Enhancing Organizational Communication Through Appreciative Inquiry: The Case of East African Union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Internal communication is a vital component of organizational communication and plays a major role in the realization of an organization's mission because it influences organization members' interpersonal relationships. However, most of the literature on organizational communication understates factors that may impede adequate internal communication practices in complex organizations such as East African Union (EAU). Hence factors such as the organization's culture, or organization members' cultural and educational backgrounds, and gender relations are understated. Furthermore, the literature understates how complex organizational structures such as those of the EAU can hinder or facilitate effective internal communication or the relationships between communication partners. Also, most studies on organizational communication have tended to study organizations from a problem-centric approach, making them more problematic and complex. This study provides an alternative lens for studying organizations by advocating for a positive approach. The study sought to identify existing positive internal communication practices in EAU, and strategies to improve them. Using structuration theory to frame the research questions and 3 phases of appreciative inquiry (AI) cycle, this study established that trust, leader-follower confidence, freedom of creativity and positive gender relations influence the organization's internal communication practices. Enhanced communication in turn improves trust, leader-follower confidence, creativity, and positive gender relations. Study participants identified and proposed strategies, actions and practices to enhance the respective communication drivers. The study found that variables such as the organization's culture, diverse organizational members, organizational leadership, and appreciative inquiry mediate the effect of internal communication in the organization, making the improvement of internal communication in EAU through appreciative inquiry a dynamic, tentative and fluid process. The study showed that structuration theory facilitated organizational learning and change of the organization's communication culture demonstrating therefore that the organization was open to learning. This study contributes to organizational communication studies by demonstrating that enhanced trust, enhanced leader-follower confidence, enhanced creativity, and positive gender relations influence the quality and quantity of internal communication and vice versa. The study also contributes to appreciative inquiry studies by extending it to Christian organizations and also demonstrates that AI can be used flexibly according to a researcher's needs.

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DECLARATION

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

Signed   _Catherine Nyameino_   (Candidate)

Date   08 . 04 . 2016

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed   _Catherine Nyameino_   (Candidate)

Date   08 . 04 . 2016

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if approved, to be available for photocopying by the British Library and for Inter-Library Loan, for open access to the Electronic Theses Online Service (EthoS) linked to the British Library, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organizations.

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Date   08 . 04 . 2016

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to several people: first to my father, Reuben Nyameino and my late mother Biliah Nyaboke for teaching me the value of knowing and loving God, and trusting Him in all things. To my husband, Edward Ontita for his love, and spiritual, moral and financial support and for taking care of our children while I was away and to our children Kevin and Ray Ontita for your love and prayers. Thank you also for believing in me and encouraging me to pursue my dreams.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I am eternally grateful to God who in his wisdom created me and has been very gracious throughout my life. He provided everything that I needed in His own time and therefore made my study experiences wonderful.

I am also indebted to so many people who have contributed to my educational journey and to the completion of this thesis. My late mother was my first teacher who would take me out in the early evenings and show me the stars and the moon and during the day would show me various plants, animals, and other creatures to remind me of the place of God in my life. Those early lessons opened my eyes to the world. My father Reuben Nyameino ceaselessly prayed for me and supported me in my career. My brother Charles and my sister in-law Veronica Nyameino made many sacrifices including their personal comfort in order to put me through school. My brother John Nyameino was my second teacher and literally taught me everything he learnt in school. He made my work easier when I joined school and on reflection, I see this foundation as the one that influenced my promotion from class two to class four; and to my former head teacher Mr. Joseph Nyandika for moving me from lower to upper primary when I least expected it.

My husband Edward Ontita who has seen me through my Bachelors, Postgraduate Diploma, Masters, and now Ph.D. Ed, your great love, spiritual, moral and, financial and academic support have been invaluable. Thanks for defying the odds of the Gusii culture to take care of our children in order for me to have the time to study, may the Lord bless you. And to our children Kevin and Ray, thanks for your patience and your understanding. I know you missed my visits to your schools, but I don't remember hearing you complain. Thanks also for excelling in your studies even in the absence of my physical support during your national examinations. And to my other siblings,

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ABBREVIATIONS

AI   Appreciative Inquiry

AR   Action Research

EAU   East African Union

ECD   East Central Africa Division

GC   General Conference

SDA   Seventh-day Adventist Church

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Chapter 1 Background to the Study

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter briefly introduces the concept of internal communication and then turns to East African Union, the context of the study, the research questions that the study sought to answer and the assumptions for the study. It then offers a synopsis of the methodology that was used, and the main findings.

This study was about enhancing positive internal communication practices in East African Union. Internal communication in this study was defined as the regular.[1] robust /sound informal and formal interpersonal communication between supervisors and subordinates at every level, between members of various departments and included the induction of new members to the organization. Robust/sound communication in this study referred to interpersonal communication practices where communication partners treat one another as 'unique, authentic individuals rather than as an object or an 'it' (Beebe, et al., 2014:3). It is therefore a communication relationship where the employees view one another beyond their organizational roles which often segment them to levels of supervisors and subordinates and instead they relate as equal in their interactions. This type of communication values each partner's contribution and is characterized with honesty, empathy and respect for one another.

In this study, therefore, interpersonal communication was viewed as a transactional process where boundaries between senders and receivers dissolve and communication becomes a give and take process as communication partners simultaneously engage in creating and interpreting the meaning of the message of the

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[1] This refers to the number of times that supervisors and subordinates informally interact with one another apart from the usual work-related communication between the two.

communication. The transactional approach of communication in this study also took the view that meaning is fluid and dynamic because it is influenced by several factors that are beyond the communication partners' control and hence it is a messy process as opposed to a being linear and straightforward process (Beebe, et al., 2014). Hence the study assumed that study participants would relate beyond their organizational roles and view one another as important actors in their interactions in order for them to foster positive communication relationships.

2 PERSONAL AND INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

I work for East African Union (EAU) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I joined the organization in 1997 as a radio producer from another Christian broadcaster where I had worked for six years. On joining EAU, I was assigned to produce programmes for the international radio channel, Adventist World Radio because at the time the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not own local stations. I served in the position of a programmes' producer until 2009 when I was appointed to coordinate radio and television activities in Kenya after the Church acquired two FM stations and one television station. In 2010 November, I was elected to the position of Communications and Adventist Media Centre director. So at the time of joining OCMS my research ideas were shaped by the issues that revolved around the production of programs, although as I explain in chapter 2, there was a more pertinent communication challenge in the organization's communication practices that I had observed earlier, but due to my fear of the likely implications on my relationship with colleagues and managers of the organization, I shelved it. The challenge was mainly on internal communication and how it affected

employee relationships. As will be discussed in chapter 3 however, my first field work findings brought me back to the very issue that I was trying to avoid.

In this study, therefore, I was not a neutral researcher, but rather one whose past and present experiences as a worker in the organization and as female head of department came to bear in the study design and how it was carried out. I acknowledge that the study may have been influenced by my own biases that may have sprung from being a member of the organization and a head of one of the departments within the organization and hence part and parcel of the organization. In this study, I took the position of participant-observer. I was a participant because as an employee of the organization, I was an insider of the context. And I was also an observer because of my position as a researcher trying to reflect on 'what was going on when what was going was going on'.[2] I used the metaphor of being inside or outside of a room to try and locate my positionality of insider-outsider or participant-observer role in the study. I viewed myself as one whose perceptions of the phenomenon in question depended on whether I was from the inside or the outside of the 'room' at a given point in time. Hence, depending on which side of the room I was at and the lenses that I used from this particular side of the room, the realities that I saw were different from those I saw when I changed my position. This means that my perceptions of the research topic were shaped by the position I took. Thus the insider lens allowed me to view and understand the organization in certain ways as an insider to the organization different from those I would find once I adopted a different lens to view the organization from the outside as a researcher. The insider-outsider views affected how I related with the study participants,

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[2] Dr. Bernard Farr of OCMS uses this phrase to challenge scholars to look beyond the surface, so that they can unearth that which is behind the actions, feelings, and thoughts that are on the surface.

the questions I asked and how I interpreted the research findings. I however acknowledge that sometimes the boundaries between insider and outsider were fluid because it was not always possible to draw a clear distinction of where one role ended and the other one started.

3   RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY IN EAST AFRICAN UNION

I carried out the study in East African Union because of a number of reasons. First, my interest was to improve my practice and hence the reason for choosing to study internal communication practices which is an aspect of my work. I hoped that through the study interpersonal relationships of the organization members would improve and the organization's communication practices would also improve. Secondly, because I am a full-time worker of the organization and due to the nature of my work, it would have been difficult for me to carry out research in another context. The EAU context accorded me the opportunity to both work and carry out the study at the same time, although this had its own challenges as well. In addition, the EAU context was ideal because I was already familiar with the study participants and this eased the field work processes to some extent. Further, the context was ideal for my study because I did not have sufficient funds that would enable me carry out research elsewhere due to the expenses that would have been involved such a travelling, accommodation and other research related expenses.

4   ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The ontological assumptions that informed this study was that first; the social world can be understood only through social constructions and interpretations of the social actors and hence social reality is not independent of the interactions of social actors.

Therefore, in order to understand the internal communication of EAU, one had to rely on organization members understanding and interpretation of the said practices. Second, the study assumed that there are multiple social realities and my role as a researcher was to try and understand those multiple meanings that actors draw from everyday realities of the phenomenon in question (Bryman, 2012).[3] My epistemological assumption is that knowledge and reality are socially constructed, and that there is no value-free science because of the various values and ways of being that I entered the study setting with and those that study participants held and which of those I chose to lay emphasis on. I was influenced by the constructivist paradigm of qualitative research which posits that social reality can only be known through social actors' experiences and practices. The constructivist view also allowed me to interact with study subjects as my co-researchers whose understanding and interpretation of their communication practices brought forth valid knowledge. Hence the study argued that positive communication practices of East African Union could be known only by engaging with the organization's employees and it was mediated by several factors which brought to bear in their understanding and interpretations of the said communication practices, and my interpretation of their proposals.

This study, therefore, did not claim complete objectivity because it was influenced by my ways of being, my experiences and relationships with my supervisors[4] and subordinates and the 'power asymmetries' (Kvale and Svend, 2009:33) that mediated my interactions with both groups as we sought to make sense of internal communication practices of East African Union.

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[3] I see realties being multiple in the sense that, there are those realities that the study participants will share, and there is also the reality that I will create through the interpretation of the data findings.

[4] These are the three officers of EAU.

The following section describes East African Union, the organization that was the focus of study.

5 EAST AFRICAN UNION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

This study was about enhancing internal communication practices. The study took place at the East African Union (EAU), the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya. EAU has a Church membership of over 2.5 million[5] in over 10,000 churches and 8 sub-organizations.[6] EAU is the main link between the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya, and the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church and represents the voice of the Seventh-day Adventist Church membership in the public domain. EAU also covers two countries namely, Kenya and Somalia.[7]

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[5] The figures are based on the 2010 Government of Kenya Census.

[6] The figures are based on the first quarter of 2011 statistical reports that were sent from the regional offices of EAU known as Fields and Conferences. The figures ae based on based on church records of baptized members and unbaptized members usually referred to as Sabbath school members. The figures may not be necessarily reliable due to recording errors that may result from inconsistencies in updating records due to death and other ways of losing church members from church register.

[7] See Appendix 1 for the territorial map of East African Union.

The following diagram helps to illustrate the relationship between EAU and its sub-organizations and higher organizations.

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                        ┌────────────────────┐
                        │ General Conference │
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          └────────────┘              │      Division        │
                                      └──────────────────────┘
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        ┌────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────┐
        │   Unions   │              │  East African Union  │
        └────────────┘              └──────────────────────┘
                 │                              │
      ┌──────────────┐              ┌──────────────┐
      │  Fields and  │              │  Fields and  │
      │ Conferences  │              │ Conferences  │
      └──────────────┘              └──────────────┘
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    ┌──────────────┐              ┌──────────────┐
    │Local churches│              │The local church│
    └──────────────┘              └──────────────┘
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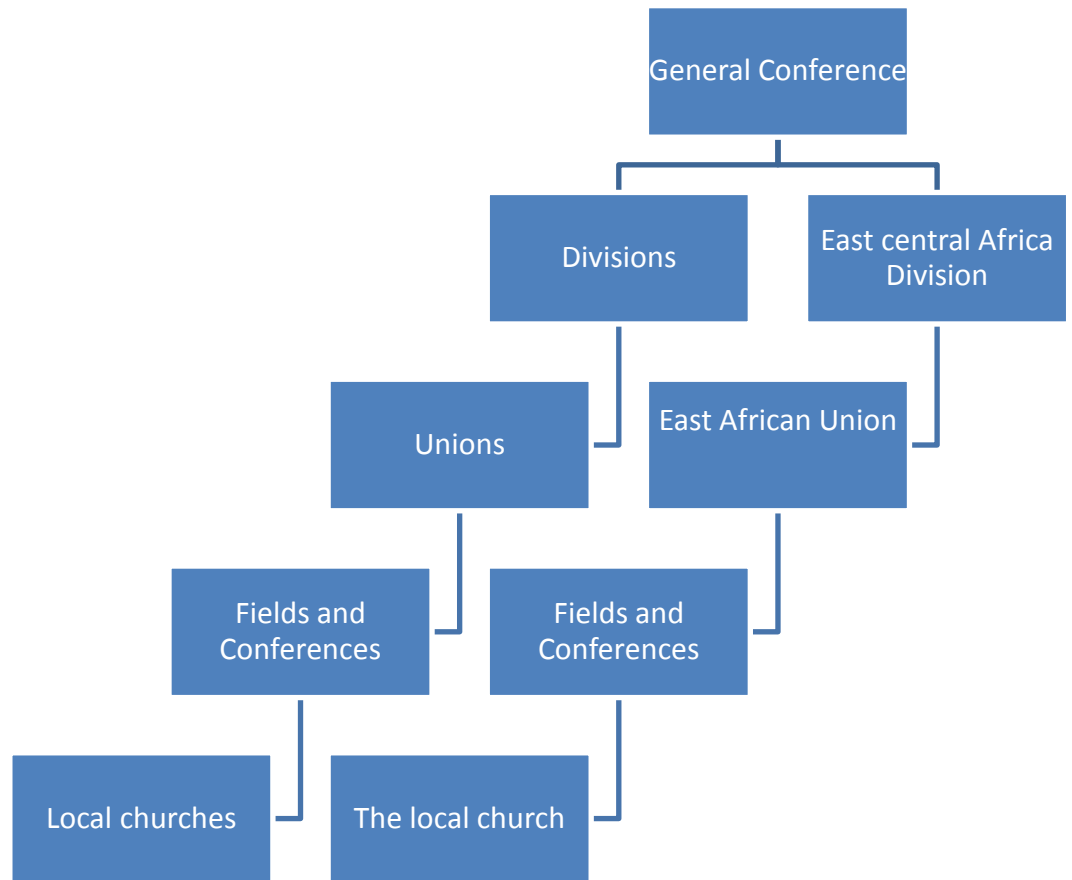
Figure 1: Relationship between EAU and higher and sub-organizations: By Author, 2013.

The above organizational chart demonstrates the critical role of EAU in relation to both the higher and sub-organizations. EAU links the local Seventh-day Adventist Churches, and the sub-organizations (fields and Conferences) with the General Conference[8] through its higher organization (the East Central Africa Division (ECD[9]) by respectively receiving and disseminating information from both sides.

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[8] The General Conference is the highest organization in the denomination's hierarchy with its headquarters in Silver Springs, Maryland, USA.

[9] East Central Africa Division is in charge of 12 countries namely-Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo DRC, Djibouti, South Sudan, and Eritrea. ECD is the regional branch of the General Conference with its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

6 THE CULTURE OF EAST AFRICAN UNION

It is difficult to offer a single definition of EAU's culture because of its hybridity brought about by its history and the organization members' varying cultural and subcultural backgrounds. Hence the study argued that EAU is a hybrid organization because of the following; First, part of EAU's culture can be traced to America where Seventh-day Adventism began in 1860 (Schwarz, 1979:94), before it spread to Kenya in 1906 (Neufeld and Neuffer, 1976; Marshall, 2006). The study found out that until 1980 most of the senior leaders of EAU comprised of western missionaries from America and Great Britain who applied western methods of leadership to a large extent.[10] Thus the study argued that EAU's culture is partly shaped by western culture through the systems that were established by the American and British missionaries some of which continue to be upheld through the organization's policies and other guidelines[11], and through organizational memories as expressed by employees over time. For example, the British culture tends to lean towards closed communication while the American one fosters a more open communication culture. Also both the British and American cultures tend to lay emphasis on systems and hierarchies that are more inclined towards vertical and formal communication practices on one hand; while the African culture on the other hand is inclined to informal communication practices, and is also influenced by cultural

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[10] For example, the Adventist church runs on an elective system where leaders at every level of the organization including the local church are elected. Those elected fall into categories of officers and heads of departments with each category having certain privileges. For example, the officers namely, the president, executive secretary and treasurer are placed higher than heads of departments and heads of departments are placed higher than other employees. This pecking order is observed for example in formal introductions of EAU employees where those who occupy junior positions come last. The study observed that communication relationships tend to follow the same trend so that information emanates from those of higher ranks and is passed to those of lower ranks.

[11] All policies and guidelines that govern East African Union are formulated and voted at the General Conference—the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Berrien Springs Maryland, USA. The policies are then passed down to lower organizations such as EAU.

practices such as gender, and respect for elders and sometimes ethnicity[12] which all come to bear on how organization members interact with one another.

Second, EAU's culture is influenced by the African culture because it is located in Kenya and is also managed by Kenyans from different cultures, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds[13] some of which are more open than others. This means that although the organization's policies are mainly shaped by the west, their interpretation and application is largely influenced by those who work for EAU. And because the workers represent different ethnic groups and cultures, their interpretation of the organization's culture is not homogenous owing to different linguistic interpretations and other cultural practices that influence how communication is understood and practiced within the organization. This then makes EAU a hybrid organization due to the mixture of western and African cultures, use of western oriented policies, and due to the different interpretations that arise from organization members' interpretations of the various aspects of organizational life.

Third, the study argued that EAU's culture is complex because of its fluidity and multiple underpinnings that result from varied interactions of the employees. In this case then, the organization's culture is also fluid and dynamic because it is reconstituted on a continuous basis due to its members' continuous interactions and as some members

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[12] Ethnicity is a major issue in Kenya and shapes the country's politics. The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates within this political milieu and sometimes ethnic politics play out during the organization's elections and appointments of new leaders and also influence how employees interact. It is not uncommon to differ in their interpretation of certain aspects of the organization's policies and their differences are influenced on the country's political issues. For example, some employees tend to use their vernacular languages especially when they are discussing something that they do not wish their colleagues from other linguistic communities to understand especially if they view the issue in question from a political angle.

[13] Presently EAU employees represent 14 tribes of Kenya. This means that apart from using English and Swahili and the main languages of communication, employees use their vernacular languages in informal communication and sometimes in formal communication.

leave and new ones join the organization.[14] Communication in EAU is therefore a complex phenomenon owing to its hybridity, multiple and continuous encounters and interpretations by a multi-ethnic workforce from different cultures and backgrounds and its position in the organizational hierarchies of the denomination.[15]

7 EAU CULTURE AND STUDY ENTRY POINTS

In addition to its hybridity due to different cultures and multiple interpretations, EAU can be described as a conservative organization with a hierarchical structure. This type of structure[16] favours vertical and formal communication.[17] The study argued that the conservative culture and hierarchical structure makes it difficult for the organization's members to enjoy their interpersonal communication relationships because it dictates the nature, quality and quantity of information to be communicated and with whom. For example, the conservative nature of the organization determined the type of study approach I took because my first field work demonstrated that difficulties may arise from taking a certain approach I had wanted to use.[18] The culture

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[14] The organization holds elections after every five years and in most cases, new officers and heads of departments are elected from lower organizations.

[15] The position of EAU in the denominational hierarchy influences the extent to which EAU can make independent decisions on certain matters. The norm is that EAU should consult the higher organization (East Central Africa) before taking certain actions.

[16] Structures in this study refer to the network of relationships among individuals and positions in the organization that result from the way positons and responsibilities are allocated, and also from the way organization members interpret their relationships based on their culture and how it affects their view of one another. Factors such as gender and seniority may affect how employees interact.

[17] See Appendix 2 for the organization's structure.

[18] See chapter 3 for a detailed discussion on how I shifted the study from one approach to the other due to the experiences of the first field work.

of the organization would also determine the extent to which study participants would interact because the organization's pecking order determines the type of information that supervisors or subordinates can share. I realized that probing into challenges of internal communication in the organization would be interpreted as fault finding, and would ultimately reduce the number of study participants. Also, my position as a head of department in the organization constrained me from using the traditional qualitative research approach where I would ask difficult questions because it would seem unreasonable for me to be the one to probe into problems of the organization's internal communication practices when I was expected to provide solutions.

From my first field work experience, it became apparent that although action research was the best approach to involving study participants in understanding communication practices of the organization, I needed to identify a more viable approach within the action research paradigm for my context. I wrestled with the question on how best I would approach the subject without causing problems to myself and others, and without losing the opportunity to carry out the study within the organization. I wrote in my reflective diary as follows:

> I seem to be hitting some dead end in terms of the area that I badly wanted to research on. I feel overwhelmed by the confusion that comes with this topic. Although I am interested in understanding the reasons that derail EAU from making itself known through media, it seems that this may affect my relationship with everyone around EAU. Already I am reeling from my recent 'confrontations' over housing benefits for married women'. So how do I detach myself from this situation so that I can take some neutral position to enable me suspend my emotional attachment to the subject in order to get some objective responses? (Reflective note2, October 6, 2008)

The foregoing excerpt from my research diary demonstrates the challenges that I faced in trying to locate my study in the EAU context. While at first I thought that I could detach myself from the research in order to maintain complete objectivity and, therefore, avoid potential problems, I realized that I could not totally divorce myself from the subject. Further reading led me to understand that qualitative research allows

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one to write themselves into the research with their various ways of being in the world (Mason, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Hence my reading on reflexivity (Etherington, 2004) and how a researcher cannot divorce herself from the study context in pursuit of complete objectivity helped me to understand my role in the study more clearly. And this led to further reading in order to identify a more viable study approach for my context. I then came across appreciative inquiry[19] which this study uses.[20]

The core business of EAU is evangelism as stated in its mission[21] and vision statements.[22] This study argued that internal communication[23] is critical in making EAU achieve its mission in 2 ways: First, internal communication influences how organization members relate to one another, the type, quantity, and quality of information they share with one another, and how they develop and sustain a common vision. Second, internal communication also influences how new members are inducted into the organization.

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[19] A detailed discussion of how I shifted from one form of action research to the other is in chapter 3. The same chapter defines appreciative inquiry and described how it was used in the study.

[20] The study argued that the EAU's culture determines the extent to which one's study findings can be implemented. This is because the findings can be subjected to a committee for approval before implementation especially if they are perceived to propose significant changes that EAU cannot implement without consultations with higher organizations. That is why in this study change is measured by the study participants' change of language from one of deficits to positive talk as opposed to profound change of structures. The study assumed that once study participants began to focus on positive communication practices and ways to improve them, change took place.

[21] The mission of the East African Union of Seventh-day Adventist Church is to communicate to all peoples the everlasting gospel of God's love in the context of the **three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6 – 12**, and as revealed in the life, death, resurrection, and high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ, leading them to accept **Jesus Christ** as personal Savior and Lord and to unite with **His remnant Church**; and to nurture believers as disciles in preparation for His soon return (EAU Handbook, 2013).

[22] EAU has a spiritually mature church membership and personnel who are totally committed to God, Christian principles and values, and being deeply grounded in God's truth and united in Christ, fully support the mission of the church; and with the concerted effort of the clergy and the laity, maintain an annual membership growth rate of over 15% (EAU Handbook, 2013).

[23] Internal communication has been defined in the introduction section of this chapter as the robust formal and informal communication between supervisors and subordinates and includes the induction of new employees to the organization.

The core business of EAU is evangelism as stated in its mission[24] and vision statements.[25] This study argued that internal communication[26] is critical in making EAU achieve its mission in 2 ways: First, internal communication influences how organization members relate to one another, the type, quantity, and quality of information they share with one another, and how they develop and sustain a common vision. Second, internal communication also influences how new members are inducted into the organization.

This study posited that the existing internal communication practices in EAU were inadequate in fully meeting the communication needs of its members due to the following reasons: EAU is a hierarchical and conservative organization which favours vertical communication. The hierarchical structure affects internal communication practices in two fundamental ways: First it affects downward and upward communication[27] because it limits the quantity[28] and quality[29] of communication

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[25] EAU has a spiritually mature church membership and personnel who are totally committed to God, Christian principles and values, and being deeply grounded in God's truth and united in Christ, fully support the mission of the church; and with the concerted effort of the clergy and the laity, maintain an annual membership growth rate of over 15% (EAU Handbook, 2013).

[26] Internal communication has been defined in the introduction section of this chapter.

[27] Papa et al., (2008) and Kreps (1990) argue that downward communication serves important functions in an organization. Its main purpose is to help managers share information with employees about their roles and responsibilities. Upward communication on the other hand helps managers to understand the employee perception of organizational policies and functions, and helps managers to understand whether employees have understood their tasks and how to perform them, and what problems employees are experiencing. Upward and downward communication as discussed here overlooks social communication between superiors and subordinates, so that an employee who encounters a personal problem that can affect his/her work does not have a way of sharing it with his/her superior.

[28] This refers to the number of times supervisors and their subordinates interact with each other apart from the usual work-related communication between the two.

between supervisors and their subordinates due to the limited flow of information from either side and due to the formal nature of the information.[30]

Second, the hierarchical structure affects orientation[31] of new employees by limiting the new employee to the offices he or she is oriented to and, by extension, with specific members with whom the said employee may interact. The study argued that although EAU views orientation of new employees as an important process and has detailed the orientation procedures as part of its guidelines (EAU Handbook, 2005: 4-5; EAU Handbook, 2013: 4-5), field observations revealed that what passed for an orientation exercise was a brief introduction for the new employee and a quick guided tour of a few minutes to offices that were deemed relevant to the new employee's work. This means that the employee in question was partially oriented to their work environment and mostly to the employees with whom he or she would spend most time. It also means that the individual may not be able to establish quick connections and start to build friendships and networks that would facilitate interaction, except perhaps with those he or she would work with closely. For example, my own experience of moving to a managerial position with no orientation limited my communication experiences at both administrative and executive committee meetings and it took time to learn what was expected of me. Hence this study argued that a lack of adequate orientation of new

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[29] Quality here refers to the type of content of communication and how information is communicated and refers to both formal and informal communication in supervisor-subordinate relationships. Such communication is characterized with openness, humour, stories, and empathy.

[30] Most of the communication tends to be supervisor initiated, and work related, hence it tends to be downward communication. For example, in cases where an employee's personal problems affect their work performance, management may institute disciplinary measures without adequately providing a forum through which the said employee can share their side of the story. If the employee in question is then disciplined he or she may draw sympathy from other organization workers and the situation may spiral to strained relationships, hence affecting the quality of communication.

[31] Adequate orientation in this study refers to the longer and organized visits of new employees to each department, giving of a job description, sharing on work expectations, mission, vision and policies of the organization and mentoring of the new employee by a colleague until one is well acquainted with colleagues and job expectations.

employees limits their communication experiences with others and contributes to inadequate organizational communication practices.

The study, therefore, argued that in order to navigate the complex organizational culture and structure, communication practices needed to transcend the usual one-way communication that dominated the organization's communication culture and they needed to go beyond the complex organizational structures to embrace a more transactional and relational[32] form of communication where the exchange of information improves employees' practices and relationships.[33]

The study also argued that the organization's structure makes communication a complex process because there is communication within departments and between them and there is communication between individuals from different departments.[34] Internal communication in EAU is, therefore, not linear, but a web that involves all people at all levels at different times for different purposes. In some cases, communication between certain departments or individuals is more regular, while in others it is based on need. Communication needs may reorganize workers into different groups so as to meet certain objectives. For example, the day-to-day running of the organization is dependent on the formal communication between supervisors and subordinates at different levels. Yet, there are times when supervisors and subordinates communicate at almost the same level such as during social retreats, or other social gatherings where hierarchy is not necessarily observed. In such instances, the communication practices give room to

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[32] This is the type of communication relationships described in Beebe et al. (2008:20) as a 'relationship dimension of communication' whereby communication partners relate beyond their social roles. This type of relationship is more about the 'how' of the communication more than the 'what' of communication. Hence it is about how one communicates a message.

[33] See Appendix 2 for a diagram of the organizational structure of EAU.

[34] For example, in formal communication, all the secretaries report to more than three immediate supervisors in addition to the executive secretary. The receptionist, office messengers and janitors work for all departments but also report to the executive secretary. Furthermore, there is the informal communication where employees communicate with each other on their own volition.

spontaneity and fun. There is also the grapevine which usually defies rank and brings together employees who want to share information through the informal communication channels. Therefore, while the organization's structures may be rigid there are ways through which members navigate in order to creatively communicate with each other. This study averred that there are positive internal communication practices in the organization that may not have been recognized or acknowledged and which, if recognized and enhanced, could improve internal communication practices. This research aimed at discovering those positive communication practices through appreciative inquiry so as to enhance internal communication within the organization.

8 PROBLEM STATEMENT

East African Union plays a critical role in the operations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya and in the world Church because it links the lower and higher organizations of the Church. The study posited that for EAU to effectively meet its obligations, the organization employees must meet each other's communication needs in order to fully meet their contractual obligations as well as work harmoniously. The quality of internal communication in EAU would, therefore, affect how its employees relate with each other and how the organizations' mission and vision are realized.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church espouses effective communication as evinced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual[35] (2005: 137) which spells out the role of communication in the local Church and the duties of the office holders. Furthermore, four annual councils of the General Conference[36] (1992-1995) discussed various

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[35] A Church Manual describes the governance, operations and functions of local churches. http://www.adventist.org/information/church-man downloaded on October 22nd, 2013.

[36] The General Conference (GC) is the highest organization of the Seventh-day Adventist church and has its headquarters in Berrien Springs, Maryland, USA. The GC is the highest decision-making body of the

strategies of enhancing organizational communication (internal and external) of the denomination. One of the strategies of achieving this was to encourage Adventist organizations at all levels to develop their own communication strategies within the larger organization's communication strategies (http://www.gc.adventist.org).[38] Hence there are communication departments at every level of the Church organization including the local Church. While the Seventh-day Adventist Church in general and EAU in particular espouses effective communication in principle, this was lacking in practice due to the complex culture of EAU and the rigid hierarchical structures that limit the quantity and type of information organization members share and with whom.

The crucial role of effective internal communication[39] is well documented in the literature.[40] For example, Ruck and Welch (2012: 295) argue that 'effective internal communication is a prerequisite for organizational success'. Although most scholars agree that communication is important to organizational success, they do not provide a common definition of organizational communication. For example, some scholars such as Papa et al. (2008); Miller (2003); Shockley-Zalabak (2009); Tourish and Hargie (2004); Richmond and McCroskey (2009) have discussed some of the different theories and perspectives from which organizational communication is understood and practiced

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organization. All decisions made at the GC level are adapted by the lower organizations up to the local church.

[37] Details of each annual council are provided in the reference section.

[38] Details of each annual council are provided in the reference section.

[39] For example, effective internal communication has been linked to employee's job satisfaction, organizational commitment, (Madlock and Lightsey, 2010), employee productivity (Clampitt and Downs, 1993) and effective social organization (Kreps, 1990). On the other hand, Salem (2008) argues that inadequate internal communication can lead to ineffective change.

[40] See Wood, 2004; Beebe and Masterson, 2008; Frank and Brownell, 1989; Shockley-Zalabak, 2009, Mumby, 2013.

in different organizations[41] with some viewing organization and communication as separate concepts (Miller, 2003: 17; Shockley-Zalabak, 2009), while others, such as Mumby (2013:4), view organization and communication as integrated.

For example, Mumby (2012: 6; 2013: 4) argues that the separation of the two terms 'organization' and 'communication' complicates the understanding of organizational communication because 'communication constitutes organization'.[42] Mumby's main argument is that people create their social realities through interaction and one of those realities is organization. Ruck and Welch (2012: 296) also argue that most studies of internal communication focus on the process 'rather than the content' of communication. The views of Mumby and those of Ruck and Welch on organizational communication were relevant to this study because they show that organizations are not only fluid and dynamic but also dependent on the continuous interactions of their members to survive and function. That interaction essentially constitutes communication and its improvement was the subject of this study. From this perspective, communication improvement was best studied using appreciative inquiry because the approach offered the requisite scope to explore internal and communication change and improvement as it occurred.

Although it has been argued in the literature that internal communication is important to organizational success, in my view some of the literature understates

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[41] Papa et al. (2008) discuss some of the different theories that influence the practice of organizational communication. Traditional theories view communication as a process of sending and receiving messages. Interpretive theories view communication as a culture hence subjective so that organizational reality is socially constructed. The critical theories view communication as a means of producing and maintaining power structures and hence defining the privileged and the oppressed. The feminist theories view communication as a tool that promotes patriarchy and oppress women so that organizations become sites of male domination.

[42] Mumby (2012: 15) defines organizational communication as 'the process of creating and negotiating collectively coordinated systems of meaning through symbolic practice oriented towards the achievements of organizational goals'.

several factors that may influence its success in an organization such as EAU. (Papa et al., 2008; Zalabak, 2009; Richmond, et al.; 2013). For example, internal communication may be affected by the organization's history, or organization members' ethnic and cultural backgrounds, their level of education, cultural communication practices, gender relations, and their understanding of the role of communication in an organization. Furthermore, the literature understates how complex organizational cultures, such as those of the EAU type can hinder or facilitate effective internal communication or the relationships between communication partners. For example, Papa et al. (2008: 56, 57) argues that supervisor-subordinate communication fails because of 'rivalry, territoriality[43] and specialization disagreements';[44] and that horizontal communication fails because organizational members are not willing to 'expend additional efforts it requires' and because of 'a lack of proximity to communication partners or unclear rules of interaction' (ibid.). Richmond et al. (2013: 26) also argue that inadequate organizational communication is solely due to 'unmotivated managers' and that communication can work 'if managers are willing to make it work'. The latter argument suggests that internal communication is more mechanical[45] than socially constructed,[46] in which case if channels of delivery are corrected, then communication can be successful. The argument also suggests that managers control communication and hence determine communication practices. This research aimed at filling some of the gaps by looking at how multi-ethnic people from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds and occupations as well as interests, can identify, develop and sustain internal

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[43] Refers to situations where each person protects their work territory,

[44] Each person understands work differently and is unwilling to learn from the other.

[45] Mechanical communication in this case is about using rules or certain orders to communicate.

[46] Socially constructed communication means that employees negotiate or shape the communication process and content.

communication practices that build strong organizational relationships and a strong communication culture.

8.1 Research Questions

The study's research questions were as follows:

Main Question

What are the positive communication practices that exist in East African Union?

Sub-Questions

i)   How do organization members utilize the positive communication practices?

ii)   How do organization members enhance those positive communication practices?[47]

8.2 Study Objectives

The study had two specific objectives:

1) To identify and describe the existing positive communication practices in East African Union.

2) To explain and describe the various strategies that study participants used to enhance the positive communication practices.

9 ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE STUDY

The study made the following assumptions:1) There were positive communication practices in EAU that were working, although they may not have been recognized or

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[47] See chapter 3 for subsidiary study questions that were formulated to respond to how specific drivers of internal communication are enhanced in EAU.

acknowledged; 2) Organization members had the ability and the willingness to identify and name the positive communication practices and propose ways in which the practices could be enhanced; 3) East African Union was aspiring for growth and higher performances and would be interested to understand how its members could communicate better so as to enhance interpersonal relationships and organizational performance and hence was open to learning; 4) Change begun to occur and to be experienced as soon as the first study question was asked thus making appreciative inquiry a 'process for change rather than a master of it' (Grant, 2006: ii). The study argued that rather than wait to see change at the end of the study process, change started to occur as soon as study participants started to share their organizational stories of positive practices. Study participants began to experience change through the use of affirmative language in telling their stories and in making new proposals on how to improve the various communication practices they identified. Hence the study argued that change occurred 'simultaneously with inquiry' (Watkins et al., 2011: 37).

10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study was very important to several groups. First, the study was important to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in general and to East African Union in particular. This is because the study participants who were also the organization's employees articulated strategies to improve their internal communication practices. The study argued that improved internal communication practices improve employee's relationships and facilitate the realization of the organizations' mission. This study was also very important to the Seventh-day Adventist Church because it was the first of its kind to be conducted in East African Union and hence denominational workers who would like to improve their practice can borrow ideas for doing their own AI studies.

Secondly, this study makes a significant contribution to knowledge by extending the application and use of appreciative inquiry in organizational development or organizational communication research by showing that enhanced trust, leader-follower confidence, freedom of creativity, and positive gender relations influence organizational relationships. The study also demonstrated that AI can be used flexibly according to the needs of the researcher, the research context, and the needs of the participants. The study's use of three phases of the appreciative inquiry cycle and at different times of the study period and the formulation of research questions to suit the researcher's needs was a case in point. This study is also important to future researchers who may be interested in improving their practice.

11 OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The study used three theories in order to try and understand internal communication practices in EAU. Structuration[48] theory was used to formulate the research questions such that they reflected the spirit of appreciative inquiry by emphasizing the affirmative or the positive core[49] through the formulation of affirmative or unconditional positive questions. The unconditional positive questions helped study participants to focus on life-giving stories, in order to embrace the existing positive communication practices to

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[48] Structuration theory takes the view that organization members create various structures through communication/ interaction in order to function but these structures, mainly in the form of institutionalized rules and resources, play a dual role in the communication experiences of organization members. Hence, the structures enable or constrain organization members' interactions thereby enabling organization members to either make changes or constraining them from making any changes. Change occurs to the extent that the communication structures enable or constrain the organization members' interactions because organization members draw upon the existing structures in their interactions. Structures in this case become the point of reference for organization members' interactions (Giddens, 1984).

[49] The positive core is what makes up the best of an organization. This includes its achievements, values, visions and best practices among other values.

(http://www.apprecitiveinquiry.case.edu/intro/definition.cf)

be enhanced. Thus structuration theory facilitated positive discussions. It was argued that to the extent that study participants identified new positive ways of enhancing their communication practices in interaction, they changed their communication culture because as it will be discussed in chapter 3, appreciative inquiry was instrumental in steering study participants' generative discussions and to the positive core that changed their communication practices.

Organizational culture theory[50] and organizational learning theory[51] were used to explain and interpret the research findings in order to show how organization members learnt new communication practices and how they changed their communication culture in interaction respectively. Hence, the study averred that learning took place when organization members detected, recognized and named positive communication practices and proposed strategies to enhance them. The study also argued that the organization's internal communication culture changed when organization members focused on the positive communication practices and began to generate strategies of enhancing them. To the extent that study participants' discussions were generative in nature and focused on the positive communication values, and to the extent that they proposed ways to enhance them, they changed their internal communication culture and by extension their organizations' culture.[52] This was with the understanding that change in this study was not viewed as an event, rather as an ongoing process that was

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[50]Organizational culture theory posits that organizations are cultures formed through the interaction of organization members. Hence, an organization does not exist independent of its members' interactions because organizational reality is socially constructed through communication and sense-making processes of organization members (Papa et al., 2008, 16, Mumby, 2012: 118).

[51] Dierkes et al., (2001) argue that organizational learning is viewed as an inclusive social process which gives voice to all organization members. Organizational learning therefore privileges local and situated knowledge and acknowledges the importance of language discourse in shaping organizational reality (Cojocaru, et al. 2012). This in essence means that learning does not occur outside the social actors because it is they that contribute what becomes social/ organizational knowledge. Secondly, learning is a continuous process that is fluid and transitory in nature because social actors move in and out of the context and engage in interaction at different times for different reasons (ibid).

[52] See chapter 3 for full discussion of the said theories.

dependent on organization members' interactions. Hence, the study assumed that once study participants began to engage in interaction with a focus on the positive core the process of change began to take place. This argument is consistent with that of Watkins et al. (2011: 37):

> Rather than being limited to the traditional view of change as an event that has a beginning, a middle and an end, we now see change as a continuous process, ongoing in every conversation we have, in every inquiry we make, in every action we take to "know" or understand something about our organization and/or about the world.

Data were collected by the use of appreciative interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. The methods were used in an appreciative nature[53] hence the use of 3 of the 4D phases of appreciative inquiry as discussed in chapter 3. Data were coded and analysed for themes using thematic analysis as discussed in Gomm (2008). Data analysis helped tease out several themes that drive internal communication practices in East African Union. The themes that remained salient throughout the data analysis process are now known as 'drivers' of internal communication in East African Union are discussed in chapters 5 to 8.

12 OVERVIEW OF STUDY FINDINGS

The study findings established that there were positive internal communication practices that existed in East African Union: trust, leader-follower confidence, freedom of creativity, and positive gender relations. Further, the study showed that the aforementioned communication practices influenced the organization members' communication practices. Various strategies to enhance them are discussed in chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8. The study argued that by naming and articulating the positive

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[53] There was a deliberate choice to focus more on what is right or what works as opposed to focusing on problems or what is wrong or does not work in the organization.

communication practices the study participants changed their communication culture and, in some cases, started to live in the direction of their aspirations as can demonstrated some of the fieldwork anecdotes. Change, therefore, 'occurred simultaneously with enquiry'[54] and in this way the organizations' communication culture changed for the better. The study also found out that EAU was open to learning as demonstrated by study participants' desire to focus on the positive and their generative discussions. This was also evident through the EAU President's closing remarks of the focus group discussions.[55]

It was established that trust improves organization members' communication practices. Study participants proposed to improve trust through enhanced election and appointment procedures of individuals to the organization, enhanced delegation of duties and responsibilities, enhanced or deep understanding and appreciation of each other, enhanced sharing of personal and official information, and through enhanced trust in themselves.

The study found out that leader-follower confidence was important in influencing communication relationships of members of EAU. Study participants proposed to enhance leader-follower confidence through enhanced openness, enhanced feedback forums, enhanced appreciation, and enhanced delegation of duties and responsibilities.

It was found out that freedom of creativity improves the quality and quantity of communication practices. Study participants proposed to enhance their freedom of creativity through enhanced flexibility in the carrying out of tasks and acknowledgment of failure, enhanced encouragement, enhanced review of policies that were perceived as inhibiting creativity, enhanced matching of tasks with talent or expertise, and enhanced

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[54] Watkins et al., (2011:37).

[55] See Appendix 11 for EAU President's remarks.

sharing of the organization's mission and vision and provision giving of job descriptions to employees.

The study also established that positive gender relations improved the communication practices of the organization members. The study argued that there was a reciprocal relationship between positive gender relations and the quantity and quality of communication because enhanced gender relations improve communication practices, and enhanced communication also improves gender relations. Study participants argued that enhanced use of God's lenses or seeing people from God's perspective as equal improves gender relations. The study held that using God's lenses reduces perceived barriers, prejudices and unnecessary tensions that arise from gender inequality. Organization members begin to relate from a platform of equality and this affects how they allocate resources and opportunities for training, how they assign work responsibilities, and how they review organization policies in order to foster gender equity. Enhanced gender relations increase levels of interactions as organization members form networks and friendships through which they share and receive information. The study further found that variables such as the organization's culture, diverse organizational members, organizational leadership, and appreciative inquiry mediate the effect of internal communication in the organization, making the improvement of internal communication in EAU through appreciative inquiry a dynamic, tentative and fluid process

13 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is presented in 9 chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the context of the study, namely East African Union, the research questions, study objectives, and study assumptions. The chapter also briefly discusses the theoretical framework and

methodology used in the study in order to shed light on how data was collected, analysed and interpreted. Chapter 2 discusses my motivation for the study and my early research experiences and how I overcame emerging challenges.

Chapter 3 turns to the various theories and methods that were used to collect, analyse and interpret the data. Chapter 4 traces the historical communication practices of East African Union and looks at ways in which they influence the organizations' present communication practices.

Chapter 5 discusses the role of trust in enhancing internal communication. Chapter 6 discusses the role of leader-follower confidence in enhancing internal communication. Chapter 7 looks at the role of freedom of creativity in enhancing internal communication. Chapter 8 discusses the role of positive gender relations in enhancing communication practices in East African Union. Chapter 9 provides an overview of the study, recapitulates the main study findings, contribution to knowledge and briefly discusses my reflections on the study and how they have impacted my professional and personal life. The chapter ends with recommendations for future research.

14 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 has introduced the reader to East African Union, the context of the study, and also described the complex nature of the organization and how it affects internal communication practices. The chapter also highlighted the research questions, and the significance of the study to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to other stakeholders. The chapter concluded by giving an overview of methodology and research findings and an outline of what the ensuing chapters contain.

Chapter 2 discusses my rationale for engaging in the study and the various challenges that I encountered and how I navigated them. The chapter also discusses how I arrived at using appreciative inquiry.

Chapter 2 Navigating the Landscape

1   Introduction

This chapter describes my motivations for engaging in the study, the challenges I faced in trying to locate myself as a researcher and how I overcame some of those challenges. In the following section I describe my motivation for engaging in the study.

2   'Drivers' (Motivation) for the Study

This study was about enhancing internal communication practices in East African Union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church[1] through the use of appreciative inquiry. My motivations for this study were several but only a few of those are discussed below. My first motivation was my personal interest to continue making my voice heard due to my childhood experiences[2] which to some extent would have excluded me from the

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[1] The Seventh-day Adventist Church is different from the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement. The latter is a breakaway group from the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1914, because they argue that Seventh-day Adventists should not be engaged in military service of any nature. The breakaway took place in Germany during World War I when the government was conscripting people to serve in the military. Even though the church experienced the same pressure in USA, the Church leadership in America agreed that the church members could serve in non-combatant positions. But in Germany, some of the Adventists refused the proposal that their Church leaders made, and further protested over this, hence leading to their being dis-fellowshipped from the church and consequently forming the new reform movement in 1919 after several attempts of reconciliation failed and in 1925 they organized their General Conference (Kramer, 1988:12). The reform movement also had a breakaway group in 1951, and as a result there are two groups known by the same name. One has its headquarters in Germany, while the other has its headquarters in USA. There are great differences between the two groups in matters of doctrine, though the administrative structures are the similar. More details on the movement can be found in Kramer (1988).

[2] I lost my mother in a motor accident when I was six. As a result, I was exposed to all sorts of 'parenting' experiences from neighbours and relatives and occasional well-wishers. Some of those I interacted with gave me what they perhaps thought was good advice but in essence they reminded me that I was destined to become like the other women in the village and so I needed to perfect my culinary and farming skills to survive womanhood. These pieces of advice negatively affected me because from my experience some of the women in my village led a life of abject poverty and misery that revolved around the daily chores and activities of a peasant community. However, my headmaster changed my destiny

academic world. My second motivation was drawn from one of my findings from my Masters research which investigated how the Kenyan media namely the *Daily Nation and East African Standard newspapers*[3] covered the Seventh-day Adventist Church over a period of 3 years. One of the major findings of that study was that during the period understudy the Seventh-day Adventist Church received far less coverage compared to other mainstream churches, and that the stories about the Seventh-day Adventist church were placed in the middle pages of the newspapers compared to those of the other churches that were placed on the front or back pages of the newspapers, placements which are considered to attract wider reading. The said study also found out that on the few occasions that the Seventh-day Adventist Church received coverage on the front pages the stories were negative. Hence the present study was to help me understand what aspects of the organization's life especially internal communication that may have led to such little coverage yet the Adventist church is a major stakeholder in the spiritual and socio-economic lives of Kenyans.

My third motivation for the study resulted from my change of the research topic and ways in which I framed the research questions. Chapter 3 will discuss in detail the reasons that prompted me to change from one orientation of action research-the way I framed the research questions to appreciative inquiry. In brief, the change of research topic and how research questions were framed was prompted by the first field work

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when I was in class 2. On one afternoon he visited my classroom and with the permission of my class teacher he asked me to follow him to class 4. The class four science teacher ushered me to an unoccupied desk and asked me to start copying the notes she was writing on the board. This marked the beginning of my upper primary education. In retrospect, the headmaster's decision to move me from lower to upper primary had a big and positive impact on me because it not only gave me confidence that my life could change for the better, but also gave me a new voice that my mother's death had drowned. So, this study is a continuation of the articulation of my voice and a way through which I help study participants articulate their own voices.

[3] These are the two mainstream newspapers in Kenya and have a circulation of more than one million newspapers per day.

which showed that first there was deeper communication problem than what I had chosen to investigate; and second, the action research approach I had chosen to use and how I framed the research questions was unlikely to be fruitful owing to the organization's culture that limited the extent to which one would probe into the organization's challenges. Hence in reading more on qualitative research approaches and more specifically on action research I read an edited volume of action research by Reason and Bradbury (2006) and came across a chapter authored by Cooperrider et al. (2008: 155-165) which views the appreciative inquiry as 'constructive mode of action research'. Cooperrider, et al. in Reason and Bradbury (2008: 156) argue that there is power in the unconditional positive question that appreciative inquiry uses:

> The power of the unconditional positive question is premised on the notion that organizations are open books which are continuously in the process of being co-authored, past, present and future are endless sources of learning, inspiration and interpretation.

After reading through other appreciative inquiry literature I found that the approach resonated with my personal and professional being because it gave room for study participants' positive stories. I also felt more comfortable in using an approach that would make it easier for me to gain access to the study setting and more comfortably interact with study participants; rather than dwell on what was not working.

My fourth motivation for undertaking this study stemmed from my desire to make a contribution to appreciative inquiry approach and how it contributes to positive communication practices in complex organizations such as EAU. My search for extant studies on communication practices in the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not yield any results and certainly none on East African Union. This study, therefore, pioneered in a critical, yet neglected area that contributes to the organization's success. Also,

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appreciative inquiry[4] is a new research method to the Seventh-day Adventist Church to which I have made a contribution.

Furthermore, looking at extant AI studies in Africa, I found that the approach has attracted the widest interest in South Africa compared to Kenya.[5] AI is therefore a new research method in Kenya owing to the few extant studies documented. In Kenya, AI has been used in capacity building (Dalta et al. 2011); agriculture (Ochieng, 2007; Miruka et al. 2011); family planning (Appleford, 2013) and HIV/AIDS (Inui et al. 2007). While it is possible that there could be more AI studies in Kenya, the small number of those documented in the available literature demonstrated that the AI approach may be largely unknown or unutilized. My engagement in this study was therefore important for my professional growth and to spur others who may have the opportunity to read this thesis to use AI in studying their contexts.

My fifth motivation stemmed from my experiencing what Argyris and Schon (1996: 11) describe as a 'mismatch' or what Jarvis (1999: 39) describes as a 'disjuncture'[6] between my professional knowledge and actual practice. During my practice as a journalist, I had encountered a number of critical incidents[7] which my journalistic skills could not adequately address. For example, issues such as supervisor-

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[4] A brief explanation of how I shifted from action research to appreciative inquiry is given in the latter part of this chapter, but a more detailed discussion of AI is in chapter 3.

[5] Some of the AI studies in South Africa include those of Mkizhe (2008) who used AI to find out what students of University of Zululand appreciated about the voluntary counselling centre's services that the testing centre in the campus offered. Meyer (2007) used AI to establish how the Zululand Mental Health Community Psychology Program (ZMHCPP) has positively impacted its clients and the challenges and opportunities the centre needs to address. McAdam and Mirza (2009) used appreciative inquiry to produce long lasting changes in a group of young and marginalised people using drugs and alcohol in South Africa.

[6] These two terms refer to gaps or incongruences between the actual practice and one's skills or actions.

[7] These are unique experiences or incidents that affected me either negatively or positively. Some of the critical incidents have been highlighted throughout.

subordinate communication, or orientation of new employees to the organization could not be adequately addressed through the technical skills I had gained as a journalist. Schon (1983: 42) alludes to the 'messiness' of problems found in what he describes as 'swampy lowlands'[8] most of which defy 'technical skills and rationality' (ibid), and calls on practitioners to engage with such contexts through reflection in order to discover new ways of solving those problems:

> In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground where practitioners can make effective use of research-based theory and technique, and there is a swampy lowland where situations are confusing "messes" incapable of technical solution. The difficulty is that the problems of the high ground, however great their technical interest, are often relatively unimportant to clients or to the larger society, while in the swamp are the problems of the greatest human concern.

This study helped me to reflect on my practice in order to develop new insights that would help address the internal communication issues that have defied my journalistic skills. Hence the study was instrumental in bridging the gap between my skills and my practice.

My sixth motivation for the study stemmed from my desire to make a contribution to the literature on organizational communication and specifically to the understanding of communication practices within East African Union. My search for extant studies on communication practices in the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not yield any results and certainly none on East African Union. The following section describes some of the challenges that I encountered during the study and how I overcame them.

3 CHALLENGES OF A NOVICE RESEARCHER

I faced a number of challenges during the study some of which are discussed below.

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[8] Swampy lowlands are the situations, places, or experiences that people face in their workplaces or homes or wherever they spend their lives.

3.1 Research Subject Clarity

 One of the early challenges that I faced was my inability to confidently and clearly articulate my research topic even though I had been made to understand that I needed to ask myself 'what was going on when what was going on was going on,'[9] and to be 'reflexive' (Etherington, 2004: 19). It took much consultation, reading and writing of critical incidents and analysis of data from the first field work to crystallize on the area of internal communication practices in East African Union. The choice of a research topic also necessitated a paradigm shift in which case I had to orient myself to qualitative research and its attendant methods.[10] I also struggled to narrow down my research topic and this contributed to my inability to precisely articulate it for some time, an experience which Mason (2002: 1) argues is common with many researchers. My puzzle was resolved through a metaphor from one of my supervisors that I needed to narrow my topic from a 'lake' to a 'river' and this helped me to be more focused.

3.2 Letting Go of a 'Classroom' Mentality

My second challenge was on the 'absence of a physical class'[11] as I knew it in which case I had to come to terms with the fact that there was not going to be a teacher in front of a class to 'impart knowledge' as I was used to. Hence I learnt to appreciate the weekly lectures and seminars which at first seemed more of a ritual than a source of knowledge to me. After listening to several presentations and various comments from

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[9] These are famous words used by Dr. Bernard Farr to challenge students to look beyond the surface meaning of words or statements. This 'second' look calls for interpretation and reflection.

[10] In my previous (MA) research, I used the quantitative method.

[11] I was educated in a system where learning was primarily through the teacher and in a formal classroom where lectures took place. When I joined the programme at OCMS, I assumed that there would be 'teaching' in this sense. However, I soon learnt that the onus of creating knowledge was on the student.

faculty members, the forums started to shape me into a researcher; as they turned out to be excellent in jogging my mind as I related them to my own study. New terminologies such as 'ontology', 'epistemology' and 'paradigms' whose meanings were unclear to me at first began to make sense.

3.3   Field Work Phobia

Another challenge was on the actual commencement of fieldwork. Even though I had formally been allowed to conduct research in my organization, my experience of starting fieldwork was replete with fear and anxiety. This was due to the uncertainty over my colleagues' perceptions of my new role as a researcher since it required that I have more regular interactions with them than I would normally have. It also took me time to position myself as a researcher in my own context even though I had decided the 'participant-as-observer'[12] role as discussed in Gelissen, (2012). The various counsels from literature such as those of Mason, (2002: 21); Rubin and Rubin, (2012: 3) in regard to researcher positionality were sometimes contradicted by my actual presence in the field. A case in point was when I was conducting focus group discussions and I would sometimes be tempted to make my contribution but was restrained by my role as a researcher whose work at that time was to note details of the proceedings. My greatest fear, however, was on whether I would be allowed to research the organization on a continuous basis and for a prolonged period of time because I reasoned that the organization members would get suspicious or tired of my continual questioning and

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[12] There are at least four observer positions a researcher can take- complete observer, observer-as-participant, participant as observer or complete participant. I chose to take the participant as observer role because I work within the context of my study and therefore participate in the organization's activities, but I could also be able to make observations within the context (see details of various observer roles in Gelissen, 2012: 2-3).

probing. My experience was in line with the argument of Marshall and Gretchen (2011: 100-140) who allude to the concerns of researchers who study their own contexts and argue that among them is the transition of the researcher into the new role within the setting and the risk of 'uncovering potentially damaging knowledge.'[13] Although the study was not looking for any damaging information, the fact that the organizations' communication practices would be examined for a prolonged period of time was a possible reason to cause suspicion among my colleagues. It took constant explanation to help organization members appreciate that the study's interest was to enhance the positive communication practices.

3.4 How Far Is Too Far: On Protecting Study Participants' Confidentiality

The other challenge I faced was the tension between protecting participants' identities and explicitly using their names. Because of using my colleagues as co-researchers, it was difficult to draw a clear line between how much one's identity was to be revealed or hidden. Hence, in the focus group excerpts, in addition to assigning numbers, participants' work role acronyms specific to this study were used. Hence 'male officer (M.O.) or male head of department (M.H.D.) or male office worker (M.O.W) was used to describe the male participants while female study participants were described as female head of department (F.H.D) and female office workers (F.O.W).[14] For interviews, I used the interviewee's full names for the case of the former employee of

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[13] Marshall and Gretchen (2011) argue that there are positive reasons for researching ones context and these include easy access to participants, the potential to build trusting relationships and closeness to the people and the phenomena through the intensive interactions that take place and through which one is able to have a subjective understanding of the same and in this way increase the quality of data.

[14] The 4 officers are all male and they include the President, the executive secretary, the treasurer and associate treasurer. There are no female officers.

EAU because he consented to it, and female reliever[15] as F. R. 1 or F.R. 2 or Head of Department (HOD) for the heads of departments interviewed respectively. This is in agreement with Creswell, (2012: 174) that a researcher can protect their study subjects' anonymity by 'assigning them numbers or aliases to their names'. I hope that by assigning numbers and initials (indicating the respondent's work role and gender) to study participants I have maintained confidentiality. Presenting data in this manner facilitated smooth analysis especially regarding gender roles.[16]

I also found, as Grant (2006), that it was difficult to discard my old drafts in favour of new ones based on suggestions from my supervisors' comments and further readings. Over time, I found that I had too many versions of each draft and learnt to appreciate that research is more emergent and fluid than static and I had to accept the constant revision of my drafts based on new evidence or new reflections. Hence, throughout the study period, I found ambiguity to be the state of things as each draft remained provisional and I had to learn to live with uncertainty.

3.5 Transitioning from a Knowledge Receiver to a Knowledge Constructor/Creator: Dialoguing with the Inner Self and Letting Go of a 'Teacher Mentality'

Belenky et al.'s (1997) description of women's ways of knowing best summarises my challenge of a paradigm[17] shift from what I describe as a knowledge receiver[18] to a

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[15] A reliever is a temporary employee in a sense because he or she comes in to stand in for a regular employee when the employee is away on study leave, due to illness or bereavement, maternity or paternity leave.

[16] In Appendix 12 I have used email communication excerpts between my colleague and I with her permission.

[17] Denzin and Lincoln (2013: 189) describe a paradigm as a 'basic set of beliefs that guide action' that define the researcher's worldview.

knowledge constructor[19] or knowledge creator. First, I struggled with the idea of creating new knowledge because in the early stages of my study, I did not fully appreciate that I had the potential to construct new knowledge. Having been educated in a system where the teacher was the repository of knowledge, I wrestled with the word 'knowledge' because it connoted some truth or expert knowledge which I believed was beyond me. Extensive reading of several theses and social science books such as Mason, (2002); Denzin and Lincoln, (2013) among others, helped me to understand knowledge as social reality as experienced and expressed by social actors.

Other scholarly literature such as those on postmodern theories, and feminist theories, the constructivist paradigm of qualitative research (Mumby, 2013, 16; Taylor and Trujillo, 2001: 170) and positive organizational scholarship (Cameron and Spreitzer, 2013: 2), helped me to gain new perspectives and insights on 'what counts' as knowledge, and who the knower is and they helped clarify that an organization can be studied from a positive perspective.

In brief, postmodern theories cast doubt on master narratives that portray the world as unitary and therefore one that can be understood and explained from a single perspective and mainly by experts, in favour of 'localised and situated narratives of experience and multiple realities' (Mumby, 2013: 23). Feminist theories advocate the inclusion of the research subject's voice,[20] a 'co-construction of reality between the researcher and the study subjects', the recognition and the acknowledgement of women as 'important stakeholders in shaping social reality and situated experiences' (Mumby,

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[18] This is the person who receives and duplicates knowledge. This kind of person feels confused when asked to do an original work http://www.colorado.edu/ftep/publications/document

[19] This is a person who is capable of constructing knowledge and is aware of herself as being part and parcel of the knowledge she creates (ibid.).

[20] Voice in this sense means a way of knowing how one knows what she knows and shares her opinion.

2013: 25; Taylor and Trujillo, 2001). The constructivist approach argues for 'multiple situated realities' that are emergent and fluid (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013: 26) while positive organizational scholarship argues for a researcher's use of an 'alternative lens' in order to study organizations from a positive perspective by looking at 'positive processes and states that occur in organizational contexts' (Cameron and Spreitzer, 2013: 27).

The above mentioned literature also resonated with my chosen methodology of appreciative inquiry which encourages researchers to move away from a 'problem-centric research to a solution-centric one (Lewis et al. 2008: 16). This was a new way of thinking because part of my journalistic training is to always look for odd stories because they make news. The readings further resonated with the various qualitative methods that were used in this study hence resonating with the argument of Seal et al. (2004: 7) for a 'situated methodology' where the research context 'is in dialogue with the methodological rules' (ibid.). My extensive reading of the literature was therefore useful in helping me appreciate that my study could contribute to knowledge.

In sum, my research journey was not smooth, neat and coherent, instead, it was fluid, and ambiguous, and was punctuated with continuities and discontinuities.

4 SUMMARY

Chapter 2 has described my motivation for the study and my early encounters as a novice researcher. In brief, I was motivated by my desire to continue to articulate my voice in the academic world, the need to try and understand how best EAU could make a contribution in the public square, a desire to identify positive communication practices in EAU and ways in which they could be enhanced; and a desire to make a contribution

to the appreciative inquiry studies in Christian contexts and particularly in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The chapter also described some of my initial struggles to locate myself in the study setting, and my transition from a knowledge receiver to a knowledge creator and my dilemmas in choosing the research paradigm and approach.

Chapter 3 will discuss the place and use of appreciative inquiry and the theories that were used and the role of each in the study. The chapter will further discuss the various qualitative research methods for the collection and analysis of data.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three discusses the research approach and the theoretical framework for the study. The chapter also describes the various methods that to collect and analyse the data. This was a qualitative research [21] study and hence various qualitative research methods were used. The study used qualitative research because it resonated with my epistemological stance that social actors construct the social reality in interaction. Qualitative research methods helped to tease out study participants' perceptions of positive communication practices. The methods were useful in identifying the various themes that study participants argued were crucial in enhancing their communication experiences in EAU and in identifying the various strategies that study participants used to enhance the various positive practices in order to improve their internal communication practices.

The first section of this chapter proceeds to describe the first field work and how it led to the change of the research thrust and approach. The next section of the chapter then proceeds to discuss how appreciative inquiry was used in the study in subsequent field work activities. The last two sections of the chapter discuss the theories that were relevant to explaining the data and the various methods to collect and analyse data respectively; and the various themes that emerged from the data analyses.

This study was located in organizational communication studies and examined literature in this broad area. However, there was a need to look for specific theories that help to explain how organizational communication takes place and its resultant effects

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[21] See Appendix 13 for a brief description of qualitative research.

on the organization. These theories include structuration theory, organizational learning theory and organizational culture theory.

In brief, structuration theory was used to frame the research questions such that the questions focused on the positive core[22] of the organization and hence facilitated positive discussions; organizational learning and organizational culture theories were used to explain the data by looking at how EAU members recognized, detected and named positive communication practices that influence their communication experiences; and how they created new communication structures through their interaction respectively.[23] The following section describes my first episode of field work.

2   IN THE FIELD

I carried out field work in three phases [24] and at different times during the study period. The first phase was conducted in 2009, the second in 2010, and the third in 2011-2013. This section describes the first fieldwork and how its findings led to a change in the thrust of the research and research approach.

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[22] These are the untapped capacities, high-point moments, values, assets, unexplored potentials, competencies, stories, and expressions of wisdom to name a few. The positive core is discovered through the 4-D AI cycle through which participants engage in answering the affirmative questions.

[23] A detailed discussion of each of the theories is in section 3 of this chapter.

[24] As discussed in chapter 2, there were several motivating factors behind my study one of them being the need to establish reasons behind EAU's poor media coverage even though at the time my observations were just casual. I opted to investigate the problems that affected the quality and quantity of radio and television programmes in the church owned stations using action research since the subject was more relevant to my work. This was with the understanding that I would be more in control of the study because it focused on my department. Hence the first field work which I carried out in April 2009 was to identify the problems that hindered quality programme production and ways in which the quality of programmes could be improved.

I conducted my first field work in April 2009 with Adventist Media Centre employees and those that worked for two church owned FM[25] stations to find out the problems that hampered the production of quality radio and television programmes and ways to improve them. I first conducted one focus group discussion and five interviews with the Adventist Media Centre employees in Nairobi,[26] then on separate dates conducted several interviews and two focus group discussions in Kisii with Kisima FM employees and in Kitui[27] with Wikwatyo FM employees. In each case, I wrote down short notes of the participants' responses and later transcribed them[28] for coding. I also made observations on the participant's interactions to note details such as facial expressions and gestures, and their tone of voice for triangulation purposes.

During the interviews and focus group discussions in each case, it was observed that study participants easily identified problems that impeded quality program productions but were not at ease to identify solutions for the same. It was also observed that the more study participants engaged in identifying problems, the more they felt helpless in finding solutions and some of the study participants' moods and temperaments changed and by the end of the focus group discussions they looked more discouraged than when they had started.

In addition to my earlier observations during the interviews and focus group discussions, the findings also revealed that the study participants generated more problems[29] than solutions. For example, they blamed respective managements for some

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[25] At the time the church had two radio stations- Kisimaa FM and Wikwatyo FM.

[26] Adventist Media Centre has five employees.

[27] Kisii and Kitui stations have seven employees each.

[28] The study participants were not comfortable with having their responses recorded for fear of being 'quoted'.

[29] Most of the problems that study participants raised related to poor remuneration, lack of enough equipment and studio facilities, lack of a forum to express their views. Some of them complained of the

of the problems and argued that the solutions lay with the respective managers. The study's findings here echoed the observations of Lewis et al. (2008: 29, 30) and Ludema (2001) that focusing on the negative reduces one's ability to be creative. The observations further resonated with those of Boyd and Bright (2007: 1020) who posit that:

> Problem-centric change process assumes that something is broken and needs fixing thus making organization members more weary of consultants and change agents. This may make members more defensive and resistant to the change process and more focused on self-interest than common good.

The first field work experience therefore pointed to the potential challenges that would arise if I continued to frame questions that elicited strong negative responses. On reflecting on the field work's findings, it became clear that the problems that study participants described were much deeper than what appeared on the surface and I wrote the following excerpt in my research journal:

> There seems to be some underlying issues that make the production of programs problematic. Why don't the stations' employees want to share their problems and challenges with the EAU leaders? How come they are now opening up to me and not before, yet some of them are my office colleagues? (Research journal notes, May 5, 2009)

On further reflection on my journal entry and on some of the critical incidents that I had written during the induction school, my own experience as a worker of EAU, the organization's culture, and from the earlier findings from my Masters thesis, as discussed in chapter 2, it became clear that the EAU's internal communication practices contributed to some of the issues raised in the first field work. Hence it was at this point that the study shifted its focus from improving the quality of radio and TV programmes to investigating internal communication practices of East African Union. This was also

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fact that they had served the organization as temporary workers for a long time without any assurance that they would be put on permanent terms.

the point at which I realized that using action research where the emphasis was on finding problems would not be viable for my context.

The findings from the first field work prompted me to identify another study approach to meet my research objectives. I read more on other action research approaches, and this led me to the works of Cooperrider in Reason and Bradbury (2006) and Cooperrider et.al (2008) on appreciative inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry resonated with my study context because of its focus on action and its focus on looking for the positive aspects of a phenomenon. Further readings on AI by various scholars and several theses led me to believe that it would be a more fruitful approach for my study. This was mainly important because of the complex culture of the organization that fostered hierarchical relationships. Hence AI would be ideal in navigating the rather rigid top-down communication approach in the Adventist Church in Kenya with the resultant sensitivity of directly discussing internal communication processes, weaknesses and successes and the reasons for failure or success with organizational members. Thus, the AI approach was chosen to help study participants focus on existing positive communication practices so as to enhance a positive communication culture.

2.1   Lessons learnt from the first Fieldwork

My first fieldwork made me realize that a qualitative researcher cannot fully anticipate what lies ahead, and should be open to changes as they unfold during the research process. In my case, the shift from one research subject to another and the change of the research approach were not anticipated at the start of the study. Rather as the study progressed there was need to shift to what would be practical within the research context.

The fieldwork also made me more sensitive to the way I framed and asked questions because I realised that my journalistic background prompted me to sometimes ask very direct and hard questions which sought for specific responses. Although this approach may sometimes work in journalism, I discovered that in research one has to be sensitive to the culture of the organization and ensure that her interactions with study participants does not leave them in some worse state than they were before this encounter. I also realized that during the first fieldwork, perhaps my position as a head of department may have influenced the study participants to discuss more about problems. This brought to my attention the issue of power relations where those I supervised may have felt that they had gotten an opportunity to share about their challenges. Furthermore, the type of research questions I asked during the first field work may have created an impression in the study participants that that I would offer solutions or at least share them with the management. The following section describes appreciative inquiry and how it was used in the study in subsequent fieldworks.

3   APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY DEFINED

Appreciative inquiry is a mode of action research methodology[30] (Bushe, 2005); Boyd and Bright (2007); (Cram, 2010), which focuses on discovering the positive aspects of phenomena and seeks ways to enhance or improve them. It is difficult to provide a single and precise definition of appreciative inquiry because it has been approached in

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[30] Briefly action research is a problem solving research approach in which the researcher identifies a specific problem to be fixed and identifies and applies solutions to those problems. It is iterative and cyclic in nature because it treats every solution as temporal. Hence once a solution is arrived at one has to evaluate its suitability to the problem and identify ways to solve the problem further. AI is a mode of action research to the extent that it seeks to bring social change, but its focus is on the strengths of the phenomenon in question. Hence, AI focuses on the positive aspects of phenomenon and seeks for ways to enhance those positive aspects (Boyd and Bright, 2007).

different ways. For example, AI can be understood as a theory or a process, (Grant, 2006; Grant and Humphries, 2006), a field of knowledge, a philosophy (Van De Haar, 2002), or a philosophy and orientation to change (Watkins et al. 2011: 31) and a research tool (Reed, 2007: 21) among other definitions. For example, Trajkovski et al. (2013:1224) defines appreciative inquiry as a 'theoretical research perspective, an emerging research methodology and a worldview that builds on action research, organizational learning and organizational change'. Stowell (2012:15) defines AI as a 'method' of action research, while Preskill and Catsambas (2006: 2) define it as a 'philosophy and a process' of research. Hence, depending on its application in a given study, appreciative inquiry takes a specific definition. Cooperrider and Whitney (2005: 3) give a description of appreciative inquiry:

> Appreciative Inquiry is about the co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. In its broadest focus, it involves systematic discovery of what gives "life" to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. It centrally involves the mobilization of inquiry through the crafting of the "unconditional positive question" …. AI seeks fundamentally, to build a constructive union between a whole people and the massive entirety of what people talk about as past and present capacities.

In this study, AI was used as a method and a process. As a method, AI was used to generate the unconditional positive or appreciative research questions for interview and focus group questions. As a process, AI's 4D Cycle[31] was used to gather data in the form of positive stories on positive communication practices in East African Union during interviews and focus group discussions.

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[31] This is an AI cycle that utilizes the 4D's which stand for discover, dream, design and destiny. The details will be given later in the chapter.

3.1 4D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry

Essentially, AI can be defined as a group or collaborative process that enquires into, identifies, and develops the best of what is in organizations in order to create a better future (Preskill and Catsambas, 2006: 1). The premise of appreciative inquiry is that organizations are not problems to be solved, instead they are created as solutions to meet challenges or satisfy the needs of society (see Cooperrider and Whitney 2005; McKergow and Clarke 2005; Watkins et al. 2011; Ludema, et al. 2006).

AI has its foundation in social constructionism (Watkins, et al. 2011: 38). The constructionist paradigm posits that 'the language that people use in order to understand the world is a social artefact, the historical product of exchange between people' (ibid.) Priest et al. (2013: 22) argue that 'appreciative inquiry's transformative potential comes from focusing on how people think rather than what they do'. Watkins et al. (2011: 37) argue that this is an alternative view of studying organizations:

> This alternative view of organizational development interventions emphasizes the role of language, dialogue, and ordinary organizational conversations, particularly as they influence the crucial choice of how the topic or issue of inquiry is framed, and the subsequent development of the inevitable inquiry protocol that accompanies almost all change efforts as the organization seeks to understand the present state.

The foregoing arguments from the literature demonstrate that an organization is a construction of its members' interaction; hence 'an arbitrary social construction where boundaries are drawn by human imagination and collective will' (Cojocaru 2012: 124). In AI, language has important outcomes in and of itself; (Mariana et al. 2012); Lewis et al.2008; Bushe, 2013; and Wolf, 2011. Preskill and Catsambas (2006:2) argue that 'how people choose to communicate reflects not only how they think, but also affects how those around them respond to what they say'. This study argued that since in AI, language is the vehicle through which social actors define social reality positively then EAU members' generative discussions that focused on positive communication

practices defined a new reality for the organization. As has been demonstrated through some few of the AI studies that have been done in Kenya[32] and in other Christian organizations,[33] AI generates positive outcomes.

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[32] Inui et al. (2007) used AI to investigate staff perceptions that contributed to the success of an HIV/ AIDS collaborative project between Moi University School of Medicine, Moi Referral Hospital in Kenya and Indiana University school of Medicine in USA. The study entitled 'A *living proof that no one has to die of HIV'* found that inspired personnel and a set of work values and motivations contributed to the programme's success.

Ochieng Obote's (2007) study on how positive deviance and appreciative inquiry influenced the tea and sugar industries of Kenya; found that positive deviance and appreciation of local resources contributed greatly to the successful growth of the two industries.

Dalta et al. (2009) used appreciative inquiry to investigate the factors that enhance participation of orphans and vulnerable children in accessing free primary education in Nyanza province. The researchers found that AI helped them to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues related to marginalization.

Miruka et al. (2011) used appreciative inquiry as a complimentary method into participatory research processes for enhancing food security in three districts of Kenya. They found that AI helped study participants to identify their unique capital assets that can be enhanced for food security.

Appleford (2013) used appreciative inquiry to design a local family planning project in six districts of the Coast province of Kenya. She found that appreciative inquiry helps to bring out local initiatives that can be built on by external sources and it can create a strong foundation for local partnership, honest appraisal and learning.

[33] Paddock (2003) used AI to study Christian values that the Catholic Church members could use to build relationships among themselves and with their communities. This was important at that time because the church was receiving negative publicity as a result of rape cases that had appeared in the media. Paddock involves the church members to focus on what was right with the Catholic Church and she found that church members positively identified practices and rituals that worked well and her study participants suggested ways in which the practices could be improved. Paddock also reports how the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) used appreciative inquiry to improve the quality of partnership and synchronise their relationships with the Catholic Social Teaching. After going through the four phases of appreciative inquiry, the study participants found that appreciative inquiry helped them to improve their relationships with partners (p. 20).

Dishongh (2009) used Appreciative Christian Therapy to help couples discover their best practices in order for them to improve the quality of their marital relationships. Through the 4-D cycle of AI, Dishongh found that even couples that had marital problems and differences could identify some positive aspects of their relationships.

Prevette (2008) used appreciative interviews to find out how different faith-based organizations that dealt with children at risk in Romania identified the needy cases. Prevette found that study participants responded positively when appreciative questions were asked but tended to raise more problems when questions asked for challenges. Prevette argues therefore that appreciative interviewing was not only instrumental in helping study participants open up to discussions on children at risk and their role in enhancing care of those children; but AI was also useful in helping different agencies identify ways in which they could work together. The aforementioned studies indicate that AI can make a positive contribution to individuals, families and organizations.

In appreciative inquiry, 'the researcher relies heavily upon collaboration with the organization members as the primary source of information by drawing out their stories of working life within the organization' (Preskill and Catsambas, 2006: 1). Then, following the inquiry, by portraying the recurring themes collected through data collection methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, one is able 'to detect patterns and properties of the organization that have kept it alive and provide a basis for vitality for its future' (Troxtel, 2002: 3). Hence, AI focuses on the strengths in people and their organizations and seeks to build a positive future through stakeholders' success stories and experiences. Rather than focusing on what is wrong, 'appreciative inquiry asks affirming questions and encourages participants to focus on what works' (Paddock, 2003: 2). This does not mean that AI ignores problems, rather it simply 'shifts the mind-set from which to address the issues' (Lewis et al. 2008: 26) and hence a shift from problems to solutions (Ludema, 2003). In order to achieve this, AI uses what (Cooperrider et al. 2008) have called a '4D cycle model which this study uses in part.[34] Below is a diagram that shows the relationship between the positive core which steers the desire for change and the four phases of the 4D Cycle.[35]

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[34] In this study, the 4D cycle model was used in part in the sense that the 'discover', 'dream' and 'design' phases were fully utilized while the 'destiny' phase is ongoing. However, there are already positive indicators on how communication practices within EAU have begun to improve. So, the various ways identified in the research are not fully implemented and that is why I argue that so far only the 3 phases can be said to have been fully utilized in the study.

[35] It is important to note that the cycles or phases are iterative, circular, and are not independent from each other. Hence, the phases can run simultaneously and can overlap so that as participants discover the positive core, they also dream and design the destiny that they desire. For example, in this study, the discover phase was used in 2010 to find out what positive communication practices existed in the organization. And the dream and design phases of the inquiry were used concurrently during focus group discussions in 2011 so that as study participants dreamed of and envisioned the ideal future they would like to have when communication is at its best, they also designed that future through provocative statements on how to realize their dreams.

Figure 2 4D cycle originally designed by Cooperrider et al. (1986)[36]

The appreciative inquiry cycle starts with the "discover" phase which calls participants to appreciate what gives life (Reed, 2007: 32, Watkins et al., 2011:36). This phase of the cycle utilizes the unconditionally positive questions as it seeks to inquire

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[36] http://www.new-paradigm.co.uk/introduction_to_ai.htm (accessed on October 20th, 2013).

deeply into the positive aspects of an organization. In the "discover" phase, participants identify and appreciate 'what is' concerning the object of inquiry, hence they focus on the 'peak times of organizational excellence when people have experienced the organizations as most lively and effective' (Cooperrider, et al. 2008: 10). They let go of 'analysis of the deficits' (Watkins et al. 2011:36) and concentrate on positive stories of even the smallest things in the organization.

In this study, the "discover" phase was used in second fieldwork in 2010 with a group of participants who took part in planning for a special event known as 'Follow the Bible'[37]. During the planning process, the study engaged participants individually and in groups to reflect on past events they considered successful and communication practices that may have contributed to the events' success. Participants were further asked to share stories of communication factors that motivated them to participate in past events as well as the present event. Data from the discover phase were analysed for themes and those themes that remained salient throughout the analysis process became the subject of inquiry in the dream and design phases.

The second phase of the cycle is the "dream" phase which is about envisioning what might be or bringing out people's dreams for the future (Reed, 2007: 33; Lewis et al. 2008: 54). In the "dream" phase, participants are asked to create more vital and life-giving images of their own future, and this helps to extend people's sense of what is possible. This phase involves challenging the status quo by asking participants to imagine or envision a preferred future for the object of study in relation to the affirmative topic (Watkins et al. 2011: 36) and 'they creatively think about that future' (Reed, 2007: 33).

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[37] The participants were drawn from EAU and its sub-organizations. In group interviews, I included all participants but in interviews, EAU workers only because my interest was on positive communication practices in EAU. See Appendix 5 for the questions that were used during the 'discover' phase.

The third phase of the cycle is the "design" phase and is about co-constructing the future (Watkins, 2011: 36, 88). Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) argue that the "design" phase is the point at which participants identify what should be the ideal and co-construct the future design. In the "design" phase, participants come up with provocative statements[38] on what they want their organizations to be like. The "design" phase is about making concrete proposals and decisions about the actions that need to be taken in order to aid the delivery of the dream. In other words, the "design" phase helps participants to articulate concrete ways in which they will want to shape their desired future (Lewis et al. 2008). In this study, the "dream" and "design" phases were used concurrently during the third field work in that study participants were asked to envision how to improve the already identified positive communication practices through provocative statements. Hence dream and design phases were used during focus group discussions and appreciative interviews from 2011 to 2013 to draw insights on how study participants envisioned enhancing their future communication practices and how they would make this a reality.

The fourth phase[39] of the AI cycle is the "destiny" or delivery phase and it is about delivering the new images of the future. In the "destiny" phase, participants work towards enacting their propositions. This involves 'thinking about specific activities and actions and making commitments to realize what has been proposed' (Reed, 2007: 33). In the "destiny" phase, therefore, individuals and groups discuss what they can do and will do to contribute to the realization and actualization of the organizational dream as articulated in the provocative propositions (Cooperrider et al. 2008; and Cooperrider

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[38] These are future statements (Lewis et al. 2008: 59).

[39] The phases of AI are ongoing as opposed to being a one- time process. Hence once people have designed their destiny, they again go back to discovering the positive core- thus making the 4D cycle cyclical.

and Whitney, 2005; 2007).[40] This study did not engage in the destiny phase directly, but it was observed that as study participants made provocative statements on their preferred future, they also started living in the direction of their propositions. For example, as it will be discussed in chapter 5, one of the strategies of enhancing trust that study participants identified was to have a deeper knowledge of one another and self-disclosure and it was observed that the focus group discussions' participants spent more time together long after the focus group discussions were over and they further continued to work in the same groups for other activities the following day. This study argued that in this sense, the study participants had already started living their dream of building trust in each other by knowing each other deeply as they had said[41] in the focus group discussions and this in a sense was the destiny phase. Although this study and others document the success of AI and conclude that AI stimulates positive outcomes, the AI method is not without criticisms mainly because of its focus on the positive core.[42] This study acknowledged the limitations of AI, but chose to use it in order to test its applicability in the EAU organizational context and to open up an otherwise conservative organizational thinking, which may be more receptive to appreciation than criticism.

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[40] It is important to recognize that the 4-D cycles are not linear, and are therefore iterative. In my experience in using AI in this study, I also observed that the cycles run concurrently as the boundaries between the phases become blurred and hence an overlap of the phases. In other words, in a single interview, participants can move from one phase to the next, and sometimes discuss all the phases as they interact. It is up to the researcher to determine and group the data according to the cycles. But in order to avoid a mix-up, I found that asking questions in a certain order helps the participants to reflect more consistently and give answers that are in tandem with the various cycles of the enquiry.

[41] Deeper knowledge of each other and self-disclosure was found to be one of the ways in which trust can be enhanced.

[42] See Appendix 10 for a detailed discussion on the criticism of appreciative inquiry

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS USED IN THE STUDY

The theories discussed in this section were chosen because they resonate with the appreciative inquiry approach because each of them recognizes that people create social reality in interaction. Thus the theories help to explain the possibility and ultimate reality that through appreciative inquiry EAU members interacted to create a new communication culture. The following is a brief description of each of the theories and how they are used in the study.

4.1 Structuration Theory

Developed by Giddens (1979; 1984), structuration theory posits that human beings are active agents who, through their interactions, create structures that govern their daily activities[43]. However, organizational structures play a dual role of either enabling or inhibiting organization members from making certain changes because the structures influence organization members' decisions consciously or sub-consciously. For example, in trying to change the communication structures of EAU, organization members draw from the existing organization's policies and guidelines as well as other structures that govern operations and their relationships. The existing structures in turn influence the extent to which the organizations' members choose to maintain or improve the existing internal communication practices. Driskill and Brenton (2005: 19) argue that to the extent that organization's members continuously draw from the existing structures, 'they reproduce the same structures either by making some small

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[43] These structures can be rules such as organizational policies and guidelines that guide the organization's operations or they could be material and non-material resources such as money and other tools such as knowledge and skills that organization members use in action (Olofuwote, 2003; Pool and McPhee, 2005; Driskill and Brenton, 2005; Beebe and Masterson, 2009).

changes to their communication practices or they maintain the status quo'. In this way, the organization's structures both enable and inhibit change at the same time'. According to Pool and McPhee (2005: 175), every action in an organization produces and reproduces the structures making change inevitable however small:

> The key idea in structuration theory is that in every action, every episode of interaction has two aspects, it reproduces the practices of which it is part, and it reproduces the system and its structure in small ways as changed or stable. Structuration theory thus explains the system itself as the product of human action operating through a duality in which structures are both the medium and the outcome of the actions… the duality of structure also implies that institutions are built on continuous practices. In a real sense, every time we engage in practice, we are helping to produce and reproduce institutions that undergird it.

Pool and McPhee (2005:175) argue that structuration theory is useful for communication because it focuses on 'interactions as the main method in which structures occur'. Hence, structuration theory demonstrates that organizations are not static because they are created and sustained by human actions whose power has potential to bring change.

Structuration theory was relevant to this study in three ways: first, it recognizes human agency and shows that people actively engage in interaction to produce rules and resources from which they draw for their day-to-day operations and activities. Second, structuration theory lays emphasis on the process of communication and its role in creating structures which guide people's interactions. Third, structuration theory acknowledges that any small change of structure is a transformation; and in this study it is argued that change began to occur when organization members' chose to focus on the positive core; which became central through the unconditional positive question. In this study, structuration theory facilitated the framing of the research questions in such a way that they elicited positive practices which study participants identified in interaction in order to change communication structures. Structuration theory was therefore used to frame the research questions such that they depict a change in organizational communication through the emphasis on positive discussions. For

example, questions such as: "How can we create a more positive communication experience between EAU leaders and employees?" Or "How can we positively enhance supervisor/subordinate confidence?" are best understood in the context of the structuration theory that envisages the development or creation of communication structures.

This study argued that the affirmative question generated both positive stories and change simultaneously. As Pool and McPhee (2005: 176) argue 'reproduction does not imply that the system endures without changes, instead a transformation is a reproduction of the system in a new direction'. Hence, in this study, structuration theory was used to ground the explanation that EAU members improved their organization's communication structures through their emphasis on the positive core of communication practices and through their generative discussions. In this context, it was reasonable for one to anticipate through appreciative inquiry the creation of structures which encourage positive communication because as Giddens (1984) argues, organization members are capable of creating new communication structures to meet their social expectations. However, structuration theory is limited in explaining how an organization's members learn in order to desire and make changes. It is also limited in explaining how these structures created by individual members assume an organizational character. For this reason, we turned to organizational learning theory in order to explain how organization members learn, and to organizational culture theory to explain how the new knowledge creates a new communication culture. The following is a brief description and discussion of organizational learning theory.

4.2 **Organizational Learning Theory**

Although there is widespread acceptance of the notion of organizational learning and its importance to organizational change and development, there is no one theory or model of organizational learning that is widely accepted. This is because organizational learning has been studied in different fields (Dierkes et al. 2001), and in each discipline, organizational learning makes certain specific assumptions. Despite the varied definitions and perceived functions of organizational learning, it is generally acknowledged that organizational learning is critical to organizations that desire to survive. Organizational survival is necessary due to the regular external and internal changes which challenge the available organizational knowledge (Dierkes et al.,2001; Barker and Camarata, 1998; Gubbins and McCurtain, 2008; Fiol and Lyles, 1985). For example, Flores et al., (2010) argue that an organization that learns benefits through increased effectiveness and firm actions, and improved organizational performance and innovation.

There are many perspectives to organizational learning discussed in the literature such as learning through reflection in action and on action (Schon, 1983: 49), noticing and dealing with disjunctures, (Jarvis, 1999: 66), and learning through creative tension[44] (Senge, 1994: 6) among others. This study was however interested in organization learning as discussed in Argyris (1992; 1996; 1999) and Argyris and Schon (1974; 1978; 1996) where learning takes place by questioning the 'Theories-in-Use' (Argyris

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[44] In this case, individual or organization compares their vision of where they want to be in contrast to their present position and they work towards identifying and implementing strategies that would help them achieve their desired vision.

and Schon, 1996:13).[45] In this case, an individual who acts as the agent of an organization experiences a mismatch between his/ her espoused theories and theories-in-use and seeks congruence between the two by questioning the values he is using to operate. Argyris and Schon (1974: 6-7) argue that in most cases people operate on different theories or values from those they espouse and that is what creates a 'mismatch':

> When someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances, the answer that he usually gives is his espoused theory of action for the situation. This is the theory of action to which he gives allegiance, and which, upon request communicates to others. However, the theory that actually governs his actions is his theory-in-use.

Argyris and Schon (1974) therefore argue that for one to start using their espoused theories of action, they must critically question the values they use. A key learning strategy here is reflection which reveals the theories-in-use that need to be changed. In addition, Argyris, (1999) and Argyris and Schon, (1978: 2) argue that organizational learning occurs when organizations practice 'Double-loop-learning'. In this case the governing variables are brought to question and to scrutiny hence leading to change of frames or the values that the organization uses to operate. Argyris and Schon (1978: 2-3; 23) describe 'double-loop learning' as 'learning that occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives'.[46] Hence, according to Argyris and Schon (1996:16):

> Organizational learning occurs when individuals within an organization experience a problematic situation and inquire into it on the organization's behalf. They experience a surprised mismatch between the expected and actual results of action and respond to that mismatch through a process of thought and further action that leads them to modify their images of organization or their understandings of organizational phenomena and to

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[45] Argyris and Schon (1996:13) define the 'theories in use' as the theory of action which is implicit of that pattern of activity'. They further argue that theories in use are in most cases tacit because they are indescribable and undiscussable (p. 14).

[46] Mazen, (2013: 210) also argues that 'double loop learning' is about reflecting on ones reasoning process and how it impacts their actions and interactions. In this case then learning is not a cognitive process but a reorientation of values.

restructure their activities so as to bring expectations and outcomes into line, thereby changing organizational theory-in-use'.

There is a strong link between individual learning and organizational learning as discussed in Argyris and Schon (1996:16), (Simon, 1996: 176); and Cook and Yanow, (1996). For example, Argyris and Schon (1996: 16) argue that: "In order to become organizational, the learning that results from organizational inquiry must become embedded in the images of the organization held in its members' minds, and/ or in the epistemological artefacts embedded in the organizational environment".

In order to try and further link individual learning with organizational learning, the study drew from Dierkes et al. (2001:4) that learning takes place within an organization's context and hence; learning and knowledge are activated, shaped and constrained by the social constitution of the organization in which the process takes place:

> The structure of roles, interests, and power between different organizational elements such as departments and hierarchical levels generate various paradoxes and tensions that bring into play a set of dynamics that have an impact on the learning process. The dynamics are associated with people's sense of identity and can release strong emotions, the effects of which may also foster or hinder learning depending on the kind of emotion and specific context involved.

Gheradi and Nicolini (2001: 35) also aver that that learning does not take place in solely people's heads, but rather it is a participatory process that takes place within a social context meaning therefore that organizational learning is a social process which occurs in social relations. Gheradi and Nicolini also view organizational learning with a postmodern lens and hence they argue that the said view gives voice to all organization members because it recognizes organization members' stories, and situated knowledge as important. A postmodern view of organizational learning also acknowledges the

importance of language discourse and fragmented identity and hence views organizational learning as a discursive practice.[47]

The perspectives of learning as discussed by Argyris and Schon (1974; 1996) and those of Gheradi and Nicolini (2001) resonated with this study because they recognize the place of reflection and interaction in order for one to identify a 'mismatch' (Argyris and Schon, 1996:11), they recognize the reorientation of values, and they also recognize organizational learning as a contextual and discursive practice. Therefore, situated knowledge as well as social interactions, relations, and stories are meaningful components of organizational learning. This study therefore argued that EAU's learning took place as its employees reflected and interacted with one another during the focus group discussions and interviews, and during the performance of their duties. This was demonstrated by the participants' detection, recognition and naming of positive communication practices in interaction and their proposals on strategies to help them realize their dreams in order to live in the direction of their aspirations.

Therefore, in this study organizational learning theory was used to provide a context for data interpretation by looking at how organization members recognized, detected, and named positive communication practices and the strategies they used to enhance those positive practices in interaction. In summary, this study argued that EAU members learned in three ways: (1) when they recognized that communication as practiced did not help them to fully live their aspirations and potential; (2) when they

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[47] Every attempt to label something as 'knowledge' is made up of specific social community belonging to a network of power relations and not by a world consisting purely of ideas. Hence no knowledge is supreme, instead, all knowledge is produced within social, historical, and linguistic relations, grounded in specific forms of conflict and divisions of labour …. stories told and retold in the organization become important because memory is retained not so much in propositions as in stories. Stories are vehicles of organizational memory and the development of stories constitute organizational learning (Gheradi and Nicolini, 2001: 44).

jointly named ways to improve their communication practices; (3) when they started to implement the new practices in their interactions and communication and hence improved the quality and quantity of their interactions as discussed from chapters 5 to 8. However, organizational learning as discussed above does not take into account the different interests and power relations within the organization or factors such as organizational structures and policies that may impede learning. Organizational learning theory also does not explain how large and complex organizations such as EAU with a diverse workforce drawn from different backgrounds and cultures agree on what effective learning entails. Organizational learning theory also assumes that all learning is positive and beneficial to an organization which is not necessarily the case.[48]

Most importantly organizational learning theory does not explain how learning by individuals from varied backgrounds and cultures such as those of EAU becomes an organizations' culture. In order to link individual learning to the organizations' culture, we drew from organizational culture theory.

4.3   **Organizational Culture Theory**

Organizational culture theory posits that organizations are cultures formed through the interactions and communication of their members on a continuous basis (Keyton, 2011; Smircich (2011). An organization's culture, therefore, is not static but rather fluid and dynamic as it is being constructed and reconstructed through multiple iterative

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[48] Wang and Ahmed, (2002: 10) also argue that "If the distinction of the organization and the individual is not made explicit, a model of organizational learning will either obscure actual learning processes by ignoring the role of the individual or become simplistic extensions of individual learning by glossing over organizational complexities".

interactions and because the organization itself is dynamic due to its members' dynamic interactions (Driskill and Brenton, 2011; Mayerson and Martin, 2011; Papa et al. 2008).

The term *culture* does not have one universally accepted definition because its definitions are influenced by the various perspectives that people take (Driskill and Brenton, 2005; 2011). These definitions either view organizational *culture* as a specific variable, hence one that can be changed by management as argued in Schein, (2010) or *culture* as what an organization is and therefore a root metaphor of organization as argued in Keyton, (2011); Alvensson and Sveningsson (2008); Driskill and Brenton, (2011). The following table illustrates the differences between the two competing perspectives on organizational culture:

4.3.1   Comparison of 2 Competing Perspectives on Organizational Culture

Culture as a variable	Culture as a root metaphor
Something the organization "has"; a tool, skill, or lever.	Something the organization "is"; expressive form.
Inform workplace of values.	Create sustain and influence culture.
Change can be done by managers	Change involves all stakeholders.

www.uky.edu/~drlane/orgcomm/325ch05.ppt

(downloaded on 10.10.2012)

From the above table, the root metaphor view of organizational culture sees *culture* as what an organization is as opposed to what an organization has and hence organization as culture. This means that an organization is viewed as the process of sense-making[49]

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[49] Weick (2001:11) argues that 'Sense-making in the broadest sense is a metaphor that focuses attention to the idea that reality of everyday life must be seen as ongoing accomplishment which takes particular

that is created and sustained through communication and interaction. Therefore, an organization's culture does not exist outside its members' communications but rather it is shaped by the organization members' interactions. Hence organization is a 'subjective experience' (Alvensson, 2002: 25).

The root metaphor view of organizational culture was most relevant to this study because it recognizes human agency as critical in creating the organization's culture. The said view was also important because it does not separate an organization from its culture but rather argues for an integration of organization and culture and thus views culture and organization as synonymous because organization is an expressive form of human experience. Additionally, the root metaphor of organization demonstrates the dynamic nature of organization and removes the notion of an organization as a 'container in which people act and interact' (see Papa et al. 2008: 16; Fairhurst and Putman, 2006) but instead privileges people's interactions in the formation of an organization and hence organizations become 'discursive constructs or communicative structures' (Mumby, 2013: 4).

The main premise of organizational culture theory therefore is that the communication and interactions of organization members creates an organization's culture. In other words, organizations do not exist outside of their members' communications. As Papa et al. (2008: 16) argues, organizations are 'constituted and enacted through the efforts of their members' interactions'. Hence organizations are real only to the extent that their members engage in various 'communication activities' (ibid.). See also (Lewis, 2011; and Mumby, 2012; 2013). Eisenberg and Riley (2011:

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shape and form as individuals try to create order and make retrospective sense of the situation in which they find themselves and others'.

295) also argue that organizational culture is constructed through communication and they proceed to discuss five assumptions in which communication is constitutive of culture.[50]

In using the organizational culture theory to understand and explain the communication practices of East African Union and how they can be improved, this study argued that EAU members changed the organization's communication culture in interaction during the focus group discussions and interviews and in their day-to-day and moment-to-moment formal and informal interactions. The continuous and changing nature of interactions of organization members thus make the organization's culture fluid, tentative and dynamic as its members continuously engage in a sense-making process. Hence, the EAU's culture is not leader-driven, rather it is influenced by the interaction of all organization members because communication takes place across the organization and in different settings such as committee meetings, staff meetings, and social/informal gatherings or between departments and between individuals. This study posited that through interaction, organization members changed their organization's communication culture in order to enable or enhance positive communication practices. This was evident from the various strategies they proposed to improve communication practices.

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[50] First, a communication perspective does not limit its interest to overt constructions with extra meaning such as central metaphors and stories. It acknowledges the symbolic character of ordinary language and the ways in which cultural meanings are constructed in everyday conversations. Second, each instance of communication is a crucible for culture with historical weight of language and past practices on one hand and potential for innovations and novelty on the other. Third, this approach takes into account broader patterns of communication in society and examines how they appear and interact in the organization nexus. Fourth, a communication orientation takes full advantage of the options available for positioning the researcher. Fifth, a communicative perspective acknowledges the legitimacy of all motives for the study of culture, including the practical interest of organizational members seeking to enhance their effectiveness.

Organizational culture theory further posits that an organization's culture is not necessarily uniform because there can be sub-cultures embedded within an organization.[51] The sub-culture concept of an organization was relevant to this study because members of EAU have different sub-cultures based on ethnicity, gender, job groups, and hierarchical positions which influence their understanding, appreciation, and interpretation of positive communication practices. The varied interpretations would make a significant contribution to the enhancement of internal communication practices in particular and to the organization's culture in general.

In this study, organizational culture theory was used to explain how EAU members created the organization's communication culture through their interaction.[52] Thus, the study argued that by focusing on the positive communication strategies and consequently naming them and the various ways to enhance them, study participants changed their communication culture. However, the application of organizational culture theory does not fully answer the research question because it does not help to explain how an organization's members arrive at evolving communication structures that enable or constrain their communication. The theory also does not take into consideration complex organizations such as EAU where interactions may be limited by the organization's structures.

Overall, the three theories namely; structuration theory, organizational learning theory and organizational culture theory provide useful glimpses into communication

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[51] The sub-cultures may be based on divisions of labour, departments, or geographical locations among other factors (Keyton, 2005; 2011; Driskill and Brenton, 2005; 2011; Kreps, 1990; Mumby, 2013). In this case, the sub-cultures influence organization members' interpretations of policies, guidelines, work assignments and other information and hence brings about different reactions to the same.

[52] Interactions here refer to the communication between study participants during and after focus group discussions, during appreciative interviews, and findings from observations on how organization members changed their practices during the study period.

within organizations and amongst organization members. The theories privilege the concept and practice of human agency in organizations to create structures and cultures and to learn and apply knowledge and experience in their daily organizational endeavours. Thus, they sharpen and show clear avenues for fruitful analysis. These theoretical expositions provided a powerful entry point for analysing internal communication at EAU using appreciative inquiry with a view to enhancing best practices. In the following section an attempt is made to show the link between the theories that were used in the study and appreciative inquiry.

4.4   A Theoretical Link with Appreciative Inquiry

By definition, appreciative inquiry is the 'cooperative, co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them' (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005: 8). This definition represents a significant shift from the traditional problem-oriented models of change. According to the appreciative inquiry approach, organizations are not problems to be solved, instead they are created as solutions to meet challenges or satisfy needs of society (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005). The study argued that the various theories discussed in this chapter link with appreciative inquiry in the following ways:

The theories and appreciative inquiry recognize and acknowledge that social reality is socially constructed Structuration theory, organizational learning theory and organizational culture theory emphasize that reality exists in the meanings that people bring to bear on the social world. Appreciative inquiry also acknowledges the same because it posits that social reality is constructed in positive interactions (Reed, 2007, ix; Watkins et al. 2011). The theories and appreciative inquiry also recognize that people are active agents in shaping their social reality, be it organizational culture or

social structures that people draw from their daily activities or the type of organization that they want to work in. Hence, human agency brings about change. Appreciative inquiry posits that change starts as soon as social actors start to identify and name what is working in their contexts. Thus, one of AI's key principles is the constructionist principle which holds that people's thoughts about the world are developed through interpretation and construction, in which case the emphasis is on people's conversations as the means of change as Lewis et al. (2008: 27) argue:

> How we talk about the world affects how we see, experience, make sense of, and understand the world, and hence the way we act in the world. From this perspective, both continuity and change are inherently contained and expressed in patterns of conversations… When we change the patterns of talk or conversation, we change the world. Consequently, these methodologies focus on people talking together in various ways to produce a change in their experience and understanding of the world and so in the way they are inclined to act together.

The three theories discussed above and appreciative inquiry acknowledge that communication is the main medium through which social reality is constructed. One cannot talk of an organization, an organization's culture, organizational structures, or even organizational change without communication, for all social reality is constructed through communication (Driskill and Brenton, 2011; Keyton, 2011; Pool and McPhee, 2005; Reed, 2007; McKergow and Clarke, 2005).

The aforementioned theories and appreciative inquiry acknowledge that social relationships are important in bringing about change. The theories argue for the role of social actors in relationship. Structuration theory and organizational culture theory posit that social actors interact to create social reality and appreciative inquiry advocates for collaborative processes in identifying what works in a given context. Appreciative inquiry argues for collaboration and whole system involvement in identifying the positive core or life giving forces and in engaging in generative discussions to bring about change (Cooperrider et al. 2008; Reed, 2007; Mumby, 2012; Keyton, 2011).

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The three theories and appreciative inquiry hold that social reality is fluid, emergent, tentative and hence evolving. This is because of shifting and disputed meanings brought about by people's differing opinions, aspirations, social coalitions and varied, multiple interpretation of phenomena such as policies, guidelines and assignments and the varied and multiple interpretations that come to bear on those phenomena (McKergow and Clarke 2005; Mumby, 2012; Dierkes et al. 2001).

Both the theories and appreciative inquiry recognize that change however small, contributes to organizational change and transformation. For example, in discussing structuration theory, Pool and McPhee (2005) argue that change, however small, is transformational. Cooperrider et al. (2008) and Watkins et al. (2011) argue that in AI, change starts with the question asked, and Priest et al. (2013: 22) argue that change starts with 'changing how people think'. So, in AI change is embedded in the first question that is asked because it facilitates organization members to start thinking positively. Hence, for AI, the unconditional positive question asked implies change because as members start to tell their stories of what works, they change towards the positive. Cojocaru (2012: 124) argues:

> Given the desire to change an organization, the strategy is redefining the way people within it explain the values that have led to its success. Change is thus seen primarily in the attitude of the members that define the organization and are part of it. In any organization, change can be achieved by modifying the histories or the stories that circulate informally.

The study argued that the framing of the study questions using structuration theory was critical in steering organization members to tell stories that would build a positive future. And organizational learning theory and organizational culture theory helped to explain that future as expressed by the study participants.

The following section describes how data were collected, analysed and interpreted.

5   METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to discover the positive communication practices that work in East African Union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Through appreciative inquiry, the study sought to identify the factors that influence positive communication practices in the organization and ways to enhance them.

In the first instance, the study questions were subjected to relevant theoretical review as it was discussed earlier in this chapter. This subjected the problem to various theories such as structuration theory, organizational learning theory and organizational culture theory. Structuration theory helped to frame the research questions so as to explain how organization members created communication structures that enhanced their interactions. Organizational learning theory helped to explain how organization members learnt in interaction and organizational culture theory helped to explain how organization members created a positive communication culture through their interaction.

The foregoing theories show that human beings are active agents with the capacity and the power to act on their situations, contexts and practices. Nonetheless the theories provide a partial glimpse into how organization members conceptualize positive communication practices and how they use them in practice. Hence, it was necessary to go to the field and collect data that would help answer the question fully. The following sections describe some of the logistics that were used to access East African Union and the methodological approach that was used to execute the study namely, collect and analyse data.

5.1 Gaining Access to the Research Setting

Gaining access has been defined as gaining permission to do some piece of research in a particular social setting or institution (Burges 1984: 38), but it has been argued that it is continuous process rather than a one- time affair (Berg and Howard, 2012) and the process involves building of relationships between the researcher and the study participants (Feldman et al. 2003). During this study and particularly during my field work between 2009 and 2013, access was negotiated for at different levels with different people in different contexts and for different reasons. Most notable of those was when negotiating for access with EAU leaders and EAU administrative committee members to allow me to conduct research in the organization. This involved face to face meetings with the officers and this culminated to a formal letter, and an explanation of the details of my research and its potential benefits to the organization and to the executive committee. Access was further negotiated for with individual employees and a retired employee whom I interviewed; and with the social welfare committee which created a slot for me to conduct focus group discussions during the annual social retreat in October, 2011, and then with the focus group participants. During the course of the study I negotiated for access with different participants to either seek for further information or clarification on their responses during the interviews or focus group discussions. Hence this study resonates with the arguments of Berg and Howard (2012) that the process is fluid and uncertain.

5.1.1 Fieldwork preliminaries

In order to smooth the process of accessing the field, I began to share my research topic and ideas with colleagues in informal meetings such as during lunch breaks. Even though this did not arouse much interest in some, there were others who followed up to

inquire more. These early encounters proved to be very useful when I later approached some of the participants for key informant interviews and focus group discussions because some of them were familiar with my research role. I then arranged and held meetings with two of the organization's leaders- the executive director and the executive secretary. In both cases, I had an already drafted letter which I handed to them after our meetings and this was useful especially when the two brought my request to the administrative committee. I was then invited to share about my research in the administrative committee and once this was voted, I was given a letter of consent.

I also had to develop certain skills to enable me to engage with study participants in an action research cycle. As it was briefly discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, the first fieldwork demonstrated that the problem-centric approach of action research was not ideal for my context. This not only prompted a search for an appropriate alternative action research methodology for my context in which case I chose appreciative inquiry but also the acquisition of skills for the same.

In the second phase of field work, conducted in 2010 I took advantage of a special event known as 'Follow the Bible,'[53] in which I was involved together with other EAU employees and others from sub-organizations and institutions of EAU. The second field work was useful in a number of ways: first it helped me gain skills of using appreciative inquiry, second, it involved several organization members, and third it was a very important event for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and hence it involved a high

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[53] Follow the Bible was an event that was organized to sensitize the church members and all Kenyan Christians to read the Bible. A historic 7 kg Bible that was taken around the world arrived in Kenya on March 8th 2010 and was taken to every city and town of Kenya. The month-long journey of the Bible brought together leaders from Central Kenya Conference, East African Union, and some of the local church pastors and local church leaders from around Nairobi to plan for the events. Some of the participants, planning meetings and events were used to collect data for my first fieldwork.

level of planning, coordination and communication which were helpful in identifying the positive core.

In the second fieldwork, I used the 'discover' phase of the 4D cycle of appreciative inquiry.[54] Through the unconditional positive questions, I sought positive stories from fifteen participants over past successful events in which they had been involved and what communication practices had made the events successful and how they would use some of those success elements to make the 'Follow the Bible' event successful. After seeking consent from participants, data were collected through open-ended in-depth appreciative interviews and observations.[55] All interviews were audio recorded and were later transcribed word for word[56] and analysed using thematic analysis[57]. From the data analysis, several themes such as inter- ethnic relations, context of the communication, trust, leader-follower confidence, and freedom of creativity and gender relations were identified. The themes of inter-ethnic relations and context were not pursued further however.[58] The other four themes were later pursued through in-

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[54] I used the first phase of AI in this particular field work because I realized that at this point it was not possible to run the full phases because of the time constraints owing to the upcoming nationwide event. Hence I took advantage of the period within which the planning committee was meeting, and scheduled interviews within the available time.

[55] See Appendix 6 for the pilot study interview questions.

[56] The transcribed data totalled 51 pages, and a sample of how data analysis was done can be found in Appendix 5.

[57] Thematic analysis is a qualitative research process that is used to identify themes from data. The process commences with the transcription of the data from interviews or focus group discussions, and then the coding of the data and consequently identifying themes from the various codes (Howitt and Cramer, 2005: 338).

[58] Although the theme of inter- ethnic relations featured in the second phase of field work, I could not pursue it further because of the following reasons: First, following the 2007 post-election violence in which some of my colleagues lost their loved ones and property, I had observed that whenever the issue was discussed both at work and in the churches, it generated deep emotions and heated arguments. For example, one of my colleagues whose entire extended family was displaced and their property burnt reacted very angrily to another colleague's suggestion that EAU workers needed to discuss this issue openly. He argued that some of EAU workers' relatives (by virtue of tribe) were the ones who caused the atrocities and he did not think those working for EAU would be any different. As a result, I did not pursue this further and so I did not have sufficient data to make plausible arguments.

depth interviews, focus group discussions through 2 of the 4D phases (dream and design) of appreciative inquiry and through further observations between 2011 and 2013. The second field work was therefore instrumental in not only generating themes which were later subjected to further interviews and focus group discussions during the third fieldwork, but also influenced the generation of subsidiary research questions. This meant that apart from the primary research question that the study had sought to answer as documented in chapter 1, the various themes that were generated from the data called for specific questions to address them. Following are the specific questions that the second field work generated:

a) How does trust enhance internal communication practices in EAU?

b) How does leader-follower confidence enhance internal Communication practices in EAU?

c) How does creativity enhance internal communication practices in EAU?

d) How do positive gender relations enhance internal communication practices in EAU?

Therefore, in this study, three of the phases of appreciative inquiry cycle were used and at different times of the study. The 'discover' phase of the cycle was used in the second field work (2010) to 'discover the positive core or the life giving forces' of

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On the theme of context of the communication, my observations revealed that it was not an issue because in several of the incidents that were observed in and out of the offices, I there was very little difference in the communication between supervisors and subordinates. My observation instead showed that interactions depended on the subject as opposed to the place where the interaction or communication took place. For example, I observed an instance at worship time where a supervisor asked for a subordinate's contribution to the discussion on the floor and the subordinate felt very uneasy, but on the same day during lunch break, the subordinate told the supervisor that the questions that were asked were very difficult for him hence his silence. At the time of the latter observation, the two were having lunch together at the lawn. In any case in the focus group discussions and interviews, the theme of context did not feature significantly. For this reason, I felt that context was not a big factor in the communication experiences of organization members and so I did not pursue it further (Observation notes, April, 10th, 2011).

internal communication practices in the organization (Cooperrider et al. 2008: 30) and salient themes were identified; while the dream and design phases of the cycle were used in the third field work (2011) during focus group discussions and key informant interviews to tease out specific strategies that study participants proposed for improving the various drivers of communication in the organization. It is important to also recognize that the affirmative questions used in the study did not necessarily follow the template provided by Cooperrider et al. (2008) in its strict sense but were designed to seek for positive responses for the various life-giving factors that had been identified in the second field work in 2010. This study therefore modified the AI method to suit the research needs. In using the two AI phases of dream and design, during the third fieldwork, it was observed that the boundaries between the phases were blurred and that the phases were not necessarily separate as it is sometimes implied in the literature.

5.2   Data Collection Methods

Several scholars such as Mason, (2002); Gray (2004); May (2011); Bryman, (2012); Berg and Howard (2012); Hennink et al. (2011) and Gelissen (2012) argue that data collection is a critical activity in the research process because it is through the collection of data, analysis and interpretation that the researcher can make sense of the social world as experienced by the participants. For example, Creswell (2013) argues that data collection and analysis enables the researcher to co-construct the social reality as he/she understands it in relation to the participants.

In this study, data were collected by use of unstructured appreciative interviews,[59] focus group discussions, and observations, and then transcribed and coded for themes. The data collection methods were selected because they encouraged study participants to share stories of positive internal communication practices and how to enhance those practices. The choice of the data collection methods was intentional because the methods support the constructivist principle of appreciative inquiry that people's ideas about phenomena are produced collaboratively in social interactions and between people (Priest et al. 2013). Thus the constructivist principle of appreciative inquiry influenced the choice of appreciative interviews and focus group discussions based on the idea that people's communication experiences differ and the way they construct positive communication experiences would also vary and yet each opinion was valid.

5.2.1 In-depth Appreciative Interviews

In-depth interviews are one of the major methods of data collection in qualitative research as discussed in Mason, (2002); Kvale and Brinkmann (2009); Hennink et al. (2011); Rubin and Rubin (2005; 2012); Wengraf (2001). Kvale and Svend (2009: 17) argue that interviews are 'a conversation' between the interviewer and the interviewee and the process brings forth social knowledge from both.

After developing interview guides as discussed in Kvale and Svend (2009), Mathews and Ross, (2010) and Bryman, (2012), I conducted in-depth, appreciative[60] interviews with semi-structured and open-ended questions with various key informants

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[59] Appreciative interviews use the unconditional positive question (Cooperrider et al. 2008). In this study, the principles of AI were used to formulate the research questions without necessarily using the exact questions usually discussed in the appreciative inquiry literature (Watkins, et al., 2011).

[60] Appreciative Inquiry uses the unconditional positive questions that aim at soliciting information of the best of what is in people, organizations or societies (Cooperrider et al. 2008; Cooperrider and Whitney 2005; Cooperrider and Srivastava, 1987; Watkins and Mohr, 2001; Watkins et al. 2011). However, the questions in this study were formulated using the principles of AI as opposed to applying them wholesale as discussed in the appreciative inquiry literature.

and in the three phases of the study.[61] The aim was to find out participants' personal opinions and perceptions of communication practices in East African Union and which of those study participants considered positive. The interviews were also used to triangulate the data that had been collected from focus group discussions and observations. The interview questions were designed in such a way that they encompassed the different phases of the 4D phases of appreciative inquiry. Hence the 'discover', 'dream', and 'design' phases were covered through the sequentially designed appreciative questions. My role in the interview was like that of a traveller (Best, 2012: 78) which metaphor according to Kvale and Svend, (2009: 49) describes interviews and analysis as intertwined phases of knowledge construction between the researcher and the subject. The interviews enabled me make sense of the study participants' diverse views on positive communication practices and in this way gave them what Gubrium et al, (2012) describe as a 'voice' to share on how to improve internal communication practices in EAU. The interviews also helped to confirm or triangulate some of the findings from focus groups discussions and observations. A total of fifteen interviews were conducted during the second phase of fieldwork conducted in 2010. Another six in-depth interviews were conducted on diverse dates in the subsequent field work between 2011-2013. The interviews investigated study participants' orientation experiences in EAU, on supervisors'-subordinates' confidence, freedom of creativity, gender relations and trust.[62] Five of the interviews were audio recorded but I also jotted down some notes during the interviews as I observed participants' reactions and physical expressions. The sixth interview with a former leader of the organization had

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[61] Some of the interview questions that were used appear in various interview excerpts from chapter 5.

[62] I used theoretical sampling to select interview participants. Theoretical sampling is mainly used to help a researcher further the emergent themes. This means that people with relevant information are selected so as to help advance the researcher's arguments (Charmaz, 2006).

to be a written exchange and the subject's answers were short and not useful in generating themes.[63] Data from the recorded interviews were later transcribed and coded.

5.2.2 Observation

Angrosino (2012: 1) defines observation as 'the act of noting phenomenon, often with instruments and recording it for scientific purposes'. According to Creswell (2013: 166) observation is one of the key methods of collecting qualitative data as it locates the researcher in the context to be observed and it is based on the research purpose and research question; and 'the researcher is expected to use his or her five senses and some instrument' to note what is going on in the setting (ibid). I chose the position of participant observer because this was the most ideal for me as an insider and it gave me the opportunity to access certain settings that would otherwise have been impossible if I had assumed a different positionality because as Herr and Anderson (2005: 30) argue, a researcher's positionality in the research process will determine how she frames 'epistemological, methodological and ethical issues in the thesis'.

Observations were made throughout the study period to investigate participants' communication practices in different settings, and how these affected their relationships in time and space. Observations were also used to note communication improvements, hence they triangulated the data from focus group discussions and interviews. Some of the main observation settings included but were not limited to interview settings, focus group discussions, executive committee meetings, staff meetings, and heads of departments' meetings, daily worship services, social welfare meetings, staff visitation

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[63] The former leader refused to give me an interview and instead asked me to send him written questions and two months after, he sent me a written response. None of the answers were more than one line, but I later established that he is suffering from dementia.

events, and other formal and informal meetings that took place. I also observed participants in and outside their offices during lunch breaks, and immediately after the morning worship services as they interacted with each other, and during lunches that would be provided after a staff meeting or some formal meetings such as training sessions.

In some instances, such as in formal meetings, I was able to jot down some notes because I had the permission to do so. At first, it was not possible to write much because I observed that those seated close to me would be peering to see what I was writing when everyone else would be concentrating on the speaker but with time, they got used to it and I could take comprehensive notes. I wrote in continuous prose sometimes and at other times in short sentences which I would later fill out in more detail. During the informal meetings, I would note down the details and later write up comprehensive notes as much as I could recall. Some of the observation notes were coded for themes, while others form part of the vignettes that are used in various sections of the thesis. The events observed helped bring out the existing positive internal communication practices and noted some improvements that resulted from enhanced communication practices. Therefore, observation was critical to this study because it was used to document the practices that actors said were working. Observation was also used to document the changes that took place as a result of enhanced positive communication practices.

5.2.3   Focus Group Discussions

Scholars such as Puchta and Potter, (2007:7) and Liamputtong (2011: 2) have alluded to the importance of focus group discussions in qualitative research, because of its ability to generate a large amount of complex information from the interactions between

relatively small numbers of people at any one time. Hence, 'focus groups afford researchers access to the kinds of social interactional dynamics that produce particular memories, position ideologies, practices, and desires among specific groups of people' (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2008: 397). Focus group discussions also 'facilitate the democratization of the research process, providing participants with more ownership over it, and they promote more dialogic interpretations and joint construction of the interactions' (ibid); (see also Morgan and Kruger, 1998:12). According to Bloor et al. (2002: 4) focus group discussions can also yield data on the 'meanings that lie behind the group assessments and help the researcher to gain insights into a wide range of views that people have on a specific subject, and they can provide rich and detailed information on people's feelings, thoughts and perceptions on a given issue in people's own words'. In this study, focus group discussions were used generate large amounts of data within a short period of time and helped to elicit various views from study participants on the how to improve the various factors that influence internal communication practices of the organization.

I conducted three focus groups in 2009 with various stations' employees as discussed in section 2 of this chapter[64] and then four focus group discussions in October 2011 during a staff social retreat in Watamu Adventist Beach Resort at the Kenya Coast near Mombasa[65] The event was suitable because it brought together all the employees for five days and it provided ample time for interaction. Secondly, this was the only time of the year that all employees would gather together for a prolonged period of time outside the office. Otherwise during most of the year, the officers and heads of

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[64] In each station, I conducted one focus group because the employees were very few. Hence I conducted one focus group in Adventist Media Centre, Kisima FM, and Wikwatyo FM respectively.

[65] See Appendix 9 for focus group discussion questions.

departments travel for various assignments, while some of the members of staff go to school. So, the social retreat provided me the rare opportunity of finding all workers together and was very useful because it helped me to get opinions from all the workers. Most importantly, I conducted focus group interviews in that particular venue to find out what kind of responses participants would give when they were in an informal setting and doing different activities from what they do every day. In this way, I considered the social retreat as one of the best activities that employees engage in and the chosen venue as comfortable enough[66] for the participants to engage in discussions as I tried to investigate what worked when an organization was at its best as Cooperrider et al. (2008) argue. The following is a description of how the focus group discussions were organized and carried out in October 2011.

The exercise commenced with the identification and training of focus group facilitators several days before we left for the retreat. I had to engage focus group facilitators due to the limited time that was allocated for the exercise because of the activities that had been planned for the event which would not enable me to single handedly conduct each focus group discussion. I used my peers who were studying at postgraduate level because of their familiarity and confidence in research. The training of focus group facilitators covered a number of areas such as the nature and scope of the study so that they would be familiar with appreciative inquiry approach and its use in the study; I also trained them on the process of data collection in which case I shared with them how focus groups function and the group dynamics of focus group participants and the significance of each member's contribution. I also took them through the art of facilitating focus group discussions and their role as facilitators. I

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[66] Liamputtong, (2011: 3) argues that the venue for focus group discussions should be comfortable enough for participants to discuss. Hence because I wanted study participants to talk more, the social retreat became the ideal for the focus group discussions.

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further trained them on the art of interviewing and how to use the already prepared interview schedules and the tape recorders. A day before the focus group discussions were held, I again explained the scope of the focus group discussions and took the facilitators through the focus group discussion questions to ensure that they fully understood their role.

On the day, I again met with each group facilitator to ensure that they were comfortable in leading the focus group discussions and helped them to familiarize themselves with the portable recorders with the help of the technician and myself so that they could operate and record the discussions. A technician on the staff was requested to help ensure that the recorders were working well throughout the discussions. I then shadow facilitated with each of the facilitators to ensure they understood the process although I spent a limited time with each of them due to time constraints.

Although all precautions were taken to ensure that my peers who facilitated the focus group discussions fully understood the process and carried out the focus group discussions as we had agreed; I am aware of the possibilities of gaps in the data collection process that may have arisen perhaps due to personal biases that may have led to side-tracking from real issues, lack of follow-up questions of critical issues that focus group participants may have raised; and possible evasion from the real issues due to vested interests. One cannot therefore claim complete objectivity in the data collection process in the use of the focus group discussions.

The focus group discussions were organized as discussed by Stewart et al. (2007: 90) and Bloor et al. (2002: 20).[67] There were four focus groups, each with six to nine

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[67] Bloor et al. (2002: 20) argue that care should be taken in selecting focus groups and proceeds to discuss various criteria that a researcher needs to employ in selecting focus group members. Key among them is being aware of the topic to be discussed. As to whether focus groups should be homogenous or heterogeneous depends on the topic. Bloor et al. (2002: 20) then spell out the advantages of both the homogenous and heterogeneous groups.

participants and in total there were twenty-eight participants.[68] Each group had both women and men, with representation from all departments of East African Union. The groups were also mixed in such a way that in each of them there was an officer (senior EAU leader), one or two heads of departments, one or two accountants, one or two office secretaries, and in three of the groups there was a grounds-man, an office assistant, and a janitor respectively.

Although most of the literature on focus group discussions recommends that ideally the groups should be as homogenous as possible and one way to do this is to separate participants according to gender and social groups as discussed in Morgan, (1998); Bloor et al. (2002); I used mixed groups due to the following reasons: First, my research topic was on looking for the organization's positive communication practices and I assumed that the organization members would be happy to work together in identifying those practices. Indeed, as discussed in chapter 5, it was observed that the discussions took much longer than anticipated. This was because each group member made some contribution to the discussions some of which form the excerpts in the various chapters of the thesis. Secondly, I had previously observed that during social retreats, organization members were assigned into various teams by mixing both men and women and supervisors and subordinates. This was mainly so that they could know each other better and therefore bond and develop closer working relationships.

The idea of using mixed groups in the focus group discussions was important in this study because the study's interest was to enhance the organization's communication practices in which case all organization members had a stake. Hence, the focus group discussions were one of the ways through which organization members would at least

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[68] See Appendix 15 for the list of names of focus group discussions participants.

momentarily put away their organization labels of supervisor or subordinate in order to identify common strategies to enhance their communication experiences. This was a way of initiating internal communication across the organization. In any case, I viewed the focus group discussions as homogenous in the sense that the participants were all Christians and workers of East African Union.

Thirdly, some literature on focus group discussions such as those of Edwards and Holland (2013: 37); Walden (2012); Stewart et al. (2007); Bloor et al. (2002) argue that the choice between mixed groups or same sex or other criteria used to organize focus groups should depend on the topic. For example, Stewart et al. (2007:10) argue that a focus group discussion should share some identity and that focus group heterogeneity provides greater perspectives and mixed groups are more effective in encouraging participation in solving problems than focus groups comprised of same sex participants (pp. 20, 28). Hence, it is generally agreed that the formation of focus group discussions should be influenced by the topic (Knodel, 1998, Bloor et al. 2002; Stewart, et al. 2007).

The focus group discussions ran concurrently,[69] due to the limited time available with the help of my peers whom I had trained as facilitators as has been discussed above. The focus group discussion questions were open-ended and appreciative in nature, in line with the appreciative inquiry and qualitative research approach as discussed in Cooperrider et al. (2008), Watkins et al. (2011), Cooperrider and Srivastava (1987), Cooperrider and Whitney, (2005), Creswell (2013), Berg and Howard, (2012). The appreciative inquiry approach recognizes that all questions determine the fate of a phenomenon in question. In this case, questions asked positively will elicit positive responses. Hence, all the questions for focus group discussions were

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[69] Concurrent in this context means that the Focus Group Discussions met at the same time but in different places and each Focus Group Discussion had its facilitator.

positive/affirmative in nature and they were designed in such a way that the questions were arranged and asked in the order of the dream and design phases of the AI cycle.[70]

The names of participants of each group were read out just before people broke out into groups with a copy of the list of names given to each group facilitator. The group facilitators then went with their group members to designated venues where they would converge for the discussions. I spent some time to ensure that the groups had settled and the discussions had commenced before I went round to each group to help respective facilitators to ensure that the discussions went smoothly and also to note some other details such as participants' facial expressions, actual participation of group members in the discussions and if the recorders were working well. All the discussions were conducted in English and were audio and video recorded. Due to the interest that the discussions generated the focus group discussions which were intended to run for two hours went to three hours or more. Data from the focus group discussions and notes were typed then transcribed. The field observation notes and interviews were also typed. All the data were coded for themes using thematic analysis as discussed below.

6   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis is a very critical phase in qualitative research because it helps explain how a researcher arrives at findings (Mason, 2002). This phase involves organizing data into salient themes and patterns, bringing meaning to the themes and writing it all up so that other people can read it (Marshall and Gretchen, 2011).

In this study, the data analysis process commenced with the word for word transcription of all interviews and focus group discussions data that were collected. Data

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[70] See Appendix 9 for focus group discussion questions.

were then subjected to thematic analysis in order to identify codes that were representative of the various chunks or units of data. The codes were later grouped into themes and sub-themes.[71] Bryman (2012: 580) elaborates on the concept of the theme[72].

The study followed the same stages as described in Vaismodi et al. (2012); Gomm 2008; and Braun and Clarke (2006)[73] in the data analysis process. Hence, in order to identify themes, once the data were transcribed, they were transferred to two column pages as described in Gomm (2008: 244).[74] The left side of the page had the original data transcript, while the right side of the page was used to note down the codes that were identified from the data. Analysis was done after every three lines as discussed in Howitt and Cramer (2005) and then paragraph by paragraph in order to synthesize patterns or codes. The sentences that contained potential themes were highlighted in red while the potential themes were typed on the right side of the table in green colour fonts. The data were again re-read against the codes that had been generated and then the chunks of data that suggested certain codes were put together in order to verify that data were representative of the codes. There was a constant backward and forward movement between the transcribed data and the codes. The codes were then collated together to form themes- which in this study are known as 'drivers of internal communication. The themes that remained salient in the data analysis process included:

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[71] Scholars such as Boyatzis, (1998); Gomm, (2008); Bryman, (2012: 578-581); Vaismodi et al. (2013); Braun and Clarke, (2006); and Mathews and Ross, (2010: 373) view thematic analysis as the process of identifying and analysing patterns or themes within the raw data'. Braun and Clarke (2006: 82) define a theme as the 'words that capture something important about the data in relation to the research questions and represents some level of patterned responses or meaning within the data'

[72] A theme is a category identified by the analyst that relates to his or her research focus and possibly the research question, that builds on codes identified in the transcripts or field notes, and that provides the researcher with the basis for theoretical understanding of his or her data that can make a theoretical contribution to the literature related to the research focus.

[73] Vaismodi et al. (2012; Braun and Clarke, 2006: 80) argue that thematic analysis involves six stages namely; transcribing the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report.

[74] See Appendix 5 for a sample of thematic analysis process.

trust, leader-follower confidence, freedom of creativity, and positive gender relations. Each of the strategies that study participants proposed to enhance their communication practices are discussed in chapters 5 to 8.

Even though data analysis is here presented as a separate section of this chapter, in the actual study, analysis was on-going. Hence, the analysis process described here may sound like a neat and free-flowing process but in reality it was messy and sometimes confusing especially in deciding how to group the various codes into themes because some of the codes could fit into more than one category or theme. I found that analysis is not a linear process as described; rather it is an iterative process where the stages overlap from time to time. I had to re-read the data later to see if the codes that were identified were supported by the data. Sometimes I had to change the codes to suit the data and, in this way, better reflect participants' words, actions and experiences.

7   SUMMARY

This chapter has described the use of appreciative inquiry in the study and explained how the three theories were used in the study. The chapter further described how field work was conducted and how data was analysed for themes.

Chapter 4 looks at the historical communication practices of East African Union and how they influence the present ones. It will be argued that EAU's structure is a hybrid due to the two cultures – the western and African culture that shape its structures and operations.

Chapter 4 Tracing the Roots: A Historical Study of Internal Communication Practices in East African Union

1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 traces some of the historical communication practices of East African Union. The main purpose of the chapter is to help the reader understand how some of these historical communication practices may be contributing to the present ones. It is important to note that there were very few archival documents[1] available to help one form a comprehensive view of past internal communication practices. Furthermore, the few available documents mainly in form of committee minutes, letters and a booklet comprising of letters of pioneer missionaries were not organized in any order because there was no organized archive. The documents were basically retrieved from what had been put aside for recycling and hence this chapter attempts to reconstruct the history of communication practices from what was available.

The researcher is also aware that verbal communication is a key form of organizational communication and therefore was used in day to-day interactions, but because of its transient nature there were no documents available. Hence the communication practices discussed in this chapter were mainly deduced from the written documents available. In an attempt to understand the organization's past communication practices, a retired employee of the organization was interviewed. The

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[1] Up until the commencement of the study, there was no archive in EAU. Documents that were deemed old and therefore not useful were dumped at an old garage where most of them were rained on and others got damp as a result of being piled on top of each other for several years. The study necessitated the retrieval of the documents that were mainly in form of letters, old organization minutes of various committees. I also got a booklet that was compiled in 2006 when the church celebrated 100 years of Adventism in Kenya. The booklet was mainly made up of letters from the pioneer missionaries, and some accounts of how they started work in Kenya. These are the main documents that were reviewed and have been quoted in this chapter.

chapter starts with a brief history of East African Union to help the reader understand how the organization's history and structure may be contributing to present internal communication practices. [2]

2 ESTABLISHMENT OF EAST AFRICAN UNION

East African Union was first organized in 1921 as a mission and at the time it comprised Churches in Kenya and Tanganyika (Tanzania) and had its headquarters in Gendia presently known as Kendu-Bay in Kenya. In 1926, East African Union then comprised the three East African countries - Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda. As Church membership grew, EAU was divided into three unions namely the Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda unions in 1928 with each union having a separate leadership (Neufeld and Neuffer, 1976).[3] According to committee minutes of 1943 of the then South African Division where East African Union belonged then, EAU was reorganized again to include the three countries of East Africa but each country had its leader.[4]

A further reorganization of East African Union was done in 1960 and Tanganyika became a separate union while Kenya and Uganda remained together (Neufeld and Neuffer, 1976). In 1953, the Kenya mission was organized into three fields.[5]

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[2] See Appendix 4 for a brief history of the origin of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

[3] For example, in Kenya, S.G Maxwell became the president of Kenya Union. In 1933, there was a further reorganization because Tanganyika was put under the Central European division[3] and Kenya was divided into three separate fields:[3] the Kisii field with G.A. Lewis as Superintendent, the Luo field with F.H. Thomas as superintendent and the Central Kenya field with W.W. Armstrong as Superintendent (letters by Pastor Worsley Armstrong to Pastor Conrad Hyde, Feb 14th 1963, and by F. H. Thomas to Conrad Hyde, 1963, EAU records n.d.).

[4] The leaders of the union then included H.M Sparrow as the President, C.T Bannister as the Secretary-treasurer, F.H Thomas as the President of Tanganyika mission, G.A Lewis as the President of Uganda mission and E.W Pedersen as the President of the Kenya mission.

[5] These were, Kenya Lake (Luo), with F. H. Muderspach as the President, South Kenya (Kisii) with K.G. Webster as the President, Central Kenya (outside Nyanza) field with R. J. Wieland as the President (Neufeld and Neuffer, 1976: 731).

East African Union relocated its headquarters from Gendia to Nakuru in 1929, and later to Nairobi in 1938 (EAU records, n.d.). In 1985, a further reorganization of EAU saw Uganda become a separate union, and Somalia was attached to Kenya.[6] According to the Year Book 2010,[7] Kenya and Somalia formed the East African Union with the headquarters in Nairobi.

East African Union is made up of six administrative regions. These lower regional organizations are known as Conferences and Fields, namely the Central Kenya Conference, the South Kenya Conference, the Western Kenya Conference, the Kenya Lake Conference, the Ranen Conference, the Kenya Coast Field, and the Central Nyanza Field. Recent developments have seen Somalia separated from EAU to become an independent territory in terms of mission work and EAU change its name to Kenya Union Mission (EAU Min, 1383, Sep, 13, 2012).

The study observed that the reorganization of East African Union at different times was sanctioned by the General Conference through the Division and indeed this continues to be the case such that any new proposals for reorganization must be approved by the higher organizations[8]. And as has been discussed in chapter 1, in some cases, the organizations' leadership at both union and Conference levels remained in the hands of Western missionaries up to 1980 when Africans took over the leadership. This means that up until that time, organization members largely relied on Western

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[6] So far there is no Adventist presence in Somalia, but the church is actively using Adventist World Radio to reach the Somali population.

[7] A Directory of the General Conference, World Divisions, Union and Local Conferences and Missions, Educational Institutions, Food Industries, Healthcare Institutions, Media Centres, Publishing Houses and Periodicals, Radio and TV Stations, Risk Management, and the Index of Institutional Employees and the Directory of Credentialed Employees.

[8] The process of reorganizing a union of conference is very rigorous. Specific conditions as set out through the GC policy must be met, and the division sets up a taskforce that ensures that each of the conditions is met without which there can be now reorganization.

management styles and ideologies in their operations and some of those persist in EAU to-date.

The study also observed that although the leadership has since changed, the operational policies remain the same; hence they are formulated by the General Conference and implemented by the lower organizations such as EAU.[9] This means that leaders at the union level only implement what has been voted at the higher organization. Hence, the study argued that this wholesome application of policy that is formulated by the higher organizations limits the extent to which local union leaders can make changes to established structures. Consequently, the wholesome application of western structures and systems for instance may have contributed to the current communication culture where communication is mainly formal and which as the study argued does not fully meet the communication needs of the organization's members.

3   HISTORICAL STUDY OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN EAST AFRICAN UNION

According to available archival records,[10] internal communication[11] in East African Union was mainly in writing but as it was alluded to in the introduction section of this chapter, verbal communication was also used though due to its transient nature there were no records available. So, the study assumed that organization members used both verbal and written communication for both official and personal matters. For example,

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[9] I have discussed the culture of EAU and how it impedes effective communication in chapter 1.

[10] It has been previously discussed that the scantly available records that were analyzed included old letters, minutes of previous years from 1940 to present, and a booklet with early missionary stories of their activities in Kenya and a brief account of how EAU was formed.

[11] This is the vertical or horizontal, formal/ informal communication or interaction between EAU workers at every level; between supervisors and subordinates at every level, colleagues and departments and induction or orientation of new employees.

various committee minutes of EAU showed that the members of the executive committees[12] who were drawn from Fields, Conferences, and Union institutions would meet on a regular basis to deliberate on issues pertaining to the organization's work which included personnel issues. Available executive committee minutes from 1943 to 2014[13] showed the various decisions that were made regarding various employees and other organizational issues such as the acquisition and management of organizational property.[14] What was not indicated in the minutes however was how the employees communicated their problems or other issues to the executive committee[15] for discussion and consideration. The study assumed that they either communicated verbally or in writing.[16] The usual practice is that agenda are brought to the executive secretary through the various heads of departments/ institutions or by individual employees and they are then discussed by the administrative or executive committees.

It was also not clear from the available documents how the committee decisions were communicated to the affected employees. But there were records of minutes of the various decisions that have been made over the years. The study assumed that communication of the committee's decision to respective employees was done verbally or in writing.

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[12] Members of the executive committee comprise of EAU officers and heads of departments, Executive directors and lay representatives from fields and conferences, heads of church owned institutions, and the union lawyer.

[13] I completed field work in September 2014.

[14] Employee issues ranged from discipline, annual leave requests, sick leave requests, study leave requests, maternity leave requests and requests for permission to travel out of the country among others.

[15] Administrative committees (ADCOM) are made up of the three officers, heads of departments and heads of institutions. The executive committee is made up of the Union ADCOM members, field and conference presidents and lay representatives.

[16] Most of the archival materials were poorly kept and so vital documents had been destroyed by moths or water. The information used here is only from the few available records. Letters were poorly filed or files had been destroyed, and the few that were retrieved are the ones that have been used. It is therefore possible that there were several files that contained letters that may have been lost or destroyed.

Second, it was observed from the available documents that the committees only discussed issues such as leave requests which were considered official in nature.[17] Hence, employees that may have had issues of personal nature yet which affected their work may not have had a forum through which they interacted with their supervisors. The same practices continue to be in force as field observations reveal because committee agenda tend to be on official matters only; and the nature of the discussions is such that they maintain organizational hierarchies. For example, it was observed that at committee level, hierarchical structures are enforced such that committee meetings are only chaired by the union president and on very few occasions his designee. The study, therefore, argued that the structure of the committees continues to reinforce and maintain hierarchical communication relationships between the supervisors and the subordinates and also between those of higher and lower organizations where communication is mainly vertical and formal and in written form. Hence the study argued that although the committee structure may be viewed as a form of orderliness and consistency, its nature determines and influences the quality and quantity of interactions between organization members because it reinforces hierarchical relationships.

As has been discussed earlier in the chapter, written communication was prevalent in East African Union. The study therefore argued that on one hand written communication may have been more appealing to the missionaries because of their background, and perhaps was seen as a way of reducing ambiguity and misunderstanding between them and their African colleagues. On the other hand, the study argued that written communication introduced a western form of communication

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[17] Other issues that were discussed included sick leave, permission to study, permission to travel, heads of departments and officers' travel plans, employment of new members, and issues related to sub-organizations and institutions.

to an oral culture. The study therefore posited that EAU accustomed itself to the written form of communication but it does not meet its members' communication needs fully. The study argued that because written communication is part of the organizations' culture, new members who join the organization orient themselves to it and in this way it reduces their regular interaction with colleagues. As a matter of fact, Pr. Fredrick Wangai[18] who was interviewed argued that writing was a more permanent form of communication and it proved that one was committed to what they said because they would find it hard to deny or negate what they had said earlier. Yet in Africa, oral communication was and still remains binding so that ones word is as good as what he or she writes, although sometimes some may deny what they say. So essentially verbal or oral communication was binding and therefore the missionaries prioritized written communication to meet their communication needs and Africans adapted to the same perhaps to maintain their jobs. For example, in the following letter excerpt, Pr. Fredrick Wangai who was working then as the executive director of EAU replied to an earlier letter from the treasurer:

> Dear brother Webster, Thank you for your circular of 18-2-71. I should not see any reason why I should pay tithe to the local treasurer. I do prefer my tithe to be deducted from the office. Any other kind of income I do turn in my tithe to the local treasurer" Sincerely yours Wangai."[19] (Letter excerpts, February 19th, 1971)

The above letter excerpts reflect an organizational culture that emphasized written communication as a way of showing commitment to promises. In an ideal situation, any one of the two officers would have walked to the other's office, or made a call to the other's extension and verbally shared the information. But in order to produce a record

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[18] Pr. Fredrick Wangai was the first African to become a leader at the Union level. He later held various posts at the Union before retiring in the late eighties. His interview excerpts appear later in the chapter.

[19] Pr. Fredrick Wangai was at the time the executive director of East African Union and he wrote the letter to the treasurer.

of what was agreed; one had to communicate in writing. The observation here is that in as much as all the organization workers were Christians, they did not fully trust one other to recall own or each other's statements all the time. Therefore, ones word was not taken as binding unless he/ she committed themselves in writing. An interview with Pr. Fredrick Wangai a retired employee of EAU alludes to this:

> I like it (writing) because you can quote it. The best way of communication is to put it in writing, because people will never change their minds, when they change their mind, if it was a decision which had been communicated to you in writing, if there is any change, it has to be done in writing to cancel the first one. (Interview Excerpts, Pastor F. Wangai, September 30th, 2011)

The argument from the interview excerpt above is that one's commitment was demonstrated through writing. Hence writing was a way of ensuring that organization members did not negate their earlier promises or commitments. The above argument demonstrates that organization members did not trust one another fully and perhaps the reason organization members would like to enhance trust amongst themselves so as to enhance their communication experiences as discussed in chapter 5.

With regard to written communication, letter writing and memos were used. Available documents showed that employees preferred to write to one another on matters that perhaps would have been discussed verbally. For example, employees who lived as neighbours and worked in the same office opted to write to the Union officers perhaps in addition to verbal communication over matters that affected them. The following letter excerpt was written by a lady missionary to the union treasurer (a missionary) to complain about what she considered as misconduct from her African neighbour. The union treasurer in turn wrote a note to his fellow officers to explain about the letter which he copied to them:

> Dear Brethren, upon returning from Uganda last week, I found a long type-written letter on my desk from Mrs Follet, 'from the "what it is worth department" (sic)'. I am going to copy a portion of her letter; it reads in part as follows:

> It would appear that we are in for some interesting times here. While we were away the neighbour (Amayo) came onto our property and cut a big tree in front of our house which

we were very fond of and which shaded the front of our house and kept it cool. We are just sick about it. Shavlik and Kralls exploded when they saw what he had done, but he had not spoken to us since our return. We visited with Mr. Gwalamubisi a while last evening and he talked with me at some length this afternoon. I get the distinct impression that Amayo has all but taken over—is making an effort to re-organize everything to his liking and dishing out orders right and left. Gwalamubisi is obviously disturbed but I think is making a valiant effort to handle the situation as diplomatically as possible. I hope he can maintain his cheerful attitude and keep the lid on, but I am afraid it is too much to hope for. We all need to pray for him in every way possible, but I certainly think he had job enough without being saddled with this man. Things should be interesting around here. --- I just hope not tragic."
(Letter Excerpts, January 14th, 1974)

The treasurer then concluded his letter by saying; "I recognize that this is one person's comments, but I feel it might be well for all of us to keep some of these things in the back of our mind."

The above letter excerpts are indicators of poor or inadequate internal communication of that time; and this is based on the following observations: 1) the letter does not show that the treasurer who in this case was a senior officer of the organization made an effort to consult the accused (Mr. Amayo) so as to verify the facts or to establish the reasons for his cutting down the tree; 2) From the contents of the letter, the aggrieved missionary did not make an effort to meet with her neighbour who had cut down the tree, but instead discussed the matter with another neighbour and then wrote the letter to the treasurer; 3) From the letter, there is no indication as to whether the treasurer sought to meet with the two parties in order to try and resolve the problem or reconcile them. Instead he wrote to his fellow officers and asked them to keep the information at the back of their minds. Hence, it may be concluded that writing was inadequate in meeting communication needs of the stakeholders because there was little interaction.

Even though it was not possible to access more archival materials to help form a coherent picture of the past communication practices between organization members from an interview with Pastor Fredrick Wangai, who had held several leadership positions in the union before retirement in 1990, it is clear that supervisor/ subordinate

communication was inadequate. Pastor Wangai admitted that during his time as a Union officer, there was very little communication between supervisors and their subordinates. He averred that subordinates were not even recognized: "these people (the leaders) were the only people who were known, those (subordinates)[20] were there but we pretended that they did not exist" (Interview excerpts, September 30th 2011, emphasis supplied).

The foregoing interview excerpts demonstrate that EAU members did not recognize supervisor/subordinate communication as important in their relationships. This may have been because at that time subordinate roles were mainly messengers' type of work, or secretarial and janitorial roles and they entirely depended on decisions that were made for them.[21] The study thence argued that because of the limited or lack of forums through which EAU members shared information, intra-organization relationships remained fairly formal. In formal relationships organization members were restricted to the type of information to be communicated, so that in situations where an employee had issues of a personal nature that affected his/her work there was no forum to handle them. Therefore, supervisor-subordinate communication was impersonal in nature because organization members communicated with one another on the basis of their roles. The study found this to be the case to-date to a large extent and hence there is a likelihood of an employee being disciplined for non- performance or other misconduct without having an adequate forum through which the affected employee can share their part of the story. The available forums such as committees or staff meetings do not provide adequate room for employees to share matters of a personal nature. Hence, the study argued that when an employee is disciplined without being given a fair

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[20] Emphasis supplied on 'leaders' and 'subordinates.'

[21] Pr. Wangai argued that important information was passed to the subordinates during morning worship meetings if the leaders felt it was necessary because there were no staff meetings or other forum thorough which information was shared.

hearing, he/she will attract sympathy from colleagues and this can easily cause strained relationships between the supervisors and the subordinates and thus reduce the quality and quantity of communication.

The following letter excerpt demonstrates that written communication was not adequate in addressing issues that arose even between missionaries who were leaders themselves. Here a former missionary wrote a letter to his former supervisor (another missionary) to complain that a letter that the latter had sent to him to clarify some issues was annoying because the issues were not raised when he was still working at EAU:

> I was rather dismayed by the rest of your letter and I hope I can clear up some of the points you raised. I am only sorry that this could not be done while I was still there and you know that I urged strenuously to have it taken care of .... I considered it my first duty to win the affection of the people and bind up the festering wounds of discontent. You know whereof I speak...This all goes to prove how much I have come to dislike the work of S. T[22] especially under the conditions in East Africa. One cannot apparently seem to make everybody happy. (Letter excerpt, 6th September, 1960, EAU records, n. d.)

The foregoing letter excerpt demonstrates that interpersonal communication between leaders was equally inadequate, and matters that should have been handled perhaps better verbally and face to face were sometimes left unattended until one left the organization. Field observations revealed that communication practices did not change much even after most of the western missionaries had left.[23] The following letter excerpts from a former Union treasurer to a head of department over the latter's furlough demonstrate this:

> The union committee will soon meet and I am in need of a confirmation from you regarding your plans for furlough. Please let me know when you are planning to take this in writing so that we can take it up in the committee and get it voted and hence recommended to the division. (August, 6th, 1980)

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[22] S.T. are the initials of a name of one of the employees.

[23] This may be due to the fact that the practices were already established and embedded in the organization and had become part of the organization's culture, so that new-comers adopted them and older ones saw them as normal. In other words, once the communication practices had become embedded in organization members' minds, it was difficult for some of them to notice that communication as practiced posed challenges to their relationships. In their day-to-day interactions, organization members drew from the same structures which constrained them from seeing alternatives.

The head of department who was also a member of the Union committee wrote: "Thank you for bringing to my attention the procedure to follow concerning furlough time. I had talked with Fred Thomas about it and thought that was all that was needed"[24] (letter dated August 8th, 1980).

The foregoing letter excerpts demonstrate that even though writing was a preferred mode of communication in EAU because it was pegged to commitment, there was need for interaction so as to enhance understanding. The excerpts also demonstrate that orientation of new employees was poor because furlough was one of the areas that new employees needed clear information.

The study found out that orientation was mainly done in writing. Although this was important because a new employee could refer to the document later, there was still need for verbal communication, so that one could ask questions and receive instant feedback and in this way establish networks and friendships necessary for relational communication. The following excerpt was part of a 4-page orientation document that explained some of the things that a new secretary was to do:

> Type and fill correspondence to treasurer and auditor (sic)
>
> At the beginning of the year: Make all new folders for treasurer's and auditor's correspondence drawers. Move last years' correspondence to drawer marked as such and put last year's folders in cartons on shelves in board room cupboard. Shred correspondence six years old. Take out last year's monthly financial statements and put in binders in treasurer's cupboard. (One copy only- shred extra). Audited year-end copies go in a book for each year, one for treasurer and one for auditor...when committee action is taken to call a new worker, remind secretary treasurer to send call blank for new worker...arrival and departure board (in hallway): When notified that a person is coming to Nairobi, be sure transport is taken care of, and place details on board...where to get supplies...S & O.

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[24] John Muderspach was the treasurer and Kenneth Bushnell was a head of department.

Supplies- most general office supplies, fixed M3 copier (paper)-service-20309, fixes typewriters. (Workshop-27830)[25] (EAU archives, nod-. letter accessed on June 4th, 2011)

From the excerpts above, new organization members were oriented through a written document. The study found that this form of orientation did not provide an opportunity for consultation and feedback. Hence, no relationship was formed between the new and old employees due to limited orientation and socialization. This would affect future interactions between the employees because as Miller (2003:139) and Shockley-Zalabak (2009) argues socialization is not a one-time activity, but rather takes place in stages until the new employee is well acclimatized to his/ her new job and has formed relationships with colleagues.

The letter excerpts also demonstrate that this form of orientation was presumed to be sufficient in guiding new employees. This is because it presumed that once a worker had clear instructions on what was expected of them then he or she would be comfortable in attending to the given assignments. Field observations revealed that orientation of new employees was still poor although the EAU handbook (2013: 4-5) spells out the processes of orienting new organization members. The actual practice was that new employees were rushed through a brief introduction to colleagues and to their work after which they were left to try to find their way around almost on their own. An interview with Mr. D.T. who joined EAU in 2010 as a head of department points to this reality as some of the interview excerpts demonstrate:

Catherine: tell me of your best experience in your orientation to your new position at EAU

D.T.: well, it was not as nice as you are trying to put it.

Catherine: Why do you say so?

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[25] I accessed only the last page of the document from the archives. The rest may have been torn off. The date was also not indicated, but it was clear from the document that these were instructions to new secretaries.

D.T.: Because once my predecessor left, I was sort of stuck… did not know exactly where to start?

Catherine: Was the orientation that you were given not adequate to help you do what you do now?

D.T.: Not at all, not at all. I just came there, I was told this is the office and from there I picked up on my own struggling to know which file is where and for what and all those things

Catherine: were the shelves marked to show you that this one belongs to this clinic and this one belongs to the other one?

D.T.: It was, but at a very shallow level just to pass off and say we have this because I was shown some few equipment and others which belong to the Better Living Centre but not the detailed orientation.

Catherine: So how did you find your way around then?

D.T.: It was very difficult. Even now I am still learning. I am still undergoing orientation though I am seven months old in the organization. I am still getting oriented to some of the files and some of the things that are done in the office. (Interview excerpts, September, 30th, 2011)[26]

The argument from the above interview excerpt is that a lack of adequate orientation makes ones working experience in EAU difficult. The study established that inadequate orientation can also affect one's interaction with others because he or she may not fully understand the extent to which they can interact and with whom. As will be discussed in chapter 5, a lack of adequate orientation may also hinder one from forming networks necessary for good interaction. The inadequately oriented person spends most of the time trying to find their way around their work and in the process they avoid what they may consider to be interruptions from their colleagues who may want to form friendships with them. This can affect the quantity and quality of communication. However, an interview with Pr. Fredrick Wangai a former EAU executive director shows that the organization's members did not find anything wrong with orientation procedures of the time. Pr. Wangai argued that throughout his working life at the various church institutions he served, there was no orientation let alone any

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[26] Pressed further, Mr. D.T. said that he was getting help from his secretary and he was also learning by himself.

interaction between supervisors and their subordinates. For example, when he joined the Central Kenya Field (now known as the Central Kenya Conference) as its President and took over from a white missionary, he was not given any orientation as the following interview excerpts show:

> Cathy: Tell me of your best orientation experience as president of Central Kenya and as administrative Secretary for EAU?
>
> Pr. Wangai: I cannot say that we were given any orientation because when I came to Central Kenya, they didn't even tell me anything… when they called me from Western Kenya, and I came to Central Kenya Field, what the president of the union did, he only gave me the keys for the office that is all I can remember, and nothing else...I did not ask anything, I was given the keys and I was told 'that is your office, the last Mzungu[27] has left'. His name was F.L. Bell, and then I took over and continued.
>
> Cathy: Were there other employees?
>
> Pr. Wangai: Yes, there were people in the office, we had the publishing director, the education director for the field and we had accountants who were Africans.
>
> Cathy: So how did you start running the office without any orientation?
>
> Pr. Wangai: I can say that I did not know what to do, but what gave me the consolation was that the Lord who had called me will tell me what to do. That is what I had depended on all the years I have worked in the denomination. (Interview Excerpts, September, 30th, 2011)

The above interview excerpts demonstrate that EAU members did not recognize or realize that orientation as practiced was not adequate. New employees found their way around the organization somehow, and turned to God when they could not get help from their colleagues. Otherwise, information was shared during sessions as the following interview excerpt from Pr. Wangai demonstrates:

> **Cathy**: What would happen to those who did not go to the sessions, such as office secretaries, janitors, messengers... how did they know EAU policies and other matters for instance?
>
> **Pr. Wangai**: Now you are talking about the janitors, the messenger.... These people (the leaders) were the only people who were known. Those (janitors and messengers) were there but we pretended that they did not exist. We assumed that they did not exist. (emphasis supplied) (Interview excerpts, September 30th, 2011)

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[27] Mzungu is a Swahili word for a white man.

The foregoing interview excerpts show that orientation for new members to EAU was not recognized as a critical component of the organization's success. Hence, the focus of the orientation was more for senior managers although this was equally rare because it was done once in a year. This seems to have been based on some assumption that employees of EAU already understood everything about the organization. This explains why there were limited forums in which organization members would be oriented except for the heads of departments who would attend ministerial councils.[28]

According to Pr. Wangai, there were no other orientation forums for the other organization employees except for pastors who attended annual ministerial councils which also served as an orientation process. Therefore, employees who were not pastors and yet were heads of departments had limited forums for orientation. According to Pr. Fredrick Wangai, communication between employees was rare because it was limited to giving reports to the higher organizations (the Division) and informing those in lower cadres (Fields and Conferences) of the decisions from the Division. This was the only time employees were given updates about the reports. The following interview excerpt from Pr. Wangai sheds more light:

Cathy: How did you share your reports with your office colleagues?

Pr. Wangai: Report to whom? As a leader, your report went to your superior and in this case from EAU to the division. Whatever had come from the division we brought it to the fields and conferences but only when we thought it was necessary.

Cathy: Did you know whether the local church members received information that affected them from the union?

Wangai: They didn't. I knew about the policies when I became the president of Central Kenya Field. I knew there was a policy but I had never seen it.

Cathy: How much of what you knew about policy did you share with the staff?

Wangai: Very little.

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[28] Orientation is still a major challenge in EAU. Even though the EAU Handbook (2005, 2013) spells out the orientation process, it was observed that this is lacking in practice as the orientation process is hurried and, therefore, inadequate in helping a new employee settle into the organization.

Cathy: Why?

Wangai: Because I did not know that it was important to share what I knew.

Cathy: Looking back at your experience of internal communication at EAU, are there things you would wish to be improved. (He did not answer this question in spite of my probing) (Interview excerpts, September, 2011).[29]

The foregoing interview excerpts demonstrate that although internal communication in EAU was poor, employees did not find this problematic. But as will be shown in chapters 5 to 8, during the period of study, appreciative inquiry facilitated study participants to desire positive communication practices having realized that the existing ones limited their interpersonal relationships and to their performance. Hence, study participants went further to identify ways to improve those they considered positive in order to also improve their interpersonal relationships.

The following section is a brief discussion on the probable factors that influenced internal communication at EAU during the missionary period.

4 FACTORS THAT MAY HAVE INFLUENCED INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN EAST AFRICAN UNION

It is not easy to concretely pin down the factors that influenced internal communication in the East African Union in its early years and even in later years because of the lack of sufficient archival materials and due to the fact that by virtue of its nature, oral communication was not documented. But from available documents and the interview

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[29] I made efforts to interview a former executive director and managed to speak to him on the phone about my intentions. He asked me to send him written questions because he said he did not want to see me in person. I sent the questions through his local Church pastor. Two months later, I got the responses from the retired leader. The responses were very brief and I did not find them very useful to my work. I met with the former leader later at the EAU campus and tried to explain to him what I wanted and he declined my request for an interview.

excerpts, one can conclude that the following are some of the probable factors that may have contributed to internal communication practices in East African Union.

First, the vastness of the territory and the physical distance between offices especially in the early years when EAU was formed and consisted of the three countries and later two countries of East Africa or when operations were spread across the three countries may have influenced the nature of communication and hence favoured written communication. Also, EAU reported directly to the headquarters in Europe and later South Africa and this contributed to the emphasis on written communication.

Second, the underdeveloped telecommunications network in the country where there was no telephone network or where making a telephone call was very expensive, contributed to the writing culture.

Third, the cultural differences and hierarchical relationships which privileged missionaries prioritized written communication. The study argued out that missionaries came from a writing culture while Africans came from an oral culture, and because missionaries were the leaders, their preferences were given priority. As it has been argued in this chapter, the complexity of the organization's culture which was partially influenced by the west necessitated and therefore preferred written communication and hence underplaying the local employees' use of verbal communication.

Fourth, internal communication may have been affected by language barriers. The study observed that at the time, most African workers were still not very competent in speaking English while some of the missionaries were also not very competent in speaking local languages and hence in order to be understood better, a more permanent form of communication, in this case writing, was preferred because one could later refer to the contents of the communication. But again, the study established that the act of insisting on written communication as a way of ensuring that ones' promises were not

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negated, demonstrated a lack of trust among organization members, because one's word was not trusted. This means that even though the organization members confessed to be Christians they did not trust each other fully and had to rely on written commitments rather than one's word.

The writing culture therefore reinforced and maintained the organizations' formal communication structures which favoured vertical communication. The formal communication structures in turn were not conducive to forming social relationships because they dictated or defined the type of information to be communicated and the people to be communicated to, hence leaving out some of the organization members. The study further maintained that the formal and hierarchical communication structures continue to dominate EAU up to present hence the inadequate internal communication practices. This study aimed to rediscover some of the positive internal communication practices that existed in order to help organization members form and foster more fruitful communication so as to transcend the organizational structures which at the time of the study were found to hinder effective communication[30].

Internal communication was also affected by the fact that the organization members' ignorance of its value in their interpersonal relationships. Hence for those who worked at EAU at the time, communication as practiced then did not pose challenges. In any case organization members found a way of getting around those challenges, for example, by praying.

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[30] East African Union seems to have been conscious of the need to communicate with the external public. Pr. Fredrick Wangai argues that when he joined East African Union as the Field Secretary, his main responsibility was to help the public understand what the Seventh-day Adventist Church was all about and this was seen as being critical to the organization

5 SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter was to describe the history of the Seventh Day Adventist denomination and the formation of East African Union. The chapter also described the communication practices that were used in time and space and their impact on the present ones. The study argued that because of its close links with the west brought through its founders, EAU has adopted a western model of organizational structure, in which case, the emphasis is on hierarchical structures and systems which do not foster informal or relational communication. This is because such structures dictate the type, quality and quantity of information that organization members share.

Some of the factors that may have influenced internal communication practices include the vastness of the territory, the underdeveloped communication networks, cultural communication differences between the missionaries and Africans, and language barriers which caused misunderstandings.

Chapter 5 will discuss one of the positive communication practices that exist in EAU and strategies to improve them. Trust was said to be an important factor in influencing internal communication practices of organization members. The chapter discusses the various strategies that study participants proposed to improve them. The chapter will demonstrate that organizational learning took place because study participants detected, recognized and named new strategies to enhance trust which they argued is a prerequisite to positive internal communication practices. Learning occurred to the extent that study participants became aware of alternative ways of communication to enhance their communication relationships. The chapter points out that study participants changed their communication culture in interaction because they came up with new strategies of improving their communication. Hence, the organization's

communication culture changed for the better through the interaction of its members because as was argued in chapter 1, an organization is formed through interaction and so is its culture.

Chapter 5 Building Trust to Enhance Internal Communication

1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 introduces one of the themes that the study established as important in influencing communication relationships of EAU members. Trust was identified from the results of the second field work through the use of the discover phase of appreciative inquiry cycle as discussed in chapter 3 section 3.1. The theme was explored in respective field works and remained salient and hence the study found it to be an important factor in the organization's communication relationships. The study participants argued that the level of trust in one another influenced their communication experiences. In this study trust is defined in the words of (Huff and Kelly, 2003: 82) as 'a willingness of a party (the trustor) to be vulnerable to the actions of the other party (the trustee) based on the expectations that the trustee will perform particular actions important to the trustor irrespective of the ability to monitor and control the other party'.

The main argument in chapter 5 is that increased trust improves the quality and quantity of communication between members of EAU; and high quality communication practices also increase trust. Hence, high quality communication practices are not an end in themselves, rather they build trust between organization members. Chapter 5 answers research question (a) by showing how trust is enhanced and how it augments communication practices in EAU. The chapter discusses the various strategies through which study participants proposed to enhance trust in one another in order to improve their communication practices and vice versa. First, there follows a brief description of how the study participants perceived trust.

2 PERCEPTIONS OF TRUST IN EAU

East African Union (EAU) is a Christian organization that is founded on Christian values that include trust. All the employees of the organization are Christians and members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The study had assumed that trust held a common definition and understanding among the organization members. However, the study found out that although the definition and meaning of trust in various linguistic groups are similar study participants express trust differently according to its definition in Kenyan language communities.

2.1 Trust: Meanings in different Linguistic Groups

EAU is made up of employees from different linguistic groups in Kenya whose use and interpretation of the word 'trust' may denote different things. Hence, the concept of 'trust' may evoke different meanings depending on how it is used and expressed in a particular community. According to a number of language communities in Kenya, trust means having faith or confidence in someone. For example, the Kikuyu[1] define trust as *'kwihoka.'* This means having confidence or having faith in someone, or believing in someone. In this case, a person who is trustworthy is dependable and cannot disappoint or let one down. Here trust in one means that the person is consistent, unchanging and reliable. In the Luo[2] language, trust is known as '*Geno'* which also means 'hope.' '*Geno'* means absolute confidence or hope or surety in somebody. In this case, a trustworthy person is one in whom the other has hope or confidence equated to trust or belief in God.

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[1] Kikuyu is one of the largest tribes found in Central Province and their language is Kikuyu. They are Bantu.

[2] The Luo tribe is a Nilotic tribe that lives at the shores of Lake Victoria and speaks Luo language.

In 'Ekegusii'[3] language, trust has three definitions: *'Ogosemeria'* which means to have hope in something or someone, or *'Okweegeka'* which means to lean on someone or something and *'Okwegena'* which means to have faith in someone. In Swahili,[4] which is the national language in Kenya, trust is known as *'Amini'* which means belief in or 'faith in'. So, *'Kuamini'* would mean to 'believe' in someone or to have confidence or faith in someone the same word that would be used when referring to believing or having faith in God. The above definitions are consistent with those of Frost et al. (1978) and Tschannen and Hoy (2000); Nicholson, et al. (2001). Hence, trust as defined by the Kenyan communities and in the conventional literature implies absolute confidence, faith, and belief in someone so that, for example, in an organizational context, an employee feels comfortable to open up and share with the other person matters of a personal and/or official nature. The following section describes the various ways that study participants said they express trust.

2.2 Forms of Trust in EAU

This section looks at ways in which study participants expressed trust in EAU. Participants expressed trust in different sites[5] of the organization and in diverse ways. Therefore, trust was a complex phenomenon within the organization as it was not expressed or understood in a singular way. As Noteboon (2002: 38) argues, 'a member of an organization trusts someone or something, in some respect, depending on conditions such as the context of an action that is the context of interaction'. This study identified four forms of trust as expressed by EAU employees in a dynamic fashion: (i)

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[3] Ekegusii is a language that is spoken by Abagusii who are found in the South-Western Kenya. They are also Bantu.

[4] Swahili is the national language in Kenya and is spoken across the country as well as taught in schools.

[5] Site in this study means occasion.

trust as expressed in an election or appointment; (ii) trust in the delegation of duties and responsibilities; (iii) trust as circumscribed by the policy and (iv) trust in self.

2.3   **Trust as expressed in Election or Appointment**

Study participants viewed election or appointments to various positions as a form of trust. This trust is akin to what French and Raven (2011: 136) describe as 'legitimate power' because such power is considered as genuinely earned and, therefore, those in such positions qualify to hold the positions in question. EAU recruits new employees by election and appointment and according to study participants trust plays a critical role in these two processes.

Elective positions are usually filled through an election process that takes place every five years or as need may arise.[6] This process affects the senior and middle level management. During elections, representatives of the local churches come from all levels of the EAU organizations. Several names are then proposed for each vacant position and each nominated name is discussed until the person deemed most suitable is elected. The rest of the employees join the organization by appointment after a competitive selection process and, from time to time, employees who are eligible for the position of head of department, are also subjected to an election process. Study participants argued therefore that for one to be elected or appointed to any position, a high level of trust is required by either the electorate or panellists:

> Some of us have been recently recruited into our current working positions and there were interviews conducted and we came out as the leading candidates in the respective offices. This means that those people who were interviewing trusted us… It is also the same as me during elections… I know there were very many names which were proposed and there

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[6] An election can be held if one of the elected leaders dies while in office or is called to serve or resigns from the organization. In such a case, the Union executive committee is mandated to identify a suitable person. Hence representatives from sub-organizations participate in electing the person. It should be noted that the Union executive committee has lay representatives from local churches that serve as committee members of the Conferences and therefore attend the Union executive committees.

were those who trusted that I can continue serving for the next five years. So I feel that election sessions constitute one of the highest points when trust is expressed and demonstrated. (M.O 1 focus group 1, 26th October, 2011)

Trust as discussed above may be based on qualities and qualifications that those that are recruited for the various positions must have, and these qualities play out during elections[7] or appointments. Field observations revealed that some of the qualities that were critical to one's election or appointment included but were not limited to, ones level of education and qualifications attained, work experience, ones standing in their local Church,[8] their participation in Church activities, both at the local Church level and the organization they previously served, their experience in the position to be filled, their knowledge of church doctrines, policies and structure, their manner of dress, and computer literacy skills among other qualities. (EAU Employee Handbook, 2005, Section 2.3).

While the qualities and qualifications discussed above play an important role, sometimes other factors such as the region of the country where one comes from can determine one's entry to the organization. This criterion is mainly used when there is what is known in Kenya as regional balancing,[9] such that the various regions[10] of the

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[7] The three officers namely the president, the executive secretary and the treasurer and aassociate treasurer, and all heads of departments are elected by delegates who represent the 8 regions known as Fields and Conferences. This is usually after every five years unless a person dies, resigns or is called to serve in another church organization. Other employees such as accountants, secretaries, and messengers are employed through an interview process, or through inter-organizational transfers.

[8] One must be of good and regular standing in the church and this is indicated by the presence of their names in the church register.

[9] East African Union is the national office of the Seventh-day Adventist church and as such represents all regions, and tribes. During elections, it is ensured that as much as possible there is a representative from each of the 8 regions in which the church is divided. Regional offices are known as Fields and Conferences and they report to the national office. 'Regional balancing' is usually done by ensuring that every region has a certain number of representatives to the 'session' the forum through which leaders are picked. At the session, several names are proposed to form the core nominating committee which is tasked with electing the candidates. Various names are then presented to the nominating committee usually chaired by the Division president in cases of Union elections. As positions are filled on the basis of competence, care is taken to ensure that candidates are identified at least from each region. While not every language group is represented at the Union level, in most instances each group is represented at Conference or Field level.

country where the church has a presence are represented. Critical to the whole process, however, is trust and whether the individual can be trusted to advance the organization's mission.

The thrust of the focus group discussions was that there are many qualified candidates for the positions. The decisive point in their election or appointment was the trust expressed by the Electoral College or the panellists. Hence, study participants proposed that trust should be shown during the election or appointment processes so that it serves as a motivating factor for their performance. In other words, when one realizes that they have been appointed because they are trusted, then they desire to live out that trust. Tschannen and Hoy (2000) and Wong and Pang (2003:555) argue that this form of trust brings feelings of confidence and a belief that an employer is straightforward.

The study argued that trust that is shown during the appointment or election processes make the employees enthusiastic and ready to perform so as to live the trust that has been bestowed on them. So, on arrival in the organization, the new employees form informal and formal networks to be able to function. Through informal networks, they reach out to colleagues and friends to try and understand how the organization

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[10] These are the regional administrative offices that are responsible for the church members in those regions: Central Kenya Conference, South Kenya Conference, Western Kenya Conference, Ranen Conference, Kenya Lake Conference, Central Nyanza Field, and Kenya Coast Field. A Field is a regional office that is semi- autonomous in the sense that its members are few and it does not have financial independence. A Conference on the other hand is autonomous to the extent that it is financially stable. The election process starts with the election of delegates from the local church level in which constituency meetings known as 'Business meetings' are held and names are proposed and voted according to the required number. In all cases, local Fields and Conferences are given slots according to their membership, which they in turn distribute to the local churches. One of the requirements that the Conferences must follow is to ensure that women and youth are fairly represented. The local churches through their pastors present the names to the Conferences that in turn present them to the Union executive committee (made up of representatives from Field and Conference offices) for voting. Throughout this process, the delegates must be vetted by their local constituents and their names voted at the local Church level, at the District level, at the Conference or Field level and at the Union level. If a question is raised over a given name, the name is dropped and another one is picked. The duly elected delegates will then gather at designated venue for up to three days to elect their leaders as described above.

works and how they can make a contribution. Moreover, in formal networks they discuss with the supervisors and colleagues on what they are expected to do, how they can perform certain tasks, and how they can contribute to enhance performance. The new employees become inquisitive about what is happening around them and how things are done, they participate in the organization's activities, such as worship programmes and staff visitations, and other social activities and in interacting with people in these ways, they enhance their internal communication practices.[11] However, field observations[12] revealed that trust that is shown in an election or appointment is hampered by factors such as inadequate orientation[13] for the new employees upon joining the organization. In seeking to understand the positive experiences of a new employee to the organization, he expressed his dissatisfaction and disorientation as well as confusion over what he termed as inadequate orientation instead. The following is an interview excerpt of the employee:

> Basically orientation in EAU is not okay. In most cases you have to find your way around. You have to find what is where, what is kept where. .... I just came there, I was told this is the office and from there I picked up struggling to understand which file is where and for what… The marking of the files was done at a very shallow level… I was shown a few equipment which belonged to the department but I can't say it was a detailed orientation... It was very difficult and even now I am still learning even though I am several months old in the job. I am still learning how some of the things are done in this office. (sic) (H.O.D. 2 interview excerpts, May 15th, 2011)

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[11] It observed one of the new accountants who joined the organization in 2012 from a sub-organization. The accountant joined EAU with a lot of enthusiasm and within a short time had made several friends in the accounts department and with other people from other departments. For example, every time I visited the accounts office, I would find the individual engaged in animated discussion with his colleagues. There was usually a lot of laughter in the group. A year later the accountant was promoted to the senior accounts position. Hence I see the accountant's quick settling in and formation of network as having been influenced by his belief that those who called him from his former place of work had a lot of trust in him.

[12] One day, H.O.D.2 called me to his office and requested me to help him understand how to make his monthly travel reports. This prompted me to request for an interview with him on his orientation. Even though I sought for the positive orientation experience he could think of, he emphasized more on what he felt was a lack of proper orientation.

[13] Adequate orientation in this study means providing the new employee with all the information that is necessary to enable him/ her perform his work. The process would include longer visits to each office, introduction of colleagues and how their work relates to the new employee and detailed information sharing on organization policies and other guidelines.

Two women relievers (referred to here as F.R.1 and F.R. 2) who had come to relieve members of staff on study leave were also interviewed. Even though the two joined the organization at the same time, F.R. 1 described her orientation experience as adequate while F.R. 2 indicated that her orientation experience was inadequate. The following is an interview excerpt from F.R. 1:

> I can describe my orientation as adequate because I attended four brief sessions before I started working and because I had done secretarial work it helped. It was not very new to me only that I needed to know how this institution works. P was asked to take me round during briefing. (sic) (Interviews excerpts, F.R. 1, May 30th, 2011)

However, as the following interview excerpt demonstrates, F.R. 2 had a different orientation experience. She said that hers was not adequate and it did not help her to fully discharge her duties:

> No I wasn't…I didn't even have time to walk around because I had to sit here and receive the visitors and receive phone-calls. Now when everyone was coming down they would come and tell me 'I am so and so', like Pastor X came and told me 'I am Pastor X and my office is there and I am now going out with Pr. Y. I remembered that but when they came back I didn't even know them because it was so brief…I didn't know their offices up there, just seated down so I don't know when they go upstairs where in particular they go...Like if someone comes and tells me, 'I want to go see N. I don't even know where N's office is… now that was challenging to me ... I knew them by face but their names I did not know well. (sic) (F.R.2, Interview excerpts, 30th May, 2011)

From the above interview excerpt, the individual in question seems to have had poor orientation because she was left on her own to find her way around. She expressed confusion and frustration when she realized that she could not master the names of the employees. In trying to understand how the organization works, she approached another employee to help her. Developing these kinds of informal networks enhanced her internal communication but it was slow and time consuming, hence costly to the organization because the organization did not fully utilize the skills of the employee as the employee spent more time trying to figure out where various offices were located and who occupied those offices. Sometimes the new employee did not even know where to deliver the letters and had to rely on particular staff:

> There are some letters I was to take to N and I told P, 'please take these letters to N, they are urgent'. He said to me, 'No D, you cannot just sit down here and you don't even know where the offices are, close the door I take you upstairs'. That is how I went upstairs and saw the offices and knew where they were' …When someone came and I did not know the person they wanted to see but the name sounded familiar like Pr. Z. then I would tell them to wait and then I go and look for P, then I ask P who Pr. Z was... And P would tell me Pr. Z. is upstairs somewhere …I would then go back and tell the person to wait.… That is how I did it (sic). (F.R.2, Interview excerpts, May 30th, 2011)

F. R. 2 not only struggled to know the employees and their offices, but also how certain equipment she was using worked and whom she needed to report to when they were faulty:

> Okay there are times the telephone could start I must call it singing.... the tones yes it sings and stops or it goes on then I call P, … you must have pressed somewhere, P said… then I say to him surely P, I cannot press anything because I don't know... then he would come and press every button until it stops....he was also guessing, he did not know that sometimes it goes off if there is nothing displaying and then it stays like that...when everything goes wrong I would call P coz I felt he knew, when I tell him the problem he would go to the person who is supposed to correct it and it gets corrected but most of the time he did it himself. So I could just wait, no phone call, just sit and wait... I don't know whom to report to and someone may feel like I was not doing anything. (F. R. 2, Interview excerpts, May, 30tth, 2011)

The foregoing interview excerpts demonstrate the challenges new employees face when they do not get adequate orientation, and how this in turn affects their internal communication experiences. EAU seems to have been making certain apparent assumptions on orientation.[14] The assumption much more affected those employees such as F.R.2 who joined the organization from outside the denomination circles. It was observed, for example, that most of the office secretaries who came as relievers were usually freelancers who did not work for the Church and therefore did not have any prior experience of how a Church organization works. But the other critical issue on orientation here is the fact that new members were rushed through the orientation

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[14] The assumptions were that a new employee who joined the organization from a sub-organization already understood how the organization operates because it was assumed that all Seventh-day Adventist organizations operate on the same principles and, therefore, a new employee would naturally learn the ropes of the organization. But this assumption may have affected new employees from sub-organizations because their previous organizations did not necessarily operate in the same way.

process, so that the little time and the bits of information that they were provided with were not sufficient in helping them work smoothly. This forced the new employee to look for ways of filling the gaps and they sought advice from other employees, even though these employees may not have been conversant with the tasks. The study argued that such issues can hamper internal communication because they make the new employee withdraw into their own cocoons with the result that older employees think that the new employees were not sociable. Such feelings may affect trust between and among the employees and consequently affect their levels of interaction. The above excerpts also demonstrate how new employees navigate the rigid structures to make friendships and networks that help them understand their work assignments.

Although one may argue that that the foregoing excerpts from H.O.D 2 and F.R. 2 sound negative in view of the fact that this study was looking for positive stories, they demonstrate that appreciative inquiry does not stop people from addressing negative issues as has been argued by scholars such as Dick (2004), Fitzgerald et al. (2001), Pratt (2002) and Rogers and Fraser (2003) who assert that AI does not honour the multiple realities of human experiences in organizations. In any case, Healy (2005: 83) asserts that 'appreciative inquiry incorporates the telling of negative experiences, as these underpin participants' motivation for improvement'. Furthermore, Bushe (2013: 105) argues that people with negative stories should be given space to share them during the appreciative inquiry process:

> I think it is unwise to try and banish discussions of what people don't like during appreciative inquiry especially if they have a lot of emotional charge around it. Instead, let us try to be thoughtful in how we make space for the inquiry into the hurt, anger, injustice, despair-doing that in a way that contributes to the group's ability to understand, and bring into being collective aspirations.

The foregoing interview excerpts and the aforementioned literature discount the criticisms of AI because of its focus on the positive core and show that while AI focuses

on the positive, participants are at liberty to share their negative experiences as well, and the negative stories validate the reasons for desiring to enhance the positive core of a given phenomenon. In any case, negative experiences presented in a genuine appreciative inquiry process act as a springboard to strategic improvement providing a realistic context for the latter. More importantly the findings demonstrate that the use of structuration theory in structuring positive study questions helped to facilitate positive thinking. Hence the study argued that the positive questions facilitated study participants into identifying trust shown during election or appointment as crucial in enhancing their communication relationships; and that adequate orientation influences employee's levels of networking. In this case then, the organization's communication culture changed through the interactions of study participants as they came up with new strategies of improving trust during election or appointment and during orientation.

Field observations showed that the orientation procedures had begun to change for the better albeit slowly, following a discussion I had with one of the officers in January 2011 on how the orientation process could be improved in order to make it more profitable for a new employee and a subsequent short survey on orientation conducted by the Union President in the same month. The survey showed that most employees were not familiar with each other and with the organization's operations, procedures and policies.[15]

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[15] In January 2011, the Union president conducted a short survey that was aimed at finding out how much the employees knew of each other and the organization's policies. This was following a similar survey that was conducted at the Division offices. While the results were not fully analyzed, the president's observations from the few responses he looked at indicated that employees knew very little of each other. Unfortunately, I was away at the time and did not participate in the survey but saw the questionnaire.

After my fieldwork, the President's survey, and the consultations, it was observed that three new employees that joined the organization were given adequate orientation.[16] This was evidenced in the new employees' quick adjustment to their new responsibilities fairly easily than those who had undergone a less rigorous orientation process. For example, it was observed that one of the new employees interacted with her supervisors more easily and mastered her work such as photocopying and filing and also used the in-house language of each department very easily within a very short period of time. The new employee also became active in the organizations' activities such as worship, staff meetings, staff visitations and social retreats as evidenced through her participation. It was observed for example that on a visit to a sick employee's house on October, 16th, 2011, the said new employee actively contributed to the discussions and offered a closing prayer. Furthermore, during the staff annual retreat of October 2011, the employee actively participated in the focus group discussions as well as in the sports team that she joined. Within six months of her employment, the new employee was promoted to a higher office whose operations were more complex. It was observed that in the various forums mentioned above, the said employees freely interacted with other members of staff (Fieldwork notes October 16th, 2011; and October 26th, 2011). This observation shows that adequate orientation enables a new employee to easily adjust to work processes. But most importantly, adequate orientation enables one to interact with other employees because they quickly form friendships and networks which contributes to high levels of interaction and, in this way, it enhances internal communication.[17]

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[16] The said employees were taken round each office and introduced to colleagues and then attached to specific members of staff to help them settle and understand their work.

[17] The said individual was in early 2013 appointed as the administrative secretary to one of the officers, and this is mainly as a result of her orientation that helped her understand the organization and her work in greater detail.

The improvement of the orientation and socialization process and subsequent easy adjustment of the new employees in EAU, as discussed above, is in concert with the arguments in Shockley-Zalabak, (2009); Miller, (2003); Kreps (1990) that socialization is a critical process in determining a new employee's performance. According to these scholars, however, socialization is not a one-time activity, but rather a three-phase process, where each phase contributes to the adjustment of new employees to the organization.[18] Hence, orientation, as discussed in the literature, implies an active and continuous process, where the organization's leadership actively provides information and training to enable the employee function and where formal and informal communication between the supervisor and the new employee and peers contributes to the new employee's understanding of how the organization works.

The study argued that the orientation process in EAU takes a different approach from the one that is discussed in the literature above.[19] Yet, as this study has shown, new employees must cope with new job assignments, new social relationships and sometimes new locations. Study participants, therefore, proposed that trust as shown during the election or appointment procedures, should be enhanced through the orientation processes in order to improve the employees' communication experience.

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[18] For example, the anticipatory phase occurs during the interview process and here the new employee learns about the organization, and the anticipated work role, expectations and experiences. This phase assumes a detailed process, where the organization provides sufficient information to help the employee make a decision on whether to take the job or not. The encounter phase occurs when the employee has joined the organization and receives training. Formal and informal interactions with a supervisor and peers take place. The metamorphosis phase occurs when a new employee begins to master organizational requirements and adjusts to the organization. (Miller, 2003:139; Shockley-Zalabak, 2009; Kreps, 1990)

[19] For example, while Shockley-Zalabak (2009) argues that during the interview the organization should provide as much detail as possible about its operations to the employee and its expectations from the new employee, in EAU, it is the new employee who was initially tasked to provide details about himself/herself and their expectations of the organization. The interview panellists assume that the prospective employee understands the organization well and is the reason for his/her interest in the position in question. The election processes also assume that the employee is knowledgeable about the organization and may not need much orientation. This agrees with Miller (2003: 139) who argues that employers make assumptions about new employees, who transfer from one job to another in the same organization and do not provide them with 'formal socialization experiences'.

2.4   **Trust as expressed in the Delegation of Duties and Responsibilities**

Study participants described a second form of trust as exhibited when the employee is

delegated with duties and responsibilities and it is believed that the person has the

capability to perform them and is left to carry out those responsibilities. This means that

the trust that is exhibited at the time of election or appointment should manifest itself

further in the delegation of duties and responsibilities. The study participants' argument

here was that increased delegation of duties and responsibilities improves the quality

and quantity of their communication and this, in turn, enhances organizations'

members' delegation of duties and responsibilities to one another. Thus, when an

employee is given responsibilities to discharge, they consider this to be a form of trust

bestowed on them. The following are some excerpts from the focus group discussions:

> Trust is a bestowed responsibility whereby you are given responsibility by your seniors.
> And they totally believe that you will do it to the best of your ability and they believe that
> the work they have given you, you can do it better; so that means minimum follow-up
> because they believe you can do it.'(sic) (M.O. 3, focus group 2, October, 26th, 2011)

> The fact that we have been trusted with whatever positions we hold in EAU shows some
> trust either by church members or superiors. So for me first and foremost, the fact that I
> have been entrusted with some responsibility means that the person who gave me that
> responsibility must have trusted me. (M.O.W. 5, focus group 3, 26th October, 2011)

> 'Because of the faith that people have in me because of the way I have worked with them,
> even in the other church places I have worked people trusted me and would even leave me
> with their children and other things to care for them......so I saw that even when I came to
> the union that trust continued. (M.O.W. 3 focus group 2, October, 26th, 2011)

> My work involves collaborating with people in our sub-organizations, and once in a while
> they ask me, 'we want you to get us this thing'. That means someone has that level of trust

> to be able to give you the responsibility to work out that thing on their behalf. (sic).
> (M.O.W. 3, focus group 1, October 26th 2011)

In another focus group, there was a discussion about how employees felt when

supervisors trusted subordinates by asking them to do other assignments in addition to

their core assignments. In this case, trust was shown by recognizing another potential in an individual:

> And so he told me, "not only do want your theological background but we also want you to use your business background…" To me that is a tall order but when people think you have that capacity, now that challenges you. … and it is when I am seeing the magnitude of the work and daily I am realizing and saying, you mean this is the work that I have been entrusted with.... there is that kind of thing you are saying, I don't want to let these people down and the other one is saying, Lord give me the grace. But you feel good…It encourages you; it affirms you as a person and gives you confidence in the abilities that the Lord has given you. (M.O.W. 2, focus group 1, October, 26th 2011)

Members of another focus group argued that the delegation of responsibility motivates employees to go beyond what they are required to do and, therefore, acts as an incentive for one to do more:

> When you are given a responsibility of that magnitude and someone has that level of trust on you, you want to do your very best. You want to make sure that whatever you get is the best so that at the end of the day someone has no regret in giving you that responsibility. And so when I am given that responsibility I want to make sure that I get the best out of what is there of course within the limits that I have been possibly given. (M.O.W. 3 focus group 2, October, 26th, 2011)

The foregoing focus group excerpts provide insights into what trust engendered or demonstrated through the delegation of responsibilities can do for an employee. Study participants argued that this form of trust motivates them to doing more. It also boosts their self-esteem and makes them exploit their other skills that may have otherwise remained dormant. The study argued that the delegation of duties and responsibilities makes the employee want to collaborate with others to achieve the desired outcomes. So, there are collaborations with colleagues and sometimes friends, who may be familiar with what the employee is doing. Moreover, they consult with the supervisors on new ideas that they may want to introduce, and they give feedback as well and all these activities enhance internal communication.

Field observations showed that enhanced delegation of responsibility enhances communication. For example, I was involved in the renovation of some old building to

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create more office space. Before the renovations started, we had to move some old files to a different location. The responsibility of identifying a location and moving the archival materials was given to Mr. P. one of our junior members of staff and I then left for an assignment out of the Nairobi office. It was observed that in the two weeks I was away, Mr. P. called me with the other building committee members regularly to report on the progress he had made. Mr. P sometimes took some of the committee members to the site to see what was happening. When I returned, I observed that Mr. P. had documented some of the work that had been done, and he showed me the new location for the old files.

Ordinarily, Mr. P. did not report to any of the building committee members and so our level of interaction was minimal, but due to his new responsibility our interactions increased. For example, on one morning as the President of the Union approached the main building, Mr. P. approached him and said "Look at those iron sheets at the reception roof. They are old and rusty and I think we need to do something" (Observation notes, August, 15th 2013).

The study argued that such confidence from Mr. P. can be attributed to enhanced delegation of duties and responsibilities. The fact that Mr. P. had been given extra responsibilities over and above his usual duties demonstrated to him that he was highly trusted and this not only increased his interaction with the members of the committee but also increased his confidence or courage to share his ideas with the President of the Union. Therefore, this study has shown that enhanced delegation of duties and responsibilities enhanced internal communication and vice versa.

However, field observations[20] showed that this trust can be undermined by a lack of clear definition of one's roles and responsibilities and a lack of recognition of one's contribution. In such cases, an employee feels unsure of their contribution to the organization and with time withdraws from actively interacting with other employees or seeking clarification on their duties and responsibilities. The following interview excerpt points to this challenge:

> Sometimes I don't see why I attend these meetings. I just feel like I am there to fill K's gap when he is not there...you know I am never recognized in any way. I see people being given various tasks and then mine comes as an afterthought if at all. .... Sometimes I feel like resigning and going home ...yes I am reading about humility but sometimes it is good to know where I belong. (M. O. 2, Interview excerpts, April, 18th, 2011)

After the above interview and in consultation with one of the officers, the organizations' profile was revised in order to give due recognition to M.O.2 and in the next mid-year meeting, during the introductions, M.O.2 was duly introduced and given a big role to play in the meetings. As a result, it was observed that during the meetings M.O.2 actively interacted with other members unlike in the previous meetings. Later the same year, during some special event for the staff, M.O.2 was given a lead role in planning for the event. It was observed then that M.O. 2 gave regular updates on the event's plans to staff members and during focus group discussions, M.O.2 actively participated in the discussions and he chaired one of the focus group discussions. The above field observations demonstrate that internal communication is influenced by the degree to which an employee feels trusted and this is partly demonstrated by the delegation of duties and responsibilities. Therefore, it can be argued that enhanced delegation of responsibilities enhances the quality and quantity of communication and

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[20] On April 18th, 2011, we held an ADCOM but we had a group of elders from the local church that had come for some consultations. During the introductions, the chairman introduced some of the leaders and forgot to introduce M.O.2 and had to be reminded. I observed that M.O.2 was upset because of the way he was left out. The excerpt is from an interview I had with M.O.2 to try and understand how he made sense of what transpired during the ADCOM. Though the questions were appreciative in nature, M.O.2 still expressed his feelings in the negative.

quality communication enhances delegation of responsibilities because it boosts one's confidence and makes one want to share with others on what they are doing.

2.5 **Trust as Circumscribed by Policy**

The other form of trust in the organization which study participants identified is the trust that is circumscribed by the organization's policy. In this case, policy defines the communication relationships that exist between employees in order for them to meet their contractual obligations. To that extent, people trust each other to achieve organizational stability and the accomplishment of work tasks as defined by the organization's mission. Internal communication in this case, is circumscribed by policy. This was amplified by a member of one of the focus group discussions:

> I can say that looking at our union; we only trust each other to the level of what the policy requires. I relate with you from the perspective of what the policy says. If I know what the policy says and you have allowed me to relate with you at par with what the policy requires, then I feel safe. I think maybe that is how I can limit the level of trust in EAU. But otherwise if it has to go deeper than what policies require, then I will go to a deeper revelation of a deeper knowledge of the other person. (M.O.1, focus group 1, October, 26^{th,} 2011)

It was observed that as the focus group discussion participants discussed further, a change started occurring in their perception and they thought that they needed a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other, in order to recover their humanity at work. Moreover, for that to happen study participants argued that there was need for continuous interactions, in order to know one another better and, therefore, to relate at a deeper level. The focus group discussion participants said that for this to happen, trust must grow in the following two areas: 1) trust arising from regular interactions and self-disclosure and; 2) trust in sharing personal and official information.

2.5.1 Trust Arising from Regular Interactions and Self Disclosure

Focus group participants pointed out that, in order for them to move beyond communication relationships, as circumscribed by the organizations' policy, they needed to know each other more deeply. This implies that regular interactions of the organization's members are necessary to foster communication. It follows that as people interact intensely, they know each other better, and they trust each other more and share information more intimately, and so they enhance their internal communication practices. The following excerpts from a focus group discussion bring this out:

> We need to know the other person so well, relate in several instances so that I confirm that what appears to be trust from the person's side is sincere and honest. .... but if it were relationships, it would require a deeper knowledge and it would require time to confirm that the way they are doing it is not a trap set but actually means it honestly…. Occasionally there will be a time when the level of relationships can go deeper, and the level of trust also goes deeper, that depends on who I have known the other person to be. (M.H.D. 3, focus group 3, October, 26th 2011)

The above focus group excerpt demonstrates that the study participants desired to develop deeper relationships beyond what is provided for by the organizations' policy. The study participants argued that developing and nurturing deeper relations takes time but it is worth investing in, because it enables them to know each other better. The focus group excerpt essentially demonstrates that study participants recognized that trust which was circumscribed by policy was not adequate in meeting their relational needs; and so they identified new practices to enhance their communication relationships.[21] Therefore, this study argues that structuration theory facilitated the change of study

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[21] In this case study, participants questioned some of the 'ideologies' that influenced the design of the policies that organizations such as EAU operate. This is because as it has been argued in chapter 1, the organization's existing policies and structures do not provide adequate space for interpersonal relations because they uphold communication more as a management tool than for enhancing organization members' relationships. In this case organization members use communication for purposes of achieving organizational objectives mainly, and not for building friendships and strong interpersonal relationships; which as the study argued are pertinent to the realization of the organization's objectives.

participants' focus from communication as circumscribed by policy to desiring one that is grounded on regular interactions and deeper knowledge of one another. This is because of the AI questions which focused on the positive core and which facilitated generative discussions. Thus, AI's focus on identifying positive communication practices influenced study participants to generate new possibilities and ways to go beyond those circumscribed by policy in order to enjoy interpersonal relationships. Hence study participants desired for regular and deeper interactions with one another where they could also be comfortable with each other that they could enjoy self-disclosure. As the following two focus group excerpts demonstrate, study participants argued that such relationships are built through a deeper knowledge of one another:

> Yes, it is true. When you know me more, you know me in my social setup, in my home setup. Like the way we went to visit J and R. You know them in that setting and you begin to open up because you have known them in different dimensions'.... 'What we are saying is, trust begins at a certain level and you cannot just begin to trust someone. You have to start from a certain point and as you develop and internalize, you communicate, you become open to this person and you enhance that trust. (F.O.W.5, focus group 3, October, 26[th,] 2011)

> Trust develops with time and before somebody can actually go out and talk to or confide in the other, he must have developed that trust. It is not a one- time experience that I meet...today and then I start telling her what is happening in my life. You know the relationship must have taken time to grow'...I think we can improve trust by having frequent meetings like this whereby there are free associations, free fellowships and through these kind of meetings, we begin to learn about each other…. With time as we come together and we fellowship with this kind of closeness we begin to understand one another and that enhances trust. (M.H.D 5, focus group 4, October, 26th 2011)

The foregoing focus group discussion excerpts demonstrate that internal communication practices are enhanced when people know each other beyond the relationships circumscribed by policy. However, as study participants argued, this form of trust is not instantaneous rather it is built over time from regular and genuine interactions, sometimes through informal activities and settings. This argument is consistent with those of Mishra and Mishra (2013: 455) that trustworthiness that leads

to openness takes longer to develop because 'it involves not only speaking the truth but also revealing information about one's intentions and expectations'.

The study argued that a deeper knowledge of one another creates openness, and removes barriers that may be created by organizational hierarchies, which segment individuals, according to job groups and positions. Such openness reduces fear and distrust that is sometimes common in the organizations' relationships and, in this way, improves the quality of the organization members' communication practices.

Field observations of October 26th and 27th, 2011 showed that change had started to take place in matters of deeper relationships and self-disclosure. This was especially evident during the focus group discussions. It was observed that at the beginning of the focus group discussions, some study participants were reluctant to join the groups, while others joined but just observed without making any contribution. This study attributed the initial lack of interest and participation of some of the study participants to mistrust or suspicion that arose from a lack of a deeper knowledge of one another. But it was observed that as the discussions continued, those that were non active joined and participated in the discussions and this was an indication that the longer the time study participants spent together, the more they got used to each other and felt freer to share with one another. For example, it was observed that the three employees that had not participated in the focus group discussions on the first day joined in on the second day after observing how those who participated interacted with each other during meals. It was also observed that the focus group discussion took much longer (more than three hours), yet initially they had been slated for two hours. Some of the groups' members continued sitting together even during dinner and after and the groups met on the second day to continue responding to the remaining research questions. It was further observed that focus group participants remained in the same groups for other group

activities and this continued to the following day where Bible study groups maintained the same members who had participated in the focus group discussions and here it was observed that the interactions were freer and livelier.

The study argued that the longer the study participants interacted, the more they knew each other and the more they became open with one another. The study assumed that the group cohesion resulted from a deeper knowledge of one another and a deeper interaction with each other during the focus group discussions which made it easier for the group members to blend together. The above study findings are consistent with the arguments of Baumeister and Larry, (1995: 530) that 'establishing and maintaining attachments and connection with others are essential human desires' (see also Morgan and Hunt, 1994:31). It was further observed on October 27th, 2011, that during respective groups' reports of proposals on how to improve the various positive communication practices under study, study participants' conversations had moved from 'I' to 'We' as the following two excerpts from the group reports demonstrate:

> Then we also said that we should be able to build trust in others and each person should be trustworthy. We need to be people who are dependable. If I share something with you and in most instances we say that is between the two of us then later on I hear this information through another person, then I can't share information with you which I feel is confidential. So we should be trustworthy and we should make other people trust us. (M.O.W. 3, focus group 1 reports, October 27th 2011)

> …The second point we discussed was gender… We saw that in EAU we have already come out of this tradition of saying that men cannot do this and ladies cannot do this. We are out of that because we cited some few examples where we said that ladies can do better than men. In fact, we need to appreciate this. (M.H.D, 1, focus group 2, report October 27th, 2011)

The above excerpt from focus group reports demonstrates that study participants began to see one another in a group relationship and recognized each other as co-actors in the group and in EAU. Whereas at the commencement of the focus group discussions they presented their arguments in singular form, they presented their reports in plural form. Hence, the study argued that the two days of close interaction of organization

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members at the social retreat and during focus group discussions facilitated trust between them because they knew each other better. This argument is consistent with those of Noteboon (2002: 89) that trust develops over time. Lewicki and Bunker (1996: 121) call this form of trust 'knowledge-based trust' and argue that it develops over time largely because of the history of interaction between those involved. They equate this form of trust to gardening: "The development of this trust is more like gardening- tilling the soil year after year to understand it, and knowing what will grow in the sand and moist sections and the shady and sunlit sections" (ibid). Smircich and Morgan (2011: 47) also aver that trust is not instantaneous but builds over time:

> The length of a relationship between individuals may affect the level of trust between them. … The level of trust may be greater in relationships of long durations than in relationships of short durations owing to the level of knowledge and familiarity acquired.

Hence, there is a higher level of trust between people who relate longer as opposed to those who relate for shorter periods of time because one cannot make strong demands on weak connections. The findings demonstrate that that trust and communication are interdependent so that the more people trust each other the more they interact with one another and the greater the trust (Barker and Camarata, 1998). The following diagram helps illustrate this interdependent relationship between trust and communication in East African union:
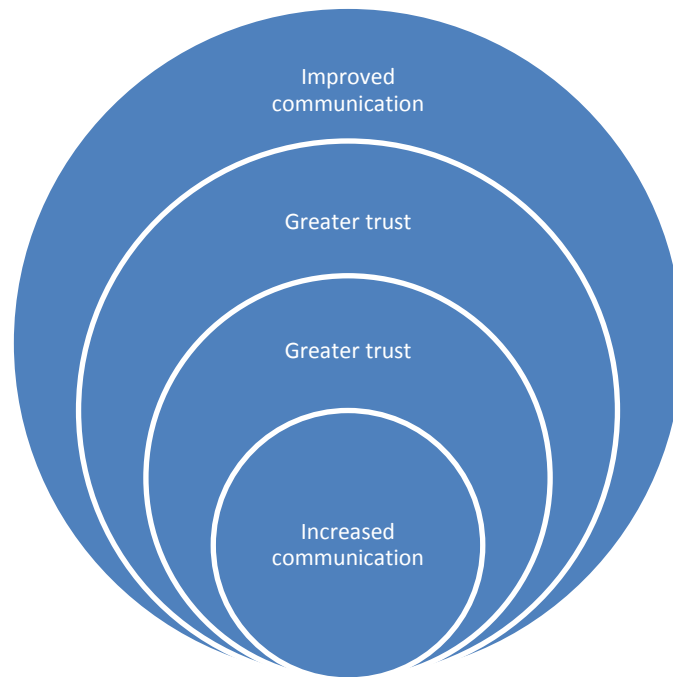
Figure 3: Interdependent Relationship between Trust and Communication in East African Union

The above diagram helps to demonstrate that trust and communication inform each other, hence the higher the trust, the higher the quality and quantity of communication and vice versa. The study argued that structuration theory was instrumental in making study participants emphasise the positive aspects of internal communication practices in their discussions. It was also argued that organizational learning took place as demonstrated by the study participants' desire to improve their level of trust between one another through a deeper knowledge of each other and through self-disclosure. The study also argued that through their interactions, study participants changed their internal communication culture as they began to view each other in relationship. The above findings are consistent with the social constructionist principle of appreciative inquiry which as 'replaces the individual with the relationship as the primary locus of change' (Gergen, (1982; 1994; Watkins et al. 2011: 48); and the wholeness principle which involves all the stakeholders (Preskill and Catsambas, 2006: 10). Furthermore, the findings support the simultaneity principle of appreciative inquiry which maintains

that inquiry and change occur simultaneously not separately. This recursiveness suggests that change begins the moment the inquiry begins (Watkins et al. 2011: 37), and as has been demonstrated above, study participants began to experience change through the choice of affirmative words, and through their willingness to interact beyond the organization's policy's prescription.

2.5.2 Trust in Sharing Personal and Official Information

Another aspect of trust that study participants proposed is one that relates to employees' informal reordering of policy to communication to enable them to freely share their personal and official information and hence trust in sharing personal and official information. Lee et al. (2010: 478) describe this type of trust as 'disclosure based trust'. Lewicki and Bunker (1996: 123) describe the same as 'identification-based trust' and argue that this form of trust exists because the parties involved effectively understand and appreciate each other. This trust is based on a person's willingness to disclose personal and work related information to another. Hence, individuals in EAU would like to have people they can confide in. The following excerpts from focus group discussions illustrate this point:

> To me trust means that you don't fear, you bring out what you want and communicate to another person without fearing that this person may go out and say the contrary or may add salt to it. You have that confidence that whatever you communicate is going to be taken as you have communicated it. (F.O.W. 2, focus group 1, October 26th, 2011)

> I think trust is creating some mutual understanding that you can share information without being scared or afraid that somebody will go and tell other people and probably start fighting among yourselves. (M.H. D 1. focus group 2, October, 26th, 2011)

> Trust is having confidence in somebody.... For me to confide in you at least for me to tell you how I feel and how I want you to help me. Trust also involves the ability to keep secrets. That when I share information with you I am sure that you will not divulge that information and make known my secrets. And so I cannot confide in you, but when I trust you then I can even share with you my burdens, my happiness and all that I have I can share with you freely. (M.H.D. 6 focus   group 4, October 26th, 2011)

> One thing is the issue of confidentiality. For example, I can trust N more than I can trust somebody else, because if I tell N Something I know it will end there. I will never hear it anywhere, and then the idea that I know she can protect me. I know that she may know the truth but she cannot re-use it to destroy me; that kind of trust where you have someone who

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will stand for you and will not destroy you. And I think that in EAU there are people you can pick and say, this one if I tell him something it will stop there but this one if I say it, I will hear it again. (F.O.W. 3, focus group 2, October, 26th, 2011)

You know you can have somebody whom you really trust and know that whatever you are discussing will not be heard. I think this is the best way. That you can have somebody to share with, because you can also bring your personal matters and confide in them. (M.O.W. 4 focus group 2, 26th October, 2011)

The thrust of the above focus group excerpts is that study participants would like to have confidants with whom they can share information of a personal or official nature. The study participants' argument demonstrates that study participants realized that communication practices which were circumscribed by policy limited their sharing with one another, and perhaps to official matters in a limited scale. The study argued that such policies compelled the employee to have two separate identities- private and public- in which case one was forced to adapt to one or the other depending on where they were and they had to constantly and consciously make choices of what information to share in each instance and corresponding identity. Yet the study argued that an employee is a whole person and carries with him/her issues that affect both their private and public lives and both interact to facilitate or hinder ones' performance. Hence, once the organization forces one to ignore one and use the other, then the individual gets confused.

The arguments from the above focus group discussion excerpts demonstrate that organizational learning took place because the study participants recognized the limitation of communication that was circumscribed by policy. They then came up with new strategies to help them enjoy their interpersonal relationships, hence they detected, recognized and named a new communication practice to help them relate better.

The study argued that when an employee identifies a confidant, they open up to each other to share their personal and official concerns. There is close consultation,

mutual sharing and mutual understanding. This closeness eliminates fear, doubt and suspicion about the intentions of the other person, and they freely share without the fear that the information will be leaked to a third party. Once this confidence is established and nurtured, employees freely consult and seek advice from each other and this improves the quality and quantity of their interactions. These findings agree with the argument of Sztompka (1999: 103):

> Endowing others with trust evokes positive actions towards those others. Trust liberates and mobilizes human agency; releases creative, uninhibited, innovative, entrepreneurial activism towards other people. The uncertainty and risk surrounding their actions is lowered and hence, possibilities of action increase proportionally to the increase in trust. We are more open towards others, more ready to initiate interactions, to enter into lasting relation-ships with them.

2.6 **Trust in Self**

A final form of trust identified in the study is trust in self, such that in order for one to trust others, one must trust himself/ herself first. Study participants argued that trust in self gives them confidence in their work, and helps them to develop trust in others. They argued that if someone does not trust themselves first they would be suspicious of everyone, including those with good intentions, so trust must start with the self. The following is a vignette from one of the focus groups that explains the trust in self:

> B: You must make yourself trustworthy. Can you walk the talk if you want people to trust you? You should do the right thing possible and don't give people space to try and think, is this person really what we think they are?
>
> A: So trust has to start from you and me?
>
> B: Yes, it has to start with me.
>
> D: If I have trusted myself to do the right thing, and you will have done the same, so at the end of the day I am able to trust you and you are able to trust me. So in the first instance you have to trust yourself. (M.O 2, and F.O.W. 2, focus group 1, October 26th, 2011)

Another focus group participant believed that it is not possible to regulate trust in others but trust if it does not start with self:

The thing I have discovered is that because I cannot be able to regulate the other person, I try and ensure that I am trustworthy… In other words, if there has to be trust in EAU it has to begin with me. I must ask God to make me to be trustworthy and so I am. You know sometimes you expect other people to be trustworthy but you are not. It must begin with me...let people know that when you are talking to them you have no other agenda at the back of your mind. (M.O.W. 2, focus group 2, October 26th, 2011)

The thrust of the above focus group discussion excerpts is that trust in self is an antidote for trust in others. Here, the focus was on the need for one to be honest, truthful, and reliable so that they can trust others. Hence, study participants proposed that individuals should enhance trust in self so as to embrace honesty and truthfulness. Such values would mean that the individual is honest with others and that their private and public life are congruent. This form of trust makes one open to consultations, suggestions and new ideas. Ultimately openness and regular consultations enhance internal communication.

Trust in self is akin to what Covey (2006: 33) calls authenticity. Covey (2006:42) argues that trust in self, or 'self- trust as he calls it 'is the foundation that enables one to trust others'. Covey avers that self- trust is about one being 'credible', 'believable', and 'trustworthy' and also one that can trust himself /herself. Pauw (2011:112) and George and Sims (2007: xxxi) also argue that trust in self is cultivated when people know themselves fully and are, therefore, true to themselves and are consistent in all situations. Such people have been described as authentic because they fully understand themselves, their strengths and weaknesses and, therefore, their behaviour is congruent with and is grounded in their qualities (Avolio and Walumbwa, 2004). For example, in discussing about authentic leaders, Gardner et al., (2005: 343) argue:

Authentic leaders must achieve authenticity through self-awareness, self- acceptance, and authentic actions and relationships. Authentic leadership extends beyond the authenticity of the leader as a person to encompass authentic relationships with followers and associates. These relationships are characterized by transparency, openness, and trust, guidance towards worthy objectives, and emphasizes on follower development.

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Even though Gardner's argument is on leadership, this can be applied to other employees as well. The study maintained that knowing the self enables one to develop confidence and trust in others and this trust enables regular and close interactions between members of organizations and therefore enhances their levels of interactions and communication.

3 SUMMARY

This chapter has established the various strategies of improving trust in EAU and how trust influences communication practices in EAU. It was established that   enhanced trust also improves the quality and quantity of communication. Study participants argued that there should be enhanced trust during elections or appointments, and enhanced trust through delegation of duties and responsibilities. In discussing trust as circumscribed by policy, study participants begun to realize that this form of trust did not help them live out their humanity at work. Hence, they questioned this form of trust in meeting their relational needs and proposed that in order for them to enjoy their relationships; they needed to enhance trust in two areas- through regular interactions and self-disclosure, and through sharing of personal and official information. The other form of trust that study participants identified was trust in self. Study participants argued that trust in self enables one to trust others.

The chapter delved into the study participants' proposal to relate beyond policy prescriptions and showed that this was is an evidence of organizational learning; because, the organization members not only questioned their theories in use, but also they went further to engage in double loop learning by changing the values that govern their communication practices. Hence, structuration theory was useful in formulating the appreciative inquiry's questions. The appreciative questions in turn encouraged

generative discussions through which organizational learning occurred. The study also argued that the organization's communication culture changed as members engaged in interaction to identify strategies for improving trust ways to use them in their day-to-day organizational life.

This chapter also established that appreciative inquiry does not stop people from sharing negative stories as has been argued in some of the literature. Study participants shared negative stories on orientation and delegation of duties. This finding is in agreement with those of Carter, (2006), Van De Harr and Hosking, (2009) and Cram (2010).

Chapter 6 will continue to discuss yet another factor that influences EAU's communication practices. Leader-follower confidence was one of the themes that was identified through the data analysis process. The chapter will address the various strategies that study participants identified as critical in enhancing leader-follower confidence in order to make their communication fruitful. The chapter will show that there is a reciprocal relationship between leader-follower confidence and internal communication.

Chapter 6 Enhancing Leader-Follower Confidence to Enhance Communication Practices

1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the various strategies through which study participants proposed to enhance confidence between leaders and their followers[1] otherwise known as leader-follower confidence in this study. The theme of leader-follower confidence was identified from the data that were collected during the second fieldwork as was discussed in chapter 3. The chapter answers question (b) of the study. Hence, the discussions are based on study findings that arose from the data analysis of the second field work which was used to explore how to enhance the various themes that were identified through the data of the second field work in 2010. The discussions are further augmented by data from interviews and observations carried out during subsequent field works for purposes of triangulation. The main argument of the chapter is that leader-follower confidence is important in enhancing organization members' communication experiences and that leader-follower confidence and communication inform each other so that enhanced leader-follower confidence enhances communication and vice versa. Confidence in this study refers to the assurance or expectation that one has on others based on familiarity and prior experience that they can perform something.

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[1] In this study term leader refers to supervisors and follower refers to subordinate. As argued in chapter 1, supervisor and subordinate position in EAU are fluid, and they change depending on the various roles. Hence, one can be a leader in one role and a subordinate in other. Hence the terms as here used do not connote superior and inferior positions.

Study participants proposed a number of strategies to enhance leaders-follower confidence. These include enhanced openness, enhanced feedback forums, enhanced appreciation and enhanced delegation of responsibility. These different ways are referred to in this study as 'enhancers of confidence'. The various enhancers of confidence, as discussed below, do not follow any particular order of importance.

2   ENHANCE OPENNESS TO IMPROVE LEADER-FOLLOWER CONFIDENCE

Study participants argued that in order to enhance leader-follower confidence, there should be a greater level of openness from both leaders and subordinates on matters that affect the organization and individual employees. Study participants were in essence proposing that individuals should exhibit a higher level of transparency or honesty in sharing information, so as to avoid rumours, suspicion, and gossip. The study participants also said that the organization should create structures that demonstrate that its members are free to share information. Openness here is both at individual level and at organizational level as the following focus group excerpt shows:

> When people have confidence, they engage in free and open communication …but in the absence of confidence between people, somebody will just guess or just engage in rumours, and rumours will always kill communication in the organization. It will lead to name calling and it will result to a cold war in the organization. But confidence you know does the opposite of all these. When people have confidence, they are open, they inquire instead of rumour mongering. They don't recoil; they know I can approach any of these leaders. When you make the communication line open and you make sure that you make it clear and you say 'please come and talk to me, I will not victimize you, you will not be held responsible for anything if you are speaking your mind… when you do that it will be okay. (M.O.3, focus group 2, October 26th, 2011)

For another focus group's participant, openness should be enhanced at the organization's level:

> The organization (EAU) should not be closed and people should be open. When there is an issue let people discuss it openly and not just create or hear rumours about it. Rumours usually destroy trust, so openness is important. (M.O.W. 9, focus group 4, October, 26th, 2011)

According to another focus group participant, leaders should be more open in sharing information, and should also encourage employees to share their views on issues that affect them:

> We need to build openness in our dealings, because if you are open in the way that you deal with people, people are also encouraged to share their issues…As a supervisor you need to give room for people to give suggestions…before may be any decision is made… Then people will come to that point where they will realize that we are involved in the process and so they get encouraged. (M.O.W. 3, focus group 2, October, 26th 2011)

The observation from the above focus group excerpts is that the study participants recognized that the organizations' rigid culture and structures' limited the levels confidence between supervisors and subordinates. They thus desired for a work environment that encourages openness. Openness in turn promotes robust formal and informal interactions and individuals are open to each other on personal and official matters. The study participants also argued that the organization leaders should also be open with employees.

The study posited that an open environment acts as a catalyst to building confidence between organization members and motivates them to share both personal and work related information because it reduces fear, gossip and rumour-mongering among employees. The study further averred that openness reduces bureaucracies and fosters horizontal communication. In this way, regular interactions may occur and hence improve the quality and quantity of internal communication which will in turn enhance leader-follower confidence. Thus, there is a reciprocal relationship between leader-follower confidence and communication. The study, therefore, maintained that leader-follower confidence essentially fosters collaborative conversations. This argument is consistent with that of Kanter (2004: 332) that collaborative conversations across

'positions, departments and groups builds confidence and makes organization members feel connected rather than isolated, and removes perceived boundaries between them'.

The study found out that organization members had started to be more open with one another as the following excerpt from field observations of a staff meeting reveal:

> Among the agenda was one on a court case between a former employee and EAU… The officers gave detailed information about the case. There was also an agenda on change of status of East African Union to East African Union Mission… In both cases, employees were encouraged to ask questions. One of the employees asked if they would be asked to give some evidence in court and this caused laughter. After the staff meeting we proceeded to the cafeteria for lunch and I observed that employees gathered in various tables to eat, and I also noted that employees who would usually sit far from the leaders shared a table.… I later asked one of the officers why they had taken the unprecedented step of offering information on a court case in a staff meeting. He told me that as officers they realized that it was better to give the correct information to everyone at the same time, than to respond to individual enquiries or let people engage in rumours. (Field notes, 7th August, 2012)

The above field observation excerpt demonstrates that organization members began to live out their aspirations of being open with one another. The study posited that the level of openness that the organization members exercised during the staff meeting enhanced the quality and quantity of communication because as organization members asked or answered questions, their interactions also increased. The study maintained that that this was a form of organizational learning because study participants detected, recognized and named openness as a crucial factor in improving confidence between them; and further they practiced openness during the focus group discussions and during the staff meeting. Therefore, structuration theory was useful in framing study questions in such a way that they focused on positive practices. The study further argued that the organization's communication culture changed once study participants began to use positive talk in their interactions.

3   ENHANCE FEEDBACK FORUMS TO IMPROVE LEADER-FOLLOWER CONFIDENCE

A second way that study participants proposed to enhance leader-follower confidence is through enhanced feedback forums. These are forums where employees' performance or employees' behaviour in relation to their work are discussed. Kouzes and Posner (2003: 103) argue that leader-follower feedback is important because it enhances the level of trust in both parties. Denning (2010: 113) argues that both formal and informal feedback mechanisms are critical in improving one's performance.

Field observations showed that there were limited feedback forums in EAU and that the quality of those available such as the short verbal face-to-face exchanges, written communication, and the annual employee evaluation exercises, were inadequate both in quality and quantity. For example, it was observed that the available staff evaluation instrument did not make provisions for interactions between the employee being evaluated and the evaluators. As a matter of fact, the evaluation instrument only provided for the feedback of the evaluation team and at the end of the exercise the verdict was read to the employee in question. Hence, the study participants desired to increase the quantity and quality of the feedback forums.

The study argued that regular feedback enhances organization members' self-confidence because it increases the level of confidence in one another due to intensive and extensive interactions. They become accustomed to one another and become more open with one another. The arguments above agree with those of Buron and McDonald-Mann (1999: 7) that 'frequent feedback promotes a less formal and more comfortable process of sharing information in leader-follower relationships'. Study participants

identified regular feedback forums such as staff meetings as important in improving leader-follower confidence as the following excerpt shows:

> Another way of improving confidence between us is to enhance forums such as the staff meeting where people sit and speak freely. It is a time to question anything… and you know this enhances confidence because people say when you raise issues and they are implemented then the leaders think that our ideas are important. (sic) (M.O. 3, focus group 2, October, 26th, 2011)

The argument from the above focus group discussion excerpt is that study participants desired for increased forums through which they could interact on a regular basis. But in addition to the quantity of forums, the quality of the content should also be enhanced- hence the emphasis on the freedom to speak and question anything. The study averred that the existing forums such as the annual social retreats, quarterly staff meetings and annual evaluation exercise were not sufficient for employees to fully know and understand each other. This is because the latter two forums were mainly used to address official matters.

The study presumed that the more forums that are made available and the freer the discussions become the more opportunities organization members have to interact with one another. Underlying this argument is the assumption that such feedback forums help to create opportunities for closer understanding of one another, for friendships, and for demystifying people. When organization members know one another well, then they develop confidence in each other, create networks and begin to share information. Such feedback forums also help both supervisors and subordinates to understand each other outside the usual contexts (offices) in which they routinely relate.

The study further maintained that feedback forums act as 'democratic spaces' where employees express their views without fearing intimidation. This is because in forums such as staff meetings and social retreats, hierarchical positions are suspended temporarily as employees address common issues that affect them. The democratic

spaces thus remove the perceived barriers that exist between the supervisors and subordinates and create room for everyone to share their thoughts. Thus, this kind of forum, in a sense, increases leader-follower confidence and consequently increases the levels of interaction and communication which in turn improve internal communication practices.

4   ENHANCE ONE-TO-ONE FEEDBACK TO IMPROVE LEADER-FOLLOWER CONFIDENCE

Another strategy through which study participants proposed to enhance leader-follower confidence is through one-to-one feedback. In a one-to-one forum the supervisor and subordinate meet face-to-face and share their feelings and opinions on personal and official matters. But there can also be face-to-face forums for individuals from different departments and job groups. One-to-one interactions brings closeness and cooperation between organization members; which in turn removes perceived fear, and suspicion between leaders and followers. In a one-to-one feedback there is room for seeking clarifications unlike in bigger forums where one may be afraid or shy to ask a question. It seems from my observations that once a one-to-one forum is established and utilised, it is easier for organization members to give work-related feedback as well as feedback that may be of a personal nature. One-to-one feedback is particularly essential in boosting confidence when one has been delegated to, or given a new task or assignment to do as the following excerpt illustrates:

> When you have been given an assignment and your boss has confidence in you, it really improves the morale and you want to deliver… But there needs to be some kind of support… How far have you gone with the assignment... what challenges are you meeting in the course of the implementation? When your boss keeps checking with you and you keep reporting back, it really improves your confidence between yourselves. (M.O.W. 3 focus group 2, October, 26th 2011)

Another focus group participant had this to say:

I think you need to give a lot of feedback on what you are doing because when the supervisor has given you responsibility, there are certain expectations and when you keep him updated on what you are doing in the process you are communicating. So that back and forth builds confidence in both of you. (F.O.W. 2, focus group 2, October 26th, 2011)

Yet another focus group participant said:

When my supervisor has given me something like compiling a report, at the end of the day I'll have to go back and report to him and I know in this way we shall have more to talk about our work and ourselves than if he had not given me anything. (F.O.W.8, focus group 4, October, 26th, 2011)

The observation here is that one-to-one feedback is important in enhancing leader-follower confidence particularly when one has been given a new or delegated assignment. But the feedback has to be regular and should help the communication partners to develop some mutual understanding of the work assignments, and hence improve confidence in each other.

Study participants also proposed that regular visits to each other's offices or other sites of work enhance feedback. Here, feedback is seen to be in both word and deed as it extends beyond words to include actions. The following focus group excerpt gives this insight:

I also think that as a leader you need to go beyond delegating. You need to visit your subordinate and may be crack a joke or two and make her feel alive… But if the boss does not even know what you are doing after delegating, then communication is a problem. You will do your assignment to your satisfaction but if he or she does not visit… So building confidence needs the boss to be present sometimes and also visit to see how the work is being done. (F.O.W.5, focus group 3, October 26th, 2011)

The foregoing focus group excerpt demonstrates that study participants proposed that feedback goes beyond words to include actions, hence, the proposal that in addition to verbal feedback, respective leaders should visit their followers' work sites in order to fully appreciate what has been achieved. The excerpt also shows that the study participants would like the quality of the interactions during feedback forums enhanced. So, they proposed that during site visits a leader can 'crack jokes' and this, in a sense,

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demonstrates the study participants' desire to work in a friendly environment that accommodates humour as well. The study argued that the presence of a leader at a follower's office or other work site acts as an assurance that the leader values the follower's work and this in itself boosts the follower's confidence in the leader. In proposing that supervisors should sometimes 'crack jokes' study participants in essence made changes to the form and content of their communication practices. They discovered that the 'what' (information) and the 'how' (the way it is communicated) are both important in the communication process. The study averred that this new strategy was evidence of organizational learning because the study participants recognised, named and proposed to improve their feedback by enhancing the 'how' of their communication practices because the 'how' of the communication process builds relationships (Beebe et al., 2008:20).[2]

The study argued that structuration theory influenced study participants to think of new ways of improving feedback. As they begun to review their communication practices study participants saw the need to improve both the content and the form of their communication practices. Bushe (2013: 91-92)[3] describes this as generativity:

> Generativity occurs when a group of people discover, create and/or are presented with an image that allows them to experience their work and organization differently. It doesn't have to be new to the world, just to this group. It doesn't have to be an image no one in the group ever heard before-but it does have to be that it has not been considered widely.

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[2] Study participants therefore proposed that in order for the feedback to go beyond the 'what' of communication, feedback forums should go beyond those prescribed by policy such as annual evaluations and quarterly staff meetings where subordinates/ followers are always on the receiving end and are always addressed in groups to more personal and regular ones where each employee is handled as a unique individual. In order for such personal attention to occur, study participants proposed that one-to-one feedback and on-site visits should be enhanced.

[3] Bushe (2013, 2) defines generativity as 'the processes and capacities that help people to see old things in new ways'.

5   ENHANCE APPRECIATION TO IMPROVE LEADER-FOLLOWER CONFIDENCE

The study participants proposed appreciation as a third strategy to enhance leader-follower confidence. They argued that appreciating people improves their morale and self-esteem and it also enhances their performance and this leads them to do more than they are expected to do. The following focus group excerpt expounds on this:

> When someone has done something small you say well done. You see even our children when they do something small and you commend them they are able to do much more. So it is with us in the office … If somebody can come and tell you, M, this is a good job, you know it boosts your confidence, as you are able to do even much better. (F.O.W. 3, focus group 2, October, 26th, 2011)

Another focus group participant argued that appreciation boosts their feelings and hence their confidence:

> It makes you understand that you are needed; your presence within the union is also appreciated. It is part of the call that what you do is helping the union to grow because without that particular job you were given to do then you would not be recognized as having made a contribution. So I think appreciation is very important.   (F.O.W. 5, focus group 3, October 26th, 2011)

Another focus group participant argued that appreciation is meaningful when it is done sooner rather than later. In other words, appreciation loses meaning when it is delayed because it might seem like an afterthought. The following focus group excerpt helps to illustrate this:

> I think appreciation should be spontaneous and either formal or informal. I can say thank you to my boss you have done wonderfully well and my boss can do the same and even write a letter. It should not wait until the year ends…. the morale of the worker will not be boosted if you wait until the end of the year to show appreciation. (M.O.W. 5, focus group 3, October 26th, 2011)

The observation here is that appreciation enhances people's confidence, boosts their moods and their self-esteem, and that appreciation should also be timely so that it does not lose meaning to the receiver. These observations are consistent with Buron and

McDonald-Mann, (1999) that appreciation should be timely. Therefore, is seen appreciation as a special tool of recognition which also enhances self- esteem in the receiver. Schwartz (2012: 1) avers that appreciation is important to organizational success:

> Feeling genuinely appreciated lifts people up. At the most basic level, it makes us feel safe, which is what frees us to do our best at work. It is also energizing. When our values feel at risk as it often does, so that way becomes pre-occupying, which drains and diverts our energy for creative value. (sic)

The argument here is that appreciation in leaders- follower relationships builds confidence in both and thus it is an antecedent for enhanced communication because appreciation boosts organization members' self-confidence thereby enabling them to become open to one another and hence interact more regularly. Regular interactions improve leader-follower confidence and most importantly, when the quality and quantity of organization members' interactions improve it also improves internal communication practices of the organization.

6 ENHANCE DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY TO IMPROVE LEADER-FOLLOWER CONFIDENCE

Another strategy that study participants proposed to enhance leader-follower confidence is through improved delegation of responsibility and authority. Study participants said that a supervisor's delegation of responsibility and authority to a subordinate demonstrates that the leader not only trusts the subordinate but also has confidence in the ability and suitability of the person to carry out the task. On the other hand, the act of delegation increases the subordinate's confidence in the supervisor because he/she views the supervisor as a genuinely concerned and caring person who is interested in the subordinate's professional growth. This makes the subordinate ensure that the task is

well done, and they give feedback to their supervisors on a regular basis. Delegation is also seen as a means of enhancing ones skills. The following focus group excerpts help to demonstrate this:

> My supervisor goes out a lot... But whenever he leaves, he tells me, 'handle the office', take care of the office. So he gives me the authority to handle duties in the office. So with that kind of authority given to you, you know someone has confidence in you. You carry it out to the best of your ability. And when he comes back, I give him the reports and he is happy with what I have done and I feel good. (F.O.W. 7, focus group 4, October 26th, 2011)

Another focus group participant narrated how she developed confidence from delegation of what she considered a big responsibility as well as authority:

> One time in CKC the treasurer went to study. Then the committee asked me to relieve the treasurer… I felt they had a lot of confidence in me that I can do it…That confidence that the committee had on me has made me even what I am today.... I think that confidence has pushed me in my career. I know I can go places; I can be somebody just because some few people saw something in me to make me a treasurer. (sic) (F.O.W. 3, October 26th, 2011)

Another focus group participant said:

> When I used to work for Pr. X, many times when he was going for leave he used to say that B. I have left everything in your hands and he copied emails to his counterparts; and said that B will handle everything and she will handle it well… I felt this was really something because he had confidence in me that whatever he left on my hands I will handle it in the best way possible. (F.O.W.1, focus group 1, October 26[th,] 2011)

Yet another focus group participant said:

> I think there are situations where I have been given work to do for example preparing for a workshop. …. When everything is finally done you feel happy that the person who asked you to do the work saw that you could do it. He or she must have had confidence in you. (F.O.W. 9, focus group 3, October 26th, 2011)

The argument from the above focus group discussion excerpts is that delegation of responsibility and authority improves the level of confidence in the subordinates and one begins to utilize his or her potential to successfully accomplish a given task. The study argued that two things are happening here: firstly, the supervisors trust that their subordinates have the capability to carry out the assignment. Secondly, subordinates show the willingness to carry out the assignment because they believe that their supervisors have full confidence that they can ably deliver good results.

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During delegation, the level of interaction may increase in the following three ways: firstly, during the actual delegation of the task there will be a high level of interaction between the supervisor and the subordinate to ensure that the task expectations are clear to the subordinate; secondly, in the course of carrying out the assignment or doing the task the subordinate will be in regular consultation/or communication with the supervisor to make enquiries or give updates respectively; thirdly, when the subordinate reports back to the supervisor there will be more interaction in terms of sharing of experiences and results of the task. However, at the same time, while carrying out the task, a subordinate can consult with other organization members such as colleagues on certain aspects of the task and this may increase interaction and communication. Thus, the study maintained that delegation of duties increases the level of leader-follower confidence and also improves their communication relationships. And this promotes individual achievement and builds individual autonomy (Valcea et al. 2011). Yukl (2013: 140) also argues that delegation of duties and responsibilities has huge benefits, not only for the organization, but also for managers and subordinates[4] and one can also argue that leader-follower confidence is one of those benefits.

Field observations revealed that delegation of duties and authority improves the quality and quantity of communication. For example, when I started to delegate more responsibility to my office colleague I observed that our communication became more regular[5] than before because my colleague visited my office or buzzed my extension

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[4] According to YukI, some of the benefits of delegation include better decisions, increased subordinate motivation, more satisfying jobs for the subordinate, and reduction of work overload for the manager.

[5] The number of emails increased as follows; 2009 (2), 2010(10), 2011 (12), 2012 (77), 2013 (76). (I asked my colleague to confirm the number of our email communication between 2009-2013). Other e-mail excerpts are in Appendix 12. Some details such as names of the people mentioned in the communication have been left out and only their initials used in order to protect the identity of the

more often than before or called me and sometimes emailed me regularly to share information on what she was doing or to share some reports if I was out of office. I also shared more information with her on specific assignments than I would do if I had not delegated some of the work to her. Following are excerpts of some of our email communications with my colleague:[6]

On Monday, May 6, 2013 11:27 AM, Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com> wrote:

Bossy,
Thanks very much. I know there is a lot to be done and look forward to the time the studio will be ready. Just keep reminding him, and also ask him to push those who are doing the studio.

Thanks and God bless

Cathy

From: callen nyamongo <callynya@yahoo.com>
To: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, May 3, 2013 4:19 PM
Subject: Re: The air cons

Hi Cathy,
I hope you are keeping well. I am writing to update you on the studio renovations. A lot has been done since you left, although there is much more to be done before we can start using it. Although the basic materials for the renovations are now available, we need to have the lighting fittings, the curtain rails, and the platform fittings in place so that the carpenters can use the measurements to lay out the various components of the whole studio.

The air cons are not installed yet, I shared this with the treasures and gave him quotations but he was overwhelmed with auditing. May be he will act this coming week.

The other work of the small studio work has not started yet.
I will get back next week.
Thanks,

Bossy.

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subjects. Other sensitive details in some of the emails have also been left out for the same reason. Further, emails with sensitive information have also been left out hence only a selection of the general ones appear here. The emails are presented in an ascending order and should be read from bottom up.

[6] My colleague granted me to use the various email excerpts, and she confirmed this through an email she sent to me on March 23rd, 2016.

From: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
To: "callynya@yahoo.com" <callynya@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, May 3, 2013 11:02 AM
Subject: The air cons

Bossy,
I hope you are doing fine. I am sure you are overwhelmed with work.
Just to find out if you discussed with L. about the need to have the air cons installed before the rest of the work. Have they started the work? ask M. to orient himself with the editing as well so that we can use him as we wait for the studio to be ready.

I am fine otherwise except for serious eye pains.

Thanks

Cathy[7]

The above e-mail excerpts were some of the many emails exchanges between my colleague and I, following my delegation of certain responsibilities to her. Hence, I observed that our level of interaction increased as a result of the extra responsibilities which necessitated regular feedback.[8] This observation demonstrates that delegation of responsibility increases confidence and also the quantity and quality of communication (Observation notes, 15th September, 2013.) These observations are in agreement with Kanter's (2004: 3, 335) argument that delegation of responsibility to other people and dialogue across groups and departments enhance confidence.

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[7] Some of the details of content such as names of people have been left out and only initials used to protect the identities of the subjects. Other sensitive details such as those that touch on people's work have also been left out.

[8] These observations are from fieldwork notes of September 15th 2013.

7 SUMMARY

Chapter 6 discussed the various factors or drivers that influence leader-follower confidence in EAU. The study also established ways through which improved leader-follower confidence improves internal communication. It was established that there is a reciprocal relationship between leader-follower confidence and communication because enhanced leader-follower confidence enhances the quality and quantity of communication practices in East African Union. Examples from the field demonstrated how organization members had started to improve leader-follower confidence. For example, it was shown that the delegation of duties and authority to an employee increased the quality and quantity of communication between the said employee and her supervisor.

The study therefore argued that organizational learning took place. This was demonstrated through study participants' proposal of news strategies to enhance leader-follower confidence. Hence they recognized and named new strategies to enhance leader-follower confidence and went further to start practicing some of those. The strategies included; becoming more open with one another, through enhanced feedback forums, through enhanced appreciation and through enhanced delegation of responsibility and authority. For example, the study participants' proposal that leader-follower feedback should include actual visit to ones site of work, or that a supervisor should 'crack jokes' during feedback sessions was evidence of organizational learning. Hence it can be said that the use of structuration theory in formulating the study questions facilitated study participants' discussions to generating new leader-follower confidence strategies which facilitated organizational learning. The organization's communication culture changed as study participants identified and named new positive

strategies for improving leader- follower confidence in interaction and as they begun to live in the direction of their aspirations.

The study resonated with Bushe (2007: 3) that a focus on the positive can support generativity: 'The focus on the positive in appreciative inquiry can increases the positive feelings, the positive talk ratio, and make generative thinking and acting more likely'. Bushe (2013: 3) further argues that: 'A generative image allows people to see the world anew, identify new options, formulate new strategies, and even reform their identity'.

Chapter 7 will discuss the various factors that study participants said are important in improving their freedom of creativity in East African Union. The chapter will demonstrate from field observations that the organization members began to improve freedom of creativity. It will be argued that there is a reciprocal relationship between creativity and communication so that enhanced creativity enhances communication and vice versa.

Chapter 7 Enhancing Freedom of Creativity to improve Communication Practices

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses freedom of creativity as a 'driver' of internal communication in East African Union. Study participants said that freedom of creativity was an important factor that influenced internal communication practices in the organization. The purpose of this chapter therefore is to establish the various ways EAU employees perceive creativity and the strategies for enhancing it in order to improve their communication relationships. The chapter answers research question (c) by establishing that there are strategies through which to enhance freedom of creativity.

The main arguments in this chapter are: firstly, that creativity is necessary for organizational growth and survival and the presence of creative people is essential to organizations such as EAU. Secondly, that the working atmosphere within an organization such as EAU has important influences on creativity. (Isaksen, and Akkermans 2011; Diliello et al. 2011; and West and Sacramento, 2012). Third, the study argued that when East African Union fosters creativity and allows employees to use their creative potential, this increases opportunities for interaction and communication. The study presumed that the process of sharing information about new ideas, products and services improves the quality and quantity of communication due to regular interactions and communication amongst employees. Hence, EAU needs to foster freedom of creativity in order to improve communication between organization members. Fourth, the study argued that enhanced communication practices enhance the levels of creativity and that communication and creativity inform each other. Thus,

enhanced creativity is an antecedent of enhanced communication practices and vice versa.

The various ways of enhancing creativity are referred to in this study as 'triggers of creativity'. Creativity in this study is defined in the words of Amabile (1996: 1) as 'the production of ideas, products and procedures that are novel or original, and potentially useful'. So, creativity in this case is the 'production of products, services and procedures that are useful to the organization' (Egan, 2005:160) and can range from 'minor adaptations in how work is performed to radical breakthroughs that result into new products or services' (Shelly et al. 2004: 933; Gilson et al. 2012: 168). This study argued that creative ideas in EAU context should be useful and beneficial to the organization and particularly enrich organization members' communication experiences.

The study found out that little research has been done on creativity in Africa. According to Mpofu et al. (2006: 480) what little there is appears to be in literature, calligraphy, and performance arts. Hence, this study makes a unique contribution to the concept of creativity in Africa by looking at how creativity can be enhanced in organizational contexts. The following section is a brief description of the concept of creativity as discussed in the conventional literature and how that links with creativity in East African Union.

2 CREATIVITY DEFINED

Scholars such as Gilson et al. (2012); Leonard and Swap, (1999); Kuratko, et al. (2012) argue that the concept of creativity is broad and therefore difficult to give a precise definition. Nevertheless, some scholars have proceeded to define creativity as 'the production of novel and useful ideas' (Amabile, 1996: 1; 1998: 77; and Shelly et al.

2004:934). Bentley (2012: 4) defines creativity as 'the making of the new and rearranging of the old'. However, Mumford et al. (2012: 4) argue that creativity goes beyond the generation of new ideas to encompass 'the production of high quality, original, and elegant solutions to problems', a definition they argue has several implications.'[1] Kuratko et al. (2012), and Pucio and Cabra (2012) also argue that it is not just enough to develop new ideas rather that the new ideas must be of interest and of use to others. Mpofu et al. (2006: 478) on the other hand argue that 'Africans consider creativity to derive from at least five components- thinking styles, personality, motivation, environment and a confluence of the aforementioned attributes'.

Although the definitions and types of creativity vary in the foregoing definitions, the underlying theme is that creativity is the individual's or group's/ organization's break or deviation from the norm to come up with new ideas, products and services that have not existed before, in order to provide a solution to an existing problem or to 'respond to changes in the work environment' (Leonard and Swap, 1999). Clegg and Birch (1998: 80) call this 'a breaking out of the pattern of the past.' Hence, this study argued that organizations such as EAU should pay careful attention to creativity because of the need to enhance effectiveness in a 'rapidly changing and extremely competitive environment' (Zhang et al. 2011: 851) and communication is an important contributory factor to this. As Walter (2012: 643) argues an 'organization that lacks the ability to enable its workforce to approach work in creative ways limits its innovative output and falls behind its competitors'. This study argued that study participants' strategies to

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[1] First, that creativity is a form of performance of the group or an individual. Second, that creative work, as an outcome of problem-solving, is ultimately a product of human cognition. Third, that creative problem-solving is viewed as a high-level cognition and hence demanding. Fourth, that as a high form of cognition, people make a conscious decision as to whether they are willing to invest scarce resources in generating a creative problem solving. Fifth, problem-solving may occur at individual, group, or organizational levels.

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enhance freedom of creativity was informed by their realization that the organizations'

complex culture and hierarchical structures constrained them from using their creativity

fully. This argument agrees with Soriano de Alencar (2012: 102) that an organization

with 'rigid and bureaucratic structures and excessive hierarchies' inhibit creativity. The

following section briefly discusses how study participants who were employees of East

African Union defined creativity.

3   HOW EAU EMPLOYEES DEFINE CREATIVITY

A focus group participant in the study defined creativity as "thinking out of the box and

sometimes without the box" (M.O.W.2, focus group 2, October 26th, 2011).

Another focus group participant described creativity as the ability to do things in a

different way from the usual prescriptive ways:

> You know most times we do things in a prescribed way. You are given this and you know
> these are the steps I take to arrive at an answer. There are times when some do not work
> even when you have applied the formula and prescriptions that are put there. So when you
> go beyond the prescriptions and those rules and come up with what may be ordinary yet
> creative, people will wonder "why didn't we think of this before" so that is what we call
> creativity. You use ordinary things to offer solutions to problems which go beyond the
> normal ways of doing things.' (M.O. 3, focus group 2, October 26th, 2011)

The foregoing focus group excerpts of study participants' definition of creativity

imply that creativity is the development of new ideas or practices that are useful in

helping one improve their work or their practice. Study participants argued that in order

for them to develop new ideas, they needed what (BPP Learning, 2012: 2) describes as

'creative freedom' which allows for an appreciation of new ideas, and an environment

that is devoid of criticism and skepticism, and one that is less prescriptive. The study

participants, therefore, proposed a number of strategies referred to in this study as

'triggers of creativity'[2] to enhance their freedom of creativity. It should be noted that the 'triggers of freedom of creativity' are not discussed in any order of importance.

4 TRIGGERS OF FREEDOM OF CREATIVITY IN EAU

The study participants pointed out that freedom of creativity was important in enhancing their creative potential. Their argument was that when they are given freedom to come up with new ideas, products and services beyond what they usually do or they are allowed to come up with new ways of doing their work, this ignites their creative potential as the following focus group excerpt demonstrates:

> I think freedom is exercised when people are free to do what they are able to do without being restricted so much. You have given somebody what to do then you want to create boundaries to it. At the end somebody may say, Ok if you knew that I could not do it then you could have done it yourself. So that freedom enhances trust. (M.H.D. 5, focus group 4, October 26th, 2011)

The study participants' argument in the above focus group excerpt is that there is need for one to be given a leeway to use their creative potential, and that boundaries of how one should perform their work inhibit creativity. These arguments are in concert with those of Stephan and Pace (2002: 23) of the need for workplace freedom, although Stephane and Pace argue that the freedom should extend beyond work assignments.[3] Study participants argued that in order for them to exploit their creative potential, the organization's leadership at all levels should enhance freedom of creativity. This will be evident when the usual work prescriptions are put aside to accommodate new ideas. The following excerpt helps to illustrate this:

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[2] The drivers of creativity are called 'triggers' in this study because the study views them as critical in awakening an individual's potential for creativity.

[3] According to Stephan and Pace (2002:23) this type of freedom should include 'freedom to express one-self, the freedom to feel uplifted, the freedom to feel secure and the freedom to feel confident and respected'.

When you are given freedom, no one limits you. It helps you to work to the maximum potential, your highest potential. You know sometimes when we limit people's freedom, we lose a lot. We have very many people who could give big inputs if they are given freedom to be creative in certain ways but somehow we are always saying 'this is the way the work should be done, no less no more'… But when you have been given that freedom to be creative then we are actually maximizing the potential that we have. Each person in EAU has potential to be creative and all they need is freedom to exercise it. (M.O. 3, focus group 2, October 26th, 2011)

The argument from the above focus group excerpt is that each person in the organization has potential to be creative if given they are freedom to be creative. Amabile (1998: 20) describes this as freedom of autonomy which she argues is essential in organizations:

Autonomy around a process fosters creativity because giving people freedom in how they approach their work heightens their intrinsic motivation and sense of ownership. Freedom about process allows people to approach problems in ways that make the most of their expertise and their creative thinking.

The study argued that study participants would like to be given autonomy in order to foster freedom of creativity. It is presumed that when freedom is exercised, communication and interaction increase as well because there is regular exchange of information as one tries to find new ways of improving their practice and so he/she forms collaborations and networks to seek for and share information with others on what he/she has found. For example, in supervisor-subordinate communication, freedom of autonomy may encourage regular feedback between the two as the subordinate keeps the supervisor informed of what is happening or as the supervisor makes enquiries on what the subordinate is doing. At other times, such an employee may share their new knowledge with other colleagues within the department or with other departments, or in forums such as staff meetings. Due to the regular exchange of information, the quantity and quality of interaction is enhanced. Regular interaction increases levels of creativity and creativity increases communication in turn because as organization members share information on new products and services, they also

discover and share new ways of improving their practice. Thus, freedom of creativity improves both communication and productivity thus demonstrating the 'symbiotic relationship between communication and creativity' (Paulus and Yang, 2000: 77). The study maintained that by identifying and naming freedom of creativity as one of the factors that influence organization members' communication experiences, organizational learning took place. Hence, structuration theory was instrumental in facilitating appreciative questions which also facilitated study participants to focus on the positive communication practices and ways to improve them.

Study participants identified six strategies to enhance their freedom of creativity: 1) Flexibly allowing individuals to perform their assignments and acknowledging failure; 2) Encouraging individual creativity; 3) Encouraging team spirit; 4) review of policies that inhibit creativity; 5) Matching tasks with talent; and 6) Sharing the organizations' mission and vision so as to enable the employee understand how his or her work relates to the bigger picture. The following section discusses each of those strategies of enhancing freedom of creativity.

4.1 Flexibility on Task Prescriptions and Acknowledgement of Failure: Triggers of Freedom of Creativity

Study participants said that the flexible performance of their duties and acknowledgment of failure enhances freedom of creativity. Hence they said that respective supervisors should give room for subordinates to flexibly attend to their work and also acknowledge failure (especially if failure does not endanger life or significantly affect the organizations' operations). Whatmore (1999: 83) describes this as 'a breathtaking freedom to be wrong'.

The study maintained that flexibility in this case is exercised by allowing one to make use of his or her new ideas in discharging their duties and by condoning failure-in which case individuals are allowed to make several attempts in a task until they find the best solution to it, especially if such failure does not endanger life. Whatmore (1999: 82) describes this kind of freedom of creativity as 'freedom to experiment, to try something new, to break the bounds, the habits, the rules, or more simply to do it differently.' Flexibility not only enables an individual to pursue new ideas to improve practice, but also encourages feedback as people share information on what they are doing and as they seek for new ideas and information from colleagues to help them improve their practice; and this increases the quality and quantity of communication between the organization members.

Therefore, the study argued that study participants here desired that respective supervisors and colleague support individuals' creative processes instead of criticizing ones' creative thinking. And this requires persistence in the creative process which as Mans (2012) argues is one of the values that is characteristic of African culture.[4] When organization members foster such flexibility and appreciation of creative thinking, individuals feel liberated to find new ways of doing their work. This in turn makes them want to share information on what they are doing as well as seek advise on how they can improve on the project. Hence, they form networks with colleagues and they share information with supervisors and in this way, they increase the frequency of information exchange and therefore enhance their levels of interaction. The following focus group excerpt helps to demonstrate what such flexibility does to an individual:

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[4] Mans (2012: 28) asserts that "Because the making of mistakes and trying again is inherent in the act of creating, a nurturing environment allows for the pursuit of creative ideas, and is less threatening and encourages persistence- a prominent African value".

You know even if you are creative, not everything you try may work. But you know sometimes we don't give people freedom to fail. You know you jump on the person, why did you do this and you knew it was going to end up like this? But you know you have to create the creative atmosphere where you give people freedom to fail…It is where you say 'well, we have discovered another way that does not work'. I always say anything that you learn in life you have to pay either in terms of money or in terms of pain. But there is no free schooling in life and so when you give people freedom to fail; I think people move very far in creativity. (M.O. W 2, focus group 1, October 26th, 2011)

The above focus group excerpt shows that organization members need not be rigid and prescriptive on how one does their work as long as this does not affect the end result. The argument is that rigidity is detrimental to creativity because it not only fosters monotony but also may kill creativity. The study posited that when one's work is monotonous he/she may not have reason to interact with others because there may be nothing new to share or enquire about their work. Hence, flexibility in the creative process is an antecedent for interaction because it encourages generation of new ideas that the person involved would like to share with or seek opinion on. The back and forth of sharing information increases the level of interaction, and also improves one's creativity. That is why study participants said that when their respective supervisors give room for mistakes, they increase one's chances of improving their creativity as the following focus group excerpt demonstrates:

Just allow somebody freedom even to make mistakes and then in making mistakes somebody learns to do something better. But you don't have to scold somebody if the mistake is not undoing the whole task altogether. Just allow freedom including making mistakes and doing things out of the ordinary way. If we give people freedom to do things their own way, I think we will encourage creativity. (M.H.D. 2, focus group 2, October 26th, 2011)

The foregoing focus group excerpt demonstrates that study participants realized the importance of accommodating failure in the creative process. Therefore, when failure is allowed in the creative process, those involved discover new ways of doing their work. In other words, change, improvement and innovation occur where routine is challenged, altered and reworked to create new opportunities and possibilities for

action. These observations agree with those of Bentley (2002: 29, 32) that failure is a 'stepping stone to success' which, if acknowledged becomes an essential process of realizing success:

> The idea that the will to try new ideas and risk failure is to be admired and rewarded never seems to be given any attention. The consequence of this is that people avoid the prospect of failure and the whole creative process slows down. Yet failure undoubtedly is a stepping stone to success, and we need to 'fail faster'. People should be encouraged to identify themselves with failure rather than try to avoid responsibility and point the finger at someone else… A blaming environment is the least conducive for creativity. (Bentley, 2002: 29, 32)

The study argued that organization members who experience freedom of creativity in the workplace are able to decide how they do their work and are able to make changes in the ways in which work is done to make processes more effective. Such people have a responsibility to care or to be concerned that the work gets done, and they are challenged to perform at their best and excel in what they do. More importantly, freedom of creativity spurs in the individual a need to seek and provide information at the same time and, in this way, the quality and quantity of communication is improved. This study's findings show that failure can lead to success if it is acknowledged and the individual is supported, it is therefore important for EAU to accommodate failure and support and encourage those that try new ideas to make as many attempts as possible until they come up with something useful to their practice. This argument is consistent with the arguments of Zhou and Ren (2013: 101) that employee's intrinsic motivation for creativity is negatively affected when a supervisor 'keeps a close tap to ensure that the employee does exactly what they are told, perform tasks in expected ways, and do not do things that supervisors might disapprove'.

The study argued that in acknowledging failure as important to creativity study participants learnt new communication practices in interaction and thus, organizational learning took place. Therefore, structuration theory changed organization members' attitude on failure which is usually associated with a lack of knowledge or carelessness

on the part of those who fail[5] and an end to a successful practice; to seeing failure as the beginning of success.[6] One can therefore argue that the organization's communication culture changed as study participants identified new ways to enhance creativity in interaction.

4.2 Encouragement triggers and improves Freedom of Creativity

Study participants identified encouragement as another strategy of enhancing freedom of creativity. Study participants maintained that encouragement should be done at two levels: at an individual level and at team level.

4.2.1 Enhanced Encouragement to Individuals triggers Freedom of Creativity

Study participants said that at individual level respective supervisors or leaders should encourage their subordinates during the creative process, and this can be through encouraging messages. This gesture makes the employee acknowledge that his or her efforts have been appreciated as the following focus group discussion excerpt illustrates:

> When we started to put measures to change the status of the union, one of the division leaders wrote to us when he found that we were giving up as a result of criticisms… he wrote a note that what we were trying to develop and implement for that time may be criticized because at the time many people could not see how the changes would impact EAU. …and just that note… I think that note encouraged us and it showed us that we are being supported and some of it has done a lot in this union. (sic) (M.O.1, focus group 1, October 26th, 2011)

The foregoing focus group discussion excerpt shows that study participants would like to be encouraged for taking risks in trying to improve their practice; and

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[5] The Kenyan system of education lays emphasis on passing highly such that those who do not make it to university for instance are considered failures. This practice pervades all systems so that failure is viewed as the end of ones 'successful life'.

[6] In this case, appreciative inquiry's focus on the positive reorganized study participants' values by recognizing that failure is important in the creative process.

demonstrates that simple ways such as writing a short note to acknowledge someone's efforts in improving something or verbally sharing a word of encouragement can spur creativity in and individual. These findings are consistent with those of West and Sacramento, (2012: 374) who argue that encouragement is important in the creative process:

> First is the encouragement of risk-taking and idea generation, a valuing of innovation from the highest to the lowest levels of management. The second refers to a fair and supportive evaluation of new ideas…the third aspect is the focus on reward and recognition of creativity.

Study participants said that encouragement is accompanied by support and so supervisors and colleagues should offer the needed support to those that try new ideas as the following excerpt explains:

> I think something else is support. You can see somebody struggling, trying to bring in some new way of doing something. And you know you can just finish them by criticizing them, telling them that they will not make it, this is a failure even before they start. But if you see somebody who is doing something to enhance performance of the institution, supporting that person, encouraging him, showing him that he can make it, support I think is important. (M.O.1., focus group, 1, October 26th, 2011)

In the foregoing focus group discussion excerpt, study participants indicated that encouragement rather than criticism enhances their creativity. The study maintained that that encouragement to individuals was already bearing fruit in EAU as the following field observation demonstrates:

> In June 2012, East African Union acquired a new television frequency to operate a national television station… Plans to set up the station got underway, and consultations with various stakeholders started. One day one of the leaders called me and expressed his fear that the project was likely to fail because of the enormous amount of financial, human and technical resources needed. The next day another leader called me to say that it may not be possible to implement the new project because he argued that we already had several media projects in the country. The concerns affected my interest in the project and somehow the union president got to know about it. That evening the union president telephoned me to encourage me to move on with the project as planned… The president's words of encouragement motivated me to think of ways of involving all employees in the project. I started with regular updates and solicited for prayers during worship. With time several members of staff began to express their confidence in the success of the project. Some suggested program ideas while others provided contacts of potential donors. (Fieldwork notes, August, 16th, 2012)

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The field observation excerpt above demonstrates that encouragement helps individuals not only to think more creatively, but also to interact with others more. For instance, I had not thought of regularly sharing about the TV project with other staff members but once I had support from the highest office of the organization, it became crucial for me to ensure that the project had all organization members' goodwill. And the more I shared with others, the more they sought for further information and in this way our interactions increased. Amabile (1998: 22) argues that supervisory encouragement is linked to intrinsic motivation:[7]

> The connection to intrinsic motivation is clear. Certainly people can find their work interesting and exciting without a cheering section-for some period of time. But to sustain such passion, most people need to feel as if their work matters to the organization or some important group of people. Otherwise they might as well work at home and for their own personal gains.

The gist of the argument is that encouragement makes people feel valued and that their contribution is important to the organization and this enhances their creative potential. The study therefore argued that once encouragement is fostered in the creative process, individuals find reason to share more because they feel that their contribution I valuable to improving practice.

4.2.2 Enhanced Encouragement of Team Spirit triggers and improves Freedom of Creativity

Study participants also said that team spirit should be encouraged in the creative process. The study participants said that there is a greater potential of developing good relationships when people work as a team although each individual may be working on their own assignment or project. This is with the understanding that each person is working towards a common goal of fulfilling the organization's mission and good

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[7] Amabile, (1998, 1) defines intrinsic motivation as the 'inner passion to solve problems at hand.'

relationships play an important role in enhancing teamwork. The study participants' observations concur with those of Chi- Hsing (2013: 3890) that good relationships enhance creativity:

> Establishing high levels of quality relationships should enhance creativity because it reduces goal conflict, bargaining over agreements, and formal monitoring and encourages parties to share knowledge. These functions allow individuals to invest more effort in activities related to creativity. Furthermore, mutual expectations and trust can extend learning from the exchange partner and provide motivation to try new solutions to existing problems, to conduct experiments and to take risks in exchanging information.

The argument above demonstrates the importance of good relationships or team spirit in enhancing creativity. When organization members foster team spirit, there is harmony and quality time is spent at work; and more importantly, team members share information about their work thereby increasing the quality and quantity of their interactions. Team spirit reduces a spirit of competition and even where there is competition, it is healthy as organization members seek ways to improve their work as opposed to instigating rivalry and enmity. Team spirit enhances mutuality and this helps employees to appreciate each other for who they are and for each other's skills and talents. This, in turn, makes the work environment friendlier and less suspicious. People are free to share information and ideas, and even help each other in assignments. The following focus group excerpt helps illustrate the importance of team spirit:

> I think team spirit is very important. You need to recognize the role of others not compete against them…You may be working at your best but down in your heart you are competing. What destroys team spirit is competition because you try to outdo each other. You need to work as a team so that when you succeed, the other also succeeds so that your success and someone else's success is the organization's success. So do your best in your place but make sure that you are working as a team in spirit. (M.O. 3, focus group 2, October 26th, 2011)

The foregoing focus group excerpt demonstrates that study participants recognized the importance of team spirit in enhancing creativity. This is especially important in EAU, where there are several departments and, from time to time, there are projects and other organizational events that require collaboration between departments.

Such collaborations enhance the quality and quantity of interactions as individual team members interact and share ideas in order to make the event or project successful. The study argued therefore that respective supervisors should encourage both individual and team creativity which some studies have shown is critical for co-worker's relationships,[8] and have huge benefits to co-workers as Grant (2011:1) argues:

> To generate new ideas that are useful as well as novel, it is important for employees to take others' perspectives…First; perspective-taking provides employees with access to new idea. Second, perspective-taking provides employees with a standard for selecting which of the novel ideas to pursue…Thus, employee creativity may be highest when employees are both intrinsically and pro-socially motivated. They are driven to generate new ideas based on a joint desire to enjoy the process of developing ideas and to produce outcomes that benefit others.

The study participants' desire for team spirit demonstrates the value of a communal ethos in the African culture where an individual is a part of the whole such that even in individual project, a sense of community is not lost. As Mans (2012: 28) argues:

> The communality of creative processes does not deny individual agency, rather it provides a forum for the performance of individuality through the enabling but also critical mechanisms of social interaction. Creative processes in the African contexts are driven by communal ethos, aesthetic values and functional needs.

The study noted that organization members had begun to embrace team spirit. This was evinced in the recent plans of change of the status of East African Union from a mission[9] to a Union Conference,[10] where various departments worked towards the

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[8] Studies such as those of Amabile (1997); Young and Nam (2011); Chi-Hsing (2013); Diliello et al. (2011) have shown that co-workers' relationships can influence one's level of creativity. As Madjar et al. (2011: 734) argue team spirit is very important in influencing individual creativity because "team members provide an opportunity for the individual to reflect on situations where creativity was exhibited and examples that may facilitate meaning that in turn facilitates ones creativity"

[9] A Union Mission status means that the organization is semi-autonomous. That there are certain things the organization cannot do without authority from the Division that is a higher organization in the hierarchy. This includes election of the officers of the Union, and spending a maximum amount of money for capital development. Anything above a certain figure must be sanctioned by the Division.

[10] A Union Conference is autonomous, can elect its own leaders, and spend money for capital development as needs arise.

realization of a common objective- that of attaining the new status.[11] It was observed that the various sub-committees that were formed to oversee the implementation of the project collaborated and shared updates on how each group was progressing. It was further observed that the various groups met after every two weeks to review progress. Therefore, the regular meetings not only improved team spirit but they also enhanced the quality and quantity of communication between team members.

The study maintained that the use of structuration theory facilitated study participants' generative discussions and this led them to identify encouragement at individual and team level as critical components of creativity. Thus, it was argued that organization members changed their communication culture to the extent that they articulated their desire to live in the direction of their proposals; and started to live that change in practice as has been discussed above. The study maintained therefore that the study participants' change of language from one of deficits to one of possibilities facilitated change of the organization's culture.

4.3 Review of Organizational Policies and Guidelines trigger Freedom of Creativity

Study participants further proposed to improve freedom of creativity through the review and change of the organization's policies and guidelines that may be curtailing it.[12] The study argued that the EAU's policies reinforce its hierarchical structure which, as has been argued in chapter 1 favour vertical communication and hence, the study

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[11] Fieldwork notes, November 6th, 2011.

[12] Stephane and Pace (2002: 21, 26) define organizational guidelines as 'all the policies, rules, regulations, mission statements, and other organizational structures that control thinking, actions and decisions of organizational members'.

participants' desire for review and possible change of the said policies to improve creativity as the following focus group excerpt demonstrates:

> You see policy is a defined framework and you must obey it. To some extent it limits creativity because probably you want to do something but policy does not make those provisions and so it does not allow you to go beyond certain limits. Since we cannot change anything at this level, we have to make recommendations so that the policies that hinder creativity are reviewed. (M.O. 4, focus group 4, October 26th, 2011)

The gist of the argument from the above focus group discussion excerpt is that policy and other organizational guidelines may inhibit creativity if they prescribe and recommend specific methods as the only ones that can produce good results. This is because an organization's policies are critical in outlining an employee's work expectations and in being clear on what is expected of them. If this is not the case and roles remain ambiguous, it inhibits employees' ability to visualize performance, ultimately reducing confidence in their ability to perform effectively and giving a sense of dissatisfaction with their work. This in a sense will also affect the individual's communication experiences because of the lack of clarity on what one is actually supposed to do. This argument is consistent with those of Tang and Chang (2010: 872) that a lack of clear guidelines on one's job may lead to 'job dissatisfaction.'

The study also argued that a lack of job clarity tends to make an individual cherish the little that he or she knows and thus make one survive on routine which in a sense limits ones freedom to exercise creativity because it curtails the generation of new ideas. Routine will in turn reduce the levels of interaction for lack of reason for consultations or feedback. Any little feedback may be either in the form of short reports or delivery of the end product to the supervisor.

An intentional review of the organization's policies to foster creativity will encourage organization members to identify creative solutions to their work problems. They will in turn consult, share information and feedback with respective supervisors and colleagues, thus increasing their levels of interaction. These arguments are

consistent with those of and Wong and Pang (2003: 554) that 'open policy' is a critical factor in motivating creativity.

Field observations reveal that a review of policy was already beginning to take place in EAU. For example, in one of the executive committee meetings in June 2012, the members were asked to study the existing organizational policy document and make recommendations for changes to those policies that needed to be reviewed.[13] While the recommendations were not specific to policies that inhibit creativity *per se*, this study argued that this was a positive indication that there were chances of reviewing those that hinder creativity. The study argued that study participants' discussions during focus group discussions on the need to review policy may have partially contributed to the organization's leaders' decisions for the same. This is because the focus groups were composed of supervisors and subordinates who agreed on the need for such a review. Therefore, the study posited that structuration theory facilitated study participants' discussions to focus on the organization's positive core thereby facilitating organizational learning and change of the organization's communication culture. Thus, organizational learning took place to the extent that study participants recognized and named the need to review the organization's policies in order to enhance creativity, and organizational culture took place as study participants came up with new strategies of enhancing creativity in interaction.

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[13] This same announcement was made to the rest of the employees on September 3rd, 2012 as discussed in chapter 8 section 3.1.4.

4.4 Enhanced Matching of Task with Talent triggers Freedom of Creativity

Study participants also proposed to improve creativity by matching tasks with talents. This means that organization members should be assigned work and responsibilities according to their expertise and talents. The study argued that one can easily identify an existing gap in their area of expertise than in unfamiliar assignments.[14] However, when one is given unfamiliar tasks which requires time to learn it may affect their creative thinking. The following focus group excerpt helps to explain this:

> When you match talent with the task you are likely to get more creativity than if you just did the opposite. So one of the things I have to do as a supervisor is to quickly study the gifts that people have in EAU and I know that God has given us those people with different gifts, so that whenever something comes up such as an event or task, I should always know this task matches with the talent of such and such a worker. So if you give somebody something that is in his or her line, you are likely to get more creativity than if you just made everything routine. (M.O. 3, focus group 2, October 26th, 2011)

The focus group discussion excerpt above shows that study participants believed that one would be more creative when they are assigned work in their area of expertise because they may easily identify areas of improvement. This increases chances for high levels of interaction because the person has confidence in articulating what it is that they are doing or have found. However, when one is given an unfamiliar assignment, they may shy off from sharing what they are doing for fear of not being able to give the correct information; and in this stifles creativity and communication. This argument is on concert with Amabile (1997: 55) that an employee can be more creative if and when they are given tasks that are in line with their area of expertise:

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[14] Soriano de Alencar, (2012: 93) argues that expertise can characterize people whose performance in a domain is consistently superior to the performance of non-experts or expertise can be acquired through practice or deliberate individual study, to perform a specific domain task particularly well. This chapter emphasizes the former definition of expert.

Because a positive sense of challenge in the workplace is one of the most important in creativity, it is imperative to match people with work that utilizes their skills, stretches their skills, and is clearly valued by the organization. As much as possible, all work should be designed to maximize intrinsically motivating aspects. (Amabile, 1997, 55)

Amabile's argument is that a person's creative potential is effectively utilized when they are assigned tasks in which they apply their expertise, and in which they can stretch their imagination. Once ones talent has been identified it needs to be nurtured as the following focus group discussion excerpt illustrates:

Creativity is a talent that must be nurtured because if you give somebody an assignment and he does it extra well, definitely you will say that this person has something extra. How do we help this person nurture this special talent and to continue doing better? (M.H.D. 5, focus group 4, October 26th, 2011)

The argument from the above focus group excerpt is that expertise facilitates employees to develop new ideas in respective areas of expertise and gives them the impetus to want to improve their practice. Study participants argued that once talent is identified it should be nurtured through freedom of creativity. Nurturing an employee's talent boosts their self-esteem and thereby motivates them to interact with others as they exchange information on each other's work or their personal matters. The sharing of information back and forth improves their level of interactions and hence their communication practices. Field observations showed that organization members had started to assign people work according to their areas of expertise:

The recent meeting of all pastors that took place at Kamagambo Adventist College took a lot of effort to bring it to fruition. Several people from EAU were voted to participate in the planning. Apart from the officers and heads of department who were given various assignments in line with their areas of expertise, three other employees were voted to participate in the planning and also they were asked to offer services during the meetings. I observed that the three subordinates were voted due to their skills in doing certain tasks namely, decoration, registration, and other clerical and secretarial work. The process of registration and other logistics were very successful because of the three members of staff whose skills and expertise quickened the process. (Field notes, 22nd April, 2012)

The following is also an excerpt from fieldwork observation:

Today in our committee meeting the executive secretary presented several names of people who will be involved in various sub-committees that have been put in place to prepare for the EAU status approval. I observed that those who head each sub-committee have some form of expertise in the areas that they were put. For example, the financial committee is

headed by the treasurer, the decorations committee is headed by one of the women employees who are an expert in decoration to name a few. (Observation notes, 30th August, 2012)

The excerpts above from field notes demonstrate that the organization was already tapping into people's creative potential. However, this process did not begin with the study but rather the study acted as a reminder to organization members of the need to give people responsibilities in their areas of expertise.

5 SHARING ORGANIZATION'S MISSION AND VISION AND GIVING JOB DESCRIPTIONS IMPROVE CREATIVITY

Study participants further proposed to enhance their creativity through the sharing of the organization's mission[15] and vision. This means that when employees understand the organization's mission well, they work creatively to achieving it. And a clear understanding of mission and vision also increases their level of interaction because they have a clear and common understanding of the job expectations and this makes them share information on how to achieve those goals. Sharing of mission and vison also reduces wrong interpretations of one's work assignments and becomes an impetus for greater interaction. Thus understanding an organization's mission is an aspect of organizational knowledge and some studies have shown that how organizations manage their knowledge is related to their success.[16] The following excerpt demonstrates the study participants' understanding of the role of the organization's mission in creativity:

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[15] Mission is defined as a shared definition of the organization's purpose (Zheng, W., Yang, B., 2010).

[16] For example, in their study of 301 companies on the relationship between organizational knowledge management and organizational success, Zheng et al. (2010) found out that knowledge management fully mediates the impact of organizational culture and strategy on organizational effectiveness. Tang and Chang's (2010) study on Taiwanese companies found out that clarity of employee roles and organizational goals influenced job satisfaction and creativity. While the two studies were not on organizational mission specifically, they help to show that an employee's knowledge and understanding

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> If you know the mission of what you are doing or the institution for which you are working, and you know you have been put there to enhance the mission, you try to create ways of enhancing the mission …So knowing the mission of the institution you are working with, is a motivating factor to make you move forward on the way you know. And you can defend that because you are doing this to fulfil the mission of the church and anybody coming in between, now you have to authorize. (M.O.1, focus group 1, October 26th, 2011)

Along with knowing the mission and vision of the organization, study participants argued that a clear job description aids an individual to understand their areas of operation; and once one identifies gaps in their area of practice they begin to think creatively on ways to fill the gaps:

> Number one is to give them their job descriptions, tell them this is what you are supposed to do, the how to do it you find out for yourself, but what we need are results. We want things to be done, so people know what they are supposed to do and then you give them the freedom even to advance on that. The job descriptions are just guidelines but we know there is quite a lot which someone can do beyond the job description. (Male participant, group 1, 26th October, 2011)

The foregoing focus group discussion excerpt points to the critical role that the mission and vision, as well as job descriptions play in an employee's creativity. According to the study participants, the said tools help an individual to understand their role in fulfilling the organization's mission and, therefore, to work creatively to achieve it. This study maintained that this is a form of employee empowerment which, as Fernandez and Moldogaziev (2013: 155) argue, helps employees 'improves performance by finding ways of correcting errors'. The study argued that in designing creative ways of achieving one's objectives, as in the job description, the individual consults with others on the suitability of the new ideas in enhancing mission. And hence the process of sharing, giving, and receiving feedback is what enhances the quality of communication as the level of interaction intensifies. The study argued that by recognizing, and naming the various new strategies of enhancing creativity,

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of the organization's mission helps increase their creativity which is essential for the organization's success.

organizational learning took place; and by doing this in interaction and in some cases staring to live in the direction of their aspirations, study participants changed their communication culture. Hence, structuration theory was instrumental in facilitating a focus on the positive strategies and practices.

6 SUMMARY

Chapter 7 has established the various factors that study participants said were crucial in improving their freedom of creativity. These include; 1) flexibly allowing individual to perform their assignments and acknowledging failure; 2) encouraging individual creativity; 3) encouraging team spirit; 4) Review of policies with a view to removing those that are repressive to creativity; 5) matching tasks with talent; 6) sharing the organizations' mission and vision.

The study argued that as freedom of creativity improves, the quality and quantity of organization member's interactions also improve and hence internal communication practices of the organization improve. It was therefore argued that the use of structuration theory in framing positive research questions was instrumental in facilitating the study participants to focus on the positive practices and hence sustain generative discussions. Thus, appreciative inquiry helped study participants to proactively identify specific strategies that would help them to improve freedom of creativity. The study therefore argued that organizational learning took place as study participants identified, and named new strategies to improving freedom of creativity and consequently improve the quality and quantity of internal communication. For example, the study argued that in recognizing that failure is an important aspect in the creative process, study participants reorganized their values because failure is usually seen as the end of one's success. The study argued that this in essence, was the 'transformation' of

the communication structures and hence organizational learning. Generative discussions also changed the organization's internal communication culture because as discussed in chapter 3, organizational culture changes through the interaction of its members.

Chapter 8 will discuss one other driver that study participants said was important in influencing their communication practices. The chapter will argue that positive gender relations influence internal communication practices in East African Union. The chapter will then proceed to discuss the various strategies that study participants proposed to enhance positive gender relations. One of the strategies that the chapter will discuss is the use of God's lens in viewing one another. The chapter will argue that the use of God's lenses influences how organization members allocate resources for further education and training, how they engender appointments and how they review the organization's policies in order to foster gender equity. So, the chapter will show that there is a reciprocal relationship between positive gender relations and communication.

Chapter 8 Improving Gender Relations to Enhance Internal Communication

1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 8 discusses the various strategies that study participants proposed to enhance gender relations which the study identified as important in influencing communication practices of organization members. The main argument of the chapter is that gender relations influence the quality and quantity of communication practices in EAU. Hence the chapter argues that improved communication improves gender relations and that communication and gender relations inform each other. The chapter answers question (d) of the study by discussing the various strategies to enhance positive gender relations in East African Union and how they contribute to the improvement of internal communication practices.

Positive gender relations were identified as a critical factor in determining the quality and quantity of communication in the organization through the use of the discover phase of appreciative inquiry as discussed in chapter three. In this study, gender is defined in the words of Ogbomo (1997: 3) as 'structural, ideological, social, economic, and political relations between men and women'.

It should be observed here that although a few African scholars such as Oyeronke (2005),[1] Mansah Prah ((2013)[2] and Quadrago and Achieng (2011)[3] have written on

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[1] Oyeronke (2005, xi) argues that most western scholars who have written on gender in Africa use a western lens- of using biological determinism to discuss a social construct such as gender. Hence Oyeronke argues that the western scholars have 'derived their conceptual and theoretical tools' from studies based on the western world and hence 'Africa is merely used as a vehicle for articulating western preoccupations and modes of understanding'.

[2] A major theme of this book is the persistence of patriarchal values and attitudes in Africa and how they have constrained and affected gender equity and gender equality.

gender from an African perspective, none of their material is on gender and communication. However, some western scholars such as Cornwall (2005) have written extensively on gender practices in Africa,[4] hence most of the literature that is used to discuss gender relations in this chapter is mainly from the west. Scholars such as Wood (2003); Kimmel (2008) who have written extensively on gender and communication have focused more on gendered language and gendered masculine norms and systems[5] in society and in organizations. Also several gender studies in the west have concentrated on the difference between men's and women's communication styles.[6] This chapter, therefore, makes a significant contribution to the understanding of gender relations in Kenya because the feedback from study participants adds a new dimension to understanding gender relations and communication practices in organizational contexts.

2   GENDER IN EAST AFRICAN UNION: EARLY PERCEPTIONS

This section describes some of the study participants' early perceptions of gender relations in East African Union. As will be discussed later in the chapter, the study participants' perceptions of gender relations changed in the course of the focus group discussions and they began to argue that there was a need to improve them. They then

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[3] The main argument of this volume is that globalization has redefined women's identities different from those defined by identity groupings of the former social regimes.

[4] Cornwall (ed.) (2005) has concentrated on discussing women's socio-political roles in the pre and post-independence eras in some African countries. The main arguments of the volume revolve around Women's agency in matters of health, politics, agriculture and education,

[5] Wood (2003:227) argues that organizational communication is gendered hence it stereotypes women as mothers, sex objects and children while men are portrayed as fighters, and bread winners. Wood also argues that the language of communication in the workplace favours masculine norms and that generally workplace communication systems are gendered.

[6] See Appendix 12 for a brief literature review on gender differences in communication.

came up with new strategies of enhancing gender relations. The study argued that the use of structuration theory in framing the study questions on the affirmative influenced study participants' perceptions on gender and they engaged in 'generative conversations' (Bushe, 2013: 5). Study participants readdressed the issue of gender relations with a new and positive lens which led them to desire to make positive changes. In this case organizational learning took place.

Hence, this section of the chapter argues that while EAU operates within the larger policy framework of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which espouses the view that women and men are equal in the sight of God, field observations revealed that matters of gender equity were upheld in principle but not always in practice.[7] The study found out that the organization's 'theories in use' (Argyris, 1999) in matters of gender relations were different from those they espoused. Organization members thought that certain roles and tasks should be performed by a certain gender because those particular roles naturally suited them. The following excerpts from field observation notes on heads of departments' meeting and one focus group discussion help to shed more light:

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[7] Field observations showed that to a large extent, EAU continued to uphold gendered practices as far as assigning employees work is concerned. For example, at the time I joined the organization, women did not hold any leadership/management positions though some of them had similar or higher qualifications than their male colleagues and even though some of the departments' activities such as women ministries directly related to women issues. Instead, women mainly worked as secretaries, and at the front office, jobs usually associated with women. It was not until 2007 that the first woman was elected to the position of women and children's ministries director. It was then argued that a woman would handle the department better because it was about issues related to women and children. But here again, apart from the fact that there are only two female heads of departments against eight male heads of departments, the rationale used to elect a woman to this position follows the societal beliefs that women are better in matters related to women and children. It has been observed further that up to the present time, EAU and her sub-organizations, such as in Fields and Conferences, women mostly head departments whose activities are associated with women's gender roles. Hence, women head the women's and children's departments as an indication that their roles are still influenced by the societal definition of women's and men's work. This practice is extended to the local churches where women are elected to departments such as children's, departments that are perceived as feminine. This observation is in concert with Chalmers' (1996: 55) argument that 'specific areas of employment are built around gender differences and the notions of the private sphere invade the public sphere, so that particular areas of expertise are seen to belong to a certain gender.' (Field observations, January 8, 2013)

Today in the head of department meeting, Pr. FJ asked that we nominate a secretary of the committee and immediately some male pastors' hands went up. FJ asked the first one to give a name, and my name was proposed (I was the only lady in the meeting). The rest of the men seconded. I tried to object to this because it was my first meeting and I needed to observe what they do, but the pastor who nominated me argued that it is very natural for women to adapt to secretarial work, so I should not find it a problem. He even offered to give me a piece of paper and a pen to write the minutes. (Field notes, 30th March 2011)

From the above fieldwork notes, EAU employees appeared to believe that certain roles were suited for a particular gender. The thinking therefore influenced their decisions with regard to gender roles. In the above excerpt, the male heads of departments unanimously agreed that a secretary to their committee should be a lady because secretarial work is for women. Later in 2011, focus group discussions were conducted so as to elicit views of study participants on how to improve gender relations. In the following focus group excerpt, the study participants argued that some roles were better suited for particular gender, hence some jobs such as those of secretaries were meant for women:

M.H.D. 5: I don't think the position I hold at EAU is as a result of my gender but I think that secretaries do well because they are ladies. Secretarial and front office work is done well because it is done by ladies. So these secretaries can tell us that for sure it is as a result of being women that has enhanced their working relationships at EAU because they do their work well.

M.H.D. 4: I think F.O.W. 7 should tell us, you know secretarial work requires a lot of organization and ladies are good at that. You leave men in that office and it will look like a small dumping site"

F.O.W. 7 Talking of gender, secretarial is a lady's thing.

(Focus group discussion excerpts group 3, October 26th, 2011)

The foregoing focus group discussion excerpt show that at this point in time some study participants believed that there were what Richardson and Robinson (2008: 3) describe as 'gendered skills', in which case women had certain skills and men had others which were a given, incompatible and exclusive. Study participants argued that there are designated gender occupations so that women and men should perform duties that are in line with their gender roles. The above excerpt demonstrates that both men

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and women participants reinforced the common belief that there were jobs designated for men and others for women in society and that such designations were unquestionable. This argument is consistent with that of Kimmel, (2008: 202):

> Virtually every society has developed a division of labour; a way of dividing the tasks that must be done in order for society as a whole to survive…virtually every society has a gendered division of labour. There are very few tasks in every society that are not allocated by gender.

Although Kimmel's argument was based on the western society, the excerpts above demonstrate that the situation in EAU may not be different. As a matter of fact, F.O.W. 7 supported M.H.D 4 that secretarial work is the domain of women.

It was also observed that there were also cases when women themselves declined from attending to certain assignments because they argued that some of those tasks were too hard for them and should be done by men. The following excerpt from a worship committee meeting demonstrates this:

> The worship committee is made up of two women and two men and I am one of the members. This committee's mandate is to make worship interesting and involving. We held a meeting today to plan for weekly worship activities for the first quarter of 2011. We agreed that committee members should lead worship during the first week of the year before we slot in other staff members. The chairperson then asked each of us to choose a day in the first week but BO was hesitant. The chairperson then requested BO to take the day when we were to read the book of the quarter. BO declined and said that the book is too hard for her, that the pastors should lead during book reading. So BO chose to take up the day for Testimonies and singing (Field observation notes, January 12th, 2012).

The foregoing field excerpt demonstrates that however implicit gender may be, it influences how EAU employees choose to perform certain tasks, how they relate with one another and ultimately how they communicate with each other. This means that women's and men's interactions in EAU may be affected by how each views herself/ himself in relation to the other in terms of their gender roles, so that this relationship influences the level of interaction between them. In other words, one's gender determines the extent to which he/she can be open to the other and the type of information they can share. The study argued that study participants' views were

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influenced by socially defined roles of gender such that society's definition of gender roles pervaded into the organization and influenced organization members' relationships. Hence, in reflecting on their work relationships, study participants drew from society's expectations of gender roles as the following focus group excerpt demonstrates:

> Gender in EAU goes with the roles we perform in society. Roles like taking care of children and cooking, are for females. So females will not move freely as men can do. For example, if it comes to a lady itinerating[8] there are limitations because the husband may be expecting this and the children may be expecting that. But men are freer and they can move anywhere so long as there is a committed lady in the house…. For me, being a man has made my work easier because I can freely move when mama is at home with the children, and she is cooking for them, taking care of them. (M.O.1, focus group 1, October 26th, 2011)

Another focus group participant added:

> There were times when it was understood that being a pastor was a male profession, and people wondered what would happen especially when the first women went school to do pastoral studies. People asked when this woman completes school and they are posted as a pastor, how will she baptize? How will she go into the water? (M. O. 3 focus group discussion 2, October 26th, 2011)

M.O.1 added:

> I think there are policies which favour gender let me say men in the performance of their duties in the church. For example, in the pastorate, there is ordination and only male pastors are ordained. This determines who becomes a leader of a union or conference because one of the qualifications of the position is ordination…. I think there are activities in the church that can only be performed by men…. there are responsibilities which are given to us because we are male and we are ordained. (M.O 1, focus group 1, October, 26th, 2011)

Yet another focus group participant said this in regard to certain positions in EAU:

> Let us for example take ministerial department which deals with pastors. When it comes to elections between me and Ms. B. for example, people will scratch their heads to see whether we entrust the responsibility to Ms. B. But for me, ah that is a man; so gender has greatly advantaged the men in work situations. (M.O.W. 2, focus group discussion, October 26th, 2011)

It is clear from the foregoing focus group discussion excerpts that at this point in time, many study participants viewed gender roles as natural. So, they did not seem to

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[8] To itinerate is to work outside the station of work mainly when officers and heads of department travel to subsidiary organizations and institutions. Each officer or head of department prepares an itinerary (schedule) to indicate where they will be at particular times of the year.

question why women employees occupied certain positions while men occupied others because that is how society has defined male/female roles. As one participant argued, 'people (local Church members) would wonder how a female pastor could baptize.'[9] The study argued that in such a scenario, a woman candidate may be left out of a certain position because societal expectations have placed certain limits on her. Although she may be qualified and willing to take up the job, those responsible for recruitment may leave her out all the same due to their perceptions of what she can and cannot do based purely on societal constructions of gender roles. Hence, the foregoing study participant's arguments and field observations demonstrate that while the Seventh-day Adventist Church challenges gender disparity mainly through the affirmative actions, and from the pulpit, to a large extent, the reality on the ground is to the contrary. This study argued that study participants' perceptions of gender and consequent assignment of gendered roles may have been partially influenced by the denomination's historical view of women where a woman's role in the workplace was limited to a 'supportive' one as Schwarz (1979: 495) affirms:

> For decades, church leaders had generally conceived of the female role in the church to be a supportive one. It was good for a pastor's wife to be able to help with the music, accompany her husband in giving Bible studies, and perhaps teach the local church school- all except the case of the church school teacher, without pay. Young women who felt a special call for full time religious work might be utilized as "Bible workers" aiding evangelists in giving studies to interested persons. College religious departments and later the seminary, offered abbreviated courses to prepare women for their assigned role as "Bible instructors."

Schwarz's arguments demonstrate that women were relegated to subordinate roles in the Church, a practice which as the study found out continues to a large extent as has

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[9] In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, baptism is by immersion. This is part of the work of a local church pastor. If one is a female, then the difficulty arises with her dress and whether she is strong enough to immerse heavy people.

been discussed even though the General Conference has since taken an affirmative action to discourage women's discrimination.[10]

The study held that although there is an affirmative action to discourage the discrimination of women, the organizational structures within the larger organization in general and EAU in particular continues to favour men in terms of leadership positions and in terms of the type of positions they are assigned. This is evident, for example, from the excerpt of M.O.1 who argued that a woman cannot become the organization's President because the organization's policy does not provide for women ordination which is a requirement for those that are considered for the post of Union President.

Therefore, EAU's structure/culture is a 'web' (Papa et al. 2008: 129)[11] which has confined and immobilized organization members from thinking beyond their current practices, so that women are perpetually left to hold lower positions in the organization compared to those of men.

The study argued that the organization's structure which fosters patriarchal relationships affects gender relations because they determine the positions women

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[10] Seventh-day Adventists deplore and seek to combat all forms of discrimination based on race, tribe, nationality, colour, or gender. We believe that every person was created in the image of God, who made all nations of one blood (Acts 17:26). We endeavour to carry on the reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ, who died for the whole world so that in Him "there is neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal. 3:28) …. The equality of all people is one of the tenets of our church. Our Fundamental Belief No. 13 states: "In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him, and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. (ibid) (GC Session, 1995)

[11] Taking the metaphor advanced by Geetz (1973) of an organization's culture as a web, Papa et al. (2008: 129) argue that 'as webs cultures are spun continuously as people within a social system interact with one another and create their own rules and norms. Interestingly, the webs spun by cultural members are both confining and mobilizing. Just as a web confines a spider's movements to the areas traversed by the web, an organization's culture restricts worker actions to those considered acceptable by the norms and rules within the system. However, webs are not only confining, they also make movement for the spider possible. This is also true of the web spun by employees interacting with one another at work. The webs spun within an organization empower employees in ways legitimized by their collectively created culture. Finally, webs are places of struggle where spiders attack their prey. Likewise, when organization members spin their cultural webs, there may be struggles over meaning and the construction of one type of culture rather than another'.

occupy in the organization and the benefits entitled to them. Women may view this practice as oppressive and this may affect the quality and quantity of their interactions.[12] This study recognized the difficulties of changing the organization's complex culture and hierarchical structures which limit organization members' communication and instead provides alternative avenues through which the said members can navigate and penetrate the complex structures to enjoy relational communication. The following section describes how study participants' perceptions on gender relations changed in the course of their interactions during the focus group discussions.

3   CHANGE OF FOCUS

This section discusses how study participants changed their perceptions of gender relations during the focus group discussions and began to argue that gender relations should be improved. The study attributed the change of heart to the use of structuration theory that shaped the focus group discussion questions in such a way that emphasis was laid on that which was working. Study participants then proposed strategies to help improve their gender relations.

As it has been discussed in the foregoing section of the chapter, at the commencement of the focus group discussions, most of the study participants argued that gender roles are God given and natural and, therefore, men and women employees work according to their God-given roles and abilities. It was observed, for example, that at the beginning of the focus group discussions and as it has been demonstrated from the foregoing focus group excerpts in this chapter, some of the focus group participants

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[12] It was discussed in chapter 1 how EAU applied some policies selectively and how married women were disadvantaged. It was argued that though the policies have since been reviewed and women get the same benefits as men, the quality of interactions between men and women remains inadequate.

(both women and men) argued that gender in EAU was a given from God because He created both men and women and valued their gendered roles. Also, some of the foregoing field observations revealed that some employees declined certain responsibilities because they argued that those responsibilities were for the other gender. But later, as the discussions progressed, there was a change of heart from several focus group discussion participants. During the focus group discussions, the thinking of some of the study participants begun to change to what Argyris and Schon (1996: 21), and Mazen (2013: 210) describe as 'double loop learning, where study participants changed the values of their 'theories in use.'[13] Study participants began to argue that gender disparity was a problem that needed to be addressed, so that employees of both genders can relate better. The following section looks at the various positive ways that study participants proposed to enhance gender relations.

3.1 Enhancing Gender Relations to improve Communication in EAU

3.1.1 Enhance the Use of 'God's Lenses' to improve Gender Relations

Study participants argued that in order to improve gender relations they needed to use 'God's eyes' or 'God's lenses' in relating with one another. This means that study participants would like to enhance their acknowledgement and appreciation of both men and women as equal before God because they were both created in His image. Study participants argued that the equality view of both men and women before God should influence their relationships at organizational level. The study maintained that, in this case, study participants rediscovered the place of God in their relationships. In other

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[13] Theories-in-use are those theories that we call to speak of our actions to others. In other words, it is the theories that we use to explain our actions. Theories-in use tend to govern our behaviour and they tend to be tacit structures (theories in-use are more influential because they inform what people actually do regardless of the external claims. (Mazen, 2013: 210)

words, they moved from using 'society's lenses' which had distorted their views of gender that viewed women as lower than men, to using God's lenses which view both men and women as equal. The study also argued that study participants' change of focus or reorientation on values of gender was a form of organizational learning that occurred through reflection on the existing gender relations. The study argued that the use of appreciative inquiry was instrumental in sustaining participants' reflections and interactions and this led to the positive proposal of affirming God as important in their gender relationships.

While one may argue that such a change of heart was obvious because study all participants were Christians, the study held that the focus on the positive core through the various appreciative questions influenced participants' change of heart and consequent reorientation of their values. Hence structuration theory helped to shape the study questions so as to elicit positive responses and therefor change begun to take place once study participants began to value each other as equal before God. The observation here is that study participants would like to treat each other as God treats them- with love and respect, and recognition that each has a unique contribution to make to the work of God. Hence, those in positions of authority and responsibility must act as God's agents and treat all employees equally. So, whereas study participants perceived human efforts as important in enhancing gender relations, they argued that they needed to use 'God's lenses' as the following focus group excerpts illustrate:

> I believe everyone has something to contribute…if you are convinced in your heart that everyone is equal in the eyes of God and has therefore something to contribute to the organization, then we shall hold our women colleagues with the same esteem as men. (sic) (M.O.W. 3, focus group 1, October, 26th, 2011)

Another participant from another focus group discussion said:

> We need to recognize that in the eyes of God all are equal and these differences we exhibit down here are man-made. If we use God's perspective, I am sure with time, if all women are the only ones who are responding to God and to faithfulness, God would not be limited to use them. (M.H.D. 3, focus group 3, October 26th, 2011)

The foregoing focus group discussion excerpts introduce God to an otherwise human realm, in terms of organizational communication. Study participants viewed God as important in influencing their daily interactions. From the above excerpts, study participants argued that God uses people on the basis of their faith and commitment to Him and not on the basis of their gender. Therefore, in order for EAU to improve gender relations, study participants realized the need to first and foremost have a deeper personal relationship with God. This would, in turn, help them to see each other from the perspective of God and hence as equal. Hence, employees' appointments or election to certain positions would be based on their relationship with God in addition to their individual qualifications as opposed to their gender *per se*.

The study held that when employees recognize that they or their colleagues hold or serve in certain positions because they are qualified to hold them, and not because they are of a certain gender, this reduces bad feelings that may be caused by perceived gender inequality. Work relationships that are based on equality will enhance a sense of fairness and, therefore, remove the walls of class and gender. Men and women will have a common identity as God's children. Hence, such relationships will reduce envy, competition, ill feelings, mistrust, gossip, and other vices that affect interpersonal relationships and, in this way, increase levels of interaction.

The study held that organizational learning took place because study participants learnt new positive communication practices as demonstrated by their desire to use 'God's lenses' as opposed to society's lenses in relating with one another. This change of strategy was due to the use of structuration theory which altered study participants' perceptions of gender as formerly influenced by society once they started to focus on how they can enjoy positive gender relationships. Hence structuration theory's use of appreciative questions influenced the generative discussions (Bushe, 2013) in which

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study participants aspired to live in congruence with their espoused theories of equality. To the extent that study participants identified, names, and proposed to relate with one another as equal before God, it can be said that they experienced 'double loop learning' because they changed the values that governed their theories in use (Argyris and Schon, 1978: 3). The study findings therefore demonstrate that organization members changed their communication practices and hence their communication culture in interaction. This was demonstrated by the fact that they adapted new lenses of viewing each other which essentially shaped their interactions. The study held that the study participants' interactions increased because perceived gender differences were reduced. The above findings are consistent with the argument of Wood (2003: 10) that communication is the vehicle through which gender inequities are changed: 'Change comes through communication which is the heart of social life and social evolution. Through communication we identify and challenge current cultural views that constrain the individuals and create inequities'. Wolf (2011: 25) also argues that "with language as the primary tool, the ability to create change occurs simply by shifting the way people talk with one another… change itself is the phenomenon that emerges from communication".

This finding makes a unique contribution to gender studies especially those that advocate for gender equity in the African context. This is because some of the African scholars that have written on gender issues such as gender equity or equality (Wekesa, 2013), gender mainstreaming (Assefa, et al., 2013), or women's empowerment (Nambira and Kamanzi, 2013) to name a few, argue for various measures such as the review of constitutions and policies to make provisions for women in order to realize gender equality and equity. But as Wekesa (2013: 19), argues, implementation of those constitutions and policies face an uphill task. For example, in discussing about the

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challenges of gender equality in Kenya, Wekesa argues that although the Kenyan constitution has been reviewed in order to strengthen the rights of women which should accord them equal opportunities, what he describes as 'the old baggage[14]' may hinder the implementation of the same:

> This baggage has been historically entrenched and fed by the resistant societal and state patriarchal institutions that have long perpetuated gender inequities in society…most of these are fed by customary, religious, and social practices that still regard a woman as inferior to a man and that her place is in the domestic domain. (Wekesa, 2013: 19)

While Wekesa's arguments are based on the Kenyan situation, one can argue that this may be the case for most African countries. This study held that the various approaches on gender equality and equity, as discussed in the above literature and in other conventional literature, such as in Wood (2003: 250-257)[15], and Lorber (1994: 294-295),[16] target the 'outer' person, hence the emphasis on change of structures. However, this study held that real change is one that is inspired by God and this type of change is change of the 'inner' person or change of heart, so that it is change that emanates from within the person not outside of the person. Change that emanates from within is one that puts God at the centre and hence enhances positive gender relations. Thus, the study participants' change of attitude on designation of work on the basis of gender to desiring to designate work on the basis of qualifications can be said to be inner change. This argument is consistent with those of Preskill and Catsambas (2006: 13) who argue that real change starts with 'change of inner dialogue':

[14] Baggage here refers to the historical and cultural practices and traditions that defined the roles of men and women.

[15] Wood (2003: 250-257) discusses the various efforts that can be employed to redress gender inequity. Some of the efforts she discusses include enforcement of equal opportunity laws, passage of affirmative actions, and usage of quota systems in job distribution.

[16] Lorber (1994: 294-295) argues that 'In order to make all workers equal, everyone who does any kind of socially useful work, including the care takers of dependents must receive a wage that sustains a comfortable standard of living. Job segregation on the basis of gender would then be superfluous'.

> The voice we hear in our minds is a strong determinant of what we ultimately say or do… and the outcomes are often related to the image projected by the inner dialogue…The inner dialogue is mainly carried through the stories people tell themselves and each other to justify their interpretations of events and decisions. … to change an organization, one has to change the inner dialogue, changing the inner dialogue then changes the stories and conversations people have with one another and how people work together.

The argument from the excerpt above is that effective change is one that changes the person from within because it changes the will and the attitudes. Consequently, the study held that although the organization did not change structurally, organization members' change of heart or attitude which, in turn, changed their inner selves created an environment that enhanced their gender relations and, in this way, improved their communication culture.

3.1.2 Enhance Opportunities for Further Education and Training to improve Gender Relations

A second way through which study participants proposed to enhance their gender relations is through enhanced and equal opportunities in further education and training. The study argued that once study participants started using 'God's lenses' to relate to each other they sought ways to enhance gender relations. Hence, the study participants pointed out that further education and training was important in helping them improve their gender related skills and competencies, in order to help them attend to their work better. The study presumed that when some organization members are unskilled or semi-skilled for their jobs, they may lack the confidence to make informed contributions in any discussions because they may fear to expose their ignorance. Some of them may develop low self-esteem and opt to keep to themselves unless it is absolutely necessary for them to interact. Others may develop a negative attitude towards those who are highly qualified and view their attempts to engage in discussions as showing off, and this creates different classes of people according to their qualifications. This may affect their level of interaction. But when there are equal opportunities for training, it makes

organization members uphold each other as equal. The following focus group discussion excerpt illustrates participant's views on gender training:

> Since we know that in EAU some job assignments are allocated on the basis of gender such as leadership at union and conference level, then we need to train and empower people in their gender related activities. If it is activities that are related to females and females are perceived to do them better, then we go for that. If there are other activities which require ordination and it is only men who are ordained, then we empower these people in their gender related lines. (M.O.1. focus group 1, October 26th, 2011)

Some study participants did not necessarily view their gender related duties and responsibilities as problematic, rather they argued that what was lacking was training in adequate skills. Study participants argued that the lack of equal opportunities for training and further education, where one gender is favoured, may cause some people to feel that they are discriminated against.[17] This then influences their relationship with one another and their level of interaction with each other. The study argued that in a scenario where one feels discriminated against, work relationships are strained and consequently communication is adversely affected.

This focus group discussion excerpt above also demonstrates that once study participants begun to view each other with 'God's lenses', then they began to define their gender relations differently on the basis of their professional abilities and not their biological makeup. The arguments above show that gender are fluid and change from time to time and are also influenced by context. As has been demonstrated in the above excerpt, study participants shifted their positionality in regard to gender roles during the focus group discussions, meaning that gender relations were also redefined. The foregoing observations are consistent with those of (Wood 2003: 27) and Oyeronke

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[17] Between 2000 and 2007, the organization sponsored over 200 pastors for their first degree in theology. Of the total number, only four were women. And once the women pastors completed their degree, the organization could not post them to churches. For example, one of the women was put on contract at one of the church's FM station because her local conference's policy could not allow her to be posted to a district. The woman earned far much less even though she had the same qualifications as male pastors.

(2005: 11) that definitions of gender are context-based and dependent on specific society's practices. Martin (2004) and Ogbomo (1997) also argue that gender identities and relationships are influenced by the societies in which people live and thus the definition of gender is dependent on how it is constructed in a particular society. Thus through reflection, study participants' perceptions of gender changed from what society offered to what God's ideals were. The study participants' proposal to have equal opportunities of training and further education are consistent with the General Conference's (1995) affirmative action on the equality of men and women:

> Seventh-day Adventists believe that all people, male and female, are created equal, in the image of a loving God. We believe that both men and women are called to fill a significant role in accomplishing the primary mission of the Adventist Church: working together for the benefit of humanity. …Women are entitled to the God-given privileges and opportunities intended for every human being--the right to literacy, to education, to adequate health care, to decision making, and to freedom from mental, physical, or sexual abuse. We also maintain that women should play an increased role in the leadership and decision-making bodies of both church and society. Ultimately, we believe that the church will fulfil its mission only when women are empowered to achieve their full potential. (GC Session, 1995)[18]

The study argued that although it may not be a direct influence of the study, EAU members had started to live out what they proposed. For example, it was observed that EAU had already paid fees for and taken some of the staff who was attending university for their undergraduate degrees. EAU had also taken others for part-time classes to complete their secondary education. Other workers were already in their postgraduate studies and most of them were funded by the organization.[19]

Observations that were made at both formal and informal meetings to find out how those that had gone for further studies interacted with their supervisors and with colleagues showed that their communication skills and relationships had improved. For

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[18] This statement was approved and voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee (ADCOM) and was released by the Office of the President, Robert S. Folkenberg, at the General Conference session in Utrecht, the Netherlands, June 29th -July 8th, 1995. http://www.adventists/beliefs/statements /main

[19] Fieldwork notes, June, 2012.

example, it was observed that two of the staff members had started to voluntarily sign the morning worship rota and they were committed to facilitate during their turns. Previously their names would be slotted in the worship rota and they would regularly request someone else to lead on their behalf. Also, these employees would tremble and stammer and, at times, opt not to read their portion when their turn came. The study attributed this to a lack of confidence due to inadequate skills in speaking English; because the two interacted freely with colleagues during informal conversations where Swahili was mainly used. It was also observed that their reading skills had improved and they had become more confident in reading the Bible during their turns in worship time. Most importantly, those members of staff also contributed to the discussions during morning worship and in other forums. For example, in a social welfare meeting held on July 12th 2012, one of them was very vocal on in advocating for the inclusion of his colleagues to the social welfare group:

> On the motion of membership to the staff welfare membership, Mr. OA (a janitor) raised his hand and asked how come his colleagues who work in residences are not members of the welfare. He said that they had given him their names and he had forwarded them to the committee. He sought to know whether they would be allowed to join the rest in the next social retreat. In the past, the janitor would ask someone else to ask the question for him. (Observation notes, July, 12th, 2012)

Again, on August 7th 2012, during a staff meeting, I made the following observations:

> The debate on the venue for the retreat has been going on for some time now. It is interesting to note that those who are keeping it alive are mainly subordinate staff. They have categorically refused to go to Watamu this year, because they say they have a right to make choices as members of the welfare group. Of interest to me is the level of interaction between supervisors and subordinates. There is an equal playing ground so to say as all members of staff are discussing animatedly over the issue. In the past, the leader's word would have been final.
>
> Then on a motion on health benefits, I observed that janitor Q was very keen on knowing why they do not receive the same benefits as others. After he was given an answer he said this in Swahili "Sisi *watu wengine hatupati vitu vingi*". (Some of us do not get a lot of benefits) in the hearing of all staff members) (Observation notes, 7th August, 2012)

It was also observed that some of the staff who would previously be reluctant to participate in Friday Bible discussions, had become very active. Sometimes when the person designated to lead was absent, they volunteered to step in more quickly than previously. This shows that when employees are given equal opportunities of training, their self-confidence and their interaction skills as well as their benefits[20] increase. This, in turn, gives them self- confidence and they begin to value themselves and view each other as equal and they in turn interact with one another more because they feel that their contributions are valued. Training and further education reduces the 'class' mentality where subordinates relate to their supervisors from a position of inferiority. Training also helps reduce perceived gender differences and discrimination and helps employees to interact better.

Further education and training also enhances employees' confidence to speak up for their rights. The following field observations illustrate how some of the staff who were in university coalesced to reject what they felt was substandard education and shared their sentiments with EAU officers to try and find a better alternative:

> A few months ago, the Administrative committee (ADCOM) voted that office staff that were undertaking their studies in University X were not going for their usual semester classes... Later a new agenda was brought to the ADCOM to allow the said staff to go to University Y to complete their studies from there. I later spoke with two of the staff to establish why they had declined to go to University X. They argued that they felt that some of their educational needs were not being met; and they shared the information with the Human resource head of department whose investigations confirmed the same. It was on this basis that the new agenda was brought to the ADCOM and their request to change schools was granted. (Observation noted, August 16th, 2012)

The above field observations demonstrate that further education and training can open people's minds to see things from a new perspective and they are eager to share those views with others. The study held that further training not only enhances people's

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[20] In the East African Union, salaries are based on job groups and job groups are based on ones qualifications. In this case, all degree holders, regardless of the position they hold in the organization, earn the same salary.

confidence and self-esteem, but also enhances their interaction skills which enable them to share information more regularly. The sharing of information increases organization members' level of interaction and hence improves the quality and quantity of communication. The study therefore held that structuration was useful in facilitating study participants to identify further educational and training as important in improving their gender relations. Organizational learning therefore took place because study participants not only named further training as important but they went further to practice what they had said. In this way also the organization's internal communication changed as study participants interacted positively and as they practiced their newly identified practices.

3.1.3   Enhance Engendering of Appointments and Nominations to improve Gender Relations

A third strategy that study participants proposed to enhance gender relations is through the appointment of employees on merit to short term or long term positions. This is referred to in this chapter as 'engendering' of work assignments. The study participants' adoption and use of God's lenses propelled them to see the need for engendering appointments and nominations. The argument that study participants advanced went like this: Rather than assign duties and responsibilities on the basis of gender *per se* and disregard ones qualifications and competencies for the task; gender relations can be better improved when people are assigned work responsibilities and other duties on the basis of their competencies. This is how one of the study participants put it:

> One of the things I used to ask myself when I was stewardship director is does the stewardship director have to be a man? In other words, must you be ordained in order to promote giving? …we need to rethink really and move towards identifying people who are qualified. (M.O.W. 2, focus group 1, October, 26th, 2011)

Once they attain the necessary qualifications, both men and women employees can do any work. Appointing people for work or for other responsibilities on merit improves gender relationships because such appointments are viewed as fair and competitive. When this is not the case, there is suspicion, non-co-operation and even gossip that affect people's communication relationships. Sometimes there may be a communication breakdown between supervisor and their subordinates, especially if a subordinate is more qualified than a supervisor. A supervisor may feel that his/her position is threatened if the subordinate seems to be more conversant with the work or seems to ask some questions that the supervisor may not be able to answer. In such a case, both supervisor and subordinate will avoid engaging in conversations unless it is really necessary and when they do, their interactions are limited This type of communication is what Beebe et al. (2008: 4) describe as 'impersonal' communication because communication partners respond to each other's' roles than who they are, and hence theirs is an 'I-it' relationship because they see each other as objects (ibid). However, when appointments are done on merit, then organization members see that there is fairness and they support those that have been given responsibilities. On the other hand, those who are given responsibilities on the basis of their expertise have the confidence to talk about their work and they do not shy away from questions, or give excuses when asked to supply information. They are also quick to form networks and friendships and these types of relationships increase interactions and enhance the quality of communication.

The study found that EAU was starting to move in the direction of study participants' dreams. The appointment of qualified women to senior positions of leadership and to various committees was a case in point. Although the number of women compared to that of men is still low, it demonstrates that EAU has begun to

3.1.4 Enhance a Review and Change of Organizational Policies to improve Gender Equity

Study participants also proposed to enhance gender relations through the review and change of perceived gendered organizational policies. The following excerpts help demonstrate this:

> Let me ask if they say that these are policy issues, and policy is only a guideline. I also understand that policies need to be changed with time as new things emerge. New light comes and we realize there is still this other option which could also work. I think change of policy will help us sort some of these issues out. (M.O.W. 3, focus group 1, October 26th, 2011)

An officer of the Union in the same focus group discussion responded to this and said:

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[21] This is a committee that organizes social events for the organization. All employees are members of social welfare by virtue of their monthly contributions. Officers to this committee are elected during a staff meeting and they hold office for 2 years, subject to renewal.

[22] Image change committee is responsible for ensuring the physical facilities of the organization demonstrate its values. This included, mission statements, signboard, general outlook of the compound, and office facilities.

[23] The secretarial committee was put in place to help the Union prepare for change of status. The work of the leader is to co-ordinate all the filing and archiving of materials, and to ensure that all records are in place and up-to-date.

[24] One would argue that the women head departments and/or committees whose activities reflect gender roles as prescribed by society. However, it is important to note that such a move enhances confidence and leadership skills in the women, and also improves the work.

Yes of course, there were times when female elders could not function and this was brought to our attention. We made our proposals to the higher organizations…and now worldwide the policy is changing and the Church Manual[25] indicates that female elders can now be ordained. So, yes, policies can be reviewed. (M.O.1, focus group1, October 26th, 2011)

Study participants realized and began to question the effectiveness of the organization's current policies in addressing gender disparities. They proposed that rather than being sporadic or make changes due to pressure, women's entrenchment should be fully planned for and catered for in the organization's policy. But as one participant argued, first there must be a policy that allows for change of policies:

I am actually in concurrence that the church is doing something. But I still consider it as an after –thought. Because in most times when a certain position is being filled or when there is a committee to be set up and people are nominated; when the process is almost done, someone says "Ah we need a lady". So I think we need an affirmative action. There must be a policy on this. There should be a policy that defines that a women representative must be there. I think that will give us some guidelines and it does not become guesswork or as an after-thought or sometimes people forgetting completely. (M.O.4, focus group 3, October 26th, 2011)

The focus group discussion excerpt above demonstrates that study participants moved from a state of denial and ignorance of gender disparity in EAU and its effects on their relationships as displayed at the beginning of the focus group discussions; to a state of acceptance that there was a challenge and, therefore, a need to change policy in order to enhance positive gender relationships. Study participants became more deliberate in their proposals on how to enhance gender relations. They therefore went through what Argyris and Schon (1978: 2; 1996: 20) describe as 'double loop learning' in which case they not only questioned the existing policies but also desired to make changes to the values that govern those policies. In this case, therefore, study participants changed their governing variables and their assumptions. This argument is

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[25] A church manual is the official document of the church that spells out how the Adventist church at all levels should be operated. It spells out details of elections, church membership, committees and their functions, and local church officers and their functions. http//www.adventist.org/beliefs/church-manual

consistent with Argyris and Schon (1978: 3) that: 'Double-loop learning occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives'. Argyris and Schon (1996:21) further argue that double loop learning 'results in the change of values of theory-in-use, as well as strategies and assumptions'.

The study posited that the use of God's lenses was instrumental in study participants' reflection on the organization's present policies. Hence they started to see gaps in the existing organization policies in meeting their relational needs. They thus pointed out that policies that are perceived to perpetuate gender disparity ought to be reviewed, in order for women and men to be recognized for their skills, and qualifications, and competencies and, most importantly, as equal before God. This kind of relationship provides an equal opportunity environment in which all employees offer their services because merit reduces feelings of prejudice that come with gender roles.

The study maintained that by proposing for a review of the organization's policies to entrench gender equity, study participants changed their governing variables. That was why study participants said that rather than rely on anecdotal changes, the organization should be intentional in matters of gender equality and this should be demonstrated through the review of gendered organizational policies. Once such policies are put in place, then it would be easier to review organization policies in general and those that impede gender equity because the organization members will have a framework through which they will review the existing policies.

The study argued that AI facilitated the change of study participants' focus. Hence through structuration theory the asking of appreciative questions moved study participants from a problem-centric or deficit-based thinking to a solution-centric thinking (Cooperrider et al., 2008), in addition to encouraging them to see beyond their

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present practices. The study averred that in this case change occurred to the extent that study participants' attitudes changed. Hence the findings agree with Watkins et al, (2011: 37) that change is simultaneous with inquiry and occurs 'at the speed of imagination' as opposed to occurring at the end of the study process. The study therefore argued that organizational learning took place because study participants identified new ways of relating with one another.

Field observations showed that EAU had already embarked on reviewing its policy. For example, it was observed that on September 3rd, 2012, the officer in charge of policy requested employees to identify any policies that they would like to be reviewed. Although the proposed changes must go to the General Conference[26] for approval and implementation this indicates that the organization's policies may change. It was further observed that the EAU Handbook had been revised, and observations revealed that several changes that spell out the relationships between male and female employees and affirm them as equal in the eyes of God had been made.[27] Although this study did not directly intervene in the review of the organization's policy, one can argue that it contributed to enhancing attitude change of organization members to want to make it a priority. This shows that organization members have the capacity to change their practices for the better.

4 SUMMARY

Chapter 8 has discussed the various factors that influence positive gender relations in East African Union. These include: (1) enhanced use of 'God's lenses' where men and

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[26] EAU is represented at the General Conference meetings by the Union President and the Pastor's representative.

[27] East African Union Employee Handbook, rev ed., 2013.

women are equal before God. Hence study participants proposed that their perception of each other should be based on God's view as opposed to theirs or that of society. The study argued that the use of God's lens would lead organization members to desire equal relationships. Hence, the sharing of the organization's resources will be on equal basis. That is why study participants proposed other strategies of enhancing gender relations such as (2) enhanced training of employees to acquire a certain level of education or certain skills; (3) enhanced engendering of appointments and nominations; and (4) enhanced review and change of the organizations' policies that may be perceived to discriminate women. The chapter also discussed how study participants' perception of gender roles changed during the focus group discussions, and they began to see the need to improve their gender relations. Thus they argued that they needed to view one another from the perspective of God.

The study therefore maintained that in this case organizational learning took place because study participants re-evaluated their 'theories in use' in light of God's lenses of viewing men and women and changed their values in order to live in congruence with their espoused Christian values of love and equity. So during the focus group discussions, study participants' attitudes towards gender changed and they identified new strategies to improve gender relations. This, in turn, led to the change of the organization's communication culture because during their interactions, organization members shifted from focusing on 'the status quo' of gender relations to embracing new strategies for enhancing their relationships.

Chapter 9 will give a summary of the whole thesis and also discuss some of the major findings and my own reflections. The chapter will also discuss the study's contribution to knowledge and areas for future research.

Chapter 9 Summary and Conclusions

1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter ties together the entire study by giving an overview of the main study findings, and how they spoke to the main research questions as set out in chapter 1 and the subsidiary questions in chapter 3. The chapter also discusses my personal reflections on how the study impacted my private and professional life by helping me to view and interact with people with 'appreciative eyes and ears' (Lewis et al. 2008: 139).[1] Thus, the use and application of AI in this study went beyond the organization's context to affect how I live and relate with my colleagues and my family members.

This study commenced with an inquiry into the positive communication practices or the life giving forces of communication in East African Union and sought to answer the following main research question:

Main Question

What are the positive communication practices that exist in East African Union?

Sub-Questions

  i.   How do organization members utilize the positive communication practices?

  ii.   How do organization members enhance those positive communication practices?

The second level of research questions that the study sought to answer were those related to the themes that the study identified from the data of the second field work in

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[1] This means Appreciative Inquiry always looks for 'signs of life, of engagement, of interest'. It is about looking for the best in people as opposed to looking for faults.

2010. In other words, when data from the pilot study were analysed and various factors that drive internal communication in EAU were identified, it was necessary to frame other research questions so as to understand how those drivers are enhanced and how they in turn improve internal communication. The following were the subsidiary questions:

a)   How does trust enhance internal communication practices in EAU?

b)   How does leader-follower confidence enhance internal Communication practices in EAU?

c)   How does creativity enhance internal communication practices in EAU?

d)   How do positive gender relations enhance internal communication practices in EAU?

In attempting to answer these questions, the study made the following rebuttable assumptions: 1) There were positive communication practices in EAU that were working although they had not yet been recognized or acknowledged; 2) Organization members had the capacity and the agency to identify and name the positive communication practices and propose ways to enhance them; 3) East African Union was aspiring for growth and higher performances and would be interested in understanding ways in which its members could communicate better in order to enhance interpersonal relationships as well as organizational performance and; 4) Change began to occur and to be experienced as soon as the first question was asked and hence   appreciative inquiry was a 'process for change rather than a master of it' (Grant, 2006: ii). Thus, the study maintained that rather than wait to see change at the end of the study process, change already started to occur as soon as study participants began to share their organizational stories of positive communication practices. Study participants began to experience change through the use of affirmative/ positive language in telling their

stories and in identifying new strategies to enhance the various positive drivers of communication that they identified. Therefore, 'change occurred simultaneously with inquiry' and 'at the speed of imagination' (Watkins et al., 2011: 37); and the organization's communication culture changed through its members' interactions because organizational learning took place. In the following sections, I discuss the main findings of the study.

2   THERE ARE POSITIVE COMMUNICATION PRACTICES IN EAST AFRICAN UNION

This study established that there are positive internal communication practices in East African Union and these are: trust, leader-follower confidence, creativity, and positive gender relations. The study also established that organization members utilize the various drivers in their regular interaction and practice. It was further established that there are various strategies to improve the respective communication practices that were identified in order to improve internal communication practices as discussed from chapters 5 to 8. The study demonstrated that there is a reciprocal relationship between communication and the respective positive communication practices such that improved communication also improves each of the practices. Chapter 5 discussed the various strategies that study participants said enhance trust between them; and ways through which those strategies enhance internal communication in EAU.

Chapter 6 described the various strategies that study participants identified as crucial in improving leader-follower confidence and how they in turn improve the quality and quantity of internal communication in EAU. Chapter 7 established the various ways to improve creativity and how they improve internal communication practices within EAU; and chapter 8 described the various factors that enhance positive

gender relations and how enhanced gender relations improve internal communication practices in the organization.

Therefore, the study answered the research questions because it was established that there were positive communication practices in EAU and there were ways in which organization members utilized them and enhanced them. In sum, the findings that were discussed in the various chapters of this thesis established the following.

The study established that trust enhances internal communication practices in EAU. Chapter 5 discussed various forms of trust in EAU.[2] Through anecdotal evidence, the study showed that study participants had started to build trust in each other as demonstrated by the length of time they spent together during and after the focus group discussions. And this showed that the more they interacted, the more they build trust in each other and vice versa and hence the reciprocal relationship between trust and communication (Chapter 5, section 2.5.1).

The study established that leader-follower confidence improves internal communication practices in EAU because as leader-follower confidence increases the quality and quantity of communication also increases.[3] Field observations demonstrated that the quality and quantity of communication between colleagues increased due to

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[2] These included trust which is shown during election or appointment of new employees, trust as shown during delegation of duties and responsibilities, trust as circumscribed by policy and trust in self. The study participants found out that trust that was circumscribed by policy hindered their communication experiences. Hence, they proposed two new forms of trust that would help them enjoy their communication relationships: trust that arises from regular interactions and self-disclosure, and trust in sharing personal and official information. (Chapter 5 sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2)

[3] Study participants proposed to enhance leader-follower confidence through: Increased openness, enhanced feedback forums, increased appreciation and increased delegation of responsibility and authority. The study argued that structuration theory was useful in framing the study questions such that they facilitated study participants' positive discussions. Hence, organizational learning occurred, and the organization's communication culture also changed.

delegation of responsibility and authority and this was evidence that leader-follower confidence improves communication and vice versa[4] (Chapter 6, section 6).

Chapter 7 established that freedom of creativity enhances internal communication practices in EAU and vice versa.[5] For example, field work observations demonstrated that encouragement in the creative process enhances interaction. Anecdotal evidence demonstrated how a supervisor's encouragement motivated the employee to regularly share information on the project with the supervisor and colleagues (Chapter 6, section 4.2.2).

The study established that positive gender relations improve internal communication practices in EAU and vice versa.[6] Evidence from the field showed that further education and training improves communication. Anecdotal evidence showed

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[4] Also, the study participants' proposals that feedback forums should include a supervisor's actual visits to their subordinate's site of work and 'crack jokes', chapter 6 (section 4) demonstrated that study participants needed the quality of the feedback content improved so that it goes beyond words to include actions; and hence their desire to go beyond the 'what' of communication to the 'how' of communication which the study argues is important to building strong communication relationships, and which invariably constituted change in communication process.

[5] Study participants proposed to enhance freedom of creativity through the following strategies; by allowing flexibility in how employees perform their work and acknowledging failure, through more encouragement of individuals and team spirit, and through a review of the organization's policies that may be perceived to be repressive to creativity. Other strategies included improved matching of task with talent, and more passionate sharing of the organization's mission and vision.

[6] The study participants proposed to enhance their gender relations through the following strategies; by using 'God's lenses' to view one another in which case all people are equal because they are made in the image of God. The study posited that God's lenses would in turn make organization members allocate resources and opportunities of training on equal basis, assign work and responsibilities on the basis of expertise, and review organization policies in order to foster gender equity. It was argued that the study participants' determination to use 'God's lenses' in their relationship demonstrated that they recognized God as important in their communication relationships. They also recognized that positive gender relations result from a change of the inner person in which case one's attitudes and values change. Study participants also recognized that a change of the inner person results from putting God at the centre. With God's lenses, organization members start to appreciate members of the opposite sex as equal to them. Therefore, this study made a unique contribution to gender studies because it showed that in order to achieve gender equity people must be transformed from within so that it is reflected in their attitudes, actions and practices. Conventional literature lays emphasis on change of policies and constitutions which as it was discussed in chapter 8 (section 3.1.1) has not been very successful in most cases. Therefore, the study argued that once the inner being changes, it would be easier to change the structures that foster gender inequity and thus improve communication relationships.

that two junior employees who had started going to school increased their interaction with colleagues during worship services and staff meetings (Chapter 8, section 3.1.2). Another field work observation showed that employees gathered courage to share with their supervisors the need to change schools; demonstrating therefore that further education and training reduced fear in the said employees and increased their levels of interactions with supervisors.

3   EAST AFRICAN UNION WAS OPEN TO LEARNING

The study established that East African Union was open to learning. This was demonstrated through the organization members' willingness to participate in the study process through focus group discussions and interviews as discussed in chapter 3 (section 4.2.3). This was also shown through their consistent focus on looking for the positive communication practices, and ways to improve them. For example, chapter 5 (section 2.5.2) demonstrated how study participants had begun to build trust in each other. Chapter 6 section 6 demonstrated how delegation of duties and responsibilities increased communication between colleagues; chapter 7 (section 4.2) demonstrated how encouragement motivated an employee to share more with colleagues about a new project, and chapter 8 (section 3) demonstrated how study participants' perceptions of gender changed during the focus group discussions and they began to advocate for gender equity.[7] Also, the Union President's closing remarks after the focus group

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[7] The study argued that once study participants began to view each other through God's lenses in their relationships (Chapter 8, section 3.11); 'God's lenses' would help them determine how they allocate and share resources and work assignments and how they review organizational policies that promote gender inequity (Chapter 8, section 3.1.4).

discussions as shown in Appendix 11 is a demonstration that the organization was open to learning.

The study therefore concluded that organizational learning occurred because study participants recognized, named, and articulated the positive communication practices and new strategies to improve them. Examples of such learning include; the study participants' desire to relate and interact more deeply and share personal and official information in order to improve trust as discussed in chapter 5 (sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2); their proposal for supervisor-subordinate feedback that included 'cracking jokes' in chapter 6 (section 4) Their desire to review the organizations' policies in order to remove those that are perceived as repressive to creativity as discussed in chapter 7 (section 4.3), or to entrench women in order to improve gender relations as discussed in chapter 8 (section 3.1.3) among other strategies.

4   EAU MEMBERS CHANGED THEIR COMMUNICATION CULTURE

The study demonstrated that the EAU members changed their internal communications culture in interaction. This is with the understanding that change in this study was not viewed as a one- time event but rather as a continuous process. And the process commenced with a focus on the positive core and use of affirmative language in identifying the positive drivers of communication, generative discussions on ways to improve those drivers, which maintained positive talk and in some cases was used in practice.[8] Change in this study occurred with every interaction, and every conversation

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[8]It was discussed in chapter 3 that both culture and organization are constructed and reconstructed through communication, and an organization does not exist outside its members' interactions (Mumby, 2013: 14). The study argued that as participants engaged in discussions on best strategies to improve their communication practices, their propositions were indicators of change of communication structures. The

and was therefore not a single event with a beginning and an end (Watkins et al., 2011:47). Therefore, it can be argued that once study participants' language, attitudes and perceptions changed, organizational learning took place and the organization's communication culture changed positively because in appreciative inquiry change begins with the framing of questions (Watkins, et al., 2011:47).

The study also documented some anecdotal evidence to show that change took place as a direct intervention of the study. For example, during the focus group discussions, study participants recognized that trust that was circumscribed by policy did not meet their communication needs and they came up with two new forms of trust (chapter 5, section 2.5.1, and 2.5.2). The study further showed that study participants interacted for much longer after the focus group discussions and started to identify themselves in relation to one another thus using 'We' instead of 'I' as had been the case at the beginning of the focus group discussions (chapter 5 section 2.5.1). Also the orientation of new employees improved as discussed (chapter 5 section 2.3). It was also shown that enhanced delegation of duties and responsibilities to two members of staff improved their communication with others (chapter 5 section 6; chapter 6 section 6). Change was also documented when the organization's leaders openly shared what previously would have been considered very confidential information about a court case with employees (chapter 6, section 2). Hence, this demonstrates that organization

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change of communication structures essentially means change of the organization's culture because an organization's culture is created through the interaction and sense making of its members (Mumby, 2013: 133). By focusing on the positive core, organization members began to see new possibilities and their individual contributions to making those possibilities a reality. For example, study participants pointed out that there was need to enhance trust by relating more regularly and by sharing personal and official information as discussed in chapter 5 (sections 2.5.2, and 2.5.3). They also said that feedback forums should be enhanced by a supervisor's actual visits to one's site of work as discussed in chapter 6 (section 4). And they also said that they needed to relate from a position of equality in order to improve their gender relations and recognized God's lenses as the means to achieve gender equity as discussed in chapter 8 (section 3.1). The foregoing examples demonstrate therefore that study participants changed their communication culture in interaction.

members began to be open with one another. The study argued that the change of the organization members' attitudes and their choice to improve the various positive communication drivers were avenues through which organization members would build a strong communication culture which would enable them to enjoy their communication relationships and improve their performance.

5 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study focused on enhancing organization communication through appreciative inquiry. The following are some of the contributions it has made to knowledge.

5.1 Contribution to Appreciative Inquiry Research in Christian Organizations

This study makes a contribution to the use of AI in Christian organizations.[9] The application and use of appreciation inquiry in my context has introduced a new dimension to studying EAU; and extended the understanding and use of AI in Christian organizations thus adding to the works of Paddock (2003) who used AI to study Christian values that the Catholic Church members could use to build relationships among themselves and with their communities.

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[9] My study is the first of its kind in East African Union and in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For example, in East African Union, previous studies have been in different fields and they used a problem-centric approach to understanding various organizational phenomena. As a matter of fact, there are neither previous studies in organizational communication nor on the use of appreciative inquiry in EAU. My study was focused on looking for 'the positive core' or the 'life giving forces' of communication practices in East African Union and thereby directed study participants' attention to the best of what 'was' and how to build on it and was a departure from previous studies.

5.2 Contribution of Knowledge in the Use of Appreciative Inquiry in Kenya

This study makes a contribution to the AI studies in Kenya. As it was alluded to in chapter 1, my search for extant studies on AI studies in Kenya yielded very few compared to AI studies in South Africa. Hence, this study contributes to the works of Inui et al. (2007), Ochieng Obote (2007), Dalta et al. (2009), Miruka et al. (2011), and Appleford (2013) that have used AI to study different phenomena in Kenya.

5.3 Contribution of Knowledge through the flexible use of Appreciative Inquiry Phases

This study modified the use of AI by using 3 of the 4 phases of appreciative inquiry at different times and with different study participants as was discussed in chapter 3. This demonstrated that AI can sustain momentum irrespective of the time difference and change of participants in different phases. The study also framed the research questions according to my research needs.[10] The flexible use of appreciative in inquiry in this study contributes to the works of Prevette (2008) and Inui et al. (2007) who used AI in formulating research questions and Miller (2011) who used AI's first two cycles of discover and dream. The study also contributes to knowledge by extending the application of appreciative inquiry to the field of organizational development studies and particularly in the context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya.

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[10] This is a new attempt which I believe has brought out valid knowledge and it also demonstrates that AI is not a prescriptive method, but rather it can be used according to the needs of the researcher. Hence, this was a significant contribution to knowledge because it is a departure from the works of Cooperrider and Whitney (2005), Cooperrider et al. (2008) and Watkins et al. (2011) who spell out a specific way in which the research questions are framed in AI.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge on Organizational Communication Studies through the Four 'Drivers of Communication'

This study contributed to knowledge by discovering different ways through which organizational communication can be enhanced.[11] Thus, the themes of trust, leader-follower confidence, freedom of creativity, and positive gender relations as discussed in this study add a new lens to understanding the factors that influence organizational communication and show that there is a reciprocal relationship between each driver and communication.[12] The various drivers of internal communication are in themselves a new lens to understanding organizational communication because they place organization members at the centre of the communication process so that their interactions and relationships become important in shaping the organization's communication practices.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge on Organizational Communication through fusing Structuration Theory, Organizational Learning Theory and Organizational Culture Theory

The use of the three theories namely structuration theory, organizational culture theory and organizational learning theory to frame research questions and to explain the data respectively are a refreshing way of understanding how organizational learning takes

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[11] The study established that enhanced trust, enhanced leader-follower confidence, enhanced creativity, and enhanced gender relations and their attendant strategies for enhancement, improve the quality and quantity of organizational communication practices and vice versa.

[12] In this case, communication ceases to be a management tool, but one through which organization members shape their relationships. Second, the aforementioned drivers of communication demonstrate that good organization structures and technologies are not sufficient in themselves in enabling effective communication; rather transformed people facilitate effective communication. Also, this study has made a unique contribution through the use of literature from different fields to make a case for positive organizational communication.

place, and how organization members create a new communication culture in interaction. The theories demonstrated that organization members have the capacity to learn and to change their communication culture in interaction, meaning therefore that communication is a give and take process because all organization members negotiate for meaning. The findings challenge some of the works of Richmond et al. (2013) who view communication as a management tool. The study also challenged the works of Schein (2006, 2010) and Alvensson and Sveningsson (2008) who view organizations' culture as a management tool and external to the organization and therefore one that can be changed by management. The study helps to show that an organization's culture is a product of its members' interactions. The study, therefore, adds to the works of Keyton (2005, 2011), and Driskill and Brenton (2011), and Mumby (2012, 2013) by demonstrating that organizations are 'communicative structures' (Mumby, 2013:4).

6   SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to East African Union office and to the organization employees that participated in interviews, focus group discussions or whose interactions I observed within the study period.

Also, although the study did not directly engage in the fourth (design) phase of the AI cycle, the study findings demonstrated that change begun to take place as it was demonstrated by some of the anecdotal changes that were discussed. This study is limited in making profound claims on how much change took place or how much change can take place if and when AI cycle is fully used. The foregoing study limitations will influence the direct application of the results in other contexts but yet

are important for future research as one may want to inquire into the factors that influence their communication experiences in their own contexts.

7 FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this study have shown that Appreciative Inquiry is a powerful tool for bringing about change and that if deployed over time with sufficient resources to facilitate participants' reflection and action, change can be widespread and durable. The findings have also shown that people across the hierarchy of the EAU were triggered to change their communication practices and had the capacity to name the change they desired. Therefore, future research that employs Appreciative Inquiry in organizations in particular and in society generally should allow more time and resources to enable participants discuss their situations, reflect and dream about what works and how to enhance it and work on enhancing those good practices to fruition. This way appreciative inquiry will be allowed to play its rightful role as an avenue for change and improvement.

Inside the EAU in particular future AI research should include entities within the campus of EAU because interactions spill over to those entities on a daily basis. This will provide opportunities for widespread change and improvement in internal communication that benefits the entire organization and its affiliates. Also future research in EAU should exploit the four phases to in order to see how much change may result. This requires more time and resources with which to facilitate participants through the research cycle, but is necessary for testing the entire methodology.

The next section discusses some of my reflections on the study results and their implications for East African Union in particular and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in general.

8   ENHANCING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES: METHODOLOGICAL AND CONCEPTUAL REFLECTIONS

This study established that organization members of East African Union interacted with each other to identify positive communication practices and various strategies to improve them. This study demonstrated that the organization's members had collective and individual capacity and the agency to improve their communication practices in interaction. The study also demonstrated that structuration theory was instrumental in making study participants generate positive strategies to improve their communication practices, and further that EAU was open to learning. The following section is a brief reflection on my research journey and on the study findings.

8.1   My Research Journey: Complex yet Liberating

My research journey began with the choice of research topic and research approach that was new to me and hence a complete paradigm- shift for me. I had to adopt a new way of thinking, which involved moving from seeing myself as a knowledge receiver to becoming a knowledge creator.[13] The paradigm shift allowed me to view and appreciate study participants as co-researchers and therefore co-creators of knowledge and therefore we co-created the organizational realities that we would like to experience thenceforth. The following are some of my reflections on the study findings.

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[13] Chapter 2 describes some of my challenges of locating myself in the study and how I overcame them.

8.2   Communication is more Relational than Mechanical

My reason for undertaking the study was to improve the organization's communication structures in order to improve communication process of EAU'.[14] I thought that once problems of the communication process are identified and solved, communication relationships would also improve as a matter of course. This study changed my perceptions because it demonstrated that communication is a relational, negotiated, and contextual experience which involves all organization members rather than a mechanical and controlled process by a few organization leaders[15]. Such communication relationships privileges both the supervisors and subordinates as important stakeholders in the communication process because they both shape and are shaped by the message in negotiating for meaning in relationship. Thus, the study proposes that organizations should invest in improving interpersonal communication relationships built on trust, leader-follower confidence, freedom of creativity, and positive gender relationships and not structures and technologies *per se.*[16]

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[14] The process school of communication privileges the managers as the 'owners' of content that is to be passed down to subordinates and waits for feedback from the subordinates (Richmond et al., 2013). Another perspective of the process school of communication is one that argues that communication is a linear process of transmission of messages. In this case the sender uses a channel to transmit the message through a medium to the receiver and the receiver in turn responds by giving feedback. This model assumes that the sender is central in the process because s/he decides what message to communicate, and the receiver on the other hand is assumed to be passive, because s/he just responds to the messages. The process school is only concerned with accuracy and efficiency, the assumption being that if the message is accurate, and the channels and medium are efficient, then the receiver will be affected by the message as intended (Fiske 1990:2). This model is usually known as 'a mathematical model of communication' (Mumby, 2013: 18) or a 'conduit model' (ibid).

[15] Through the study, I discovered that although communication structures and processes (vertical and horizontal, or the use of technology to share information) are important, organization members' interaction and sense-making of the messages is more important.

[16] This study contributes to a better understanding of the functions of organizational communication by arguing for a more comprehensive view of communication that includes a relational[16] view. This study argued that communication is not a management tool of control whose mere role is to pass information from the upper echelons of the organization to the lower ones as discussed in Richmond et al. (2013: 26) Instead, it is a tool for building and enhancing organizational relationships. It belongs to each organizational member and, therefore, shapes and is shaped by all stakeholders for better performance. The relational view of communication then demonstrates that 'meaning does not reside in words but in

8.3 Positive Communication is Loving and Considerate

A closer look at the various strategies that study participants said enhance the various drivers of communication shows their similarity to Biblical principles. Hence, communication strategies such as openness with one another, fostering gender equity, and fostering creative potentials in others to name a few, are all based on Christian principles of loving one another and doing to others what one would like to be done to them. such communication values the 'other'[17] and recognizes them as important stakeholders in the communication process because Beebe et al, (2008: xiii) posits, that good communication is 'other oriented'. Moreover, study participants' strategy to acknowledge failure in the creative process is a reminder that failure is a reality to all people whether they are supervisors or subordinates and neither should look down on the other.[18]

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people' (Richmond et al., 2013: 16; Beebe et al., 2008:22) because people negotiate for meaning. So words do not deliver meaning, it is people who create meaning. Hence, effective internal communication, in this case, is one where vocabularies have been generated through social interactions. This study, therefore, departs from the common understanding of communication as a process which privileges the sender and in this case the manager, and views all organization members as the sources of, and best interpreters of organizational information. This argument is consistent with Ruck and Welch (2012: 298) who argue that communication 'cares about the employee well-being'. Hence, they aver that 'A changing communication environment calls for new approaches and practices and assessments with an emphasis on communities, content and dialogue rather than volume and channels'.

[17] This refers to the subordinates who are usually receivers of messages.

[18] The idea that failure should be acknowledged and those who fail should be given a second chance brings out a redemptive aspect to organizational relationships. Hence, just as God gave Adam a second chance after Adam fell as recorded in Genesis 3, and continues to give mankind a second chance of salvation through Christ, EAU members proposed to give each other a chance for improvement. Thus, to EAU members, failure is a springboard to success. And when it is acknowledged, interpersonal relationships thrive because organization members freely interact with one another.

8.4 Appreciative Inquiry is collaborative and strengthens Relationships

The use of appreciative inquiry in this study was instrumental in facilitating the study participants to develop collaborative and closer relationships with each other, at least as it was observed during the focus group discussions.[19] Thus AI facilitated group relationships which are crucial to building trust. Appreciative inquiry moved people from the 'I' or 'Me' to the 'We' or 'Us' mode, and hence helped participants to value each other's contributions, thereby reawakening the spirit of oneness that in Africa is expressed as the 'Ubuntu'[20] As demonstrated through the group reports[21]. In this study, therefore, change was not just verbalized but was experienced through positive language and group relations. Therefore, AI made study participants active stakeholders in the change process and not mere recipients of change. This study adds to the works of Cooperrider et al. (2008), Watkins et al. (2011) and Lewis et al. (2008) that appreciative inquiry is collaborative and hence involves all organizational stakeholders; and that it builds or strengthens relationships (Paddock, 2003).

8.5 Appreciative Inquiry fosters Generativity

Appreciative inquiry fosters positive thinking and generative discussions. For example, the discovery phase of the appreciative inquiry generated the various themes or drivers

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[19] For example, in chapter 5 (section 3.3.), it was shown that study participants not only took longer than it was anticipated during focus group discussions but they continued to work in the same groups during other activities afterwards. For example, a day after the focus group discussions, the organization members remained in the same groups for Bible study and for other programmes that required group-work.

[20] Ubuntu is an African Philosophy which originated in Southern Africa and it simply means that a person exists because of the other. In other words, humanity is not inborn, but rather is nurtured through interaction with the 'other'. Ubuntu aims at making people value the 'other' by emphasizing the inter-subjective nature of relationships.

[21] See chapter 5, where group representatives used 'We' in sharing their reports compared to their earlier discussions where they used "I".

of internal communication.[22] Subsequent AI phases generated various strategies to enhance respective drivers of internal communication. The study posited that the AI questions sustained generative discussions which led to the rediscovery of new ways of improving internal communication practices. This finding is consistent with the arguments of Bushe (2013), that AI's generative capacity helps people to see new options to old practices.

8.6   Appreciative Inquiry is an All-Round Approach to Research

In this study, I found that AI did not stop people from sharing negative stories or experiences.[23] This demonstrates that appreciative inquiry is an all-round approach to research because study participants do not necessarily focus on the positive only. Rather, there is room for them to share their negative experiences as well, although the emphasis is not laid on the negative but on the positive or solution.

8.7   The Good in People Outweighs the Bad

Contrary to my earlier experiences as a worker of EAU which had influenced my opinions about some of the organization members, the use of AI led me to appreciate

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[22] As discussed in chapter 3, study participants that were engaged in the first phase of the AI cycle shared their positive stories of when they enjoyed communication at its best. Chapter 3 (section 5) discussed how the data that were collected from the discover phase of appreciative inquiry were analysed for themes or for what was positive in the study participants' communication experiences and themes of trust, leader-follower confidence, freedom of creativity and gender relations were identified. Also, in order to understand how to enhance the various themes that were identified through the discovery phase, study participants were engaged in the dream and design phases of AI in subsequent field work where the AI's unconditional positive questions were used to solicit positive responses on how to improve respective communication drivers as discussed from chapters 5 to 8.

[23] For example, two of the study participants shared their negative experiences of orientation as it was discussed in chapter 5 (section 3.1) and another participant shared his negative experience of delegation of responsibilities in chapter 5 (section 3.2). Also, in discussing ways to improve the various communication practices, study participants referred to what they would not like to see happening. Negative practices such as poor orientation, gossip, lack of trust in one another, lack of proper delegation of duties, lack of recognition of one's position and contributions, and lack of appreciation and the need to review 'repressive' policies were some of those negative practices that were mentioned.

the 'good' that is in each person. For example, the organization members' voluntary participation in various ways throughout the study period changed my mind. Going forward, I will focus on the good in people however little it may be. Hence, EAU should also focus on the good aspects in people and seek to amplify and magnify them in order to enhance each worker's contribution.

9 COMPLEXITIES OF ENHANCING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION USING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

This subsection brings together all the major variables in this study with a view to providing a snapshot of the complex and dynamic interactions leading up to improved internal communication. The following is a diagrammatic representation of a summary of the findings.

Figure 4: Summary of the Findings

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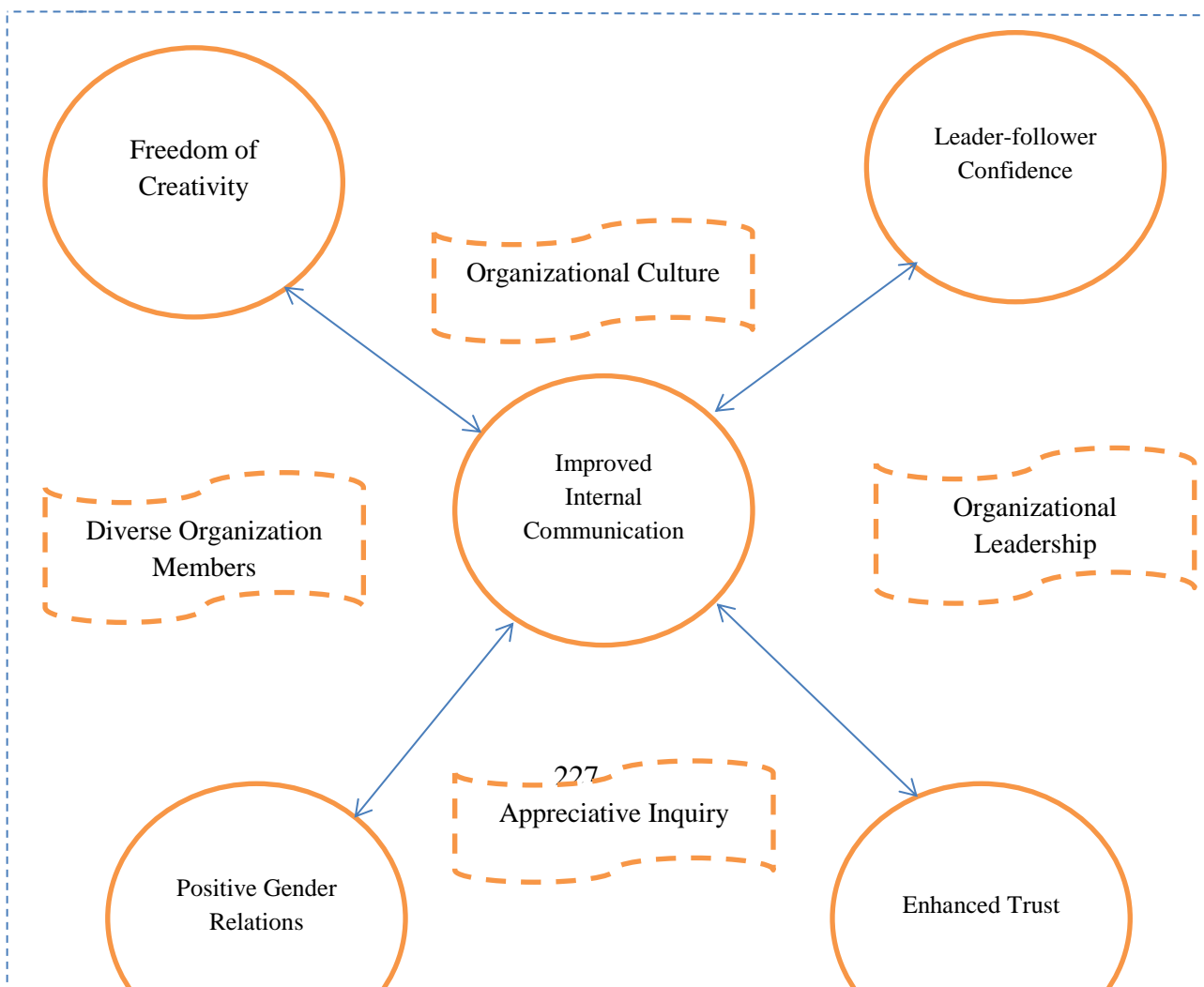
The diagram above shows how the four drivers of internal communication in EAU improve communication practices and vice versa. Therefore, the improvement of respective drivers improves communication practices and improved communication practices improve respective communication drivers.

The diagram also demonstrates the various variables that mediate the effect[24] of the drivers of internal communication. These include organizational culture,[25] diverse organizational members, appreciative inquiry, and organizational leadership. The variables are in dotted lines to show that they are influenced by a large number of factors. The variables therefore collectively and individually mediate the forward and backward relationships between the communication drivers and improved internal communication practices. This means the improvement of internal communication in EAU is mediated by the organization's culture, organizational leadership, diverse organization members and appreciative inquiry.

The dotted boundary of the diagram represents the boundary of the organization's communication with the outside world, and it shows that there is a myriad of influences that percolate the boundary from outside the organization and hence influences communication practices in the organization. The dotted boundary of the diagram also implies that EAU is open to learning as opposed to being a closed organization. This makes the scheme of improving internal communication in EAU through appreciative inquiry dynamic, tentative and fluid.

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[24] This means the extent to which internal communication can be improved or not improved.

[25] The organization's culture is made up of identities of employees, power structure, organizational policies, existing or recurring communication practices, and gender prejudices and identities among other factors.

# 10 A TRANSFORMED SCHOLAR: THE INFLUENCE OF THE STUDY ON MY PERSONALITY

At a personal level, the study moulded me into a more open and appreciative person. At the start of the study, I was scared of comments and corrections from my supervisors and during seminars.[26] Hence, my initial view of student seminars was replete with anxiety as they appeared to be 'punitive' where students' academic mistakes were 'criticized'. As I attended more seminars and lectures, I began to appreciate comments that were made on my own and other students' seminar papers. I, in turn, felt free to share my scripts with other people for scrutiny and started to see my supervisors' comments as helpful and not punitive. I also began to appreciate comments from critical friends and sometimes modified the script on the basis of some of the comments. I would not have comfortably done this a few years before, having been educated in a system that not only shaped learners to keep to themselves what they knew and made them secret knowers in that sense but also punished those who failed to duplicate the teacher's knowledge. So, this study liberated me by empowering me with openness and confidence in sharing the findings and this has influenced my personality a great deal.

The study has also helped me at family level as a mother and wife because it has made me to proactively look for the good in my children and my spouse. For example, AI has helped me to relate with my teenage children better because I choose to focus on the good in the things that they do and say. During our conversations, I dwell on the positive things and I have made it a habit to remain positive even when things seem to get out of hand.

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[26] This was partly influenced by my childhood school influenced where an individual who failed (by not duplicating the teacher's notes) was not only seen as stupid but could even be punished.

I have since observed great and positive changes in my children, both in their conduct and in their performance, and partially attribute some of these to my persistence in appreciating the positives in them. So, to me, AI is not just an organizational approach to discovering what works, but it has become my way of life both at work and at home. I have discovered that choosing to focus on the positive in people and looking at life positively revitalizes my energy and gives me hope that change is possible and indeed it does happen. Therefore, to me, effective change is one which is from within because it changes people's attitudes, aspirations and practices. As was argued in chapter 8, such a change is possible when God is put at the centre of communication relationships, and actors involved consider each other as genuine co-creators of improved organizational communication and performance.

Appendix 1: Map of EAU's Adminstrative Territory
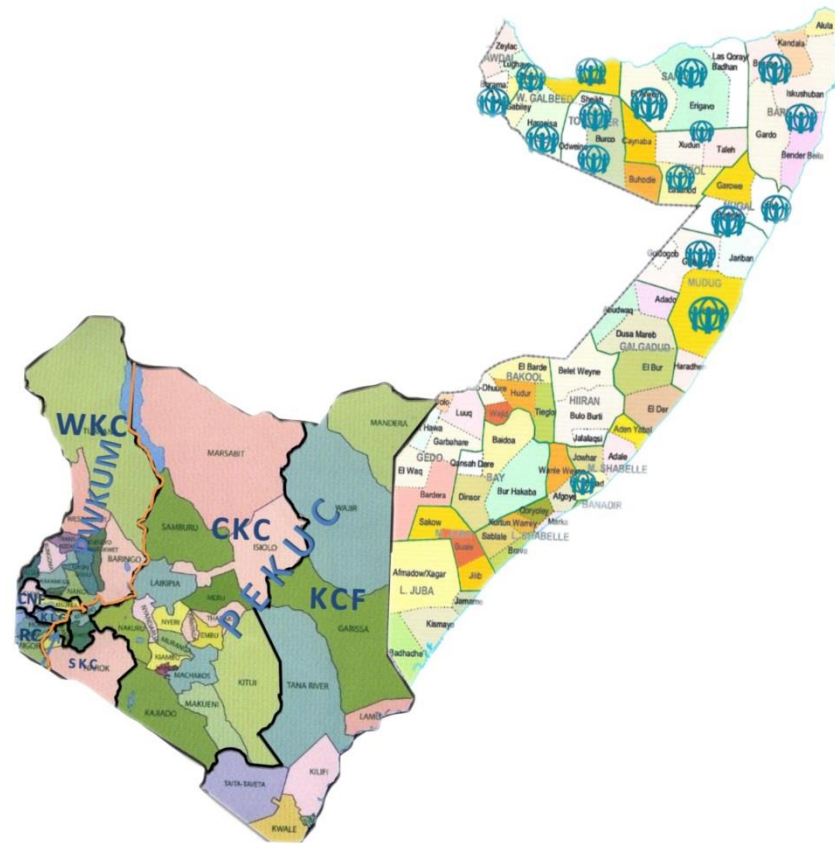
Appendix 2: EAU Organization Chart

EAU Organizational Chart
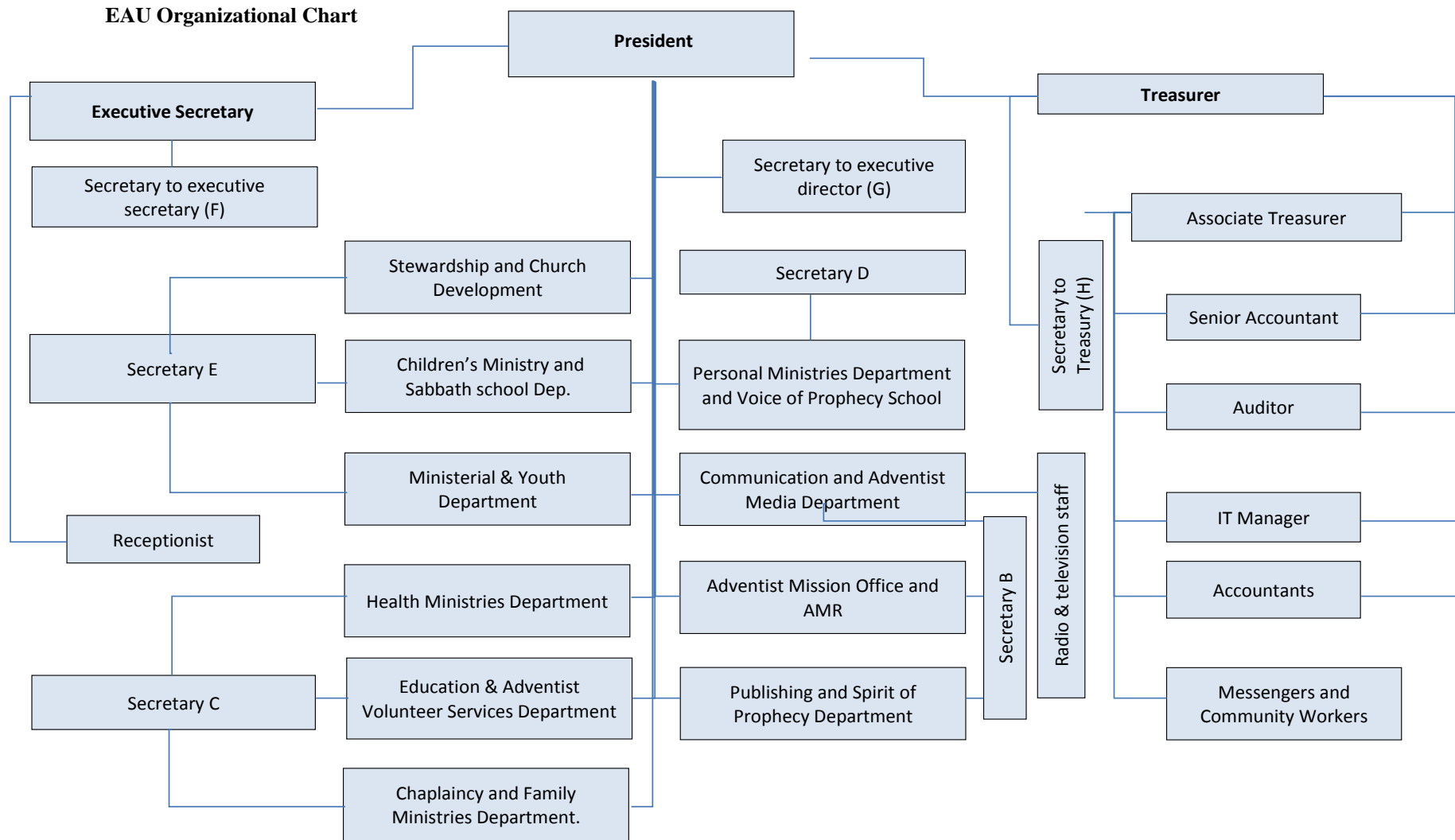
Appendix 3: Conceptual Clarifications

Appreciate: To appreciate is to recognise/ search for the best in people and in their practice/ organizations, by affirming their existing strengths, successes and potential. This entails appreciating the things that give life to living systems such as health, vitality and excellence.

Inquire: To inquire in this study means to explore or discover through asking questions and to be open to seeing new potential and new possibilities.

Appreciative Inquiry- AI is a research methodology or process that focuses on the positive aspects of a living system. It seeks to strengthen that which is working by asking questions that strengthen an organization's capacity to appreciate and grow towards the positive potential. AI therefore involves asking the unconditional positive questions which invite stories of the positive past or something that is at its best and through the stories a positive future is designed. The AI process is iterative, generative, and collaborative in nature (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

The positive core or life-giving forces-These are the untapped capacities, high-point moments, values, assets, unexplored potentials, competencies, stories, and expressions of wisdom to name a few. The positive core is discovered through the 4-D AI cycle through which participants engage in answering the affirmative questions (http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/definition) accessed on October 23, 2013.

4-D cycle- This is the cyclical and iterative format through which participants discover the existing strengths and successes, they dream of what they might become, they design through co-construction their ideal future, and they move towards that destiny through learning and empowerment in order to sustain their ideal future (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

Positive internal communication- this is the vertical or horizontal, formal/ informal communication or interaction between EAU workers at every level between supervisors and

subordinates at every level, colleagues and departments and induction or orientation of new employees.

APPENDIX 4: ORIGIN OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Although the origin of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's belief in the second coming of Christ is traced to America in the early part of the 19th century through the Millerite movement, Schwarz, (1979) and Froom, (1971) argue that the event had long been anticipated by different groups of people in Europe and America who at the time focused on what was known as the 'Great Advent Awakening'. According to Froom (1947: 263) the 'great awakening' was brought about by among other factors; the fall of the papacy, the French revolution, and the exploits of Napoleon.[258] Yet, as Knight, (2000: 38) argues Miller's interpretation of scriptures of Daniel 8:14[259] and Revelation 14: 6-7[260] was instrumental in the formation of the advent movement because his scriptural interpretation implied that Jesus was to return at the beginning of the 1000 year period and not the end as it was commonly understood in the first four centuries of the Christian era and during the reformation.

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[258] Apart from the Advent awakening whose main focus was the search for the meaning of Daniel 8: 14,[258] Froom (1971: 50) argues that there were several other factors that contributed to the Millerite movement: the religious diversity brought about by the Protestant reformation; the proliferation of spiritualism and consequent formation of the cults allied to it; the formation of missionary movements that saw the sending of missionaries to 'heathen lands' (Froom, 1971: 50) such as Asia and Africa; the formation of the Sunday school movement; educational reforms; health reforms which came with the formation of vegetarian societies; and the abolition of slavery. Other factors that influenced the Millerite movement included improved communication and transport, democracy in Britain and America which brought religious diversity; improved economic conditions, the emergence of reform movements, and educational reforms (Schwarz, 1979: 15-36; Froom, 1971: 39-80; Froom, 1947: 263-264).[258] Froom, (1947: 13) argues that Miller drew his inspiration from the various prophetic interpretations that had started as early as 1639, and hence the 19th century advent movement which was shaped by 'colonial American and early interpreters.'

[259] Daniel 8:14 says: And he said to me "For two thousand three hundred days, then the sanctuary shall be cleansed" (NKJV).

[260] Revelation 14:6-7 reads: Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel, to preach to those who dwell on the earth- to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people-saying with a loud voice "Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgement has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water" (NKJV).

Spalding (1947: 25) argues that Miller's interpretation of prophecies did not come to pass on the two dates of 1843 and 1844 that he and others in the movement had set; and hence some of the people left for their former churches. By the time Miller died in 1849, Adventism as earlier understood had started to split people into groups due to different interpretations of the prophecies and the recent disappointments. Getui (1985: 80), Schwarz, (1979: 56-70) and Spalding, (1947: 25) argue that as a result of the differing interpretations of both scriptures and the great disappointment there were three distinct groups by 1852. It was from one of those splinter groups that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was formed. Knight (2000: 74) asserts that one of those groups known as the Sabbatarian Adventist group later formed the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the group had by that time come up with four points of doctrine.[261] Getui (1985: 80) elaborates on the groups that merged to form the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

> These were the group headed by Hiram Edison in Western New York State which emphasized the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary, the group in Hampshire, which along with Joseph Bates advocated observance of the Seventh-day; and the group around Maine, which held that Ellen G. White was a true prophetess, whose words and visions were to be followed by the Adventists. These three groups fused to form the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. It might be added that the three teachings developed by these groups, that of the Sanctuary the Sabbath and the Spirit of Prophecy, formed the basis of a new theological system known as Seventh-day Adventism.

Once the groups merged, the members continued to advocate their new doctrines.[262] The group also started to observe Saturday as the day of worship. Spalding (1947: 38) and Getui (1985: 92) and Schwarz (1979) aver that even though the Adventist group grew in numbers the members

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[261] By the early 1848 the Sabbatarian Adventist leaders through both extensive and intensive Bible reading had come to basic agreement on at least four points of doctrine; (1) the personal, visible, premillennial return of Jesus; (2) the two phase ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary; (3) the perpetuity of the Seventh-day Sabbath and its end-time importance, and; (4) the concept that immortality is not inherent, but something that comes only as a gift through Christ. Those four pillars not only set Sabbatarians from other Millerites, but from other Christians in general.

[262] Knight (2000: 86) argues that those who developed the four doctrines: the second coming, the sanctuary, the Sabbath, and the state of the dead, never themselves became a part of the Sabbatarian movement.

were not keen to form an organization due to an earlier warning that had been given by one of the editors[263] of the '*Voice of Truth.*'[264] Hence, Olson (1981: 155) argues:

> During the first decade and a half of its existence, the Advent Movement had neither organized church nor organized conference. No legal entity of any kind existed for holding church property. In fact, it did not own any property, and to add to its embarrassment, it did not even have a name.

However, as the membership increased it became necessary to form an organization (Froom 1971: 136; Schwarz, 1979). For example, there was need to hire and pay preachers which necessitated 'systematic benevolence.'[265] There was also need to take care of the monies that were being collected as tithes and offerings; and there were various properties that members had acquired over time all of which were in their names which needed to be owned corporately (see Schwarz, 1979: 89; Olson, 1981; Getui, 1985: 93; Froom, 1971: 136). The properties included church buildings across the country and the publishing house. Also the membership had grown geographically and new frontiers had been opened and organization became critical in order to minister to the people wherever they were. Ellen G. White[266] offers an explanation in one of her books '*Testimonies for the Church*' on how the organization was formed:

> As our members increased, it was evident that without some form of organization, there would be great confusion and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the church and the ministry from

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[263] George Storrs the editor had warned Adventists separated from their Churches to be careful not to manufacture a new church' (Schwarz, 1979: 47; Spalding, 1947: 26). Storrs wrote 'No church can be organized by man's invention but what it becomes Babylon the moment it is organized' (Schwarz, 1979: 26; Froom, 1971: 134).

[264] Voice of Truth magazine was one of the early publications of the Advent movement that was used to propagate the messages from Miller and his associates on the imminent return of Christ.

[265] Systematic benevolence has been defined as the practice of making regular contributions to the church in accordance with a predetermined plan. It is a principle of denominational financing flowed from the 1850s to the present (Neufeld and Neuffer, 1976: 145).

[266] Ellen G. White is known as a prophetess of the Adventist Church. Although disabled at age nine, her exposure to the Millerite movement led her to become deeply involved in prayer. She then started receiving visions that contributed to the shaping of the Adventist Movement. She wrote several books and articles that continue to be used by the Church today (Getui, 1985, Schwarz, 1979, Nyaundi, 1993, 1997).

unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable (White, 1923, 26).

Hence, the Seventh-day Adventist denomination was organized on September 29th 1860 (Schwarz, 1979: 94). Schwarz (1979) avers that once the organization was formed, a three-level structure was formed- local Churches, state or district conferences,[267] and the General Conference-[268] to represent and speak on behalf of all the Churches.[269] The denomination's structure has since been improved on with the addition of divisions and unions[270] and districts in other cases and East African Union (EAU) falls within the new structure. As Olson (1981: 162) argues, the Seventh-day Adventist Church considers itself as one body whether it is in the West or East, present or future because all Adventist Churches are linked together by the General Conference:

> The organization of the General Conference linked together in one body all the existing churches and local conferences. It made provision for all new churches and conferences that would be organized, as the Advent Movement would spread around the world, to become a part of this one body.

Olson's argument points to the strong linkages that exist between lower and higher organizations of the church since the Seventh-day Adventist Church was started. Hence, the study argues that the strong linkages that have existed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church since its formation have contributed to the present organizational structure of East African Union. It should be noted that lower organization structures are voted at the General Conference and lower

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[267] A conference is defined as a group of local churches within a defined geographical area that has been grouped by action of a division executive committee at midyear, year- end or a division convened meeting, official status of the Seventh-day Adventist local conference/mission /field and subsequently accepted at union meeting into the sisterhood of conferences/missions (Church Manual, 2012, 9).

[268] The General Conference is the highest decision-making body of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is made up of all the churches, which form the various hierarchical organizations such as conferences, unions and divisions.

[269] The present structure starts with the local church, then a district usually made up of several churches, a station made up of several districts, then a conference, union, division and general conference in that order. The district and station levels are organized by the local conferences. In each case a pastor is appointed as the leader and this is mainly for coordination purposes. Otherwise, the local church through is pastors reports directly to the local conference.

[270] A Union is made up of a group of churches within a defined geographical area that has been granted by the General Conference session, official status as a union f churches with either conference or mission status (Church Manual, 2012: 9).

organizations adapt them, and the lower organizations cannot make changes to the structures without consulting the higher organizations and ultimately the General Conference.[271] For example, offices are replicated at all organizational levels such that if there is a communications or stewardship department at the General conference, such an office would be found at all lower organizations including the local Church. The study argues that while the replication of offices is important for unifying denominational operations, the wholesome application of structures without considering contextual factors may hinder effective communication. Indeed, in such a scenario, organization members interact in order to fulfil the organizations' obligations and not necessarily to build strong interpersonal relationships. Beebe et al. (2008: 24) argue that this type of communication relationship can be defined as the "I-it" or 'impersonal communication' because communication partners respond to each other in their 'social roles' (ibid).

As it was argued in chapter 1 therefore the hierarchical structures of the EAU impede effective internal communication because they limit organization employees to the people they should communicate to; and they also influence the type, quality and quantity of information that is communicated or shared. Hence the organizations' communication tends to be more formal or prescribed than informal, relaxed, relational and creative yet as Beebe et al. (2008: 7) argue relational communication is important to organizational performance. The next section briefly describes how the Seventh-day Adventists movement became an organization and how East African Union was formed.

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[271] Two examples can help explain the point. In 2010 the General Conference discouraged lower organizations from having one person serve as head of department and communication. This necessitated the separation of the two departments in EAU even though there was a challenge of funds to add someone to head either department. Also in 2014, the executive committee of EAU proposed that the Human resource department should be merged with the treasury, but again the General Conference through the Division refused the new arrangement.

From a Movement to an Organization: The Beginning of Seventh-day Adventist Church

Nyaundi (1993.13, 14) argues that Adventism is a Christian ideology that describes a doctrine which emphasizes the imminence of Christ's second coming. Nyaundi (1993, 28) further argues that one of the main differences between Seventh-day Adventism and Millers is that Adventists do not set dates but opt to emphasize the imminence of Christ's return. There are several distinctions between Seventh-day Adventists and other denominations. For example, Seventh-day Adventists are guided by the 28 fundamental beliefs that form the foundation of the denomination. Some of those include the belief in the Holy Scriptures and the Old and New Testaments as the written word of God, 'given by divine inspiration through the holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Spirit.'[272] Adventists also believe that 'there is only one God- Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal persons'.

Seventh-day Adventists further believe that Saturday is the Seventh-day of the week and, therefore, the Holy Sabbath of the Lord because God blessed, sanctified and rested on that day and therefore requires his people to worship him in the same way. Adventists also believe in the second coming of Christ, the sanctity of marriage, the heavenly sanctuary as a literal place where Christ is ministering as the high priest, and the investigative judgement and the Trinity. (http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/)[273] The following section describes a brief history of how the Seventh-day Adventist Church was started in Kenya.

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[272] http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/

[273] http://www.adventist.org/beliefs for a detailed description of the Seventh-day Adventist Church beliefs.

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The Beginning of Seventh-Day Adventism in Kenya

It is recorded that the first missionaries arrived in Kenya which was then known 'as British East Africa' in 1906 (see Marshall, 2006; Neufeld and Neuffer, 1976). A.A Carscallen[274] and Peter Nyambo sailed from Germany and arrived at the port of Mombasa, after they were sent by the British Union. Writing about his coming to Kenya, Carscallen stated:

> In the autumn of 1906 the British Union Conference decided to open mission work in British East Africa and asked me to go out to that country to commence work. Peter Nyambo a Negro student from South Africa and I sailed from Hamburg Germany on October 1, 1906. After an exceedingly hot trip through the Red Sea, we arrived in Mombasa nearly three weeks later. We went straight to Tanga by the same boat to visit our three mission stations that our German workers had opened in German East Africa some three years earlier (EAU records n. d.).

After visiting Tanganyika,[275] then known as 'German East Africa', the two missionaries travelled to Kenya accompanied by A.C Enns a German missionary in German East Africa who was already carrying out missionary work there. In one of his letters to the British Union dated November 27th 1906, Carscallen explained their early encounters in Kenya:

> Brother Enns, brother Nyambo and I took a small launch here and we crossed over to the southern shores of the kavirondo bay where we pitched our tent close to the water's edge until we could have a look around the country. After two-day's search, we decided to locate on a hill about two miles back from the bay…. the country here is very thickly settled with a most friendly class of natives. We can stand on our hill and count about two hundred villages each of the nearest ones sending us a present at least of a fowl. The natives have made friends with us quite quickly and we now have a good deal of company. The chiefs have shown themselves most friendly and have come to see us several times (EAU records, n. d.; Marshall, 2006).

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[274] Arthur Carscallen was born in Canada, and went to Britain in 1903 aged 23 years to study at Union College presently known as Newbold College. He also did Colporteur Work (Selling of Adventist books from house to house or office to office) and it was during this time that he was asked to go to Kenya as a missionary (Marshall, 2006; EAU records, n. d.).

[275] Tanganyika is the former name for the country of Tanzania.

The pioneers chose a site at Gendia[276] for their offices[277] and operated from there for several years. At the onset, the missionaries' major activities included putting up facilities that would serve as mission centres and schools, as well as learning the local languages such as Swahili, and Luo. Carscallen reported how he started preaching using the Luo language: "We spent the first year in building and learning the language. I started preaching in the native language in three months, but I still wonder whether the natives understood me or not" (EAU records n.d.). Marshall (2006) argues that Carscallen went further to translate the book of Mathew into the Luo language and this was published by the British Missionary Society in 1913. Carscallen further reduced the Luo language to writing and wrote a Luo grammar and spelling book.[278]

Translation became a major activity in subsequent years as other missionaries not only learnt the languages of the various communities that they served but also translated several books from English into local languages (see EAU minute 2283-84 of 29th Nov 1953 where Pastor Wheeler was voted[279] to study Kikuyu language and EAU Minute number 97 where Miss C.J. Schull and Miss G.A. Clarke were asked to translate materials for the week of prayer into Swahili and Luo

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[276] Gendia is commonly referred to as Kendu Bay is in the Southern part of Nyanza province and is in Kenya Lake Conference.

[277] Nyaundi (1993; 1997) argues that the choice of Gendia as a mission headquarters was influenced by several factors. First, the mission offices were accessible due to the Kenya-Uganda railway that linked Lake Victoria and the Indian Ocean, in both cases providing port facilities. The second reason was the geographical location because Gendia is located at the shores of Lake Victoria on higher ground that provides beautiful scenery of the surrounding hills. The third reason was the proximity of the already established German mission in German East Africa, so that the missionaries in both colonies could share information. The fourth reason was the British East African government policy which required that missions be ten miles apart probably to avoid possible conflicts and fights over converts. It is important that apart from Seventh-day Adventist missionaries, there were also other missionaries in Gendia from the Catholic and Anglican churches who had come to the place before 1906 (Nyaundi, 1993: 91).

[278] See also EAU records, n.d.

[279] Voting here refers to being allowed to study. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, all decisions are voted in the respective decisions making committees or boards. This is also done in the local Churches when new leaders are elected to serve.

respectively. Also, in the EAU (then Known as Kenya Field Mission) Executive Committee minutes of May 26th, 1943 and Minute 239 of April 7th, 1944, it was voted that Rex Pearson should sit for his lower Swahili examination in March 1944).[280] According to Marshall (2006) translation thus helped narrow the communication gap between the Western missionaries and the local people, hence overcoming language barriers and enhancing closeness between the two groups.

The study however argues that while the missionaries' efforts to learn African languages was helpful in improving their communication with their new converts and colleagues, there is no documented evidence available to show that missionaries made deliberate efforts to help African workers learn English. This may be interpreted to mean that either the Africans were not proactive in acquiring the new language skills or that the missionaries were not keen in helping their colleagues learn the new language.

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[280] The various people that were voted to study Swahili and other Kenyan local languages were missionaries from Britain.

Appendix 5: SAMPLE OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS PROCESS

Research Question	Interview excerpt 1(NH)	Emerging theme
1) Can you recall an event or events in which you felt that you fully enjoyed participating?	There have been several times, but two notable ones are when I participated in decorating Central church when the GC president came several years ago, and when I participated in 'Safari Africa' and again I was put in charge of decorating the production venues within Central church.	
Can you narrate what happened?	In both times just like now I was informed that the union committee had voted that I take part in the events. I guess this was partly due to my vast knowledge in decorations, and also due to the trust that the committee had on me. You know the work involves handling a substantial amount of money because we have to purchase flowers and other things almost on a daily	Knowledge in something Trust from others

	basis, and the treasury usually gives me a lot of money and then a give a report at the end of the event. Even in this particular event, I was informed of my participation and I have already been given the money to use. The beauty of the whole thing is that I am left to decide how to make it beautiful and all they want to see is a beautiful venue.	
What was your role in the event?	My hobby is decorating, I love flowers and I love making a place look beautiful. I am always asked to lead a small committee, so I could say I am leader…. But of course a leader in the sub-committee because there is usually a man as the overall leader of the larger committee. (laughs) in any case, if I was asked to lead the larger committee I would decline because I am sure men would not want a lady to be a leader. They believe they are better leaders, but in a smaller committee where it is just us ladies, I find it Ok.	Gender relations
What do you think made you positively contribute to the success of	Oh a lot of things. As I mentioned earlier, I always feel trusted whenever I am informed that I am participating in an event. I also enjoy the fact that I am left to freely do what I like- no one bossing me around as to	Trust

Freedom of creativity |

| the event? | how they want the flowers or other decorations to be done. I like it when I am given something to do and I am left to do it my way. There were times in the past during………. time when I remember I would be asked to do something and…………. would be asking me questions as if it was an exam. The worst of it all is when I would present my report like how we plan to arrange the flowers, then……………. would bring all sorts of proposals until I get confused? So I like it when I have a free hand…. not that I cannot be corrected or I cannot take suggestions, but I mean can you imagine when you are given responsibility and someone literally takes over…. Yet they have no clue how to do decorations? Such comments discourage me. The other thing I like is the respect from male colleagues, I think that even though men will always want to be seen as the best in everything, at least when it comes to decorations, they respect what I do. | Felt constrained in her creativity

 Freedom of creativity

 Gender relations |
| 1) What do you think contributed to your | I think it was mainly the trust of the leaders that I can do something. The fact that they delegated the responsibility fully to me, and also provided | Trust |

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successful contribution or participation of the event?	the money that we needed and of course allowing me to do what I thought was good. I know it may sound obvious, but for me it is important to be left free and be encouraged to do as you like so long as the end result is good and people like it.	Freedom of creativity Freedom of creativity
How would you gauge your personal involvement and contribution to the success of those events?	Well, I don't know how I could be rated by others, but I know I did my best. At least people appreciated what I did and maybe I can say that is why they have asked me to do something in this one. I don't know, I am just thinking….	
What can be done to enable you give your best contribution in 'Follow the Bible"?	As always, I just want to be given space to do my work. I don't mind comments, but would not like people who criticize when I know that they do not even know how to decorate venues. There are of course other things, but Another important thing is to be given space as woman. Usually in those meetings, I am quiet because men dominate a lot and sometimes they forget that women are also supposed to speak. But I don't mind as long as someone	Freedom of creativity Freedom/Gender relations

	does not step on my toes. I know that women are only in the decorations sub-committee, but we need to be allowed to make our point also.	
What in your opinion are some of the best ways in which we can share information?	I think it is hard for me to be sure which are the best ways, but maybe we should always share necessary information at the right time so that people don't hear it from elsewhere. May be during morning worship or staff meetings or something of the sort…. another thing is may be stop talking negatively about each other. I know that gossip really affects me, and I don't like getting involved where people think they are better than others….	Timely information sharing Poor relations affect communication

APPENDIX 6: FIELDWORK QUESTIONS FOR FIRST FIELD WORK -MARCH 2010

1) Tell me of a time when you felt that you enjoyed participating in the organization's event.

2) Can you narrate what happened then?

3) What was your role in the event?

4) What do you think contributed to the success of the event?

5) How would you gauge your personal involvement and contribution to the success of the whole event?

6) How would you like to contribute to the success of the 'Follow the Bible event and other future events?

7) What can be done to enable you give your best contribution towards this event?

8) What do you see EAU becoming when internal communication is at its best?

9) What in your opinion are some of the best ways in which we can share information as organization members?

10) How would you like the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be known and understood when its communication is at its best? What would be your role in making this a reality?

11) What do you see EAU becoming when communication is at its best?

APPENDIX 7: FIELDWORK QUESTIONS FOR 2011 ONWARDS

a) What do you value most about internal communication in EAU?

b) What are some of the internal communication practices that have made your work enjoyable enjoy working in EAU?

c) Describe the best example you have experienced of an open two-way communication between you and your immediate supervisor/ subordinate/ co-worker.

d) What did you learn from that experience?

e) How have you applied the experience to your daily interactions with your supervisor/ subordinate/co-worker?

f) What do you believe would be the ideal situation when your emotions, your concerns, or your ides are heard or responded to?

g) What do you see as the best way of receiving and sharing information from and with your leaders/ immediate supervisor/ subordinate/co-worker?

h) Imagine it is 2015 and EAU is rated as one of the best organizations with effective internal communication practices.

i) What do you imagine EAU to be like at that time?

j) What positive contribution will you have made towards this best practice? Or what role will you have played in making this become a reality?

Orientation/Induction

a) Describe the best orientation experience you had when you first joined EAU.

b) What made the orientation experience memorable?

c) What did you learn from the experience?

d) How have you used the experience to orient new employees who have joined the organization/ department after you?

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e) What would you think would be the best ways of orienting new employees?

f) Imagine it is 2020, and you are still working for EAU. Can you describe the ideal employee orientation program that you would like to see in place? What role would you have played to make this a reality?

APPENDIX 8: Letter to Social Welfare Committee to seek Permission to conduct Focus Group Discussions

The Chair,

Social Welfare Committee,

East African Union

P.O Box 42276, 00100,

GPO Nairobi.

September 14th 2011.

Dear Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT FIELDWORK ON INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PRATICES DURING THE SOCIAL RETREAT

I am writing to kindly request that your committee allows me to conduct focus group discussions on positive internal communication practices that exist in EAU and how they can be enhanced. The data collected will be used in my Ph.D. research which is on how EAU can improve its existing positive internal communication practices.

Given permission I will identify and train the group leaders who will in turn lead in the focus groups in answering the questions already formulated. Each group will record its discussion and time will be created for each group to share at least three positive internal communication practices that need to be enhanced and how this should be done. My main interest is in finding out how trust, leader/follower confidence, freedom of creativity and gender relations can be enhanced. These are practices that were identified through my pilot study in 2010 which some of the organization

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members participated. I will then use the discussion materials to write a report which I will share with our leaders, in addition to using the same for my thesis. I am therefore kindly requesting that the social committee allots at least three hours so as to accommodate the exercise. The first one and half hours will be used in running the focus group discussions, and the second one and half hours will be used to share group findings.

The sessions can be scheduled at different days during the retreat. I have already informed the leaders of my intentions and I am sure the focus group discussions will open up dialogue on how we as an organization can improve our internal communication practices which in turn greatly influence how we communicate with the external publics.

May the Lord bless you as you consider this important request.

Sincerely in Christ,

Catherine K. Nyameino

APPENDIX 9: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

OCTOBER 26, 2011

Introduction

Thank you very much for taking time to participate in this focus group discussion. This session is meant to help each team member and ultimately EAU identify and enhance some of the internal communication practices that can make our work in EAU successful. This will contribute greatly to organizational image change as communication is central to the image of any organization. Internal communication is critical in organizational success because it contributes to how we relate with one another and helps us to interpret the aims and objectives of the organization more comprehensively.

This research on internal communication practices in EAU focuses on what is already working. My research approach is called 'Appreciative Inquiry' – which views life from a positive perspective. Appreciative Inquiry focuses on what works in organizations given that organizations grow towards what they emphasize. This means that if we focus on organizational problems, we shall specialize on identifying problems and shifting blame to the 'other' and never arrive at a solution. It is for this reason that I have chosen on focusing on the internal communication practices that work at EAU.

In this research I define internal communication as communication back and forth among staff in general and particularly between supervisors and subordinates at every level (in other words each of us is a supervisor and subordinate at the same time at different levels and times), and I am also looking at communication during staff orientation.

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My past fieldwork, mainly through observation and interviewing of some of the participants in the 'Follow the Bible' activities identified trust, freedom of creativity, leader-follower confidence, and gender relations as being key in improving internal communication at EAU.

In these focus group discussions, we are focusing on each of the foregoing practices with a view to describing how they respectively help us communicate better with each other and what we will do to improve in each going forward.

Note: Kindly note that all the focus group discussions will be recorded on tape for purposes of transcribing the data for interpretation. Secondly, no names will be used in the actual script for reasons of confidentiality in research ethics. More importantly, however, the information will be critical in enriching internal communication practices in EAU.

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS

Enhancing Trust to improve Internal Communication at EAU

a) What do you understand trust to mean in a work situation such as EAU?

b) Please recall incidents/situations in which you felt most trusted? Please describe the incidents in details.

c) How did you feel when you realized that someone trusted you with a certain responsibility?

d) What did that realization that someone trusted that you were capable of handling that responsibility do to your performance?

e) Are there people in EAU that you trust more than others? Why?

f) What are some of the ways you think we can enhance or improve trust amongst us?

g) What do you see as your role in improving trust in our organization?

h) (Any other comment- facilitators please allow group members to openly and freely share anything else they would like to add on the discussion on trust).

Freedom for Creativity to improve Internal Communication at EAU

a) Please recall and name successful events/functions in which you think you were most creative in your work in EAU?

b) Describe what happened? What led to that creativity?

c) How did you feel at the end of it?

d) What did you achieve as a result of that freedom to use your creativity?

e) How have you helped your colleagues in EAU to use their creativity?

f) In what ways do you think freedom for creativity can be used to enhance internal communication practices in EAU?

g) What do you see as your role in enhancing freedom for creativity in EAU?

h) Any other comment on creativity at work in EAU (facilitators allow each participant to freely make comments).

Building Leader/Follower Confidence to improve Internal Communication in EAU

a) Please recall and name a time/situation/incident in which you felt that your supervisor or subordinate demonstrated confidence in you? Please describe the incident/situation in detail.

b) What did this incident/situation mean to your work in EAU?

c) In your view how does the confidence of a supervisor in a subordinate improve internal communication in EAU?

d) In your view how does the confidence of a subordinate in a supervisor improve internal communication in EAU?

e) How can we improve confidence between one another as members of EAU?

f) What do you see as your role in enhancing supervisor's confidence in subordinates so as to contribute to improved internal communication?

g) What do you see as your role in enhancing subordinates' confidence in supervisors so as to contribute to improved internal communication?

h) Imagine it is 2020 and EAU is rated as the best Adventist Organization in internal communication. What role will you have played to help the organization achieve this?

i) Any comments on confidence building in EAU (facilitator please take comments from each participant).

Enhancing Gender Relations to improve Internal Communication

Gender has been defined as socially constructed male and female roles in Society. It defines what women and men should and should not do. Because gender has been taken almost as a given, people have been socialized to accept their socially defined roles. Sometimes this creeps into organizational life as well and male and female employees tend to base organizational relations on gender roles that society has given each.

a) Please recall a time when you felt that your gender enhanced your performance at EAU? Please describe what happened in detail.

b) Please recall an experience or time when you as a worker of EAU felt that gender relations were at their best?

c) What was your role in this relationship?

d) How do you think gender relations can enhance/improve internal communication practices in EAU?

e) What will be your role in enhancing gender relations in EAU?

f) What steps do you suggest for EAU to enhance gender relations?

g) Any comments on gender relations in EAU (facilitators please go round for a comment from each participant).

Thanks very much for your participation. The researcher will from time to time engage with you individually to clarify certain emerging issues and for a deeper discussion of any critical incidents of interest to EAU's Image Change Project. Thanks once more and may God bless you all.

APPENDIX 10: Criticisms of Appreciative Inquiry

A number of scholars have argued that appreciative inquiry has weaknesses and may not fully solve social problems. For example, in their article '*Critical evaluation of Appreciative Inquiry: bridging an apparent paradox,*' Grant and Humphries (2006: 104) argue that disallowing negative stories appears to reduce engagement. Quoting Rogers and Fraser (2003), and Gergen and Gergen (2003), Grant and Humphries (2006: 104) argue that 'AI distorts facts' by emphasizing the positive instead of embracing both the good and the bad. Furthermore, quoting Dick (2001:105), Fitzgerald et al. (2001), Pratt (2002) and Rogers and Fraser (2003) Grant and Humphries aver that AI does not honour the multiple realities of human experiences in organizations and instead it encourages unrealistic perceptions, attitudes and behaviour (ibid). Govender and Edwards (2009: 116) also argue that 'as a result of the constant emphasis on the positive, researchers who use AI are often perceived as unrealistic, idealistic and lacking in critical thinking'. Nonetheless, building on the positive to co-create better futures certainly involves critical thought, reflection and facilitation.

Bushe (2001: 118) argues that AI tends to be less effective in situations where an organization's members hold deeply seated and unexpected resentments and this limits their ability to imagine a positive future: 'From a theoretical perspective there is a question of what happens to negative images and affect if they are "repressed" from collective discussions by a zealous focus on the "positive" (ibid). Richer et al. (2009:48) argues that 'a superficial understanding of AI may lead to the focus on the positive being interpreted to mean disallowing the exploration of difficulties'.

The criticisms of AI have not gone unchallenged however. For example, Carter (2006: 6) argues that appreciative inquiry addresses both the good and bad sides of a phenomenon:

"Appreciative inquiry does not prevent bad stories from being told alongside good stories. It is the stories of what has gone wrong that allow energy to be invested in what would be happening in a perfect world"

Van De Haar and Hosking (2004) also argue that in social constructivism, the focus remains a relational process rather than a product, and there is no attempt to reduce multiple voices/ realities and divergent voices to consensus. Preskill and Catsambas (2006: 26) also argue:

Appreciative inquiry does infact address issues, challenges, problems, and conflicts, but it does so by shifting the focus and language from one of deficits to one of hope and possibilities based on what has worked in the past. This reframing means that the spirit of inquiry is not about 'fault finding harsh judgment, or culpability, but rather the exploration of what might be if changes were made.

Furthermore, Banaga (1998: 263) argues:

Appreciative Inquiry does not turn a blind eye on negative situations or deficit oriented realities in organizations. It does not substitute a rosy and romantic picture for an objective and realistic one. It accepts these realities for what they are-areas in need of conversation and transformation…. but AI intentionally shifts the focus and intervention to those realities that are sources of vitality.

Michael (2005: 228) argues that in using AI interviews for her study of three African NGO's in Africa, she found that in 'starting from the positive, one can arrive at 'a much nuanced understanding of the negative than they might otherwise have done'. My own experience of using AI and as will be discussed in chapter 5 shows that AI does not stop people from sharing their negative stories. Rather, it enables them to go beyond recognizable negative phenomena to capture and latch on the positive and the successful to build preferred and fruitful futures that ultimately overcome and resolve the negative. Constructing positive futures does not overlook problems, it resolves them.

The foregoing debates on the suitability of appreciative inquiry as a research methodology demonstrate that appreciative inquiry may not be a panacea to solving all organizational problems or indeed other social problems. Yet AI does encourage

positive thinking and actions, and generative discussions that enhance organizational

growth.

Appendix 11: CLOSING REMARKS FROM EAU PRESIDENT AFTER FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

We are very grateful for the opportunity which we have had since yesterday and this morning to share on issues which touch on communication in EAU. We know communication is key and is quite important. It makes institutions firm and stand still and sometimes if mishandled communication makes institutions to fall apart and I think if we would have lecturers from institutions of higher learning, dealing with communication to come and lecture to us, and I know we would have paid a lot of money to have them here and keep them here. Yes, it would have been very expensive to have them here. But if you consider the information we have shared in different sides of communication and we ourselves participating and contributing; I believe this has been one of the best methods for us to learn communication in EAU.

And I am very, very appreciative for the part each of us has played and as it has been stated, this was a forum where everybody felt free to share without being afraid of the administrators, without being afraid of supervisors, and we have given information which I believe is going to help us, because in my group there are questions which I was wondering whether we could have any person to come and teach us that information.

And we have shared and gathered that information from the little group which we had and that information is quite important. As we were giving other reports here, I believe what we have discussed even though it is for a project, I believe what we have discussed will have a great impact on the communication in EAU. And I believe it will go beyond the intended purpose to help us fully understand what communication is and how we are supposed to communicate top down, down up and that will help EAU to improve on the ways that we have been communicating. And I am grateful that this has been quite helpful to me and I believe everybody has benefitted.

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We have all participated, we have all shared. I believe this is one of the best approaches we have had. So I would like to say to Catherine thank you very much for what you have led us to undergo, and it has been very beneficial and I feel none will feel that a part of our recreation has been taken away from us because this is very important as part of what we are supposed to do. Otherwise it would have demanded a seminar with high levels of presenters, we have done it and I think we should clap for ourselves. Any comments before I close...Ok can we stand for a word of prayer? (October, 27th, 2011).

Appendix 12: Email Excerpts

On Thursday, December 10, 2009 10:16 AM, Cathy Nyameino
<cnyameino@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thanks Bossy.
Make copies once the leaders are back and have them ready for us to deliver as soon as possible.
Have a good day.

Cathy

--- On **Wed, 12/9/09, Callen nyamongo *<callynya@yahoo.com>*** wrote:

From: callen nyamongo <callynya@yahoo.com>
Subject: Re: About the Station's licenses
To: "Cathy Nyameino" <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2009, 11:04 PM

Hi Cathy,
We are fine, I believe you too.

I will try to ask for them so that I can make copies. But right now there is nobody in that office. Some are out. Otherwise we have done all the programs for the year and have sent the reports. Just winding up with a few other things.

Regards from everyone.
Thanks
Bossy

--- On **Mon, 12/7/09, Cathy Nyameino *<cnyameino@yahoo.com>*** wrote:

From: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
Subject: About the Station's licenses
To: callynya@yahoo.com
Date: Monday, December 7, 2009, 12:08 PM

Bossy,
It is my hope that you are doing fine.
I have been so busy to a point of not finding time to write. I presume you too have been

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busy that is why you have not written to me.

Now, last week I wrote to K.P. and asked him to give you give us the original copies of the radio and TV licenses that were issued for Kitui and Kisii and Nyamira (I am not sure we have the Nyamira one but you may need to confirm) so that we can have them renewed to digital ones before the end of the year.

He wrote back and copied you that you pick the documents from his office. Pleas pick them and make at least three copies of each and have them ready so that i can take them to CCK Once I arrive. I should be in Kenya on 21st of December and hope to rush them to CCK the following morning.

Otherwise I am fine and trying to do final readings for my current assignments.

God bless and regards to your family and B. as well.

Cathy

_____

On Thursday, September 23, 2010 1:28 PM, Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
To: callnya@yahoo.com
Sent: Thu, September 23, 2010 12:38:54 PM
Subject: A few things to remember

Bossy,
I am sure that by the time you read this i will have long left for school.
Now, kindly follow up the following

a) There is a small video camera in the video camera bag which belongs to South Kenya Conference. The battery is faulty and needs replacement. I had talked with the Treasurer, of SKC and he was to send money so that we could but the batteries for them. They cost about 4500 each and I thought it would be good to have two.

Now, he has not sent the money yet, and i was suggesting that you talk to him through H's office and remind him to arrange with EAU and have the batteries bought and their account charged. Do it when Mr. A. is back he will help you through the process.
We can then hire the same camera for end year coverage and pay SKC instead of getting equipment from out.

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b) Please check with D. on our next year's budget which i sent to him via email sometimes back. I hope they do not forget to have it discussed.

All minutes and budget for Communications committee are with betty, please share them with Pr. M. I gave the budget proposals to the treasury as requested. B. has the copy.

I am leaving behind the still camera, the charger and the downloading cable for you to use during the meetings.

I know you will keep up with the productions as you always do. I am always grateful for all that you do.

God bless

Catherine

On Tuesday, October 5, 2010 6:10 PM, Eunice Calvo-Trindade <eunice@awr.org> wrote:

Dear Callen,

I had not read your email when I replied to Catherine. Thank you very much for letting me know. I also hope you get feedback from your listeners very soon.

God bless your ministry.

Thanks and kind regards,
Eunice

From: callen nyamongo [mailto:callynya@yahoo.com]
Sent: 05 October 2010 08:23
To: eunice@awr.org
Cc: cnyameino@yahoo.com
Subject: Re: URGENT - 3rd Quarter Listener Reports

Dear Eunice,
I believe you are doing fine.
I am responding to your letter on behalf of Catherine who is away for studies.
At the moment, we do not have any listener reports. We started rebroadcasting around two months ago and we are looking forward to any feedback from our listeners. In case of any report, we will forward it to you.

Thanks for now and may God bless you.

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Callen Orina
AMC Technician

Eunice,
I am sorry for taking long to respond. I am currently out of Nairobi (In oxford) till end
of December. I am forwarding your email to Callen Orina who is our technician and
producer for the English programs. I am not sure we have letters but she can confirm.

Thanks

Catherine

On Monday, December 6, 2010 4:37 PM, Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
wrote:

Thanks Bossy
Do what you can, and share with them whatever we have.
God bless.

Cathy

From: callen nyamongo <callynya@yahoo.com>
To: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
Sent: Mon, December 6, 2010 4:04:05 PM
Subject: Re: Listener stories

Hi Cathy,
Good to hear from you. I'm fine but busy.
I will ask for stories from them and do the necessary.
Thanks and God bless you.
Bossy

From: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
To: callynya@yahoo.com
Sent: Fri, December 3, 2010 3:15:51 PM
Subject: Listener stories

Bossy,
You are very quiet. I assume you have so much you are doing.
Aim fine and hope you are fine too and busy with studies and work.
I have forwarded a message from AWR Europe. They need stories from listeners. I know A.A. should be able to coordinate that from Nyamira. Please call CKC and ask Pastor S.K. and to ask Pr. K.I to send a few stories.

Please check on the stories before you forward them to AWR, or you can send them to me and I will edit and forward them.

My regards to B.

Cathy

On Tuesday, March 6, 2012 10:58 AM, Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com> wrote:

Bossy,
I hope you are doing well. I arrived safely but just managed to access internet here. The program is packed with activities and i hardly find time to even look around. we live far from the Division office and have to be picked and dropped.
Now i had forgotten to send you a soft copy of the AWR form. I hope you get this one. Kindly fill it and send it.

God bless
Cathy.

On Thursday, March 8, 2012 9:03 AM, Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com> wrote:

Bossy,

Sorry i was not able to respond to your mail yesterday due to internet problems.

Thanks very much for the report.
However, you forgot to indicate some details, such as the date the program was produced, the date it was broadcast, and the length. Kindly add those details. Then delete the upper part that give the instructions. Just leave the part that is filled.
I know you reviewed five programs, could you kindly send all the reports?

How is pastor K. and B. doing?
Please prepare all the quotations for the equipment that you had already sourced for and give copies to L. Indicate which ones are the most suitable.
Regards.

Thanks
Cathy

From: callen nyamongo <callynya@yahoo.com>
To: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
Cc: Bossy Orina <callynya@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 7, 2012 9:57 AM
Subject: Re: Filled Review Form

Hi Cathy,
Good to learn that you reached well. We are fine.
There was a blackout the whole of yesterday. At least we have power today.
Attached is the review form. We have gone through to counter -check but please do the same before you forward.
Thanks and I wish you a nice stay those sides.

Bossy

From: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
To: "callynya@yahoo.com" <callynya@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 6, 2012 10:58 AM
Subject: Hi

Bossy,
I hope you are doing well. I arrived safely but just managed to access internet here.
The program is packed with activities and i hardly find time to even look around. We
live far from the Division office and have to be picked and dropped.
Now I had forgotten to send you a soft copy of the AWR form. I hope you get this one.
Kindly fill it and send it.

God bless

Cathy

On Friday, May 25, 2012 4:42 PM, Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thanks Bossy
Catherine

From: callen nyamongo <callynya@yahoo.com>
To: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, May 25, 2012 3:02 PM
Subject: Re: HI

Hi Cathy,
Good to learn you are well.
I gave Tom the cash, ha could be in Kisii today. He will pick the camera on Monday for
AUA. Work is going on as normal. We have had to take more interns to help us meet
some of our deadlines, but we are very careful about quality.

Enjoy your stay.
Bossy

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From: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
To: "callynya@yahoo.com" <callynya@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 23, 2012 4:33 PM
Subject: HI

Bossy,
I hope you are doing well.
I am fine and starting to adjust to this place. They are five hours ahead of Kenya.

I hope you have made all the arrangements for Tom.
Thanks for the good work.

God bless

On Thursday, November 22, 2012 4:34 PM, Cathy Nyameino
<cnyameino@yahoo.com> wrote:

Bossy,
Thanks very much for writing. I am fine and working really hard. This time has been
the most fruitful I think and I have managed to write four chapters and I am working on
two others before I come. God has been very gracious to me, and I think the field work
data has boosted the work more.
How is Family? I am still praying for F. and trust that the Lord will give her a good
grade. How is J. doing? And how about B.?
Please pass my regards to them.

thanks very much

Cathy

From: callen nyamongo <callynya@yahoo.com>
To: cathy ontita <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 22, 2012 2:58 PM
Subject: Greetings

Hi Cathy,
Just finding out how you are faring on.
We are fine.
All the best in your studies and may God be with you.

Bossy

On Monday, May 6, 2013 11:27 AM, Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
wrote:

Bossy,
Thanks very much. I know there is a lot to be done and look forward to the time the
studio will be ready. Just keep reminding him, and also ask him to push those who are
doing the studio.

Thanks and God bless

Cathy

From: callen nyamongo <callynya@yahoo.com>
To: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, May 3, 2013 4:19 PM
Subject: Re: The air cons

Hi Cathy,
I told him and gave him quotations but he was overwhelmed with auditing. May be he
will act this coming week. The work has not started yet.
Sorry for the pains. I will get back next week.
Bossy

From: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
To: "callynya@yahoo.com" <callynya@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, May 3, 2013 11:02 AM
Subject: The air cons

Bossy,
I hope you are doing fine. I am sure you are overwhelmed with work.

Just to find out if you discussed with L. about the need to have the air cons installed
before the rest of the work. Have they started the work? Ask MO to orient himself with
the editing as well so that we can use him as we wait for the studio to be ready.
I am fine otherwise except for serious eye pains.

Thanks

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Cathy

On Thursday, May 9, 2013 11:13 AM, Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com> wrote:

Bossy
Thanks very much. I hope they come for it because he needs to find the battery for himself. How are the studio renovations going? Is Moses practicing editing? Do encourage him. Did you find a place to practice it yourself?
Have a good day.

Cathy

From: callen nyamongo <callynya@yahoo.com>
To: Cathy Nyameino <cnyameino@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 9, 2013 7:44 AM
Subject: Re: Pastor's camera

Hi Cathy,
I believe you are doing well. We are fine too.
I will give him the camera.
I wish you well in all your endeavours. God bless you.
Bossy

Catherine Ontita (ontitac@eku.adventist.org)

Appendix 13: Qualitative Research - A Brief Introduction

This study used the qualitative research paradigm to study communication practices in EAU. Qualitative research has been widely studied and discussed in the literature but its definition varies from scholar to scholar owing to the different techniques and the wide range of intellectual disciplines in which it is used[1]. But Bryman (2012, 380) argues that qualitative research is simply 'a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data'. Qualitative research also emphasizes socially constructed reality and the intimate relationship between the researcher and the participants (Mason, 2002, 3). It also accepts the multiple social realities as opposed to one reality and acknowledges the subjectivity of both the researcher and the researched among other qualities as argued in (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008a; 2008 b). See also Bernard, 2013; Kisber, 2010; Schwandt, 1998; Biber and Leavey, 2011). In qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data (Gray, 2004). Creswell's (2013, 44) definition gives a synopsis of qualitative research:

> Qualitative research begins with the assumption and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and established patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of the participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complete description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or call for change.

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[1] Scholars such as Mason, (2002); Guest et al., (2013); Denzin and Lincoln, (2005, 2008a, 20008b, 2011); Berg and Howard, (2012); Babbie, 2011; Barbour, 2008; Biber and Leavey, 2011; Inglis and Christopher, (2012); Creswell (2013); Esterberg, (2002; Kumar, (1999); Marshall and Gretchen, (2011 have discussed the various definitions of qualitative research.

Appendix 14: Gender and Communication: Brief Literature Review

There is a strong argument that communication is gendered because it is through communication structures that society creates and sustains gender (Wood, 2003, 30; Ashcraft, 2005, 154). Some studies have also shown that there are differences between men's and women's communication. For instance, Durant et al., (2012) examined gender preferred communication styles within the online cancer communities and found that men patients preferred to socialize in large, less intimate groups but women patients preferred highly intimate connections with other female patients. In a study on gender differences in health care-provider patient communication, Street (2002) found that there is a difference between male and female care provider-patient communication. Women showed greater affinity for collaboration models of patient-physician relationships than their male colleagues. Maccoby's (1990) study on children's communication styles found that male childhood and adolescent communication involves more interruptions, self-displays, challenges, strong assertions and direct judgements than female childhood and adolescent communication. Inman's (1996) and Wood and Inman's (1993) studies on women and men's communication practices found that men rely more than women on shared activities and doing things for others to build, sustain, and express intimacy with friends and romantic partners. Actelli's (1992) study on gender differences in relationship awareness and satisfaction among young married couples found that women generally find talking about relationships satisfying, whereas men generally find talking about relationships satisfying only when there is some tension or problem to be solved.

Jansen and Jansen (2012), in their research on how a physician's gender communication style influenced patient preference and satisfaction in gynaecology and obstetrics, found that most patients preferred a female rather than a male gynaecologist-

obstetrician and this was partly explained by a more patient-centred communication style used by female gynaecologist-obstetrician. In their study on the influence of gender in patient-physician relationships in medical visits, Patrick et al., (1999) found that female patients generally receive more information, ask more questions, and have more partnership-building than male patients. Hall et al.'s (1994) study on the relation of physician and patient gender to verbal and non-verbal communication in a primary care setting, found that female physicians conducted longer visits, made more positive statements, made more back-channel responses and smiled and nodded more compared to male physicians and patients made more partnership statements and gave more medical information to female physicians compared to male physicians.

In their research to establish whether telephone conversations are gendered, Friebel and Seabright (2011) carried out two researches to establish if women spoke on the phone longer than men. Their first research on random subscribers established that due to tariffs, women's calls lasted longer by 16% than those of men and in their research on four call centres in Germany, results showed that calls randomly allocated to women lasted 15% longer than those of men. Friebel and Seabright (2011) argue that their research reflects systematic gender differences in communication strategies. Mo et al., (2009) conducted a literature review to identify studies addressing gender differences in messages posted to online health related support groups. Their findings showed there are differences in communication single-sex online health support groups and similarities on communication patterns in mixed-sex online health support groups. Kapidzic and Herring (2011) carried out a study on gender distinctions among teens in an online environment. The results of their study showed that there was significant difference in speech acts, message tone, physical stance, and social distance in profile pictures. Hence they concluded that traditional patterns in communication style and self-presentation persist in computer-mediated communication.

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Appendix 15: List of Focus Group Discussion Members

GROUP	NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS
1	Betty Anyago
	Peter Asilwa
	Debora Ogochi
	Kigundu Ndwiga
	Washington Omollo
	Paul Muasya
	Lameck Anyona
Group 2	
	Mary Njaaga
	Samuel Makori
	Hellen Nunda
	Paul Girimbe
	Daniel Tirop
	Stanley Waweru
Group 3	Paul Kimwomi
	Dan Agwena
	Jerusha Muga
	Joel Okindo
	Eric Aluoch
	Okiri Mochache
	Joan Nyakundi
	Jessica Odira

	Jackson Muyonga
Group 4	
	Samuel Lumwe
	Martin Akoto
	Alex Malayi
	Pamela Otila
	Rogers Ochenge
	Ruth Chiampui
	Janet Kwasi

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