

CHAPTER 4

THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of communication, the communication process, and various theories and models of communication.

Perhaps the most appropriate way to begin the discussion of communication is to trace the origins of the term and how it has been modified over time to include other connotations needed for the definition of this concept. According to Perry (1996), the term communication has two different meanings. The term is rooted in the Latin word *communis*, which refers to communion or the idea of shared understanding of, or participation in, an idea or event. Later in the 17th century, the notion of imparting, conveying, or exchanging information and materials was incorporated into the concept. Commenting on the social import of communication, Perry cites Dewey (1916), who wrote:

‘Society not only continues to exist by transmission, by communication, but it may fairly be said to exist in transmission, in communication. There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication. Men live in a community in virtue of the things they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to process things in common’ (p.4).

Having defined the term communication, and since the major interest of this study is mass communication and SAfm in particular, it is perhaps more appropriate to describe briefly the term mass communication. According to McQuail and Windahl (1981), the term mass communication applies in a situation where the communicator or the source transmits some message to the mass audience via a ‘mass’ medium such as radio or television. The word ‘mass’ is referred to here as a large body of persons (Bittner, 1986).

Mass communication is impersonal in the sense that in most, if not all, instances the source communicates directly via a mass communication medium such as radio or television. According to Bittner (1986), a few hundred feet may be all the distance the

human voice can project to a crowd without the aid of a public address system. A mass medium can take the same message around the world.

Furthermore, unlike face-to-face or interpersonal communication where the communicator has the advantage of observing the recipient and the opportunity to adapt the message on the spot to achieve the desired objective, mass communication does not give the communicator the privilege of immediate feedback to allow the message to be adapted accordingly.

Another difficulty of communicating with the larger audience through a mass communication medium is that the recipients of messages are not within easy reach of the communicator. Another characteristic of the mass audience is that it consists of fairly general groups of people who are described by Blumer (1946, cited by Perry, 1996) as:

‘a mass consisting of a very loosely organised group of people who come from all walks of life, who remain anonymous with each other, and who interact very little among themselves’ (p.4).

The ever-present challenge facing any communicator who targets messages to attract and to appeal to the largest possible audience is that this often requires more than just the appropriate communication messages that are intended for the audience being sought. According to Agee et al (1988), the successful communicator is one who finds the right method of expression to establish empathy with the largest possible number of individuals in the audience. The difficulty and challenge facing communicators who want to attract a mass audience is well illustrated in the following comment:

‘The politician reaches many more individuals with a single television speech than through handshaking tours, but that person’s use of mass communication may be a failure if the same feeling of sincerity and ability that is conveyed through handshake and smile cannot be projected on a radio broadcast’ (Agee et al, 1988, p.36).

Though the above is not all that could be said about mass communication, the following definition will, it is hoped, capture the essence of the term. According to Janowitz (1968, cited by McQuail & Windahl, 1981), ‘mass communication comprises the institutions and

techniques by which specialised groups employ technological devices (press, radio, films, etc) to disseminate symbolic content to large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed audiences' (p.4).

The phrase 'symbolic content' that has been used in this definition refers to a symbol, usually a word, picture, or sign, that is transmitted by a communicator (Agee et al, 1988). According to O'Sullivan et al (1994), a symbol stands for something other than itself, by virtue of agreement among members of the culture that uses it. Thus, in using symbols to communicate, an individual is calling on the collective store of meaning that he or she shares with interlocutors (McQuail, 1975). Symbols are, in essence, the primary mode of expression or communication.

This definition of mass communication is based partly on the view that the audience is a loosely aggregated mass. According to Windahl et al (1992), this notion is also found in what are generally described as mass society theories. Modern society, according to those theories, is characterised by specialisation and the weakening of traditional bonds, etc leading to psychological and social isolation. This type of theory was dominant during the first half of this century and strongly influenced early mass communication research (Windahl et al, 1992).

4.2 The Communication Process

Any study that is undertaken in any area of communication would be incomplete without a discussion of the process of communication. Since the focus of the present research is on radio, and SAfm in particular, it is important for any discussion of the communication process to be based on what is known about mass communication in general.

There are four main elements of the mass communication process: the communicator or source, the message, the medium or channel, and the audience or recipients. The communicator or source is the initiator of communication messages. The role of the communicator as the sole initiator of the mass communication process is somehow deceptive, because those who are often given the responsibility of sending out communication messages do so in order to advance the interests of others or of the

organisations they work for. In addition to this, many communication messages that are sent to the intended audience are packaged in such a way that they meet the needs and expectations of the organisation for which the individual communicators are working.

However, it is essential for the audience to know who is communicating with them. According to Windahl et al (1992), too often communication is rejected because of an unclear perception of who is sending it. This can cause the audience to question the authenticity of the message. A good example of this is the perceived interference or involvement by the government of the day in the affairs or day-to-day running of the broadcasting media or institution. Not only is the credibility of the broadcasting organisation concerned bound to suffer, but at risk are the individual communicators whose image and credibility will be destroyed as well. Windahl et al (1992) recommend that mass media organisations make it clear to the audience who is actually communicating with them and in whose interest.

According to Fauconnier (1981), the term message signifies what is expressed and transmitted to the recipient, and can denote any of the following: meaning, information, signs, opinions, knowledge, feelings, facts, etc. Fauconnier (1981) has argued, however, that 'meaning' and 'information' cannot be conveyed, because meaning can originate only through interpretation of the message, and a message contains information only once it has been assimilated in the thought system. In line with this view, then, the message contains data that can become informative when it has been received (Fauconnier, 1981).

According to Windahl et al (1992), there is some disparity between the meaning attributed to a message by communicators and receivers. This difference is not always considered by communicators and is the source of many problems in planned communication. In highlighting the significance of this observation, Windahl et al (1992, p.11) wrote:

'It is a common flaw in sender-oriented communication theory and practice to embrace the sender's definition of the message and to disregard the interpretation by the receiving side. The result, of course, is ineffective communication'.

The channel or medium in mass communication indicates a link that bridges the gap

between source and recipient; it can also indicate the (material) means by which signs and signals are transmitted, such as wires, cables, tubes, lines and water. The term can also be applied to radio and television, which enable people to receive programmes or programmed messages via various channels (Fauconnier, 1981).

The term audience or recipients refers to those people who are on the receiving end of communication messages. According to Windahl et al (1992), the recipients of communication messages can vary to include:

- (1) a certain category or group of people who receive communication messages
- (2) people who define themselves as part of an audience based solely on attending to a certain mass medium or certain content, especially if they do it frequently
- (3) people who are categorised in terms of their use of media such as 'readers of youth magazine' and 'science programme listeners'

However, this brief outline of what the communication process constitutes is inadequate for two reasons. First of all, there is no way of knowing at what point it can be said that the communication process has been a success or failure. Secondly, without the knowledge and insight of the various theoretical models, one cannot fully understand the various aspects of the communication process that are involved in different communication situations.

Since the ultimate goal of the present investigation is to develop a new theory that would add value to the present study, a brief review of communication theories and models that are relevant to this study is in order. The combined discussion of theories and models was unavoidable, as it is not always easy to separate the two. However, in order to do justice to the discussion that will follow, it is proper to give a definition of a theory and a model first.

Graziano et al (1989) define a theory as a formalised set of concepts that organises observations and inferences, and predicts and explains. Put simply, a theory is a

supposition or a system of ideas explaining something that is based on general principles or observations and can be subjected to an empirical test. The importance of theories lies in the fact that they enable the scientist to bring together and integrate what has been learned about the phenomena under study (Graziano et al, 1989). According to Graziano et al (1989), to develop an adequate theory that will organise, predict, and explain natural phenomena is a major goal of scientists.

A model may be described as an isomorphic construction of reality or anticipated reality (Bill et al, 1973, cited by Severin et al, 1979). It seeks to show the main elements of any structure or process and the relationships between those elements (McQuail et al, 1981). Graziano et al (1989) regard models as 'mini-theories' because they are often used as steps in the development of a theory. Models are regarded as extremely useful in the sense that they help people to organise information, to illustrate relationships between parts, and to create new ideas and predict new observations (Graziano et al, 1989).

4.3 Communication Models

4.3.1 Wilbur Schramm's Model of Communication

Schramm's communication model involves the source, the message and the destination. According to Ruben (1984), Schramm saw communication as a purposeful effort to establish commonness between a source and a receiver. In an effort to establish this commonness with the intended receiver, the first thing the source does is to encode its message. This means that the source takes the information or feeling to be shared, and puts it in a form that he or she believes will be understood by the intended recipients. Once encoded and sent, it becomes the responsibility of the receiver to make sense of the message. Schramm introduced the concept of field of experience or shared environment that he believed was critical in determining whether the message would be received at the destination in the manner intended by the source. Schramm argued that without a common field of experience such as common language, common background, or common culture, there was little chance that meaningful communication would take place (Ruben, 1984).

Denis McQuail also adopted a similar position on the shared environment, and

particularly the shared experience of the world of referents that communication messages are about. McQuail (1975) contends that messages can have meaning only if they concern matters within, or close to, the experience of both senders and receivers. However, McQuail concedes that there is some latitude in this requirement, since communication frequently extends the boundaries of shared experience by using known referents to convey meaning about others unknown to the receiver.

The concept of feedback in a communication system, that is the procedures for control that enable a system to adapt to changes in the environment, has been given prominence in Schramm's communication model. Schramm wrote:

‘feedback tells us how our messages are being interpreted.... An experienced communicator is attentive to feedback and constantly modifying his messages in light of what he observes or hears from his audience’ (cited by Ruben, 1984, p.48).

According to McQuail (1975), Schramm emphasised the fact that feedback makes the process of communication circular rather than linear or one-directional, and no representation of the human communication process can omit this key element.

4.3.2 Uses and Gratification Approach

The uses and gratification approach is a need-based theory and conceived from audience members playing an active part in the selection of media content that will fulfil their needs. The basic assumption of the uses and gratifications model is that audience members more or less actively seek the content that seems to be the most gratifying (Windahl et al, 1992). In other words, an important part of media use is assumed to be purposeful in the sense that audience members more or less actively seek communication messages that are designed to fulfil their needs. Hence, the more individuals perceive that the actual content is need fulfilling, the greater the chance that they will choose it (Windahl et al, 1992). What is noteworthy, however, in most of the uses and gratifications models is that they exclude the sender element of the mass communication process (Windahl et al, 1992).

In addition to the specific needs that certain mass media messages fulfil in people's lives, there are also motives that encourage people to choose a particular type of media content. One of the most commonly cited typologies of motives is that of McQuail et al (1972, cited by Windahl et al 1992), which includes the following dimensions:

- (1) Information: seeking advice, getting oriented towards events in different parts of the environment, learning
- (2) Personal identity: gaining self-knowledge, finding models of behaviour, reinforcing values
- (3) Integration and social interaction: finding out about the condition of others, making it possible to relate to others, finding out how to play one's roles, establishing bases for social interaction
- (4) Entertainment: relaxing, escaping from everyday problems, filling time, and satisfying sexual needs

One thing that is quite clear from these typologies is that there is a variety of reasons for using media. Still on the same point, gratification studies based on specific media content have demonstrated that one and the same set of media material is capable of serving a multiplicity of other needs and functions (Katz et al, 1974).

However, there is a widespread but often mistaken assumption among communicators that people in the audience attend to messages for the reasons the sender had intended. Consider, for example, a person who decides to read a local health promotion brochure, not because of an interest in the health message, but because of curiosity about the identity of the doctors and nurses whose pictures appear in the pamphlet. This points to the risk of measuring the success of communication in terms of exposure alone, since idiosyncratic motives may prompt the attending individual or person to pick up elements and meanings other than those assigned by the sender (Windahl et al, 1992).

Regarding gratification, receivers of communication messages are guided by their

perception of what the outcome of consuming a certain message might be (Windahl et al, 1992). The value-expectancy theory of media use is an interesting approach to finding out what content will be sought in order to obtain gratification. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, cited by Windahl et al, 1992) base this theory on a social psychological theory that depicts behavioural intentions and/or attitudes as a function of two factors: expectancy and evaluation.

Expectancy is a belief or perception that an object possesses a certain attribute, or that a behaviour will have a certain consequence. For example, radio listeners who want to know about the state of affairs in their country will listen to the news because they expect the news programme to provide them with this kind of information.

Evaluation is the negative or positive value attached to the expected attribute or consequence. This concerns the value attached to having listened to the news or a music programme, for example, as an outcome of need-fulfilment or gratification.

Thus, when planning a radio broadcast, the presenter must be able to answer two questions about the audience (Windahl et al, 1992):

- (1) Will the audience believe that the programme will lead to a certain outcome?
- (2) Will the audience value the outcome gratification positively?

4.3.3 SMCR Communication Model

The SMCR model of communication is the brainchild of K Berlo. The acronym SMCR in Berlo's communication model stands for Source, Message, Channel and Receiver. This model places emphasis on four factors that can contribute to successful communication between the source and the receiver. These factors are:

- (a) Communication skills
- (b) Attitudes
- (c) Knowledge
- (d) The socio-cultural context

The source should be able to speak and write well, whereas the recipient should be able to listen and read well (or should possess the required communication skills to decode and make sense of the communication message). Berlo subdivides attitudes as follows:

- Attitudes to the self
- Attitudes to the subject
- Attitudes to the recipient

According to Berlo (cited by Fauconnier, 1981), with a negative self-attitude or a negative attitude to the subject, communication cannot be successful, while a negative attitude to the recipient could endanger the communication objective. If recipients do not harbour a positive attitude to the source, they will probably reject the message (Fauconnier, 1981).

According to Fauconnier (1981), the knowledge factor in Berlo's SMCR model is essential to both the source and the recipient, as it is impossible to communicate on a subject with which one is hardly or not at all acquainted. Furthermore, the source could convey the message in technical terms and this could interfere with successful communication, especially if the recipients were not familiar with the jargon that was used by the source.

The fourth factor, the social and cultural systems, is seen by Berlo as closely connected with communication in that they co-determine communication. This is evident especially among individuals who play different social roles, or come from social classes or cultures that tend to communicate in different ways (Fauconnier, 1981).

Regarding the message aspect of the model, Berlo attaches greater importance to its structure. Berlo uses the term 'elements' to signify the content of the structure; these elements co-determine the effect on the recipient. A code is a group of symbols cast into a specific structure. 'Message treatment' concerns the source's decision on how to use the code and content of the message to attain the desired communication objective. The 'channel' must make it possible to encode the message when sending it, and to decode it once it has reached the recipient (Fauconnier, 1981). This model has been presented below in figure 4.1.

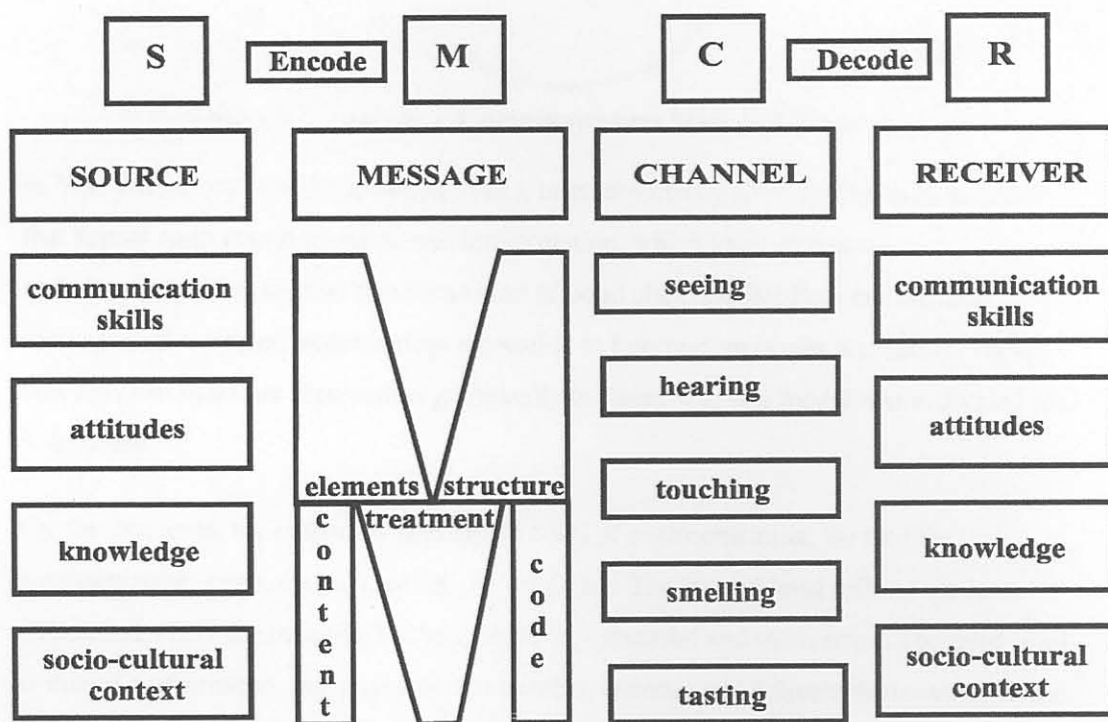


Figure 4.1 Communication Model of D K Berlo

4.3.4 Analytical Model of M van Schoor

This model is known as an analytical model, presumably because it is an analysis of communication as Van Schoor sees it. This model was constructed round the triptych of communicator, medium, and recipient.

According to Van Schoor (cited by Fauconnier, 1981), the communicator wishes to express a message intended for the recipient. In order to do this the person uses a medium, i.e. an institutionalised combination of codes and signs such as language, sounds and images. Recipients are also active participants in the communication process because they are the turning point in the sense that they activate and actualise the potential value of the message. It is particularly the significance and value attached to the message by the recipient that will determine whether the communication takes place.

One of the characteristic features of the model is the aspect of intersubjectivity. According

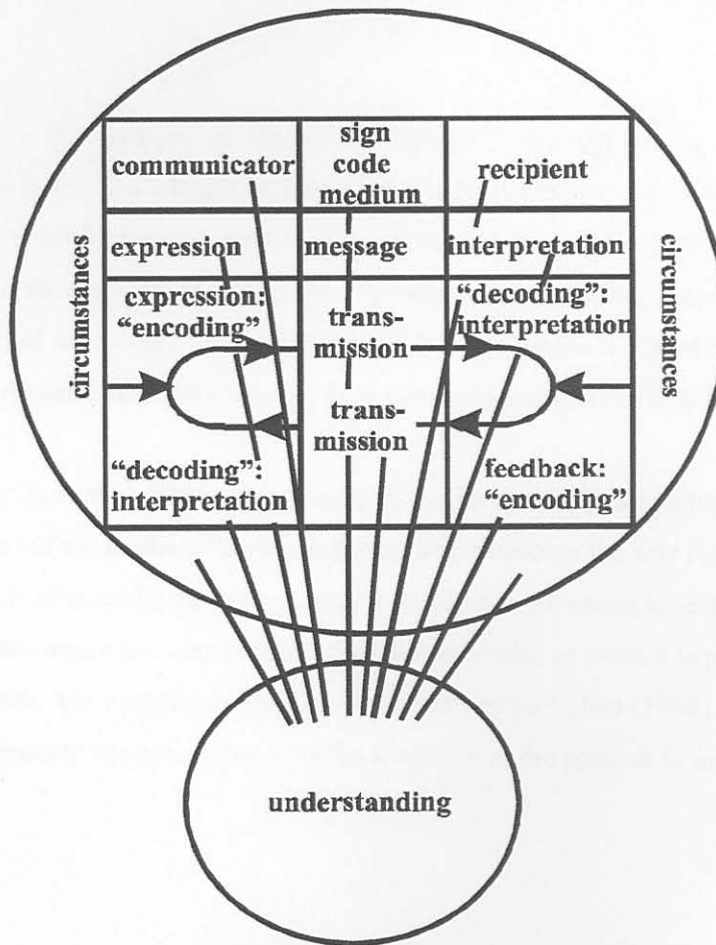


Figure 4.2 Analytical Communication Model of M van Schoor

to Van Schoor (cited by Fauconnier, 1981), intersubjectivity refers to the understanding that results from communication and interpretation, which leads to mutual understanding. This implies that some kind of bond always exists between source, message and recipient, which makes it possible to interpret messages accurately. These concepts and ideas are represented graphically in figure 4.2, in a model that is divided into four levels.

On the first level, the externally perceptible level of communication, we find the communicator, signs, codes, medium and recipient. The second level reflects the inner dimension where the meaning of the message is expressed and interpreted. The third level is that of performance: the source communicates, encodes and delivers the message to the point where it can be decoded and interpreted by the recipient. At that point the message

could go back to the source, but this is not always possible. Lastly, there is the dimension of the social circumstances in which the communication process takes place (Fauconnier, 1981).

Van Schoor views communication as a quest for mutual understanding and even for well-being. Furthermore, he regards the pursuit of mutual understanding as a dramatic synthesis of the communication process, and as the core of all human communication (Fauconnier, 1981).

4.3.5 Maletzke's Model of Mass Communication Process

This model is the work of German scholar and theorist G Maletzke. Maletzke's (1963) model (see figure 4.3 below) shows communication as a very complicated social psychological process and regards the communication process as the product of many factors.

The model consists of four basic elements: communicator, message, medium and receiver (McQuail & Windahl, 1981). Maletzke (1963) has further identified two important components of the model between the medium and receiver, which are 'pressure' or 'constraint' from the medium, and the receiver's image of the medium. The pressure or constraint aspect of the medium has to do with the fact that receivers are well aware that different media demand different kinds of adaptation on the part of the receiver.

According to McQuail et al (1981), every medium has its possibilities and limitations, and the characteristics of the medium must be regarded as influencing the way the receiver experiences and is affected by the media content. We do not, for example, experience a play in exactly the same way when it is performed on the radio as when it is performed on TV. The expression 'the medium is the message' coined by McLuhan (1964) may well illustrate how seriously the role of the medium in relation to the receiver is sometimes taken.

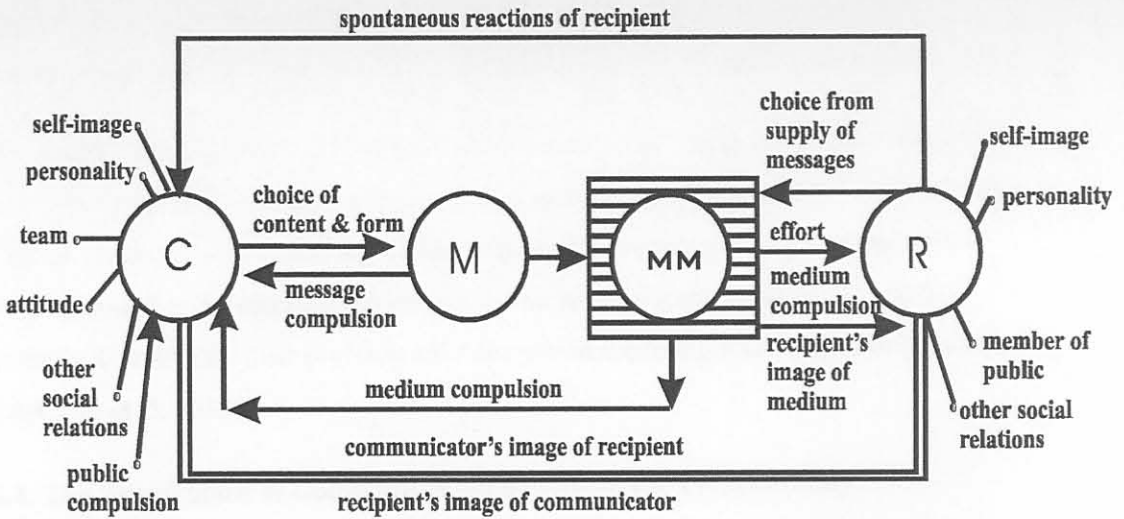


Figure 4.3 Mass Communication Model of G Maletzke

According to McQuail et al (1981), the image of the medium that is held by the receiver causes expectations of media content and may therefore be assumed to have an influence on the receiver's choice of content, and way of experiencing it and responding to it. Hence, the prestige and credibility of the medium are important elements in this image.

In addition to the above aspects of pressure or constraint, and the receiver's image of the medium, there are other factors in the model that may be labelled as causative. There are three such factors that Maletzke (1963) has identified in his model: (1) the receiver's self-image; (2) the personality structure of the receiver; (3) the receiver's social context. The receiver's self-image refers to the person's self-perception, roles, attitudes and values that create a disposition to receive communication. This factor is supported by psychological research, which has shown, for example, that we tend to reject information that is inconsistent with values we ascribe to ourselves (McQuail et al, 1981; Fauconnier, 1981).

The personality structure of the receiver has more to do with individual differences in terms of development, age, experiences, intelligence, interest, views, and so on (Fauconnier, 1981). Each of these factors determines how the receiver responds to communication messages. For instance, social psychologists often assume that some categories of persons are more easily influenced than others (McQuail et al, 1981).

The third and last factor, the receiver's social context, refers to the surrounding society,

the community in which the receiver lives, the groups he or she belongs to, and the individuals with whom he or she interacts. This also has important implications for the success or failure of mass communication messages (McQuail et al, 1981). According to McQuail et al (1981), the more the individual accepts being a member of a group, the smaller are the possibilities of influencing his or her attitudes with messages that run contrary to the values of the group.

All the above factors are also more or less applicable to the communicator: personality, self-perception, social relationship, and the pressure or constraint from the message, where the communicator is bound, for instance, to adapt the shaping of the message to the type of content. However, whereas the recipient is a member of the general public, the communicator usually forms part of a team belonging to an institution (Fauconnier, 1981).

Finally, the communicator's self-image, in Maletzke's view, does not merely comprise the way communicators look upon their own roles as individuals, but also how they see their roles as communicators. That is, whether individuals see themselves as interpreters of events, crusaders for special ideas, or just as mirrors of events; in addition, whether individuals think that their professional roles permit them to put forward their own values (McQuail et al, 1981).

4.4. The Significance of Communication Models in the Present Study

The models discussed above are of significance to the present study for various reasons. Most, if not all, of the models that have been discussed place greater emphasis on the importance of factors such as shared experience, language, background, attitudes and knowledge which are critical in the communication process. Not only do these factors suggest the importance of the socio-cultural environment in determining the success of the communication process, they also make it possible to extend communication beyond the boundaries of what is known and familiar by using known referents to make sense of other forms of communication to the recipient. This is material to any mass medium, but especially radio, because radio programmes such as music, news, and talk shows often present new ways of experiencing the world that are not necessarily confined to the

familiar.

Another point to consider is that if there is no shared or common experience, language, attitudes and knowledge, for example, between the radio presenter and the listeners, it is highly unlikely that the programme being presented will be successful. Though close scrutiny of the communication models discussed in this chapter reveals differences in the views on the mass communication process propounded by the various scholars and theorists, their relevance to radio and mass media in general cannot be questioned.

The value of these models, however, lies in the fact that anyone who knows and understands radio can draw from the knowledge and insights of these models to design and develop a model for any radio station. This is probably one area that has not yet been given enough attention by communication scholars and researchers alike. This researcher is convinced that, if models for specific radio and television stations or any other mass medium could be developed, it would be possible to realise the full potential of these media to the benefit of the entire society or community.

The feedback aspect that seems to be a common feature in some of the models is without a doubt extremely important for radio. Without any understanding of the listeners' values, likes and dislikes, etc, radio presenters would not be able to adapt their communication messages to suit their listeners. This underscores the importance of conducting audience research in this regard.

4.5 Theories of Dissonance, Consonance and Balance

All the theories of dissonance, consonance and balance rest on a common base: the attempts of individuals to arrive at and maintain a certain degree of consistency in their attitudes, beliefs and behaviour (Lindgren, 1969). The concept of inconsistency in all three theories assumes that inconsistency is a noxious state that sets up pressures to eliminate it or reduce it (Zajonc, 1970). The first theory to be reviewed in this category is cognitive dissonance, which was propounded by Leon Festinger (1957, cited by Lindgren, 1969 & Berkowitz, 1975).

According to Berkowitz (1975), Festinger suggested that cognitive dissonance arises when people, at any one time, know things that have opposing behavioural implications. The state of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, would motivate the person to try to reduce dissonance and achieve consonance. In addition to reducing dissonance, the person would actively avoid situations and information that were likely increase this dissonance (Berkowitz, 1975; Lindgren, 1969; Zajonc, 1970).

At the heart of this theory is individuals' desire to seek consistent knowledge of themselves and their environment. Festinger contends that people strive for consistency in the way they interpret the world around them. They want their knowledge of one aspect of the environment to have the same implications for their behaviour as their knowledge of the other features of the world around them (Berkowitz, 1975).

Festinger further points out that dissonance functions like a drive, need or tension. Its presence leads to action to reduce it, just as the presence of hunger leads to action aimed at reducing the hunger. Dissonance can be resolved or at least reduced by changing our opinion, by getting others to change their opinion, or by deciding that there is no basic disagreement (Lindgren, 1969). One of the consequences of Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance that is of interest to this study is the one that deals with exposure to information.

Zajonc (1970) contends that since dissonance occurs between cognitive elements, the principle of dissonance should have a close bearing on the individual's commerce with information. In particular, the assumption that dissonance is a psychologically uncomfortable state that would lead one to the prediction that individuals will seek out information that reduces dissonance and avoid information that increases it. The next two theories to be reviewed under this category are those that are better known as balance theories.

It was in fact Heider (1946) who provided the first theoretical analysis of cognitive consistency. Though the balance theory that he formulated follows certain mathematical principles, the point he made is simple, especially when one considers the assumption on

which this theory is based. According to Zajonc (1970), the fundamental assumption of balance theory is that an imbalanced state produces tension and generates forces to restore balance. The balanced state is characterised by comfort and harmony among elements, whereas the imbalanced state is characterised by discomfort, disharmony, and the generation of activity intended to restore some kind of balance. Heider maintains that an imbalance creates stresses. The action, or the extent to which individuals will attend to these stresses so as to achieve some balance, depends on the strength of the stresses (Lindgren, 1969). Heider's original formulation did not attach any special significance to agreement of opinion.

It was Theodore Newcomb, however, who improved substantially on Heider's original theory. Notably, Newcomb regarded shared views as being extremely important in social encounters. According to Newcomb, one of the main reasons for people's communicating with each other is to maintain or establish similar attitudes to each other and the issues that concern them (Berkowitz, 1975).

The phrase Newcomb uses that captures the essence of the above point is 'strain toward symmetry'. Newcomb postulates a strain of symmetry that leads to a commonality of attitudes between two people so as to bring their attitudes to a particular object or person into congruence (Zajonc, 1970).

Newcomb cites the work of Festinger and his associates on social communication in support of his hypothesis. Festinger's studies on communication have shown clearly that the tendency to influence other group members towards one's own opinion increases with the degree of attraction. In another study, Burdick and Burnes reported two experiments in which measures of skin resistance were obtained as an index of emotional reaction in the presence of balanced and imbalanced situations. They observed significant differences in skin resistance depending on whether the subjects agreed or disagreed with a 'well-liked experimenter'. In the second experiment, Burdick and Burnes found that subjects who liked the experimenter tended to change their opinions towards greater agreement with his, and those who disliked him, towards greater disagreement (Zajonc, 1975).

According to Berkowitz (1975), Rokeach (1960) went even further than Newcomb in stressing the importance of attitude in social life. Rokeach argued that social relationships are typically influenced more strongly by the degree to which people share the same views than by their race, religion, or nationality. Rokeach contends that if we dislike others because of their race or ethnic group, this is actually owing to our assumption that their beliefs and values differ from our own.

To conclude, Heider's and Newcomb's systems have many common features in that they both describe a kind of cognitive homeostasis, that is a tendency for attitudes to develop or orient themselves in such a way that a state of consistency or balance is developed. Three kinds of state can be identified in this theory: (1) a state of rest or balance (a normal state); (2) the intrusion of certain forces or events that upset this normal state; (3) the operation of certain mechanisms or processes that have the function of bringing the system back to the normal state (Lindgren, 1969).

The concepts of cognitive consistency and balance that have been discussed above suggest that people in general find comfort in knowing that they are living in a harmonious and predictable world. This kind of human tendency for harmony may be extended to include every sphere of human activity, and radio broadcasts in particular.

The balance theories have considerable implications for radio producers and presenters alike. First of all, they emphasise the importance of harmony or congruence between radio broadcasts and those who are listening. Thus, in accordance with Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance, the general expectation is that listeners will seek out programmes and presenters that are in tune with their beliefs, values, attitudes, lifestyles, needs, etc. Similarly, the theory predicts that listeners will avoid presenters and programmes that are not in tune with their beliefs, values, attitudes, lifestyles, needs, etc.

4.5.1 Lewin's Field Theory

Kurt Lewin's field theory views the life of a person in relation to psychological forces that influence much of his or her behaviour. To make sense of the theory, one need only make sense of the various constructs Lewin used to make his point that were considered for this

project. These constructs are: the life space, behaviour and locomotion, and force and force field. These constructs will first be discussed individually and later together in the form of a summary in the context of a radio broadcast.

4.5.2 The Life Space

Lewin considered a life space as a psychological field, that is the space in which a person moves. The psychological field, according to Lewin, comprises everything that determines the behaviour of an individual at any one time (Lundin, 1979). In essence, Lewin viewed behaviour as a function of life space. One of the fundamentals of the life space is that it includes all the things that have existence, and excludes all that do not have existence for the individual or group at any time (Lundin, 1979; Shaw & Costanzo, 1970).

Lewin further contends that life space is more than a mere subjective event, and that there may also be forces at work of which the person is unaware, but which influence his or her behaviour (Lundin, 1979). Perhaps one point that is relevant and significant that Lewin introduced in his construct of life space is the presence of boundaries. He considered the boundaries as barriers that can hinder the individual's behaviour or movement towards a desired goal (Lundin, 1979).

4.5.3 Behaviour and Locomotion

According to Lewin, behaviour means any change in life space. Behaviour is also regarded as locomotion of the person in the life space, since locomotion refers to movement within the life space (Shaw & Costanzo, 1970). The ease with which an individual moves within the life space at any given time will, however, depend on existing boundaries or barriers that stand between the person and the desired goal.

According to Shaw and Costanzo (1970), locomotion may be produced by a need, which corresponds to a tension system of the interpersonal region. The extent to which a need will produce locomotion depends in part upon the degree to which the interpersonal region is in communication with another region. Two regions are said to be in communication if a change of state in one region produces a change in the other region. Hence, if two

regions are in communication, and a need is aroused in one of them, locomotion from that region to the other occurs until a state of equilibrium is reached (Shaw & Costanzo, 1970).

4.5.4 Force and Force Fields

According to Shaw and Costanzo (1970), a force is defined as that which causes change. Its properties are direction, strength, and point of application. There are two basic concepts that Lewin used to explain a field of forces in the life space: valence and vectors or forces.

Valence refers to the particular attractiveness or repulsiveness of an object in the life space (Lundin, 1979). The valences that Lewin was concerned about are those that correspond to a person's needs.

According to Shaw and Costanzo (1970), the strength of a force towards or away from a goal is a function of the strength of the valence and the psychological distance between the person and the goal. As the distance between a person and the object is increased, the attractiveness of the valence is decreased (Lundin, 1979).

A force or vector constituted the push, which directed a person towards a goal. The force may be directed towards or away from the object and is correlated with the object's valence. The vectors have three properties: (1) direction, towards or away from an object; (2) strength, which is correlated with the degree of attraction or repulsion of the valence; (3) a point of contact (Lundin, 1979).

4.6 Lewin's Field Theory in the Context of a Radio Broadcast

Within life space, radio, like all the forms of human communication, is one of the things that most individuals are subjected to. In the process of socialisation, radio listeners in general learn about radio broadcasts to an extent that they can discriminate, or distinguish between good and bad programmes. Furthermore, since radio becomes an important part of life for many listeners, any radio programme or station that deprives them of the things they want and expect from it will, in one way or another, cause tension between the listeners and the programme or radio station. In most cases where this kind of situation

prevails, listeners may stop listening to the programme or the station.

The notion of boundaries or barriers that Lewin introduced in his field theory may represent, in the case of radio, anything that can have a negative impact on the listening behaviour of most radio listeners. This may include poor programme presentation and uninteresting radio programmes or topics. In accordance with the prediction of Lewin's field theory, such tension or unhappiness among listeners could be eliminated or reduced if there were corresponding improvement in both programme content and presentation to suit the listeners' needs and interests.

Movement to and away from (i.e. the attraction or repulsion) any given radio programme or station could result from a number of competing or opposing forces that exist at any given time. In most instances, the listeners' movement away (i.e. repulsion or avoidance) from a particular radio station or programme may largely be attributed to the lack of appeal of the station or programme.

The more the station or the programme is experienced as unappealing or irrelevant by most of the listeners, the further they will distance themselves from the station or programme. However, when the station provides programmes that are interesting, important and relevant to the listeners, the closer they will move towards the station. That is, the more the listeners experience the station as fulfilling their needs, the more closely they will be attracted to it.

4.7 Summary and Conclusion

What is quite clear in the sections of this chapter that have been covered is that knowledge of the communication process alone is not adequate to explain the many facets of the mass communication process. That is why it was necessary to discuss the various communication theories and models, as well as to get a good understanding of the key factors or elements of the mass communication process that are crucial to this study.

Not only are the various theories and models that have been discussed in this chapter essential to understanding the mass communication process in general, and their relevance

to radio as a mass communication medium, they also provide useful insights and ideas that will be used later in Chapter 9 to develop a new theoretical model for successful radio broadcasting in a multicultural environment.