

The Role of Relationship Marketing within the Durban University of Technology Alumni

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Declaration

I, Nishie Pramchund Govender, hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own research and has not been submitted for any other degree or to any other University.

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Date

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beautiful daughter, Temika, who has been my inspiration to forge ahead with my studies and onto whom I wish to impart the knowledge that education is the key to a global universe.

Abstract

The alumni form the largest stakeholder group of any higher education institution (HEI). Representatives from this constituency occupy seats on the Council (the highest governing body of a higher education institution). Institutions, worldwide, look to their alumni, as a source of funds, to provide expert advice and general support. Therefore, higher education institutions and alumni have to share a mutually beneficial and ongoing relationship. This relationship is maintained through constant and regular communication. Loyal alumni are a mainstay of financial support for many universities. It is important, though, that universities, not only focus on gifts but rather on a broad and deep engagement with alumni. Alumni relations with their colleges and universities seek to generate interest that eventually translates into financial contributions and volunteer service, which means giving back to their alma mater. To achieve this goal, communication is extremely important. Alumni respond to a call for assistance from their alma mater for many reasons. Some of the reasons include having had good experiences during their undergraduate years as well as their academic qualifications holding them in good stead in the work place. The value that universities place on their alumni cannot be underestimated. Many hold influential positions and can assist in contributing to the financial coffers of the university as well as sharing their expertise.

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List of Acronyms

DUT	-	Durban University of Technology
CHE	-	Council on Higher Education
CTP	-	Committee of Technikon Principals
DIT	-	Durban Institute of Technology
RM	-	Relationship Marketing
CRM	-	Customer Relationship Management
RSS	-	Rich Site Summary
BSU	-	Business Studies Unit
CONVEX	-	Executive Committee of Convocation
SMS	-	Short Message Service
IT	-	Information Technology
AGM	-	Annual General Meeting
CLV	-	Customer Lifetime Value
DevMan	-	Development Manager
CMC	-	Computer-mediated communication
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
HEIs	-	Higher Education Institutions

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Chapter One

Background to the Study

1.1 Introduction

Educational institutions, worldwide, are undergoing fundamental shifts in how they operate and interact with their “customers”: students, alumni, donors, faculty members, and staff members (Grant and Anderson 2002:23). Higher education institutions, worldwide, have Convocation and Alumni Relations offices. These offices are the direct link between the institution and their graduates and their aim is to cultivate and nurture a lifelong relationship between alumni and their alma mater. The Convocation and Alumni Relations office is tasked with initiating and implementing an alumni relations programme which will create a desire amongst alumni to identify with and support their alma mater, in this case, the Durban University of Technology.

The Statute of the Durban University of Technology contains, within it, the “functions of convocation” which state that “the Convocation may discuss and state its opinion upon any matter relating to the institution, including any matter referred to it by the council, the senate or the institutional forum” (Republic of South Africa 2005:17). Further, the affairs of the Convocation are governed by the Constitution of the Convocation of the Durban University of Technology. One of its main objectives is “to promote, protect and maintain the interests and rights of the Convocation” (Constitution of the Convocation of the Durban University of Technology 2008:2).

Alumni are at the core of Alumni Relations, creating, nurturing, sustaining and maintaining relationships with alumni. A firm that is customer-centric puts the customer at the centre of everything that happens, both inside and outside the firm. Customers are the lifeblood of any business. They are at the centre of the business universe (Johnston and Marshall 2008:5). Relationship marketing focuses on maintaining a continuous relationship with customers. Its distinguishing characteristic is its focus on building long-term rather than short-term relationships with customers. Relationship

marketing attempts to create a bond between the customer and a company or its brands. It consists of initiating, enhancing and maintaining relationships with one's "customers". Relationship marketing "involves the identification, specification, initiation, maintenance and (where appropriate) dissolution of long-term relationships with key customers and other parties, through mutual exchange, fulfilment of promises and adherence to relationship norms in order to satisfy the objectives and enhance the experience of the parties concerned (Baran, Galka and Strunk 2008:98-99).

Many higher education institutions in South Africa, however, as opposed to their overseas counterparts, do not enjoy sufficient support from their alumni. Professor Robert Golele, Co-President of the University of Limpopo Alumni and Convocation, stated in "ON THE MOVE", the University of Limpopo Alumni Magazine, that alumni attendance at an event in the Free State was dismal. Of the 80 alumni that confirmed their attendance, only 12 actually attended. He stated that one of the areas that needed special attention was the need to communicate more with alumni. He also indicated that the low level of alumni support, particularly financial support, was because there was no "buy-in" from alumni. There was a need to make increased "buy-in" worthwhile (University of Limpopo, *On the Move* 2009:6) This study, therefore, examines the role of relationship marketing within the Durban University of Technology Alumni. According to Constantin (2011:20), all organisations have to establish strong relationships with their customers, to maintain them and to create a basis of mutual cooperation in the long-term. Such relationships surpass the boundaries of traditional business-to-business market, being increasingly present on consumer market or public services. Constantin (2011:20) further states that one of the strategic tools that universities can use is marketing communication. Communication is a way of building and maintaining a position. Given the competitive conditions of the university education market and in order to have a better communication with its customers, a university has to use different communication tools in different situations.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Brink and Berndt (2008:7), the “objectives of relationship marketing are to identify and establish, maintain and enhance, and, when necessary, terminate relationships with customers and other stakeholders at a profit so that the objectives of all parties involved are met. This is done by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises”.

The establishment and nurturing of mutually beneficial relations between a university and its alumni, as a primary stakeholder group, should be a top priority for any higher education institution that wants to prosper and grow in a fast-changing and highly competitive market. The alumni of a tertiary institution could be one of the most valuable resources of the institution, due to the contributions – whether those are financial, strategical or social – that they could make towards the credibility and longevity of the institution. The input they could have in terms of institutional fundraising activities, institutional council representation, financial partnerships and community development could significantly contribute to the strategic positioning of the institution as a market leader in the South African higher education sector (Barnard and Rensleigh 2007:433-434).

The Durban University of Technology (DUT) has not enjoyed serious levels of support from alumni for a number of years. This has changed in the last few years with attendance at alumni events having significantly increased. This increase has, therefore, increased two-way communication between the alumni and DUT and has thus forged greater relationships. What now remains critical is for DUT to maintain these relationships with the alumni so that it can be further translated into mutually beneficial long-term relationships.

This study sets out to examine the role of relationship marketing in forging a long-term relationship between the Durban University of Technology and its alumni.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of this study was to examine the role of relationship marketing in initiating, forging and maintaining links with the Durban University of Technology alumni.

The objectives of this study are to:

- Examine the way in which relationship marketing is being practised by the Convocation and Alumni Relations office;
- Assess the existing communication tools utilised to maintain and promote relationship marketing; and
- Determine how improved and increased communication can affect relationship marketing.

1.4 Rationale for the Study

The researcher undertook this study to ascertain whether relationship marketing has made an impact on the involvement of alumni in the affairs of DUT and whether this involvement could translate into alumni becoming advocates of loyalty to DUT.

The findings of this study will help to improve and further enhance the communication efforts of the Convocation and Alumni Relations department at DUT.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study will be confined to alumni of the Durban University of Technology.

1.6 Structure of Dissertation Chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the study and provides an overview of the research problem, the research objectives, the rationale behind the study and the research methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Two surveys the literature on relationship marketing and the alumni.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter Three examines the research methods employed to conduct this research study. It discusses the nature of the study, the survey method and the research instrument employed.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussions

Chapter Four provides the findings of the study and conducts an analysis based on these findings.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter Five draws conclusions based on the findings and thereafter proposes recommendations.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the introduction and background to the study. The problem statement, aim and objectives and rationale for the study were also explained. Chapter

One also outlined the scope of the study including the overview of the following chapters.

Chapter Two will present the literature review on relationship marketing.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has given an outline of the study, which sets out to examine the role of relationship marketing in initiating, forging and maintaining links with the Durban University of Technology's alumni. This chapter reviews the literature by examining the following:

- The role of relationship marketing;
- The way in which relationship marketing is being practised by the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office;
- An assessment of the existing communication tools utilised to maintain and promote relationship marketing; and
- Determining how improved and increased communication can affect relationship marketing.

2.1.1 Background to the creation of universities of technology

Higher Education in South Africa has undergone transformation since the first ever democratic elections held in 1994. With a change in the political order came a change in the Higher Education environment. According to du Pre' (2010:4), in 2000, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) conducted a "shape and size" exercise which looked at a new configuration of the Higher Education landscape. Following their recommendations, the National Plan for Higher Education, in 2001, outlined a process of mergers and re-designations of South Africa's 36 public Higher Education institutions. This resulted in 23 institutions – comprising 11 "traditional universities", 6 "comprehensive universities" and 6 "universities of technology".

du Pré (2010:2) states that universities of technology have, as their foundation, the former technikons which built a solid reputation in providing career-oriented programmes. Throughout the world, universities of technology have made a major impact on the development of their countries and regional economies by preparing graduates for the world of work and applying their research skills to identifying the problems and needs of society.

In 2002, Technikons ML Sultan and Natal had engaged in a voluntary merger, and, despite the decision by the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP) to petition the ministry for the adoption of the term “university of technology”, took on the name “Durban Institute of Technology” (DIT). In 2006, DIT changed its name to Durban University of Technology (DUT) and, in 2008, began to operate as a University of Technology (du Pré 2010:5).

2.2 What is Relationship Marketing?

According to Negricea, Avram and Eftimie (n.d.:44), relationship marketing has been defined as an organisation function and a set of processes which creates, delivers and communicates value for customers and administrates long-term relationships with them, in the benefit from the organisation and its partner. Negricea, Avram and Eftimie (n.d.:46) further state that relationship marketing focuses on establishing long-term relationships with customers and keeping them, because experience has shown that it is much easier for a company to retain customers than to attract new customers. Long-term relationships are based on an amount of knowledge acquired over time, experience and confidence gained from collaborative relationships with customers. Organisations that want to exploit the potential offered by applying the principle of relationship marketing calculate and monitor an extremely important indicator, the customer value, throughout the entire period of the relationship with the organisation. According to the authors above, relationship marketing is essential for building long-term relationships because it is easier to maintain these relationships than to establish

new customers and relationships. The authors suggest that long-term customers, rather than new ones, are more likely to purchase products over a period of time.

Eiriz and Wilson (2006:276) define relationship marketing as being concerned with dyadic and multilateral relationships as well as with networks of relationships, and it shares with other disciplines a concern over strategic alliances, partnerships as well as relationships between organisations and individuals. According to Gummesson (2008:5), relationship marketing (RM) is usually defined as an approach to develop long-term loyal customers and thus increase profitability. He further states that “relationship marketing is interaction in networks of relationships”. Therefore, Eiriz and Wilson and Gummesson suggest that relationship marketing is important in cultivating relationships with customers because it increases the profitability of the organisation. Increased profits lead to a larger market share.

Sarshar, Sertyesilisik and Parry (2010:65) suggest that RM is a theory that has derived from a culmination of old concepts bundled together under the label “RM”. RM focuses on obtaining and maintaining profitable relationships with customers, business to customer, and with other companies, business to business. The idea is that long-term customers cost less to service and, therefore, are more profitable. RM can be categorised into three main sections: customer segmentation, customer retention and customer loyalty. Zineldin and Philipson (2007:230) further suggest that relationship marketing focuses on how to develop, maintain and enhance customer relationships over the customer life cycle rather than on attracting new customers. Repeat business is the lifeblood of any business. This definition suggests that long-term customers are the mainstay of any organisation that guarantee the longevity and survival of the organisation.

Cătoiu and Țichindelean (2012:657) suggest that relationship marketing represents a strategic level of marketing which guides the company to the identification, development and maintenance of a relationship portfolio. Through the managed relationship portfolio, the relationship marketing strategy can be a source of competitive advantage for the company. Hau and Ngo (2012:222) state that a fundamental benefit of pursuing relationship marketing is purported to be the creation of stronger customer relationships that enhance performance outcomes, including sales growth, market share, profits, return on investment and customer retention. This explanation is supported by the recent pledges received from alumni towards the DUT's Individual Giving Campaign. At the recent Homecoming event, held on Saturday, 6 September 2014, pledges in excess of R90 000 were received. This suggests that alumni want to assist their alma mater in whatever they can and they only need a simple request. Alumni tend to identify with what students experience in their tertiary lives as they were once in similar positions.

Relationship marketing is about retaining customers by establishing, maintaining and enhancing relationships with customers and other parties. Extant research has shown that a firm's level of relationship marketing activities is positively correlated to its performance as well as the level of strategic competitive advantage that it achieved in the market place. Developing further, relationship marketing was defined as a strategy by which the interactions, relationships and networks become fundamental. With the rapid growth of the internet and mobile platforms, relationship marketing is continuing to evolve and grow as technology opens more collaborative and social communication channels. The overall goals are to nurture and retain existing customers, reduce the costs of marketing and build mutually satisfying relationships (Sohail 2012:237).

Further, Gummesson (2008:24) states that RM is often presented as the opposite to *transaction marketing*, the one-shot deal. In transaction marketing, the fact that a customer has bought once does not forecast the probability for repurchase, not even if a series of purchases has been made. In RM, loyalty - especially customer loyalty - is

emphasised. In the “loyalty ladder”, the lowest rung is the contact with a *prospect* who, hopefully turns into a *customer* and a first purchase. Recurrent customers are *clients*; those who have come back and a long-term relationship is in the making. In the next stages, the client becomes a *supporter* and, finally, an *advocate* for the supplier.

Baron, Conway and Warnaby (2010:11) also state that the relationship marketing approach is often compared to transactional marketing. Transactional marketing attracts customers using *offensive* strategies, e.g., encouragement of brand switching; recruiting dissatisfied customers of competitors while relationship marketing *retains* customers using *defensive* strategies, e.g., minimising customer turnover, and maximising customer retention.

According to Harwood and Garry (2006:107-108), drivers for this evolution from so-called “transaction” marketing to relationship-oriented marketing were based on the notion that not all customers are the same in terms of their profitability to the organisation and that the retention of customers, rather than the acquisition of new customers, could be more profitable.

According to Grönroos (2009:352), research in relationship marketing and service marketing has not only shown that marketing has to renew itself to be able to handle growing and multi-faceted customer interfaces, but also that it has to be developed so that, when appropriate, it can allow for long-term relationships with customers to develop and to be managed.

Berndt and Tait (2012:7) state that relationship marketing aims to satisfy existing customers and so spread the word through those customers about how well the product or the service works. Relationship marketing helps to show the customer that the

business cares for its existing customers as much as its new ones and that long-term customer satisfaction is the business's main purpose. Retention of existing customers is based on customer satisfaction.

According to research conducted by Ndubisi (2007:103), the research provides empirical evidence for the influence on customer loyalty of four underpinnings of relationship marketing: trust, commitment, communication and conflict handling. Loyalty is a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronise a preferred product or service in the future in spite of situational influences. Further, satisfaction is inextricably linked to customer loyalty and relationship commitment. Highly satisfied customers spread positive word of mouth and, in fact, become a walking, talking advertisement for an organisation whose service has pleased them (Ndubisi, Malhotra and Wah 2008:8).

The benefit that relationship marketing offers has helped it gain popularity in the recent past as an approach to develop bonding with individual constituents of the value chain of a firm operating in an industry. Players, to gain a competitive edge in an increasingly cutthroat market condition, are using it as a competitive marketing weapon. Marketers are increasingly using relationships as a tool of value creation, and, in the process, they are involving customers for their real time views on product development, designing, pricing distribution, etc. (Origin of Relationship Marketing, 2008).

The key characteristics of relationship marketing are that every customer is considered an individual person or unit, activities of the firm are predominantly directed towards existing customers and it is based on interactions and dialogues as well as that the firm is trying to achieve profitability through the decrease of customer turnover and the strengthening of customer relationships (Ndubisi and Wah 2005:543). Relationship marketing theory suggests that relationships add quality to marketing transactions. Whenever people deal with people in "relationships" or communities, they not only

exchange money for goods, they share ideas, opinions, information and insights. They begin to share and exchange values. Moreover, the people whose values are the most in tune with those around them, tend to form the strongest, most supportive bonds with other people (Egan 2011:47-48).

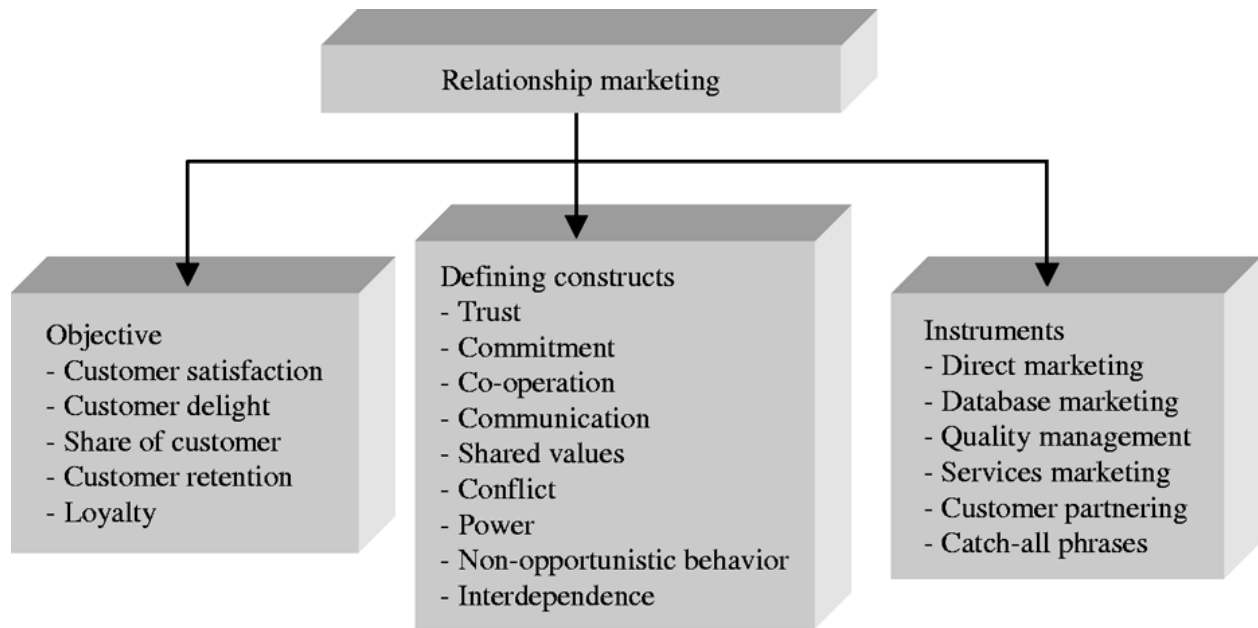
At a tactical level, relationship marketing is used only as a sales promotion tool. At a strategic level, the process by which suppliers seek to “tie in” customers through legal, economic, technological and time bonds becomes more relevant. Moreover, at a philosophical level, relationship marketing shifts the focus of marketing strategy away from products and their life cycle towards customer relationship life cycles (Osarenkhoe 2007:145). Relationship marketing places a good deal of stress on loyalty as reducing customer defection rates is crucial to retention and “customer loyalty” is now being used as well as “brand loyalty” to emphasise the interactive nature of the commitment of the customer to the firm and/or its employees (Baron, Conway and Warnaby: 2010:45).

According to Johnson (2010), relationship marketing is targeted at building stronger and long-lasting relationships with clients and other companies. The business is done with a strategic orientation, where the relationship is improved with existing customers rather than finding new customers. It is meant to cater for the needs of individual customers. Its major part involves studying the need of the customer and how it changes in different circumstances. Relationship marketing applies techniques like marketing, sales, customer care and communication. The relationship is not only enhanced but its life period is increased by these strategies. Moreover, as the customers realise the value of the relationship, they are drawn closer. This definition suggests that organisations need to know their customers’ needs and wants. Having this knowledge is essential as it assists organisations in persuading their customers to purchase their products.

Relationship marketing has 3 basic features: relational databases, integrated marketing communications and capabilities for dialogue. A company's database enables it to identify customers, track purchasing behaviour, calculate customer lifetime value (CLV), and personalise communication. Company systems must be in place to collect customer information from all touch points, disseminate the information within the company to all relevant parties and generate co-ordinated communications with the customer. The key concept of relationship marketing is the development of an individualised, one-to-one relationship with a customer that becomes increasingly relevant and focused as the organisation learns about the customer's needs and wants over time (Baran, Galka, Strunk 2008:98-99). At the DUT, this is achieved through the DevMan system which contains the biographical details of all alumni on the database. This system also tracks attendance of alumni at events, thereby also indicating the level of loyalty of alumni towards DUT.

According to Hunt, Arnett and Madhavaram (2006:77), firms that implement relationship marketing-based strategies recognise the importance of developing and maintaining long-term co-operative relationships with other firms and/or consumers. Specifically, RM-based strategy emphasises that to achieve competitive advantage and, thereby, superior financial performance, firms should identify, develop, and nurture an efficiency-enhancing portfolio of relationships. Relationship marketing research identifies a number of successfully designed and implemented RM-based strategies. In general, RM-based strategies are designed to allow firms to more easily share, develop, and leverage resources with other firms and/or consumers.

According to Chattananon and Trimetsoontorn (2009:255), a comprehensive model of relationship marketing was developed by Lindgreen in 2001. Figure 2.1 is an example of a model of relationship marketing.



Source: Lingreen (2001)

Figure 2.1 Analytical model of relationship marketing

According to Figure 2.1, the objectives of relationship marketing are customer satisfaction, customer delight, share of customer, customer retention and loyalty.

Customer Satisfaction - According to Lucas (2012:363), building good relationships in order to increase customer satisfaction is valuable because it can lead to repeat business. Satisfaction is a big factor for many customers in remaining loyal. Similarly, the DUT alumni would want to return to continue with their post-graduate qualifications if they were satisfied with the calibre of academic programmes offered at the DUT.

Customer delight or exceeding customer expectation is a powerful way to gain customer loyalty and solidify long-term relationships (Johnston and Marshall 2010:90). Customer delight can be defined as the effect of delivering a product or service that surpasses customer expectations in a favourable experience. The Convocation and Alumni Relations department offers bursaries to financially needy and academically deserving

students and, in so doing, is able to offer a few students an opportunity to continue with the tertiary education and progress in their chosen career paths.

Share of customer is the percentage of customers that buy a company's product. The Convocation and Alumni Relations department hosts social as well as leadership events such as homecoming in order for alumni to stay in touch with their alma mater and, in so doing, ensures that the DUT is the number one choice for an institution of higher learning.

Customer retention, with regard to customer satisfaction, is becoming increasingly significant, because customers today have the opportunity to choose from such a large range of products and services, and because the competition within various markets is becoming even fiercer. Following the adage that one has to invest six times as much in a new customer as in an already existing one, companies are discovering new potential in the building up and maintenance of a stable customer base. This is the source of commercial success and long-term growth (Raab, Ajami and Gargeya 2008:90). It is important for the DUT to ensure that its academic offerings are on par with other leading higher education institutions to ensure that students remain at the DUT. It is also important for students to have a positive undergraduate experience which will ensure the DUT's competitiveness when it comes to an institution of higher learning. Alumni are positive word of mouth ambassadors and their experiences at the DUT will go a long way to them advocating for the DUT.

Loyalty is seen as a deeply-held commitment to re-buy or re-patronise a preferred product or service in the future (Baron, Conway and Warnaby 2010:46). Lucas (2012:334) suggests that customer loyalty is an emotional rather than a rational thing. Tied to commitment, loyalty is typically based on customer interest in maintaining a relationship with one's organisation. Alumni attendance at events has significantly

increased in the last few years. Attendance at homecoming events as well as the Annual General Meeting has surpassed expectations with a large percentage of alumni enquiring as to when future events will be held.

With regards to the defining constructs, a number of authors have sought to characterise relationship marketing in terms of trust, commitment, co-operation, communication, shared values, conflict, power, non-opportunistic behaviour and interdependence (Chattananon and Trimetsoontorn, 2009:256).

Trust is an expectation that the word of another can be relied upon and implies honesty in negotiations. The challenge for relationship marketing is to inculcate trust in the partner. Trust is established where the perceived performance matches promised performance. Trust can be influenced by satisfaction and experience, as trust is unlikely to be built where no experience exists (Baron, Conway and Warnaby 2010:31). Constant communication builds trust. The Convocation and Alumni Relations department regularly communicates with alumni informing them of developments at their alma mater. A recent communique was sent to alumni informing them of academic programmes offered by the Business Studies Unit (BSU).

Commitment is the belief that the importance of a relationship with another is so significant that it warrants maximum effort to maintain it. Commitment implies that both parties will be loyal, reliable and show stability in their relationship with one another. When commitment and trust are present, they produce outcomes that promote efficiency, productivity and effectiveness. Hence, commitment and trust lead directly to co-operative behaviours that are conducive to relationship marketing success (Berndt and Tait 2012:26). The Executive Committee of Convocation (CONVEX) has three representatives on the DUT Council and two representatives on the Institutional Forum which highlights the commitment of members to give back to their alma mater.

According to Hult  n (2007:258), in order to build and establish relationships, the concepts of trust and commitment are seen as pre-requisites. In a study conducted by Kelleher (2011:28), in alumni relations, alumni returning to reunions year-after-year or participating in other university events, demonstrate commitment and loyalty. She further states that alumni relations officers try to build trust by keeping in touch with alumni electronically. With regards to the aspect of values, she adds that, in alumni relations, value might relate to the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that are derived from alumni participation in a multitude of alumni programmes.

Co-operation - commitment and trust are key because they encourage marketers to work at preserving relationship investments by cooperating with exchange partners. Business almost always involves large cooperative and mutually trusting people, customers and investors (Morgan and Hunt 1994: 20-22). Similarly, alumni and the DUT must have a mutually symbiotic relationship which is achieved through working together to enhance the reputation of the institution. Through this relationship, alumni have contributed towards the Give a Tiger bursary fund which is aimed at assisting financially needy and academically deserving students.

Communication is a process of formal and informal sharing of meaningful and timely information between sellers and buyers. Communication, which enables information exchange, is an important element of relationship marketing. Communication in relationship marketing refers to keeping in touch with customers, providing timely and trustworthy information, and communicating proactively if a delivery problem occurs. Empirical evidence asserts that communication is a determinant of relationship marketing. The more breadth and depth that exists in communication patterns, the stronger the partnership is likely to be (Sohail 2012:237). The Convocation and Alumni Relations department of the Durban University of Technology launched an Individual Giving Campaign aimed at raising funds for bursaries as well as the One Meal, Once a

Day food security initiative. To this effect, a video was produced which was communicated to alumni both internally and externally.

Shared Values - According to Egan (2011:124), shared values also directly influence both trust and commitment. The extent to which the partners have beliefs in common about behaviours, goals and policies that are important, appropriate and right for a particular situation is likely to affect commitment to a relationship.

Conflict is the overall disagreement in the working relationship. During the violent student protests at the DUT, the Convocation and Alumni Relations office kept alumni informed of developments via the DevMan system. All communicate regarding the protests sent out by Executive Management was channeled through to alumni so as to be kept abreast of developments at their alma mater.

Power and mutual dependence are closely-related concepts. The buyer's dependence on the supplier is a source of power for the supplier and vice versa. A well-known definition is that the relative power of an organisation over another is the result of the net dependence of the one on the other. If A depends on B more than B depends on A, then B has power over A. Relative power is defined as the dependence of one party compared to the dependence of the other party. The primary consequence of relative dependence is indicated as power (Caniëls and Gelderman 2005:220-221).

Non-opportunistic behaviour refers to not taking advantage of the relationship partners (Egan 2011: 122). Alumni relations is based on a symbiotic relationship where both the institution and its alumni rely on each other for a mutually beneficial relationship.

Interdependence is created by partners' relationship investments, that is, asset reciprocity that holds the relationship partners together and creates barriers to leave the relationship because of the high costs involved. The more the interdependency, the stronger is the relational behaviour (Rao and Perry 2002:601-602).

In terms of the instruments, relationship marketing has been interpreted as direct marketing and database marketing, quality management, services marketing and customer partnering (Chattananon and Trimetsoontorn 2009:256).

Direct Marketing (DM) focuses on using the database to communicate (and sometimes distribute) directly to customers so as to attract a direct response (Egan 2011:256). The Convocation and Alumni Relations office utilises the DevMan system to communicate with alumni. Event notices as well as updating alumni on crises at the university are done by emailing alumni through the DevMan system.

Database marketing (DbM) emphasises the creation and exploitation of long-term direct relationships, something that has been identified as having significant implications for the strategic and long-term planning of the firm's marketing. Database marketing is seen as a powerful tool that generates knowledge about consumers around an important set of dimensions and will continue to be an important component of effective marketing campaigns' and strategies' formulation (Nwokah and Gladson-Nwokah 2011:29). The DevMan system contains comprehensive information on alumni which includes their email and cellphone numbers for communication purposes.

Quality management is an effective system of maintaining and improving the quality of goods and services in an organisation so as to obtain the most economic operation levels with customers' full satisfaction. It is the duty of management to develop some

system of quality control to ensure that the quality of products conforms to predetermined quality standards because quality is an important issue for today's customer. The successful achievement of these standards plays an important role in acceptance of the output in the market (Giri 2010: 52). At the DUT, the quality aspect of the Convocation and Alumni Relations office is overseen by the Executive Committee of Convocation (CONVEX). CONVEX has agreed to undergo a self-evaluation process to evaluate its performance and functionality.

Services marketing focuses on delivering processes, experiences and intangibles to customers rather than physical goods and transactions. It involves integrating a focus on the customer throughout the firm and across all functions. Rather than the traditional goods marketing focus on transactions and exchange, services marketing strategy is centred on the customer, usage and relationships (Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler 2010:1). Similarly, alumni are at the core of alumni relations. Creating programmes that are of benefit to alumni and assisting with queries helps maintain links with alumni and their alma mater. The Convocation and Alumni Relations office is seen as the vehicle to channel their concerns as Convocation has three representatives on Council.

Customer partnering is defined as a long-term commitment for the purpose of achieving specific business objectives by maximising the effectiveness of each participant's resources. The relationship is based on trust, dedication to common goals and understanding each other's individual expectations and values (Pheng 1999:155).

Catch-all phrases are defined as something that holds or includes odds and ends or a wide variety of things. The Convocation and Alumni Relations office catch-all phrase is "Convocation – Your Link for Life". This is based on the notion that alumni relations create lifelong bonds with alumni.

Payne, Ballantyne and Christopher (2005:858) further discuss the development and use of the “six markets” model to relationship marketing viewed from a stakeholder approach:

“Customer markets” (including existing and prospective customers as well as intermediaries) are central to this model and the customer, in this context, refers to alumni, i.e., alumni of the DUT.

“Referral markets” (these include two main categories – existing customers who recommend their suppliers to others, and referral sources, or “multipliers”, such as an accounting firm who may refer work to a law firm) see alumni as active promoters of the DUT whereby prospective students are encouraged to study at the DUT and such alumni are viewed as advocates of the institution.

“Influencer markets” (which included financial analysts, shareholders, the business press, the government, and consumer groups) see alumni being elected onto governance structures of the DUT, i.e., Council and Institutional Forum to impart their expertise or knowledge sharing for the benefit of the DUT.

“Employee markets” (concerned with attracting the right employees to the organisation): In this market, a large number of the DUT employees are alumni which translates into the loyalty of alumni for choosing their alma mater as their place of employment.

“Supplier markets” (these include traditional suppliers as well as organisations with which the firms have some form of strategic alliance) allude to alumni who are able to

provide a service to the DUT, either directly through companies they own, or through companies at which they are employed.

“Internal markets” (the organisation including internal departments and staff) allude to alumni who are invited back to the institution to assist in alumni programmes such as mentorship and coaching to staff and students.

As a logical result of the appearance of the concept of relationship marketing, the concept of customer relationship management (CRM) has been brought to attention. CRM has directed attention towards various vital aspects, including the necessity of direct relationship between customers and marketers, the importance of keeping current customers, as well as the inevitability of building long-term relationships with customers. Great advances in technology helped in enhancing communication with customers, providing an environment rich with information so as to contribute to improving efficient strategies to deal with customers. CRM has been defined as a comprehensive strategy that includes the process of acquiring certain customers, keeping them and co-operating with them to create a distinguished value for both the company and the customer. This strategy requires integrating the functions of marketing, sales and customer service so as to achieve the highest competence and efficiency in delivering value to the customer (Soliman 2011:166). The concept of CRM, therefore, deals with building and solidifying relationships with customers with a view to ensuring that they become long-term, repeat customers. It further suggests that enhanced communication plays a significant role in forging such relationships.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers Consulting defines CRM as “a journey of strategic, process, organisational, and technical change whereby a company seeks to better manage its enterprise around customer behaviours. This entails acquiring knowledge about customers and deploying this information at each touchpoint to attain increased revenue

and operational efficiencies". CRM greatly enhances the process of securing, building, and maintaining long-term relationships with profitable customers (Johnston and Marshall 2010:62).

CRM refers to the practice of collecting, storing and analysing customer-level information and incorporating the results into the decision-making process of a firm. It also involves automating, enhancing and integrating core business processes such as production, operations, sales, marketing and finance. The power of CRM lies in its adaptability to further the performance of any individual activity of the business, or even the entire business as a whole. An important concept in CRM is customer value. Customer value is essentially the financial value of the customer relationship to the firm. Customer value is widely used by firms to evaluate their marketing efforts (Kumar and Petersen 2012:2-3).

According to Aksoy, Keiningham and Bejou (2007:2-6), customer-centric strategies, such as those proposed by CRM, have become one of the most pervasive trends in relationship marketing in recent years. The basic overarching objective of such customer centric approaches is to better understand customers by collecting relevant information and then making the most of this information in interactions with the customer with the expectation that this ultimately leads to improved effectiveness in customer management and results in increased firm profitability. Effective CRM implementations purport to gain a 360 degree view of the customer. Given that customers interact via a variety of channels, this entails integration of customer information collected from various touch points (e.g., face-to-face, telephone, online, etc.). Only through successful integration of customer data can this information be utilised effectively. Information regarding the needs of alumni and what influences their decisions are obtained through the administration of surveys which are conducted by Magnet Communications. The information obtained is used to improve on the

interaction between alumni and the DUT as well as to try and address some of their concerns.

Aksoy, Keiningham and Bejou (2007:6) further argue that the objectives of customer-centric marketing should be the goal of every firm. A firm's ability to realise these objectives and goals, however, is dependent upon its ability to adopt a customer-centric philosophy and maintain an accurate and industry-relevant customer database. This is the cornerstone in the development of an effective consumer segmentation scheme and the creation of predictive algorithms that have the ability to better understand customers, prepare relevant offers, increase cross-sell and up-sell opportunities and reduce costs. Equipped with such customer information, the company has the ability to devise its strategies more effectively and to allocate resources where the marketing dollar achieves the highest return on investment (ROI). In the end, customer-centric marketing is a mutually beneficial venture, in which, customers gain through the opportunity to have more relevant offers to them, and firms gain through enhancing the loyalty and profitability of their customer relationships.

The overall business goal of CRM is to make the enterprise as profitable as possible over time by taking steps to increase the value of the customer base. The enterprise makes itself, its products and/or its services so satisfying, convenient, or valuable to the customer that he/she becomes more willing to devote his/her time and money to this enterprise than to any competitor. Building the value of customers increases the value of the demand chain, which is, the stream of business that flows from the customer up through the retailer all the way to manufacturer. A customer-strategy enterprise interacts directly with an individual customer.

Business organisations of different sizes are still motivated to adopt CRM to create and manage the relationships with their customers more effectively. Enhanced relationships

with one's customers can ultimately lead to greater customer loyalty, retention and, profitability (Akroush *et al* 2011:159). Furthermore, the rapid advancements in communications technology have greatly transformed the way relationships between companies and their customers are managed.

According to Peppers and Rogers (2004:5-6), enterprises are determined to build successful and profitable customer relationships and understand that the process of becoming an enterprise focused on building its value by building customer value doesn't begin with installing technology. Instead, the process begins with a strategy or ongoing process that helps transform the enterprise from a focus on traditional selling or manufacturing to a customer focus, while increasing revenues and profits and that the leadership and commitment necessary to cascade the thinking and decision-making capability throughout the organisation that puts customer value and relationships first.

Sanghi (2010:56) states that alumni are one of the most important stakeholders of a university. Therefore, it is important for universities to maintain an ongoing relationship with alumni, and seek their participation in achieving excellence. Alumni are often keen to play their part not just because the enhanced brand name of the university helps them professionally but also because they have nostalgic memories and feel emotionally connected to the place. To have a fruitful relationship with alumni, it is necessary that the university knows who they are, where they are, and what they are doing. When students graduate, universities must collect all contact information from them as communication is extremely important. Sanghi suggests that keeping a database of alumni records is important for a continuous relationship with an institution's alumni and that regular communication implies that the university is still keen to maintain relationships with its alumni. Alumni, often, want to know what is happening at their alma mater which assists their decisions of whether to give back to their alma mater or not.

Alumni associations have become important focal points for universities' efforts to developing continuing relationships with students after they have graduated. From the university's perspective, a strong and vibrant alumni association offers potential sources of finance and political influence, in addition to a strong likelihood of individuals recommending the university to future prospective students. Many universities, particularly in the United States, have developed a wide range of communication and support programmes to facilitate individuals continuing membership in their alumni association (Palmer and Koenig-Lewis 2008:84-85). To ensure that it continues to maintain relationships with its alumni, the Convocation Office of the Durban University of Technology has purchased the Development Manager, which is a system enabling communication with alumni via email, sms and post. The department is able to track the success rate of this communication in terms of successfully delivered mails and returned mails as well as flagging responses to events.

The purpose of the alumni association is to support the university by fostering the spirit of loyalty among its alumni, to provide a communications link between alumni and the university (to keep alumni informed about the university and the university – about its alumni), to encourage and establish activities for alumni, to foster the active interest, support and involvement of alumni in university affairs, to increase the sense of pride alumni have in their university and to provide alums as a resource to benefit the university (Karpova 2006:11).

Communication is critical for a university as it looks to “inform consumers and others about its goals, activities, and offerings and motivate them to take an interest in the institution (Levine 2008:180). Communication programmes, which are also part of alumni donor cultivation, include publications, advertising, public relations, special events and stewardship of current or potential donors. Written materials that colleges may use to stay in touch with their constituents include annual reports, catalogues, newsletters, alumni magazines, invitations, press releases and more (Levine 2008:181).

Levine thus infers that, for relationship marketing to be successful amongst higher education institutions, communication is crucial. Communication plays a pivotal role in informing a university's constituent base as to what the developments are at their alma mater.

Muscat (2010) argues that relationship marketing builds long-term customers through regular communication which can be done with social media, one's website or direct communication with one's clients. It has been proven that people prefer to buy from businesses or people that they can trust. Lavrusik (2009) states that "universities across the country, are beginning to use social media tools to engage alumni and build a network of graduates with a shared affinity for the institution".

The increase in competition among higher education institutions, together with the challenges and changes they must face in their surrounding environment have made it necessary for them to start paying attention to retaining customers, and also to nurture all the relationships with their publics. Creating long-term relationships with the organisation's stakeholders is an essential component for most services, and higher education makes no exception. The relationship between universities and their stakeholders are becoming key components in the development and sustainability of higher education institutions. For any university to be successful in achieving these goals, it must apply a relationship marketing orientation towards its environment. Regarding the higher education sector, the following definition of relationship marketing has been offered, "Relationship marketing is a set of marketing activities or actions that attract, motivate, and enhance existing and potential students' relationships as well as students' parents, relatives, friends, reference groups for the benefit of all sides concerned, emphasising on retaining students until their graduation and attracting further students" (Gordan, Apostu and Pop 2012:171-172). The authors suggest that relationship marketing in higher education is essential for its continuation and existence.

The activities associated with relationship marketing, with regards to its stakeholders, endeavour to ensure the long-term sustainability of higher education institutions.

According to Trustrum and Wee (2007:1), marketing strategy in higher education has been growing in importance for a number of years. It is not just a phenomena of private institutions but of all universities and colleges and is concerned not only with attracting students but also in securing income from other sources, such as endowments, commercial consultancy, research and many other activities. Higher education institutions are in a highly customer-centred service of business making, building relationships and providing quality service is extremely important. The major customers include students, parents and future employers. Students want to be able to obtain the right information and advice from institutions in order to make the right decision about their education.

According to Mergel and Greeves (2012:189), social media use is not about technology. It is about harnessing the value of two-way communication and finding ways to align this communication with the goals of one's organisation. Social media has the power to become solid collaboration tools and p ermanent loops of information sharing and feedback. They enable one to connect with varying constituencies and other relevant resources in affordable, efficient and productive ways. Wankel and Wankel (2011:231) further state that social media provides one the opportunity to humanise stories of students and alumni of one's institution, which can create loyalty and earn future business (students) and, ultimately, their respect.

Reuben (2008:11) further states that social media offer advancement professionals a great opportunity for keeping in touch with alumni after they graduate. Facebook is one of the more popular tools that is now being used to keep in touch with recent alumni. Alumni that are more in touch with their alma mater, and individuals there, are more apt

to be future donors to the college. Social media, thus, provides an alternative platform to reach out and communicate with alumni. Alumni have become more technology savvy and tend to engage more and more with each other and their alma mater via social media.

Zailskaitė-Jakštė and Kuvykaitė (2010:850), state that every organisation, according to their activities, has to choose the most appropriate social media sites where it can reach the respective target audiences and continually communicate with them. Zailskaitė-Jakštė and Kuvykaitė (2010:850) further state that higher education institutions should look for more purposeful communication too. They have to find innovative methods in order to survive and prosper in conditions of global economy. According to Powell, Groves and Dimos (2011:54), customer support can be a key brand attribute that can sway many consumers to purchase the brand or remain loyal to the brand. Providing great social media-based customer support can significantly increase the brand image to those individuals who are active on social media.

Geiger (2006) argues that online social networking has changed the world and this is more apparent in higher education than anywhere else. This is because bigger, faster, and stronger technology has changed the way one communicates, and the way one defines community. Email, cell phones and instant messaging have successfully become a part of everyday life and blogs, podcasts and RSS feeds, and wikis were also doing the same. Social networking communities are bringing these tools together to help members find, share and communicate with others, based on trusted relationships.

Further, email marketing campaigns for universities remain the quickest, most inexpensive, personal and flexible communication tool to engage alumni, donors and future students. Increasingly, universities are using email campaigns to invite segments of a database to events, such as open houses, tours and receptions, and collect

registrations online. Email marketing campaigns, for universities, are the leaders in reaching broad audiences in a targeted manner (Aylesworth-Spink, 2009).

It is essential that the DUT and the Convocation and Alumni Relations office stay connected to their alumni. This is especially important when it comes to post-graduate study. Higher education institutions are in a fairly competitive market place and the DUT must be seen as the first choice institution for returning students. Solomon (2008) explains that relationship marketing is applicable where the customers have many options in the market for the same product or service and the customer is entitled to make a selection decision. In such a kind of market, businesses try to maintain their clients by providing comparatively better products and good service and, hence, achieving customer loyalty. Moreover, once customer loyalty is achieved, it becomes difficult for competitors to do well in the market. The customer turnover was not given attention as the main attention was on customer satisfaction. This kind of marketing was initially named as defensive marketing. Offensive marketing is the marketing where not only new customers are attracted, but also the sales are stepped up by increasing the purchase frequency.

Relationship marketing is crucial amongst the alumni of the DUT. The byline for the department of Convocation and Alumni Relations is “Convocation: Your Link for Life”. The department espouses to being the lifelong link between the alumni of the DUT and their alma mater. For this relationship to be symbiotic, the Convocation and Alumni Relations department has to be in regular contact with their alumni for the purpose of keeping them informed of developments at their alma mater which, in turn, enables alumni to plough back to the institution.

2.3 The Origin of Relationship Marketing

The relationship marketing strategy developed from the direct response marketing campaigns popular in the 60's, 70's and 80's. These campaigns emphasised the importance of customer retention and continued customer satisfaction, rather than an emphasis on individual transactions, and per-case customer resolution (Fea, 2008).

The term "relationship marketing" was first explicitly used by Berry in 1983. Berry used the term as part of a critique of services-marketing literature, arguing that researchers and businessmen have concentrated far too much on attracting customers to products and services than retaining them. He advocated a switch from a transactionary approach, where marketing effort was focused on customer attraction, to a relational approach, where the attraction of new customers should be viewed only as an intermediate step in the marketing process and the primary objective was retaining customers (Harker and Egan 2006:221-222).

Baron, Conway and Warnaby (2010: 13-14) have offered the following in tracing the origin of relationship marketing:

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, relationship marketing emerged as an alternative to mainstream marketing for business-to-business and service marketers. It was seen as an alternative paradigm where markets are heterogeneous, buyers and sellers both active and interactions and relationships were important.

In the late 1980s, it was proposed that relationship marketing may be of benefit to business-to-consumer markets. Technology advances made it conceivable as customer databases offered potential to personalise interaction with customers and there were opportunities to identify *the most important customers*; thereby identifying lifetime value accruing from individual customers or customer types, and also making cross-selling more achievable.

In the mid-1990s, there was a general acceptance, by academics, that relationship marketing was feasible, and indeed helpful, for organisations engaged in business-to-consumer marketing in that there was academic weight/support for relationship marketing in consumer markets, there were the arguments for a paradigm shift from transactional to relationship marketing and there was an assumption that both consumers and organisations want relationships (Business-to-Consumer).

From the mid-1990s until the early 2000s, there was an expansion of work/research on relationship marketing, especially in the business-to-consumer marketplace. Issues that were given attention included what motivated consumers and organisations to engage in relationship marketing, the identification of feasible scenarios for relationship building and a keen interest in explaining the processes of relationship development.

2.4 The Maturing of Services Marketing

For relationship marketing to be successful, it is also essential for employees of an organisation to assist in the retention of customers. In this regard, it is crucial for staff of the Convocation and Alumni Relations office to interact continuously with alumni; it is their responsibility to ensure that communication and any form of interaction takes place via the various tools such as emails, sms, Facebook or LinkedIn, including the DevMan system. The importance of people has been reportedly emphasised within services-marketing literature because the service is performed and the performers are employees. Harwood, Garry and Broderick (2008:10), stress the critical marketing role performed by front-line employees who interact with customers and their contribution towards delivery and service satisfaction. Related to this interaction was the emergence of customer care and quality philosophies of the 1980's. There was a shift of focus, particularly, within the service industries, towards customer care and quality. It was further proposed that the natural outcome of quality service delivery and customer care is the development of relationships through interaction between employees and customers. As a result, these entities are inextricably linked, as illustrated in figure 2.2.

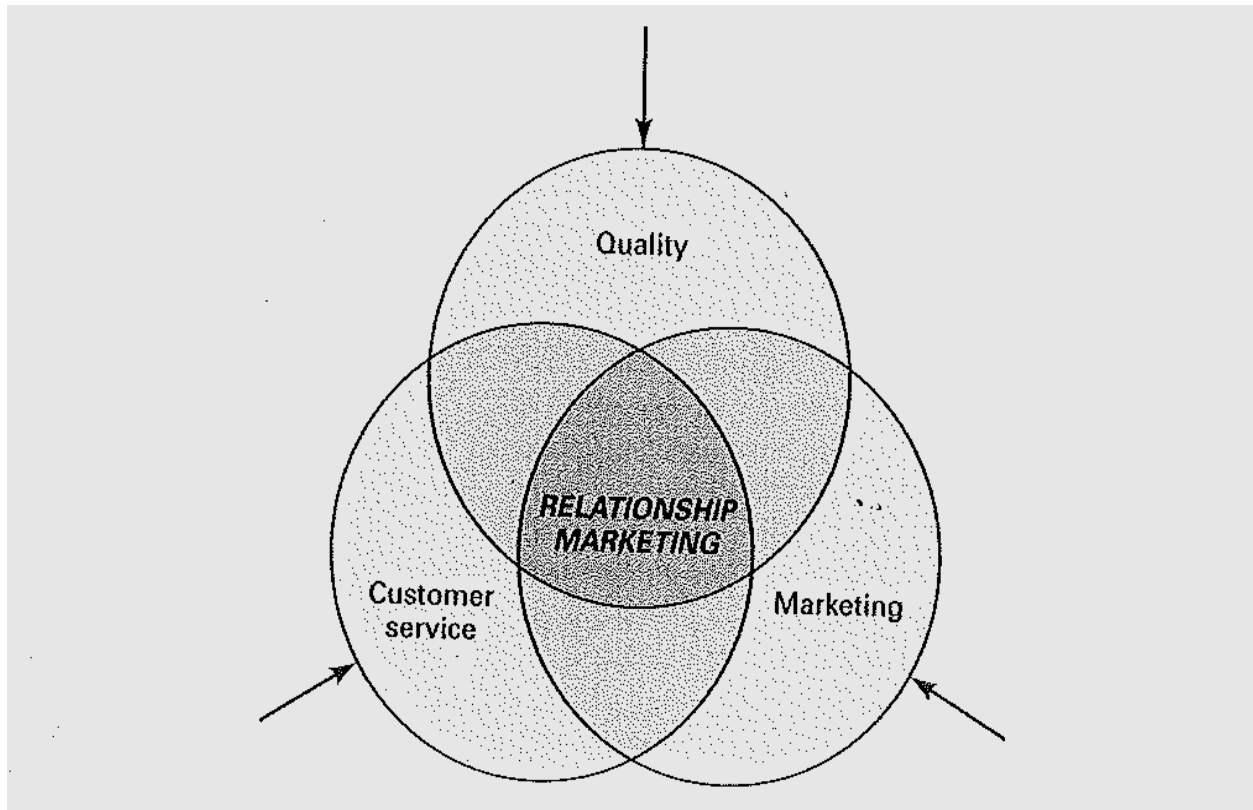


Figure 2.2 The relationship marketing orientation: Bringing Together Customer Service, Quality and Marketing

Source: Christopher *et al* (1991)

Figure 2.2 illustrates that relationship marketing is achieved by customer service, quality and marketing. Within the context of the Convocation and Alumni Relations department, customer service is achieved by providing a foundation for alumni to network with one another as well as investigating concerns raised by alumni; the quality aspect is achieved by the quick turnaround time that employees take in resolving alumni issues as well as the effectiveness of alumni programmes. Finally, marketing is done by advertising the various events being planned, both locally and regionally; and the various alumni assistance programmes such as the mentorship or coaching programme. The advertising of events is done via the mainstream media, email, sms, and social networking sites (Facebook).

2.5 A Recognition of the Benefits of Relationship Marketing for Firms

There has been an increasing recognition of the benefits of relationship marketing from both the firm's and the customer's perspectives. From the firm's perspective, increased competition through the globalisation of world markets, market fragmentation, and the deregulation of many service markets (e.g., banking, law, airlines, etc.) has meant that protection of the customer base has become paramount. More specifically, its advantages included increased profitability, which has been widely demonstrated across a variety of industries that profits increase if a firm retains its existing customers rather than attempts to acquire new ones, competitive advantage through added value and the creation of firm advocates. It has been proposed that relationship marketing may go beyond creating mere customer loyalty. As the relationship strengthens, it may create "customer advocates" of the company (Harwood, Garry, Broderick 2008:11-12).

As is illustrated above, the benefits for the DUT would translate into alumni returning for post-graduate study as well as endorsing the DUT as a first choice tertiary institution for prospective post-graduate as well as undergraduate students. This relationship building is also essential should the DUT wish to tap into the resources of alumni for funds or knowledge sharing.

2.6 A Recognition of the Benefits of Relationship Marketing for customers

From a customer's perspective, in this case, alumni of the DUT, risk and uncertainty can be treated if a product or service is variable in quality and/or complexity and if the product is of an intangible nature. Frequent communication and interaction regarding the recent developments at their alma mater assist in allaying fears of uncertainty. Often higher education institutions are in the media for negative reasons, such as student unrests which are synonymous with the start of the academic calendar. The DUT is no different. However, information that is conveyed to alumni and various stakeholders, via the numerous mechanisms, on how the situation is being handled and the measures in place to avert such matters often assist in reducing the risk of uncertainty at an

institution and the manner in which the matter is handled is often recognised as either being handled well or not at well. These factors add to the decisions of whether alumni or corporate stakeholders would invest in the university. Risk reduction and reduced uncertainty are posited as potential outcomes that customers find particularly important within the context of some markets. Harwood, Garry and Broderick (2008:13) suggest that a relationship allows providers to become more knowledgeable about customers' requirements and needs. Thus, having a long-term, ongoing, stable relationship becomes more predictable. As a result, problems are solved and special needs accommodated.

2.7 Advances in Information Technology

Information Technology (IT), as a tool, may facilitate the effectiveness of a relational perspective by tracking the buying patterns of existing customers, customising services, promotion and pricing to customers' specific requirements, co-ordinating or integrating the delivery of multiple services to the same customer, providing two-way communication channels (company to customer and customer to company), minimising the probability of service errors and breakdowns, augmenting core service offerings with valued extras and personalising service encounters as appropriate.

From a DUT perspective, including that of the Convocation and Alumni Relations office, technology and electronic uses have included Skyping (for e.g., between alumni, President of Convocation and the Vice Chancellor at the Convocation AGM held on Saturday, 8 February 2014, YouTube (for e.g., video messaging for alumni), Social Networking Sites (for e.g., Facebook and Twitter), LinkedIn (for e.g., the Convocation and Alumni Relations office has invited alumni via LinkedIn to join the DUT Alumni Network), sms (for e.g., AGM notifications, urgent DUT notifications as well as birthday messages) and email. The DevMan system is also used to communicate with alumni. All communication with alumni is personalised which assists in creating a bond between alumni and the DUT. The DUT website is also a mechanism for communicating with

alumni. According to Bunker (2011:13), nothing is as crucial as a college's website. All external communications, including email marketing and social networking activity, should funnel alumni to the institution's homepage since a good homepage contains valuable information that keeps users on site for at least three minutes, an eternity in Internet time. According to Wandel (2008:37), social networking remains undeniably constructive as a means of connecting individuals regardless of geographic constraints. Reuben (2008:11) states that social media gives one the opportunity to humanise stories of students and alumni of one's institutions, which can create loyalty and earn future business (students) and, ultimately, their respect.

2.8 Essential Ingredients of a Relationship

According to Brink and Berndt (2005:30), the success of a business relationship lies in the development and growth of trust and commitment among partners. The two parties also need to have shared goals and mutual benefits to build a successful relationship:

2.8.1 Trust and Commitment

Trust can be seen as a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence. Trust is a belief in a person's or organisation's competence to perform a specific task under specific circumstances. Commitment is undoubtedly connected with the notion of trust. Commitment can be defined as an enduring desire to maintain a valued partnership (Berndt and Tait 2012:25). Programmes that are relevant and beneficial to alumni create a sense of trust amongst alumni in that such programmes are geared towards the forward progression of alumni.

2.8.2 Shared Goals and Mutual Benefits

Shared goals and mutual benefits are also key constructs in building effective business relationships. The extent to which the partners have beliefs in common

about behaviours, goals and policies that are important, appropriate and right for a particular situation is likely to affect commitment to a relationship. The existence of shared goals has been found to have significant effects on relationships that could be profoundly useful to the sellers of products and services (Brink and Berndt 2005:32).

2.9 Relationship Loyalty

Loyalty is a concept close to the heart of customer relationship management:

2.9.1 Customer Loyalty in Perspective

Central to an organisation's relationship management strategy is the ability of that organisation to develop and enhance long-term customer relationships and to satisfy its existing customers. The main focus of such organisations is on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, i.e., retaining customers and generating repeat orders. Indeed, there is a positive impact of customer loyalty and retention on company profitability. Customer loyalty is defined as a commitment to continue to do business with a company on an on-going basis. A company benefits from a customer's loyal behaviour (Leventhal 2006:65-66).

2.9.2 Customer Retention

Customer retention has been shown to be a primary goal in firms that practise relationship marketing. There appears to be a general consensus that focusing on customer retention can yield several economic benefits. As customer tenure lengthens, the volumes purchased grow and customer referrals increase. Simultaneously, relationship maintenance costs fall as both customer and supplier learn more about each other. Retained customers may pay higher prices than newly acquired customers. All of these conditions combine to increase the net present value of retained customers (Ang and Buttle 2006:84-85).

2.9.3 Customer Migration

Berndt and Tait (2012:30) further state that organisations should not only focus on customer retention *per se*, but they need to investigate customer migration before it leads to defection. Upward migration means that customers spend more, while downward migration refers to customers spending less and less. Managing migration – from the satisfied customers who spend more to the downward migration who spend less – is crucial in customer-retention strategies. Many more customers change their spending behaviour than defect. Managing migration not only gives companies an early chance to stem the downward course before their customers defect entirely, but also helps them influence upward migration earlier.

2.9.4 Customer Lifetime Value

Companies increasingly derive revenue from the creation and enhancement of long-term relationships with their customers. This move towards a customer-centric approach to marketing, coupled with the increasing availability of customer-transaction data, has led to an interest in estimating and understanding customer lifetime value (CLV). CLV is viewed as the present value of the future cash flows associated with a customer. Knowing the CLV of individual customers enables the decision maker to improve the customer segmentation and marketing resource allocation efforts. This, in turn, will lead to higher retention rates and profit for the firm (Kahreh and Kahreh 2012:146-147).

Over the years, brand loyalty has tended to be defined and measured in either behavioural or attitudinal terms (Baron, Conway and Warnaby 2010:46). At first glance, loyalty can be considered to be a behavioural concept being seen in terms of actual purchase behaviour. Therefore, behavioural definitions were built on proportions of purchase (share of purchase, share of visits, share of wallet), or patterns of purchase (frequency, probability of purchase/re-purchase, repeat purchase behaviour or a

combination of various aspects of purchase. Truly loyal customers are those who feel so strongly that their company can best meet their needs and that any other competitors rarely need to be considered.

Malthouse and Mulhern (2007:60) concur that customer loyalty is seen in terms of attitudes and behaviours. They argue that attitudinal loyalty represents how consumers think and feel about a brand while behavioural loyalty represents purchase behaviour over time, usually defined either in terms of purchase volume or share of spending. They define loyalty as *an attitudinal construct that manifests itself in buying behaviour*. They connect attitudinal loyalty to actual buying behaviour and the financial implications of that buying to the firm in the form of the financial value of a customer. Loyalty, in part, causes customers to buy a particular brand, which improves the customer's value and ultimately the firm's performance.

2.10 Marketing Communications

Key to relationship marketing is communication. Customer interaction is about communication. According to du Plessis, van Heerden and Cook (2010:3), marketing communications involves marketer-initiated techniques directed at target audiences in an attempt to influence attitudes and behaviours. Research consistently supports the idea that emotional attachment to the university is a strong predictor of alumni support. Alumni involvement with an institution after graduation is an important factor affecting alumni support of their alma mater. According to Levine (2008:180), institutions of higher education need allies and supporters and they rely on their own alumni, to play this role.

Customers appreciate being informed about what is going on and they enjoy being kept in the loop. An essential part of communication is not just knowing how to say something or write something in a professional manner or having a wealth of

communication options to keep one in touch with one's customers; it is also about listening to what they have to say. Effective listening is one of the fundamental skills that go not just with communications but with customer service and, ultimately, customer retention (Bedi, 2009).

According to du Plessis, van Heerden and Cook (2010:3), the ultimate goal of marketing communication is to reach some audiences to affect their behaviour. Marketing communications has the potential to provide added value, and it achieves this through the development of appropriate customer relationships. Above all else, marketing communications should be an audience-centred activity. According to Fill (2011:5), marketing communications is an audience-centred activity which attempts to encourage engagement between participants and provoke conversations.

2.11 The Tasks of marketing communications

According to Fill (2011:11), communication plays an important part in the process through which information flows as it can help accomplish one or more key tasks. Marketing communications can act as a differentiator, particularly in markets where there is little to separate competing products and brands. Communication can also be used to reinforce experiences and beliefs. This may take the form of reminding people of a need they might have or reminding them of the benefits of past transactions with a view to convincing them that they should enter into a similar exchange. Communication can also inform and make potential customers aware of an organisation's offering. No purchase can be made without prior awareness and, finally, communication can be used to persuade current and potential customers of the desirability of either trialling a product, buying a product or to enter into a relationship.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the five principal marketing communications tools: advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling.



Figure 2.3 The tools of the marketing communications mix

2.12 The Tools of the Marketing Communications Mix

2.12.1 Advertising

Advertising is a way of telling the market what one wants to sell or want to buy, a means of informing existing and potential customers about a product, its special features and benefits and a means of persuading them to buy the product. Advertising is a mass communication process whereby verbal and non-verbal symbols are transmitted through a channel to a receiver with the objective to communicate an idea, change or reinforce an attitude or provide important information about a particular product or service. Advertising is any paid form of mass presentation of ideas, products and services by an advertiser, addressed to a selected target audience with the objective of creating awareness, informing, reminding, influencing and persuading them to buy the

product or service or to be favourably inclined towards these ideas, products or services (Koekemoer 2011:99). The Convocation and Alumni Relations office uses mainstream media, e.g., newspapers as well as the Convocation website and social media to advertise alumni events such as the Convocation AGM or the Convocation Golf Day.

2.12.2 Sales promotion

According to du Plessis, van Heerden and Cook (2010:176), sales promotion consists of personal and impersonal short-term efforts aimed at customers to motivate them to buy the organisation's products or services. Sales promotion includes communication activities to provide extra value or incentives to consumers to stimulate sales. It attempts to encourage product interest, trial or purchase. Sales promotion embraces activities to pull people towards products or that push products towards people. Sales promotions are a range of tactical marketing techniques using any media platform to achieve specific sales within a specified period. To attract post-graduate students, the Post Graduate Development Support Directorate at the DUT, in 2008, offered laptops to returning students. In 2011 and 2012, these were amended to scholarships that were awarded to prospective post-graduate students as an incentive.

2.12.3 Personal selling

Koekemoer (2011:121-122) states that selling is defined as the personal or impersonal process of assisting and/or persuading a prospect to buy a commodity or service and to act favourably upon an idea that has commercial significance to the seller. Selling is also described as the art of persuading people to want what the salesperson has in terms of products, services or ideas. Personal selling is a person-person process by which the seller learns about the prospective buyers' wants and seeks to satisfy them by offering goods or services and making a sale. Persuasion is ultimately at the core of personal selling. Regional events, Homecoming as well as the Convocation Annual General Meeting provide a platform for one-on-one communication between the DUT management and alumni.

2.12.4 Public Relations

Public relations entails building good relations with an organisation's publics and stakeholders by creating favourable attitudes, building a good corporate image and handling of unfavourable rumours, stories or events. The identification and segmentation of different stakeholders and fulfilling their communication needs is used as one of the main techniques to focus on public relations strategy of the organisation. Public relations is a managerial function that aims to achieve a mutual two-way communication between an organisation and its different stakeholders (du Plessis, van Heerden and Cook 2010:224-225). Every event hosted by the Convocation and Alumni Relations office is viewed as a public relations exercise. These events are aimed at highlighting the activities on offer by the department as well as updating alumni of the current developments at their alma mater. Often questions are posed as to the status of programmes at the DUT as well as alumni responses to student protests.

2.12.5 Direct Marketing

Direct marketing is an interactive system of marketing that uses one or more advertising media to effect a measurable response and/or transaction at any location. Direct marketing is the interactive use of a variety of advertising media to encourage an immediate planned behavioural response in such a way that this behaviour can be recorded, analysed and stored on a database for future retrieval and use (Koekemoer 2011:159). An example of direct marketing is that of the Give-a-Tiger Campaign, an alumni initiated bursary fund project, which entails direct telephonic contact as well as email communication with alumni to secure funds for the Give-a-Tiger Campaign. Alumni are informed of the different ways of contributing towards the fund. A video has also been commissioned which will be downloaded onto the University YouTube page as well as the DevMan system.

2.13 Messages and the marketing communications mix

Brand-related messages have two main sources. One is the organisation itself in terms of how it chooses to present their organisation or brand which is a planned aspect of marketing communications. The other source involves audiences and the brand messages that customers create and communicate, both positive and negative. What is common to both is that they both contain two elements, information and emotion. Messages should reflect a balance between the need for information and the need for pleasure or enjoyment in consuming the message. In 2012, the DUT began, in earnest, the process of repositioning its brand through a rebranding marketing campaign to the various stakeholders. Convocation and Alumni Relations held regional events in the Western Cape, Gauteng, Durban and Midlands to inform and update alumni of the new branding image of the University. Alumni have begun to identify with the new revised logo.

Long-term sales and market share growth are the ultimate objectives of most marketing communications campaigns. However, sales are influenced by other marketing mix instruments, such as product quality, design, benefits, packaging, distribution and pricing strategies, as well as the market evolution, technology and innovations and competitive action (de Pelsmacker, Geuens and Van den Bergh 2010:165).

2.14 Conclusion

This literature review sets out to examine the role of relationship marketing. It further discusses why relationship marketing is important and examines the way in which relationship marketing is practised. It also assesses the communication tools utilised to maintain and promote relationship marketing and examines the impact of improved communication on relationship marketing. Based on the literature review, it is evident that relationship marketing within universities of technology is a new concept and its role and functions within the alumni still remains largely unexplored. Therefore, the study uses the literature review to underpin the research instrument with the intention of

further probing the role of relationship marketing in initiating, forging and maintaining links with the Durban University of Technology's alumni.

The next chapter focuses on the research methodology of this study.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study. The chapter explains the research design, target population, data collection and data analysis used in the study. This research study aims at investigating the role of relationship marketing within the Durban University of Technology alumni. The study is descriptive, quantitative and cross-sectional in nature.

3.2 Research Design

Dhawan (2010:36) states that the formidable problem that follows the task of defining the research problem is the preparation of the design of the research project, popularly known as the "research design". Decisions regarding what, where, when, how much, by what means concerning an inquiry or a research study constitute a research design. A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. In fact, the research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. As such, the design includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis and its operational implications to the final analysis of data.

In the research design, therefore, one would have to specify the number of groups that should be used (this is necessary to decide which statistical technique to use), whether these groups are to be drawn randomly from the populations involved or whether they should be assigned randomly to groups and what exactly should be done with them in the case of experimental research. According to Creswell (2009:3), research designs are plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. He further states that

the selection of a research design is also based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researchers' personal experiences, and the audience for the study.

A research design is a logical and systematic plan prepared for directing a research study. It specifies the objectives of the study, the methodology and techniques to be adopted for achieving the objectives. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. It is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions. The plan is the overall scheme or programme of research. A research design is the programme that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting observations. It provides a systematic plan of procedure for the researcher to follow (Krishnaswami and Satyaprasad 2010:45).

3.3 Target Population

The population is all individuals of interest to the researcher (Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger 2005:18). The target population for this study will include all DUT alumni obtained from the alumni database, Development Manager (DevMan). The population size was 74 158.

Neuman (2011:41) states that a population is the abstract idea of a large group of many cases from which a researcher draws a sample and to which results from a sample are generalised. Groves *et al* (2009:69-70) state that the target population is the group of elements for which the survey investigator wants to make inferences by using the sample statistics. Target populations are finite in size. They have some time restrictions and are observable. These aspects of target populations are desirable for achieving a clear understanding of the meaning of the survey statistics and for permitting replication of the survey.

3.4. Quantitative Approach

The study will be quantitative and cross-sectional in nature. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:94-95) state that quantitative research involves looking at amounts or *quantities*, of one or more variables of interest.

Schreiber and Asner-Self (2011:13) suggest that quantitative research focuses on objectivity and quantifying the phenomenon under investigation. Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007:117) also state that quantitative research relies on measuring variables — or, at the very least, on counting of objects or events. That is, the data are numbers (or are converted into numbers before their analysis begins). Quantitative research is about hypothesis testing, and theory testing. That is, the predictions are stated explicitly, and then confronted with the data. Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007:117) further state that quantitative research relies heavily on algorithms: sequences of clearly-defined procedures which, when applied, always produce a desired end result. This does not mean that each quantitative research study is just one big algorithm (like a long division or a computer programme) — far from it. The results of various algorithms have to be integrated and evaluated by the researcher, in order to arrive at the conclusion about the truth of the initial hypothesis. The researcher's heuristics (hunches and rules of thumb) play a key role there. Nevertheless, various algorithms are employed widely as tools. Quantitative research is nomothetic in its focus - it strives to formulate general laws that apply to whole populations of objects, events or people.

Creswell (2009:4) states that quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables, that these variables can be measured so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures. Researchers engaged in this form of inquiry have assumptions about testing theories deductively, building protection against bias, controlling for alternative explanations, and being able to generalise and replicate the findings.

Glenn (2010:96) states that quantitative research is more focused and aims to test hypotheses. Quantitative data are of the kind that may lead to measurement or other kinds of analysis involving applied mathematics.

3.5 Sampling Method

This study used a non-probability sampling technique in selecting the sample from the target population. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010:276), in non-probability sampling designs, the elements in the population do not have any probabilities attached to their being chosen as a sample. Denscombe (2010:25) states that non-probability sampling involves an element of discretion or choice on the part of the researcher at some point in the selection process.

3.6 Sample size

The population comprised all alumni of the DUT which is 74 158. (Development Manager Alumni System). The sample constituted all alumni with contactable email addresses. This comprised a total number of 13 467 alumni. 443 responses were received. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010:295), for a population of 75 000, a sample size of 382 is advised. Sekaran and Bougie (2010:296) further state that sample sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research.

3.7 Questionnaire Design

Messenger-Davies and Mosdell (2006:80) state that questionnaires are a very quick way of gathering a lot of data but the quality of the data depends on the clarity with which the research question has been formulated, the extent to which the questions in the questionnaire are related to the research question, the wording of the questions and their comprehensibility.

3.7.1 Questionnaire format

A structured questionnaire consisting of 30 questions was used to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions, multiple choice and scaled response questions. The format of the questionnaire was structured to reflect the main themes contained within the literature review and this included biographical data, feedback regarding the communication sent to the alumni (recipients) as well as questions related to relationship marketing between the alumni and the DUT in terms of loyalty, commitment and brand advocacy.

Questions 1 – 4 related to biographical data in terms of age, gender, race, faculty, qualification and number of years since graduation;

Questions 5 – 19 related to communication sent by the Convocation and Alumni Relations office; and

Questions 20 – 30 related to relationship marketing which led to the cultivation of loyalty and commitment of alumni towards their alma mater.

3.8 Measuring Instrument

An instrument is anything used to collect data: questionnaires are a type of instrument for collecting data where the goal is to look for differences – that is variability – in responses across groups of people. A questionnaire is a pre-formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives. Questionnaires are an efficient data collection mechanism where the researcher knows exactly what is required and how to measure the variables of interest (Sekaran and Bougie 2010:197). The questions or statements may be considered open-ended or close-ended. Open-ended questions allow the participant to write, type or vocalise extended responses.

According to Al-Omiri (2007:514-515), computer-mediated communication (CMC) such as email enables a researcher to send questionnaires directly to the respondents. Consequently, the process has several advantages. The costs associated with paper-based survey questionnaires are eliminated and the distribution time is reduced considerably. Email surveys enable the researcher to make direct contact with the respondents. A significant advantage of an email survey is speed of data collection and instant access to a sample, irrespective of their geographical location. All such advantages make email a highly appropriate method for data collection in cross-sectional studies or studies that require international respondents.

3.9 Data Collection Method

Data was collected through the use of questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered electronically to alumni whose email addresses were captured on the DevMan system. The questionnaire included a covering letter containing the details of the researcher and the purpose of the study. Respondents were reassured of the confidentiality of their responses and were informed that they were under no obligation to participate in the study.

3.10 Data Analysis

The data collected from the responses was analysed with SPSS version 20.0. The results are presented in the form of graphs, cross tabulations and other figures.

3.10.1 Descriptive Statistics

Lind, Marchal and Mason (2004:6) state that descriptive statistics describes the organising and summarising of quantitative data. Univariate and bivariate analyses are the most appropriate for descriptive statistics. Univariate analysis is concerned with measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion. The most appropriate measure of central tendency for interval data is the mean and the most appropriate

measure of dispersion for interval data is the standard deviation. Bivariate analysis concerns the measurement of two variables at a time. Descriptive statistics is useful as it summarises results for an experiment, thereby allowing for more constructive research after more detailed analysis. Descriptive data analysis aims to describe the data investigating the distribution of scores on each variable, and by determining whether the scores on different variables are related to each other.

3.10.2 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistical analysis is concerned with the testing of hypotheses. According to Rosenthal (2011:155), inferential statistical procedures are tools for drawing conclusions about populations based on observations from samples randomly selected from those populations. Rosenthal (2011:158) further states that inferential statistics involves using sample statistics to estimate population parameters.

The following types of inferential statistics were used in this study.

i. Chi-square test

The chi-square test calculates whether the difference between the observed distribution pattern of data collected from a sample shown in a two-way table is significantly different from that which would have been expected, based upon the null hypothesis. One compares the tabulated values for one's sample with those one would have expected if there had been no underlying relationship between the two variables and then calculate the probability of a sample as extreme as, or more extreme than, that actually observed to have occurred. If this is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), then the null hypothesis is usually rejected. The chi-square statistic must be calculated using the observed values in the table (Saunders and Brown 2007:80).

ii. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis attempts to identify underlying variables, or factors, that explain the pattern of correlations within a set of observed variables. Factor analysis is a set of

techniques for determining the extent to which variables that are related can be grouped together so that they can be treated as one combined variable or factor rather than as a series of separate variables (Cramer 2003:26). Factor analysis is a statistical technique whose main goal is data reduction. According to Brown, Hendrix and Hedges (2011:155), the fundamental purpose of factor analysis is to find the latent variables that are presumed to underlie empirically observed variables. A typical use of factor analysis is in survey research, where a researcher wishes to represent a number of questions with a small number of hypothetical factors.

iii. Correlation

Correlations are an ideal tool to discover the association between two variables. A correlation analysis does not only give the analyst an indication whether the two variables have a significant relationship, but it also shows whether this relationship is positive or negative (Coussement and Charry 2011:211).

3.11 Pilot Test

A vital stage to go through is the process of piloting which is testing the questionnaire. This process is important in that it checks if the wording of each question is clear and unambiguous, are there clear instructions on how the respondents should answer the questions, does the questionnaire look professional and whether the researcher has explained who he/she is and the purpose of the questionnaire (Messenger-Davies and Mosdell 2006:108-109). The initial questionnaire was distributed to 22 respondents. Based on the feedback, no revision was required.

3.12 Delimitations

The study was confined to alumni of the Durban University of Technology.

3.13 Limitations

The findings of this study were based on responses received only from alumni of the Durban University of Technology. Therefore, recommendations could only be applied to the Durban University of Technology.

3.14 Validity

The validity of the questionnaire is whether or not it is measuring what one wants it to measure. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010:157), validity is a test of how well an instrument that is developed, measures the particular concept it is intended to measure. Validity means an instrument measures what it was exactly designed to measure (Shawer 2011:106). Face validity is the extent to which, on the surface, an instrument “looks like” its measuring a particular characteristic (Leedy and Ormrod 2010:92). To ensure its validity, the questionnaire was subjected to a pilot test to a group of alumni.

3.15 Reliability

A questionnaire is reliable if it provides a consistent distribution of responses from the same survey universe. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010:161), the reliability of a measure is an indication of the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the “goodness” of a measure. Neuman (2011:208) states that reliability means dependability or consistency. It suggests that the same thing is repeated or recurs under the identical or very similar conditions. Reliability refers to the property of a measurement instrument that causes it to give similar results for similar inputs. Cronbach’s alpha is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. Cronbach’s alpha is computed in terms of the average inter-correlations among the items measuring the concept. The closer Cronbach’s alpha is to 1, the higher the internal consistency reliability (Sekaran and Bougie 2010: 324). Cronbach’s alpha was calculated to ensure the reliability of the instrument.

3.16 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodology employed to conduct the study. It examined the selection of subjects, the survey method and the research instrument employed. The next chapter will provide a discussion and analysis of the results.

Chapter Four

Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discusses the findings obtained for the questionnaire in this study. The data collected from the responses will be analysed with SPSS version 20.0. The results will be presented in the form of graphs, cross tabulations and other figures.

4.2 Response rate

The population consisted of DUT graduates ranging from diploma to doctoral respondents. In total, 13 467 questionnaires were dispatched and 443 were returned. The response rate was considered to be sufficient in order to draw statistical inferences.

4.3 The Research Instrument

The research instrument consisted of 30 items, with a level of measurement at nominal and ordinal levels. The questionnaire was divided into three sections, which measured the following:

Questions 1 – 4 related to biographical data in terms of age, gender, race, faculty, qualification and number of years since graduation;

Questions 5 – 19 related to communication sent by the Convocation and Alumni Relations department to alumni; and

Questions 20 – 30 related to relationship marketing which created loyalty and commitment towards their alma mater.

The various questions were analysed in more detail under Section Analysis.

4.4 Reliability Statistics

The two most important aspects of precision are reliability and validity. Reliability is computed by taking several measurements on the same subjects. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered as “acceptable” (Introduction to SAS. UCLA: Academic Technology Services, Statistical Consulting Group, 2007).

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 reflect the Cronbach’s alpha score for all the ordinal items that constituted the questionnaire.

Table 4.1 Reliability statistics in relation to Communication

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	443	94.9
	Excluded	24	5.1
	Total	467	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.751	3

Table 4.2 Reliability statistics in relation to loyalty

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	443	94.9
	Excluded	24	5.1
	Total	467	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.786	6

The reliability score is greater than the suggested value (of 0.7). This indicates a high degree of acceptable, consistent scoring for the different categories for this research.

Certain components divided into finer components. This is explained in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 below in the rotated component matrix.

Table 4.3 Communication forging links for life

Component Matrix ^a	
Q11	Component
	1
I want to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office	.857
The communication received from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office encourages me to attend events hosted by the University	.829
Communication from your former university is essential in building and nurturing a relationship between you and your university	.776

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Table 4.4 Communication forging loyalty and brand advocacy

Rotated Component Matrix ^a		
Q19	Component	
	1	2
It is important for the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office to stay connected to its alumni	.811	.101
Listening to alumni and addressing their concerns helps to improve alumni retention	.873	.059
The relationships formed by alumni contributes to their sense of loyalty towards their alma mater ie. DUT	.840	.161
Experiences during their undergraduate years shape alumni loyalty and commitment to their alma mater ie. DUT	.638	.299
I would recommend DUT as a first choice institution of teaching and learning	.145	.903
DUT offers quality education and programmes that are relevant to the workplace	.155	.893

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

With reference to Tables 4.3 and 4.4, the principal component analysis was used as the extraction method, and the rotation method was Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation. This is an orthogonal rotation method. According to Abdi and Williams (2010:442), for varimax, a simple solution means that each component has a small number of large loadings and a large number of zero (or small) loadings. This simplifies the interpretation because, after a varimax rotation, each original variable tends to be associated with one (or a small number) of the components, and each component represents only a small number of variables. In addition, the components can often be

interpreted from the opposition of few variables with positive loadings to few variables with negative loadings. Formally, varimax searches for a linear combination of the original factors.

For Question 11, which relates to communication forging lifelong links, all of the statements aligned perfectly under a single component. This implies that these statements perfectly measured what they set out to measure.

For Question 19, which relates to communication forging loyalty and brand advocacy, the component split into 2. This means that respondents identified two sub-themes (or sub-components). The colour coded factors identify similar sub-themes. The first four options relate to loyalty and retention while the last two options relate to alumni being advocates of the DUT, by means of promoting the DUT's academic offerings as a world class institution of learning.

4.5 Biographical Data of the Respondents

The figures and tables below indicate a summary of the biographical details of the respondents.

Table 4.5 Race composition by gender and age (Black)

Race				Gender		Total
				Male	Female	
Black	Age	18 - 25	Count	32	49	81
			% within Gender	20.0%	34.3%	26.7%
			% of Total	10.6%	16.2%	26.7%
		26 - 35	Count	108	83	191
			% within Gender	67.5%	58.0%	63.0%
			% of Total	35.6%	27.4%	63.0%
		36 - 45	Count	19	9	28
			% within Gender	11.9%	6.3%	9.2%
			% of Total	6.3%	3.0%	9.2%
		46 - 55	Count	1	2	3
			% within Gender	.6%	1.4%	1.0%
			% of Total	.3%	.7%	1.0%
	Total		Count	160	143	303
			% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
			% of Total	52.8%	47.2%	100.0%

In terms of Table 4.5, of all the Black respondents, gender was almost equally split (52.8% male and 47.2% female). Amongst the African males, two-thirds (67.5%) were between the ages of 26 and 35 years. This grouping of African males constituted 35.6% within the male category.

Table 4.6 Race composition by gender and age (White)

Race				Male	Female	Total
White	Age	18 - 25	Count	2	5	7
			% within Gender	14.3%	38.5%	25.9%
			% of Total	7.4%	18.5%	25.9%
		26 - 35	Count	7	7	14
			% within Gender	50.0%	53.8%	51.9%
			% of Total	25.9%	25.9%	51.9%
		36 - 45	Count	3	1	4
			% within Gender	21.4%	7.7%	14.8%
			% of Total	11.1%	3.7%	14.8%
		46 - 55	Count	2	0	2
			% within Gender	14.3%	0.0%	7.4%
			% of Total	7.4%	0.0%	7.4%
	Total		Count	14	13	27
			% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
			% of Total	51.9%	48.1%	100.0%

Similarly, Table 4.6 indicates that of all the White respondents, gender was also almost equally split with 51.9% of responses by White males and 48,1% of responses by White females.

Table 4.7 Race composition by gender and age (Indian)

Race				Male	Female	Total
Indian	Age	18 - 25	Count	7	23	30
			% within Gender	11.1%	53.5%	28.3%
			% of Total	6.6%	21.7%	28.3%
		26 - 35	Count	30	19	49
			% within Gender	47.6%	44.2%	46.2%
			% of Total	28.3%	17.9%	46.2%
		36 - 45	Count	15	1	16
			% within Gender	23.8%	2.3%	15.1%
			% of Total	14.2%	.9%	15.1%
		46 - 55	Count	10	0	10
			% within Gender	15.9%	0.0%	9.4%
			% of Total	9.4%	0.0%	9.4%
		> 55	Count	1	0	1
			% within Gender	1.6%	0.0%	.9%
			% of Total	.9%	0.0%	.9%
	Total	Count	63	43	106	
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
		% of Total	59.4%	40.6%	100.0%	

Table 4.7 indicates that of the Indian respondents, 59.4% of responses were male while 40.6% were female.

Table 4.8 Race composition by gender and age (Coloured)

Race				Male	Female	Total
Coloured	Age	18 - 25	Count	1	1	2
			% within Gender	33.3%	50.0%	40.0%
			% of Total	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%
		26 - 35	Count	2	1	3
			% within Gender	66.7%	50.0%	60.0%
			% of Total	40.0%	20.0%	60.0%
	Total	Count	3	2	5	
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
		% of Total	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%	

In terms of gender, Table 4.8 shows that Coloured males accounted for 60% of responses while Coloured females accounted for 40% of the responses.

Table 4.9 Race composition by gender and age (Other)

Race				Male	Female	Total
Other	Age	18 - 25	Count	1		1
			% within Gender	50.0%		50.0%
			% of Total	50.0%		50.0%
		26 - 35	Count	1		1
			% within Gender	50.0%		50.0%
			% of Total	50.0%		50.0%
	Total			Count	2	2
				% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%
				% of Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.9 indicates that of the Other respondents, 100% were male.

Table 4.10 Gender distribution by age

				Gender		Total
				Male	Female	
Total	Age	18 - 25	Count	43	78	121
			% within Gender	17.8%	38.8%	27.3%
			% of Total	9.7%	17.6%	27.3%
		26 - 35	Count	148	110	258
			% within Gender	61.2%	54.7%	58.2%
			% of Total	33.4%	24.8%	58.2%
		36 - 45	Count	37	11	48
			% within Gender	15.3%	5.5%	10.8%
			% of Total	8.4%	2.5%	10.8%
		46 - 55	Count	13	2	15
			% within Gender	5.4%	1.0%	3.4%
			% of Total	2.9%	.5%	3.4%
		> 55	Count	1	0	1
			% within Gender	.4%	0.0%	.2%
			% of Total	.2%	0.0%	.2%
	Total	Count		242	201	443
		% within Gender		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total		54.6%	45.4%	100.0%

Overall, Table 4.10 shows that 54.6% of the sample were male respondents. Most respondents were between the ages of 26 to 35 years (58.2%). Of this, a third (33.4%) were male. The findings suggest that more males took the time to answer the questionnaire than females.

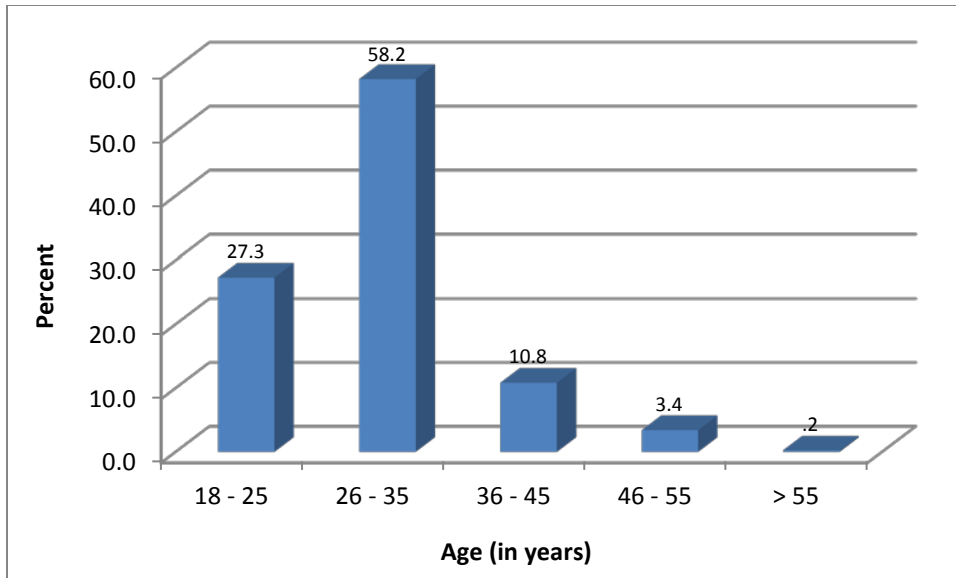


Figure 4.1 Summary of age variables

According to Figure 4.1, more than 85% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 to 35 years. This is useful as responses were obtained mainly from recent graduates who are more in-tune with current developments and can relate to their training at the DUT.

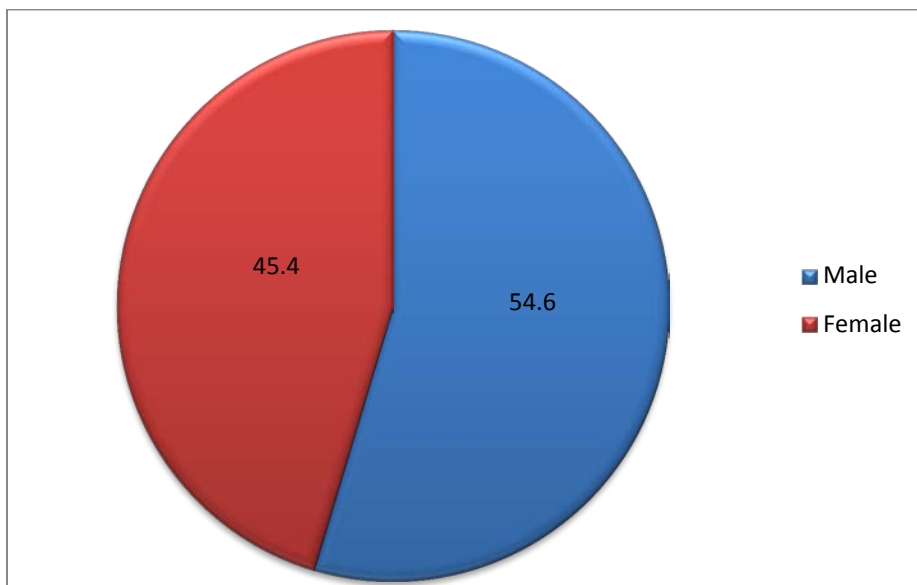


Figure 4.2 Summary of gender variables

Figure 4.2 shows that 54.6% of the respondents were male while 45.4% of the respondents were female.

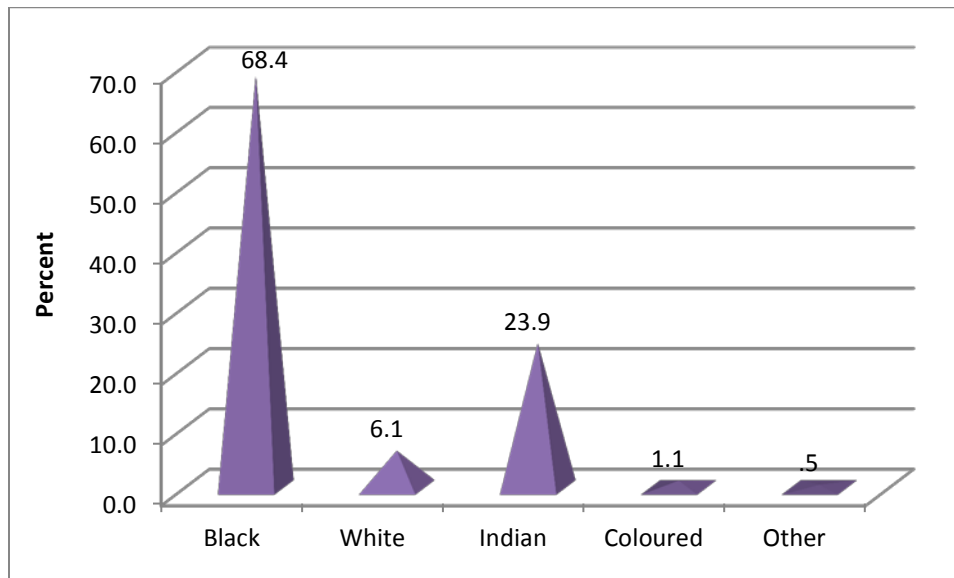


Figure 4.3 Summary of race variables

Figure 4.3 indicates that a little more than two-thirds (68.4%) of the respondents were Black, with approximately a quarter (23.9%) of the respondents being Indian. 6.1 % were White, 1.1% were Coloured and 0.5% were Other.

The results match the demographics of the university. From 2011 – 2012, 25 028 Black students graduated from the DUT which accounted for 66.9% of the graduates while 14 231 Indian students graduated from DUT accounting for 21.9% of graduates. (Statistics provided by the DUT Management Information).

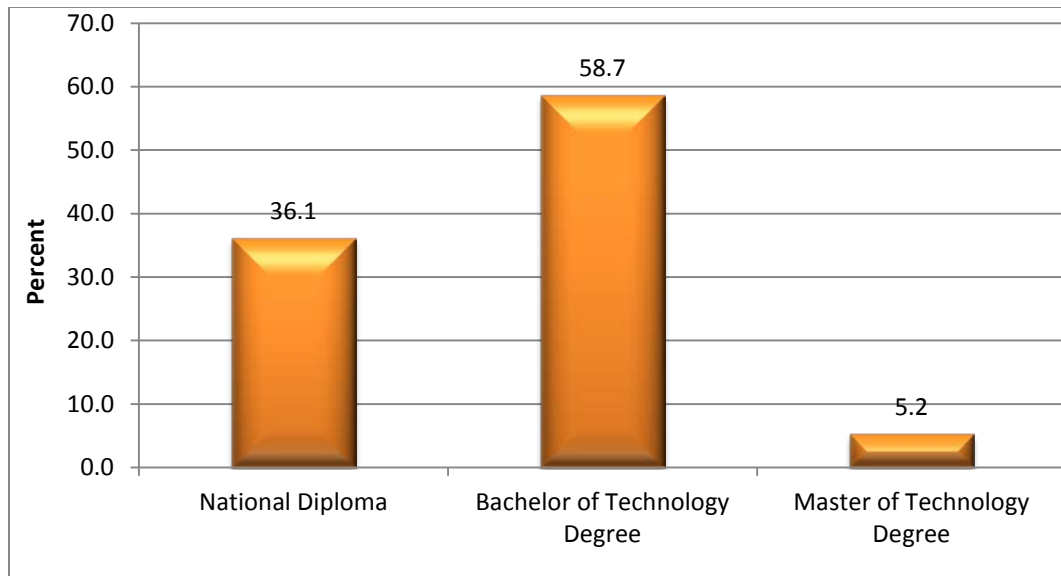


Figure 4.4 Level of qualification of the respondents

Figure 4.4 shows that nearly two-thirds (63.9%) had a post-graduate degree. This is also useful in that the younger graduates also have higher qualifications. This provides an opportunity to further analyse the standards set by the DUT.

Table 4.11 Faculties graduated from

	Frequency	Percent
Accounting and Informatics	111	25.1
Management Sciences	133	30.0
Applied Sciences	24	5.4
Engineering and the Built Environment	106	23.9
Arts	31	7.0
Health	38	8.6
Total	443	100.0

According to Table 4.11, on average, 26.3% of respondents belonged to the Faculties of Accounting and Informatics, Management Sciences and Engineering & the Built Environment. 5.4% of the respondents were from the Faculty of Applied Sciences, 7 %

of respondents were from the Faculty of Arts and 8.6% of respondents were from the Faculty of Health.

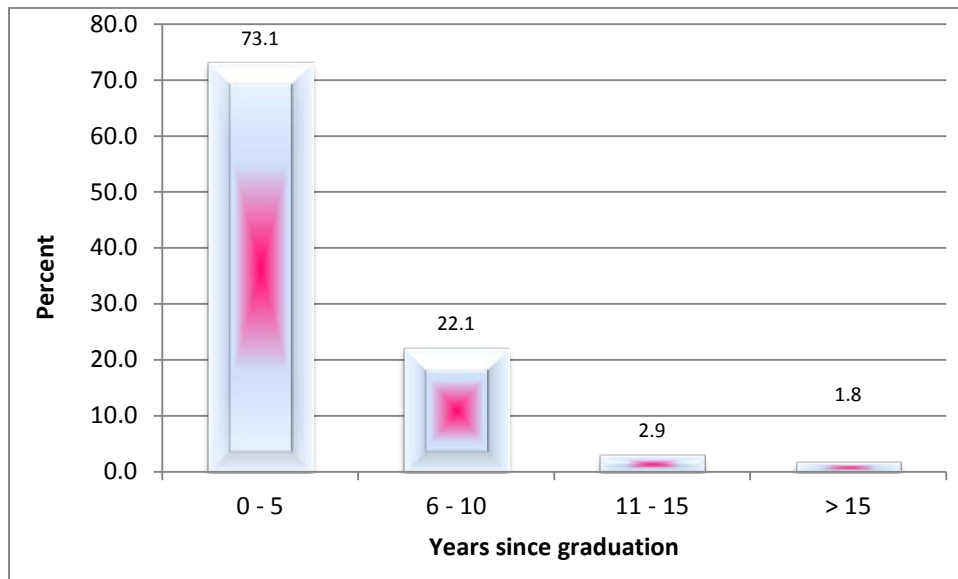


Figure 4.5 Time span in years since respondents graduated

Figure 4.5 shows that 73.1% of respondents indicated that they were at the DUT in the last 5 years, while 22.1% of respondents graduated 6-10 years ago. 2.9% of respondents graduated in the 11-15 year bracket while 1.8% of respondents graduated more than 15 years ago.

4.6 Section Analysis

The section that follows analyses the scoring patterns of the respondents per factor, variable or statement. The results are presented using summarised percentages for the variables that constitute each question.

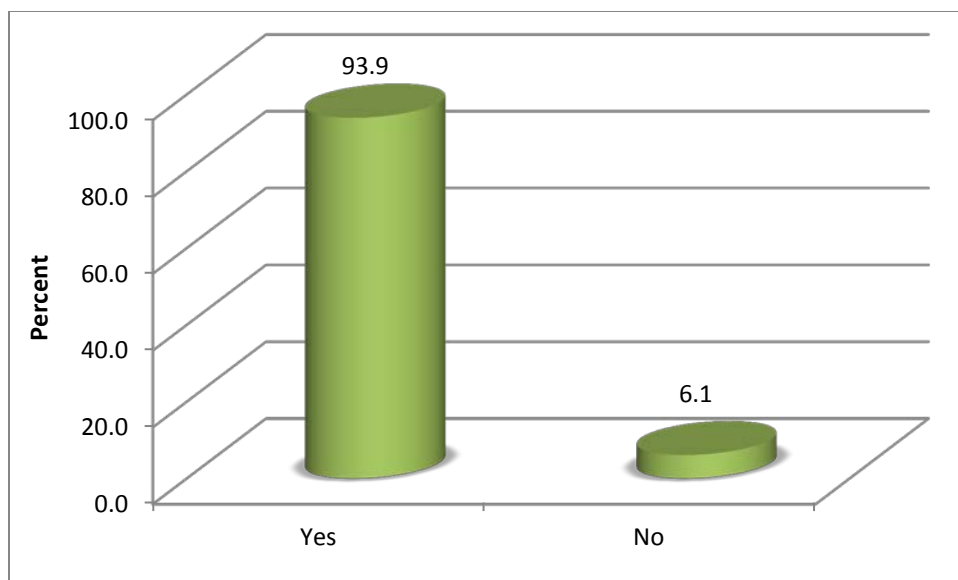


Figure 4.6 Communication received from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office at DUT

Figure 4.6 illustrates that the majority of respondents (93.9%) indicated that they did receive some form of communication. According to the White Paper on Effective Email Communications (2006:1), relationships are built on communication, respect and trust, which are earned when one demonstrates daily that one's organisation is worthy of supporters' investments of time, energy and money.

Table 4.12 Method of communication received

	Percent
Fax	1.1
E-mail	93.7
SMS	1.8
Post	0.7
Website	0.2
Newspaper	0.7
Social Networking Sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc)	1.8
Total	100.0

According to Table 4.12, 93.7% of the respondents indicated that communication received was via email. 0.7% of respondents received communication via post and a further 0.7% also received communication via newspaper. These findings are in keeping with Huang and Shyu (2009:586) who state that email is the most frequently performed activity on the Internet by consumers. Email communication is extremely inexpensive, and enables firms to instantly reach customers in any part of the world. The White Paper on Effective Email Communications (2006:1) further states that email offers a cost-effective way for non-profit organisations to send personalised communications to donors, members, alumni and volunteers, and it enables constituents to respond to one's call of action at one's convenience. SMS and social networking accounted for 1.8%, respectively, of the respondents.

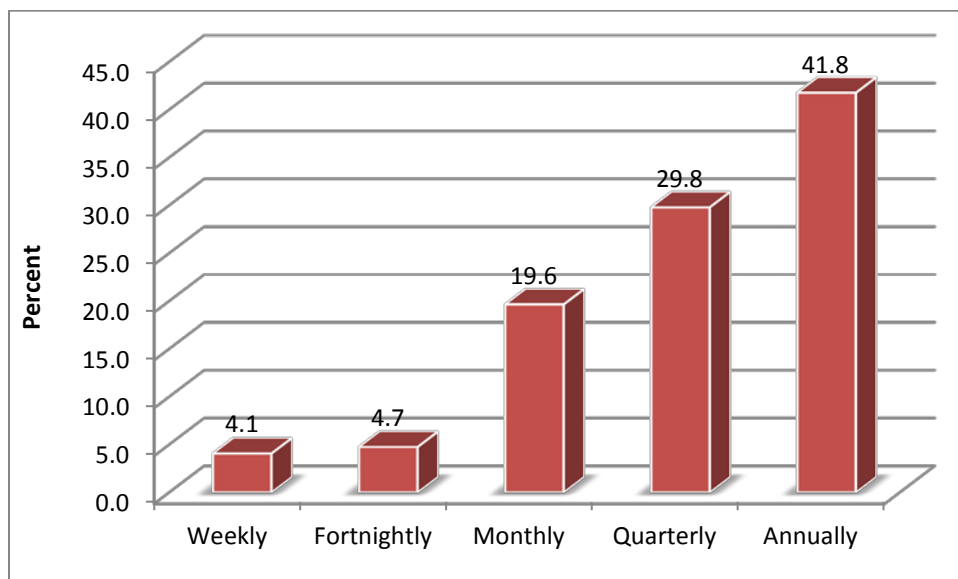


Figure 4.7 Frequency of the communication received

Figure 4.7 illustrates that the intervals for communication were not often. 41.8% stated that they received communication once a year. 29.8% received notices once per term and 19.6% received communication on a monthly basis.

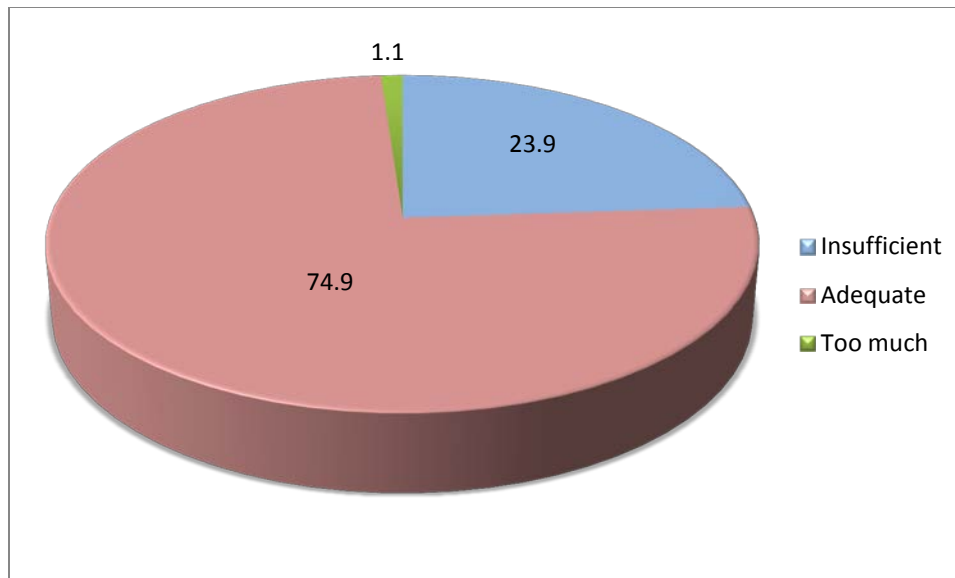


Figure 4.8 The amount of information received

According to Figure 4.8, 74.9% of the respondents indicated that the information received was adequate. 23.9% felt the information was insufficient and 1.1% felt that there was too much information. This result suggests that the frequency of the communication received did not negatively affect alumni attitudes to the amount of information received.

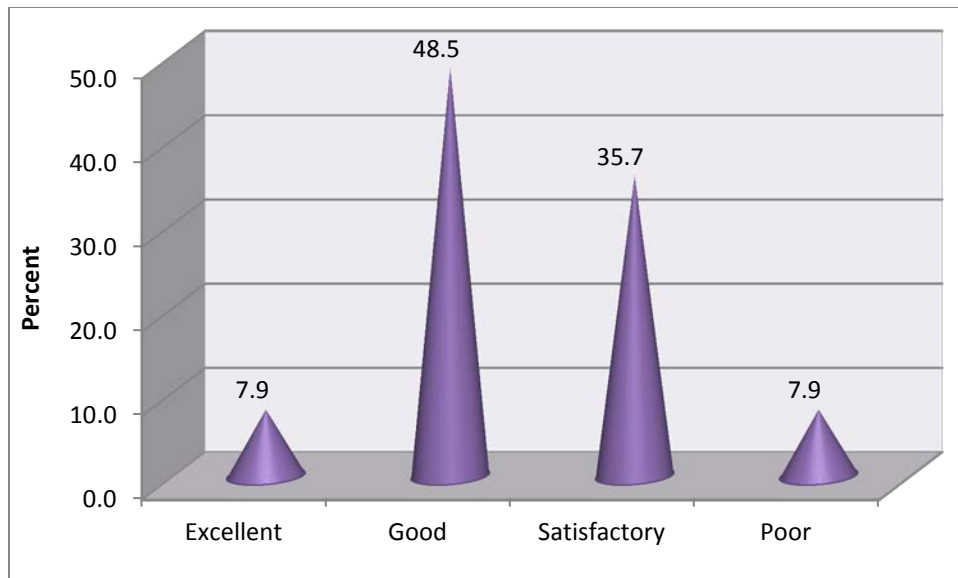


Figure 4.9 The quality of the information received

In terms of Figure 4.9, 7.9% of the respondents indicated the quality of information received from the Convocation and Alumni Relations department was excellent. 48.5% stated that the information was good while 35.7% reported that the information was satisfactory and 7.9% stated that the information received was poor.

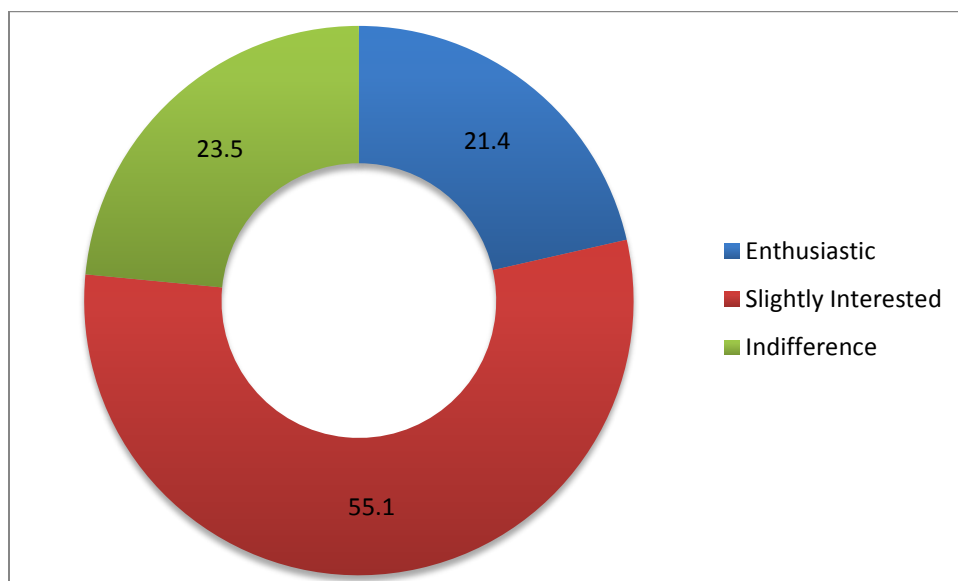


Figure 4.10 Reaction of alumni to the communication received

Figure 4.10 shows that 21.4% of respondents were enthusiastic about the communication received. 55.1% were only slightly interested while 23.5% were indifferent. The findings support the sentiment that alumni relations is a business built on nostalgia and often their experiences during their undergraduate years as well as post-graduation will define the extent to which alumni continue to remain connected to their alma mater.

Figure 4.11 investigates the relationship between communication and how it impacts on alumni and their decisions to be involved in the life of their alma mater as well as creating lifelong links between alumni and their alma mater.

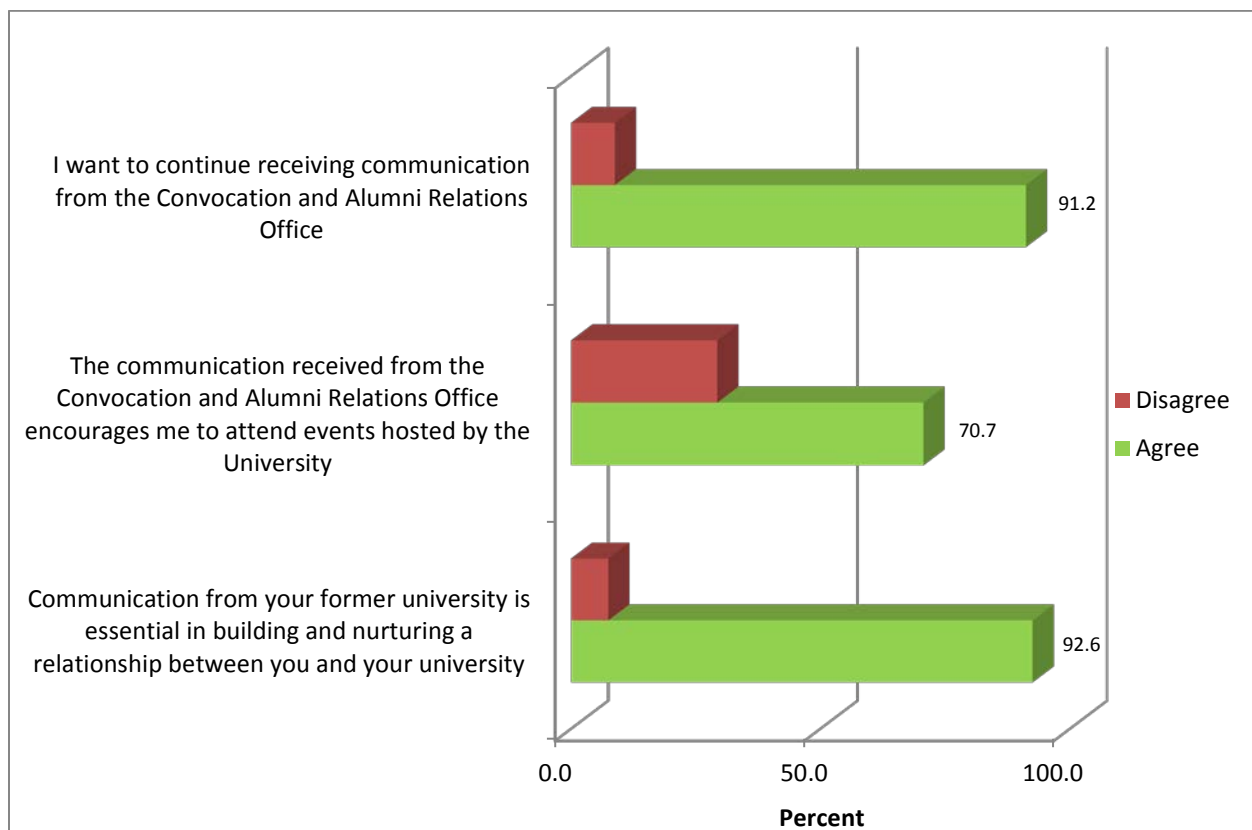


Figure 4.11 Relationship between communication and how it impacts on forging lifelong links between alumni and their alma mater

According to Figure 4.11, 91.2% of respondents agreed that they want to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office. 70.7% of respondents agreed that the communication received from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office encouraged them to attend events hosted by the university, while 92.6% agreed that communication from one's former university is essential in building and nurturing a relationship between alumni and one's university. This finding suggests that alumni feel strongly that regular communication is the key to creating and maintaining lifelong relationships between alumni and their alma mater.

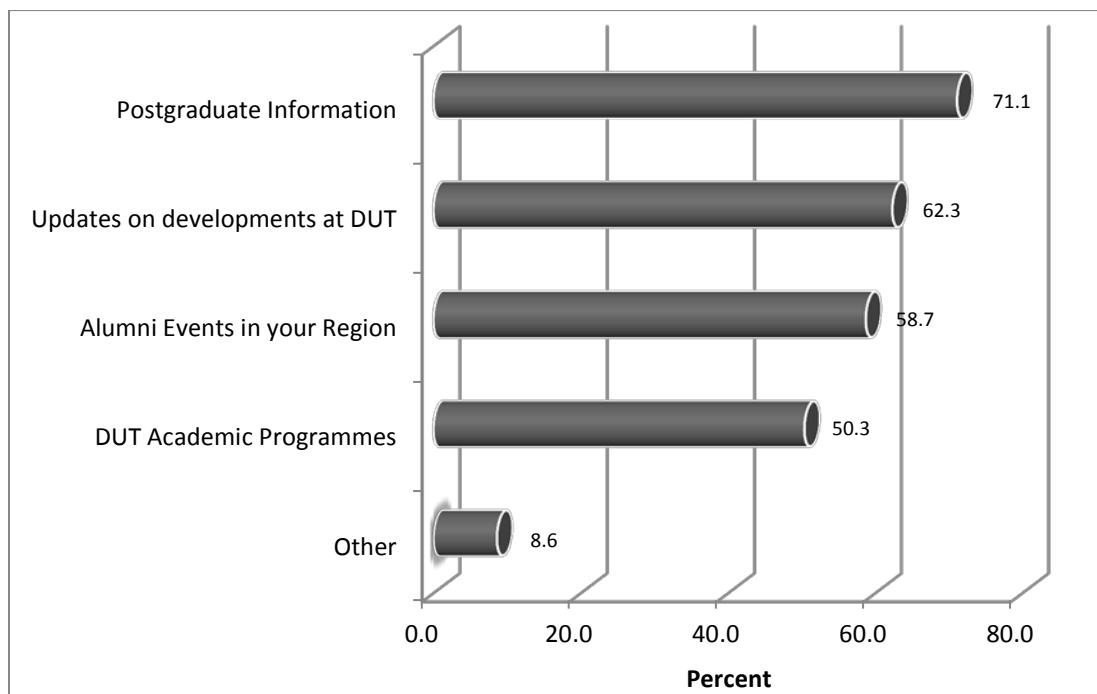


Figure 4.12 Information respondents want to receive from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office and DUT

Multiple responses, as shown in Figure 4.12, were allowed for this question. 71.1% of respondents replied that they would want post-graduate information. 62.3% wanted to be updated on developments at DUT while 58.7% wanted information on alumni events in their region. This is a positive finding for the university as the institution is keen to grow its post-graduate numbers.

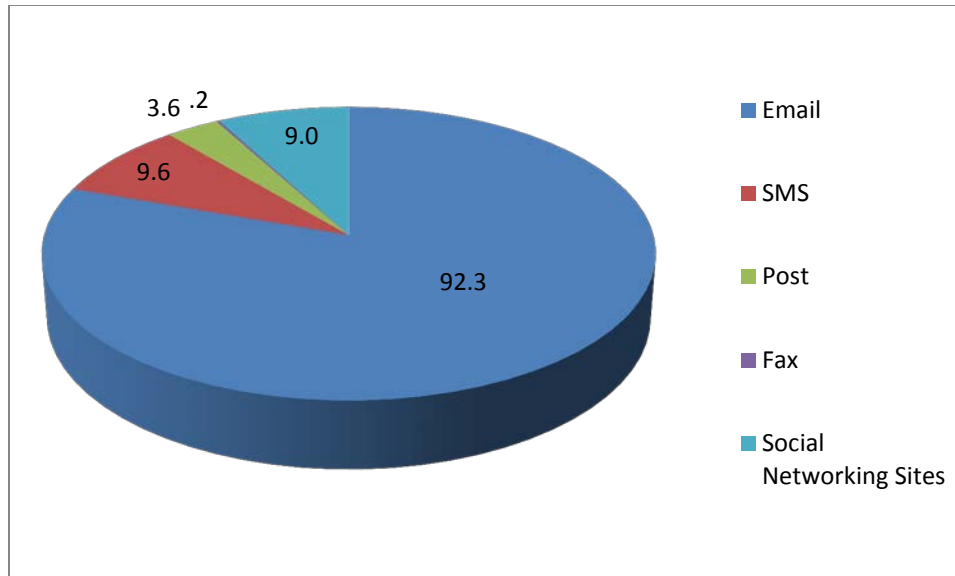


Figure 4.13 The preferred method of communication

Figure 4.13 illustrates that respondents overwhelmingly preferred to be contacted by email (92.3%). Huang and Shyu (2009:586) indicated that emails also carry social cues in the relationship. The authors further stated that providing personalised emails can instill a feeling of uniqueness in customers. This feeling of uniqueness helps differentiate the brand from others and increases customers' involvement with the brand.

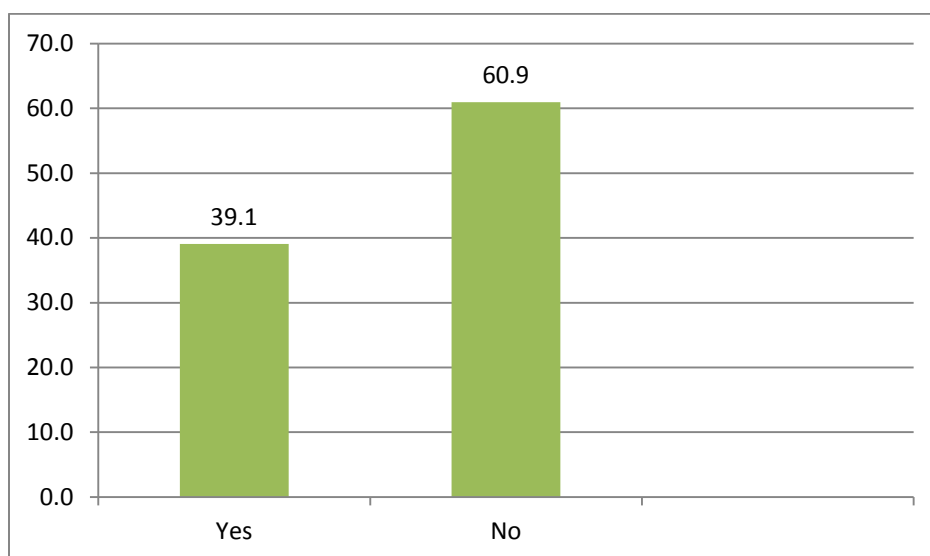


Figure 4.14 Visit to the DUT and Convocation webpage

According to Figure 4.14, 60.9% of respondents had not visited the DUT and Convocation webpage while 39.1% had. According to Schimmel *et al* (n.d.), a university's website is an important tool in information gathering and the webpage is the gateway to all other forms of communication.

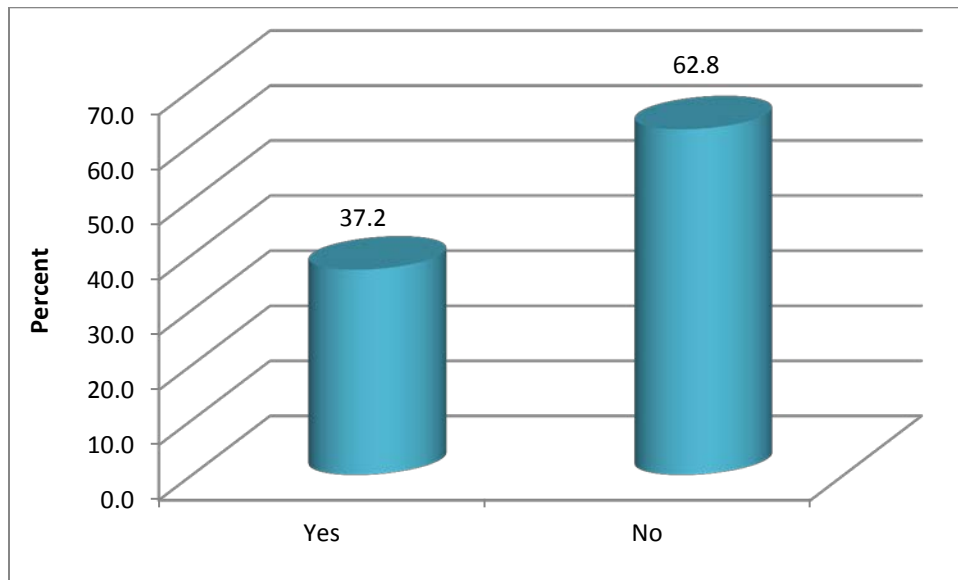


Figure 4.15 Being informed of developments at DUT and the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office

Figure 4.15 illustrates that 62.8% of respondents indicated that they had not been adequately informed of developments at the DUT and the Convocation and Alumni Relations office while 37.2% said they had been adequately informed. When alumni are adequately informed of developments at their alma mater, it assists in their decision to stay connected to the institution, especially when the institution puts out a call for assistance. Kelleher (2011:18) states that alumni relations officers work to successfully create lifelong relationships between alumni and their alma mater. Furthermore, she states that universities want to translate the positive feelings and loyalty of the institution into active advocacy and financial support for the institution.

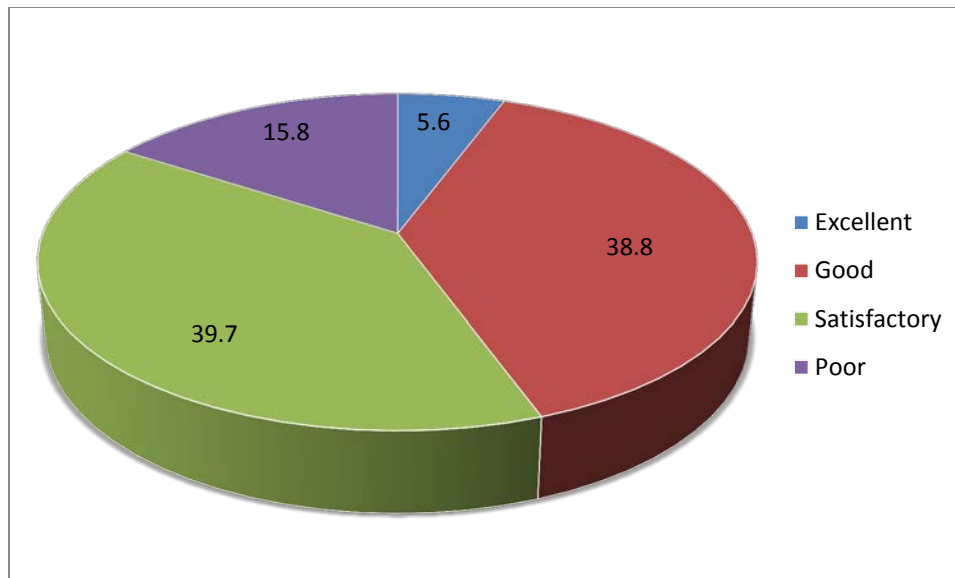


Figure 4.16 Rating the communication efforts of the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office

In terms of Figure 4.16, 39.7% of respondents rated the communication efforts of the Convocation and Alumni Relations office as satisfactory. 38.8% rated the communication efforts as good. 5.6% of the respondents gave a rating of excellent while 15.8% of the responses gave a rating of poor.

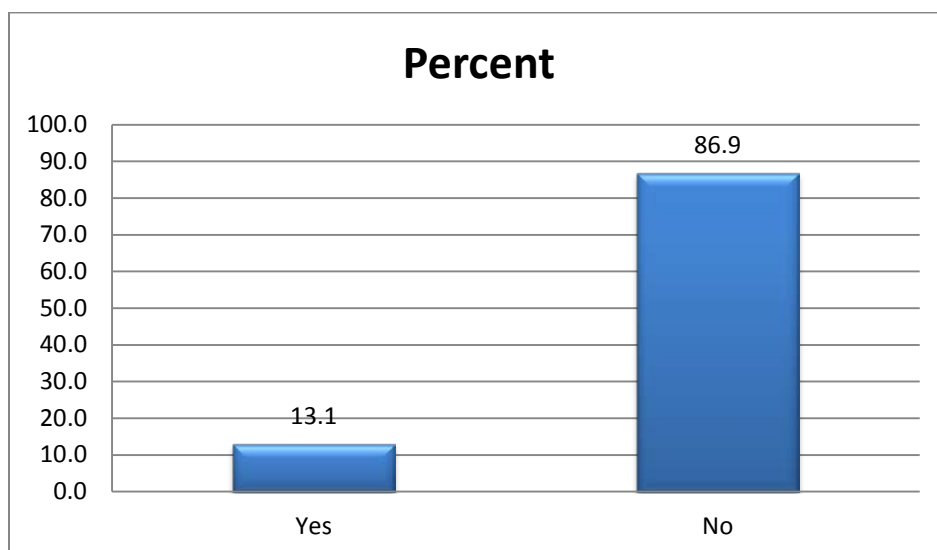


Figure 4.17 Reading of the Constitution of Convocation

According to Figure 4.17, the majority of respondents (86.9%) had not read the Constitution of Convocation. Convocation is a statutory body within a higher education institution and is governed by rules and procedures for members. Knowledge of these rules gives one an understanding of the functioning and objectives of Convocation.

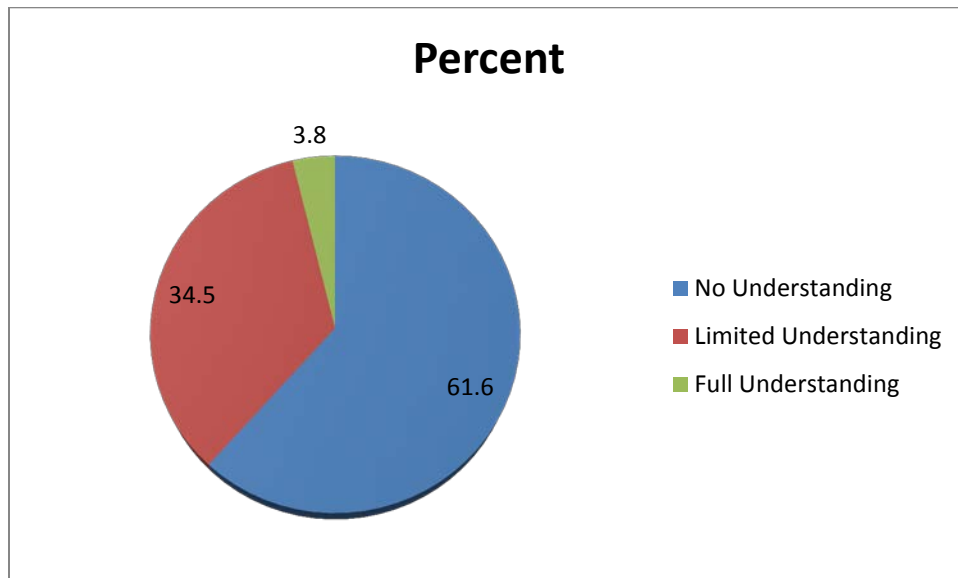


Figure 4.18 Extent to which respondents understand the Constitution of Convocation

Figure 4.18 shows that only 3.8% of the respondents understood the Constitution of Convocation. The majority (61.6%) had no understanding of the Constitution of Convocation. This leads directly from the previous question which indicated that the majority had not read the Constitution. Consequently, the implication is that the respondents' knowledge of the Constitution would be poor.

4.7 Creating and forging a sense of loyalty amongst alumni towards their alma mater

Question 19 deals with creating and forging a sense of loyalty amongst alumni towards their alma mater and, in turn, becoming advocates of the DUT by recommending it as a first choice institution of learning and teaching.

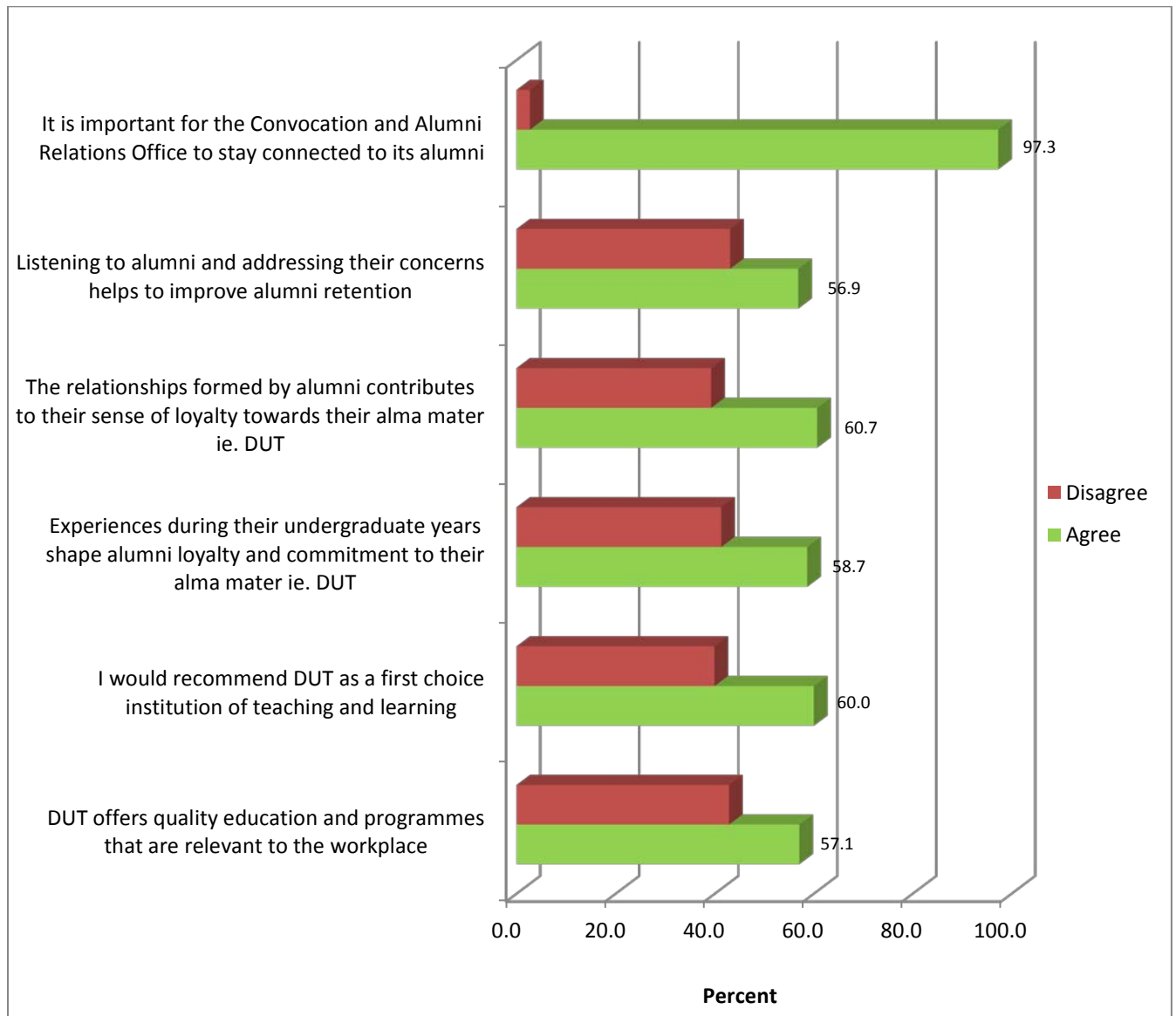


Figure 4.19 Creating and forging a sense of loyalty amongst alumni towards their alma mater

All of the statements in Figure 4.19 have similar levels of agreement (and disagreement). However, 97.3% of respondents felt that it is important for the Convocation and Alumni Relations office to stay connected to its alumni. These values suggest that respondents were happy overall with their experiences at the DUT. This finding further suggests that alumni would become advocates of the university by emphasising their loyalty and commitment to their alma mater. According to Ehigie and Taylor (2009:503), customer loyalty is the feeling of attachment, affection or commitment to a service provider. Student loyalty to school after graduation is different from mere customer loyalty to a product. It includes such activities like providing current students with job-related information, providing internships for current students, hosting a reception to discuss one's alma mater with prospective students, keeping other graduates connected to the school's alumni, attending alumni events and other related behaviours. Loyal students also disseminate positive information about the school to prospective students and donors and engage in activities that could promote the image of the school.

According to Sopher (n.d.), alumni are our backbone, our consistency, our role models – good or bad and the foundation of our organisations. Creating positive alumni relations can strengthen your chapter, provide invaluable advising, create professional contacts, and funding for special projects. Alumni are an untapped resource that can be a positive force.

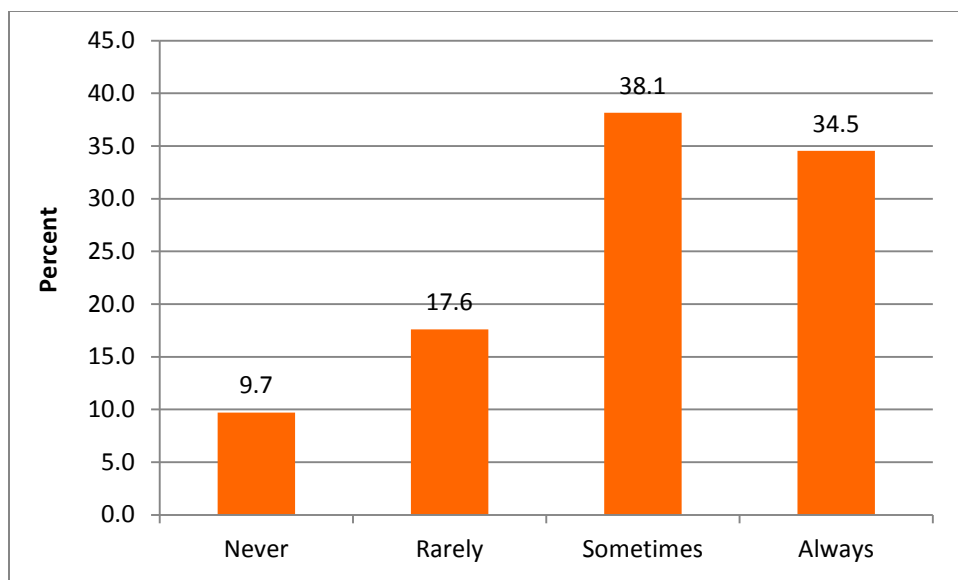


Figure 4.20 Frequency of staff of the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office responding to queries

According to Figure 4.20, 38.1% of respondents indicated that staff of the Convocation and Alumni Relations office sometimes responded to queries. 34.5% indicated queries were always responded to while 17.6% indicated rarely and 9.7% indicated never.

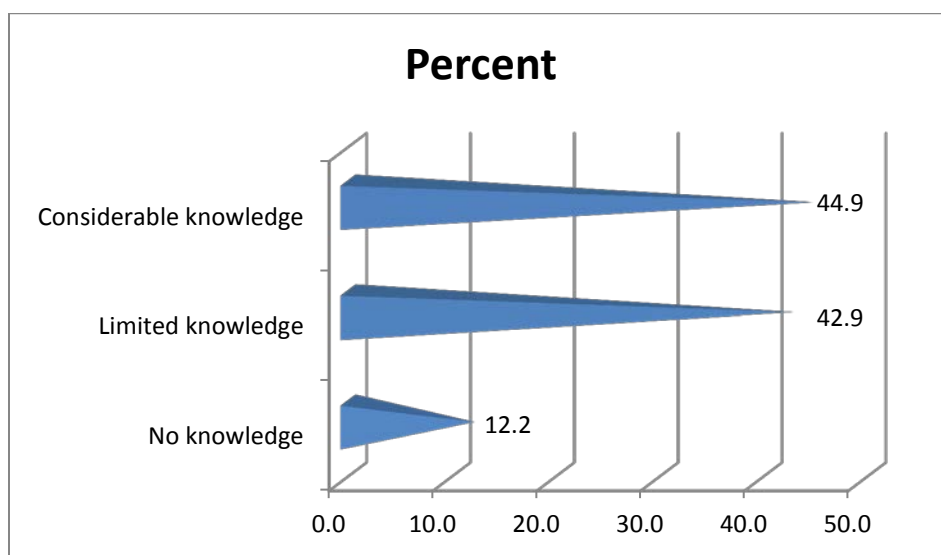


Figure 4.21 Level of knowledge and expertise displayed by the Convocation and Alumni Relations staff when responding to queries by alumni

Figure 4.21 shows that 44.9% of the respondents were of the opinion that the Convocation and Alumni Relations staff had considerable knowledge when responding to queries by alumni. 42.9% rated the staff as having limited knowledge while 12.2% felt that the staff had no knowledge.

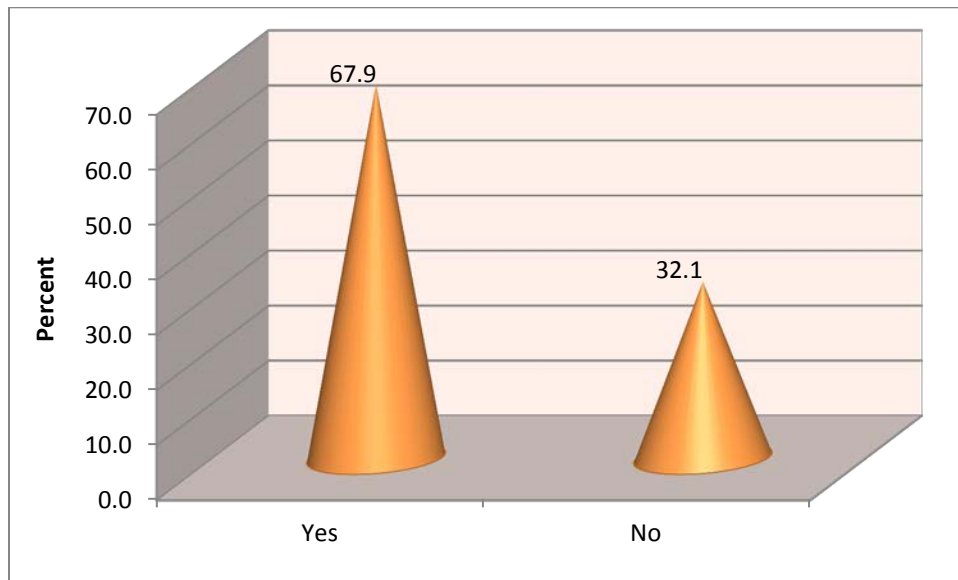


Figure 4.22 Attempts by the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office to understand the needs of alumni

Two-thirds of the respondents (67.9%), according to Figure 4.22, believed the staff of the Convocation and Alumni Relations office made an attempt to understand the needs of the alumni. Understanding the needs of alumni helps the department better understand how to serve the alumni. Further, by understanding the needs of alumni, the Convocation and Alumni Relations office will be in a better position to create programmes and events that could harness maximum support from alumni.

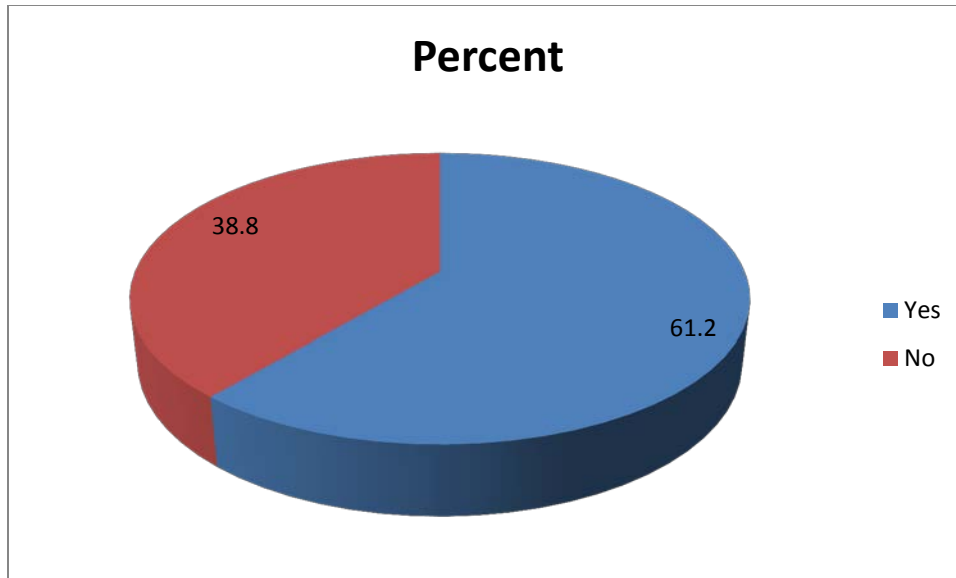


Figure 4.23 Satisfaction with the service rendered by the Convocation and Alumni Relations office

According to Figure 4.23, 61.2% of respondents indicated that they were happy with the service rendered by the Convocation and Alumni Relations office. When alumni are happy with the service they receive, they are more likely to engage with their alma mater and continue to support their institution. This leads to alumni becoming advocates of the university.

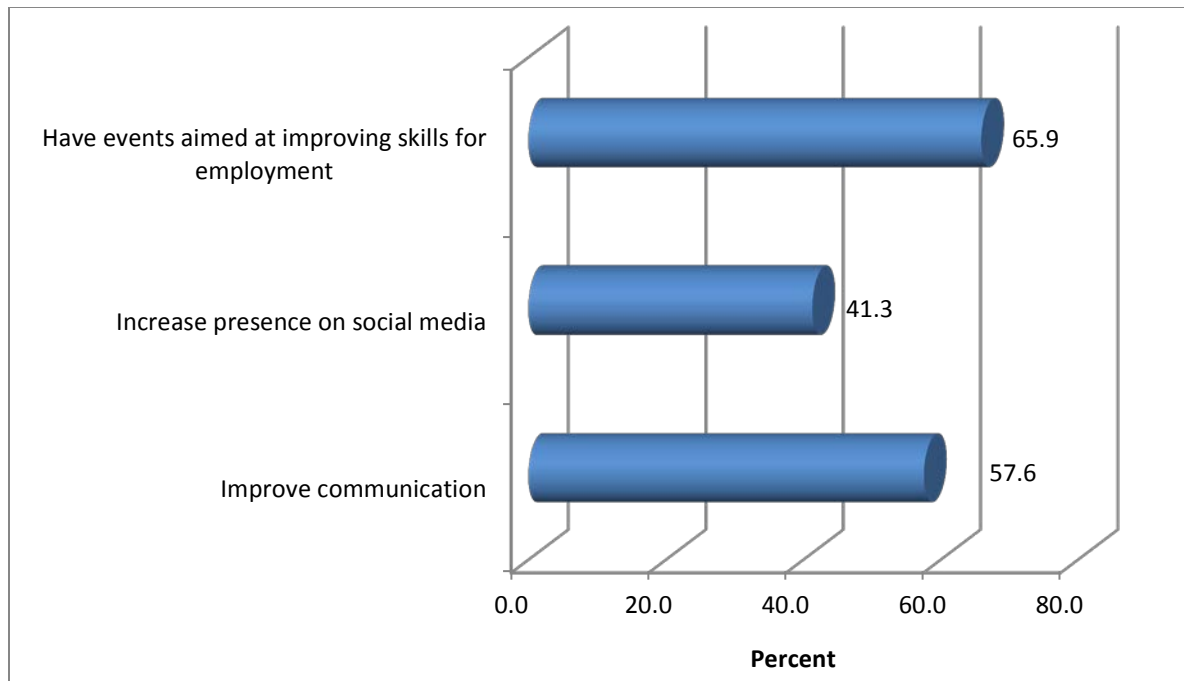


Figure 4.24 The Convocation and Alumni Relations Office improving its service to alumni

Multiple responses were allowed for this question, as shown in Figure 4.24. 65.9% of respondents indicated that the office should have events aimed at improving skills for employment while 57.6% indicated that the Convocation and Alumni Relations office must improve communication. 41.3% indicated that the Convocation and Alumni Relations office must increase its presence on social media.

Griesel and Parker (2009:2) argue that the expectation is for higher education to engage proactively with the skills needs of the economy, and simultaneously, to address – through research, knowledge generation and innovation – the many pressing imperatives that constrain South Africa as a developmental state and young democracy. Griesel and Parker (2009:2) further state that in light of the global economic crisis that was precipitated in 2008, it is even more important that South Africa produce even more skilled graduates who are able to compete within a shrinking global work force.

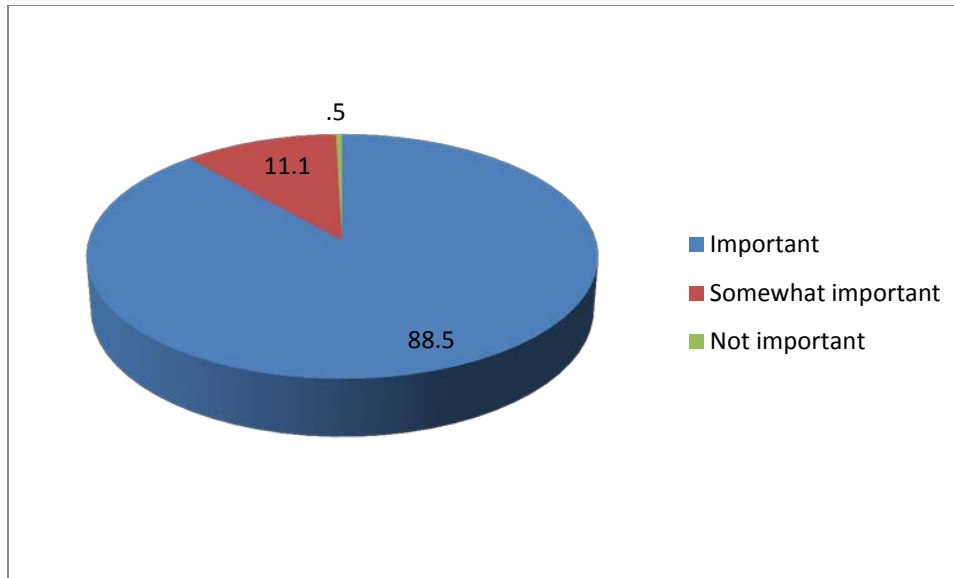


Figure 4.25 The importance of creating value for alumni

Figure 4.25 illustrates that 88.5% of responses indicated that it is important for an institution to create value for its alumni. The value creation for alumni talks directly to the level of academic learning obtained which makes the alumnus employable. According to McAlexander, Koenig and Schouten (2006:109), the more centrally and positively a person's education figures in his/her identity, the more attached he/she is likely to be to the source of that education.

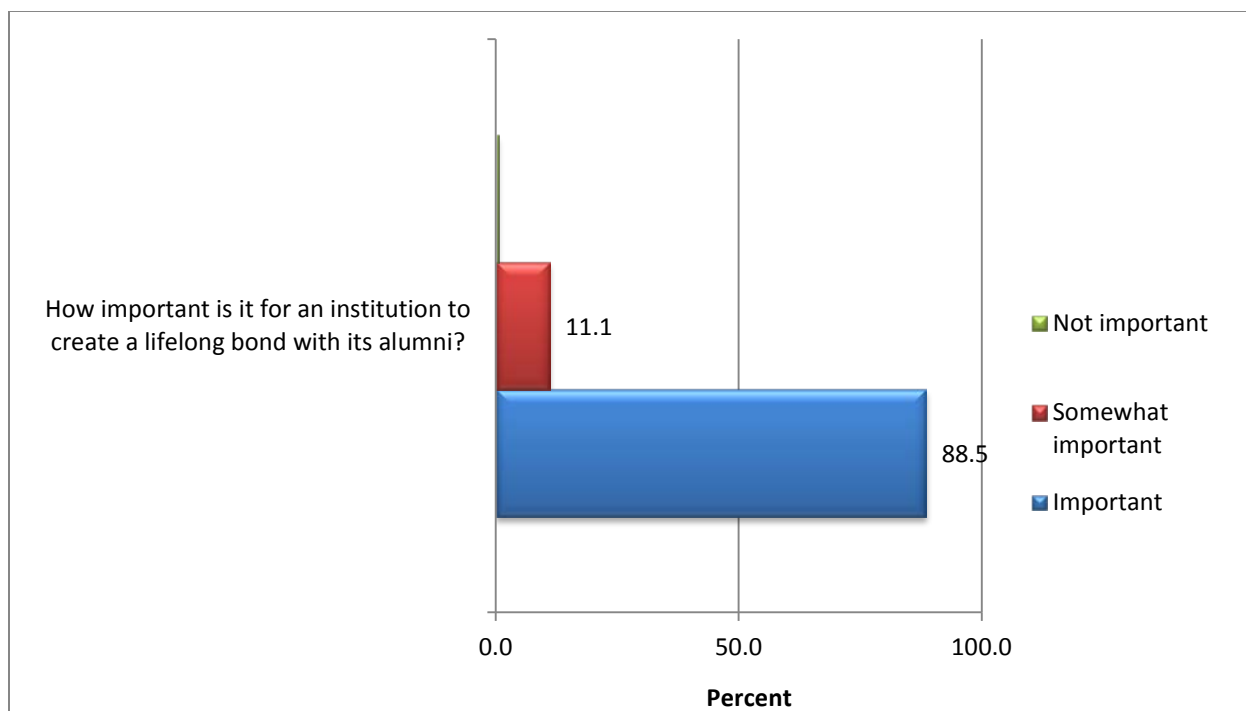


Figure 4.26 Creating a lifelong bond with alumni

According to Figure 4.26, the majority of respondents (88.5%) felt that it is important for an institution to create a lifelong bond with its alumni. The by-line for the Convocation and Alumni Relations office is “Your link for Life”. By creating a lifelong bond with alumni, DUT stands to benefit immensely from possible donor contributions, having generations of alumni attend the DUT as a preferred institution of higher learning and advocating for the brand.

According to the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2011:92), graduate employability has become an increasingly important element of curriculum development processes. This trend may have been partially influenced by current economic conditions but is also due to an increasing realisation that graduates should be equipped with skills needed for the workplace. This relates to the value creation for alumni. One way to create a lifelong bond with alumni is to engage them on their knowledge and expertise. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2011:94) further suggests that alumni have long been a valuable resource for HEIs. Alumni are

being used as an additional resource or opportunity for developing employability. Some of the examples include the use of alumni as mentors, conducting mock interview practice and, where possible, providing students with work placements. The use of alumni to help deliver employability activities could also help institutions overcome current resource constraints.

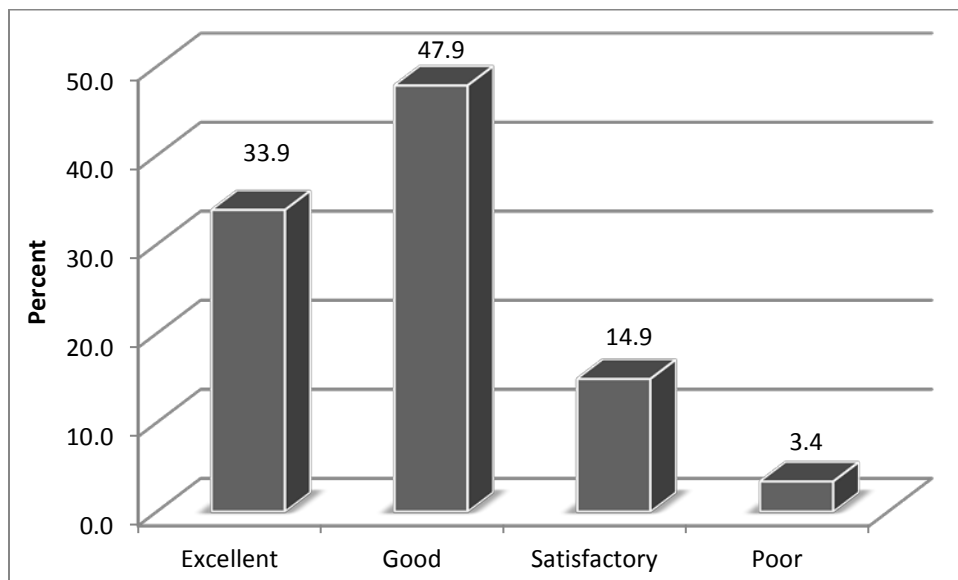


Figure 4.27 Rating the DUT experience

Figure 4.27 illustrates that 47.9% of respondents rated their experience at the DUT as good. 33.9% felt that their experience was excellent whilst 14.9% rated their experience as satisfactory. Only 3.4% rated their experience as poor.

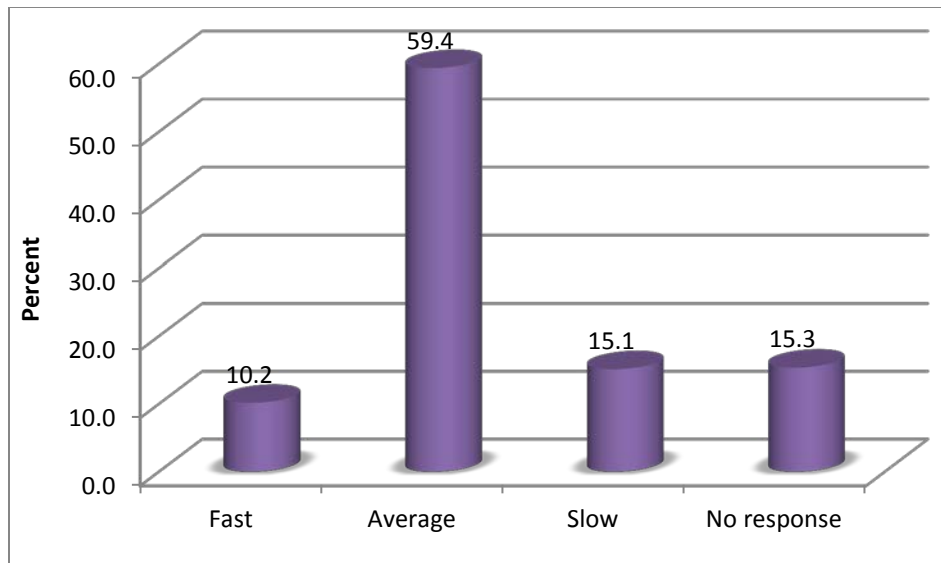


Figure 4.28 Response by the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office to informing alumni of crises at the university

Figure 4.28 shows that 59.4% of the respondents rated the response by the Convocation and Alumni Relations office to informing alumni of crises at the university as average. 10.2% of the respondents believed that the response rate was fast. 15.1% felt that the response rate was slow while 15.3% felt that there was no response to inform them of crises at the university.

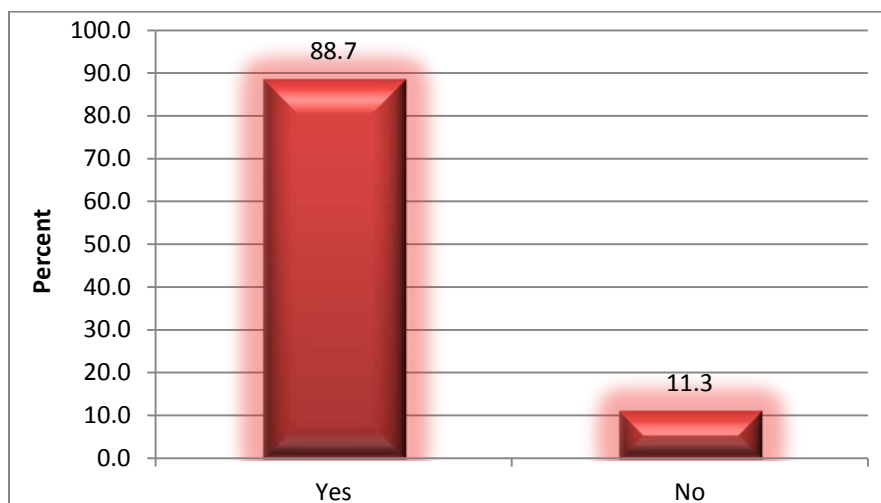


Figure 4.29 Trust in the DUT brand

According to Figure 4.29, the majority of the respondents (88.7%) indicated that they trusted the DUT brand. According to McAlexander, Koenig and Schouten (2006:117-118), the value proposition of building a vital university brand community is this: integration in the brand community creates enduring bonds of loyalty to the institution. That loyalty yields returns in terms of support for the university, its product, and its programmes. A brand community can be nurtured and strengthened by the institution.

4.8 Staying connected with your university

This was an open question and responses to this question were varied. Many indicated that the contact from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office is what kept them connected to the DUT. Other responses indicated that it was the bonds and friendship created at the DUT as well as the high standard of education and the relationships forged with the DUT lecturers.

4.10 Chi-square Test

The traditional approach to reporting a result requires a statement of statistical significance. A p-value is generated from a test statistic. A significant result is indicated with " $p < 0.05$ ".

The Chi-square test was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables (rows vs columns) (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13 Results of the chi square tests

	Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Faculty	Graduation Years
Have you, in the past, received communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office at DUT?	0.834	.058	0.181	0.849	0.182	0.651
If yes, via which method was it received?	0.687	0.19	0.512	0.597	0.755	0.392
What was the frequency of the communication?	0.639	.080	0.394	0.092	0.314	0.157
How would you describe the amount of information you received?	0.353	0.242	.006*	0.411	.028*	0.867
Rate the quality of the information you received?	0.693	.437	.000*	.011*	.034*	.039*
Rate your reaction to the communication received?	0.705	.547	.000*	.003*	.008*	0.738
I want to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office	0.979	0.541	.000*	0.633	.000*	0.853
The communication received from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office encourages me to attend events hosted by the University	0.753	.999	.000*	0.274	.000*	.046*
Communication from your former university is essential in building and nurturing a relationship between you and your university	.016*	0.565	.001*	0.196	0.055	0.634
What is your preferred method of communication?	0.976	0.253	0.995	0.981	0.836	0.327
Have you visited the DUT and Convocation webpage?	0.228	.063	0.536	0.905	.130	0.075
Were you adequately informed of developments at DUT and the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office?	0.35	.121	0.29	.037*	.035*	0.16
How would you rate the communication efforts of the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office?	0.566	.527	0.1	0.07	.021*	0.727
Have you read the Constitution of Convocation?	0.412	.004*	.032*	0.679	0.555	0.7
To what extent do you understand the Constitution of Convocation?	.047*	.382	.003*	0.228	0.105	0.18

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: [It is important for the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office to stay connected to its alumni]	0.795	0.389	.000*	0.469	.017*	0.87
Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: [Listening to alumni and addressing their concerns helps to improve alumni retention]	0.436	0.54	.001*	0.822	.000*	0.684
Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: [The relationships formed by alumni contribute to their sense of loyalty towards their alma mater ie. DUT]	0.609	0.64	0.332	0.451	0.114	0.534
Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: [Experiences during their undergraduate years shape alumni loyalty and commitment to their alma mater ie. DUT]	0.446	0.805	0.685	0.698	0.428	0.807
Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: [I would recommend DUT as a first choice institution of teaching and learning]	0.425	.507	0.09	0.216	0.397	0.995
Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: [DUT offers quality education and programmes that are relevant to the workplace]	0.634	0.56	.001*	0.29	0.139	0.544
Indicate how often the staff of the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office, respond to queries?	0.261	.705	.016*	0.063	.074	0.517
In your opinion, what is the level of knowledge and expertise displayed by the Convocation and Alumni Relations staff when responding to queries by alumni?	0.221	.091	.000*	.001*	.895	0.813
Does the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office make an attempt to understand the needs of alumni	0.864	.365	.001*	.015*	.086	0.553
Are you happy with the service rendered by the Convocation and Alumni Relations department?	0.653	.324	.008*	.000*	.040*	0.349
Indicate how the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office can improve its service to alumni?	0.5	.020*	0.212	0.343	0.693	0.073
How important is it for an institution to create value for its alumni?	0.969	0.964	.014*	0.162	.025*	.007*
How important is it for an institution to create a lifelong bond with its alumni?	0.451	0.518	.000*	0.201	0.179	0.075
How would you rate your experiences at DUT?	0.995	.292	0.113	.006*	0.078	0.703
How would you rate the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office response to informing alumni of crises at the university?	0.592	.032*	0.129	.017*	0.364	0.899
Do you trust the DUT brand?	0.103	.836	.000*	0.628	0.146	0.482
What keeps you connected, if at all, to your university?	0.247	0.424	0.335	0.915	0.767	0.074

For example, the p-value between qualification and "Rate the quality of the information you received?" is **0.011**. This means that the qualification of the respondents did play a role in terms of how the question was scored.

Further, the p-value between graduation years and "The communication received from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office encourages me to attend events hosted by the university" was **.046**. This means that the graduation years played a role on how the question was answered.

Also, a further example was the p-value between age and "Communication from your former University is essential in building and nurturing a relationship between you and your university" was **.016**. This indicates that age played an important part on how respondents answered the question.

All values without a * implies that there is no significant relationship.

4.11 Correlations

Bivariate correlation was also performed on the data. The results appear in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14 Results of bivariate correlations performed on data

		Have you, in the past, received communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office at DUT?	If yes, via which method was it received?	What was the frequency of the communication?	How would you describe the amount of information you received?	Rate the quality of the information you received?	Rate your reaction to the communication received?	I want to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office	The communication received from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office encourages me to attend events	Communication from your former university is essential in building and sustaining a relationship between you and the Convocation webpage?	Were you adequately informed of developments at DUT and the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office?	How would you rate the communication efforts of the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office?	Have you read the Constitution of Convocation?	To what extent do you understand the Constitution of Convocation?	Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: [It is important for the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office to stay connected to its alumni and address their concerns helps to improve alumni retention]	Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: [The relationships formed by alumni contributes to their sense of loyalty]	Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: [Experiences during their undergraduate years shape alumni loyalty and commitment to their institution of teaching and learning]	Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: [DUT offers quality education and programmes that are relevant to the workplace]	Indicate how often the staff of the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office make an attempt to understand the needs of alumni?	Are you happy with the service rendered by the Convocation and Alumni Relations department?	How important is it for an institution to create value for its alumni?	How important is it for an institution to create a lifelong bond with its alumni?	How would you rate your experiences at DUT?	How would you rate the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office response to informing alumni of crises at the	Do you trust the DUT brand?	
Spearman	Have you, in the past, received communication from the Co	Correlation Coefficient	1.000																							
	Sig. (2-tailed)																									
	N	443																								
	If yes, via which method was it received?	Correlation Coefficient	.141**	1.000																						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003																								
	N	441	441																							
	What was the frequency of the communication?	Correlation Coefficient	.061	-.010	1.000																					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.829																								
	N	443	441	443																						
	How would you describe the amount of information you received?	Correlation Coefficient	-.172**	-.037	-.318**	1.000																				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.436	.000																						
	N	443	441	443	443																					
	Rate the quality of the information you received?	Correlation Coefficient	.230**	.076	.279**	-.429**	1.000																			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.109	.000	.000																					
	N	443	441	443	443	443																				
	Rate your reaction to the communication received?	Correlation Coefficient	-.190**	.022	.137**	-.282**	.460**	1.000																		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.642	.004	.000	.000																				
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443																			
	I want to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office	Correlation Coefficient	-.014	-.022	-.043	.025	.185**	.384**	1.000																	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.762	.643	.365	.601	.000	.000																			
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443																		
	The communication received from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office encourages me to attend events	Correlation Coefficient	.100*	.036	.022	-.173**	.392**	.454**	.579**	1.000																
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.446	.650	.000	.000	.000	.000																		
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443																	
	Communication from your former university is essential in building and sustaining a relationship between you and the Convocation webpage?	Correlation Coefficient	.072	.080	.023	-.003	.199**	.260**	.464**	.415**	1.000															
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.130	.093	.622	.953	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000																
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443	443																
	Have you visited the DUT and Convocation webpage?	Correlation Coefficient	.069	.073	.066	-.044	.166**	.087	.079	.176**	.104*	1.000														
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.150	.125	.165	.353	.000	.068	.097	.000	.029																
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443															
	Were you adequately informed of developments at DUT and the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office?	Correlation Coefficient	.060	.046	.243**	-.312**	.292**	.247**	.081	.208**	.070	.302**	1.000													
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.210	.336	.000	.000	.000	.000	.089	.000	.140	.000															
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443														
	How would you rate the communication efforts of the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office?	Correlation Coefficient	.105**	.089	.321**	-.402**	.578**	.336**	.185**	.313**	.175**	.234**	.560**	1.000												
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.063	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000													
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443													
	Have you read the Constitution of Convocation?	Correlation Coefficient	.015	-.011	.028	-.002	.028	.151**	.167**	.187**	.149**	.265**	.158**	.139**	1.000											
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.753	.815	.550	.963	.550	.001	.000	.000	.002	.000	.001	.003													
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443												
	To what extent do you understand the Constitution of Convocation?	Correlation Coefficient	.030	-.025	-.021	.076	-.130**	-.151**	-.116**	-.197**	-.142**	-.293**	-.142**	-.169**	.532**	1.000										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.529	.607	.661	.112	.006	.001	.014	.000	.003	.000	.003	.000	.003	.000											
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443											
	Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: [The relationships formed by alumni contributes to their sense of loyalty]	Correlation Coefficient	.035	-.020	-.096*	.048	.127**	.297**	.536**	.406**	.516**	.136**	.050	.073	.132**	-.154**	1.000									
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.469	.673	.043	.316	.007	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004	.296	.127	.005	.001											
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443										
	Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: [Experiences during their undergraduate years shape alumni loyalty and commitment to their institution of teaching and learning]	Correlation Coefficient	-.008	-.057	-.059	.040	.091	.233**	.477**	.370**	.412**	.061	.069	.101	.126**	-.081	.674**	1.000								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.870	.235	.215	.401	.057	.000	.000	.000	.000	.200	.145	.034	.008	.089	.000										
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443									
	Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: [DUT offers quality education and programmes that are relevant to the workplace]	Correlation Coefficient	.054	-.018	-.003	-.010	.107	.249**	.425**	.343**	.456**	.127**	.057	.123**	.140**	-.095	.591**	.634**	1.000							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.258	.702	.944	.830	.024	.000	.000	.000	.000	.007	.231	.010	.003	.046	.000	.000									
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443								
	Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: [The Convocation and Alumni Relations Office makes an attempt to understand the needs of alumni]	Correlation Coefficient	.010	.055	.005	-.078	.066	.140**	.275**	.395**	.063	.103*	.102	.135**	-.098*	.383**	.490**	.570**	1.000							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.829	.253	.918	.100	.166	.003	.000	.000	.000	.187	.029	.032	.004	.038	.000	.000	.000								
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443							
	Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: [The Convocation and Alumni Relations Office encourages me to attend events]	Correlation Coefficient	.140**	.129**	.012	-.087	.236**	.299**	.264**	.301**	.219**	.069	.099*	.254**	-.018	-.033	.247**	.223**	.244**	1.000						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.007	.806	.068	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.149	.037	.000	.707	.491	.000	.000	.000	.000							
	N	443	441	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443	443						
	Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: [The Convocation and Alumni Relations Office encourages me to attend events]	Correlation Coefficient	.083	.104**	.015	-.052	.196**	.250**	.277**	.258**	.234**	.101*	.172**	.256**	.059	-.072	.285**	.240**	.247**	.281**	1.000					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.080	.029	.747	.274	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.034	.000	.000	.217	.128	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000						
	N	443	441																							

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results indicate the following patterns.

Positive values indicate a directly proportional relationship between the variables and a negative value indicates an inverse relationship. All significant relationships are indicated by a * or **.

For example: the correlation value between "Rate the quality of the information you received?" and "What was the frequency of the communication?" is 0.279. This is a positive, directly proportional relationship. That means, the rating of the quality of the information depended on how often communication was received. The more often communication was received, the more the respondent was able to rate the quality.

A further example is the correlation between "I want to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office" and "Rate your reaction to the communication received" was 0.384. This is also a positive, directly proportional relationship. This means that wanting to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office depended on the reaction to the communication received. The more positive the reaction was to the communication received, the more alumni wanted to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office.

Another example is the correlation between "The communication received from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office encourages me to attend events hosted by the university" and "I want to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office" was 0.579. This means that the more respondents wanted to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office, the more inclined they were to attend events hosted by the university as they were encouraged by such communication.

On the other hand, negative values imply an inverse relationship.

For example: The correlation value between "I want to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office" and "To what extent do you understand the Constitution of Convocation?" is -0.116. This implies that as one variable increases, the other decreases. The more communication alumni receive from the Alumni office, the less likely respondents are going to study the constitution.

Another example illustrated is the correlation value between "How would you describe the amount of information you received?" and "Were you adequately informed of developments at the DUT and the Convocation and Alumni Relations office?" which was -0.312. This suggests that the more information received, the less likely alumni were to be adequately informed of developments at the DUT and the Convocation and Alumni Relations office.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings and discussion of the results collected from the study. The data was analysed using SPSS 20.0. The analysis of the data was presented in the form of graphs, cross tabulations and tables. Cronbach's alpha score for communication (0.751) and loyalty (0.786) indicates that the items represent reliable measures.

The study revealed that the Convocation and Alumni Relations office is employing relationship marketing to stay connected to the DUT alumni. The research further revealed that the most common communication tool utilised by the Convocation and Alumni Relations office is email and that social media is being employed to attract and retain alumni as this tool of communication has become a dominant method of communication. The study also revealed that alumni want to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office. Respondents

indicated that communication from one's former university is essential in building and nurturing a relationship between alumni and their alma mater.

The next chapter will present the conclusions that were drawn from the study and offer recommendations based on the findings.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. The objective of this chapter is to point out the main conclusions that were drawn from the study and to put forward recommendations.

5.2 Summary of the study

The aim of this study was to examine the role of relationship marketing in initiating, forging and maintaining links with the DUT alumni. The target population was made up of alumni with current email addresses. The study investigated respondents attitudes towards communication received from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office as well as their loyalty and commitment to their alma mater.

Chapter Two presented a theoretical framework for the study. An overview of the relevant literature related to relationship marketing was presented. The literature also related to communication and alumni relations management in higher education. This chapter also included the analytical model of relationship marketing which outlined the objectives, defining constructs and instruments of relationship marketing. The chapter further included the tools used in the marketing communications mix.

Chapter Three presented an overview of the research methods that were used to conduct the empirical study. The discussions in this chapter focused on the research design, target population, data collection and data analysis.

Chapter Four presented the findings and analysis of the empirical study. Findings indicate that relationship marketing is being practiced by the Convocation and Alumni Relations department of the Durban University of Technology. The study further revealed that alumni felt it was important for the Convocation and Alumni Relations department to stay connected to its alumni. Communication is important in creating and forging lifelong links between alumni and their alma mater. Communication is also important for creating a sense of loyalty amongst alumni towards their alma mater.

5.3 Attainment of the Research Objectives

This section discusses how each of the objectives of this study was attained.

(i) Examine the way in which relationship marketing is being practised by the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office.

The research revealed that the Convocation and Alumni Relations office was practising relationship marketing by the various means of communication with alumni. Email was the main communication method used. Social media interaction was employed albeit by a small percentage. Communication with alumni was also through the use of sms, the print mediums such as advertising events in the media as well as the distribution of an alumni magazine. Alumni magazines are seen as the most constant and ongoing form of communication that links alumni with their alma mater. The alumni magazine also endeavours to sustain and build alumni connections.

(ii) Assess the existing communication tools utilised to maintain and promote relationship marketing

An analysis of the various methods of communication revealed that email was the most common form of communication. However, it must be noted that the Convocation and Alumni Relations office needs to increase its presence on social media sites to stay connected with alumni as this has become the most common form of communication. Social media use is seen in terms of collaboration, cordiality and creativity. Higher

education institutions must keep up with this world of social media applications as well as social media users. Research has shown that relationships established between and among individuals with common interests online can form meaningful and enduring online communities. University social networking sites can facilitate the development of these communities because they provide a platform for alumni to stay connected to one another and to share and explore their common interests in giving back to the university. Such connections with other alumni over time can strengthen alumni feelings of connectedness with their alma mater. Social media is seen as enriching communication. The benefits of social media include greater engagement and greater interest in one's alma mater.

(iii) Determine how improved and increased communication can affect relationship marketing

The study highlighted the relationship between communication and how it impacts on forging lifelong links between alumni and their alma mater. The study revealed that the majority of alumni want to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations office and agreed that the communication received encouraged them to attend events at the university. Therefore, improved and increased communication could increase alumni participation at events and, in turn, create donor opportunities for the university. Communication is linked to building long-term relationships. Continued and enhanced communications with a university's alumni creates opportunities for alumni to play an active and meaningful role at their institution thereby being kept abreast of developments. Building strong relationships is only possible with constant communication.

5.4 Recommendations

Arising from the analysis of the findings, the following recommendations are offered.

- Social media is sweeping across the world at a phenomenal rate. Alumni are now more in cyberspace than ever and it is imperative that the Convocation and Alumni Relations office keeps pace with these technological advancements by increasing their presence on social networking sites.
- It is essential that the Convocation and Alumni Relations office keep updated records of alumni in order to continuously communicate with their alumni. For this purpose, the DevMan Alumni Database System was purchased to ensure effective record keeping of alumni. However, it must be pointed out that these software programmes must, on a regular basis, be updated to keep up with the change in technology so as to get maximum benefit out of such programmes and not become redundant. Regular and on-going communication with the service provider is essential in ensuring that the system remains relevant as well as user friendly.
- The Convocation and Alumni Relations office must make a concerted effort to ensure that information regarding developments at the DUT is adequately and timeously communicated to alumni. Information sent out to alumni must be as inclusive as possible since prospective donors or post-graduate students could be receiving such information.
- It is important that the Convocation and Alumni Relations office always respond to queries. This is important as timeous responses to queries help to create a sense of trust between alumni and the office. Building trust amongst alumni goes towards solidifying relationships between alumni and their alma mater.

- Having events that are aimed at improving skills for employment is important in that it improves the life chances of alumni by providing them with the necessary skills to flourish in the work environment.
- Although 59% of the respondents indicated that the response of the Convocation and Alumni Relations office to informing them of crises at the DUT was average, this aspect of communication with alumni can be improved. Informing alumni of crises at their alma mater in a fairly quick turnaround time allays any fears or uncertainty alumni and other stakeholders might develop towards their alma mater.
- To continue a symbiotic relationship with DUT alumni, the frequency of communication needs to be maintained and it is recommended that new methods of communication be investigated and introduced in order to maintain, nurture and sustain alumni interest in their alma mater.
- The Constitution of Convocation is an important document as it governs the manner in which the office conducts itself in relation to the university's largest stakeholder, i.e., its alumni. The document contains the principles, functions and objectives of Convocation as well as the process involved for the election of members and their terms of office. Understanding the Constitution of Convocation gives one a clearer perception of the role of Convocation. It might be a worthwhile exercise to investigate ways in which to get alumni to read and be *au fait* with the Constitution of Convocation. This is not essential but it would give alumni a better understanding of the Convocation, seeing that it is a statutory body of the university.

5.5 Limitations

This study was subject to the following limitations:

- Restrictions placed on company internet usage did not permit some respondents to answer the questionnaire;
- Alumni had left their place of employment with no forwarding details which resulted in returned emails; and
- The Convocation and Alumni Relations office had changed service providers with regards to the Alumni Database System and information was not able to be updated on a regular basis.

5.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to ascertain how the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office communicates with its alumni and what communication tools have been used. 443 alumni formed the basis for the empirical analysis. From the findings, it can be concluded that communication from one's alma mater is essential in building and nurturing a relationship between alumni and their alma mater. Although the study also revealed that the Convocation and Alumni Relations office communicates on a fairly regular basis with its alumni, it did also show that, in improving its service to alumni, the Convocation and Alumni Relations office must improve its communication, increase its presence on social media and have events aimed at improving skills for employment.

Conclusions and recommendations have been made that could improve the manner in which the Convocation and Alumni Relations office communicates with its alumni and this, in turn, will lead to an improvement in relationship marketing with the DUT alumni.

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Appendix

The Role of Relationship Marketing within the Durban University of Technology Alumni

Letter of Consent

Dear Respondent

I am currently registered for my Masters Degree in Public Relations Management in the Department of Public Relations. My dissertation is entitled, 'THE ROLE OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING WITHIN THE DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY ALUMNI'.

I would appreciate it if I could have 15 minutes of your time to complete the attached questionnaire. Please note that all details of respondents including the responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for participating in this survey.

Yours faithfully

Nishie P Govender
Student Number: 20103475
031 3752549

Professor VP Rawjee
Supervisor
031 3736826

Professor JP Govender
Co-Supervisor
031 3735396

*** Required**

1. Age *

- ☒ 18 - 25
- ☐ 26 - 35
- ☐ 36 - 45
- ☐ 46 - 55
- ☐ Older than 55

Gender *

- ☒ Male
- ☐ Female

Race *

- ☒ Black
- ☒ White
- ☒ Indian
- ☒ Coloured
- ☒ Other

2. Level of Qualification obtained *

- ☒ National Diploma
- ☒ Bachelor of Technology Degree
- ☒ Master of Technology Degree
- ☒ Doctor of Technology Degree

3. Faculty *

- ☒ Accounting and Informatics
- ☒ Applied Sciences
- ☒ Arts
- ☒ Engineering and the Built Environment
- ☒ Health
- ☒ Management Sciences

4. No of years since you graduated from DUT *

- ☒ 0 - 5
- ☒ 6 - 10
- ☒ 11 - 15
- ☒ More than 15 years

5. Have you, in the past, received communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office at DUT? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☒ No

6. If yes, via which method was it received? *

- ☒ Fax
- ☒ E-mail
- ☒ SMS
- ☒ Post
- ☒ Website
- ☒ Radio
- ☒ Television

- ☒ Newspaper
- ☒ Social Networking Sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc)

7. What was the frequency of the communication? *

- ☒ Weekly
- ☒ Fortnightly
- ☒ Monthly
- ☒ Quarterly
- ☒ Annually

8. How would you describe the amount of information you received? *

- ☒ Insufficient
- ☒ Adequate
- ☒ Too much

9. Rate the quality of the information you received? *

- ☒ Excellent
- ☒ Good
- ☒ Satisfactory
- ☒ Poor

10. Rate your reaction to the communication you received? *

- ☒ Enthusiastic
- ☒ Slightly interested
- ☒ Indifference

11. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: *

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I want to continue receiving communication from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
The communication received from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office encourages me to attend events hosted by the university	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Communication from your former university is essential in building and nurturing a relationship between you and your university	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

12. What information would you want to receive from the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office and DUT? *

- ☐ Alumni events in your region
- ☐ Updates on developments at DUT
- ☐ Postgraduate information
- ☐ DUT Academic programmes
- ☐ Other:

13. What is your preferred method of communication? *

- ☐ Fax
- ☐ E-mail
- ☐ SMS
- ☐ Post
- ☐ Social Networking Sites (Facebook, Twitter)

14. Have you visited the DUT and Convocation webpage? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☒ No

15. Were you adequately informed of developments at DUT and the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☒ No

16. How would you rate the communication efforts of the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office? *

- ☒ Excellent
- ☒ Good
- ☒ Satisfactory
- ☒ Poor

17. Have you read the Constitution of Convocation? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☒ No

18. To what extent do you understand the Constitution of Convocation? *

- ☒ No understanding
- ☒ Limited understanding
- ☒ Full understanding

19. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: *

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is important for the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office to stay connected to its alumni	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Listening to alumni and addressing their concerns helps to improve alumni retention	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
The relationships formed by alumni contribute to their sense of loyalty towards their alma mater ie. DUT	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Experiences during their undergraduate years shape alumni loyalty and commitment to their alma mater ie. DUT	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
I would recommend DUT as a first choice institution of teaching and learning	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
DUT offers quality education and programmes that are relevant to the workplace	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

20. Indicate how often the staff of the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office, respond to queries? *

- ☒ Never
- ☒ Rarely
- ☒ Sometimes

- ☒ Always
- 21. In your opinion, what is the level of knowledge and expertise displayed by the Convocation and Alumni Relations staff when responding to queries by alumni? ***
- ☒ No knowledge
 - ☒ Limited knowledge
 - ☒ Considerable knowledge
- 22. Does the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office make an attempt to understand the needs of alumni? ***
- ☒ Yes
 - ☒ No
- 23. Are you happy with the service rendered by the Convocation and Alumni Relations department? ***
- ☒ Yes
 - ☒ No
- 24. Indicate how the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office can improve its service to alumni? ***
- ☐ Improve communication
 - ☐ Increase its presence on social media
 - ☐ Have events aimed at improving skills for employment
- 25. How important is it for an institution to create value for its alumni? ***
- ☒ Important
 - ☒ Somewhat important
 - ☒ Not important
- 26. How important is it for an institution to create a lifelong bond with its alumni? ***
- ☒ Important
 - ☒ Somewhat important
 - ☒ Not important
- 27. How would you rate your experiences at DUT? ***
- ☒ Excellent
 - ☒ Good
 - ☒ Satisfactory
 - ☒ Poor
- 28. How would you rate the Convocation and Alumni Relations Office response to informing alumni of crises at the university? ***
- ☒ Fast
 - ☒ Average
 - ☒ Slow
 - ☒ No response

29. Do you trust the DUT brand? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

30. What keeps you connected, if at all, to your university? *

A vertical scrollbar with a grey track and a white slider, positioned on the left side of the text area for question 30.

Thank you for your participation.

A vertical scrollbar with a grey track and a white slider, positioned on the left side of the text area for the thank you message.