COMMUNICATION AUDIT AS AN INTEGRATED
COMMUNICATION MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT: A CASE STUDY

by

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Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS WITH SPECIALISATION IN ORGANISATIONAL
COMMUNICATION RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NOVEMBER 2005

I declare that THE COMMUNICATION AUDIT AS AN INTEGRATED COMMUNICATUIN MEASUREMENT: A CASE STUDY is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The issue of communication and its integration in all aspects of the organisation, as well as its contribution to the achievement of organisational strategy, has become a major focus point in many discussions as indicated by some examples of the proponents of integrated communication such as, Gayeski and Woodward (1996), Jones (1999), Wightman (1999) Duncan and Moriarty's (1998), Reukert and Walker (1987), Moenaert, Souder, DeMeyer and Deschoolmeester (1994), Clark and Fujimoto (1991) and Sriram, Krapfel and Spekman (1992).   According to Leahy (2003a:3), management expects to measure effects which simply means that management expects results in all aspects of the organisation including communication.   However, the issue of contribution and more specifically the precise value of what communication contributes, or the impact it has on the success of an organisation, are seldom clear and the effect of communication is often not tangible.

The impact that communication has can, according to Wallace (1993:14), be seen as fundamental to the organisation since it can be argued that it plays an active role in determining the way in which the organisation operates (Wallace 1993). Communication plays an active role in establishing what the nature of an organisation is in terms of for example the internal environment, (the organisational culture and climate) and operational processes of for example collaboration between units and the level of integration, and the alignment of operational activities, objectives and processes. If the impact of communication is critical, the extent of the impact as well as the management thereof to capitalise on communication as a strategic driver in organisational success, is significant.   In light of this argument it is becoming necessary for organisations to measure the effectiveness of communication within the intraorganisational context. Whilst recognising that a range of methods exist that can measure communication in the intraorganisational context, as a result of the communication audit according to Wallace (1993:129), which has over the years become a well- and often-used research method of

appraising the communication system of an organisation, as well as Angelopulo, Barker, Du Plessis, Bornman, Schoonraad and Hanekom's (2004:90) assertion that it comprises a comprehensive analysis of an organisation's internal or external communication, it is maintained that the use of the communication audit should be evaluated. Considering the use of the communication audit in measuring intraorganisational communication, the methodology that it uses, the ease of application and the need to identify a measurement tool that can measure integrated communication or can be adapted to do so, this study focuses on establishing the effectiveness of the utilisation of a communication audit as an integrated measurement instrument of intraorganisational communication.

1.2   CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The focal point of this study is to establish if the communication audit can effectively measure all communication-related elements and its integration that contributes to, or inhibits, smooth operations of the organisation as a complete system (Neher 1997:327). It includes measuring issues regarding operations, systems and people impacting on intraorganisational communication and also requires an interpretation of underlying issues in order to make a comprehensive evaluation of the integration of communication in the case study organisation, as well as to establish whether the communication audit can measure the integration of communication.

1.2.1 Purpose and rationale of study

Communication is increasingly becoming important in the organisational context and recognition is given to the fact that it has a major impact on organisational success. Typically, communication appears to be reserved for what is perceived as corporate communication and marketing or marketing communication in many organisations, and it also appears that very little attention is paid to the fundamental principle of integration of all aspects of business, including communication (Duncan & Moriarty 1998:2, Moriarty 1994:38). The end result is that different business units tend to function in isolation with

regard to the various aspects of the business, but especially communication (Moriarty 1994:38).

In light of Duncan and Moriarty's (1998) contention that business units often function in isolation, it is necessary for organisational management to understand that a successful organisation requires a strategic and integrated approach to communication and that this allows the organisation to plan and anticipate what is required from communication as a whole and how to gain the best value from it. According to Verwey and Verwey (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:92), such a strategic approach allows a systematic and consistent application of organisational communication in an integrative framework that ultimately serves to link all aspects of business. Essentially, it allows the different communication efforts of the organisation, both internally and externally, to form a collective approach rather than an individual attempt to try and achieve set goals. Watson and Wyatt (1993:3) also argue that a close tie between the business aspects of the organisation and communication is critical to support the strategic direction of the organisation and the achievement of organisational goals.

Furthermore, Gayeski and Woodward (1996:2) propose a model for the integration of communication that is based on the concepts of a market-based strategic communication, human performance technology, business process engineering, and a systematic method for analysis and development of communication interventions. Essentially, according to Gayeski and Woodward (1996:2), as is the case with Verwey and Verwey (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:92) and Watson and Wyatt (1993:3), it is important to understand and recognise that communication, as a whole, should form part of an integrated approach to business and ultimately the strategic management of an organisation.

The systems theory, which is used as the theoretical basis for measuring integrated communication and is discussed in detail in chapter four, argues that the complete system functions and yields better results than the individual parts of the system (Checkland 1995:45; Shockley-Zalabak 1991:108). Within the confines of this reality it is becoming

necessary to measure communication from an integrated perspective and to this extent it is necessary to explore whether current measurement instruments, with specific reference being made to a communication audit for the purposes of this particular study, are effective integrated communication measurement instruments.

1.2.2 Background of study

As background to this particular study an organisational overview of the organisation on which the case study is based and the relationship of the topic to the communication discipline are provided. The choice of organisation for this particular case study was partially based on the access the researcher was allowed to the organisation, that it is a small organisation which allowed the researcher to include all staff and thereby ensuring the validity of findings in relation to this particular organisation, the organisations own interest in improving its organisational communication and finally, the researchers own interest in the development sector.

1.2.2.1 Organisational overview: National Development Agency

As preparation before initiating the research and in order to gain some insight into the organisation, the researcher reviewed a range of documents. The information that was extracted and can be found in documents such as organisational policies, legislative frameworks and operational procedures which provided insight into the organisation's background, its way of doing business and the organisational structure with the most relevant being mentioned below.

- Organisational background

The National Development Agency is a Section 3A statutory organisation, which was created by the NDA Act of 1998, as amended, which essentially states that:

"The organisation is primarily mandated by the Act to grant funding to, undertake research related to poverty eradication and build the capacity of, Non Governmental

Organisations (NGO's), Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) and Community Based Organisations (CBO's), with the express purpose of eradicating poverty in South Africa."

The National Development Agency is mandated to:

1. Grant funds to Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) for the purpose of meeting developmental needs of poor communities
2. Strengthen the institutional capacity of Civil Society Organisations for long-term sustainability
3. Promote consultation, dialogue and sharing of developmental experiences
4. Debate and influence developmental policies
5. Develop strategies to collaborate with local community development trusts, foundations, Government clusters and civil society

The organisation formally came into existence in 2000 and essentially is a young organisation. The NDA is based in the development industry as positioned through its role in poverty eradication and is categorised according to this positioning within the Government. The organisation is, as a result of its creation by an act of parliament, classified as a semi-public sector or parastatal type of organisation, which is similar to the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) and the Independent Development Trust (IDT). Although it is financed through the Government via the portfolio of the Department of Social Development, the organisation remains an independent organisation that must account for its expenditure to the National Treasury. As a result of its positioning and classification as a Section 3A organisation, the NDA, although independent, must conform to the various public sector related legislation, which over and above the NDA Act, includes the Public Finance and Management Act as well as the Treasury Regulations, stipulated by Government.

The NDA is a medium-sized organisation with a current averaged total annual staff complement of 121 staff members and it has a gender ratio of 60% female and 40% male employees. The staff in the organisation are mostly postgraduate individuals with their

area of expertise falling into a variety of specialist fields including research, legal, social and development fields. Culturally the organisation is to a large extent homogenous, with the racial breakdown being as follows: 85% African, 4% Indian, 4% Coloured and 7% White. The organisation has been going through restructuring and management changes, including the transition from the Transitional National Development Trust to the NDA, leadership change with a new CEO in the process of being appointed, the appointment of a new Board of Directors constituted solely of external members and the relocation of the company. As a result it has experienced, and is still experiencing, difficult times especially related to staff.

- Legislative, strategic and operational organisational frameworks

As has been indicated, the NDA was created by legislation and must therefore comply with a host of legislative frameworks of which the Public Finance and Management Act, NDA Act and Treasury Regulations are the most important. From these legislative frameworks a host of policies govern how the organisation operates, especially with regard to decision-making and financial management and expenditure. The various existing policies and documents as defined by these legislative frameworks were reviewed and included, amongst others, the current organisational strategic plan, which is designed in accordance with the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) of the South African Government, the Delegation of Authority as developed in accordance with the NDA and PFMA Acts, Internal Policy manuals including the Human Resources, Financial and Procurement policies, as well as the operational plans of the various Directorates and Units.

As part of the process of understanding how the organisation operates and how communication not only flows within the organisation but also how the communication and its related aspects are integrated within the organisation, the formal organisational hierarchy was reviewed.

- Organisational structure

The NDA was created as a centralised entity with all decisions being made at the top hierarchy of the organisation. However, it was decided that such a centralised structure negatively impacted on the service delivery capabilities of the organisation, especially as the majority of the communities with which they had to work were typically geographically placed in the outlying rural communities. Therefore, one of the most critical mechanisms of ensuring that the NDA has the necessary geographical reach led to a decision being made in 2002 - 2003 that the organisation had to be decentralised to all nine provinces, which would be managed through the establishment of five regional offices that would ensure proper and efficient co-ordination and integration of work.

The organisation has also classified its structure according to roles, with a functionalist structuring approach being used. Functional structures group people on the basis of their common expertise and experience or because they use the same resources. In essence each function concentrates on its own specialised tasks, for example the Human Resources, financial, marketing and communication department/directorate. Generally, this type of structure builds a solid foundation for smaller organisations, with the heads of departments often forming the executive team of the organisation. Such a structuring still allows for improved strategic co-ordination, which often becomes more difficult if the organisation grows very large. Integration, however, must become a focus area for all managers and it is typically a weakness in this type of structural approach.

The NDA has six directorates reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with a number of smaller units also reporting directly to the CEO, as a result of legislative parameters provided by legislation. The Directorates include Human Resources, Research and Development, Finance, Programme Management, Internal Audit (including Risk Management), Company Secretariat and Marketing and Communication. A Board-appointed Director leads each of these Directorates. Another unit that, although not managed by a designated Director, reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer and which forms the second Senior Management tier of the

organisation in terms of seniority and decision-making powers, includes the Strategy and Policy Development unit. All these positions form part of the organisation's Executive Management Committee or Exco and as such form the strategic decision-making management structure of the NDA. Each of these directorates and units then form the hierarchical structure for their relevant specialist areas, which typically include line (operational) management and staff at the lower levels of the organisation.

Each of the various directorates and units have a defined purpose, which are as follows:

1. Programme Management – provides development grant funding to CSO's (Civil Society Organisations) in order to implement integrated and sustainable community-driven projects that contribute towards the eradication of poverty.

2. Research and Development – undertakes relevant research and provides publications on research and development information that focus on the national challenges and strategic Government priorities, promotes policy co-ordination and dialogue and strengthens the institutional capacity of civil society organisations and the NDA.

3. Corporate Governance – ensures the NDA complies with all relevant corporate governance legislation.

4. Human Resources – supports the management of human resources and the administration and smooth running of the agency.

5. Finance and IT – is focused on maximising compliance with all relevant financial statutes and regulations, including the Public Finance Management Act. IT provides enhanced support to key programmes and business units of the NDA.

6. Strategy Planning and Policy Co-ordination – provides forecasting of the political landscape and includes resource mobilisation and stakeholder management.

7. Internal Audit – provides mechanisms to ensure quality assurance, compliance and management of risk and fraud.

8. Marketing and Communications – provides positioning of the NDA among civil society organisations and other relevant organs of state and is also accountable for internal communication in conjunction with HR.

The functional and positional structure of the NDA is reflected in a diagrammatic organogram illustrated in Figures 1.1 and 1.2.

FIGURE 1.1: FUNCTIONAL ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURAL OVERVIEW

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                            ┌──────────┐
                            │   CEO    │
                            └──────────┘
                    ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
                    │Office Manager│ │     Risk     │
                    │              │ │ Management   │
                    └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘

┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────┐ ┌──────────┐
│Strategy &│ │ Project  │ │  HR &    │ │Research  │ │Marketing │ │Company           │ │ CFO  │ │ Internal │
│Participa-│ │Management│ │Facilities│ │and       │ │&         │ │Secretariat       │ │      │ │  Audit   │
│tion      │ │          │ │Management│ │Develop-  │ │Communi-  │ │                  │ │      │ │          │
│          │ │          │ │Services  │ │ment      │ │cation    │ │                  │ │      │ │          │
└──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────┘ └──────────┘
                ┌──────────┐                                                     ┌──────────┐
                │ Capacity │                                                     │Financial │
                │ Building │                                                     │Management│
                └──────────┘                                                     └──────────┘
                ┌──────────────┐                                                 ┌──────────┐
                │Regional      │                                                 │Procurement│
                │Offices       │                                                 └──────────┘
                └──────────────┘
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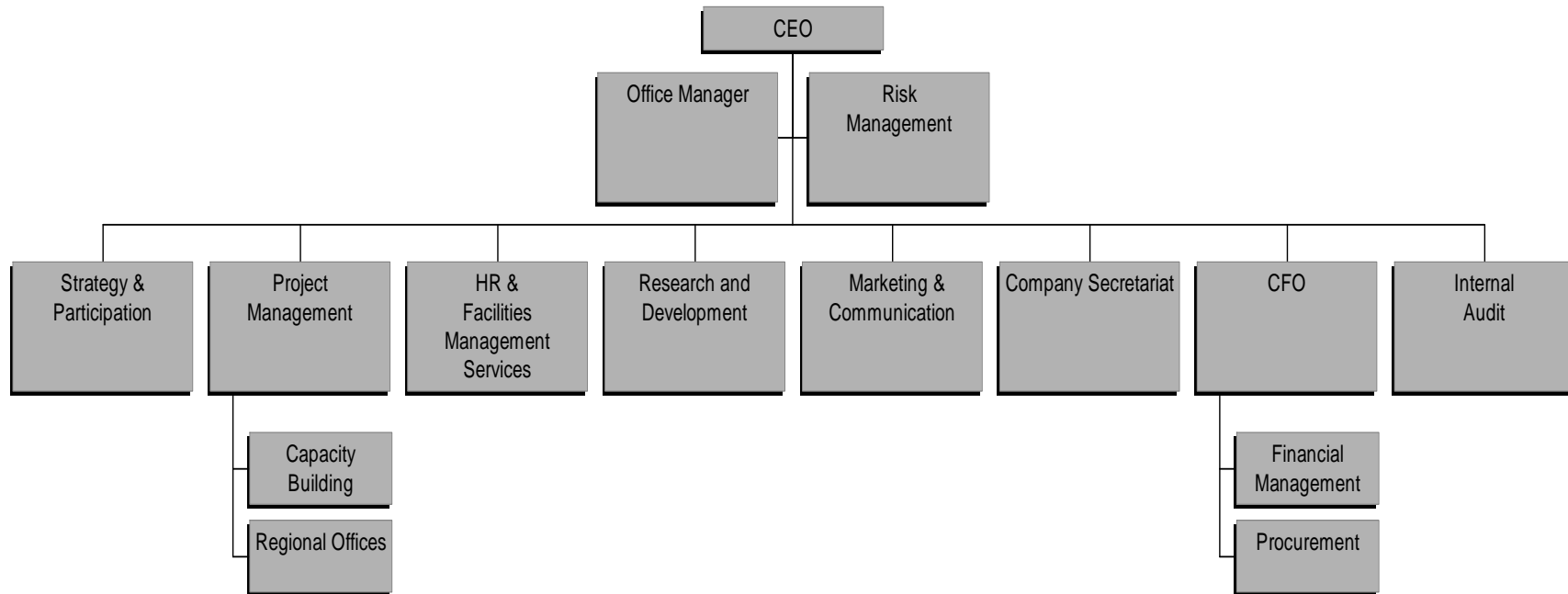
FIGURE 1.2: POSITIONAL STRUCTURE
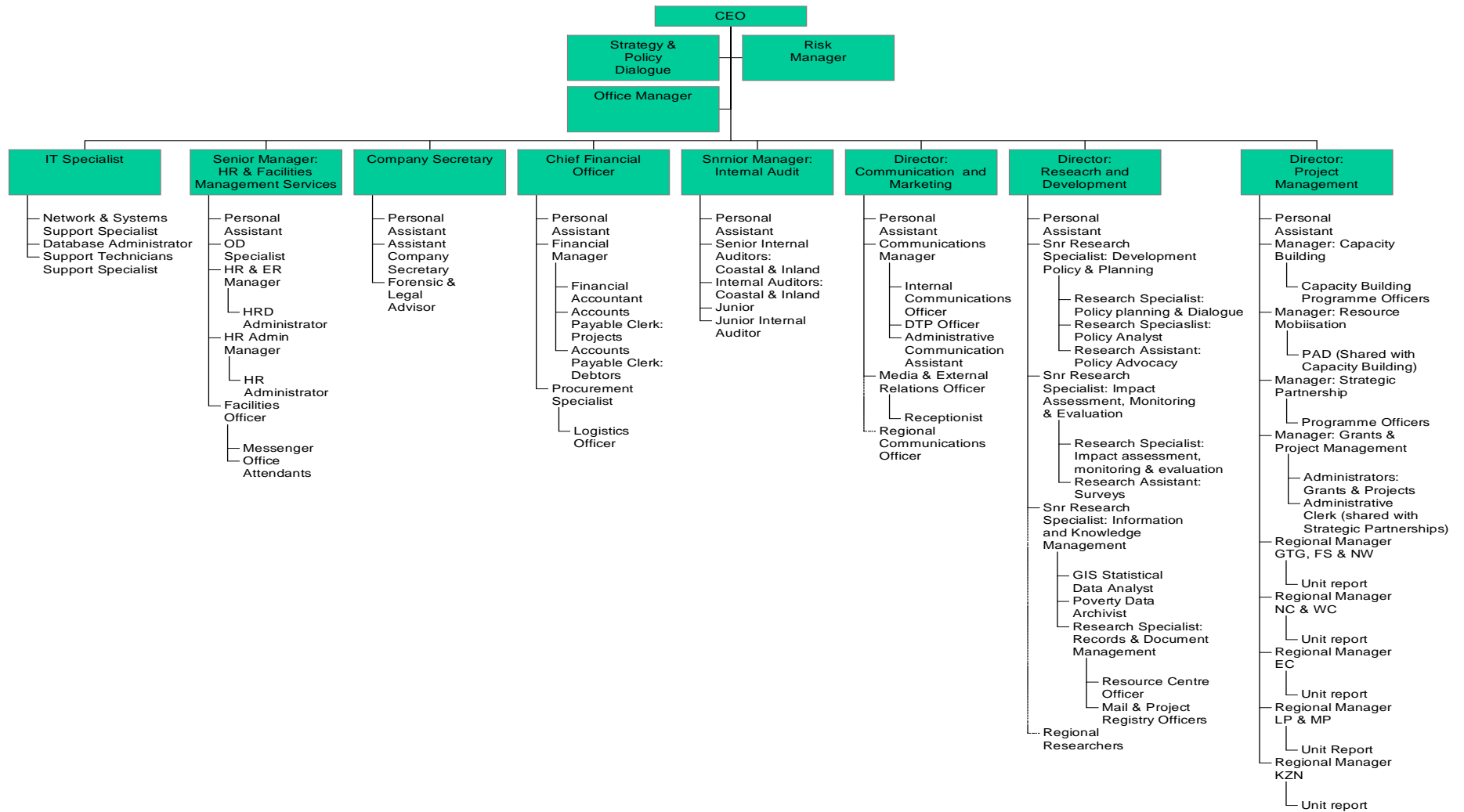
1.2.2.2 Relationship of topic to the discipline of communication

Based on Strategic Communication (2002:1) the reality of the move toward integration of communication in the profession is starting to filter into organisations.   Similarly, it is argued in Strategic Communication (2002:1) that it is also a reality that communication is becoming more strategic, with strategic communication involving and requiring systematic analysis, planning, execution and evaluation.   The systematic analysis, planning, execution and evaluation requires an in-depth consideration of the organisation's mission, values, goals and objectives, budgeting, staffing and the environment, as well as its internal and external audiences. Communication, as argued in Strategic communication (2002:2), furthermore also needs to reflect the contribution it makes to the organisation and as such needs to be measured.

Current communication evaluation and measurement methods are largely focused on evaluating and measuring processes, outputs and the impact of communication.   The integrated approach to communication as argued by Gayeski and Woodward (1996:3) and Watson and Wyatt (1993:3) is critical to organisational success and, bearing the measurement of the integration of communication in mind, factors such as people management and operational and financial issues, amongst others, should be measured as additional dimensions of intraorganisational communication.

The importance of this particular topic lies in the fact that the communication audit is a measurement instrument that is often used within the confines of organisations and yet it has not been established whether it is an appropriate, comprehensive and effective measurement instrument for the increasingly integrated approach to communication and business as a whole.   Furthermore, even though a range of variations on the communication audit exists, the issue surrounding the effectiveness of an integrated communication audit has not really been answered.

However, from a more practical perspective, the communication profession and management as a whole must be able to measure the successes, failures, weaknesses and

strengths of the overall communication, and its integration in the organisation, including people and systems-oriented issues impacting on communication, in order to constantly improve and enhance organisational communication (Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:4; O'Malley Sa:2).

Considering all the issues impacting on communication as mentioned here, it is important to establish whether the communication audit can fulfil this role and therefore add knowledge to the discipline of communication and if indeed the communication audit cannot fulfil this role, it creates an opportunity for further study and the development of a measurement tool that could be more suitable to the task of measuring an integrated communication approach in organisations. The relationship of the topic, due to the broader implications it may have as a result of its potential findings, forms an important component of the advancement of the discipline of communication. Therefore, the topic is not only an exploratory venture into the subject matter related to functionalist aspects, but it also allows the researcher to venture into more interpretive aspects by establishing and evaluating underlying issues such as opinions, attitudes, organisational values and culture and behaviour impacting on communication and its integration. The findings can also result in further research and even the development of a potentially more appropriate and effective measurement instrument of integrated communication in organisations.

1.3   LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing research on the topic and the theoretical approach that is used can be highlighted as follows:

1.3.1 Existing research on topic

According to Barker (1979:63), in research related to communication audits some of the relevant issues that can be highlighted include the fact that four categories can be identified in much of the research, namely research focusing on the message, networks,

human relations and other factors affecting communication. To a large extent the majority of early studies focused on specific areas of communication in organisations and rarely focused on the interactions between these areas and the organisation as a system. These studies are generally concerned with communication channels, message effectiveness and satisfaction with communication and do not really look at the underlying issues such as organisational culture, values, opinions, attitudes, integration and reasons for lack of integration between different business units. From the literature it is also clear that researchers such as Booth (1986:103), Baker (1979:63), Checkland (1981:25) and Rensburg and Bredenkamp (1991:76) saw the communication audit as an important instrument for assessing communication within the organisation. As a result the communication audit has evolved to include a variety of communication audits for specific circumstances. The evolution of communication audits in the 20th century focused on auditing technology, people and the effectiveness of communication. To illustrate the evolution of the communication audit specific mention can be made to examples of audits that are representative of these focus areas. These examples can in turn provide some insight into communication audits that are interested in measuring similar communication dimensions and can also act as point of reference for communication audits and from which literature research can be undertaken and are as follows:

- Booth (1986:103) carried out research that specifically focused on a systems approach to classify audits with a technology orientation. In this research the focus was specifically on the configuration of communication networks in relation to cost, efficiency and facilities.

- A more people-oriented or "softer" systems approach to auditing was developed by Checkland (1981:25), for instances where issues related to communication could not be clearly defined. Typically, these were more related to people issues than to technology issues. The research that Checkland (1981:27) undertook was done in the form of a case study that focused on identifying themes in the audit, with these themes including not only communication. The main purpose of this approach is to

provide a general problem-solving approach to complex situations that may or may not contain communication issues.

- Francis and Woodcock (2004:31) indicate that the Audit of Communication Effectiveness (ACE) is a key diagnostic instrument in the evaluation and improvement of intraorganisational communication. The ACE is a 72-item questionnaire, which focuses on generating data on 12 specific components of communication effectiveness, with the primary purpose of providing a standardised organisational survey focusing on communication issues.

- Over and above these, other communication audit models that attempt to include two or all three of the dimensions as discussed here can also be identified, as well as the International Communication Association (ICA) Audit, which is also the method that is the most documented and can act as an example hereof (Rensburg & Bredenkamp 1991:76). In addition, another model that is often discussed and used is the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) (Van Riel 1992, DeWine & James 1988:3; Clampitt 2001; Meuller & Lee 2002:220).

With regard to the evaluation of communication integration, Duncan and Moriarty (1997a:4) highlight six areas in which organisations can be better integrated, namely employees, customers and other stakeholders, corporate learning, brand positioning, creative ideas and corporate mission. According to Angelopulo *et al* (2004:99), organisations are also starting to recognise the importance of measuring and evaluating integrated communication efforts. With this increasing importance in mind, it is also noteworthy to indicate that the main barrier to prove the impact of integrated communication on the bottom line is, according to Brown (2000:11), the lack of integrated communication measurement programmes and a lack of sophisticated research strategies.

Considering the purpose and objectives of the above research related to communication measurement and more specifically the communication audit as well as Angelopulo *et al*

(2004:99) and Brown's (2000:11) views that organisations are recognising the importance of measuring integrated communication and that there is a lack of integrated communication measurements, it can be argued that there is a need to evaluate the effectiveness of a communication audit as a potential integrated communication measurement instrument.   This then brings the discussion to defining key concepts relevant to this particular study. A brief overview of the key concepts approach to the research is provided here, but is discussed in detail in chapter 2 where integrated communication is contextualised within the confines of the intraorganisational context.

1.3.2 Key concepts

The discussion related to key concepts for this particular study broadly deals with organisational communication and then cascades down to aspects relevant to communication and its measurement. As organisational communication is such a complex and multidimensional field, the focus of the research will be narrowed down to emphasise intraorganisational communication. Over and above the complexity of organisational communication as a whole, the focus on the internal aspect of communication, specifically intraorganisational communication, is particularly important as a result of the argument that in order to be effective, efficient and successful an organisation needs to ensure that it operates from a stable foundation and as a result, optimal functioning within the organisation is critical to achieve optimal success in relation to organisational processes that are externally focused.

Within this contextual framework attention is thus given to intraorganisational communication, the integration of communication in the organisational system and the communication audit as the preferred measurement instrument for this particular research. The key concepts will, both in the overview as provided in this chapter as well as the in-depth discussion in the following chapters, be discussed in the following order:

- Intraorganisational communication
- Integrated communication

- Measurement of intraorganisational communication

- Communication Audit as measurement tool

As a starting point a summary or overview of the concept of intraorganisational communication will be discussed and is as follows:

1.3.2.1 Intraorganisational Communication

Intraorganisational communication is concerned with communication that takes place inside the organisation. Communication inside the organisation takes place in different settings, which are generally referred to as communication levels. Intraorganisational communication encompasses the four communication levels as described by Kreps (1997:149), namely intrapersonal, interpersonal, small-group and intraorganisational communication (multigroup) level.

If one explores these levels of communication further, it could be argued that communication pervades each setting within the organisation and that a significant amount of communication is directed toward internal audiences. The implication is that not only the profession, but also other specialists and especially management, must be concerned with managing the communication process related to keeping the internal stakeholders, that is the staff, informed with the specific purpose of creating and building buy-in into organisational goals, objectives and vision and mission. Barker and Du Plessis (2002:4) define intraorganisational communication as "the internal, work-related messages that are shared amongst members of an organisation, whether intrapersonal, interpersonal or in small groups."

In the current business environment staff form a crucial pillar of the organisational structure, resulting in the fact that their strategic value necessitates a holistic approach to employee communication. Consequently, as argued by Rensburg (1997:103) intraorganisational communication and the direct bearing it has on the people within the organisation, is a crucial element in the effectiveness of an organisation. Within the

confines of intraorganisational communication as defined by Barker and Du Plessis (2002:4) the necessity of communication, information sharing and participation is a critical concept.

Allesandri (2001:8) supports the principle of participation and sharing when she argues that staff at all levels must understand how to promote corporate identity. Allesandri (2001) thereby highlights the fact that intraorganisational communication is critical on a broader platform in that an organisation must not only sell and maintain the organisation's reputation to its external stakeholders, but if your internal stakeholders do not buy into the organisation it will similarly have a major negative impact on all aspects of the business, including wider issues such as staff retention and external reputation. It also underlines the necessity of ensuring that organisations are aware of where they currently stand with regard to communication, participation and sharing, in order for them to actively address weaknesses and thereby increase the effectiveness of communication.

1.3.2.2 Integrated Communication

When taking issues such as the current business environment, strategic value of communication, staff participation and decentralisation of organisations and knowledge, as highlighted above, into consideration, it is clear that it is becoming critical to to understand and recognise that communication, as a whole, should form part of an integrated approach to business and ultimately the strategic management of an organisation as is supported by Gayeski and Woodward (1996:2). Conceptually it is an accepted norm that the whole system functions and yields better results than the different parts of the system, in other words, together the chance of succeeding increases. A total perspective to communication needs to be taken and it is suggested that closer ties should exist between the various different parts of an organisation.

Even though the trends suggest that the integration of communication with other aspects of the business is a developing reality, the application is often not as clear-cut as it

appears.   As supported by Gayeski and Woodward (1996:2) and Wightman (1999:19), an integrative communication approach suggests a planned and co-ordinated communication effort, where ideas are shared and a common understanding of the purpose of the communication is reached, resulting in a joint effort to achieve the set objectives.   Wightman (1999:19) argued that to integrate the communications functions in essence, recognises the fact that the stakeholders are the actual integrators of the communications process.   If one accepts that it implies a broader approach and recognises that communication is a fundamental reality of life in an organisation then, according to the researcher, integrated communication can be defined as the amalgamation of the dimensions of communication as fundamental interdependent and interrelated components of all organisational processes in order to improve interaction and collaboration so as to achieve organisational success.

Gayeski and Woodward (1996:2) propose a model for the integration of communication based on the concepts of a market-based strategic communication, human performance technology, business process engineering, and a systematic method for analysis and development of communication interventions. The implications are that by approaching communication from only one point of view will invariably mean that one will ignore a critical component of the communication reality.   Ultimately, if one looks at the opinions as expressed by various authors such as Gayeski and Woodward (1996:2), Wightman (1999:19) and Duncan and Moriarty (1998:7; 1997b), it is clear that despite the fact that recognition of a broad-based integration is highlighted, integration is still an issue that can get lost as a result of the enormous scope of communication.

In an environment where competitive advantage is critical to sustain the organisation, every aspect of the organisation must be approached from a strategic perspective. Therefore, within the context of the communication, it seems clear that the "catch phrase" is that an integrated and strategic approach must be taken to making a valuable and measurable contribution to the organisation. However, this cannot and will not stay a "catch phrase", as the issue of communication and its contribution is one of the areas that has increasingly come under scrutiny with regard to what it actually delivers within the

confines of the organisation's vision and mission, and therefore its strategic direction. With this in mind, it is therefore becoming necessary to be able to measure the effectiveness of communication throughout all aspects of the business.

1.3.2.3 Measurement of Intraorganisational Communication

The issue of measurement is fast becoming a critical component in a more strategic approach to communication. Gray (2000:6) states that the primary objective of measuring intraorganisation communication is to determine the extent to which it changes or influences attitudes. Binneman (1998:22) argues that one of the reasons why intraorganisational communication in all its forms exists is to achieve measurable results that will help the organisation achieve its mission and ultimately its vision. Binneman (1998:22) also discusses three levels of measurement, which can be directly applied to intraorganisational communication, namely:

- The first level of measurement is related to monitoring outputs, with the main question being focused on whether the message is getting out, with measurement instruments including, for example, feedback discussions.

- The second level of measurement is related to whether or not the message was actually received and understood and can be directly related to the effectiveness of communication, communication channels, *et cetera*. Some research instruments that are referred to include audits, focus groups, surveys and content analysis.

- The third and most advanced level for measuring communication is monitoring perceptions and behaviour with the purpose of identifying and addressing weaknesses and problems, as well as optimising strengths that in turn will result in a change of opinion, attitudes and behaviour. Some of the research instruments included here relate to, for example, data analysis and also include audits of the current situation, with follow-up audits taking place to determine whether there has been a shift in opinions, attitudes and behaviour.

The value of Binneman's (1998:22) proposed three levels of measuring communication for this particular study lies in the fact that an attempt is being made to measure communication and its integration by focusing on, for example, whether communication is taking place (level one), how effective communication and the channels used are (level two) and finally the underlying perceptions that are manifested (level three). Binneman's (1998:22) model provides an approach that can result in the identification and evaluation of issues impacting on the effectiveness and integration of communication as a strategic and fundamental component of the organisation and its success, amongst other outcomes.

In relation to Binneman's model (1998), in terms of aspects of communication that it considers and the focus on the measurement communication in the intraorgansiational context, it is necessary to look at a measurement tool that currently exists which can measure the dimensions of intraorganisational communication as articulated by Binneman (1998). By considering this and bearing in mind the regular use of the communication audit by many organisations and the success it has in measuring a variety of components of intraorganisational communication such as, for example, communication networks, effectiveness and employee satisfaction, it seems appropriate and opportune to ustilise the communication audit for this particular research. Whilst a brief overview of the communication audit as measurement tool will be provided here, a detailed discussion on the issue will be provided in chapter four.

1.3.2.4 Communication Audit as measurement tool

The communication audit is a basic method for measuring, assessing and analysing intraorganisational communication. A communication audit is a research method which assists a particular organisation in establishing how its communication efforts are perceived and as such comprises a comprehensive analysis of an organisation's internal or external communication (Angelopulo *et al* 2004:90). Fogelmann-Beyer (1999:19) defines an audit as a method of research that helps define the relationship between an organisation's objectives and the communication methods used to promote those

objectives. Fogelman-Beyer also (1999:19) reiterates that the communication audit allows one to take a step back to ask how the organisation is performing and provides a benchmark for measuring success. Booth (1988:8) defines the concept of a communication audit as "the process whereby the communication within an organisation are analysed with a view to increasing organisational efficiency".

The communication audit can provide an objective report on the intraorganisational communication of the organisation, which in turn allows the organisation to improve its communication effectiveness. The focus of the communication audit is on evaluating the processes and/or systems of communication (Neher 1997:328). The communication audit is a well-recognised data collection measurement instrument which, according to Shockley-Zalabak (1991:379), allows the researcher to obtain valid information about communication systems.

Furthermore, for the purpose of this particular study, an operational definition of the communication audit that is derived from a literature review and which is contextualised in chapter four in the discussion on the communication audit, has been developed. This operational definition defines the communication audit as an assessment process which provides an impartial situational analysis of the current state of intraorganisational communication, in all its facets, with the purpose of providing information about communication problems, which can be addressed in order to improve and harness intraorganisational communication. In conclusion to this overview, it is, however, necessary to take note that to ensure relevance to the context being researched and therefore in terms of application, it is important for a communication audit as a measurement instrument to be tailored to suit a particular organisation (Van Riel 1992).

1.4 TYPE OF STUDY

The study is an exploratory-descriptive study that is specifically directed at understanding the uniqueness and peculiarity of the case study, the National Development Agency (NDA). This study will be undertaken in both a qualitative and quantitative manner,

which will attempt to establish whether the use of a communication audit can measure integrated communication in the case study organisation. According to Knox (1995:60), it is valuable to use both methods as triangulation leads to a greater expansion of the study and as a result initiates new ways of thinking that will allow the researcher to confirm and support certain aspects of the collected data.

Secondly, the communication audit itself is primarily concerned with describing the nature and conditions of the present situation of the National Development Agency. Therefore, as indicated above, with regard to the case study this particular study will attempt to describe how communication takes place, is viewed, experienced and perceived in the sample organisation. Furthermore, as a result of its practical application, it will also allow the NDA to diagnose problems and weaknesses related to communication and its integration.

1.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

The main research problem is as follows:

- To establish if a communication audit can be used as an effective integrated measurement instrument of intraorganisational communication within an organisation

1.5.1 Formulation of the subproblems

- To establish whether the communication audit can be used as an integrated communication measurement instrument

- To establish the effectiveness of using a communication audit as an integrated measurement instrument

1.5.2 Research questions

- Is an integrated communication audit an effective measurement instrument for intraorganisational communication?

- Does a communication audit as measurement instrument measure integrated communication?

- Should a communication audit be adapted to measure integration of communication within the context of an organisation?

1.6   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study will combine both a quantitative research methodology, namely the survey questionnaire, and qualitative research methodologies, namely the in-depth interview and focus group discussion, which will result in what is known as research triangulation. Barker (1999:483) defines triangulation as "drawing together multiple types of evidence gathered from different sources using different methods of data collection". Rice and Ezzy (1999:38) indicate that triangulation involves using a combination of methods, researchers, data sources and theories in a research project. As supported by Rice and Ezzy (1999:38), it is argued that triangulation creates an opportunity to develop a more complex picture of integration of communication, thereby creating the most comprehensive picture possible and increasing the validity of the research and its findings. Triangulation is discussed in more detail in section 4.3.2 of chapter 4.

The research was undertaken in the form of a case study of the National Development Agency. The evaluation and interpretation was done through the tabulation and statistical analysis of data. With regard to measuring scales, nominal measurement was used to compile frequency of answers, which was used to identify particular issues that needed to be highlighted for the organisation. Descriptive statistics were used as they allow the

data to be organised, summarised and presented by means of frequency, which can be used to highlight the current reality of communication in the case study.

1.6.1 Research method

Three distinct research methods were used and they are as follows:

1.6.1.1 In-depth Interview

Neuman (2000:506) describes in-depth interviews as a joint venture between the researcher and the interviewee and as the particular research will be a practically applied study and of particular value to the organisation, an in-depth interview with the Communications Director of the National Development Agency forms the departure point for the comprehensive communication audit. The reasons for choosing to use an in-depth interview were to ensure that the researcher uncovers perceptions at a senior level and to establish the background of what may emerge from the focus group discussions. It also allowed the researcher to gain a broader perspective with regard to how communication is viewed at a strategic level and this again created a deeper understanding of the context within which the focus group and questionnaire answers could be seen. The interview also created an opportunity to gain buy-in from leadership, which as a result of formal leadership sanction and approval, improved participation of senior management and staff.   The interview was semi structured and was conducted with the aid of a list of questions. Finally, in order to undertake a comprehensive audit and to ensure the validity and reliability of data, the researcher needed to ensure that all hierarchical levels of the organisation were included and as such a focus group discussion was included in the research.

1.6.1.2 Focus Group

The focus group was particularly critical in this study as the researcher attempted to gain an understanding of especially regional attitudes and behaviour toward communication

and its integration in the National Development Agency. The focus group also allowed for the free exchange of ideas where participants could discuss their personal experiences, which in turn allowed other participants to express similar or dissimilar experiences. The focus group was also used as a preliminary research method, in order to highlight issues and matters that might not have been included into the survey component of the communication audit. Issues of a more complex nature, such as integration of communication, could also be discussed and it created the opportunity to gain insight into the participants' understanding of key concepts such as integrated communication. This was vital as in the actual questionnaire respondents may not fully understand complex issues such as integration of communication and as such the researcher might fail to extract the necessary findings from the survey.

Finally, the participants in the focus groups consisted of eight senior staff members which included regional managers and senior project managers. The focus group discussion provided the researcher with an opportunity to gain an understanding of the regional staff's perceptions, communication participation, channels that are used, barriers to effective communication and general experience of communication. As is the case in the in-depth interviews, the focus group discussion was semi structured and was conducted with the aid of a list of questions that provided some direction and control. The discussion was recorded and noted to ensure that the facilitator would be able to capture all the relevant matters without it impacting on the flow of the discussion.

1.6.1.3 E-mail Questionnaire Survey

The purpose of the survey, specifically a questionnaire, was to explore what the general attitudes, opinions and perceptions of staff in the National Development Agency are towards communication throughout the organisation. The survey was administered in an online format, as it is currently the primary communication channel that is used by the organisation, especially for regional communication. Due to the fact that all staff in the organisation are computer literate, it overcomes the issues of time, distance and cost.

The questionnaire includes various sections that focus on issues such as vision, mission, situational analysis related to direct communication matters such as communication channels, message assessment, communication effectiveness and issues around management communication. It, however, also includes broader involvement with issues related to human resources, organisational strategy and participation as well as information sharing and distribution between the various business units. Operational matters and their impact on the organisation, with the emphasis being placed on the way in which they impact on communication and its integration in the organisation, are also included. The questionnaire utilises a Likert-type scale and also includes some open-ended questions that allow respondents to express their particular views more clearly. The questionnaire also requires demographic information, with the specific purpose of drawing comparisons between the hierarchical levels and other relevant factors.

1.6.2 Sampling

The research is very specific in that it is a case study and therefore includes a specific organisation and as a result is purposive in nature as it attempts to gain a deeper understanding of what is happening with communication in the organisation. The sampling is one of convenience or availability as regards the survey questionnaire. As a result of the size of the organisation, which totals 121 employees, and in order to ensure an appropriate level of validity in terms of the research findings, it was necessary for the researcher to include the whole universe and therefore the population of the organisation thereby attempting to ensure that a sufficient number of respondents participated in the survey questionnaire research. In addition, a nonprobability, purposive (known group) sample was used for the focus group discussion, as the participants were selected based on their specific positions in the regions in order to gain information from senior staff/managers who, in terms of hierarchical authority, have both an operational and strategic role to play. It was critical not to simply get the view from executive management based at the head office as they may not be in touch with the current situation regarding communication in the organisation or alternatively may not be aware of the extent of potential communication-related issues in the organisation. The regional

staff, however, will not only look at communication from a senior management perspective, but will also have a better understanding of the communication realities in the organisation due to their dual function in terms of the strategic and operational nature of their work.

Furthermore, the participating organisation required a very inclusive process not only as a result of the participating organisation intending to utilise the information in a practical capacity, but also as a result of them wanting all staff to be afforded an opportunity to express themselves in this regard. Therefore, inclusiveness was especially important. The employee register was used to identify all employees and to ensure that the questionnaire was distributed to all employees. It is, in addition, also necessary to differentiate between the population used for the focus group and the population used for the in-depth interview. Only the Communications Director of the NDA participated in the in-depth interview, whereas eight senior staff members participated in the focus group.

Due to the fact that the maximum number of days staff can be absent from work when on leave is a three week period, it was decided that the questionnaires would be distributed and collected during a four week period, thereby addressing potential non-returns due to staff being on leave.

1.7   ANTICIPATED FINDINGS

It is expected that the research will show that the communication audit as a measurement tool, although effective in the measurement of communication, in essence will not succeed in effectively measuring the issue of communication integration in the organisation. The reason for this argument is that the measurement might not show communication integration in an in-depth manner, but will rather evaluate each aspect in isolation. It is therefore believed that the measure itself might not be able to reflect the complexity of integration of communication and all other related concepts and issues. It is also expected that the audit itself will reflect perception of the level of integration

rather than the tangible or actual level of integration within the organisation. The research and the resultant findings will lead to recommendations for the development of an integrated communication measurement instrument that can be used by organisations to measure communication from an integrated perspective.

1.8   OVERVIEW OF REMAINING CHAPTERS

In the remaining chapters the contextualisation of integrated communication in the confines of organisational communication, specifically the field of intraorganisational communication, will provide a theoretical framework against which the issue of communication measurement will be considered. A detailed discussion of communication measurement, with specific reference to the communication audit, will provide the backdrop for the actual research, with the study being concluded with a discussion of the research methodology, the research findings and recommendations.

Chapter 2 – Communication in the intraorganisational organisational context

Organisational communication, with specific reference to intraorganisational communication, is discussed and provides the background for the contextualisation of integrated communication.

Chapter 3 – Measurement of intraorganisational communication

In this chapter the issue of measurement is broadly contextualised for application in chapter four. The discussion focuses on defining measurement of intraorganisational communication and of various perspectives on measurement of intraorganisational communication. For the purpose of providing a background for the application of the research in this chapter, only generic reference is made to the types of measurement tools that will be used in this particular research whilst the actual application and relevance of the methods discussed is analysed in chapter four. Reference is made to some of the aspects of intraorganisational communication that should be measured, which for the

purpose of this study are referred to as the measurement imperatives for integrated communication and finally a measurement framework is also highlighted.

Chapter 4 –The communication audit

In chapter four the communication audit is contextualised as preferred measurement instrument for this particular study and a critical discussion of the communication audit, which includes the objectives and scope thereof is provided. This chapter also makes specific reference to the systems theory as theoretical basis for measuring integrated communication. Furthermore, various types of communication audits are described with specific reference being made to the ICA Audit, which is adapted to provide the framework for the measurement of integrated communication.

Chapter 5 – Research methodology and findings

A detailed description of the research methods and the findings of the study, from which conclusions and recommendations are drawn, is provided.

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNICATION IN THE INTRAORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

An overview of the approach to this research is provided in section 1.3.2 of chapter one and in order to comprehensively contextualise the study this overview is expanded in this chapter to include an in-depth discussion thereof. To this end, specific reference will be made to the contextualisation of integrated communication within the confines of organisational communication, specifically the field of intraorganisational communication. These issues will be discussed and analysis and interpretation of their relevance to organisations and this particular study is provided.

Organisational communication will provide the foundation from which the discussion will flow, with specific reference being made to the communication networks that are found in organisations, and the various levels at which communication takes place, as well as the direction or flow of communication in organisations. Reference to communication networks, the levels at which communication takes place and the flow of communication is especially necessary as it not only gives insight into the communication-related systems, processes and structures, but also has a direct impact on how effective communication in the organisation is (Hamilton 1987:43; Greenbaum 1987:279; Booth 1988:62; Duncan & Moriarty 1998:6, Binneman 1998:22).

The next level of the discussion will look at intraorganisational communication as a specific field and component of organisational communication, especially as the research it is concerned with, is the measurement of intraorganisational communication and in order to contextualise the research attention must be afforded to it. Finally, integrated communication will be discussed in order to provide a conceptual framework for integration that can be used for the research, as well as reviewing the value of integration of communication for the organisation.

Business in the current era is so complex that an in-depth understanding of every aspect of an organisation's business is critical, especially as continuous change has become the new business reality for all organisations (Robbins 2001:540; Hill & Jones 2001:485). Change is something that has become a key determinant in many organisations and it has to be embraced in order for organisations to ensure their future survival (Schein 1992:314; Du Plessis, Van der Walt, & Scriven 2001:96). As a result of globalisation, technology and the increasing sophistication of consumers, the way in which businesses are being managed is changing and this new approach to managing businesses is increasingly based on knowledge and intangible assets, instead of only the financial capacity and capital of the company (Robbins 2001:541; Smit & Cronje 2002:61).

Environments are characterised by a fast and often unpredictable rate of change and an enormous pressure to produce goods or services quickly and therefore every aspect of an organisation must be able to answer to these demands, or the organisation may face the potentially real prospect of losing market share and ultimately the closure of its business (Hill & Jones 2001:85; Neher 1997:14). Within this particular paradigm, it is necessary for organisations to take a holistic view of their structures, stakeholders and strategy.

Confined within this perspective, emphasis must be placed on harnessing the knowledge and intangible assets of the organisation and this underlines the fact that the role of communication has become critical. As argued by Kock, McQueen and Baker (1996:31) as well as Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross and Smith (1994:44) and Skapinger (2000:16), an understanding of this key role becomes more apparent when one realises that part of the intangible assets of an organisation are confined in its people, such as the knowledge they contribute to the organisation, as well as the approach they have to their work. The understanding that people contain the intangible assets of an organisation, such as knowledge, is supported by Kock *et al* (1996:31) as well as Senge *et al* (1994:44) and Skapinger (2000:16) when they argue that people have a fundamental role in the management of knowledge, which includes sharing and transferring of organisational knowledge, in organisational success.

Within the organisational context it can be argued that even though the reality of communication is very apparent to most communication professionals, some organisations still need to recognise communication for its fundamental value (Schultz 1993:5; Winkler 2002:16). This view is supported by Watson Wyatt's (1999:3) research which found that only 51% of high performing organisations have well defined communication strategies that allow employees to better understand their organisation's business goals. Watson Wyatt (1999:3) also found that only 52% of senior management recognised and supported the importance of strong communication programmes in achieving their business strategies. This lack of recognition by a large percentage of senior management as indicated by Watson Wyatt (1993:3) can create situations where organisations still struggle with internal problems related to staff and the management of staff and other processes, as well as the integration of different organisational divisions, units and departments and their particular objectives and activities, and the mutual organisational goals. Thus, when looking at communication as part of the total package necessary for organisational success, it is critical to not only understand how and what to communicate to diverse audiences for various different purposes and to understand how effective the communication is, but it is also critical to integrate all communication in all its forms throughout the organisation (Watson Wyatt 1999:10; Barker & Du Plessis 2002:3) and as such the next section will be devoted to gaining an understanding of organisational communication.

2.2   OVERVIEW OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

With the intention of understanding the nature and scope of organisational communication, it is essential to define what is meant by the key concepts of organisation and communication. According to Neher (1997:1), organisations are the primary way in which people bring co-operative efforts to bear for solving problems and meeting certain needs. Neher (1997) defines organisations as an ongoing, observable pattern of interactions among people with these interactions usually being planned, sequential and

systematic. Mersham and Skinner (2001:9) defines an organisation as a relatively stable system of individuals who work together to achieve, through a hierarchy of ranks and a division of labour, common goals. On the other hand the essence of communication lies in the fact that people are attempting to exchange a message in order to accomplish a goal, irrespective of whether it is a personal or an organisational goal. The main purpose of communication is to create or generate shared meaning and as a result truly effective communication is an interactive process, which is underlined by Tubbs and Moss (2000:8), Kreps (1997:27) and Duncan and Moriarty's (1998:2) argument that communication is a transactional process that consists of a myriad of components that interact simultaneously. In Kreps's (1997) view these components include the message to which people react, the meanings that people actively create, the time and place of the communication, the relationships established between communicators, the personalities and disposition of the communicators, the purpose people have for communicating, and the effects of communication on people and situations.

A number of communication models exist and some examples include the transmissional, stimulus response and transactional models. The transmissional model is focused on getting a message transferred from a source to a destination (receiver) with the high level of accuracy. It places emphasis on fidelity, information, encoding, decoding, channel capacity, noise, redundancy and feedback (Neher 1997:53). The stimulus response model focuses on the cognitive structures of the people involved and more on the individuals than on channels or the process of transmission and as such it places emphasis on conceptual filters of the people involved in the communication event (Neher 1997:53). Although the transactional model is not necessarily an ideal model on communication as a process, it does highlight the principle of interaction between people and places emphasise on the fact that people actively influence and impact on communication and therefore that communication is not simply saying something, but rather that it is complex in nature (Neher 1997:53). Essentially the transmissional model focused specifically on the movement of a message through a channel whilst the stimulus repose model focuses specifically on the cognitive structures of the people involved. Therefore these models according to Neher (1997:53), respectively focus on one aspect of the

communication process and not on all aspects thereof. On the other hand in relation to Tubbs and Moss (2000:8) and Neher's (1997:54) view, the transactional model looks at communication from a more systemic perspective and as a result in the context if this study appears to be more relevant as a result of this systemic approach.

Furthermore, the complexity of communication can, according to Harris (1993:286) and Haworth and Savage (1989:234), especially be seen in it being a process involving both purposive and expressive messages composed of multi-unit and multilevel signals that depend on the context for their meanings and interpreted by the individuals (two or more) that form part of the interaction. Tubbs and Moss's (2000:8) also argue that the transactional viewpoint emphasises the simultaneous and mutually influential nature of communication and the actual communication event.

Rensburg and Bredenkamp (1991:5) describe a transaction as a process that involves the interaction of the observer or receiver and what the observer or receiver observes. According to Miller (1995:12) and Tubbs and Moss (2000:8), the transactional nature of communication suggests that communication is highly complex, which is underpinned by the concept of interaction, with feedback and influence forming essential components of the process. Daniels and Spiker (1994:38), as illustrated in Figure 2.1, indicate that the transactional perspective of communication emphasises the idea that communication is mutual as well as reciprocal.

In communication as a transactional process the source and receiver aspects of communication happen simultaneously as each participant in a communication encounter or situation has an awareness of themselves and others (Daniels & Spiker 1994:38). Tubbs and Moss (2000:9), Harris (1993:287) and Daniels and Spiker (1994:39) provide models that depict the transactional process and nature of communication as depicted in Figure 2.1.   In Figure 2.1 a communication event, which involves two people, is illustrated. The person who initiates the communication event and the initial receiver are both sources of communication as each originates and receives messages simultaneously,

as whilst the one person is speaking the other is observing the person's behaviour and reacting to it. Both parties are being influenced by one another in the transaction.

Essentially, the originator sends a message but whilst sending the message is already interpreting the response of the other individual. In addition the message or response to the message can be distorted by interferences such as, noise, culture, environment, past experience, the relationship, *et cetera* all of which impact on whether or not the message was received the way it was intended and thus the effectiveness of the communication.

Message

Feedback

Sender
Encoding
Decoding
Receiver

Noise
Culture
Climate
Channels
Environment
Relationships
Socialisation
Past Experience

Receiver
Decoding
Encoding
Sender

Feedback

Message
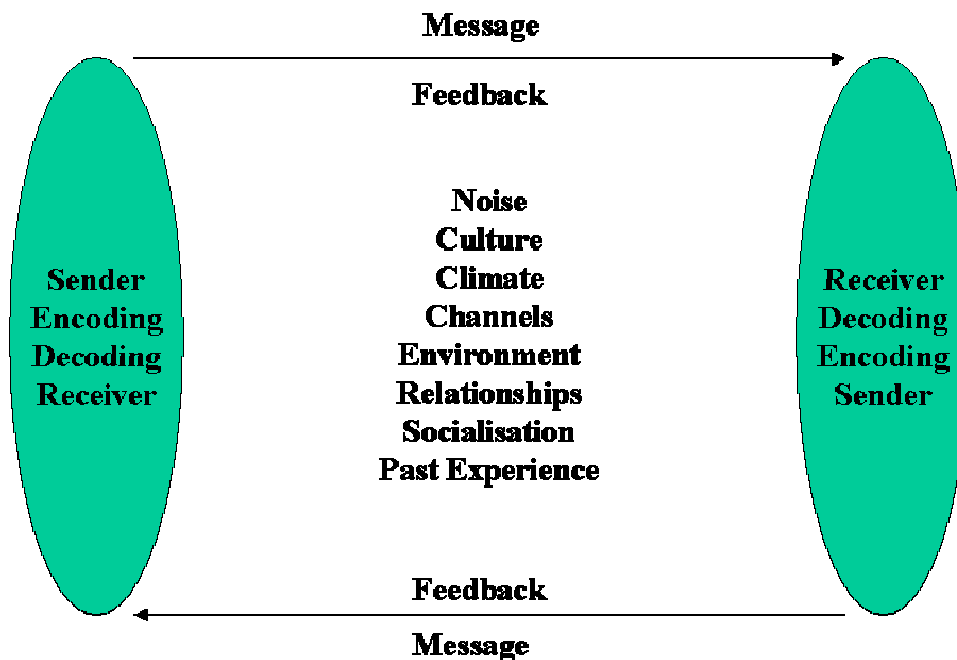
FIGURE 2.1: A TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF COMMUNICATION
(Harris 1993:287; Daniels & Spiker 1994:39; Tubbs and Moss 2000:9)

Whilst the brief discussion above provided some background to what communication means and some understanding of the interactive nature of communication, this needs to be contextualised within the organisational situation as the intention is to understand the nature and scope of organisational communication and as such, organisational communication will accordingly be defined.

2.2.1 Defining organisational communication

Organisational communication is a very complex and multifaceted process, which has an encompassing impact on all aspects and components of the organisation (Duncan & Moriarty 1998:5; Mersham & Skinner 2001:5). Kreps (1997:11) defines organisational communication as the process whereby members gather pertinent information about the organisation and the changes occurring within it. Fundamentally, communication within the organisational context is a data-gathering function for members as it provides them with relevant information, which helps them to understand organisational activities in order to accomplish individual and organisational change and goals, as well as the fulfilment of personal needs.

In order to further clarify the concept of organisational communication, Neher (1997:19), Du Plessis *et al* (2001:10), as well as Smit and Cronje (2002:367) provide specific propositions that underpin the essence of communication in the organisation, namely:

- Communication is the fundamental process of organising, in that organising requires gathering members of the organisation together to accomplish a purpose.
- By understanding organisational communication insight is gained regarding the functioning and internal working of an organisation, therefore allowing more effective participation in the organisation.
- Communication is a key determinant in making sound and effective decisions within an organisation.
- Communication skills are the basis for effective leadership in organisations and as such individuals can conceptualise the skills necessary for becoming effective leaders and thereby provide the necessary direction for members to achieve both personal and organisational success.

It is clear that organisational communication is more than just the daily interactions of individuals within organisations and according to Shockley-Zalabak (1991:30) it is a process through which organisations create and shape events.   Shockley-Zalabak

(1991:31) specifically highlights the fact that organisational communication is an ongoing process that incorporates the diversity of people and their particular characteristics into the creation of a message, with the intention of creating a shared meaning for a particular purpose. These aspects, as highlighted in the discussion above, give an indication that there are very specific functions that underline and define organisational communication in that it is informative, it regulates and it persuades and integrates people, processes, systems and structures. Koehler, Analtol and Applbaum (1981:9) and Rensburg (1997:108) support this view when they also argue that organisational communication is functionally oriented and highlights four functions namely:

1. Informative function
2. Regulatory function
3. Integrative function
4. Persuasive function

1 The informative function of organisational communication is focused on providing sufficient information in order to ensure that the organisation is able to function efficiently. According to Koehler *et al* (1981:9) and Rensburg (1997:108), not only do organisations need to obtain information to adapt to changes in environmental conditions, but a constant flow of information is required by staff members to enable them to achieve organisational and individual goals.

2 The regulatory function focuses on controlling the activities of the organisation to ensure its efficient operation and as such provides a set of guidelines for the management of the organisation and typically includes policies, rules and instructions. According to Koehler *et al* (1981:9) and Rensburg (1997:108), the regulatory function is work-oriented and focuses on informing employees about what tasks they are expected to perform in order to complete a specific job or assignment and about restrictions that are placed on their behaviour.

3   The integrative function focuses on achieving organisational unity and cohesion and is largely concerned with creating identity and uniformity in the organisation (Rensburg 1997:108). It defines goals and tasks to facilitate the assimilation of new members (Koehler *et al* 1981:9).

4   The persuasive function in an organisation also focuses on influencing members within the organisation and attempts to gain employees' co-operation and compliance in a voluntary manner (Koehler *et al* 1981:9 & Rensburg 1997:109).

In addition to defining organisational communication in terms of the functions that it fulfils, and in order to understand the fundamental nature of organisational communication, it is necessary to understand the concept of communication levels, direction and networks, especially as these elements which are referred to by Duncan and Moriarty (1998:6) as organisational communication support elements have a direct impact on communication efficiency and as such should be measured when evaluating organisational communication. By considering communication levels, direction and networks, one is able to gain an overview of how the organisation operates at a basic level. The issue of communication networks and flow is also being addressed in the actual research questionnaire. Furthermore, due to the fact that there could be a multiple number of people participating in any given situation, the communication process becomes a network of participants and the next section will provide an outline regarding this.

2.2.2 Communication levels

Organisational communication may take place in different contexts where four levels of communication can be identified. Kreps (1997:149), Rensburg (1997:102) as well as Smit and Cronje (2002:370) describe these levels, including their nature and functions, as follows:

- Intrapersonal communication level, which enables the individual to process information.

- Interpersonal communication level, which enables individuals to establish and maintain relationships.

- Small group communication level, which enables members of organisational work units to co-ordinate activities.

- Intraorganisational or interorganisational communication (multigroup) level, which enables different functional units of organisations to co-ordinate efforts.

With each level identified each of these levels will now be discusses in more detail.

2.2.2.1 Intrapersonal Level

The intrapersonal communication level in essence refers to a constant communication process taking place within an individual, where a message is actually encoded or created and decoded or interpreted (Kreps 1997:149; Shockley-Zalabak 1991:133). People constantly process and think about information, messages, the environment, verbal and nonverbal cues, *et cetera*. It is a process that does not necessarily underscore constant awareness and can be seen as the most basic level of communication. Intrapersonal communication enables individuals to send and receive messages, which allows the individual to communicate at interpersonal or group level. Kreps (1997:149) also argues that during intrapersonal communication, individuals develop the attitudes, beliefs and preferences that influence the nature of the relationships they develop with other organisational members. Intrapersonal communication functions as the foundation for building relationships within the organisation and as such contributes to the establishment and maintenance of sound interpersonal and group relationships (Kreps 1997:149; Shockley-Zalabak 1991:133).

2.2.2.2 Interpersonal Level

The interpersonal communication level refers to communication that takes place between two individuals (Smit & Cronje 2002:370). The interpersonal level of communication is a step up from the intrapersonal communication level and builds on intrapersonal communication as the most basic level of communication. Essentially both levels of communication take place simultaneously in that the two individuals involved in the communication situation whilst communicating with each other are, as has been indicated in the intrapersonal level, actually mentally encoded or decoded the message and therefore are processing the information they have received. The interpersonal level of communication basically utilises the intrapersonal level of communication to create a message that is transmitted to another individual and interprets the feedback that is received and therefore its focus moves onto the next level where its main purpose is to build relationships. Interpersonal communication therefore enables two people to communicate and it simply adds another dimension to the communication process by adding another person (Kreps 1997:149; Rensburg 1997:102).

According to Kreps (1997:150), interpersonal communication enables individuals to elicit co-operation from others, as well as to develop co-ordinated activities in order to accomplish personal and organisational goals. It is also argued that building and developing relationships is the most important outcome of interpersonal communication and that the interpersonal relationship is the smallest social system that demonstrates the development of co-ordinated activities (Kreps 1997:150; Rensburg 1997:102).

2.2.2.3 Small group Level

Small group communication immediately implies a communication situation that involves three or more people (Van der Walt, Schoonraad, Hanekom, Du Plessis, Schriven & Theron 2003:19; Harris 1993:325). The purpose of this communication in the organisational environment is to work towards a common or shared goal or objective.

The underlying factor here is that the group must work as a collective unit and not a collection of individuals. The small group context and the increased number of participants also implicitly implies a larger potential for conflict and therefore group dynamics are critical to the success of communication at this level. Group dynamics complicate this level of communication as a result of the fact that each individual has their own personality, likes, dislikes, culture, experience, *et cetera*. Small group communication builds on the interpersonal communication interaction, but again adds another dimension to the communication situation in the form of several communicators (Kreps 1997:149). The importance of groups lies in the fact that there is an increased ability to analyse and solve problems, as members share information and ideas with each other and do not rely on only themselves or one other person for information and ideas (Kreps 1997:149; Harris 1993:326; Rensburg 1997:102).

2.2.2.4 Intraorganisational/Interorganisational Level

Intraorganisational communication essentially refers to the internal messages that are shared in the organisation and are usually work-related, and it is integral to the functioning of the organisation because it is the means through which organisational members co-ordinate their activities to accomplish organisational goals (Kreps 1997:149; Rensburg 1997:103). In contrast, interorganisational communication, refers to the messages about organisational activities and needs, which are communicated to other organisations or the external environment (Kreps 1997:150).

As the number of participants who participates in the communication increases, the complexity of the communication increases (Van der Walt *et al* 2003:19; Rensburg 1997:102). For example, as indicated in the discussion related to the interpersonal level of communication, without intrapersonal communication where the individual is processing information and therefore interpreting what another individual is communicating, the two individuals involved will be unable to communicate. In other words, whilst communicating at an interpersonal level both individuals are also communicating at an intrapersonal level when they are mentally interpreting and

analysing what is being said.   Consequently, the interrelationship can be seen in the fact that effective communication can only be achieved if communication at each level is effective.

Whilst understanding the actual levels at which communication can take place it is also necessary to look at the patterns or directions that communication follows as this provides insight into the communication system of the organisation.   As indicated in section 2.2.2 above, understanding the concept of how communication flow in the organisation provides an understanding of how the organisation operates and again is necessary for effective integration of communication.   This is especially true if one considers the argument of Duncan and Moriarty (1998:6) that the direction of communication flow is a critical element that impact on all aspects of organisational communication.   The following section will focus on the flow of communication in the organisation.

2.2.3 Directions of communication

Communication is channelled through an organisation and the flow of information essentially refers to the direction in which messages travel in the organisation and encapsulates who communicates with whom (Rensburg 1997:104).   Shocley-Zalabak (1991:55) and Mersham and Skinner (2001:40) define communication direction as the description of the movement of communication in organisations based on the authority or position levels of the communication senders and receivers.   Information and messages flow up and down as well as across the hierarchical structure of an organisation. Information flows and therefore communication takes place in a vertical and a lateral direction (Katz & Khan 1978:440; Harriman 1974:144; Neher 1997:160; Robbins 2001:289).   The vertical dimension of the communication flow can further be divided into downward and upward directions.

2.2.3.1 Downward Communication

As is implied by the subheading, communication flows from the top of the organisation to the bottom and this is usually from management to the subordinate employees. In downward communication the information provided is usually work-related and is disseminated through the formal communication channels of the organisation (Mersham & Skinner 2001:40). Typically the communication sent downward from management to subordinates has defined purposes in that it (Robbins 2001:289; Rensburg 1997:104; Neher 1997:161; Wells & Spinks 1989:7):

- provides instructions on how, what and when to undertake work,
- facilitates an understanding of tasks and their relationships to other organisational tasks and functions. It therefore provides a rationale for doing the work. In other words, how the work an employee does impacts and influences other employees and the achievement of goals,
- provides a broad range of information related to statutory issues such as policies, operational procedures and practices within the organisation,
- provides feedback on employees' performance, and
- provides information related to, amongst others, ideological and strategic matters including the vision, mission and goals of the organisation.

Generally most organisations utilise downward communication extensively, as job instruction is given priority, with the sole purpose of ensuring acceptable and reliable levels of performance, with the purpose of making a contribution towards the achievement of organisational purposes and goals. Organisations, however, do not place the same emphasis on the other defined purposes as set out above and these purposes are often poorly implemented or even ignored. Consequently the success of organisational communication is often impacted on and this is part of the reason why organisations fail to realise their objectives and goals on a long-term basis.

2.2.3.2 Upward Communication

As is implied by the subheading, communication flows from the bottom of the organisation to the top and is usually from the subordinates to management. Upward communication therefore flows to a higher level in the group or organisation. In upward communication subordinates usually express their opinions and ideas. Typically the communication sent upwards serves at least four purposes in that it (Robbins 2001:289; Mersham & Skinner 2001:41; Wells & Spinks 1989:8):

- provides feedback on the operations of the organisation,
- provides insight into how a message has been received and the resulting reaction,
- provides feedback on the employees themselves, their performance, jobs and problems and related to this, the attitudes of the subordinates toward the organisation and management, and
- it engenders the feeling and belief that the subordinates have the means by which they can communicate their ideas and express their feelings.

If the current business reality is considered, it is clear that upward communication often happens in the context of informal conversations, meetings, various kinds of suggestion systems, surveys, counselling, exit interviews and progress and formal reports (Smit & Cronje 2002:371; Wells & Spinks 1989:117). As a result of the potential distortion of communication and the potential for disagreement with the communication, upward communication in a true and honest form is often the most neglected type of communication and often does not fulfil the purposes it is designed for. Essentially it can be argued that channels and communication forums designed to facilitate open and upward communication form a critical component for building and maintaining a positive communication and organisational climate and as such form part of a holistic approach to organisational communication and success.

2.2.3.3 Horizontal or Lateral Communication

Horizontal or lateral communication can be described as communication that takes place between members of a particular work group or unit, and workgroups or units of the same level and hierarchical equivalent, which in other words simply refers to people on the same level (Smit & Cronje 2002:372; Mersham & Skinner 2001:42; Wells & Spinks 1989:8). Such communication could either be work-related or part of the social interaction between employees at a particular level. Within the work context the communication here is designed to ensure or improve co-ordination of the work effort, in order to facilitate achievement of departmental and ultimately organisational goals. Typically the communication that flows horizontally or laterally has defined purposes in that it (Robbins 2001:289; Wells & Spinks 1989:140):

- provides information throughout the organisation, which facilitates organisational integration. Integration otherwise might not have taken place if the formal channels as defined by the chain of command were followed and it is essential for organisational success in light of the fact that organisations function as a system, with each unit being interdependent on the other,
- increases the speed and efficiency of organisational operations and delivery,
- increases organisational problem-solving ability, especially as problem solving, when done within a particular unit, could ignore the impact that it might have on other units and their ability to achieve their organisational goals, and
- provides social and emotional support for staff functioning at any particular level.

Horizontal flow of communication therefore provides an overall and more holistic view of operations and enables the various levels to integrate this bigger picture perspective into their operations and thereby enhances organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

The three primary directions in which communication can flow within the hierarchy of an organisation are illustrated in Figure 2.2 below. In this figure, it is clear that downward communication is communication from management with information cascading from

the top of the organisation to the lower levels through the various managerial levels, whilst upward communication is communication from subordinates with information being channelled through the managerial hierarchy. Furthermore, as illustrated in Figure 2.2, horizontal communication flows between peers.
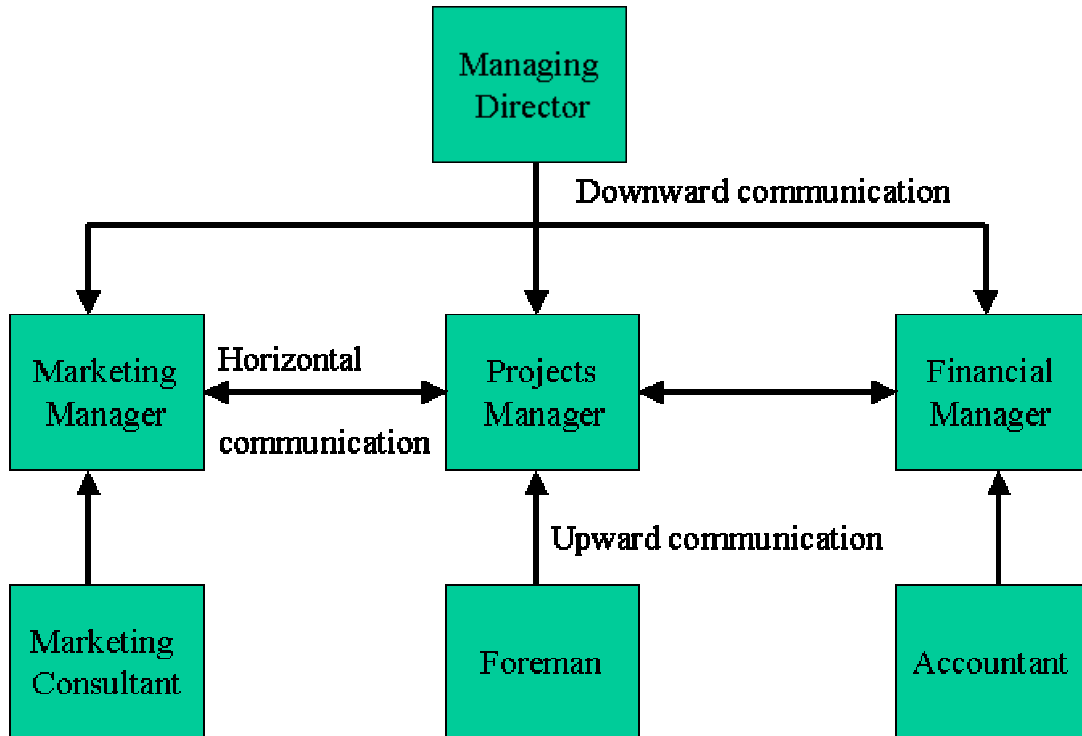
Figure 2.2: Communication flow of organisational communication
(Smit & Cronje 2002:372)

As indicated in the discussion on the levels of communication, the directions that communication follows is particularly relevant as it provides insight into the communication system of the organisation. This includes it being descriptive of the management approach in an organisation which in turn forms a component of the cultural environment. Consequently, the direction of communication is particularly relevant when evaluating communication and as such forms part of the audit questionnaire (Neher 1997:154).

Communication networks as is the case with the levels and direction of communication in the organisational context play a fundamental role in intraorganisational communication. It essentially forms another component part of the structural aspects or support element of organisational communication and is also a dimension of intraorganisational communication that is measured by the research.   In addition, if one wants to consider integrated communication one must also consider the issue of communication networks, especially as communication not only moves in various directions and on different levels but it also has different functions within the confines of the communication networks.

2.2.4 Communication Networks

Communication networks define the channels by which information flows and can be either formal or informal (Robbins 2001:290). Communication networks are the patterns of contact between communication partners that are created by transmitting and exchanging messages (Monge & Contractor 1998:5; Mersham & Skinner 2001:48; Shockley-Zalabak 1991:48).   According to Van der Walt *et al* (2003:9) the term communication network is used to denote the existence of specific patterns by which messages are transmitted between multiple individuals. Van der Walt *et al* (2003:9) also define communication networks as "patterns of communication channels within formal and informal communication systems as they occur in an organisation."

Mersham and Skinner (2001:48), Wells and Spinks (1989:35), as well as Krackhardt and Hanson (1993:207) also argue that communication networks are created by the formal and informal patterns of communication that organisational members engage in and thereby create the communication relationship between any organisational members. In essence, from the abovementioned definitions, it is clear that generally communication networks develop as a result of formal organisational contact and informal social contact. Formal networks are often depicted by, and are similar to, the organisational structural chart in that the act of organising the organisation in terms of the decision-making power, reporting lines, allocation of work, *et cetera* creates networks by which information

flows. However, whilst working together individuals develop interpersonal relationships, which result in informal networks emerging.

The basis on which communication networks are constructed depends, according to Lewis (1987:78), on certain critical questions that can be asked and they are as follows:

- How dependent is the network on the information and how will the various participants be receiving the information?
- What is the content of the information that is transferred and needed?
- Which channels must be used to transmit the information?
- What medium must be used to transmit the information?
- What controls should be created and used to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of networks?

According to Lewis (1987:78), the communication relationship between organisational members is the central unit in any particular network and some examples of these networks can be given to demonstrate what communication relationships exist in an organisation. The examples also provide a blueprint of the communication that takes place in an organisation and in the context of the research can provide insight into how the organisation operates and how communication is viewed.   The structure of the communication network is defined by the size of the network, the degree to which members are connected and the various differences that occur within the network (Kreps 1997:222).

The communication system/structure distributes or transmits all communication throughout the organisation and as such the networks that exist in the organisation determine the way intraorganisational communication flows in the organisation. It is important to understand the impact of the communication system in relation to the communication networks that exist in the organisation and as such it is necessary to take cognisance of the types of communication networks that exist (Wallace 1993:146; Greenbaum 1987:310).   Mersham and Skinner (2001:48), Wells and Spinks (1989:42),

Kreps (1997:221) as well as Rogers and Agarwala-Rogers (1976:89) provide more information on the various types of networks that exist and according to these authors the most recognised ones are as follows:

- Chain of Command Network

The chain of command network forms the core structure of organisational communication and is typified by the organisational chart of an organisation, where communication flows upwards and downwards (Kreps 1997:221).

- Systems Network

The systems network maps the patterns of communication throughout the entire organisation. It includes the chain of command but it also recognises the fact that information flows throughout an organisation in such a manner that it ultimately links all positions on the organisational chart. It recognises the fact that information is filtered to all members who form part of the organisational system.

- Staff Position Network

In an organisation it is clear that interrelated relationships exist and this network describes positions that supply services and support to other positions that are within the chain of command, but are not directly part of it. The implication is that even though there is not a direct reporting line, the nature of the relationship requires information to flow between them.

- Informal Communication Networks

The informal communication network refers to communication that literally flows from each individual to almost every other individual in the organisation. This is not a formal flow of communication and it underlines the complexity and unpredictability of the flow

and content of information throughout the organisation. Informal communication networks are typically defined by the grapevine within an organisation (Mersham & Skinner 2001:48; Robbins 2001:291).

- Status Networks

The status network refers to the perceived status that is allocated to an individual or group within the organisation. Within the organisational context this type of network is often the core culture in a department, section or organisation. It is made up of those individuals who actually act as gatekeepers and are not necessarily individuals or groups that appear on the organisational hierarchy.

- Clique Networks

The network in this instance identifies groups of individuals within the organisation who communicate more exclusively with one another than with other organisation members and it is often typical of units where there are technical knowledge specialists. As a result of the nature of the work and their expertise, a clique is formed and is informally positioned in the organisational hierarchy (Mersham & Skinner 2001:51).

In addition to understanding the various types of networks that exist in order for any communication effort to be effective, it is also necessary to recognise the fact that the networking process creates communication patterns or networks which are descriptive of the way in which communication flows in organisations. Van der Walt *et al* (2003:9) highlight this when they indicate that the term communication network is used to denote the existence of specific patterns by which messages are transmitted between two or more individuals. Kroon (1995:417) and Robbins (2001:290) also refer to communication patterns in organisations and as illustration of these patterns refers to the fact that in the small group context some specific network patterns can be identified, which are descriptive of actual communication networks. These patterns, which are often generic in small groups, are illustrated in Figure 2.3 and include the chain network, inverted Y

network, wheel network, circle network and all channels network. These networks will briefly be referred to.
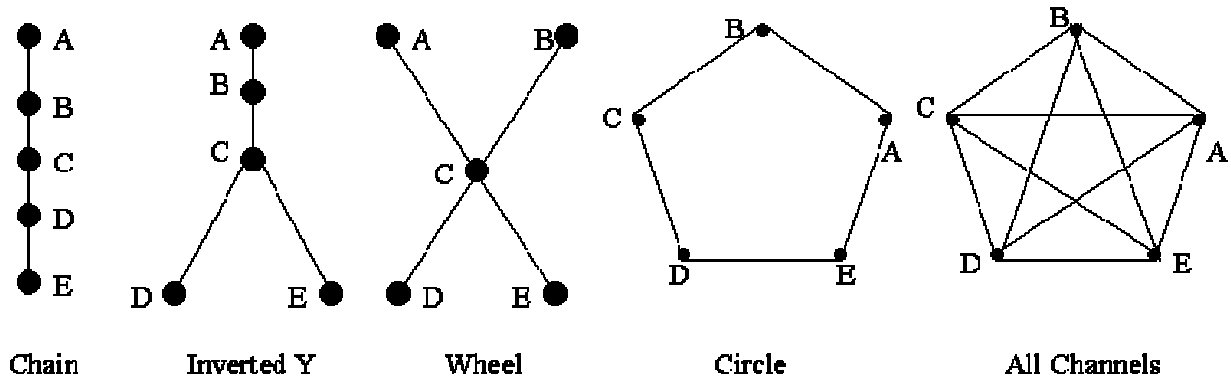
Figure 2.3: Small group network communication
(Mersham & Skinner 2001:48; Robbins 2001:291; Du Plessis *et al* 2001:54)

- Chain Network

As discussed by Mersham and Skinner (2001:49) and Du Plessis *et al* (2001:54), the chain network occurs within the formal system. The chain is a direct line of hierarchy, which can be understood as the chain of command network. In the chain pattern the information, as illustrated in Figure 2.3, flows from point A to point E by being relayed by each successive individual point. There is no contact between the other points other than down the line, for example, B can only receive and send information from and to points A and C and C in turn can only receive and send information from points B and D. Information is generally task- oriented and therefore is focused on instructions as direct information related to a specific task. Information is also typically sent from one level to the next in a downward fashion (Mersham & Skinner 2001:49; Du Plessis *et al* 2001:54). The chain communication network facilitates an average speed of information dissemination with an average level of accuracy and morale in such a network is generally of an average level. As a result of the prescriptive nature in terms of

information flowing in a direct line, the opportunity of a leader emerging is low (Kroon 1995:418; Robbins 2001:291).

- Inverted Y Network

The Y-form pattern also occurs in the formal communication system (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:55). The network here represents a hierarchy at four levels, with the final direct link having links in different areas but at a similar level below them (Mersham & Skinner 2001:49). As illustrated in Figure 2.3, in this communication pattern point C acts as a central relay point, which can be referred to as a bridge and as such D and E can send messages to and receive messages from C but no one else. The link between the remainder of the points is similar to that of the chain pattern, with these points only able to send and receive messages from the points immediately following them. Information in this network is also generally task-oriented and is focused on instructions and direct information related to a specific task. The speed of communication dissemination is average, with a generally high level of information accuracy. The morale level of individuals and the likelihood of the establishment of a leadership role in such a network are average (Kroon 1995:418).

- Wheel Network

As is the case in the chain and Y networks, the wheel pattern also occurs in the formal communication system (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:55). The wheel communication network represents a managerial position with four subordinate staff members (Mersham & Skinner 2001:49). It is important to note that this type of network is very centralised as all communication takes place through the manager. There is no communication between subordinates and information is only transmitted through a central figure. The leader in the wheel, which is denoted by C in Figure 2.3, acts as the central conduit for all the groups' communication. Communication flow in this network is fast and the information that is shared has a high level of accuracy as it is communicated through the same individual (Kroon 1995:418; Robbins 2001:291). The consistency of the message is

therefore very good. The leadership factor is high, with only one individual fulfilling this role, but as a result of the low level of involvement, the morale of members in this network is low (Robbins 2001:291).

- Circle Network

The circle network occurs in the informal communication system (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:55). In this network mutual interaction is critical, with every member having equal communication opportunities (Mersham & Skinner 2001:49). Vertical communication takes place between the manager and subordinates and vertical communication takes place only at the lowest level. In the circle network every point (member) can communicate with the points (members) to the left and right of them and as such information is relayed to all the points (members) in the circle (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:55; Lewis 1987:52; Mersham & Skinner 2001:49). Communication in a circle network is slow and the accuracy of the information transfer is average. Typically, morale is high as a result of the amount of involvement of staff in the network, but a low leadership level can be distinguished and can become problematic (Kroon 1995:418).

- All Channel Network

The all channel network is the least structured communication network and communication flows freely between all individuals in the network (Mersham & Skinner 2001:49; Kroon 1995:418). According to Du Plessis *et al* (2001:56), the all channel network pattern occurs particularly within the informal communication system. Active communication between all members is facilitated in this network and in a completely connected network no communication restrictions are placed on any members (Robbins 2001:291). The network is descriptive of a total systems or informal network. In this type of network the communication is fast and the accuracy of information transfer is of an average level. Generally, it encourages a high morale but lacks a leadership component. The all channel system maximises opportunities for feedback and as a result

of the fact that messages are relayed directly rather than through various levels, the level of message accuracy is very high (Lewis 1987:52; Robbins 2001:291).

As is the case in including the directions that communication follows it is also relevant to understand communication networks in the organisational context as it also provides insight into the communication system of the organisation and can provide clues to the way in which an individual will participate in the communication process, the management approach in an organisation and the organisational cultural environment. Ultimately awareness of communication networks provides insight into the way in which communication takes place within the organisation.

As indicated at the start of this chapter, organisational communication is being discussed in order to provide an understanding of the context from which the study will operate namely, communication in the organisation. Essentially organisational communication provided a broad backdrop for the study and in order to provide the contextual parameters within this broad backdrop in which the study will take place, it is necessary to narrow the focus the defined area of interest. The focal point for the next topic will therefore be on intraorganisational communication, as a specific field and component of organisational communication, as it provides the parameters within which the study will be carried out and therefore the framework for this particular study. Essentially it will look at the contextualisation of intraorganisational communication from a theoretical perspective but also linking it to the actual practical application in the research.

2.3 INTRAORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION CONTEXTUALISED

Intraorganisational communication is concerned with communication that takes place inside the organisation and is critical for creating and sustaining any organisation. Neher (1997:15) describes an organisation as "ongoing patterns of interactions among people; these patterns are usually planned, sequential, and systematic". The communication that takes place within this setting becomes the actual process that binds individual people

with their own goals and objectives, experiences, needs and wants into a group or community striving to achieve organisational goals.

Although Van der Walt *et al* (2003:19) indicate that intraorganistional communication is defined as a field or component of the communication process, they also argue that it is in fact the encompassing whole or context of all levels of communication in the internal environment of the organisation. The argument of Van der Walt *et al* (2003:19) creates an understanding that communication literally pervades each setting within the organisation and as such a significant amount of communication takes place in the internal organisational setting and is directed toward internal audiences. Barker and Du Plessis (2002:4) define intraorganisational communication as "the internal, work-related messages that are shared amongst members of an organisation, whether intrapersonal, interpersonal or in small groups." The implication is that not only the profession, but also other specialists and particularly management, must be concerned with managing the communication process related to keeping the internal stakeholders, that is the employees, informed with the purpose of creating and building buy-in.

Employees form a crucial pillar of the organisational structure, resulting in the fact that their strategic value necessitates a holistic approach to employee communication. Rensburg (1997:103) also argues that intraorganisational communication and the direct bearing it has on the people within the organisation, is a crucial element in the effectiveness of an organisation. Within the confines of intraorganisational communication as defined by Barker and Du Plessis (2002:4), the necessity of communication, information sharing and participation is a critical concept. With the concept of intraorganisational communication explained, one would need to understand the purpose of this type of communication as well as what trends are prevalent in organisations. This is needed in order to provide clarity over and above what has already been mentioned with regard to why intraorganisational communication is so critical, not only for the communication profession, but for the organisation as a whole.

As intraorganisational communication becomes the actual process that binds individual people with their own goals and objectives, experiences, needs and wants into a group or community striving to achieve organisational goals it is necessary to understand what the role or purpose of intraorganisational communication is. Consequently the next section will focus on the purpose or role of intraorganisational communication in order to further contextualise intraorganisational communication as a key concept.

2.3.1 Purpose of intraorganisational communication

The main purpose of the intraorganisational communication is to manage the communication process with the internal stakeholders in an effort to inform or persuade the internal audience (Neher 1997:291).   Neher (1997:291) argues that providing information is linked to persuasion since persuasion can only take place if the audience has sufficient information to alter their perceptions. The underlying principle of this information giving, is that the originator of the message must convince the audience or receiver of the message that the information is not only true but also relevant. In light of this, Neher (1997:292) also suggests four distinct persuasive purposes of intraorganisational communication and they are as follows:

- Gain compliance regarding policies, procedures and directives

The first purpose is related to providing information with regard to how things are done, in other words what the prevailing formal policies of the organisation are. These policies are often communicated in a formal manner through Human Resources when an individual starts with the organisation.   The communication is usually done in a presentation format with formal documentation to back it up (Neher 1997:292).

When there are changes to policies or new policies are being incorporated into the company's statutory rules and regulations, these must be communicated in order for them to be enforced. It is the responsibility of the organisation to ensure that all employees not only know about the policies but also understand them, as well as the consequences of failing to adhere to them. In light of the fact that ignorance of a policy, procedure, *et*

cetera, renders it legally unenforceable, the organisation needs to proactively manage the communication by developing a comprehensive communication plan, in an effort to ensure total compliance to these policies, procedures, *et cetera*. The premise here is 'what one does not know or understand cannot render one responsible or liable'. A disagreement with regard to policies can result in noncompliant behaviour on the part of employees, which may be in the form of, for example, just doing enough work to get by. Hence another crucial fundamental of communicating is to gain agreement or compliance by choice and not only enforcement, even though enforcement does have a role to play.

- Motivate staff and build morale

Today's organisations are struggling with employee commitment and staff motivation and morale can play a crucial role in this. Smit and Cronje (2002:344) define motivation as "an inner desire to satisfy an unsatisfied need". Employee morale and motivation are the cornerstones in ensuring not only a high level of performance but also commitment from employees. Cazakan (2002:8) argues that the trend of low employee commitment and performance is as a result of, for example, the lack of a clear corporate vision, uncertainty, profound organisational upheaval and lack of knowledge and information, as well as a lack of the clear provision of boundaries, regulation and control. According to Cazakan (2002:8) the issue of the lack of norms, that places emphasis on the provision of standards, boundaries and regulation and the knowledge thereof, plays a crucial role in staff motivation and morale. Whilst the issue of norms plays a role in staff motivation, the breakdown or erosion of these norms and therefore values and standards, which can be referred to as anomie, is a concern of intraorganisational communication (Kuczmarski & Kuczmarski 1995:25).

The concept of anomie is a term that refers to a condition of relative normlessness in a particular society and was first introduced by Durkheim in 1893 when he described it as a condition of deregulation (Jones 2000; Ortmann 1997, Coser 1991). Deregulation, according to Durkheim (Jones 2000), meant that rules on how people should behave break down and as a result people do not know what is expected of them and what to

expect from one another. Anomie as defined in contemporary English means the absence of any kind of rule, law, principle or order (American Heritage Dictionary of English 2000; Wikipedia 2004). Durkheim (Durkheim 1977:8, Jones 2000; Ortmann 1997) defined anomie as a state where norms, which in this instance refers to expectations of and regulation of behaviour, are confused, unclear or absent.

The absence of any kind of rule, law, principle or order as defined by anomie according to Van der Walt (2003:66) results in individuals in the organisation becoming increasingly alienated, isolated and distrustful as the feelings of supportiveness and the mental and emotional stimulation that comes from group membership disappear. Without a solid foundation of values and beliefs and its accompanying set of norms, which guide interpersonal communication and behaviour, anomie becomes out of control. As clarity of purpose impacts heavily on staff motivation and morale, the prevention of anomie through communication forms part of the purpose of intraorganisational communication as it is used to gain compliance and buy-in into organisational norms.

Some of the key principles for the organisation are to create understanding, buy-in and participation, build commitment and trust, create a sense of purpose and to create a conducive organisational climate and culture. Winkler (2002:17) suggests that the real power of an organisation and ultimately its strategy and its encompassing vision, is only unleashed when most of those involved have a common understanding of the goals and direction of the organisation. The implication for the organisation is that it needs to ensure that communication takes place on a regular basis and that the staff feel part of the organisation. Rouse and Rouse (2002:250) indicate that communication needs to focus on the kind and quality of information that is transmitted, the frequency of communication and the hierarchical levels at which information must be disseminated.

Practically, the organisation needs to inform the staff of what is happening in the organisation as a whole through newsletters, information boards, *et cetera* in an effort to motivate and encourage them. Ultimately, if staff are not happy, the resulting

consequence is going to lead to the organisation not being able to provide the service or product that it wants to, within the timeframe that it wants to do so.

- Communicating to build support for changes or initiatives

Organisations, like individuals, are constantly changing or having to change in order to adapt to a changing world and therefore change has become a prerequisite and not a choice. Consequently, managing change is one of the most important and most difficult issues that organisations will face. Hill and Jones (2001:486) argue that change that is strategic can be defined "as the movement of an organisation away from a present state towards a desired future state in order to increase the organisation's competitive advantage". Robbins (2001:542) also argues that organisations should be concerned with change that is proactive and purposeful and as such planned change should focus on changing the behaviour of individuals and groups within the organisation. Areas of organisational change can be identified, as follows (Smit & Cronje 2002:222):

- Change in strategy
- Change in organisational structure
- Technological change
- Changing people

Change itself is an extremely complicated process, with people and their natural resistance to change forming the core thereof. It is also argued that the greater the magnitude of the change, the more severe the discomfort people experience and the more reluctant and resistant people become toward change (Robbins 2001:541; Smit & Cronje 2002:61). Without buy-in from the employees any change or new initiative is doomed to fail. The implication is that information is critical to persuade the staff that the change or initiative is going to result in improvements and by design the resulting emphasis is on communication.

Robbins (2001:548) suggests that a programme should be developed which utilises change tactics and should include education, participation, change facilitation and support, negotiation, manipulation, co-operation and where necessary coercion, all of which are communication-based tactics for change and transformation in organisations. A proactive and managed communication strategy, plan and programme are necessary to do things right and as such this again serves to underline the critical nature of intraorganisational communication.

- Communicating to indoctrinate (instruct and orientate) employees into the organisational ideology, objectives and culture

Rensburg (1997:115) suggests that when people share a common frame of reference for interpreting and acting towards one another and the world in which they live, one sees culture in action. Hill and Jones (2001:435) define organisational culture as the specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organisation and these values and norms control the way they interact with stakeholders outside the organisation. Kreitner and Kinicki (1995:31) define culture as "a pattern of basic assumptions that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel". Essentially, organisational culture can be seen as a sense of the organisation, in that it describes how things are done in a particular organisation and therefore reflects the shared realities therein and how these realities impact on its internal and external environment.

The essence of this purpose is primarily concerned with the socialisation of people in an effort to induce identification with, and commitment to, the organisation, its vision, mission, goals and values, through communication. The resulting communication is focused on organisational commitment and therefore the extent to which the individual and group is committed to the goals, values and purposes of the organisation (Neher 1997:294). Ultimately, organisational culture is a component part of intraorganisational communication since it -

- helps to establish what defines the organisational boundaries,
- carries and transmits a sense of identity,
- transforms individual interest to commitment,
- enhances social stability,
- makes sense of the organisational environment, and
- provides control mechanisms that provide guidelines to employees and shape their actual behaviour.

The above persuasive-oriented purposes are also supported by Shockley-Zalabak (1991:62) when he proposes that influence is a necessary process for creating and changing organisations and organisational events. Shockley-Zalabak (1991:62) argues that the attempt of intraorganisational communication to persuade is frequently seen in the following:

- Organisational identification, which refers to the perception of a sense of belonging and, according to Shockley-Zalabak (1991:63), is usually associated with the belief that the individual and organisational goals are compatible.

- Socialisation, which refers to the active attempts of the organisation to help members learn appropriate behaviours, norms and values.

- Communication rules, which refer to general prescriptions about appropriate communication behaviours and, according to Shockley-Zalabak (1991:65), can be divided into thematic and tactical rules. Thematic rules are general prescriptions of behaviour reflecting values and beliefs of the organisation, whereas tactical rules prescribe specific behaviour related to the more general themes.

- Power, which refers to attempts to influence another's behaviour to produce desired outcomes.

In addition to what these purposes imply, the other significant issue is concerned with application and therefore how effectively the communication programme and ultimately the message is adapted to the appropriate audience, as well as how the message will be disseminated. The implication is that the organisation needs to have an in-depth understanding of the organisation, its structures and communication networks.

Communication that takes place in the organisation needs to become a proactive and managed process rather than just one that takes place naturally (D'Aprix 1996:15; Watson Wyatt 1999:10). This is especially necessary since the role of communication is often the function that counteracts changes to the environment, manages conflict, provides leadership and assists with the overall achievement of organisational objectives. Therefore, a more strategic approach must be taken to communication as a whole, but in particular to the internally focused communication. In support of this view, O'Malley (Sa:2) defines strategic communication as using intraorganisational communication to create, strengthen or preserve, among key audiences, opinion favourable to the attainment of organisational goals. Within this context the internal audience is a particularly critical audience and stakeholder. The move from a mechanistic and traditionalist view of organisations to one where people are key resources therefore crystallises the importance of communication and, as a result of the major impact it has on the organisation and its human capital, the need for a proactive and more integrated approach to intraorganisational communication is underlined.

The traditionalist or classical views of organisations find their roots in the scientific management approach towards organisations and management. Scientific management is based on Taylorism where the structuring of the system is of primary importance. The basic concept of this functional approach to management is based on the principles that purpose and corresponding policies and procedures are clearly defined through specific subdivided tasks and direct lines of authority (Harris 1993:47; Robbins 2001:583; Rensburg 1997:103; Smit & Cronje 2002:37; Wren 1994:330). Essentially predictability and control through careful design form the basic design of scientific management. In

this approach communication is a concept that to a large extent does not receive attention and its primary purpose is to assist in the establishment of managerial control (Rensburg 1997:111; Mersham & Skinner 2001:18). Consequently, the flow of communication is one way namely, downward and relies on formal channels of communication (Mersham & Skinner 2001:19).

Conversely, the humanistic views of the organisation focus on people and their role and contributions to the organisation, as well as their own expectations of the organisation. The humanistic approach focuses more on management practices in relation to organisational behaviour and they recognise that people work for more than just money and that attention must be given to building the morale of employees (Mersham & Skinner 2001:19; Kroon 1995:44). According to this approach, employees are considered as part of the capital of the organisation in that the employees are sources of ideas and suggestions and management's task is to encourage employees' contribution and participation. Communication focuses less on formal regulation and more on informal communication, with communication flowing in all directions. The emphasis of the humanistic approach is on participation. (Rensburg 1997:112; Robbins 2001:587; Smit & Cronje 2002:43; Wren 1994:330; Peters & Waterman 1982:10).

To contextualise intraorganisational communication comprehensively it is also necessary to take note of the dominant trend that has developed in the intraorganisational context, namely knowledge management. The role of knowledge management is also necessary to the discussion as it provides some insight into an underlying concept of integration of intraorganisational communication especially as it highlights the principles of access to and sharing of information and knowledge throughout all levels of the organisation. The trend of knowledge management essentially underlines an important and fundamental role of intraorganisational communication as will be seen from the discussion that will follow.

2.3.2 Trends in intraorganisational communication

Organisations are increasingly becoming dependent on knowledge and the advent of knowledge management as a dominant communication and management principal, which can be defined as the understanding of information, and the ability to apply it in varied situations is becoming important (Kock *et al* 1996:35).   Organisations are using information and leveraging it in order to achieve a particular goal.

Many businesses are increasingly relying on specialised information and knowledge, and recognising that the most important factor defining the competitiveness of an organisation is related to its ability to acquire, evaluate, store, use and discard knowledge and information, only serves to further clarify the importance of knowledge management (Kock *et al* 1996:36).   Furthermore, the increasing complexity, such as increased technological dependency and advancement, product and business innovation, as well as demanding and educated consumers that business is faced with, requires the dissemination and therefore the spreading of knowledge to the person who is directly concerned with a particular function or task. Jenner (1994:18) suggests that such a new paradigm based on decentralisation of power, increased work empowerment, and lateral or horisontal communication channels, is more suited to the new market conditions and in order to be effectively implemented, this requires the decentralisation of knowledge.

Kock *et al* (1996:35) argue that this decentralisation of knowledge creates a necessity for motivation and teamwork rather than co-ordination and decision-making. Knowledge management can be defined as managing knowledge in an organisation through its systematic identification, integration and application in an effort to fulfil organisational objectives.   Van der Walt *et al* (2003:23) define knowledge management as the "management of the organisation's intellectual capital together with an intimate knowledge of its markets, resulting in a competitive advantage".

Senge *et al* (1994:54) essentially argues that knowledge must be proactively managed. Knowledge management is therefore about sharing and thereby transferring and

developing new ideas and knowledge. As such, the creation of "communities" where communication is designed to share know-how, knowledge and the creation of knowledge, is a fundamental principle of intraoganisational communication. Senge *et al* (1994:54), also verbalise the fact that an organisation's intellectual capacity is its social capital and as such must be harnessed and managed, which in turn underscores the importance of the role of intraorganisational communication in the organisational context.

With the context for this particular study in relation to the issue of organisational communication broadly being discussed and subsequently the emphasis being placed on intraorganisational communication as component of organisational communication, the next step is to highlight the issue of integration of intraorganisational communication. This will be done by looking at the evolution of integrated communication, defining it as a key concept and providing a framework for integration that can and will be used for this particular research project. The issue of integrated communication is especially important as the study is specifically focused on the measurement of integration of intraorganisational communication in organisations and as such will be discussed below.

2.4   INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION IN THE ORGANISATION

As part of the contextualisation of integrated communication in the intraorganisational context it is necessary to not only define integrated communication. , but also to consider how integrated communication evolved.

2.4.1 Integrated communication defined

According to Checkland (1995:23) and Thorson and Moore (1996:243), the segmentation of the organisation and its resulting specialisation is increasingly being replaced by a systems approach thinking with the integration of all aspects of the organisation as a system becoming more relevant. At the most basic level a system can be seen as an assembly of parts or components, which in the organisational context is the

people and departments, that make up the organisation (Miller 1995:87; Corman, Banks, Bantz & Meyer 1990:113; Rensburg 1997:51). The systems approach which provides a framework within which an organisation can be viewed argues that the entire system functions and yields better results than the different parts of the system. The systems approach thinking not only looks at the system in its entirety, but also recognise that the organisation as a system consists of a number of related subsystems, such as, for example communication, which are interdependent and interrelated (Harris 1993:10; Corman *et al* 1990:113; Checkland 1995:27). This interdependence and interrelatedness between the different parts of the system, including the issue of permeability, forms the three main characteristics that define the systems concept and is important to understand in order for, the purpose of this particular study, conceptually define the issue of integrated communication (Miller 1995:87).

1. Hierarchical ordering revolves around the principle that the system components are arranged in highly complex ways and it means that a system is made up of smaller subsystems, which in turn are comprised of smaller workgroups and individuals (Miller 1995:87).

2. Interdependence revolves around the principle that the functioning of one component of a system relies on the other components of the system and according to the system's framework no component can function effectively without active assistance from other system parts (Miller 1995:88; Rensburg 1997:52; Wells & Spinks 1989:141).

3. Permeability revolves around permeable boundaries that allow information and materials to flow in and out of the system and the components of the system (Rensburg 1997:51; Miller 1995:88).

According to Harris (1993:3) and Checkland (1995:45), systems framework of permeability, interdependency and interrelatedness as described by Miller (1995:51) requires communication to bind the parts of the system together and communication is

essentially the thread that ties the system together. Communication is an essential part of every organisation and without it, no organsation can survive. Essentially in line with the systems approach as discussed by Harris (1993:3) and in an effort to prevent a fragmented approach to communication being used in organisations, it is important to understand and recognise that communication, as a whole, should form part of an integrated approach to the management of an organisation and therefore it is necessary to define integrated communication.

Gayeski and Woodward (1996:3) define integrated communication as "the application of analysis, communication and evaluation techniques to create and manage integrated, multifaceted interventions combining information, instruction, collaboration, business process design, feedback and incentive systems to improve human performance in the workplace in order to achieve organisations' desired missions and visions". The definition provided by Gayeski and Woodward (1996:3) is very broad and creates a deeper understanding that communication pervades every setting within the organisation and forms an integral part of all organisational processes. It highlights the multifaceted nature and role of organisational communication in organisations and thereby underlines the importance of the inclusive and holistic management of all communication within the organisational context in order to achieve organisational success.

Even though the trends suggest that an integration of not only the profession within its own boundaries, but also the integration of communication with other aspects of the business is a developing reality, the application is often not as clear cut as it appears (Jones 1999:340). An integrative model suggests a planned and co-ordinated communication effort, where the different communication professionals and other stakeholders share ideas and come to a common understanding of the purpose of the communication, resulting in a joint effort to achieve the set objectives (Jones 1999:340). Wightman (1999:19) supports this perspective of broad stakeholder participation when it is argued that to integrate the communication functions in essence, recognises the fact that the stakeholders are the true integrators of the communication process. Barker and Du Plessis (2002:2) argue that an integrated approach focuses attention on the integration

of various communication activities in the organisation, in order to cope and deal with the increased challenges that are faced in maintaining a positive organisational image, as well as to remain competitive in the changing environment.   Barker and Du Plessis (2002:2) also refer to the fact that integration moves outside the boundaries of the typical concept of communication and indicate that integration should happen on five main levels, namely the integration of:

- communication activities,
- relationships with various stakeholders,
- functions,
- organisational structure, and
- the environment, both internal and external.

According to Jones (1999:340) the integration of communication is necessary where co-operation is required and as a result integration is also about cross-border communication. Fundamentally integration is underlined by a broader approach and recognises that communication is a fundamental reality of life in an organisation (Duncan & Moriarty 1998:2). Duncan and Moriarty's (1998:3) argument that communication is a central integrative process and when it is properly done is the actual integrative element that assists in tearing down functional silos within the organisation is very important. As indicated in the researcher's own definition of integrated communication in section 1.3.2, chapter 1, integrated communication can be defined as the amalgamation of the dimensions of intraorganisational communication as fundamental interdependent and interrelated components of all organisational processes in order to improve interaction and collaboration so as to achieve organisational success. Therefore, to approach organisational communication from only one point of view, even if integrated, will invariably mean that a critical component thereof will be ignored and in order to meet the needs of the future, which are represented by a complex and competitive business environment, a multidimensional approach to communication must be taken.

2.4.2 Conceptual framework for integration

With a basic conceptualisation of what integrated communication means, the concern that needs to be addressed is how integration of communication takes place. Khan and Mentzer (1998:53) looked at integration of communication in relation to marketing with other departments in organisations and although applied in a marketing context, they provide very valuable insight into integration of communication through their framework for integration which is based on the various views as expressed by a number of researchers, amongst others, such as Reukert and Walker (1987), Moenaert *et al* (1994), Clark and Fujimoto (1991), Sriram *et al* (1992) as well as Song and Parry (1993). According to Khan and Mentzer (1998:53), consensus regarding integration of communication within the organisation in relation to marketing is still lacking. They then in their work grouped the like-minded perspectives on integration of communication in relation to marketing that proliferate from researchers, such as, Reukert and Walker (1987), Moenaert *et al* (1994), Clark and Fujimoto (1991), Sriram *et al* (1992) as well as Song and Parry (1993) amongst others, together and by doing this isolated three perspectives on integration of communication.

- In the first perspective, integration of communication can be seen as being focused on interaction, with the focus being on more communication taking place between the different sections of the organisation and therefore on increased information flow between units (Khan & Mentzer 1998:53).

- The second perspective sees integration of communication as being focused on collaboration, with the emphasis being on instilling collective goals, mutual respect and teamwork amongst units (Khan & Mentzer 1998:53).

- The third and final perspective, which is described as a composite perspective, sees integration of communication as a combination of interaction and collaboration, with the focus on balancing the two aspects. These three perspectives are captured in a framework as developed by Khan and Mentzer (1998:53) and are illustrated in their

hypothesised framework of marketing's integration. The principles of the framework that Khan and Mentzer (1998:54) provide can be adapted to provide insight into organisational integration on a larger scale. In the following section the different views of integration will be discussed chronologically and these are as follows:

- Interaction view of integration
- Collaborative view of integration
- Composite view of integration

2.4.2.1 Interaction View of Integration

The interaction view as seen by Ruekert and Walker (1987:3), Griffin and Hauser (1992:365) and Moenaert et al (1994:31) places emphasis on the use of communication to manage the flow of information between departments and is therefore focused on information exchange interaction activities. The argument here is that information exchange between the various departments and organisational units provides information about a variety of issues, which in turn reduces uncertainty related to decision-making, problem solving and other related processes, thereby resulting in improved performance and increased satisfaction in working with other units.

Khan and Mentzer's (1998:55) studies have shown that increased interaction alone does not have a direct effect on performance success and in fact could have a detrimental effect on performance due to, amongst other reasons, too many meetings being held or information overload taking place. Although examples of work, such as Osburn, Moran, Musselwhite and Zenger (1990:3) exist, the importance of a well-informed and involved workforce and the link with employee satisfaction and the effect it has on productivity should be focused on and established. Harris (1993:208) and Koehler et al (1981:86) also argue that although a causal link exists and there is a correlation between information adequacy and involvement and employee satisfaction, there is no absolute and as such it is argued that by simply providing more information greater productivity and effectiveness is not guaranteed. The old adage "too much of a good thing becomes a

bad thing" appears to be true for the integration process, with a balanced approach to interaction being underlined by Khan and Mentzer (1998:55). Appropriate use of interaction is focused on balancing the need for, and the amount of, information required as well as ensuring that the right information, which is relevant to the audience, is provided. The emphasis is thus on the appropriate use of interaction to establish effective contact, share relevant and appropriate information and build relations with the purpose of optimising productivity, teamwork and operational delivery.

2.4.2.2 Collaborative View of Integration

Collaboration, according to Sriram *et al* (1992:305), is commonly characterised as a voluntary, mutual and shared process, which then increases effectiveness. The underlying principles according to Souder (1987:i) are shared values, mutual or interdependent goals and commitments and collaborative behaviour, which therefore places emphasis on departments or units working together, having a mutual understanding of tasks, activities and processes, sharing a common vision for the organisation and a buy-in into the visions, sharing of resources and ultimately the achievement of collective goals. Khan and Mentzer (1998:55) define collaboration between departments and units as "an effective and volitional process where departments work together with mutual understanding, common vision and shared resources to achieve collective goals". Such collaboration often results in harmony and goodwill between departments and units which in turn leads to increased satisfaction when dealing with one another, as well as an increased commitment to assist where possible with other departments reaching and achieving goals.

According to Khan and Mentzer's (1998:55) hypotheses and findings there is a strong correlation between collaboration and performance. They argue that collaboration positively influences performance in terms of departmental and overall organisational success. The reason for this appears to be based on the fact that mutual understanding, collective goals, as well as sharing of information and resources is more cost-effective as it minimises duplicated efforts, reduces time to complete activities, and increases the

knowledge base, which can result in more efficient operational or service processes being designed. Therefore, in terms of effective integration, collaboration appears to be the key determinant for success.

2.4.2.3 Composite View of Integration

The composite view of integration is concerned with a multidimensional perspective of integration. Khan and Mentzer (1998:56) argue that the composite definition of integration must reflect as indicated below the distinct natures of integration as defined by Song and Parry (1993:127) and Gupta, Raj and Wilemon (1985:290), and collaboration as defined by Clark and Fujimoto (1991:57). According to Song and Parry (1993:127) and Gupta *et al* (1985:290), interdepartmental integration is defined by interaction which is characterised by information sharing and involvement, whilst according to Clark and Fujimoto (1991:57), integration is defined by collaboration which is characterised by communication and teamwork. However, according to Khan and Mentzer's (1998:56) research, high levels of integration do not correspond with high levels of information sharing and involvement as marketing departments, despite high levels of interaction, still find it difficult to successfully implement their marketing strategy. Similarly Khan and Mentzer's research showed that departments may collaborate but may not meet for extended periods of time. Khan and Mentzer (1998:56) consequently define interdepartmental integration as a multidimensional process where interaction and collaboration have unique and significant contributions.

Based on this definition of the composite perspective on integration, interaction and collaboration are considered unique processes that when applied in a concurrent manner should positively influence performance (Khan & Mentzer 1998:56). Consequently it appears that a combination of the two perspectives as suggested by the composite view, would have more success than utilising any single approach as illustrated in Figure 2.4. Clampitt (2001:25) also argues for the fostering of interdepartmental co-operation and allocation of shared responsibility for communication.

However, in achieving a balance between interaction and collaboration, according to Clampitt (2001:25) and Khan and Mentzer (1998:56), an equal split between the two approaches would not yield the required results, as collaboration has a much larger positive effect and direct impact on successful integration and as such the right percentage mix of the interaction and collaboration perspectives must be achieved. Achieving such a balance might not be something that comes naturally to managers and as such the ultimate recommendation is to place the most emphasis on collaboration, whilst ensuring that there is opportunity where direct interaction takes place, especially since collaboration requires departments to become familiar with one another and build relationships (Khan & Mentzer's 1998:56).
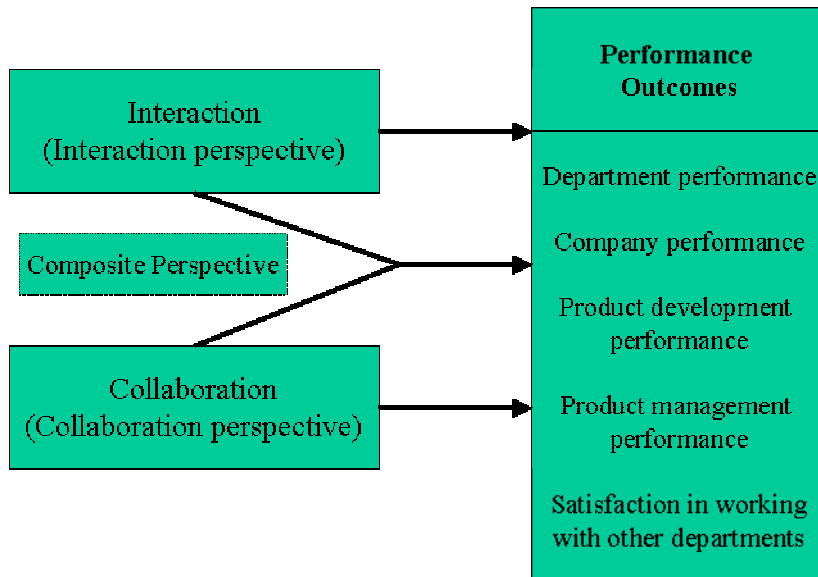
Figure 2.4: Framework of communication integration of Marketing with other departments illustrating the interaction, collaboration and composite views
(Khan & Mentzer 1998:54)

Whilst the various views of communication integration provide a general understanding thereof, it is also necessary to take this understanding a step further by providing recognition of the value that integrated communication has for organisations as this can be used to encourage organisations to look at organisational communication and, more specifically, intraorganisational communication from an integrated perspective.

The value of integrated communication, as was indicated in section 2.4 when defining integrated communication, is broad based as it allows the organisation to not only operate more efficiently as a result of increased buy-in into organisational strategy, but also as a result of a shared purpose between the various units in that the various units work together and thereby improve productivity, and the organisational climate and culture. The value of integrated communication also resides in the consistent and mutual understanding it creates amongst employees in relation to all aspect and processes of the organisation and thereby assisting the organisation to internalise the principles of shared purpose, commitment and collaboration within the organisation. The role of integration of communication, although not something which has been considered an essential component of communication success until recently, clearly provides value as it is able to assist an organisation to create organisational unity and teamwork and therefore an "us" perception and feeling amongst the staff and various units, as well as allow the organisation to manage both internal and external issues more efficiently and effectively.

2.5   SUMMARY

By looking critically at communication, one realises that it is a complex, multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon that cannot be understood by merely taking it at face value. Understanding that this is a complex, multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon also provides a realisation that the issue of organisational communication is very broad in conceptual content as well as impact. It requires that the issue of interaction and collaboration is considered as vital to the integration of communication with emphasis being placed on creating mutual understanding and shared purpose as well as instilling mutual respect and teamwork within the organisation.

The fact that a range of factors such as communication levels, flow and networks, impact on organisational communication, makes it necessary for an organisation to identify and consider these issues when deciding how to manage the communication process in accordance with a specific agenda or strategy, regardless of whether it is only confined

within the communication profession or on a broader scale within the organisation as a whole. The system's view, as has been indicated in section 1.3, chapter 1 by looking at the organisation as a complete system as well as its component parts and the collaboration between these component parts in order to achieve organisational goals, underlines the importance of ongoing relevant and appropriate intraorganisational communication that is focused on creating and building mutual and shared organisational understanding and purposes.

The significance of integrated communication as expressed here becomes particularly critical when recognition is given that communication does not take place in isolation and has an impact on other parts of the organisation. Therefore, as a result of organisational communication pervading every aspect of organisational life and it forming a basic fundamental component of organisational success, the effective integration of communication is critical and in-depth consideration should be given to all aspects that impact on successful communication integration. From this reflection of aspects impacting on integrated communication, emerge or emanate recognition of the importance of determining the current status of communication integration in the organisation and as a result the assessment and measurement of integrated communication becomes one of the fundamental themes that needs to be analysed.

As a fundamental issue that needs to be analysed and with the purpose of contextualising measurement broadly, as well as in terms of its application in chapter 4, the issue of measurement is examined and discussed in the next chapter. The discussion focuses on defining measurement of intraorganisational communication and of various perspectives on measurement of intraorganisational communication, types of measurement tools that can be used and what aspects of intraorganisational communication should be measured.

CHAPTER 3: MEASUREMENT OF INTRAORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

3.1   INTRODUCTION

As indicated in chapter 2, organisational communication provides the broad context of or framework for the study and then places emphasis on intraorganisational communication, as a specific field and component of organisational communication. In chapter 2 it is also argued that to be successful, intraorganisational communication needs to be approached from an integrated perspective. In this chapter this is taken a step further and emphasis is placed on the measurement of intraorganisational communication. This is very important as the purpose of the research is specifically focused on establishing if an existing intraorganisational communication measurement instrument and more specifically the communication audit can be used as an effective integrated measurement instrument of intraorganisational communication within an organisation.

Organisations are often interested in assessing the effectiveness of an organisation's intraorganisational communication activities in order to allow management to enhance its control over the organisation or to assist the organisation to function or meet its goals and objectives more effectively (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:95). The issue of measurement is fast becoming a critical component in a more strategic approach to communication and Leahy (2003b:2) underlines this when he argues that the business or management mantra of "if you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it" is increasingly becoming relevant. Gray (2000:6) states that the primary objective of measuring intraorganisational communication is to determine the extent to which it changes or influences attitudes. Binneman (1998:22) argues that one of the reasons why intraorganisational communication in all its forms exists is to achieve measurable results that will help the organisation achieve its mission and ultimately its vision.

To provide some understanding of the reality and importance of measuring and evaluating intraorganisational communication efforts, one needs to recognise that organisational value is contained in more than its physical assets. By understanding the critical role of evaluation and measurement one is able to establish and recognise what value intraorganisational communication has with regard to the organisation's bottom line. Consequently in the following discussion the overview of the approach to measurement of communication in the intraorganisational context as provided in section 1.3.3 of chapter 1 is expanded to comprehensively contextualise the relevance of measurement for this study and to provide insight into how intraorganisational communication can be measured. To this end, reference will be made to various perspectives on measurement, some of the measurement tools that exist as well some potential measurement imperatives that can attempt to establish what the level of integration is of intraorganisational communication in an organisation.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF MEASUREMENT IN INTRAORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

The central point in this part of the discussion is that measurement provides indicators of success and failure of organisational communication, as well as gives a clear indication of the present situation related to the broad context of communication but also more specifically intraorganisational communication in the organisation. Fundamentally measurement in the context of intraorganisational communication is concerned with improving some aspect of intraorganisational communication (Neher 1997:326). However, to understand the main thrust of measurement in intraorganisational communication it is necessary to contextualise measurement broadly.

Wimmer and Dominick (2001:476), Baker (1999:108) and Welman and Kruger (2001:133) essentially define measurement as a procedure whereby numerical value is assigned to objects, events or properties. Within the organisational context the essence of measurement lies in the fact that it attempts to establish how effectively an organisation is

achieving it's objectives, strategies and tactics. Leahy (2003b:2) argues that without providing and setting parameters, management cannot effectively manage work and that one needs a starting point and an end point, with a comparison being made between the two, in order to measure achievement. According to Du Plessis *et al* (2001:96), assessment or measurement is generally concerned with improving some aspect of organisational communication and more often than not it is management driven.

Neher (1997:326) argues that measurement or assessment tries to establish how well an organisation is doing in terms of meeting desired goals and objectives and is therefore by implication concerned with improving some aspect of communication. Therefore, within the communication and organisational context, measurement or assessment should be concerned with the systematic ways of intraorganisational communication and in the intraorganisational context this must be done for the purpose of diagnosing problems and designing interventions that can improve intraorganisational communication (Neher 1997:324). Measurement or assessment of intraorganisational communication is particularly important as it provides indicators of success and failure of intraorganisational communication, as well as gives a clear indication of the present situation related to communication in the organisation.

A number of benefits of measurement exist but some of the most relevant can be highlighted. As Leahy (2003b:2) clearly states, management measures effects and a benefit of measurement is confined in the opportunity it creates to show value of intraorganisational communication and therefore verify the contribution that it makes to organisational success. Measurement and especially ongoing measurement also allows the organisation to hone their intraorganisational communication strategies, messages and medium as well as gain an in-depth understanding of their employees and the organisational environment (Sinickas 2002:6). It also increases the level of credibility given to the idea of intraorganisational communication and the impact it has and as such allows the communications professionals or individuals responsible for intraorganisational communication to become valuable contributors to organisational processes (Sinickas 2002:6). In addition, measurement of intraorganisational

communication can also accurately define what weaknesses and strengths exist in relation to this thereby providing insight that can be used to improve intraorganisational communication in future (Sinickas 2002:6).

Measurement, as can be seen from the above discussion, has a role to play in intraorgansiational communication. Measurement, however, can be applied in a variety of ways with the variety of areas on which it focuses and as such can incorporate a broad range of issues. It can, for example, be concerned with the process of communicating itself or the impact communication has on employees. With such a broad range of issues that can be measured, the approach to measurement or assessment of communication becomes critical as it defines what the measurement is trying to achieve.

Whilst understanding that the issue of measurement in the intraorgansiational context is important, it is also necessary to clarify the framework or perspective that will be used to measure intraorganisational communication, keeping in mind that the framework or perspective that is used must be aligned with the research, and thus the idea of measuring integrated intraorganisational communication. The perspective or framework in this context refers to different types of approaches to communication measurement. The perspectives that can be used to measure intraorgansiational communication are discussed below.

3.2.1 Perspectives on measurement/assessment

Within the context of intraorganisational communication it is necessary to understand that various approaches to communication measurement or assessment techniques exist and that one can look at measurement from differing frameworks or perspectives. A number of perspectives or frameworks on measurement exist but mainly two perspectives, namely the functionalist and interpretivist perspectives, are being used by organisations (Neher 1997:327; Du Plessis *et al* 2001:98; Neuman 2000:71). However, a third perpsective, namely the critical perspective, although not as widely used in organisational assessment of applied or internal communication, has also been identified

(Neher 1997:327; Neuman 2000:71). Each framework can, however, be discussed as follows:

3.2.1.1 Functionalist perspective

Traditionally assessments of intraorganisational communication have typically been functionalist in their orientation in that they are particularly concerned with information processing and therefore place emphasis on how messages are transferred and the way in which this is done. According to Du Plessis *et al* (2001:11), messages and/or behaviours are interpreted in terms of the functions they perform. According to Neher (1997:327) and Du Plessis *et al* (2001:98), functionalism is concerned with isolating specific elements of an organisation that contribute to or hinder the operations of the organisation. Essentially this approach entails adopting a model, which explains communication in terms of scientific laws that can predict behaviour and the effect of messages (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:11; Duncan & Moriarty 1998:3).

Typically of a functionalist perspective, reference can be made to the bureaucratic organisation, which is primarily concerned with making the employees at the bottom of the organisation efficient and productive (Wren 1994:35; Conrad 1990:109; Kreps 1997:64; Smit & Cronje 2002:58). According to Kreps (1997:64) and Smit and Cronje (2002:38), bureaucracy refers to the ideally structured human organisation, which focuses on increasing organisational effectiveness and consequently productivity. Bureaucracy attempts to standardise organisational practice by prescribing specific structures, rules, guidelines and procedures for dealing with tasks and as such aligns with the functionalist perspective of isolating and addressing specific elements that contribute to or hinder organisational operations.

The functionalist perspective to assessment therefore incorporates issues around information flow and loads, communication networks, communication channels and mediums. According to Du Plessis *et al* (2001:98) the functionalist method of assessing communication obtains scientific data that is used to:

- identify weaknesses in the functioning of some aspect of an organisation's communication system,

- quantify data about an organisation's communication activities, and

- study the communication climate and culture of an organisation.

The functionalist perspective is generally aimed at determining how to improve things and some of the measurement/assessment techniques that are used in this perspective include quantitative research methods such as, for example, surveys and questionnaires focussing on organisational culture and climate.

3.2.1.2 Interpretive perspective

The interpretive perspective, on the other hand, is more concerned with discovering and understanding what the organisational experiences of organisational members are, as well as understanding how they interpret these experiences (Neher 1997:336; Duncan & Moriarty 1998:3). Neuman (2000:71) defines the interpretive perspective as the "systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds."

Du Plessis *et al* (2001:11) argue that this perspective is directed at understanding and explaining human behaviour and typically would concentrate on understanding people's experiences rather than improved productivity. The focus is therefore on gaining insight into intraorganisational communication from the participants' perspectives. Consequently, the emphasis is on the lived experience of all the different stakeholders within the organisation and as a result the researcher becomes a participant-observer in the organisation. The interpretivist perspective to assessment makes use of qualitative research techniques and would typically focus on establishing how many of the social needs of people are satisfied by the interaction with those with whom they work and as a

result therefore also incorporates evaluation and assessment of organisational culture and climate (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:11).

Typically reference can be made to the learning organisation as it sets an organisational culture and climate which recognises that people have different social experiences, awareness, values and aspirations and that these impact on their perceptions and behaviours in and outside the organisation (Senge 1994:3). The learning organisation is defined by Du Plooy-Cilliers (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:32) as "a type of organisation that identifies the learning needs of its employees and of the organisation on a continuous basis, where learning is facilitated, and where employees share their knowledge in order to transform the organisation, enabling it to enhance its ability to create its own future".

The learning organisation is primarily concerned with participation, co-operation and teamwork, where teams collectively create and share knowledge and ultimately take action on the knowledge gained and thereby transform the organisation (Sambrook & Steward 2000:3; Senge 1994:236). The learning organisation essentially recognises the importance and contribution, as well as learning needs, of employees at all levels and consequently the need to understand the underlying perceptions and beliefs of its employees. The learning organisation therefore reflects an organisational culture and climate that creates the necessary communication opportunities and channels, as well as provides the necessary information and resources to facilitate learning.

The approach to research that is frequently used in this category is often labelled as phenomenology or ethnomethodology, which suggests that no predetermined set of categories is imposed on the data that it is trying to discover. It is rather concerned with establishing patterns within the organisation and then giving these patterns meaning and interpreting their relevance (Neher 1997:337). Some of the measurement/assessment techniques that are used in this approach include participant observation or field research, narrative analysis, metaphor analysis, communication events or documents of the

organisation, and identification of themes and meanings of organisational stories and story telling (Neuman 2000:71).

3.2.1.3 Critical perspective

The critical perspective to assessment is concerned with issues around dominance and hegemony. Neuman (2000:76) argues that the critical approach is "a critical process of enquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves." According to Du Plessis *et al* (2001:12), the main concern in this perspective is with issues relating to power and control within the organisation. The focus here is on identifying the power structure that is confined within an organisation, as well as trying to understand the ways in which such a power structure maintains itself.

Typically reference can be made to knowledge management, which is discussed in more detail in section 2.3.2 of chapter 2 and in which knowledge management is broadly defined. Van der Walt (2003:56) defines knowledge management as the process of establishing environments and systems for creating, encapsulating, storing, organising, managing and communicating information and knowledge as well as building and maintaining social capital by encouraging employees to share their experiences throughout the organisation with the intention of creating and retaining organisational value. Knowledge management is particularly relevant to the critical approach, as for most people knowledge is power and generally people are reluctant to share their knowledge with others (Mickletwait & Wooldridge 1997:128; Stadler 1999:23). The way in which an organisation manages and shares knowledge is reflective of the critical approach, as it is especially concerned with understanding how the power structure of an organisation maintains itself.

Typically issues that are embodied here include raising questions regarding the existence and purpose of the organisation itself in that it would, for example, look at the issue of whether an organisation can have a democratic environment when it in fact operates on

autocratic principles (Neher 1997:327). The critical perspective to assessment and measurement makes use of qualitative research techniques and would therefore attempt to investigate and assess the meaning of organisational symbols and practices that keep a particular group in power.

There is value in each perspective as each has a role to play in the measurement of intraorganisational communication in that it approaches the evaluation of communication from different angles or directions that are complementary and essentially the different perspectives look at intraorganisational communication in all its facets. In addition, these perspectives typically use specific assessment methodologies in order to assess specific aspects of, or issues related to, intraorganisational communication. The next section will specifically focus on methods of communication measurement.

3.3   METHODS OF COMMUNICATION MEASUREMENT

As part of understanding the issue of measurement or assessment and in order to select an appropriate measurement instrument, attention must be given to some of the types of measurement instruments or methods that are used in the intraorganisational communication context. In this particular research context, the research is approached from a functionalist perspective as it is interested in isolating specific elements of intraorganisational communication, such as information flow and loads, communication networks, communication channels and mediums that contribute to or impede communication and ultimately the operations of the organisation.

Interpretivism is interested in discovering and understanding what the organisational experiences of members are and how they interpret these experiences with the purpose of gaining insight into intraorganisational communication from the participants' viewpoint. The critical perspective on the other hand wants to establish patterns within the organisation, allocate meaning to it and then interpret it primarily for the purpose of identifying the power structure that is confined within an organisation. Essentially the primary purpose of measurement approached from the interpretivist and the critical

perspectives are not aligned with the primary purpose of this particular study and as such the relevance of methodologies that are descriptive of them is limited.

Furthermore, generic reference is made to the research methods that have actually been used for collecting data in the research process as illustration of the measurement perspective used to measure intraorganisational communication in relation to this specific study. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is used for collecting data in this particular study. The qualitative methods, namely the in-depth interview and focus group discussion, are used to uncover themes that needed to be incorporated in the actual survey questionnaire as well as to provide context to the information that is extracted from the questionnaire. The questionnaire on the other hand, which is descriptive of a quantitative method, forms the primary method for evaluating the effectiveness of intraorganisational communication and is an example of the functionalist perspective. The focus is placed on these three research methods in particular as it contextualises the background information of the research methods that are used in this particular study and thereby create a tangible understanding of these methods as research instruments. The actual application, relevance and appropriateness of the use of these methods as part of the communication audit will, however, be discussed in detail in chapter 4 in the discussion on communication audits. The research methodologies used for collecting data to measure intraorganisational communication in this research process, will be discussed in a sequential order and are as follows:

- Survey questionnaires
- Focus groups
- In-depth interviews

3.3.1 Survey Questionnaire

Survey research itself is an old research method and is designed to elicit information that is relevant to the researcher's studies. Surveys are typically the most used data-gathering technique that is used in many research fields (Rubin & Babbie 1997:346; Neuman

2000:54; Du Plooy 2001:116; Baker 1999:201). Survey research has been developed within the functionalist tradition and is essentially a quantitative research technique that produces quantitative information, which is used to measure a variety of issues, including communication, through asking questions (Angelopulo *et al* 2004:46; Baker 1999:10). According to Rubbin and Babbie (1997:346) and Angelopulo *et al* (2004:46), surveys are often used to explore the general attitudes, opinions, preferences and perceptions of staff. Within the confines of the research as applied in this particular context, only the example of a questionnaire survey that is self-administered will be discussed, although it is critical to note that a variety of types of surveys exist.

As it is difficult to ask questions in person due to restraints related to physical reach, especially in large organisations which may even have offices spread throughout a country or even numerous countries, the questionnaire provides a solution to collecting data without limitations to its reach. A questionnaire, as defined by Wimmer and Dominick (2001:480), is a written set of questions used to survey respondents. Questionnaires can be administered either in a face-to-face situation, by telephone, to a group, or sent to individuals in a mailed self-administered format (Baker 1999:176; Du Plooy 2002:116; Angelopulo *et al* 2004:50).

Face-to-face or telephone-administered questionnaires, which really are a form of interviewing, are different from those that are self-administered as they can be unstructured due to the fact that the researcher is present, whereas this is not the case in the self-administered questionnaires (Neuman 2000:271). Essentially, traditional surveys offer benchmarks and measure progress as they quantify results and provide a current perception or opinion of a given situation that is being researched, such as communication effectiveness in an organisation.

3.3.1.1 Advantages of questionnaire surveys

Various advantages of this method of research can be identified and must be understood by the researcher in order to determine whether the survey format is appropriate to a

particular research project's objectives. The first and most obvious benefit for utilising the questionnaire survey is based in the cost of surveys as it is fairly reasonable when compared to the volume of information that is being collected (Wimmer & Dominick 2001:481, Rubin & Babbie 1997:363; Welman & Kruger 2001:151). The researcher cannot only cover a large geographical area, but the survey questionnaire also makes very large samples feasible (Rubin & Babbie 1997:363; Leedy & Ormrod 2005:187; Neuman 2000:271). As a result of the fact that large samples are feasible through the utlisation of survey questionnaires, research findings can be more generalisable (Rubin & Babbie 1997:363).

The utilisation of questionnaires also provides anonymity and as a result respondents can answer the questions more openly and honestly (Neuman 2000:272; Welman & Kruger 2001:152). Questionnaires can also be completed at the respondent's own pace and in privacy (Neuman 2000:272). From the above advantage, one is also able to isolate the next benefit, which is centred on the fact that large volumes of information can be gathered with relative ease. Furthermore, the survey questionnaires also allow the researcher to examine a range of variables in one questionnaire (Rubin & Babbie 1997:363). Finally, standardised questions are an important strength as they enable the researcher to ask the exact same question of each respondent, which even though still open to interpretation by the respondents, limits the researcher's manipulation of the research situation and increases the reliability of the research (Rubin & Babbie 1997:364).

3.3.1.2 Limitations of questionnaire surveys

As with the benefits, the researcher must be aware of some of the limitations where this method of collecting data is concerned. One of the biggest limitations of survey questionnaires is that the researcher has no control over the actual respondent and therefore the researcher is unable to determine whether the relations between independent variables and dependent variables are causal or noncausal (Wimmer & Dominick 2001:108; Welman & Kruger 2001:152). The questionnaire also tends to fail to measure

the complexity of life as the researcher cannot develop a feel for the total life situation in which respondents are thinking and acting when responding (Rubin & Babbie 1997:364).

Questionnaire design can be problematic as inappropriate wording and placement of questions can result in biased results, as the questions can be phrased in such a way that they will elicit a specific response (Baker 1999:202; Neuman 2000:264). Another limitation of questionnaire surveys also centres around the questionnaire design, as the questions must be self-explanatory due to the fact that the researcher is seldom around to give clarity when the respondent is not sure as to what is actually being asked (Wimmer & Dominick 2001:108; Baker 1999:202). Most people have participated in research at some point, whether informal or formal, and as a result people may be hesitant to take part in research, especially questionnaire surveys. Collecting the data can be time consuming as the researcher has to wait for the respondents to return questionnaires in self-administered questionnaire surveys. The biggest limitation, however, is the actual return ratio, which is often very low, with a large portion of potential respondents simply just not responding (Neuman 2000:272; Welman & Kruger 2001:152).

In the context of this particular study the questionnaire is also the primary research method that is used for data gathering. Essentially is has relevance for the study in that it intended to explore the general attitudes, opinions, preferences and perceptions of staff and allows information to be gathered in a relatively short period of time. Essentially, it allows quantification of results and provides a current view of the particular situation that is being researched. However, the appropriateness of the questionnaire for this particular study is discussed in more detail in section 4.2.4.4 in chapter 4.

3.3.2 Focus group interviews

Focus groups are not a new concept and over the years have become a well-known and recognised qualitative method that is used in research (Baker 1999:224). A qualitative approach to communication research is aimed at understanding human situations and behaviours and explaining these within a specific context (Du Plooy in Verwey & Du

Plooy-Cilliers 2003:217; Reinard 2001:223). Neuman (2000:510) defines a focus group as a type of group interview in which an interviewer asks questions to the group, and answers are given in an open discussion among the group members. A focus group is a qualitative method that aims to describe and understand the perceptions, interpretations and beliefs of a selected population in order to understand the particular group's perceptions, beliefs and interpretation of the specific subject matter. Focus groups are also descriptive of the interpretivist approach to communication research as they are directed at understanding and explaining communication behaviour as well as discovering and understanding what the organisational experiences of organisational members are and how they interpret these experiences.

Essentially focus groups are moderator-led discussion groups. Du Plooy (1991:28) defines a focus group interview as "an unstructured interview conducted by a moderator or facilitator with two or more respondents simultaneously, in a face-to-face situation using nondirective or open-ended questions". Rice and Ezzy (1999:72) highlight the following features of a focus group:

- It enables an in-depth discussion
- It involves relatively small groups
- Success depends on interaction between participants rather than answering questions
- Interaction is a unique feature of focus groups
- Participants have shared social and cultural experiences or share concern for the same matters.

The purpose of the focus group is often fourfold, namely to (Reinard 2001:223; Wimmer & Dominick 2001:97) -

- gather preliminary information for a research project,
- help develop questionnaire items for survey research,
- understand reasons behind a particular phenomenon, or
- test preliminary ideas or plans

To understand the application of focus groups as a method that can be utilised by researchers, it is important to highlight the benefits, but also to be aware of the limitations of this method.

3.3.2.1 Advantages of using focus groups

A range of advantages of this method of research can be identified and, according to Reinard (2001:225), as a result of its specific advantages it has become a very popular research method. One advantage of the focus group is the flexibility it permits which allows active and continuous adjustments of the hypothesis to be tested as the issues become better defined through the process. The focus group, as a result of this flexible nature, can result in significant information being uncovered for the research, and also provide rich insight into the topic or issues under discussion (Rice & Ezzy 1999:90; Krueger & Casey 2000:47; Angelopulo *et al* 2004:43). Essentially focus groups are a socially-oriented research method, which captures real-life information in a social environment. Another benefit of the focus group is derived from the fact that the group interaction provides security, as individuals may feel less exposed and more comfortable to express their views and as a result it encourages participants that are typically quiet and not that outspoken to participate (Baker 1999:225; Steward & Shandasani 1990:55; Reinard 2001:226). It can also create a more comfortable setting for participants to discuss uncomfortable and personal issues without feeling intimidated, as a result of common problems or experiences of other participants (Rice & Ezzy 1999:90; Krueger & Casey 2000:47; Baker 1999:224).

Although the researcher and participants can interact directly it still has a lower cost than individual interviewing (Baker 1999:224; Focus groups 2004:1). Focus groups are also an excellent way of obtaining in-depth knowledge on sensitive matters and have high face validity (Rice & Ezzy 1999:90; Krueger & Casey 2000:47; Baker 1999:225). Finally, according to Reinard (2001:225), the focus group is very useful in pilot studies as it not only makes it possible for the researcher to pick up any mistakes before they are

incorporated further along in the research process such as a questionnaire, but it allows the discovery of what variables and settings are the most worth identifying and studying.

3.3.2.2 Limitations of using focus groups

Over and above the advantages of utilising the focus group as a research methodology, a range of limitations similarly exist that essentially can have a limiting impact on its application. The principle disadvantage of focus groups is that the results cannot be generalised to the larger population with any degree of scientifically measured confidence, as the information gathered represents only the perspectives of the specific participants and the confidence placed in the findings is a matter of judgement (Rice & Ezzy 1999:90; Krueger & Casey 2000:44; Reinard 2001:226). This judgement in turn is based on the design of the focus group discussion itself and on the assessment of the skills of those who conduct the focus group and interpret the findings (Focus groups 2004:1). Essentially a well-designed and executed focus group can offer results that are only suggestive and still need to be interpreted by the researcher.

Moreover, the researcher has less control than when utilising individual interviews and complexities related to individual beliefs, perceptions and practices cannot be explored. In a situation where a group participates in a discussion there is always a risk that some participants may conform with other members' opinions even though they may not agree. Conversely, differences in opinion can be problematic in group discussions, especially when participants are very dominant.

Furthermore, due to the fact that a moderator directs focus groups, there is a risk that the moderator, in an effort to keep the discussion focused on the topic, can influence the group's interaction. Aligned with this disadvantage, Reinard (2001:226) indicates that the focus group is only as good as its moderator, as an unskilled moderator may act in ways that bias the group. Finally, the data that is collected is often difficult to analyse, it is also often difficult to assemble an appropriate group.

Although in this section generic reference is being made to the focus group in order to provide a broad insight into measurement of intraorganisational communication, the focus group also forms an important component of the research process in the context of this particular study. It is particularly relevant as it allows participants the opportunity to freely and openly discuss their opinions and perceptions, which in turn highlight issues that are relevant to the study and which may need to be incorporated into the questionnaire. It furthermore provides an opportunity to gain insight into participants' understanding of key concepts, which in turn needs to be considered when designing the survey questionnaire. However, the appropriateness of the focus group for this particular study is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

3.3.3 In-depth Interview

Neuman (2000:506) describes in-depth interviews as a joint venture between the interviewer and the interviewee and researchers often rely extensively on in-depth interviewing as a field research technique. In-depth interviews are also often referred to as an intensive/informal/ethnographic/focused/unstructured conversational interviews (Du Plooy 1995:112). An in-depth interview is also frequently described as an interview with a purpose and is a qualitative research technique (Du Plooy 1995:112). The reason for choosing to use an in-depth interview is to ensure that the researcher uncovers perceptions at an individual level on a particular issue.

The in-depth interview can in essence provide a detailed background about the underlying reasons why participants give specific answers, as well as provide extensive information related to the interviewee's opinions, perceptions, values, motivation and feelings, *et cetera*. It also allows the researcher to gain a broader perspective with regard to how communication is viewed within a particular organisation. Essentially in-depth interviews as a qualitative research method, which is designed to provide deeper understanding of how communication is perceived and experienced in the organisation, is representative of an interpretivist approach to communication research. The information gathered from this particular method of data collection provides background information

with regard to what may emerge from more focused measurement techniques and allows the interviewee to provide feedback on their experience.

Bearing this in mind, it can be argued that in-depth interviews are a valuable method of measuring the effectiveness of intraorganisational communication, especially as a precursor to the more structured measurement methods, as they provide data for the structuring of many of the other measurement techniques, such as the questionnaire or focus group discussion.

3.3.3.1 Benefits of in-depth interviews

As a very well known and recognised method utilised by researchers, the benefits of in-depth interviews can be utilised by the researcher to the advantage of their research. In-depth interviews allow the researcher to explore previous answers or topics further, thereby allowing them to uncover information that might not typically be discussed and they therefore allow the researcher the freedom to explore new issues or topics that may emerge during the interview (Angelopulo *et al* 2004:41; Neuman 2000:272). The interviewer can also clarify any uncertainties or questions that the respondent does not understand, as the researcher and respondent can interact directly (Du Plooy 2001:119; Neuman 2000:272).

The presence of the researcher limits answers of no value such as "do not know" or yes or no answers. The in-depth interview also allows the researcher to observe the respondent to uncover information by looking at nonverbal cues (Du Plooy 1995:114). Moreover, in-depth interviews are an excellent way of obtaining in-depth knowledge on sensitive matters and complexities related to individual beliefs, perceptions and practices can be explored. This particular methodology is also flexible in nature, the researcher has a high level of control and the interviewer can keep the discussion focused on the topic and relevant information. Finally, complexities related to individual beliefs, perceptions and practices can be explored (Du Plooy 1995:114).

3.3.3.2 Limitations of in-depth interviews

Inherent limitations of in-depth interviews need to be recognised when this methodology is being considered as preferred research methodology. Firstly, the in-depth interview is a costly and time-consuming research method that has a higher cost than focus group interviewing as it requires high levels of personal involvement from the researcher or interviewers (Du Plooy 1995:114; Angelopulo *et al* 2004:41). The volume of data that is collected is often very large and difficult to analyse and therefore it is generally difficult to quantify and standardise responses (Du Plooy 2001:119; Du Plooy 1995:114). Information represents only the perspectives of the participants with regard to the particular research and it therefore cannot be generalised. As a result of the above limitation, it is critical to record everything that is being said. Researchers must be careful not to influence the content of the discussion by giving their opinions or to influence the response by providing some unintentional nonverbal cues. The interviewee may not be honest or willing to share all the information that is required (Du Plooy 1995:114).

Again, as is done in the discussion of the focus group, generic reference is being made to the focus group in order to provide a broad insight into measurement of intraorganisational communication. However the in-depth interview also forms an important component of the research process in the context of this particular study. The nature of the in-depth interview as discussed here allowed the researcher in particular to attempt to uncover perceptions related to intraoganisational communication at a senior level, as well as to establish the background of what emerged from the focus group discussions. Its benefits as described above, essentially allowed the researcher to gain a broader perspective with regard to how communication is viewed, as well as to contextualise the data extracted from the focus group discussions and questionnaire survey.

Whilst the measurement perspectives as discussed above provide an understanding of the evaluation approach that the researcher will take and the methodology used focuses on

the actual process of data gathering, it is as important to establish what must actually be measured. The elements or aspects of intraorganisational communication that needs to be measured must be clearly defined, as it will determine whether or not the communication audit can measure integrated communication or is an effective integrated communication measurement instrument are in which the research questions are answered. In the next section the focus will be placed on elements or components of intraorganisational communication that should be measured. For the purpose of this study, it is referred to as the communication measurement imperatives.

3.4 ELEMENTS OF INTRAORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION MEASUREMENT

In terms of the measurement of intraorganisational communication, which is concerned with the systematic ways of analysing intraorganisational communication for the purpose of diagnosing problems and designing interventions that can improve communication, it is necessary to recognise that a variety of elements or aspects of intraorganisational communication can be monitored, which also incorporate elements such as employee performance and issues impacting on it, business process engineering and the integration of operational processes throughout the organisation and organisational strategy as argued by Gayeski & Woodward (1996:2). In effect the communication elements that the organisation has to measure when attempting to evaluate intraorganisational communication and the level of integration of intraorganisational communication in the organisation needs to be identified and will be discussed below.

3.4.1 Communication measurement/assessment imperatives

Communication measurement takes many forms, which can be confusing for those tasked with performing it (Likely 2002:22). Communication measurement is also generally not clear-cut, as intraorganisational communication itself is complex and impacts on the organisation as a whole. Measurement/assessment imperatives, which in the context of this discussion refer to the elements or aspects of intraorganisational communication which the researcher are concerned with measuring, must approach intraorganisational

communication measurement from an integrative perspective especially if the systems model of thinking, where each component is interrelated, is used. Generally the measurement of intraorganisational communication includes six communication elements that are measured and these refer to the message sender, message receiver, message, medium, environment and the action or behaviour of, in this instance, employees. Some of the issues that often impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of intraorganisational communication and are often related to these six components can be identified and are mentioned by Binneman (1998:22) and Organisational Diagnostics (2004:sa) as:

- Obstacles hampering effective communication
- Ineffective communication processes and resources which can then be eliminated or optimised
- The exact areas where communication gaps occur
- The role of informal communication
- The level of integration within the organisation
- The impact of people-related issues such as attitudes, opinions and behaviour on communication and its integration

Some of the obstacles hampering effective communication, as well as ineffective communication processes and resources include, for example, information overload, inappropriate channels for communication being used, a negative organisational culture and climate and conflict in the organisation, nonsupportive communication structure, *et cetera*. On the other hand, issues related to how integrated communication in the organisation is, include for example issues related to whether operational departmental goals and objectives align themselves with the organisation's vision, mission and overall objectives and whether departmental interaction and collaboration is effective in achieving shared goals and objectives. Knowledge of these issues is critical in order to enable the organisation to recognise and address any shortcomings related to it, with the purpose of improving intraorganisational communication. Furthermore, these issues, as highlighted by Binneman (1998:22) and Organisational Diagnostics (2004:sa), are generally descriptive of the functionalist and interpretivist approach to communication

and its measurement as described in section 3.2.1 and are concerned with improving the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of intraorganisational communication on both the organisation and its employees. Likely (2002:22) also argues that organisations need a communication performance measurement framework that incorporates three measures, namely, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of intraorganisational communication. These measures are described as follows:

- Efficiency focuses on productivity and includes issues such as the quantity of communication and whether the communication channels worked, and if the message was appropriate and on time. Issues such as the communication infrastructure and the communication process are important. This level of measurement is often referred to as output or output measurement (Likely 2002:22; Sinickas 2002:sa; Communication metrics 2002:sa).

- Effectiveness generally focuses on whether the right people received the message and whether it affected their awareness and understanding. Issues directly affecting communication effectiveness include organisational climate and culture and these two issues are often measured when evaluating communication effectiveness. Typically this level of measurement of communication is also referred to as an outtake or outtake measurement (Likely 2002:22; Sinickas 2002:sa; Communication metrics 2002:sa).

- Impact generally focuses on how the audience interpreted or perceived the communication, how they reacted and how it changed their perceptions. This measure of communication is typically referred to as an outcome (Likely 2002:22; Sinickas 2002:sa; Communication metrics 2002:sa).

By closely considering the efficiency which places emphasis on communication infrastructure and communication processes, the effectiveness which places emphasis on issues such as organisational climate and culture and the impact of communication which places emphasis on perceptions, three distinct areas of the major elements of

intraorganisational communication that needs to be measured can be identified.   These three focus areas create the basis for some of the key communication-related issues amongst others that should be measured and in terms of this particular research project is termed measurement imperatives, that needs to be included in the research are discussed below and are as follows:

- Structure and process measurement
- Culture and climate measurement
- Perception measurement

3.4.1.1 Structure and process measurement

When referring to the measurement of structure and process in this context, reference is being made to the organisational structure and communication-related infrastructure and processes, such as the channels of communication, the levels at which communication takes place, the directions in which communication flows, as well as the communication networks that exist in the organisation (Hamilton 1987:43; Greenbaum 1987:279; Booth 1988:62; Duncan & Moriarty 1998:6).   By understanding these intraorganisational communication-related concepts, one is able to gain an overview of how the organisation operates at a basic level and in the applied context insight is crucial for the effective integration of communication.   According to Duncan and Moriarty (1998:9), integration is a systemic process that requires certain organisational support elements, which typically refer to the organisational and communication infrastructure.   Essentially the design of the formal communication system/structure is responsible for carrying all communication throughout the organisation and, as such, the way in which it is designed affects the communication flow in the organisation.   It is important to understand what impact the structural design of the organisation has on communication and how the utilisation of technology impacts on the structural design and communication (Wallace 1993:146; Greenbaum 1987:310).

Within the ambit of measurement or assessment it is difficult to measure the more complex and more insubstantial aspects of communication such as organisational climate and culture without considering the structural elements of communication such as communication channels, communication networks, *et cetera*. The structural elements of intraorganisational communication often provides an indication of the way the organisation operates and, the management approach of the organisation, which in turn often manifests itself in the organisational culture and climate (Hamilton 1987:43; Goldhaber 1993:88).

The measurement of structural elements as described here is also especially relevant as what happens at a primary level, such as the levels and direction of communication, and communication networks, influences secondary communication aspects such as communication climate and communication satisfaction. All the elements, with the exception of the actual infrastructure, have been discussed in section 2.2 of chapter 2, therefore the actual communication infrastructure of the organisation and how it should be measured will be discussed below. In addition to the more structural aspects of the intraorganisational communication, other issues related to the actual message and whether it is received and understood will be mentioned and specific reference will be made to media richness, message load and overload and the relevance of messages.

- Physical communication infrastructure

The communication infrastructure of an organisation plays a critical role in how communication takes place as it provides the basic framework in which communication takes place, for example in a technologically advanced organisation the way in which communication is shared is totally different from the way in which communication is shared in a nontechnologically-driven organisation (Downs 1996:29; Goldhaber 1993:73; Greenbaum 1987:297). Dependent on organisation's level of access to technology, it could be found that in the technologically-advanced organisation, due to its greater access to technology, e-mail may be the preferred method of communication, whereas in a nontechnologically-advanced organisation, where access to technology is limited face-to-

face or small group contact may be the preferred method of communication. Therefore, bearing in mind that organisations have incorporated technological change, which has impacted directly on the way in which organisations' infrastructure is configured, it is critical for organisations to recognise this as a factor in achieving intraorganisational communication and other objectives.

In addition to the actual communication infrastructure that is provided, it is also necessary to consider whether the organisation is utilising the most appropriate medium for the transmission of information throughout the organisation (Downs 1996:29; Goldhaber 1993:67). To find the best message medium fit to enhance the organisation's ability to communicate effectively, the issue of the richness of media becomes important.

- Media richness

Essentially the issue of media richness is aimed at finding the best message medium fit among rich and lean media and rich and lean information, thereby enhancing the organisation's ability to effectively communicate (Rice 1993:67). Media richness is focused on differentiating between lean and rich media through the number of cue systems within each medium, and measurement of whether the communication mediums the organisation utilises are appropriate in terms of richness requirements therefore forms a crucial measurement imperative of an integrated communication measurement process (Rice 1993:67; Dennis & Kinney 1998:257).

When working in an organisation one is bound to find two or more individuals working together and by implication they then communicate through some medium. These mediums themselves differ in how effectively they transmit information and some mediums provide richer and more complete information than others (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:62). The most commonly used and richest medium is face-to-face communication, as it provides immediate feedback and exchange of ideas and allows the communicators to use varying modes of communication, which is confined in words, vocal cues, nonverbal communication and written communication (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:62).

According to Dennis and Kinney (1998:257), these modes combine to transmit information about a task and social information about the personal characteristics of the various individual team members. Therefore, it is argued that other media have lesser ability to transmit these different forms of communication (Dennis & Kinney 1998:257; Du Plessis *et al* 2001:47).

The process as discussed above is the main conceptual framework of the media richness theory. In essence, the main premise around media richness and the conceptual theory which underpins it is that media differs in richness, with face-to-face communication being the richest, whilst other media capable of sending fewer cues or providing slower feedback are leaner. Richness or leanness simply refers to the ability of information to change understanding within a time interval (Daft & Lengel 1986:560). The basic concept is therefore the degree to which media affected communication can change the way in which teams work and can lead to better or poorer performance levels (Daft & Lengel 1986:560). Furthermore, the issue of media richness is especially critical in an increasingly technologically-driven world and organisational environment. Therefore, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness and shortcomings of intraorganisational communication, the issue of the richness of the media that is used must be measured.

In addition to the issues as discussed, it is necessary to look at how the channels are used as not all channels are suitable for all messages as they differ in channel capacity and noise (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:47). This is especially critical as the channel of communication and its suitability for transmitting specific messages impacts heavily on communication effectiveness and therefore the issue of information load and overload is another area that should be measured.

- Information load

Information load refers to the quantity and rate of incoming information that must be processed through a single channel and therefore refers to the number of inputs received

within a specified period (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:47). According to Neher (1997:159) the major purpose of analysing the flow of communication through the channels and networks in an organisation is to identify and deal with bottlenecks or people dealing with information overload. Therefore, the concept of information load allows the organisation to identify potential problems.

On the other hand, although information load can be problematic, information overload typically can be a greater threat to effective communication (Neher 1997:159; Downs 1996:30). Organisations are sometimes faced with the dilemma of trying to understand why, despite their efforts to communicate regularly to their internal stakeholders, the communication itself is not effective. Amongst many other reasons for ineffective communication, such organisations may find that more communication and information is not necessarily a good thing, as it results in information overload rather than the intended purpose of keeping staff informed.

Neher (1997:179) defines information overload as a subjective judgement that depends on the perception of the complexity, unpredictability and effort required to process messages, as well as the sheer number of incoming messages. Information overload can simply be defined as a situation where the receiver is bombarded with so much information that he or she is unable to cope with the volume of information, especially as a large portion of communication that is received is often not relevant to an employee (Downs 1996:30).

Over and above the stress factor related to having to sift through large volumes of information, this information overload could lead to problems where the individual does not respond to, or even access information, which may lead to critical information being ignored. In support of this view, Watson and Wyatt (1999:6) also refer to this organisational reality and the impact on organisational communication effectiveness in their research, when they argue that the receiver literally has to cut through the clutter to find that which is of relevance to them. Therefore, although organisations may be enticed

to communicate more, the organisation should rather measure whether they are communicating relevant information to the audience (Downs 1996:30).

Relevance of information received is especially important to employees as although they like to receive information, employees generally want to receive information in which they have interest (Watson and Wyatt 1999:6). Receiving irrelevant information essentially may have a limited impact, if any, on the audience that receives the information except that, as indicated above, that it potentially can result in information overload (Downs 1996:30). On the other hand, receipt of relevant information can make a positive impact, as the audience feels empowered as they have access to information and knowledge about issues pertaining to them. By providing relevant information the organisation can increase buy-in as the employees could be more informed regarding issues that has an impact on them. Message relevance is therefore also an underlying fundamental of communication effectiveness and, as such, it needs to be measured or assessed. As mentioned in this discussion on the measurement of the communication structure and processes in the organisation, the organisational culture and climate provides the milieu and background to why an organisation communicate the way it does. Consequently, the second measurement imperative that is necessary to evaluate intraorganisational communication refers to the measurement of organisational culture and climate.

3.4.1.2 Culture and climate measurement

By understanding what the organisational culture and climate is, one is able to gain an insight into how the organisation operates at a basic level. Moreover, in the applied context insight into the organisational culture and climate is crucial for the effective integration of intraorganisational communication as it has a direct impact on how to integrate intraorganisational communication in a particular organisation. It essentially contextualises the nature of a particular organisation, which assists not only in highlighting problem areas in relation to the organisational nature that inhibits intraorganisational communication, but also provides information on the appropriate

integration of intraorganisational communication within a particular organisation. The issue of culture will be discussed first and will be followed by a discussion of organisational climate.

Kreitner and Kinicki (1995:31) define culture as "a pattern of basic assumptions that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel". Rensburg (1997:115) argues that when people share a common frame of reference for interpreting and acting towards one another and the world in which they live, one sees culture in action. Verwey and Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:132) define organisational culture as "the patterns of shared beliefs, values and knowledgeable means of managing an organisation's experience that tends to manifest in its material arrangements and in the behaviour of its members". Considering the definitions as listed here and by extracting the underlying key concepts organisational culture can be defined as the shared values and norms of a specified group that determines and influences the way the group and its constituent members act towards each other and others.

Furthermore, organisational culture fulfils specific functions and according to Robbins (2001:515), organisational culture -

- defines boundaries and through this differentiates between organisations,
- carries and transmits a sense of identity,
- transforms individual interest to commitment,
- enhances social stability,
- makes sense of the organisational environment and provides control mechanisms, and that in turn provide guidelines to employees and shape their actual behaviour.

Considering the above discussion not only is the structure and process of communication critical to measure, the way in which the organisation functions in terms of the organisational environment is also an aspect that should be measured as the culture and climate of the organisation provides the background assumptions and expectations that people operate from (Barker in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:146).

Furthermore, the role that communication plays in the cultural context can be seen in the irrefutably significant influence that it has on the culture of the organisation, just as culture influences the way organisational members communicate (Kreps 1997:132). This interrelated influence, according to Kreps (1997:132), is highlighted by the fact that organisational culture is created through organisational members' development of collectively held logic and legends about the organisation and its identity, which are shared and integrated through organisational communication. Du Plessis *et al* (2001:25) state that culture provides the background that enables people to learn about the organisation and how to perform their roles more efficiently and productively. Barker (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:132) argues that organisational culture provides information related to what a new employee must learn and integrate in order to be accepted as a member of the organisation. According to Harris (1993:18), the various communication activities are what keeps the organisation operating and provide the cultural foundation.

Neher (1997:144) and Mersham and Skinner (2001:112) also refers to the reciprocal relationship between culture and communication and argues that culture is created as people communicate with one another and on the other hand culture shapes and directs the communication confined in it. Therefore the organisation, by recognising the underlying fundamental of organisational culture and the fact that it indeed forms part of the intraorganisational communication context, should make it a critical aspect that must be measured in order to build and enhance the shared meaning between staff and thereby enhance the organisation's ability to move in one strategic direction.

On the other hand organisational climate is important, as it is typically descriptive of the organisational environment and refers to the set of attributes possessed by the organisation (Barker in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:135; Kreps 1997:193; Du Plessis *et al* 2001:26). It more specifically refers to the way people feel about or perceive the actual atmosphere within the organisation (Neher 1997:145). It also refers to specific connotations within the confines of personal experience and as a result organisational

climate can be conducive or not conducive. The climate of the organisation is the result of the management philosophy in a particular organisation, which is reflected in the management style that is practiced (Kreps 1997:194). Level and Galle (1988:316) also refer to climate as the organisational atmosphere and the well-known Hawthorne studies highlight the importance of the social climate of an organisation. Considering the definitions as listed here and by extracting the underlying key concepts organisational climate can be defined as the perceptions and experiences of the organisational environment and its prevalent atmosphere. The way the employee perceives and therefore experiences the organisational climate can generally be divided into five main factors, as mentioned by Downs and Hazen (in Downs 1996:112); Wallace (1993:146); Clampitt and Berk (2000:226) and Sampson (2004:2). These are:

- Supportiveness
- Participative decision-making
- Trust, confidence and credibility
- Openness and candour
- Clarity of organisational and performance goals

The communication climate, which is a component part of organisational climate, is descriptive of the intraorganisational communication environment and more specifically refers to the way people feel about communication within the organisation. The environment in which the employee functions can directly impact on their perception of the organisation and the communication and the level of satisfaction the employee may experience with communication. For example, if the environment is autocratic and negative, communication is often viewed with suspicion and distrust, whereas an open, participative and positive environment or climate often result in communication being viewed as trustworthy. As a result of communication being subject to the influence of many personal and organisational variables, communication climate is determined by how communication sources and opportunities are experienced by each individual employee (Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:167; Wallace 1993:146). It is therefore important to establish -

- how employees perceive, and therefore how they employees feel about the communication within the organisation,

- what leadership style is used,

- whether employees are motivated to communicate and are there any consequences of communicating if they do so, and

- whether there is conflict and uncertainty within the organisation and what impact it has on communication.

For the purpose of this study, communication measurement is approached from a holistic perspective and, as such, it recognise that the organisational culture and climate directly affects intraorganisational communication's success and contribution to the organisational strategic objectives and goals as it not only creates an enabling working environment for its employees and impacts on employee satisfaction but also determines how people communicate and communication is viewed in the organisation (Francis & Woodcock 1994:20). It also includes issues such as the vision and mission of the organisation and the successful communication thereof to all stakeholders.

The aspects that are measured here are especially focused on the impact/outcome of the communication, how intraorganisational communication is perceived and, as such, the issue of employee perceptions become a critical consideration. Hence, in addition to the measurement of organisational culture and climate, the way in which employees perceive intraorganisational communication is discussed, especially as satisfaction with intraorganisational communication provides an understanding of communication in the organisation and the impact it has on employees. In addition, according to Binneman (1998:4), measurement or evaluation of employee perception is a key component of intraorganisational communication measurement especially as it attempts to establish whether intraorganisational communication is effective in fulfilling its purpose of motivating and building employee morale and gaining compliance and support from employees.

3.4.1.3 Perception measurement

Perception is a critical concept in the social sciences as people react to the world as they perceive or see it and not the world as it really may be (Breakwell, Foot & Gilmore 1993:186; Breakwell 2004:145). There is often considerable discrepancy between the way in which the social world or aspects thereof, such as communication, is seen and the way it actually is (Breakwell *et al* 1993:186). This principle is also applicable to communication and as such the way in which communication is seen or being perceived is important.

Salem (1999:55) argues that the way in which employees perceive communication can potentially impact on their readiness to accept and internalise the message. For example, if the employees perceive the communication as negative, their reaction or behaviour towards it may be one of resistance and as a result the communication is ineffective. This is often seen when organisations want to communicate change to their employees, as change is generally perceived in a negative way (Salem 1999:55). The perception of the communication has a direct relationship with the consequent behaviour and attitude of the audience.

Furthermore, perception measurement looks at more interpretive issues rather than measurable methods of communication and it is focused on attempting to understand and interpret employees' experiences of intraorganisational communication. The value here lies especially in the fact that it looks at the impact of communication rather than just the outputs. Perception measurement is therefore a critical component of an integrated and holistic measurement process and, according to Webster (2003:2), the value of perception measurement lies in the fact that it, amongst other benefits, can -

- quantify and prioritise the needs and wants of the stakeholders/audience,
- quantify and prioritise the decision criteria for decisions as well as the standards of performance of the stakeholders/audience,

- quantify the stakeholders/audience's levels of awareness and the perceptions they have regarding what potentially could satisfy their needs and wants, in comparison with the desired standards of performance,

- identify and prioritise the message to be delivered to the target audience, and

- quantify the awareness and perception shifts that are achieved through the communication effort.

According to Verwey (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:14), in order for people to work effectively, they must be motivated, have trust in their fellow workers and the organisation and have a real sense of commitment to achieving team and organisational goals. The way in which the employees perceive and experience the organisation has a direct impact on the level of motivation, trust and commitment. To achieve a high level of motivation, trust and commitment, it is critical to measure perceptions as this allows the organisation to establish the current situation in the organisation, become aware of problem areas and address any shortcomings or obstacles preventing or limiting employee motivation, trust and commitment.

As indicated by Likely (2002:22), a framework for the measurement of communication needs to be created that looks at the principles of output/efficiency, outtake/effectiveness and outcome/impact. Within the confines of these three measurement levels that also incorporate the measurement imperatives that should at the very least be measured as discussed here, a framework or model for measurement, which can provide the foundation for the measurement of integrated communication needs to be provided. Such a measurement model, which layers the levels of measurement from communication output to communication outtake and finally communication outcome, will be conceptualised in the next section.

3.4.2 Communication measurement model

When evaluating the measurement of intraorganisational communication, the various aspects or elements that can be measured to illustrate more clearly has been transposed

into a pyramidal structure by the researcher. The pyramidal structure is created to simply illustrate that the measurement of intraorganisational communication can be seen in the context of levels as described by Likely (2002:22) when he refers to levels of assessment of intraorganisational communication.
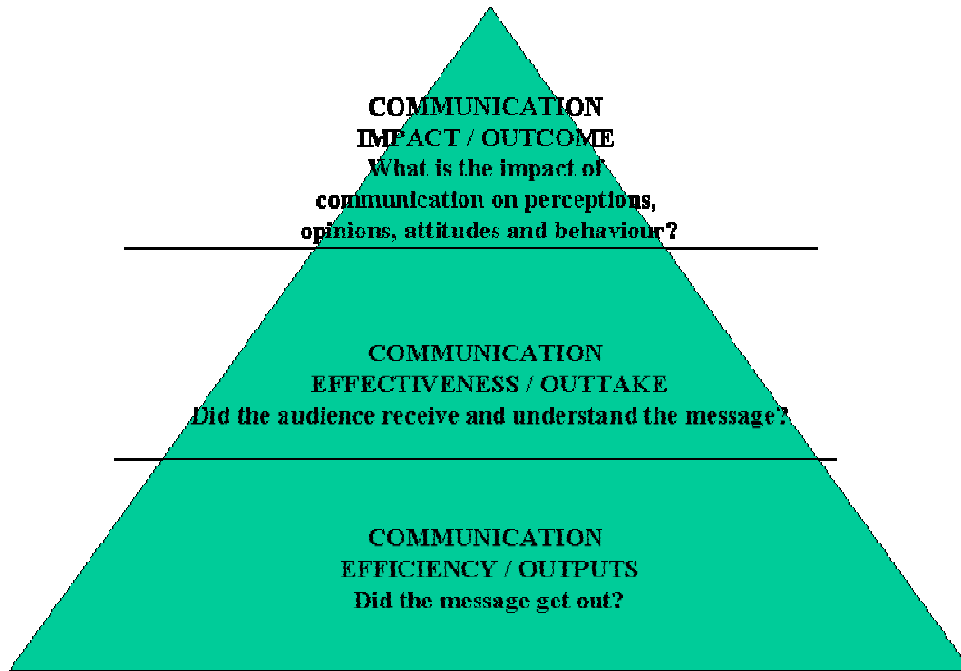

FIGURE 3.1: LEVELS OF MEASUREMENT /ASSESSMENT

The model encompasses the three different levels of assessment of communication as described by Likely (2002:22), Binneman's (1998:22) levels of measurement focus on:

- The actual communication efficiency/outputs and therefore the question of whether or not the message is actually accurately being distributed and received.

- The effectiveness of communication/communication outtake and therefore the question of whether the audience received and understood the message.

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- The impact/outcome of the communication and therefore the question of what the opinions, perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of the audience are and how the communication has changed or influenced them.

The value of Likely (2002:22) and also Binneman's (1998:22) three levels of measuring communication as depicted in Figure 3.1, for this particular study lies in the fact that an attempt is being made to measure communication and its integration by focusing on, for example, whether communication is taking place (level one), how effective communication and the channels used are (level two) and finally the underlying perceptions that exist. Binneman (1998:22) and Likely's (2002:22) measurement levels can result, amongst other results, in the identification and evaluation of issues impacting on the effectiveness and integration of communication as a strategic and fundamental component of the organisation and its success.

In addition, although not comprehensive in the context of the communication audit the three levels as argued by Likely (2002) and Binneman (1998) provide some of the parameters that should be included in the assessment of communication in the case study organisation. This model does not specify all the aspects of communication and its integration that should and will be measured, but it does provide the basis for assessment of communication in terms of the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of communication as well as the variables and issues related to the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of communication.

3.5   SUMMARY

Over and above the idea of what must be measured in relation to intraorganisational communication, it is critical to establish how it must be measured or assessed. The measurement of intraorganisational communication and the integration of all communication within this context is complex and requires a holistic approach when applied. Communication is in essence the bridge between the organisation's strategy and its successful implementation and as such quantifying its effectiveness is as important as

any other business performance measurement. The value of measurement and assessment lies primarily in the fact that it is able to provide information and an understanding of perceptions of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of intraorganisational communication and thereby creates an opportunity for the organisation to attempt to improve perceptions of intraorganisational communication.

This chapter specifically focuses on the principle that as the research is concerned with establishing whether the communication audit can effectively measure integrated intraorganisational communication, the issue of measurement is a key concept and becomes a primary focus area and, as such, requires a very careful consideration of the issues impacting on the measurement of intraorganisational communication. Within this ambit, the actual perspective on measurement that is used or more simply the way measurement is approached impacts directly on what aspects of intraorganisational communication is measured as well as how successfully it is measured. The way in which the measurement of intraorganisational communication is approached also has a direct relationship with determining what methodology can or should be used to obtain relevant information and as such reference is made to the current prevailing measurement perspectives that exist in relation to intraorganisational communication measurement.

In relation to the measurement perspectives and the research methodology that is descriptive of these perspectives, the actual method for measuring intraorganisational communication that is used is also discussed in order to contextualise the choice of the particular measurement instruments that will be used and their specific appropriateness for this study both in relation to the actual administration of the instruments and interpretation of data as well as and more importantly, whether it will measure the communication elements the researcher intends to measure.

In addition, as part of the focus being placed on the measurement of intraorganisational communication, the way the research is approached (measurement perspectives) and the methods (measurement instruments) that will be used to measure the intraorganisational communication must further be expanded on to include what elements of

intraorganisational communication needs to be measured. The issue of the actual physical environment and operational processes (structure and process) in relation to communication, the way in which the organisation operates in terms of how things are done and therefore the organisation and its communication is experienced (culture and climate) and employee perceptions as argued in this chapter all form a component part of evaluating intraorganisational communication especially for this particular research project.

In the following chapter the issue of measurement of communication will be narrowed down to a specific communication measurement instrument, namely the communication audit, which will be used and applied in this particular research project.

CHAPTER 4: THE COMMUNICATION AUDIT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Measurement of intraorganisational communication has broadly been defined and discussed in chapter 3 and as means of progression the discussion will narrow its scope to the communication audit as the measurement instrument that will be used to evaluate integrated intraorganisational communication. An overview of the communication audit as a key concept and its importance to this research was provided in section 1.3.2.4 of chapter 1 and in order to comprehensively contextualise the use of the communication audit as preferred measurement methodology, this overview is expanded in this chapter to include a critical discussion of the communication audit which includes the objectives and scope of the communication audit and some types of communication audits. Reference is also made to a number of theoretical foundations with specific reference to the systems theory which in relation to this particular study provides the theoretical basis for measuring integrated communication.   The theoretical discussion as outlined above provides the background to the actual application of the research and the choice of the ICA audit as preferred method of measurement. Finally, the ICA Audit will be adapted to provide an exploratory framework for the measurement of integrated intraorganisational communication. The communication audit has been developed as a way of measuring intraorganisational communication.   To establish the appropriateness of its application to the concept of integrated organisational communication, but more specifically intraorganisational communication, it is essential to define what the nature and role of the communication audit is to provide a theoretical framework on which the audit is based, as well as what level of reliability and validity it has.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION AUDITS

Communication audits are not a new concept and they were first developed by organisational development scholar and practitioner, Odiorne (1954:235) as a means of studying communication flow. He attempted to establish what the accuracy and direction

of communication in a particular organisation was. His work concluded that the techniques he used, although not substantiated through testing, did produce valuable information which, when used, resulted in a general improvement of communication within the organisation (Odiorne 1954:240). The communication audit has, however, been refined over the years and has become a valid and reliable research method of appraising the communication system of an organisation (Wallace 1993:129). Before the communication audit itself is defined it is important to understand some of the theoretical foundations on which communication audits have been based.

4.2.1 Theoretical framework

The concept of audits and the way it has been used has been based on numerous theoretical foundations of which the classical, human relations and the systems theories are perhaps the most prominent. These organisational theories describe the way in which organisations are viewed and also provide a basis from which organisational communication and the measurement of organisational communication and more specifically, intraorganisational communication, as a part of the organisation can be approached. Essentially in this context the organisational theories offer ways in which the researcher can use the communication audit to measure intraorganisational communication. However, as a result of the development of how organisations are viewed, only brief reference will be made to the classical and human relations theories, which view the organisation from a narrower base, whilst more attention will be paid to the systems theory, which according to the researcher underlines the more modern perspective that the organisation is a system and, as such, all components of the organisation are interrelated and need to be integrated. The three approaches are as follows:

4.2.1.1 Classical Approach

One of the most wide-ranging models of organisations was based on the similarity between organisations and machines and the classical theory of organisations is based on

this mechanistic view of organisations. The classical approach to management was developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and is generally recognised as the first attempt to analyse and direct organisational activities (Kreps 1990:64; Smit & Cronje 2002:37). The foundation of this theory was based on the principle that scientifically designed organisations are characterised by carefully developed chains of command and efficient division of labour (Mersham & Skinner 2001:18; Shockley-Zalabak 1991:86). Classical theories were concerned with what the organisation looked like and focused on the design, structure and order of the organisation (Smit & Cronje 2002:37). F.W. Taylor, who is often referred to as the father of scientific management, in essence embodied the approach when he almost exclusively focused on the most efficient use of all resources, including employees (Krebs 1990:64; Du Plooy-Cilliers in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:26). Taylor's work served as the basis for the development of essential elements he viewed as the foundation of scientific management, namely (Mickletwait & Wooldridge 1997:7; Du Plooy-Cilliers in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:26; Robbins 2001:583):

- careful selection of workers,
- scientifically training and developing the workers in order to change them into a specialist in their particular field,
- equal division of work between management and workers,
- discovering the scientific method for tasks and jobs by breaking them down into their simplest components,
- designing reward systems that will motivate workers to perform well, and
- using managers to co-ordinate tasks and activities and using them to motivate workers.

Essentially Taylor asserted that through the scientific examination of a specific organisational job the task could be designed in such a way that it promotes efficiency and increased productivity (Kreps 1990:72; Smit & Cronje 2002:380; Robbins 2001:583). By and large the classical approach is founded on principles that underline

the fact that maximum output should be valued and that co-operation and not individualism should be advocated (O'Hair, Friedrich & Shaver 1995:15).

The classical approach to a large extent ignored communication as a key variable in the study of human behaviour, and with the exception of management communication, is irrelevant to organisational success (Rensburg 1997:110). Generally, the purpose of communication was viewed from the perspective that it was there to assist in the establishment of managerial control and was used as a tool of management to facilitate task completion (Mersham & Skinner 2001: 17; Shockley-Zalabak 1991:93).

Communication in this approach was viewed as a one-way process and as being unimportant to organisational functioning. This approach rather subscribed to the belief that use of coercion and power enabled the organisation to achieve organisational goals (Du Plooy-Cilliers in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:26). Communication in this approach was therefore used mostly for giving orders and instructions and was mostly formal and in a written format. The communication role was seen to be focused on reducing uncertainty about task expectations and measurement (Shockley-Zalabak 1991:93). In addition, horizontal communication between people at the same level was seen as a waste of time and money (Puth 1994:15). Essentially people were seen as cogs in a machine and as a result communication, other than for the purpose of instruction, was not encouraged, which in turn implies that the social needs of employees were not acknowledged (Rensburg 1997:111; Mersham & Skinner 2001:18).

With this in mind, it appears that the classical theorists used a closed systems assumption and viewed communication activities as isolated events, without considering other variables and their research was therefore very focused on efficiency rather than effectiveness (Barker 1979:4). The focus here was on the principle that communication should flow downward in an organisation and that the instructions should be clear and understandable in order to optimise management and productivity. The classical approach, however, was heavily criticised for its simplistic view of human nature and motives and the impact this has on organisations (Kreps 1997:73; Smit & Cronje

2002:380; Shockley-Zalabak 1991:93). This focus on efficiency and effectiveness is also particularly descriptive of the functionalist perspective to measurement as it attempts to isolate elements of communication in order to improve the operations of the organisation. Du Plessis *et al* (2001:11) as indicated in section 2.3.1 of chapter 2 indicated that this perspective is primarily concerned with making the employees efficient and productive (Wren 1994:35; Conrad 1990:109; Kreps 1997:64).

Essentially the approach was seen as inhuman and incompatible with a world that places more and more emphasis on participation (Du Plooy-Cilliers in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:27). Even though as a result of this "inhuman" approach, its relevance has to a large extent diminished in an environment where people play a critical role in organisational success the principals of effectiveness and efficiency are still important. These principles of how to improve processes in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness is still critical in order for organisations to be successful, but the approach does not move past this and consider other variables that impact on organisational success and its effectiveness and efficiency. As it does not consider other dimensions such as the social needs of people, the classical approach although it provides fundamental components to successful communication and in turn organisational success, is one-dimensional. As indicated in section 3.2.1.1.of chapter 3, integrated communication is multidimensional and as a result the classical approach is not appropriate for this particular study.

The approach and its fundamental principles which are confined within the functionalist perspective are primarily concerned with information processing and isolating elements of an organisation that contribute to or hinder the operations of the organisation and influenced communication studies through work conducted by Leavitt (1951:38) and Guetzkow and Simon (1955:242) amongst others. Leavitt (1951:38) and Guetzkow and Simon's (1955:242) work contributed to the conceptual understanding of the reality that attention needs to be given to how communication patterns, chains and networks influence group performance and employee behaviour. Overall its impact can be seen in the more functionalist aspects of the communication audit, such as network analysis. It

furthermore highlights the need to take a more holistic approach by recognising the role of people in the organisation, which is highlighted by the human relations approach.

4.2.1.2 Human Relations Approach

The Human Behaviour School of thought shifted the emphasis from the structure of organisations, work design and measurement to the interactions of individuals, their motivation and influence on organisational events (Shockley-Zalabak 1991:96; Mersham & Skinner 2001:19). The Human Behavioural perspective assumes that work is accomplished through people and it emphasises co-operation, participation, satisfaction and interpersonal skills (Shockley-Zalabak 1991:96). The Human Relations approach, which is descriptive of the behavioural or humanistic theoretical framework, focused more on management practices and organisational behaviour. Mayo, Roelistberger and Dickson's Hawthorne studies (in Rensburg 1997:111), which focused on establishing what the relationship was between worker output and working conditions, are of the most important research that is descriptive of the more human-oriented approach and are the basis of the Human Relations approach.

The Hawthorne studies were designed to identify the ideal work environment for peak efficiency and were conducted at the Western Electrical Hawthorne plant in Cicero, Illinois between 1925 and 1932. The initial focus of these studies was in line with the classical theory and followed the Taylorist scientific management design. However, the studies' findings led researchers to question the validity of the scientific management school of thought (Kreps 1990:79). The studies manipulated the lighting in the work areas of the plant by decreasing and increasing the lighting over a period of time. The results, however, showed that that employees did not react to the changes in the lighting and therefore changes to their environment, they rather reacted to feeling important as a result of being monitored. The studies resulted in the finding that social factors were an important factor that influenced worker productivity (Conrad 1990:158).

The emphasis of the Human Relations approach is more on the needs of individuals in the organisation (Mersham & Skinner 2001:19). This people orientation of the theory is underlined by the following basic assumptions (Puth 1994:19):

- Motivation and productivity are determined by group norms and values
- People on an emotional level relate to other people
- Motivation depends to a large extent on the leadership and communication skills of management
- Communication as a social premise is emphasised, and
- Employees are viewed as individuals rather than simply a collective within the confines of an organisation.

These basic assumptions of this approach as discussed here is descriptive of the interpretivist perspective as discussed in section 3.2.1.2 of chapter 3 as it attempts to discover and understand what the organisational experiences of organisational members are and how they interpret these experiences and therefore how people form and preserve their social worlds. Typically it is concerned with acquiring an understanding of intraorganisational communication from the peoples' perspectives and therefore focuses on comprehending people's experiences rather than enhanced productivity. The functionalist perspective aligns itself with the human relations approach in its interest in whether the social needs of people are satisfied by the interaction with those with whom they work.

Within the ambit of these principles the approach essentially established the importance of personal interaction and a more involved management process, which advocated and underlined both an upward and horizontally directed communication flow. Direct interpersonal contact rather than formal indirect contact was advocated and therefore informal communication was also recognised (Rensburg 1997:112). Furthermore, the Human Relations theory acknowledged that it was important to identify the individual needs of organisational members and this, according to Kreps (1990:92), can only be accomplished through effective management-worker communication. The human

relations theory which highlights the importance of the needs of organisational members is also articulated in the interpretivist perspective to measurement as interpretivism is also concerned with discovering and understanding what the organisational experiences of organisational members are, and how these experiences are interpreted (Neher 1997:336; Duncan & Moriarty 1998:3). The Human Relations theory and the interpretivist perspective on measurement are therefore directed at understanding and explaining human behaviour.

Essentially from this perspective communication is vital to the use of human resources and good organisational decision-making (Shockley-Zalabak 1991:96; Mersham & Skinner 2001:19). The research, which flowed from this approach and influenced communication studies, revolved especially around concepts that have been incorporated in the auditing of communication and they are as follows (Barker 1979:6):

- Leadership
- Communication satisfaction
- Small group communication
- Grapevine
- Informal communication

The relevance of this approach to the audit is that it highlights the role of the employee and social factors in the effectiveness of intraorganisational communication and the issues such as leadership, communication satisfaction, *et cetera* as indicated above, are incorporated in the audit. The human relations school of thought has also been criticised for it being a manipulative management strategy designed to increase productivity by pretending to be concerned about people (Rensburg 1997:112).

According to the researcher, even though as a result of its focus on people, its relevance can be seen as not totally encompassing in terms of its perceived failure to highlight the interrelationships of the various dimensions of communication. Barker (1979:6) in particular, criticised this approach, as according to him the communication research that

was undertaken within the ambit of this approach although it did consider a range of dimension of a system, did not comprehensively view all aspects of the system and its interrelationships, but rather emphasised the elements that are related to people and the interrelationships in relation to this.   Fundamentally, it is more advanced than the classical approach as it brings the dimension of people into the picture. People are a key principle and as a result even though the Human Relations approach is valuable, it does not emphasise integration and as such in the researcher's perspective is not appropriate for this particular study.   On the other hand, the systems theory places emphasis on the link and interrelatedness between each component of the system, which in the context of this study seems to be the most appropriate theoretical foundation in relation to integrated communication. The next section will concentrate on providing an understanding of the systems theory and its relevance to this particular study.

4.2.1.3 Systems Approach

The systems approach, which is also referred to in section 1.3.1 of chapter 1 and section 2.4.1 of chapter 2, was developed in the 1950's and appears to have a more dynamic approach to the organisation and the management thereof than the classical and humanistic types of approaches. Management theorists have also moved away from the scientific and human relations models and have, according to Booth (1986:90), recognised the systems approach as more valid and applicable to intraorganisational communication. The systems approach is seen as particularly valid and applicable as it recognises the role that communication plays in facilitating efficient functioning between the various components of organisations.

More detail regarding the principles of this approach can be obtained by using Katz and Khan's (1966:24) open systems theory, which is one of the most prominent contributions to the systems approach to management and the organisation. According to Katz and Khan (1966:82), an open system, which is defined by them as being an organisation interfacing and interacting with its environment, can characteristically be defined by nine qualities, namely:

- open systems import some form of energy from the external environment,

- the energy is transformed into some product,

- the product is then transferred to the environment,

- the energy exchange is cyclical,

- the system continuously works to avoid chaos or disorganisation,

- inputs into the system are informational as well as energetic,

- open systems which survive, are characterised by a steady state or dynamic homeostasis,

- systems move in the direction of differentiation of function and elaboration of roles, and

- open systems can reach the same objectives by different means from different initiatives' conditions.

The concept of "system" involves the idea of a set of elements connected together to form an entire system showing properties that are unique to the complete system rather than the properties of its component parts (Salem 1999:84; Checkland 1995:55; Mersham & Skinner 2001:24). According to Salem (1999:85), although systems thinking is concerned with wholes and the properties of wholes, it is equally concerned with how subsystem elements are arranged, their interaction and interdependence, as well as the mechanisms that generate and sustain the emergence of a whole. The systems theory or approach was developed with the purpose of allowing scholars to consider simultaneously all the complicated processes that make up human interaction (Conrad 1990:95; Checkland 1995:36). In essence the systems approach seeks to understand the interrelationship of all components and subsystems within the organisation but also between the organisation and its environment, especially as the external environment impacts on the internal organisational context (Smit & Cronje 2002:45).

Whilst the systems theory operates from the primary principles of interrelatedness and interdependence, it can be argued that the same fundamental principles of interrelatedness and interdependence also form the basis from which integrated communication operate

(Miller 1995:87; Corman *et al* 1990:113; Rensburg 1997:51 Wells & Spinks 1989:141; Harris 1993:3; Checkland 1995:45). The two principles are also highlighted by the researcher's definition of integrated communication as provided in section 2.2 of chapter 2. In this definition integrated communication is defined as the amalgamation of the dimensions of organisational communication as fundamental interdependent and interrelated components of all organisational processes in order to improve interaction and collaboration so as to achieve organisational success. Furthermore, Miller's (1995:51) argument that communication is the thread that ties the system together and is an essential part of every organisation without which it cannot survive as well as Duncan and Moriarty's (1998:3) argument that communication is the integrative element that assists the organisation to operate as a system underlines the argument that there is a link between the systems theory and integrated communication. Comparatively speaking, the classical and humanistic approaches do not articulate the interrelatedness and interdependence of all the dimensions and aspects of the system and intraorganisational communication.

Goldhaber (1993:64) argues that the principles that define an organisation as a system -

- is made up of a number of subsystems, all of which are interdependent and interrelated,
- is open and dynamic, having inputs, outputs, operations, feedback and boundaries,
- strives for balance through both positive and negative feedback, and
- has a multiplicity of purposes, functions and objectives, some of which are in conflict.

Essentially, the systems theory views an organisation from a holistic perspective by defining the organisation and management as the science of wholeness (Rensburg 1997:113; Mersham & Skinner 2001:24). According to Booth (1986:102), a system may be defined as an assembly of parts which are connected together in an organised way in order to fulfil a purpose that has an interest or value to someone. A system is made up of various parts and focuses on the relationship between these parts. Each component or part is dependent on the others to function effectively and therefore, as a result of this

interdependency, the complete system is better than one part or section of the system. Interdependence also implicitly means that a change in one area will affect the other parts of the system (O'Hair *et al* 1995:20).

The systems approach provides a perspective for understanding the complicated and interrelated processes that make up organisations and intraorganisational communication (Conrad 1990:97; Mersham & Skinner 2001:25). Byers (1996:27) also supports this view when it is stated that the systems approach gives recognition to the interrelationships among the different components that make up and influence the organisation. Furthermore, the systems approach not only looks at the structure or the people within the organisation, but it takes it a step further by including the environment as a third dimension.

Barker (1979:54) argued that early research from a systems perspective was conceptually widespread but can be used in the context of the social sciences. Barker (1979:54) also finds that the systems view enables researchers to consider interactions and interrelations of components within an organisation in order to uncover a more detailed and accurate picture of human behaviour, which also allows researchers to study intraorganisational communication more thoroughly. With the above in mind, the basic assumptions of the systems approach include the premise that human problems in the organisation are complex and dealing with them is not a simple matter and according to this approach communication is the element that keeps the system in balance. According to Conrad (1990:101), the systems theory provides a framework for understanding why communication processes function as they do.

The applicability of the systems theory to communication can be seen in the fact that based on the premise of this theory, communication also forms a subsystem of the organisational system and therefore functions as part of the whole. Furthermore, according to Du Plooy-Cilliers (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:30) the entire system and all its subsystems are dependent on communication to function effectively. Similarly, Du Plooy-Cilliers (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:31) argues that even

though communication influences all systems, everything that happens inside and outside the organisation also influences communication. According to the systems approach, communication is the element that keeps the system in a state of homeostasis. Homeostasis in this context means that the balance of the entire system is maintained through the co-ordination of organisational activities and functions (Rensburg 1997:114).

As communication is used at all levels in the organisation, it is used to connect the various levels and functions as well as the organisation with the external environment (Du Plooy-Cilliers in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:31). According to Kreps (1990:102), interdependence implies that all parts of the organisation are interrelated and in order for the organisation to operate effectively all functional units within the organisation have to be co-ordinated. Kreps (1990:102) states that this co-ordination can only be elicited through communication, which is used to inform interdependent components of changes and to persuade components to co-operate by co-ordinating activities. Therefore, communication can be seen as the basic process that facilitates the interdependence of all the subsystems within the total system (Byers 1996:27).

In addition to interdependency, the issue of the openness of an organisation, in other words, the degree to which organisations are responsive to their environment and the organisation's awareness of changes to its environment also has an implication for organisational communication (Kreps 1990:98). As a result of the organisation's ability to constrain organisational activities, organisational members must actively communicate with members of relevant organisations in the systems environment in order to determine the nature of environmental constraints, as well as to influence the activities of those organisations (Kreps 1990:102).

Moreover, the systems theory provides a microscopic and macroscopic analytical framework, which implies that there are many levels of organisation in an organisation. To understand the organisation both the inner workings of the organisation (microscopic) and interrelationships with the environment (macroscopic) need to be examined (Kreps 1990:102). Although intraorganisational communication contextually is not as such

concerned with the environment, within the context of the systems perspective as discussed here the environment influences the context of the organisation and impact on the organisation itself and as a result have a bearing on intraorganisational communication.   This particular principle of the systems theory introduces the importance of the channels of organisational communication (Kreps 1990:102).

The systems theory, according to Downs (1996:39), has made several important contributions to the ability to conduct meaningful communication audits. The systems theory, according to Downs (1996:39), conditions the researcher to take a holistic view of the unit being audited. It essentially encourage the researcher to measure all the areas that impact on the system and which incorporate the issues as highlighted by the functionalist, interpretivist and critical perspectives of measurement, which include -

- improvement of processes in relation to issues such as communication patterns, chains and networks in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness of communication,
- acquiring an understanding of intraorganisational communication from the peoples' perspectives and thereby improving people's experiences of communication and the organisation, thus ensuring that the social needs of people are satisfied by the interaction with those with whom they work, as well as
- identifying the power structure that is confined within an organisation and how the power structure maintains itself.

Furthermore, according to Downs (1996:39) the system is the total unit or organisation being examined but it is made up of many subsystems that can be defined differently, according to the purpose of the researcher. For example, in a general audit a total system can be evaluated but in order to do so the parts or subsystems of the system need to be evaluated. The systems perspective calls attention to the way things are related and it underscores the fact that the isolation of any one variable often distorts perceptions (Downs 1996:39).

Furthermore, according to Booth (1986:90), using a systems approach in communication auditing is particularly appropriate since the organisation exists as part of the world and as such intraorganisational communication cannot effectively be analysed as small components in isolation. Booth (1986:90) argues that the systems methodologies have the potential to manage all the various dimensions of intraorganisational communication as they take a holistic view of a system or subsystem and also focus on the component parts of each system and subsystem.

The systems perspective also calls attention to several communication formats, namely, individual to individual within the same work group, individual to individual across workgroups, unit to unit, individual to organisation, work unit to organisation and the environment to each of the other formats (Downs 1996:40). Checking the different formats during an audit is important as they are all interrelated and although the one format may be emphasised more than others for a particular audit, the systems perspective, according to Downs (1996:41), reminds auditors that the different formats affect one another.

Even though the systems thinking has been an advancement of theoretical perspectives from the early theories such as the classical and human resources approach to management and communication, it still has some limitations. The most important limitation is related to predicting and determining the effects of change on the various components of the system. As a result of this unpredictability an organisation cannot focus only on the effects of change that is anticipated but need to be prepared that the change may affect components that may not be anticipated. This unpredictability of the effects of change complicates the study of the system as a whole (Du Plooy-Cilliers in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:32; Conrad 1990:97). This unpredictability is also further complicated based on the organisation's and its employee's readiness to change as argued by Salem (1999:55) in section 3.4. In addition, people have limited cognitive capacity and this makes it impossible for them to take all internal and external factors and considerations into account (Du Plooy-Cilliers in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:32).

Finally, the system forms part of a bigger supra-system and it is practically impossible to incorporate all the systems into a study (Conrad 1990:97).

In essence, early theoretical approaches, namely the classical and human relations approach to the organisation and the management thereof, created fundamental principles, which are incorporated into the context of the communication audit through the communication audit placing emphasis on issues related to efficiency and effectiveness of communication structure and processes as well as the importance of people. The principle components of the audit that are reflective of these approaches are organisational and communication structure, perception or human experience and finally the organisational environment itself. With a basic foundation of the research that impacts on the communication audit and its development having been provided, the communication audit will be discussed beginning with the development of a definition of the communication audit and which will include a discussion on the purpose, advantages and limitations of the communication audit.

4.2.2 Defining the communication audit

Du Plooy in (Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:220) argues that a communication audit is a research method that is used to assess the effectiveness of intraorganisational communication, and to diagnose and rectify communication problems. Goldhaber (1993:74) indicates that the communication audit is "a research procedure which assesses the effectiveness of the organisational communication system". According to Hamilton (1987:3), the audit allows management the opportunity to improve the way in which the organisation deals with the information necessary for its operation and specifically addresses issues such as the clarity, appropriateness and efficiency of intraorganisational communication. Holsenbeck (1975:15) focuses on structural related issues, but includes the concept of the changing environment when the communication audit is defined as "an evaluation of existing communication patterns to assess the extent to which they meet the current needs of the organisation as it interacts with its changing environment".

Fogelman-Beyer (1999:19) also reiterates that the communications audit allows one to take a step back to ask how the organisation is performing and provides a benchmark for measuring communication and ultimately organisational success. Booth (1988:8) defines the concept of a communication audit as "the process whereby the communication in an organisation is analysed with a view to increasing organisational efficiency." According to Angelopulo *et al* (2004:90), "a communication audit is designed to consider an organisation's communication needs, policies, practices and capabilities". Angelopulo *et al* (2004:90) also state that "a communication audit evaluates personal communication, written communication, audio-visual and published communication material by audiences and message content." Essentially the communication audit can be defined as an assessment process which provides an impartial situational analysis of the current state of intraorganisational communication, in all its facets, with the purpose of providing information about communication problems, which can be addressed in order to improve and harness intraorganisational communication.

Whilst defining the audit provides some understanding of what a communication audit is, to understand the nature of the communication audit the specific purpose for which a specific audit is designed needs to be clear.

4.2.2.1 Purpose of communication audits

Communication is critical for organisational success, especially in today's continuously changing business environment. If the interaction within the organisation is inefficient and ineffective, the organisation could find it difficult to maintain a healthy balance. To maintain a healthy balance, Hamilton (1987:3) argues that from time to time organisations need to examine their internal communication systems, find out who is talking to whom, about what, through what channels and with what degree of success. Hamilton (1987:3) indicates that the communication audit, by providing answers to these questions, provides critical information that assists in decision-making, which in turn allows intraorganisational communication to be improved, thereby impacting on the bottom line of the organisation through increased organisational productivity.

In support of this view, Neher (1997:328) indicates that the purpose of the communication audit is to allow management to improve the way in which the organisation deals with information necessary to its operation. Du Plooy (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:220) also argues that the main purpose of a communication audit is not assessing employees as individuals, but instead to assess both the formal and informal communication structures and processes and to utilise the information extracted to improve organisational communication. Therefore, the purpose of the audit is to improve the functioning of the organisation in terms of increasing productivity and efficiency, as implied in Neher's (1997:328) statement.

Neher (1997:328) further expands on the underlying implications of the purpose of the communication audit as stated, when he argues that the communication audit gives a readout of the state of communication within the organisation at any given point in time (health check) or on an ongoing basis (progress check) on issues such as how employees perceive the communication climate, or it can reveal bottlenecks or weaknesses in an organisation's handling of the flow of information and the changes, if any, that occur over a period of time. By defining the communication audit through the manner in which it is conducted as indicated in the above section, Angelopulo *et al* (2004:90) highlight an underlying purpose of the audit in that "it allows the manager to make informed, economical decisions about future objectives of the organisation's communication."

Gray (2000:6) argues that the primary objective of measuring intraorganisational communication is to determine the extent to which it changes behaviour or influences attitudes and that it is critical to satisfy employees' communication needs. Therefore, communication audits assess the extent to which employees' communication needs are being met, whilst considering a wide range of variables that impact on the employees. This purpose aligns itself with the human relations approach as it considers the impact of communication on employees. Furthermore, by considering a wide range of variables that impact on employees and effective communication, this purpose of the communication audit also aligns itself with the systems theory, which supports the view

that all components of communication in the organisation should be considered as they form part of the whole system.

Clarity regarding the purpose of the communication audit can also be found in understanding why a communication audit should be undertaken and Reuss and Silvis (Sa:58), Booth (1988:24), Du Plessis *et al* (2001:98), Rensburg (1997:119) as well as Rensburg and Bredenkamp (1991:84) refer to the following purposes for which communication audits are carried out, namely to:

- find out how well communication programmes are working,
- diagnose current or potential communication problems and/or missed opportunities,
- evaluate a new communication policy or practice,
- assess the relationship of communication to other organisational operations,
- develop communication budgets,
- develop benchmarks,
- measure progress against previously established benchmarks,
- develop or restructure the communication function within an organisation, and
- provide background for developing formal communication policies and plans.

Lomax (1986:51) describes the purpose of the communication audit as the following:

- A research and assessment process that explores the communication needs and strengths and weaknesses of an organisation.
- It identifies what is being done effectively and gives justification for budget and resources to continue.
- It identifies existing communication efforts that are not achieving their objectives and therefore are misplaced and ineffective.
- It identifies communication gaps.
- It can make recommendations regarding how to eliminate communication related weaknesses and in turn create communication-related strengths.

Underlining or highlighting the purposes of the communication audit as discussed here provides a deeper insight into the definition of the communication audit as it gives meaning to the context for and in which the communication audit is used. To further expand this understanding of the communication audit, attention must be given to the underlying advantages and limitations of a communication audit as these have a direct impact on the successful application of a communication audit as well as whether the analysis of intraorganisational communication will provide the information required from it.

4.2.2.2 Advantages of the communication audit

The most important advantage of a communication audit is confined in its primary purpose, which is focused on providing a deeper understanding of the internal communication structure and climate of an organisation. Hamilton (1987:6) argues that the intrinsic worth to a communication audit lies in the fact that an effective and well-administered audit and its resulting findings, if effectively implemented, could result in change, which is supported by all the members of an organisation. When the communication audit is undertaken and its findings and recommendations successfully implemented, benefits or advantages derived from the auditing process that can be experienced by the organisation include (Hamilton 1987:6):

- increased and improved productivity,
- more appropriate use of existing and future communications and information technology,
- more efficient use of time,
- discovery of "hidden" information resources, and
- increased staff confidence, loyalty and commitment.

These benefits are especially derived from measuring perceptions in terms of issues impacting on staff morale such as the organisational and communication culture and climate and identifying and addressing weaknesses or barriers as identified by the

measurement of perceptions with regard to issues impacting on staff morale. Not only does audit data provide information that the researcher can use to make recommendations which in turn can be used to improve the aspects of communication that need improvement, but it can also, according to Rensburg and Bredenkamp (1991:87), provide other advantages. Amongst these advantages, the data can be used to influence new business innovations such as restructuring and organisational development programmes, as well as identifying key communication groups before the organisation undertakes any restructuring or implementing of organisational development initiatives. It can be used as a pre- and post-measurement to establish the impact of new and continuing communication-related programmes. It can also be used to identify initiative-related communication costs such as telephone calls and postage specifically related to a communication initiative or programme (Rensburg & Bredenkamp 1991:87).

Downs (1996:34) also explains that management typically identifies five functional benefits to a communication audit, namely:

1. The verification of facts, in that the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation are often known but there is an inherent requirement from management to verify that these weaknesses and strengths exist. The audit therefore allows the organisation to move away from perception and assumption toward valid information on which to base decisions.

2. The diagnostic value is another benefit in that it allows the organisation to pre-empt situations, issues and problems and take a more proactive approach to communication and its impact within the organisation.

3. The provision of feedback is a benefit as the communication audit allows the organisation to assess a variety of programmes and therefore provides an internal benchmark of how well the programme is implemented or communicated.

4. Downs (1996:34) argues that another benefit resides within the confines of active communication and therefore participation, in that insight from a broader intellectual capital basis is provided and this increases the veracity of ideas and decisions. That "two heads are better than one" is a sound management principle that is emphasised by utilising the communication audit.

5. Downs (1996:34) refers to the training benefit, which is expressed in the idea that managers who participate in the planning and conducting of a communication audit inherently improve their communication processes and skills.

Du Plooy (2001:315) argues that some technical benefits of communication audits can also be identified and they are as follows:

- An audit is based on a valid framework that investigates the effectiveness during a specified time period.
- The selection of one measuring instrument or the combination of two or more instruments, provides flexibility in the research design and can be guided by the objective of the research, the extent of the problem and the size of the population.
- An instrument such as a questionnaire can be adapted to the nature of the particular organisation and, once standardised, can be used during follow-up audits, thereby increasing validity.

Finally, according to Rensburg and Bredenkamp (1991:87), the communication audit is a means to an end as it is a diagnostic instrument that provides management with information to develop solutions for organisational problems, especially problems that are linked to communication in some way. The benefits described above are all of value but Stone (1995:56) argues that the greatest value of a communication audit is renewed and meaningful dialogue about the roles and goals of communication, in support of the organisation's strategy and delivery. The significance of this lies in the fact that through the audit process and the dialogue that takes place the role of communication as a crucial component to organisational success can receive attention and recognition.

4.2.2.3 Limitations of the communication audit

Various limitations can be identified, with the main limitation or disadvantage centring on whether or not the communication audit is a cost-effective process (Du Plooy 2001:315). Gayeski (2000:28) argues that although communication audits are useful, they have some shortcomings, namely:

- Communication audits rely heavily on opinions and respondents only express their views, or sometimes even the view that they think the researcher would like to hear.
- Participants very seldom have something to use as a reference point and therefore they cannot compare their current communication system to something and thereby make an objective input.
- Satisfaction measures are extremely difficult to correlate to performance and causality cannot be determined.
- An increasing mobile workforce priority results in the communication behaviour receiving less attention, as it is more productive to focus on communication rules and tools.

Furthermore, communication audits are generally very specific and in instances where organisations are geographically spread the audit must be conducted at every centre as the environment, problems, issues and considerations can vary broadly and the findings of one geographical location probably are not descriptive of another geographical area and therefore cannot be generalised. Moreover, as a result of the limitation of generalisation and depending on the actual methods that are used a communication audit, although already costly, can become a very expensive process. The various methods that are used within the confines of the communication audit itself have limitations attached to them and as such an inherent requirement of incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods is increasingly being suggested (Stone 1995:55).

In addition, in the confines of the particular study, part of the purpose of the study is to establish whether the communication audit can measure integrated communication throughout the organisation. Potentially, and this is yet to be proven, the communication audit might find it difficult to incorporate the measurement of all aspects of integrated communication in one process. The reasoning for this argument is that the scope of such an audit would simply be too large to measure such a host of issues effectively.

The audit measurement instruments, in order to measure integration of communication, need to be comprehensive without becoming cumbersome for the respondents to undertake and to include all aspects of integrated communication could increase the volume of work required from the respondents as well as the researcher and this may have an impact on the validity and reliability of the research and its findings. However, although listed here as a perceived limitation, as indicated, this perceived shortcoming is based on the speculation of the researcher.

Whilst recognising and understanding the limitations of the communication audit is critical to successfully implementing an audit in an organisation, to understand what can be measured by a communication audit is also critical and to do this the scope of the communication audit itself needs to be reviewed. In addition this is especially important as an audit from an integrated perspective, as described by Gayeski and Woodword's (1996:3) definition of integrated communication, as well as Barker and Du Plessis's (2002:2) argument that the communication activities, functions, organisational structure, the environment and relationships with stakeholders are the levels where integration should take place can be complex. Hence, in order to understand the way in which the communication audit can be applied to measure intraorganisational communication, the following section will focus on delineating the scope of the communication audit.

4.2.3 Scope of the communication audit

The communication audit provides a platform to develop and align intraorganisational communication that is designed to deliver not only efficiency and effectiveness, but also business benefit and value (Francis & Woodcock 2004:15). The scope of a communication audit is something that is a variable issue, as it depends on the information that is required from the audit. Therefore, in each instance the audit methods and the focus that is used might not be the same, as the purposes for the audit will vary from one organisation to the next. However, Fogelman-Beyer (1999:19) identifies general elements that a communication audit should consider, namely:

- Participation in vision and mission development
- Clarity of communication
- Situational assessment – understanding the current situation within the organisation
- Message assessment
- Media / medium assessment
- Communication programme assessment
- Communication programme development
- Measurement

These elements, however, are not comprehensive enough when considering the measurement of integrated communication and a number of issues are highlighted by other authors such as Greenbaum (1987) and Wallace (1993). Greenbaum (1987:310) and Wallace (1993:147) suggest that the communication audit as it is used currently considers the following organisational communication-related activities which incorporate some of the issues already mentioned by Fogelman-Beyer (1999:19), namely:

- Corporate policy planning with respect to its impact on communication efforts
- Corporate culture with respect to its consistency with organisational goals as well as communication climate

- The organisation of the internal communication department in terms of organisational structure and the design of the formal communication system
- Information procedures with regard to the flow of information throughout the organisation
- Work processes, products and results with regard to communication output
- Technological platform on which the organisation operates
- Competency and ability of organisational members to communicate
- Interdepartmental relations with regard to communication interaction
- Briefing systems with regard to employee interaction and information

These elements, as described by Fogelman-Beyer (1999:19), Wallace (1993:146) and Greenbaum (1987:310), to some extent align with the measurement of integration of communication as defined by Gayeski and Woodward (1996:3) as they incorporate the evaluation of integrated, multifaceted interventions combining information, instruction, collaboration, business process design, feedback and incentive systems to improve human performance in the workplace. Including these various elements into the scope of the audit also aligns with the evaluation of communication activities and functions, organisational structure, relationships with stakeholders as well as the environment which in turn represent the five levels at which Barker and Du Plessis (2002:3) argue integration should take place.

The scope of the communication audit essentially addresses the abovementioned communication-related issues and activities as described by Fogelman-Beyer (1999:19), Wallace (1993:147) and Greenbaum (1987:310) and assesses or evaluates how effectively these issues and activities are perceived to fulfil communication functions and in reality are confined in the efficiency, effectiveness, satisfaction, impact and achievement of communication within the organisational context.

Once one is familiar with the concept of the communication audit, the issue of which type of audit will be the most appropriate to fulfil the objectives determined for the measurement is critical. Similarly, for the purpose of this particular study and in order to

contextualise the choice of the type of communication audit that will be used in this study, some of the types of communication audits that can be undertaken will be highlighted in the next section.

4.2.4 Types of communication audits

When considering the definition and scope of the communication audit as discussed in sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, it can be argued that there is a wide range of communication structures and behaviours that could be addressed in the communication audit. Similarly, it can be argued that in an integrated approach to communication where each aspect of communication forms part of the system this is even more apparent with management audits, job satisfaction, organisational climate and culture surveys all ultimately measuring aspects of communication. With such a large scope of communication-related issues that need to be measured, it is necessary to use a communication audit that either already incorporates all the relevant intraorganisational communication aspects or which can easily be adapted to incorporate these aspects.

Considering that the choice of communication audit will impact on answering the research questions as posed in section 1.5.2 of chapter 1 specific reference will be made to the ICA audit as it is not only one of the most widely used communication audits, but it also measures many of the communication domains that form part of the scope of integrated communication including receiving and sending information to and from others, the timeliness of information received as well as the action taken on information received (Du Plooy in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:220). The ICA audit also includes communication domains such as communication channels and relationships, job satisfaction as well as the actual sources of the information (Du Plooy in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:221).

Moreover, where the ICA audit fall short in terms of evaluating measurement imperatives for integrated communication in the intraorganisational context, the ICA audit can be adapted and consequently appears to be particularly compatible to the purpose of this

particular study.   However, to contextualise the choice of the ICA audit as the preferred type of communication audit that is used for this particular study, reference will be made to some of the other existing types of communication audits that are often used to measure aspects of intraorganisational communication.

These ones are especially chosen as examples as they also incorporate some of the elements that is considered important for the measurement of structure and process, perception and culture and climate as identified in section 3.4 in chapter 3. The types of communication audits included here will be discussed in a chronological order and are as follows:

- Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire
- Communication audit of written media
- Audit of communication effectiveness
- ICA Audit

4.2.4.1 Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ)

The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire was develop by Downs and Hazen (1977:63) in an attempt to discover the relationship between communication and job satisfaction and has successfully been used in a variety of research projects in intraorganisational communication.   Downs and Hazen (in Downs 1996:112; Sampson 2004:2; Clampitt & Berk 2000:226; Varona 1996:111; Nhlapo 2000:7) explored the multidimensionality of communication satisfaction and based on literature reviews and interviews with workers, they developed a questionnaire, which was intended to measure the multidimensionality of communication satisfaction. On the basis of their analysis an eight-factor questionnaire, which was then revised into a ten-factor questionnaire, was developed and the factors that are measured are as follows (Van Riel 1992:68):

- Organisational perspective/corporate information

This factor deals with the broadest kind of information about the organisation as a whole and includes items of notification about changes, information about the organisation's financial standing, and information about the broad organisational policies and goals (Sampson 2004:2; Clampitt & Berk 2000:226; Varona 1996:111; Nhlapo 2000:7).

- Organisational integration

Organisational integration revolves around the degree to which individuals receive information about the immediate work environment and items that are included here are the degree of satisfaction with information about departmental plans, the requirements of the job and personnel news (Varona 1996:111; Nhlapo 2000:7; Downs 1996:113).

- Communication climate

This factor reflects communication on both the organisational and personal level and on the one hand includes items such as the extent to which the communication in the organisation motivates and stimulates workers to meet organisational goals and the extent to which it makes employees identify with the organisation. On the other hand, it includes items such as estimates of whether or not people's attitudes toward communicating are healthy within the organisation itself (Sampson 2004:2; Varona 1996:111; Nhlapo 2000:7).

- Supervisory communication

Supervisory communication includes both upward and downward aspects of communication with superiors, with the principle items included here referring to the extent to which superiors and supervisors are open to ideas, the extent to which they listen and pay attention and the extent to which they offer guidance to their subordinate

employees in solving job-related problems (Sampson 2004:2; Clampitt & Berk 2000:226; Varona 1996:111).

- Subordinate communication

This factor focuses on upward and downward communication with subordinates and therefore only workers in a supervisory capacity would respond to these questions. Items that are included here are subordinate responsiveness to downward communication and the extent to which subordinates initiate upward communication (Varona 1996:111; Nhlapo 2000:7; Downs 1996:112).

- Horizontal/co-worker communication

Horizontal communication/co-worker communication focuses on the extent to which horizontal or informal communication is accurate and free flowing and includes satisfaction with the activeness of the grapevine (Sampson 2004:2; Clampitt & Berk 2000:226; Varona 1996:111; Nhlapo 2000:7).

- Media quality

Media quality deals with the extent to which meetings are well-organised, written directives are short and clear and the degree to which the amount of communication is right (Sampson 2004:2; Clampitt & Berk 2000:226; Varona 1996:111).

- Top Management Communication

This additional factor evaluates the communication of top management with organisational members and includes items about top management attitudes towards the openness to new ideas, caring and willingness to listen (Varona 1996:111; Downs 1996:112).

- Interdepartmental communication

Interdepartmental communication deals with the communication that is needed among the different departments of the organisation in order to facilitate their efficiency. It includes items about problem solving, teamwork and communication among managers (Varona 1996:111 & Nhlapo 2000:7).

- Personal feedback

Personal feedback refers to what an individual knows about how his or her performance is being judged (Varona 1996:111; Nhlapo 2000:7; Clampitt & Berk 2000:226).

According to Clampitt and Berk (2000:226), the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire provides a wonderful overview of the potential problem areas that can be further investigated and it is still a dominant measure of communication satisfaction in applied and basic research (Sampson 2004:2). It does, however, not incorporate any measurement of what the current situation is as reflected by the respondents compared to what the respondents feel is required, as is the case in the ICA Audit.

The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire offers both an efficient and a comprehensive approach to audit of the communication practices of organisations. Measuring communication satisfaction, however, provides an understanding of communication in the organisation and its impact on employees, but it does not allow concrete evaluation of the effectiveness of communication channels and written communication as well as integrated communication and as a result is not appropriate for this particular study. The concrete evaluation of communication channels and written communication is crucial as most of the formal communication in organisations is presented in a written format. Thus, as important as it is to evaluate the abovementioned aspects impacting on communication satisfaction, another crucial component is to evaluate the effectiveness of communication channels and written media in the organisation.

4.2.4.2 Communication audit of written media

Campbell and Hollmann (1985:60) support the necessity of evaluating written media when they advocate the importance of undertaking a systematic analysis and evaluation of the readability of organisational messages. The focus of the audit, therefore, would be specifically on assessing the content, relevance, layout and presentation of the written media. Although Campbell and Hollmann (1985:60) argue that all written communication should be assessed, they refer in particular to written messages that have an impact on productivity and financial resources, and some of these written messages are as follows:

- Policies
- Published in-house bulletins
- Newsletters
- Contracts
- Training and orientation material
- Letters, memos and reports

Typically the method that is used to evaluate written media is content analysis, which simply concentrates on asking what is being written and how clear the communication is in terms of interpretation and understanding. According to Du Plooy (2001:313) and Kolbe and Burnett (1991:243), content analysis within the context of intraorganisational communication is done on information that is disseminated via media, including written media, and this can provide valuable insight not only into the effectiveness of written intraorganisational communication but also into the nature of the communication routine within the organisation. The audit of written communication, although valuable, does not consider the issue of relationships, interaction, collaboration as well as employee satisfaction, opinions and perceptions and as a result is not suitable for this particular study.

Finally, as part of a comprehensive view of an organisation and all aspects of its communication, auditing written communication forms a critical component of ensuring overall communication effectiveness within the organisational context.

4.2.4.3 Audit of Communication Effectiveness (ACE)

The Audit of Communication Effectiveness, according to Francis and Woodcock (2004:35), is a key diagnostic tool in unblocking intraorganisational communication and has been widely used in a variety of organisations. It is focused on providing diagnostic data on intraorganisational communication effectiveness, which in turn allows the organisation to develop improvement programmes for issues that have been diagnosed as ineffective. Francis and Woodcock (2004:36) also argue that the purpose of the Audit of Communication Effectiveness (ACE) is to provide a standardised organisational survey focusing on communication issues that is technically a survey, which is focused on extracting current opinion at the time of the survey being carried out.

The unblocking organisational communication model used in the ACE survey is broad in scope and is combined into four conceptual quadrants, each made up of three components. The quadrants themselves centre on the following principles, which underline effective communication according to Francis and Woodcock (1994:7) and are as follows:

- Communication for sharing a compelling vision, which incorporates the components of sensitivity to the external environment, a compelling vision and persuasive management
- Communication for effective integration effort, which incorporates aspects such as integration mechanisms within the organisation, supportive geography or geographical positioning within the organisation (proximity) and downward flow of communication

- Communication for sustaining a healthy community, which incorporates aspects such as high trust levels, lack of prejudice and supportive teamwork

- Communication for intelligent decision-making, which includes aspects such as an upward flow of communication, and effective and relevant administration and communication skills of all employees.

This approach is generally focused on improving the effectiveness of communication from an organisational perspective. In other words, it is concerned with organisational outcomes that are mostly focused on productivity through effective communication. The approach is more descriptive of a bottom down approach even though it recognises that the organisation needs a healthy community to function effectively. It also is mostly used in evaluating narrowly defined business units and therefore its broader application in terms of the overall purpose of finding a measurement instrument that can comprehensively evaluate integrated communication throughout an organisation is questionable. Consequently, the method, although it has value, is not the most suited to the purpose of the research and therefore not entirely appropriate for this particular study.

4.2.4.4 ICA Audit

The best-known communication audit is one called the International Communication Association (ICA) audit (Du Plooy in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:220). The ICA Audit was primarily designed by Goldhaber, Richetto, Dennis, Falcione and Rogers under the auspices of the Organisational Communication Division of the ICA which is a professional society composed of communication researchers, practitioners and teachers from various countries (Sampson, 2004:1). The justification provided by Goldhaber and Rogers (1979:20) of the need for communication audits was especially based on the fact that they had noted the value of financial auditing for organisations and the value of physical medical checkups for individuals and as such they argued that the communication audit provides an organisation with advanced information which may prevent major breakdowns that limit overall effectiveness.

Goldhaber and Rogers (1979:20) also continue to justify the need for measurement of communication in organisations in the context of its value for diagnosis, evaluation and control. Furthermore, Goldhaber (Salem 1999:42) indicates that over and above the need for the measurement of communication and the actual application within the organisational context, the communication audit methodology of the ICA itself has several advantages and although not typically included in the research reported in literature, they are as follows:

- It uses a variety of measurement techniques (five) to converge on a core of communication behaviour
- It relies on co-operation from a number of large organisations, which in turn provides a large sample for the research database
- It allows several multivariate comparisons among key organisational variables, especially by interfacing the findings of the five measurement techniques
- It has been carefully and rigorously developed after four years of literature research and five pilot tests in a variety of organisations
- Its standardised measurement procedures allow for replication and generalisation of findings.

According to Sampson (2004:1), the purpose for the design of the ICA communication audit was to provide organisations with reliable and factual data about their internal communication and to do so in a way that permitted the organisation to compare itself with similar organisations. The ICA communication audit in its original form is still a widely used measurement method, but it also provides a fundamental framework for communication audits that are modified to fit specific purposes. The modification and ultimately the adaptation of the framework the ICA communication audit provides, is especially critical as it allows the researcher to attempt to measure communication and its integration throughout the system. This is achieved by providing an opportunity to incorporate all aspects or component parts of communication in the system into the audit instrument.

The ICA communication audit, according to Booth (1988:8), was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Determine the amount of information underload and overload associated with the major topics, sources and channels of communication
- Evaluate the quality of information communicated from and/or to these sources
- Evaluate the quality of communication relationships, specifically measuring the extent of interpersonal trust, supportiveness, sociability and overall job satisfaction
- Identify the operational communication networks (for rumours, social and job-related messages), comparing them with planned or formal networks (defined by organisational hierarchical structure)
- Identify potential bottlenecks and gatekeepers of information by comparing actual communication roles of key employees with expected roles
- Identify categories and examples of commonly occurring positive and negative communication experiences and incidents
- Describe individual, group and organisational patterns of actual communication behaviours related to sources, channels, topics and length and quality of interactions
- Provide general recommendations derived from the audit, which call for changes or improvements in attitudes, behaviours, practices and skills

The ICA communication audit is based on a series of research techniques for observation, data gathering and analysis that are standard in the social and behavioural sciences and a set of five standardised instruments and procedures can be identified and are summarised in Table 4.1 (Booth 1988:90).

TABLE 4.1: DESCRIPTION OF MEASUREMENT METHODS USED BY THE ICA
COMMUNICATION AUDIT TO GATHER COMMUNICATION-RELATED DATA

MEASUREMENT METHOD	FOCUS AREA	SESSION
Survey Questionnaire	Current status of the communication system as well as the ideal or desired status	Group
Interview	Focuses on topics that are important to the organisation or the researcher	Individual and/or group
Critical Incident Analysis (CIA)	Provides a description of communication behaviour related to a specific area of communication events	Individual
Communication Diary	Focus on key personnel and their communication	Individual
Network Analysis	Focus on general patterns of interaction and communication roles	Group

Neher (1997:329), Booth (1988:90), Du Plessis *et al* (2001:99), Rensburg and Bredenkamp (1991:87) and Rensburg (1997:119) go on to expand on the five elements as summarised in the table and describe each of the instruments as follows:

1   Questionnaire surveys

Generic reference has been made to the questionnaire section 3.3 of chapter 3, but it will again be referred to within the parameters of its application within the context of the audit. The questionnaire in the ICA communication audit is intended to measure attitudes and perceptions about communication sources, messages, channels and receivers within the context of the major interaction situations within the organisation (Wallace 1993:188). Typically, the topics that are surveyed include accessibility to information, adequacy of information, relevance of communication, communication satisfaction and

importance, communication content, communication relationships and communication outcomes.

Barker (1979:153) and Hamilton (1987:43) consider the use of the questionnaire as particularly appropriate to the audit context as it allows information to be gathered in a relatively short period of time. This is especially relevant for this particular research, as the case study organisation has placed some restrictions on the timeframe within which they would prefer to receive feedback on the research. Barker (1979:153) also indicates that the instrument itself is well designed to measure the concerns of the employees and the organisation. Barker (1979:153) also argues that the questionnaire is a valid and reliable communication-auditing tool, which makes its use appropriate when auditing communication in organisations.

In addition to the reasons for using a questionnaire as provided by Barker (1979:153), a further advantage of using the questionnaire as a measurement instrument is that it allows the quality and amount of the communication within the organisation to be measured (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:100). It also allows the researcher to include a large number of respondents (employees) and therefore a large sample, which consequently can increase the reliability of the data extracted (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:100; Hamilton 1987:44). This advantage is also relevant to the research that will be undertaken as all employees will be included in the sample and it allows the researcher to ensure that the research process does not become costly and time consuming as would be the case if all employees are interviewed. The use of the questionnaire has the further advantage of allowing for scoring to be processed through computers, which in turn allows for a quick readout and simple statistical analysis (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:100; Hamilton 1987:43). It is also easy to duplicate and allows inclusivity by providing an opportunity for everyone to contribute. The actual research that is undertaken will provide the organisation with a benchmark, which they can use to measure progress should they implement any of the recommendations that are made and as such this advantage is particularly relevant to the study itself.

In addition to these advantages, the communication audit creates a communication opportunity, which in turn provides the organisation relief from any objections that not every one was consulted when the audit's findings and resulting recommendations are implemented (Hamilton 1987:43). This advantage was critical in deciding which instrument to use, as inclusivity forms a part of the case study's organisational development interventions and therefore was placed as a criterion required from the research process. Finally, the communication audit has the added benefit of gathering demographic data and factual information about employees' interests, skills and qualifications which may be outdated and thereby providing the organisation with updated personnel information which can be used in a variety of settings including human resource planning and administration (Hamilton 1987:43).

In converse to the advantages as discussed above, the questionnaire presents the researcher with some obstacles to overcome, and one of the most obvious weaknesses is the length and complexity of the questionnaire (Downs 1996:109). The time that is needed to complete the questionnaire can result in respondents rushing to complete the questionnaire, refraining from answering all questions or simply just not participating in the research by not returning their questionnaires. This weakness is of particular concern as the case study organisation employs staff who are often out of the office and therefore have time restraints in terms of their availability to complete the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is a self-administered instrument and the implication is that any ambiguous terms will present the respondents with a problem in answering the question (Downs 1996:109; Wimmer & Dominick 2001:108). The resulting consequence can be that the respondents' answers may not be an answer to what the researcher was asking, but rather what they though was being asked. Similarly, the researcher cannot, without talking to all respondents, know how the questions were interpreted. Furthermore, the ICA survey questionnaire is a self-report, perception-based instrument and the results can be subject to questions about the congruence between what the respondents report and the actual communication realities in the organisation (Downs 1996:109). Finally, the audit even though fairly comprehensive, still leaves out significant areas such as structure of

network as well as employee buy-in and understanding of organisational strategy and objectives (Downs 1996:109).

The survey itself is typically conducted by using a self-administered questionnaire, which asks respondents to indicate their perceptions of communication and the desired ideal status of communication. The questionnaire focuses on comparing desired or needed communication with the communication actually received in the organisation and it consists of a hundred and twenty-two items, twelve demographic items and typically includes the following eight parts, namely (Du Plooy 2001:31; Rensburg 1997:119; Du Plessis *et al* 2001:100):

- Receiving information from others
- Sending information to others
- Action on information sent
- Sources of information
- Timeliness of information received from key sources
- Communication relationships
- Communication and work satisfaction
- Communication channels

Within the confines of the eight parts as listed above, items related to pay and benefits, performance evaluation, organisational policies, job duties, promotion policies and opportunity, change as well as organisational mistakes and failures are evaluated. From the data extracted from these questions the researcher can then compare the amount or quality of information received about a particular topic with the amount or quality that the respondents feel they need (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:100).

2   Interviews

Generic reference has also been made to the interview in section 3.3 of chapter 3, but will again be referred to within the parameters of its application within the context of the

audit.   The interview, according to Booth (1988:19), can be described as conversations with a specific purpose and is especially appropriate to the auditing context as it is used to explore variables that may be impacting on communication.   Interviews are, according to Hamilton (1987:69), more personal than some of the other measurement instruments such as the focus group discussion as they are focused on the individual and what they want from the organisation.   The interview is considered to be one of the most basic and central tools within internal communication audits and offers three main advantages over alternative information gathering-strategies or approaches, namely (Booth 1988:19):

- It provides unanticipated information as well as greater depth and meaning of communication experiences
- It enables auditors to gain a better understanding of how organisational practices and issues are perceived and interpreted by the employees
- It also fulfils the need of both the auditors and respondents for the audit to have a human and social aspect to the discovery of information.

In addition to the mentioned advantages, the researcher can also use the interview to explore and describe specific communication experiences and to elaborate and explain the findings of one of the measuring techniques (Du Plooy 2001:314; Rensburg & Bredenkamp 1991:90).   According to Hamilton (1987:69), the interview is the most productive way of becoming acquainted with and understanding an organisation and its employees.   It essentially provides the researcher with the opportunity to observe the organisation in operation and to acquaint themselves with some of the communication issues that may be prevalent in the organisation.   An example of such an opportunity that may arise is when the interviewee shows the researcher around, resulting in the researcher consequently being able to refine their appreciation of what the organisation and the particular employee does (Hamilton 1987:69; Downs 1996:49).   The researcher is able to develop a first-hand familiarity with the people and work processes in the organisation.

The interview also allows the researcher to probe answers during the interview, whereas some other measurement tools, such as the questionnaire, typically provide defined questions and therefore have a narrow or no explorative opportunity (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:101; Downs 1996:49). Related to this benefit the interview also allows the researcher to ask open-ended questions that will uncover information about areas that the researcher may not have anticipated to include in the questionnaire as well as potential idiosyncrasies of the organisation that the researcher should be aware of (Downs 1996:49). These advantages are particularly relevant to this particular research project as it allows the researcher to uncover topics especially related to the integration of communication for discussion in the focus groups as well as for the questionnaire.

In converse to the advantages as discussed above, the interview is also plagued by limitations that the researcher must consider. One of the most common limitations that the researcher is faced with is time constraints and interviews are time consuming (Du Plooy 1995:114; Hamilton 1987:69; Downs 1996:49). The organisation has indicated that the researcher has a particular timeframe, which must be adhered to, and this limitation has an impact on how the interview as measurement instrument must be used. Information extracted from interviews is not entirely quantifiable as it is more difficult to code, analyse and interpret (Hamilton 1987:69; Downs 1996:49; Du Plooy 1995:114).

Finally, information represents only the perspectives of the participants with regard to how they see the organisation (Downs 1996:49; Du Plooy 1995:114). Reliability of these perceptions could be problematic and needs to be verified, which would require probing and further questioning of other respondents as well as documentary data.

The ICA communication audit normally uses two interviews. The first is a structured interview, which uses open-ended questions, which provides exploratory information and the second follow-up interview is directed at expanding and explaining information found in the first interview and other audit instruments (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:102; Rensburg & Bredenkamp 1991:90; Rensburg 1997:120). Finally, the ICA interview covers the following items (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:102):

- The respondent is asked to describe their job

- The respondent is asked to describe the kinds of decisions that he or she makes, as well as the sources and adequacy of the information received for making those decisions

- The respondent is asked to describe the communication strengths and weaknesses of the organisation as well as the nature of the formal and informal channels through which he or she receives information

- The interviewer also explores issues of ways to improve information flow in the organisation, typical decision-making, and conflict resolution methods in the organisation.

- The respondent is asked to discuss his or her communication relationship with superiors, co-workers, middle management and subordinates.

3   Critical incident analysis

The critical incident technique is a methodology that is used to deduce instances of effective and ineffective behaviour in any context and was first used to evaluate competencies of air pilots in the Second World War. Today it is widely used in the audit context, where respondents are requested to provide information about effective or ineffective communication experiences that they may have had.   In essence, the employees are asked to describe in detail, in writing or verbally during an interview, critical communication incidents which they feel are representative of typical successful or unsuccessful communication incidents and from these descriptions it is possible to gain insight into why departments or organisations are having communication problems (Booth 1988:67).   The method is especially helpful in the assessment or measurement of communication climate and interpersonal communication skills and according to Wallace (1993:195) this method of measurement provides a fuller description of the actual communication behaviour than the questionnaire or communication diary.   However, according to Neher (1997:331) the information itself is much less quantifiable than that produced by surveys or interviews.

According to Downs (1996:134), the instrument is not governed by rigid rules and this gives the instrument the advantage of adaptability. The technique is highly adaptable to any specific observable situation or context and can even be left entirely open, for example, the researcher can indicate that they want the respondents to list critical incidents about supervisor-subordinate relations. The critical incident analysis also focuses on specific behaviours thereby representative samples of an observed behaviour can be collected. The critical incident analysis allows direct observation by those who actually experience the communication in the organisation.

The responses are unstructured as the respondents are given complete freedom in describing any experience and the resulting consequence is that typically respondents will stress the incidents that they assess has high priority or a major impact (Downs 1996:134). The information obtained from the critical incidents assists with the interpretation of information provided by the questionnaire as it can help to point out some examples or explain communication problems that might have been isolated by the questionnaire (Downs 1996:135; Du Plessis *et al* 2001:103; Rensburg & Bredenkamp 1991:89). Furthermore, as a result of the fact that this instrument can be administered through interviews and written surveys, the interviewer can probe the descriptions of the incidents described and this increases the depth of understanding of the incident and the interviewer's appreciation of it (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:103).

The instrument, however, as indicated by Neher (1997:331), produces information which is not as quantifiable as other instruments such as the questionnaire, which makes it a tool that needs to be used in conjunction with other instruments. The information cannot be machine scored and requires much more time and effort to read and analyse (Neher 1997:331). Furthermore, not only does the respondents look at any experience through their own communication filters and as a result can report data which is susceptible to subjectivity, but they also rely on their memory to recall specific information about an incident. Subjectivity and reliance on memory and recall are clearly limitations that the researcher should take note of (Downs 1996:134). However, regardless of the limitations

that the instrument has it is seen as a valid and reliable technique of gathering information related to communication from the organisation (Downs 1996:135).

4   Communication diary

The communication diary is a diary where individuals literally log and therefore "tally" communication activities over a specified period of time (Neher 1997:333). Greenbaum (1987:29) indicates that the concept of the communication diary "is intended to provide personal and group data about specific communication behaviours whilst requesting participants to record certain information about the interaction". Information can include, for instance, who the interaction was with, the medium or channel that was used, what the content of the interaction was and what the results or outcome of the interaction was, as well as the length of time the respondent spent on various communication activities (Neher 1997:333). Booth (1988:51) also indicates that the communication diary can provide information with regard to patterns of communication within the organisation and includes the following:

- The number of interactions that took place during the surveyed period
- The actual and average number of interactions that took place during a defined time span such as an hour, day or week
- The number of face-to-face, telephone, written and electronic interactions
- The duration of interactions
- The percentage of confidential interactions received and what is perceived to be useful, important and relevant
- The initiator of the interaction.

According to Booth (1988:50), a communication diary is kept for the purpose of providing information on the communication behaviour of an individual in their own right, as well as providing information on the communication behaviour of a group in instances where an individual is chosen as a representative of a group and the representative's communication behaviour is seen as being representative of that group.

The communication diary provides a more complete picture of the full range of communication activities than the network analysis (Neher 1997:333; Du Plessis *et al* 2001:108). The data produced provides insight into actual communication behaviour, the communication system, climate and interpersonal skills. However, the problem in using this instrument and collecting this kind of data lies in the strain that keeping meticulous records of this kind for any length of time places on the participants (Neher 1997:333).

5   Network analysis

Network analysis is a practical method for examining communication contacts in an organisation and provides very specific and direct information on the pattern of an individual's linkages in the organisation (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:104). Network studies are used with the purpose of producing a "map" of typical interconnectedness between members of an organisation and thereby identifying heavily used communication channels, possible bottlenecks, gatekeepers and positions that play a major lining function in the organisation's communication patterns (Neher 1997:332). It is essentially concerned with mapping communication networks, which as discussed in detail in section 2.2 of chapter 2, are the patterns of contact between communication partners that are created by transmitting and exchanging messages (Monge & Contractor 1998:5; Mersham & Skinner 2001:48; Shockley-Zalabak 1991:48; Robbins 2001:290).

According to Hamilton (1987:57), network analysis is the making of maps that connect time, space and communication and it is based on counting the communication interactions between people within the organisation. Network analysis is concerned with the identification and location of the links rather than the actual content of the interaction and as such the intention is to discover what the patterns of communication flow within a given organisation are (Booth 1988:42). Therefore, network analysis describes the communication links and networks that operate in an organisation, identifies the communication roles fulfilled by specific employees and identifies gatekeepers that create bottlenecks (Du Plooy 2001:315). Typically a survey format is used, with

respondents being requested to keep track of communication contacts and to provide information with regard to certain key variables, such as the communication method and source. The tracking of communication interactions in terms of the source and method of communication used can then be used to provide a diagrammatical picture or matrix of the formal and informal networks that exist in the organisation (Wallace 1993:194). Network analysis is generally used to study specific problems in the organisation and it is typically considered to be a "standby" of many communication audits (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:105).

Network analysis is a very practical method for examining communication contacts in organisations as it provides very specific and direct information on the pattern of an individual's linkages in the organisation (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:104). Network analysis also allows the researcher to understand the context in which each person interviewed works, as a person's contacts and environment are a controlling factor in his or her communication (Hamilton 1987:58). Measuring and fitting the communication network by means of the organisational map could help in identifying bottlenecks and developing strategies to improve communication effectiveness. A major problem is assessing who, why and when people interact is that the initiator of the communication and the target destination need to be identified. There is also a limitation of time constraints as listening to and analysing hours of recordings is time consuming and expensive. Regardless of this, network analysis is seen as the best way to describe existing patterns of communication relationships in an organisation and ultimately provides an understanding of the organisation's communication structure and data from which systematic changes can be made to communication structures (Du Plessis *et al* 2001:105; Downs 1996:168).

The ICA communication audit has also been criticised and Dewine and James (1988:145) highlight seven main categories, namely:

- Lack of centralised control over the data collection process
- Inability to compare local organisational norms to national norms
- Lack of follow-up procedures to test for impact

- Limitation of an essentially perception-based measurement tool

- Problems with the audit's present structure

- Methods of data analysis

- Procedures for developing recommendations for the organisation are based on the interpretation of results

Finally, Downs (1996:111) indicates that the ICA audit is merely an instrument, which should be used in conjunction with other methodologies to build a comprehensive assessment of an organisation. By understanding and being aware of its strengths and limitations, the researcher can use the ICA audit as a foundation for measuring intraorganisational communication. The relevance of the ICA audit to this particular study is also important and can be highlighted.

The standardisation of the ICA audit which allows the organisation to replicate the measurement of communication and thereby allowing it to measure progress over a period of time is also a particular strength of the ICA audit in light of the case study organisation's intention of using the findings and recommendations to address communication-related obstacles and weaknesses. The fact that the ICA audit allows several multivariate comparisons among key organisational variables recognise the principle of interrelationship and interdependency of communication domains and consequently the impact that these may have on one another and this is especially important to the principle of integration.

Furthermore, the ICA audit's approach of using more than one measurement instrument not only increases validity but it also allows the researcher to gain a better understanding of how organisational practices and issues are perceived and interpreted by the employees. However, this benefit also provides an added advantage which is not by design but by default which relates to the fact that integrated communication is a complex process and it is potentially unlikely that using one measurement instrument would capture this complexity and as a result the multi measurement instrument approach of the ICA audit is particularly relevant for the study of evaluating and measuring integrated

communication. The biggest limitation for this particular study is the limitation of the ICA audit essentially being a perception-based measurement tool. Finally the scope of the ICA audit is something that is a variable issue, as it depends on the information that is required from the communication audit and as such can be designed to include variables that is descriptive of integrated communication and it is especially in this area that the ICA audit will need to be adapted.

For the purposes of this particular study, the issue of validity and reliability of each type of audit also needs to be highlighted in order to further highlight the ICA audit as preferred measurement instrument.

4.3   VALIDITY

The validity of the audit has been referred to in the context of the discussion about defining the communication audit and how it evolved. However, within the context of application it is critical to find the most appropriate type of audit for this particular research and attention will be given to issues that impact on the validity of the various types of audits. It has also been highlighted that the audit allows the researcher to use more than one measurement method and attention will also be given to the idea of triangulation, which increases the validity and reliability of the audit itself.

4.3.1 Validity of communication audits

The validity of the findings of the research is the cornerstone of whether the research will be able to draw valid conclusions about the ability and applicability of the communication audit to measure integrated communication in organisations and therefore using the type of communication audit that will provide comprehensive and valid findings is critical.

With regard to the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ), many or most of the questions incorporated in the survey have a conceptual slant toward communication

behaviours of others. The relatively few questions that ask the respondents for a self-evaluation of communication tend to have a downward bias (Downs 1996:126). According to Downs (1996:126), the survey also does not contain any specific items about interdepartmental communication, which is particularly relevant to integration of communication. Analysis of the original research findings of open-ended questions has shown interdepartmental communication to be a prevalent problem and by excluding this communication issue the CSQ does not provide a comprehensive evaluation of all communication issues in the organisation (Downs 1996:126).

Furthermore, the questionnaire focuses very specifically on communication satisfaction and the instrument does not measure other aspects of communication such, as for example, communication networks and structure as well as communication integration (Downs 1996:126). Finally with regard to the CSQ, as is also the case with the ICA audit, a databank can provide the researcher opportunity to compare research findings. The fact that the survey questions do not include a comprehensive evaluation of all the communication aspects prevalent in intraorganisational communication and its downward bias with regard to self-evaluation questions as a result of the way in which some questions are formulated, has an impact on the validity of findings related to the measurement of integrated communication. This makes it unsuitable for the comprehensive measurement of integrated communication in this particular study.

The audit of written communication uses content analysis to evaluate all written communication and according to Babbie (2001: 335) content analysis is an appropriate method for studying communication in an organisation. The audit of written communication undertakes the evaluation of organisational communication based on the coding of recorded communication such as memos, policies, manuals, *et cetera*. It is focused on what is written. This often only includes formal and informal written organisational communication (Babbie 2001: 335, Babbie 1990:143).

Auditing written communication is a critical component of communication evaluation in the organisation but it does not evaluate non-documented aspects of communication such

as the daily interaction between subordinates and management, the interaction between departments as well as issues such as motivation and job satisfaction of employees, *et cetera*. In addition, according to Angelopulo *et al* (2004:73), the analysis of communication content of intraorganisational communication provides the researcher and organisation with insight into issues such as communication networks, types of communication and the direction in which messages are communicated on the effectiveness of communication in the organisation. Consequently, although it provides valuable insight into some aspects of intraorganisational communication as indicated by Angelopulo *et al* (2004:73), it is not a comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of communication. The validity of the information is therefore limited to the aspects that can be measured effectively.

The audit of written communication essentially draws inferences from the textual communication of the organisation (Morris 1994:912). According to Du Plooy (1995:152), content analysis is useful for examining manifest messages, which refers to the directly visible, objectively identifiable characteristics of communication, which can be processed statistically. It is, however, necessary to note that statistics in isolation say nothing and therefore the information provided by statistics must still be interpreted before it becomes meaningful. Similarly, the determination of latent content requires judgements on the part of the researcher, which provides an assessment of the content of the subject matter under review (Du Plooy 1995:152). Validity and reliability of findings are therefore reliant on the objective and accurate interpretation of statistics as well as the objective and unbiased judgement of the researcher.

Moreover, in the context of this particular study the organisation under review is a governmental type of organisation and is heavily legislated. Consequently, the organisation has an extraordinary amount of policies and operational processes and procedures that are documented and would need to be analysed. To assure validity and reliability of the research findings, the information analysed according to Baker (1999:268), Wimmer and Dominick (2001:112) and Reinard (2001:185) must be representative and undertaking the analyses of such a large volume of data as is the case

in this particular study will be time-consuming. Finally, in this particular context the large volume of data that would need to be analysed as well as the limited aspects that the audit of written communication measures, makes it unsuitable for the comprehensive measurement of integrated communication in the case study organisation.

With regard to the Audit of Communication Effectiveness (ACE) the primary purpose is to provide a standardised organisational survey focusing on communication issues. According to Francis and Woodcock (2004:44), the survey is technically an opinion questionnaire, as the survey asks employees their views and attitudes on a range of communication issues. Very few of the items that are asked are behaviourally specific and according to Francis and Woodcock (1994:31) the data that is generated is therefore subject to the prevailing morale of employees at the time of the survey. The validity and reliability of the data could have a less than optimal reliability dependent on the circumstances in the organisation.

Francis and Woodcock (1994:31) also indicate that generally the ACE survey provides the most valuable data when the organisation is narrowly defined, for example, a particular business unit of the organisation. Francis and Woodcock (2004:46) also indicate that although statistical analysis is the preferred method of analysis, the researcher must avoid excessive statistical averaging, as this would simply produce mathematical means rather than the analysis of each score. There is also the likelihood that excessive statistical averaging in this particular survey can amalgamate or merge functions or departments together which in turn could produce bland "middle of the road" results and therefore produce data that is not useful.

According to Downs (1996:108) the ICA audit instrument has been refined over a period of time and the end product has become very usable. The method is adaptable to many types and sizes of organisations and consequently has proven itself in many contexts. As a result of its adaptability it will also allow the researcher to adapt the instrument to measure the communication issues that are not currently incorporated in the ICA audit. Furthermore, the reliability and validity of the survey questions have been thoroughly

researched and documented, with testing showing the reliability and validity of questions. According to Downs (1996:108), the reliability coefficient of these tests reflected the extent to which people answered the same way across time, whilst validity coefficients measured the correlation between each scale and the organisational outcomes scale. In both instances the validity and reliability of the questions were of an acceptable level (Downs 1996:108). In addition, the data bank of research utilising the ICA audit that is available gives the ICA audit an advantage, as the researcher can undertake comparisons with the norms provided from this data bank.

Although the ICA audit is methodologically sound, it does not measure all aspects of communication in the organisation but focuses on specific communication domains as illustrated in the discussion on the ICA audit. It does, however, provide comparisons between current perception and circumstances related to communication issues and what the respondents believe it should be. Finally, the ICA audit utilises a number of measurement instruments, which can supplement and corroborate findings of the various instruments and are of particular value to the researcher in this particular study. The ICA audit, although not comprehensive, provides a method for evaluating communication which is generally reliable and valid and as such can be used as a basis for the measurement of integrated communication.

4.3.2 Triangulation

The strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research have increasingly brought the question of complementarities to the fore and have resulted in the increasing trend of combining these two methods into a single study. The combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies has resulted in what is known as triangulation. Baker (1999:483) defines triangulation as "drawing together multiple types of evidence gathered from different sources using different methods of data collection". Baker (1999:483) indicates that triangulation involves using a combination of methods, researchers, data sources and theories in a research project.

Furthermore, according to Baker (1999:483), triangulation creates the opportunity for the researcher to develop a complex picture of the phenomena being researched, which might otherwise be unavailable if only one method were utilised. Deacon, Pickering, Golding & Murdock (1999:29) argue that in order to ensure that a measurement is accurate, the full range of available sources needs to be considered and reviewed to build up the most accurate and comprehensive picture or reality possibility.

The underlying principle is therefore that the more sources that are consulted, the more likely it is that errors, omissions, variances and discrepancies will be identified and as a result can be addressed or resolved. In essence the use of multiple indicators improves the measure and as the diversity of the indicators increases, the greater the implied validity of the actual measure and its results becomes. Triangulation is therefore an attempt to include multiple sources of data collection in a single research project in order to increase the reliability of the results, and to compensate for the limitations of each method.

4.3.2.1 Types of Triangulation

Within the concept of research, regardless of whether the research is quantitative or qualitative, it is critical to ensure rigour within the research process and rigour can be enhanced through triangulation related to data sources, methods or methodologies, researchers and theories. These aspects then also define the various types of triangulation that can be identified.

- Theoretical Triangulation

This involves the use of several frames of reference or perspectives in the analysis of the same set of data (Duffy 1987:131). According to Duffy (1987:131), it involves drawing on multiple theoretical perspectives to provide new insights.

- Data Triangulation

Simply put, this type of triangulation involves the use of multiple information or data sources. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:143) describes this method as an attempt to gather observations through the use of a variety of sampling strategies to ensure that a theory is tested in more than one way. Guy, Edgely, Arafat & Allen (1987: 112) indicate that triangulation can be defined as using more than one method in data collection.

- Investigator Triangulation

In simple terms, this type of triangulation is the use of multiple observers, coders, interviewers and/or analysts in a particular study. It is therefore about the inclusion of a variety of researchers in the research process, even including participants as co-researchers in order to ensure that another perspective is obtained.

- Methodological Triangulation

Methodological or methods triangulation refers to the use of two or more research methods or methodologies within a single study (Duffy 1987:131). The argument for methodological triangulation lies in the fact that the advantage of using more than one research method is that the researcher can undertake a more comprehensive testing of the theory, which is of concern to the particular research. Baker (1999:284) suggests that using more than one method to investigate a problem allows a corrective approach as one method may have certain features that another may not. Therefore, the principle here is that approaching the research problem through a variety of methods allows the strengths to compliment each other and decreases the impact of the individual weaknesses of a particular method, as another method might not have the same inherent weaknesses.

Of the four types of triangulation that have been mentioned, it is important to note that methodological triangulations are particularly relevant to the communication audit and are directly applied in the context of the ICA audit, as it proposes the use of more than

one method of measurement and, as indicated earlier on, highlights five specific measurement instruments. The more measures used to collect data, the more reliable the data is, as the different measurement instruments supplement each other so that the consistency of the findings can be tested (Downs 1996:18). Therefore, it is arguable that the communication audit, when using more than one methodology, substantially increases the validity of the research. By understanding the communication audit in a broad perspective, it is clear that although it is very useful, there is a need for the adaptation of the communication audit in order to measure integrated communication and as such the next section will focus specifically on the adaptation of the communication audit.

4.4   ADAPTATION OF THE COMMUNICATION AUDIT

As discussed in section 2.3 of chapter 2, intraorganisational communication is a complex process and as such it can be argued that successful intraorganisational communication relies on a blend of processes, channels, tools, behaviours and results that are aligned with a high level of interaction or cross-functional co-operation and collaboration. Communication is more than just a method by which information is transmitted, it is really the underlying fundamental that supports seamless interaction within the organisation and as such a balanced view of all the various elements of communication, from an integrated perspective, is the only way to establish whether the current intraorganisational communication supports organisational strategy and direction. With this in mind, it is critical to look at the measurement of communication not only from a measurement of the typical aspects of communication such as structure, but also the measurement of nontypical aspects of the communication paradigm such as strategic communication, human performance technology and business process engineering, as suggested by Gayeski and Woodward (1996:2).

A more analytical approach to the communication audit of integrated communication should be considered in order to provide valuable insight into the assessment of communication rules and tools (Gayeski 2000:31; Gayeski 1993:5). Elements that are identified by Gayeski (2000:31) that are descriptive of a more analytical approach and

also consider aspects of integrated communication, have been incorporated into this particular study and are as follows:

- Infrastructure – Who may easily and directly communicate with whom, and which paths and channels can be used?
- Network flexibility – The organisation's openness in terms of who may initiate dialogue, and who may seek information and in what ways may they seek information?
- Communication load – What is the volume of messages that must be sent and received on a daily basis?
- Communication efficiency – How quickly can a given type of message be created, stored, disseminated and retrieved?
- Communication integrity – How trustworthy, accurate and current is the information in the system?
- Communication effectiveness – How accurately can the intended audience act on a typical message, how well can two-way persuasion and dialogue take place, and how does this affect performance?

The communication audit in its attempt to measure integrated communication also needs to measure business and operational processes, information sharing and knowledge management and the impact or lack thereof, alignment of organisational-wide goals and objectives, and technological enhancement or platforms, *et cetera*. Moreover, as has been indicated in the discussion on the types of audits in section 4.2.4, although the ICA audit provides a fundamental framework for the evaluation of a large number of communication issues, it does not provide a measurement of all relevant communication issues. It is, however, adaptable and the fact that it allows adaptation of the instrument makes it possible for the researcher to easily incorporate communication issues the ICA audit does not measure, especially those related to the evaluation of integrated communication in the organisation. Communication issues that the ICA audit does not measure and can easily be incorporated includes infrastructure, network flexibility, communication load, communication efficiency, communication integrity,

communication effectiveness, openness and inclusiveness of communication, organisational culture and climate as well as interdepartmental communication with emphasis being placed on interaction and collaboration between departments and dependency on other departments. Such adaptation can still use the methodology of drawing comparisons between the present communication situation and the required communication situation, which in turn can provide the researcher with valuable insight when making recommendations regarding improvements related to communication.

In view of the argument of Gayeski (2000:31) for a more analytical approach, as well as the fact that the ICA audit has not really been developed with the measurement of integrated communication in mind and as a result a number of communication issues are not being addressed in the ICA audit questionnaire, some adaptation of the existing audit processes, with specific reference to the questionnaire survey, will be required. The ICA audit and the principles confined within it will be used as the framework, with the survey, as one of the principle measurement tools, being adapted to attempt to make it more applicable to the integrated context.

4.4.1 Conceptual measurement framework

The ICA audit as described above provides the fundamental basis for the research process. Elements that an integrated approach should measure, according to Gayeski (2000:31), and the measurement imperatives for integrated communication as discussed in section 3.4.1 of chapter 3 as well as the communication aspects included in the ICA audit can fundamentally be grouped into four categories, namely aspects of communication that has a bearing on:

- Communication structure and systems
- Communication aspects impacting on the individual's own perception and experiences
- Communication aspects impacting on the team situation
- Communication aspects impacting on the broader organisation

These categories as mentioned here also link to Binneman (1998) and Leahy's (2003) measurement framework of output, outcomes and impact and ultimately can be used to form a logical structure for the measurement of integrated communication in this particular research context. For the purpose of this particular study these categories can be described as follows:

1. The systems and structure aspect focuses on the actual communication-related infrastructure, such as communication channels that are used, including issues such as information load and media richness, the levels at which communication takes place, the directions in which communication flows, as well as the communication networks that exist in the organisation. It is essentially focused on aspects related to communication efficiency/outputs and therefore the question of whether or not the message is actually accurately being distributed and received, as well as the effectiveness of communication/communication outtake and therefore the question of whether the audience received and understood the message. Specific reference is made to the following communication-related aspects which this focus area will measure, namely:

   • IT platform
   • Networks and network roles
   • Patterns and direction of communication
   • Communication channels and mediums
   • Information load
   • Information sources
   • Message
   • Message relevance and appropriateness

2. Individual orientation is focused on individual perceptions, opinions and experiences of employees and satisfaction with communication, as well as how the interpersonal communication skills and abilities of the individual impact on the effectiveness of the

team and ultimately the organisation as a whole (Francis & Woodcock 1994:20). It also includes issues such as motivation and job knowledge. Again aspects related to the effectiveness of communication/communication outtake and therefore the question of whether the audience received and understood the message are included here. However, the impact/outcome of the communication and therefore the question of what the opinions, perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of the audience are and how the communication has changed or influenced it, is incorporated in this section. Specific reference is made to the following communication-related aspects which this focus area will measure, namely:

- Motivation
- Skills and ability
- Job knowledge
- Job and communication satisfaction
- Perceptions, attitudes and experiences
- Training and development or people investment

3. Team orientation is especially focused on the immediate work group and the interdepartmental contact situations with team competence, capabilities, integration and needs or blockages impacting on the individual as well as the organisation as a whole. It also incorporates issues around management communication, operational processes, information sharing and knowledge management (Francis & Woodcock 1994:20). It consequently includes measurement of issues of output or communication efficiency, outtake or communication effectiveness and outcome or communication impact. Specific reference is made to the following communication-related aspects which this focus area will measure and they are:

- Business and operational processes
- Departmental and team goals
- Information sharing
- Knowledge management

- Shared work and action
- Delivery and quality
- Relationships

4. Organisational orientation focuses on the overall systemic view of the organisation, including its environment and culture and how communication affects it in terms of achieving its strategic objectives and goals whilst providing an enabling working environment for its employees (Francis & Woodcock 1994:20). It also includes issues such as the vision and mission of the organisation and the successful communication thereof to all stakeholders. The aspects that are measured here are especially focused on the impact/outcome of the communication and again how the communication has changed or influenced the opinions, perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of the audience. Specific reference is made to the following communication-related aspects which this focus area will measure and they are:

- Vision
- Mission
- Strategic direction
- Organisational goals
- Climate and culture
- Change
- Leadership
- Diversity
- Rules and regulations

These orientations combined essentially incorporate the various components of intraorganisational communication and create a holistic picture of intraorganisational communication and as such provide a framework for evaluating all aspects of communication. Essentially one can argue that without an effective communication infrastructure, communication cannot be effective. Similarly, a team consists of a number of individuals and the organisation consists of a number of teams, which could be

departments or work groups. This highlights the principle of interrelatedness between the communication issues, which essentially is confined in, and described by, these four orientations.   In addition, Downs (1996:40) argues that as indicated in the discussion on the systems theory, the systems perspective calls attention to several communication formats, namely, individual to individual within the same work group, individual to individual across work groups, unit to unit, individual to organisation, work unit to organisation and the environment to each of the other formats (Downs 1996:40). Downs (1996) also argues that the different formats are all interrelated and need to form part of the auditing process providing support for the four orientations as discussed here.

Understanding the interrelatedness of these four orientations and the impact the different communication issues incorporated in these orientations have on one another, as well as the principle of the systems theory that without one the others cannot be successful, highlights the need for the effective integration of all these communication issues. Therefore, these orientations which define the various aspects of communication in the organisation, incorporate the various levels of measurement and the concept of the systems theory, supports an argument that in an integrated model each part of the system impacts on one another and creates action in one another similar to the cogs of a wheel, as is illustrated by the researcher in Figure 4.1.
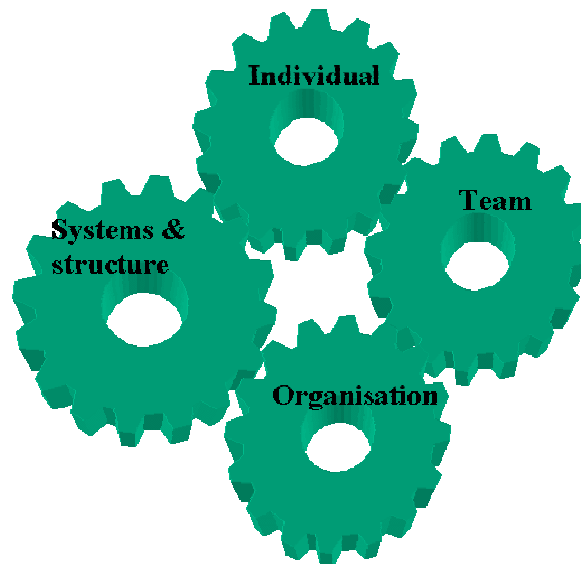
FIGURE 4.1: COMMUNICATION ORIENTATION

The various orientation levels are also supported by Angelopulo's (2000:3) research on the scalable competency in the communication profession, in that the researcher identifies three levels of communication namely the task, management and strategic levels. These levels in essence, although different in their research focus, can still be applied to map out the same communication imperatives or dimensions namely the individual, team and organisational orientations as suggested by Francis and Woodcock (2004:46) and similarly the more practical application of Binneman (1998:22) which is as follows:

- Task level

Within the confines of the task level it is clear from the research that this level forms the basis or foundation level of the pyramidal framework as suggested by Angelopulo (2000:6). The foundational level is general in focus and refers to operational level duties or functions and as such it can be argued that it is particularly concerned with the technical aspects of communication, such as the communication output as suggested by Binneman (1998:22) and Likely (2002:22). The task level is also concerned with getting the job done and places emphasis on skills, abilities and competencies and therefore can be equated to the individual orientation.

- Management level

At the management level, as argued by Angelopulo (2000:6), it is critical to understand the attitudes and values of the respective stakeholders in order to ensure that the communication is indeed effective and it therefore focuses on the management of communication. At this level an argument can be made that in the communication context, management is concerned with managing the human and other resources in order to not only increase operational efficiency, but also to enhance relationships to the benefit of the organisation. Therefore, the team, in terms of a narrowly defined (department) as well as a broadly defined (interdepartmental) context, is critical at this level. The team as well as collaboration between teams is important here.

- Strategic level

The strategic level as described by Angelopulo (2000:6) is focused more on the bottom-line, the "return on investment" or the outcome of the communication than either of the other two levels, even though it forms the top of the pyramidal framework. This level is focused on ensuring that a measurable contribution is made to the achievement of the organisation's strategic objectives and ultimately the achievement of the strategic mission and therefore is concerned with the impact of communication.

This level especially defines the organisational environment and as such gives life to the prevailing culture and climate of the organisation through its leadership. It encompasses strategic organisational drivers such as the vision and mission of the organisation and the achievement of the goals and objectives as derived from the vision and mission.

Therefore, in the conceptual framework as illustrated in Figure 4.2, which incorporates Angelopulo's (2000) pyramidal framework depicting the three levels of communication, as well as the various levels of measurement as discussed by Binneman (1998:22) and Likely (2002:22), the effectiveness and efficiency of the interaction and the collaboration between these levels ultimately defines the level of communication success an organisation may have.
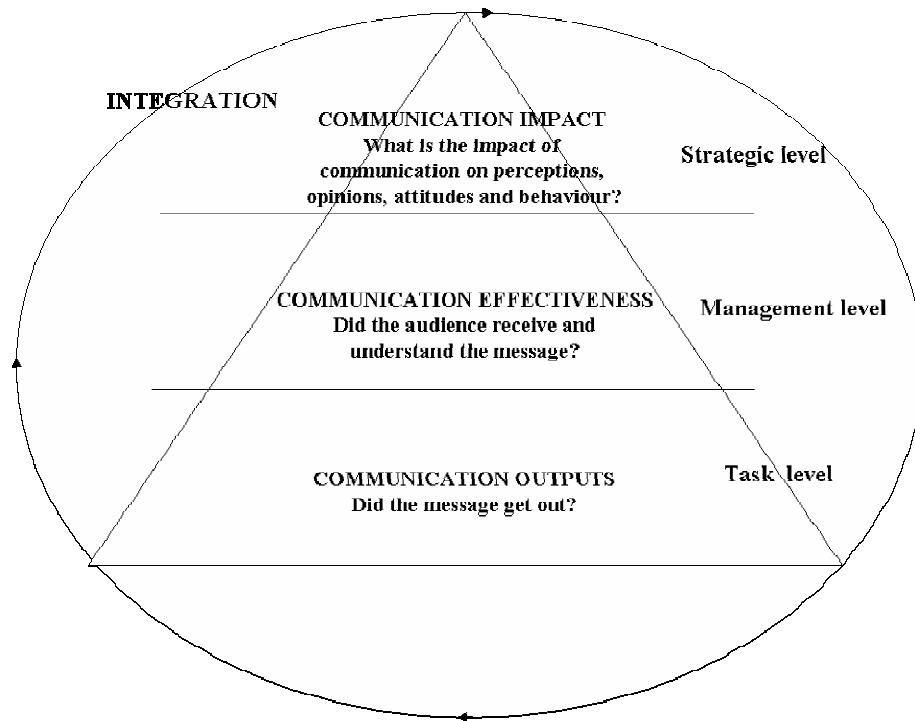
FIGURE 4.2: INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK OF LEVELS AND ORIENTATION OF COMMUNICATION
(Angelopulo 2000:6; Binneman 1998:22 and Likely 2002:22)

In conclusion, the ICA audits as indicated provides a basis from which the audit framework can be adapted. The issues that are incorporated in the ICA audit are mostly focused on issues pertaining to the communication systems and structure of the organisation and communication aspects that impact mostly on the individual. Issues around job and communication satisfaction, channels of communication, sources and relevance of information are included. The issue of relationships and organisational culture is addressed albeit not comprehensively enough, other communication aspects such as impacting on the team and the organisation are largely absent. As a result the ICA audit fails to incorporate critical components of integrated communication as it is defined in section 2.4.2 of chapter 2 by Gayeski and Woodward (1996:2) as a process that attempts to create and manage integrated, multifaceted interventions combining information, instruction, collaboration, business process design, feedback and incentive systems to improve human performance in the workplace to achieve organisations' desired missions and visions. Similarly, it also fails to incorporate Barker and Du

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Plessis's (2002:2) argument that integration must take place at five main levels. Especially as these five levels are also descriptive of the four orientations as mentioned in that it is concerned with the structure, communication activities (individual) and functions (team), relationships as well as the internal and external environment (organisational). Consequently, the scope of the ICA audit is not adequate enough to measure integrated communication and as such needs to be adapted to incorporate issues confined in the concept of integrated communication, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.4.2 Adapted communication audit model

With the above systemic focus which is necessary as the fundamental principle of integration having been clarified, it is also necessary to interpose the different levels of measurement as argued by Binneman (1998:22) and Likely (2002:22) and illustrated in Figure 3.1 in chapter 3 as well as the principles of Khan and Mentzer's (1998:53) hypothesised framework of interaction and collaboration as part of the key components for integration, as illustrated in Figure 2.4 in chapter 2, into the adaptation of the ICA audit framework.

The development of an adapted communication audit model can use the conceptual framework as discussed in section 4.4.1 above that includes four quadrants, which make provision for the different orientation levels and the structural platform of communication within the organisation as illustrated by the researcher in Figure 4.3. It also incorporates the levels of measurement of communication, which are concerned with the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of communication. Each of these quadrants are comprised of a range of components (measurement imperatives) which need to be included in order to measure the integration of communication in an organisation, as discussed in the previous sections. Within the confines of the boundaries of the organisation and the integrative perspective not only the interaction, which takes place between the quadrants, is critical, but the actual collaboration between these quadrants also binds them into a total system in which communication is measured from an integrative perspective.
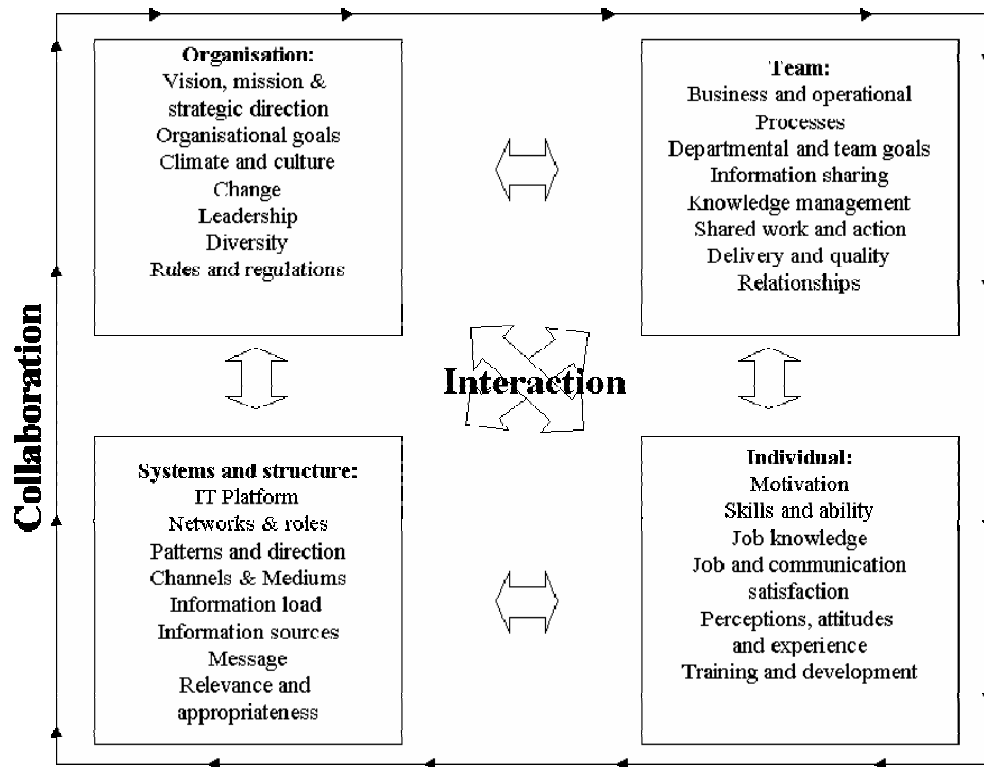
FIGURE 4.3: CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR AUDIT OF THE ORGANISATION FROM AN INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVE

The framework as suggested for this particular research incorporates an approach that utilises the ICA audit framework in terms of the measurement instruments and the questionnaire focus areas, but expands it in order to include broader components of what it wants to measure. Therefore, it simply looks at the areas that the ICA measures and adds any communication-related aspects that might not have been incorporated. It then defines all of these communication-related components that take place in the organisation and categorises them into the four quadrants of individual, team, organisational and systems- and structural-oriented communication. These four communication-oriented dimensions are then placed within the boundaries of organisational collaboration which, as defined by Khan and Mentzer (1998:53), when applied provide a model for communication integration which will attempt to measure all aspects of integrated communication within the intraorganisational context in this communication audit model. Finally, in terms of application the aspects of communication that needs to be measured

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in order to evaluate integrated communication as discussed here in chapter 4, will be incorporated into the ICA audit's present framework or structure, especially the survey questionnaire, thereby ensuring that the measurement instrument focuses on and considers the issue of integrated communication.

4.5   SUMMARY

Since its introduction the communication audit has become a widely used, sophisticated and reliable communication research technique that has been applied to a number of contexts within organisations.   The communication audit as a research technique, although understood, often still has to prove its value in the organisational context to management.   The principle that must be highlighted is the fact that the communication audit provides a sound framework that can be used to measure communication in the intraorganisational context, although adaptation is often necessary to suit the organisation and the purpose of the research.   The conceptual framework provides a basis for understanding the necessity of integration from a systemic perspective and then provides the framework within which the ICA audit has been adapted, which will be especially applied in the questionnaire.

The next chapter will focus specifically on the research methodology and application, in order to answer the question of whether the communication audit is indeed an effective integrated measurement instrument of intraorganisational communication within an organisation.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

With the conceptual and theoretical framework for this particular study having been discussed in the previous chapters, finally the actual research, the methodological application thereof and the findings and recommendations made by the researcher, will be the focus of the remaining chapter of the document.

The study, as has been indicated in chapter 1, is an exploratory study that has been applied in the form of a case study and has been undertaken in both a qualitative and quantitative manner. The actual research itself was preceded by the writer undertaking a review with the specific purpose of gaining an understanding of the case study organisation.

5.2 METHODOLOGY

The research was undertaken in the form of a case study with the research essentially combining qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The research data was collected by means of three method approaches, namely the in-depth interview, a focus group discussion and a survey questionnaire. The data collected by these measures was divided into two distinct processes with the findings of the research largely being based on the data extracted from the survey questionnaire whereas the data extracted from the in-depth interview and focus group provided contextualisation as well as supporting information for the development of the questionnaire. All the staff of the case study organisation were included in the research sample.

The research process and gathering of data essentially included primary research data which was collected to answer the actual research questions of whether the

communication audit could effectively measure integrated communication in intraorganisational communication within an organisation and therefore whether it is an effective integrated communication measurement instrument as well as to establish what the level of communication integration is in the case study organisation.

Secondary data was also extracted which provided a better understanding of the organisation with the secondary research data specifically including the review of organisational documentation and the organisational structure of the case study organisation. This essentially provided an understanding of the current organisational reality as well as insight, which allows the researcher to contextualise information provided by participants.

The National Development Agency was approached to form part of this case study and an interest in establishing how effective communication integration is and how it impacted on staff in general was expressed by the organisation. Findings and recommendations of the study in terms of respondent's perceptions would be documented in a management report and made available to the organisation for use if they wanted to. Consequently, an overview of the organisation as extracted from the secondary research was provided to contextualise the case study organisation, especially as findings regarding the effectiveness and the degree of integration of communication in the organisation can only be applied to the organisation itself and not generalised to a larger population.

The evaluation and interpretation was done through the tabulation of answers in accordance with frequencies of answers and statistical analysis thereof. This information is included as an addendum. With regards to measuring scales, nominal measurement was used to compile frequency of answers, which was used to identify particular issues that needed to be highlighted for the organisation. Descriptive statistics were used as they allow the data to be organised, summarised and presented by means of frequency, which can be used to highlight the current reality of communication in the case study.

5.3   RESEARCH PROCESS

5.3.1 In-depth Interview

In the in-depth interview, a member of the Executive Committee was approached to participate, with the discussion lasting approximately two hours. Although the discussion was recorded, the researcher made notes during the discussion. The researcher generally used a semistructured interview format, with a number of open-ended questions included on an interview guide in order to ensure that critical aspects of communication were discussed (attached as Addendum B).

5.3.1.1 Data analysis

As the purpose of the in-depth interview is not to quantify the information, but rather to identify themes that should be included in the survey questionnaire, the answers of the respondent were simply coded in order to categorised the information in accordance with themes that developed during the interview and themes that were predetermined and incorporated in the semi structured interview. By grouping responses to with the themes that were identified, the following information was highlighted in the interview:

1. Responsibility for internal communication

The respondent indicated in the interview that the responsibility for internal communication was shared throughout the organisation. The Communication directorate was responsible for the actual publishing of formal communication and information, but the Human Resources Directorate often needed to create communication such as policies, as well as take responsibility for secondary communication such as training on policies and feedback sessions where staff can air their views or make suggestions. Generally all directorates had a level of accountability for the dissemination of formal communication in their own directorates.   The directors themselves are especially responsible and accountable for communication in their directorates, which is then cascaded down

through the management hierarchy with, for example, the Regional Managers in turn being responsible for ensuring that regional staff receive communication and are appropriately informed and knowledgeable.

2. The role of communication in the organisation

Internal communication, although critical in nature, played a small role in the organisation as it is principally focused on keeping staff informed and aware of regulatory information such as policies, as well as administrative- and operational-related information such as salary information, job descriptions and operational processes.

3. The role that internal communication should play

Both Communications and Human Resources want communication to play a leading role in change management, organisational development initiatives and redefining the culture of the organisation.   Communication should, over and above management communication that is not solely operationally inclined, play a role in staff motivation and the building of staff morale. Communication can also assist in linking the different directorates and helping to improve interaction and ultimately collaboration between units in order to improve operational delivery and productivity.

4. Existing channels for communication

Channels for communication include a staff forum where staff have opportunities to discuss issues, make suggestions and clarify matters, as well as directorate-based management and staff meetings. The executive committee also utilises briefing sessions when they want to inform staff. The organisation is in the process of developing an intranet but there is currently a designated drive exit, which is accessible via computer and that contains all organisational information.

5. Executive view of communication

All aspects of internal communication are seen as critical in the organisation by some of the Executives, whilst others see some aspects as critical and some as a by-product that is required for the organisation to operate. Communication of broad organisational information as well as regulatory information is seen as critical whereas communication of, and participation in, operational matters is frequently ignored. The focus here is on operational delivery, with communication playing an informative role rather than driving many of the change processes which impact on staff.

6. Consistency of perception of communication and its application

External communication is seen as especially critical and plays a key role in the marketing of the organisation, its positioning and communication to all external stakeholders. The communication budget is also to a large extent allocated to external communication. The internal communication plays a secondary role in the organisation and its application is reflective of the different individuals' overall view of communication. Some directors will make a greater effort in communicating with staff whereas others do not do so. On the whole, however, internal communication takes a back seat to many of the operational and financial issues and concerns that must be considered at executive level. Consequently, although communication is viewed in varying degrees as critical, this view is not carried through in the application of internal communication.

7. Reasons for the perceptions and application of communication

The organisation is a young organisation and external expectations in terms of the organisation place pressure on external perceptions of the organisation, rather than on internal organisational matters. The same pressure is also exerted on organisational delivery with regard to poverty alleviation and the funding of grants, which again

encourages the view of ensuring operational delivery is achieved, rather than paying attention to internal matters such as internal communication.

8. Contribution of communication

Communication is contributing to creating informed employees, as it ensures that the staff are aware of what is happening with the organisation in terms of organisational successes, changes to operational matters as well as expectations with regard to employees, related to both their conduct and jobs.

9. Contribution communication should make

A number of areas in which communication can make a valuable contribution was highlighted, namely:

- It can contribute to the building of a positive organisational culture and climate
- It can ensure that the various operational activities of the organisation are integrated with one another and thereby maximise the organisation's delivery and consequently the impact on its mandate of poverty alleviation
- It can increase employee motivation, satisfaction and morale
- It can assist with building the organisation's image as a preferred employer and in turn assist the organisation in attracting the right staff
- It can assist with decreasing organisational conflict
- It can assist with encouraging and building employee commitment and buy-in into the organisational strategy

10. Levels of integration of communication between units

Generally the various units of the organisation function in isolation of each other to a large extent. Strategies and operational plans are developed without input from other directorates and as such become activities that are driven by a specific unit, with other directorates making very little contribution to them other than being on the receiving end

of some of the activities. The respondent again cited an example of changing operational activities and the other relevant directorates not being involved in the process. In the particular example the respondent cited, the operational procedures related to project management and the grant-funding process which was changed, but as relevant staff did not form part of the process of changing the operational procedures, operational manuals were not changed, job descriptions were not adapted to reflect the new responsibilities of staff, the positional changes were not regarded in terms of the increased or decreased complexity of certain positions and staff were not trained with regard to the new processes, and as a result were unable to effectively implement the change. The respondent indicated that essentially no communication programme formed part of this procedural change and as a result the various directorates were either not involved in the process and where they were there was no collaboration, but rather independent efforts to implement the change.

11. Communication strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- Keeping all employees informed and up to date regarding organisational matters
- Technologically advanced platforms for communication exist
- Consistent communication of formal communication
- Sufficient forums for communication exist
- Very strong external communication
- One central repository for all organisational information, which can be accessed by all staff

Weaknesses:

- Lack of strategic approach to internal communication
- Poor integration between all communication-related issues, including interdepartmental interaction and co-ordination

- Although sufficient forums for communication exist they are not utilised effectively
- Inconsistent management communication
- Lack of participation of staff and lack of feedback

12. Organisational climate and culture's impact on communication

As a result of the organisation not only being relatively new and having undergone major changes since its inception, but also as a result of the leadership changes that have taken place, the organisation's organisational culture is one that is not particularly conducive. The current culture of the organisation is underlined by suspicion and distrust. The continued uncertainty had a detrimental impact on the organisational culture and communication itself is viewed with suspicion.

13. Methods for building and securing high employee morale and satisfaction

The company has a positive approach to remuneration and employee development, which is reflected in its related human resources policies. Performance management also allows for the differentiation and reward of above average performers.

14. Decision-making in the organisation

The organisation is heavily legislated and must act in accordance with the legislation. This has resulted in a very formal delegation of authority being developed for all aspects of the business, but especially financial (including procurement) and human resources delegations, which centralises decision-making at the top of the organisational hierarchy. Financial decision-making, or any decision having a financial impact, is taken at senior level in accordance with certain financial delegations and legislative requirements, with relatively few other critical decisions being made at levels lower than senior management. Policy decisions are recommended to the Board, with the Board making the final decision.

15. Participation in the development of the strategic direction, vision and organisational objectives both at organisational and operational (directorate) level

The organisation has included staff participation in the expansion of defined organisational objectives, as detailed in the organisation's strategic document. The actual development of organisational strategy, however, still takes place at senior management and board level, with very little input from lower level staff.

16. Conflict resolution

The company has formal grievance and disciplinary procedures, including mediation between parties. These procedures are often used.

17. Management of change initiatives

Generally the directorate implementing the change manages change initiatives. There is not an integrated approach to management of change, although there has been recognition that all change needs to be approached from an integrated perspective. A formal change management programme is in the process of being developed which will provide a framework for how change should be approached in future.

18. Responsiveness of the organisation to change

The organisation has undergone continued change since inception and therefore it is used to it. The ongoing nature hereof has, however, impacted on the willingness of the employees to accept change and has resulted in severe resistance at various levels to any change, regardless of whether or not it is to the benefit of the employees. The organisation is, as a result of legislation governing it and its delegation of authority, very bureaucratic which has led to any response to change taking a very long time to be implemented, regardless of management's drive to implement it as timeously as possible.

19. Improving communication

- The organisation has designated positions purely focused on communication matters.
- It is in the process of developing and implementing a formal change management programme related to specifically changing the culture of the organisation, as well as empowering management to effectively implement change at all levels. A performance management system, which includes monthly discussions, has been developed and implemented to facilitate employee management communication on a one-on-one basis, which also creates opportunity for employees to provide feedback.
- The company has initiated a programme where workshops and training are conducted on policy-related issues to build a uniform understanding of organisational policies.

20. General

The respondent directly indicated in the interview that generally communication has been relegated to the back seat in light of so many other strategic imperatives and the external pressure placed on the organisation to exceed delivery expectations. There is, however, an increasing awareness of the importance and impact of communication in the delivery of the organisation's strategic imperatives and as such the involvement of the communication directorate in other directorate activities is increasing.

5.3.2 Focus Group

In the focus group discussion, eight individuals participated in the discussion, which lasted approximately three hours. The facilitator used a semi structured interview format with a number of open-ended questions included on an interview guide to ensure critical aspects of communication were discussed. The focus group participants were asked to discuss a number of questions.

5.3.2.1 Data analysis

As is the case with the in-depth interview, the purpose of the focus group is not to quantify the information but again rather to identify themes that should be included in the survey questionnaire and as such the answers of the respondents were simply coded and categorised in accordance with themes that developed in the focus group discussion and predetermined themes that were incorporated in the semi structured interview (attached in addendums). By grouping responses in accordance with the themes that were identified, the following information in relation to the themes was highlighted in the focus group discussion:

1. The channels (formal and informal) of communication typically used

A number of communication channels exist in the organisation, of which management communication is the primary way in which information is received and given. E-mail communication that was management driven was the most used method for receiving and giving formal and work-related information, both inside and between the different directorates and regions. Information received via the e-mail was prone to misinterpretation and this has presented a number of difficulties in terms of misunderstanding of communication received and given via this medium, which has resulted in conflict within the organisation. Staff meetings in the various directorates and regions and one-on-one meetings, which formed part of the organisation's newly implemented performance management system, also took place.

Other channels of communication included staff forum meetings, briefing sessions and written documents including reports, policies and briefing documents. Especially written reports which are transferred electronically and relate to operational functions and processes of the different directorates and regions, were, to a large extent, how staff found out what was happening in other directorates. The organisation does not have an internal newsletter but did have a drive on its system designated for the publishing of all information which, although very useful, was not easy to navigate.

2. Best source of news and information

Senior management was the best source, especially as the majority of decision-making is done at senior level and as such individuals employed in these positions generally had the best access to what was happening in the organisation. However, as a result of the way in which the organisation operates in terms of its decision-making and the tendency of rumours to proliferate, information is typically only shared when a final approval has been made. Furthermore, once this information is received it is mostly thrashed out with colleagues at the same level, to make sense of the implications that it holds for their own units.

Rumours are often also another way of hearing about issues and although these rumours do not always give a completely accurate version of the issue, they typically have some value to them in that they make staff aware that something related to a specific issue is going on. This is often the case when information around a specific issue has not been shared yet. Sharing of information takes place between colleagues at the same level as soon as they become aware of something happening that impacts on them, their units or the organisation in general.

3. Content, relevance, value and interpretation of effectiveness of communication channels

Information received through management communication is often the most accurate and relevant, although the sharing of specifically strategic and contentious issues is often restricted. The communication received through management communication, especially briefing sessions and management meetings, is generally clear. The use of the e-mail, however, is problematic as the various writing styles and cultural differences in interpreting messages often result in misunderstanding, especially at lower levels. Staff generally try to see what it means to them as an individual and as a result any word or

phrase that could have a dual meaning is interpreted as having negative implications for themselves.

Furthermore, although written reports and documents in terms of content, relevance and value, are generally good, these documents are often designed for higher level reporting which makes interpretation at lower levels difficult. As a result of this, staff would regularly interpret the information in terms of perception, which has led to action that was problematic on a number of occasions. The value of these documents is often limited to management. Other channels of communication such as staff forum meetings provide and receive feedback to a certain extent. They do, however, also provide a platform where disgruntled employees can air their views on organisational matters and thereby create confusion rather than providing clarity. The forum meetings also take place at the national office and do not really include regional participation.

4. Information needs

Often strategic issues, which include financial issues or issues around change, although generally eventually shared, are not received timeously. Some directorates often also initiate programmes that conflict with programmes in other directorates or change processes that are not conducive to delivery in other directorates. This typically took place when only the directorate itself was aware of the particular programme. Information, which creates awareness and understanding of what is happening in other directorates, is required to align operational processes in the various directorates that in turn will allow staff to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their own units, or simply to plan their diaries more effectively without activities clashing.

5. The current situation with regards to accessing and sharing information

Although all information can be accessed through the system provided, it is often not timeous as the information is published on the system after the fact. Sharing at senior levels takes place at the Executive meetings that occur every two weeks, but this is not

always cascaded down from there and is especially dependent on the issue under discussion and the approval requirements placed on decision-making related to specific issues. Sharing occurs within the units themselves, but again is based on a need-to-know principle. Conversely, sharing and accessing information in some of the other units is particularly difficult and is often met with resistance.

6. Improvement of the flow of information

- By providing timeous feedback on relevant issues discussed at management level
- Creating work teams which consist of members from different departments
- Publishing organisational-wide activity schedules
- Publishing an internal newsletter
- Encouraging sharing of information between individuals and units (directorates)

7. Conflict resolution method or methods used

The organisation has a formal disciplinary and grievance process, which it uses to deal with conflict-related matters and which includes formal as well as informal mediation. In the mediation process, individuals involved in conflict have an opportunity to discuss and solve any problems they may experience. The mediation can be undertaken on a formal or informal level, with management playing an important role in the mediation of conflict in their own units, in order to diffuse tension as well as to limit the conflict escalating to a formal level where the Human Resources Directorate will intervene and manage the mediation process. The current conflict resolution methods, however, do not make real provision for dealing with conflict that involves larger organisational conflict issues between staff and management.

8. Methods for motivation

Generally the motivation of employees is mostly undertaken through the performance management system, which, especially in future, will dictate the monetary reward in

terms of the bonuses and increases that the individuals will receive. The performance management system also provides opportunity to give feedback and encouragement to staff. The organisation also has a training and development programme, which is used to motivate employees.

9. Decision-making and its impact on delivery or departmental and organisational effectiveness

The organisation, although decentralised in terms of its operational decision-making, is still centralised at the national office with all important decisions being made at Executive level. The organisation is very hierarchical and bureaucratic in nature, with certain approvals having to take place before any decisions of consequence can be made. There are also very specific delegations of authority allocated to the executive according to which decisions are made, with only the various Directors being allocated accountability and formal decision-making power. As a result of the fact that decision-making is centralised and very bureaucratic in terms of the decision-making process itself, decisions are not taken fast enough and this limits staff's ability to always function efficiently and effectively in their units and the organisation. The delegation of authority can also be very complex in its application in some areas, which in turn has resulted in confusion in especially the regions regarding what can or cannot be done.

10. Responsiveness of the organisation to and the management of change

The organisation has undergone many changes since its inception and has coped with the change, albeit often not particularly well. This is particularly reflective in the resistance there is to change, as well as the difficulty with the implementation of changed processes. The organisation recognises the need to change and is often aware of the requirements to change very early on, but often fails to implement and manage the change initiatives effectively. There was often isolated implementation of especially operational changes by some directorates and an example of the change of the project management cycle relating specifically to the call-for-proposal process, was emphasised.

11. Level of participation in the development of the organisational strategy and
    operational plans

The regional staff have involvement in especially the development of operational plans
for the regions and make some contribution to the strategy related to project management.
However, even at this level the Regional Managers, the real involvement in the
development and determination of the organisational strategy is at Executive and Board
level, with the Board dictating the broad parameters of the direction the organisation must
take and the Executive developing and presenting the proposed strategy for approval to
the Board.

12. Level of involvement of other operational units in the development of the different
    directorates/regions' operational strategies and plans

There was some involvement in the development of directorate strategies but very little
interaction, participation or collaboration between the various directorates in the
development of their operational plans.   The various directorates took the overall
organisational strategy and directorate strategies and developed operational plans around
them without consulting any other units.   There is involvement with regard to overall
strategy, but not with regard to operational plans and programmes.

13. Interdepartmental collaboration (shared work and action)

In many instances there is interaction, but no collaboration between units with the
interaction with other directorates being merely to receive work (input) from another
directorate in order for their directorate to do their job. With the exception of one or two
directorates, there was little or no interaction with regard to the involvement in mutual
projects or co-ordination of work, in the value chain, very few work teams are created
that included participation from different units.   Essentially each directorate simply
completed their work and handed it on to the next unit and this has resulted in a situation

where blame is allocated when things do not go right. The fact that there is very little collaboration between units concerning operational activities makes it difficult to have a fast delivery time and has resulted in duplication of work. Regardless of these issues, the organisation has, however, been able to deliver on what it has to but the limited collaboration has forced employees to work harder and has limited their ability to work smarter.

14. Operational processes and procedures that are obstacles to the achievement of goals

Units are sometimes so focused on ensuring that they deliver on their operational plans that they do not align their processes with other directorates. There have also been instances where changes to processes have been implemented in some directorates without consideration being given to the impact they have on operational processes in other directorates.

15. Impact of organisational climate and culture on communication

There was a culture where a lack of accountability is the order of the day, with failure being blamed on other individuals or units. This has been perpetuated by the fact that some managers expect high levels of performance and ensure that staff adhere to this, whereas other managers do not enforce delivery from staff. Inconsistent application of policies and expectations from management has only served to perpetuate a climate of suspicion and distrust. Personal interest is often placed before the interest of the organisation. The lack of effective communication has, to a large extent, created the culture of distrust, as staff are often not aware of what is going on. According to the respondents, the culture and climate in turn has inhibited communication between employees at all levels.

16. Communication strengths of the organisation

The biggest strength of the organisation is the technological facilities that it has which facilitate the accessing and sharing of organisational information. All staff also have e-mail facilities and this facilitates the sending and receiving of information, especially extensive reports and written documents such as project proposals. The organisation also has very detailed policies and rules and regulations that provide parameters for how staff should act.

17. Communication weaknesses of the organisation

The lack of interdepartmental collaboration and timeous sharing of information is the organisation's biggest weaknesses. Furthermore, management's approach to communication lacks commitment and this is reflected in staff not always having an awareness or understanding of what is happening in the organisation or their directorate and other directorates. Genuine participation in matters of consequence is also lacking. Although the technological facilities have their benefits, currently the system is abused in terms of staff sending inconsequential and irrelevant information throughout the organisation, resulting in too much information that has very little value being received. Finally, personal perceptions and cultural and gender differences have led to misinterpretation of communication sent via the e-mail.

18. Improvement of internal communication

The factor that would make the biggest difference to the communication in the organisation would be for management to commit to communicating with their staff. The organisation must encourage more effective management communication, which includes improved feedback with management sharing information more readily and timeously. Another area that would show in a drastic improvement in communication would be for the organisation to emphasise and enhance teamwork within and between units, focusing on participation and collaboration.

19. Contribution of communication

Communication in the organisation is generally approached in a haphazard manner, as some directorates make a concerted effort to communicate, whilst others make no effort at all. Therefore, communication is not making any real strategic contribution, other than the normal functions such as to regulate the organisation, ensuring people are able to do their jobs and monitoring performance.

5.3.3 Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire is intended to measure attitudes and perceptions about all aspects of communication in the organisation, including communication sources, messages, channels and receivers within the context of the major interaction situations within the organisation. The survey questionnaire includes four conceptual quadrants, namely communication systems and structure, individual orientation, team orientation and organisational orientation. The topics incorporated in these four quadrants which where surveyed are as follows:

- Systems and structure included the location and infrastructure of the organisation impacting on communication, direction and flow of communication, channels of communication, volume of information, information sources, accuracy of information relevance and timeliness of communication.

- Individual orientation included the adequacy of information, sending information, action on information, job and communication satisfaction and importance and communication content.

- Team orientation included information and knowledge sharing, interdepartmental communication, shared work and action, employee buy-in into departmental goals and communication relationships.

- Organisational orientation included communication outcomes, organisational and communication climate, communication participation and decision-making, organisational leadership, communication of change and organisational rules and regulations.

The survey itself is a self-administered questionnaire, which asks respondents to indicate their perceptions of communication. The questionnaire consists of a 193 items, three demographic items and one section where respondents could comment or add any further information. A total of 63 items were asked in relation to the communication systems and structures of the organisation, 64 items on matters related to the individual orientation quadrant, 37 items on the team orientation quadrant and 29 items in relation to the organisational orientation quadrant.

The researcher received 71 responses from the 121 questionnaires distributed which totals a 58% response. Although the response rate was lower than preferred in terms of being representative, the number of responses received not only still makes valid analysis possible as the number of responses is still largely representative of the organisation, but the respondents were also representative of the different directorates (extracted from the demographic data).

Furthermore, the question regarding job grade allowed the researcher to establish the seniority and level of the respondents in the organisation and it was found that the returned questionnaires were representative of all the positional levels within the organisation. Finally, the demographic data extracted from the questionnaire indicated that the vast majority of respondents in general were employed for longer than two years and therefore had sufficient personal experience of the organisation and its communication. Consequently, it is the opinion of the researcher that the results still provided satisfactory answers to the research objectives.

Analysis and interpretation of specifically the survey questionnaire was undertaken by means of frequency counts and averages as well as difference scores for certain

questions. The researcher plotted the frequencies with which each question was answered, which determined the degree of agreement with regard to each question. The average, on the other hand, allowed comparison among items. The difference scores were specifically used to give a measure of satisfaction on specific questions such as perceptions of information being received and sent. This was done by subtracting the perceptions of the current situation from the perceptions of what the respondents felt the situation needed to be like.

5.3.3.1 Summary of answers and findings

1   Systems and structure

- Location and infrastructure

Generally the respondents indicated that the geographic location of the organisation did not negatively impact on communication and that the organisation had appropriate infrastructure to facilitate communication. A total of 63 respondents, which totals a 89% response expressed this opinion whilst eight respondents, which totals 11%, suggested that the infrastructure was not appropriate and that the location of the organisation negatively impacted on their communication.

- Flow of communication

Communication was generally perceived as flowing from the top downward and between colleagues at the same level, with 64 responses, which totals a response 90% of respondents expressing this opinion. Only respondents at a higher level as determined from their job grade, which constituted seven responses or 10% of the respondents, indicated that communication also regularly flowed from the bottom upward.

- Channels of communication

With reference to the various channels of communication and the amount of information received, the difference scores were used. The scores were determined by subtracting the perceptions of the current amount of information received through the various channels from the perceptions of what the respondents felt the amount of information was they needed to receive through the various channels. The difference scores indicated that there is a clear variance between the current amount of information being received and the amount of information the respondents indicated they needed, with respondents in all instances and to varying degrees, indicating that the information they received through the various channels was not adequate as depicted in Table 5.1. As depicted in Figure 5.1, a total of 86% of the respondents indicated that they needed to receive more information through face-to-face interaction, 71% of respondents indicated that they needed to receive more information through group interaction, 38% of respondents indicated that they needed to receive more information via the telephone, 30% of respondents indicated that they needed to receive more information via e-mail, 15% of respondents indicated that they needed to receive more information via written documents and 100% of respondents indicated that they needed to receive more information via the central information repository.

	Respondents indicating an inadequate amount of information being received through the various channels
Face-to-face contact	61 (86 %)
Group face-to-face contact	51 (72 %)
Telephone	27 (38 %)
E-mail	21 (30 %)
Written documents	11 (15) %
Central information repository	71 (100 %)

TABLE 5.1: AMOUNT OF INFORMATION RECEIVED

Inadequate amount of information being received through the various communication channels
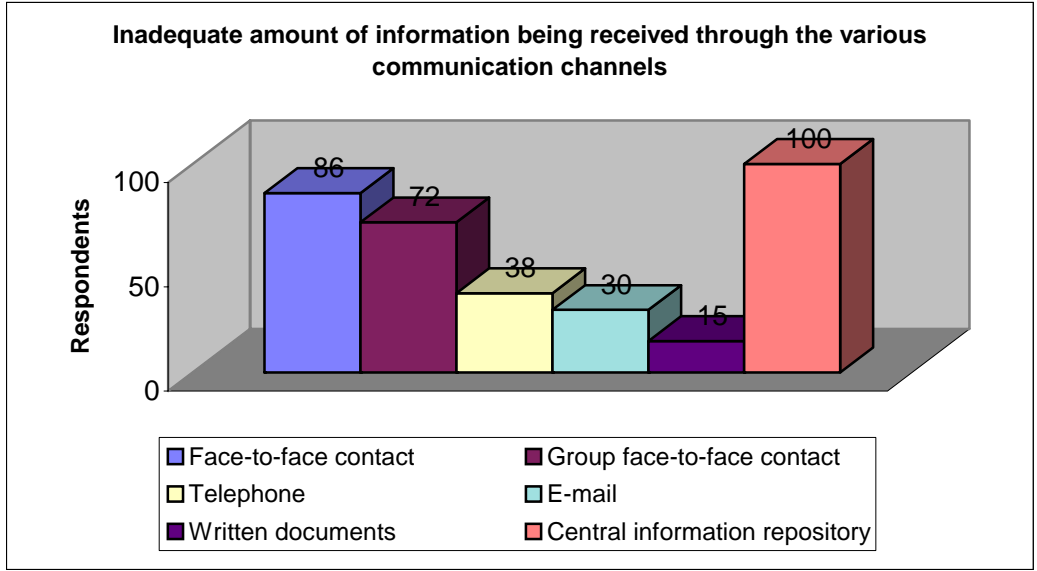
FIGURE 5.1: INADEQUATE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION RECEIVED

- Accuracy of information

Perceptions regarding the accuracy of information varied as depicted in Table 5.2 and figure 5.2. Results indicated that direct face-to-face contact has the highest level of accuracy with 55 responses, which totals 78% of respondents indicating this. Conversely, information received through the central information repository had the lowest level of accuracy, with 57 which totals 80% of respondents indicating that the information was inaccurate.

Sixty percent of respondents indicated that information received via direct face-to-face contact in group situations is accurate. Eighty-eight respondents or 72% of responses rated information received through written documents as accurate. A total of 54% of respondents indicated that information received through e-mail was accurate, whilst 44% indicated a neutral perception in this regard. A total of 36 respondents, which equals 51% of responses, indicated that information received via telephonic contact, was accurate whilst 21 respondents or 30% of respondents indicated that the information was not accurate.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Direct face-to-face contact between two people	6	72	15	7	0
Direct face-to-face contact in group situations	2	58	22	11	7
Telephonic contact	0	19	51	23	7
E-mail	11	43	44	2	0
Written documents	58	14	22	6	0
Central information repository	0	0	20	26	54

TABLE 5.2: ACCURACY OF INFORMATION
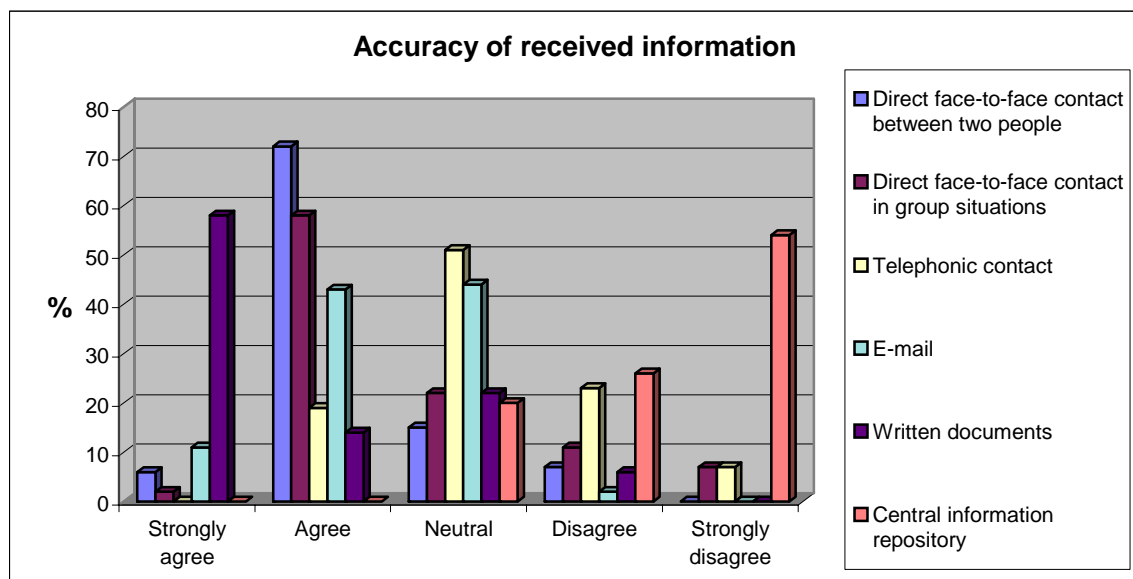
FIGURE 5.2: ACCURACY OF INFORMATION

- Relevance of information

Similar to the accuracy of information received through the various communication channels, the respondents' perceptions regarding the relevance of information varied as depicted in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.3. According to the respondents, direct face-to-face contact has the highest level of relevance, with 59 respondents or 83% of respondents indicating this. Conversely, information received through the central information

repository had the lowest level of relevance with 52 respondents or 73% of respondents indicating that the information was not relevant to them.

Furthermore, 46 respondents or 65% of respondents indicated that information received via direct face-to-face contact involving more than two people was relevant. Fifty respondents or 70% of respondents rated information received through written documents as relevant. A total of 38 respondents or 54% of respondents indicated that information received through e-mail was relevant whilst 31 respondents or 44% of respondents indicated a neutral perception in this regard. Thirty-six or 51% of respondents indicated a neutral perception regarding the relevance of information received via telephonic contact, whilst 21 respondents or 30% of respondents indicated that the information was not relevant.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Direct face-to-face contact between two people	11	72	15	2	0
Direct face-to-face contact in group situations	7	58	28	7	0
Telephonic contact	0	19	51	23	7
E-mail	11	43	44	2	0
Written documents	56	14	23	7	0
Central information repository (G-drive)	0	0	27	55	18

TABLE 5.3: RELEVANCE OF INFORMATION
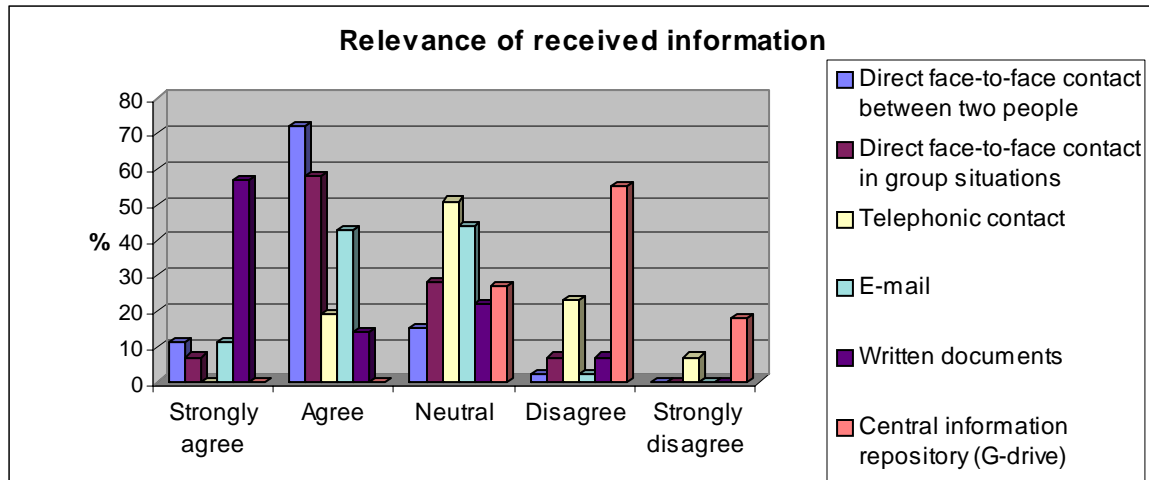
FIGURE 5.3: RELEVANCE OF RECEIVED INFORMATION

- Misunderstanding of communication

Misunderstanding of communication do occur, with the majority of respondents generally indicating that, with the exception of the e-mail, misunderstandings sometimes occur as depicted in Table 5.4 and illustrated in Figure 5.4.   According to 31 respondents or 44 % of respondents information received through this channel is frequently misunderstood, whilst 29 respondents or 41% indicated that misunderstandings occurred only sometimes.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Direct face-to-face contact between two people	0	33	54	13	0
Direct face-to-face contact in group situations	0	29	59	12	0
Telephonic contact	0	1	78	21	0
E-mail	0	15	41	44	0
Written documents	0	9	80	11	0
Central information repository (G-drive)	0	10	80	10	0

TABLE 5.4: MISUNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNICATION
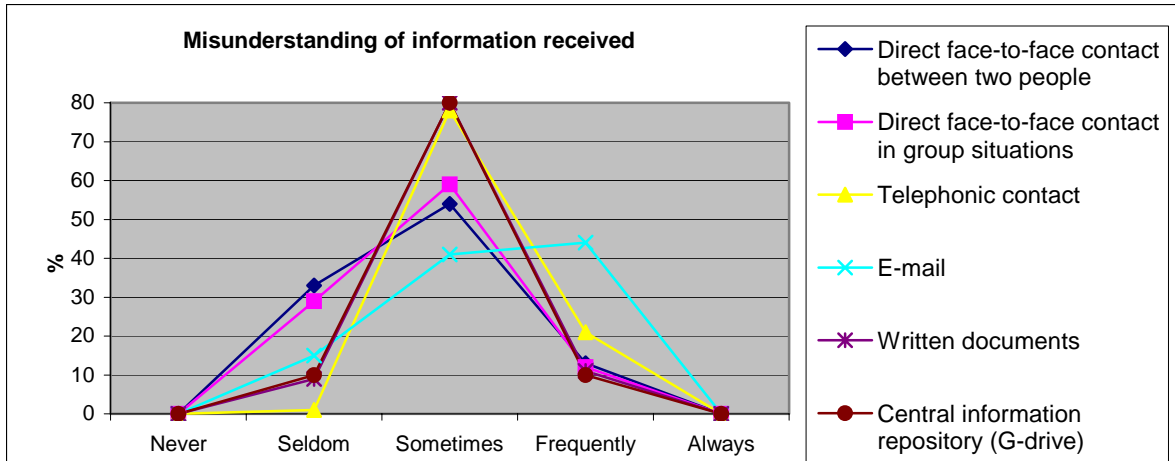
FIGURE 5.4: MISUNDERSTANDING OF INFORMATION RECEIVED

In addition to how often misunderstandings occurred, ranking respondents' perceptions of why misunderstandings occurred indicated that the main reasons for misunderstandings occurring are employees receiving too little information, the perceived tone of the communication, incomplete communication and cultural differences. As illustrated in Figure 5.5, a number of respondents also added that over and above the listed reasons for misunderstandings occurring, the duplicity of information also caused misunderstandings.
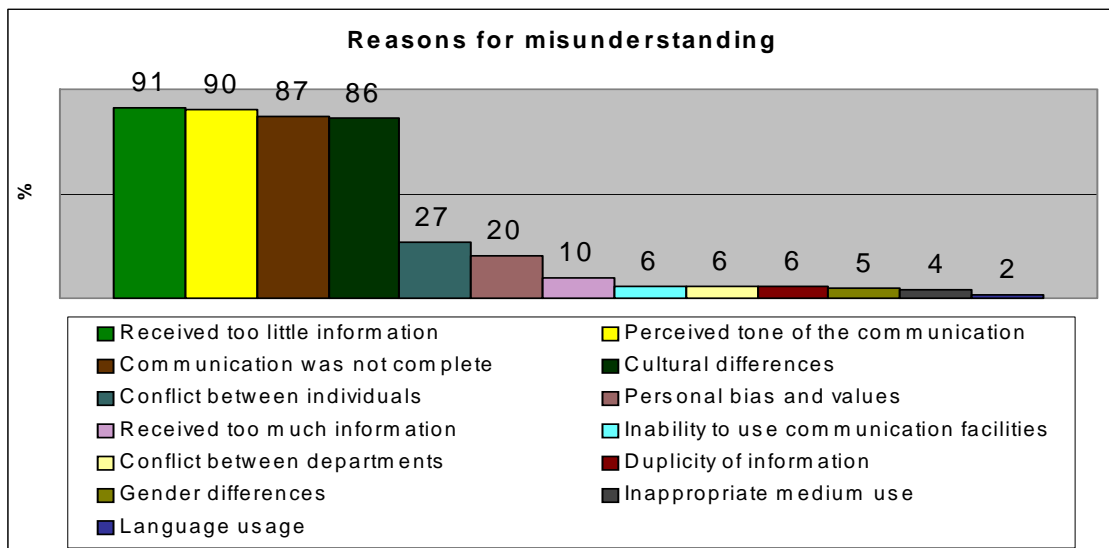
FIGURE 5.5: CAUSES FOR MISUNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNICATION OCCURING

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- Volume of information

Generally the respondents had expressed a neutral perception in terms of their ability to manage the volume of information they receive, with eight respondents or 11% of respondents indicating that they were unable to manage the volume of information they received and 16 respondents or 23% indicating that they were able to manage the volume of information they received.

- Sources of information

Results indicated that respondents in general were not satisfied with the amount of information they receive from the various sources as depicted in Table 5.5.   By rank ordering the difference scores between what the respondents indicated they currently receive and what they needed to receive, it is clear that the respondents are most satisfied with the information they receive from grapevine and co-workers, with 19% of respondents indicating they want more information from the staff forum and 27% of respondents indicating they want more information from co-workers.

Conversely, the vast majority of respondents indicated that they did not receive sufficient information from the various sources within the organisation, with respondents indicating that the areas of most dissatisfaction related to the amount of information received from meetings between sections in the same department, from their manager, head of their directorate and formal management briefings. In each of these instances at least 90% of respondents indicated their dissatisfaction with the amount of information they received from these sources as illustrated in Figure 5.6.   It is however necessary to note that their was an indication that respondents wanted less information through the grapevine and this is reflected in Figure 5.6 as a negative.

	Respondents indicating that they received an inadequate amount of information from various sources
From meetings between sections in the department (directorate)	94%
From my manager	93%
From the head of my division (directorate)	90%
From formal management briefings / presentations	90%
From meetings between departments (directorates)	87%
From individuals in other departments (directorates or regions)	87%
From subordinates (if relevant)	74%
From my co-workers	27%
From the staff forum	19%
From the grapevine (want less information from this source)	-60%

TABLE 5.5: INADEQUATE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION RECEIVED
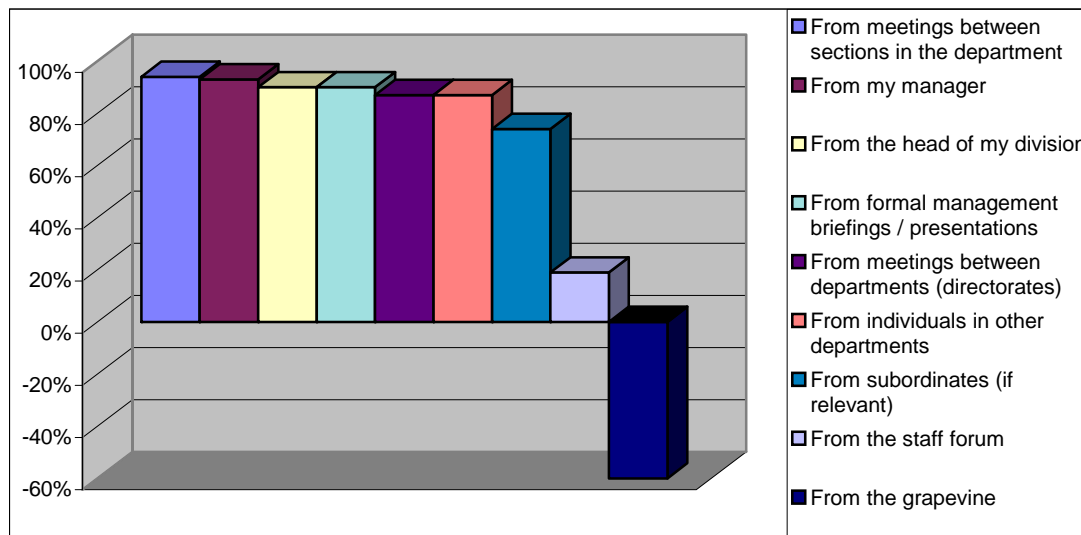
FIGURE 5.6: AMOUNT OF INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM SOURCES

- Timeliness of information

A varied response was received with regard to the timeliness of information received from various sources, with information received through the grapevine and from subordinates being rated as generally being timely as depicted in Table 5.6 and illustrated in Figure 5.7. However, only 57% of respondents indicated that information received from the head of the department (directorate) was timely. Similarly, 37 respondents or 52% of respondents indicated that information received from their manager was timely and 49% of respondents indicated that information received from their co-workers was timely.

Timeliness of information from sources	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
From the grapevine	8	80	10	2	0
From my subordinates	0	83	14	3	0
From the head of the department (directorate)	0	57	40	3	0
From my supervisor / manager	4	48	45	3	0
From my co-workers	0	49	51	0	0

TABLE 5.6: TIMELINESS OF INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM SOURCES
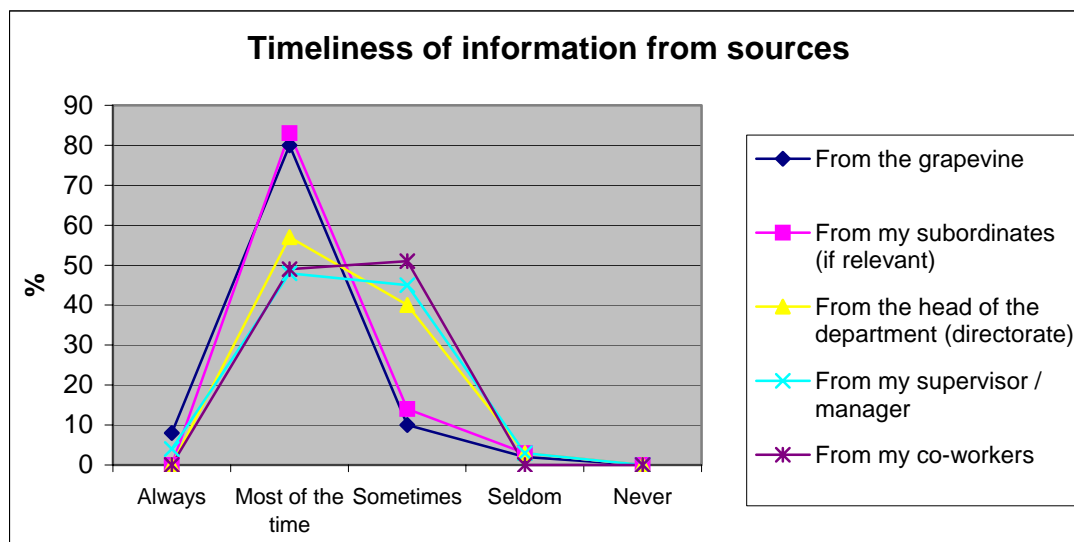
FIGURE 5.7: TIMELINESS OF INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM SOURCES

Results related to the communication systems and structures of the case study organisation have shown that although there is an adequate communication infrastructure in terms of enabling effective communication to take place, the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, volume and appropriateness of the source of information and the channel through which information is transmitted, are not adequate.

2   Individual orientation

- Positional descriptions and procedures

Responses indicated that they had an accurate and appropriate job description, with 55 respondents or 78% of respondents expressing this opinion whilst five respondents or 7% of respondents suggested that they did not have an accurate and appropriate job description. Fifteen percent of respondents indicated a neutral perception in this regard. Furthermore, respondents generally expressed satisfaction with the existence of understandable and comprehensive procedures regarding how to do their specific job, with 88% of respondents expressing a positive perception regarding this. Conversely, only 3% expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the existence of understandable and comprehensive procedures to do their job, with 9% of respondents indicating a neutral perception in this regard.

- Content of information

On the whole, the respondents had varying degrees of satisfaction with the amount of information they received on specific topics as depicted in Table 5.7 and illustrated in Figure 5.8. The respondents did, however, indicate that they required substantially more information on the majority of topics, with recognition of efforts and communication on a range of aspects related to performance and its evaluation as well as change, being of major concern. Other topics that require more information centre on salaries and benefits, how problems are solved and how their jobs relate to the operations of the department and the achievement of organisational goals. An exception was noted with

respondents indicating that they felt they received too much information regarding the mistakes and failures of their department.

	% Respondents indicating that they need more information on various topics	% Respondents indicating that they want less information on various topics
Recognition of efforts	100	
How they are judged as an individual	96	
Level of performance	86	
Operational changes affect the work	84	
Developments in the department	84	
Technological changes affect the work	79	
How to receive a favourable performance evaluation	76	
How their work related problems are being handled	75	
How their work relates to the operations in the department	70	
Work contribution to organisational goals	66	
About salary and benefits	56	
Organisational policies, rules and regulations	28	
Work duties	27	
Mistakes and failures in the department		71

TABLE 5.7: SATISFACTION OF NEED FOR INFORMATION ON TOPICS
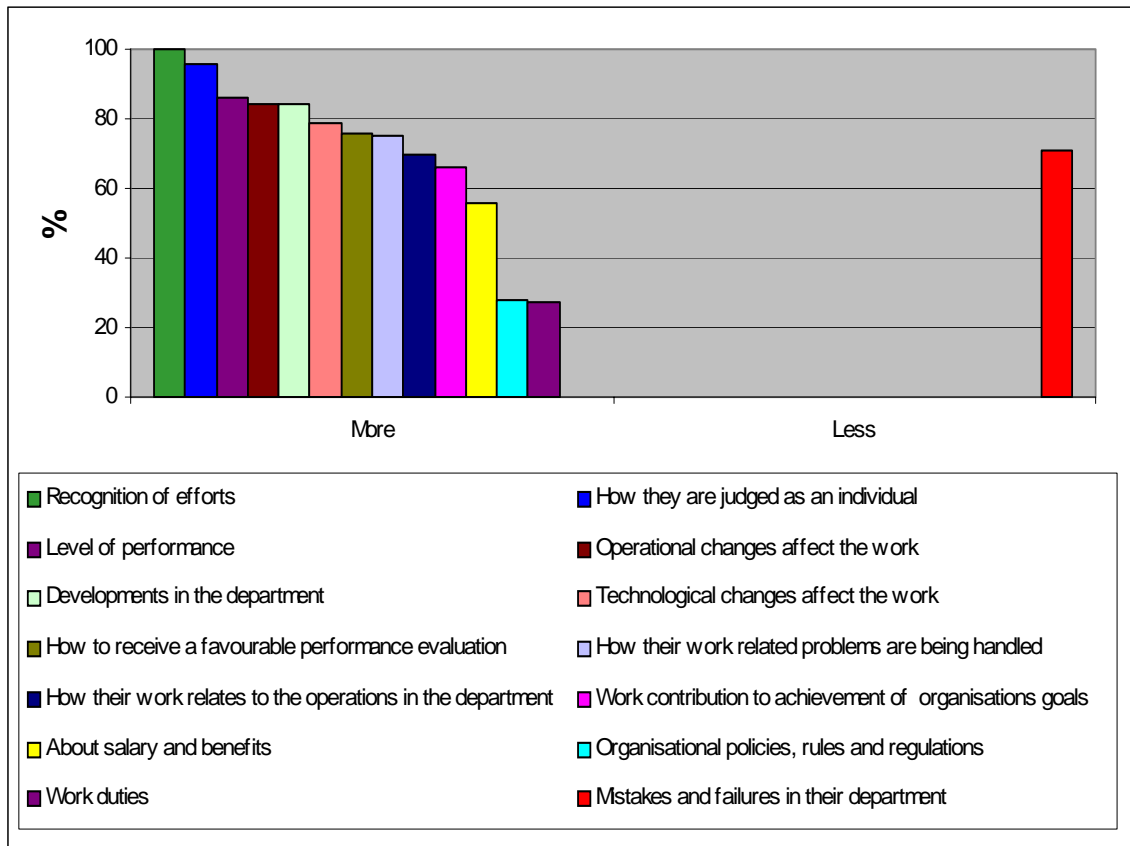
FIGURE 5.8: SATISFACTION OF NEED FOR INFORMATION ON TOPICS

- Sending information

As depicted in Table 5.8, in general respondents indicated that they send sufficient information. With the exception of evaluating the performance of their immediate supervisor, of which 47 respondents or 66% of respondents indicated that they needed to send more information, only a small percentage of respondents indicated that they needed to send more information with regard to the other variables mentioned.

	Respondents indicating that they need to send more information
Reporting progress of work	4 (6%)
Reporting requirements of job	10 (14%)
Reporting work-related problems	6 (9%)
Complaints regarding work/working conditions	8 (11%)
Requesting information necessary to do my work	3 (4%)
Evaluating performance of immediate supervisor	47 (66%)
Requesting clearer work instructions	11 (16%)

TABLE 5.8: SENDING OF INFORMATION

- Action on information

There are varying degrees of action being taken on information sent, with 61 respondents or 86% of respondents indicating that co-workers take the least amount of action on information sent. This is followed by 36% of respondents indicating that top management, 32% of their supervisors and 26% of subordinates, are not taking adequate action on information sent.

- Employee satisfaction

Respondents indicated varied levels of satisfaction with regard to issues pertaining to them. Generally, good levels of satisfaction were reported with regard to training and development opportunities with 87% of respondents indicating a positive level of satisfaction. Similarly, 78% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their work and 78% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the organisation's concern for employee welfare. Sixty-five percent of respondents indicated that they were generally satisfied with their salary and benefits, whilst only 4% of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with their salaries and benefits.

Conversely, 89% of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with the level of recognition and rewards they received for their efforts and 87% of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with the organisation as compared to other organisations. Furthermore, 82% of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with promotional opportunities in the organisation. The remaining issues, such as working in the organisation, ability to contribute to the success of the department, organisational efficiency, quality of service and achievement of organisational objectives, were all rated on a more neutral to positive basis, with respondents generally indicating that they were satisfied with these issues most of the time or sometimes. The differentiation between the levels of satisfaction is clearly depicted in Figure 5.9 below.

Satisfaction levels of respondents

Legend:
- Training and development opportunities
- Work
- Concern for employees welfare
- Salary
- Working in the organisation
- Organisations achievement of its objective
- Organisations efficiency in general
- Quality of the organisations service in general
- Opportunities available for contributing to the success of the department
- Promotional possibilities in the organisation
- The organisation as compared to other organisations
- Recognition and reward

FIGURE 5.9: SATISFACTION LEVELS OF EMPLOYEES

With regards to aspects incorporated in the individual orientation, it can be concluded that communication on matters impacting on how to undertake the job do exist, and to a large extent are adequate. However, issues around the action being taken on information

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and the actual adequacy of information about specific topics are clearly inadequate. This in turn has a direct, negative impact on the perceived effectiveness of communication and the level of satisfaction employees have with communication in the organisation.

3   Team orientation

- Interaction and collaboration

On the whole, the interaction and collaboration between the various departments is inadequate, even though 64 respondents or 90% of respondents indicated that there is a high level of dependency on input from colleagues, both inside and outside their departments, in order to successfully complete their work as depicted in Table 5.9 and illustrated in Figure 5.10. Seventy-four percent of respondents indicated that the level of interaction between the departments is inadequate and this low level of interaction that takes place appears to also not be particularly effective, resulting in low collaboration and commitment between the various departments, with 89% of respondents indicating that the amount of collaboration between work groups/departments that takes place is inadequate. However, the interaction that does take place is not rated as positive, but rather as neutral, with 55% of respondents indicating that the interaction is neither positive nor negative. This can be correlated with the fact that face-to-face interaction in terms of meetings and interdepartmental project teams only takes place 10% of the time, whereas indirect communication via management and technology mediated communication via e-mail and telephone takes place 90% of the time.

The quality and timeousness of input by other departments also has a direct bearing on the level of satisfaction the respondents experience with communication in the team situation. Only 7% of respondents indicated that they regularly received input timeously from other departments and 62% of respondents indicated that the quality is regularly of an acceptable level as can be seen in Table 5.9. In terms of these responses, it is clear that integration between departments is very low, even though the nature of the work requires a high level of interaction. In addition to this, 87% of respondents indicated that

the existing operational processes and procedures of other departments impacted negatively on their ability to undertake and complete their work successfully.

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Level of dependency on input from colleagues to complete work	56%	34%	10%	0%	0%
Necessary input is provided timeously from colleagues / other departments to complete work on time	0%	7%	29%	56%	8%
Appropriate quality level of work provided by colleagues / other departments	0%	62%	32%	6%	0%

TABLE 5.9: DEPENDENCY ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS
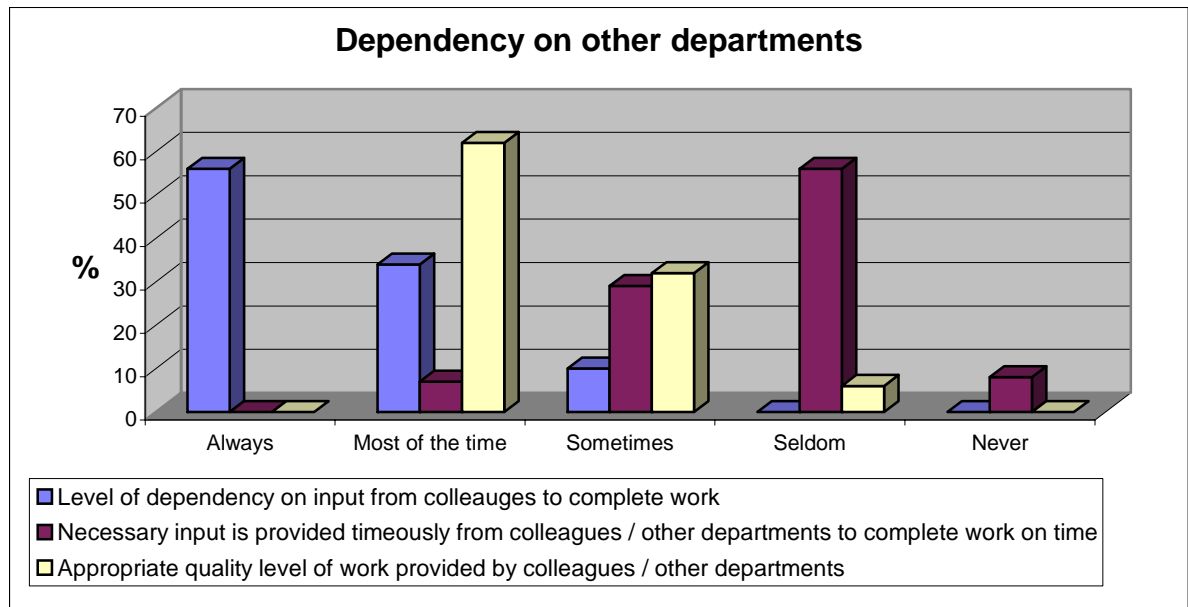
FIGURE 5.10: DEPENDENCY ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Furthermore, as illustrated in Figure 5.11, e-mail is the most frequently used medium for interdepartmental communication.
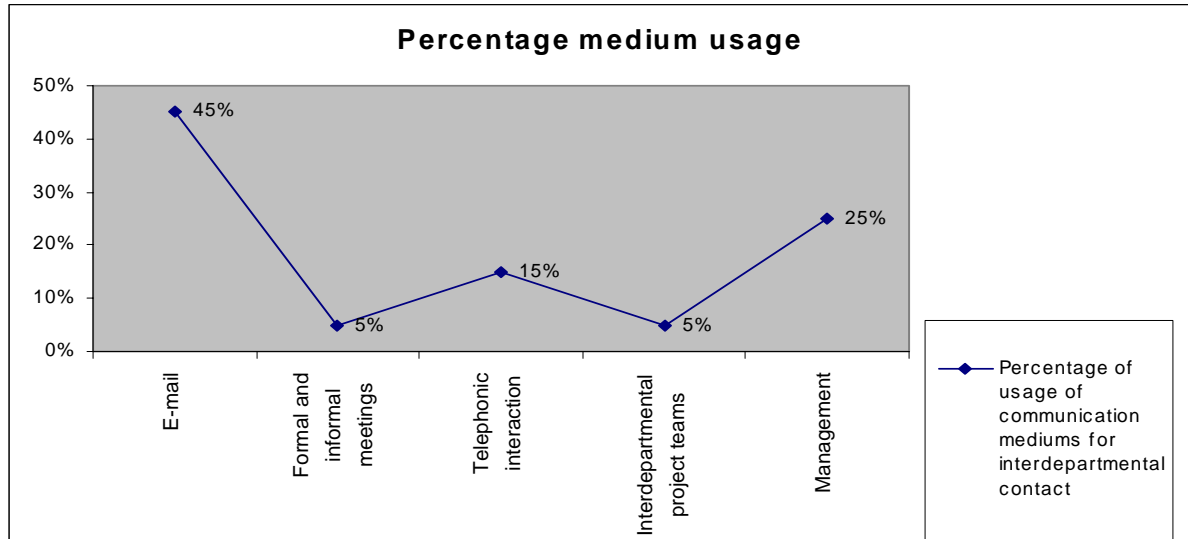
FIGURE 5.11: COMPARATIVE MEDIUM USAGE FOR INTERDEPARTMENTAL CONTACT

Finally, with regard to interdepartmental interaction and collaboration, the integration of the different departments' strategies, plans and objectives is very low, with 85% of respondent's indicating that they did not understand the link between their and other departments strategies and objectives. Similarly, 86% of respondents indicated that they felt that other departments did not understand the link between their department and the respondent's own department as indicated in Table 5.10 and illustrated in Figure 5.12. A largely negative and neutral response was received in terms of respondents indicating that their own department understood the contribution other departments make.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Own department understands other departments' contribution to achieve organisation's strategy and goals	0	18	39	40	3
Own department understands the link between their and other departments' strategies, plans and activities	0	5	10	67	18
Other departments understands the link between their and our department's strategies, plans and activities	0	6	8	59	27

TABLE 5.10: INTERACTION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS
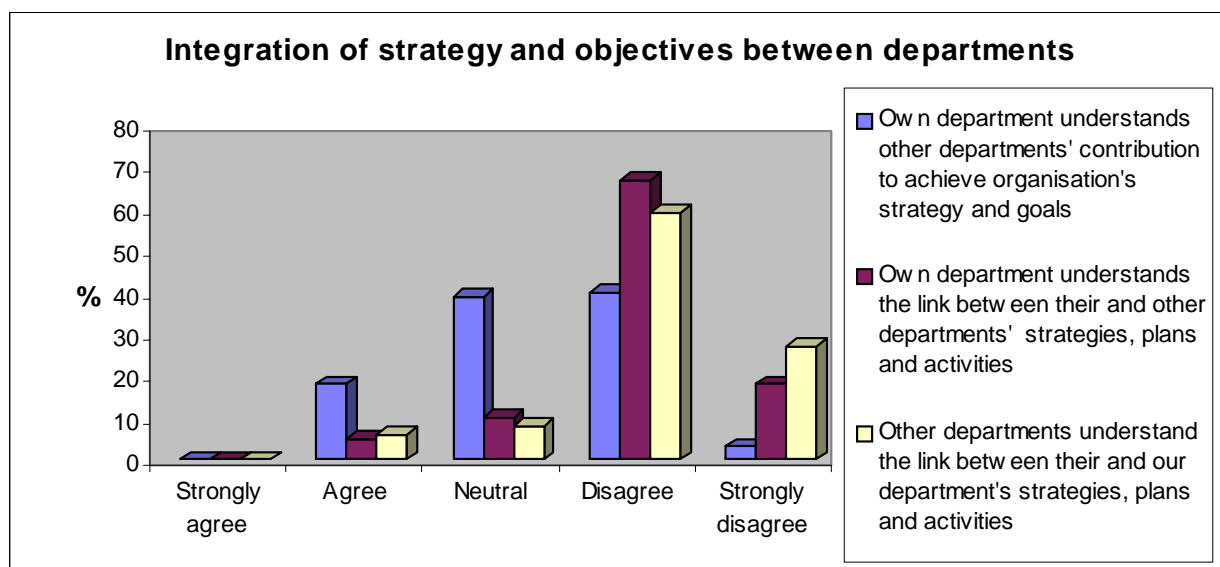
FIGURE 5.12: INTEGRATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS

- Communication relationships

As reflected in Table 5.11, four central intraorganisational communication relationships are evaluated and these include relationships with co-workers, immediate supervisor/manager, top (senior) management and the employee's relationship with the organisation.   Generally, respondents indicated that they have a negative relationship with senior management, with 38% indicating this and 39% indicating a neutral perception of their communication relationship with senior management. Similarly, 39% of the respondents reported a negative relationship and 25% a positive relationship with the organisation.   On the other hand, 47% of respondents indicated that they had a positive, and 24% indicated they had a negative, communication relationship with their immediate supervisor.   Finally, the respondents indicated that they had the best communication relationships with their co-workers, with 69% of respondents reporting a positive communication relationship with co-workers.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Senior management	23	39	38
Immediate supervisor/manager	47	29	24
Co-workers	69	22	9
General relationship with the organisation	25	36	39

TABLE 5.11: COMMUNICATION RELATIONSHIPS

The nature of the organisation is clearly one where there is a high level of dependency on co-workers, project team members and departments to successfully render the service it is meant to render. There is, however, a very low level of interaction and collaboration between the departments, with the various departments having limited understanding of the objectives, work, pressure and requirements of other departments. Relationships with the case study organisation, although not completely negative, are not at an optimum level, with too large a percentage of respondents indicating a negative or neutral perception in this regard.

4   Organisational orientation

• Characteristics of organisation

In terms of the characteristics of the organisation a number of characteristics that describe the organisational culture and climate were included in the questionnaire. On the whole respondents indicated that the organisation was not particularly supportive or stable, with 38 respondents or 54% of respondents and 41 or 58% of respondents respectively indicating this. They also indicated that there was a low level of cohesiveness in the organisation, with 58 respondents or 82% of respondents indicating this. On the other hand, according to respondents, the level of competitiveness in the organisation is fair, with 67% of respondents indicating this. Eighteen percent of respondents indicated a high level of competition whilst 15% of respondents indicated a low level of competition.

In conjunction with this, 87% of respondents indicated that the organisational design is autocratic in nature. This was supported by results that showed that 47 respondents or 66% of respondents indicated that managers generally made decisions and announced them. In addition, 45 respondents or 63% of respondents indicated that the general leadership approach of the organisation is to demand performance with very little consideration for people, whilst 24 respondents or 34% of respondents indicated that adequate performance is possible by means of a combination of pressure for performance and adequate job satisfaction.

- Openness of communication

Questions in this particular section were focused on determining what employees' perceptions are of the level of openness of communication as depicted in Table 5.12. With regard to factors related to openness of communication, 31 respondents or 45% of respondents indicated that they did not feel able to express their views openly, with another 21 respondents or 30% indicating a neutral response in this regard. Similarly, 39 respondents or 55% of respondents indicated that communication was not open and candid and knowledge and information is not freely shared as illustrated in Figure 5.13.

Openness of communication	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Able to express views openly	10	15	30	25	20
Open and candid communication	0	10	35	35	20
Freely shared knowledge and information	0	20	25	35	20

TABLE 5.12: OPENNESS OF COMMUNICATION
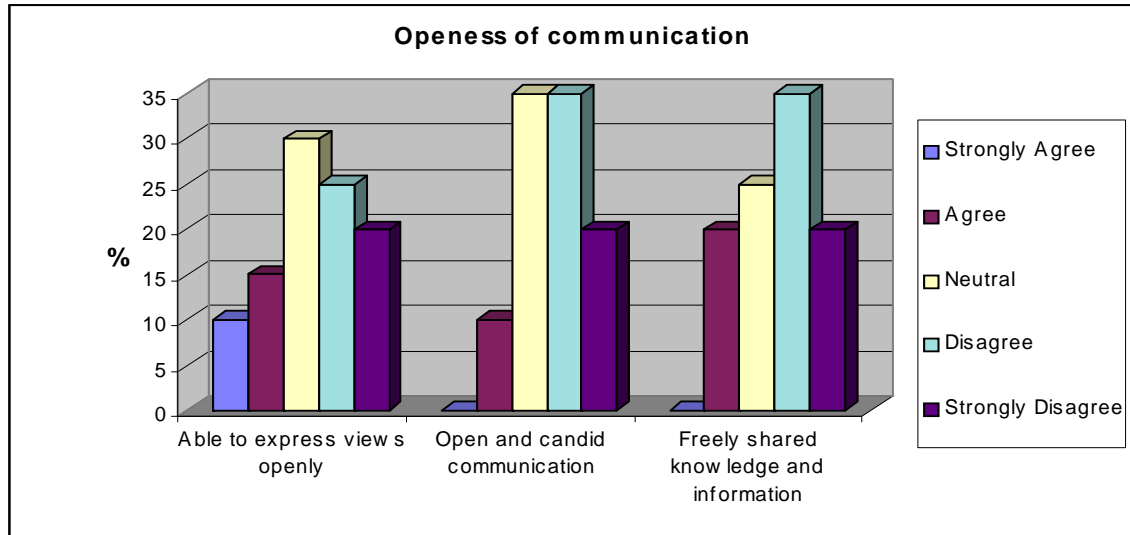
FIGURE 5.13: ORGANISATIONAL OPENNESS TO COMMUNICATION

- Inclusiveness of communication

Questions in this section were focused on determining what employees' perceptions are of the level of inclusiveness of communication as depicted in Table 5.13 and illustrated in Figure 5.14. Generally the answers of respondents indicate a low level of inclusiveness of communication in the organisation. With regards to the factors related to inclusiveness of communication, 56% of respondents indicated that they did not feel an effort is being made to get the opinions of staff and similarly 50% of respondents indicated that they did not feel their opinions were valued. Furthermore, 32 respondents or 45% of respondents indicated that decisions are made without input from staff, with only 21 respondents or 30% of respondents indicating that decisions are made with their input.

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost never
Effort is made to get opinions and perceptions of staff	6	15	23	36	20
Opinions and contributions are valued and used	5	10	35	30	20
Decisions are made with input from staff	15	15	25	25	20

TABLE 5.13: INCLUSIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION

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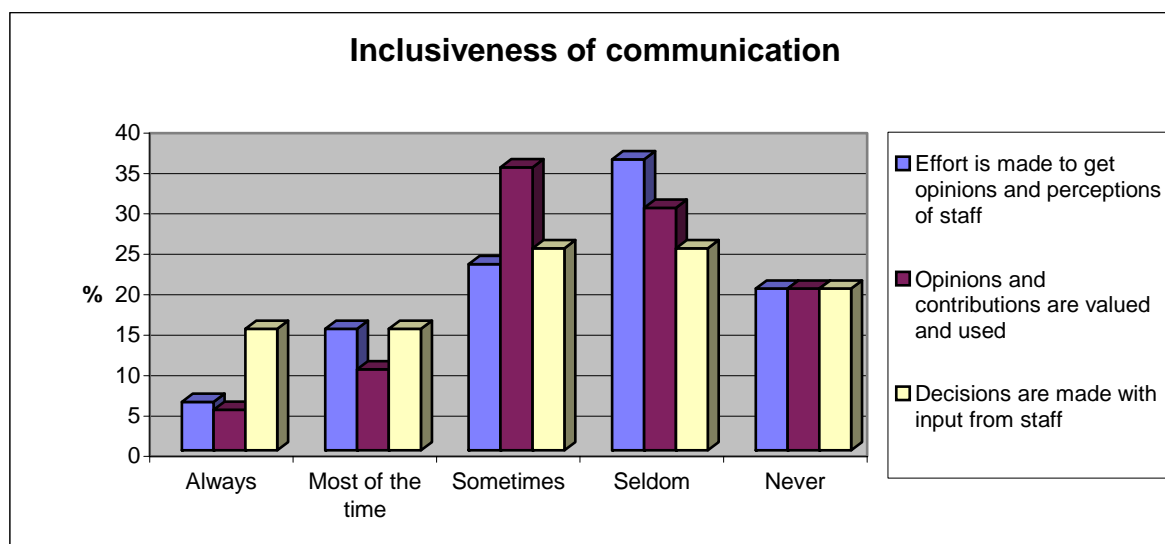
FIGURE 5.14: COMMUNICATION INCLUSIVITY

- Knowledge of organisational strategy and direction

The need for organisational information is high amongst the respondents, with a total of 70% of respondents indicating that knowledge of strategy and strategic direction is important. However, from the data that has been collected it is clear that, although the respondents' need for information regarding organisational strategy and direction is high, the actual information being provided is not sufficient, with 51% of respondents indicating that they did not know what the organisation's strategy was. Conversely, only 24% of the respondents indicated that they had knowledge of the organisational strategy.

- Policies, rules and regulations

The need for organisational information related to policies, rules and regulations is high amongst the respondents, with a total of 85% respondents indicating that they believed knowledge of policies, rules and regulations is important. Four factors related to knowledge and understanding of policies and rules and regulation were incorporated into the questionnaire and reflected varied responses, with 52% of respondents indicating that they did not understand the policies, rules and regulations appropriately. From the data

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that has been collected, even though respondents have a high need for communication in relation to policies, rules and regulations, the mean of factors related to the actual communication of policies, rules and regulations indicated that it was not particularly good. An average of 37% of respondents indicated that policies, rules and regulations are not well communicated, whilst only 22% felt it was well communicated. On the other hand, with regard to the factor related to the actual understanding or the accurate interpretation of policies, rules and regulations, 33% of respondents indicated that they did understand the policies, rules and regulations clearly, whilst 52% of respondents indicated that they did not.

- Communication of change

With regard to change, respondents generally indicated that they had a particularly high need for understanding the need for any change. However, only a small number of respondents indicated that they understood the need for change and had prior knowledge of change. The majority of respondents indicated that they find out about change when it happened, with at least 70% of respondents indicating no prior knowledge of change.

- Impact of management

Three factors were included in the questionnaire that evaluated the impact of how management operates on the employees, two of which were focused on immediate supervisors/managers and one on the senior (top) management of the organisation. On the whole, a neutral perception was reported, with 58% of respondents indicating that the way management and senior management operates in terms of their management style, the example they set and the way they treated employees, did not have a real impact. On the other hand, 23% of respondents indicated a negative perception in this regard, whilst 19% indicated a positive perception in this regard.

- Employee attitudes

In relation to employees' attitudes, from the responses as depicted in Table 5.14 it appears that employees are committed to their work and the organisation, but simultaneously they have a less than optimal attitude towards rules and regulations within the organisation.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Employees have respect for rules and regulations	0%	14%	41%	27%	18%
Employees seldom waste time	16%	40%	34%	5%	5%
Employees are committed to the organisation	15%	42%	23%	15%	5%

TABLE 5.14: EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES

5.4   DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Through the use of statistics and comparing the percentages with which respondents agreed or disagreed with a particular question/statement or issue, the research results highlight the level of effectiveness of intraorganisational communication in each of the issues included in the four quadrants of the adapted ICA communication audit model as depicted in Figure 4.3 in chapter 4. From the information extracted from the research it is clear that the organisation's intraorganisational communication is not effective and that there is a clear lack of a translated strategy for intraorganisational communication, which in turn has led to a level of communication satisfaction amongst respondents that should be of major concern to the organisation.

Results related to the communication systems and structures of the case study organisation have shown that although adequate communication infrastructure exists in terms of enabling effective communication to take place, the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, volume and appropriateness of the source of information and the channels through which it is transmitted, are not adequate as on the whole respondents indicated a negative perception in this regard.

With regard to aspects incorporated in the individual-oriented communication, it can be concluded that communication on matters impacting on how to undertake the job does exist and to a large extent is adequate. However, issues around the action being taken on information sent by employees and the actual adequacy of information on specific topics is clearly inadequate. This in turn will have a direct and negative impact on the perceived effectiveness of communication and the level of satisfaction employees have with communication in the organisation.

With regard to organisationally-oriented communication, there is a clear lack of openness of communication and the communication is inclusive. On the whole, knowledge of regulatory matters is not optimal, but the understanding and interpretation thereof is particularly low, with respect for regulatory aspects of the organisation also being particularly low. In addition, knowledge and understanding of strategic matters, including strategic direction and change, is low. The organisation also appears to be autocratic and directive in nature with decision-making being centralised at the top of the organisation.

From the results it also clear that the organisation does not have an optimal intraorganisational communication climate and that this has a direct impact on communication satisfaction amongst employees. Essentially, there appears to be a clear disconnection between what the employees require and the communication that is provided. Integration of communication throughout the organisation, especially between departments, is very low even though the nature of the work requires a high level of interaction. Furthermore, where this interaction does take place, it is not particularly

effective resulting in low collaboration and commitment between the various departments.

In addition, although the necessary systems for communication are generally in place, these systems are generally either not used or used ineffectively and as such communication opportunities are not used to build commitment by keeping staff informed, secure and motivated. Finally, results have shown that respondents typically rated aspects of communication where they directly played a role more positively than communication where others played a direct role. This may be for a number of reasons, one of which is that they emphasise others roles with reason, but they do not recognise the role they themselves play in communication. This lack of recognition by respondents of the role they play in making communication effective highlights the fact that intraorganisational communication in the case study organisation has received limited attention and to a large extent communication can be seen as immature.

With regard to integration over and above a number of issues that are relevant for integration as depicted in Figure 4.3 of the adapted ICA communication audit model, the actual interaction and collaboration which forms part of the actual process of integration as argued by Khan and Mentzer (1998:53) was also evaluated. In general, perceptions regarding the team, group dependency, interaction and collaboration are conflicting. On the whole, a correlation can be drawn between the communication failure in the organisation and the achievement of organisational objectives, with communication failure in many instances being one of the most important underlying reasons for organisational failures.

The research results although specific to an organisation has shown that as is argued in the literature there is value in measuring integrated communication. Essentially it does places emphasis on issues that may be seen as broader than just being confined within the ambit of intraorgansiational communication but that plays a role in enhancing effective intraorganisational communication and which is encapsulated in the four dimensions of

systems and structure, individual, team and strategic communication orientations as depicted in Figure 4.3 in Chapter 4.

Against the analysis and interpretation of the data collected for the purpose of this particular study, the research questions as posed in chapter 1 will be addressed and are as follows:

5.5   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• The first research question asked was whether an integrated communication audit is an effective measurement instrument for intraorganisational communication?

The study revealed that this statement is positive. The integrated communication audit does indeed measure intraorganisational communication, as it is able to measure the internal, work-related messages that are shared amongst members of an organisation, which is descriptive of the definition of intraorganisational communication as defined by Barker and Du Plessis (2002:4) in section 2.3, chapter 2. The integrated communication audit also measured perceptions regarding the purposes of intraorganisational communication, as mentioned in section 2.3.1 of chapter 2, which included issues such as compliance regarding policies, procedures and directives, staff motivation, building support for changes or initiatives and creating organisational identification as well as socialising employees into the organisational ideology, objectives and culture all of which are descriptive of the purposes of intraorganisational communication.

It can essentially incorporate the various aspects that constitute intraorganisational communication into the measurement instruments. Current communication audit instruments provide a tried and tested evaluation of intraorganisational communication and the integrated communication audit simply adds other dimensions to the current evaluation instruments. The adaptability of these instruments only serves to enhance the integrated communication audit's ability to measure intraorganisational communication

and therefore, the integrated communication audit is an effective measurement instrument for Intraorganisational communication.

- The second research question asked whether an integrated communication audit as measurement instrument does measure integrated communication?

The study revealed that the integrated communication audit only partially measures integrated communication. Although it is possible for the integrated communication audit to measure some aspects of the integration of communication, it only scratches the surface of integration. Practically the incorporation of all aspects of the integration of communication into the integrated communication audit is difficult. As it fails to incorporate the measurement of all the aspects of integration into the measurement the integrated communication audit therefore fails to give justice to the complexity of the integration of communication. It is also difficult to measure respondents perceptions of the impact of one variable of integrated communication on another variable and on the organisation as a whole as it measures the different variables in isolation and depends on the actual researcher to draw correlations between these issues.

The superficial evaluation of the complexity of integration, as well as the lack of respondents having an opportunity to link the different issues together in the questionnaire and the dependency on an external researcher to provided insight into the issues provides a snapshot of whether integration of communication exists and not a comprehensive view of integrated communication. One aspect of the communication audit which falls short of measuring integration of communication is that many of the questions identify problems but do not provide conclusive answers to the issues pertaining to the problems, such as the actual severity of the problems, causes of the problems, *et cetera*. It simply identifies a problem that then needs to be probed and investigated further. The answers also reflect perceptions of the organisation rather than actual substantiated information. Furthermore, the results of some questions may be biased due to a halo effect with respondents, as a result of negative or positive experiences or perceptions in other areas, answering the questionnaire in a generally

negative or positive fashion, rather than objectively evaluating each issue and answering accordingly.

- The third question asked whether a communication audit should be adapted to measure integration of communication within the context of an organisation?

Although the communication audit and its adaptation provides a foundation for the measurement of the integration of communication, simply adapting the current measurement tools does not provide the information that is required to measure integration of communication in all its facets reliably. A measurement tool that is specifically designed to measure communication integration should rather be developed, especially as the integration of communication is increasingly being recognised as a fundamental part of communication effectiveness and success. Essentially the communication audit was designed at a time when integration of communication was not an issue that received intense consideration and rather than adapting the communication audit, a measurement instrument that specifically measures the integration of communication and the relational impact that integrate communication variables have on each other, the organisation and individuals, should be designed and tested.

5.6   RECOMMENDATION

Findings of this study indicate that the integrated communication audit, although very useful in the organisational context, does not comprehensively measure the level of integration of communication, which is descriptive of a systemic approach to communication. The integrated communication audit can provide information of perceptions of intraorganisational communication and aspects of integrated communication that is based on employee perceptions. It requires the researcher to conclude findings that are based on inferences of the correlation between data and the issue of integration that is drawn from the perceptions of staff and these perceptions may not be factual. In addition, a lack of in-depth knowledge of the organisation may result in obscured or hidden issues especially around integrated communication as broadly

defined in this study not being identified or highlighted or even inaccurate deductions being made.

In addition, a weakness in the measurement of employee perception is directly related to the halo effect, which relates to the potential of respondents marking responses generally negative or positive dependent on their experience in one area of intraorganisational communication. Similarly, the issue of centrality, which refers to respondents marking their response generally neutral, also impacts on getting an accurate version of the information. Essentially the respondent's personal perceptions may impact on the way the respondent rates intraorganisational communication and its integration in the organisation regardless of whether or not this is based in fact.

The ICA communication audit, as adapted, certainly measures intraorganisational communication, but undertakes analysis of information on issues in isolation in that it focuses on a defined dimension of a particular interest area, especially with links between the different components of process, individual, team and organisational communication dimensions not being highlighted. For example, questions related to organisational strategy places the emphasis on the need of employees to know what the strategy is, whether they are aware of it and whether they understand it. It does not look at the link between the strategy being translated into the culture of the organisation, human performance management, the way in which the organisation operates, issues such as unit strategy, *et cetera*. As a hypothetical illustration, an organisation may adopt a low-cost high-volume manufacturing strategy which, although not expressed, can result in a perception where employees believe inferior quality products are being manufactured and is accepted and as a result a culture where employees believe inferior performance is acceptable is created.

Essentially a strategy may be communicated and employees may be aware thereof, but how it links with other intraorganisational communication elements and dimensions potentially may not be detected from the use of an integrated communication audit. Therefore, the integrated communication audit only considers a number of variables and

the link between it rather than the link between a more representative number of variables and as a result drawing broad inferences from the data could be pure speculation. To increase the links between the various variables would mean that the length of the survey would only increase and this is particularly problematic, as in order to incorporate all these issues, it already is lengthy. The integrated communication audit as developed here also despite the attempt to focus on integration still places emphasis on perceptions of effectiveness and, based on the perceptions of effectiveness and experiences of the respondents, general finding can be made that due to communication not being particularly effective, an inference can be drawn that integration is low. Conversely, where the findings are generally positive, an inference can be drawn that there is some level of communication integration within the organisation. Such inferences may prove to be accurate or inaccurate. It cannot definitively say what the actual level of integration is.

Over and above obvious integration issues that can be picked up, more obscure aspects of integration may be lost to the researcher as a result of the communication audit as developed here, not being able to identify it. This will result in it not being recognised or addressed. With the instrument being used to measure perceptions as well as the questions generally being defined, there is a potential that the instrument might not be able to measure more obscure issues in relation to integrated communication with it potentially rather measuring outwardly expressed levels of integration and as such it is critical to consider whether an evaluation of obvious issues will be sufficient for the purpose of a specific situation.

Considering these issues with regard to the in-depth measurement of integrated communication, a recommendation can be made that a measurement instrument which can comprehensively measure not only perceived levels and some aspects of integration of communication, but also all aspects of intraorganisational communication and the actual levels of integration of communication, should be developed. A measurement instrument that measures the integration of communication in the organisation would allow organisations to improve the integration of communication from a holistic

perspective. This, in turn, could make a contribution to improving the organisation as a systems operation and thereby optimise the contribution communication makes to the achievement of operational and strategic organisational objectives.

5.7   CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research has inherent value for the case study organisation as it provides a status quo assessment of communication in the organisation.   In terms of results, it is clear that on the whole the organisation needs to prioritise intraorganisational communication as a strategic priority, as there is at least a level of communication failure taking place in each area of communication. There is very little, if any, real integration of communication and from the data extracted it appears that communication as a whole is ineffective. The organisation has a fragmented approach to communication and in order to succeed they will need to take a more integrated approach to communication. This in turn will most likely make an impact on aspects that are not necessarily seen as direct components of communication, such as productivity and improved service delivery. Generally, the interaction and collaboration between individuals, work groups, teams and departments is limited and an improvement in this area can result in the organisation broadly benefiting as the efforts that are made by the various individuals and groups in the organisation can be optimised if everyone works towards the same objectives and goals in a way that compliments the activities and processes of other units and departments.

Furthermore, improvement in the interaction and collaboration between the various individuals and groups can also result in an improved organisational culture and climate and employee satisfaction.   The organisation must look at the intraorganisational communication from a holistic perspective, with issues such as organisational culture and climate, structural design and the nature of the business, amongst others, all impacting on the effectiveness of communication, which in turn impacts on the organisation's service delivery.

The inherent limitations of the research is that it specifically focus on the intraorganisation communication context and as such cannot directly be applied or used for the measurement of integrated communication in relation to the externally orientated organisational communication. In addition, the instrument does not effectively measure the level of integration and this is a clear limitation where it is the organisations intent to measure the degree or level of integration.

In terms of the study it can be concluded that the study does add to the field and study of communication as it begins to highlight the need for the development of an integrated communication measurement tool. It also shows that the communication audit, although it can be adapted, is not an ideal method for measuring integrated communication. It also indicates that the use of the communication audit as an intraorganisational measurement tool continues to be a valuable measurement tool, but that it can also be utilised as a superficial evaluation tool of integrated communication as long as the purpose of the evaluation is content with a superficial evaluation of integrated communication within the organisation.

However, the study has additional value in that it clearly shows that the ICA Audit can be adapted to incorporate the measurement of broader intraorganisational communication related issues and more specifically issues that form part of the principle of integrated communication as defined by the researcher as well as Gayeski and Woodward (1996). The adaptation of the ICA Audit in the study enhances the inherent value of the ICA Audit as it increases the number of intraorganisational communication related elements that is measured and therefore the comprehensiveness of the measurement of intraorganisational communication. The ICA Audit as adapted in the study is also able to isolate the various intraorganisational communication elements that combined, form the fundamental elements of integrated communication and such has use for the field of organisational and more specifically intraorganisational communication.

In light of the literature suggesting that in the context of organisational communication the concept of integrated communication is necessary it would be valuable to develop a

measurement instrument that will be able to measure integrated communication effectively and in-depth.

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ANNEXURE A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

ORGANISATIONAL SURVEY

Dear Staff member

Thank you for making a valuable contribution to the organisation. We value your opinion and would greatly appreciate it if you take some time to share it with us by completing this questionnaire. The purpose of this survey is to determine how how effective organisational communication and its integration is, how satisfied staff are with communication and how staff experience the work environment and the organisation as a whole.

Your opinion of issues related to all aspects of communication and other processes, will provide the organisation with an opportunity to harness strengths and enhance weaknesses and thereby assist the organisation's expectations in future. Your comments will be carefully considered, as the organisation works to ensure that you have an enabling work environment, that is also a positive personal experience.

The questionnaire itself will be confidential in that you will not be required to indicate your name on the questionnaire.

Please return your completed questionnaire in an unmarked envelope to the collection boxes kept in the HR Directorate by the deadline date.

Return to the collection boxes by: 30 November 2004

Thanking you in anticipation

Instructions:

Please tick the answer that closely matches your opinion and perception.

Almost always	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
✖	☐	☐	☐	☐

1. COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS & STRUCTURE:

1.1. The physical setting of the national organisation allows easy access to and contact with other directorates and units:

Almost always	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.2. The geographic location of the regions has a negative impact on interaction with them:

Almost always	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.3. The organisation has the appropriate IT infrastructure to facilitate communication:

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.4. Within the organisation communication is flowing from the top downward:

Almost always	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.5. Within the organisation communication is flowing from the bottom upward:

Almost always	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.6. How often does communication flow between colleagues (horisontal flow) of the same level?:

Almost always	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.7. The following is a list of channels through which information is transmitted to employees. Tick the block that best indicates the amount of information you <u>CURRENTLY</u> receive through that channel.

1.7.1 Face-to-face contact between two people

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.7.2 Face-to-face contact among more that two people (group)

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.7.3 Telephone

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.7.4 E-mail

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.7.5 Written documents (reports, minutes of meetings, procedure documents, memo's, etc)

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.7.6 Central information respository (G-drive)

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.8. **The following is a list of channels through which information is transmitted to employees. Tick the block that best indicates the amount of information you <u>NEED</u> to receive through that channel.**

1.8.1 Face-to-face contact between two people

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.8.2 Face-to-face contact among more that two people (group)

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.8.3 Telephone

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.8.4 E-mail

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.8.5 Written documents (reports, minutes of meetings, procedure documents, memo's, etc)

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.8.6 Central information respository (G-drive)

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.9. **Information you receive via direct face-to-face contact between two people is accurate:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.10. **Information you receive via direct face-to-face contact between more than two people (group) is accurate:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.11. **Information you receive via telephonic contact is accurate:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.12. **Information you receive via e-mail is accurate:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.13. **Information you receive via written documents is accurate:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.14. **Information you receive via the central information respository (G-drive) is accurate:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.15. **Information you receive via direct face-to-face contact between two people is relevant to you:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.16. **Information you receive via direct face-to-face contact between more than two people (group) is relevant to you:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.17. **Information you receive via telephonic contact is relevant to you:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.18. **Information you receive via e-mail is relevant to you:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.19. **Information you receive via written documents is relevant to you:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.20. **Information you receive via the central information respository (G-drive) is relevant to you:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.21. **How often is the communication received via these channels misunderstood?**

1.21.1 Direct face-to-face-contact between two people

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.21.2 Direct face-to-face contact between more that two people (group)

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.21.3 Telephonic contact

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.21.4 E-mail

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.21.5 Written documents

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.21.6 Central information respository (G-drive)

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.22. If misunderstandings happened, in your experience, why did these misunderstandings occur?

Please tick all the answers that are relevant (there may be more than one tick)

Communication was not complete	Perceived tone of the communication	Cultural differences	Gender differences	Personal bias and values
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Received too much information	Received too little information	Conflict between employees	Conflict between departments	Inability to use communication facilties
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Inappropriate medium use	Language usage
☐	☐

Other: _____

1.23. **I am able to manage the volume of information I receive on a daily basis:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.24. **You receive information from various sources. Tick the block that best indicates the amount of information you <u>CURRENTLY</u> receive from that source.**

1.24.1 **From my co-workers**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.24.2 **From subordinates (if relevant)**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.24.3 **From individuals in other departments (directorates or regions)**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.24.4 **From my manager**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.24.5 **From the head of my division (directorate)**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.24.6 **From meetings between sections in the department (directorate)**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.24.7 **From meetings between departments (directorates)**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.24.8 **From formal management briefings / presentations**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.24.9 **From the staff forum**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.24.10 **From the grapevine**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.25. **You receive information from various sources. Tick the block that bests indicates the amount of information you <u>NEED</u> to receive from that source.**

1.25.1 **From my co-workers**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.25.2 **From subordinates (if relevant)**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.25.3 **From individuals in other departments (directorates or regions)**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.25.4 **From my manager**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.25.5 **From the head of my division (directorate)**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.25.6 **From meetings between sections in the department (directorate)**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.25.7 **From meetings between departments (directorates)**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.25.8 **From formal management briefings / presentations**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.25.9 **From the staff forum**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.25.10 **From the grapevine**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.26. **Indicate the extent to which information from the following sources is usually timely.**
Tick the block that bests indicates the timeliness of information received.

1.26.1 **From my subordinates (if relevant)**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.26.2 **From my co-workers**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.26.3 **From my supervisor / manager**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.26.4 **From the head of the department (directorate)**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.26.5 **From the grapevine**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. INDIVIDUAL ORIENTATION:

2.1. **I have an accurate and comprehensive job description that details my specific duties:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.2. **Do you feel satisfied that understandable and comprehensive procedures exist of how to do your specific job?**

Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.3. **You receive information on various topics. Tick the block that best indicates your satisfaction with the amount of information you <u>CURRENTLY</u> receive on that particular topic.**

2.3.1 **About my work duties**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.3.2 **About how well I am doing my work**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4. **You receive information on various topics. Tick the block that best indicates the amount of information you __NEED__ to receive on that particular topic.**

2.4.1 **About my work duties**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.2 **About how well I am doing my work**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.3 **About organisational policies, rules and regulations**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.4 **About salary and benefits**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.5 **About how technological changes affect my work**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.6 **About how operational changes affect my work**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.7 **About mistakes and failures in my department (directorate or region)**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.8 **About how my work related problems are being handled**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.9 **About how I am being judged as an individual**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.10 **About what I must do to receive a favourable performance evaluation**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.11 **About when I have performed well**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.12 **About important developments in the department**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.13 **About how my work relates to the operations in the department**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.4.14 **About how my work supports the achievement of the organisation's long range goals**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.5. **There are topics on which you can send information to others. Tick the block that best indicates the amount of information you <u>CURRENTLY</u> send on that topic.**

2.5.1 **About reporting what I am doing in my work**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.5.2 **About reporting what I think my work requires of me**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.5.3 **About reporting my work-related problems**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.5.4 **About my complaints regarding my work and/or working conditions**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.5.5 **About my requesting information necessary to do my work**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.5.6 **About my evaluating the work performance of my immediate supervisor**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.5.7 **About my asking for clearer work instructions**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.6. **There are topics on which you can send information to others. Tick the block that best indicates the amount of information you <u>NEED</u> to send on that particular topic.**

2.6.1 **About reporting what I am doing in my work**

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.6.2 About reporting what I think my work requires of me

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.6.3 About reporting my work-related problems

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.6.4 About my complaints regarding my work and/or working conditions

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.6.5 About my requesting information necessary to do my work

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.6.6 About my evaluating the work perfromance of my immediate supervisor

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.6.7 About my asking for clearer work instructions

Enough	More than average	Average	Little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.7. For each person listed below indicate the amount of action that <u>CURRENTLY</u> is taken on information you send by ticking the corresponding block.

2.7.1 Subordinates (if relevant)

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.7.2 Co-workers (inside and outside the department)

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.7.3 Immediate supervisor / manager

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.7.4 Top (senior) management

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.8. For each person listed below indicate the amount of action that <u>NEEDS</u> to be taken on information you send by ticking the corresponding block.

2.8.1 Subordinates (if relevant)

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.8.2 Co-workers (inside and outside the deparment)

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.8.3 Immediate supervisor / manager

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.8.4 Top (senior) management

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9. Work satisfaction or lack thereof can relate to work itself, one's co-workers, immediate supervisor (manager), the organisation as a whole, etc. Tick the block that best indicates the extent that you are satisfied with:

2.9.1 My work

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9.2 My salary

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9.3 My promotion possibilities in the organisation

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9.4 My training and development opportunities

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9.5 Opportunities available for my contributing to the overall success of the directorate

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9.6 Recognition and reward for outstanding performance

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9.7 Concern for employees' welfare

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9.8 Working in the organisation

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9.9 The organisation as compared to other organisations

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9.10 The organisation's efficiency in general

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9.11 The quality of the organisation's service in general

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.9.12 The organisation's achievement of its objectives:

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. TEAM (WORKGROUP / DEPARTMENT, INTERDEPARTMENT & MANAGEMENT)

3.1. I am dependent on other colleagues and departments to complete my work:

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.2. Colleagues and other departments provide the necessary input timeously in order for me to complete my work on time

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.3. Colleagues and other departments provide work that is of an appropriate quality level

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.4. Departments interact with each other on a daily basis. Please indicate how often your workgroup / department currently interacts with other departments and what you believe the need for interaction is:

3.4.1 Current level of interaction

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.4.2 Level of interaction needed

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.5. **Departments need to collaborate on certain projects. Please indicate how often your workgroup / department currently collaborates with other departments and what you believe the need for collaboration is**

3.5.1 **Current level of collaboration between departments**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.5.2 **Level of collaboration needed**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.6. **What percentage of the time does communication between departments take place through:**

Please write the percentage in the space provided

E-mail	Formal and informal meetings	Telephonic interaction	Interdepartmental project teams	Management contact
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

3.7. **The way our work group or department gets along with other work groups or departments can best be described as:**

Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.8. **Operational processes and procedures in other departments (directorates) impact positively on my ability to undertake and complete my work successfully**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.9. **My department (directorate) knows how other departments (directorates) support the achievement of the organisation's strategy and long range goals:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.10. **Employees in my department (directorate) understand the link between our and other departments' (directorates) strategies, plans and activities:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.11. **Employees in other departments (directorates) understands the link between their and our departments' (directorates) strategies, plans and activities:**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12. **A variety of communication relationships exist in the organisation. Staff exchange messages regularly with one another. Considering your relationships with others in the organisation tick the block that best describes the relationship in each item.**

3.12.1 **I trust my co-workers**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

3.12.2 **My co-workers get along with each other**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

3.12.3 **My relationships with my co-workers are satisfactory**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

3.12.4 **I trust my immediate supervisor (manager)**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

3.12.5 **My immediate supervisor (manager) is honest with me**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

3.12.6 **My immediate supervisor (manager) listens to me**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

3.12.7 **I am free to disagree with my immediate supervisor (manager)**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

3.12.8 **I may tell my immediate supervisor (manager) when things are going wrong**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

3.12.9 **My immediate supervisor (manager) acknowledges my good work**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

3.12.10 **My immediate supervisor (manager) is friendly with his/her other subordinates**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

3.12.11 **My immediate supervisor (manager) understands my work needs**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never

3.12.12 My relationship with my immediate supervisor (manager) is satisfactory

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12.13 I trust the management of the organisation

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12.14 The organisation's senior management is sincere in its efforts to communicate with employees

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12.15 My relationship with the senior management of the organisation is satisfactory

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12.16 I get along with staff that belong to other cultural groups

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12.17 *Top (s*enior) management encourages differences of opinion

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12.18 I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12.19 I have a say in decisions that affect my work

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12.20 I influence operations in my unit / section in the directorate

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12.21 I influence operations in my directorate

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12.22 I influence operations in other directorates

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.12.23 I influence operations in the organisation

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***3.12.24* I contribute to the accomplishment of the organisation's objectives**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. ORGANISATIONAL ORIENTATION (INCLUDING STRATEGY & CHANGE)

***4.1.* The organisation has various characteristics or approaches to leadership and management that describe it. Please indicate by ticking the box that best indicates the most accurate description of the organisation in relation to:**

***4.1.1* Organisational design**

Democratic	Participative	Autocratic
☐	☐	☐

***4.1.2* Decision making freedom**

Manager allows subordinates to make decisions within limits	Manager presents a problem, is given suggestions, and then makes a decision	Manager presents a tentative decision subject to change	Manager puts forward ideas and invites questions	Manager makes decisions and announces them
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.1.3* Leadership approach**

Achievement is attained by workers who are motivated and pursue the goals of the organisation with good will	Attention to the needs of people and sound relations lead to a pleasant atmosphere and workplace	Adequate performance is possible by means of a combination of pressure for performance and adequate job satisfaction	Performance is demanded with minimum consideration for people	Minimum effort is made to get work done
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.1.4* Competitiveness in the organisation**

Extremely competitive	Very competitive	Fairly competitive	Not very competitive	Not competitive at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.1.5* Supportiveness of the organisation**

Extremely supportive	Very supportive	Fairly supportive	Not very supportive	Not supportive at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.1.6* Stability of the organisation**

Extremely stable	Very stable	Fairly stable	Not very stable	Not stable at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.1.7* Cohesiveness of the organisation**

Extremely cohesive	Very cohesive	Fairly cohesive	Not very cohesive	Not cohesive at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.2.* Decisions affecting employees are made with input from employees**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.3.* Knowledge and information is freely shared within the organisation**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.4.* Within the organisation communication is open and candid**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.5.* I feel free to express my views openly in the organisation**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.6.* Sufficient effort is made to get the opinions, perceptions and thoughts of employees**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.7.* Ideas, opinions and contributions are valued**

Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.8.* Rumours are common within the organisation**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.9.* I understand the need for change**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.10.* I find out about change to the organisation before it happens**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.11.* I know the organistion's strategic direction and vision**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.12.* Rate the importance of knowing the organisation's strategic direction and vision**

Important	Neutral	Unimportant
☐	☐	☐

***4.13.* Policies, rules and regulations are well communicated**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

***4.14.* Changes in policies, rules and regulations are well communicated**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.15. I know and understand organisational rules and regulations clearly

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.16. Policies, rules and regulations have been published appropriately

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.17. Rate the importance of knowing organisational policies, rules and regulations

Important	Neutral	Unimportant
☐	☐	☐

4.18. Employees have respect for rules and regulations

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.19. Employees are committed to the organisation

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.20. Attitudes toward communication in the organistion are basically healthy

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.21. Challenges that are faced by the organisation and the impact they may have is shared with employees

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.22. Employees seldom waste time

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.23. The management style of the organisation

Has a very favourable influence	Has a favourable influence	Has no real effect	Has an unfavourable influence	Has a very unfavourable influence
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.24. The example management set

Greatly encourages me to work hard	Somewhat encourages me to work hard	Has little effect on me	Somewhat discourages me to work hard	Greatly discourages me to work hard
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.25. The way that employees are treated by the Senior management (leadership) of the organisation influences my overall attitude about the job and company

It has a very favourable influence	It has a favourable influence	It has no real effect	It has a slightly unfavourable influence	It has an unfavourable influence
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

5.1. **How many years have you been employed by the organisation?**

Less than a year	Between 1 - 2 years	Between 2 - 4 years	Over 5 years	10 years or more
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5.2. **What is the job grade of your position?** _____

5.3. **In what department / directorate are you employed?** _____

You have now completed this survey. Thank You!

You may have something that you would like to express that we did not address in the survey.
If so, please use the space provided on the next page.

Should you wish to elaborate on any specific question, please include the number of the question you are referring to.

ANNEXURE B: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Who is responsible for the formal and informal internal communication in the organisation?

2. What is the role of communication in the organisation?

3. What systems for communication exist in the organisation?

4. How does especially the Executive Committee view communication in the organisation?

5. Do you think the way in which (internal) communication is viewed is consistent with the way in which it is applied, especially by the Executive Committee and management in the organisation?

6. What are the reasons for the way in which communication is viewed and applied in the organisation?

7. What contribution is communication making in the organisation (specifically internal communication)?

8. How integrated do you believe communication is in the organisation?

9. What would you say are the communication strengths and weaknesses of your organisation?

10. How does the climate and organisational culture impact on communication and the organisation as a whole?

11. How does the company build and secure high employee morale and satisfaction?

12. How participative (in terms of inter-directorate interaction and collaboration as well as staff participation) is the development of strategic direction, vision and organisational objectives both at organisational and operational (directorate) level?

13. How is conflict resolved in the organisation?

14. How does the organisation manage change initiatives?

15. What is the organisation doing to improve communication, if anything?

16. Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

ANNEXURE C: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Discuss and describe the channels (formal and informal) through which you typically receive and give information in the organisation.

2. What is your best source of news and information in and about the organisation?

3. In terms of content, relevance, value and interpretation, how effective are these channels through which you receive information in the organisation?

4. How would you describe the current situation with regard to accessing and sharing information in the organisation?

5. What is the typical conflict resolution method or methods used in the organisation?

6. How are staff motivated in the organisation?

7. Describe the way decisions are typically made in the organisation and how this impacts on delivery or departmental and organisational effectiveness.

8. How responsive is the organisation to change and how does it manage change initiatives?

9. What type of participation takes place in the development of the organisational strategy and operational plans?

10. What is the level of involvement of other directorates / regions in the development of the different directorates / regions' operational strategies and plans?

11. What do you believe the current situation is with regard to interdepartmental collaboration (shared work and action) and what effect does this have on the achievement of organisational and directorate / regional goals?

12. Do the different directorates / regions have operational processes and procedures that are obstacles to the achievement of your directorate / region's achievement of goals and in what way are they obstacles?

13. How does the climate and organisational culture impact on communication and the organisation as a whole?

14. What are the major communication strengths of the organisation (start with the organisation as a whole and then move onto the regions, directorates)?

15. What are the major communication weaknesses of the organisation (start with the organisation as a whole and then move onto the regions, directorates)?

16. What can the organisation do to improve internal communication?

ANNEXURE D: CODED THEMES FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW DATA

CODE	THEMES
1	Responsibility for internal communication
2	Role of communication in the organisation
3	Role that internal communication should play
4	Existing channels for communication
5	Executive view of communication
6	Consistency of perception of communication and its application
7	Reasons for the perceptions and application of communication
8	Contribution of communication
9	Contribution communication should make
10	Levels of integration of communication between units
11	Communication strengths and weaknesses
12	Organisational climate and culture's impact on communication
13	Methods for building and securing high employee morale and satisfaction
14	Decision-making in the organisation
15	Participation in the development of the strategy
16	Conflict resolution
17	Management of change initiatives
18	Responsiveness of the organisation to change
19	Improving communication
20	General

ANNEXURE E: CODED THEMES FOR FOCUS GROUP

FOCUS GROUP DATA

CODE	THEMES
1	The channels (formal and informal) of communication which is typically used (4)
2	Best source of news and information (3)
3	Content, relevance, value and interpretation of effectiveness of communication channels (8)
4	Information needs (6)
5	The current situation with regard to accessing and sharing information (7)
6	Improvement of the flow of information (4)
7	Conflict resolution method or methods used (4)
8	Methods for motivation (7)
9	Decision-making and its impacts on delivery or departmental and organisational effectiveness (4).
10	Responsiveness of the organisation to and the management of change (2)
11	Level of participation in the development of the organisational strategy and operational plans (6)
12	Level of involvement of other operational units in the development of the different directorates / regions' operational strategies and plans (6)
13	Interdepartmental collaboration (shared work and action) (8)
14	Operational processes and procedures that is are obstacles to the achievement goals (8)
15	Impact of organisational climate and culture on communication (8)
16	Communication strengths of the organisation (3)
17	Communication weaknesses of the organisation (8)
18	Improvement of internal communication (7)
19	Contribution of communication (3)

Numbers in brackets after themes indicate number of statements from participants in relation to these themes recorded in the course of the focus group discussion