

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS OF THE Q STUDY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter first explains the findings of the Q study for both the communicators and receivers of corporate online communication. It then discusses the theoretical significance of the findings for each factor that emerged from the statistical analysis in terms of the structured Q sample.

7.2 FINDINGS

To determine the number of factors or patterns of perceptions among both the communicators and receivers of corporate online communication, the researcher employed the procedures described by Stephenson (1953) and Brown (1980a)⁹¹. The procedures specify that once the Q sorts have been collected and correlated, the researcher follows the same factoring process as that used in factor analysis.

7.2.1 Overall findings for the communicators of corporate online communication

Judgmental rotation yielded three dominant factors in the concourse. This solution accounts for 65 percent of the variance in the correlation matrix, which is depicted in annexure C.

In order to calculate factor scores for the three factors, the following criteria for including Q sorts in the factors were applied as suggested by Brown (1997a, 2000ab, 2001, 2002, 2003abe):

- Pure loadings are a Q sort that loaded on one factor only. The researcher considered factor loadings of 0,35 and more as significant. In order to estimate the factor scores, the researcher needed to present a final solution of as many purest loadings as possible on a factor. Pure loadings are pure expressions of the factor and provide a focused perspective of a specific factor (Brown 2003e). See also chapter 5, section 5.3.5.1a and chapter 6, section 6.4.2.4.
- The size of the factor loading was also considered. Because the findings of this

study have few pure loadings, the researcher also considered the size of the factor loading even though this was a mixed loading. Brown (2002) suggests that, depending on the number of Q sorts defining a factor (for instance only three or four), the researcher may also select Q sorts that load significantly higher on one factor than on the other. The researcher consequently considered mixed factor loadings if the one loading was roughly 0,20 higher than the loading on the other factor. For instance, if the loading on one factor was 0,35 and 0,55 on the other factor, the higher loading of 0,55 was also selected (0,20 higher than the other loading), because the higher loading would not be too contaminated by the lower loading on another factor. See also chapter 5, section 5.3.5.1c.

- Regarding factor 3, only one Q sort was used to calculate the factor scores because the participant who loaded purely on this factor compared with the low loadings on other factors, represents a significant participant and is therefore theoretically important to this research (communicator 19). Brown (2001) explains that if a pure factor loading contains only a single person it might first be judged unworthy of retention. It should, however, be retained if the single participant is deemed important for theoretical reasons. When a theoretically important participant loads markedly high on one factor and very low on others, it is recommended that this factor should be examined, interpreted and compared with other factors, even though no other participant loaded on that factor. See also chapter 5, section 5.3.5.1d.

Figure 7.1 below indicates the factor loadings of the 20 Q sorts for the three factors as well as the variance. The **X** next to a Q sort indicates a Q sort that was included in the factor and used to calculate factor scores for each factor. This figure shows that the variance for factor 1 is 27 percent, for factor 2, 29 percent, and for factor 3, nine percent.

Figure 7.1: Factor loadings: communicators of corporate online communication

QSORT	1	2	3
1	0,35	0,55	0,10
2	0,20	0,40	0,20
3	0,10	0,30	0,40
4	0,20	0,50	0,30
5	0,30	0,60	0,10
6	0,40	0,70	0,20
7	0,50	0,80	0,30
8	0,60	0,90	0,40
9	0,70	1,00	0,50
10	0,80	0,90	0,60
11	0,90	0,80	0,70
12	1,00	0,70	0,80
13	0,80	0,60	0,90
14	0,70	0,50	1,00
15	0,60	0,40	0,90
16	0,50	0,30	0,80
17	0,40	0,20	0,70
18	0,30	0,10	0,60
19	0,20	0,00	0,50
20	0,10	0,00	0,40

⁹¹ See also the theoretical discussion in chapter 5, section 5.3.4.2.

1 comm1	0,4855 X	0,3338	0,2344
2 comm2	0,5422	0,5965	0,3150
3 comm3	0,4762	0,7026	0,1133
4 comm4	0,5471	0,4998	0,1739
5 comm5	0,6816	0,4761	0,1650
6 comm6	0,7472 X	0,5304	0,2552
7 comm7	0,6678 X	0,3445	0,3318
8 comm8	0,3950	0,7089 X	0,1394
9 comm9	0,3170	0,8127 X	0,2009
10 comm10	0,4803	0,6162	0,0632
11 comm11	0,5207 X	0,2706	0,3160
12 comm12	0,5553	0,5196	0,4611
13 comm13	0,2860	0,4887	0,4307
14 comm14	0,7375 X	0,4260	0,2426
15 comm15	0,5979	0,4338	0,2328
16 comm16	0,5336 X	0,3537	0,1229
17 comm17	0,4690	0,5837	0,3914
18 comm18	0,3962	0,6557 X	0,4682
19 comm19	0,0275	0,1438	0,5559 X
20 comm20	0,4813	0,7122 X	0,2481
% variance	27	29	9

Figure 7.2 below indicates that the number of defining variables (Q sorts) for factor 1 is six, for factor 2, four and for factor 3, one. It also indicates that the composite reliability for factor 1 is 96 percent, for factor 2, 94 percent and for factor 3, 80 percent. The composite reliability of a factor depends on how many people define it. The higher the number of participants who render a viewpoint, the more confidence the researcher may have in the scores of the statements comprising it (Brown 1980a:245). A factor should have at least five participants defining it, which will generate a factor reliability of 0,95 (Brown 2000b).

The standard error of factor scores for factor 1 is 0,20, for factor 2, 0,24 and for factor 3, 0,44. The standard error of factor scores indicates the magnitude of error associated with that factor's scores. The higher the factor reliability, the lower the magnitude of error associated with the factor's scores will be.

The reliability coefficient for all three factors is 0,80, which indicates the stability of the participants' perception. According to Brown (1980a:244), the reliability coefficients of a participant with himself or herself, normally range from 0,80 upwards.

Figure 7.2: Factor characteristics: communicators of corporate online communication

Factors	1	2	3
Number of defining variables	6	4	1
Average reliability coefficient	0,800	0,800	0,800
Composite reliability	0,960	0,941	0,800
Standard error of factor scores	0,200	0,243	0,447

The findings of the Q factor analysis for the communicators of corporate online communication are now discussed as follows:

- the Q sorts that were included in each factor respectively
- the composite Q sort or factor array for each factor that emerged from the statistical analysis.
- the statements that characterise each factor
- distinguishing statements
- consensus statements

7.2.1.1 Factor 1: responsible corporate online communication

Seventeen participants with significant loadings of 0,35 and more loaded on this factor. Six Q sorts which can be associated with this factor were used to calculate factor scores. This best solution accounts for 27 percent of the variance. The factor reliability is 0,96, which makes it a strong and well-defined factor.

Factor 1 contains the perspective of six communicators of corporate online communication from companies as follows:

- four who conduct online sales only in various industries, for instance books, music, wine and flowers
- one with both online retail and offline retail operations
- one from the life insurance industry with both online and offline operations

Figure 7.3 below illustrates the factor array for factor 1.

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

Most disagree			Neutral						Most agree	
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
20	30	16	18	52	43	50	46	34	23	21
27	47	45	10	39	3	17	53	37	33	22
32	29	31	6	19	9	26	41	36	25	42
	48	40	4	8	44	1	24	49	13	
		11	5	2	12	7	15	28		
			54	38	14	51	35			

Figure 7.3 is now explained as follows:

Factor 1 is characterised by statements that loaded on +5, -5, +4 and -4 (Brown 1980a:23-24), namely the following:

- Users want to pay for items via a secured system (+5, statement 21).

- There must be a statement that transactions are secure (+5, statement 22).
- Online customers need to be able to navigate logically through the website (+5, statement 42).
- The corporate website must guarantee customer privacy (+4, statement 23).
- An e-mail link is essential to enable users to communicate directly with the organisation (+4, statement 33).
- There must be assurance of service support by the organisation (+4, statement 25).
- Information about the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) must be easily accessible (+4, statement 13).
- Item prices need not be published (-5, statement 20).
- Customers should not be able to monitor the status of their orders (-5, statement 27).
- A corporate website must exclude the organisation's contact numbers (-5, statement 32).
- A corporate website must exclude the organisation's physical address (-4, statement 30).
- A subscribed mailing list option is nonessential (-4, statement 47).
- Adequate access to customers' online account details is undesirable (-4, statement 29).
- An aftersales confirmation e-mail is unnecessary (-4, statement 48).

This factor is labelled *responsible corporate online communication*, because it displays a stronger consideration of reliable and dependable interaction with online customers with regard to products and/or services than perspectives in factors 2 and 3. The highly rated statements mirror awareness that corporate online communication must put online customers at ease through assuring and confidence enhancing interaction with online customers. These statements mainly deal with the online customer's need to know where to find and contact the organisation, their privacy and security, interaction with the organisation and control over their corporate online communication with the organisation. The factor opposes statements that diminish the customer's confidence and personal and direct contact with the organisation.

The factor displays a strong awareness that online customers want to feel safe in their dealings and corporate online communication with an organisation. This is achieved through reassuring information and elements in the organisation's corporate online

communication that generate confidence, faith and a sense that the organisation can be depended upon. Through constant and reliable interaction, the organisation fulfils the needs of its online customers.

The following statements are rated moderately:

- The corporate website must not contain text chat software for corporate online communication with an organisational representative (+3, statement 19).
- A detailed online sales brochure must offer maximum possible choice (+3, statement 37).
- A standardised response form to enquiries hinders customers in specifying the exact information they need (+3, statement 36).
- The corporate website must be integrated with other departments in order to manage online relationships with its customers (+3, statement 49).
- Customers must be able to access the status of their orders at any given time (+3, statement 28).
- Multimedia decreases a corporate website's interactivity (-3, statement 16).
- An automatic responder to e-mail alienates the customer (-3, statement 45).
- It is unnecessary to inform customers about the means of delivery of their ordered goods (-3, statement 31).
- Customers generally dislike an e-mail product newsletter (-3, statement 40).
- Users do not appreciate an educational section on how to best use a particular product (-3, statement 11).

The following statements are rated very low:

- Software that automatically manages customer relationships improves customer service (+2, statement 46).
- An option to personalise the organisation's website according to customers' needs increases usability (+2, statement 53).
- A section for frequently asked questions (FAQs) and problems is beneficial (+2, statement 41)
- There must be a guarantee that merchandise is available at the time of the order (+2, statement 24).
- A contact directory with individual employees' details is undesirable (+2, statement 15).

- A search capability must only be built in if all relevant key words produce meaningful findings (+2, statement 35).
- Information about the organisation's financial position (investors' relations section) is undesirable (-2, statement 18).
- Information about the organisation must be excluded in the media section (-2, statement 10).
- An organisation's website must provide for a community bulletin board where nonprofit organisations can publicise their events free of charge (-2, statement 6).
- Information about any community efforts in which the organisation is involved is essential (-2, statement 4).
- The corporate website must contain information about any environmental projects in which the organisation is involved (-2, statement 5).
- Users disregard links to other sites containing information on the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) (-2, statement 54).
- A guestbook is an effective means of building a customer database (+1, statement 50).
- The reflection of the organisation's corporate identity creates a feeling of understanding (+1, statement 17).
- There must be assurance of error-free billing (+1, statement 26).
- A profile of the organisation's activities increases familiarity (+1, statement 1).
- Placing the organisation's history on its website increases the believability of its operations (+1, statement 7).
- A corporate website must have exclusive website services for regular customers (+1, statement 51).
- An online *members-only* magazine alienates other potential customers (-1, statement 52).
- An online sales video makes personalises customer contact (-1, statement 39).
- The corporate website must not contain text chat software for corporate online communication with an organisational representative (-1, statement 19).
- Information about the organisation's culture is irrelevant (-1, statement 8).
- A virtual library is impractical in making the organisation's website a valuable resource (-1, statement 2).
- An online discussion forum for customers is undesirable (-1, statement 38).

Considering the factor's strong sense of responsible corporate online communication, its much lower rating of statements 15, 18, 24, 26 and 38 is unexpected. It is, however, clear that its much lower rating of statements 1 to 14 (credibility) is indicative of a relative unconcern about information about who the organisation is, what it stands for and its activities, except for information about its product(s) and/or service(s) (statement 13).

The following statements are rated neutrally (0):

- Free product samples that can be ordered, do not necessarily retain customers (statement 43).
- The corporate website must contain information about any charitable activities in which the organisation is involved (statement 3).
- A media section with access to the organisation's media releases must be included (statement 9).
- Preprogrammed answers (answerbots) are irritating (statement 44).
- A section on the organisation's special events is unnecessary (statement 12).
- Content management software restricts the coordination of messages (statement 14).

Five statements which distinguish factor 1 from factors 2 and 3 were treated differently.

This factor distinguishes itself in terms of the organisation's responsible interaction with online customers, which is depicted in table 7.1 below.

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

		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Statement no	Statement	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score
33	An e-mail link is essential to enable users to communicate directly with the organisation.	4	2	-1
37	A detailed online brochure must offer maximum possible choice.	3	1	-3
36	A standardised	3	0	-5

	response form to enquiries hinders customers in specifying the exact information they need.			
43	Free product samples that can be ordered, do not necessarily retain customers.	0	2	3
47	A subscribed mailing list option is nonessential.	-4	-1	0

An e-mail link to enable users to communicate directly with the organisation and continuous interaction with the organisation through a subscribed mailing list are rated as important. However, users may still have a personal choice about whether or not to subscribe to the mailing list. This underscores the factor's sense of responsible corporate online communication. A standardised response form to customers' enquiries is inadequate to assist consumers to find the exact information they need, which is indicative of an awareness that corporate online communication should be effective in order to be responsible. A detailed online sales brochure offering maximum possible choice is rated as moderately important. This factor, however, rated free product samples that can be ordered, neutrally, which makes it either essential or nonessential.

7.2.1.2 Factor 2: trust

Sixteen participants with significant loadings of 0,35 and more loaded on this factor. Four Q sorts, which can be associated with this factor, were used to calculate factor scores. This best solution accounts for 29 percent of the variance. The factor reliability is 0,94, which makes it a less strong factor than factor 1, but high enough to consider valuable for interpretation.

Factor 2 contains the perspective of four communicators of corporate online communication from companies as follows:

- one with both online and offline retail operations in the mobile telecommunications industry
- one from the banking industry

- two from a life insurance industry with both online and offline operations

Figure 7.4 below illustrates the factor array for factor 2.

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

Most disagree			Neutral						Most agree	
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
30	29	48	54	19	36	5	33	13	34	21
18	20	10	52	16	53	44	49	25	26	23
32	27	11	12	45	1	51	24	28	42	22
	31	39	14	40	46	37	43	41	35	
		6	8	47	15	7	4	9		
			2	50	38	17	3			

Figure 7.4 is now explained as follows:

This factor is characterised by statements that loaded on +5, -5, +4 and -4 (Brown 1980a:23-24), namely the following:

- Users want to pay for items via a secured system (+5, statement 21).
- There must be a statement that transactions are secure (+5, statement 23).
- The corporate website must guarantee customer privacy (+5, statement 22).
- A corporate website must exclude the organisation's physical address (-5, statement 30).
- Information about the organisation's financial position (investors' relations section) is undesirable (-5, statement 18).
- A corporate website must exclude the organisation's contact numbers (-5, statement 32).
- Regular customers expect website content to be continually updated (+4,

statement 34).

- There must be assurance of error-free billing (+4, statement 26).
- Online customers need to be able to navigate logically through the website (+4, statement 42).
- A search capability must only be built in if all relevant key words produce meaningful findings (+4, statement 35).
- Adequate access to customers' online account details is undesirable (-4, statement 29).
- Item prices need not be published (-4, statement 20).
- Customers should not be able to monitor the status of their orders (-4, statement 27).
- It is unnecessary to inform customers about the means of delivery of their ordered goods (-4, statement 31).

Since factor correlation between factors 1 and 2 is high, factor 2 resembles factor 1. However, careful examination indicates interesting differences.

This factor is labelled *trust* because it displays a stronger consciousness of statements in the category of trust than in factor 1 with regard to the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s). It rates statements about the organisation's financial position (statement 18), namely that transactions are secure (statement 23), there is assurance of error-free billing (statement 26), and there is information about the means of delivery of ordered goods (statement 31), higher than factor 1.

However, conforming with the perspective in factor 1, this factor also rates statements about payment via a secured system (statement 21) and a guarantee of customer privacy (statement 22) highly, but rejects statements that the organisation's physical address must be excluded (statement 30), its contact numbers be excluded (statement 32), and that item prices need not be published (statement 20). This factor also loads high with regard to three statements in the category long-term relationships (statements 34, 42 and 35 which were rated +4) which deal with the need for updated information, logical navigation and an effective search capability.

The highly rated statements mirror awareness that trust is important in order to conduct successful corporate online communication. The factor opposes statements that diminish trust. It displays a strong awareness that online customers wish to feel

protected in their dealings and corporate online communication with an organisation.

This is achieved through information and elements in the organisation's corporate online communication that generate respect and faith. By being truthful, the organisation fulfils the needs of its online customers.

The following statements are rated moderately:

- Information about the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) must be easily accessible (+3, statement 13).
- There must be assurance of service support by the organisation (+3, statement 25).
- Customers must be able to access the status of their orders at any given time (+3, statement 28).
- A section for frequently asked questions (FAQs) and problems is beneficial (+3, statement 41).
- A media section with access to the organisation's media releases must be included (+3, statement 9).
- An aftersales confirmation e-mail is unnecessary (-3, statement 48).
- Information about the organisation must be excluded in the media section (-3, statement 10).
- Users do not appreciate an educational section on how to best use a particular product (-3, statement 11).
- An online sales video personalises customer contact (-3, statement 39).

- An organisation's website must provide for a community bulletin board where nonprofit organisations can publicise their events free of charge (-3, statement 6).

The following statements are rated lower:

- An e-mail link is essential to enable users to communicate directly with the organisation (+2, statement 33).
- The corporate website must be integrated with other departments in order to manage online relationships with its customers (+2, statement 49).
- There must be a guarantee that merchandise is available at the time of the

order (+2, statement 24).

- Free product samples that can be ordered, do not necessarily retain customers (+2, statement 43).
- Information about any community efforts in which the organisation is involved is essential (+2, statement 4).
- The corporate website must contain information about any charitable activities in which the organisation is involved (+2, statement 3).
- Users disregard links to other sites containing information on the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) (-2, statement 52).
- Content management software restricts the coordination of messages (-2, statement 14).
- A section on the organisation's special events is unnecessary (-2, statement 12).
- Information about the organisation's culture is irrelevant (-2, statement 8).
- A virtual library is impractical in making the organisation's website a valuable resource (-2, statement 2).
- Preprogrammed answers (answerbots) are irritating (+1, statement 44).
- The corporate website must contain information about any environmental projects in which the organisation is involved (+1, statement 5).
- A corporate website must have exclusive website services for regular customers (+1, statement 51).
- A detailed online sales brochure must offer maximum possible choice (+1, statement 37).
- Placing the organisation's history on its website increases the believability of its operations (+1, statement 7).
- The reflection of the organisation's corporate identity creates a feeling of understanding (+1, statement 17).
- The corporate website must not contain text chat software for corporate online communication with an organisational representative (-1, statement 19).
- Multimedia decreases a corporate website's interactivity (-1, statement 16).
- An automatic responder to e-mail alienates the customer (-1, statement 45).
- Customers generally dislike an e-mail product newsletter (-1, statement 40).
- A subscribed mailing list option is nonessential (-1, statement 47).
- A guestbook is an effective means of building a customer database (-1, statement 50).

The following statements are rated neutrally (0):

- A profile of the organisation's activities increases familiarity (statement 1).
- An option to personalise the organisation's website according to customers' needs increases usability (statement 53).
- A standardised response form to enquiries hinders customers in specifying the exact information they need (statement 36).
- Software that automatically manages customer relationships improves customer service (statement 46).
- A contact directory with individual employees' details is undesirable (statement 15).
- An online discussion forum for customers is undesirable (statement 38).

Seven statements distinguish factor 2 from factors 1 and 3 and were treated differently by this group. This factor in particular distinguishes itself in terms of a low rating of statements in the category of long-term relationships, which is depicted in table 7.2 below.

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

		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Statement no	Statement	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score
33	An e-mail link is essential to enable users to communicate directly with the organisation.	4	2	-1
4	Information about any community efforts in which the organisation is involved is essential.	-2	2	-3
5	The corporate website must contain information about any	-2	1	-3

	environmental projects in which the organisation is involved.			
37	A detailed online sales brochure must offer maximum possible choice.	3	1	-3
53	An option to personalise the organisation's website according to customers' needs increases usability.	2	0	4
36	A standardised response form to enquiries hinders customers in specifying the exact information they need.	3	0	-5
15	A contact directory with individual employees' details is undesirable.	2	0	4

An e-mail link for corporate online communication and a standardised response form or contact directory with individual employees' details are unimportant. There is no strong preference for a detailed sales brochure with maximum choice. There is no disagreement that community efforts and environmental projects in which the organisation is involved, should be communicated on the corporate website (as opposed to factor 1 and 3's disagreement). Its low rating, however, is also indicative of a lack of concern about these aspects.

7.2.1.3 Factor 3: efficient information

Factor 3 represents an unanticipated response and a possible discovery. Five participants with significant loadings of 0,35 and more loaded on this factor. One Q sort, which can be associated with this factor, was used to calculate factor scores. This solution accounts for nine percent of the variance. The factor reliability is 0,80.

Factor 3 contains the perspective of one communicator of corporate online

communication from the banking industry. Even though the factor reliability is low, the participant who loaded pure on this factor represents an important response that differs noticeably from factors 1 and 2⁹². The researcher therefore included it in the data analysis (a loading of 0,55 as opposed to factor 1's loading of 0,27 and factor 2's loading of only 0,14). Brown (2001) emphasises that a factor with low factor reliability should be included for analysis when a theoretically important participant loads high on one factor and low on others.

Figure 7.5 below illustrates the factor array for factor 3.

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

Most disagree			Neutral					Most agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
36	48	39	27	13	25	8	9	19	15	41
45	10	37	22	33	11	32	21	20	34	42
24	51	5	12	38	31	17	23	26	52	49
	2	3	18	16	46	40	29	28	53	
		4	14	30	47	1	35	43		
			7	6	50	54	44			

Figure 7.5 is now explained as follows:

Factor 3 is characterised by statements that loaded on +5, -5, +4 and -4 (Brown 1980a:23-24). These are as follows:

- A section for frequently asked questions (FAQs) and problems is beneficial (+5, statement 41).
- Online customers need to be able to navigate logically through the website (+5, statement 42).
- The corporate website must be integrated with other departments in order to manage online relationships with its customers (+5, statement 49).
- A standardised response form to enquiries hinders customers in specifying the

⁹² See theoretical discussion in chapter 5, section 5.3.5.1d.

exact information they need (-5, statement 36).

- An automatic responder to e-mail alienates the customer (-5, statement 45).
- There must be a guarantee that merchandise is available at the time of the order (-5, statement 24).
- A contact directory with individual employees' details is undesirable (+4, statement 15).
- Regular customers expect website content to be continually updated (+4, statement 34).
- An online *members-only* magazine alienates other potential customers (+4, statement 52).
- An option to personalise the organisation's website according to customers' needs increases usability (+4, statement 53).
- An aftersales confirmation e-mail is unnecessary (-4, statement 48).
- Information about the organisation must be excluded in the media section (-4, statement 10).
- A corporate website must have exclusive website services for regular customers (-4, statement 51).
- A virtual library is impractical in making the organisation's website a valuable resource (-4, statement 2).

The structure in factor 3 is surprising and appears as sensitivity to the efficient presentation and finding of online information on the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s). This factor is labelled *efficient information* because it displays a strong consideration of well-presented and efficient information to the online customer.

Factor 3 loads much lower on trust than factors 1 and 2, and more on statements in the category of long-term relationships. It also loads low on most statements for the category of credibility, except for statements 2 and 10. The highly rated statements mirror strong agreement on the useful presentation and finding of information. Apart from the fact that information must be useful, available and up to date, it should also be accessible to the media and retrievable through a virtual library.

This factor displays a strong awareness that corporate online communication needs to be efficient in terms of both presentation and the finding of information. This is achieved through elements that enhance the finding and usefulness of information. The factor therefore rejects statements that diminish efficient presentation and the

finding of online information. However, it does not rate contact details about the organisation's employees (statement 15), or exclusive services for loyal online customers (statement 51 and 52) as essential, but prefers to concentrate on the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s).

The following statements are rated moderately:

- The corporate website must not contain text chat software for corporate online communication with an organisational representative (+3, statement 19).
- Item prices need not be published (+3, statement 20).
- There must be assurance of error-free billing (+3, statement 26).
- Customers must be able to access the status of their orders at any given time (+3, statement 28).
- Free product samples that can be ordered, do not necessarily retain customers (+3, statement 43).
- An online sales video personalises customer contact (-3, statement 39).
- A detailed online sales brochure must offer maximum possible choice (-3, statement 37).
- The corporate website must contain information about any environmental projects in which the organisation is involved (-3, statement 5).
- The corporate website must contain information about any charitable activities in which the organisation is involved (-3, statement 3).
- Information about any community efforts in which the organisation is involved is essential (-3, statement 4).

The following statements are rated lower:

- A media section with access to the organisation's media releases must be included (+2, statement 9).
- Users want to pay for items via a secured system (+2, statement 21).
- The corporate website must guarantee customer privacy (+2, statement 23).
- Adequate access to customers' online account details is undesirable (+2, statement 29).
- A search capability must only be built in if all relevant key words produce meaningful findings (+2, statement 35).
- Preprogrammed answers (answerbots) are irritating (+2, statement 44).

- Customers should not be able to monitor the status of their orders (-2, statement 27).
- There must be a statement that transactions are secure (-2, statement 22).
- A section on the organisation's special events is unnecessary (-2, statement 12).
- Information about the organisation's financial position (investors' relations section) is undesirable (-2, statement 18).
- Content management software restricts the coordination of messages (-2, statement 14).
- Placing the organisation's history on its website increases the believability of its operations (-2, statement 7).
- Information about the organisation's culture is irrelevant (+1, statement 8).
- A corporate website must exclude the organisation's contact numbers (+1, statement 32).
- The reflection of the organisation's corporate identity creates a feeling of understanding (+1, statement 17).
- Customers generally dislike an e-mail product newsletter (+1, statement 40).
- A profile of the organisation's activities increases familiarity (+1, statement 1).
- Users disregard links to other sites containing information on the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) (+1, statement 54).
- Information about the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) must be easily accessible (-1, statement 13).
- An e-mail link is essential to enable users to communicate directly with the organisation (-1, statement 33).
- An online discussion forum for customers is undesirable (-1, statement 38).
- Multimedia decreases a corporate website's interactivity (-1, statement 16).
- A corporate website must exclude the organisation's physical address (-1, statement 30).
- An organisation's website must provide for a community bulletin board where nonprofit organisations can publicise their events free of charge (-1, statement 6).

The following statements are rated neutrally (0):

- There must be assurance of service support by the organisation (statement 25).

- Users do not appreciate an educational section on how to best use a particular product (statement 11).
- It is unnecessary to inform customers about the means of delivery of their ordered goods (statement 31).
- Software that automatically manages customer relationships improves customer service (statement 46).
- A subscribed mailing list option is nonessential (statement 47).
- A guestbook is an effective means of building a customer database (statement 50).

Eighteen statements distinguish factor 3 from factors 1 and 2 and were treated differently. In particular, this factor distinguishes itself in terms of a low rating of 10 statements in the category of trust (especially statement 24), as well as statements that suggest exclusive services for loyal customers in the category of long-term relationships, which are depicted in table 7.3 below.

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

Statement no.	Statement	Factor 1 Rank score	Factor 2 Rank score	Factor 3 Rank score
52	An online <i>members-only</i> magazine alienates other potential customers.	-1	-1	4
19	The corporate website must not contain text chat software for corporate online communication with an organisational representative.	-1	-1	3
20	Item prices need not be published.	-5	-4	3
21	Users want to pay for items via a secured system.	5	5	2
23	The corporate website must guarantee customer privacy.	4	5	2
29	Adequate access to customers' online account details is undesirable.	-4	-4	2
32	A contact directory with individual employees' details is undesirable.	-5	-5	1
54	Users disregard links to other sites containing information on the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s).	-2	-2	1

25	There must be assurance of service support by the organisation.	4	3	0
11	Users do not appreciate an educational section on how to best use a particular product.	-3	-3	0
13	Information about the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) must be easily accessible.	4	4	-1
33	An e-mail link is essential to enable users to communicate directly with the organisation.	4	2	-1
30	A corporate website must exclude the organisation's physical address.	-4	-5	-1
22	There must be a statement that transactions are secure.	5	5	-2
37	A detailed online sales brochure must offer maximum possible choice.	3	1	-3
3	The corporate website must contain information about any charitable activities in which the organisation is involved.	0	2	-3
51	A corporate website must have exclusive website services for regular customers.	1	1	-4
36	A standardised response form to enquiries hinders customers in specifying the exact information they need.	3	0	-5
24	There must be a guarantee that merchandise is available at the time of the order.	2	2	-5

This perspective rejects exclusivity for loyal customers (statements 51 and 52). It suggests that an online *members-only* magazine might alienate other potential customers, which is indicative of a concern to rather attract new customers and the fact that customers will automatically be retained because of an emphasis on compliant information. It also suggests that text chat software for corporate online communication with an online representative is undesirable. Also surprising is the factor's rejection of a detailed online sales brochure (statement 37). It is much more in favour of a standardised response form for enquiries than factors 1 and 2 (statement 36). An

unanticipated response is undoubtedly the factor's rejection of statement 24, which opposes a guarantee that merchandise is available at the time of the order.

7.2.1.4 Consensus statements for factors 1, 2 and 3

There are 29 consensus statements for factors 1, 2 and 3 as depicted by table 7.4 below:

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

		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Statement no.	Statement	Rank score	Rank score	Rank score
1	A profile of the organisation's activities increases familiarity.	1	1	1
2	A virtual library is impractical in making the organisation's website a valuable resource.	-1	-2	-4
6	An organisation's website must provide for a community bulletin board where nonprofit organisations can publicise their events free of charge.	-2	-3	-1
7	Placing the organisation's history on its website increases the believability of its operations.	1	1	-2
8	Information about the organisation's culture is irrelevant.	-1	-2	1
10	Information about the organisation must be excluded in the media section.	-2	-3	-4
11	Users do not appreciate an	-3	-3	0

	educational section on how to best use a particular product.			
12	A section on the organisation's special events is unnecessary.	0	-2	-2
14	Content management software restricts the coordination of messages.	0	-2	-2
16	Multimedia decreases a corporate website's interactivity.	-3	-1	-1
17	The reflection of the organisation's corporate identity creates a feeling of understanding.	1	0	1
21	Users want to pay for items via a secured system.	5	5	2
23	The corporate website must guarantee customer privacy.	4	5	2
27	Customers should not be able to monitor the status of their orders.	-5	-4	-2
28	Customers must be able to access the status of their orders at any given time.	3	3	3
30	A corporate website must exclude the organisation's physical address.	-4	-5	-1
34	Regular customers expect website content to be continually updated.	3	4	4
35	A search capability must only be built in if all relevant key words produce meaningful findings	2	4	2
38	An online discussion	-1	0	-1

	forum for customers is undesirable.			
39	An online sales video personalises customer contact more personal.	-1	-3	-3
41	A section for frequently asked questions (FAQs) and problems is beneficial.	2	3	5
42	Online customers need to be able to navigate logically through the website.	5	4	5
43	Free product samples that can be ordered, do not necessarily retain customers.	0	2	3
44	Preprogrammed answers (answerbots) are irritating.	0	1	2
45	An automatic responder to e-mail alienates the customer.	-3	-1	-5
46	Software that automatically manages customer relationships improves customer service.	2	0	0
48	An aftersales confirmation e-mail is unnecessary.	-4	-3	-4
49	The corporate website must be integrated with other departments in order to manage online relationships with its customers.	3	2	5
54	Users disregard links to other sites containing information the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s).	-2	-2	1

7.2.2 Overall findings for the receivers of corporate online communication

- Pure loadings are a Q sort that loaded on one factor only. The researcher considered factor loadings of 0,35 and more as significant. The researcher needed to present a final solution of as many purest loadings as possible on a factor to estimate the factor scores. Pure loadings are pure expressions of the factor and provide a focused view of the point of view of a specific factor (Brown 2003e). See also chapter 5, section 5.3.5.1a and chapter 6, section 6.4.2.4.
- The size of the factor loading was also considered. Because the findings of this study have few pure loadings, the researcher also considered the size of the factor loading even though this was a mixed loading. Brown (2002) suggests that, depending on the number of Q sorts defining a factor (for instance only three or four), the researcher may also select Q sorts that load significantly higher on one factor than on the other. The researcher consequently considered mixed factor loadings if the one loading was roughly 0,20 higher than the loading on the other factor. For instance, if the loading on one factor was 0,35 and 0,55 on the other factor, the higher loading of 0,55 was also selected (0,20 higher than the other loading), because the higher loading would not be too contaminated by the lower loading on another factor. See also chapter 5, section 5.3.5.1c.

Figure 7.6 below indicates the factor loadings of the 20 Q sorts for the two factors as well as the variance. The **X** next to a Q sort indicates a Q sort that was used to calculate factor scores for each factor. The figure below indicates that the variance for factor A is 29 percent and for factor B 33 percent.

Figure 7.6: Factor loadings: receivers of corporate online communication

QSORT	A	B
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1 rec1	0,4526	0,7028 x
2 rec2	0,1662	0,7121 x
3 rec3	0,5449	0,6352
4 rec4	0,7196 x	0,4419
5 rec5	0,2579	0,5967 x
6 rec6	0,2265	0,6893 x
7 rec7	0,5769	0,5976
8 rec8	0,4433	0,4996
9 rec9	0,4327	0,5679
10 rec10	0,6449 x	0,1837
11 rec11	0,7148	0,5982
12 rec12	0,3414	0,5416 x
13 rec13	0,6809 x	0,4430
14 rec14	0,4375	0,6705 x
15 rec15	0,5500	0,6770
16 rec16	0,4417	0,4793
17 rec17	0,6625	0,6596
18 rec18	0,6834 x	0,3363
19 rec19	0,6842 x	0,4524
20 rec20	0,5588	0,6263
% variance	29	33

Figure 7.7 below indicates that the number of defining variables (Q sorts) is five for factor A and six for factor B. It also indicates that the composite reliability for factor A is 95 percent and 96 percent for factor B. The composite reliability of a factor depends on how many people define it. The higher the number of participants who render a viewpoint, the more confidence the researcher may have in the scores of the statements comprising it (Brown 1980a:245). A factor should have at least five participants defining it, which will generate a factor reliability of 0,95 (Brown 2000b).

The standard error of factor scores for factor A is 0,21 and 0,20 for factor B. The standard error of factor scores indicates the magnitude of error associated with that factor's scores. The higher the factor reliability, the lower the magnitude of error associated with the factor's scores will be.

The reliability coefficient for both factors is 0,80, which indicates the stability of the participants' perception. According to Brown (1980a:244), the reliability coefficients of a participant with himself or herself, normally range from 0,80 upwards.

Figure 7.7: Factor characteristics: receivers of corporate online communication

Factors	A	B
Number of defining variables	5	6
Average reliability coefficient	0,800	0,800
Composite reliability	0,952	0,960
Standard error of factor scores	0,218	0,200

The findings of the Q factor analysis for the receivers of corporate online communication are now discussed as follows:

- the Q sorts that were included in each factor respectively
- The composite Q sort or factor array for each factor that emerged from the statistical analysis
- the statements that characterise each factor
- distinguishing statements
- consensus statements

7.2.2.1 Factor A: confidence

Sixteen participants with significant loadings of 0,35 and more loaded on this factor.

Five Q sorts which can be associated with this factor were used to calculate factor scores. This best solution accounts for 29 percent of the variance. The factor

reliability is 0,95, which makes it a strong and well-defined factor.

Figure 7.8 below illustrates the factor array for factor A.

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

Most disagree			Neutral					Most agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
48	18	45	4	40	39	41	37	33	26	22
20	31	27	6	46	51	19	44	13	23	21
32	29	54	11	50	12	53	1	42	25	28
	30	36	3	5	47	38	17	34	24	
		16	15	9	14	52	49	35		
			2	10	8	43	7			

Figure 7.8 is now explained as follows:

Factor A is characterised by statements that loaded on +5, -5, + 4 and -4 (Brown 1980a:23–24). These are as follows:

- Users want to pay for items via a secured system (+5, statement 21).
- There must be a statement that transactions are secure (+5, statement 22).
- Customers must be able to access the status of their orders at any given time (+5, statement 28).
- An aftersales confirmation e-mail is unnecessary (-5, statement 48).
- Item prices need not be published (-5, statement 20).
- A corporate website must exclude the organisation's contact numbers (-5, statement 32).
- There must be assurance of error-free billing (+4, statement 26).
- The corporate website must guarantee customer privacy (+4, statement 23).
- There must be assurance of service support by the organisation (+4, statement 25).
- There must be a guarantee that merchandise is available at the time of the

order (+4, statement 24).

- Information about the organisation's financial position (investors' relations section) is undesirable (-4, statement 18).
- It is unnecessary to inform customers about the means of delivery of their ordered goods (-4, statement 31).
- Adequate access to customers' online account details is undesirable (-4, statement 29).
- A corporate website must exclude the organisation's physical address (-4, statement 30).

Since factor A appears to contain numerous statements in the category of trust, it is labelled *confidence* in the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s). It displays a strong consideration of security, control, openness and visibility of the organisation. The highly rated statements mirror a need to know that dealings with the organisation pose no risk and to have control over the online experience in terms of access to account details and the status of online orders. The factor opposes statements that diminish confidence.

The factor displays a strong awareness of aspects that are required to feel secure enough to trust the organisation. Assurance comes first in this factor and it is not as concerned about who the organisation is or about lasting relationships.

The following statements are rated moderately:

- An e-mail link is essential to enable users to communicate directly with the organisation (+3, statement 33).
- Information about the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) must be easily accessible (+3, statement 13).
- Online customers need to be able to navigate logically through the website (+3, statement 42).
- Regular customers expect website content to be continually updated (+3, statement 34).
- A search capability must only be built in if all relevant key words produce meaningful findings (+3, statement 35).
- An automatic responder to e-mail alienates the customer (-3, statement 45).

- Customers should not be able to monitor the status of their orders (-3, statement 27).
- Users disregard links to other sites containing information on the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) (-3, statement 54).
- A standardised response form to enquiries hinders customers in specifying the exact information they need (-3, statement 36).
- Multimedia decreases a corporate website's interactivity (-3, statement 16).

The rating of the above statements indicates that this factor is not concerned about aspects such as who the organisation is and what the organisation does to create a feeling of confidence.

The following statements are rated lower:

- A detailed online sales brochure must offer maximum possible choice (+2, statement 37).
- Preprogrammed answers (answerbots) are irritating (+2, statement 44).
- A profile of the organisation's activities increases familiarity (+2, statement 1).
- The reflection of the organisation's corporate identity creates a feeling of understanding (+2, statement 17).
- The corporate website must be integrated with other departments in order to manage online relationships with its customers (+2, statement 49).
- Placing the organisation's history on its website increases the believability of its operations (+2, statement 7).
- Information about any community efforts in which the organisation is involved is essential (-2, statement 4).
- An organisation's website must provide for a community bulletin board where nonprofit organisations can publicise their events free of charge (-2, statement 6).
- Users do not appreciate an educational section on how to best use a particular product (-2, statement 11).
- The corporate website must contain information about any charitable activities in which the organisation is involved (-2, statement 3).
- A contact directory with individual employees' details is undesirable (-2, statement 15).

- A virtual library is impractical in making the organisation's website a valuable resource (-2, statement 2).
- A section for frequently asked questions (FAQs) and problems is beneficial (+1, statement 41).
- The corporate website must not contain text chat software for corporate online communication with an organisational representative (+1, statement 19).
- An option to personalise the organisation's website according to customers' needs increases usability (+1, statement 53).
- An online discussion forum for customers is undesirable (+1, statement 38).
- An online *members-only* magazine alienates other potential customers (+1, statement 52).
- Free product samples that can be ordered, do not necessarily retain customers (+1, statement 43).
- Customers generally dislike an e-mail product newsletter (-1, statement 40).
- Software that automatically manages customer relationships improves customer service (-1, statement 46).
- A guestbook is an effective means of building a customer database (-1, statement 50).
- The corporate website must contain information about any environmental projects in which the organisation is involved (-1, statement 5).
- A media section with access to the organisation's media releases must be included (-1, statement 9).
- Information about the organisation must be excluded in the media section (-1, statement 10).

The following statements are rated neutrally (0):

- An online sales video personalises customer contact (statement 39).
- A corporate website must have exclusive website services for regular customers (statement 51).
- A section on the organisation's special events is unnecessary (statement 12).
- A subscribed mailing list option is nonessential (statement 47).
- Content management software restricts the coordination of messages (statement 14).
- Information about the organisation's culture is irrelevant (statement 8).

7.2.2.2 Factor B: meaningful relationships

Eighteen participants with significant loadings of 0,35 and more loaded on this factor.

Six Q sorts which can be associated with this factor were used to calculate factor scores. This best solution accounts for 33 percent of the variance. The factor reliability is 0,96, which makes it a strong and well-defined factor.

Figure 7.9 below illustrates the factor array for factor B.

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

Most disagree			Neutral					Most agree		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
18	11	30	19	14	53	24	26	28	34	21
20	48	54	15	36	5	4	42	17	33	13
27	12	2	8	35	6	50	23	46	37	49
	31	16	29	47	52	1	25	22	7	
		38	10	44	43	39	51	9		
			40	45	32	3	41			

Figure 7.9 is now explained as follows:

Factor B is characterised by statements that loaded on +5, -5, + 4 and -4 (Brown 1980a:23 – 24). These are as follows:

- Users want to pay for items via a secured system (+5, statement 21).
- Information about the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) must be easily accessible (+5, statement 13).
- The corporate website must be integrated with other departments in order to manage online relationships with its customers (+5, statement 49).
- Information about the organisation's financial position (investors' relations section) is undesirable (-5, statement 18).
- Item prices need not be published (-5, statement 20).
- Customers should not be able to monitor the status of their orders (-5,

statement 27).

- Regular customers expect website content to be continually updated (+4, statement 34).
- An e-mail link is essential to enable users to communicate directly with the organisation (+4, statement 33).
- A detailed online sales brochure must offer maximum possible choice (+4, statement 37).
- Placing the organisation's history on its website increases the believability of its operations (+4, statement 7).
- Users do not appreciate an educational section on how to best use a particular product (-4, statement 11).
- An aftersales confirmation e-mail is unnecessary (-4, statement 48).
- A section on the organisation's special events is unnecessary (-4, statement 12).
- It is unnecessary to inform customers about the means of delivery of their ordered goods (-4, statement 31).

Factor B represents a blend of the categories of credibility, trust and long-term relationships. The structure of this factor places much more emphasis on the category of credibility than any other factor for both the communicators and users of corporate online communication.

This factor is labelled *meaningful relationships*, because it displays a strong consideration of meaningful relationships based on a perception of the organisation's history, brand, accountability, visibility, expertise and ability in terms of its product(s) and/or service(s). For a meaningful relationship to be formed, the organisation needs to be perceived as having expertise, being trustworthy and open, having dynamism and being sociable. The highly rated statements mirror a need for security, a favourable perception of the organisation and effective customer service. The factor opposes statements that diminish credibility, trust and long-term relationships.

The following statements are rated moderately:

- Customers must be able to access the status of their orders at any given time (+3, statement 28).
- The reflection of the organisation's corporate identity creates a feeling of

understanding (+3, statement 17).

- Software that automatically manages customer relationships improves customer service (+3, statement 46).
- There must be a statement that transactions are secure (+3, statement 22).
- A media section with access to the organisation's media releases must be included (+3, statement 9).
- A corporate website must exclude the organisation's physical address (-3, statement 30).
- Users disregard links to other sites containing information on the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) (-3, statement 54).
- A virtual library is impractical in making the organisation's website a valuable resource (-3, statement 2).
- An online discussion forum for customers is undesirable (-3, statement 38).

The following statements are rated lower:

- There must be assurance of error-free billing (+2, statement 26).
- Online customers need to be able to navigate logically through the website (+2, statement 42).
- The corporate website must guarantee customer privacy (+2, statement 23).
- There must be assurance of service support by the organisation (+2, statement 25).
- A corporate website must have exclusive website services for regular customers (+2, statement 51).
- A section for frequently asked questions (FAQs) and problems is beneficial (+2, statement 41).
- The corporate website must not contain text chat software for corporate online communication with an organisational representative (-2, statement 19).
- A contact directory with individual employees' details is undesirable (-2, statement 15).
- Information about the organisation's culture is irrelevant (-2, statement 8).
- Adequate access to customers' online account details is undesirable (-2, statement 29).
- Information about the organisation must be excluded in the media section (-2, statement 10).
- Customers generally dislike an e-mail product newsletter (-2, statement 40).

- There must be a guarantee that merchandise is available at the time of the order (+1, statement 24).
- Information about any community efforts in which the organisation is involved is essential (+1, statement 4).
- A guestbook is an effective means of building a customer database (+1, statement 50).
- A profile of the organisation's activities increases familiarity (+1, statement 1).
- An online sales video personalises customer contact (+1, statement 39).
- The corporate website must contain information about any charitable activities in which the organisation is involved (+1, statement 3).
- Content management software restricts the coordination of messages (-1, statement 14).
- A standardised response form to enquiries hinders customers in specifying the exact information they need (-1, statement 36).
- A search capability must only be built in if all relevant key words produce meaningful findings (-1, statement 35).
- A subscribed mailing list option is nonessential (-1, statement 47).
- Preprogrammed answers (answerbots) are irritating (-1, statement 44).
- An automatic responder to e-mail alienates the customer (-1, statement 45).

The following statements are rated neutrally (0):

- An option to personalise the organisation's website according to customers' needs increases usability (statement 53).
- The corporate website must contain information about any environmental projects in which the organisation is involved (statement 5).
- An organisation's website must provide for a community bulletin board where nonprofit organisations can publicise their events free of charge (statement 6).
- An online *members-only* magazine alienates other potential customers (statement 52).
- Free product samples that can be ordered, do not necessarily retain customers (statement 43).
- A corporate website must exclude the organisation's contact numbers (statement 32).

Twenty-four statements distinguish factor A from factor B and were treated differently

by each factor. In particular these two factors distinguish themselves in terms of a high consideration of trust (factor A) as opposed to a perception of who the organisation is and effective customer service (factor B). These differences are depicted in table 7.5 below.

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

Statement no	Statement	Factor A	Factor B
		Rank score	Rank score
22	There must be a statement that transactions are secure.	5	3
24	There must be a guarantee that merchandise are available at the time of the order.	4	1
35	A search capability must only be built in if all relevant key words produce meaningful findings.	3	-1
44	Preprogrammed answers (answerbots) are irritating.	2	-1
17	The reflection of the organisation's corporate identity creates a feeling of understanding.	2	3
49	The corporate website must be integrated with other departments in order to manage online relationships.	2	5
7	Placing the organisation's history on its website increases the believability of its operations.	2	4
19	The corporate website must not contain text chat software for corporate online communication with an organisational representative.	1	-2
38	An online discussion forum for customers is undesirable.	1	-3
51	A corporate website must have exclusive website services for regular customers.	0	2
12	A section on the organisation's special events is unnecessary.	0	-4
40	Customers generally dislike an e-mail newsletter.	-1	-2
46	Software that automatically manages customer relationships improves	-1	3

	customer service.		
50	A guestbook is an effective means of building a customer database.	-1	1
5	The corporate website must contain information about any environmental projects in which the organisation is involved.	-1	0
9	A media section with access to the organisation's media releases must be included.	-1	3
4	Information about any community efforts in which the organisation is involved is essential.	-2	1
6	An organisation's website must provide for a community bulletin board where nonprofit organisations can publicise their events free of charge.	-2	0
11	Users do not appreciate an educational section on how to best use a particular product.	-2	-4
3	The corporate website must contain information about any charitable activities in which the organisation is involved.	-2	1
27	Customers should not be able to monitor the status of their orders.	-3	-5
29	Adequate access to customers' online account details is undesirable.	-4	-2
30	A corporate website must exclude the organisation's physical address.	-4	-3
32	A corporate website must exclude the organisation's contact numbers.	-5	0

Even though factor B is less conscious about security, it rated statement 27, which deals with disagreement about not being able to monitor the status of online orders, much higher than factor A.

7.2.2.3 Consensus statements for factors A and B: receivers of corporate online communication

There are 38 consensus statements for factors A and B as depicted in table 7.6 below.

Table 7.6: Consensus statements for factors A and B: receivers of corporate online communication

		Factor A	Factor B
Statement no	Statement	Rank score	Rank score
1	A profile of the organisation's activities increases familiarity.	2	1
2	A virtual library is impractical in making the organisation's website a valuable resource.	-2	-3
5	The corporate website must contain information about any environmental projects in which the organisation is involved.	-1	0
6	An organisation's website must provide for a community bulletin board where nonprofit organisations can publicise their events free of charge.	-2	0
8	Information about the organisation's culture is irrelevant.	0	-2
10	Information about the organisation must be excluded in the media section.	-1	-2
11	Users do not appreciate an educational section on how to best use a particular product.	-2	-4
13	Information about the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) must be easily accessible.	3	5
14	Content management software restricts the coordination of messages.	0	-1
15	A contact directory with individual employees' details is undesirable.	-3	-3
16	Multimedia decreases a corporate website's interactivity.	-3	-3
17	The reflection of the organisation's corporate identity creates a feeling of understanding.	2	3
18	Information about the organisation's financial position (investors' relations section) is undesirable.	-4	-5
20	Item prices need not be	-5	-5

	published.		
21	Users want to pay for items via a secured system.	5	5
23	The corporate website must guarantee customer privacy.	4	2
24	There must be a guarantee that merchandise is available at the time of the order.	4	1
25	There must be assurance of service support by the organisation.	4	2
26	There must be assurance of error-free billing.	4	2
28	Customers must be able to access the status of their orders at any given time.	5	3
29	Adequate access to customers' online account details is undesirable.	-4	-2
30	A corporate website must exclude the organisation's physical address.	-4	-3
31	It is unnecessary to inform customers about the means of delivery of their ordered goods.	-4	-4
33	An e-mail link is essential to enable users to communicate directly with the organisation.	3	4
34	Regular customers expect website content to be continually updated.	3	4
36	A standardised response form to enquiries hinders customers in specifying the exact information they need.	-3	-1
37	A detailed online sales brochure must offer maximum possible choice.	2	4
39	An online sales video personalises customer contact.	0	1
40	Customers generally dislike an e-mail product newsletter.	-1	-2

41	A section for frequently asked questions (FAQs) and problems is beneficial.	1	2
42	Online customers need to be able to navigate logically through the website.	3	2
43	Free product samples that can be ordered, do not necessarily retain customers.	1	0
45	An automatic responder to e-mail alienates the customer.	-3	-1
47	A subscribed mailing list option is nonessential.	0	-1
48	An aftersales confirmation e-mail is unnecessary.	-5	-4
52	An online <i>members-only</i> magazine alienates other potential customers.	1	0
53	An option to personalise the organisation's website according to customers' needs increases usability.	1	0
54	Users disregard links to other sites containing information on the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s).	-3	-3

In the next section the theoretical significance of the findings of each factor for both the communicators and receivers of corporate online communication is discussed.

7.3 THEORETICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FINDINGS IN TERMS OF THE STRUCTURED Q SAMPLE

The theoretical significance of the findings of the Q study for both the communicators

and receivers of corporate online communication is now discussed in accordance with each factor and the categories and levels of the structured Q sample.

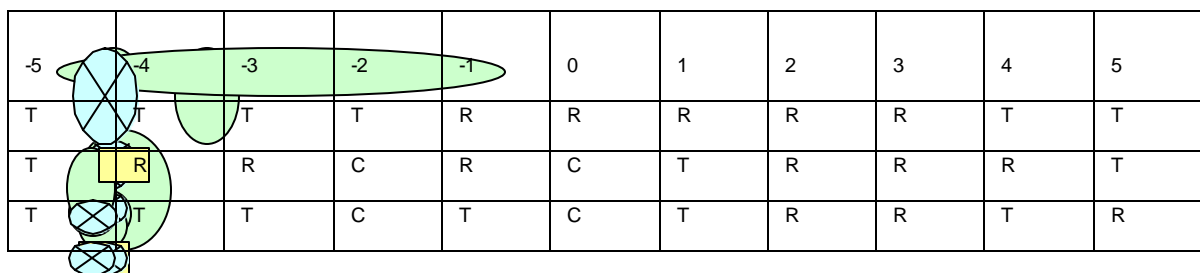
7.3.1 Communicators of corporate online communication

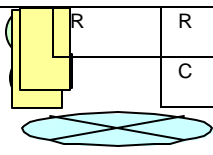
The theoretical significance of the findings of the communicators of corporate online communication is discussed in accordance with each factor and the categories and levels of the structured Q sample (see table 6.1 in chapter 6).

7.3.1.1 Factor 1: responsible corporate online communication

Figure 7.10 below indicates the aspects of credibility, trust and long-term relationships which are perceived to be necessary by factor 1 for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s). This factor accentuates the fact that corporate online communication should be responsible in order for it to be significant. Its strongest perception of corporate online communication involves the categories of trust and long-term relationships, but embraces all three categories.

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





R	R	C	C	R	C	T	R	C
	C	C	C	C	C	T	T	
		R	R	C	R	R		

C = Credibility

T = Trust

R = Relationships

Figure 7.10 is now explained as follows:

Trust

The strongest perception of aspects of trust deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of accountability, concreteness and association which are explained below.

Corporate online communication is accountable because it poses no risk, is predictable, the intentions and motives of the communication are clear and the communication is honest and consistent. Accountable corporate online communication is also perceived as being indicative of the organisation's character.

Corporate online communication is concrete because it induces confidence and faith in the corporate online communication. It is truthful and communicates the openness of management. It also communicates security.

Regarding the level of association, corporate online communication communicates the ability, expertise, competence, congruence and fairness of the organisation. It also portrays the kindness of the organisation and the fact that it can be depended upon. Corporate online communication induces a feeling of loyalty.

Long-term relationships

The strongest perception of aspects of long-term relationships deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of personal interaction and expectation, which are explained as follows:

Corporate online communication provides for personal interaction through customer service and ample opportunities for interaction.

Corporate online communication complies with the expectation of the customer because it fulfils the needs of the customer, shows commitment to and communicates differentiated products and/or services to the customer.

Credibility

The category of credibility does not feature as strongly as the other two categories. The strongest perception of aspects of credibility deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of history and perception.

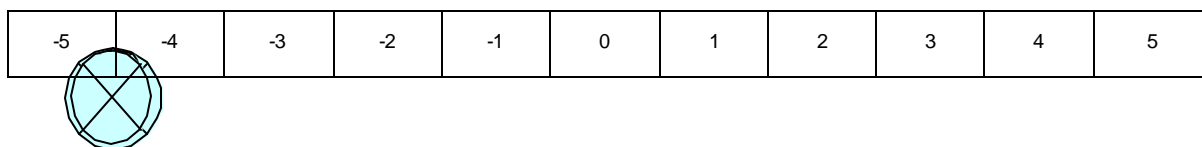
Corporate online communication includes the history of the organisation because receivers of corporate online communication perceive past actions as a prediction of future behaviour. Corporate online communication is also trustworthy.

Corporate online communication creates a favourable perception of the organisation's level of expertise, sociability and similarity to the audience. Corporate online communication also communicates favourable information about the organisation to the media in a special media section.

Figure 7.11 below indicates the aspects of credibility, trust and long-term relationships that are perceived to be insignificant by factor 1 for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s).

This factor embraces all the levels of the above three categories, but rejects specific statements in the categories of credibility, trust and long-term relationships as discussed below.

Figure 7.11: Factor 1: responsible corporate online communication - communicators of corporate online communication (insignificant corporate online communication)



T	T	T	T	R	R	R	R	R	T	T
T	R	R	C	R	C	T	R	R	R	T
T	T	T	C	T	C	T	R	R	T	R
	R	R	C	C	R	C	T	R	C	
		C	C	C	C	C	T	T		
			R	R	C	R	R			

C = Credibility

T = Trust

R = Relationships

Trust

The strongest perception of aspects of trust deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of accountability, concreteness and association. Only one statement about trust is deemed insignificant.

Communicating the organisation's employees' details in a contact directory is deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in terms of accountability. It does not affect the organisation's responsibility and predictability.

In order for corporate online communication to be concrete, open communication about the management of the organisation is deemed insignificant in terms of who management are.

With regard to the level of association, an organisation's expertise and congruence are not affected if details of employees are not communicated.

Long-term relationships

The strongest perception of aspects of long-term relationships deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of personal interaction and expectation.

Regarding the level of personal interaction, corporate online communication does not

provide customer service if a standardised response form hinders customers in specifying the exact information they need, or uses software that automatically manages customer relationships. Personalisation of corporate online communication and development of customer networks are also deemed insignificant. Interaction through an online sales video and preprogrammed answers is deemed insignificant to enhance corporate online communication.

Regarding the level of expectation, customers' needs are not fulfilled if corporate online communication includes a search capability in which relevant key words do not produce meaningful findings. Free product samples that can be ordered, are also deemed insignificant in communicating differentiated products and/or services to the customer.

Credibility

The strongest perception of aspects of credibility deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of perception and social responsibility.

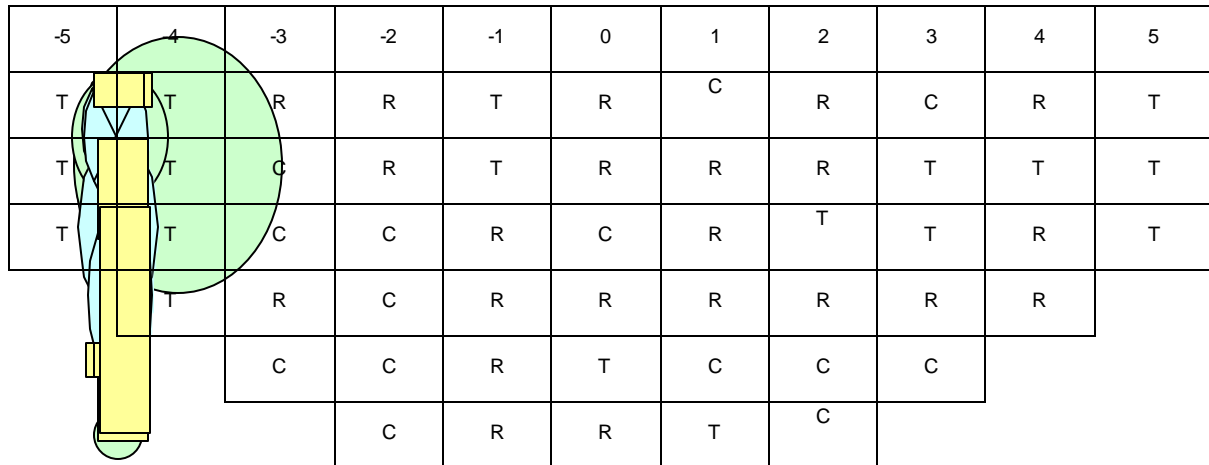
Regarding the level of perception, it is deemed insignificant for corporate online communication to include media releases in its communication.

With regard to the level of social responsibility, it is also deemed insignificant for corporate online communication to portray believability of intentions through communication about community efforts, involvement in environmental projects and charitable activities or to provide for a community bulletin board where nonprofit organisations can publicise their events free of charge.

7.3.1.2 Factor 2: trust

Figure 7.12 below indicates the aspects of credibility, trust and long-term relationships which are deemed significant by factor 2 for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s). This factor accentuates trust because it is aware that online customers want to feel protected in their dealings and corporate online communications with an organisation. Its strongest perception of corporate online communication involves the categories of trust, credibility and long-term relationships.

Figure 7.12: Factor 2: trust - communicators of corporate online communication (significant corporate online communication)



C = Credibility

T = Trust

R = Relationships

Figure 7.12 is now explained as follows:

Trust

The strongest perception of aspects of trust deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of accountability, concreteness and association, which are explained as follows:

Accountability in corporate online communication is evident in the fact that it poses no risk, is predictable, its intentions or motives are clear and it is honest. It also communicates the organisation's character and responsibility.

Corporate online communication is concrete because it generates confidence, respect and faith, is truthful, has integrity and is accepted by the receiver. Corporate online communication is also open with regard to the organisation's management.

The consumer can associate with the organisation's corporate online communication because it communicates the organisation's ability, expertise and competence. Corporate online communication also indicates the organisation's compassion, humanity and congruence, is fair and creates a feeling of loyalty and the fact that one can depend on the organisation.

Long-term relationships

The strongest perception of aspects of long-term relationships deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of personal interaction and expectation, which are explained as follows:

Corporate online communication includes customer service and provides for an opportunity for interaction. Communication is also personalised according to the receiver's needs.

Corporate online communication complies with the receiver's expectation because it fulfils the needs of the customer, shows commitment and communicates differentiated products and/or services.

Credibility

The strongest perception of aspects of credibility deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of history, perception and social responsibility.

Corporate online communication reflects the organisation's history in the sense that receivers perceive the organisation's past actions as an indication of its future behaviour. Corporate online communication on this level also communicates trustworthiness and behavioural integrity.

Perception of corporate online communication is also deemed significant because it includes the organisation's level of expertise, its dynamism, sociability, extroversion and similarity to the receiver. It includes favourable communication to the media. Corporate online communication on this level also contributes favourably to the organisation's

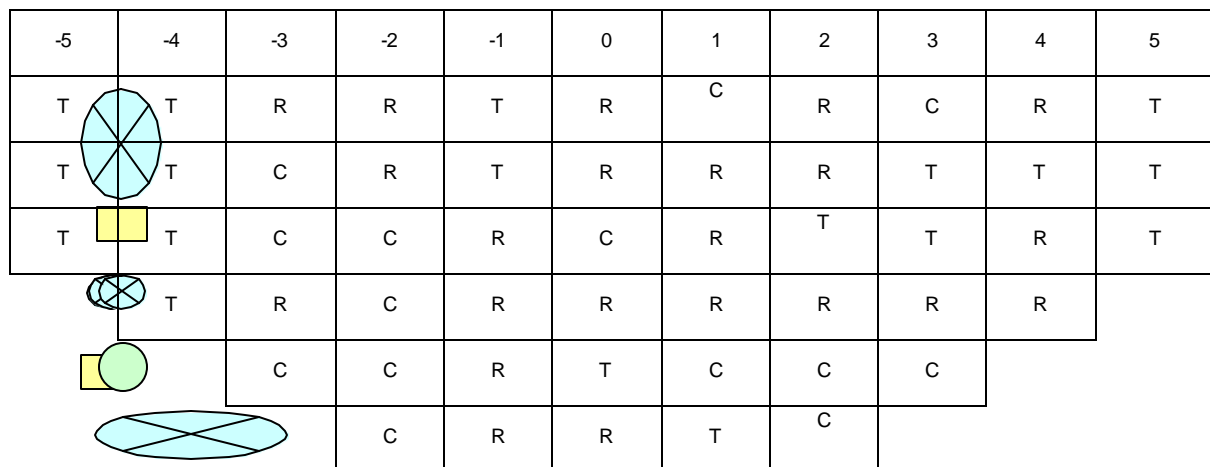
brand.

Corporate online communication is also socially responsible because it communicates the believability of the organisation's intentions.

Figure 7.13 below indicates the aspects of credibility, trust and long-term relationships which are deemed insignificant by factor 2 for corporate online communication.

This factor embraces all the levels of the above three categories, but rejects specific statements in the categories of credibility, trust and long-term relationships as discussed below.

Figure 7.13: Factor 2: trust - communicators of corporate online communication (insignificant corporate online communication)



C = Credibility

T = Trust

R = Relationships

Figure 7.13 is now explained as follows:

Trust

The strongest perception of an aspect of trust deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of accountability, concreteness and association, but comprises only one statement.

Corporate online communication can still be accountable even though it does not communicate information about the organisation's employees. The organisation's predictability and responsibility are not compromised.

The concreteness of corporate online communication is not affected by not communicating information about the organisation's employees. It is deemed insignificant to have open communication about the management of the organisation.

The receiver can still associate with the organisation's corporate online communication even though it does not communicate information about its employees. The organisation's expertise and congruence are not affected.

Long-term relationships

The strongest perception of aspects of long-term relationships deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of personal interaction and expectation. Only seven statements are deemed insignificant.

The personal interaction embedded in corporate online communication does not need to include a video or an online discussion forum. Developing customer networks is also deemed insignificant. Customer service is also not compromised by not using a standardised response form to enquiries or software that automatically manages customer relationships. Personalisation of corporate online communication is also deemed insignificant in terms of personalising website content.

Corporate online communication does not meet the expectation of the receiver with

regard to differentiated products and/or services when free product samples can be ordered online.

Credibility

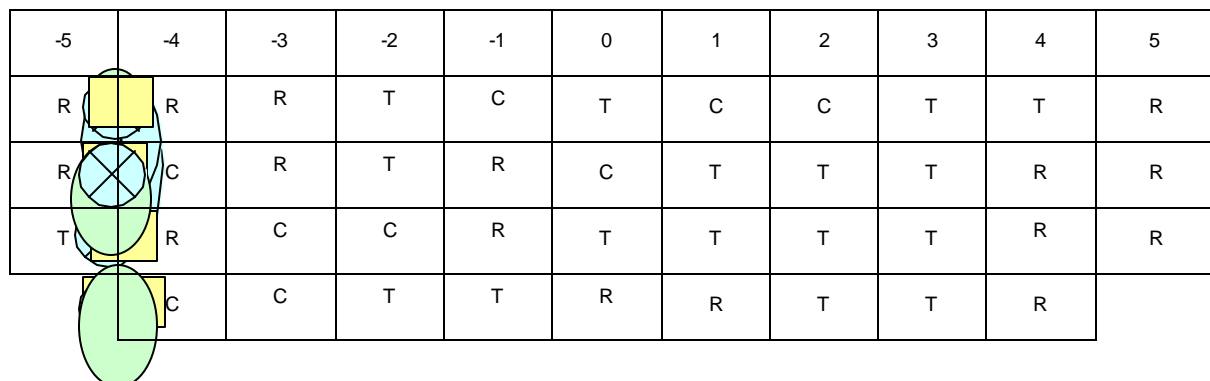
The strongest perception of aspects of credibility deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of history and social responsibility but includes only two statements.

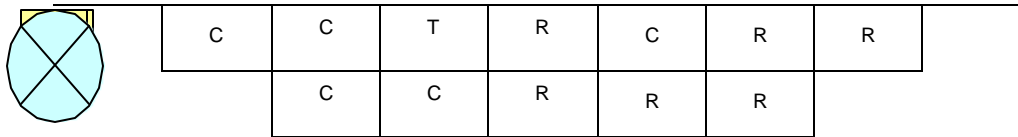
With regard to the level of history, the credibility of corporate online communication is not affected if a profile of the organisation's activities in the level of history is not communicated. As far as the level of social responsibility is concerned, corporate online communication does not need to provide for a community bulletin board where nonprofit organisations can publicise their events free of charge.

7.3.1.3 Factor 3: efficient information

Figure 7.14 below indicates the aspects of credibility, trust and long-term relationships which are deemed significant by factor 3 for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s). This factor accentuates well-presented and effective information for the receiver. Both its strongest and weakest perception of corporate online communication is related to the category of long-term relationships.

Figure 7.14: Factor 3: efficient information - communicators of corporate online communication (significant corporate online communication)





C = Credibility

T = Trust

R = Relationships

Figure 7.14 is now explained as follows:

Trust

The strongest perception of aspects of trust deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of accountability, concreteness and association, which are explained as follows:

Corporate online communication is accountable when its messages pose no risk, it is honest and its intentions and motives are clear.

Corporate online communication is concrete when it generates confidence, respect, faith and when there is open communication about management. It also needs to communicate security to the receiver.

For the receiver to associate with the organisation's corporate online communication, it communicates the ability, expertise, compassion and competence of the organisation.

Long-term relationships

The strongest perception of aspects of long-term relationships deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of personal interaction and expectation, which are explained as follows:

Corporate online communication includes personal interaction by allowing for effective customer service and providing ample opportunities for interaction. Corporate online

communication also personalises its message to the receiver.

Corporate online communication complies with the receiver's expectation when it fulfils the needs of the receiver and shows commitment to him or her.

Credibility

The strongest perception of aspects of credibility deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of history and perception, which are explained as follows:

Corporate online communication communicates the history of the organisation because it is an indication of its future behaviour. It also makes the corporate online communication trustworthy and is an indication of the organisation's behavioural integrity.

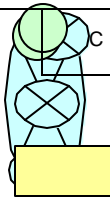
Corporate online communication creates a perception of the organisation's dynamism, sociability and level of expertise. Corporate online communication also communicates favourable information about the organisation to the media.

Figure 7.15 below indicates the aspects of credibility, trust and long-term relationships which are deemed insignificant by factor 3 for corporate online communication.

This factor embraces all the levels of the above three categories, but rejects specific statements in the categories of credibility, trust and long-term relationships as discussed below.

Figure 7.15: Factor 3: efficient information - communicators of corporate online communication (insignificant corporate online communication)

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
R	R	R	T	C	T	C	C	T	T	R
R	C	R	T	R	C	T	T	T	R	R
T	R	C	C	R	T	T	T	T	R	R



C	C	T	T	R	R	T	T	R
	C	C	T	R	C	R	R	
		C	C	R	R	R		

C = Credibility

T = Trust

R = Relationships

Figure 7.15 is now explained as follows:

Trust

The strongest perception of aspects of trust deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of accountability, concreteness and association, which can be explained as follows:

This factor embraces the view that corporate online communication is accountable in terms of no sense of risk, but excludes communication about the security of transactions, service support and the means of delivery of ordered goods. Adequate access to customers' online account details and to the status of orders at any given time, is also deemed insignificant. In terms of honest communication, the organisation's contact numbers and communication about the assurance of error-free billing are deemed insignificant. Predictability and responsibility are deemed insignificant in terms of communicating the details of the organisation's employees. The intentions and motives of the corporate online communication are also deemed insignificant in terms of a guarantee that merchandise is available at the time of the order. Communicating respect and acceptance are deemed insignificant in terms of the reflection of the organisation's corporate identity.

The factor also embraces the concreteness of corporate online communication regarding the generation of confidence and truthfulness but excludes a guarantee that merchandise must be available at the time of the order. It is also not concerned about communicating security and faith in terms of a statement that transactions are secure.

Corporate online communication on the level of association excludes communication

about the organisation's ability and competence in terms of service support. In terms of communicating ability and fairness, a guarantee that merchandise is available at the time of the order, and service support, are deemed insignificant. In terms of communication that the organisation can be depended upon, assurance of service support is deemed insignificant. Making the organisation more likeable and communicating humanity and congruence through its corporate identity are also deemed insignificant. Creating a sense of loyalty by communicating adequate access to customers' online account details is deemed insignificant.

Long-term relationships

The strongest perception of aspects of long-term relationships deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of personal interaction and expectation, which can be explained as follows:

The factor embraces personal interaction and personalisation of corporate online communication, but excludes exclusive communication for regular customers. Interaction is also deemed insignificant in terms of an online sales video, an e-mail link, automated software, a subscribed mailing list and an e-mail product newsletter. Providing an e-mail link is also deemed insignificant with regard to customer service. Developing customer networks through a guestbook is deemed insignificant.

Corporate online communication on the level of expectation excludes links to other sites containing information applicable to the organisation's products in terms fulfilling the customer's needs.

Regarding the level of expectation, it is deemed insignificant to communicate differentiated products and/or services through a detailed online sales brochure and free products and/or services that can be ordered. Fulfilling the customer's needs is deemed insignificant in terms of providing links to other sites containing information applicable to the organisation's products. Commitment is also insignificant in terms of exclusive communication for regular customers.

Credibility

The strongest perception of aspects of credibility deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of perception and social responsibility, which can be explained as follows:

With regard to the level of perception, communicating the level of expertise excludes an educational section on how to best use a particular product. It is also deemed insignificant to communicate a perception of extroversion and similarity to the audience in terms of the organisation's culture.

As far as the level of level of social responsibility are concerned, corporate online communication excludes communication about charitable activities, community efforts and environmental projects. It also does not include a community bulletin board. The entire level is deemed insignificant in terms of communicating the believability of intentions.

7.3.2 Receivers of corporate online communication

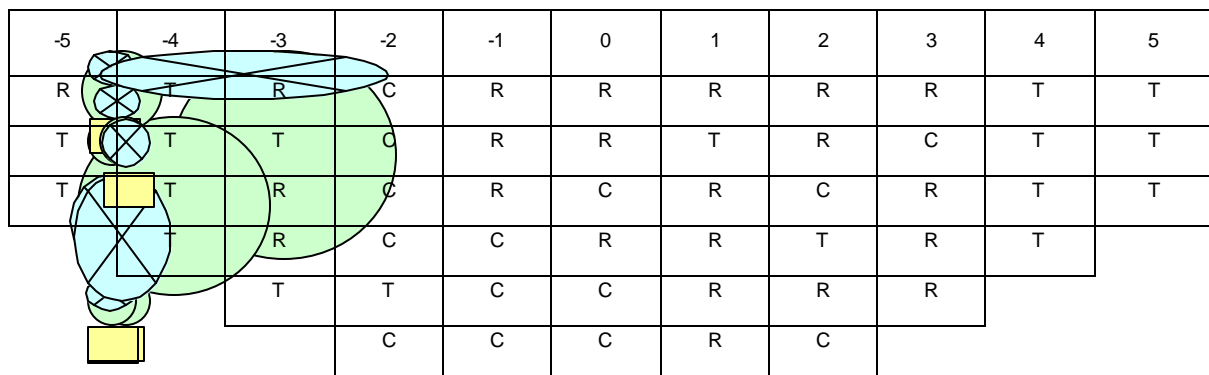
The theoretical significance of the findings of the receivers of corporate online communication is discussed in accordance with each factor and the categories and levels of the structured Q sample.

7.3.2.1 Factor A: confidence

Figure 7.16 below indicates the aspects of credibility; trust and long-term relationships deemed significant by factor A for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s).

This factor accentuates a strong consideration of security, control, openness and visibility of the organisation. Its strongest perception of corporate online communication has to do with the categories of trust and long-term relationships.

Figure 7.16: Factor A: confidence - receivers of corporate online communication (significant corporate online communication)



C = Credibility

T = Trust

R = Relationships

Figure 7.16 is now explained as follows:

Trust

The strongest perception of aspects of trust deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of accountability, concreteness and association, which are explained as follows:

Corporate online communication is accountable because it poses no risk, is honest, predictable, consistent, responsible, its intentions and motives are clear and it is also indicative of the organisation's character.

Corporate online communication is concrete because it generates confidence, respect and faith. It is truthful, displays integrity and is accepted by the receiver. It further communicates openly about the management of the organisation and about security.

With regard to the level of association, corporate online communication communicates the ability, expertise, competence, compassion, humanity, congruence and fairness of the organisation. It also induces a feeling of loyalty towards and liking of the organisation and communicates the fact that the organisation can be depended upon.

Long-term relationships

The strongest perception of aspects of long-term relationships deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of personal interaction and expectation, which are explained as follows:

Corporate online communication includes personal interaction allowing for effective customer service and ample opportunities for feedback. Communication is also personalised.

Corporate online communication complies with the receiver's expectation when communication displays commitment and fulfills his or her needs. Corporate online communication communicates differentiated products and/or services to the receiver.

Credibility

The strongest perception of aspects of credibility deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of history and perception which are explained as follows:

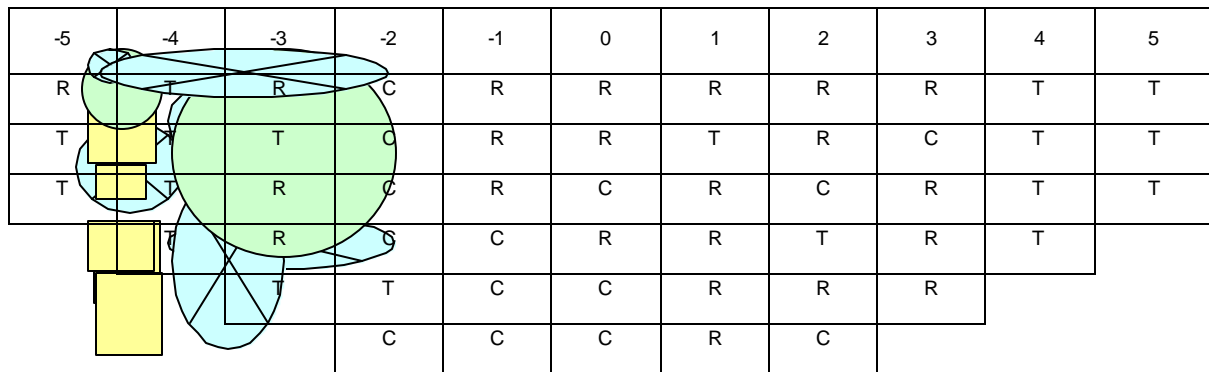
Corporate online communication includes the organisation's history because past actions are an indication of future behaviour. Its history also indicates that its communication is trustworthy.

Corporate online communication creates a perception of the level of expertise and

composure of the organisation and similarity to the receiver. It communicates favourably about the organisation's brand as well as communicating favourable information to the media.

Figure 7.17 below indicates the aspects of credibility and long-term relationships which are deemed insignificant by factor A for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s). All aspects of trust are deemed significant as indicated in figure 7.16 above. This factor embraces all the levels of the above three categories, but rejects specific statements in the categories of credibility and long-term relationships as discussed below.

Figure 7.17: Factor A: confidence - receivers of corporate online communication (insignificant corporate online communication)



C = Credibility

T = Trust

R = Relationships

Figure 7.17 is now explained as follows:

Long-term relationships

The strongest perception of aspects of long-term relationships deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of personal interaction and expectation, which can be explained as follows:

With regard to the level of personal interaction, effective customer service, which is an

essential part of corporate online communication, does not need to include automated customer relationship software. Developing customer networks is also deemed insignificant. Interaction embedded in corporate online communication need not include an online sales video, subscribed mailing list or online discussion forum. Personalisation of corporate online communication is also rejected in terms of exclusive website services, website content and an online *members-only* magazine.

As far as the level of expectation is concerned, corporate online communication does not need to communicate differentiated products and/or services by offering free products and/or services online.

Credibility

The strongest perception of aspects of credibility deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of history, perception and social responsibility, which can be explained as follows:

With regard to the level of history, communicating the organisation's culture is deemed insignificant in terms of predicting its future behaviour. The trustworthiness of corporate online communication is not affected by not communicating charitable activities, community efforts and environmental projects in which it is involved or providing for communication through a community bulletin board. The trustworthiness of corporate online communication is also not affected if content software management tools are not used in order to ensure consistency in the communication.

The perception of the organisation's dynamism and sociability is not affected if its special events are not communicated; nor is the perception of its extroversion and a feeling of similarity to the audience, if its culture is not communicated.

Regarding the level of social responsibility, the organisation's believability of intentions is not affected by not communicating its charitable activities, community efforts, the environmental projects in which it is involved or providing for communication through a community bulletin board. By not ensuring consistent communication through content management software does not affect the credibility of the organisation's brand.

7.3.2.2 Factor B: meaningful relationships

Figure 7.18 below indicates the aspects of credibility, trust and long-term relationships deemed significant by factor B for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s).

This factor accentuates a strong consideration of meaningful relationships based on a perception of the organisation's history, brand, accountability, visibility, expertise and ability. Its strongest perception of corporate online communication involves the categories of trust, long-term relationships and credibility.

Figure 7.18: factor B: meaningful relationships - receivers of corporate online communication (significant corporate online communication)

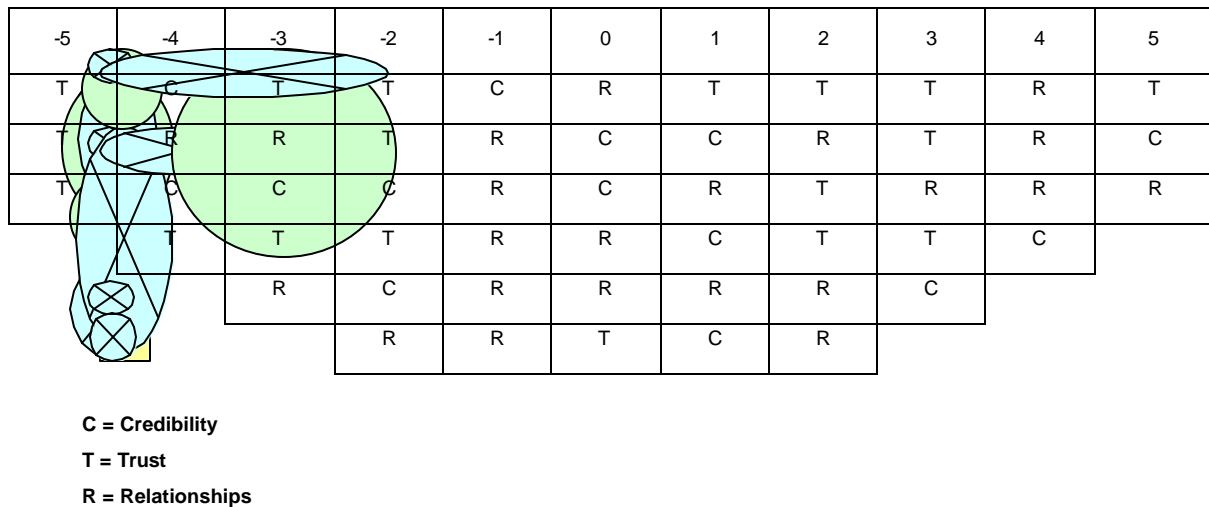


Figure 7.18 is now explained as follows:

Trust

The strongest perception of aspects of trust deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of accountability, concreteness and association, which can be explained as follows:

Corporate online communication is accountable because it poses no risk, is honest,

predictable, consistent, responsible, its intentions and motives are clear and it also reflects the organisation's character.

Corporate online communication is concrete because it generates confidence, respect and faith. It is truthful, displays integrity and is accepted by the receiver. It further communicates openly about the management of the organisation and about security.

With regard to the level of association, corporate online communication communicates the ability, expertise, competence, compassion, humanity, congruence and fairness of the organisation. It also induces a feeling of loyalty towards and liking of the organisation and communicates the fact that the organisation can be depended upon.

Long-term relationships

The strongest perception of aspects of long-term relationships deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of personal interaction and expectation, which can be explained as follows:

Corporate online communication includes personal interaction allowing for effective customer service and ample opportunities for feedback. Communication is personalised and develops customer networks.

Corporate online communication complies with the receiver's expectations when communication displays commitment and fulfils his or her needs. Corporate online communication also communicates differentiated products and/or services to the receiver.

Credibility

The strongest perception of aspects of credibility deemed significant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of history, perception and social responsibility, which are explained as follows:

Corporate online communication includes the organisation's history because past actions are an indication of future behaviour. This history also indicates that its

communication is trustworthy. Moreover corporate online communication displays behavioural integrity.

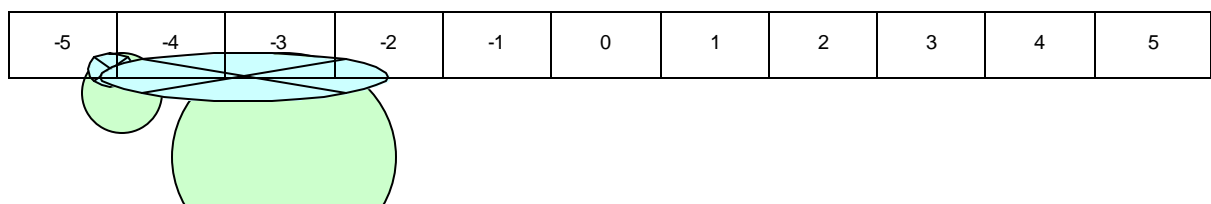
Corporate online communication communicates a perception of the level of expertise, composure, dynamism, sociability and extroversion of the organisation as well as its similarity to the receiver. Corporate online communication also corresponds favourably to the organisation's brand while the communication also conveys favourable information about the organisation to the media.






With regard to the level of social responsibility, corporate online communication communicates the believability of the organisation's intentions.

Figure 7.19 below indicates the aspects of credibility, trust and long-term relationships which are deemed insignificant by factor B for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s).

This factor embraces all the levels of the above three categories, but rejects specific statements in the categories of credibility, trust and long-term relationships as discussed below.

Figure 7.19: Factor B: meaningful relationships - receivers of corporate online communication (insignificant corporate online communication)



T		C	T	T	C	R	T	T	T	R	T
T		R	R	T	R	C	C	R	T	R	C
T		C	C	C	R	C	R	T	R	R	R
	T	T	T	R	R	C	T	T	C		
		R	C	R	R	R	R	C			
			R	R	T	C	R				

C = Credibility

T = Trust

R = Relationships

Figure 7.19 is now explained as follows:

Trust

The strongest perception of an aspect of trust deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the level accountability. Only one statement about trust is deemed insignificant. With regard to the accountability of corporate online communication, the honesty of the communication is not affected if the organisation's contact numbers are not provided.

Long-term relationships

The strongest perception of aspects of long-term relationships deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the levels of personal interaction and expectation, which can be explained as follows:

With regard to the level of personal interaction, personalisation of corporate online communication is deemed insignificant in terms of exclusive website services and an online *members-only* magazine.

As far as the level of expectation is concerned, corporate online communication does not need to communicate differentiated products and/or services by offering free products and/or services online.

Credibility

The strongest perception of aspects of credibility deemed insignificant for corporate online communication in the context of selling the organisation's product(s) and/or service(s) is manifested in the level of social responsibility. The believability of the intentions of the organisation's corporate online communication is not compromised by not communicating information about environmental projects in which the organisation is involved or by not providing for communication through a community bulletin board.

7.4 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the findings of the Q study for both the communicators and receivers of corporate online communication. This was followed by an overview of the theoretical significance of these findings for each factor in accordance with the structured Q sample.

Chapter 8 summarises these findings in accordance with each factor for both the communicators and receivers of corporate online communication. It then critically assesses the findings with regard to the overall theory of the study.