A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF CORPORATE ONLINE COMMUNICATION: A MARKETING PUBLIC RELATIONS (MPR) PERSPECTIVE

By Thereséa Charmaine Du Plessis
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by

THERESÉA CHARMAINE DU PLESSIS

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PROMOTER: PROF G C ANGELOPULO

JOINT PROMOTER: PROF D F DU PLESSIS

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SUMMARY

This study identifies, tests and modifies factors for effective corporate online communication using a marketing public relations (MPR) perspective. An MPR perspective entails an integrated cross-disciplinary approach with a strong product and/or service focus. The need for the study is underscored by the fact that there is undoubtedly a lack of a theoretical framework in which to practise corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation’s products or services.

In order to test the identified factors for effective corporate online communication, namely credibility, trust and long-term relationships, this study uses Q methodology as a research method and applies Q sorting as a means of data collection. Participants are asked to sort statements about corporate online communication in their preferred order of importance on a large board in the presence of the researcher. This is known as the Q sorting process. The identified factors are tested among 20 communicators and 20 receivers of corporate online communication. The participants’ sortings of statements are compared by means of Q factor analysis and then analysed.

The results of the study indicate that only one factor is perceived as an absolute significant factor for effective corporate online communication and that two of the factors necessitate modification. Consequently, based on the results, four factors are identified for effective corporate online communication, using an MPR perspective. These four factors are derived from the perspectives of both the communicators and receivers of corporate online communication and are included in a proposed theoretical framework of corporate online communication using an MPR perspective.
KEYWORDS

Corporate online communication
Corporate website
Credibility
Factor
Factor analysis
Internet
Long-term relationships
Marketing public relations (MPR)
Marketing communications
Organisational communication
Q methodology
Trust
World Wide Web
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 INTRODUCTION AND DEMARCATION OF SUBJECT AREA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 Aim of the study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 Objective of the study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 NEED AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH DESIGN</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5.1 Measuring instrument, research problem and research question</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 LAYOUT OF THE THESIS</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 SUMMARY</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER 2: MARKETING PUBLIC RELATIONS (MPR): A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION IN MARKETING</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Definitions of marketing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 A historical overview of developments in marketing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2.1 Production-oriented perspective</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2.2 Sales-oriented perspective</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2.3 Marketing-oriented perspective</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2.4 Societal marketing perspective</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2.5 Cause-related marketing (CRM) perspective</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2.6 Relationship marketing perspective</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Marketing processes and activities</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.4 Communication in marketing 24
2.2.5 Marketing communication 26
  2.2.5.1 Advertising 28
  2.2.5.2 Sales promotion 28
  2.2.5.3 Direct marketing 29
  2.2.5.4 Personal selling 29
  2.2.5.5 MPR 30
  2.2.5.6 Sponsorship 30
  2.2.5.7 The Internet 30
2.2.6 Trends in marketing and marketing communication 31
2.3 PUBLIC RELATIONS 33
  2.3.1 Definitions of public relations 33
  2.3.2 A historical overview of public relations 36
  2.3.3 Theoretical and practical approaches to public relations 37
  2.3.4 Public relations activities 40
  2.3.5 Corporate social responsibility 42
  2.3.6 Trends in public relations 43
2.4 THE INTEGRATION OF MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS 44
  2.4.1 Integrated communication 44
  2.4.2 The debate surrounding the integration of marketing and public relations 46
2.5 MARKETING PUBLIC RELATIONS (MPR) 50
  2.5.1 Defining MPR 51
  2.5.2 MPR activities 53
  2.5.3 Main benefits of MPR 54
    2.5.3.1 MPR allows for more credibility in the selling of the organisation’s product(s) and/or service(s) 56
    2.5.3.2 MPR can instil more trust in the selling of the organisation’s product(s) and/or service(s) 60
    2.5.3.3 MPR plays a significant role in establishing long-term relationships with an organisation’s stakeholders and customers in the selling of its product(s) and/or service(s) 62
2.6 SUMMARY 64
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 3: CREDIBILITY, TRUST AND LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS</th>
<th>65</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 CREDIBILITY</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Source credibility</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 TRUST</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Trust as a multidimensional concept</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Different approaches to the conceptualisation of trust</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Different forms of trust</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4 Sources of trust</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 SUMMARY</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 4: CORPORATE ONLINE COMMUNICATION: AN MPR PERSPECTIVE</th>
<th>84</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 THE IMPACT OF THE INTERNET ON ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 THE DIGITAL DIVIDE</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 ONLINE MARKETING</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1 The growing importance of online marketing</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2 The nature of online marketing</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.3 The differences between online and traditional marketing</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 ONLINE PUBLIC RELATIONS</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.1 The growing importance of online public relations</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.2 The differences between traditional and online public relations</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 INTERNET RESOURCES FOR CORPORATE ONLINE COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.1 The World Wide Web</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.1.1 The corporate website</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7 TECHNIQUES FOR CORPORATE ONLINE COMMUNICATION

4.7.1 E-commerce

4.7.2 Online customer service

4.7.3 Product- and service-related information

4.7.4 Company-related information

4.7.5 Online media relations

4.7.6 Investors’ relations

4.7.7 Customer feedback

4.7.8 Information source

4.7.9 Online promotions

4.8 CORPORATE ONLINE COMMUNICATION: AN MPR PERSPECTIVE

4.8.1 The nature of corporate online communication

4.8.2 Current integration of corporate online communication techniques on
    the corporate website

4.8.3 Corporate online communication in relation to the identified
    factors for effective corporate online communication
    4.8.3.1 Credibility
    4.8.3.2 Trust
    4.8.3.3 Long-term relationships

4.9 SUMMARY

CHAPTER 5: Q METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.2 Q METHODOLOGY DEFINITIONS

5.3 THE FIVE PHASES OF A Q STUDY

5.3.1 Collecting the concourse

5.3.2 Selecting a sample representative of the range of
    communicated ideas in the discourse
    5.3.2.1 Unstructured Q samples
    5.3.2.2 Structured Q samples
    5.3.2.3 Number of statements for a Q study
5.3.2.4 Preparation of the statements for the Q sorting process 150

5.3.3 Selecting participants from people involved in the discourse and asking them to arrange the sample of ideas in their preferred order of importance 150

5.3.3.1 Intensive person-sample 152

5.3.3.2 Extensive person-sample 153

5.3.3.3 Selection of the response format 153

5.3.3.4 The Q sorting process 154

5.3.4 Formal comparison of the arrangements by participants by means of factor analysis 160

5.3.4.1 Factor analysis 161

5.3.4.2 Q factor analysis 162

5.3.5 Analysing the results of the factor analysis 168

5.3.5.1 Factor scores 168

5.3.5.2 Interpreting the factor array 171

5.3.5.3 Distinguishing statements 172

5.3.5.4 Consensus statements 173

5.4 BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF Q METHODOLOGY 173

5.4.1 Benefits of Q methodology 173

5.4.2 Limitations of Q methodology 174

5.5 SUMMARY 175

CHAPTER 6: OPERATIONALISATION 176

6.1 INTRODUCTION 176

6.2 SELECTION OF THE CATEGORIES AND STATEMENTS FOR THIS STUDY 176

6.2.1 Pretesting of statements: a pilot study 187

6.3 SELECTION OF THE PERSON-SAMPLE AND THE Q SORTING PROCESS 188

6.3.1 The person-sample 188

6.3.1.1 Communicators of corporate online communication 188

6.3.1.2 Receivers of corporate online communication 188
6.3.2 The response format 189
6.3.3 The condition of instruction and Q sorting process 189
6.4 PROGRAMME FOR DATA ANALYSIS 191
6.4.1 PQMethod 191
6.4.2 Steps followed in the PQMethod program 192
  6.4.2.1 Entering statements 192
  6.4.2.2 Entering sorts 192
  6.4.2.3 Extracting factors 192
  6.4.2.4 Rotating the centroids 193
  6.4.2.5 Q-analysis 193
6.5 SUMMARY 194

7.1 INTRODUCTION 195
7.2 FINDINGS 195
7.2.1 Overall findings for the communicators of corporate online communication 195
  7.2.1.1 Factor 1: responsible corporate online communication 199
  7.2.1.2 Factor 2: trust 204
  7.2.1.3 Factor 3: efficient information 211
  7.2.1.4 Consensus statements for factors 1, 2 and 3: communicators of corporate online communication 217
7.2.2 Overall findings for the receivers of corporate online communication 220
  7.2.2.1 Factor A: confidence 223
  7.2.2.2 Factor B: meaningful relationships 227
  7.2.2.3 Consensus statements for factors A and B: receivers of corporate online communication 233
7.3 THEORETICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FINDINGS IN TERMS OF THE STRUCTURED Q SAMPLE 236
7.3.1 Communicators of corporate online communication 236
  7.3.1.1 Factor 1: responsible corporate online communication 236
  7.3.1.2 Factor 2: trust 241
7.3.1.3 Factor 3: efficient information

7.3.2 Receivers of corporate online communication
  7.3.2.1 Factor A: confidence
  7.3.2.2 Factor B: meaningful relationships

7.4 SUMMARY

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY, ASSESSMENT, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

8.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS WITHIN FACTORS
  8.2.1 Findings within factors: communicators of corporate online communication
    8.2.1.1 Trust
    8.2.1.2 Credibility
    8.2.1.3 Long-term relationships
  8.2.2 Findings within factors: receivers of corporate online communication
    8.2.2.1 Trust
    8.2.2.2 Credibility
    8.2.2.3 Long-term relationships

8.3 FINDINGS RELATING TO THE OVERALL THEORY OF THE STUDY
  8.3.1 Trust
  8.3.2 Credibility
  8.3.3 Long-term relationships

8.4 CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE FINDINGS

8.5 REVISED CATEGORISATION

8.6 CONCLUSIONS

8.7 RECOMMENDATIONS
  8.7.1 Four factors for effective corporate online communication
  8.7.2 Further studies

8.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: The seven stages through which the marketing discipline evolved 15
Table 2.2: Hypothesised main benefits of MPR 56

Table 3.1: Dimensions of the concept of credibility 68
Table 3.2: Dimensions of the concept of source credibility 69
Table 3.3: Dimensions of the concept of trust 76
Table 3.4: Dimensions of the concept of long-term relationships 81

Table 4.1: Criteria for traditional and Internet market segmentation 93
Table 4.2: Differences between online and traditional marketing 93
Table 4.3: Differences between online and traditional public relations 99

Table 5.1: Q methodology definitions 141
Table 5.2: An explanatory table of a structured Q sample in Q methodology 148
Table 5.3: The differences between a structured and unstructured Q sample 149
Table 5.4: The differences between an intensive and extensive person-sample 153
Table 5.5: The differences between a forced-choice and free-sort condition of instruction 160
Table 5.6: An example of a correlation matrix 164
Table 5.7: An example of factor loadings 165
Table 5.8: An example of a factor array 172

Table 6.1: The structure of the Q sample in this study 177
Table 6.2: The dimensions included in the all-encompassing levels of the category of credibility 178
Table 6.3: The dimensions included in the all-encompassing levels of the category of trust 179
Table 6.4: The dimensions included in the all-encompassing levels of the category of *long-term relationships* 180

Table 6.5: Selection of statements in terms of the category of *credibility*, its three levels and various dimensions 185

Table 6.6: Selection of statements in terms of the category of *trust*, its three levels and various dimensions 186

Table 6.7: Selection of statements in terms of the category of *long-term relationships*, its two levels and various dimensions 187

Table 7.1: Statements that distinguish factor 1 from factors 2 and 3: communicators of corporate online communication 204

Table 7.2: Statements that distinguish factor 2 from factors 1 and 3: communicators of corporate online communication 210

Table 7.3: Statements that distinguish factor 3 from factors 1 and 2: communicators of corporate online communication 216

Table 7.4: Consensus statements for factors 1, 2 and 3 communicators of corporate online communication 217

Table 7.5: Statements that distinguish factor A from factor B: receivers of corporate online communication 231

Table 7.6: Consensus statements for factors A and B: receivers of corporate online communication 233
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 5.1: An example of how Q sort cards are spread on a Q sort diagram using a forced-choice condition of instruction 157

Figure 5.2: An example of how Q sort cards are spread on a Q sort diagram using a free-sort condition of instruction 159

Figure 6.1: The Q sort diagram for this study 190

Figure 7.1: Factor loadings: communicators of corporate online communication 197

Figure 7.2: Factor characteristics: communicators of corporate online communication 198

Figure 7.3: The factor array for factor 1: communicators of corporate online communication 199

Figure 7.4: The factor array for factor 2: communicators of corporate online communication 205

Figure 7.5: The factor array for factor 3: communicators of corporate online communication 211

Figure 7.6: Factor loadings: receivers of corporate online communication 221

Figure 7.7: Factor characteristics: receivers of corporate online communication 222

Figure 7.8: The factor array for factor A: receivers of corporate online communication 223

Figure 7.9: The factor array for factor B: receivers of corporate online communication 227

Figure 7.10: Factor 1: responsible corporate online communication - communicators of corporate online communication (significant corporate online communication) 237

Figure 7.11: Factor 1: responsible corporate online communication - communicators of corporate online communication (insignificant corporate online communication) 239
| Figure 7.12: | Factor 2: trust - communicators of corporate online communication (significant corporate online communication) | 241 |
| Figure 7.13: | Factor 2: trust - communicators of corporate online communication: (insignificant corporate online communication) | 244 |
| Figure 7.14: | Factor 3: efficient information - communicators of corporate online communication (significant corporate online communication) | 246 |
| Figure 7.15: | Factor 3: efficient information - communicators of corporate online communication (insignificant corporate online communication) | 248 |
| Figure 7.16: | Factor A: confidence - receivers of corporate online communication: (significant corporate online communication) | 252 |
| Figure 7.17: | Factor A: confidence - receivers of corporate online communication: (insignificant corporate online communication) | 254 |
| Figure 7.18: | Factor B: meaningful relationships - receivers of corporate online communication (significant corporate online communication) | 256 |
| Figure 7.19: | Factor B: meaningful relationships - receivers of corporate online communication (insignificant corporate online communication) | 259 |

**SOURCES CONSULTED**

**ANNEXURES**

- Annexure A: Statements for this study
- Annexure B: Instructions that are provided to the participants in this study prior to the Q sorting process
- Annexure C: Written report for data analysis: communicators of corporate online communication
- Annexure D: Written report for data analysis: receivers of corporate online communication