AN ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE ON COMMUNICATION PRACTICE WITHIN THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

by

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An assessment of the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the Gauteng Department of Social Development

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the extent to which organisational culture influences and shapes an organisation's communication practice, in the Gauteng Department of Social Development. This emanates from the realisation by the South African government that the drive to improve service delivery starts with strengthening internal communication within government departments (Government Communicators' Handbook 2014). Internal communication is a key in the success of any business. It connects various processes and activities of the organisation towards the achievement of goals (Holá & Pikhart 2014). There are many factors that influence internal communication in the organisation and organisational culture is one of them (Senior & Swailes 2010:5). The understanding of the prevailing organisational cultures in the organisation is therefore essential to building successful organisation (Fatsha 2012). The lack of service delivery to some extend emanates from poor organisational culture within the organisation (Cakata 2011:6).

In this dissertation researcher explores the relationship between organisational communication and organisational culture. The point of departure in this study is that these two concepts have a reciprocal relation. Organisational communication enables an organisation to divulge the culture among its employees. Organisational culture comes from the interactions and communication between staff members. A strong sense of open communication culture is essential for effective communication within an organisation.

The results of this study show that organisational culture impact on communication practice mainly through creating a framework within which the meaning is understood. The code of ethics that springs from governing framework of GDSD provides shared values, beliefs and assumptions about how GDSD officials should behave and interact. This study concludes that the understanding of organisational culture is essential for effective communication practice because communication strategy is formed within the ambit of organisational culture.

KEY TERMS:

Organisational culture, organisational structure, values, ethics, internal communication, channels of communication, flows of internal communication, employee engagement, public sector, public sector culture, communication practice and Gauteng Department of Social Development.

TSHOBOKANYO

Thutopatlisiso eno e sekaseka ka moo mokgwatiro wa setheo o tlhotlheletsang le go bopa tiragatso ya tlhaeletsano mo Lefapheng la Tlhabololo ya Loago la Gauteng (GDSD) ka gona. Seno se simologa go tswa mo temogong ya puso ya Aforikaborwa ya gore letsholo la go tokafatsa tlamelo ya ditirelo le simolola ka go maatlafatsa tlhaeletsano ya ka fa gare mo mafapheng a lona a puso (Government Communicators' Handbook 2014). Tlhaeletsano e e nonofileng ya ka fa gare e botlhokwa mo katlegong ya kgwebo nngwe le nngwe. E golaganya ditirego le ditiragatso tse di farologaneng tsa setheo go thusa mo phitlhelelong ya maikemisetso a setheo (Holá le Pikhart 2014). Go na le dintlha di le dintsi tse di tlhotlheletsang tlhaeletsano ya ka fa gare mo setheong mme mokgwatiro wa setheo ke nngwe ya tsona (Senior le Swailes 2010:5). Ka jalo, go tlhaloganya (me)mokgwatiro o o gona mo setheong go botlhokwa go aga setheo se se atlegileng (Fatsha 2012). Go na le ka moo e leng gore tota tlhaelo ya tlamelo ya ditirelo e ka bakwa ke mokgwatiro wa go sa dire sentle mo teng ga setheo (Cakata 2011:6). Mo tlhamong eno, mmatlisisi o tlhotlhomisa kamano magareng ga tlhaeletsano ya mo setheong le mokgwatiro wa setheo. Ntlhatshimologo mo thutopatlisisong eno ke gore megopolo eno e mebedi e na le kamano e e lekalekanang. Tlhaeletsano mo setheong e kgontsha setheo go abelana le go jalelela mokgwatiro wa sona mo badiring ba sona. Mokgwatiro wa setheo o simologa go tswa mo tirisanong le tlhaeletsano magareng ga botsamaisi le ditokololo tsa badiri gammogo le magareng ga badiri ka bobona. Mokgwatiro wa tlhaeletsano e e buletsweng o botlhokwa gore go nne le tlhaeletsano mo setheong. Dipholo tsa thutopatlisiso eno di bontsha gore mokgwatiro wa setheo o ama tiragatso ya tlhaeletsano ka go tlhama letlhomeso le bokao bo ka tlhaloganngwang go tswa mo go lona. Molao wa maitsholo a a siameng o o laolang GDSD o tlamela ka dintlhatheo tse di abelanwang, ditumelo le megopolo malebana le ka moo batlhankedi ba GDSD ba tshwanetseng go itshola le go dirisana ka gona. Thutopatlisiso e konosetsa ka gore go tlhaloganya mokgwatiro wa setheo go botlhokwa gore go nne le tiragatso e e nonofileng ya tlhaeletsano gonne togamaano ya tlhaeletsano e tlhamelwa mo mokgwatirong wa setheo.

MAREO A BOTLHOKWA:

Mokgwatiro wa setheo, popegotheo ya setheo, dintlhatheo, maitsholo a a siameng, tlhaeletsano ya ka fa gare, dikanale tsa tlhaeletsano, tirisano le badiri, lephata la setšhaba, mokgwatiro wa lephata la setšhaba, tiragatso ya tlhaeletsano, Lefapha la Tlhabololo ya Loago la Gauteng

ISISHWANKATHELO

Esi sifundo sihlalutya ubungakanani befuthe lenkcubeko yequmrhu ngendlela le nkcubeko iluchaphazela ngayo unxibelelwano kwiSebe Lophuhliso Lwezentlalontle eGauteng (i*Gauteng Department of Social Development - GDSD)*. Sisukela ekuqapheleni kukarhulumente woMzantsi Afrika ukuba iphulo lokuphucula unikezelo zinkonzo liqala ngokuqinisa unxibelelwano lwangaphakathi kumasebe karhulumente (Government Communicators' Handbook 2014). Unxibelelwano lwangaphakathi olusebenzayo lusisitshixo sempumelelo kulo naliphi na ishishini. Luqhagamshela iinkqubo ezahlukeneyo nemisebenzi yequmrhu ukuze luncede ekufezekiseni iinjongo zequmrhu (Holá and Pikhart 2014). Zininzi izinto ezichaphazela unxibelelwano lwangaphakathi kwiqumrhu, kwaye inkcubeko yequmrhu yenye yazo (Senior and Swailes 2010:5). Ukuziqonda iinkcubeko zequmrhu ezigqubayo ngoko ke kubalulekile ekwakheni iqumrhu elinempumelelo (Fatsha 2012). Ngamanye amaxesha ukuqhwalela konikezelo zinkonzo kudalwa kukungasebenzi kakuhle kwenkcubeko yequmrhu (Cakata 2011:6). Kolu phando, umphandi uphengulula ulwalamano phakathi konxibelelwano lwequmrhu nenkcubeko yequmrhu. Esi sifundo siqalela kwinkalo ethi ezi ngcinga zimbini zinolwalamano. Unxibelelwano lwequmrhu lwenza ukuba iqumrhu labelane kwaye libethelele inkcubeko yalo kubasebenzi. Inkcubeko yequmrhu iphuhla ngokusebenzisana nangonxibelelwano phakathi kwabaphathi nabasebenzi kanti naphakathi kwabasebenzi ngokwabo. Inkcubeko yonxibelelwano olusekuhleni ibalulekile ukuze kubekho unxibelelwano olusebenzayo kwiqumrhu. Iziphumo zesi sifundo zibonisa ukuba inkcubeko yequmrhu iyayichaphazela indlela eluqhutywa ngayo unxibelelwano, ngokuseka isakhelo apho intsingiselo ithi iqondakale khona. Indlela yokuziphatha elawula i*GDSD* inika iinqobo zokuziphatha ekwabelwana ngazo, iinkolo nokucingela ukuba kufuneka aziphathe kwaye asebenzisane njani amagosa e*GDSD*. Esi sifundo sigqibela ngokuthi ukuyiqonda inkcubeko yequmrhu kubalulekile ekwenzeni unxibelelwano olusebenzayo ngoba icebo lobulumko lonxibelelwano lakhiwe ngokulingqamanisa nenkcubeko yequmrhu.

AMAGAMA APHAMBILI:

inkcubeko yequmrhu, ukwakheka kwequmrhu, iinqobo zokuziphatha, ukuziphatha ngokulunga, unxibelelwano lwangaphakathi, amanqwanqwa onxibelelwano, ukusetyenziswa kwabaqeshwa, inkcubeko yecandelo likawonkewonke, ukusebenza konxibelelwano, iSebe Lophuhliso Lwezentlalontle eGauteng

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late grandmother, Sina Dikeledi Tlalang   who was affectionately known as ST. ST instilled in me the values to be successful in career and study. I will always cherish good memories you shared with me granny. May your departed soul rest in peace.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DDGs:	Deputy Director Generals
GCIS:	Government Communication and Information Services
GDSD:	Gauteng Department of Social Development
HOD:	Head of Department
MEC:	Member of Executive Committee
PD:	Power Distance
SONA:	State of the Nation Address
SOPA:	State of the Province Address
UA:	Uncertainty Avoidance

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AND THE RATIONALE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is critical to all of government's service delivery efforts (Government Communicators' Handbook 2014). Organisational culture creates the environment in which communication takes place within an organisation, thus an, analysis of an organisation's culture should be a point of departure in any study of communication practice. The previous study of Vos (2006) recommended that communication researchers should consider features that influence communication practice within an organisation. This study assessed the influence of organisational culture on communication practice in the Gauteng Department of Social Development (GDSD). The organisational culture is considered as one of the features that influence communication within an organisation (Senior & Swailes 2010). The study assessed the influence of organisational culture through analysing key cultural attributes such as values, decision making and openness of communication within GDSD.

The researcher is a community development practitioner employed by the GDSD. The researcher studied the organisation from inside and outside the organisation. The study is important for improved internal communication within GDSD which translates into better service delivery.

This chapter introduces the overall study. Thus, the background to and context of the study are specified. The chapter also presents an organisational overview of the GDSD as well as the relevance of the study to the discipline of communication. The goals and objectives of the study are also explained; the main features of the literature review are briefly highlighted and the research questions are also clearly articulated. The researcher also further deliberates on the research design of the study. Finally, the chapter presents the layout of the dissertation and ends with a summary that reviews the whole chapter.

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

There is a gap in both the literature and research in relation to communication practice within government. Pandey and Garnett (2006) are of the opinion that the limited literature on government communication practice plays a role in the poor understanding of government communication practice. The most recent study on government communication practice in the South African context revealed an urgent need to understand government communication practice from an organisational perspective (Mukhudwana 2014). Accordingly, it was hoped that this study would contribute to the existing body of knowledge on government communication practice from an organisational perspective through exploring the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD.

The GDSD functions in line with guidelines contained in national policy and legislative frameworks. The department is expected to deliver integrated social services in Gauteng with communication being key in this delivery of integrated social services by the GDSD. However, the organisational culture dictates the communication patterns within the organisation. Thus, the study of organisational culture and internal communication stemmed from strategic communication (Miller 2015) and the sense making approach through communication (Søderberg 2011). Organisational culture is embedded on a strategic, sense-making approach and employee interaction. Hence, Mumby (2013) concludes that it is impossible to plan and implement communication strategies unless such strategies are guided by an assessment and thoughtful consideration of the prevailing organisational culture. Idris, Wahab and Jaapar (2015) are of the opinion that cultural incorporation within an organisation plays a vital role in realising excellent communication and enhancing achievement of organisational goals.

There is ample research into both the roles and functions of government communicators in government communication studies (Gelders & Ihlem 2009). In addition, Nazipova, Koshkina and Faizova (2017) highlight that recent studies link organisational culture to company performance and Vos (2006) identified the need to study organisational culture in relation to communication practice within government. A review of literature on government communication within South African context revealed the link between

communication practice and politics (Johnston 2005). Nevertheless, the impact of organisational culture on communication practice within government department has not been assessed holistically by any study, thus this study attempted to address this gap.

1.2.1 Background to the study

It was previously mentioned that communication is a critical element of the service delivery efforts by government. According to Young (2007), poor government communication is a catalyst behind the negative perceptions of government departments. The South African cabinet has attributed the sporadic public service protests in the country to poor internal communication within government departments and, at the time of the study, was calling for the strengthening of internal communication within the government departments in South Africa (Government Communicators' Handbook 2014).

A study conducted in South Africa by the Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation (2013), and which focused on the culture in the public service, found that the majority of government departments, estimated, 80%, were not complying with service delivery requirements and, in addition, that about 76% of the total number of government departments did not have in place sound policies and systems to promote ethics and values. This inability of government departments to practise sound policies and systems may be attributed to poor cultural integration within such departments (Hume & Leonard 2013) with such poor cultural integration ultimately impacting negatively on internal communication and contributing to inadequate public service delivery (Bolboli & Reiche 2013). Poor service delivery by government departments contributes to service delivery strikes with reports reflecting an alarming increase of between 90 and 110% in such strikes in the country with Gauteng contributing 15% to this statistic in 2015 (Moore 2015).

Moleketi (2000) also demonstrated the importance of organisational culture when she emphasised that open expression and the embracing of constructive values generate an environment of excellence that then infiltrates the organisation as whole. Idris et al (2015) support the notion that the clear articulation of values within an organisation is linked to internal communication and is possible only through an appreciation of the organisational culture and its connection to the organisation's mission and vision, thus confirming that

organisational communication should be studied in relation to the organisational culture within which it takes place (Schein 2004).

1.2.2 Relevance of the study to the discipline of communication

Organisational culture reflects the values, beliefs and behavioural norms of the employees within an organisation, thus playing a role in their sense making of situations they encounter and, thus, it forms part of the study of communication (Gaus, Tang & Akil 2017). Putnam (1999) confirms that organisational culture has become a standard component of organisational communication. Thus, this study was deemed to be relevant to the discipline of communication because it sought knowledge about the communication practice within the natural environment of an organisation in order to understand organisational cultures and how they function.

1.3 RESEARCH AIMS

As previously mentioned in the introduction to this chapter (Section 1.1) effective communication practice is essential for any public sector. However, it is the organisational culture that determines the way in which communication should be practised within the organisation (Raza, Mehmood &Sajjid 2013). Poor internal communication in the public sector is perceived as one of the elements that contributes to a decline in service delivery (Government Communicators' Handbook 2014).

As previously stated (Section 1.1), this study aimed to establish the link between the organisational culture and communication practice within the GDSD.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

The purpose of this exploratory study was to assess the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD by means of a qualitative analysis.

1.4.1 Research objectives

In order to achieve the aims of the study the following research objectives were formulated: -

- To assess employees' perceptions of the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD.
- To determine the types of organisational cultures prevailing within the GDSD
- To explore the impact of these organisational cultures on communication practice within the GDSD
- To explore the way in which organisational culture may be used to improve internal communication within the GDSD.

1.4.2 Research questions

The following research questions guided the parameters of the study: -

- What are the employees' perceptions of the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD?
- What are the types of organisational cultures prevailing within the GDSD?
- What is the impact of these cultures on communication practice within the GDSD?
- How may organisational culture be used in such a way that it improves communication within the GDSD?

1.4.3 Research design

This study was exploratory study in which qualitative methods were used. The quest to analyse key cultural attributes such as decision making process and openness of communication made this study exploratory in nature. The aim was to obtain an understanding of the impact of organisational culture on communication practice. The multidimensional levels of organisational culture compelled the researcher to explore the varying depths of this phenomenon in order to determine its influence on communication practice. According to Fortado and Fadil (2012), it is not possible for quantitative methods to capture all the dimensions and components of organisational culture and, thus, such methods are deemed to be inappropriate in any study of organisational culture.

The inductive nature of this study excluded the formulation of hypotheses. The study aimed to explore a variety of perceptions of the impact of organisational culture on communication practice in the broader population of the GDSD. Nevertheless, it is

possible that the findings of this study may be used in the hypotheses formulated by future researchers. The study involved the use of *six structured face to face interviews* and *two focus groups* to assess the participants' perceptions of the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD. All the participants in the structured interviews were asked the same questions. This made the data analysis easy as the researcher was able to compare the responses to the questions (Patton 2002). It was, however, possible that the interviewees may have interpreted the questions posed in the structured interviews in different ways (Merriam & Tisdell 2015) and this may have led to different types of findings prior to the point of saturation. The semi-structured focus group discussions enabled researcher to follow up on the views expressed by the participants in the interviews (Rubin & Rubin 2005) and, thus, to achieve maximum engagement. The review of existing literature on organisational culture and communication dictated the trends followed in the interview schedules which were used for both the focus groups.

1.5 DEFINITIONS OF KEYWORDS

This study sought to assess the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD and, therefore, organisational culture and its related concepts formed basis of the study. In order to ascertain the impact of organisational culture on communication practice the researcher had to explore the correlations between these two concepts thus leading to the identification of internal communication related concepts.

1.5.1 **Organisational culture –** There are several definitions of organisational culture. However, for the purpose of this study organisational culture was taken to refer to all the values that regulate the way in which an organisation operates.

1.5.1.1 *Organisational culture related concepts*

- **Organisational structure –** The "the sum total of the ways in which organisation splits its labour into separate responsibilities and then attains coordination among them" (Wilden, Gudergan, Nielsen & Lings 2013).
- **Values**–The embodiment of what an organisation stands for. These values should form the basis of the behaviour of its members.

- **Ethics—**The guidelines and principles which decide the way in which individuals should behave in the workplace.

1.5.2 Internal communication – For the purpose of this study internal communication refers to the transmission of information among the members of an organisation across all levels in order to create a common understanding of such information.

1.5.2.1 Internal communication related concepts

- **Channels of communication –** Media through which an organisation conveys its messages
- **Flows of internal communication –** Specific channels through which messages move within the organisation.
- **Employee engagement –** Connection between employees or between employees and management to facilitate goal achievement.

1.5.3 Public sector – Government related organisations.

1.5.4 Public sector culture – For the purpose of this study this term refers to the way in which government functions.

1.5.5 Communication practice – Ways adopted by an organisation to communicate with its stakeholders.

1.5.6 Gauteng Department of Social Development – Government organisation.

1.6   OVERVIEW OF THE GDSD

The Department of Social Development in Gauteng is a government department which was formed in accordance with the constitutional mandate in South Africa to provide leadership in respect of social development. The department's policies are guided by the constitution of the country. The department seeks to address the needs of vulnerable members in society through planning, implementing, coordinating and monitoring the delivery of developmental social welfare services. The department operates within national policy and legislative frameworks. The White Paper on Social Welfare (1997) and the White paper on Population for South Africa (1998) are the guiding manuals of the department.

The vision statement of the department is a caring and self-reliant society while the mission statement is to transform society by building conscious and capable citizens through the provision of integrated social development services.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A poor understanding of communication within government departments in South Africa has long been a problem (Communications 2000). Poor internal communication within government departments in South Africa leads to poor service delivery which, eventually, translates into public service protests (Government Communicators' Handbook 2014). It was hoped that this study would contribute to an understanding of communication within government departments and that this increased understanding could make a significant contribution to improved internal communication within the GDSD and better service delivery. Improved internal communication results in engaged employees with high levels of motivation and who identify strongly with their work (Mbhele 2016).

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This study was divided into six chapters. Chapter One contained an introduction to the research the topic and context of the study while Chapter Two presented a literature review which contextualised the research problem and provided theoretical framework for the study. In addition, Chapter Two also provided an overview of the overall understanding of internal communication and culture and further explained the interrelatedness of these two organisational components. Chapter Three discussed the research methodology used in the study, describing the research framework, study type, sample and data collection methods as well as the reliability and validity of the findings. Chapter Four presented the data findings. Chapter Five discussed the data analysis and interpretations while Chapter Six, the last chapter, contained a summary of all the study findings, conclusion to the study and recommendations.

1.9 LIMITATIONS

Although organisational culture is not the only variable that impacts on the communication practice within an organisation this study was limited to the influence of organisational

culture with the study focusing on the impact of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD. Thus, it was not possible to generalise the results to all government departments in either Gauteng or elsewhere.

1.9.1 Methodological limitation

Silverman (2010) criticised the qualitative approach for being contextually insensitive, stating that it should pay more attention to both meanings and experiences. This study was a purposive study which focused only on employees who possessed knowledge about values and belief systems that shape communication within GDSD. The qualitative nature of the study made the generalisation of the study findings not possible.

1.10 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a theoretical overview of the whole study. The context and relevance of the study were explained, the aim of the study specified, the research problem statement outlined, the research objectives and the research questions that formed the parameters of the study clearly articulated. The chapter also contains an overview of the GDSD and, finally the structure of the study as a whole was highlighted. The next chapter presents the literature review that was conducted for the purposes of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two presents a theoretical framework for understanding the influence of organisational culture on communication practice. It also contains a review of relevant literature and theory on organisational culture, communication and the interaction between these two concepts and a discussion on the link between organisational culture and employee engagement. The chapter further highlights organisational culture within the public sector and discusses and justifies the models and standardised instruments of the assessment of organisational culture. This chapter further relates the literature review presented to the Gauteng Department of Social Development (GDSD) and elaborates on the organisational culture dimensions within the GDSD. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of all issues discussed in it. The next subsections highlight some of the significant studies which have been conducted on organisational culture and communication.

2.2   CULTURE AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Culture and organisational culture are generally discussed as interchangeable concepts in communication studies (Needle 2004; Hofstede 1980; Denison 1990; Schein 1985; Zhang 2012; Keyton 2011; Gregory, Harris, Almenakis & Shook 2009). The explanations of organisational culture and culture provide a background for the understanding of the link between organisational culture and communication practice. Communication within an organisation does not take place in a vacuum but is influenced by the context within which it occurs with such context being created by the organisational culture (Schein 2004). In other words, organisational culture and communication are closely related.

2.2.1 Culture

Tsai (2011) views culture as a set of beliefs, values, understandings, practices and ways of making sense that are shared by a group of people. Culture, ultimately, provides the background against which its members interpret, cooperate and make sense of their environment. Nguyen and Aoyama (2014) support the notion that culture constitutes a

foundation of an organisation that defines employee behaviour. Organisational culture is instilled into all employees as soon as they are recruited through training, counselling and interactions, especially with senior management (Suar & Khuntia 2010). Culture may also be said to be a system of meanings held by the members of organisation that distinguishes them from other people (Robbins 2001). Thus, culture confers identity to the organisation.

2.2.2 Organisational culture

Markovi (2008) views organisational culture as a specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups within the organisation and which determines the way in which people interact. Organisational culture is an essential component of any business because it controls all the activities within the organisation (Stokes, Baker & Lichy 2016). According to Janicijevic (2013:72), organisational culture is "a system of assumptions, values, norms, and attitudes, manifested through symbols which the members of an organisation have developed and adopted through mutual experience and which help them determine the meaning of the world around them and the way they behave in it". Although the researchers propose various definitions of the term it would appear the majority of them unanimously concur that it is a collection of beliefs, values, norms and assumptions common in all the employees of a company (Gregory, Harris, Armenakis & Shook 2009).

Fatsha (2012) believes that the identification of the existing organisational culture within the organisation will enhance the building of an efficient organisation. This may be attributed to the fact that organisational culture aligns the employees with the organisation, enabling them to develop an understanding of the vision of the organisation (Newstrom & Davis 1993). It is not, however, all types of organisational cultures that contribute to the success of an organisation. Section 2.3 below differentiates between two organisational culture types within an organisation.

Ortega-Parra and Sastre-Castillo (2013) postulate that organisational culture, as envisaged as a coherent system of assumptions and values, gives an organisation a distinguishable character. Thus, organisations have their own unique ways of operating that derives from their organisational culture. Altaf, Afzal, Hamid and Jamil (2011) concur

that organisational culture forms an organisation's identity which then guides the behavioural patterns within the organisation while Weber and Tarba (2012) maintain that the managers of an organisation maintain the organisation's uniqueness through the organisational culture. The next section discusses the differences between weak and strong organisational cultures.

2.3 DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN WEAK AND STRONG ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES

Identifying the prevailing organisational cultures within the organisation enhances the efficiency of the organisation (Fatsha 2012) and may, ultimately, also determine how different organisational cultures affect communication practices. Sokro (2012) is of the opinion that the extent to which members of the organisation adopt the organisational culture depends on the prevailing organisational culture within the organisation. Failure to adopt the organisational culture by members of the organisation will, eventually, impact adversely on the communication practice within the organisation because organisational culture is a framework through which the meaning is understood and message interpreted within the organisation (Schein 2004).

Deal and Kennedy (1982) believe that the organisational culture within an organisation may be either weak or strong. In a weak organisational culture values and beliefs are not widely shared within the organisation (Ashipaoloye 2014). Rules and regulations are, therefore, emphasised over the shared understanding of the values and beliefs with an organisation with a weak organisational culture relying on strict rules and regulations to align employees to the organisation. Robbins and Judge (2011) also highlight that a weak organisational culture is a culture in which the employees have varied opinions about the organisation's mission and values with employees being more likely to revolt against management in a weak organisational culture (Eaton and Kilby 2015) as compared to their counterparts in a strong organisational culture. An environment in which the members act against management creates tension which is not conducive for communication practice. It may, further, determine how messages are received from management, for example, employees may choose to ignore messages from management, thus resulting in communication failure (Flamholtz & Randle 2012).

Childress (2013) asserts that a weak organisational culture has the potential to obstruct employees in defining their organisational values and the processes of conducting business while an inability on the part of the employees to define the organisational values and processes suggests poor internal communication within the organisation. According to Ravasi and Schultz (2006), efficient internal communication enables the organisational culture to impose norms that direct what occurs in the organisation by outlining suitable behaviour for different circumstances. Poor internal communication may, ultimately, be associated with weak organisational culture (Mumby 2013). Schein (2010) also believes that a weak organisational culture lacks consistent and transparent communication. Flamholtz and Randle (2012) concur with Eaton and Kilby (2015) that employees in a weak organisational culture are likely to act in a pattern that defies organisational priorities because of inadequate communication and a lack of guidance from management.

A strong organisational culture is one in which the organisational values and beliefs are widely shared and significantly influence people's behaviour (Modau 2014). Flamholtz and Randle (2012) highlight that a strong organisational culture streamlines the behaviour of employees in line with the organisational priorities. It is irrefutable that a strong organisational culture promotes open communication which contributes towards goal attainment (Nwibere 2013). Organisations with strong organisational culture strongly instil and spread their norms and values to the employees. The types of organisational culture are discussed below.

2.4 TYPES OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Daft and Lengel (1986) believe that organisational culture is a system that identifies and processes information. Hence, identifying the various organisational culture types within an organisation simplifies the identification of correlations between organisational culture and communication practice. The main types of organisational culture that arise from competing values framework include hierarchy, market, clan and adhocracy culture (Oz, Kaya & Cifci 2015). A competing values framework is an organisational culture assessment model which was devised by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) and adapted by Cameron and Quinn (1999). The model is founded on horizontal and vertical dimensions which comprise competing values.

Hierarchy culture is an organisational culture type characterised by an active leadership and found in mechanical and bureaucratic organisations that value order and rules (Oz et al 2015) while a market culture arises at a time of steadiness and control. Cameron and Quinn (1999) believe that the focus of this type of culture is on transactions with external constituencies. This type of culture may be easily distinguished by competitiveness and productivity. Clan culture compels managers to democratically stimulate and persuade employees to uphold a culture of best performance within the organisation (Miguel 2015). Clan culture also includes collaboration, participation, employee involvement, and open communication (Pinho, Rodriques & Dibb 2014). In a clan culture, the organisation's managers promote teamwork and employee empowerment (Yirdaw 2014). The majority of the features of a clan culture enable the clan culture it to influence internal communication (Ning 2012). On the other hand adhocracy nurtures adaptability, flexibility and creativity in uncertain conditions (Yirdaw 2014). The next section discusses internal communication.

2.5   INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication comes to the fore in the study of organisational culture because of the reciprocal relationship between organisational culture and communication (Modaff, DeWine & Butler 2008). Ryynänen, Pekkarinen and Salminen (2012) view internal communication as an internal organisational practice that offers and shares information to create a sense of community and trust among employees. Organisational culture provides a context for internal communication while the process of instilling the organisation's culture entails internal communication. Idris et al (2015) view cultural integration within an organisation as an essential element in maintaining successful internal communication.

According to Broom, Casey and Ritchey (2000), internal communication is a critical feature that builds relationships within an organisation while Rayner and Adam-Smith (2009) maintain that all the relationships within an organisation depend on effective two-way communication. Turner (2008) elaborates that organisations with high communication effectiveness are able to build positive relationship with their employees as compared to organisations with low communication effectiveness.   Internal

communication, as a relationship builder within an organisation, enables dialogue between management and employees while Constantin and Baias (2015) highlight that dialogue within an organisation contributes to trust and a proper understanding of organisation's mission on the part of the employees.

Internal communication refers to the sharing of information between the sender and receiver where meaning moves from point A to B and the participants are connected by channels (Sending, Waldstron, Krietner & Kinicki 2014). Argenti (2012) also views internal communication as a process of building relationships and creating a conducive atmosphere for all the people within the organisation. Ruck and Welch (2012) regard communication as a feature that contributes to organisational success. Quirke (2008), in support of Ruck and Welch (2012) urge that communication should be a fundamental feature of organisations because it has the potential to structure engagement and arrangements between employees and departmental units through ensuring the positive relationships that enable communication between managers and employees. Neves and Eisenberger (2012:412) also believe that employees who have transparent lines of communication with managers are more likely to engage in a meaningful relationship with such managers. It is vital that the importance of internal communication within an organisation is not underestimated because it influences the capability of strategic managers to involve employees and attain the organisational objectives (Hirsch 2015). Keyton (2010) highlights that the role of internal communication in an organisation's success is receiving increasing recognition due to its central role in unifying all the activities that take place within an organisation. Barker and Angelopulo (2006) also support the notion that communication is a glue that binds an organisation together.

Internal communication is also conceptualised as controlled communication within an organisation (Tench & Yeomans 2009:334) with organisational culture being seen as controlling the internal communication within the organisation (Keyton 2011). Accordingly, Welch and Jackson (2007:35) define internal communication as "…the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders within organisations across several interrelated dimensions including internal line manager communication, internal team communication, internal peer project communication and internal corporate

communication". This definition provides a useful starting point as it refers to the ways in which 'managed' communication is disseminated throughout an organisation with clear responsibilities being assigned based on an employee's role or position within a company. In addition, the definition was seen as particularly pertinent to this study as it refers to internal communication as a distinct dimension, an area which often warrants a brief mention only in much of the communication literature. The word 'managed' suggests the role of managers in enforcing organisational culture through communication. L'Etang (2008) argues that in order to gauge an organisation's communications, one should understand the organisation's climate and analyse the cultural, political and relational dimensions present within the organisation. Seitel (2004) believes that to research the goals of the organisation's internal communication strategy, it should be receptive to employee desires and concerns.

Welch (2012:246) reiterates that a lack of proper communication within an organisation may constitute a threat to organisational interactions and result in a failure to accomplish organisational goals while James (2003:7) believes that internal communication is an ever-evolving field that requires regular assessment and monitoring to ensure its relevance.

According to Ruck and Welch (2012), internal communication is vital for bringing employees into alignment with the organisational structure of an organisation. Alignment in this regard refers to the extent to which employees understand what the organisation is trying to accomplish and how their work contributes to this. Borca and Baesu (2014) also believe that, for an organisation to communicate effectively with its employees, there must be a hierarchical pyramid which is also termed an organisational structure. Long, Perumal and Ajagbe (2012a) believe that employees should be properly aligned with the organisational structure as lines of communication are built within the organisational structure while Robbins and Judge (2011) maintain that organisational structure decreases employee ambiguity and enhances internal communication.

Organisational structure, organisational culture and internal communication are intertwined and, thus, it is difficult to discuss the influence of organisational culture on

communication without an understanding of the organisational structure. The next section discusses internal communication models.

2.5.1 Internal communication models

Internal communication models are essential for understanding internal communication. Jones (2011) mentions two internal communication models which have been identified by scholars, namely, the transmission model and the transaction model. Shannon and Weaver developed the transmission model in 1949 (Fiske & Jenkins 2011). Jones (2011) views the transmission model as linear, thus implying a single pattern process whereby the sender conveys a message to the receiver.

The transaction model was deemed to be the communication model relevant for the purposes of this study because it views communication as a procedure in which the participants create social certainties together within a social, relational and cultural context (Jones 2011). Fiske and Jenkins (2011) believes that the transaction model may build human relationships. The researcher in this study was of the opinion that the open lines of communication present in the model allow for the exploration of the impact of organisational culture on communication practice within an organisation (Neves & Eisenberger 2012).
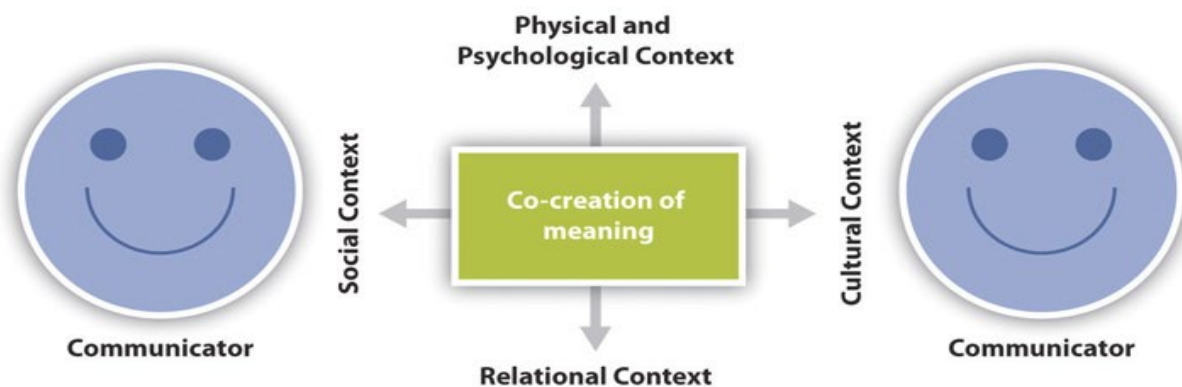
Figure 2.1 Transactional communication model

Source: Jones (2011)

An inclusive understanding of the communication context is made possible by the transactional model of communication. Context is the location in which communication occurs (Adler & Rodman 2006:5). *Physical context* refers to the environmental features in which communication happens, for example, the dimensions, design, temperature, and illumination of the environment while *psychological context* refers to the intellectual and emotional factors that take place within a communication encounter. Pressure, nervousness, and feelings are distinctive examples of the psychological influences of communication (Jones 2011).

In terms of the transaction model of communication persons construct shared-meaning and shape actualities in their communication. The transaction model takes into account how social, relational, and cultural contexts constructs affect communication encounters. *Social context* may be the unspecified norms that direct communication. When mingling with different communities, individuals begin to understand the rules and slowly distinguish the norms for communicating (Saha & Kumar 2018). The next section discusses flows of communication within the organisation.

2.6   FLOWS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

Communication practice is critically influenced by the context within which it takes place (Fisher 1989). The context of communication within the organisation emanates from the organisational culture (Alvesson 2013) while, ultimately, the flow of communication within the organisation depicts the organisational culture. The influence of organisational culture on the flow of communication is demonstrated extensively in Hofstede's cultural dimensions discussed below (Section 2.14.1).

Greenberg and Baron (2008:348) distinguish two types of communication movement within an organisation, namely, a formal and an informal communication flow. Formal communication adheres to organisational rules (Bratton, Callinan, Forshaw & Sawchuk 2007) while informal communication does not use the formal chain of command.

It is imperative that the structure of the organisation enables communication to flow in three distinct directions, namely, downward, upward and horizontally (Lunenburg & Ornstein cited in Lunenburg 2010:2). Miljković and Rijavec (2008) concur with Lunenburg

and Ornstein about the directions of communication within an organisation while Yan (2011) is of the opinion that communication may also be directed upward and downward in a vertical direction. Widhiastuti (2013) is of the opinion that hierarchical communication within an organisation is crucial for the exchanges of information and the facilitation of team building. Richmond, McCroskey and McCroskey (2005 cited in Spaho 2013) maintain that communications flows mainly vertically, horizontally, upward and downward within the organisation. The next subsection discusses vertical communication.

2.6.1 Vertical communication

Verma (2013) views vertical communication as taking place between people on different hierarchical levels with this type of communication taking place between managers and their subordinates within an organisation and involving both upward and downward communication (Cornelissen 2014). Downward communication is discussed in the next subsection.

2.6.2 Downward communication

Tubbs and Moss (2008) view downward communication as communication from management to employees. Rho (2009) concurs with Tubbs and Moss (2008) in explaining that downward communication is cascaded from top management down to the employees. This type of flow is suitable for organisations with an authoritarian leadership style (Spaho 2013). Sueldo (2016) believes that downward communication flow involves the giving of orders while Verma (2013) equally believes that this type of communication is used to convey procedures and policies to subordinates across different levels. Leopold (2002) highlights that management uses this channel to notify employees about issues that affect them, to capacitate employee directly in relation to organisational culture and to align employees' duties to the organisational values. Upward communication is discussed in the next subsection.

2.6.3 Upward communication

This type of communication movement is initiated by employees to the management (Goldhaber 1993). Upward communication is intended to make upper managers aware of the challenges experienced at the grassroots level as well as to make suggestions for

improving task related procedures (Verma 2013). This communication is usually used by employees to provide feedback and to ask questions. Bulutlar and Kamaşak (2008) maintains that open communication improves the relationship between employee and management while Giri and Kumar (2010) emphasise that an upward communication flow enables employee participation in policy development within the organisation. The next subsection discusses horizontal communication.

2.6.4 Horizontal communication

Horizontal communication may be seen as communication that enhances coordination within the organisation. This enhanced coordination allows the transverse flow of messages that permits units to team up with other units without being confined to the normal hierarchical flow structure. Larkin and Larkin (1994) view this type of communication as ideal for a decentralised power environment. It is also believed that this type of communication flow has the potential to increase job satisfaction through coordination. For example, within GDSD it enhances coordination of members without confining them to upward or downward communication. Miller (2007) reveals that the decentralisation of certain strategic decisions ensures more interaction between employees, thus contributing to increased job satisfaction although this depends on the prevailing organisational culture. Informal communication is discussed in the next subsection.

2.6.5 Informal communication – the grapevine

The grapevine refers to the casual spread of information and, thus, it involves hearsay information from person to person (Singh & Sharma 2013:157). This type of communication is made possible by the informal connection of organisational members and is sometimes work oriented. This informal channel is known as the grapevine and is used mainly for social interaction (Abugre 2013).

Davis (2004) believes that this type of information flow is one of fastest channels of communication within an organisation although it is generally seen as conveying inaccurate information. Tubbs and Moss (2008:495) see this communication

untrustworthy because of message misrepresentation in the communication process. The next section discusses internal communication barriers.

2.7   INTERNAL COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Garg and Agarwal (2012:40) view communication as essential for organisational success. However, communication barriers may hinder organisational success. Longest and Young (2000 cited in Ergen 2011:58) assert that a barrier in this regard may be regarded as something that prohibits, restricts and/or misrepresents the message. They also mention environmental and personal barriers.

Environmental barriers manifest in competition for attention within an organisation, time, the organisation's managerial philosophy, multiple levels of hierarchy and complexities, power or status relationships and the use of specific technology unfamiliar to the receiver (Guo & Sanchez 2009).

Organisational culture may be one of the obstacles of communication within an organisation (Feigenbaum 2012). Larkey (1996) believes that cultural differences in an organisation affect intercultural encounters and may, ultimately, also affect internal communication. Furnham and Gunter (1993) highlight that organisational culture establishes a ground for a common understanding of employees from different cultural backgrounds. Guirdham (2005) also reiterates that organisational culture creates a common ground which enables employees from different cultural groups to interact. Communication in different cultural dimensions is discussed in the next section.

2.8   ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Remer (2007) is of the opinion that organisational culture values influence the communication channels preferred by an organisation. O'Neill (2011) concurs that organisational culture determines the appropriate communication channels and also the communication channel features to be used in an organisation. Blue, MacBride, Weatherless and Letowski (2012) maintain that if management overloads the communication channels with irrelevant information this may render such channels and the communication delivered via these channels useless. It is vital that the organisational culture includes a standard procedure for assessing appropriate communication

channels. According to Tenhiälä and Salvador (2014), the unavailability of standard procedures for assessing appropriate communication channels within the organisation will tempt leaders to select ineffective communication channels. Schein (2010) also believes that establishing a set of standards and trends which emanate from the organisational culture involves creating efficient communication channels between employees and managers. Ultimately efficient communication channels within the organisation allows for the free flow of information throughout the organisation and also supports the existence of an open communication culture. An organisational culture that includes well-defined communication channels enables communication to reach the employees on time (Michenera & Bersch 2013). Communication channels are, therefore, useful for developing transparent communication, encouraging a culture of sharing and building teamwork among the members of the organisation (Cao, Huo, Li & Zhao 2015).

Cultural norms also influence channel preference within an organisation. Hara, Shachaf and Hew (2010) cite an example of groups from collectivist and individualist cultures which have different preferences for communication channels. Collectivist cultures favour channels with wealthy and great social presence compared to teams from individualist cultures.

The link between organisational culture and communication is discussed in the next section.

2.9 THE LINK BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

A cultural perspective on communication practice emanates from the understanding that an organisation's culture is a system of social knowledge that is shared between organisational members (Guirdham,2005). Organisational culture produces a shared system of senses that creates a foundation for both communication and mutual understanding (Furnham & Gunter 1993) and, thus, organisational culture and communication are closely related. Moran, Abramson and Moran (2014:35) argue that "any culture is primarily a system for identifying and processing relevant information, so most cultural behaviour entails communication whether we realise it or not. Holá & Pikhart (2014) support the notion that internal communication is a primary way of articulating and

encouraging company culture. Organisational culture guides daily working relationships within organisations, prescribing how communication occurs (Raza e al 2013). Aryasri and Aijaz (2013) agree with Raza et al (2013) and go on to say that, by guiding daily working relationships and communication within the organisation, organisational culture shapes and coordinates the communication behaviour of employees. Yeomans (2014:79) argues that "the science of communication is always universal, but the art of communication is always cultural" while Cai and Zimring (2017) stress that organisational culture is a key factor in organisational communication.

The interrelated impact of organisational culture and internal communication is highlighted by the fact that organisational culture is created through organisational members' development of a collectively held logic and legends about the organisation and its identity, which are then shared and integrated through organisational communication (Schein 2010). Culture may, therefore, be seen as a code which the members of organisation acquire and divide between themselves with the process entailing communication (Nicholas 2009). According to Jandt (2007:7), cultural design and all acts of social behaviour entail communication. Nelson and Quick (2011) also assert that new employees have to find their acceptance into the organisational group through learning the accepted behaviour, values and beliefs of the organisation. In support of Nelson and Quick (2001) Nicholas (2009) asserts that culture provides the background that enables the members of the organisation to learn both about the organisation and also, how to perform their roles more efficiently and productively.

The organisational culture creates a context for all organisational activities including communication, and also creates a meaning for the interpretations of activities taking place within the organisation (Alvesson 2013). It would, therefore, be difficult for organisational members to communicate effectively without an organisational culture background because interpretations of objects and speeches are made possible by the meaning which is created by the organisational culture. Kreps (1997) also elaborates that organisational cultures influence the way in which members communicate within the organisation by creating a context within which communication takes place. Harris (1994) believes that communication activities assist an organisation to operate and also provide

a cultural foundation within the organisation. Thus, organisational culture shapes employee communication patterns within the organisation.

Jandt (2010:44) supports the notion that culture and communication are interlinked while Neher (1997:144) and Mersham and Skinner (2001:112) highlight that an organisational culture is created as people within the organisation communicate with one another and that, on the other hand, culture shapes and directs the communication taking place within that culture. Thus, understanding the internal communication within an organisation would need a thorough analysis of the organisational culture within the organisation. According to Hatch and Gunliffe (2013), the norms, shared beliefs and values inherent in an organisational culture are frequently reciprocal. Toth (2007) views internal communication as a vital area of an organisation because it nurtures the force that develops cultures within an organisation. Janicijevic (2013: 72) argues that organisational culture may also be described as a classification of the norms, values, beliefs and attitudes which are displayed through the codes which are established and accepted by members of organisation through shared involvement and which also enable them to define the significance of the sphere around them and the way in which they conduct themselves in it. Baran (2014:5) concludes that internal communication is the process of creating a shared involvement.

Schein (2010) is of the opinion that organisational culture is a co-ordination of shared meaning that influences the shared opinions and insights within the organisation while Gudykunst and Kim (2003) concur that the "cultural influences" on communication comprise the group-held values, norms, beliefs and attitudes that influence the interaction through communication between employees or employees and management. Idris et al (2015) view positive cultural integration within an organisation as an essential feature that maintains successful communication. This implies that the type of organisational culture adopted by an organisation as well as the way in which it is coordinated affect how employees communicate. In other words, communication becomes the essential building block of the organisational culture (Armstrong 2010). Holá and Pikhart (2014) concur with Armstrong (2010) and elaborate that communication is a crucial bridge that connects the various processes and activities taking place within the organisation towards the

achievement of the organisational goals. Scholars conclude that organisational culture is always accompanied by a group of people, shared assumptions and effective communication (Schein 2010; Sok, Blomme & Tromp 2014).

Bindl and Parker (2010) assert that organisational culture shapes the communication that takes place within the organisation with the type of organisational culture (weak or strong) determining the quality of the communication taking place within the organisation. The type of communication within the organisation will eventually determine the organisation's ability to realise its objectives. In South Africa, for example, poor internal communication in government departments was cited as a factor hindering service delivery and contributing to the public service protests (Government Communicators' Handbook 2014). Organisational culture and employee engagement are discussed in the next section.

2.10   COMMUNICATION IN DIFFERENT CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

According to Richardson and Smith (2007), cultural values influence communication and, thus, the communication styles in different cultural dimensions will not be the same. Hall's (1989) differentiation between high context and low context communication is one of the theoretical perspectives which is ideal for the understanding of cultural variations in communication styles.

Hall (1989) differentiates between high context and low context communication cultures and contends that low context communication is used primarily in individualistic cultures while high context communication is used mainly in collectivistic cultures. The members of high context communication cultures rely on their pre-existing knowledge of each other and the setting to convey or interpret meaning, thus reducing the reliance on explicit verbal codes (Hall 1989). On the other hand, in low context communication, most of the meaning is conveyed in explicit verbal code with the members of low context communication cultures expecting the message sender to be direct, provide detailed information and use unambiguous language because they do not assume pre-existing

knowledge of people or setting (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010). The following section discusses organisational culture and employee engagement.

2.11   ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement refers to the extent to which an employee identifies with the mission, purpose and values of the organisation (Stockley 2007). Kruse (2012:1) defines employee engagement as "the emotional commitment the employee has to the organisation and its goals". The type of organisational culture within in the organisation immensely contributes to employee engagement.   Welch (2012) also confirms the relationship between organisational culture and employee engagement by stating that communication has a positive impact on employee engagement when the organisational vision and value are openly understood by all the employees. Organisational culture facilitates understanding within the organisation which results in employee engagement (Alvesson 2013). Internal communication is ultimately one of the main elements of employee engagement (Iyer & Israel 2012). Attridge (2009) elaborates that, when management openly communicates the organisational vision and future of the organisation, disengagement levels among employees decrease.

 It is through organisational culture that new employees are oriented in respect of the way in which their duties fit into the overall structure of the organisation. Thus, organisational culture enables the members in organisation to work together to realise the organisational objectives. An organisation is formed when individual members work together towards common purpose (Daft 1998). Eaton and Kilby (2015) highlight that the lack of an effective organisational culture produces disengaged employees who are not able to add value within the organisation. Viega-Pires (2013) highlights that it is incumbent on organisational managers to understand the significance of an effective organisational culture to keep employees engaged while Miller (2007) also points out that organisational communication promotes all activities within an organisation through the organisational culture. Organisational culture eventually integrates the employees into the overall structure of the organisation (Simoneaux & Stroud 2014). Cameron and Quinn (2011) are of the opinion that organisational culture is the glue that binds organisational members

together. The efficient collaboration of GDSD members in this study can be attributed to effective organisational culture. The lack of effective organisational culture will, eventually, result in detached relationships between the employees. Thus, the stronger the culture the stronger the glue holding the organisation together (Cameron & Quinn 2011).

According to Mamdoo (2012:54), the organisational culture impacts on the employees' behaviour which is responsible for the attainment of the organisational goals through employee engagement. The standards and policies enforced by GDSD are cultural setting which create guidelines for communication. Organisational culture creates a point of reference for opinions, clarifications and activities for the organisational members when it creates a particular set of assumptions and values within the organisation (Schein 2010). Hence, organisational culture affects all the procedures that occur in an organisation while also determining how the organisational members interact through communication.

Regular performance reviews have the potential to increase contributions and collaboration within the organisation (Cooper- Thomas, Paterson, Stadler & Saks 2014). The guidelines for performance management are, therefore, enshrined in the organisation's culture, for example, employees have regular quarterly review sessions with their supervisors to evaluate their performance and, in the process, employee engagement takes place. Organisational culture irrefutably influences the communication practice within an organisation because it dictates how people should interact and communicate to achieve the organisational goals (Sorrells 2016).

An organisational culture that ensures work engagement and empowerment plays a vital role in employee involvement (Nicholas & Erakovich 2013). Employee empowerment involves the recognising rights and needs of employees and making available the necessary resources to meet such rights and needs (Ugwu, Onyishi & Rodriguez- Sanchez 2014). Nosomboom (2014) believes that employee satisfaction and enthusiasm foster employee engagement while employees are satisfied when their needs are addressed. Ruck and Welch (2012) view empowering employees as a practicable instrument that would make them more engaged with Kompaso and Sridevi (2010)

describing engaged employee as those who are emotionally connected to the organisation. The organisational vision as well as directions for employee development are enshrined in the organisational culture (Souba 2011). Organisational culture aligns employees' duties with the organisational objectives, for example, all employees have employment contractual obligations which stipulate the targets that should be met annually (Menguc, Auh, Fisher & Haddad, 2013). Employees must, therefore, perform their duties in line with the organisational goals as directed by the organisational culture (Verčič, Verčič,& Sriramesh 2012). The process of aligning employee duties to the organisational goals is guided by the organisational culture with employee engagement making this possible (Raza et al 2013). Organisational culture ultimately influences communication practice because communication behaviour within the organisation is framed by the organisational culture during the process of aligning the employees' duties to the organisational goals.

Organisational culture conveys the organisational values to all the employees in the organisation, thus promoting collaboration and influencing internal communication, thus ensuring the realisation of the organisational goals. Bakker (2011) views internal communication as one of organisational contexts that facilitates employee engagement while Bindl and Parker (2010) maintain that internal communication practice is shaped by the organisational culture which, eventually, contributes to an engaged workforce. According to Walker (2012), excellent organisations have one thing in common, namely, the cultural positioning between the employees and the organisation coupled with a strategic positioning between the organisational priorities and organisational goals. On the other hand, Mishra, Boynton and Mishra (2014) believe that it is management's responsibility to build a culture of transparency that will ensures the engagement of employees in all organisational activities. Organisational culture within the public sector is discussed in the next section.

2.12 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE WITHIN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

In view of the fact that the organisational culture controls all practices within the organisation (Fatima 2016), it follows that the organisational culture within the public sector determines the public sector communication practice. Thus, an overview of the

organisational culture in the public sector should help to ensure a better understanding of the correlation between the organisational culture in the public sector and the communication practice. Matshiqi (2007) highlights that the South African government is guided by the values enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, and that these values include a high standard of professionalism ethics, accountability, sound human resource management, impartiality, fairness and equity. The prevailing values in government departments within South Africa, which are linked to the "Batho Pele" principles, reflect the organisational culture of South Africa government. Batho pele principles is the white paper on transformation of the South African public services which was published in 1997 to enhance public services (South Africa 1997). These principles are consultation; service delivery; access; courtesy; information; openness and transparency; redress; and value for money (South Africa 1997).

The organisational culture framework developed by Cameron & Quinn (2011) linked both hierarchy and clan cultures with the culture of the public sector in South Africa. Public sector organisations exist in the context of both written rules and regulations as well as unwritten ethics and the habits of the organisational system (Rong & Hongwei 2012) with this empowering public sector leaders to execute their management responsibility efficiently, especially in regard to the development of communication plan (Christiensen 2007).

Clan culture, which also has similarities of the public sector culture, refers to the degree of employee cohesion and commitment (Cameron & Quinn 2011). Employee cohesion is facilitated by open culture communication. Rong and Hongwei (2012) recommend that public sectors should establish a people-oriented management which is characterised by an open communication culture which supports understanding of values within the organisation.

Parker and Bradley (2000) highlight that generally the organisational culture prevailing in public sectors is predominantly hierarchical and concerned with political agendas. Government culture is significantly influenced by societal and political dynamics although these are often beyond the control of the heads of departments. According to Chikerema (2013), many African countries continue to be crippled by a political culture of patronage

in the execution of public service with public service employees performing their duties as directed by the politicians. Chipkin (2011) points out that the organisational culture in South Africa tends to be informed by pre-and post-colonial cultural fundamentals. However, Erthal and Marques (2018) highlight the need for government culture keep on changing in order to meet new demands otherwise government will fail to deal with 21st century challenges. Deresky (2014) also adds that globalisation is continuing to bridge the gap between public and private sector demands and expectations through emergence of interregional networks, systems of interaction and exchange. Thus, increasing the importance of organisational culture as an element in business communication.

Dorasamy (2009) attributes the poor service delivery by government to the poor performance of government employees which results from poor internal communication. Crafting a culture that enable employees to perform excellently requires that the leaders create a culture of open communication within the organisation (Paschal & Nizam 2016). Alvesson (2013) believes that it is not possible to understand employee work performance outside of the behaviour of the employee and the environment in the employee works. These views point to the essential harmony between organisational culture and the individual employee to ensure that the employee adds value in the organisation. Tsai (2011) is of the opinion that taking into account organisational culture is essential for directing employee's output and commitment through communication. The South African Cabinet also believes that the strengthening of internal communication within government departments is essential for efficient public service delivery (Government Communicators' Handbook 2014).

Erthal and Marques (2018) attest that the national culture influence the cultures of organisations and shapes how organisations communicate both internally and externally. In addition, Schneider (2011) asserts that national culture affects the nature of the relationships between the employees in organisations. The next section focuses on the measurement of organisational culture applicable to this study.

2.13   MEASURING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN THE ORGANISATION

Martins and Da Viega (2015) believe that the ubiquitous and permeating nature of organisational culture demands that organisations identify the fundamental dimensions

of their organisational culture and the effect thereof on employee related variable such as communication. It is, therefore, essential to measure organisational culture in order to understand how organisational culture influence communication practice. Organisational culture is one of the most important tools that may shape employee behaviours positively and ensure organisational effectiveness (Alvesson 2013). Armstrong (2009) also highlights that, fundamentally, organisational culture is about subjective beliefs, unconscious assumptions, behavioural norms and artefacts – all of which are difficult to measure. O'Reilly, Chatman and Doerr (2014) caution that researchers should be careful to use the appropriate tool to measure organisational culture as some of the tools may be unable to capture the cultures from various types of setting. In addition, measuring the culture is also complicated because people are different and there is no general recognised way of thinking about organisational culture (Fortado & Fadil 2012) with Hartnell et al (2011), therefore, concluding that there is a lack of general standardisation to measure organisational culture. Denison and Mishra (1995) elaborate that the measurement of organisational culture has long been a contentious topic in literature.

Nevertheless, Minkov (2011) is of the opinion that organisational culture may be measured according to the beliefs, values, norms and behaviours adopted within the organisation. Schein (1984) supports the notion that, in order examine why members behave the way they do; researchers should ascertain for the values that govern behaviour.

Janicijevic (2013) views the beliefs, norms and attitudes of organisational members as the cognitive component of the culture shared by the organisation's members,stating that the beliefs, norms and attitudes preferred by the organisation shapes employees' mental (interpretive) scheme. Hartnell et al (2011) explored this cognitive component of culture and related it to the question "How are things done in the organisation?" In attempting to answer this question, Hartnell et al (2011) stressed that understanding this component would make it possible to understand organisational culture and its relationship with communication within the organisation. Schein (2011) elaborates that members of organisation with strong culture will have uniform beliefs and behaviour patterns.

Fletcher and Jones (1992) concur that the concept of organisational culture may be conveniently operationalised in terms of types or dimensions. Accordingly, in order to understand the influence of organisational culture on communication practice a detailed analysis of the beliefs, values and norms adopted by the organisation is required. Denison (1996) believes that, if a researcher wishes to examine organisational culture, the researcher should immerse him/herself into that particular culture by becoming a member of it and working with the members on a routine basis in order to learn the norms, values and beliefs of these members of the organisation.

A multifaceted approach to studying organisational culture which draws from different organisational culture models is used in this study to captures the influence of organisational culture on communication practice. For example, the researcher in this study combined the theoretical lenses of Hofstede, Denison and Schein to capture the influence of organisational culture from different settings of the GDSD. Organisational culture is multidimensional and, therefore, its influence on communication practice may be captured using a multifaceted approach whereby various organisational culture models are used to create a holistic view of organisational culture within the organisation. Hofstede's (1985) organisational culture model is discussed in the next subsection.

2.13.1 Hofstede's organisational culture model

Hofstede (1980) provided a descriptive approach to organisational culture which does not place organisations into categories but, instead, proposes six dimensions which may be used to measure culture. These dimensions include individualism versus collectivism, power distance (PD), masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance (UA), long term orientation versus short term orientation and indulgence versus restraint.

2.13.1.1 Individualism versus collectivism

Hofstede (1991:51) describes individualism versus collectivism as "the extent to which individuals are integrated into groups". Hofstede (1993) views individualism as the degree to which people prefer to act as individuals rather than as groups while, in collectivism, group work is preferred. In individualistic societies, the ties between individuals are loose with the individual being prioritised over the entire group. On the other hand, collectivistic

societies are characterised by tightly integrated relationships and strong social ties, providing mutual support and loyalty (Hofstede 2001).

Gudykunst (1996) mentions values and self-construal as characteristics of communication that are influenced by the individualism cultural dimension with points of indirectness and reaction style being communication features which are influenced by individualism. Individualism also manifests a more obedient response style as compared to collectivism. Brewer and Venaik (2011) assert that individualism and collectivism are vital in any exploration of variances in behaviour through cultures.

In general, individuals in a collectivism culture are guided by values such as harmony and solidarity with the individualistic approach being guided by individuality and accomplishment, and always striving for uniqueness (Markus & Kitayama 1991). The employees in organisations that are characterised by independent self-construal will always seek for clarity (Gudykunst 1996).

2.13.1.2 Power distance

Hofstede (2001:98) views power distance (PD) as "the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally." Hofstede (1980a) measures power distance through a question about the supervisor-subordinate relationship. Thus, power distance refers to the extent of the hierarchical inequality that people will accept and regard as proper according to society's power distance norm in relation to its institutions and practices. Hofstede et al (2010) further distinguish between low and high PD cultures in an organisational culture and specify that one is usually dominant than the other. PD levels differ according to the national culture of a specific country (Hofstede 1991, cited in Gudykunst 1996). In other words, the national culture influences the culture of organisations located in the nation in question. Thus, Hofstede et al (2010) conclude that the power prevailing in a nation will impact on the communication processes of organisations operating within that nation. Egalitarianism is also an important concept that influences communication at different PD levels (Gudykunst 1996). Egalitarianism communication refers to a two-way communication that involves sharing information rather than directing behaviour (Moss 2009). Cultures with a high PD index show an affinity with authoritarianism which implies

hierarchical or vertical social relationship structures where authority sharing equates to a loss of status (Hofstede et al 2010). Based on the level of hierarchy, people in high PD cultures are assumed to be unequal and complementary in social interactions, particularly in the view of the people from lower PD cultures (Hofstede 1985). Centralised leadership is a feature of a high PD culture while low PD is characterised by autonomous leadership and a preference for equal power distribution (Eylon & Au, 1999). In addition, high PD cultures anticipate and admit that power is distributed unequally whereas low PD culture prefers power to be distributed equally (Richardson & Smith, 2007).

A low PD culture in an organisational culture displays more horizontal patterns of social relationships, which aim to minimise differences in respect of status, sex or age. Individuals expect greater individual autonomy while management focuses on diminishing status gaps through empowerment and/or career development. Moreover, the relationships in societies exhibiting a low degree of PD are less formal and more direct in social interactions as opposed to the relationships in large PD countries where they are conceived as unequal. Subordinates in high PD countries, such as China and the Arabic and Latin American countries, do not expect to take responsibility and expect precise assignments from their leaders (Ulijn, Duysters & Meijer 2010). Coercive power is often used in organisations with a high PD culture. However, Daft, Kendrick and Verhinina (2010) view coercive power as a punishment while Madlock (2008) claims that employees in high PD organisations maintain that they are not fully involved in organisational activities by management due to one way communication. In addition, employees in high PD cultures are often punished if they do something wrong with such punishment being unavoidable in view of the fact that such organisations have downward communication structures only.

Gudykunst (1996) believes that the employees in low PD cultures often demonstrate skilful influence while Daft et al (2010) maintain that employees in low PD cultures are more knowledgeable as compared to their compatriots in high PD cultures, this may be attributed to the fact that employees in low PD cultures have easy access to knowledge held by management and in high PD culture easy access to management is an unthinkable (Hofstede 1985). It was indicated early that Hofstede (1985) used the

supervisor-subordinate relationship to assess PD culture with the supervisors in a low PD culture being distinguished as those who are willing to listen to their subordinates and communication including both an upward flow and a downward flow. On the other hand, organisational cultures characterised by a high PD are distinguished by the authoritarian style of leadership in terms of which compliance is emphasised and obedience is a rule while an organisational culture characterised by a low PD allows employees an opportunity to engage in a meaningful discussion with their supervisors because of the existence of both upward and downward communication channels. Hofstede (2014) believes that impact of PD on communication falls within the ambit of the employee-supervisor relationship, for example, in a high PD organisational culture subordinates respect their supervisors and sometimes fear them. As such, it is the supervisors who always initiate communication and while the subordinates never contradict the supervisors.

2.13.1.3 Uncertainty avoidance

According to Hofstede (2001: 167), the dimension of uncertainty avoidance (UA) measures "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations". Hofstede et al (2010) stress that the uncertainty avoidance index may be used to measure whether a culture has a strong or weak uncertainty avoidance. Hofstede (1993) further elaborates that weak uncertainty avoidance within an organisation is portrayed through risk behaviour on the part of the employees, flexibility and tolerance toward differing opinions and behaviours. On the other hand, strong avoidance is represented by the avoidance of risk, standardised procedures and written rules, respect for authority and promotion based on either age or seniority (Hofstede 1993). In addition, it is associated with traditionalism, superstition and authoritarianism and reflects the way in which members of a society cope with ambiguity and anxiety. The establishment of law and rules is one of the crucial differences between weak and strong uncertainty avoidance organisations. A high uncertainty score indicates low tolerance towards ambiguity and uncertainty with high uncertainty cultures being rule-oriented and following established laws and control. In addition, high uncertainty cultures maintain inflexible codes of belief and behaviour and display intolerance towards unorthodox

behaviour or ideas (Hofstede 2014). High uncertainty avoidance in an organisation is characterised by a strong desire for truth and a tendency to monitor, control and plan over long periods (Hofstede, 1980) with employees pursuing job security, resisting changes, seeking behavioural rules and fearing failure. On the other hand, low UA organisations easily accept change, take more initiative, show tolerance towards unorthodox behaviour and are willing to take risks.

Matusitz and Musambira (2013:45) further describe uncertainty avoidance as "the extent to which a culture believes it is threatened by ambiguous situations". Employees in high uncertainty avoidance organisations view the equivocal as a risk and choose to keep anger by avoiding unrest and opposition. Communication is perceived as uncertainty because the members are not exposed to it in high uncertainty avoidance although in low uncertainty avoidance, it is easier to communicate.

2.13.1.4 Masculinity versus femininity

Masculinity in this context represents a preference for society assertiveness, achievement and material reward for attaining success while femininity represents a preference for modesty, cooperation, quality of life and caring for the weak (Hofstede 2001). According to Hofstede (1991), this dimensional aspect refers to the difference between masculine characteristics and typical female traits. Hofstede further (1991) elaborates that, in a masculine society, there is a division of labour in terms of which the more assertive tasks are given to men while emphasis is placed on academic success, competition and achievement in careers.

In a feminine society the emphasis is on relationships, compromise, life skills and social performance. This dimension depicts society's goal orientation in which a masculine culture emphasises status as derived from wages and position while, in a feminine culture, the emphasis in on human relations and quality of life. In addition, this dimension focuses on the questions about the values of females and males in societies. The language, values and response style are all characteristics that affect communication in a masculinity cultural dimension (Carli 1989). The masculine and feminine vary according to the values that are highlighted in a specific culture with success and money being the

most important prevailing values in masculine cultures and "consideration of others and gratitude for life" (Claes 1999) as the most important values in feminine cultures. Masculine cultures emphasise clearness in communication (Rezaei, Allameh & Ansari 2018) while feminine cultures are primarily characterised by non-verbal communication (Madlock 2008).

Different styles of communication prevail in the feminine and masculine cultural dimension (Hofstede 2014). For example, in a feminine culture employee are asked, not ordered, to do a job, frankness is perceived as offensive and frank conversations are avoided while, on the other hand, in a masculine culture employees are ordered, not asked, to perform a task and frankness is acceptable.

2.13.1.5 Long term versus short term cultural dimension

Long term relationships represent society's inclination to search for virtue and, in a short term relationship, absolute truth is preferred (Hofstede 1980). Organisations characterised by the long-term culture dimension are distinguished by their focus on the future and, thus, these organisations prioritise future plans ahead of short term plans. In addition, these organisations value persistence, perseverance and adaptation while organisations characterised by the short term cultural dimension value short term related matters.

2.13.1.6 Indulgence versus restraint cultural dimension
The indulgence versus restraint cultural dimension revolves around the degree to which societies are able to exercise control over impulses and desires (Hofstede 1980). Organisations that allow the free gratification of human drives relating to leisure are indulgence oriented while organisations characterised by the restraint cultural dimension believe that such gratifications need to be curbed and regulated by strict norms. The next subsection discusses Denison's culture model.

2.13.2 Denison's model of organisational culture
Sadegh Sharifirad and Ataei (2012) maintain that that Denison's (1990) model is adopted in several organisations because of its ability to explore organisational culture. Fey and

Denison (2006) point out that Denison's cultural model was tested in the United States and Russia as well as in North American, South American and Asian nations and that there is considerable evidence in favour of its fundamental premises.

Schein (2010) believes that underlying beliefs and assumptions that represent the deepest levels of organisational culture are at the core of Denison's (1990) model. Denison's (1990) model reveals fundamental assumptions which provide the foundation for any study of organisational culture components such as values, observable artefacts and behaviour (Denison 2000). Denison's model also provides comparisons between organisations based on values and practices that manifest from organisational culture, for example, behaviour. Denison's model considers organisational values as more accessible for the purposes of study as compared to assumptions and more reliable than artefacts (Denison 2000, in Yilmaz 2008). Thus, organisational values facilitate the study of organisational culture and should be explored in order to gain an understanding of the prevailing culture within an organisation.

Denison's (1990) organisational culture model is based on four cultural traits, namely, involvement, consistency, adaptability and mission (Denison 1990). Each trait is measured by three indexes.

Involvement consists of empowerment, team orientation and capability development (Denison 1990). Hacker (2015) maintains that organisations which demonstrate the involvement culture trait believe in working cooperatively towards common goals, developing employee skills and valuing individual authority as well as taking recognising employee initiatives. Thus, an involvement culture within an organisation ensures the internal integration of resources by creating a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Denison (1990) views consistency in this context as comprising the values and elements that form the basis of a strong organisational culture. According to Denison (1990), such consistency creates a strong culture that is based on beliefs, values and symbols which are understood and supported by staff members. Consistency is measured by three indexes, namely, core values, agreement and coordination and integration. These three components reveal how organisational members share a set of values which create both a sense of identity and a clear set of expectations, how organisational members reach

agreement on critical issues and overcome differences when they occur and how organisational members work together to achieve a common goal (Denison 1990). Ultimately the consistency cultural trait facilitates the coordination of activities within an organisation by emphasising stability.

According to Denison (2000), the adaptability trait refers to the way in which the organisation copes with external contingencies and changes. Adaptability also includes component indexes of creating change, customer focus and organisational learning. Adaptable organisations are customer driven, take risks, learn from their mistakes and possess the capability and experience required to bring about change. Schein (2010) concurs that adaptability refers to the organisation's ability to adjust and respond to challenges in the external environmental. This can be measured by evaluating both the organisation's initiative in creating change and also how organisation align its services to the needs of its customers (Denison 1990).

Denison (1990) explains that the mission dimension provides an appropriate direction to both the internal and external stakeholders. Thus, the mission trait defines the organisation's goals and provides organisational members with a sense of purpose and meaning (Denison 1990). Thus, the mission trait emphasises stability and direction and helps an organisation to orchestrate its relationships with the external world. Organisations characterised by the mission trait culture may be distinguished by a well-defined, understood and clear set of values which stress strategic direction and intent, goals and objectives as well as vision. GDSD 's mission is clearly outlined; vision statement is also known to organisational members.

Denison (1996) maintains that organisational culture is not easily observable and that exploring organisational culture involves the researcher immersing him/herself in the culture by becoming members of the organisation and working with existing members on a routine basis to learn the norms, values and beliefs of the members. The next subsection discusses Schein's model.

2.13.3 Schein's organisational culture model

Schein (1985, 1992, 2004, 2010) believes that organisational culture is a multi-layered phenomenon, with the various levels of organisational culture providing an understanding

in respect of defining organisational culture. Figure 2.1 below depicts the three divisions of organisational culture as proposed by Schein (1992). The artefacts form the outermost level and may be easily observed. Schein (2010) describes artefacts as the observable features within a company such as structure, organisational processes, corporate clothing and the logo. The organisation's rules of conduct coupled with the organisation's values result in the values being espoused by members of the organisation. Schein (2010) views such espoused values as the way in which the organisation expresses its strategies, objectives and philosophies. Although espoused values are not observable but they may be described according to the way in which people clarify and defend their activities. According to Cheung, Wong and Wu (2011), it is at the central level of the organisational culture where certain values tend to be deeply entrenched within a culture and manifest as assumptions which guide the language and social interaction of the organisational members.

It is important to understand how these three levels of organisational culture influence daily communication practice within the organisation. Values, as a subtle mechanism, may also be used to influence all the activities taking place within the organisation (Mumford, Scott, Baddis & Strange 2002).

Artifacts and symbols

Espoused values

Assumptions
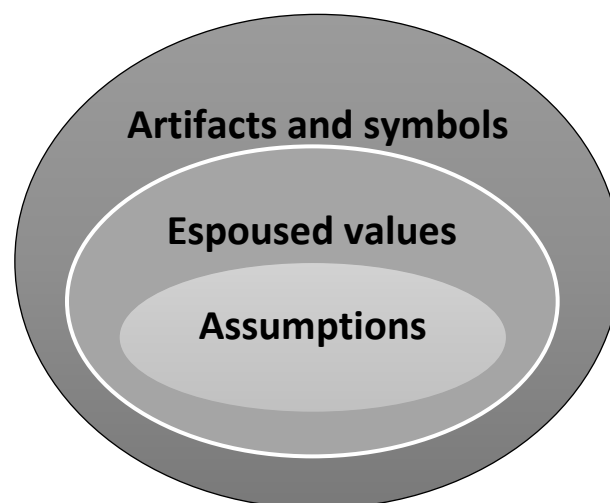
Figure 2.2: Levels of organisational culture

Source: Schein (1992)

Schein (1999) stresses that it is not possible to measure culture by using surveys as this would result in superficial findings because those carrying out the survey may not know what to ask, employees may not be motivated to be honest and, in addition, they may also interpret and answer the questions differently (Schein 2010). Organisational culture is based on the underlying values and assumptions within an organisation and, thus, in-depth qualitative procedures may be used to identify the cultural attributes within an organisation (Schein 1992) and, eventually, determine how such cultural attributes influence communication practice.

Schein (1999) further suggests that measuring organisational culture within the organisation will require researchers to examine the content of the socialisation process of new members by interviewing socialisation agents such as supervisors and peers of new members. It will further requires analysing the beliefs, values and assumptions of culture carriers (Schein 1999). The participants in this study are therefore chosen according to their knowledge on GDSD 's values.

Rezaei et al (2018) stress that in view of the ability of organisational culture to influence various aspects of the organisational process, it is important to measure such organisational culture as it has the ability to influence various aspects of an organisational process. Mullins (2005) mentions communication as one of such aspects that may be influenced by organisational culture. It is, therefore, important to measure the way in which organisational culture influences communication practice so as to promote effective communication within the organisation. An overview of the GDSD in relation to literature review discussed above follows.

2.14 OVERVIEW OF THE GDSD IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE REVIEW DISCUSSED

The GDSD has clear vision and mission statements which are understood by all the members of the organisation with the mission statement assisting the GDSD in the creation of its identity. Ultimately the GDSD's vision and mission contribute to organisational culture prevailing within the department. Organisational identity emanates from the presence of a culture within an organisation (Kreitner & Kinicki 2013). The GDSD also has strategic objectives which guide employment relations within the organisation. The vision, mission and strategic objectives are formed within the framework of Chapter 10 of the South African Constitution, 1996 which outlines how public service should be conducted. Thus, the GDSD's organisational values are informed by the vision, mission and strategic objectives of the department.

2.15 DIMENSIONS OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE WITHIN THE GDSD

As highlighted earlier, the researcher adopted various frameworks in order to profile the organisational culture with GDSD, in particular, the frameworks of Hofstede (1985), Denison (1990) and Schein (1992). The interview questions were formulated in such a way that they identified the cultural dimensions prevailing in the GDSD and how these cultural dimensions impacted on the communication practice. For example, the researcher posed a question about the supervisor-subordinate relationship to determine the power distance within the department. Individualism versus collectivism as well as the other cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede (1985) were covered.

In addition, the researcher also developed the interview questions in such a way that they covered the cultural dimensions outlined in Denison's (1990) theory. For example, the researcher poses a particular interview question to establish how employees were involved in decision making within the organisation while there was also an interview question which was intended to determine how consistent communication within GDSD was. The question about mission was also considered to be important.

Analysing the beliefs, values and assumptions of the culture carriers within the GDSD was done through interviews with organisational members to determine the extent to which the organisational culture affects communication practice within the GDSD. The next section provides a summary of the literature discussed in this chapter.

2.16   SUMMARY

Although there is no single way in which to define organisational culture it is, nevertheless, an essential element in any organisation. Nevertheless, the concept has been unanimously defined by the majority of researchers as a collection of beliefs, values, norms and assumptions common in all the employees of the organisation. In an attempt to understand the influence of organisational culture on communication, the researcher listed and discussed the dimensions of organisational culture as stipulated in the theories of Hofstede (1985), Denison (1990) and Schein (1985). Organisational culture and its link with aspects of internal communication were fully explained while internal communication aspects such as channels of communication, internal communication models, employee engagement, and flow of communication were discussed in conjunction with organisational culture. The literature also confirmed the impact of both national culture and local culture. The aim of the literature review was to explore the relationship between organisational culture and communication behaviour within an organisation. The research design and methodology used in the study are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter laid the theoretical foundation of this study with the emphasis on the relationship between organisational culture and communication practice. The elements of organisational culture were discussed, the difference between weak and strong cultures explained and theories and models of internal communications and organisational culture presented. Finally, various measurements of organisational culture were reviewed to determine the way in which communication practice is affected by the different cultural dimensions within the GDSD.

All scientific research is guided by a set of procedures which are derived from philosophical assumptions which propose relevant methods for the development of knowledge. Creswell (2014) stresses the importance of understanding the researcher's philosophical assumptions which underpin a study because beliefs and theories are paramount in such a study. This chapter explain the use of selected methodologies in order to gain an understanding of the impact of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD. Thus, the chapter discusses the research design, methods and data analysis process used in the study as well as the participant selection process. Reliability and validity in research are then discussed. The chapter then elaborates on the practical application of theoretical aspects of research methodology, it expands on the ethical considerations which were upheld during the study and explains the multiple data collection methods used. The chapter also locates the focus group discussion questions and interview questions within the theoretical framework which formed the basis of the study. This chapter concludes with a summary of the major facets of the framework used in the study. The next section discusses the research method used and the paradigm which underpinned the study.

3.2   RESEARCH METHOD AND PARADIGM

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), research methodology may be defined as a logical and determined strategy which is implemented to produce data relevant to a particular research problem. Three research approaches have been identified, namely, qualitative, quantitative and mixed method (Kumar 2012). Quantitative methods are suitable to study a link between two or more features in a study and are appropriate primarily for theory testing (Welch, Plakoyiannaki, Piekkari, & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki 2013). Tsang (2014) distinguishes between qualitative and quantitative methods and explains that quantitative methods as suited to studying the collaboration between certain features in a study while qualitative methods are appropriate to determine phenomena in research.

Punch (2014) describes qualitative study as a method of social science research whereby non-numerical data is collected and meaning interpreted from the data collected so as to understand the social life of the targeted population. Walia (2015) concurs that qualitative study focuses on words than numbers and adds that it also observes the world in its natural setting while Yin (2014) explained that the exploratory nature of qualitative research findings often results in the development of various credible and unforeseen understandings of topic. Thus, qualitative research is seen as relevant in the study of beliefs, unconscious assumptions, behavioural norms and artefacts which are difficult to measure. Tewksbury (2009) also confirms that the aim of qualitative methods is to gain a true understanding of the social aspects of the way in which research occurs in a culturally grounded context. Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012) add that qualitative research methods pursue an understanding of the processes as well as the social and cultural contexts which shape behavioural patterns.

A research paradigm forms the foundation of a study because it informs the selection of the methodology, sample and tools appropriate to the proposed investigation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009). This study was interpretative in its attempts to understand the experiences of GDSD members in relation to the influence of the organisational culture on communication practice. Wagner et al (2012:56) view the purpose of interpretative research as "to understand people's experiences" while, according to Ponterotto (2005),

elaborates that the interpretative research exhumes and brings to the surface the unknown lived experiences of the subject matter.

According to interpretivist paradigm reality is socially constructed (Mertens 2009), thus implying that there is no distinct, noticeable reality (Merriam 2009). Reality is viewed through the values that individuals attach to their life world. Interpretivism, therefore, strives to comprehend and construe daily activities, understandings and social structures as well as the principles the public ascribes to these occurrences (Rubin & Babbie 2010). Interpretivism further adopts both a relativist ontology in terms of which multiple realities exist and a subjectivist epistemology in which researcher and participants co-create a meaning (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). Thus, in terms of the subjective epistemology the cognitive processing of data is informed by researcher's interaction with the participants.

The interpretative paradigm ultimately allows the researcher to view the world through the lens of the perceptions and experiences of the research participants. These experiences and perceptions are then used to construct and interpret the data which has been gathered. Morehouse (2011) concludes that the acceptance of multiple perspectives in interpretivism often leads to a deeper understanding of the situation. The following section discusses the use of multiple data collection methods.

3.3   DATA COLLECTION

3.3.1 Multiple methods

The researcher used multiple qualitative data collection methods in order to add rigour to the study. In line with the multiple methods approach the researcher employs multiple investigators, theories, and various methods of data collection to ensure the quality and validity of the study (Plack 2005). Miles and Huberman (1994) believe that biases in qualitative study may be mitigated by using multiple sources of evidence to provide multiple instances from different sources while Yin (2014) maintains that the convergence of information from a variety of sources which provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon add rigour to a qualitative study.

Accordingly, the researcher used both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews to add credibility in the study. The study involved two focus group discussion sessions

and in-depth interviews with six voluntary participants who were carefully selected according to their experiences and knowledge of the research topic. The researcher used in-depth interviews to probe the participants' knowledge on the impact of organisational culture on communication that may not have emerged during the focus group discussions. This sequence enabled researcher to use multiple sources to provide instances from various sources. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews are often for the purposes of exploration in qualitative research (Du Plooy 2009). According to Babbie and Mouton (2007), in a qualitative study multiple data collection methods may be used, for example, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Fusch, Fusch and Ness (2017) concur that the use of multiple methods in qualitative research adds depth to the data which is collected. The credible qualitative data reveals a connection between multiple methods and saturation (Fusch & Ness 2015). The two sequential methods of data collection mentioned above are discussed fully in the next subsections.

3.3.1.1   In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews enabled the researcher to explore the influence of organisational culture within the GDSD. Marshall and Rossman (2016) view the interview as a popular data collection technique in qualitative research while, according to Yin (2014), the use of in-depth interviews is vital in exploring the exclusive features of a case in full. Radcliffe (2013) is of the opinion that in-depth interviews are crucial in order to comprehend the feelings of the participants. The participants' feelings may be probed deeply through in-depth interviews to enable the interviewer to identify underlying concepts, leading to follow-up questions. Bevan (2014) is of the opinion that follow up questions in an interview are important in collecting extra data and regulating the interview procedure. In this study the researcher used open ended questions to allow follow up questions to be posed. However, Khan (2014) also cautions that follow up questions may emerge from the participants' responses reverting to early questions while O'Reilly and Parker (2013) contend that follow up questions in an interview play a key role in data saturation.

Kumar (2012) maintains that interviews may be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Reliability is the strongest advantage of the structured interview, thus enabling replication of data (Mukhudwana 2014) although the drawback of structured

interviews is that they do not easily accommodate emerging issues (Du Plooy 2002). In this study the researcher used semi-structured interviews in the focus group discussions to ensure the maximum engagement of the participants. Semi-structured questions are also essential if views and opinions are to be aired during the interview process (Yin 2014). The researcher also used the structured method of questioning in the in-depth interviews to ensure the research was consistent with topic investigated. The researcher also used open-ended questions in both the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews. The use of open-ended questions in qualitative research facilitates the collection of credible data from the participants. According to Saunders et al (2009), open ended questions accord participants the latitude to explain and build on their responses which is critical in a qualitative study. Leedy and Ormrod (2015) view open ended interviews as offering enough flexibility to accommodate emerging issues while Mukhudwana (2014) maintains that open ended interviews have the potential to allow different results to emerge from each interview conducted, thus enabling a multitude of different findings, opinions and results up to the point of data saturation. Full participation by the researcher in the data collection process is, therefore, central to collecting precise data in a study (Jacob & Furguson 2012). The interview process usually entails recording and transcribing the interview conversations for the purposes of the data analysis (Radcliffe 2013).

Face to face interviews are rooted in the interpretive paradigm and were, therefore deemed to be relevant for this study as they enable the researcher to elicit in-depth knowledge from the participants. However, Seidman (2006) warns that interviews have nothing to do with the researcher's ego and that it is essential that interviewer(s) focus on the participants' experience during the interviews. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) believe that the researcher should be able to write everything down and analyse these notes frequently during the interview to ensure accurate data is collected.

The note taking and recording facility were used to collect data. The use of a recording facility during interviews lessens the importance of written notes (Jacob & Furguson 2012). Radcliffe (2013) is of the opinion that the use of a reliable recording machine in

research plays an essential role in recording broad data throughout the interview. According to Marsh (2013), the minimum duration of an in-depth interview 45 minutes.

3.3.1.2 *Focus group discussion*

A focus group discussion is a type of group interview in which the interviewer poses questions to the group and answers are provided during an open discussion between the members of the group (Neuman 2011). Focus groups may be used in collaboration with other data collection methods. Morgan (1996) recommends that, in order to gather rich data, focus group discussion must be combined with other data collection methods such as in-depth interviews. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2015) view a focus group discussion as a collaborative conversation between six to eight pre- selected participants, controlled by a skilled mediator and with the focus on precise issues. It may be said that the researcher in this study was the mediator during the focus group discussions.

Focus group discussions are able to cover a wide range of perspectives on the research topic as well as a broad understanding of matters from the viewpoints of the participants (Morgan 2012). Walden (2012) cites the main advantage of focus group as its ability to cover extensive data quickly. Focus group discussions also have the advantage of producing shared narratives on the research topic that surpass individual standpoints to create a group perception of the topic under discussion (Jug & Vilar 2015). The next section presents a discussion on the practical application of the theoretical aspects discussed above.

3.3 PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THEORETICAL ASPECTS DISCUSSED

The researcher in this study was not interested in collecting numerical data but, instead, was seeking an in-depth understanding of the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD. Accordingly the researcher sought to gain this understanding through the use of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews which were conducted with the participants who were purposively chosen from the GDSD. A qualitative research method was deemed appropriate to answer the research questions posed in this study. The in-depth interview questions and focus group discussions were informed by the theoretical framework of organisational culture and internal

communication which underpinned the study. It emerged from the literature review that was conducted that organisational culture is a multi-layered phenomenon (Schein 1985, 1992, 2004 & 2010) and, thus, it was felt that the qualitative research method had the potential to identify the influence of organisational culture on communication practice from different angles within the GDSD.

It was arranged that the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews would take place in areas convenient to all the participants. This was in line with the advice of several researchers, for example, Patton (2002) and Shenton and Heyter (2004) that, researchers should choose interview sites that are conducive and accessible for the participants. In addition, Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) maintain that people are more likely to attend in-depth interviews if the interviews are conducted in a place which is familiar to them. The study included two focus group discussion which were scheduled to take place in Krugersdorp and Carltonville. These two areas were convenient for participants. Each focus group comprised eight members who had been purposively chosen according to their knowledge on the GDSD's values and experience of the research topic.

Semi- structured questions were used in the focus group discussions to elicit in-depth and diverse views on the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD. In addition, the semi-structured questions allowed the researcher to engage all the participants in the discussion to a point of data saturation.

As already mentioned, the in-depth interviews used in the study comprised open ended questions. Jamshed (2014) maintains that no qualitative interview lacks structure while structured interviews prevent the interviewees from becoming too casual (Stuckey 2013). The structured interviews used in the study enabled the researcher to maintain consistency in questioning the participants.

 In all instances the researcher followed appropriate research procedure in accordance with the guidelines for ethical research. In addition, the researcher adhered to qualitative interview protocol in terms of which all the participants must be familiarised with the informed consent process. Marshall and Rossman (2016) support the observation that the informed consent process in all research involving human subjects ensures the reliability and validity of the study.

The qualitative method used in the study provided the researcher with an opportunity to explore the beliefs, assumptions, norms and values of employees of the GDSD and further describe how these elements of organisational culture influenced communication practice in the department. The researcher embraced the inclusive viewpoints of the various individual participants and, thus, it may be said that reality was approached typically from people who were able to share their knowledge and experiences in relation to organisational culture and communication practice in the GDSD. This study demonstrated all the features of the interpretivist approach. Morehouse (2011) adds that the acceptance of multiple perspectives in interpretivism leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the situation than may previously have been the case.

3.4   DEVELOPMENT OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Qualitative research uses the inductive, deductive or both approaches in the data collection process (Ryan et al 2007). Gratton and Jones (2010) explain that the deductive approach involves the testing of a pre- determined theory, explanation or hypothesis while Thomas (2006) believes that the inductive approach to data analysis refers to interpretations made by the researcher based on the raw data collected from the study participants. The inductive approach is flexible because researcher does not have to adhere to a predetermined theory when compiling the interview questions. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston (2014) recommend the use of inductive research because of its ability to explore in-depth issues from the perspectives of various participants.

This study followed the inductive approach because the researcher intended to explore in-depth issues from the perspectives of various participants using multiple data collection methods in order to gather a multitude of findings, opinions and results until a point of data saturation. However, although the study was inductive in approach the theoretical framework of organisational culture and communication as mentioned in the literature was used to guide the way in which the questions were formulated. In research existing literature may be used as a basis for research and a framework through which findings can be interpreted (Smith 2015). The following subsection discusses the focus group discussion guide.

3.4.1 Focus group discussion guide

This study used two focus group in order to collect the data required. However, it must be noted that, depending on the need for more information, the number of focus group discussions conducted may increase slightly. Rubin and Rubin (2005) are of the opinion that the selection of participants in a qualitative study should be informed by the issue of credibility with credibility in this regard referring to the type of value that the participants are going to add to the study. Sixteen employees (eight per group) from the GDSD based in the West Rand region participated in the focus group discussions. The criteria for participating in the focus group was that the participants should have knowledge about values that govern GDSD and not in any management position. Management members were not included because, had they been included, there was a possibility that their subordinates would have feared victimisation and not aired their inner views and perspectives. The setting of the group discussion was made known to the participants and was accessible to all the participants. The meeting was scheduled to last for an hour and half.

The questions and probing questions included in the focus group schedule were intended to cover all the variables in the GDSD that comprised organisational culture. The questions posed were guided by the literature on organisational culture and communication.

The researcher start the focus group discussion by welcoming the participants, introducing himself and outlining the purpose of the group discussion. The issues of informed consent and anonymity were then clarified. The researcher also ascertained whether all the participants had signed and returned their consent forms and filed them.

The group discussion guide contained questions about organisational variables such as the values, norms, organisational objectives and attitudes prevailing in the GDSD. The questions also elaborated on how such variables affected communication practice within the GDSD. Both the open-ended questions and the semi-structured questions provided the participants with an opportunity to elaborate on their different views and perspectives and, as such, to make a significant contribution to the multitude of findings, results and ideas voiced until the point of data saturation.

The researcher facilitated the group discussion but without influencing the participants. It is the researcher's role to maximise the interviewees' participation and to ensure that the discussion follows the guide. However, the researcher also allowed the participants some flexibility but did not divert completely from the discussion guide. Flexibility allows participants the maximum engagement in the research topic that may produce rich data. The interview schedules for the six face to face, in-depth interviews which were conducted with the participants are discussed fully in the next subsection.

3.4.2 Face to face interview schedule

The participants in face to face interview are carefully selected according to their knowledge and experience of the research topic to ensure they are able to produce the required information. The face to face interviews in this study involved two members of management, two communicators and two employees to the point of data saturation at which it appeared that the researcher obtained more valuable information from these members of GDSD.

The participants were purposively selected based on their insights and perspectives in respect of the research topic. For example, senior managers reflect the management style (leadership) and the resulting communication styles (climate) that influence the organisational culture. This provided the researcher with insights into the type of organisational culture management was trying to establish (organisational culture – encoding). Management also demonstrates business practices, such as control and decision making styles, which form part of the organisational culture (Schein 2010) and, thus, their views and perspectives on these business practices reflect the type of organisational culture they are trying to establish. Thus, the views and perspectives of management further assisted researcher in determining how the particular culture created within the GDSD affected communication. The communication strategy used in an organisation emanates from the business practices, such as the strategic objectives, mission and vision of the organisation, which are management's responsibilities with managers being responsible for aligning the organisational culture with the communication strategy to ensure improved communication.

Communication officers are responsible for interpreting the organisational culture through communication and are further responsible for the communication flows (output) in an organisation. Employees, on the other hand, have to live the organisational culture (decoding). It is also important to highlight that the number of participants were determined by the data saturation level and, thus, should the study have failed to reach data saturation using six participants, the researcher would have purposively increased the number of participants depending on both the information required and available people who were able to provide it.

The in-depth interviews with participants were held in Fochville office, Carltonville, Krugersdorp and Johannesburg. The researcher arranged interviews at the place convenient for the interviewees. In the next subsection the researcher discusses the pilot study that was conducted.

3.5   PILOT STUDY

Neuman (2011) views a pilot study as a small study which is conducted prior to the actual study research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, data collection and analysis instruments used are both adequate and appropriate. This study was piloted using four employees of the GDSD who were based in the Fochville office with focus group discussions being conducted with two employees of the GDSD at the Fochville office and in-depth interviews being conducted with two officials at the same office. The pilot study determined the participants' interest in the study, question sequence, length and timing in respect of both the focus group discussion guide and the interview schedule. In addition, the pilot study also enabled the researcher to identify whether there were any questions that were unclear to the participants. The research design used in the study is discussed in the next section.

3.6   RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is an essential element in the research process to make the study stronger and manage the research process easily (Yin 2014). In addition, it enables the researcher to determine the data saturation point (O'Reilly & Parker 2013). Data

saturation is the point in the data collection process at which the researcher has attained the required depth and breadth of the information for the purposes of the study (Yin 2014).

This study was a qualitative study which used both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews in order to collect the requisite data. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews are chosen primarily because of their ability to obtain in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences, perceptions, feelings and knowledge that could not be obtained by any other methods (Patton 2002).

This study also contains elements of exploratory research. According to Welch et al (2013), an exploratory study is suitable to investigate various issues in the business setting or social institutions. The next section discusses the population and participation selection.

3.7   POPULATION AND PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Babbie (2013) indicates that, in the research context, a population is a cluster of individuals about whom inferences may be made in a study. This study used the qualitative research methodology and representativity was deemed to be unimportant as the individual participants were chosen based on their personal insights and perspectives. Mohd Ishak and Abu Bakar (2014) are of the opinion that qualitative research does not require any statistical analysis and, thus, it is incumbent on qualitative researchers to be creative when addressing sampling issues. Yin (2014) concurs that qualitative researchers do not have to endure the strenuous randomisation process involved in sampling procedures because it is not possible for the results to be generalised to a larger population. It is only analytical generalisation that is possible where a set of results are generalised to a broader theory. Marshall and Rossman (2016) mention that the majority of qualitative research does not mention the sampling procedure, population, unit of analysis or target population as it is not important to do so.

The qualitative nature of this study meant that the participant selection process was both important and relevant although the traditional sampling techniques used primarily in quantitative studies were not deemed to be relevant. Neuman (2009) points out that qualitative researchers do not pay much attention to either the sample's

representativeness or the techniques used for drawing samples. Flick (2015) asserts that that the individuals or cases in qualitative study are selected not because of their population representation but, instead, because of their relevance to the research topic. In this study the inflexible sampling techniques used in quantitative studies were not pertinent. Purposive sampling was used to choose six Individual participants for the face to face in-depth interviews and sixteen focus group participants (eight in each group session) based on their knowledge and experience in relation to the GDSD. Purposive sampling is used when a sample is selected based on both the researcher's knowledge of the population and the nature of the research aims (Babbie 2016). However, the researcher was open to the possibility that it may be necessary to increase the number of participants in the face to face in-depth interviews and also the focus group discussions slightly in the interests of data saturation.

According to Marsh (2013), data saturation guides qualitative research. Saturation is reached when all the questions have been explored in detail and no new concepts or themes emerge in the subsequent interviews (Trotter 2012). Collingridge and Grant (2008) believe that both population and sampling are further informed by the research questions on the research topic. The next section discusses the data analysis process.

3.8   DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher commenced the data analysis process by coding the data. Neuman (2009) maintains that coding data in qualitative research involves organising the raw data into conceptual categories and generating themes which are then used to analyse the data. Braun and Clarke (2013) define a theme in research as a collection of data collated into categories of related information which capture patterns within the data. Codes are usually attached to chunks of varying sizes, words, phrases, sentences and/or paragraphs (Mukudwana 2014).

The data collected from both the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions were transcribed and thematic analysis used to generate categories and explore the themes that emerged from the participants' conversations. As a qualitative data analysis method thematic analysis may be defined as a general approach to conducting a data analysis by identifying themes and patterns found in the data (Wagner et al 2012). The

thematic analysis approach is used to understand the phenomenon that is being researched by carefully examining the way in which the participants experience the given situation. This method of analysis also assists in answering the research questions that guide as study. After the researcher had gathered data through recording and taking notes of what the participants had said during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions the data was transcribed. As the data was transcribed, the unit of analysis, which could be a word, a phrase or a few sentences, was identified. In view of the fact that these units of analysis were identified from the data recorded from the interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher labelled them with codes and identified what was discussed and what the underlying meanings of the given instances were. Braun and Clarke (2013) claim that using codes to identify themes helps in capturing the key ideas about the data in relation to the research questions. Bazeley (2009) maintains that identifying themes attains full significance only when the process of determining the themes is consistent. In this study the researcher ensured consistency through using specific checklist and not deviating from it.

According to Yirdaw (2016), conducting an analysis of the data derived from in-depth interviews bringing together disparate materials such as the written notes, recorded data and behaviours which have been observed to weigh and sift all the inputs by grouping these inputs into articulated set premises and speculations. Thus, in this study, the recordings were played and the transcripts done through systematically relating and classifying the information according to the research problems, research objectives and the participants' answers.

In addition, the researcher also used the process of identifying patterns, relationships and ideas as part of the thematic analysis of the data from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The coded themes in the data were identified and marked on the margin of the paper. The researcher analysed the interview content through the themes identified and the codes assigned so as to determine what would be discussed from the interviews. The data analysis in qualitative analysis is conducted in a way that ensures that the findings are reliable and valid by carefully coding and analysing the codes identified. Thus, the researcher used thematic data analysis for the purposes of this

research study due to its characteristics (explained above) and because it was deemed to be appropriate to the qualitative method that was used. The next section contains a discussion of reliability and viability.

3.9   RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

3.9.1 Reliability

Reliability occurs when the research tool used is consistent, stable, predictable and accurate (Kumar 2012). According to Creswell (2014), a research tool is reliable to the extent that when replicate measurements made by it under constant conditions provide the same results. Thus, in the research context reliability is concerned with the question as to whether the measure used will yield the same results on different occasions. Yin (2014) maintains that reliability is the primary standard for judging the quality of the research design while Kapoulas and Mitic (2012) are of the opinion that testing reliability in a research study is essential in establishing the quality of the study. According to Bekhet and Zausniewski (2012), the reliability of the study embraces the similarity, dependability and consistency of the study in comparison to other, similar studies. The researcher in this study ensured reliability by informing the participants about the context of the study. In addition, the use of multiple qualitative data collection methods reduces the possibility of bias. Multiple method was achieved through asking the same questions contained in the focus group discussion guide to two different focus groups at two different places. The researcher applied this same method in the interviews. The researcher also used coherent analytic procedures from the raw data to the reported findings. In other words, as soon as the researcher had embarked on the data collection, the preparation for the data analysis began with the researcher checking the transcripts for potential oversights during the analysis phase and comparing data to avoid any misrepresentation during the coding process. In addition, the researcher also gave a copy of the transcribed notes from the audio recording to the participants so they could review the detailed feedback from the interviews and verify the interpretive accuracy. Carlson (2010) maintains that providing a transcribed copy to the participants to allow them to review it increases reliability. The study process included an in-depth analysis of the interview transcripts and the coding process.

3.9.2 Validity

Validity in the research context refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reveals the actual meaning of the concept under consideration (Babbie 2013). According to Pandey and Patnaik (2014), a multimethod qualitative approach may be used to enhance the validity of a study. In a multimethod qualitative approach the researcher search for convergence among the multiple and different sources of information in order to form themes or categories (Creswell & Miller 2000). The researcher validated the credibility of this study by using a multiple qualitative method in terms of which focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted with various participants with the multiple views of individual participants enhancing the validity of the study.

3.9.3 Research ethics

The researcher complied with all ethical principles as prescribed by Unisa in order to uphold the integrity of the research. The first step was to obtain approval from Head of Department in the GDSD. The fact that the researcher is employed by the department where the research was conducted could lead to bias. In an effort to minimise bias, the researcher used pre-existing scale of developing focus group discussion guide. The structured interview method was also adopted to keep consistency of interviews. The wording of questions was carefully considered for better understanding of the participants.

For the purpose of this study, each participant signed a letter of consent to acknowledge that they participated willingly and that they could withdraw their participation at any stage of the research. The aim of the consent letter was also to explain the purpose of the research, confirm anonymity of participants and assure participants that information will be handled confidentially. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) maintain that informed consent has been seen as the main determinant of the ethicality of research study.

3.10   FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE REVIEW DISCUSSED ABOVE

All the questions used in both the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews were informed by the research questions which were formulated for the purposes of the study with the interview questions and focus group discussions questions being carefully selected to ensure that they provided answers to the research questions. It was the aim of this research study to assess the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD. The theoretical framework of organisational culture and communication, as presented in the literature review chapter, formed the basis of both the research questions and the interview questions.

Researchers agree that organisational culture comprises the beliefs, value, norms and assumptions which are common to all the employees of a company (Gregory, Harris, Amenakis and Shook 2009). This study aimed to explore the way in which organisational culture, through its identified features and dimensions, influenced communication practice within the GDSD. The features of organisational culture identified in the literature coupled with the knowledge of organisational culture as cited in various culture models provided a framework in terms of which the influence of organisational culture on communication could be understood. Thus, all the questions posed were based on this framework.

3.10.1 Focus group discussion

Question 1 in the focus group discussion referred to communication as experienced within the GDSD. The researcher took into account the fact that communication takes place within the context created by the organisational culture and, therefore, the type of communication practice prevalent in the organisation reflects the prevailing type of organisational culture (Alvesson 2013). The question also highlighted the guidelines that framed internal communication within the GDSD. Ravasi and Schultz (2006) contend that organisational culture guides what happens in the organisation by defining appropriate behaviour in various situations while the communication practice within the organisation is equally shaped by the framework of organisational culture because all organisational

activities are regulated by the organisational culture (Stoke, Baker & Lichy 2016). All the guidelines regulating communication practice within the organisation ultimately emanate from the context of the organisational culture. Question 2 also pointed to regulation within the organisation and how it affected the way in which the employees communicated. Question 3 reflected on organisational strategies as enshrined in the organisational culture and how strategies affect existing communication practice. The organisational culture perspective of organisational strategy requires organisational members to accurately interpret environmental information and then respond appropriately (Mintzberg & Quinn 2003). Questions 4 and 5 were about values and how such values affect communication within the organisation. Soho (2000) views an organisational culture system as a coherent set of interdependent values. Questions 6 involved artefacts while Question 7 focused on power dimension and the uncertainty avoidance of Hofstede (1985) and reflected on communication norms as well as the collaboration and consistency dimensions of organisational culture (Denison 1990).Questions 8,9 and 10 were based on information centralisation or decentralisation which also reflects the prevailing organisational culture within an organisation. Question 11 addressed the flow of communication, Question 12 reflected on the influence of organisational values on communication practice Question 13 focused on the flow of communication in relations to organisational culture, Question 16 dealt with downward communication while Question 17 involved flows of communication as influenced by communication practice as well as channels of communication. Finally, Question 18 addressed the way in which organisational culture creates identity.

3.10.2 Interviews with management

These interviews comprised 7 questions which covered organisational culture and communication. Question 1 reflected on the leadership style that emanated from the prevailing organisational culture. Organisational culture affects internal communication through producing a leadership style that prescribes a specific communication style within the organisation (Tsai 2011). Question 2 was about controlling communication through organisational values, Question 3 covered communication channels as influenced by organisational culture and Question 4 addressed the decision-making process which cut

across the various dimensions of culture as highlighted by Hofstede (1985) and Denison (1990). The decision-making process also takes place within the context of organisational culture and determines the communication pattern used in the organisation. Questions 5 and 6 were based on organisational challenges which, to some extent, expose the type of organisational culture and how it affects communication practice. Question 7 was based on the organisational culture preferred by management while Question 7 resonated with the fourth research question

3.10.3 Interviews with communicators

Questions 1,2,3, 4 and 5 focused on channels of communication, the effects of organisational culture on communication and the upward communication flow, Question 6 addressed organisational challenges which also reflect the prevailing organisational culture while Question 7 was based on the organisational culture desired by the communication officers.

3.10.4 Interviews with employee

Question 1 dealt with the influence of organisational culture features on communication practice, Question 2 addressed communication flows and communication channels, Question 3 focused on upward communication, Question 4 covered collaboration, Question 5 was based on communication practice as framed by the prevailing organisational culture, Question 6 focused on the influence of organisational culture on communication and, finally, Question 7 was based on the organisational culture desired by employees to ensure effective communication practice.

It was important to highlight that some of the dimensions of organisational culture, as cited in the various models, share some similarities, for example, Hofstede (1985) refers to power distance, uncertainty avoidance and individualism versus collectivism while Denison (1990) refers to collaboration which, to some extent, reflects power distance and Individualism versus collectivism. The researcher summarised the differences and commonalities as cited in the various organisational models at the end of this study.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the research methods used, theoretical assumptions which underpinned the study and the data collection and analytical procedures which were used to collect and analyse the requisite data. The chapter also discussed how the qualitative research design worked together with the interpretive paradigm to produce results were analysed using thematic analysis. Purposive sampling was highlighted as the process that the researcher used to select the study participants. The chapter also explained the multimethod data collection process which involved both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews as the preferred way in which to achieve data saturation. The links between the focus group discussions, face to face interviews and inductive data collection approach were identified and their choice for the purposes of the study were justified. The chapter also highlighted the practical application of the theoretical aspects of the research methodology in the study. The chapter described how the questions in both the focus group guide and the face to face interview schedule were formulated. The issues of validity and reliability were explained and the measures taken to ensure both the validity and the reliability of the study were justified. The chapter also elaborates on how the study complied with the ethical requirements of research and, finally, the focus group discussion questions and interview questions were clearly located within the theoretical framework of the study. It was also pointed that these questions had addressed all the research questions satisfactorily. The next chapter presents the data which was collected.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The research findings are presented in this chapter. The data presented reflects the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD. The findings of the study emanated from the responses of the participants to questions which were formulated using the four research questions which formed the basis of the study. The chapter starts by presenting the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data that was collected primarily from the focus group discussions and interviews. The codes that were used to identify the data also facilitated the formulation of the themes which then resulted in the identification of subthemes. The literature review on organisational culture and communication also contributed to the identification of the themes and subthemes that emerged from the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The following four themes emerged from both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews namely, *communication standard operations procedures, leadership role, consistency and a clearly articulated mission and vision statement.*

The central research questions for this study were the following: -

- *What are the employees' perceptions of the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD?*
- *What are the types of organisational cultures prevailing within the GDSD?*
- *What is the impact of these cultures on communication practice within the GDSD?*
- *How may organisational culture be used in such a way that it improves communication within the GDSD?*

4.2 **WHAT ARE EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE ON COMMUNICATION PRACTICE WITHIN GDSD?**

The central research questions were answered through eighteen open-ended focus group questions in each session, two focus group sessions were held, one in Carltonville and Krugersdorp. In-depth interviews schedule consisted of seven open- ended questions per

session and six interview sessions were held with participants in Fochville, Carltonville, Krugersdorp and Johannesburg. The questions were aligned with the central research questions and the conceptual framework of the study, which were Denison organisational culture model, Hofstede and Schein's frameworks of organisational culture. Different themes emerged during data analysis under this research question and were ultimately grouped into four main themes which included communication standard operation procedure, leadership role, consistency and clearly articulated mission and vision statement. *FG describes participants who took part in the focus group discussions and II describes participants who took part in the in-depth interviews.*

4.1.1 Theme 1: Communication standard operations procedure

This theme is linked to how the participants perceived communication practice within the GDSD. The subthemes included organisational structure, ethics and values. The participants' views of communication practice within the GDSD are discussed below.

The study participants indicated that communication within GDSD is informed by the structure of the organisation. *For example, Participant II05 reported that communication within GDSD is determined by the hierarchical nature of the organisation.* Items that signify organisational structure such as task allocation, coordination and supervision as well as information flow also surfaced during the discussions. For example, FG03 added that the organisational structure of GDSD is hierarchical in nature with *clarified lines of reporting.* FG01 reiterated that GDSD has a *framework* within which communication takes place. When asked to unpack the framework mentioned, FG01 noted *communication policy* as the guideline for a communication within the organisation. *FG011 felt that GDSD determines the way in which responsibilities are shared within the organisation in order to achieve organisational goals.* When asked how GDSD determines communication practice within the organisation, *FG014 reiterated that rules and policies are guidelines within which communication takes place. Participant II05 substantiated that employees in the GDSD did not become frustrated when confronted by different situations because of the outlined procedures which provide guidelines for internal communication processes. Participant II06* highlighted that the national *acts* such as *promotion of access to information act 2 of 2000* and *section 108 of the constitution* provide the basis for

communication in the organisation. *Participant II05 also added that the state of the nation address also* guides GDSD's communication strategy.

Task allocation, coordination, supervision as well as information flow appeared as indicators of how organisational culture affect internal communication within GDSD. For example, *participant II04 from in-depth interviews commented that the structure of GDSD determines how the responsibilities are shared.* II01 noted that message coordination was also done within policy guidelines of the GDSD. Participant FG04 also elaborated that communication between supervisor and subordinates is also founded on the policy framework of GDSD.

The ethics subtheme also emerged from the core theme of communication standard operations procedure. This subtheme surfaced in both the focus groups when the participants unanimously agreed that the GDSD clearly defines what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the organisation. For example, *II03 reported that GDSD's ethics are based on Chapter 10 of the South African Constitution which stipulates that the public service should maintain and promote a high standard of professional ethics. "Unethical behaviour is totally not tolerated within the GDSD, therefore the code of conduct is frequently communicated to employees through road shows,"* reported FGO7. *FG014 also commented that the ethics within the GDSD provided guidelines for integrity and, ultimately, resulted* in *good practice and accountable behaviour.* FG05 mentioned that aligning their duties according to the ethical requirements of the GDSD enhanced standards of professionalism and efficient communication. FG09 also viewed ethics as a way of ensuring that there was no corruption within the organisation. FG05 mentioned that *policies are constantly enforced through communication to ensure that employee behaviour complies with the values of the GDSD.* Participant II06 stated that *respect and integrity* are some of values observed by GDSD. Participant II01 *noted that members within the GDSD were upholding the values as enshrined in the policy documents.* Participant FG08 from focus group also mentioned that organisational values shape communication behaviour within the GDSD by promoting certain behavioural patterns*. Participant II05 also added that respect is highly recommended within GDSD. FG08 elaborated that all members within GDSD are*

expected to perform their duties with high level of integrity. When asked how such values impact on communication practice, the participant elaborated that values guide communication relationship within GDSD.

FG012 mentioned face to face interaction as the preferred channel of communication within the GDSD because of prompt feedback arising from this channel of communication. *FG06 further commented that emails and intranet were also often used within the GDSD.* FG016 expressed the view that social media should be integrated into the GDSD's way of communicating because of ever changing technology and the fact that new ways in which to communicate are being developed on a daily basis. *"I think the GDSD must always reach us in a way that best suits us, social media appeals to our personal and professional lives," commented FG016.*

FG03 stated communication protocol is observed within the GDSD. FG 01 mentioned that in terms of the GDSD's communication practice, staff at service point level communicate with head office via the regional office". However, FG09 commented that it is more efficient to communicate directly with head office as this fast tracks the feedback process. *"I have had a work-related problem that took too long to be resolved through the acceptable pattern of communication within the GDSD and, ultimately, the problem was resolved after I had resorted to communicating directly with head office", commented FG09.*

The participants in both focus groups felt that there was a need for regular intra-departmental meeting scheduled in different offices when all units would come together and outline their scope of work with the participants expressing the view that this type of regular interaction would create a common understanding of how the various directorates in the GDSD operated. *"I am not conversant with what the community development practitioners are doing in the department and I believe they are also not fully conversant with what we are doing as social workers," commented FG 07.*

When probed further about information not reaching them, for example *FG012 indicated vehemently that the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Directorate should ensure regular engagement with employees to keep them up to date on reporting templates. II04 elaborated that sometimes they realise during actual quarterly reviews that the templates*

have changed and that resulted in underperformance. II014 also supported that they would like to receive feedback from M&E regularly on their unit's quarterly performance.

Table 4.1: Summary of theme 1: Communication standard operation procedure (focus groups)

SUBTHEMES	FOCUS GROUP 1	FOCUS GROUP 2
Organisational structure	▪ Task allocation ▪ Coordination ▪ Supervision ▪ Information flow ▪ Relationship between various roles	▪ Coordination ▪ Information flows ▪ Supervision ▪ Relationship building
Ethics	▪ Good practice ▪ Accountability ▪ Guidelines for integrity ▪ Trust among employees ▪ Standard of professionalism	▪ Timely and informative communication ▪ Standards of professionalism ▪ Anti-corruption strategy
Values	▪ Integrity ▪ Respect	▪ Integrity ▪ Respect

4.1.2 Leadership role

The participants expressed the view that the leaders set the standard in the GDSD to guide communication behaviour. Participant *II05 commented that leaders within the GDSD provide information that directly affects behaviour through road shows, training and intranet (Socdev). FG08 mentioned that Rules, GDSD policies and procedures are used by leaders to ensure the required behaviour. Participant II02 commented that GDSD leaders valued ideas, opinions and suggestions of employees. FG016 reported that employees were always conducted about management decisions that govern the*

organisation. Participant II05 concluded that GDSD leaders set a standard for communication behavioural patterns.

The participants indicated that, when they behaved in the way prescribed by the GDSD, they usually received benefits such as *rewards*. For example, participant II02 stated explicitly that employees were likely to attract benefits such as performance bonus when they perform their duties as guided by policies of GDSD. However, participant FG03 expressed the view that rewards should not be limited only to money, certificates of appreciation and trophies because even the verbal acknowledgement of good behaviour from leaders in the organisation amounted to rewards.

The subtheme of *empowermen*t also emerged from theme of leadership role when the participants mentioned that the GDSD leadership contributed significantly in terms of their knowledge of how the organisation operated. *For example, participant II01 stated that It is mandatory for all employees in the GDSD to attend training organised by the organisation.* The trainings organised by GDSD ultimately instil the culture of the organisation in employees thereby shaping their communication behaviour.

The participants also mentioned that they were inspired by their leaders who upheld the organisational values. *For example, FG 04 stated that the leaders within GDSD respect employees and that when leaders are late for meeting appointments with staff members, they will start off by apologising for late coming.* The participant FG09 added that they reciprocated the kind of respect they received from their leaders. Thus, the organisational culture of GDSD creates communication of mutual respect between leaders and employees.

The participants indicated that they were receiving *mentorship and coaching* from their leaders to enhance their understanding of the GDSD. *For example, II06 indicated that the leaders within the GDSD serve to provide coherence and guide behaviour.* However, FG07 mentioned that inconsistency in policy implementation by leaders resulted in inconsistent communication within the organisation. Mentorship and coaching within GDSD therefore is an organisational culture effort that seeks to shape behaviour of employees in accordance with the desired organisational standards. The communication eventually is planned in such a way that it achieves expected outcomes.

Table 4.2: Summary of theme 2: Leadership role (Focus groups)

SUBTHEMES	FOCUS GROUP 1	FOCUS GROUP 2
Policies and procedures	▪ Communication policy ▪ Rules	▪ Communication policy ▪ Rules
Empowerment	▪ Consistent communication of policies by leaders ▪ Training	▪ Capacitation on policies and procedure ▪ Continuous awareness of values
Rewards	▪ Rewards for good behaviour	▪ Appreciation of good behaviour
Mentorship	▪ Coaching and persistent guidance by leaders	▪ Aligning employees' 'behaviour to organisational values through coaching and mentoring.

4.1.3 Consistency

The study participants perceived consistency as a strategy used by GDSD to create common understanding among employees. For example, *FG09 noted that communication within GDSD was consistently guided by organisational values determined by management. II07 reported that consistency of messages within GDSD minimised confusion and created common understanding within GDSD*. The consistency theme related to the conceptual framework of the Denison organisational culture model. The study of Denison (1990) identified consistency as a key internal element in an effective organisational culture. Recent evidence suggests that consistency in the organisation reflects effective organisational culture (Givens 2012). The study of Lee and

Gaur (2013) shows consistency as an important strategy to maintain coordination and consistent control system. Consistency is a strategy used by managers in an effective organisational culture to integrate, coordinate and control activities of organisation (Schein 2010). *The participant 1102, for example reported that consistent integration of employees' inputs by management resulted in more engaged employees. FG01 noted that management within GDSD strived for high level of employees' engagement.* Consistency strategy presents itself in team work, collaboration, standardisation and synergy (Rao 2016).

Table 4.3: Summary of theme 3: Consistency (Focus group)

SUBTHEMES	FOCUS GROUP 1	FOCUS GROUP 2
Integration	- Cultural framework - Staff alignment with organisational values	- Participative leadership involving employees in decision making - Creation of common understanding
Control	- Social norms - Mission statement	- Code of conduct - Policies and procedures

4.1.4 Clearly articulated mission and vision statements

According to the participants, the need for communication within the GDSD is derived from the *mission and vision statements* of the organisation. For example, Participant *FG05 reported that communication within GDSD is guided by mission and vision statement.*

Subthemes such as *strategy* and *objectives* emerged from this main theme. For example, Participant *FG013 expressed the view that communication practice emanated from organisational strategy and that organisational strategy determines how organisational members should collaborate to achieve the organisational objectives.* Collaboration is achieved through communication. Participant *II015 highlighted that the strategy directs the actions that guide and shape organisational behaviour, Participant FG014 mentioned*

that the strategy set the priorities for an organisation and that communication facilitated the realisation of such priorities.

Table: 4.4: Summary of the theme 4: Clearly articulated mission and vision statement (Focus group)

SUBTHEMES	FOCUS GROUP 1	FOCUS GROUP 2
Strategy	▪ **Actions that guide and shape the organisation** ▪ **Set priorities**	▪ **Working towards common goal** ▪ **Set organisational directions** ▪ **Decisions that guide and shape the organisation**
Objectives	▪ **Targets or standards** ▪ **Identifiable goals**	▪ **Measurable ends** ▪ **Performance standards**

4.3   WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES PREVAILING WITHIN GDSD?

The themes identified under this research question were classified into three main themes, namely *collaboration, leadership role and open communication*. Subthemes such *coordination, control and trust a*lso emerged. Leadership role consisted of subthemes such as *conducive environment and empowerment*. For example, *FG03 reported that the type of organisational culture prevailing within GDSD is the one that allows collaboration between organisational members. Participant II01 added that the kind of organisational culture within GDSD enable leaders to create conducive environment for full participation of organisational members. FG011 defined the type of organisational culture with GDSD as the one that supported open communication*. The study participants did not find any mismatch between organisational culture and mission and vision statement. For example *FG01 stated that mission and vision statements of GDSD correlated with how the*

organisation operate. Participant *II04 reported that the culture of GDSD is the one in which managers supported employees to establish a culture of excellence.*

FG07 noted that the working environment created by GDSD is the one in which trust is prevailing. II06 reported that the enforcement of rules and regulations were persistently carried out to control activities within GDSD.

The above-mentioned views of participants displayed characteristics of clan and hierarchy cultures. For example, *FG03 reported the type of culture existed within GDSD as the one that allowed collaboration.* Clan or supportive culture can be distinguished by collaboration between members (Han 2012). Participant *II01 reported that GDSD organisational culture enabled leaders to create conducive environment for full participation of members.* A culture that encourages full participation of members and supports open communication is a clan culture (Pinho et al 2014). A culture of excellence as reported by II04 is the characteristic of a clan culture (Miguel 2015). Trust is also a characteristic of clan culture (Fiordelisi 2014). The enforcement of rules and regulations as cited *by participant II06* defined hierarchy culture, hierarchy culture is a combination of rules and regulations to control activities in the organisation (Sok et al 2014).

4.4   WHAT ARE EFFECTS OF THESE CULTURES ON COMMUNICATION PRACTICE?

The main themes under this research question are *communication flow and centralisation or decentralisation of communication. For example, FG013 confirmed that communication takes place through hierarchical levels of GDSD. Participant II02 noted that communication within GDSD is centralised at head office in Johannesburg and communicators are assigned to regional communication responsibilities from head office. FG02 noted that communication flow is predominantly downwards in the form of instructions to ensure compliance with rules and regulations. II04 however felt that communication flows from all directions within GDSD.* The influence of organisational cultures on communication manifests predominantly through *authoritarian and participative* organisational cultures (Grunig 1992). In an authoritarian culture communication is centralised and there is no equal sharing of power whereas, on the other hand, a participative culture is characterised by the inclusion of employee inputs on

decision making. GDSD ultimately displayed the effects of both clan culture and hierarchy culture on communication practice, thus downward communication flow and all-round communication flow.

4.5   HOW MAY ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE BE USED IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT IMPROVES COMMUNICATION WITHIN GDSD?

Leadership role, consistency, mission and vision statement resurfaced as the main themes under this research question. For example, *FG03 reported that leaders should reinforce organisational culture that supports open communication and full participation* of organisational members. Participant *II04 noted that leaders should create a culture of sharing information effectively to promote common understanding within GDSD*. Clan culture is therefore ideal for improving internal communication within the organisation due to its ability to create open communication (Pinho et al 2014).

The study participants reiterated that consistency of messages across the organisation is essential for effective internal communication. *For example, II06 noted that organisational culture of GDSD should allow consistent flow of messages for better internal communication.* Consistency is essential for the creation of an effective organisational culture that promote internal communication (Givens 2012).

*FG015 noted that organisational culture should match with prevailing mission and vision statement. T*he mismatch between these concepts can cause confusion and ultimately affect internal communication negatively.

II02 noted that organisational culture of GDSD should make all employees realise the values that govern internal communication. FG07 recommended that the leaders should always ask employees for their inputs on the management of their performance. Clan culture is the one that makes it possible for management to encompass inputs of employees. Adoption of clan culture ultimately necessitates better internal communication within the organisation.

II02 explicitly stated that messages should be delivered consistently across the organisation for better internal communication. Consistency strategy is used by managers to integrate, coordinate and control the activities within organisation (Schein 2010).

FG012 reported that information overload is detrimental to improved internal communication. GDSD should therefore adopt decentralisation of information. Previous studies have reported that decentralisation has the advantages of reducing information overload (Robbins 1990). Decentralisation favours participative culture (Grunig & Grunig 1992), therefore GDSD should established a participative culture throughout the organisation for efficient internal communication.

4.6   SUMMARY

The data presented and discussed in this chapter reaffirmed that organisational culture creates an environment for the understanding in the organisation.   The prevailing standards of behaviour within an organisation is a ground for common understanding. The work attitude and behaviour of members within GDSD is persistently shaped by enforcement of ethos. The effect of organisational culture on communication is realised when ethos enforced influence behaviour and attitudes of members. It was clear in this chapter that the establishment of structure is leadership's prerogative. Two types of organisational structures were distinguished in the data, namely, a hierarchical structure and a flat structure. The formal structure of the GDSD determines the employees' participation in the decision-making process. The values of the GDSD provide standards which guide behaviour within the organisation with the ethical standards within the GDSD providing a framework for communication practice. Consistency also emerged in the data and was linked to communication efficiency within the organisation. The data also linked the mission and vision statement of the GDSD to the internal communication within the organisation.   The influence of organisational culture on communication practice within GDSD is also reflected on organisational structure. The structure dictates how communication should take place. For example, the lines of communication built on the structure dictate the flow of information.   The themes and subthemes identified from the data linked various organisational culture variables, such as values, strategy, policies and procedures, to communication practice within the GDSD. It was found that organisational culture, communication, organisational structure and leadership role appeared to be closely related concepts. The discussion on the findings is presented below.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The data collected during the study was presented in the previous chapter while this chapter now discusses this data. Thus, Chapters 4 and 5 of the study may be said to be interrelated. The purpose of this exploratory study was to assess the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD by means of a qualitative analysis. Thus, the following objectives were developed to guide the study: -

- To assess employees' perceptions of the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD.
- To determine the types of organisational cultures prevailing within the GDSD
- To explore the impact of these organisational cultures on communication practice within the GDSD
- To explore the way in which organisational culture may be used to improve internal communication within the GDSD.

The discussion in this chapter was guided by the four research questions which intended to achieve the objectives of this study. The theoretical lens of this study also guided themes and subthemes developed. The thematic analysis was used in this study to analyse data collected. The study of Braun and Clarke (2013) explained thematic analysis as a data analysis method that helps a researcher to identify themes and patterns of meanings across dataset in relation to a particular research questions. *Latent* and *semantic* coding can be distinguished in a thematic analysis method (Braun& Clarke 2013). The latent codes are researcher's driven themes that invoke conceptual and theoretical frameworks to identify implicit meanings within the data (Braun& Clarke 2013). Semantic codes are frameworks developed from data to identify implicit meanings (Braun& Clarke 2013). The latent codes ultimately emerged from the theoretical lens of this study, the Danison, Hofstede and Schein's conceptual frameworks of organisational

culture. The semantic codes were also adopted in the study to address emerging patterns that could not be covered by the latent codes.

5.2 WHAT ARE THE INFLUENCES OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE ON COMMUNICATION PRACTICE?

In the data presentation section, participant *FG01 stated that management within GDSD develop guidelines in which communication takes place. F*G011 mentioned that GDSD *determines how responsibilities are shared*. These codes made researcher to arrive at standard operations procedure within GDSD that influence how communication takes place. The *organisational structure* as mentioned by *participant FG03* also contributed to the development of standard operations procedure theme. *Clarified lines of reporting* also pointed to standard operating procedures that emanated from organisational culture.

5.2.1 Communication standard operations procedure

This theme and its subthemes align with the literature review and were related to the conceptual frameworks of Hofstede (1980, 1985 and 2003), Denison (1990, 2000) and Schein (1985, 2004, 2010). The participant from focus group, *FG01 highlighted that GDSD set guidelines for all activities within the organisation, including communication practice with these organisational guidelines within the GDSD ultimately serving as a frame of reference for the communication practice.* In substantiation of the communication standard operations procedure within the GDSD, *participant II05 from in-depth interview commented that employees in the GDSD did not become frustrated when confronted by different situations because of the outlined procedures which provide guidelines for internal communication processes.* Hofstede's (2003:18) definition of organisational culture as "*a collective programming of mind*" corresponds with this main theme with the collective programming of mind implying influence by the environment. Thus, it may be said that the communication practice within the GDSD was, ultimately, programmed using the standard operations procedures which emerged from the organisational culture prevailing in the organisation.

Previous studies on government communication revealed that communication practice in government is standardised through institutions such as the German Federal Press and

information office (in Germany), British Government Communication Network (in United Kingdom) and the Government Communication and Information Services (GCIS) in South Africa (Sanders, Crespo & Holtz-Bacha 2011). Mukundwana (2014) attests that GCIS has produced long lists of government communication guideline documents in its attempts to standardise communication practice in South Africa.

An in-depth interview with communicators revealed the link between national culture and GDSD's organisational culture. *Participant II06* noted national *acts* such as *promotion to information access act 2 of 2000* and *section 108 of the constitution* as the basis for communication strategy within GDSD. *Participant II05 highlighted the state of the nation address* as the as the point of departure in their communication strategy. These views of GDSD communicators supported the theory of Hofstede (1980) which linked the standard operation procedures within organisations to the national culture. Thus, organisational culture of GDSD is formed within national culture of South African government. In his 2018 state of the nation address the president of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, reiterated the fact that South Africa was still experiencing poor service delivery which was attributed to the poor internal communication within government departments (Ramaphosa 2018). This statement reflects the national culture of poor performance which was rife in all government departments in South Africa and may be linked to the current government administration (operating system). It may, therefore, be said that the standard operating procedures affect the communication practice in organisations. The president further proposed the restructuring of government to improve service delivery (Ramaphosa 2018), thus confirming that the state of the nation address was setting the tone for government communication (Government Communicators' Handbook 2014) and, ultimately, reflecting the influence of both the national culture and the culture prevailing in the provincial departments.

Denison (2000) affirmed that organisational culture comprises the beliefs and assumptions which act as frames of reference for the behavioural patterns and practices within an organisation. In the GDSD these behavioural patterns and practices are then known as the standard operation procedure and, as indicated in the data collected in this study, inform the communication pattern within the organisation. Schein (2004) concurred

with Denison (2000) that the organisational culture determines the communication patterns in an organisation through the creation of a frame of reference for the interpretations and actions of the organisation's members. Thus, within the GDSD, the communication standard operation procedure ultimately determines how communication should take place within the entity. In the following subsections, the researcher links the subthemes under communication standard operation procedure with the views of organisational culture as discussed in the literature review.

5.2.1.1 Organisational structure

To get perceptions about the influence of organisational culture on communication practice, researcher asked participants to explain how GDSD operates in terms of communication. The participants were quick to point to the organisational structure as the key determinant of communication within GDSD. For example, participant *FG01 reported that lines of communication are built within the organisational structure.* Organisational structure in this study ultimately emerged as an element of organisational culture that influence communication. It can therefore be concluded that organisational culture within GDSD influence communication practice by dictating the organisational structure. The participant, *FG03 from focus group in this study described the organisational structure of the GDSD as hierarchical in nature with lines of reporting built in it.* However, they did not identify any significant barriers to internal communication because of the clarified lines of reporting within the GDSD although two participants from the focus group did point to the slight delays in the upward communication due to the hierarchical nature of the GDSD. *One of these participants, FG09 commented that her case had dragged on through the levels of the GDSD but that it was finally resolved when she had resorted to dealing directly with the head office.* Another participant, *II03 felt that hierarchical structure of GDSD was not allowing him immediate access to top management and eventually the delay in getting feedback.* Nevertheless, both participants indicated that there were no significant communication barriers in the horizontal, vertical and downward flow of communication within the GDSD. This emerged from statements in which participant mentioned that the structure of GDSD allowed for open communication and that all

employees were able to interact with others on different hierarchical levels without any difficulty.

The participant, *FG07 indicated that organisational members of GDSD interacted freely at all levels of the organisation*. The free interaction of members on the different hierarchical levels of GDSD corresponds with Hofstede's (2001) power distance dimension of culture as discussed earlier in the literature review with the collaboration and open communication cited by the participants depicting the low power distance dimension of Hofstede (1985) as discussed in the literature review. Hierarchical structure was also discussed as an element of a high PD culture by Hofstede (1993) although, in the case of the GDSD, the hierarchical structure was not creating any barriers to the communication flows at all levels. A hierarchical structure also signifies the members' consent that power is shared unequally within the organisation. Nevertheless, it appeared that the majority of the participants had no problem with the hierarchical nature of the GDSD.

The participants also indicated that the organisational structure enabled social cohesion between the members which talks to the individualism versus collectivism dimension of culture of Hofstede (1985). *For example, participant II02 from interviews noted that GDSD culture allows for team building.* "*Members of GDSD are often allowed to go out together on a team building*", substantiated participant FG04. Organisational culture of GDSD therefore influences communication positively by allowing for both formal and informal interactions of organisational members. The collaborative efforts and open communication that unified the members of the GDSD, as was evident in the data collected, were characteristics of the collectivism culture dimension of Hofstede (Hofstede 1985).

The fact that the employees' inputs were integrated into decision making at the GDSD corresponded with the low uncertainty avoidance culture dimension of Hofstede (1985) as discussed in the literature review (Section 2.14.1.3).

The organisational structure aspects, such as task allocation, coordination, common goal and supervision, that emerged from the data collected in the study was congruent with Denison's (1990) view on the involvement culture trait as discussed in the literature review

(Section 2.3). These aspects were also mentioned in the literature review under Schein's (1985) artefacts layer of organisational culture.

In his 2018 state of the nation address President Ramaphosa also indicated that the structure and size of state should be revisited to ensure optimal service delivery (Ramaphosa 2018). The next subsection discusses ethics.

5.2.1.2   Ethics

The participants commented that the GDSD maintained and promoted a high standard of professional ethics with communication practice being shaped by ethical codes of practice (Section 5.2.1). *For example, participant II06 noted that GDSD had strong guidelines that regulate behaviour.* The strong guidelines within GDSD translates into ethics that govern responsibilities within the organisation. The organisational culture within the GDSD influences ethical behaviour through the *ethical standards* that outline the desired behaviour and, eventually, shape communication pattern within the organisation. As indicated in the literature review Schein (2004) commented that establishing ethics within an organisation creates a framework within which communication occurs. Thus, within the context of the GDSD such a framework ultimately plays a role in the way in which communication should take place within GDSD. The next subsection focuses on values.

5.2.1.3   Values

Participant II01, *noted that members within the GDSD were upholding the values as enshrined in the policy documents*. Participant FG08 from focus group also mentioned that organisational values shape communication behaviour within the GDSD by promoting certain behavioural patterns*. Participant II05 also added that respect is highly recommended within GDSD. FG08 reported that all members within GDSD are expected to perform their duties with high level of integrity*. This demonstrated alignment of duties to the organisational culture and portrayed how communication may be controlled through management imposing certain values on an organisation.   Various definitions of organisational culture, as proposed by different scholars and revealed in the literature review, clearly mention value as an element of organisational culture (Hofstede 1985; Denison 1990; Schein 2004). In addition, it emerged from the literature review that

communication and organisational culture are an intertwined concept which are shaped by the prevailing values and, thus, this would also have been the case in GDSD (Schein 2010). Leadership role is discussed in the next subsection.

5.2.2 Leadership role

Northouse (2013) views leadership as a procedure whereby a person (leader) inspires a group to attain a shared understanding. *For example, Participant II05 commented that GDSD leaders set a standard for communication behavioural patterns. FG08 perceived rules, policies and procedures within GDSD as guidelines for communication strategy.* These views from the data collected linked the organisational culture and the leadership role within the GDSD (Section 4.2.1.2). The influence of organisational culture on communication practice emanated from leaders who impose certain communication standards. This link was also reflected in the literature review where internal communication was conceptualised as a controlled communication (Section 2.5), thus highlighting that communication does not takes place within a vacuum but, rather, in an environment which is created by the leaders.

The literature review also confirmed that the process of creating a common understanding emanates from the organisational culture (Section 2.8) and that communication develops from the organisational culture (Alvesson 2013). Patterson and Radtke (2009) view communication as the construction of the message in a way that ensures that it inspires target audiences to act in the anticipated way. Cooren, Kuhn, Cornelissen and Clarke (2011) link communication and leadership while Fairhurst (2009) believes that the role of leadership in communication is the creation of meaning. Meanwhile, meaning within the organisation contributes to organisational identity (Robbins 2001) which is an output of organisational culture (Schein 2004). The next subsection discusses policies and procedures.

5.2.2.1 *Policies and procedures*

Participant *FG014 mentioned rules and policies of GDSD as guidelines for communication within GDSD. FG08 believed that leaders within GDSD were key drivers of rules, policies and procedures that guide communication practice.* Sanders et al (2011)

confirmed that the development of formal rules governing the practice and structure of government communication are essential. Communication practice is governed by legal frameworks which impact on the communication practice.

The participant FG08 in this study highlighted that policies and procedures determined the communication prevailing in the GDSD. This aligns with Schein's (2010) assertion, as mentioned in the literature review (Section 2.2), that communication is viewed from the context of the organisational culture while Section 2.9 of literature review detailed how policies and procedures are the key drivers of communication within an organisation. The leaders in the GDSD create a context for communication within the organisation through policies and procedures that emanate from the organisational culture. Yukl (2006) confirms that influence of leadership on an organisation lies in leadership's provision for an organisational context for internal communication practice.

5.2.2.3 Empowerment

It emerged from the data that the leaders within the GDSD integrated the employees' opinions and inputs into their decision making. For example, *participant II02 reported that GDSD leaders always considered employees' inputs in the decision making.* The effect of integrating employees resulted in participative communication. This corresponds with Denison's (1996) theoretical framework which also informed the study. According to Denison (1990), the participation of employees in the organisational decision making makes them both responsible and accountable for their actions. It was the responsibility of the leaders in the GDSD to define the communication style and what was expected of the employees, policies and procedures provided clear guidelines in this regard. Denison (1990) maintains that employees who are involved in decision making are more likely to produce the expected results. The participants mentioned that the leaders in the GDSD shared knowledge of the way in which the organisation operated. For example, participant II05 noted that leaders within GDSD persistently share information through training and roadshows to acquaint organisational members with operational strategies of the organisation. The communication behaviour within the GDSD ultimately becomes aligned to the way in which the GDSD operates through communication empowerment by the leaders. Schein (2010) also supports the notion that leaders strengthen knowledge within

an organisation through indicating strategies which are relevant for organisational success. The next subsection discusses rewards.

5.2.2.4   *Rewards*

The data collected in the study linked rewards to compliance with organisational values (Section 4.2.1.1). Schein (1985) perceived organisational rewards as a management tool with which to control behaviour within the organisation. As indicated in the literature review Denison (1990) cited an organisation's mission as an element of the organisational culture. The GDSD's mission statement was found to communicate the organisation's purpose and direction to both employees and clients with the mission statement ultimately influencing the communication pattern within the GDSD. Schein (2010) maintains that the organisational culture consists of a relationship between the organisation and individuals who work within the organisation. The relationship is expressed through structuring the terms of the reward exchange with the reward system expressing the values and norms to which those within the organisation are expected to conform. Mentorship and coaching are discussed in the next subsection.

5.2.2.5   *Mentorship and coaching*

The participants confirmed that both mentoring and coaching happened within the GDSD (item 4.1.2). Mentorship and coaching are linked to Hofstede's (1993) power distance dimension of culture with Hofstede et al (2010) mentioning that the influence of the power distance dimension on communication practice rests on the employee-supervisor relationship. In the employee-supervisor relationship in the GDSD develop mentoring and coaching which were intended to align all organisational activities to the organisational values. The process of aligning employees to the organisational values in the GDSD was accompanied by the specific pattern of communication which was ideal for mentoring and coaching. Both mentoring and coaching complement the organisational culture by ensuring the preferred organisational behaviours (Hester & Setzer 2013). The GDSD demonstrated features of low power distance which results in employees engaging in a meaningful discussion with their supervisors. Mentoring and coaching ultimately enhance a conducive environment (organisational culture) within which communication takes place.

Mentoring and coaching are also linked to Denison's (1990) involvement dimension of organisational culture. The involvement dimension of organisational culture was evident in the data in the participants' statements that reflected unity within the GDSD. Consistency is discussed in the next subsection.

5.2.3 Consistency

Consistency relates to Denison's (1996) framework that guided this study. As noted in the literature review Denison (1990) identified consistency as a critical element in the development of an effective organisational culture. The participants indicated that they behave in alignment with the organisational values and beliefs, thus reflecting a strong organisational culture (Modau 2014). Nwibere (2013) further highlights that an effective organisational culture contributes to the open communication which promotes goal attainment.

Hofstede's (2001) low power distance culture dimension was present in the GDSD as evidenced by the participants' views that management consistently took into account the employees' inputs in the decision-making process. Both the downward and upward communication channels in the GDSD allowed for the consistent engagement of employees and management.

Schein (1985) distinguished between two main functions of organisational culture, namely, internal integration and external adaptation. Internal integration postulates that organisational culture impacts on the conduct of organisational members (Schein 1985). The participants in this study clearly indicated that they behaved in ways consistent with the values espoused in the GDSD with the organisational culture in the GDSD creating behavioural expectations that compelled the organisational members to behave in ways that were in consistent with the culture of the GDSD. Through its set of values the organisational culture influences behavioural pattern within an organisation and, ultimately, dictates communication patterns that match the organisational values. Integration is discussed in the next subsection.

5.2.3.1 *Integration*

FG016 for example reported that employees were involved in the decision making by management. The consistent integration of work activities within the GDSD corresponded with Hofstede's (1991) organisational culture framework and Denison (1990). Hofstede (1991) views the shared perceptions of daily practices as the centre of the organisational culture. Integration in the context of this study correlated with the power distance and individualism versus collectivism dimensions of Hofstede (1991). The participants shared that all GDSD members collaborated in pursuing a common purpose (Section 4.2.1.1) with such collaboration providing evidence of the existence of the collectivism dimension of culture within the GDSD. Communication in organisations is also used to facilitate understanding between various people in order to achieve the organisational goals. The existence of the power distance dimension also emerged from the data with the participant II02 mentioning that the GDSD leaders integrated employee inputs into the decision-making process. They also mentioned that the GDSD leaders regularly conducted meetings with the employees to address their needs. In other words, the GDSD exhibited features of the low power distance dimension.

It also emerged from the data that policies were consistently enforced within GDSD to ensure the alignment of the employees' values to the values of the organisation. This corresponded with Denison's (1996) involvement dimension of organisational culture. According to Denison (1990), it is through involvement that organisations constantly engage and align employees' behaviour to the organisational values. Control is the focus of the next subsection.

5.3.2.2   Control

The *participant II02 and FG07* indicated that GDSD used a code of ethics to align the behaviour of the members with the organisational values. According to Schein (2004), through the values imposed on organisational members organisational culture influence all activities within the organisation. Thus, the code of ethics within the GDSD eventually influenced communication practice within the organisation in line with values of the organisation.

The code of ethics in the GDSD also corresponded with Hofstede's (1991) power dimension culture with the participants mentioning that rules and policies guide behaviour

within GDSD. Hofstede (1985) distinguished between high and low power distance and elaborated that high PD cultures use stringent rules to enforce behaviour while, in low PD cultures, rules are relaxed.

The participants' assertions in relation to ethics and values fitted into Denison's (1990) organisational culture framework. Denison (1990) views consistency in the organisational context as systems which are put in place to control behaviour within an organisation. The organisational systems ultimately both shape communication and dictate the social norms within the organisation. The mission statement is discussed in the next subsection.

5.2.4 Clearly articulated mission and vision statements

A clearly articulated mission and vision relates to Denison's (2000) organisational culture model which formed the basis of this study. The participant *II05* clearly linked communication practice within the GDSD to the organisation's mission and vision. It also emerged that participants *II03 and II06 considered the mission and vision as the core of communication practice in the GDSD.* The GDSD's clearly articulated mission included a short description of the reasons for the GDSD's existence while the vision articulated the future of GDSD as aspired to by its leaders. According to Denison (1990), both the mission and the vision play a fundamental role in upholding strong organisational culture within an organisation. The literature review indicated that a strong organisational culture is the starting point of an effective communication practice within an organisation. The next subsection focuses on strategy.

5.2.4.1 Strategy

The participants, *FG07 and FG 09 highlighted the mission and vision as the basis of communication within the GDSD*. An understanding of the way in which the organisational culture, through the mission and vision, provided a context for communication practice within the GDSD and contributed to an effective communication plan. The communication strategy within GDSD develops within parameters of organisational culture. Thus, organisational culture influences the communication process within an organisation (Schein 2004). The communication strategy within the GDSD ultimately developed within the parameters of the organisational culture. Childress (2013) linked an effective

organisational culture with a successful business strategy. In addition, the lack of a communication strategy within an organisation may fail to position the organisation in the market (Grossman 2005). The next subsection discusses objectives.

5.2.4.2 Objectives

The participant FG05 in the study commented that a clear mission and vision were streamlining the communication efforts of the GDSD in line with the organisation's objectives. This confirmed the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD. The employees within an organisation are expected to understand the basic objectives of their organisation while it is the role of the leaders to ensure that the employees develop a sound understanding of the organisation and its objectives (Dewaker 2008). The next subsection discusses the types of organisational cultures to be found in an organisation.

5.3 WHAT ARE TYPES OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES PREVAILING IN AN ORGANISATION (GDSD)?

Different organisational cultures impact on organisational activities differently. However, the focus of this study was to determine the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD. Denison (1990) maintains that a strong organisational culture within an organisation links employees to the formal rules and regulations while Schein (2010) is of the opinion that the strong organisational culture establishes a set of standards and trends which facilitate communication within the organisation. Hence, against this important background of organisational culture it is important to identify the organisational cultures to be found in an organisation.

 In the literature review (Section 2.4) four possible types of organisational culture types were identified and discussed, namely, a hierarchy organisational culture, market organisational culture, clan organisational culture and adhocracy organisational culture. In section 4.3 of this study, participants confirmed clan and hierarchy cultures as the prevailing cultures within GDSD. The study found that the clan organisational culture was a perfect match for the organisational traits of GDSD as highlighted by the participants. The participants mentioned collaboration and participation as organisational features of

the GDSD (Section 4.2.1.1). These two are dominating features of a clan organisational culture (Pinho et al 2014). The study participants also mentioned that they took part in decision making in the organisation. This was in line with Miquel's (2015) assertion that the managers in a clan culture democratically stimulate and persuade employees to embrace the culture adopted by the organisation.

5.4 WHAT ARE EFFECTS OF THESE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES ON COMMUNICATION PRACTICE?

The literature review in Chapter 2 clearly outlined the relationship between organisational culture and communication within an organisation (item 2.10). It was also evident in the previous chapter that organisational culture, through its difference variables, influences the communication context within an organisation. Bowen (2004) also highlights the influence of organisational culture in ethical decision making. This assertion concurs with the views of participants presented in the previous chapter (Section 4.2.1.1).

 Grunig (1992) maintains that the influence of organisational culture on communication manifests predominantly in authoritarian and participative organisational cultures. In an authoritarian culture communication is centralised and there is no equal sharing of power whereas, on the other hand, a participative culture is characterised by the inclusion of employee inputs on decision making. The next subsections discuss the way in which the different organisational cultures influence communication within an organisation.

5.4.1 Hierarchy organisational culture

It emerged from the literature review in Chapter 2 that a hierarchy culture is associated with mechanical and bureaucratic type of leadership (Section 2.4) with strict rules and procedures being used to govern behaviour. The downward communication structure is prevalent in this type of culture due to the emphasis on conformity and submissiveness (Hofstede 1985). This type of culture also correlates well with Hofstede's (2001) high power distance culture dimension. Communication is centralised: leaders initiate communication and subordinates comply. In other words, the communication is mainly downwards.

5.4.2 Clan culture

The literature review provided evidence of collaboration, participation, involvement, open communication, teamwork and empowerment as features of a clan culture (Section 2.4). Iyer and Israel (2012) highlight that communication enables collaboration among employees within an organisation. The communication within a clan culture ultimately flows in all directions to empower all involved in the organisation. The development of a team within an organisation requires communication that flows in all directions within the organisation to ensure information is shared (Ryynänen, Pekkarinen, & Salminen). In addition, a clan culture also includes open communication (Pinho et al 2014), Campbell and Göritz (2014) add that open communication enables employees to share information without fear. The open sharing of information is considered ideal for a common understanding of the organisation (Schein 2010).

5.5 HOW MAY ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE BE USED IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT IMPROVES COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE ORGANISATION?

The participants shared the view that organisations should adopt an organisational culture that promotes open communication (Section 4.1.1). The literature review (Section 2.3) confirmed that a strong organisational culture promotes open communication as it fosters communication within an organisation. The participants also indicated that internal communication may be improved when employees' ideas are integrated into the decision making (Section 4.5). A clan culture was viewed as the type of culture that has the potential to promote the integration and collaboration of employees (Section 5.5.3). It would, therefore, appear that organisations should prefer a clan culture over any other culture type in order to improve the internal communication.

5.6   SUMMARY

It was clear that organisational values within the GDSD were enforced through a code of ethics and, thus, all communication behaviours within the GDSD had to be in line with the organisation's values. In other words, through the enforcement of specific values the organisational culture in the GDSD influenced the communication practice within the organisation and, thus, the communication practice within the GDSD ultimately became the product of the prevailing organisational culture. The influence of the organisational culture on communication practice within an organisation requires the profiling of the

existing organisational culture. The organisational culture within an organisation may be either weak or strong. Five different types of organisational culture were distinguished and discussed in the chapter. The next chapter presents a discussion of the study findings, conclusions to the findings and recommendations

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter completes the study by presenting the general findings emanating from both the focus groups and the interviews. It also further concludes the research problem and provides answers to the research questions that were discussed in previous chapters. The influence of organisational culture on communication practice is specifically assessed and the study findings are examined in relation to the literature review in Chapter two. The limitations and strengths of the study are clearly outlined. The main conclusion to the study encapsulates the research questions posed in the study. In addition, recommendations are proposed for future researchers.

The general findings from the focus groups and interviews reflected the participants' perceptions of organisational culture and its role in communication practice. In the subsections below the overall findings are articulated in line with the research questions that formed the basis of the study.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

6.2.1. Research question 1: What is the impact of organisational culture on communication?

The data from the focus groups discussions and the interviews was classified into codes, core themes and their subthemes and were fully described in the previous chapter. The main themes and their corresponding subthemes identified in the study abstracted the influence of organisational culture within an organisation. The following four main themes emerged, namely, *communication standard operations procedure, role of leadership role, consistency and a clearly articulated mission and vision.* The figure below presents the themes and subthemes that emerged in the study by providing a summary of the main themes and subthemes that were identified in the study.

Communication standard operation procedures	Leadership role	Consistency	Clearly articulated mission and vision
- Organisational structure - Ethics - Values	- Policies and procedures - Empowerment - Rewards - Mentorship	- Integration - Control	- Strategy - Objectives

Figure 6.1: Themes and subthemes in conceptualising the influence of organisational culture on communication practice

Features of organisational culture that contribute to the impact of communication practice emerged from the themes and subthemes which were identified in the study. During the interview sessions the participants indicated that communication standard operating procedures are necessary for reducing the frustrations that may arise from misunderstandings (Section 4.2.2.1). Communication standard operating procedures may be seen as the clarification of the way in which duties should be performed within an organisation. It emerged that the specific procedure on how feedback was collected in the GDSD provided the employees with assurance that their organisation was open to two- way communication. For example, as indicated in Chapter 4, the participants highlighted that regular meetings were held during which employees interacted with senior managers to unpack issues and address them. Longenecker (2010) maintains that established standards within an organisation are a prerequisite for effective communication. The regular meetings scheduled between senior management and the employees within the GDSD were clearly building employee loyalty and ensuring that the decisions and policies of management were in the best interest of everyone involved.

According to Ruben and Gigliotti (2016), the influence of the leadership role on communication practice stems from the relationship between leaders and followers as well as the contexts and interpretive activities of those involved. Schein (2004) further

elaborates that organisational culture creates a context for all organisational activities, thereby influencing all aspects within the organisation. Ultimately the leadership role emanates from the organisational culture while its impact on communication practice manifests through, among other things, selecting an appropriate organisational structure for the organisation. The lines of communication within the organisation are built within the organisational structure, thus resulting in the organisational structure playing a role as an organisational communication determinant. Ruben and Gigliotti (2016) explicitly mention *agenda setting, management of meaning/framing and sense-making* as key leadership roles in shaping the communication within an organisation.

According to Schein (1985), organisational culture has two critical roles, namely, internal integration and external adaptation. Internal integration refers to the fact that organisational culture influences behaviour within the organisation (Schein 1985) as individuals within the organisation are compelled to behave in accordance with the values of the organisation. As reported in Chapter four of this study the participants confirmed that they aligned their duties with the ethical requirements of the GDSD and that their behaviours within the GDSD were guided by the values of the GDSD. Thus, it may be said that the organisational culture becomes a set of shared values within the organisation. The organisational culture of any organisation should, ultimately, generate behavioural expectations that consistently align employee behaviours to the organisation's values. Deal and Kennedy (1982) concluded that organisations with a strong culture generally outperform those with a weak culture because a strong culture creates behavioural consistency. Denison (1990) also asserts that an organisation's success depends on the degree to which the values of the organisation's culture are shared consistently by the organisational members, with this consistent sharing of the organisational values within the GDSD, ultimately, creates a common understanding of organisational goals.

According to the participants in the study there was collaboration between the mission statement, vision statement and communication practice within the GDSD. Mackleavey & Harrison (2010) view a written mission statement as a tool which management uses to communicate with employees about strategic direction. Both the mission and vision

statements of the GDSD clearly mentioned the organisational values as well as the purpose which provided direction for the organisation's communication efforts. It is imperative that an effective mission and vision statement are linked to the organisational culture and, hence, Schein (2010) claims that the organisational culture manifests through the organisation's core values. The study found that the GDSD's communication practice was significantly impacted upon by the organisation's core values. It may, therefore, be concluded that the answer to the first research question emanated from the themes and subthemes that emerged from the participants 'views.

6.2.2 Research question 2: What are the types of organisational cultures prevailing in the organisation?

In relation to the types of organisational culture prevailing in the GDSD, it appeared that the participants in both the focus groups and interviews used both the themes and the subthemes, depicted in Figure 6.1, to describe their perceptions of the existing organisational cultures in the organisation. The literature review had highlighted (Section 2.4) clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy as the four possible types of organisational cultures within an organisation. However, features of the clan and hierarchical cultures only in the GDSD emerged from the participants' views

6.2.3 Research question 3: What are the effects of these organisational cultures on communication practice?

The themes and subthemes identified in the study revealed that organisational communication does not takes place within a vacuum but is influenced by the prevailing organisational culture (Schein 2004). The participants in both the focus groups and the interviews had interlinked organisational culture and leadership role and revealed how both these concepts jointly influenced communication practice within the organisation. Communication within an organisation is shaped by the cultural context within which it occurs. The core aspects of the culture within an organisation is to control the behaviour within the organisation and, thus, it affects even the communication behaviour.

The literature review contained in Chapter two of this study outlined how organisational culture provides an overall framework through which the members of the organisation

learn to organise their thoughts and behaviours in relation to the organisational values. The communication practice within the GDSD was clearly aligned to the organisational values.

Cameron and Quinn (1999) postulate that organisational culture types may influence the organisational communication in either the external environment or the strategic orientation of organisation. According to Cameron and Quinn (1999), there are two possible dimensions to organisational culture, namely, an emphasis on internal maintenance versus external relationships and an emphasis on organic processes versus mechanistic processes. The four organisational culture types, namely, hierarchy, market, clan and adhocracy, arise from these dimensions of the context. Quinn and Spreitzer (1991) view clan culture as characterised by relationships, adding that it is primarily about teamwork and participation. In this type of culture the communication flows to all directions, thus unifying the organisation's employees and promoting teamwork.

 The hierarchical culture is characterised by the values and norms related to bureaucracy (Quinn & Spreitzer 1991). This type of organisational culture favours effective leadership that value order and rules. Communication in this type of culture is primarily downward and is in the form of instructions. In addition, the communication is centralised (Eylon & Au 1999).

Generally speaking, a market culture occurs in a time of stability and control and is a rational culture which emphasises efficiency and achievement (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991). Employees in this culture type are success-oriented and regards personal interests as more important than the organisational goals, the main emphasis in this type of culture is on the concepts of planning, performance and efficiency with this type of culture being characterised by self-construal communication (Eylon & Au 1999).

Adhocracy (creative) is a developmental organisational culture which is based on risk taking, innovation and change (Quinn & Spreitzer 1991). It usually refers to the culture of an organisation in business, flexible, ground-breaking and inventive areas with and has an external oriented and active structure (Kummerow & Kirby 2014). This type of culture is often found in organisations that easily embrace new technological developments. In

addition, the communication is open and flows from all directions, making it easy for employees to take the initiative.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) distinguished between two types of organisational cultures, namely, weak and strong organisational cultures. These cultures affect the communication practice in organisations in different ways. In other words, the communication practice within an organisation is dependent on the type of organisational culture adopted by the organisation. The literature review linked a weak organisational culture with the autocratic leadership style which is characterised by centralised communication with the communication in a weak organisational culture entailing strict rules and regulations to align employee behaviour with the organisational culture. However, according to Schein (2010), the communication in a weak organisational culture lack both consistency and transparency. In addition, a weak organisational culture creates room for misunderstandings which contribute to poor communication.

In a strong organisational culture values and believes are widely shared among the members of the organisation. A strong organisational culture is, thus, associated with open communication which unifies employees. Collaborative communication is also a feature of a strong organisational culture due to the common understanding that emerges from the wide sharing of beliefs and values. In addition, decentralised communication, ultimately, prevails in a strong organisational culture and contributes to effective communication.

Hrebiniak (2005) concludes that trust is a common organisational culture-related problem. An environment which is not open for communication eventually results in a lack of trust between management and employees with such a lack of trust in the organisation ultimately determining how communication is received by both management and employees.

As discussed in Chapter four of the study the participants described the organisational structure in the GDSD as promoting open communication and further elaborated that the lines of communication were clarified in the organisation structure. The participants also perceived communication within GDSD as consistent and transparent. In addition, the

clearly articulated mission and vision statements also reflected the open communication within the GDSD.

6.2.4 How may organisational culture be used in such a way that it will improves communication within an organisation?

It emerged from the literature review in Chapter 2 that a strong organisational culture correlates with effective communication within the organisation. Clearly a strong organisational culture should be a point of departure in improving organisational communication. The context within which communication takes place should be strengthened to promote effective communication. An organisation may improve the internal communication by adopting a strong organisational culture that enables the wide sharing of values and beliefs. Such a strong organisational culture promotes open communication which then translates into improved communication within the organisation. In addition, a strong organisational culture promotes efficient cultural integration within the organisation (Schein 2010) which eventually gives rise to improved internal communication.

6.3 STRENGTH

Main themes and subthemes which emerged were supported by the literature on organisational culture. The methodological steps used to collect and analyse the requisite data were clearly outlined and justified while credibility and reliability were clearly specified. The research methods used promoted such credibility and reliability. The questions posed in both the focus groups and the interviews were carefully formulated to achieve the best possible results with the literature on organisational culture and communication informing the formulation of the questions. All the questions were pilot tested. In addition, the data collected was transcribed verbatim and verified.

The Interview schedule is informed by feedback from the focus group discussions feedback and, as such, it addressed any shortfall which had been identified in the focus groups. The researcher retained the database of the data collected for quality purposes. Finally, multiple data collection methods ensured the validity of the research.

6.5 CONTRIBUTION

This study contributed to the existing body of knowledge on government communication practice. The specific focus of the study was on the internal communication practice within the GDSD. Liu, Horsely and Levenshus (2010b) lamented the fact that the prevailing theories and models do not adequately take into account the existing knowledge on public sector environment and its influence on communication practices. Indeed, there is little evidence in the literature of research that evaluates the contextual framework of communication practices within governments.

This study acknowledged that organisational culture is a multidimensional concept and, hence, it was decided to adopt an integrated approach based on the theories and models of Schein (1992), Denison (1990) and Hofstede (1985). The basic premise of this study was that the context of communication within the organisation requires discussion about the nature of communication which takes place within the organisation. The context of the organisational communication is created by the existing organisational culture (Schein 2004) and, as such, the organisational culture predetermines the communication within the organisation. It is, therefore, irrefutable that organisational cultures influence communication practice within organisations.

6.6 CONCLUSIONS

It is recommended that future studies on government communication should focus on features that influence communication practice (Vos 2006). Organisational culture is identified as one of features that influence communication practice (Senior & Swailes 2010). This study assessed the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD. It emerged from the literature review that organisational culture is a multidimensional concept which has not been specifically defined. The approach adopted in the study was derived from the integration of three organisational culture theories which had far-reaching results that enhanced the study findings about the correlations between organisational culture and communication practice within the GDSD. The findings produced inductively substantiated theories which are confirmed in the literature with the study finding that there was a correlation between the inductive data

collected from the participants and the relevant theories mentioned in the literature review.

Chapter two explored existing literature on organisational culture and internal communication. The theoretical framework formulated on the basis of the work by three credible theorists of organisational culture paved the way for understanding the influence of organisational culture on communication practice. The literature review revealed organisational culture creates a cultural context within which communication takes place within an organisation. In other words, organisational culture influences internal communication through the cultural context in which such communication takes place.

Chapter three presented the methodological guidelines which provided direction for the study. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews proved to be essential in determining the influence of organisational culture of communication practice from different perspectives. The combination of these methods added rigour to the study.

Chapter four presented the data collected from the participants who took part in focus group discussions and interviews. Four main themes and subthemes that related to organisational culture and communication emanated from the data. The sequential use of focus group discussion and interviews proved to be helpful because feedback from focus group discussions was used in the formulation of the interview questions. The researcher was then able to address any shortfalls which had been experienced during the focus group discussions.

Chapter five discussed the thematic analysis which was used to interpret data which had been collected and which was presented in Chapter four. Thus, it may be said that Chapters four and five were closely interlinked.

Chapter six contained a summary of the study, the conclusions and recommendations and discussed the contribution and strengths of the study.

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The emergence of the *fourth industrial revolution* worldwide has placed government departments in a better position than was formerly the case to reshape

their communication practice. Cronje (2016) views the fourth industrial revolution as a blend of technologies that shapes the lines between the physical, digital, biological and neuro-technological spheres. It is, therefore, essential that the GDSD embraces this *technological paradigm shift* by introducing new media platforms such as *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram,* etc and also put social media policy in place to ensure a successful transition into the new technological era. The GDSD must, ultimately, integrate new technological initiatives into its strategic vision to embrace the new technological developments and to effect this transition into the new technological era.

- Internal information sharing sessions about all the programs in the GDSD should be prioritised at the various service points. In addition, the GDSD should initiate a weekly or monthly social services platform in which all members across all programmes converge to disseminate information about what they are doing in their units. This will create common understanding among the members of the GDSD, thus ensuring the improved referral of clients and more effective service delivery.

- The quarterly report feedback on the performance of different units must be made available to all the affected employees by the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) unit while it is essential that there is a common understanding of the indicators on the part of both the M & E members and the members of the various units to avoid confusion during reporting time.

6.7.1 *Recommendations* for future studies

This study focused on the influence of organisational culture on communication practice within the GDSD. Organisational culture, structure and leadership role are all aspects of an interconnected concept that influences communication within an organisation and, thus, it is recommended that future researchers investigate how these concepts jointly influence communication practice. Such future researchers could use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The use of the quantitative method would enable the researchers to draw large size samples and generalise the findings.

The findings of this study postulated that the influence of organisational culture on communication practice manifests from the contextual framework within which such communication takes place. This contextual framework emanates from the organisational culture and is enforced through rules and policies. It is, therefore, essential that an analysis of the policy documents that impact on communication practice be conducted to obtain an understanding of the correlations between government communication policies and practice.

There is also a need in South Africa to evaluate the relationship between organisational culture and the communication flow among the three tiers of government, namely, national, provincial and local governments as the logical study of these relationships will promote an understanding of government communication practice.

According to McKinsey and Company (2016), the new technological development brought about by the *fourth industrial revolution* may help governments to attend to the needs of their citizens more effectively. The participants in this study also demonstrated an interest in the new technological developments ushered by the 21st century. However, at the time of this study it was still not known how the new technological developments would affect government communication practice. It is, therefore, crucial to evaluate how public sector organisations may adjust their organisational cultures to embrace the new technological paradigm shift that promotes efficient communication practice. In the 2018 state of the nation address, President Ramaphosa (Ramaphosa 2018) proposed that the South African government should find a service delivery model that would enhance service delivery in South Africa. Such a service delivery model would inform organisational culture, structure, leadership styles and communication practice. Finally, this new service delivery model should, eventually, be within the scope of the new technological developments.

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