

**DETERMINING EMPLOYEES' ACCEPTANCE OF ELECTRONIC  
NEWSLETTERS IN AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT**

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF COMMERCE**

in the subject of

**BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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February 2016

# DECLARATION

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I declare that "*Determining Employees' Acceptance of Electronic Newsletters in an Academic Environment*", submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce in the subject Business Management with specialisation in Marketing Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA), is my own work and that all sources utilised within this research study have been acknowledged by means of complete references.



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February 2016

## **DEDICATION**

This master's dissertation is dedicated to my Heavenly Father for granting me the strength and perserverance to accomplish yet another goal; to my mother, Venetia Prinsloo, who has shown me the value of education; to my sister Cleo Prinsloo for her support and encouragement; and to my fiancé Granville Smith, who reminded me whenever I was discouraged why I chose this path.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following individuals who have been instrumental in the completion of this study:

- My supervisors, Prof J.A. Wiid and Mrs A.A. Meyer, for their guidance, encouragement, support and patience. Without them, I would still be floundering on page one. Thank you for your hand in my development; I could not have done this without your endless patience and good humour when they were sorely needed.
- The University of South Africa (UNISA) for financial assistance.
- Dina Venter for her assistance with statistical expertise on my survey.
- Nathi Zongozzi, thank you for your expertise and assistance with my online survey.
- Hennie Gerber from the College of Graduate Studies, for his guidance and expertise with statistical analysis.
- Glenda Buncombe for editing the dissertation.
- Jenny Seagreen for the formatting, layout and technical editing of this dissertation.
- The research respondents for their willing participation and co-operation.
- My family, for your encouragement and support.
- My colleagues and friends, for your support and encouragement.

*“I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

– Jeremiah 29:11 –

# ABSTRACT

Internal marketing and internal communication are essential tools to align employees' mindsets with the necessary tasks which bring about employee satisfaction and organisational prosperity. Electronic newsletters serve as an internal marketing communication medium which can convey the necessary information to employees regarding the organisation's goals and objectives. They also act as a medium to build relationships with employees and encourage improved service delivery and customer-oriented employee mindsets. Employees' willingness to make use of electronic newsletters for the purpose of disseminating organisational information is an indication of employees' acceptance of the organisational information and use thereof in performing organisational tasks successfully as the organisation intends. The purpose of the current study was to determine employees' acceptance of electronic newsletters, as an internal marketing communication medium, in order to disseminate organisational information which contributes to the attainment of organisational goals, objectives and success.

An empirical study was conducted to determine employees' acceptance of electronic newsletters by means of an adapted technology acceptance model, self-administered, e-mail survey disseminated to employees of a higher education institution. The study followed a quantitative research approach, utilising regression in the analysis of the data.

Based on the research results, employees do accept the electronic newsletter for the dissemination of organisational information, albeit with suggestions on how it can be better utilised in future.

## **Key terms**

Internal marketing, internal communication, acceptance, willingness, technology acceptance model (TAM), electronic newsletter, higher education institution, information overload, regression

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Communication: The process in which individuals share ideas, thoughts and feelings with one another in commonly understandable ways using a communication medium (Hamilton, 2008:5).

Electronic newsletters/e-newsletters: An electronic form of the old paper newsletter (Molenaar, 2012:111). The newsletter is used to inform employees about relevant developments within the organisation.

Holistic marketing: A marketing concept that recognises that each marketing programme, process, activity and the development, design and implementation thereof contributes to the overall marketing objectives, albeit interdependently (Govindarajan, 2007:10; Eva-Cristina & Pop, 2008:788). Holistic marketing includes relationship marketing, integrated marketing, performance marketing and internal marketing.

Integrated marketing: Ensures that all activities are coordinated and integrated (including the marketing mix), in order to optimise the efforts to satisfy the customers' needs efficiently (Faarup & Aabroe, 2010:27; Eva-Cristina & Pop, 2008:789).

Internal communication: "strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within the organization" (Welch & Jackson, 2007:183).

Internal marketing: "a planned effort using a marketing-like approach, directed at motivating employees, for implementing and integrating organisational strategies towards customer orientation" (Ahmed, Rafiq & Saad, 2002:10).

Marketing accountability: The coverage of the organisational marketing activities and expenditures that are financially and non-financially accountable (Park, Auh, Maher & Singhapakdi, 2012:1576).

Performance marketing: The assessment of "the relationship between marketing activities and business performance" (Kotler & Keller, 2009:64).

Relationship marketing: An alteration from the marketing principle in that the organisation strives to form long-term, value-added relationships over time with suppliers and customers (Brijball Parumasur & Roberts-Lombard, 2014:357).

Social responsibility marketing: Efforts not only affect the company and those that the marketing activities are directed at, but also society as a whole. Legal, ethical, environmental and social contexts of the activities the organisation participates in should be responsible (Kotler & Keller, 2009:64).

Strategic alliances: Relationships with partners, whereby a cooperative agreement is created between organisations (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2012:235).

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>A</b>	Actual use
<b>ABI</b>	Attitude and behavioural intention
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	Coefficient of determination squared adjusted
<b>ANOVA</b>	Analysis of variance
<b>DF</b>	Degrees of freedom
<b>E-newsletter</b>	Electronic newsletter
<b>IT</b>	Information technology
<b>MSA</b>	Mean sum of squares
<b>PEOU</b>	Perceived ease of use
<b>PU</b>	Perceived usefulness
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	Coefficient of determination
<b>SSA</b>	Sum of squares
<b>SSE</b>	Sum of squared error
<b>SST</b>	Sum of squares total
<b>Std Dev</b>	Standard deviation
<b>TAM</b>	Technology acceptance model
<b>TV</b>	Television
<b>UNISA</b>	University of South Africa



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# CHAPTER 1

## DETERMINING EMPLOYEES' ACCEPTANCE OF ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS IN AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In preceding eras, organisations had to wait lengthy periods for postal mail to be delivered, responded to and subsequently returned, which was the existing mode of business communication at that time. Written correspondence was considered the central form of communication medium (Haggis & Holmes, 2011:169). Then, contact between the organisation and its stakeholders were limited to the physical realm of face-to-face interactions, the telephone or postal mail. With the rise of information technology (IT), it has become increasingly apparent that organisations can interact with consumers or employees on a grander scale without losing the element of interaction (Cant, Van Heerden & Ngambi, 2010:434). Today, technological advancement has meant that long-distance communication media such as electronic mails (e-mails), telephone calls and voicemails provide a faster means of reliable communication.

IT has made it possible to communicate despite distance, making it easier for geographically dispersed organisational offices to communicate continuously. In addition, IT provides opportunities to communicate in a reciprocal manner over long distances, engage with fellow employees to provide ideas, feedback and motivation and ultimately to contribute to the organisation's strategy (Lipiäinen, Karjaluoto & Nevalainen, 2014:275).

Technological changes have also influenced the way in which organisational information is communicated to employees. E-mail has made it easier to send newsletters electronically as all employees that have personalised organisational e-mail addresses are able to receive the electronic newsletters or e-newsletters. An e-newsletter is an internal marketing communication medium, which is an organisational communication medium, utilised to convey organisational information to the employees (Kowlaski, 2011:136). E-newsletters can

be utilised to satisfy an employee's need for information, to build a relationship with employees, to engage with employees and to transfer knowledge to employees in order to improve collaboration in providing high customer service (Berndt & Tait, 2014:103).

One advantage of e-newsletters as an internal marketing communication medium is that employees who would otherwise not have had access to organisational information can now access it (Little, 2011). Organisational information could lead to employee engagement and that is able to influence attitudes and behaviours of employees. Negative behaviours such as functions working in silos can be overcome by means of communication through e-newsletters, allowing functions to share activities and resources (Gressgård, Amundsen, Aasen & Hansen, 2014:639–640). Contrary to the perception of information overload, when used correctly, e-newsletters can aggregate mass announcement e-mail messages and in fact reduce e-mail overload. E-newsletters can also be used to convey the important objectives of the organisation that employees should strive to accomplish.

Despite the numerous benefits of e-newsletters, they have unfavourable effects too. These include most employees perceiving that reading e-newsletters is a waste of time (Little, 2011). This is not an incorrect perception considering that employees are interrupted several times a day with messages that are unrelated to the task being performing at the time the message is received (Cut Through Communications, 2012). Each interruption of the employees' concentration has a cost and it takes time to refocus them. White, Vanc and Stafford (2010:74) have reported cases where interruptions are particularly annoying when e-newsletters sent to "all staff" contain generic information and are not important enough to be read immediately. Despite e-newsletters being preferred media of communication by organisations and employees alike (White *et al.*, 2010:74), they are oftentimes not opened and read by employees. Since they do not open the e-newsletters, employees are unaware of the information that the organisation wishes to convey to them by means of the organisational e-newsletter (Little, 2011). Possible heavy workloads prevent employees from reading the e-newsletter and an information surplus can lead to information overload (White *et al.*, 2010:69).

Regardless of the disadvantages, e-newsletters as an internal marketing communication medium still satisfy the need to disseminate organisational information to employees. By making use of the e-newsletter for its intended purpose, employees are able to derive a number of benefits. E-newsletters rooted in internal marketing strive to develop employees' capabilities in order to achieve organisational success. Consequently, achieving employee satisfaction in terms of knowing that the employee can make a significant contribution to the organisation's operations also contributes to the organisation's success (Lindsay, Jackson & Cooke, 2011:390).

Employees making use of the e-newsletter for its primary purpose of organisational information indicates their acceptance of the e-newsletter's intended purpose. Employees' acceptance can be measured by means of the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Camarero, Rodríguez & San José, 2012:5), which is an IT system usage prediction model that measures individuals' willingness to make use of a system (Lee, Hsieh & Ma, 2011:356).

Based on the discussion above, the role of e-newsletters in internal marketing, e-newsletters as an internal communication medium and the measurement tool used to measure employees' acceptance of e-newsletters are discussed below.

## **1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The focus of this study is on employees' acceptance of the internal marketing communication e-newsletter medium. The discussion below will be divided into sections, namely internal marketing including internal communication, e-newsletters and TAM.

### **1.2.1 Internal marketing**

Internal marketing can be defined as those activities that are undertaken by the marketing function to form relationships with employees (Glanfield, 2011:206), by satisfying their needs and garnering employees' commitment to organisational goals and objectives (Berndt & Tait, 2014:93–95). Internal customer relationship satisfaction is linked to external customers' satisfaction (Boshoff, 2014: 222). There are two dimensions to internal marketing which emphasise the

change in internal marketing from merely a solution to improved customer service to a management tool that is pre-emptive in improving customer service (Berndt & Tait, 2014:95–97; Khan, 2011:258).

In the first dimension the employee is seen as the internal customer that evaluates the job as the product, offering financial benefits in terms of salary, training benefits and personal growth.

The second dimension entails empowering and motivating employees to utilise marketing efforts to solve customer problems and seek opportunities to improve customer service.

It can therefore be stated that internal marketing requires management to “create, encourage, enhance understanding of, and appreciate the roles of employees through job products that satisfy their needs” (Khan, 2011:258). Management performs the duties related to internal marketing to gain employees’ acceptance and support of the goals, objectives and values of the organisation, thus influencing service delivery (Boshoff & Tait, in Tsai & Wu, 2011:2594).

As a management instrument (second dimension), internal marketing takes place at two levels (Andrews, Boyne, Meier, O’Toole & Walker, 2012:91). The first level is the marketing functions which are aligned with the adoption of the customer’s point of view. The second level is the rest of the functions within an organisation which embrace the marketing efforts of the organisation. For either level of internal marketing to be achieved, horizontal and vertical alignment are required. Horizontal alignment is the extent to which management agrees on organisational matters. Vertical alignment is the extent to which the priorities on organisational matters are consistent across different job positions within an organisation (Andrews *et al.*, 2012:77). Alignment of departments should occur between senior management and departmental functions (vertical alignment) and within the organisation in order to support the marketing efforts of the organisation. Internal marketing therefore requires an alignment between all functions within the organisation (horizontal alignment).

Vertical and horizontal alignment makes it possible to obtain sustainable marketing returns. For employees to embrace organisational marketing efforts

and thus achieve sustainable marketing returns, the organisation will have to identify and understand employees' wants and needs. By creating variables to satisfy employees' wants and needs, the organisation can create prosperity and restoration to a possibly unstable organisational environment (Jooste, Strydom, Berndt & Du Plessis, 2012:453–454). Variables created to possibly achieve employee satisfaction and organisational prosperity are known as the marketing mix, which includes product, pricing strategies, place and marketing communication (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:20). The marketing mix is applied to internal marketing, where the product is considered as the job, the price is the opportunity cost of engaging in the job, the place is the location where the job is offered and the promotion is organisational communication, and the reward policies (Yang, 2015:77).

The following aspects are guidelines for the initiation of a successful internal marketing strategy (Berndt & Tait, 2014:106–107):

- *Personal training and development* of employees regarding service quality, thus also affording employees empowerment and participation in providing high service quality
- *Continuous communication* with employees to maintain service quality standards
- *Acknowledgement and reward* for employees which serve as motivation for continued high service quality
- *Internal communication* to ensure that all employees are aware of their role and function within the organisation

Although each aspect of the initiation of an internal marketing strategy is credited for the important role it plays, the focus of the study was on internal communication. Internal communication is the vehicle to create relationships with employees, which in turn can impact the customer relationships that internal marketing wants to achieve (Boshoff, 2014:222; Parumasur & Roberts-Lombard, 2014:378). Therefore, only the internal communication guideline, also known as the marketing mix promotion variable, is discussed in further detail below.

### **1.2.1.1 Internal communication**

Internal communication lends itself to developing individuals' business and personal skills and is described as a process which enables employees to share information, form relationships, construct meaning and build organisational values and culture (Men & Stacks, 2014:301). Internal communication is intended as an interactive process, which generates knowledge for employees to contribute to organisational operations and activate employees' allegiance to the organisation (Mazzei, 2014:83; Sedej & Justinek, 2013:86). Employees' allegiance is essential considering that employees make effective brand ambassadors. Thus it is necessary for the organisation to enhance the internal communication of organisational information to employees to energise employees' appreciation for the intent of the organisation (Gyepi-Garbrah & Asamoah, 2015:5). In addition, internal communication is an effective tool in garnering employees' trust, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, productivity and positive relationships, as positive attitudes (Men & Stacks, 2014:301). According to Berger (in Men, 2014:256), internal communication is a principal and essential task in an organisation as it helps employees and departments to coordinate tasks in order to achieve objectives and goals, socialisation, results orientation, solutions and change management.

In order to convey organisational objectives to the employees, a number of internal communication media are used. Internal communication media include newsletters, videoconferencing, web-based meetings, shared workspaces, electronic presentations, micro blogs, internal advertising, company radio, web TV, bulletin boards, e-mailing to staff, meetings and external campaigns that are directed at employees (Mazzei, 2010:229). Alternative internal communication media that the organisation could use include online interactive meetings, online forums, employee-generated intranets, communication networks, workshops, internal communication committees and organisational theatre (Mazzei, 2010:229). Each communication medium has its own advantages and disadvantages, producing different interaction capabilities and forms of communication between the organisation and the employees. In the study, attention was focused on the communication medium of e-newsletters, as these

are widely used as a result of their versatility and cost advantage (Vidgen, Sims & Powell, 2011:93). In the next section, e-newsletters are discussed.

### **1.2.1.2 E-newsletters**

Newsletters transmitted through the Internet are referred to as electronic newsletters, or e-newsletters. E-newsletters are created to inform the target audience on matters of interest or information that is relevant to them (Dixon, 2012:11). E-newsletters, which are sent via e-mail, allow for immediate and extensive information dissemination of news or information. This is achieved through the creation, distribution and application of knowledge in organisations.

E-newsletters provide organisational information and can be an effective internal marketing medium, especially when they are also interactive. The feedback from these e-newsletters can provide data regarding the employees' needs and interests (Kowlaski, 2011:136). Organisations can use e-newsletters to inform employees about current corporate news, training courses, community outreach projects and corporate financial information.

E-newsletters have a number of advantages largely due to being disseminated by e-mail. Firstly, e-newsletters allow for versatility in that they can contain an announcement, news of a promotion, an advertisement or critical organisational information. Secondly, employees are more likely to read the internal newsletters because they are sent electronically, compared to internal newsletters in print. Thirdly, e-newsletters incur less cost than printed newsletters (Vidgen *et al.*, 2011:93). The advantages of using e-newsletters encourage organisations to make use of them.

The main disadvantage of e-newsletters is the concern regarding the information overload that is possible when distributing information (Vidgen *et al.*, 2011: 85). The 'overload' concern has led to a study conducted in an academic environment that found that employees apply a filtering system. This filtering system includes employees only looking at the senders' name and subject lines. In some cases employees delete e-newsletters without reading the content, or store e-newsletters to read at a later stage (White *et al.*, 2010:75).

E-newsletters lack the richness of alternative information sources. They are not the optimal medium to inform employees on delicate, complicated information to influence, persuade or sell an idea to the employees. Communication inefficiency creates a vacuum where employees may feel a sense of distrust and speculation, whereas too much information can result in information overload or a paradox of plenty, in which an overabundance of information is ignored (White et al., 2010:70). Internal communication can jeopardise the very relationships that it wants to build, such as when poor communication takes place, which may be counter-productive (Welch, 2012:246). Taking all the aspects that may cause employees to dislike or disapprove of an internal communication medium together, it could lead to unwillingness to use the e-newsletters. Thus, when employees disapprove of, dislike or find an electronic medium to be unacceptable, they may ignore that communication medium (Welch, 2012:252).

The measurement of the acceptance of the e-newsletters by employees refers to employees' willingness to use e-newsletters for their intended purpose. The employees' acceptance of e-newsletters was measured in this current study by means of the technology acceptance model (TAM). This model is discussed in the next section.

### **1.2.2 Technology acceptance model**

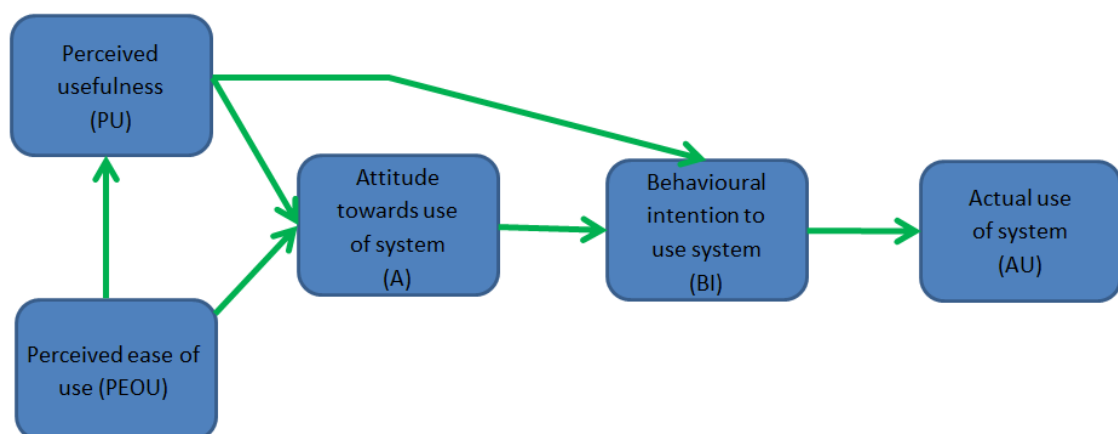
TAM is a theoretical extension of the theory of reasoned action (TRA). TRA originated from social psychology and generalises explanations of a number of individual behaviours (Lee et al., 2011:356). Based on the TRA, Davis (in Lee et al., 2011:356) introduced TAM, which is a modified model and focuses on the user acceptance of computer technology (Zhang, Nyheim & Mattila, 2014:300).

TAM is a research tool that can assist in explaining and predicting users' adoption of a system, which for the study, are e-newsletters (Zhang, Gao & Ge, 2013:1030). Acceptance is the willingness of individuals to utilise an IT system for the tasks it is designed to perform (Camarero et al., 2012:5). TAM theory states that behaviour is defined by two typical determinants of behavioural intention, which are attitude and subjective norm. Subjective norm is a function



of the opinion of those who are considered as important to an individual regarding whether that individual's actions to perform a certain behaviour in question should occur (Lee *et al.*, 2011:356). Any factor could affect the subjective norm, such as in the case of information systems, system design characteristics, users' characteristics, task characteristics and organisational structure (Lee *et al.*, 2011:356).

The attitude behavioural intention determinant of TAM was replaced by two separate variables, which are perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU). The application thereof is for specific domains of computer-human interactions (Camarero *et al.*, 2012:5). TAM emphasises that these variables – perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness – as the root in determining acceptance of technology. Individuals' attitude towards IT is affected by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Sheikhshoaei & Oloumi, 2011:368). These variables are precursors to an individual's attitude towards using the system, which in turn is a precursor to an individual's behavioural intention to use the system and actual use of the system (Kesharwani & Bisht, 2012:306; Abbasi, Chandio, Soomro & Shah, 2011:31). This is illustrated in Figure 1.1 below.



**Figure 1.1:** Variables of the TAM  
Source: Adapted from Bradley (2009:280)

The base variables as illustrated in Figure 1.1 are discussed below:

Perceived ease of use is defined as “the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system would be free of effort” (Davis in Chauhan, 2015:60). In other words, the less time spent on learning how the application operates, the more time spent actually using the application (Sheikhshoaei & Oloumi, 2011: 368).

Perceived usefulness is defined as “the degree to which a person believes that a system will enhance his or her job performance” (Davis in Rauniar, Rawski, Yang & Johnson, 2014:9-10). In other words, the more an application improves effectiveness within an organisation, the more it will be considered as helpful (Sheikhshoaei & Oloumi, 2011:368).

Attitude towards the use of a system is a learned bias that an individual forms in response to a system in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner (Lee, 2012:10). Bias towards a system can be influenced by perceived ease of use and the perceived usefulness of an IT system (Sheng & Zolfagharian, 2014:461).

Behavioural intention is an individual’s perceived likelihood or the subjective possibility that an individual will engage in a given behaviour (Letchumanan & Tarmizi, 2011:514, 2012). Behavioural intention to use a system is influenced by the attitude to use a system, which in turn is influenced by the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Letchumanan & Tarmizi, 2011:514).

Actual use of the system refers to the actions taken by the individual to make use of the system for its intended purpose. Actual use is influenced by behavioural intention to use the system (Lee *et al.*, 2011:356).

TAM was selected to test employees’ acceptance of e-newsletters. As TAM is widely applied in studying the acceptance of IT (Abbasi *et al.*, 2011:31; Lee *et al.*, 2011; Cheng, 2014:3), it was deemed suitable for the current study. TAM was used to determine employees’ acceptance of electronic communication as an internal marketing communication medium. Thus, by applying TAM to e-

newsletters, the study aimed to determine employees' willingness to utilise e-newsletters for the purpose of providing organisational information.

Below is a discussion on the background of the study regarding the problem statement and research methodology.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The communication industry has been evolving for centuries (Dima, Teodorescu & Gifu, 2014:46) and the evolution of communication media has also led to an increased amount of information communicated. A shift from a scarcity of information to a surplus has taken place, because of the ease of conveying information over the latest communication media (Cho, Ramgolam, Schaefer & Sandlin, 2011:38). The evolution of communication media is possible through technology advancement that has made electronic communication a reality, especially in the workplace.

Employers can communicate by means of communication media that have increased frequency and speed of communication (Cho *et al.*, 2011:38). These latest and faster communication media have had a huge impact on internal organisational efforts as organisations can interact with their employees through the intranet, e-mails and e-newsletters. Technology has reshaped interpersonal communication, as employees now have to cope with fast-paced multi-communication media (Smith, 2013:254). The necessary information can be communicated to employees who are then able to use the information in order to fulfil organisational objectives (Men, 2014:256). Employees can also receive information about their roles in achieving organisational goals and objectives. Through fast dissemination of e-newsletters, organisations can get more from employees in terms of increased productivity and job improvements. Organisations can increase desired employee productivity levels and job improvements by means of what is communicated to them, which can be influenced by internal marketing (Berndt & Tait, 2014:95–97). Internal marketing can align employees with organisational goals and objectives (Khan, 2011:258). Internal communication can include a number of media to communicate with the employees, ranging from oral briefings and company newspapers to corporate videos

(Mazzei, 2010:229). The communication medium focused on for the study was e-newsletters and how they are used to communicate with employees.

E-newsletters are distributed through the communication medium known as e-mail, which carries a variety of information (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:396–397). Although e-newsletters allow for fast and easy dissemination of corporate news, there are concerns that employees do not necessarily use e-newsletters effectively. Employees can experience an information overload which could contribute to their unwillingness to use an IT system such as e-newsletters (Vidgen *et al.*, 2011:85). Organisations would want employees to demonstrate a willingness to use internal newsletters and thus accept e-newsletters (Kesharwani & Bisht, 2012:306). Organisations need employees to accept the e-newsletter as a means of disseminating organisational information as it plays an important role in communicating how employees play their roles in achieving organisational goals and objectives (Boshoff, 2014:222).

Communication regarding organisational goals is essential, but it is also essential in times of crises when face-to-face meetings are not possible. In crises, such as the recent student protests (Quintal, 2015) against fee hikes (*#FeesMustFall*), employers at higher education institutions were able to inform employees of important logistical and security aspects such as closure of the institution or greater security measures in place. A relevant example of a lack of communication which e-newsletters could have overcome is “... there was insufficient communication from ... management regarding the assembly, including conflicting information about the venue and notices regarding the closure of university on Monday” (Quintal, 2015). This example illustrates the damage or possible distrust and speculation employees may feel due to communication inefficiency (White *et al.*, 2010:70). In addition, when it is not possible for all staff members to be accommodated in an institution-wide staff meeting, the e-newsletter can provide details on decisions made and discussions held and can be very valuable, especially for a large institution that spans many regions. It is essential for an organisation to have communication in place such as an e-newsletter which employees accept in order to overcome inefficient communication or a lack of communication.

Based on the discussion above, the question can be posed: Do employees accept e-newsletters for the intended purpose of disseminating organisational information? Based on the discussion above regarding the internal marketing communication and the similarities between organisations and academic institutes the research objectives are formed. The research objectives are discussed in the following section.

## **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The purpose and primary objective of the study was to determine employees' acceptance of e-newsletters for their intended purpose, namely to provide organisational information, in an academic environment by applying TAM.

The secondary objectives that were based on the research problem are as follows:

1. To determine whether employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on the perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter
2. To determine whether employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on attitude towards using the e-newsletter
3. To determine whether employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on attitude towards using the e-newsletter
4. To determine whether employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter
5. To determine whether employees' attitude towards using the e-newsletter has a significant influence on behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter

## **1.5 HYPOTHESES**

Based on the primary and secondary objectives, hypotheses were formulated. These hypotheses were based on the theoretical components of TAM. The components of the hypotheses are discussed below.

### **1.5.1 Perceived ease of use**

Perceived ease of use refers to the extent to which an individual believes that a certain system will be free of physical and mental effort (Sheikhshoaei &

Oloumi, 2011:368). It can have an effect on the extent to which the employees may believe that an IT system will add value to their employment performance, which is known as perceived usefulness (Zhang *et al.*, 2014:300).

A number of studies have been conducted that support the significant effect that perceived ease of use has on perceived usefulness as well as on attitude towards using the system. These studies have shown that behavioural intention to use the particular IT system is important (Camerero *et al.*, 2012; Lee *et al.*, 2011).

Employees may prefer e-mail as an internal communication medium (White *et al.*, 2010:74), because of the level of ease to save, store and retrieve information. The usability of the electronic format also gives employees a sense of control over their internal communication access (Welch, 2012:251). This perceived ease of use relates to the employees believing that the communication medium is free of physical and mental effort.

This study sought to revalidate these relationships in the context of e-newsletter usage in academic environments. Based on the discussion above, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H<sub>1</sub>: Employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on the perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter.

### **1.5.2 Perceived usefulness**

Perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which an individual believes that using a certain system would enhance his or her job performance (Kilic, Güler, Çelik & Tatli, 2015:287). Perceived usefulness is expected to have an influence on the individuals' intention to use any IT system. Perceived usefulness has an effect on the attitude of the employees, which is the willingness of the employees to use the e-newsletters for their intended purpose (Abbasi *et al.*, 2011:31).

The increased number of e-newsletters sent via e-mail to employees may cause information overload. Information overload may lead to employees merely scanning e-mails, or filtering the e-mails by only checking the sender's name and the

subject line. Employees might see the e-mails as not being useful to enhance their work performance and consequently might not open e-mails to read the content (White *et al.*, 2010:75). This could be because employees see e-mails as an intrusion and therefore rather ignore them, as they do not attach any importance to them. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H<sub>2</sub>: Employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their attitude towards using the e-newsletter.

### **1.5.3 Attitude**

Individuals' attitude towards IT may be influenced by the perceived ease of use and the perceived usefulness of the IT medium (Sheikhshoaei & Oloumi, 2011: 368). Employees' attitude towards e-newsletters is also evident in their preference for this internal communication medium (White *et al.*, 2010:74). Based on the above, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H<sub>3</sub>: Employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their attitude towards using the e-newsletter.

### **1.5.4 Behavioural intention**

The overall users' behavioural intention potential to use an information system is considered as the most indicative of an individual's actual system usage. Attitudes influence behavioural intention to use the system, which in turn is influenced by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Letchumanan & Tarmizi, 2011:514). There are a number of studies that support this notion of attitude towards IT as being an indicator of the behavioural intention to make use of the IT (Camerero *et al.*, 2012; Lee *et al.*, 2011; Letchumanan & Tarmizi, 2011).

In a study where employees showed their preference for e-newsletters and the elimination of print newsletters, they found e-newsletters to be superior, especially in terms of the benefits reaped by the organisation (Welch, 2012:250). To test whether employees' attitude towards e-newsletters is an indicator of their intention to use the e-newsletters, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H<sub>4</sub>: Employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter.

H<sub>5</sub>: Employees' attitude towards the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter.

## **1.6 METHODOLOGY**

The research design, sampling, data collection, data preparation and data analysis are discussed in the next section.

### **1.6.1 Research design**

The research was conducted using an empirical approach, and primary data was used. Primary data is data collected to address the research problem (Malhotra, 2010:73).

Additionally, a quantitative research approach was adopted in conjunction with descriptive research. Descriptive research describes the characteristics of objects, people, groups, organisations or environments (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:51). There is a comprehensive understanding of the situation when descriptive studies are conducted (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:53). Descriptive research design was especially suited to this study as descriptive research studies describe marketing variables such as consumers' attitudes, intentions, and behaviours (Burns & Bush, 2010:57). Descriptive research was relevant as TAM measures elements which are indicators of attitude towards use of the system and behavioural intention to use it (Camerero *et al.*, 2012:5). Cross-sectional studies were used to measure units of the population sample at one point in time (Burns & Bush, 2010:150).

Quantitative research, as defined by Malhotra (2010:171), is "a research methodology that seeks to quantify the data, and typically, applies some form of statistical analysis". It addresses research objectives through empirical assessments that involve numerical measurement and analysis approaches (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:133). It is characterised by finding the variables of the concept interested in, operationalising them and then measuring them (Grix, 2010:117). This re-



search design was especially relevant to the measurement of acceptance of the e-newsletter by means of TAM. TAM was suitable as the model has been tested empirically and supported through validations, applications and replications in previous studies (Lee *et al.*, 2011; Letchumanan & Tarmizi, 2011; Lin, Fofanah & Liang, 2011).

## **1.6.2 Sampling**

The individuals who are relevant to the research problem have to be identified (Gill & Johnson, 2010:127). The sampling is discussed in the section below.

### **1.6.2.1 Context**

As the flow of knowledge, information and technology among individuals, organisations and research and development institutions increases, so does the level of innovation. An increase in innovation consequently determines the innovation performance within a country. The main contributors to increased innovation performance are private organisations, universities and public research institutions. Research has also indicated that commercial innovation profits from linkages with universities and their research output determine a country's creation and utilisation of technology for development (Nyerere & Friso, 2013:663–664). With its prominent contributions to innovation, the increased use of information and communication technology and value of its research outputs (Nyerere & Friso, 2013:663–664), a university or higher education institution was thus the focus of the current study. As higher education institutions are prominent contributors to innovation within a country, a higher education institution in South Africa was selected as the population.

Specific focus was on a communication medium utilised within a higher education institution for transferral of knowledge and information. Without communication there can be no transferral of the valuable research and thus no contribution to innovation (Nyerere & Friso, 2013:663–664). To facilitate the flow of information and knowledge, thereby fostering innovation, an appropriate medium of communication through technology is essential for smooth transmissions within higher education institutions before extending to industry. As a technologically enabled communication medium, e-newsletters are inexpensive

and delivered in a timely manner and therefore overcome the standard obstacles.

### **1.6.2.2 Target population and units of analysis**

The target population of the study consisted of employees at a South African higher education institution that were employed within the different provinces in which the institution's offices are located in South Africa. The units of analysis were the individual employees at the different institution offices in South Africa. The motivation for choosing this specific target population was that the employees are the target audience of the e-newsletter, which is sent via e-mail to the employees' work e-mail addresses. Management could use the insight gained from the study to understand employees' willingness to make use of the e-newsletter for its intended purpose. A sample size of 357 was used, and the difference in acceptance of e-newsletters between academic and administrative staff was determined.

### **1.6.2.3 Sampling method**

When using quantitative research, there is a need for a large sample to produce generalised results that can be transferred or applied to similar situations (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:94). The sample was based on the institutional records that allowed more accurate sampling. Probability sampling is a sampling technique that bases the selection procedure on chance and is a random process. This does not mean that the procedure is unscientific, but rather that it is a basis for the probability sampling technique (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:426). Every element in the population has an equal and known likelihood of being selected (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:389). The probability sampling technique used was systematic sampling. As this was a descriptive study, a probability systematic sampling method was used where the starting point was selected on the list and every *n*th number on the list thereafter was selected (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:427).

Systematic sampling utilises a natural ordering or population order, which results in a sample that is almost random (Kolb, 2008:184–185). If a list is according to a pertinent matter, such as rank, then the chance of selecting an element from each rank grouping is good. If a list is according to a certain bias, such as time period, then the list can be randomised before implementing the sampling interval.

### **1.6.3 Data collection**

The data collection measurements chosen are discussed below.

#### **1.6.3.1 Measurement**

Acceptance of the e-newsletters was measured using TAM in the form of a self-administered online survey. TAM uses a 5-point Likert scale which measures perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and attitude to use the information systems, which are also indicators of the behavioural intention to use the system. The 5-point Likert scale measures the extent of agreement or disagreement with TAM statements where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. Low scores are an indication of disagreement and higher scores an indication of agreement; average scores are average responses. However, negative reverse scoring is present to counter bias.

#### **1.6.3.2 Pre-testing of the data collection instrument**

The questionnaire was pre-tested by means of an online survey that was sent out to 20 respondents of the sample population. The need for a pre-test lies in the possibility of problems that could arise from the meaning of the statements, the flow and continuity of the questionnaire, the sequence of the questions, as well as the length of the statements and questionnaire (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:360).

#### **1.6.3.3 Reliability and validity assessment**

A measure of reliability is confirmed when different attempts to test the same concept converge on the same result (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:334). Internal consistency measures homogeneity or the extent to which each of the items in a scale converges on a common meaning. Measurement is performed by

means of correlating the scores on subsets of items that make up a scale. The method used to test the scale reliability was Cronbach's alpha, which represents the average of all possible split-half reliabilities for a construct. Internal consistency is estimated by computing the average of all possible split-half reliabilities for a multiple-item scale, which is relevant to the 5-point Likert scale for TAM.

Validity tests alignment of scale with concept, practicality of scale to measure the concept, extent that the scale covers domain of interest and if the scale reliably and truthfully represents that concept (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2013:303–305). As TAM has been utilised in a number of studies (Kilic *et al.*, 2015; Lee *et al.*, 2011, Letchumanan & Tarmizi, 2011; Lin *et al.*, 2011), it was deemed reliable. However, as TAM was being applied to a different context in the study, its validity and its factors were tested in the current study.

#### **1.6.4 Data preparation**

Editing is a process of checking the answers that have been collected to see if they are correct, accurate and suitable in order to proceed to the next step, which is processing. In coding the answers, the complex descriptions are broken down into simpler meanings and are allocated a code (Bradley, 2010:314). As the 5-point Likert scale was made up of closed questions, these questions were pre-coded.

The data entry for capturing the codes onto a computer program such as Microsoft Excel was exported to the statistical package. This was followed by analysis of the data, which was then compiled into an analytical report (Bradley, 2010:313).

#### **1.6.5 Data analysis**

Data analysis is the course of processing the data and producing an analytical report, which is interpreted by means of an interpretive report (Bradley, 2010: 313).

Descriptive statistics were utilised for the variables which are descriptive in nature. For the purpose of this study, factor analysis was utilised, as it categorises a large number of variables which have a number of factors in common

explaining the many correlations among the variables (Feinberg, Kinnear & Taylor, 2013:482). Furthermore, linear regression was carried out, which provides a measure for whether two variables have a relationship and the strength of the relationship whereby one independent variable influences the second dependent variable (Menhard, 2010:3). Factor analysis and regression are appropriate for the 5-point Likert scale of TAM, which is a multivariate scale. As the stated hypotheses indicate, for the testing of the relationships between the variables, regression was relevant for this study (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:543).

The results from the regression analysis will be interpreted in the analysis report.

### **1.6.6 Ethical implications**

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committees from the University of South Africa, which is discussed in section 4.3.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

There have been a number of studies conducted in an academic context that made use of TAM; however, the model has also been used in relation to e-learning systems for students (Camerero *et al.*, 2012; Katz & Yablon, 2011). Another study that was conducted regarding employees was on the acceptance of e-learning within an organisation (Lee *et al.*, 2011). The majority of these studies were conducted within the corporate environment. The significance of this current study lies in the application of TAM within the South African academic environment, specifically directed at the internal marketing tool e-newsletters and the employees' acceptance of them.

Communication in crisis situations by means of e-newsletters was previously pointed out. This type of communication could benefit an organisation when alternative forms of communication are not possible.

The significance of the study provides a notable backdrop on the combination of information overload that employees experience in an academic environment

and the acceptance of the e-newsletters as measured by means of TAM in a South African context. This has not been extensively researched previously.

Management could use the insight gained from the study to understand employees' willingness to make use of the e-newsletter for its intended purpose.

## **1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

### **Chapter 1**

Chapter 1 provides an outline of the study. This includes the rationale for the study, the definitions of constructs, as well as the preliminary literature review. The research question and the accompanying methodology of the study are included.

### **Chapter 2**

Chapter 2 deals with the holistic marketing concept. The concept is discussed and insight is gained into the place of internal marketing within the greater holistic marketing concept. A greater part of the chapter covers internal marketing in terms of the internal market, the tools and techniques used. Greater emphasis is placed on the communication process, which is a component of internal marketing. The position of e-newsletters within the internal marketing communication process is clarified.

### **Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 focuses on e-newsletters as an internal communication medium. The advantages and disadvantages of e-newsletters are discussed. In addition, the compilation of e-newsletters in terms of the relevant purpose, being organisational information transfer, and how the e-newsletter can be optimised to achieve its purpose are discussed.

### **Chapter 4**

The research methodology is discussed in chapter 4. This chapter includes aspects such as the research design, the sampling method used, the manner in

which the data was collected, the ethics involved in the research process, the documentation of the data captured and the analysis of the data.

## **Chapter 5**

The results from the research study are presented in Chapter 5. This chapter contains the analysis of the results, and will include implications of the results.

## **Chapter 6**

Based on the results, the recommendations are proposed in this section. The purpose of Chapter 6 is to conclude the research in terms what can be drawn from the results. Indications of future research based on the shortfalls of this study are also provided.

### **1.9 SUMMARY**

The basis of the study lies in employees' acceptance of e-newsletters. The employees' acceptance of the e-newsletters serves as an indication of the actual usage of the internal marketing communication medium. It also serves as an indicator of whether the e-newsletter is used for its intended purpose of disseminating organisational information.

TAM, which was used to indicate the acceptance of the e-newsletter, also clarifies the perceived ease of use, the perceived usefulness, the attitude of employees towards the e-newsletter, the intention to use the e-newsletter and the actual use of the e-newsletter.

## CHAPTER 2

### HOLISTIC MARKETING COMPONENTS: FOCUSING ON INTERNAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION

*“A business that makes nothing but money is a poor kind of business”*

Henry Ford

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Evolution occurs in most spheres of life, where an aspect improves and adapts to changing circumstances. Marketing is no different in terms of how it is performed today, compared to the foundation phase of marketing with regard to the core marketing concepts of product, price, place and promotion. Marketing is the amalgamation of activities utilised to offer a product or service to customers, thereby satisfying customer wants and needs and simultaneously accomplishing organisational objectives (Keegan, 2014:27). The application of the marketing mix has evolved compared to preceding years, in terms of product advancements, increased distribution media, increased communication media for promotion and alternative pricing conditions. Products have become more advanced, such as television sets that have far more features than previous versions available in the 1980s. The market has become more competitive with increasing substitute products. Distribution can now take place online as well, and online shopping of music, movies and even groceries is possible. Promotion can take place through many communication media, namely online adverts, banner adverts, adverts on social media networks and e-newsletters, amongst others.

Similarly, as the marketing mix has changed, so have the types of marketing orientations. Marketing has evolved with the increase in customer demand and in sophistication of distribution media. The different orientations of marketing are illustrated in Figure 2.1.





**Figure 2.1:** Evolution of marketing concept  
 Source: Adapted from Pride and Ferrell (2013:13)

Production orientation is the first known marketing orientation in which mass production was the focus of organisational operations (Powers, 2012:191). Products were made readily available to consumers, who were more price sensitive (Pride & Ferrell, 2013:12–13). The demand for products was higher than supply; thus organisations focused on improving production and increasing supply.

Production orientation was followed by the second known marketing orientation, namely product orientation. This assumed that consumers were only interested in the product itself and its quality. Thus organisations concentrated on improving the quality of products on offer (Brassington & Pettitt, 2013:11).

The third marketing era was sales orientation where organisations assumed that product sales would increase due to the increase in consumers purchasing products as a result of more aggressive sales techniques that the organisation utilised (Grewal & Levy, 2014:14). Sales orientation concentrated on selling products to customers by making use of personal selling, advertising and distribution. Despite the increased use of marketing communication advertising, sales orientation, as the previous orientations, failed to understand the importance of appealing to the customers' wants and needs and satisfying those wants and needs (Lamb *et al.*, 2012:5).

The fourth orientation was market orientation, which understood that sales were not significantly affected by merely depending on salesforce efforts and aggressive advertising to increase the likelihood of increased purchases by consumers. Market orientation recognised that the customer's decision to purchase a product based on the perceived value of the product also increased sales (Kerin, Hatley & Rudelius, 2011:14; Pride & Ferrell, 2013:12–13). The market orientation consisted of 1) focusing on customer wants and needs to distinguish the organisational product offering from that of the competitor; 2) integrating all organisational efforts to achieve customer satisfaction in terms of customer wants

and needs and distinguishing the product from competitors' products; and 3) achieving long-term organisational goals in a legal and responsible manner with regard to satisfying customer wants and needs.

The fifth orientation was the emerging marketing orientation, also known as the societal marketing orientation. It recognised that some products are not in the best interests of society. An organisation should not only serve the primary organisational goal, which is to satisfy customers' wants and needs, but also enhance society's long-term best interests. The societal marketing orientation therefore considered environmentally friendly products, financially responsible practices and social responsibility (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2011:6). The indicators of an organisation truly adopting a societal marketing orientation are evident in the adoption of its principles by the organisation as a whole.

The societal market orientation is also the point of departure for holistic marketing. Holistic marketing is a more comprehensive use of marketing activities in an effort to utilise a more comprehensive socially responsible marketing concept (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013:13). The evolution of marketing is illustrated below in terms of the focus, means, end and how marketing is perceived in an organisation. See Figure 2.2.

<b>Marketing is everything</b>			
	<b>Old</b>	<b>New (1960s)</b>	<b>Strategic (emerging)</b>
Focus →	Product	Customer	Way of doing business
Means →	Telling and selling	Integrated marketing mix	Knowledge and experience
End →	Profit	Profit	Mutually beneficial relationship
Marketing is ... →	Selling	A function	Everything

**Figure 2.2:** Marketing is everything  
 Source: Keegan (in Keegan & Green, 2015:26)

To gain a better understanding of internal marketing, holistic marketing, which is internal marketing's setting, is unpacked in the subsequent section. As the focus of the study was on internal marketing, this concept will be discussed in further detail below, especially the holistic component of internal marketing.

## **2.2 HOLISTIC MARKETING**

The marketing mix utilised to attract consumers in decades gone by is no longer sufficient for today's modern consumer. Today there are more distribution media, goals and objectives have become more complex and considerations for socially responsible actions and decisions need to be made (Grigore, 2011:43). In order to approach the more complex market as described above, a more complete, cohesive approach is required. That complete and more cohesive approach comes in the form of holistic marketing. Holistic marketing recognises that each marketing programme, process and activity contributes to the overall marketing objectives (Nigam, 2011:1).

Holistic marketing consists of four components, namely integrated marketing, relationship marketing, performance marketing and internal marketing (Grigore, 2011:46). Each of the components facilitates the primary purpose of an organisation in its own manner by applying and focusing on a different perspective of the marketing mix. The holistic marketing framework is illustrated in Figure 2.3. Each component will be discussed in detail following Figure 2.3.



**Figure 2.3:** Holistic marketing components  
 Source: Adapted from Reiner (2011)

The first holistic marketing component, known as integrated marketing, is discussed in the following section.

### 2.2.1 Integrated marketing

Integrated marketing ensures that all marketing activities, such as the marketing mix compilation, are coordinated and integrated in order to optimise organisational efforts to satisfy the customers' needs efficiently (Faarup & Aabroe, 2010: 27). The marketing activities should be devised and assembled into completely integrated marketing programmes that create, communicate and deliver value to customers (Kushalappa, 2012).

Integrated marketing is about understanding what consumers base their purchasing decisions on. An organisation needs to delve deeper in understanding a customer's act of making a purchasing decision, by understanding what influences those purchasing decisions. Consumers base their purchasing decisions on the marketing mix elements that are evident to them, such as the product itself, price, promotion and place (Cant *et al.*, 2010:17). Therefore, an organisation needs to understand what exactly about each of the marketing mix

elements influences consumers' purchasing decisions and which combination appeals to the consumer.

### **2.2.2 Relationship marketing**

As indicated in Figure 2.3, relationship marketing is the next component in holistic marketing. Relationship marketing is a process in which organisations form long-term, value-added relationships over time with customers and suppliers (Khojastehpour & Johns, 2014:241). Organisations concentrate their marketing efforts on building relationships with them and managing the relationship so that it is long term (Strydom, 2011:9). Additionally, relationship marketing creates a mutually beneficial arrangement for all individuals involved in the relationship. All individuals or groups of individuals involved in building the relationship are active participants, thus making it a multiparty relationship (Grigore, 2011:43). Relationship marketing focuses on customers as well as partners in business.

The aim of relationship marketing is to satisfy current customers' wants and needs, and persuade customers to inform others of the organisation's quality product or service delivery (Berndt & Tait, 2012:6). Customers are also attracted by additional benefits that accompany the product or service offering. Any additional benefit that customers derive from the purchasing experience enhances consumers' purchasing experience (Machado & Diggins, 2012:2).

Relationship marketing in terms of customers as well as business partners, suppliers and manufacturers (Cant & Van Heerden, 2010:15):

- focuses on long-term instead of short-term goals;
- emphasises retaining customers, suppliers and essential stakeholders;
- considers customer service and product quality as a high priority;
- encourages fostering commitment within the organisation to perform relationship marketing;
- strives for a shared exchange and fulfilment of promises;
- entails the commitment of all employees to providing high-quality products.

The organisation serves its primary purpose of offering a product or service with the optimal combination of the marketing mix by means of integrated marketing and strengthens the primary function by establishing and maintaining relationships with customers and partners by means of relationship marketing. The organisation can maintain and enhance its goodwill and financial return by means of performance marketing.

### **2.2.3 Performance marketing**

As indicated in Figure 2.3, performance marketing is the next holistic marketing component. Performance marketing postulates that there should be a financial and non-financial return from organisational marketing activities. It considers broader concerns that affect society in terms of any legal, social and environmental effects (Barcelon, 2013). An organisation should operate in a socially responsible manner and simultaneously comprehend the marketing scorecards and marketing metrics which indicate its financial performance (Bieze, 2010:21). Measurability and sound business principles are essentials in performance marketing which are evident in financial accountability and social responsibility marketing as components of performance marketing.

Financial accountability is the justification of investments made by the organisation. Accountability in marketing ensures that the organisational marketing activities and expenditures are financially and non-financially accountable (Park, *et al.*, 2012:1576). The financial and non-financial returns should be evident from marketing activities. Return on marketing, which is a result of marketing activities, is defined as the “revenue produced by the marketing program that is divided by the cost of the particular program at a specific risk level” (Powell in Steward, 2009:636).

Financial decisions have a great impact on organisational customers, as the benefits received by consumers can be maximised by controlling costs and organisational expenditures efficiently (McDonald, 2010:383). Alternatively, social responsibility marketing efforts not only affect an organisation and those that marketing activities are directed at, but also society as a whole. Social responsibility marketing aims to regulate commercial marketing practices that an

organisation undertakes that are damaging to society (Gordon, 2011:84). Socially responsible behaviour encourages stakeholders to adopt behaviours that would benefit society and organisations in terms of goodwill, which in turn is beneficial to the financial performance of the organisation (Kurtz, 2011:86). Social responsibility marketing accepts the obligation to evaluate the organisation's performance in equal parts of profits, consumer satisfaction and social wellbeing (Hinson & Kodua, 2012:332–333). In addition, legal, ethical, environmental and social contexts of the activities the organisation participates in should be responsible (Nigam, 2011:6).

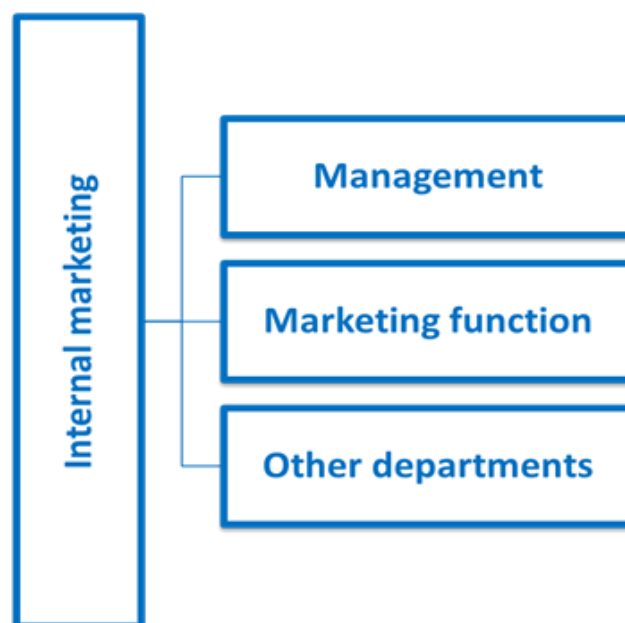
The components of holistic marketing, as indicated in Figure 2.3, are interlocked to provide a comprehensive marketing approach. Integrated marketing ensures that the primary organisational purpose of offering a product is attained by means of an optimal marketing mix compilation (Faarup & Aabroe, 2010:27). Relationship marketing ensures that the primary organisational function is strengthened by establishing and maintaining relationships (Strydom, 2011:9). Performance marketing ensures that goodwill and financial return are retained and even enhanced (Powell in Steward, 2009:636). The final component, internal marketing, is the focus of the study, and is discussed in further detail below.

#### **2.2.4 Internal marketing**

Internal marketing was first conceptualised by Berry in 1981 (in Khan, 2011: 258) and can be described as “viewing employees as internal customers, viewing jobs as internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organisation”. A later redefined conceptualisation of internal marketing described by Ahmed, Rafiq and Saad (2002:10) is “a planned effort using a marketing-like approach, directed at motivating employees, for implementing and integrating organisational strategies towards customer orientation”. From the various conceptualisations of internal marketing, it is evident that as a holistic marketing component, internal marketing has evolved over time (the evolution of the definition of internal marketing is shown in Appendix A). Internal marketing has evolved from merely considering the employees as internal customers to a more comprehensive understanding

of the activities required to motivate employees in providing quality service to external customers.

As a holistic marketing component, internal marketing ensures that employees of the organisation understand and provide high-quality products and services to customers. The purpose of internal marketing is achieved by providing employees with benefits and they, in turn, reward the organisation for these benefits by embodying the organisational objectives in whichever form the organisation has established. Internal marketing activities are directed at management, the marketing function and other departments in order to create alignment with the organisational marketing goals (Glanfield, 2011:210). The main conceptual areas of internal marketing are management, the marketing function and other departments as illustrated in Figure 2.4.



**Figure 2.4:** Internal marketing component of holistic marketing

#### **2.2.4.1 Management**

Internal marketing was initially regarded as a solution to achieving consistently high service quality and more recently as a management tool (Vrontis, Thrassou & Zin, 2010:35). As a management tool, internal marketing strives to encourage the marketing function to adopt the customers' viewpoint of service quality provided and to encourage the organisation as a whole to embrace organisational



marketing efforts. In the South African context, Boshoff and Tait (in Tsai & Wu, 2011:2594) propose that by addressing the factors that influence employees' acceptance and support of organisational goals, objectives and values, the organisation's service delivery could be influenced.

Management is responsible for a marketing strategy which dictates the direction, scope and outcomes of internal marketing. This suggests that the marketing strategy is able to influence employees to be service-minded and customer-oriented (Glanfield, 2011:210). Internal marketing ensures that everyone in an organisation embodies appropriate consumer viewpoints which are especially relevant to senior management (Kotler & Keller, 2009:64). The goal of internal marketing is to satisfy employees who are then more inclined to serve the customer well. By providing benefits to employees, an organisation is securing employees' improved efforts to fulfil the organisational objectives. When employment security is provided by the organisation, an organisation is considered as being committed to their employees. Ensured employment security and organisational commitment to employees leads to increased employee satisfaction (Tsai & Wu, 2011:2594). Employee job satisfaction is generally considered as the degree to which individuals enjoy their jobs (Spagnoli & Caetano, 2012: 256). Internal marketing, in essence, markets the benefits organisations offer to the employees, enabling employees to understand the benefits and garnering employee satisfaction with the organisational benefits. In return, employees reward the organisation by providing customers with improved service quality.

For internal marketing to exist as a managerial tool, key elements should be understood by management. The key elements of internal marketing are as follows (Drake, Gulman & Roberts, 2005:3–5; Khan, 2011:258):

- Employee motivation and satisfaction are achieved through internal marketing which acts as a vehicle for staff acquisition, motivation and retention. These elements lead to improved productivity and external service quality.
- Customer orientation and customer satisfaction are outcomes of successful internal marketing. Internal marketing is considered to be a tool that promotes customer-oriented behaviour among staff members.

- Interfunctional coordination and integration of all functions is required for internal marketing. As internal marketing has a strong influence on each employee within an organisation, it is imperative for it to function optimally.
- A marketing-like approach is adopted by internal marketing to satisfy employees by offering benefits and incentives to retain loyal employees as well as to obtain the best employees.
- Implementation of specific corporate and functional strategies is essential for organisational integration related to internal growth.

Management may decide on benefits to be marketed to employees, but the marketing function facilitates the activities which market organisational benefits to employees.

#### **2.2.4.2 Marketing function**

The marketing function is a division within an organisation responsible for organisational marketing activities. It performs or initiates internal marketing to encourage employees from other departments to adopt and practise organisational marketing in some form (Kurtz, 2011:312). Internal marketing utilises a form of the marketing mix which is adjusted to internal marketing activities (Lancaster & Massingham, 2011:510). The internal marketing mix includes the traditional marketing mix variables of product, price, promotion and place (Pantouvakis, 2012:179). Physical evidence, process and participants are added due to the intangible nature of the service being marketed to the target market. In the case of internal marketing, employees are seen as the internal customer and the job is seen as an intangible internal product that satisfies the wants and needs of these internal customers (Berry in Khan, 2011:258). The application of the marketing mix to internal marketing as conceptualised as a hybrid approach, by Ahmed and Rafiq (2002:28–35), is discussed below:

- Product: At the core of internal marketing, the product offering is employment. The product is accompanied by a number of components that make up the full experience at the workplace. This includes performance measures, new procedures for handling customers, training courses and organisational values and attitudes.

- Price: This is the total cost of buying into the employment experience. This could include the psychological cost of adapting to new working methods, opportunity costs and transfer pricing and expenses.
- Promotion or internal communication: This is the use of communication media to market organisational benefits, as well as motivate and influence employee attitudes. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.
- Place or distribution: This refers to the meetings, conferences and other interactions that employees would have with management regarding announcements, new training, etc.
- Physical or tangible evidence: This refers to the office environment in which employment activities and interactions take place.
- Processes: In internal marketing, processes include employee training, quality reporting and new policy implementation.
- Participants or people: This refers to those on the delivering and receiving end of the product delivery. In the case of internal marketing, this would be the supervisors that communicate with the employees.

In addition to the return on internal marketing benefits, i.e. employees providing improved product and service quality to customers, employees are able to contribute to an organisation's competitive advantage through high service levels. Employees play a major role in customer satisfaction levels and thus even more so to the increase in customer satisfaction if their own satisfaction levels are high (Masterson & Pickton, 2010:442; Jooste *et al.*, 2012:454). Therefore the suggestion that internal marketing activities are just as important, if not more so, than the marketing activities directed at the external customers of the organisation is justified.

The marketing function initiates internal marketing activities which are to be implemented in other departments to market organisational benefits to employees.

#### **2.2.4.3 Other departments**

Internal marketing refers to organisational efforts to grasp what employees' needs are and what should be done to meet those needs in order to increase

job satisfaction and thus improve customer service (Akroush, 2012:52). Thus when applying internal marketing to other departments, if employees are satisfied and motivated, service encounters with customers will be satisfactory and thus there will be a positive influence on customer satisfaction (Masterson & Pickton, 2010:442; Jooste *et al.*, 2012:454). In order to achieve increased levels of productivity and customer satisfaction, which are other organisational goals, internal marketing communicates interdependence of all employees (Kurtz, 2011:312).

Additionally, the view by Grönroos (in Awwad & Agti, 2011:310) is that each employee should borrow from relationship marketing by striving to build long-term customer relationships, thereby thinking like a marketer and applying external marketing strategies internally. This allows for the employees to improve their service awareness and display customer-oriented behaviour. If the entire workforce adopts service-mindedness and customer-oriented behaviour, then there is a need for the staff to be motivated to utilise a marketing-like approach internally (Glanfield, 2011:209).

By understanding internal marketing as the use of a marketing-like approach internally, organisations can understand the importance of utilising internal marketing.

#### **2.2.4.4 *The importance of internal marketing***

The value of internal marketing lies in the realisation that if an organisation wishes to have a service- and customer-oriented culture amongst the employees, it should adopt internal marketing (Khan, 2011:258). It is suggested (Zepf in Awwad & Agti, 2011:313) that employees are an important element in the marketing strategy of an organisation, hence the reasoning that internal marketing must precede external marketing is relevant. The reasoning is justified as it does not make sense to have an external marketing campaign that promises excellent service before the company's staff are ready to provide it. Service quality has become an imperative competitive advantage source (Fang, Chang, Ou & Chou, 2014:171–172).

The internal marketing concept assists an organisation with service excellence by means of (Ibrahim, 2011:39; Vasconcelos, 2008:1251):

- highlighting employee value;
- streamlining general internal decision making by empowering the workforce;
- improving internal processes.

In order to facilitate interaction between the organisation and employees, and convey organisational goals and messages related to internal marketing activities and the means used to satisfy employees' needs, internal communication can be used. This will be discussed in Chapter 3.

### **2.3 SUMMARY**

The literature review on the holistic marketing framework and the elements which are included were discussed. As internal marketing was the focus of this study, greater emphasis was placed on internal marketing, how it is integrated into the organisation, as well as its uses. The communication process that an organisation would follow in order to communicate the internal marketing activities, especially in terms of publishing an e-newsletter, will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### E-NEWSLETTERS AS A COMPONENT OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Internal marketing is based on the logic that if employees are satisfied and motivated, service encounters with customers will be satisfactory, and hence a positive influence on customer satisfaction (Awwad & Agti, 2011:310–311). Internal marketing is defined as “a planned effort using a marketing-like approach, directed at motivating employees, for implementing and integrating organisational strategies towards customer orientation” (Ahmed & Rafiq in Awwad & Agti, 2011:310–311). Internal marketing attempts to align employees with the organisational vision, to grasp what employees’ needs are and what should be done to meet those needs, in order to increase job satisfaction and thus improve customer service (Akroush, Abu-ElSamen, Samawi & Odetallah, 2013: 307).

To aid internal marketing and thereby enable an organisation to reap its benefits, communication is necessary. Effective communication is a two-way information-sharing process which involves an individual or group of individuals sending a message that is easily comprehended by the receiving individual(s) (Smith, 2013:173). As internal communication by definition is communication directed at employees, employers are able to communicate the importance of adopting the customers’ viewpoint of service quality. Effective internal communication is able to facilitate internal marketing’s purpose to deliver messages on implementing and integrating organisational strategies towards customer orientation. Internal communication can be utilised to encourage employees to embrace organisational marketing efforts (Tortosa, Moliner & Sánchez, 2009:1438; Ahmed & Rafiq, 2002:10) and therefore supports internal marketing. Communication is especially crucial when directing it at internal stakeholders, or employees, as the success of organisational sustainable development and financial performance depends on effective communication with employees (Meng & Berger, 2012:332).

In order to influence employee performance, internal marketing communication can be conveyed through a number of communication media. Internal communication is discussed in the following section.

## **3.2 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

Internal communication includes all formal and informal communication that occurs at horizontal level (i.e. amongst managers) and vertical level (i.e. between managers and employees), which is the flow of communication between all employees, where interactions and relationships between stakeholders within an organisation are strategically managed (Mazzei, 2010:221; Tynan, Woltencroft, Edmondson, Swanson, Martin, Grace & Creed, 2013:254). Additionally, internal communication can assist employees' understanding of organisational goals and objectives (Apud & Apud-Martinez, 2013). Moreover, it provides a platform for organisational culture. Organisational culture is the atmosphere dependent on values, mission and operational processes within an organisation (Hume, 2010:4). A unified organisation supportive of the organisational culture promotes effective utilisation of resources to achieve organisational goals.

Internal communication strives to foster a unified front with employee commitment contributions, promotion of positive identification and development of environmental change awareness and employees' understanding of it (Ruck & Welch, 2012:294). In addition, it can enhance productivity and teamwork, build employee trust and be used to share organisational goals and objectives to allow for employee participation in striving to be customer oriented (Bharadwaj, 2014: 184).

For internal communication to take place, a chief concern is understanding what communication entails and how it can be accomplished successfully, as internal communication follows the basic principle of the communication model (see Figure 3.1). In the section below, the communication model is discussed.

### **3.2.1 Communication model**

Communication is a cyclical process enabling individuals to share ideas, thoughts and feelings with one another in commonly understandable ways using a com-

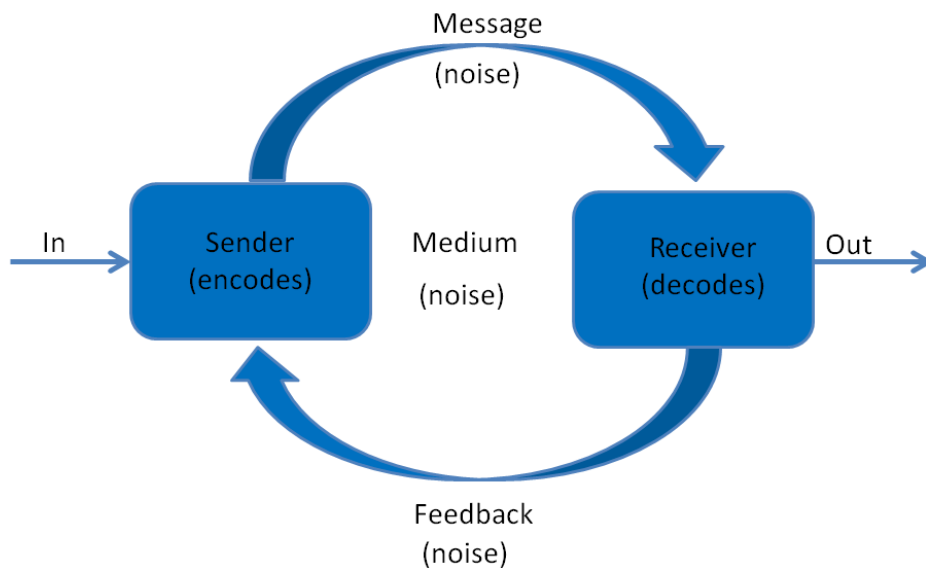
munication medium (Fourie, 2014:226). A number of communication approaches where communication occurs are as follows (Smith, 2013:173):

- A flow of communication (information) focuses on the contents of the message and the media of communication utilised to convey the message to the receiver.
- An attempt of influence or persuasion is an attempt to influence people using ethical means for the audience to agree and support the organisation.
- A quest for understanding involves striving for mutual understanding by those in discourse.

Depending on the type of communication approach pursued by an organisation, the basic communication model (Figure 3.1) still forms the foundation of each approach. As illustrated in Figure 3.1, the sender encodes a suitable message which includes all relevant detail, and transmits the message with the aid of a communication medium. The receiver receives the message, interprets it and provides feedback to the sender. Once feedback is received by the sender, the sender determines whether the message was understood as it was intended (O'Rourke, 2013:27). Misunderstanding a message is possible, which can be corrected by re-initiating the communication process in order to clarify the message, hence the cyclical nature of communication.

The flow of communication between the person sending the message (sender) and the person/s receiving the message (receiver/s) is illustrated in the basic communication model, which is displayed in Figure 3.1.





**Figure 3.1:** Basic communication model

Source: Adapted from Baker (2014:401); Daniels, Hunter, McGhie, Middleton Horn, Van Jaarsveldt & Van Vuuren (2014:38)

The elements of the communication process are further discussed below:

- **Sender:** The sender initiates the process and needs a catalyst to drive communication, which is the purpose of the communication. A catalyst also comes in the form of motivation to communicate, such as a reason to fill a gap in understanding (Tynan *et al.*, 2013:10). The sender must be mindful of the purpose of communication and of the receiver's ability to understand the message, including language, interest and attention to the message (Patidar, 2012).
- **Message:** The intended message is information the sender wants to convey, including impressions and meanings that a sender would like for a receiver to understand (Masterson & Pickton, 2010:276). Messages are created through encoding which includes all the aspects necessary to convey the message, such as the full spectrum of the message (O'Rourke, 2013: 27). Composition of the message in terms of word selection, language, tone and professionalism should be taken into consideration (Patidar, 2012).
- **Media of communication:** A message is transmitted through a medium. An appropriate medium should be chosen that suits the type of message sent, in order to be effective and interpreted correctly. Selection of an appropriate

medium of communication increases the chances that the receiver will receive the same message; otherwise distortion in the message may occur (Patidar, 2012).

- Receiver: The receiver is the target of communication that has to decode the message. The receiver may be a single person or a group of persons. The receiver decodes the meaning of the message and provides feedback to the sender (Tynan *et al.*, 2013:10).
- Feedback: The receiver provides feedback to the sender. Receiving feedback indicates whether the initial message has been understood correctly (Baker, 2014:401). Without feedback, the communication process is considered as incomplete.
- Barriers to communication: Barriers prevent messages from being communicated clearly to the receiver. Although a sender may have conveyed the message through an optimal medium, there are still factors that could affect the meaning of the message which form a barrier in communication (Masterson & Pickton, 2010:276). There are internal and external barriers to communication.

Internal barriers to communication include those internal perceptual barriers of the receiver or sender which include fatigue, poor listening skills, attitude towards the sender or the information, lack of interest, fear, mistrust, past experiences, negative attitude, problems at home, lack of common experiences, and emotions (Patidar, 2012). External barriers to communication are those barriers that individuals cannot control, such as noise, distractions, e-mail not working, bad phone connections, time of day, the sender used too many technical words for the audience, environment and information overload when the receiver is overwhelmed by numerous simultaneous messages (Tynan *et al.*, 2013:11). Thus when sending a message, internal and external barriers to communication should be considered, in addition to the fact that the receiver should have the same language ability and comprehension as the sender. If not, it may lead to distorted understanding of the meaning of the message by the receiver (Patidar, 2012).

An organisation should further consider each of the elements in the communication model. The medium through which the message is communicated has to be suited to the message.

### **3.2.2 Communication media**

Communication media have evolved from offline to online communication, although an organisation may use these media concurrently. Postal mail was prominent in centuries gone by, followed by many different forms of communication such as telegraphs, telephones and e-mail (Tynan *et al.*, 2013:9). This evolution of communication media has also led to an increased amount of information communicated. A shift from a scarcity to a surplus of information has occurred, because of the ease of conveying information through IT (Tynan *et al.*, 2013:9). The evolution of communication media has been possible through the advancement of technology that has made electronic communication a reality.

With the advancement in technology, employers can communicate by means of newer and faster communication media that have increased the frequency and speed of communication (Paxson, 2010:3). A whole range of media are now available to organisations to interact with employees (Sedej & Justinek, 2013: 87; Ahmed *et al.*, 2003:1180).

With so many communication media to choose from, organisations need to consider the suitability of the communication medium to the message and goal of achieving effective communication. Internal communication media include interpersonal (person-to-person) communication, staff meetings, social events, internal newsletters, staff handbook, notice boards, e-mails, intranet, video conferencing and many more that can be used to convey information to internal stakeholders (Argenti, 2006:358; Hume, 2010:12–15).

The appropriateness and effectiveness of the communication medium need to be considered. As the communication medium affects message receipt accuracy, organisations need to consider the communication medium information richness – information-rich media convey more non-verbal communication, such

as social convention cues like tone, urgency of a matter, professionalism or formalities (Bauer & Erdogan, 2013).

The different possible internal communication media that the organisation can use are illustrated in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1:** Internal communication media

Internal communication medium	Media	Information richness	Advantages	Disadvantages
In-person communication	All-staff meetings, individual meetings and recognition meetings, formal speeches, panel discussions, question-and-answer sessions, oral testimonials, employee counselling, committee meetings, demonstration and training programmes, interviews, personal instructions, office grapevine	High	Personal, direct and conducive to two-way communication	Audience must be in one location, communication is time-consuming and not anonymous
Printed communication	Internal newsletters, staff handbook, resource library and notice boards, house journals, information brochures, handbooks and manuals, bulletins, bulletin boards, annual reports, commemorative stamps, exhibits and displays, mobile displays, suggestion boxes, instructions, orders, pay inserts, flyers, written reports, financial statements, training kits	Medium/low	Easy to communicate a large amount of information, audience can access it in their own time, meets requirements in legal matters	Can be costly, can be avoided, conducive to one-way communication and can have legal implications
IT-based communication	E-mail, listservs, telephone/video conferencing, discussion forums, blogging, social networking sites and intranets or websites, video blogs, forums, wikis, mobile platforms, digital signage, Internet protocol, television and RSS	Medium	Easily disseminated, cheaper, not location specific, reach a large audience and can overcome large distances easily	Information overload and not everybody has access to technology-based communication, can be uncontrolled media

Source: Adapted from Ahmed and Rafiq (2002:31); Van Riel and Fombrun (2007:190); Welch and Jackson (2007:188); Pergamon Flexible Learning (2009:60); Rensburg and Cant (2009:145–146); Hume (2010:12–15); Mazzei (2010:229); Bovée and Thill (2012:212–240)

A distinction can be made between offline and online communication.

### **3.2.2.1 Offline communication**

Offline communication takes place without the means of the Internet. Print media, verbal communication and non-verbal communication are included in offline communication. Tasks including extensive execution explanations require relatively high information richness as both verbal and non-verbal communication are present (Miller, 2011:53), whereas tasks easily explained require low information richness.

**Verbal communication** can take place over the phone or in person. The medium of the communication is oral. In-person communication is direct, personal and allows for two-way communication. This is beneficial when used in cases such as interviewing, meetings or giving orders (Daniels *et al.*, 2014:43), where detailed explanations are necessary, therefore requiring high information richness (Miller, 2011:53). Additional to face-to-face communication, audio and visuals can form part of meetings, where videos or audio messages can be relayed to employees to enrich messages. High information richness is characterised by a number of visible communication cues such as use of body language and other social conventions (Hume, 2010:12). However, the sender and receiver/s of the message need to be in one location. Verbal communication is timeous and prevents anonymity, except for video calling.

**Written communication** may appear on paper or on a screen presentation, which can be read by many individuals. Examples of written communication include memos, training manuals, proposals, letters and operating policies (Bauer & Erdogan, 2013). Written communication can communicate a large amount of information which can be accessed in the individual's own time. Beneficial elements of written communication include attracting maximum attention by strategically placing posters or meeting legal requirements in the form of contracts, invoices and accounts (Hume, 2010:13). Disadvantages include the high cost of printing and distributing printed communication, the audience can lose interest in reading the material, written documentation can have legal implications and there may be issues of privacy. In the subsequent section, online communication will be discussed.

### **3.2.2.2 Online communication**

Online communication utilises IT to convey a message and allows for almost real-time delivery of e-mails, voicemail and tailored intranets, amongst other on-line communication, as indicated in Table 3.1. It generates interactive communication with employees (Rensburg & Cant, 2009:148). Online communication can be speedily disseminated, is affordable and is able to reach large audiences across the world, although audiences must be technologically capable of receiving the message. Applications emerging from new technology offer a wide range of opportunities for the achievement of two goals of internal communication: communication to inform and communication to create a community (Friedl & Verčič, 2011:84).

Although there are many communication media as illustrated in Table 3.1, the most prolific in an organisational setting are websites, e-mails, intranets, social media sites and e-newsletters.

- Websites: Although websites are targeted at external audiences of the organisation, they can also be utilised for internal audiences (employees) to serve as a reminder of the organisation's mission, vision and other additional organisational information (Smith, 2013:253).
- E-mail: This is simply mail sent electronically and instantaneously and is not limited by distance (Smith, 2013:253).
- Intranet: This is different from a website in that it targets employees. Intranets are password protected and only accessible by members or organisational employees. Intranet sites enable access to shared files, resources and other information with employees who may be located in different branches across a country or countries (Hume, 2010:15).
- Social media: This includes blogs, podcasts, message boards, wikis and Twitter, etc., for social networking (Scott, 2011:38; Witzig, Spencer & Galvin, 2012:113). Social networking is defined as individuals converging on social media sites to discuss matters of interest (Lacho & Marinello, 2010:128). Information and experiences such as interactions with others can be shared on the social media sites where an individual's page is customised with

pictures and displays elements of the individual's identity. Similarly, organisations can create a page with a social media website, customising it with information, pictures of community engagement activities, videos and advertising directed either at customers or employees (Lacho & Marinello, 2010:128; Scott, 2011:38). This enables audiences to create a different perception of the organisation other than the services or products offered. Additionally, social media helps "to find other people with similar interests to help solve a problem quicker, easier and maybe cheaper rather than 'knowledge management' and improving communications by people showing how much they value it by sharing, liking, rating, and commenting on it rather introducing 'Facebook' or 'social media'" (Morrell, 2013).

- **Electronic newsletters:** Online newsletters or e-newsletters are an electronic form of the paper-based newsletter, sent by e-mail (Molenaar, 2012:111). E-newsletters are shorter versions of printed newsletters, comprising many headlines and hyperlinks to the website where the reader can read more on the story (Klein, 2011:219). In terms of internal communication, newsletters are corporate publications and serve as a reliable method of communication with employees, providing employees with frequent updates on organisational information, policies, campaigns and special events (Reinsch & Turner, 2006:349; Cicone & Jacob, 2009:322; Rensburg & Cant, 2009:179, Tynan *et al.*, 2013:270).

As e-newsletters were the focus of this study, further detail will be provided in the next section.

### **3.3 ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS**

E-newsletters supply new information or update existing information (Rensburg & Cant, 2009:179), thereby ensuring that all important information is shared in a single unified communication medium in an organisational setting (Dixon, 2012:11). Several functions of the e-newsletter include disseminating organisational information, motivating employee performance, fostering a sense of employee unity, improving employee morale and complementing organisational records (White *et al.*, 2010:66). The functions of e-newsletters are supported by



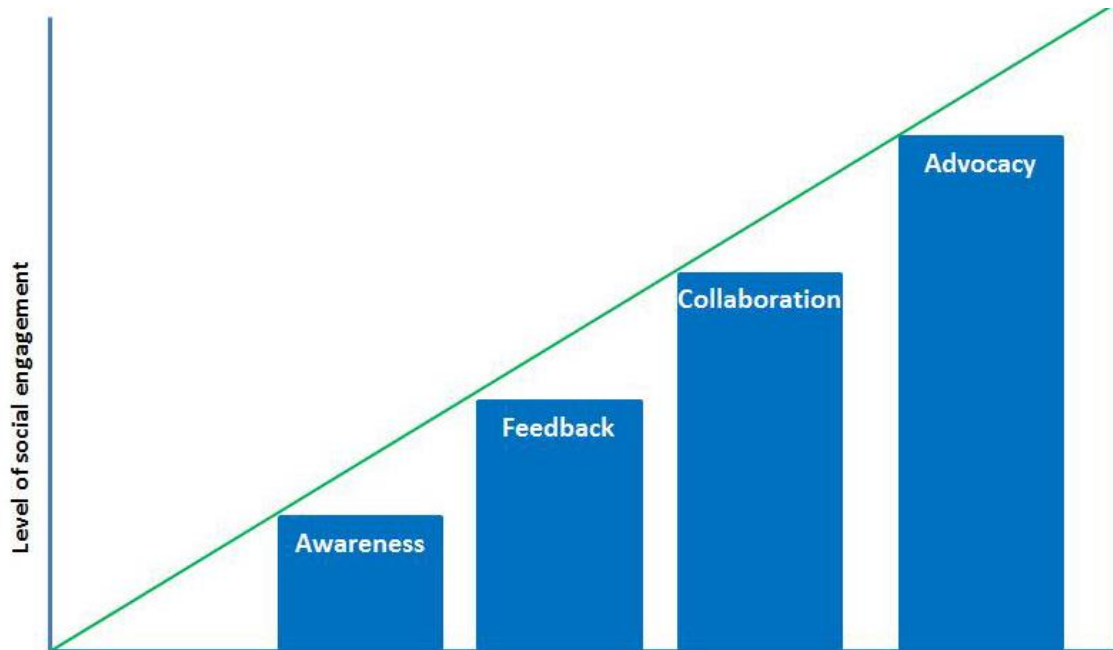
the social engagement capabilities of an e-newsletter. These capabilities assist an organisation by creating awareness, encouraging feedback, enabling collaboration and encouraging staff to be advocates for the organisation. The different levels of social engagement of e-newsletters are discussed in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2:** Social engagement capabilities of e-newsletters

<b>Social engagement type</b>	<b>Capabilities</b>
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send updates on information</li> <li>• Broadcast reminders for events or meetings</li> <li>• Archive online information</li> <li>• Customise content for the specific target audience</li> </ul>
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow target audience to ask questions</li> <li>• Track number of e-newsletters that were opened by target audience</li> <li>• Track number of target audience members that click through specific sections</li> <li>• Link the e-newsletter to a survey</li> </ul>
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve audience in idea generation, including tracking the idea and suggestions made by the target audience</li> <li>• Based on idea generation and progress, arrange meetings for target audience to conceptualise the idea</li> </ul>
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate cases of advocacy which encourage the target audience to perform the role of advocate for the organisation</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Dixon (2012:13–15)

The gradient of social engagement of e-newsletters and the corresponding capabilities that accompany the different social engagement levels (as shown in Table 3.2) are illustrated in Figure 3.2.



**Figure 3.2:** Social engagement capability gradient of e-newsletters  
 Source: Adapted from Dixon (2012:13–15)

E-newsletters have a number of functions and accompanying capabilities, but their advantages and disadvantages also need to be considered.

### 3.3.1 Advantages and disadvantages of e-newsletters

E-newsletters fulfil the purpose of the internal communication goals. They can be sent to employees instantaneously with a number of attributes, such as documents, pictures, worksheets, attachments, links to other sites or other information (Schneider, 2009:379–380; Kinzey, 2013:156). Moreover, e-newsletters are less formal than glossy, printed publications and are more easily directed to special groups in a timely fashion. To strengthen this notion, a study conducted by Waters and Lemanski (2011:161) on direct communication found that 50% of Fortune 500 companies make use of e-newsletters. Along with the speed at which the e-newsletter can be sent, e-newsletters have additional advantages (Smith, 2013:254):

- Metrics can be used to indicate certain aspects of the e-newsletter usage.
- E-newsletters can be archived so that readers may access prior versions.
- The nature of e-newsletters means that the latest information can be sent to readers who are thus kept up to date on developments.

Despite the many advantages of e-newsletters, there are also a number of disadvantages. With the advancement of technology comes the desire of employees to constantly communicate with fellow employees using electronic communication media. Constant communication means that e-newsletters arrive in employees' mailboxes at unexpected times (Molenaar, 2012:111). Technology makes it easier for employees to communicate limitlessly and thus more messages are being sent than those being processed and therefore messages are not being received as intended (Hume, 2010:14; Masterson & Pickton, 2010:27; Bovée & Thrill, 2012:55).

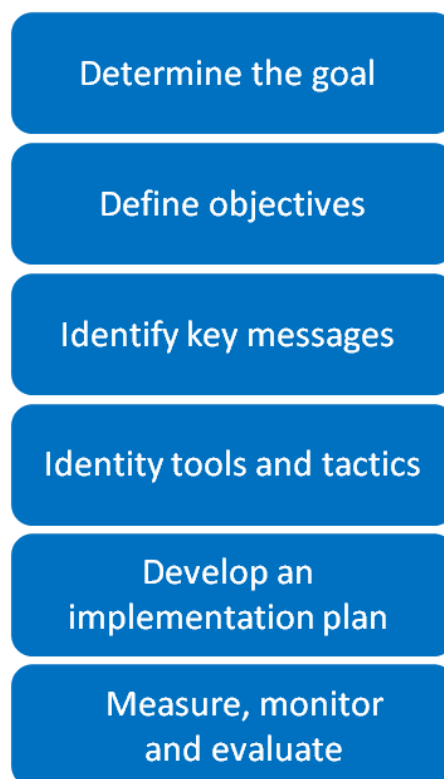
Communicating too little information creates a vacuum where employees feel a sense of distrust and speculation, whereas too much information can result in information overload or a paradox of plenty, causing an overabundance of information to be ignored (White *et al.*, 2010:70). An overload of information creates a complex situation for employees as it is now difficult to distinguish between useful and useless information, which means that productivity is lowered and employee stress levels increase (Bovée & Thrill, 2012:59). Despite the increased stress levels or in spite thereof, employees can also become addicted to technology. The desire to constantly be connected and stimulated by the technological communication media is known as IT addiction (Bovée & Thrill, 2012:60).

Taking together all the aspects that can cause employees to dislike or disapprove of an internal communication medium, it could lead to unwillingness to use e-newsletters. Thus, when employees disapprove of, dislike or find an electronic medium to be unacceptable, they will ignore that medium. Therefore, organisations need to evaluate the acceptability of their internal communication formats to employees (Welch, 2012:252). In doing so, they will also have to consider the way in which the e-newsletter is designed and compiled for its intended purpose. The next section deals with how e-newsletters are compiled to be effective.

### **3.3.2 Compilation of e-newsletters**

An e-newsletter is an effective medium of internal communication as the content is "carefully selected, written and presented to convey a common experience

and a feeling of belonging, and to promote identification and unity with a group”. As e-newsletters are aimed at focusing on work-related accomplishments, recognising employees and organisational accomplishments (Newsom & Haynes, 2011:301; Miller, 2012:190), they have to be planned in order to be geared to these topics. Hence, a step-by-step plan process is required to create the desired effect by means of the e-newsletter. The communication plan is that process which can assist the organisation in compiling the desired e-newsletter, which is illustrated in Figure 3.3.



**Figure 3.3:** Communication plan  
Source: Adapted from Hume (2010:7–10)

The starting point for a communication plan is to review the mission statement to ensure that the intended message to be created by the plan is aligned with the fundamental purpose philosophy of the organisation. The mission statement “establishes the scope, domain and fundamental purpose of the organization and provides a guiding philosophy” (Newsom & Haynes, 2011:82). In addition, the mission statement makes it easier for the organisation to discern goals, objectives and activities on which to base strategies.

- **Step 1: Determine the goal**

The communication goal is the overall change that an organisation wishes to accomplish with the emphasis on the long-term focus. Communication goals indicate which direction an organisation wants to move in (Fourie, 2014:170) and the resulting accumulated benefits which the target audience will enjoy when the development work is a success. Communication goals are related to internal analysis results on an organisation's vision and mission statements. Thus these goals also foster the organisation's efforts to move in a certain direction (Theaker & Yaxley, 2013:93).

- **Step 2: Define objectives**

Objectives are further refinement of the goals, where the objectives are even more specific in nature and have a short-term focus. Each communication goal is linked to an objective which represents smaller, more easily achievable parts of a goal. The objectives provide further direction, a focus and a tactical benchmark for consistency, set a time limit to accomplish goals, communicate the value and scope of the strategy and provide a means of evaluating the success of the strategy (Fourie, 2014:170). Objectives must be outcome oriented in order to track their effectiveness at the evaluation stage (Theaker & Yaxley, 2013:94).

- **Step 3: Identify key messages**

The communication content is referred to as the message which embodies the meaning qualifying the content by the target audience (Rensburg & Cant, 2009:197). Message decisions are made based on the mission statement, goals and objectives. These are the messages derived from what the organisation stands for and therefore depend on the values and principles the organisation wishes to convey (Newsom & Haynes, 2011:88). For instance, if an organisation emphasises community wellness, excellence in its field and employee focus, then communication will be conveyed around the topics of how the organisation is contributing towards wellness, excellence in its field and employee focus. Internal e-newsletters should provide valid

content that is relevant to the organisation and its employees (Dixon, 2012: 16).

- **Step 4: Identify media and tactics**

The communication medium is the vehicle which communicates the message, while a tactic is the manner in which a medium will be utilised (Hume, 2010:8). Step 4 undertakes identifying and selecting the most appropriate media to deliver the message (Newsom & Haynes, 2011:90). Identifying the media includes making a list of all the relevant communication media in the organisation such as listed in Table 3.1. The tactics are actions performed at the operational level of a strategic framework, such as the actual events, the corresponding media events and the communication methods utilised to implement the strategy (Theaker & Yaxley, 2013:105). In the case of communication, the tactic is concerned with organisational media which are produced by the organisation and which dictate message content, timing, packaging, distribution and audience access (Hume, 2010:8, Smith, 2013:229). In the case of e-newsletters, the medium is the e-newsletter and the tactic is publishing updated organisational information, current news and events and new developments on a weekly basis.

- **Step 5: Develop an implementation plan**

The implementation step includes decision making regarding related aspects such as costs involved, staff time taken to implement the organisational media, the resources required, level of expertise required and the frequency of the communication tactic (Smith, 2013:229, 312).

Members of the communication functions should be assigned to the different key messages and should identify possible stories for inclusion. Additional stories could include write-ups on management, the facility, group's purpose or history, while other stories could include write-ups on upcoming events, conferences, or workshops (Fourie, 2014:38–45). Writers should be assigned to major events such as developments in research, developments in organisational policies, important meetings and workshops.

Finalising the plan is when the plan is set in motion. The responsibilities assigned during the implementation step are now performed in the finalisation step. Once the write-ups are completed, they are sent along with visuals to the editor of the e-newsletter. The stories are edited and placed according to importance. The e-newsletter is published for the target audience's perusal.

Once the e-newsletter has been published, those that implemented the plan need to evaluate its effectiveness, which would include the extent to which the outcomes have been fulfilled (Rensburg & Cant, 2009:198).

- **Step 6: Measure, monitor and evaluate e-newsletter readership**

To discover the effectiveness of the outcomes of the e-newsletters, the organisation can measure whether the objectives have been met. Outcomes based on what the objectives have indicated are measured by determining relevant outcomes such as (Theaker & Yaxley, 2013:137):

- Knowledge: Evaluation of employees' awareness, knowledge and understanding of the content within the e-newsletter
- Predisposition: Evaluation of the attitudes and opinions of the employees with regard to the e-newsletter in general and the content
- Behavioural: Evaluation of how employees have reacted towards the e-newsletter and its content
- Relationship: Evaluation of the mutual understanding and resulting co-orientation of employees as a result of the e-newsletter
- Reputation: Evaluation of the impression that employees have cultivated as a result of the information visible in the e-newsletter

For a more superficial evaluation of the measurement of e-newsletter readership, metrics can be applied which indicate the usage of the e-newsletter (Leavy, 2011:271). E-newsletter metrics allow an organisation to track the number of times an e-newsletter was opened, how many times a link embedded within the e-newsletter has been opened or how many e-newsletters were not received (Lantz, 2009:161). Leavy (2011:273) identifies the metrics as:

- Opens: Indicates how many recipients opened the e-newsletter
- Clicks: Indicates how many recipients clicked through the e-newsletter
- Bounces: Indicates which employee e-mail addresses are no longer in operation
- Non-responders: Indicates how many recipients did not open the e-newsletter

If the results of the e-newsletter evaluation are disappointing, an organisation can attempt to rectify issues which may deter employees' acceptance of e-newsletters, by optimising the e-newsletter's formatting. Existing options to optimising the e-newsletter are discussed in the next section.

### **3.3.3 Optimising the e-newsletter**

To minimise some of the effects of e-newsletters' disadvantages and consequent non-usage of them, organisations can apply rules as suggested by Rensburg and Cant (2009:180), Dixon (2012:16–17) and Molenaar (2012:111–112) to optimise the use of e-newsletters:

- Use a compelling subject line.
- Do not use any unnecessary pictures, video or animation.
- Provide only relevant information that is of interest to the receiver.
- Include short messages (minimum of five lines) and a link that can be clicked on for further information.
- Provide an interaction possibility (response), but also a possibility to prevent the receipt of further messages.
- Send no more than five messages at a time.
- Consider when the customer (employee) would be reading this newsletter and send the newsletter according to this.
- Relate the e-newsletter to the organisation's website in terms of the design.

Additionally, Meath (2006:351) advises that organisations should publish regular e-newsletters that can be sent to all and that are not lengthy to inform employees on a number of important issues. By applying the above rules, the



organisation is more likely to succeed in getting employees to read the e-newsletter.

### **3.4 SUMMARY**

Internal communication with the accompanying aspects of the communication model and communication media were discussed in Chapter 3. As internal marketing was the focus of the study, greater emphasis was placed on internal communication geared towards delivering internal marketing messages by means of e-newsletters. The above discussion related to non-academic organisations rather than to academic institutions; however, as this study was conducted in an academic environment, there are similarities that can be sought to make the link between the different environments (White *et al.*, 2010:66–67). The literature review provided a notable backdrop to a study on the combination of information overload that employees experience in an academic environment and acceptance of the e-newsletters. The research methodology utilised to achieve the aim of the study is discussed in Chapter 4.

# CHAPTER 4

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

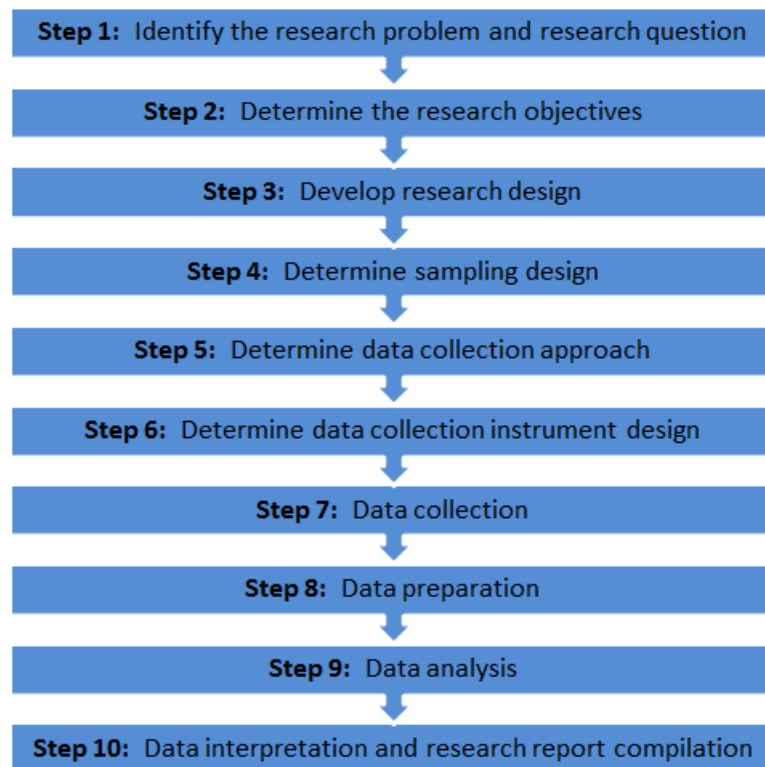
### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the current study was to determine employees' acceptance of e-newsletters by applying the adapted TAM. Acceptance is the willingness of employees to utilise the e-newsletters for their intended purpose (Camarero *et al.*, 2012:5). The purpose of e-newsletters is to provide organisational information and act as an effective marketing medium, especially in an interactive capacity (Kowlaski, 2011:136). Organisations can use e-newsletters to inform employees about current corporate news, training courses, community outreach projects and corporate financial information, amongst other things. By satisfying the need for information, which is the purpose of e-newsletters, employees are indicating acceptance of the e-newsletters (Camarero *et al.*, 2012:5).

The research methodology chapter serves as a guide for the research process. The chapter commences with a discussion on the process of research. The steps involved in the research process will be discussed, placing emphasis on the research methods, designs, sampling techniques and TAM. The chapter concludes with the analysis method used in relation to the study.

### 4.2 RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process consists of a series of 10 steps which are illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.



**Figure 4.1:** Research process

Source: Adapted from Wiid and Diggins (2013:30); Zikmund *et al.* (2010:61); Strasheim (2012)

The steps in the research process are discussed in the sections below.

#### **4.2.1 Step 1: Identify the research problem and research question**

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the first step in the research process is to identify the research problem (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:42). The research problem definition is a statement of the problem that has been identified and the components that make up the research problem (Malhotra, 2012:67). The research problem needs to be well thought out so as to ask the correct research questions. A well-defined research problem makes it easier to embark upon determining the possible cause of and solutions to the problem so as to utilise the appropriate level of analysis (Aaker, Kumar, Day & Leone, 2011:49).

The research problem was formulated after having reviewed numerous articles (Bové & Thrill, 2012:55; Molenaar, 2012:111; Vidgen *et al.*, 2011:85; Masterson & Pickton, 2010:27; Hewitt, 2006:78; Reinsch & Turner, 2006:349) that indicated the problems in relation to employees' acceptance of e-newsletters. Many of these problems relate to information overload, e-

newsletters interrupting concentration on work matters, unsolicited e-mails, a tendency to filter e-mails, information being sent faster than it can be processed and technological addiction.

As indicated in Chapter 1, identification of the research problem led to the formulation of the research question: Do employees accept e-newsletters for the intended purpose of disseminating organisational information?

#### **4.2.2 Step 2: Determine the research objectives**

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the second step in the research process is to determine the research objectives. Research objectives are the goals to be achieved in conducting the research. Objectives are made up of primary and secondary objectives. A primary objective is an overall statement of the thrust of the study, which is also the statement that indicates the main concept that the research wishes to establish. Secondary objectives are aspects of the topic that the research wishes to establish within the scope of the study (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:48). Research objectives, derived from the research problem, are often described as deliverables which lead to the formation of hypotheses. These are unproven statements about a particular factor or phenomenon that can be tested empirically (Malhotra, 2012:83; McDaniel & Gates, 2010:48). The research objectives and hypotheses for the current study are highlighted next.

##### **4.2.2.1 Primary and secondary objectives**

The primary objective of the study was to determine employees' acceptance of e-newsletters for their intended purpose, namely to provide organisational information, in an academic environment, in an academic environment by applying TAM.

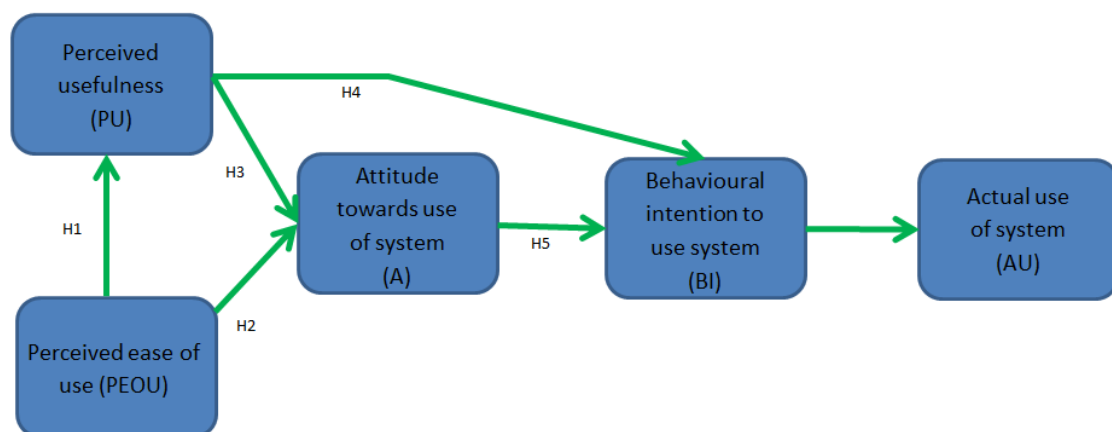
The secondary objectives that were based on the primary objective were as follows:

1. To determine whether employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on the perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter
2. To determine whether employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on attitude towards using the e-newsletter

3. To determine whether employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on attitude towards using the e-newsletter
4. To determine whether employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter
5. To determine whether employees' attitude towards using the e-newsletter has a significant influence on behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter

#### 4.2.2.2 Hypotheses

Based on the literature study and the objectives of this study, five hypotheses were formulated in connection with employees' acceptance of e-newsletters in an academic environment. The hypotheses relate to TAM as discussed in Chapter 1. The hypotheses are captured and illustrated in TAM as presented in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2:** TAM with hypotheses indicated  
 Source: Adapted from Davis (in Rauniar *et al.*, 2014:10)

Based on the discussion above regarding the research problem, research question and research objectives, the derived hypotheses are discussed in the following section.

#### (a) Hypothesis pertaining to PERCEIVED EASE OF USE

H<sub>1</sub>: Employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on the perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter.

**(b) Hypothesis pertaining to PERCEIVED USEFULNESS**

H<sub>2</sub>: Employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their attitude towards using the e-newsletter.

**(c) Hypothesis pertaining to ATTITUDE**

H<sub>3</sub>: Employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their attitude towards using the e-newsletter.

**(d) Hypotheses pertaining to BEHAVIOURAL INTENTION**

H<sub>4</sub>: Employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter.

H<sub>5</sub>: Employees' attitude towards the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter.

**4.2.3 Step 3: Develop research design**

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the third step in the research process is the development of the research design. The research design is based on the research question that represents a framework for the specification of the study's variables (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:54) to test the objectives and hypotheses (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:49). The core attributes of research design have been described as an activity- and time-based plan, a guide for sources and types of information and a methodical delineation of the research process activities. There are many decisions to be made with regard to the research design. The components (reasoning, scope, research method, temporal classification and research environment) that make up the research design will be discussed below.

**4.2.3.1 Reasoning (inductive and deductive)**

As the hypotheses have been formulated, the sources from which the theory as well as the hypotheses have been derived should be comprehended. In order to provide an understanding of the construction, evaluation and justification of the chosen theory and the subsequent hypotheses, an explanation of the research

methods that are deductive and those that are inductive is necessary (Gill & Johnson, 2010:46).

Inductive reasoning is based on a research method where a researcher observes a given empirical matter and creates explanations and theories based on the observations (Strasheim, 2012; Gill & Johnson, 2010:56). Alternatively, deductive reasoning is based on the development of theory before testing theory through empirical observations, thereby testing the facts through data collection (Strasheim, 2012; Gill & Johnson, 2010:46).

Since TAM has been previously tested (Bovée & Thrill, 2012:55; Molenaar, 2012:111; Vidgen *et al.*, 2011:85; Masterson & Pickton, 2010:27; Hewitt, 2006:78; Reinsch & Turner, 2006:349) through empirical observation and data collection, the current study made use of deduction research methods.

#### **4.2.3.2 Research scope (exploratory, descriptive, causal)**

As research is deductive, the accompanying type of research should be identified. There are indicators of the type of research to be selected. Different research designs each offer a variety of choices which present different advantages and disadvantages (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:66). The types of research will be discussed below.

- Exploratory research is utilised when researchers are uncertain about encounters during the research process (Wilson, 2012:34). It is useful when creating initial insights into the research problem.
- Causal research is conclusive research where the key aim is to obtain evidence of a cause-and-effect relationship (Malhotra, 2012:108).
- Descriptive research provides descriptions on characteristics of the subject population, estimates on population attributes and associations between different variables (Wiid & Diggins, 2013:57). There is a comprehensive understanding of the situation when descriptive studies are conducted (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:53). Despite this, there are hypotheses present in descriptive research which may be tentative and speculative (Aaker *et al.*,

2011:73). Descriptive research was suitable for the current study as its variables, such as consumers' attitude, intentions and behaviours, form part of TAM (Kilic *et al.*, 2015:286; Burns & Bush, 2010:57).

#### **4.2.3.3 Qualitative and quantitative research**

Quantitative research is the quantity and quantification of data, while qualitative research is the interpretation of subjective experiences (Grix, 2010:32, McQuarrie, 2012:237).

Quantitative research is “a research methodology that seeks to quantify the data, and typically, applies some form of statistical analysis” (Malhotra, 2012:171). It addresses research objectives by means of empirical assessments that involve numerical measurement and analysis approaches (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:133). Finding variables of a concept the researcher is interested in, operationalising the variables and measuring them are characteristics of quantitative research (Grix, 2010:117). Quantitative research intends to find general patterns and relationships between variables and tests theories, thereby making predictions (Grix, 2010:172). It was most suited for the current study as it tests hypotheses which measured employees' acceptance of e-newsletters by means of TAM. As the purpose of quantitative research is to test hypotheses and thus investigate cause and effect and create predications (Wiid & Diggines, 2013: 59), it was also suitable for the current study. The reason for using TAM for this research study was that the model has been tested empirically and supported through validations, applications and replications of many different mediums by quantifying the results and making inferences (Camarero *et al.*, 2012; Lee *et al.*, 2011; Lin *et al.*, 2011).

#### **4.2.3.4 Temporal classification**

A specific time frame for conducting research is essential. There are two types of time frames or temporal classifications, namely cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies. Longitudinal studies take place over a long period of time and respondents are questioned on multiple occasions. The multiple surveys allow an analysis of the response continuity and changes over that set period (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:196–197). Cross-sectional studies are conducted at



one point in time, providing data about the respondents at that instance (Burns & Bush, 2010:150). As the data collection instrument in the study was distributed at one point in time, a cross-sectional time frame was used.

#### **4.2.3.5 Research environment**

There are three research environments in which to conduct research, namely field research, laboratory conditions and simulations (Burns & Bush, 2010:150). Firstly, in simulation the condition under which the research is conducted is created to imitate reality. Secondly, laboratory conditions are arbitrary conditions where the researcher conducts research in conditions which do not imitate reality but facilitate measurement. Thirdly, field research is conducted in the actual environment in which the respondents can be found (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:35).

As the data collection instrument in the current study was distributed in the environment where respondents could be found, field research was used. The type of information source used to test the hypotheses is discussed below.

#### **4.2.3.6 Types of information sources**

In order to satisfy research objectives, data needs to be collected. There are two different types of data: secondary data and primary data.

Secondary data is previously collected data intended for prior purposes (Wilson, 2012:36). Secondary data exists as historical data which has been collected by another researcher (Cant & Van Heerden, 2011:129). Although problems with secondary data include not being totally aligned with the research problem at hand and not being accurate, secondary data can assist in clarifying the present problem, indicate suggestions for improved methods to investigate the research problem and provide standards against which the primary data can be measured (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:144–146). There are two types of secondary data, namely internal and external secondary data. Internal secondary data is the internally collected data such as marketing activity reports and procurement accounts. External secondary data is the data collected external to the organisation in the form of business reports or news bulletins (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:

76). When conducting research of an academic nature, information should be current and reviewed by other scholars.

Primary data is collected to address the research problem. It is slower and more expensive than secondary data (Cant & Van Heerden, 2011:129–130). Primary data usually accompanies secondary data as it is able to augment some of the secondary data’s shortfalls in terms of examining findings in greater detail (Masterson & Pickton, 2010:175), as well as being more geared to the research problem (Strydom, 2011:82). Primary data can be in the form of surveys, consumer panels or focus groups (Masterson & Pickton, 2010:174–176).

The study commenced with secondary data in order to provide a background to the research problem and to establish what primary data was required. The secondary data was in the form of a review of relevant literature on internal marketing, internal communication and e-newsletters.

The secondary data is followed up by primary data in the form of data collected by means of a survey. Table 4.1 below provides a summary of the research design utilised for the study.

**Table 4.1:** Research design summary

<b>Research design components</b>	<b>Chosen research design component for current study</b>
Reasoning	Deductive research
Research scope	Descriptive research
Research type	Quantitative research
Temporal classification	Cross-sectional study
Research environment	Field research

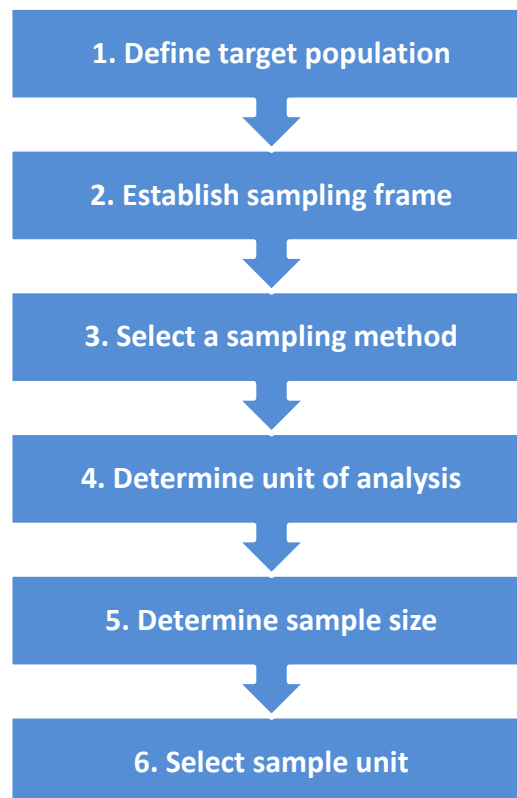
In the subsequent section, the sampling design will be discussed.

#### **4.2.4 Step 4: Determine sampling design**

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the fourth step is to determine the sampling design. In conducting research, the research population has to be identified in order to

have a focused study involving those that are relevant to the research problem (Gill & Johnson, 2010:127). In order to determine stakeholders that are relevant to the research problem, a sampling process should be utilised. There are numerous reasons why sampling is more suitable than obtaining data from a census: lower costs, greater accuracy of results, greater speed in data collection and availability of population elements (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:182).

A sampling process is a plan for defining the relevant target population, identifying possible respondents, establishing procedures in selecting a sample and determining a sample size (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:381). There are many arrangements of sampling processes which utilise a variation of similar steps, but the sampling process used for the study is seen in Figure 4.3 below.



**Figure 4.3:** The sampling process

Source: Adapted from Zikmund & Babin (2010:391) and Strydom (2011:91)

The steps in the sampling process and their application to the study will be discussed below.

#### **4.2.4.1 Define target population**

As indicated in Figure 4.3, the first step in the sampling process is the target population delineation. The target population is a group of people or objects that the researcher desires to research, which display the descriptors that represent the characteristics of the desired target population's frame. The target population is the entire group of people that display the characteristics that are relevant to the research (Zikmund *et al.*, 2013:387).

The target population for the current study was academic and administrative employees of a leading higher education institution in South Africa. The specific institution was selected based on the large student numbers and the correlating large base of academic and administrative staff numbers (Van Zyl & Barnes, 2013:3, 15). Furthermore, staff members were diverse in terms of age, gender and nationality.

In the changing educational and technological environment there is a need for staff to constantly process information for new programmes, courses and modules added each year. In order to communicate to staff in an inexpensive and timely manner, e-newsletters are utilised. Therefore, based on the institution's profile and the distribution of offices nationally, the particular institution was suited to serve as an environment for the current study on employees' acceptance of an e-newsletter as a means of distributing organisation information.

#### **4.2.4.2 Establish sampling frame**

As indicated in Figure 4.3, the second step in the sampling process is establishing the sampling frame. A structure which supports identification of each member of a population under consideration to be a part of a sample by means of a list of the population is the sampling frame. If every member of a population is to have a chance to be a part of the sample, then it is reasonable to have a list of the population, making every member of the population identifiable in order to have a chance to be included in the sample (Zikmund *et al.*, 2013:388).

The sampling frame for the current study was academic and administrative staff members at a leading South African higher education institution.

#### **4.2.4.3 Select a sampling method**

As indicated in Figure 4.3, the third step is selecting the sampling method. The sampling method is a method utilised to determine a sample. There are two types of sampling methods, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:188).

Firstly, non-probability sampling selects units of analysis based on personal judgement or convenience. The chance of a member of the target population being chosen is unknown, meaning that there are no calculations involved in the selection (Zikmund *et al.*, 2013:393).

Secondly, probability sampling is considered as closer to true randomness than non-probability sampling. It is the selection of a sample where the elements of the population have a known, non-zero likelihood of selection (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:386). A sampling unit has a known chance of being selected as the exact population size is known, which means that the probability can be calculated. The probability is based on an equation where the total number of people in the sample is divided by the total number of people in the population (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010:137).

The sampling method selected for the study was probability sampling as it corresponds with the two desirable characteristics of a sample, namely that a sample should mirror the important characteristics of the population and that samples should be selected objectively (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:386). The selected sampling method allows for the generalisation of results of the selected target population, which is considered an advantage of probability sampling (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:386).

Systematic sampling was selected as it is a random selection of the first element and sample size is completed by selecting the subsequent elements based on a fixed or systematic interval (Daniel, 2012:145–146). In essence, a starting point is selected on a list and every *n*th number on the list is then selected (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:427).

The sampling interval is calculated by dividing the number of elements in a sampling frame by a targeted sampling size:

$$\text{Sampling interval} = \frac{\text{Sampling frame (N)}}{\text{Sample size (n)}}$$

The calculation of the sampling interval will be discussed under the selection of the sample size.

#### **4.2.4.4 Determine units of analysis**

As indicated in Figure 4.3, the fourth step is to determine the units of analysis. The primary unit subjected to statistical analysis is the unit of analysis. The selection of units of analysis should take into consideration the ecological fallacy which states that “the conclusion(s) drawn at the group level may not pertain to the individual and conversely, that the conclusion(s) drawn based on the analysis of the individual level may not be accurate to the group” (Keller, 2010:1585–1587). Proper identification of the units of analysis is critical, as it may result in biased or invalid results if completed incorrectly.

The individual employees present at the higher education institution were the units of analysis. The motivation for choosing this specific target population was that the employees are the target audience of the e-newsletters, which is sent via e-mail to the employees’ assigned organisational e-mail addresses. Management could use the insight gained from this study to understand employees’ willingness to make use of the e-newsletter for its intended purpose, namely providing organisational information.

#### **4.2.4.5 Determine sample size**

As indicated in Figure 4.3, the fifth step is determining the sample size, which is the number of subjects included in the research to achieve representative results for an entire population (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:386). The sample size represents the number of respondents participating in the study (Malhotra, 2012:374). Researchers cannot have too large a sample size, as this will be taxing on resources, while a small sample size could lead to inaccurate results

(Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010:145). The calculation for determining the sample size will be discussed in the subsequent section.

#### **4.2.4.6 Select the sample**

As indicated in Figure 4.3, the sixth and final step is the actual selection of the sample, which is achieved by basing the overall sampling decision on the sub-decisions in each step of the sampling process, thereby selecting the sample for the current study. Prior to actual collection of data, ethical considerations are to be taken into account. Ethical clearance will be discussed in step 10 of the research process.

The sample size is calculated based on the population size, confidence interval and the confidence level. The confidence interval or margin of error is an analytical technique that considers the acceptable percentage of miscalculations in a study. The confidence level is the statistical probability that a random variable lies within the confidence level of an estimate (McGivern, 2013:499–500). In the current study the margin of error at 5% and confidence level of 95% were considered as acceptable. As systematic sampling was utilised in selecting the employees, the sample size with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, based on a population size of 5 656, was calculated at 357 respondents.

Systematic sampling utilises a natural ordering or population order, which will result in a sample that is almost random (Zikmund *et al.*, 2013:397). If a list is according to a pertinent matter, such as rank, then the chance of selecting an element from each rank grouping is good. If a list is according to a certain bias, such as time, then the list can be randomised before implementing the sampling interval.

Thus, based on the equation for the sampling interval, the result is as seen below:

$$\text{Sampling interval} = \frac{5\ 656}{357} = 15.84314 (\approx 16)$$

As indicated in the calculation of the sample interval above, the result is 16. A random number within the sampling interval number, thus every 16th employee, was chosen to be included in the sample (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:195). For the study to be measurable, a minimum of 357 employees needed to respond to the survey.

#### **4.2.5 Step 5: Determine data collection approach**

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the fifth step is to determine the data collection approach. The measurement instrument forms part of the research process in that it generates, refines and evaluates marketing actions, monitors marketing performance and improves the understanding of marketing processes (Berndt & Petzer, 2011:181–200). Therefore it is essential to make careful considerations to match the research objectives to the intended and most suitable research instrument in order to understand the marketing process better.

There are various data collection methods specifically for the collection of primary data. The three main approaches of primary research are observation, experimentation and survey research (Masterson & Pickton, 2010:179).

Firstly, observation research includes recording patterns of people, objects and events in a methodical manner in order to gain information about the relevant subject matter. Secondly, experimental research involves experiments which are conducted either in the field or in a laboratory setting (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:217). Thirdly, survey research involves structured questioning in which participants are questioned and responses are recorded (Wilson, 2012:131). Survey research was selected as the data collection method in order to collect information relevant to the research objectives. The advantages of survey methods reinforced the reason for utilising the survey method. These include affordability and efficient and accurate means of assessing information about a population (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:147). Despite the disadvantages of possible errors due to human error and low response rate, the survey method was still considered as appropriate for the current study.

There are a number of forms of collecting data through surveys, such as personal interviews, telephone interviews, postal surveys and online surveys



(Brassington & Pettitt, 2013:181–184). The manner in which the data is recorded depends on how the researcher wants to capture the responses. Interviewer-administered surveys are facilitated by the interviewer, who is then responsible for capturing the survey responses, while self-administered surveys are captured by the respondent. The most suitable survey type for the current study was a self-administered online survey.

Online surveys can be divided into two branches, the first being web-based surveys and the second being e-mail surveys. E-mail surveys either have the survey in the body of the e-mail, as an attachment, or a link is provided in the e-mail to a website where the survey is displayed. Web-based surveys are posted on a website and respondents are able to complete them immediately. When a link to another website is included, then the survey becomes a web-based survey (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:173–174). The web-based survey was considered as suitable for this study, due to the relevance to the topic of e-newsletters.

#### **4.2.6 Step 6: Determine data collection instrument design**

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the sixth step is the data collection instrument design. As the data collection was compiled by means of a survey or questionnaire, the researcher was required to comprehend what would be included in the questionnaire in order to answer the research objectives and hypotheses. A questionnaire is a document which is used as an instrument to capture the data generated by respondents' answers (Brassington & Pettitt, 2013:191). The answers are subjective concepts to the questions posed. The varying questions set in a questionnaire are arranged sequentially, which provides flexibility and allows the questionnaire to be answered in a timely fashion (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010:90).

As the TAM questionnaire is an established questionnaire used by numerous authors (Kilic *et al.*, 2015; Lee *et al.*, 2011; Lin *et al.*, 2011; Oshoaei & Oloumi, 2011; Davis, 1989), it was relevant for the use of this study, although with adaptations.

### ***Pre-testing the data collection instrument***

The next step is to ensure that the questionnaire is pre-tested so that problems are resolved before the main data collection is conducted. Pre-testing is completed on a small scale to simply serve the purpose of uncovering the mistakes that might arise (Brassington & Pettitt, 2013:195). Mistakes in meaning, layout, structuring and expected results, including their analysis, are checked during and after the pre-test of the questionnaire. Therefore, pre-testing is a control measure which provides a chance to correct and eliminate errors by making adjustments after the pilot test has occurred (Burns & Bush, 2010:437). The data collection instrument was pre-tested on 20 employees within the selected institution.

### **4.2.7 Step 7: Data collection**

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the seventh step is collecting the data. The data collection instrument was distributed to staff members by means of a self-administered e-mail survey. The instrument served to measure the objectives of the current study regarding employees' acceptance of e-newsletters for the purpose of communicating organisational information to the employees.

The link to the survey was embedded in the e-mail sent to staff members inviting them to voluntarily participate in the study. The link redirected employees to a LimeSurvey platform which automatically captured the responses.

### **4.2.8 Step 8: Data preparation**

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the eighth step is data preparation. Once all the necessary data has been collected, it is edited. Editing includes verification of data, accuracy and suitability. Editing is necessary to determine the correctness and completeness of the questionnaires (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:221). Once editing has been completed, the data is processed in terms of coding complex answers into simpler meanings (Bradley, 2010:314). After data preparation, data analysis is able to take place.

## **4.2.9 Step 9: Data analysis**

Data obtained from the e-mail survey was analysed by means of descriptive and inferential statistics.

## **4.2.10 Step 10: Data interpretation and research report compilation**

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the tenth step is data interpretation and research report compilation. The interpretation of data is the pinnacle of the research process (Bradley, 2010:313). Interpretation of the data is essential as it is the comprehensive gathering and reporting of information. Firstly, the descriptive statistics are reported, followed by an analysis of the statistics, which allows for more in-depth interpretation.

### **4.2.10.1 Descriptive statistics**

Descriptive statistics arrange and synthesise results to provide meaningful information to efficiently summarise the characteristics of a large set of data (Norwood, 2010:308). In addition, from the summary of characteristics, descriptive statistics allow the researcher to see patterns in the research (Kolb, 2008: 251–252) and include measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion and percentages and statistical tests.

Central tendency includes the average or the mean, which is the values added up, divided by the number of observations that appear; the median is the 50% mark of observations; the frequency is the number of times each value appears within a data set and the mode is the value which occurs most often (Norwood, 2010:308; McGivern, 2013:462).

Measures of dispersion indicate how data is spread around the measures of central tendency. Measures of dispersion include the difference between the highest and lowest value in the dispersion, known as range; variance and standard deviation which are based on deviations around the mean of the observations or for standard deviation, and coefficient of variation which compares the dispersion of two or more series of data (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:248–249). Also, the standard deviation statistic answers the question: How varied are individual scores from the mean of the group? (Tanner, 2012:30) or indi-

ates the standardised value away from the mean that each individual response is located.

The skewness indicator is used in distribution analysis as a sign of asymmetry and deviation from a normal distribution (Norwood, 2010:309; Wiid & Diggines, 2013:249–250). The interpretation of skewness is as follows:

- Skewness  $> 0$  – Right-skewed distribution – most values are to the left of the mean.
- Skewness  $< 0$  – Left-skewed distribution – most values are to the right of the mean.
- Skewness  $= 0$  – mean = median, the distribution is symmetrical around the mean.

Kurtosis is the peakedness of the set of values that appear on a distribution graph (Norwood, 2010:308; Wiid & Diggines, 2013:249–250). The interpretation of kurtosis is as follows:

- Kurtosis  $> 3$  – Leptokurtic distribution, sharper than a normal distribution, with values concentrated around the mean and thicker tails. This means high probability for extreme values.
- Kurtosis  $< 3$  – Platykurtic distribution, flatter than a normal distribution with a wider peak. The probability for extreme values is less than for a normal distribution, and the values are wider spread around the mean.
- Kurtosis  $= 3$  – Mesokurtic distribution – normal distribution, for example.

Factor analysis and regression analysis, both in-depth analyses, are discussed next.

#### **4.2.10.2 Factor analysis**

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the ninth step is data analysis. The validity and reliability of the data collection instrument need to be tested. As Zikmund *et al.* (2013:303–305) indicate, validity is divided into different types. Face validity measures the alignment of the scale with the concept being tested, criterion-related validity tests the practicality of the scale to measure the concept, content

validity measures the extent to which the scale covers the domain of interest and construct validity measures whether the scale reliably and truthfully represents that concept. TAM has been utilised in a number of studies and was adapted for the current study. Since TAM has been utilised for numerous other studies, it was deemed reliable for the current study. However, despite this, because TAM was being applied to a different context in terms of country, industry and institution, the validity of TAM and its factors were tested in the current study. The validity of TAM was tested with exploratory factor analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) involves placing variables into relevant categories or factors (Kremelberg, 2011:288). It determines which latent variables influence a set of variables or measures, thus identifying those factors that are aligned with the concept as well as those items or factors which are not considered as having a strong enough correlation and thus identified as removable (Muijs, 2011:198). In EFA the number of factors cannot be predetermined, nor can the variables be predefined that will be loaded onto certain factors. The most common method of performing this factor extraction is principal components analysis.

There are three main methods to determine/extract the factors (Muijs, 2011:200):

- Scree plot: To plot the reduced number of variables into factors which contain very little variance, followed by choosing the number of factors with a sharp reduction in explained variance.
- Eigenvalues: Variance extracted by the factor with a variance value above 1.
- Theoretical considerations: Based on the theory, determining the variables that should be reduced in the relevant factors.

From the methods to extract the factors, the correlation between the variables and the relevant factors is determined. The factor loadings are an indication of the correlation coefficients, which may vary between -1 and +1; the stronger the correlation, the closer the figure to -1 or +1. The closer the correlation is to 0, the weaker the variable load is to the factor. Factor loadings measure the correlation between the latent variable and observed variable, and can be either

positive or negative. A highly positive relationship is close to the value 1, while a highly negative relationship is closer to the value -1. Considering reverse-scored items, when a negative loading is present with negatively worded items, this implies a positive relationship if the item is positively worded (Lamb *et al.*, 2011). According to factor analysis, a factor can only be added together as a scale if the factor makes substantive and theoretical logical sense (Muijs, 2011:201).

In order to calculate numerous interpretable factors, rotation is utilised. “There are two main types of rotation for uncorrelated factors, Varimax and quartimax rotation. In Varimax rotation, each factor will tend to have either large or small loadings on any particular variable. This means that this method will usually produce several very distinct factors. Quartimax rotation, on the other hand, usually generates a general factor on which most variables are loaded to a high degree” (Muijs, 2011:202). Regression analysis is discussed below.

#### **4.2.10.3 Regression analysis**

Linear regression analyses the associate relationships between an independent metric and dependent metric variable (Best & Wolf, 2014). The denotation is that if there is an increase in one independent metric, there will be an increase in the dependent metric. It is possible to test the strength of a relationship with regression, if the relationship between factors can be described with an equation. The linear regression model is depicted by Menard (2010:3):

$$Y = a + bX$$

**where:**

**Y = dependent variable**

**X = independent variable**

**a = intercept**

**b = coefficient of the independent variable**

The equation and thus the nature of the relationship between independent and dependent variables can be demonstrated on a scatter plot diagram, which plots the dependent variable on the vertical Y axis and the independent variable on the horizontal X axis (Hutcheson & Moutinho, 2008:20–21). The parameter estimates are linked to the scatter plot, and the intercepts indicate the amount

by which the dependent variable will increase based on the increase of the independent variable (Hutcheson & Moutinho, 2008:22).

A number of calculations are associated with regression analysis. These calculations include summary of fit, analysis of variance and lack of fit.

The relevant terms that will be utilised to describe the analysis regarding summary of fit are as follows:

Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$  or RSquared): This represents the measure of the strength of the linear relationship between the dependent (Y) and independent variable (X). RSquared measures the extent in percentage of the total variation in the dependent variable (Y) that is 'explained' by the variation of the independent variable (X). A perfect linear relationship between X and Y will mean that  $R^2$  equals 1, RSquared can still be high for a negative relationship and no relationship will mean that  $R^2$  equals 0.

Adjusted R (RSquared adj): This endeavours to modify the RSquared more closely to reflect the goodness of fit of the model as the more variables added to a given model  $R^2$  can only increase. The variables added to a model for  $R^2$  to increase may be irrelevant with regard to the dependent variable of interest. This happens because  $R^2$  and consequently also changes in  $R^2$  can only be positive. Therefore, independent variables unrelated to the dependent variable can by chance produce an increase in  $R^2$ . To correct for this tendency, an adjusted version of  $R^2$  has been proposed which, in contrast to  $R^2$ , can decrease when adding new variables to an equation which are irrelevant with regard to the dependent variable (Best & Wolf, 2014:62–63).

Root mean square error (RMSE): For a regression model, this is similar to the standard deviation for the ideal measurement model; it estimates the deviation of the actual y-values from the regression line. In other words, the spread of y-values around the average are obtained.

Mean response: This is an estimate of the mean of the y-values associated with the x-values.

The relevant terms used to describe the analysis regarding the lack of fit are as follows (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:484):

Degrees of freedom (DF): This indicates the number of observations in a statistical problem that are free to vary. Degrees of freedom represents the number of observations that can be missing but still allow for a statistical calculation to be performed.

Sum of squares among groups or among group variation (SSA): This represents the difference between each subsample's mean and the overall sample mean.

Mean sum of squares among groups (MSA): This represents the variation among group means.

Sum of squared error or sum of squares within groups or within group variation (SSE): This represents the sum of the squared differences between each observation and its associated sample mean accumulated over all groups.

Mean square error (MSE): This represents the variation within the sample groups as measured by the mean sum of the squares within groups.

Sum of squares total (SST): This represents the combined SSE and SSA.

F distribution: This is a set of distributions whose shape changes slightly according to the number and size of the samples involved. The F test or f ratio allows for the calculation of the probability that a particular calculated value of F could have occurred by chance rather than as a result of the treatment or model effect. F statistic is calculated by dividing the MSA by the MSE.

P-value: This is the exact probability of getting a computed test statistic by chance. The smaller the p-value, the smaller the probability that the observed result occurred by chance (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:503).

As the F-ratio is greater than the p-value (prob), the lack of fit is rejected, indicating a fit of the model.



Analysis of variance or ANOVA is a statistical test which is used with two or more populations to determine the difference between means (Bradley, 2010: 322). The relevant terms related to ANOVA have already been discussed above under lack of fit (terms include sum of squares among groups, mean sum of squares, sum of squared errors, mean square error, degrees of freedom and F statistic).

With the interpretation of the data and the research report compilation, the limitations of the study need to be considered. In the next section the ethical considerations of this study are discussed.

### **4.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Ethical guidance is important in a study that includes human participants. Ethical clearance is necessary in order to confirm that the study will protect the rights and interests of respondents, particularly that information gathered does not infringe respondents' privacy and dignity. Thus the ethical clearance indicates that the research study has been conducted ethically by preserving and promoting the "autonomy, quality, legitimacy and credibility of research" (Unisa, 2012:2). The ethical clearance, which is necessary before the data collection phase, was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee. To reinforce the ethical nature of the research, a consent form was attached to the survey in order to obtain permission from respondents regarding the collection of information for the use of the study and served as an information device for respondents on the current study (Unisa, 2012:12). Respondents were required to accept the consent form terms before continuing with the survey, which informed respondents that the survey was anonymous, that they could withdraw at any time during the survey, the duration of the survey, and that privacy and confidentiality of respondents' answers were maintained (see consent form attached in Appendix B).

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

The purpose of the methodology chapter was to present the types of research methodology applied and the most suitable methods used to conduct this research.

The current study measured employees' acceptance of e-newsletters by means of TAM. By measuring acceptance, the study determined users' willingness to utilise e-newsletters for their intended purpose, namely the transfer of organisational information. Research objectives and hypotheses were formulated based on TAM, and thus quantitative research was deemed relevant. The survey was distributed by means of a link embedded within an invitation to staff members to participate in the study. The appropriate sample size was calculated to be 357. Exploratory factor analysis was utilised to analyse the data in addition to descriptive statistics.

The research design, sampling design, data collection design, data collection pre-test, data collection instrument and the subsequent data preparation and data analysis were chosen based on the research objectives, research problem and identified hypotheses, and discussed in this chapter.

The subsequent chapter will present the results from the data collection process. Graphs and tabulations are included to indicate the percentages, distributions and relationships related to the hypotheses and data collected.

# CHAPTER 5

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters focused on the literature review regarding internal marketing, internal communication and e-newsletters. Subsequent to the literature review, the research methodology (research process) chosen to conduct the study was discussed in Chapter 4. The data analysis will now be discussed in this chapter.

This chapter presents the research findings and the interpretation of the relevant results. Supporting tables and figures will accompany the interpretations for illustration purposes. To serve as a backdrop, the research question, research objectives and research methodology will be reiterated prior to the data analysis and interpretation section.

### 5.2 STUDY BACKGROUND

In the subsequent sections, a study background is provided regarding TAM, the research question, research objectives and the chosen research methodology.

#### 5.2.1 Technology acceptance model

In order to establish employees' willingness to use the e-newsletter for its intended purpose, namely to provide organisational information, TAM was applied to an academic environment (Kilic *et al.*, 2015:287). It was an appropriate research tool to use in explaining and predicting users' adoption of e-newsletters to disseminate organisational information. TAM, comprises perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude towards use of the e-newsletter, behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter and actual use of the e-newsletter (Kesharwani & Bisht, 2012:306). Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are precursors to attitude towards use of e-newsletters, which in turn is a precursor to behavioural intention to use e-newsletters. The results of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude towards use of

the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter are an indication of the actual use of the e-newsletter as an internal marketing communication medium by employees (Kesharwani & Bisht, 2012:306; Abbasi *et al.*, 2011:31).

### **5.2.2 Research question**

The research question was derived from the research problem concerning the issue of employees' acceptance of e-newsletters in an academic environment. Acceptance is the willingness to use the e-newsletter for its intended purpose. The question of employees' willingness to use the e-newsletter for its intended purpose stems from factors such as information overload, e-newsletters interrupting employees' concentration on work-related matters, unsolicited e-mails, tendency to filter e-mails, information being sent faster than it can be processed and technology addiction that employees experience in the workplace (Bovée & Thrill, 2012:55; Molenaar, 2012:111; Vidgen *et al.*, 2011:85; Hewitt, 2006:78; Reinsch & Turner, 2006:349). Based on the research problem, the research question was: Do employees accept e-newsletters for the intended purpose of disseminating organisational information?

### **5.2.3 Research objectives and hypotheses**

The primary research objective served as the thrust of the study: to determine employees' acceptance of e-newsletters for their intended purpose, namely to provide organisational information, in an academic environment. The primary and secondary objectives were theoretically substantiated in Chapter 1.

The secondary research objectives were as follows:

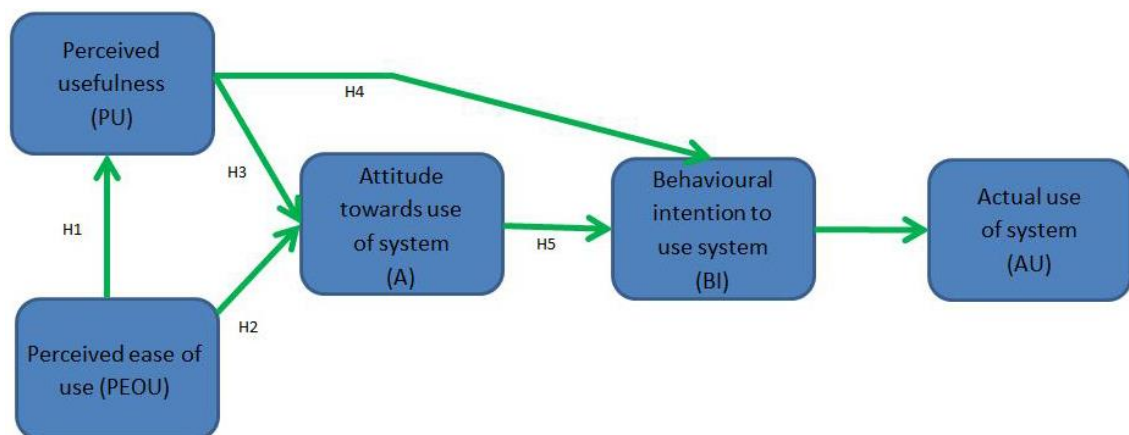
1. To determine whether employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on the perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter
2. To determine whether employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on attitude towards using the e-newsletter
3. To determine whether employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on attitude towards using the e-newsletter

4. To determine whether employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter
5. To determine whether employees' attitude towards using the e-newsletter has a significant influence on behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter

Research objectives, derived from the research problem, are often described as deliverables which lead to the formation of hypotheses. These are unproven statements about a particular factor or phenomenon that can be tested empirically (Malhotra, 2012:83; McDaniel & Gates, 2010:48). The hypotheses for the study, which were theoretically substantiated in Chapter 1, are:

- 1 H<sub>1</sub>: Employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on the perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter.
- 2 H<sub>2</sub>: Employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their attitude towards using the e-newsletter.
- 3 H<sub>3</sub>: Employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their attitude towards using the e-newsletter.
- 4 H<sub>4</sub>: Employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter.
- 5 H<sub>5</sub>: Employees' attitude towards the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter.

A visual representation of the hypotheses is indicated below:



**Figure 5.1:** Illustration of hypotheses

Source: Adapted from Davis (in Rauniar *et al.*, 2014:10)

The analysis acceptance/rejection of these hypotheses will be discussed in Chapter 6. In the subsequent section the research methodology utilised for the study will be discussed.

#### **5.2.4 Research methodology**

As the study focused on TAM and aimed to predict users' attitude towards the use of e-newsletters and their behavioural intention to use e-newsletters, descriptive research was deemed relevant as it describes relevant variables of "consumer's attitudes, intentions, and behaviours" (Camarero *et al.*, 2012:5; Burns & Bush, 2010:57). In addition, since the current study would quantify and apply statistical analysis to the findings, quantitative research was suitable for the study (Malhotra, 2012:171).

The research was directed at a specific group of individuals suitable to the research problem. Sampling was therefore required to select these individuals from a target population (Gill & Johnson, 2010:127). The target population for this study was academic and administrative employees of a leading higher education institution in South Africa (Van Zyl & Barnes, 2012:3, 15).

To gain as close to true randomness as possible in sample selection, probability sampling was utilised in order to generalise results of the target population (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:386). The probability sampling method chosen was the sampling interval, which was calculated by dividing the number of elements in the sampling frame by the targeted sampling size. The sample size was calculated at a confidence level of 95%, and at a margin of error at 5% based on a population size of 5656 sample size could be observed on a sample size table (Research advisors, 2006) at 357 respondents.

Thus, based on the equation for sampling interval the result is as seen below:

$$\text{Sampling interval} = \frac{5\ 656}{357} = 15.84314 (\approx 16)$$

As indicated in the calculation of the sample interval above, the result is 16. A random number within the sampling interval number, thus every 16th employee was chosen to be included in the sample. For the study to be measurable a minimum of 357 employees was required to respond to the survey.

As a result of the low response rate (with many incomplete surveys), the survey was repeated to a different set of every 16th employee to gain more completed surveys. Reminders were sent out indicating how many more completed responses were required and to request those with incomplete surveys to complete it. This resulted in 404 fully completed surveys collected and analysed. The response rate was  $(404/5\ 656)$  7.14%.

The analysis of the primary data will include descriptive statistics processing (computed values), factor analysis and linear regression. The subsequent section deals with the descriptive statistics used in the current study.

### **5.3 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

Descriptive statistics are utilised to summarise the characteristics of a large set of data efficiently (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:457). Descriptive statistics include measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion and percentages and statistical tests.

Measures of central tendency include the sum of values for all observations of a variable divided by the number of observations known as the mean; the value below which 50% of the observations fall, known as the median, and the value that occurs most frequently, known as the mode (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:248–249).

Measures of dispersion indicate how data is spread around the measures of central tendency. Measures of dispersion include the difference between the highest and lowest value in the dispersion, known as range; variance and standard deviation which are based on deviations around the mean of the observations or for standard deviation, and coefficient of variation which compares the dispersion of two or more series of data (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:248–249). Also, the standard deviation statistic indicates the standardised value away from the mean that each individual response is located.

In the results, skewness is reported, which is an indicator in distribution analysis of asymmetry and deviation from a normal distribution. Where a right-skewed distribution ( $>0$ ) is present, the values are to the left of the mean; where a left-

skewed distribution ( $<0$ ) is present, the values are to the right of the mean and where the skewness is at the median ( $=0$ ), the values are distributed symmetrically around the mean (Wiid & Diggins, 2013:249–250). In addition, kurtosis is reported which describes the degree to which the data is bunched around the middle of the distribution. The descriptive statistics collected for the study are discussed below.

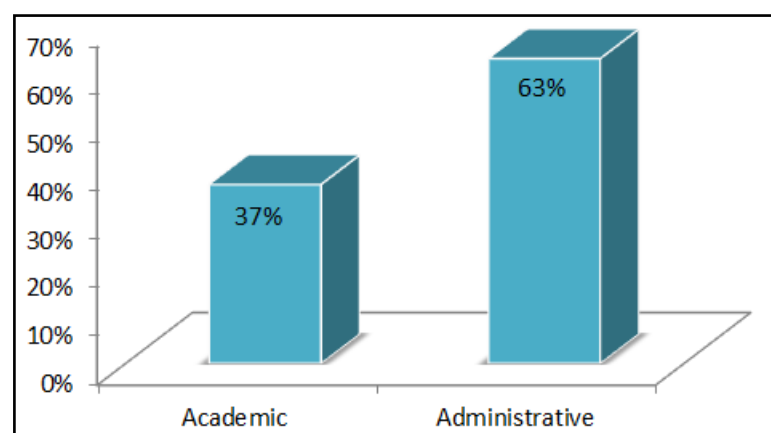
Kurtosis is the peakedness of the set of values that appear on a distribution graph (Norwood, 2010:308). In terms of the kurtosis of a distribution a steep peak is known as a leptokurtic distribution, flatter than normal distribution is known as platykurtic distribution and a normal distribution (bell shaped) is known as mesokurtic distribution.

### 5.3.1 Demographic profile

The employment type, duration of employment, current age and gender made up the demographic profile of the respondents.

#### 5.3.1.1 Employment type

The sample was asked to indicate the relevant current employment type on a dichotomous scale. It is evident from Figure 5.2 that almost two-thirds (63%) of the respondents occupied an administrative position and just more than a third (37%) occupied an academic position.



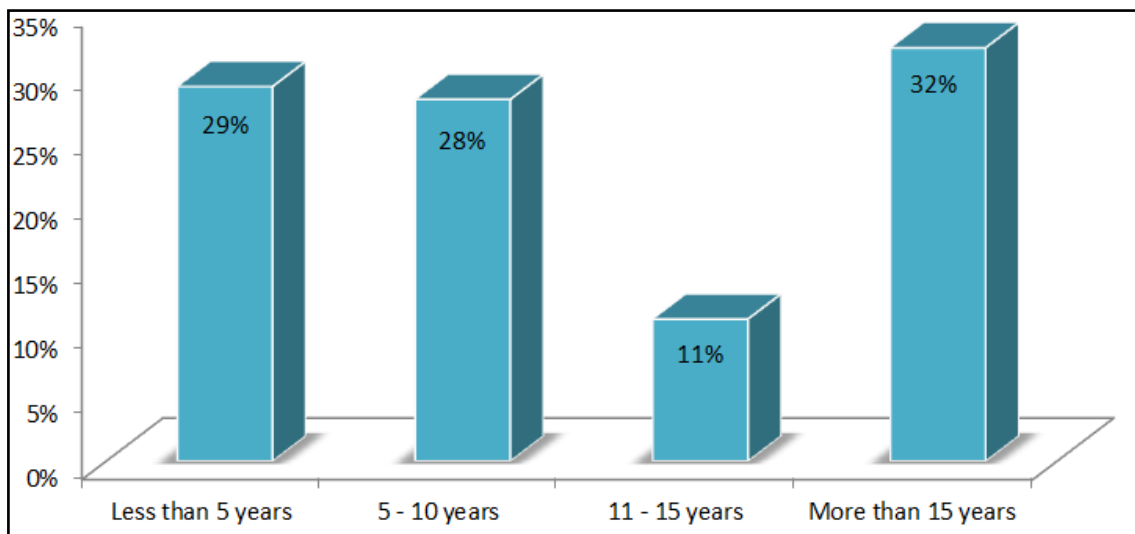
**Figure 5.2:** Employment type

Source: Question 1



### 5.3.1.2 Duration of employment

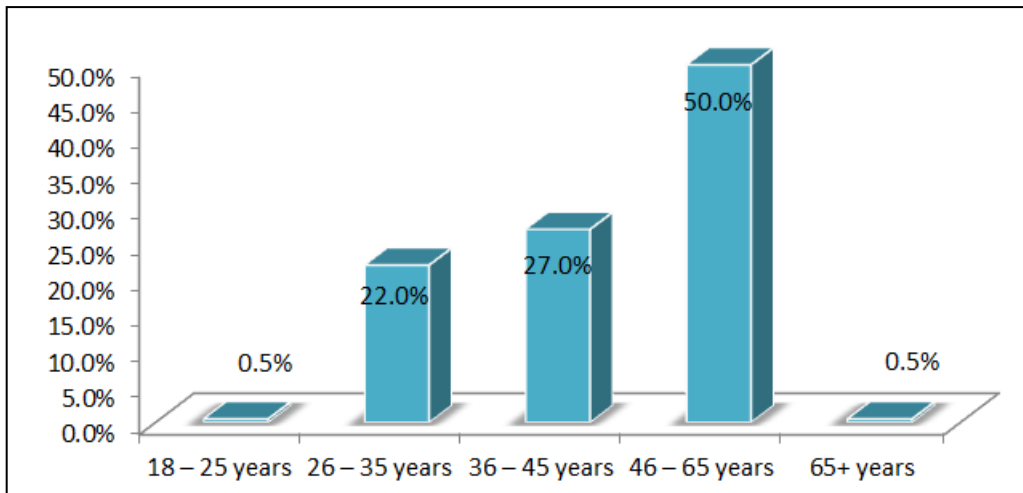
Respondents were asked to indicate the relevant duration of employment at the higher education institution on an interval scale. It is clear from Figure 5.3 that almost a third (32%) of the respondents had been employed for more than 15 years at the institution. Respondents in the 5 – 10 years employment bracket and those in the less than 5 years bracket made up almost a third each, being 28% and 29%, respectively. The remaining respondents (11%) had been employed between 11 and 15 years.



**Figure 5.3:** Duration of employment  
Source: Question 22

### 5.3.1.3 Current age

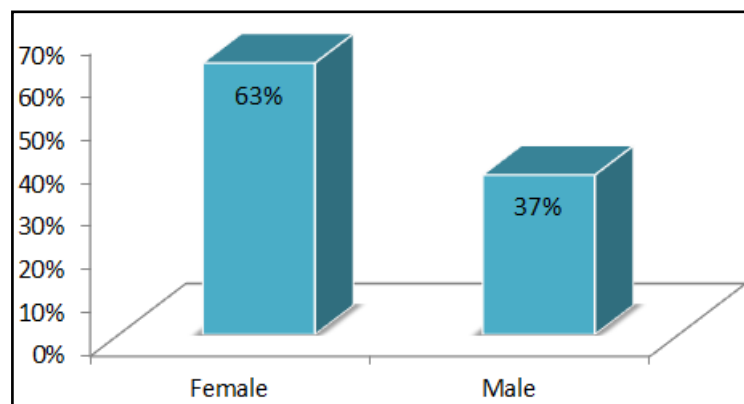
Age categories were asked in order to establish the age range of respondents. The results show in Figure 5.4 that half of the respondents (50%) fell within the 46 – 65 age group, while almost a third (27%) fell within the 36 – 45 age group. Less than a quarter (22%) fell within the 26 – 35 age category. Less than 1% of the respondents were in the 18 – 25 age category (0.5%) and the 65+ age category (0.5%).



**Figure 5.4:** Current age  
 Source: Question 23

### 5.3.1.4 Gender

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender on a dichotomous scale. It is evident from Figure 5.5 that almost two-thirds (63%) of the respondents were female and the rest male (37%).



**Figure 5.5:** Gender  
 Source: Question 25

In the subsequent section, the aspects that have an impact on the acceptance of the e-newsletter by employees are discussed.

Based on the discussions in the literature review chapters, the matters of usage, e-newsletter subsections, e-newsletter social engagement interactions and capabilities, characteristics of e-newsletters, quality of the e-newsletter, interruptions caused by the e-newsletter, alternative communication media

offered, preferred inclusions in the e-newsletter and finally preference to receive the e-newsletter were covered. These matters are interpreted below.

### **5.3.2 Employees' e-newsletter preferences**

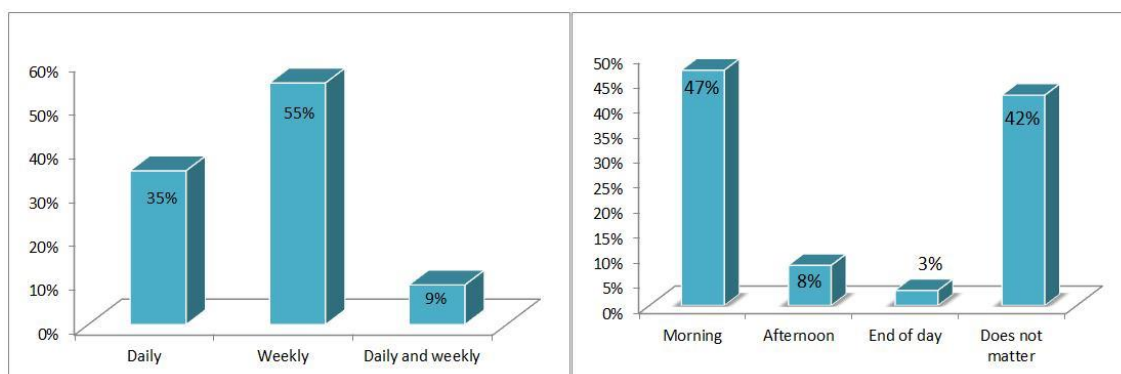
The following sections report on the preferences employees indicated regarding the e-newsletter.

#### **5.3.2.1 Usage**

Questions were posed regarding employees' preference for what time of the day and week the e-newsletters should be disseminated. A multiple-choice single-response scale was used. Figure 5.6 indicates the preferred day of the week and time of the day for e-newsletters to be disseminated to employees. A daily e-newsletter covers news every day as it occurs, while a weekly e-newsletter condenses the week's news into one e-newsletter.

More than half (55%) of the respondents indicated that they would prefer weekly e-newsletters of condensed news, while just over a third (35%) preferred a daily e-newsletter of everyday news. Less than a tenth (9%) of the respondents preferred both daily and weekly e-newsletters to be disseminated.

In terms of time of day that the e-newsletter should be disseminated, almost half (47%) of the respondents indicated a preference for the morning, while more than two-fifths (42%) indicated that any time of the day for the dissemination of the e-newsletter was acceptable. Less than a tenth (8%) of the respondents preferred the afternoon, while a mere 3% preferred to receive the e-newsletter at the end of the day.



**Figure 5.6:** Respondents' preference for e-newsletter dissemination times

Source: Question 11 and 20

### 5.3.2.2 E-newsletter sub-sections

Respondents were asked to indicate their preference for reading certain sub-sections in the e-newsletter. They indicated their preference on a 6-point scale with categories ranging from 0% to 100%. The percentages of the employees who read specific e-newsletter sub-sections are shown in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1:** E-newsletter sub-sections read

Statement	0% (Not at all)	1% – 20%	21% – 40%	41% – 60%	61% – 80%	81% – 100%
Corporate news	5% [19]	15% [62]	15% [59]	19% [78]	23% [94]	23% [92]
Academic news	3% [14]	16% [65]	18% [71]	18% [71]	24% [96]	22% [87]
College news	5% [22]	15% [59]	14% [57]	23% [94]	25% [101]	18% [71]
Regional news	11% [44]	27% [108]	17% [69]	18% [72]	15% [59]	13% [52]

Source: Question 9

For the 81% – 100% category, more than a fifth of the respondents read corporate news (23%) and academic news (22%). More than a fifth of the respondents read academic news (24%) and college news (25%) in the 61% – 80% category. Almost a third (27%) of the respondents indicated that they read regional news in the 1% – 20% category. Less than a tenth of the respondents did not read corporate news (5%), academic news (3%) or college news (5%).

### 5.3.2.3 E-newsletter social engagement interactions

Respondents were asked to indicate the community or social engagement interactions that the e-newsletter provided. They indicated their preference on 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree). For simplification, as strongly disagree and disagree both show a negative perception of social engagement interactions, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'disagree'; similarly, as strongly agree and agree both show a positive perception of social engagement interactions, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'agree'.

**Table 5.2:** Social engagement interactions

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Sends updates on events	1% [3]	4% [17]	9% [38]	67% [270]	19% [76]
Broadcasts reminders for meetings	4% [16]	11% [44]	21% [84]	53% [213]	12% [47]
Archives online information	1% [5]	7% [28]	29% [116]	49% [197]	14% [58]
Customises content for the administrative and academic employees	3% [13]	11% [46]	27% [109]	45% [182]	13% [54]
Allows employees to ask questions	8% [34]	17% [70]	31% [126]	34% [139]	9% [35]
Links Intcom to a survey	5% [20]	13% [53]	37% [150]	38% [153]	7% [28]
Includes a suggestion section for employees	7% [28]	17% [68]	30% [122]	35% [142]	11% [44]
Includes updates on progress of suggestions made by employees	12% [47]	17% [69]	31% [126]	30% [122]	10% [40]
Indicates employees acting as good ambassadors for the institution	2% [7]	8% [31]	23% [93]	54% [219]	13% [54]
Indicates where the institution supported employee causes	2% [10]	8% [34]	28% [114]	48% [194]	13% [52]

Source: Question 12

Table 5.2 provides the descriptive statistics of the e-newsletter social engagement interactions. A large proportion (86% = 67% + 19%) of the respondents

agreed that the e-newsletter sent updates on events. Almost two-thirds (65% = 53% + 12%) agreed that the e-newsletter broadcast reminders for meetings. More than half (58% = 45% + 13%) agreed that the e-newsletter customised content for the administrative and academic employees. A large percentage (67% = 54% + 13%) of the respondents agreed that the e-newsletter reported on employees acting as good ambassadors for the institution, while a small percentage (10% = 2% + 8%) disagreed with this. Almost two-thirds (61% = 48% + 13%) of the respondents agreed that the e-newsletter indicated where the institution supported employee causes, while a tenth (10% = 2% + 8%) disagreed with this.

#### **5.3.2.4 E-newsletter social engagement capabilities**

To establish employees' perception of the e-newsletter social engagement or community interaction capabilities, a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree) was used. The majority of the respondents agreed on the items of the social engagement element of e-newsletters. For simplification, as strongly disagree and disagree both show a negative perception of social engagement, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'disagree'; similarly, as strongly agree and agree both show a positive perception of social engagement, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'agree'.

**Table 5.3:** Social engagement capabilities

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
Creates awareness about important institution information	1% [3]	3% [11]	7% [28]	63% [254]	27% [108]
Provides feedback on questions from employees (in discussion forums)	8% [33]	18% [71]	34% [137]	30% [121]	10% [42]
Collaborates with employees to generate ideas	8% [34]	18% [73]	31% [124]	33% [133]	10% [40]
Encourages employees to be advocates/ambassadors for the institution	5% [21]	10% [42]	27% [108]	45% [182]	13% [51]

Source: Question 13

From Table 5.3 the descriptive statistics of the e-newsletter social engagement capabilities can be seen. The majority (90% = 63% + 27%) of the respondents agreed that the e-newsletter created awareness about important institution information, whereas a minority (4% = 1% + 3%) disagreed with this. More than half (58% = 45% + 13%) of the respondents agreed that the e-newsletter encouraged employees to be advocates/ambassadors for the institution, while almost a fifth (15% = 5% + 10%) disagreed with this. It is clear that a small percentage (7%) of the group had no opinion on whether the e-newsletter created awareness about important institution information.

### 5.3.2.5 Characteristics of e-newsletter

Employees' preference for e-newsletter characteristics was determined using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very unimportant, 5 = Very important). For simplification, as very unimportant and unimportant both show a negative perception of the characteristics, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'unimportant'; similarly, as very important and important both show a positive perception of characteristics, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'important'.

**Table 5.4:** Characteristics of e-newsletters

Characteristics	Very unimportant	Not important	Neutral	Important	Very important
General quality of photographs in Intcom e-newsletters	6% [25]	3% [12]	22% [89]	48% [194]	21% [84]
Content in Intcom	4% [17]	1% [3]	11% [43]	51% [208]	33% [133]
Layout of Intcom e-newsletters	4% [17]	2% [8]	20% [80]	51% [206]	23% [93]
Ease of navigation through Intcom e-newsletters	3% [14]	1% [5]	15% [61]	46% [186]	34% [138]
A "thought for the day" included in Intcom	15% [62]	8% [32]	27% [111]	33% [132]	17% [67]

Source: Question 15

The descriptive statistics of the characteristics of the e-newsletter are shown in Table 5.4. The majority (84% = 51% + 33%) of the respondents perceived the content of the e-newsletter to be important, while a minority (5% = 4% + 1%)

perceived it to be unimportant. Almost three-quarters (74% = 51% + 23%) perceived the layout of the e-newsletter to be important, while less than a tenth (6% = 4% + 2%) perceived it to be unimportant. A large proportion (80% = 46% + 34%) of the respondents perceived the ease of navigation through the e-newsletter to be important, while a small proportion (4% = 3% + 1%) perceived this to be unimportant. From the results, it is evident that almost a third (27%) of the respondents did not have an opinion on “A thought for the day” to be included in the e-newsletter.

### 5.3.2.6 Quality

The question surrounding e-newsletter quality was used to determine employees’ perception of the e-newsletter quality in terms of layout and design (1 – Very unappealing, 5 – Very appealing). For simplification, as very unappealing and unappealing both show a negative perception of quality, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form ‘unappealing’; similarly, as very appealing and appealing both show a positive perception of quality, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form ‘appealing’.

**Table 5.5:** Quality aspects of the e-newsletter

Statement	Very unappealing	Unappealing	Neutral	Appealing	Very appealing
The layout of Intcom	1% (4)	7% (29)	33% (134)	50% (204)	8% (33)
The colours used in Intcom	1% (4)	7% (29)	34% (139)	48% (193)	10% (39)
The images included in Intcom	1% (4)	5% (20)	35% (143)	49% (199)	9% (38)

Source: Question 16

The descriptive statistics of the quality of the e-newsletter are shown in Table 5.5. More than half (58% = 50% + 8%) of the respondents found the layout of Intcom appealing, while almost a tenth (8% = 1% + 7%) found the layout and (6% = 1% + 5%) images included in Intcom unappealing. Interestingly, approximately a third of the respondents were neutral on the layout (33%), colours used (34%) and images (35%) included in the e-newsletters, thus having no opinion on the statements regarding quality of e-newsletters.



### 5.3.2.7 Interruptions

Respondents were asked to indicate their perception of the e-newsletter as an interruption of the work day, as shown in Table 5.6. For simplification, as strongly disagree and disagree both show disagreement with finding e-newsletters to be an interruption, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'disagree'; similarly, as strongly agree and agree both show agreement with finding e-newsletters to be an interruption, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'agree'.

**Table 5.6:** E-newsletters considered as an interruption by employees

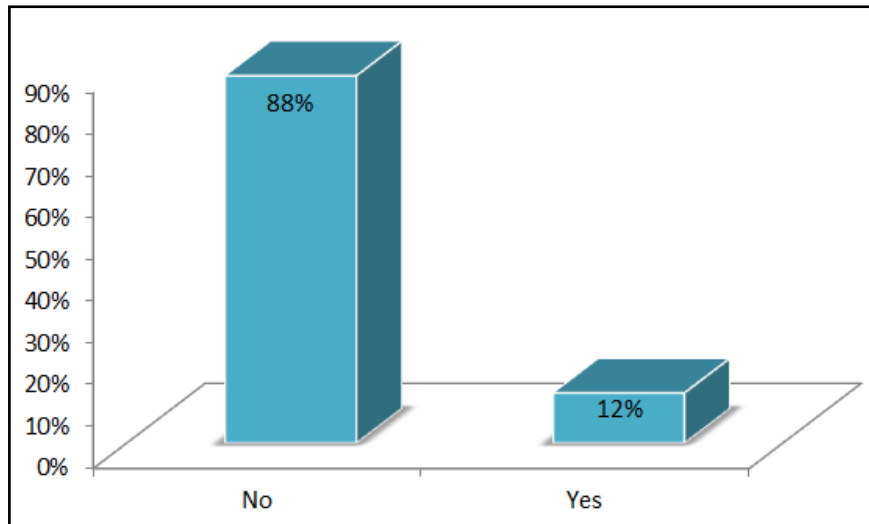
Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Intcom causes information overload	13% (53)	39% (156)	29% (116)	13% (54)	6% (25)
Intcom interrupts concentration on work matters	16% (63)	48% (192)	22% (87)	11% (45)	4% (17)
Intcom is an unwelcome intrusion during working hours	21% (85)	50% (203)	20% (80)	6% (23)	3% (13)
I just skim read through Intcom	7% (27)	28% (113)	18% (73)	35% (143)	12% (48)
I ignore Intcom	39% (159)	37% (148)	17% (67)	6% (24)	1% (6)

Source: Question 17

Table 5.6 indicates the descriptive statistics for employees' perception of e-newsletter interruptions. A large proportion (71% = 21% + 50%) of the respondents disagreed that the e-newsletter was an unwelcome intrusion during working hours, while a small proportion (9% = 6% + 3%) agreed that it was. Almost half (47% = 35% + 12%) of the respondents agreed that they skim read through the e-newsletter. A large proportion (76% = 39% + 37%) disagreed that they ignored the e-newsletter, indicating that they at least took note of it. Less than a tenth (7% = 6% + 1%) agreed that they ignored the e-newsletter, indicating that they did not read the e-newsletter at all. Interestingly, close to a third (29%) of the respondents were neutral regarding the e-newsletter causing information overload and a fifth (20%) were neutral on the e-newsletter being an unwelcome intrusion during working hours.

### 5.3.2.8 Employees' preference for a different communication medium

Respondents were asked to indicate their preference for a different communication medium. It is clear from Figure 5.7 that the majority (88%) of the respondents preferred the e-newsletter to a different communication medium.



**Figure 5.7:** Preference for different communication medium  
 Source: Question 18

Of the 12% of respondents that preferred a different communication medium to disseminate organisational information other than e-newsletters, their preferences are shown in Table 5.7.

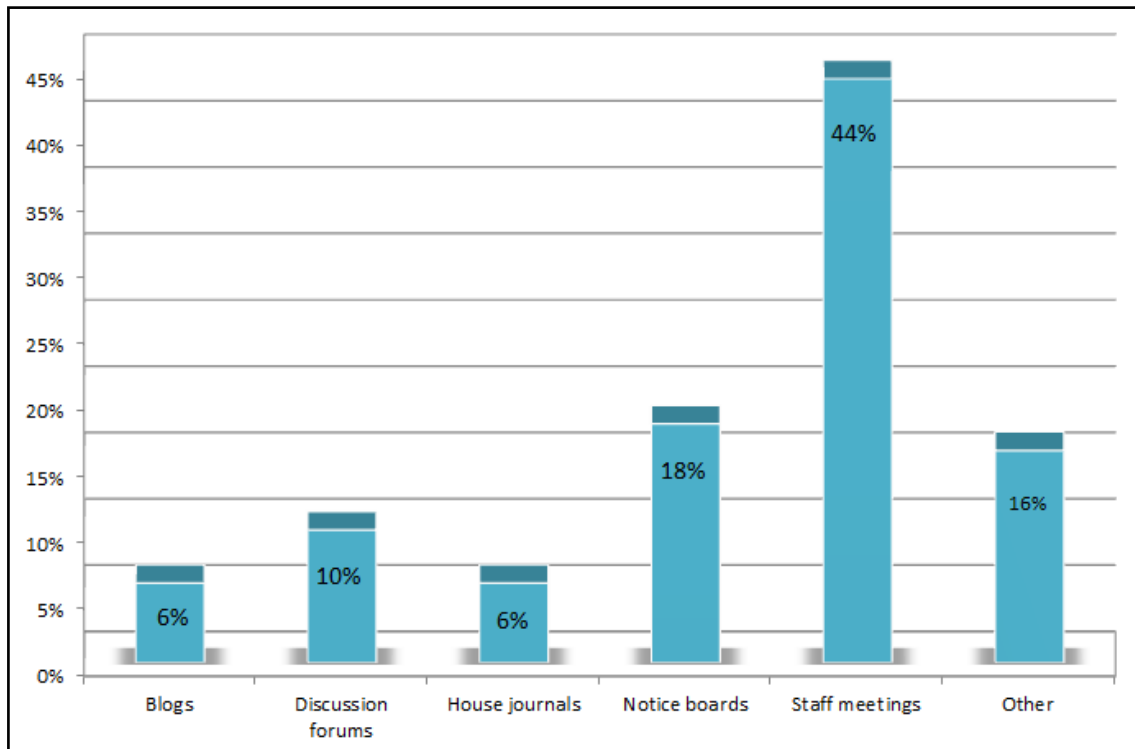
**Table 5.7:** Alternative communication media

Alternative communication medium	Percentage
Staff meetings	44
Notice boards	18
House journal	6
Discussion forums	10
Blogs	6
Other	16

Source: Question 19

Table 5.7 indicates the descriptive statistics for employees' preference for alternative communication media. The majority (44%) of the respondents preferred the richest communication medium, which is face-to-face communication in the

form of staff meetings. The remaining respondents were split between blogs (6%), discussion forums (10%), house journals (6%), notice boards (18%) and other (16%). A visual representation of the alternative communication media is given in Figure 5.8.



**Figure 5.8:** Alternative communication media

### **5.3.2.9 Inclusion preferences for the e-newsletter**

The respondents were asked to indicate what they would prefer to have included in the e-newsletter. As an open-ended question, each respondent provided their own opinion. Upon investigation of the responses, a few key terms/categories stood out, which are indicated in Table 5.8.

From the answers that respondents provided, categories formed based on the similarities in answers. Therefore to simplify the reporting, categories have been provided in Table 5.8 along with direct quotations from the respondents to indicate the types of responses provided.

**Table 5.8:** Preferable inclusions in e-newsletter

	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency count</b>
1.	Satisfied with the current e-newsletter (or nothing to add)	48
2.	Events (updates or inclusions)	16
3.	Dates (organisational due dates for tutorial letters, submissions etc.)	9
4.	Achievements of staff members/employees	54
5.	Policy/policies (any changes made)	16

Source: Question 10

Category 1: Satisfied with the current e-newsletter (or nothing to add)

The term ‘satisfied’ appeared 48 times in the open-ended answers, indicating that approximately 48 respondents were satisfied with the current e-newsletter structure and content. Employees also used phrases such as ‘nothing to add’. Direct quotes from the open-ended question regarding employees’ satisfaction with the current e-newsletter are:

- “Happy with the content”
- “I am satisfied with the newsletter the way it is at the moment – a good mix.”
- “Nothing to add”

Category 2: Events (updates or inclusions)

Events in conjunction with requesting updates on events occurring on the institution’s campuses or the inclusion of certain events which are not normally advertised in the e-newsletter were indicated as preferences for inclusion in the e-newsletter by employees. The term ‘events’ and related phrases occurred 16 times. Direct quotes from the open-ended question regarding employees’ desire for updates or information on events are:

- “Events e. g. conferences, symposia etc. ...”
- “... more of events happening on a daily basis, especially the classes and seminar.”
- “ ... I also use the Intcom to learn about on-campus events, especially more music events info and art exhibition info is good.”

### Category 3: Dates (organisational due dates for tutorial letters, submissions etc.)

Employees referred 9 times to their desire to be reminded of deadlines or due dates for tutorial letters, submission dates for academic material or certain paperwork. Direct quotes surrounding dates include:

- “Essential dates and changes with regards to assignment closing dates, etc.”
- “More due dates for important scheduling dates”

### Category 4: Achievements of staff members/employees

Employees referred to achievements of staff members/employees 54 times, indicating a desire for a more personal and social perspective of the e-newsletter. Direct quotes regarding achievement include:

- “Staff Achievement News”
- “The achievements of staff at lower levels as emphasis is invariably on those at management level.”
- “Organisational and individual achievements.”

### Category 5: Policy/policies (any changes made)

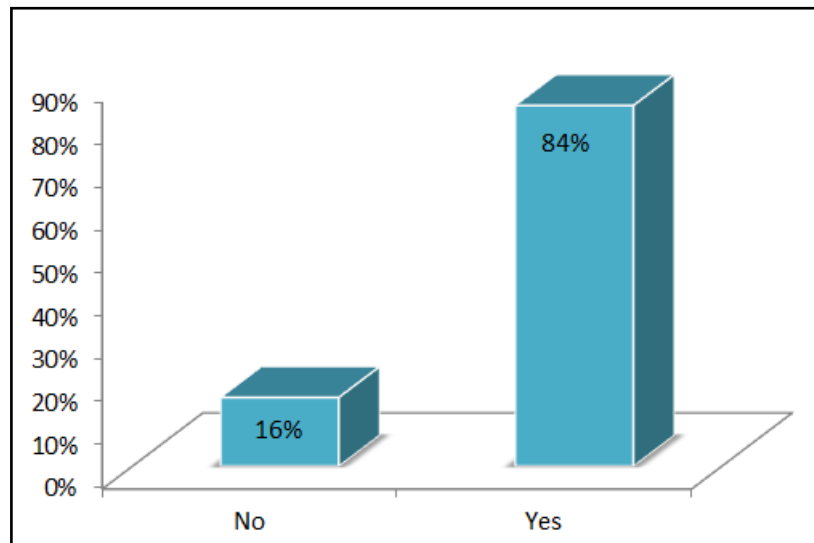
The term ‘policy’ or ‘policies’ was referred to 16 times, indicating a need for policy changes in particular to be communicated for employees to keep abreast of changing organisational information that would give them greater control over the work they performed. Direct quotations regarding policy/policies include:

- “policy updates”
- “Announcements and information about policy changes.”
- “Some indication of policy and process changes that will have an effect on my daily work.”

#### **5.3.2.10 Employees’ desire to receive the e-newsletter**

The question “Do you want to RECEIVE AN E-NEWSLETTER regarding organisational information?” was posed to respondents. The results indicate that more

than four-fifths (84%) of the respondents wanted to receive the e-newsletter, while less than a fifth (16%) did not. These results can be seen in Figure 5.9.



**Figure 5.9:** Employees' desire to receive the e-newsletter  
Source: Question 7

The relevant aspects of TAM that correspond to the respondents' preferences are discussed in the subsequent section.

### **5.3.3 Technology acceptance model (TAM)**

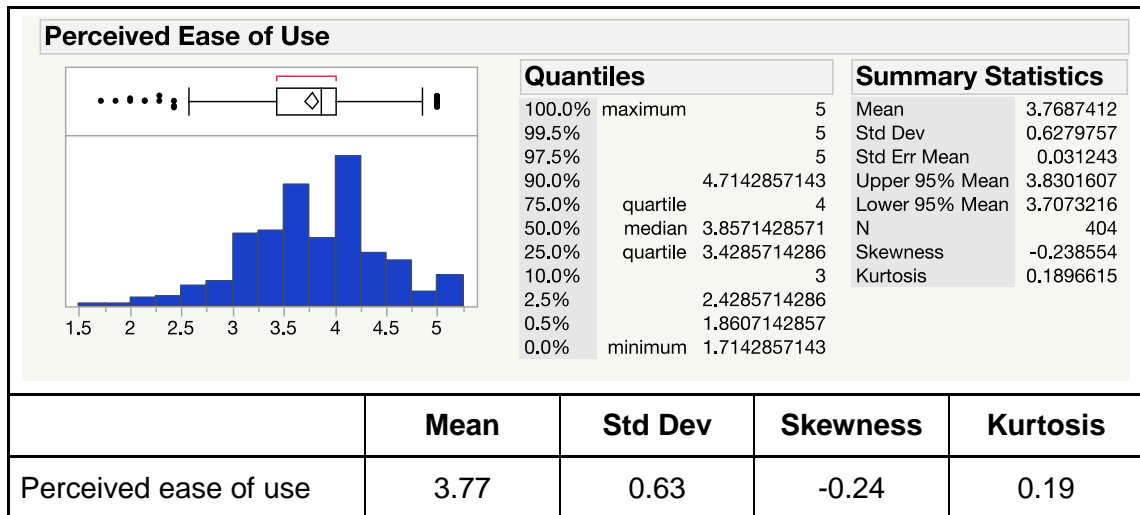
The TAM variable findings are discussed separately in the subsections below.

#### **5.3.3.1 Perceived ease of use**

Perceived ease of use can be defined as "the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system would be free of effort" (Davis in Chauhan, 2015:60). In other words, the less time spent on learning how the application operates, the more time spent actually using the application (Sheikhshoaei & Oloumi, 2011:368).

Figure 5.10 indicates the perceived ease of use of e-newsletters amongst respondents which was tested on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. The mean response is at 3.77, indicating that the average of the responses leans more towards agree. The standard deviation indicates a variation of more than 0.5 from the mean of the group, which is a deviation in answers of about 0.5 from the mean. Based on the skewed

distribution being less than 0, a left-skewed distribution is present, as more responses are to the right of the mean, which leans towards agree on the Likert scale. The kurtosis is a 0.19 value of the data, which is a flatter peak than that of normal distribution, indicating a wider spread around the mean. Furthermore, the majority of responses lie around the second and third quantiles.



**Figure 5.10:** Perceived ease of use factor

Table 5.9 indicates the range of answers by the respondents regarding the factor perceived ease of use. For simplification, as strongly disagree and disagree both show disagreement regarding the perceived ease of use of e-newsletters, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'disagree'; similarly, as strongly agree and agree both show agreement regarding the perceived ease of use of e-newsletters, the scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'agree'.

**Table 5.9:** Perceived ease of use responses

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I find it cumbersome to use Intcom	10.64% [43]	44.55% [180]	25.25% [102]	15.84% [64]	3.71% [15]
Operating Intcom is easy for me	2.22% [9]	5.94% [24]	12.13% [49]	58.17% [235]	21.54% [87]
Interacting with Intcom is often frustrating	13.86% [56]	45.52% [196]	26.24% [106]	9.16% [37]	2.22% [9]
Interacting with Intcom requires a lot of my mental effort	20.55% [83]	52.48% [212]	18.32% [74]	6.93% [28]	1.73% [7]
My interaction with Intcom is clear and understandable	2.48% [10]	8.17% [33]	16.58% [67]	58.42% [236]	14.36% [58]
I find it takes a lot of effort to become skilful at using Intcom	24.01% [97]	49.01% [198]	18.07% [73]	7.43% [30]	1.49% [6]
Overall, I find Intcom easy to use	1.49% [6]	6.19% [25]	11.63% [47]	53.96% [218]	26.73% [108]

Source: Question 3

As seen in Table 5.9, a large percentage (79.71% = 58.17% + 21.54%) of the respondents agreed that operating the e-newsletter was easy and their interaction with the e-newsletter was clear and understandable (72.78% = 58.42% + 14.36%). The majority disagreed that interacting with the e-newsletter required a lot of their mental effort (73.03% = 20.55% + 52.48%) and that it took a lot of effort to become skilful at using the e-newsletter (73.02% = 24.01% + 49.01%). The minority (8.92% = 7.43% + 1.49%) of the respondents agreed that it took a lot of effort to become skilful at using the e-newsletter.

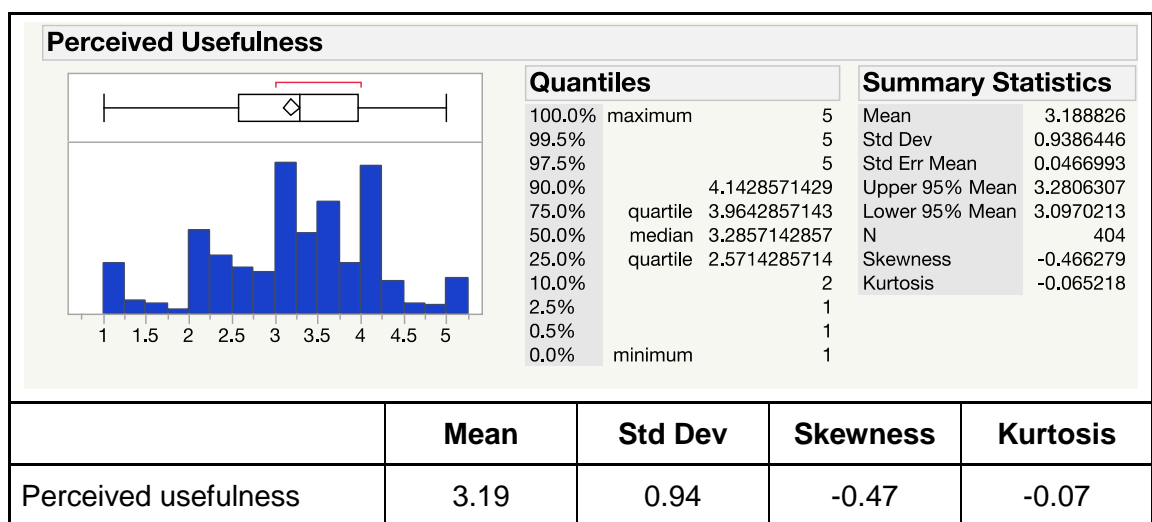
### 5.3.3.2 Perceived usefulness

Perceived usefulness can be defined as “the degree to which a person believes that an e-newsletter will enhance his or her job performance” (Davis in Camarero *et al.*, 2012:5). In other words, the more an application improves effectiveness within the organisation, the more the application will be considered helpful (Sheikhshoaei & Oloumi, 2011:368).

Figure 5.11 indicates the perceived usefulness of e-newsletters amongst respondents which was tested on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly



disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. The respondents' mean response is at 3.19, indicating that the average of the responses leans more towards strongly agree. The standard deviation indicates a variation of almost 1 from the mean of the group, which is a deviation of almost 1 from the mean. Based on the skewed distribution being less than 0, a left-skewed distribution is present, as more responses are to the right of the mean, which leans towards agree on the Likert scale. The kurtosis is a -0.07 value of the data, which is a flatter peak than that of normal distribution, indicating a wider spread around the mean. The majority of responses lie above the third quartile.



**Figure 5.11:** Perceived usefulness factor

Table 5.10 indicates the range of answers by the respondents regarding the factor perceived usefulness. For simplification, as strongly disagree and disagree both show disagreement regarding the perceived usefulness of e-newsletters, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'disagree'; similarly, as strongly agree and agree both show agreement regarding the perceived usefulness of e-newsletters, the scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'agree'.

**Table 5.10:** Perceived usefulness responses

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Using Intcom improves the quality of work I do	8.91% [36]	12.13% [49]	30.45% [123]	41.09% [166]	7.43% [30]
Using the information from Intcom gives me greater control over my work	7.92% [32]	13.12% [53]	29.95% [121]	40.35% [163]	8.66% [35]
Intcom supports critical aspects of my job	6.68% [27]	20.79% [84]	31.19% [126]	32.67% [132]	8.66% [35]
Using the information from Intcom increases my productivity	8.91% [36]	20.79% [84]	33.17% [134]	30.69% [124]	6.44% [26]
Using the information from Intcom improves my job performance	8.42% [34]	22.03% [89]	35.89% [145]	28.71% [116]	4.95% [20]
Using the information from Intcom makes it easier to do my job	7.43% [30]	18.56% [75]	31.44% [127]	36.14% [146]	6.44% [26]
Overall, I find the Intcom e-newsletter useful in my job	6.44% [26]	11.88% [48]	27.23% [110]	42.82% [173]	11.63% [47]

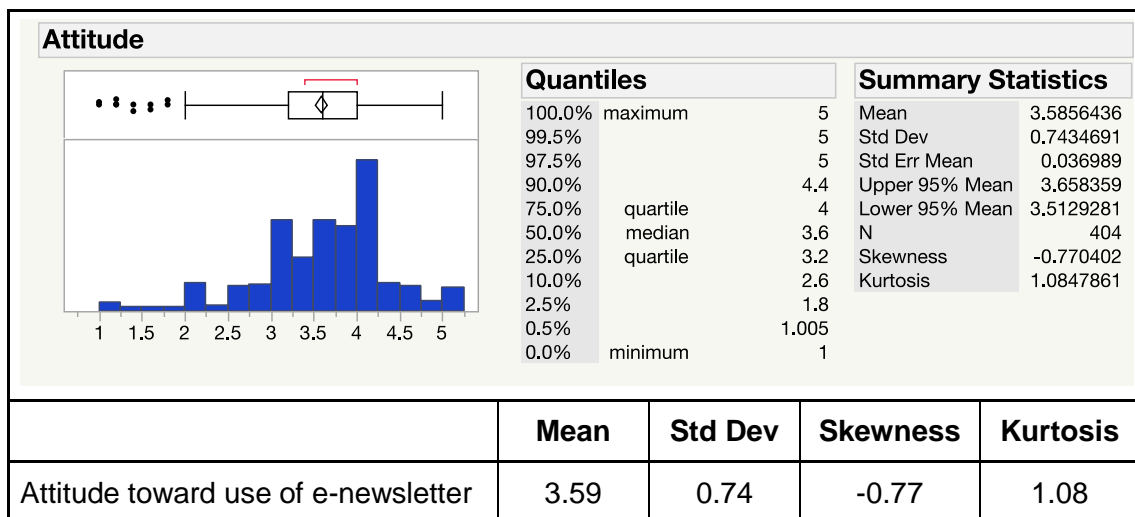
Source: Question 2

As seen in Table 5.10, almost half (48.52% = 41.09% + 7.43%) of the respondents agreed that using Intcom improved the quality of work they did, while more than a fifth (21.04% = 8.91% + 12.13%) disagreed with this. More than half (49.01% = 40.35% + 8.66%) of the respondents agreed that using information from Intcom gave them greater control over their work, while more than a fifth disagreed (21.04% = 7.92% + 13.12%). A moderate proportion (54.45% = 42.82% + 11.63%) of the respondents agreed that overall the Intcom e-newsletter was useful in their job, while a smaller proportion (18.32% = 6.44% + 11.88%) disagreed. Almost a third (31.44%) of the respondents were neutral about whether using the information from Intcom made it easier to do their job.

### 5.3.3.3 Attitude towards use of e-newsletter

Attitude towards the use of the e-newsletter is a learned bias that an individual forms in response to an e-newsletter in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner (Lee, 2012:10). Bias towards an e-newsletter can be influenced by perceived ease of use and the perceived usefulness of the IT medium (Sheikhshoaei & Oloumi, 2011:368). Figure 5.12 indicates the attitude of

respondents towards the use of the e-newsletter which was tested on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. The respondents' mean response is at 3.59, indicating that the average of the responses leans more towards agree. The standard deviation indicates a variation of 0.74 from the mean of the group, which is a deviation of 0.74 from the mean. Based on the skewed distribution being less than 0, a left-skewed distribution is present, as more responses are to the right of the mean, which leans towards agree on the Likert scale. The kurtosis is a 1.08 value of the data, which is a flatter peak than that of normal distribution, indicating a wider spread around the mean. Furthermore, the majority of responses lie around the second and third quantiles.



**Figure 5.12:** Attitude towards use of e-newsletter factor

Table 5.11 indicates the range of answers by the respondents regarding the factor attitude towards the use of the e-newsletter. For simplification, as strongly disagree and disagree both show disagreement regarding attitude towards the use of e-newsletters, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'disagree'; similarly, as strongly agree and agree both show agreement regarding the attitude towards the use of e-newsletters, the scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'agree'.

**Table 5.11:** Attitude towards use of e-newsletter responses

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I like to read Intcom	4.20% [17]	9.16% [37]	15.59% [63]	54.95% [222]	16.09% [65]
I feel good about reading Intcom	4.21% [17]	9.90% [40]	32.92% [133]	42.33% [171]	10.64% [43]
I like to engage with colleagues in the comments section of Intcom	16.58% [67]	35.15% [142]	29.21% [118]	14.85% [60]	4.21% [17]
I think it is good to have Intcom to provide organisational information	2.22% [9]	1.73% [7]	5.20% [21]	54.70% [221]	36.14% [146]
Overall my attitude towards Intcom is favourable	1.73% [7]	3.96% [16]	11.88% [48]	55.20% [223]	27.22% [110]

Source: Question 4

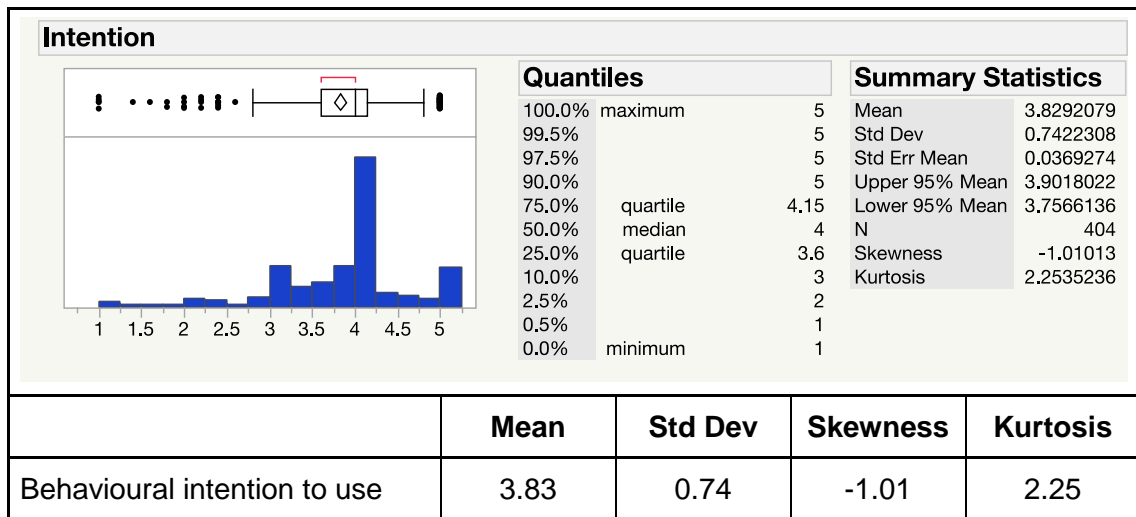
As seen in Table 5.11, almost a fifth (19.06% = 14.85% + 4.21%) of the respondents liked to engage with colleagues in the comments section of Intcom, while more than half did not (51.73% = 16.58% + 35.15%). A large percentage (90.84% = 54.70% + 36.14%) thought it was good to have Intcom to provide organisational information, while a small percentage (3.95% = 2.22% + 1.73%) did not think so. Similarly, a large proportion (82.42% = 55.20% + 27.22%) of the respondents' agreed that their overall attitude towards Intcom was favourable, while a small proportion (5.69% = 1.73% + 3.96%) disagreed.

#### **5.3.3.4 Behavioural intention to use e-newsletters**

Behavioural intention is an individual's perceived likelihood or the subjective possibility that an individual will engage in a given behaviour. Behavioural intention to use an e-newsletter is influenced by attitude towards using an e-newsletter, which in turn is influenced by the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter (Letchumanan & Tarmizi, 2011:514).

Figure 5.13 indicates the behavioural intention of respondents to use the e-newsletter which was tested on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. The respondents' mean response is at 3.83, indicating that the average of the responses leans towards agree. The standard deviation indicates a variation of 0.74 from the mean of the group, which is a

deviation of almost 1 from the mean. Based on the skewed distribution being less than 0, a left-skewed distribution is present, as more responses are to the right of the mean, which leans towards agree on the Likert scale. The kurtosis is a 2.25 value of the data, which is a flatter peak than that of normal distribution, indicating a wider spread around the mean. Furthermore, the majority of responses lie around the second and third quantiles.



**Figure 5.13:** Behavioural intention to use e-newsletter factor

Table 5.12 indicates the range of answers by the respondents regarding the factor behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter. For simplification, as strongly disagree and disagree both show disagreement regarding behavioural intention to use e-newsletters, scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'disagree'; similarly, as strongly agree and agree both show agreement regarding behavioural intention to use e-newsletters, the scale columns are combined in the reporting to form 'agree'.

**Table 5.12:** Behavioural intention to use responses

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I intend to use Intcom on a regular basis in the future	2.97% [12]	5.45% [22]	23.27% [94]	53.96% [218]	14.36% [58]
I intend to continue to use Intcom in future	1.73% [7]	3.47% [14]	15.35% [62]	62.87% [254]	16.58% [67]
I intend to frequently use Intcom in the future	2.48% [10]	7.43% [30]	23.52% [95]	52.97% [214]	13.61% [55]
I will strongly recommend others to use Intcom	2.97% [12]	5.94% [24]	22.77% [92]	50.74% [205]	17.57% [71]
I will continue to read Intcom for organisational information	1.49% [6]	2.48% [10]	7.43% [30]	59.41% [240]	29.21% [118]

Source: Question 6

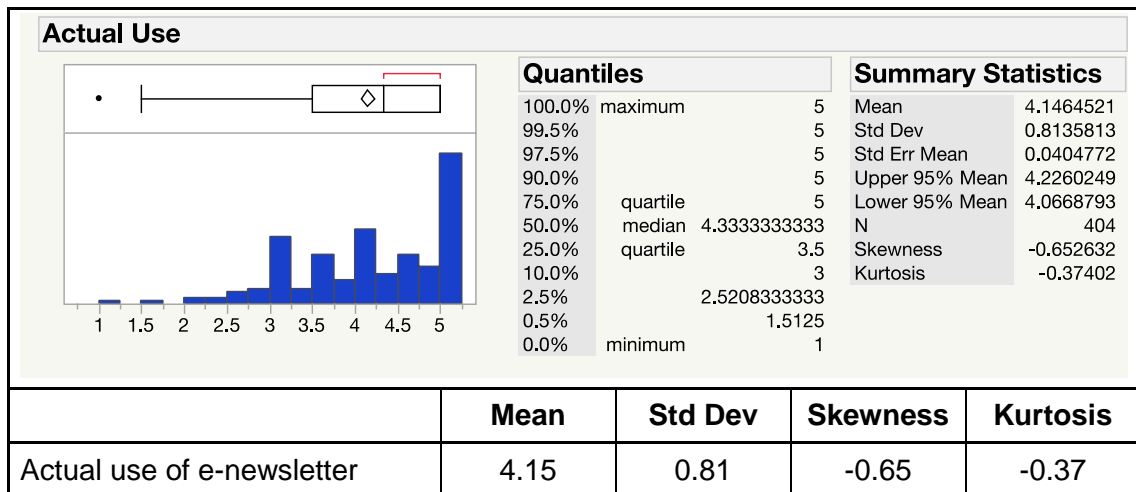
From the results shown in Table 5.12, it is evident that a large percentage (79.45% = 62.87% + 16.58%) of the respondents intended to continue to use Intcom in future, while a small percentage (5.20% = 1.73% + 3.47%) did not. A moderate proportion (68.31% = 50.74% + 17.57%) agreed that they would strongly recommend others to use Intcom, while a small proportion (8.91% = 2.97% + 5.94%) disagreed with this. A large percentage (88.62% = 59.41% + 29.21%) of the respondents would continue to read Intcom for organisational information, while a small percentage (3.97% = 1.49% + 2.48%) would not.

### **5.3.3.5 Actual use**

Actual use of the e-newsletter refers to the actions taken by the individual to make use of the e-newsletter for its intended purpose. Actual use is influenced by behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter (Lee *et al.*, 2011:356).

Figure 5.14 indicates the actual use of an e-newsletter by the respondents which was tested on an interval scale known as a semantic differential scale. The range is from 1 representing a negative description of the e-newsletter to 5 representing a positive description of the e-newsletter. The respondents' mean response is at 4.15, indicating that the average of the responses leans towards positive descriptive words in relation to e-newsletters. The standard deviation indicates a variation of 0.81, which is a deviation of almost 1 from the mean.

Based on the skewed distribution being less than 0, a left-skewed distribution is present, as more responses are to the right of the mean, which leans towards positive descriptive words. The kurtosis is a -0.37 value of the data, which is a flatter peak than that of normal distribution, indicating a wider spread around the mean. Furthermore, the majority of responses lie around the second and third quantiles.



**Figure 5.14:** Actual use of e-newsletter factor

Source: Question 5

Table 5.13 indicates the range of answers by the respondents regarding the factor actual use of the e-newsletter. For simplification, the first and second columns were combined as were the fourth and fifth columns, as each of these are close in connotation on the semantic differential scale.

**Table 5.13:** Actual use responses

Good	48.02% [194]	22.77% [92]	22.53% [91]	5.69% [23]	0.99% [4]	Bad
Wise	44.31% [179]	27.97% [113]	23.02% [93]	3.71% [15]	0.99% [4]	Foolish
Favourable	42.82% [173]	27.12% [112]	25.50% [103]	2.72% [11]	1.24% [5]	Unfavourable
Beneficial	46.78% [189]	29.46% [119]	20.05% [81]	3.47% [14]	0.25% [1]	Harmful
Positive	48.27% [195]	29.70% [120]	19.31% [78]	2.45% [10]	0.25% [1]	Negative
Friendly	45.30% [183]	29.46% [119]	21.04% [85]	3.71% [15]	0.5% [2]	Unfriendly

Source: Question 5

From the results shown in Table 5.13, it is evident that a large percentage of the respondents perceived using Intcom in their job as:

- good (70.79% = 48.02% + 22.77%);
- wise (72.28% = 44.31% + 27.97%);
- favourable (69.94% = 42.82% + 27.12%);
- beneficial (76.24% = 46.78% + 29.46%);
- positive (77.97% = 48.27% + 29.70%) and
- friendly (74.76% = 45.30% + 29.46%).

A small percentage of the respondents perceived using Intcom in their job as:

- bad (6.68% = 5.69% + 0.99%);
- foolish (4.7% = 3.71% + 0.99%);
- unfavourable (3.96% = 2.72% + 1.24%);
- harmful (3.72% = 3.47% + 0.25%);
- negative (2.70% = 2.45% + 0.25%) and
- unfriendly (4.21% = 3.71% + 0.5%).

#### **5.3.4 Validity of TAM**

TAM has been utilised in research conducted across different industries and was thus adapted for the current study. Types of validity cover alignment of the concept and scale, practicality of testing the concept and true scale's representation of the concept. These have all been tested by authors who have utilised and therefore confirmed the validity of TAM. As the validity of the scale has already been tested and utilised in a number of studies (Al-Adwan, Al-Adwan & Smedly, 2013; Wong, Osman, Goh & Rahmat, 2013; Zhang *et al.*, 2013; Alsanaa, 2012; Kesharwani & Bisht, 2012; Mangin, Bourgault, León & Guerrero, 2012; Venter, Van Rensburg & Davis, 2012; Abbasi *et al.*, 2011; Lee *et al.*, 2011; Letchumanan & Tarmizi, 2011; Lin *et al.*, 2011), it was deemed valid for the current study. However, the validity of the TAM scale and its factors were tested in order to confirm the validity considering that the model was being used in a different context in terms of country, industry and institution. The results of



the validity testing are provided below where exploratory factor analysis results are discussed.

### 5.3.5 Reliability of TAM factors

Reliability is when different attempts to test the same concept converge on the same result, thus testing internal consistency (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:334). Cronbach's alpha was utilised to measure internal consistency or internal reliability of the multi-item summated rating scale (Bryman & Bell, 2011:158). Alternative measures to test reliability are available but Cronbach's alpha is most widely used and therefore discussed here. For a scale to be considered reliable, it has to possess a high average correlation and a relatively large number of items. A value of 0.7 is considered relatively reliable. Results will therefore be interpreted as being acceptable above 0.6, having good reliability if Cronbach's alpha is 0.8 and as unacceptable if Cronbach's alpha is below 0.6.

The acceptance of e-newsletters by employees is deduced from 30 statements (or items) of TAM. Respondents were asked to rate these statements on 5-point Likert scales (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree) and a semantic differential scale (1 = negative perception; 5 = positive perception). The 30 statements were subdivided into factors, namely perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude towards using the e-newsletter, behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter and actual use of e-newsletter.

Table 5.14 shows the means, standard deviations, correlations and coefficient alpha reliability estimates for the study's constructs.

**Table 5.14:** Factors – means and standard deviations and coefficient alpha reliability estimates

Factor	Mean	Std dev	Cronbach's alpha	Reliability
Perceived usefulness	3.19	0.94	0.96	Good
Perceived ease of use	3.77	0.63	0.82	Good
Attitude towards use of e-newsletter	3.59	0.74	0.86	Good
Behavioural intention to use e-newsletter	3.83	0.74	0.92	Good
Actual use	4.15	0.81	0.94	Good

Based on Cronbach's alpha for each factor, it was determined that all the factors included in TAM had strong internal consistency, with the highest score (0.96) for the factor perceived usefulness and the lowest score (0.82) for perceived ease of use. Estimates of internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha all exceeded 0.80, indicating good reliability.

Standard deviations indicated as fairly high are indicative of a variation in agreement among the factors. In terms of means, the sub-factor actual use of e-newsletter had the highest mean at 4.15, indicating more importance, while the lowest mean for the factor perceived usefulness was at 3.19, indicating least perceived importance. However, the means were closely distributed, reflecting general agreement on the importance of all the factors.

After the reliability test was completed, a mean was calculated for each factor to assess the level of agreement among the factors. Item analysis was done to establish the reliability of the different factors in the questionnaire in terms of Cronbach's alpha values. Internal consistency was calculated in order to determine the extent to which the items within each factor converged on the same meaning in terms of measuring the same dimension in the same manner. Internal consistency is indicated by reliability and subsequently Cronbach's alpha.

Based on TAM being considered as reliable, it was deemed as a valid measurement for further analysis, namely for exploratory factor analysis, which is discussed in the subsequent section.

#### **5.4 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (EFA)**

Factor analysis was utilised in order to determine which latent variable influenced a set of variables or measures (Vogt, 2005:114), in addition, this analysis allows items which are not aligned with the concept to be removed (Muijs, 2011:198). EFA was conducted to inspect factor validity of the factors adopted in the study. An extraction method used in EFA is principal factor analysis which is the rotation of items by means of grouping items according to the factor which they match (Williams, Brown & Onsman, 2012:5–6). Principal factor analysis

with Varimax rotation was conducted to assess the underlying structure for the 24 items on a Likert scale of the TAM questionnaire (excluding the actual use of the e-newsletter factor as that it used a semantic differential scale). The three main methods of factor analysis, being eigenvalues, scree plot and factor loadings, are discussed.

### 5.4.1 Eigenvalues

Eigenvalues indicate the optimal number of factors that should be retained. According to Muijs (2011:198–225), an eigenvalue of 1 and above can be used to identify significant factors. When a factor’s eigenvalue is below 1, the contribution is insignificant to the variance explained by the underlying factor structure. Based on EFA for the study, the eigenvalues are illustrated in Figure 5.15.

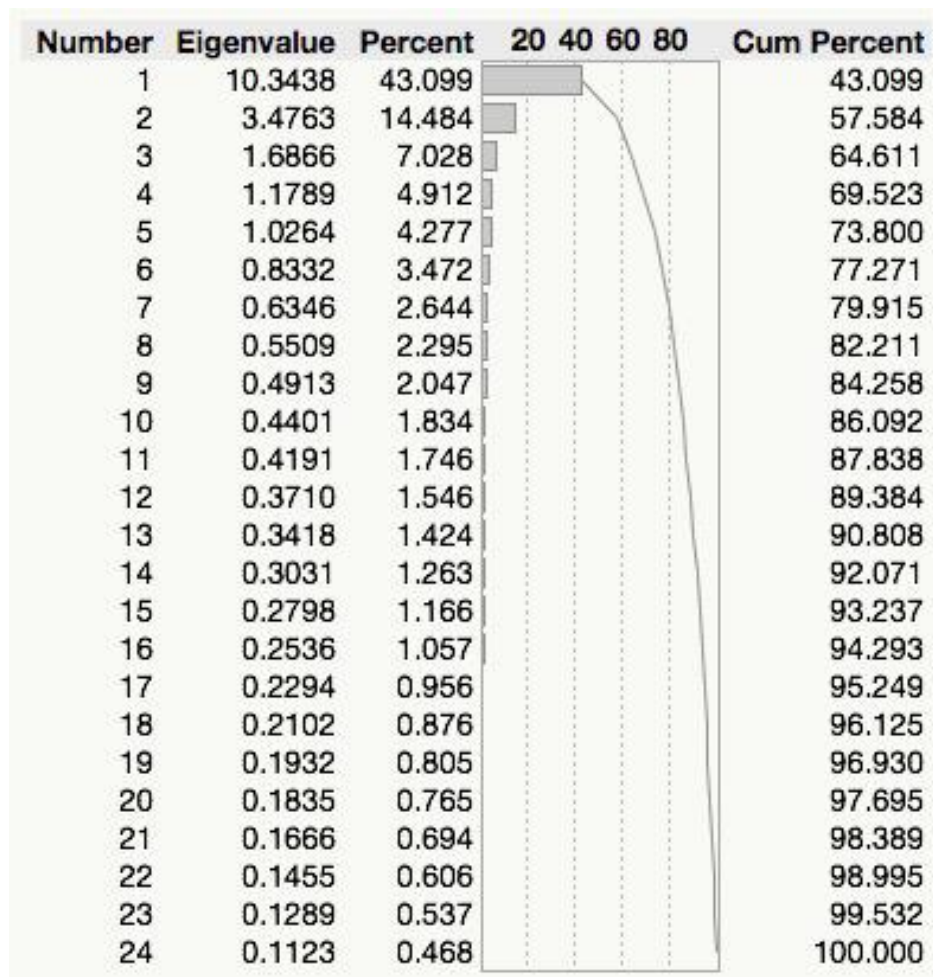


Figure 5.15: Eigenvalues

The eigenvalues indicate a possibility of five significant factors:

- Factor 1: 10.34
- Factor 2: 3.48
- Factor 3: 1.69
- Factor 4: 1.18
- Factor 5: 1.03

To confirm this , a scree plot is provided for those numbers above 1 on the plot.

### 5.4.2 Scree plot

The scree plot, Figure 5.17, indicates the optimal number of factors that could be extracted. The significant factors are those above 1 on a scree plot where the slope runs vertically and then tapers off sharply.

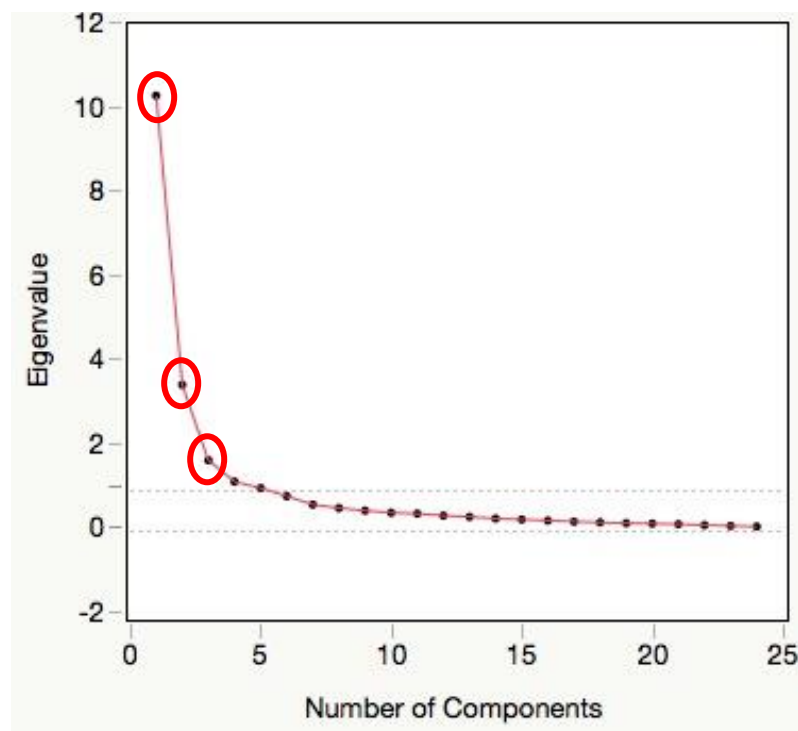


Figure 5.16: Factor analysis, 3 factors

From the scree plot, Figure 5.16, there are three qualifying factors, indicated with red circles. Since the cumulative percentage, as shown in the eigenvalues in Figure 5.15, for three factors is more than the acceptable norm at above 60% (64.61%), three factors were deemed acceptable. Factor loadings are required

in order to determine which items or questions load onto which factor, thereby determining what the factors consist of. For the current study, it was deemed necessary to further rely on the factor loadings.

### 5.4.3 Factor loadings

Factor loadings measure the correlation between the latent variable and observed variable, and can be either positive or negative. A highly positive relationship is close to the value 1, while a highly negative relationship is closer to the value -1. The factor loadings and variance of TAM are discussed below.

It was deemed suitable to make use of three factors where no cross-loadings appear, as shown in Table 5.15. The table indicates the factor loadings which are from highest to lowest for each factor.

**Table 5.15:** Factor loadings for rotated factors

Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Q2.5 Using the information from Intcom improves my job performance	0.90	0.21	-0.1
Q2.4 Using the information from Intcom increases my productivity	0.86	0.27	0.00
Q2.6 Using the information from Intcom makes it easier to do my job	0.86	0.21	-0.1
Q2.3 Intcom supports critical aspects of my job	0.82	0.24	-0.1
Q2.2 Using the information from Intcom gives me greater control over my work	0.81	0.29	-0.0
Q2.7 Overall I find the Intcom e-newsletter useful in my job	0.79	0.27	-0.2
Q2.1 Using Intcom improves the quality of work I do	0.78	0.36	-0.0
Q6.1 I intend to use Intcom on a regular basis in the future	0.27	0.76	-0.2
Q6.4 I will strongly recommend others to use Intcom	0.32	0.76	-0.3
Q6.3 I intend to frequently use Intcom in the future	0.19	0.75	-0.3
Q6.2 I intend to continue to use Intcom in future	0.21	0.74	-0.3
Q4.5 Overall my attitude towards Intcom is favourable	0.29	0.66	-0.3
Q4.2 I feel good about reading Intcom	0.38	0.66	-0.1
Q4.1 I like to read Intcom	0.31	0.66	-0.2
Q6.5 I will continue to read Intcom for organisational information	0.17	0.61	-0.4

Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Q4.4 I think it is good to have Intcom to provide organisational information	0.23	0.60	-0.3
Q4.3 I like to engage with colleagues in the comments section of Intcom	0.34	0.41	0.09
Q3.7 Overall I find Intcom easy to use	0.19	0.31	-0.6
Q3.5 My interaction with Intcom is clear and understandable	0.20	0.24	-0.5
Q3.2 Operating Intcom is easy for me	0.14	0.22	-0.5
Q3.4 Interacting with Intcom requires a lot of my mental effort	0.02	-0.1	0.73
Q3.6 I find it takes a lot of effort to become skilful at using Intcom	0.09	-0.0	0.71
Q3.3 Interacting with Intcom is often frustrating	-0.1	-0.2	0.65
Q3.1 I find it cumbersome to use Intcom	0.04	-0.1	0.46

Principal factor analysis in conjunction with Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalisation, N = 404, were utilised. The two factors attitude towards use of the e-newsletter (A) and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter (BI) emerged as a single factor, and so despite the initial index of four factors, only three emerged.

The Varimax rotation loaded three factors clean, as there are no cross-loadings that appeared for them. Therefore, the following factors emerged from the factor analysis: Factor 1 = perceived ease of use (PEOU); Factor 2 = perceived usefulness (PU) and Factor 3 = Attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter (ABI). It became evident that the majority of the factor loadings were 0.6 or above, showing good convergent validity.

After rotation, the first factor (perceived ease of use) accounted for 23.91% of the variance, the second factor (perceived usefulness) accounted for 21.97% and the third factor (attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter) accounted for 13.81%. In Table 5.15 the items and factor loadings for the rotated factors, with loadings less than 0.40 omitted to improve clarity, are displayed.

For visual representation of the factor loadings on each of the factors, Figure 5.17 represents the factor loadings.

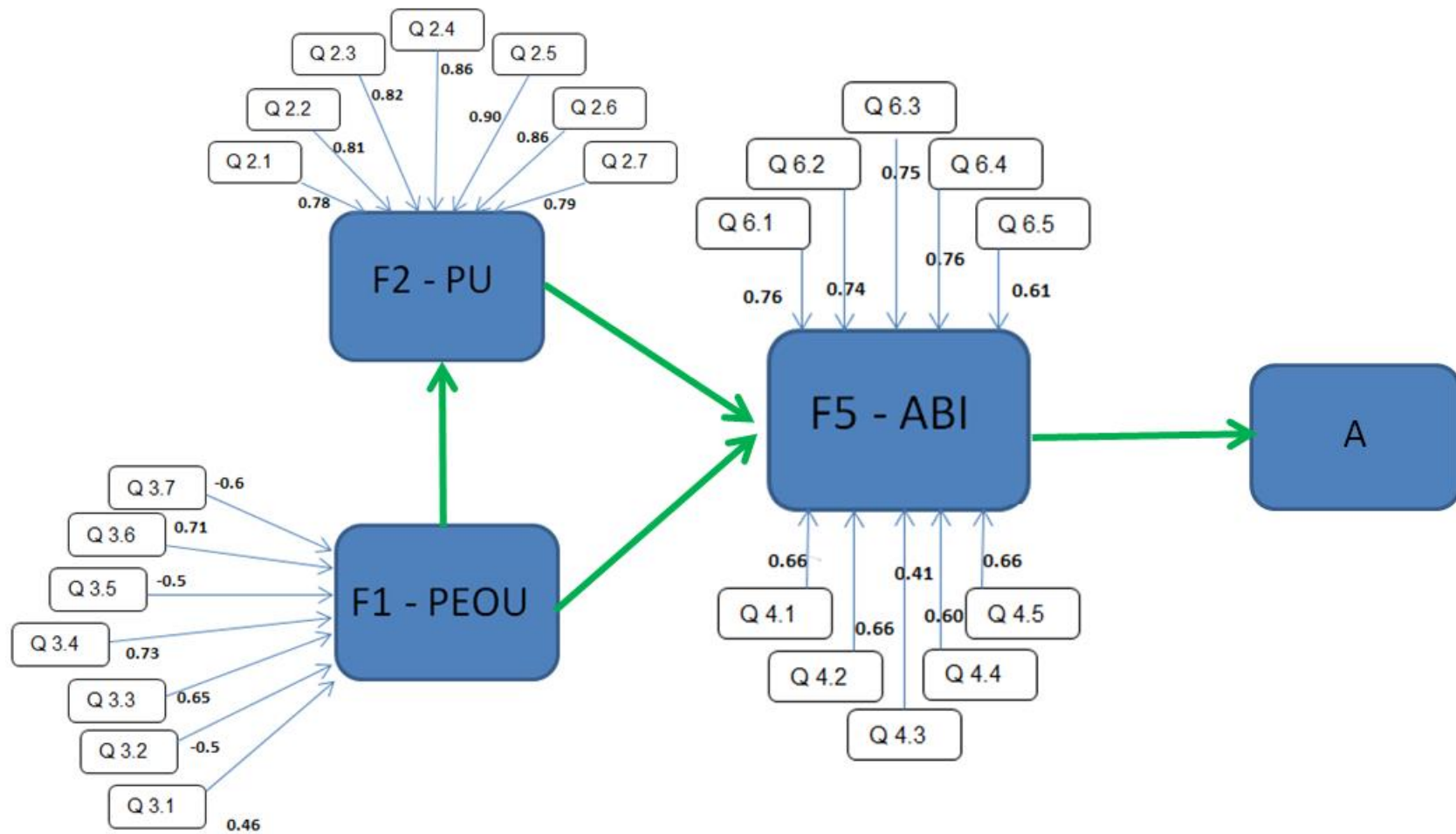


Figure 5.17: Adapted TAM

The factor analysis revealed three factors, namely perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and attitude and behavioural intention to use the system. The descriptive statistics of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have been discussed in sections 5.3.3.1 and 5.3.3.2, respectively. Since the descriptive statistics of the combined attitude and behavioural intention to use the system were not included before adaptation of the model, these are discussed below, based on the factor analysis results.

#### **5.4.3.1 Combined attitude and behavioural intention to use the system**

Based on the factor analysis, it emerged that three factors were significant. Attitude towards using the system and behavioural intention to use the system were considered by respondents as one factor.

Considering that the descriptive statistics for the individual items have already been discussed and remain the same as in Tables 5.11 and 5.12, the individual items will not be repeated.

Tables 5.11 and 5.12 indicate the respondents' attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter tested on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. As indicated in Figure 5.18 the respondents' mean response is at 3.71, indicating that the average of the responses leans towards agree. The standard deviation indicates a variation of 0.69 from the mean of the group, which is a deviation of almost 1 from the mean. Based on the skewed distribution being less than 0, a left-skewed distribution is present, as more responses are to the right of the mean, which leans towards agree on the Likert scale. The kurtosis is a 1.49 value of the data, which is a flatter peak than that of normal distribution, indicating a wider spread around the mean. Furthermore, the majority of responses lie around the second and third quantiles.



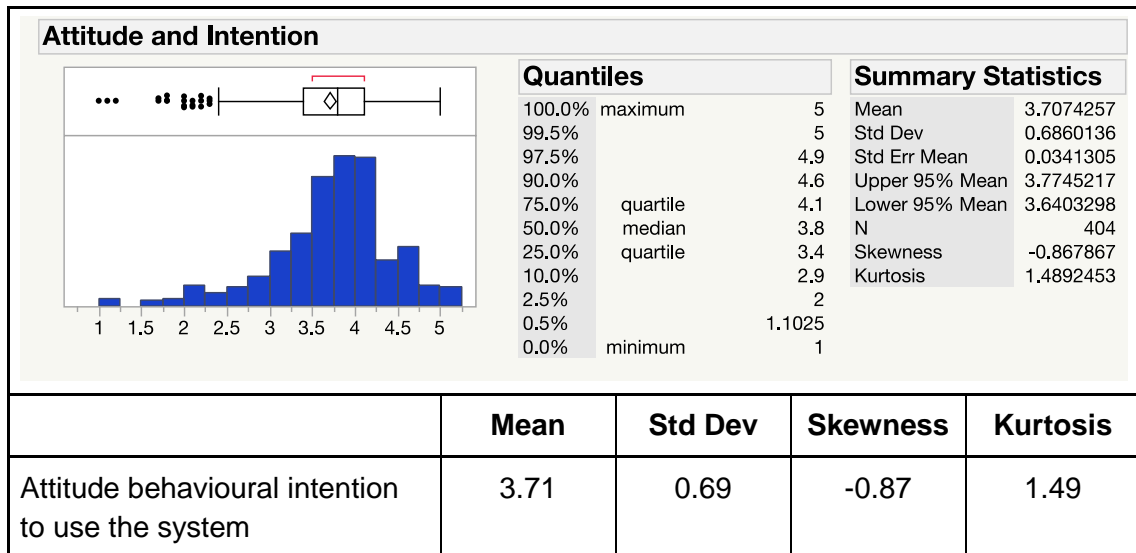


Figure 5.18: Attitude and behavioural intention to use the system

#### 5.4.3.2 Reliability of combined attitude and behavioural factor

Based on the factor analysis, the reliability of the combined factor attitude and behavioural intention is indicated in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16: ABI factor's mean, standard deviation and coefficient alpha reliability estimates

Factor	Mean	Std dev	Cronbach's alpha	Reliability
Attitude and behavioural intention	3.19	0.94	0.96	Good

Based on the Cronbach's alpha of the factor, it was determined that the factors included in TAM have strong internal consistency, with a high score (0.96) for the factor attitude and behavioural intention.

## 5.5 REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Regression analyses the associative relationships between a metric-dependent variable and an independent variable (Bradley, 2010:322), thus estimating how well Y (dependent variable) can be predicted based on X (independent variable). Regression analysis describes the notable change that one variable causes on an observed variable, thus describing the statistical relationship between the two variables. The detailed and in-depth application and analysis of regression methodology go beyond the scope of this research. However, for

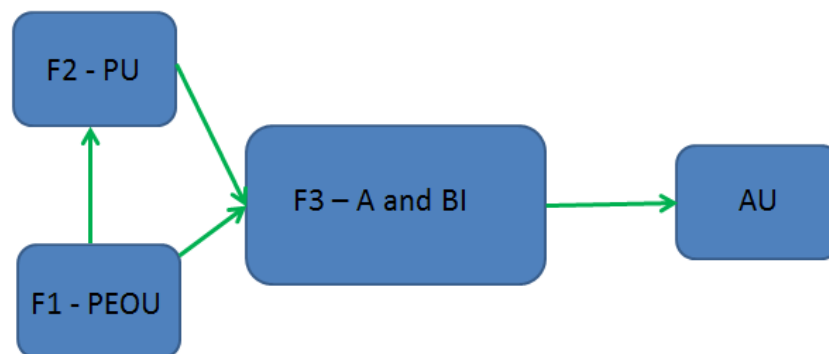
the purpose of multiple regression analysis on TAM, the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is discussed.

The nature of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable can be illustrated by means of a scatter diagram, with the dependent variable on the vertical Y axis and the independent variable on the horizontal X axis. Upon examination of the scatter diagrams, if the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is linear, then linear regression is appropriate to analyse the data (Hutcheson & Moutinho, 2008:21).

In the subsequent section, the linear regression results are presented.

## 5.6 LINEAR REGRESSIONS FOR ADAPTED TAM

In order to report on the adapted model as a whole, first the individual linear regressions need to be discussed to provide a comprehensive view of the factors in adapted TAM as depicted in Figure 5.19.



**Figure 5.19:** Variables of the adapted TAM

Source: Adapted from Davis (in Rauniar *et al.*, 2014:10)

### 5.6.1 Relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness

The tests relevant to the linear regression of the relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are shown in Table 5.17.

**Table 5.17:** Regression output for perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness

<b>Summary of fit</b>	
RSquared	0.05
RSquared adj	0.05
Root mean square error	0.91
Mean of response	3.19
Observations (or sum wgts)	404

<b>Analysis of variance</b>				
Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio
Model	1	18.80	18.80	22.48
Error	402	336.26	0.84	Prob > F
C. Total	403	355.06		<.0001*

<b>Lack of fit</b>				
Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio
Lack of fit	22	18.70	0.85	1.02
Pure error	380	317.56	0.84	Prob > F
Total error	402	336.26		0.44
				Max RSq
				0.11

<b>Parameter estimates</b>					
Term	Estimate	Std error	t Ratio	Prob> t	Std beta
Intercept	1.89	0.28	6.83	<.0001*	0
Ease of use	0.34	0.07	4.74	<.0001*	0.23

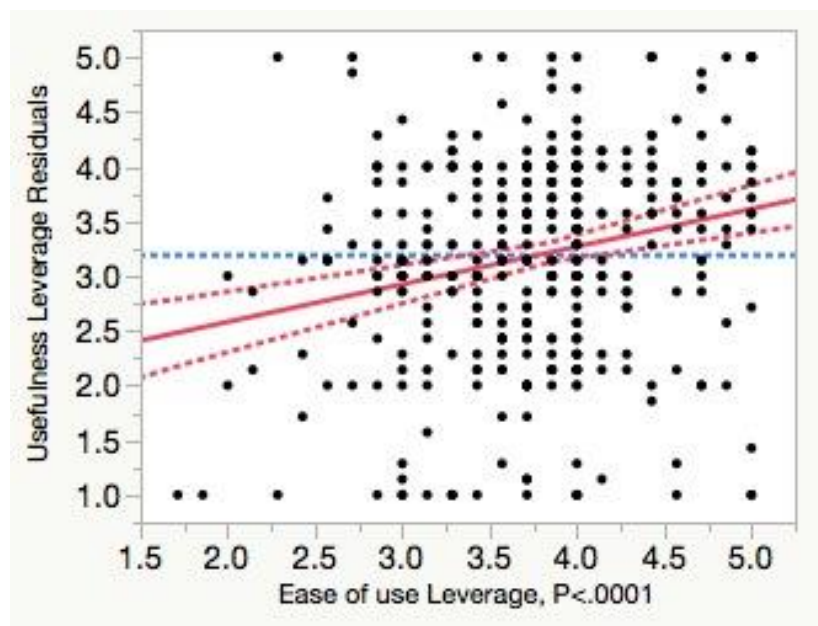
The summary of fit provides the RSquared ( $R^2$ ) or coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the regression between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. The coefficient of determination is at 0.05, which means that the dependent variable perceived usefulness is only explained by 5% from the variable perceived ease of use.  $R^2$  adj indicates a 5% of variation in perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness is explained by the regression model. The spread of the y-values around the average is indicated with the RMSE at 0.91, which indicates a wider spread than the other models.

ANOVA indicates whether the regression explains a statistically significant portion of the variance, which uses a ratio to compare how well the linear regres-

sion predicts the outcome of the accuracy of using an outcome mean data as an estimate. The calculated p-value (<.0001\*) is smaller than 0.01, so the regression model fit is significant at a 99% level of confidence. Therefore, there is a significant linear relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness.

Lack of fit indicates when the regression line fails to adequately describe the functional relationship between the experimental factors and the response variable. To determine whether a regression line accurately fits the data, a comparison must be made between the p-value and the significant level. The lack of fit calculation between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness at a confidence level of 99% or alpha at 0.01 is smaller than the p-value which is at 0.11, indicating that there is no evidence that the model does not fit the data, and therefore it is deemed acceptable.

The linear regression model is depicted by  $Y = a + bX$ . Y is the dependent variable, X is the independent variable, a is the intercept and b is the coefficient of the independent variable. Based on the current study, the linear regression model is depicted by perceived usefulness = 1.89 + 0.34 × perceived ease of use. The regression scatter plot for the model perceived ease of use influence on perceived usefulness is depicted in Figure 5.20.



**Figure 5.20:** Linear regression between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness



The F-test was performed to determine if the regression model fit (the whole model) was statistically significant. In the overall model the p-value from the F-test is less than 0.01 ( $p < .0001^*$ ), indicating a significant linear relationship between the dependent variable (perceived usefulness) and the independent variable (perceived ease of use) at a 99% level of confidence. The significance of the individual independent predictors was assessed by using the individual p-values. Perceived usefulness is a significant predictor at a 99% level of confidence with a p-value below 0.01 ( $p < .0001$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

The linear regression between perceived ease of use plus perceived usefulness and attitude towards using the e-newsletter is discussed next.

### **5.6.2 Relationship between perceived ease of use plus perceived usefulness and attitude towards using the e-newsletter plus behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter**

The tests relevant to the linear regression of the relationship between perceived ease of use plus perceived usefulness and attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter are shown in Table 5.18.

**Table 5.18:** Regression output for perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness

<b>Effect summary</b>		
<b>Source</b>	<b>LogWorth</b>	<b>P-value</b>
Usefulness	36.627 	0.00000
Ease of use	22.222 	0.00000

<b>Summary of fit</b>	
RSquared	0.50
RSquared adj	0.50
Root mean square error	0.48
Mean of response	3.71
Observations (or sum wghts)	402

<b>Analysis of variance</b>				
<b>Source</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>Mean square</b>	<b>F-ratio</b>
Model	2	93.04	46.52	200.55
Error	399	92.56	0.23	Prob > F
C. Total	401	185.60		<.0001*

<b>Lack of fit</b>				
<b>Source</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>Mean square</b>	<b>F-ratio</b>
Lack of fit	220	53.06	0.24	1.09
Pure error	179	39.50	0.22	Prob > F
Total error	399	92.56		0.27
				Max RSq
				0.79

<b>Parameter estimates</b>						
<b>Term</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Std error</b>	<b>t Ratio</b>	<b>Prob&gt; t </b>	<b>Std beta</b>	<b>VIF</b>
Intercept	0.98	0.15	6.26	<.0001*	0	
Usefulness	0.37	0.03	14.21	<.0001*	0.52	1.05
Ease of use	0.41	0.039	10.50	<.0001*	0.38	1.05

<b>Effect test</b>					
<b>Source</b>	<b>Nparm</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>F-ratio</b>	<b>Prob &gt; F</b>
Usefulness	1	1	46.81	201.80	> 0001*
Ease of use	1	1	25.59	110.32	> 0001*

The summary of fit provides the RSquared ( $R^2$ ) or coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the regression between perceived ease of use plus perceived usefulness and attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter. The coefficient of determination is at 0.50, which means that the dependent variable perceived usefulness is only explained by 50% from the variable perceived ease of use.  $R^2$  adj indicates a 50% of variation in perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness is explained by the regression model. The spread of the y-values around the average is indicated with the RMSE at 0.48, which indicates a wider spread than the other models.

Using ANOVA, the calculated p-value ( $< .0001^*$ ) is smaller than 0.01, so the regression model fit is significant at a 99% level of confidence. Therefore, there is a significant linear relationship between perceived ease of use plus perceived usefulness and attitude and behavioural intention towards the e-newsletter.

The lack of fit calculation between perceived ease of use plus perceived usefulness and attitude and behavioural intention towards the e-newsletter at a confidence level of 99% or alpha at 0.01 is smaller than the p-value which is at 0.79, indicating that there is no evidence that the model does not fit the data, and therefore it is deemed acceptable.

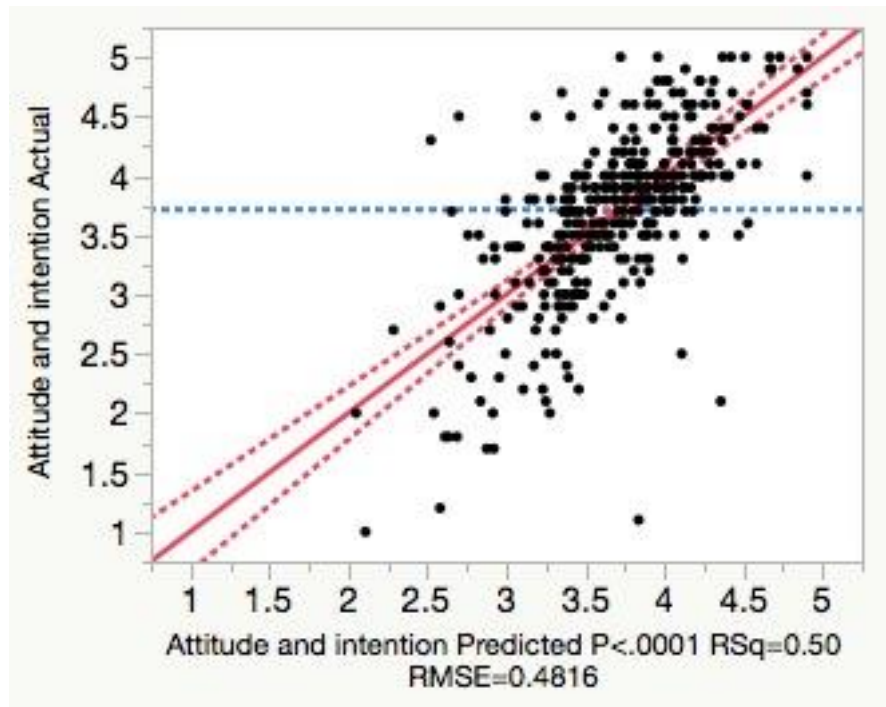
The F-test was performed to determine if the regression model fit (the whole model) was statistically significant. The overall model the p-value from the F-test is less than 0.01 ( $p < .0001^*$ ) indicating a significant linear relationship between the dependent variable (perceived usefulness) and the independent variables (perceived ease of use) at a 99% level of confidence. The significance of the individual independent predictors was assessed by using the individual p-values. Perceived usefulness is a significant predictor at a 99% level of confidence with p-value below 0.01 ( $p < .0001$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

A preliminary review of the scatter plot depicted in Figure 5.22 indicates that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness correlate positively to attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter with the strength of the relationship ( $R^2$  value) at about 50%. The scree plot shows the effectiveness of the

various components in explaining the variance. Using the Varimax method simplifies the factors, making it easier for the subsequent regression analysis.

The linear regression model is depicted by  $Y = a + bX$ . Y is the dependent variable, X is the independent variable, a is the intercept and b is the coefficient of the independent variable, based on the current study the linear regression model is depicted by: perceived usefulness =  $0.37 + 0.41 \times$  perceived ease of use. The regression scatter plot for the model perceived ease of use influence on perceived usefulness is depicted in Figure 4.25.

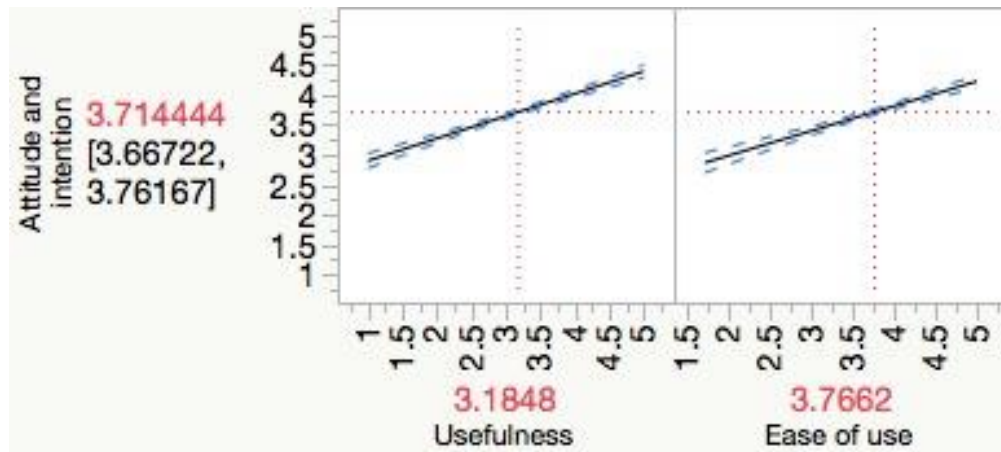
The linear regression model is depicted by  $Y = a + bX$ . Y is the dependent variable, X is the independent variable, a is the intercept and b is the coefficient of the independent variable. Based on the current study, the linear regression model is depicted by Attitude and behavioural intention =  $0.98 + 0.41 \times$  perceived ease of use and  $0.37 \times$  perceived usefulness. The regression scatter plot for the model of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness on attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter is depicted in Figure 5.21.



**Figure 5.21:** Linear regression between attitude and behavioural intention and perceived ease of use plus perceived usefulness



The prediction profile, in Figure 5.22, indicates how changes in a factor affect the predicted values. The profile lines show the magnitude of change in attitude towards the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter as the factor changes (factor 3). The line for perceived usefulness (factor 2) is steeper, indicating that changes in perceived usefulness have the greatest effect on attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter (factor 3).



**Figure 5.22:** Prediction profile on ABI based on PU and PEOU

The linear regression between attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter and actual use of the e-newsletter is discussed below.

### 5.6.3 Relationship between attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter and actual use of the e-newsletter

The tests relevant to the linear regression of the relationship between behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter and actual use of the e-newsletter are shown in Table 5.19.

**Table 5.19:** Relationship between attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter and actual use of the e-newsletter

<b>Summary of fit</b>	
RSquared	0.39
RSquared adj	0.39
Root mean square error	0.63
Mean of response	4.14
Observations (or sum wghts)	402

<b>Analysis of variance</b>				
Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio
Model	1	104.72	104.71	260.86
Error	400	160.57	0.40	Prob > F
C. Total	401	265.29		<.0001*

<b>Lack of fit</b>				
Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio
Lack of fit	34	30.52	0.90	2.53
Pure error	366	130.05	0.36	Prob > F
Total error	400	160.57		<.0001*
				Max RSq
				0.51

<b>Parameter estimates</b>						
Term	Estimate	Std error	t Ratio	Prob> t	Std beta	VIF
Intercept	1.35	0.18	7.70	<.0001*	0	
Attitude and intention	0.75	0.05	16.15	<.0001*	0.63	1

The summary of fit provides the RSquared ( $R^2$ ) or coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the regression between attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter and actual use of the e-newsletter. The coefficient of determination is at 0.39, which means that the dependent variable actual use of the e-newsletter is only explained by 39% from the variable attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter.  $R^2$  adj indicates a 39% of variation in attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter and actual use of the e-newsletter is explained by the regression model. The spread of the y-values around the average is indicated with the RMSE at 4.14, which indicates a wider spread than the other models.

Using ANOVA, the calculated p-value ( $< .0001^*$ ) is smaller than 0.01, so the regression model fit is significant at a 99% level of confidence. Therefore, there is a significant linear relationship between attitude plus behavioural intention towards using the e-newsletter and actual use of the e-newsletter.

The lack of fit calculation between attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter and actual use of the e-newsletter at a confidence level of 99% or alpha at 0.01 is smaller than the p-value which is at 0.51, indicating that there is no evidence that the model does not fit the data, and therefore it is deemed acceptable.

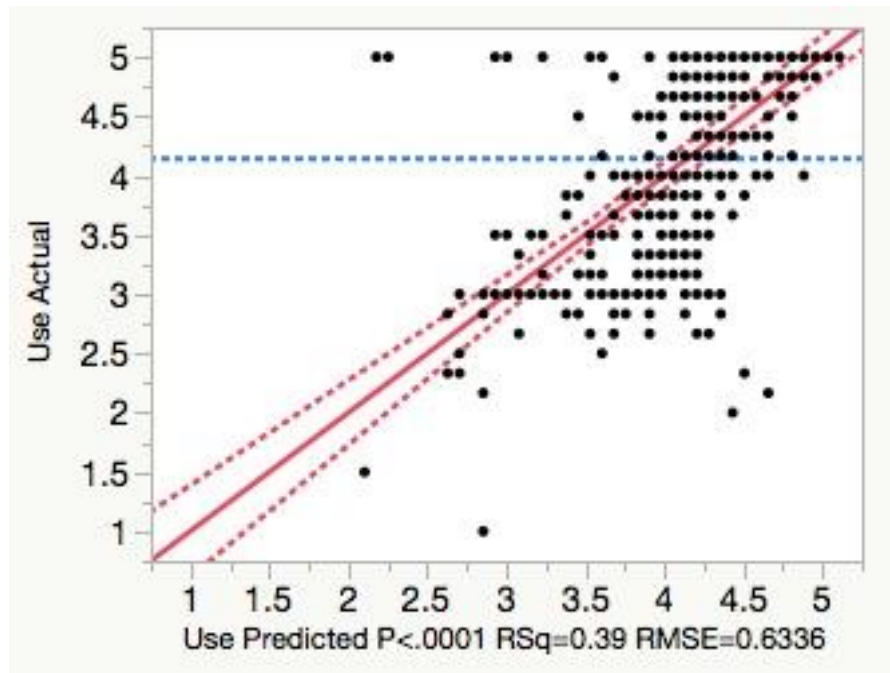
The F-test was performed to determine if the regression model fit (the whole model) was statistically significant. In the overall model the p-value from the F-test is less than 0.01 ( $p < .0001^*$ ), indicating a significant linear relationship between the dependent variable actual use of the e-newsletter and the independent variables attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter at a 99% level of confidence. The significance of the individual independent predictors was assessed by using the individual p-values. Attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter are significant predictors at a 99% level of confidence with p-values below 0.01 ( $p < .0001$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

A preliminary review of this scatter plot, in Figure 5.23, indicates that attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter correlate positively to actual use of the e-newsletter with the strength of the relationship ( $R^2$  value) at almost 40%. The scatter plot shows the effectiveness of the various components in explaining the variance. Using the Varimax method simplifies the factors, making it easier for the subsequent regression analysis.

The linear regression model is depicted by  $Y = a + bX$ . Y is the dependent variable, X is the independent variable, a is the intercept and b is the coefficient of the independent variable. Based on the current study, the linear regression model is depicted by Actual use =  $1.35 + 0.75 \times$  Attitude and behavioural intention. The regression scatter plot for the model attitude and behavioural intention

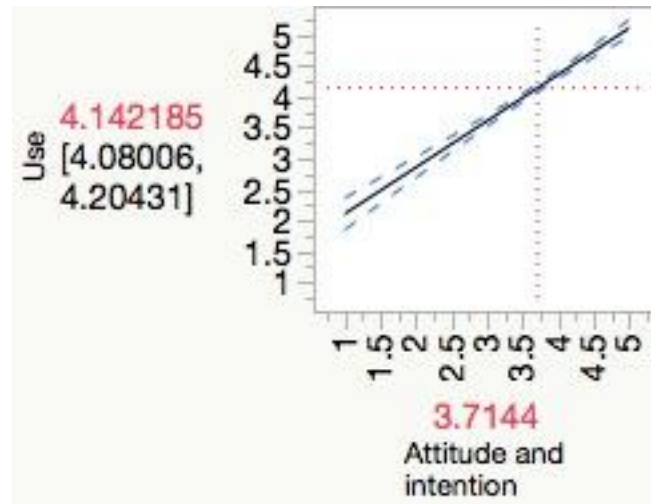
to use the e-newsletter influence on actual use of the e-newsletter is depicted in Figure 5.23.

The linear regression model is depicted by behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter (1.35) and actual use of the e-newsletter (0.75). The regression output for the model behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter and actual use of the e-newsletter is illustrated in Figure 5.23.



**Figure 5.23:** Linear regression between behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter and actual use of the e-newsletter

The prediction profile in Figure 5.24 indicates how changes in a factor affect the predicted values. The profile lines show the magnitude of change in actual use of the e-newsletter as the factor changes. The only line for attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter (factor 3) is steeper, indicating that changes in attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter have an effect on actual use of the e-newsletter.



**Figure 5.24:** Prediction profile ABI on AU

The results in relation to the hypotheses will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

## 5.7 SUMMARY

This analysis chapter summarised the research findings of the study. The chapter commenced with background information, recapping TAM, the research question and objectives before reiterating the research methodology chosen. The findings discussion followed, covering descriptive statistics on the demographic profile of respondents and aspects impacting on TAM. Reliability was confirmed to confirm eligibility for regression analysis. Finally, a discussion of regression analysis with reference to the TAM factors was presented. The implications of the results from the analysis chapter will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the research was to answer the question: Do employees accept e-newsletters for the intended purpose of disseminating organisational information? In order to answer the question, research objectives were formulated based on the literature review. The primary objective was to determine employees' acceptance of e-newsletters for their intended purpose, namely to provide organisational information, in an academic environment. The secondary objectives that were based on the research problem were:

1. To determine whether employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on the perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter
2. To determine whether employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on attitude towards using the e-newsletter
3. To determine whether employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on attitude towards using the e-newsletter
4. To determine whether employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter
5. To determine whether employees' attitude towards using the e-newsletter has a significant influence on behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter

The literature review from which the objectives were derived is revisited in the subsequent discussion.

Internal marketing is defined as "a planned effort using a marketing-like approach, directed at motivating employees, for implementing and integrating organisational strategies towards customer orientation" (Ahmed *et al.*, 2003:10). Internal marketing encourages employees to be customer oriented while simultaneously mindful of organisational goals and objectives (Boshoff, 2014: 222). Internal communication can transmit the desired communication to internal stakeholders regarding customer orientation, organisational goals and objectives.

An internal communication medium known as e-newsletters can be utilised to convey messages to employees relating to organisational matters (Berndt & Tait, 2014:106–107).

The e-newsletter, as an internal marketing communication medium, overcomes behaviours of departments that work in isolation rather than working together, communicates organisational objectives, builds relationships with employees and encourages excellent service and a customer-oriented mind set (Andrews *et al.*, 2012:91; Berndt & Tait, 2014:103; Gressgård *et al.*, 2014:639–340). The versatility of content included in the e-newsletter, cost effectiveness, flexibility of dissemination times and audience-specific natures makes for convincing attributes for the use of e-newsletters for an organisational information communication medium (Dixon, 2012:11; Kowlaski, 2011:136; Vidgen *et al.*, 2011:93).

As with any process, evaluation of the success of a process is important, as is the success of the use of an internal communication medium such as an e-newsletter to convey a message with the desired result. If the communication medium is not delivering the intended message to the employees, then a form of disturbance is present, preventing clear intended communication. Disturbances or disruptions in communication organisational information occur when individuals are overloaded with information, depending on how often and how lengthy communications are (Cut Through Communications, 2012). Added disruptions include interruption of concentration due to the unpredictability of e-newsletters' dissemination times and employees creating a filter where they only read what they consider to be important and discard the remaining e-mails and e-newsletters (Bovée & Thrill, 2012:59; White *et al.*, 2010:75).

TAM was utilised to measure employees' willingness to use the e-newsletter for its intended purpose of disseminating organisational information, thus measuring employees' acceptance of e-newsletters. TAM is a research tool that can assist in explaining and predicting users' adoption of e-newsletters (Zhang *et al.*, 2013:1030). The constructs that make up TAM are perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude towards using the system, behavioural intention to use the system and actual use of the system. TAM was discussed in Chapter

4, which is subsequent to the literature review chapters which provided the theoretical backdrop for the current study.

The focus of the current study was to determine employees' willingness to use the e-newsletter for the purpose of conveying organisational information. With the high use of e-newsletters in organisations and specifically in the higher education institution concerned, the research question was posed: do employees accept e-newsletters for their intended purpose?

In this chapter, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made for the higher education institution using e-newsletters to convey organisational information to its employees. In addition, limitations of the research study and suggestions for future research will be discussed. The subsequent sections provide a conclusion to the study. The aspects surrounding e-newsletter usage as indices of TAM usage are discussed.

## **6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

The employment type, duration of employment, current age and gender make up the demographic profile of the employees.

The study reveals that 63% of the respondents were administration staff, with 57% having been employed for 10 years and less, followed by 32% working for more than 15 years at the institution. 50% of the respondents were between 46 and 65 years of age, indicating that the older generation responded more than the younger generations. More respondents were female (63%) than male (37%).

### **6.2.1 Employees' e-newsletter preferences**

The descriptive statistics relate to the literature discussed in the preceding chapters that are indices of the hypotheses results surrounding TAM.

It is clear from the study that a weekly e-newsletter, released in the morning, is preferred. Contrary to literature, respondents did not perceive the e-newsletter to be a disruption to the work day and did not ignore the e-newsletter. Re-



spondents indicated that they skim read through each e-newsletter sub-section, namely corporate news, academic news, college news and regional news.

The study reveals that there was agreement amongst respondents regarding e-newsletters' social engagement function, although there was a significant negative perception of the feedback and idea-generation aspects of the e-newsletter. As e-newsletters' main purpose is to inform employees about organisational information, there was strong agreement that they create awareness about important institutional information. This appears to serve as an indication of the e-newsletter achieving its purpose of disseminating internal organisation information.

Overall the quality of photographs, content, layout, ease of navigation and a thought for the day were considered as important characteristic inclusions in the e-newsletter. However, as respondents may become accustomed to the design and layout, it is a good idea to make small changes occasionally to entice those reading the e-newsletter with new designs and colour schemes. The majority of the respondents preferred the e-newsletter as a communication medium, but a few preferred another communication medium. The most preferred communication medium besides e-newsletters was staff meetings.

Respondents would like e-newsletters to include updates on events, updates on the academic calendar items and due dates, positive personal achievements of individuals and changes made to policies. A large proportion (84%) of the respondents wanted to receive the e-newsletter for the purpose of receiving organisational information. However, a small proportion (16%) indicated that they would not want to receive the e-newsletter.

### **6.2.2 Technology acceptance model**

As stated in Chapter 1, employees' willingness to utilise the e-newsletter for organisational information dissemination was measured by means of the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Camarero *et al.*, 2012:5), which revealed the following descriptive statistics:

### **6.2.2.1 Perceived ease of use**

Perceived ease of use is defined as “the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system would be free of effort” (Davis in Chauhan, 2015:60). The highest agreement on the item “Overall, I find the e-newsletter easy to use” reveals that there is no difficulty in using the e-newsletter for organisational information transferral. The e-newsletter’s design and layout make it easy for readers to use and understand.

### **6.2.2.2 Perceived usefulness**

Perceived usefulness is defined as “the degree to which a person believes that a system will enhance his or her job performance” (Davis in Rauniar *et al.*, 2014:9-10). The highest agreement on the item “Using the information from the e-newsletter improves my job performance” reveals reliance on the e-newsletter for process or service information to perform better in the job position respondents occupied. However, there was disagreement that the e-newsletter improved job performance. Despite the disagreement, the e-newsletter provides information on new IT processes implemented, training manuals, new suppliers and workshop invitations for job-related training and could therefore contribute considerably to improving job performance. Respondents were more positive about the function that e-newsletters serve in that they improve the quality of work done, give greater control over work and overall are useful in the respondents’ occupation.

### **6.2.2.3 Attitude towards using the system**

Attitude towards use of a system is a learned bias that an individual forms in response to a system in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner (Lee, 2012:10). The highest agreement on the item “I like to read the e-newsletter” reveals that respondents were not opposed to using the e-newsletter to gain organisational information. The item with the lowest frequency was “I like to engage with colleagues in the comments section of the e-newsletter”, as a story link needs to be opened in the e-newsletter and then readers may only leave comments in the comments section. As the e-newsletter provides information not only on organisational processes, but also about outside work activities and

information regarding collaborations with other institutions, this makes for appealing reading.

#### **6.2.2.4 Behavioural intention to use the system**

Behavioural intention is an individual's perceived likelihood or the subjective possibility that an individual will engage in a given behaviour (Letchumanan & Tarmizi, 2011:514). The highest agreement on two items, namely "I intend to use the e-newsletter on a regular basis in the future" and "I intend to continue to use the e-newsletter in future" reveals that respondents were willing to use the e-newsletter for the purpose of organisation information transfer currently and in the future. The current and future usage of the e-newsletter reveals the satisfaction employees experience with the e-newsletter.

#### **6.2.2.5 Actual use of the system**

Actual use of the system refers to the actions taken by the individual to make use of the system for its intended purpose (Lee *et al.*, 2011:356). A positive perception was revealed regarding the use of the e-newsletter since the majority of respondents found the e-newsletter to be good, wise, favourable, beneficial, positive and friendly.

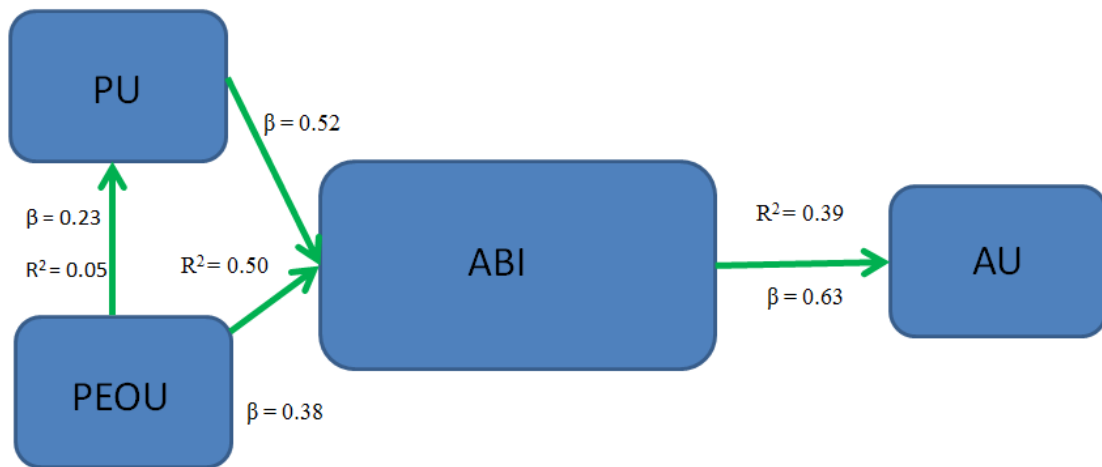
### **6.3 ANALYSIS OF TAM**

The validity of factors has been tested by means of factor analysis, which included eigenvalues, scree plots and factor loadings. Three factors emerged, namely perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and a combined factor of attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter. For the subsequent section, based on the analysis of TAM, the conclusions will be based on the adapted model.

### **6.4 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY: DISCUSSION OF OBJECTIVES**

The objectives are revisited below and conclusions will be drawn according to each objective. Considering the above results based on the standardised beta

coefficient used for reporting on the regressions between constructs, the results are discussed below accompanied by Figure 6.1.



**Figure 6.1:** Impact of factors in adapted TAM

The correlations of the constructs are depicted in Figure 6.1, indicating the correlations relating to the three identified factors. Perceived ease of use (PEOU) does have an impact on attitude and behavioural intention (ABI) to use the e-newsletter. Perceived usefulness (PU) plays a role in predicting attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter. In addition, it was found that attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter have an impact on actual use of the e-newsletter. The combined perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have an impact on the combined attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter.

Employees who perceive the e-newsletter to be easy to use and useful in their jobs have a more positive attitude towards using the e-newsletter and have the behavioural intention to use it. The positive attitude and behavioural intention, in turn, influence employees' actual use of the e-newsletter. In other words, for this study this refers to acceptance of the e-newsletter for transferal of organisational information.

A more detailed discussion in relation to the objectives and hypotheses follows in the next section.

## **6.4.1 Secondary objectives and hypotheses of the study**

The five secondary objectives within the current study, as indicated in Chapter 1, are discussed.

### **6.4.1.1 *Sub-objective 1: To determine whether employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on the perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter***

Perceived ease of use has an influence on perceived usefulness, because without a basic understanding of how to use the e-newsletter (which pertains to perceived ease of use), employees will struggle with using the e-newsletter. The evidential influence of perceived ease of use on perceived usefulness is a reason to support hypothesis H1, as  $\beta = 0.23$  and  $R^2 = 0.05$ .

H<sub>1</sub>: Employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on the perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter.

### **6.4.1.2 *Sub-objective 2: To determine whether employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on attitude towards using the e-newsletter***

If employees find the e-newsletter difficult to use, this will probably negatively affect the employees' attitude towards the e-newsletter. Therefore, it is imperative that the perceived ease of use be high to have a greater chance of positively influencing the employees' attitude towards using the e-newsletter. However, in view of the factor analysis which generated the most suitable factors at only three factors, and because employees saw no difference between attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter, the second hypothesis fell away.

H<sub>2</sub>: Employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their attitude towards using the e-newsletter.

H<sub>2</sub> is rejected, as the impact of perceived ease of use on employees' attitude towards using the e-newsletter could not be tested.

**6.4.1.3 Sub-objective 3: To determine whether employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on attitude towards using the e-newsletter**

If an employee does not find the e-newsletter useful, this will most probably negatively affect the employees' attitude towards the e-newsletter. Therefore, it is imperative that the perceived usefulness be high to have a greater chance of positively influencing the employees' attitude towards using the e-newsletter. However, the results show that employees saw no difference between attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter. The factor analysis thus combined the two factors to form one.

H<sub>3</sub>: Employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their attitude towards using the e-newsletter.

H<sub>3</sub> is rejected, as the impact of perceived usefulness on employees' attitude towards using the e-newsletter could not be tested.

**6.4.1.4 Sub-objective 4: To determine whether employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter**

Since perceived usefulness is a predictor of behavioural intention to make use of the e-newsletter, if the perceived usefulness is low, then the likelihood of employees intending to make use of the e-newsletter is low. Therefore, it is imperative that the perceived usefulness be high to have a greater chance of positively influencing the employees' intention to use the e-newsletter. However, the results show that employees saw no difference between attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter. The factor analysis therefore combined the two factors to form one.

H<sub>4</sub>: Employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their intention to use the e-newsletter.

H<sub>4</sub> is rejected, as the impact of perceived usefulness on employees' behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter could not be tested.

**6.4.1.5 Sub-objective 5: To determine whether employees' attitude towards using the e-newsletter has a significant influence on behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter**

Given that how employees perceive the e-newsletter affects the intention to use the e-newsletter, it is essential that the attitude towards using the e-newsletter be high. However, the results show that employees did not see a distinction between attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter. The factor analysis thus combined the two factors to form one.

H<sub>5</sub>: Employees' attitude towards the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter.

H<sub>5</sub> is rejected, as the impact of attitude towards using the e-newsletter on employees' behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter could not be tested.

The acceptance/rejection of the hypotheses is summarised in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1:** TAM hypotheses results summary

No.	Hypothesis	Decision	Reason
H <sub>1</sub>	Employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on the perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter.	Supported	Perceived ease of use has a considerable impact on perceived usefulness where the standard beta is 0.38.
H <sub>2</sub>	Employees' perceived ease of use of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their attitude towards using the e-newsletter.	Rejected	As employees saw no difference between attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter, these two aspects were combined. Therefore the impact of perceived ease of use on employees' attitude towards using the e-newsletter could not be tested.
H <sub>3</sub>	Employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their attitude towards using the e-newsletter.	Rejected	As employees saw no difference between attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter, these two aspects were combined. Therefore the impact of perceived usefulness on employees' attitude towards using the e-newsletter could not be tested.

continued/...

No.	Hypothesis	Decision	Reason
H <sub>4</sub>	Employees' perceived usefulness of the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their intention to use the e-newsletter.	Rejected	As employees saw no difference between attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter, these two aspects were combined. Therefore the impact of perceived usefulness on employees' behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter could not be tested.
H <sub>5</sub>	Employees' attitude towards the e-newsletter has a significant influence on their behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter.	Rejected	As employees saw no difference between attitude towards using the e-newsletter and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter, these two aspects were combined. Therefore the impact of attitude towards using the e-newsletter on employees' behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter could not be tested.

#### 6.4.2 Primary objective of the study

The primary objective serves as the thrust of the study. For this research, it was to determine employees' acceptance of e-newsletters for their intended purpose, namely to provide organisational information, in an academic environment. **Based on the adapted TAM, as indicated in Figure 6.1 (page 140):**

- perceived ease of use does have an influence on perceived usefulness ( $\beta = 0.23$ ;  $R^2 = 0.05$ )
- perceived ease of use together with perceived usefulness have an influence on attitude and behavioural intention to use e-newsletters ( $R^2 = 0.50$ ), where perceived usefulness has a greater influence (PU:  $\beta = 0.52$ ) on ABI than (PEOU:  $\beta = 0.38$ )
- attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletters have an influence on actual use of the e-newsletters ( $\beta = 0.63$ ;  $R^2 = 0.39$ )

Based on the adaptation of TAM and the influence that attitude and behavioural intention have on actual usage, it can be inferred that employees accept e-newsletters for their purpose of disseminating organisational information. Therefore, the primary objective has been met.



## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING USE OF E-NEWSLETTERS**

The abovementioned findings could be beneficial to the higher education institution. As employees perceive the e-newsletter to be easy to use and useful in daily operations, the higher education institution should continue to follow the same formula for e-newsletter creation. Internal marketing communication media such as e-newsletters are a common form of communication providing organisational information. Due to the size of the institution, staff meetings are not always possible; however, perhaps a link in the e-newsletter to a live streaming or video of the meeting, especially for an institution-wide staff meeting that cannot accommodate all staff members, would be a worthy inclusion.

It is recommended that the higher education institution put mechanisms in place to constantly update the e-newsletters in terms of design and interface (layout, quality of pictures, content etc.) to ensure that employees continue to perceive the e-newsletter as easy to use and useful in their everyday jobs, in alignment with technological changes. In addition, with reference to inclusion preferences, the e-newsletter should include information that gives even greater control to employees in terms of notifications on policy changes and updates on when important documentation is due, such as examination papers and tutorial letters (a permanent link could be incorporated for the academic calendar in an easy-to-find location). To serve as encouragement for employees, information regarding employees' individual achievements and roles as institutional ambassadors should be included more regularly in the e-newsletter. Preference for when the e-newsletter is disseminated should be taken into consideration to ensure that the e-newsletter continues to not be perceived as an intrusion in the work day. Social engagement, particularly for a large institution, is hard to achieve. Therefore to improve the social engagement capability of employees, feedback and idea generation should be improved.

It is essential to ensure that employees continue to accept the e-newsletter for its intended purpose and that the individual items of the constructs of TAM continue to be met for employees to perceive the e-newsletter as easy to use

and useful in their daily work. In addition, to continue to have a positive attitude and a positive behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter for the purpose of organisation information dissemination.

## **6.6 LIMITATIONS**

Particular limitations of this research study should be noted. Firstly, a single-service sector served as the basis for the study. This served as an obstacle for generalising the findings to different sectors, considering that this sector has unique characteristics.

Although this study was merely meant to describe the current employees' acceptance of e-newsletters by means of a quantitative study, there is still the limitation that the surveys used gave respondents fixed choices which forced them to respond to questions that might otherwise not have been relevant to them (White *et al.*, 2010:66).

TAM also has numerous limitations which include utilising cross-sectional research. It measures employees' acceptance at only one point in time, which is limiting considering that an individual's perceptions evolve over a period as they gain more experience (Lee *et al.*, 2011:364). Another important factor to consider is that TAM was designed for the individual and not for social or organisational factors (Sheikhshoaei & Oloumi, 2011:376). The results from TAM are self-reported usage instead of actual usage. TAM relies on the respondent to give an indication of their usage.

Despite these limitations, a single sector was the focus of this study, so as not to complicate the research. In addition, TAM still provides a wealth of information which indicates at a specific point of time the acceptance by individuals of e-newsletters.

The results of the current study could not be generalised to other industries, companies or institutions. The study was constructed around the responses from employees based on a closed-ended survey which utilised interval sampling. In addition, an important factor to consider is that TAM was designed for the individual and not for social or organisational factors (Sheikhshoaei &

Oloumi, 2011:376). The results from TAM reflected self-reported usage instead of actual usage. TAM relies on the employee to give an indication of their usage.

## **6.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

A full research study could be conducted in order to allow for generalisation of results. Further research can be conducted to establish the true opinions of those employees that provided neutral answers on the Likert scales. In addition, the constructs 'attitude towards using the e-newsletter' and 'behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter' could be investigated as one factor, namely 'attitude and behavioural intention to use the e-newsletter', thus further investigating the adapted model and its generalisation in different contexts. The negative responses or disagreement indicated by employees can be researched in depth to establish the reasoning behind these negative responses. The feasibility and effectiveness of including a link in the e-newsletter to a live streaming or video of meetings would be a suggestion for further research.

## **6.8 SUMMARY**

In this chapter the research conclusions were discussed in terms of literature inclusions as well as the stated research objectives to show how all the objectives were achieved. Recommendations were made for employees' continued positive perception and their acceptance of e-newsletters based on a number of singular factors. Limitations and future research suggestions of the study were identified.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**– DIFFERENT SCHOLARLY APPROACHES**  
**TO INTERNAL MARKETING –**

Over the past decades, there has been an evolution in the concept of internal marketing. In the table below, the different scholarly approaches to internal marketing from the conception of the concept until the present day are illustrated.

**Table 1:** Different scholarly approaches to internal marketing (IM)

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Key points</b>	<b>Type of research</b>
Sasser & Arbeit	1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in job satisfaction</li> <li>• Targeted at front-line personnel</li> <li>• A behavioural-instrumental approach</li> <li>• IM is implemented through internal market research and job re-engineering aimed at developing jobs that attract and retain excellent service provider</li> </ul>	Normative
William	1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in greater job satisfaction</li> <li>• Targeted at front-line personnel</li> <li>• A behavioural-instrumental approach</li> <li>• IM is a strategy to deal with status and pay concerns of front-line personnel in order to improve customer service</li> </ul>	Normative
Berry	1981 1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in job satisfaction</li> <li>• Targeted at front-line personnel</li> <li>• A behavioural-instrumental approach</li> <li>• IM is a strategy for job re-engineering and internal communication aimed at deriving customer-minded front-line personnel</li> </ul>	Normative
Gronroos	1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in customer consciousness</li> <li>• Targeted at the entire organisation and all employees</li> <li>• A behavioural-instrumental approach</li> <li>• IM is a strategy for developing the required “state of mind” that will allow customer service effectiveness under a broader relationship management paradigm</li> </ul>	Normative
Tansuhaj, Wong & McCullough	1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in increased levels of job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation</li> <li>• Targeted at front-line employees</li> <li>• A behavioural-instrumental approach</li> <li>• Responsibility of the company’s marketing specialists (marketing and sales departments)</li> <li>• IM is implemented through communication with employees</li> </ul>	Empirical

continued/...

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Key points</b>	<b>Type of research</b>
Gummesson	1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in increased levels of productivity and efficiency</li> <li>• Targeted to all employees involved in the service value-creation chain</li> <li>• A mechanical approach</li> <li>• IM is implemented through communication with employees and culture change mechanisms</li> </ul>	Case study
Tansuhaj, Randall & McCullough	1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in increased levels of job satisfaction and commitment to the company</li> <li>• Targeted at front-line employees</li> <li>• A behavioural-instrumental approach</li> <li>• Responsibility of the company's marketing specialists (marketing and sales departments)</li> <li>• IM is implemented through communication with employees</li> </ul>	Normative
George	1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in effective internal exchanges</li> <li>• Targeted at all employees</li> <li>• A holistic approach</li> <li>• IM is implemented through coordinating human resource and marketing departments to improve the company's service orientation</li> </ul>	Normative
Ahmed & Rafiq	1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in increased marketing strategy effectiveness by aligning, motivating and integrating the employees towards the implementation of company strategies</li> <li>• Targeted at all employees</li> <li>• A holistic approach</li> <li>• IM is implemented through the application of marketing techniques along with human resource management practices to facilitate the implementation of the company's market objectives</li> </ul>	Normative
Foreman & Money	1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM may have various objectives depending on who is targeted (specific groups of employees or the entire organisation)</li> <li>• Can be targeted at specific departments or at the entire organisation</li> <li>• A behavioural-instrumental approach</li> <li>• IM is implemented through communication, development, participative management, motivation and rewards</li> </ul>	Empirical

continued/...

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Key points</b>	<b>Type of research</b>
Freeman & Varey	1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in satisfaction of employees' needs, both as individuals and service providers</li> <li>• Targeted at front-line personnel</li> <li>• A holistic approach</li> <li>• IM is implemented through internal communication aiming to "sell" the importance of customer service</li> </ul>	Normative
Piercy	1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in strategic alignment</li> <li>• Targeted at those who can influence the implementation of the marketing strategy</li> <li>• A behavioural-instrumental approach</li> <li>• IM allows the removal of interdepartmental barriers for developing and implementing the company's market objectives</li> </ul>	Normative
Grönroos	1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in sales- and service-minded personnel</li> <li>• Targeted at all employees, regardless of job description and hierarchy</li> <li>• A behavioural-instrumental approach</li> <li>• IM should be integrated with the marketing function because marketing is the responsibility of every employee who influences customers' value</li> </ul>	Normative
Wasmer & Bruner	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in individual employee's objectives alignment with company objectives</li> <li>• Targeted at all employees</li> <li>• A behavioural-instrumental approach</li> <li>• IM is implemented through formal and informal internal market research and communication to "sell" the company's objectives internally</li> </ul>	Normative
Varey & Lewis	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in change management</li> <li>• Targeted at all employees</li> <li>• A holistic approach</li> <li>• IM is the philosophy and the behaviour that allow rapid organisational change in response to the company's macro and micro environments</li> </ul>	Normative
Rafiq & Ahmed	2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in increased productivity and job improvements</li> <li>• Targeted at all employees</li> <li>• A holistic approach</li> <li>• IM is the planned effort to achieve employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction and interfunctional coordination through employee empowerment</li> </ul>	Normative

continued/...

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Key points</b>	<b>Type of research</b>
Ahmed & Rafiq	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in increased productivity and job improvements</li> <li>• Targeted at all employees</li> <li>• A holistic approach</li> <li>• IM is a cultural framework and an instrument to achieve strategic alignment, while building customer service competences, by managing internal relations through internal communication</li> </ul>	Normative
Naude, Desai & Murphy	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in increased job satisfaction and market orientation adoption</li> <li>• Targeted at all employees involved in the service value-creation chain</li> <li>• A mechanical approach</li> <li>• IM perceived implementation is influenced by individual and organisation characteristics</li> </ul>	Empirical
Ballantyne	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM results in knowledge renewal</li> <li>• Targeted at all employees</li> <li>• A mechanical approach</li> <li>• IM influences service procedures and operations, facilitating their re-engineering using input from both the external and internal environment</li> </ul>	Normative
Lings	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal market orientation (IMO) represents a company philosophy</li> <li>• IMO results in increased levels of job satisfaction</li> <li>• Targeted at front-line personnel</li> <li>• A cultural approach</li> <li>• There are three major facets of IMO, namely internal market research, communications and response</li> </ul>	Normative
Lings & Greenley	2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IM used interchangeably with IMO to describe the effort to</li> <li>• improve internal climate</li> <li>• Results in increased levels of job satisfaction</li> <li>• Targeted at front-line personnel</li> <li>• A behavioural-instrumental approach</li> <li>• Four major facets of an IM programme, namely formal information generation, informal information generation, information dissemination and responsiveness</li> </ul>	Empirical

Source: adapted from: Gounaris (2008:70–71)

## **APPENDIX B**

### **– DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT –**

\* for confidentiality purposes the name of the higher education institution has been changed to Institution A

**Cover letter to survey**

**DETERMINING EMPLOYEES' ACCEPTANCE OF ELECTRONIC  
NEWSLETTERS IN AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT**

Dear Prospective participant,

My name is Carly Prinsloo and I am doing research with Prof Wiid and Mrs Meyer, a full professor and lecturer respectively in the Department of Marketing and Retail management, towards a MCOM: Business Management with specialisation in Marketing Management at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "Determining employees' acceptance of electronic newsletters in an academic environment".

You have been selected to participate in this survey because you are an employee at the Institution A who is exposed to the institution's electronic newsletter. The survey you received is to study employees' willingness to use electronic newsletters for the purpose that it was intended. It is hoped that the information I gain from this survey will help me in determining employees' acceptance of electronic newsletters in an academic environment.

By completing this survey, you agree that the information you provide may be used for research purposes. You are, however, under no obligation to complete the survey and can withdraw from the study prior to submitting the survey. Also note that the survey is developed to be anonymous and I as researcher will have no way of connecting the information you provide to you personally. You will not be able to withdraw from the study once you have clicked the send button based on the anonymous nature of the survey. If you choose to participate in this survey it will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. I do not foresee that you will experience any negative consequences by completing this questionnaire. Nevertheless, as researcher I undertake to keep any individual information provided herein confidential, not to let it out of my possession, and to analyse the feedback received only on group level. The records will be kept for five years for publication purposes where after it will be permanently destroyed

(electronic versions will be indefinitely kept for record purposes). You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the survey.

Should you require any further information, want feedback on the study or need to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Ms Prinsloo at 012 429 8677 or [prinsck@unisa.ac.za](mailto:prinsck@unisa.ac.za) alternatively you can contact Mrs Meyer at [meyeraa@unisa.ac.za](mailto:meyeraa@unisa.ac.za) at 012 429 4639.

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**Respondent's signature**

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**Date**



Resp. no.			
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**– Employees’ acceptance of electronic newsletters  
in an academic environment –**

Dear Respondent

Thank you for your willingness to complete the acceptance of an electronic newsletter (e-newsletter) survey. The aim of the survey is to determine your willingness to use e-newsletters for their intended purpose, namely to provide organisational information. The survey should not take more than **15 minutes** to complete. This is an anonymous and confidential survey. You cannot be identified and the answers you provide will be used for research purposes only.

**Please answer all the questions by placing a cross (X) in the appropriate block.**  
There are no right or wrong answers.

Note that the survey uses the term “e-newsletters”. This refers to e-newsletters in general, whereas Intcom refers to the Institution A’s e-newsletter.

Q1. Please indicate your **TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT**.

Academic	1
Administrative	2

Q2. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements about how you generally feel about the **USEFULNESS OF INTCOM**.

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
2.1	Using Intcom improves the quality of work I do	1	2	3	4	5
2.2	Using the information from Intcom gives me greater control over my work	1	2	3	4	5
2.3	Intcom supports critical aspects of my job	1	2	3	4	5
2.4	Using the information from Intcom increases my productivity	1	2	3	4	5
2.5	Using the information from Intcom improves my job performance	1	2	3	4	5
2.6	Using the information from Intcom makes it easier to do my job	1	2	3	4	5
2.7	Overall, I find the Intcom system useful in my job	1	2	3	4	5

Q3. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements describing how you generally feel about the **EASE OF USE OF INTCOM**.

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
3.1	I find it cumbersome to use Intcom	1	2	3	4	5
3.2	Operating Intcom is easy for me	1	2	3	4	5
3.3	Interacting with Intcom is often frustrating	1	2	3	4	5
3.4	Interacting with Intcom requires a lot of my mental effort	1	2	3	4	5
3.5	My interaction with Intcom is clear and understandable	1	2	3	4	5
3.6	I find it takes a lot of effort to become skilful at using Intcom	1	2	3	4	5
3.7	Overall, I find Intcom easy to use	1	2	3	4	5

Q4. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements describing your **ATTITUDE TOWARDS INTCOM**.

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
4.1	I like to read Intcom	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	I feel good about reading Intcom	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	I like to engage with colleagues in the comments section of Intcom	1	2	3	4	5
4.4	I think it is good to have Intcom to provide organisational information	1	2	3	4	5
4.5	Overall my attitude towards Intcom is favourable	1	2	3	4	5

- Q5. Listed below are pairs of descriptive words that could describe the use of e-newsletters. For each pair of descriptive words, choose the position on the scale that, in your view, best describes the **USE OF INTCOM**. Note that number 3 represents neutral. All things considered, I find using Intcom in my job is:

5.1	Good	1	2	3	4	5	Bad
5.2	Wise	1	2	3	4	5	Foolish
5.3	Favourable	1	2	3	4	5	Unfavourable
5.4	Beneficial	1	2	3	4	5	Harmful
5.5	Positive	1	2	3	4	5	Negative
5.6	Friendly	1	2	3	4	5	Unfriendly

- Q6. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements describing how you generally feel about your **INTENTION TO USE E-NEWSLETTERS**.

	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
6.1	I intend to use Intcom on a regular basis in the future	1	2	3	4	5
6.2	I intend to continue to use Intcom in future	1	2	3	4	5
6.3	I intend to frequently use Intcom in the future	1	2	3	4	5
6.4	I will strongly recommend others to use Intcom	1	2	3	4	5
6.5	I will continue to read Intcom for organisational information	1	2	3	4	5

- Q7. Do you want to **RECEIVE AN E-NEWSLETTER** from Institution A regarding organisational information?

Yes	1
No	2

- Q8. How would you **RATE YOUR USAGE** of Intcom?

Don't use at all	Use about once each second week	Use about once each week	Use several times a week	Use about once each day	Use about several times a day
1	2	3	4	5	6

Q9. Which **PERCENTAGE** of each section in Intcom do you read?

Choose one percentage range option for each section.

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>0% (Not at all)</b>	<b>1% – 20%</b>	<b>21% – 40%</b>	<b>41% – 60%</b>	<b>61% – 80%</b>	<b>81% – 100%</b>
9.1	Corporate news	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.2	Academic news	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.3	College news	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.4	Regional news	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q10. Indicate what you would **LIKE INCLUDED** in the e-newsletter.


Q11. **WHEN** during your workday would you like to receive the e-newsletter?

*Please choose only one of the following:*

<b>Daily</b>	
In the morning	1
In the afternoon	2
At the end of the day	3
It does not matter	4

Q12. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that Intcom performs the following **INSTITUTION A COMMUNITY INTERACTION** capabilities.

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
12.1	Sends updates on events	1	2	3	4	5
12.2	Broadcasts reminders for meetings	1	2	3	4	5
12.3	Archives online information	1	2	3	4	5
12.4	Customises content for the administrative and academic employees	1	2	3	4	5
12.5	Allows employees to ask questions	1	2	3	4	5
12.6	Links Intcom to a survey	1	2	3	4	5
12.7	Includes a suggestion section for employees	1	2	3	4	5
12.8	Includes updates on progress of suggestions made by employees	1	2	3	4	5
12.9	Indicates employees acting as good ambassadors for the institution	1	2	3	4	5
12.10	Indicates where the institution supported employee causes	1	2	3	4	5

Q13. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that Intcom caters for the following **INSTITUTION A COMMUNITY INTERACTION** capabilities.

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
13.1	Creates awareness about important Institution A information	1	2	3	4	5
13.2	Provides feedback on questions from employees (in discussion forums)	1	2	3	4	5
13.3	Collaborates with employees to generate ideas	1	2	3	4	5
13.4	Encourages employees to be advocates/ambassadors for Institution A	1	2	3	4	5

Q14. How would you rate the importance of the following **CHARACTERISTICS OF AN E-NEWSLETTER?**

	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Very unimportant</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
14.1	General quality of photographs in all e-newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
14.2	Content in all e-newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
14.3	Layout of all e-newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
14.4	Easy navigation through the e-newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
14.5	A "thought for the day" included in the e-newsletter	1	2	3	4	5

Q15. What is your opinion of the importance of the following **CHARACTERISTICS OF INTCOM?**

	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Very unimportant</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
15.1	General quality of photographs in Intcom e-newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
15.2	Content in Intcom	1	2	3	4	5
15.3	Layout of Intcom e-newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
15.4	Ease of navigation through Intcom e-newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
15.5	A "thought for the day" included in Intcom	1	2	3	4	5

Q16 How would you **RATE THE DESIGN** of Intcom?

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Very unappealing</b>	<b>Unappealing</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Appealing</b>	<b>Very appealing</b>
16.1	The layout of Intcom	1	2	3	4	5
16.2	The colours used in Intcom	1	2	3	4	5
16.3	The images included in Intcom	1	2	3	4	5



Q17. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements about **INTCOM DISRUPTIONS** during working hours.

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
17.1	Intcom causes information overload	1	2	3	4	5
17.2	Intcom interrupts concentration on work matters	1	2	3	4	5
17.3	Intcom is an unwelcome intrusion during working hours	1	2	3	4	5
17.4	I just skim read through Intcom	1	2	3	4	5
17.5	I ignore Intcom	1	2	3	4	5

Q18. Would you **PREFER A DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION MEDIUM** to receive organisational information?

Yes	1	→ Go to Q19.
No	2	→ Go to Q20.

Q19. If yes, which medium of communication **WOULD YOU PREFER?**

Staff meetings	1
Notice boards	2
House journal	3
Discussion forums	4
Blogs	5
Other (please specify):	6

Q20. Indicate how often you would like to receive an e-newsletter (**FREQUENCY OF E-NEWSLETTER**).

Daily	1
Weekly	2
Daily and weekly	3

Q21. How **IMPORTANT** are newsletters for organisational information?

	Characteristics	Very unimportant	Not important	Neutral	Important	Very important
21.1	Daily newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
21.2	Weekly newsletter	1	2	3	4	5

Q22. How long have you been employed at INSTITUTION A?

Less than 5 years	1
5–10 years	2
11–15 years	3
15 and more	4

Q23. What is your current **AGE**?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

18 – 25 years	1
26 – 35 years	2
36 – 45 years	3
46 – 65 years	4
65+ years	5

Q24. What would you **CLASSIFY** yourself as?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Asian	1
Black	2
Coloured	3
Indian	4
White	5
Other (please specify)	

Q25. Please indicate your **GENDER**.

Female	1
Male	2

**Thank you for completing the survey.  
I appreciate your assistance.**