

**THE ROLE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS
AT THE DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (DUT)**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Technology:
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ABSTRACT

The Southern African Higher Education system in the post-apartheid period had to respond to the various discriminatory practices that existed during the apartheid era. This entailed responding to inequalities in the education system at various levels. As far as higher education was concerned there was a need to serve society based on the principles of equality, equity and inclusivity. One such response was to merge higher education institutions such as ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal to form the Durban Institute of Technology now referred to as the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

The merger process revealed numerous challenges one of which was the human resource issue that underpinned the merger of staff between the two technikons which differed in practice. The rationale for this study was that staff at DUT were experiencing alienation; mistrust and a lack of shared purpose. The aim of this study was to evaluate the role of internal communication in the transition process of the merger at the DUT. The objectives were to examine existing organisational communication tools; to evaluate staff perceptions of the current methods of communication utilised in the internal communication process; and to determine how internal communication has contributed to the transition process. The study used a quantitative research method; this enabled an evaluation of the role of internal communication in a higher education setting during a transition process. The sample population was 400 administrative and academic staff from across the seven campuses. Staff were assessed via a survey questionnaire. The data was analyzed using SPSS.

The study found that living and coping with change in the work environment is a fact of life for organisations and individuals. The success of any change programme depends on the organisation's ability to communicate effectively with its employees; therefore internal communication plays a pivotal role in any change programme. Staff at the DUT had limited communication from Management during the change phase. They were of the opinion that effective internal communication could improve productivity in the workforce.

DECLARATION

I, **Vaneshree Govender**, do hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own work and findings, except where indicated. All sources used have been duly acknowledged and referenced.

.....

Govender, V.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my two children Klareesa and Shivar Govender. Thank you for the life lessons and for teaching me the true meaning of communication.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Firstly I want to thank God for giving me the strength, courage and knowledge to pursue this project to the end.
- I would also like to dearly thank my husband Prinavin Govender and my children Klareesa and Shivar Govender for their support and love and for allowing me to spend countless hours away from them so that I could do my research.
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- To Selisha Ramduth thank you for your assistance, motivation and support.
- Lastly, a very big thank you to my colleagues at DUT that have offered their support and encouragement throughout my journey.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

DIT	-	Durban Institute of Technology
DUT	-	Durban University of Technology
HEMIS	-	Higher Education Management Information System
ICS	-	Internal communication systems (ICS)
MS	-	Microsoft
SECM	-	Strategic Employee Communication Model
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is regarded as a dynamic process of exchanging meaningful messages, and also as a transaction process between participants during which a relationship develops between them. Communication, therefore, can be seen as an integral part of all management functions. In order to successfully plan, organise, lead or control, management has to communicate with their employees. Furthermore, decision making relies heavily on the communication skills of both managers and employees especially in times of change (Skinner, Von Essen, Mersham and Motau, 2007: 73).

According to the Ministry of Education (2001: 4):

The key challenges facing the South African higher education system were to redress past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities.

The merger of the ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal, in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN), was in keeping with national trends and resulted in the formation of the Durban Institute of Technology (DIT) in April 2002 (Ministry of Education, 2001: 4). According to the International Marketing Council of South Africa (2003), this initiative by the then Minister of Education, Mr Kader Asmal, was intended to balance the injustices of the past and make higher education equal and accessible to all. In 2006, Minister Kader Asmal changed the name of DIT to the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

Locke (2007: 88) states that employees undergo significant levels of anxiety, stress and damage to their morale when faced with an amalgamation between large established universities and smaller specialist colleges or institutes. Kilfoil and Groenewald (2005:12) further state that mergers are characterised by heightened emotions, fears of losing one's job, having to move sites, changes to conditions of service that might be unfavourable. However, attention to human issues, good

communication and speedy resolution of issues can help to diminish such stress. As employees of the newly merged institution, the DUT, staff members naturally experienced levels of anxiety and fear of losing one's job. The core focus of this study was therefore to assess whether staff were communicated with throughout the transition process and whether this communication assisted them to allay any fears that existed.

Dewhurst (2009) maintains that internal communication starts with having the right conversations to understand business needs. In times of uncertainty, like in the case of mergers or take-overs, staff are amenable to change if the proper tools of communication are utilised. This will allay unnecessary fears amongst staff. The DUT, over the past few years, has undergone numerous changes, viz., from a technikon to an institute of technology and finally to a university of technology. The change in the many Vice-Chancellors also caused concern amongst staff. Along the way, staff at the DUT were not immune to the obvious characteristics that were associated with mergers, i.e., stress, anxiety and low morale. Some staff managed to embrace the merger and move ahead while some were still uncertain of this process. This study investigates the role of internal communication in the transition process at the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Locke (2007: 83) indicates that an unusually broad range of issues take on strategic significance in a merger and that organisational culture is critical to the successful integration of staff, students and other stakeholders within a newly combined higher education institution. The DUT was one of the first higher education institutions formed through a merger. There can be no doubt about the important role that communication plays in the leadership of an organisation. This therefore placed pressure on the leadership of the institution to communicate efficiently. It is, therefore, essential that management communicate with its stakeholders at a level that is understood by all, as confusions may arise if the information is interpreted differently than what was intended.

Organisations operate in changing environments and this change presents both risks and opportunities. The changes that have to be implemented are important to the survival of the organisation. Organisations that do not manage change effectively are not likely to survive. According to Puth (2002: 110), to manage change effectively, an organisation has to have effective internal communication with its members and external communication with its various groups. Change involves communication at all levels of the organisation and in all forms: groups and one-on-one discussions, formal briefings, written proposals, and memoranda. Organisational change, unaccompanied by appropriate communication, can be overwhelming to the organisation and its people.

As a newly merged institution, staff at the DUT faced many outstanding issues such as alienation, mistrust and a lack of shared purpose that needed to be addressed (DUT, Annual report, 2005:3). Earlier discussion (Locke, 2007 & Puth, 2002) highlighted that internal communication is an important aspect of any management function; any organisation hoping to achieve its mission will have to effectively communicate this information to its employees.

This study, therefore, investigated the role of internal communication in the transition process at the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to evaluate the role of internal communication in the transition process at the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine existing organisational communication tools utilised in the communication process at the DUT during the merger;
2. To evaluate staff perceptions of the current methods of communication utilised in the internal communication process; and
3. To determine how internal communication has contributed to the transition process at the DUT.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

According to Du Plooy (2002: 111), at every level and in all forms of organisations, people tend to resist change. Change has a tendency to create inconvenience, uncertainty and anxiety amongst employees. The DUT has not been immune to this frame of thinking. The integration of staff into the newly merged institution left some staff feeling uncertain about their future in the organisation. In conversations with other stakeholders at the university after the transition process, anecdotal evidence suggests that communication tools utilised during that process could have been lacking in efficiency. The findings/outcomes from this study will be beneficial to managers at a senior level during a change process, thus enhancing the effectiveness of internal communication in an organisation.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

For the purpose of this study, the period of the transition phase is defined from the year 2002 to the year 2007. This study is limited to the staff, who were employed at the DUT at the time of the merger. The findings of this study can only be representative of the effectiveness of the communication tools utilised during the transition process only and therefore cannot be generalised to other higher education institutions in South Africa and the DUT in general.

1.6 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed provides a brief history of communication. Important concepts such as communication, organisational culture, internal communication, organisational communication and a model on internal communication are discussed further.

1.6.1 Communication

Daily interaction between people is a necessary part of getting the job done. Communication is often described as the glue that binds together the various

components of an organisation, enabling interaction with its agents, its customers and the broader public. The degree to which an organisation can achieve its objective is largely determined by its communication. Through communication, the organisation's members are able to work with each other, their customers and their clients (Barker and Angelopulo, 2006: 3).

Proctor and Doukakis (2003: 270) further state that poor communication is seen to be the key driver of negative feelings among an organisation's employees and that the only way to find out what was happening was from informal communication such as the rumour mill or local newspaper. When leaks, gossip and rumour replaces organised communication as the key source of information inside an organisation, it is a sure sign that there is a management problem. The DUT has over the years since the merger had its fair share of rumours, gossips and leaks of information.

1.6.2 Organisational Communication

Barker and Angelopoulou (2006: 11) define organisational communication as communication happening within the organisation, with individuals, dyads and groups that need to be communicated, to support and enhance performance (and avoid losses from, for example, decreased staff morale).

Welch and Jackson (2007: 176) indicate that organisational communication is concerned with the symbolic use of language and how organisations function and what their goals are. The flow of communication can be formal or informal; internal or external; upward, downward or horizontal and, lastly, may include networks.

According to Marques (2010: 56), dialogues about organisational communication will continue to amplify as workplaces of various natures gravitate towards greater interaction among workers, customers and other workers from an expanding array of backgrounds. Organisational communication has demonstrated to be a crucial aspect in the success rate of any type of organisation, particularly in this case of a University setting.

1.6.3 Organisational Culture

There are a number of ways to define organisational culture. One such definition according to Rajala, Ruokonen and Ruismäki (2012:540) is that organisational culture is a gathering of the values that dominate in an organisation. These values are often strengthened by myths, anecdotes and stories from its history. The DUT with its rich historical background inherited its organisational culture through the merging of the two technikons. Marshall and Adamic (2010:18) indicate that when new leaders take over existing organisations, they find that the existing culture defines what kind of leadership style is expected and accepted, based on past and the beliefs, values, and assumptions of earlier leaders. The DUT has since merger, had a change of leadership several times.

According to Schein (2009: 4) when leaders come from outside the organisation they have the ability to:

- Destroy the existing culture by getting rid of the key culture carriers;
- Fight the existing culture by attempting to impose his or her own beliefs, values, and assumptions on the existing members of the organisation ;
- Give in to the existing culture by abandoning his or her own beliefs, values, and assumptions or;
- Evolve the culture by initially adapting enough to figure out how to get things done and then gradually imposing new rules and behaviours that rest on different beliefs, values, and assumptions.

On a cautionary note Schein (2009: 12) indicates that communication failures result primarily because the organisational culture of the organisations have different priorities, which leads to gradual drifting apart of the communication systems they use.

1.6.4 Internal Communication

There are various interpretations of the concept of internal communication. According to Tench and Yeomans (2009: 334), internal communication is the term used to describe an organisation's managed communication system where employees are regarded as a public or stakeholder group. Employees are communicated with through a variety of methods, including newsletters, notice boards, staff briefings and intranets, which are designed to inform employees about the business. Stauss and Hoffmann (2000: 143) define internal communication as the planned use of communication actions to systematically influence the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of current employees. Welch and Jackson (2007: 177) are of the opinion that effective internal communication is crucial for successful organisations as it affects the ability of strategic managers to engage employees and achieve objectives.

Tench and Yeomans (2009: 337) believe that the strategic purpose of internal communication is one that is concerned with building two-way relationships with internal publics, with the goal of improving organisational effectiveness. Some of the key roles of effective internal communication within an organisation involves the following:

- Supporting major change programmes;
- Communicating messages from top management;
- Raising awareness of the organisation's priorities ;
- Raising/maintaining the credibility of the top team;
- Increasing employee motivation;
- Enhancing efficiency and productivity;
- Facilitating feedback; and
- Enhancing manager's communication skills.

The above discussion supports the notion that internal communication is important in communicating change during the transition period at the DUT.

1.6.5 Barriers to Internal Communication

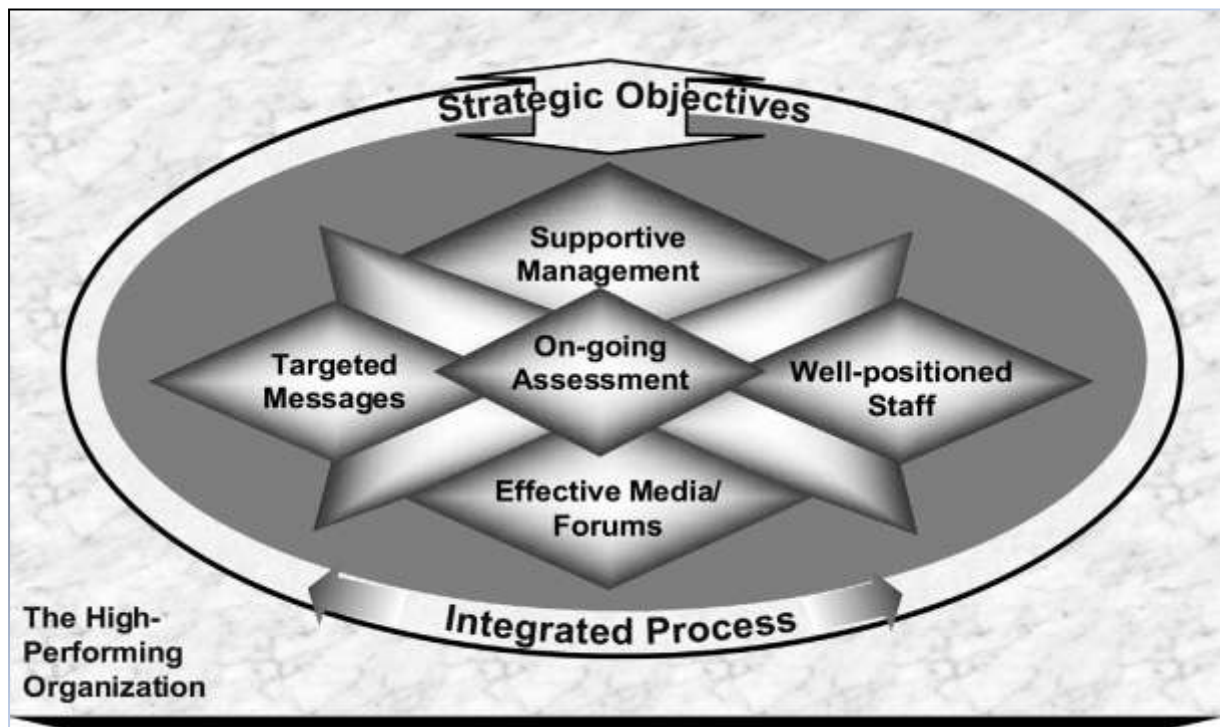
Grasso, Golen and Burns (2005:38) state that an implicit assumption of the communication process is that there is a free flow of information that exists between the sender and receiver. This process portrays communication as a continuous and dynamic flow. However, communication involves a constant interpretation of messages by the sender or receiver. As a result of the communication process, problems or barriers arise that can inhibit or impede the free flow of information during a communication exchange. Grasso *et al* (2005: 39) further state that these barriers maybe viewed differently by different races, age groups and different sexes.

1.6.6 The Strategic Employee Communication Model (SECM)

The Strategic Employee Communication Model (SECM), as illustrated in Figure 1.1 can be used to help management understand the strategic role that communication plays in the day-to-day success of any company as well as during major change and can help overcome the “everything” and the “publication-limited” perceptions on communication.

This model captures all of the major components of employee communication linking them to each other and to the company’s strategy and operations. Figure 1.1. is on the next page.

Figure 1.1: The Strategic Employee Communication Model



(Adapted from Barrett, 2002: 219)

The SECM works analytically to break employee communication down into manageable recognisable parts. At the same time, the model shows how intertwined and interdependent each part is when employee communication is positioned strategically to facilitate change.

Traditionally, communication components are at the heart of the model. The direct link to the organisation's strategic objectives, the business planning processes and the overlay of supportive management with ongoing assessment of individual and company communication move the model from a tactical to a strategic level.

This SECM was used to interpret the effectiveness of internal communication during the transition process at the DUT. It further assessed whether communication took place at all levels and whether communication was open and transparent during the transition process.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.7.1 The Study Design

Research was conducted within the quantitative paradigm. This enabled an evaluation of the role of internal communication in a higher education setting.

According to Babbie (2010: 24), quantification often makes our observation more explicit. It can also make it easier to aggregate and summarise data. Further, quantification opens the possibility of statistical analysis ranging from simple analyses to complex formulae and mathematical models. The quantitative method of data collection relies on random sampling and structured data-collection instruments that fit diverse experiences into predetermined response categories which produce results that are easy to summarise, compare and generalise.

Descriptive research was utilised to illustrate the characteristics of internal communication tools used by the DUT. Descriptive studies are based on previous understanding of the nature of the research problem (Zikmund, 2005: 57).

1.7.2 Target Population

Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2005: 126), view the target population as the group to which the researcher would like to generalise the results. In this study, the target population consisted of one thousand, three hundred and ninety seven (1397) employees. For the purpose of this study four hundred (400) staff at DUT from the administrative and academic sectors were targeted.

1.7.3 Size of Sample

Sampling involves following a rigorous procedure when selecting units of analysis from a larger population (Du Plooy, 2002: 100). When dealing with people, sampling can be defined as a set of respondents (people) selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey.

At the DUT the staff complement consists of approximately 1397 employees (HEMIS, 2011). This study analysed the responses of 400 employees at DUT, through the use of questionnaires.

1.7.3.1 Purposive Sampling

According to Babbie (2010: 193), purposive or judgmental sampling is when a sample is selected on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population and the nature of the research aims. This sampling technique was used to select 400 staff as indicated in the sample selection. The study targeted those members of staff who were specifically employed between 2002 and 2014 as those staff members would have had knowledge of the merger and would have been through the transition process at the university.

1.7.4 Sample Selection

An increase in the sample size, in proportion to the size of the population from which the sample is drawn, results in a decrease in the standard error. Therefore, it is not necessary to draw a sample larger than 500 as it will have little effect in decreasing the standard error or margin of standard error (Welman *et al*, 2005: 71).

The population or units of analysis for this study were selected/chosen from administration departments and academic departments from across the six faculties at the DUT. A total 400 staff members were selected.

1.7.5 Data Collection Methods

According to Welman *et al* (2005: 174), the decision to conduct a questionnaire survey should in itself be the culmination of a careful process of thought and discussion, involving considerations of all possible techniques.

The study used questionnaires to collect data for the purpose of analysing participant's responses. Questionnaires were administered by the researcher via

email and hand delivery, with the support of research assistants. The process of data collection, data recording and data storage was concurrently run. A sound storage and filing system was developed for all data collected.

1.7.6 How the data will be analysed

Data gathered from the questionnaires were electronically captured on Microsoft (MS) Excel. The researcher and statistics practitioner were involved in the planning and execution of the data analysis. The quantitative research was computed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Software version 21.0.

1.7.7 Pre-testing

According to Cramer & Howitt (2004:131) a pre-test is a measurement stage preceding the administration of the experimental treatment. The pre-test provided a baseline measurement against which change due to the experimental treatment can be assessed. Without a pre-test, it was not possible to know whether scores have increased, stayed the same or reduced. It also showed whether the means of the groups were similar prior to the subsequent measurement. The questionnaire was pre-tested with ten (10) staff members from the academic and administrative sector.

1.7.8 Limitations

Simon and Goes (2013:np) indicate that limitations are matters and occurrences that arise in a study which are out of the researcher's control. These limitations restrict the parameters to which a study can go, and sometimes affect the end result and conclusion that can be drawn. This study focused on internal communication tools used during the transition phase at the university and as such cannot be generalised to Higher Education Institutions in South Africa.

1.7.9 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Wallace (2010:23) indicates that the concepts of anonymity and confidentiality are closely linked. Anonymity is the protection of a research participant's or site's identity. Confidentiality is the safeguarding of information obtained in confidence during the course of the research study. It may be oral (i.e., obtained during an interview) or written (i.e., obtained during a review of an individual's or entity's records and other documents). Staff participating in this study were duly informed through the informed consent letter which indicated that their identity and contents of the survey questionnaire will not be shared with a third party.

1.7.10 Validity and Reliability

Validity, according to Welman *et al* (2005: 142), is the extent to which the research findings accurately represent what is really happening in the situation. This study's validity relied on the questionnaire, which was developed from the objectives and literature of this study.

Welman *et al* (2005: 145) indicate that reliability is concerned with the findings of the research and relates to the credibility of the findings. Reliability of this research was ensured by making use of properly constructed questions. Content analysis was conducted on the data gathered from the questionnaire (primary data) and from reports and other documents at the university (secondary data).

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Sieber (2004:323) indicates that a code of ethics specifies the proper conduct of members of a particular group. That is, a code is a set of rules or norms of a particular group. The code recognises the group's special obligations to society - obligations that transcend normal standards of morality. For the purpose of this study the researcher undertook to seek the permission from the DUT to conduct research and all participants were duly informed via the informed consent letter.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

CHAPTER TWO – Literature Review

Chapter two contextualises the problem and provides a theoretical framework for the study. This chapter provides an overview of the overall understanding of internal communication and further explains the interrelatedness of the internal communication procedures at the DUT.

CHAPTER THREE – Research Methodology

Chapter three provides an account of the methodology used in this research. The chapter describes the research framework, the study type, sample, data collection methods, reliability and validity are discussed in detail.

CHAPTER FOUR – Results and Discussion

Chapter four presents the results of the study. It sets out analysis of the results and interpretation of data gathered from the sample.

CHAPTER FIVE – Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter five concludes with a presentation of the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the research objectives and provides an overview of the study. Chapter two will present the literature review of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION DURING CHANGE MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a background to the study. It outlined the overall significance and objectives of the study. This chapter provides a theoretical framework for understanding the impact of internal communication during the transition process of an institution. It will clearly define the different concepts in communication focusing on internal communication and the model of communication as determining factors to consider during change. This chapter will also review the strategic employee communication model which will capture all of the major components of employee communication linking them to each other and to the university's strategy and operations.

2.2 A CHANGING HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Linholm (2003 cited in Qian and Daniels 2008:319) highlighted that the higher education environment had undergone tremendous changes during the past two decades, which included reduction in financial resources; change in student demographics and questions from the public about the nature and purpose of the higher education system. Post-apartheid South Africa has overhauled its entire education system as part of a broader national reform movement aimed at overcoming the inequities and polarisation of the past. (Sedgwick, 2004:np). During the apartheid era, the South African education system had immersed itself along disparate higher education systems which were organised along racial lines. Pityana (2003:np) highlighted that South Africans benchmarked themselves against the best in the world and yet they served many without complaining,

The ideological purposes of apartheid South Africa which shaped much of the intellectual engagement emanating therefrom. In essence it was a diverse, unequal and discriminatory system serving the various publics of South Africa under the umbrella of a once-dominant apartheid social and political system and a crumbling but uncertain economy.

As a result of the inequities many talented young people were ill-prepared for post-secondary education and they lacked high-level skills (Sedgwick, 2004: np).

To regulate higher education, Section 23 of the *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997* states:

Merger of public higher education institutions - the Minister may after consulting the CHE and by notice in the Gazette, merge two or more public higher education institutions into a single public Higher Education Institution.

The higher education sector was transformed through a series of mergers and incorporations aimed at collapsing 36 universities and *technikons* (polytechnics) into 22 institutions. As a result, there are now three types of public higher education institutions in South Africa: traditional universities, universities of technology and comprehensive universities (Sedgwick, 2004).

The merging of higher education institutions was a new phenomenon in the history of the South African higher education system. The formation of the Durban Institute of Technology on 1 April 2002 when the M L Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal merged was the first merger of higher education institutions in the history of South Africa. The merged institution, in 2006, changed to what is now known as the Durban University of Technology. Throughout this transition the communication process played a pivotal role as staff, students and stakeholders had to be informed about the future of the new university. Staff were communicated with through “effective media during the merger process which helped in communicating positive messages which spoke to great things to come for the new university of technology in Africa” (DUT, 2008: 16).

Another case of a newly merged institution in 2005 was that of the Walter Sisulu University which saw the merger of three historically disadvantaged institutions of higher learning to form one comprehensive university. The three merged institutions were: the Border Technikon, the Eastern Cape Technikon and the University of Transkei (Soha, 2010).

For the purpose of this study, the timeframe of the transition period is defined from the year 2002 to the year 2007. It must be noted that the study highlights the communication tools utilised during the transition process only and does not necessarily make reference to current day communication processes at the DUT.

2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION DURING CHANGE

According to Moran and Brightman (2001 cited in Todnem 2005:369) change management is the process of continually renewing an organisation's direction, structure and capabilities to serve the ever changing needs of external and internal customers. Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia and Irmer (2007:188) share this opinion when they state that in response to the introduction of new technologies, changing labour forces, and various environmental factors, many organisations are finding it necessary to engage in some form of reorganisation or change in order to remain competitive. Daly, Teague and Kitchen (2003:153) further iterate that many factors such as globalisation, technological advances, deregulation, privatisation, mergers or acquisitions coupled with a movement of labour intensive projects to less expensive locations and changing customer demands are forcing organisations to continuously review their purpose. This evaluation process will help them to decide which changes: strategic or operational, will have to be made in order to survive or grow.

In the view of Gilley, Gilley and McMillan (2009: 75) organisational leadership behaviours have a direct influence on actions in the work environment that enable change. Leaders may function as change agents by creating a vision, identifying the need for change and implementing the change itself. "Organisations remain competitive when they support and implement continuous and transformational change" Cohen (1999 cited in Gilley *et al* 2009: 75).

During late January 2000, the Minister of Education requested the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to conduct an overarching exercise designed to put strategies into place to ensure that the higher education system was indeed on the road to the 21st century (Council on Higher Education Size and Shape Task Team 2000). In terms of the need for change the DUT transitioned from a Technikon to an Institute of Technology to a University of Technology.

Over the years researchers have explored the link between internal communication, and successful change management programs (Kitchen and Daly, 2002; Proctor and Doukakis, 2003). Salem (2008 cited in Balmer, Invernizzi, Romenti & Fumagalli 2012:484) stated that the strategic role of communication during change

management processes is unquestioned by corporate communication researchers and that changes are messy and complex phases within company life cycles which are characterised by conflicting emotions among organisational members, as well as a lack of identification and trust. Kitchen and Daly (2002:46) further state that twenty first century organisations have high on their strategic and operational agendas a preoccupation with the concept of change due to numerous issues that have impacted an organisation's performance. This includes issues such as: globalisation, "glocalisation", deregulation, privatisation, mergers, acquisitions, the movement of labour towards less expensive economic locations, revolutionary advances in technology, and empowering of consumers coupled with changes in demand patterns.

Barrett (2002 cited in Balmer *et al* 2012:484) states that effective strategic employee communication was considered the keystone for change management processes provided it created a sense of community and enhanced the sense of belonging to the company. During the change process communication holds an organisation together (Tubbs, Moss and Papastefanou, 2012:281). They further add that without communication, the various parts (departments or units) of the organisation are unable to work together. This strongly alludes to increased and organised communication.

The transition phase of the DUT would have required increased and organised communication to enable the various departments to work together for a successful merger. Communication holds the organisation together and enables co-ordination and co-operation. Communication in an organisation is therefore vital. Watson and Wyatt, (2006) note that communication is a critical element in creating successful results. This supports the need for communication during merger processes.

2.4 THE NATURE OF COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATIONS

Du Plessis and Boshoff (2008:3) define communication as "the use of a medium to convey a message between individual or groups and it is a means of relating to each other". Wood (2007:12) defines communication as a "systematic process in which

people interact with and through symbols to create and interpret meaning, it is a process which is ongoing and dynamic, it is a system which consists of interrelated parts that affects one another, it is symbolic which is an abstract, arbitrary, and ambiguous representation of other things, and it also focuses on meaning which is the heart of communication". Communication as defined by Spaho (2013:103) is the "transfer of information from sender to receiver, implying that the receiver understands the message. Communication is also sending and receiving of messages by means of symbols". Various researchers have offered their explanation of the definition of communication; essentially communication is the process of conveying a message from the sender to the receiver *via* a channel in a medium that is understood by both.

Communication is essential in interacting, it is a continuous process that we engage in with others in different activities or projects that bring about understanding in tasks and messages sent or received. For an entire day one is talking, listening, writing and conversing with another, making a point here, disputing a point there, expressing opinions and feelings, (Steinberg, 2006:2). It is part of our everyday activities.

Steinberg, (2006:2) is of the opinion that human existence would be unbearable without communication. She further states that the ability to communicate and to share meaning with others and the technologies that makes most of the communication possible is taken for granted. Accordingly, the history of communication has evolved in different stages, which Steinberg (2006:2) refers to as a "revolution" - a communication revolution is indicative that each new development has changed the way in which one communicates with other people and with our world.

Based on this revolution, Steinberg (2006:3) further identifies the stages in which the history of communication started, it began with human communication when humans only communicated through gestures, postures, and facial expressions, it moved to the stage of speech and language, then to the age of writing, to the age of print and finally to the age of electronic mass media. These stages have modeled the way in

which the different aspect of communication has become interconnected and functional.

However, Turner, Qvarfordt, Biehl, Golovchinsky and Black (2010: 841) are of the view that electronic media provides a persistent record of its messages, but does not convey non-verbal signals. Face-to-face communication, on the other hand, provides a wealth of information about the communicating parties, gleaned from facial expressions, body language, verbal pauses, and other sources, but generally leaves only an imperfect trace (in participants' memories) of exactly what was said.

Communication is a field that has different aspects to it, these are many times inter-related, some of which are Intra and Interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, public communication, internal and external communication, small group communication and crisis communication, (Woods, 2012:36). These different fields of communication make communication activities easier to operate and implement, communication is expressed in different forms and situations individuals or organisation s specifically create a process, steps, and channels to communicate with their target audience at any given situation.

Effective communication at the DUT is imperative. As a tertiary institution communication occurs daily with students in the form of lectures, tutorials, online classrooms, emails and through social media. Internal communication within the institution is important for staff from other departments to coordinate issues related to their duties. External communication is equally important as external stakeholders expect to be informed regularly on the happenings of the university.

2.4.1 Organisational Communication

Richmond, McCroskey & McCroskey (2005 cited in Spaho 2013:104) defined organisational communication as a process by which individuals stimulate meaning in the minds of other individuals by means of verbal or nonverbal messages. "Organisational communication happens all the time, it is a natural and a necessary means through which individuals accomplish tasks, coordinate activities with others,

and build relationships with both internal and external stakeholders” (Tamara 2011:99).

Tamara (2011:35) explains that the manner in which an organisation approaches communication policy, staffing, planning, and budgeting paints a clear picture of how it thinks of itself and how it wishes to relate to employees. This indicates the communication flow of the organisation’s openness and a willingness to actively gather perception and opinion, information sharing, communication planning, the integration and application of technology, and preparation and development of supervisors to communicate effectively with their people. This paints a clear picture of the organisation’s culture and leads to effective communication in the organisation.

Spaho (2011:392) further explains that effective communication is very important for the creation of a successful company. Poor communication between managers and employees will result in conflicts inside the company which will farther lead to moral decline and in the end it will not be possible to reach the company’s strategic goals. On the other hand, regular communication, especially with young employees will stimulate employee’s creativity which will enhance their work ethic. Experience reveals that it is better to work with creative employees to meet the company’s strategic goals and objectives.

It is not possible to have human relations without communication; however, good and effective communication is required not only for good human relations but also for good and successful business, communication has to be strategic in order for operations to adjust accordingly to the ever changing environment. In relation to this study, this is relevant as the theory clearly shows the importance of communication in an organisation.

According to Daneci-Pătrău (2011: 487) it is important to continuously inform employees about the general matters that influence their work role as this leads to a better understanding of management’s actions, to reducing the misunderstandings arisen in daily activities and to enhancing mutual trust between employers and the employees. As a tool of management, communication is “the central means by which

individual activity is coordinated to devise, disseminate, and pursue organisational goals” (Gardner, Paulsen, Gallois, Callan, & Monaghan, 2001: 7).

In the view of Neves and Eisenberger (2012: 452) employees who have open lines of communication with managers are more likely to build effective work relationships with those managers. This also led to an increase in their: organisational identification; performance and contributed to organisational productivity. Employees who report positive and open communication with managers are also better able to cope with major organisational changes, such as layoffs and mergers (Gopinath & Becker, 2000). There is strong evidence that different aspects of effective management communication, such as high frequency, openness and accuracy, performance feedback, and adequacy of information about organisational policies and procedures, are positively related to employee’s performance.

Several studies emphasise that effective communication can enhance organisational outcomes (Garnett, Marlowe, & Pandey, 2008; Pandey & Garnett, 2006). This is reiterated by Luthans (2005 cited in Jaradat and Sy 2012:122), who stated that organisations that had excellent communication patterns tended to encourage their people to work cooperatively and more efficiently.

Spaho (2011: 390) states that managers spend the majority of their time communicating in several forms: meeting, face-to-face discussion, letters, emails etc. Also more and more employees realise that communication is a very important part of their work because a lot of work activities are based on teamwork among workers in different functional groups. This is the reason why communication has become more important in companies.

Therefore, communication can be regarded as a conduit for information within an organisation which can assist employees in the decision-making process as it helps in identifying and assessing alternative course of actions, maintaining good human relations and encouraging ideas or suggestions from employees and implementing them whenever possible. At the DUT, staff receives communication from Executive Management via email and internal mail.

2.4.2 Internal Communication

Internal communication is communication between management and staff at various levels of the organisation in order to reach organisational goals (Van Staden, Marx and Erasmus-Kritzinger: 2002:15). Welch (2007 cited in Welch 2012:247) indicated that internal communication is understood as communication between strategic managers and internal stakeholders designed to promote commitment and a sense of belonging to the organisation, to develop awareness of its changing environment, and understanding of its evolving aims. According to Hopkins (2006) internal communication can also be described as a subset of effective business communication which is built around this simple foundation: communication as a dialogue, not a monologue, stating that communication is a dual listening process. Hopkins (2006) further explains that internal communication especially in a business context is the dialogic process between employees and employer and employees and employees.

Communication plays an important role in any organisation, internal communication is among the fastest growing specialisations in public relations and communication management science. Verčič and Verčič (2012:224) explain that:

Internal communication gave rise in the 1990s in the US and spread thereafter to Europe growing strength in the new millennium. It is during this time that a host of other factors such as globalisation, deregulation, and economic crises brought with them permanent restructuring, downsizing, outsourcing, mergers and acquisitions and other kinds of more or less creative destruction within an organisation. This further resulted in a drastic reduction of trust employees have in management leading to lower employee loyalty despite the increased need for the strategic management of a workforce that has been growing more diverse.

Welch (2012:246) states that internal communication underpins organisational effectiveness since it contributes to positive internal relationships by enabling communication between senior managers and employees. She further states that successful internal communication can promote employee awareness of opportunities and threats, and develop employee understanding of their organisation's changing priorities. As a result this can contribute to organisational

commitment and play a part in developing a positive sense of employee identification.

Paradoxically, Welch (2012:246) further indicates that internal communication can also pose a threat to organisational relationships, as poor communication can be counter-productive. The potential benefits of internal communication rely on appropriate messages reaching employees in formats useful and acceptable to them. However, if employees felt such communication was conducted inappropriately, the communication process could inadvertently damage internal relationships.

James (2003:7) states that excellent internal communication cannot simply be implemented and left alone; the process must be ever-changing and adaptable for success, as organisations broaden or expand more and more internal communication methods become increasingly diverse to match the varying needs of each organisation's internal staff and stakeholders.

At the DUT the main function of the Communications Department is to ensure effective and focused communication, both within and outside the university community. The Communications Department also has to ensure that mechanisms are in place so internal communication is effective. The Communications Department communicates to internal stakeholders about DUT's programmes, research and activities of faculty, staff and students via media such as the ConDUiT (internal newsletter), DUT Matters (intranet), the website, annual report and other relevant media. They further assist in ensuring that all staff understand and share the vision and mission of DUT through their internal communication activities and they work closely with DUT's Executive Management in planning the release of news and information to all stakeholders of the DUT community.

2.4.3 Processes and Methods of Internal Communication

Ergen (2011: 55) states that a communication process is the procedure where a sender and a receiver communicate. This scheme incorporates the "encoding-

decoding” operations and describes the usual transfer of the message. Steinberg (2006:13) is of the view that the communication process is a complex and dynamic process of exchanging meaningful messages. In addition to the transmission of messages, communication involves its interpretation and meaning. Mumby (2013: 14) defines the communication process as a dynamic, ongoing process of creating and negotiating meanings through interactional symbolic (verbal and non-verbal) practices, including conversation, metaphors, ritual, stories, dress and space.

According to Scott (2005 cited in Ergen 2011:56) communication is about sending, receiving, and understanding information and meaning. He asserts that “receiving” and “understanding” are the most important operations in the communication process, since the response of the receiver defines whether the communication attempt is successful or not. Ergen (2011) further states that in the communication process, feedback is considered an indispensable component, since it contributes correctively to the new inputs of information and knowledge, or even works towards the adjustment of sender and receiver. This therefore necessitates further discussion of the types of directions of communication flow in an organisation.

Lunenburg (2010:1) in his research, stated there are two basic types of communication in an organisation viz: formal communication and informal communication. Formal communication is the exchange of messages regarding the official work of the organisation, and informal communication is the exchange of unofficial messages that are unrelated to the organisation’s formal activities.

Borca and Baesu (2014) and Kandlousi, Ali and Abdollahi (2010) agree that communication in organisations usually takes place within the hierarchical pyramid called the organisational structure, and instruction and information are passed downward and upward along these channels Altinöz (2008 cited in Borca and Baesu 2014:498) stated that formal communication worked in specified structures within the organisational rules and towards the organisational goals. Informal communication, on the other hand, is unofficial - taking place among staff as face-to-face, telephone or video-conference interaction.

2.4.3.1 Flow of Communication within the Organisation

There are different ways in which communication flows within an organisation. These ways depend on how large the organisation is and how long it has been in existence. Lunenburg & Ornstein (2008 cited in Lunenburg 2010:2) state that the structure of an organisation should provide for communication in three distinct directions: downward, upward, and horizontal. These three directions establish the framework within which communication in an organisation takes place. However, according to Richmond, McCroskey & McCroskey (2005: 28) communication flows in two directions in the organisation: vertically and horizontally. Richmond *et al* (2005:28) further distinguished that vertical communication is concerned with upward and downward communication between managers and employees. This is further explained below.

(a) Vertical Communication

Richmond *et al* (2005:28) explains that vertical communication is concerned with communication between employees at different hierarchical levels in the organisation. It focuses on downward and upward communication between managers and employees.

Verma (2013:64) is of the opinion that vertical communication is held between or among people who are on different levels of authority within the organisation. It occurs between hierarchically positioned persons and involves both downward and upward communication flows.

At the DUT an example of vertical communication is when the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic communicates with the Executive Deans of each faculty. Communication from Academics to their respective Head of Department is an example of upward vertical communication at the DUT.

(b) Downward Communication

Rho (2009:6) indicated that downward communication means the flow of information from superiors to subordinates and it is a dominant channel in accordance with formal communication networks.

Tourish (2010 cited in Lunenburg 2010:2) stated that the downward flow of communication provides a channel for directives, instructions, and information to organisational members. However, much information gets lost as it is passed from one person to another. Moreover, the message can be distorted if it travels a great distance from its sender to the ultimate receiver down through the formal school organisation hierarchy.

Richmond *et al* (2005:29) state that downward flow of information flows from upper management down to the employees at lower ranks. Downward communication generally is effective when upper levels of management are highly motivated to make it work. There are five different elements that generally flow downward in all organisations. They are job instruction, rationale, ideology, information and feedback.

Verma (2013:64) states that in this kind of flow information is transmitted from higher to lower levels. The downward flow of communication relates to multiple issues i.e. directives, instructions, and information regarding procedures and policies etc., to give directions for implementing goals, strategies and objectives. Verma (2013:64) further explains that the communication environment in any organisation generally remains dominated by downward communication flow. In an organisation it is downward communication that plays the most important role. It determines upward communication style, sets background for horizontal and grapevine communication and is also responsible to a large extent for establishing ideal or non-ideal communication climate. Downward communication is determined by numerous factors and determines several kinds of communication and Communication climate.

In summary downward flow of communication is information that flows from a higher level of an organisation to a lower level. This communication flow is used by the managers to transmit work-related information to the employees at lower levels. At the DUT the Communications Department which is a sub-division of the Corporate Affairs department is tasked with ensuring that employees are informed about the activities within the organisation. The Communications Department engages closely with DUT's Executive Management in planning the release of news and information to the DUT community. This was done through communication channels such as the ReadIT (in-house newsletter), the DUT intranet, the DUT website, Annual Report and other relevant media such as letters and memorandums from the Vice-Chancellor to the DUT community.

(c) Upward Communication

Verma (2013:67) states that upward communication flows from junior to senior. It may be related to: problems and exceptions to routine work in order to make the leader aware of difficulties; Suggestions for improving task-related procedures; periodic reports regarding individual and departments performance; different kinds of grievances.

According to Richmond *et al* (2005:29) upward communication is initiated by those at the lower levels of the organisation, it can be successful only if those at the higher levels are willing to allow the communication to be effective. Verma (2013:67) concurs with this by stating that communication from juniors to seniors does not flow as freely and smoothly as communication from seniors to juniors. The senior's attitude and communication plays a critical role in the upward communication flow. If the senior is really concerned and really listens, upward communication improves.

The most common barriers to effective upward communication is long time gap between the communication and the action (Richmond *et al* 2005, Verma 2013 and Lunenburg 2010), administrators' defensive attitude about less-than-satisfactory actions (Verma 2013 and Lunenburg 2010). Physical barriers can also inhibit upward communication flow.

According to Verma (2013:67) the effectiveness of upward communication can be possible by following a few strategies viz. Management can encourage open door policy, whereby employees are invited to come in and discuss any problem they may have. In reality, the open-door policy is seldom used as Management may say: "My door is always open," but in many cases both the employee and Management know the door is really closed. One to one counselling sessions can greatly facilitate upward communication. The Participative techniques can be very helpful. Group decision making can generate a great deal of upward communication

In summary communication that flows from a lower level to higher level in an organisation is called upward communication. It provides feedback on how well the organisation is functioning. Employees are able to use upward communication to convey their problems and performances to their superiors. Ideally, the organisational structure should provide for both upward and downward communication flows. Unfortunately, communication from the bottom does not flow as freely as communication from the top (Richmond *et al* 2005), however upward communication leads to more committed and loyal employees in an organisation because they are given a chance to raise and speak about unsatisfactory issues to the higher levels. Currently at the DUT the use of protocol is applied when communicating with Senior Management. Employees are encouraged to communicate with Senior Management through their Line Managers, however during the merger process there was no clear communication policy at the DUT and some employees preferred the open door policy and communicated with Senior Management directly.

(d) Horizontal Communication

Richmond *et al* (2005:28) state that horizontal communication is concerned with communication between employees at the same level in the organisation. It focuses on communication between peers, people, at equal or very nearly equal levels in the organisation.

Verma (2013:68) indicated that horizontal communication flow exists to enhance coordination. This horizontal channel permits a lateral or diagonal flow of messages, enabling units to work with other units without having to follow rigidly up and down channels. These communications are informational too, but in a different way than downward and upward communication. Here information is basically for coordination, to tie together activities within or across departments. This can be intradepartmental as well as interdepartmental as several times task accomplishment remains related to issues related to other departments. This kind of communication increases more in decentralised power.

Rho (2009:7) states that horizontal communication indicates the lateral exchange of information, which flows in accordance with the functional principle among people on the same level within an organisation.

Richmond *et al* (2005:31) further state that this is communication that flows across the organisation (from peer to peer to peer). There is much more horizontal communication in organisations on a daily basis than there is vertical. This is because there are more employees than managers, and employees at the same level feel more comfortable talking with each other than with people at different authority levels. Horizontal communication often focuses on employee satisfaction and employee morale. At this level employees usually can talk openly and freely about your feelings about the system and can discuss your problems with others who can identify with them. In addition, this is also the channel at which most social interaction takes place within the formal organisation. It is through the horizontal channels that an employee is likely to increase one's knowledge, communication skills, and socialisation skills. At this level of communication it is also possible for employees to establish a long-lasting interpersonal relationships that will assist in them becoming better employees with a better chance of survival in the organisation.

Lunenburg (2010:6) explains that horizontal communication flow exists to enhance coordination. This horizontal channel permits a lateral or diagonal flow of messages, enabling units to work with other units without having to follow rigidly up and down channels.

In summary, communication that takes place at same levels of hierarchy in an organisation is called horizontal communication. This level of communication saves time by facilitating co-operation among team members and coordination of tasks, it provides emotional and social assistance to the employees, it helps in solving various organisational problems, it serves as a means of information sharing and it can also be used for resolving conflicts of a department with other departments or conflicts within a department. At the DUT horizontal communication happens on a daily basis. In order to co-ordinate tasks and activities that is necessary for the successful operation of the University the various departments need to communicate effectively with each other.

2.4.4 Informal Communication - The Grapevine

According to Singh and Sharma (2013: 157) the grapevine is the informal transmission of information, gossip or rumour from person to person. The grapevine is the informal and unsanctioned information network within every organisation. The network helps employees make sense of the world around them and consequently provides a release from emotional stress and all informal information is undocumented.

Singh and Sharma (2013:157) further state that the grapevine is an expression of healthy human motivation to communicate. It moves through the organisation in every direction. It moves upward, downward, and diagonally, within and without chains of command, between workers and managers, and even with and without an organisation. Fortado (2011:218) is of the view that informal communications are far from just idle chatter. People act based on their interpretations. The grapevine shapes employee sentiments about the company and specific people. It would be imprudent to ignore these social facts.

Enuoh and Inyang (2010:83) state that informal listening, speaking and workings in groups are just as important as writing formal documents and giving formal oral presentations. A newcomer in an organisation will need to listen to other employees to find out what one is supposed to do and to learn about the organisation's values and culture. Informal chitchat, both about yesterday's game and about what is

happening at work, connects one to the grapevine, an informal source of company information. Networking with others in office and in town and working with others in workgroups is crucial to success.

Arora and Pant (2014: np) state that information through grapevine usually travels faster than formal channels. To say that such rapid transfer of information occurs only rarely would be wrong if we look at the functioning in workplaces. They spread quickly, uncontrollably and, once started, are often hard to stop. In the present age of technology we may compare gossip and rumors in a workplace with computer viruses. Like the computer virus gets transferred from one system to another and contaminates files and systems; in the same manner gossips and rumors travel from sender to receiver passing on the negative rumors, thus contaminating a healthy work environment.

In support of this Singh and Sharma (2013:157) state in their research that the informal organisation is less permanent and less stable than the formal organisation. The grapevine is flexible and personal and can spread information faster than the formal communication channels. The grapevine is also capable of penetrating even the tightest security because it cuts across organisational lines and deals directly with people in the know.

The grapevine is inherent in the culture of any organisation (Singh and Sharma, 2013). At the DUT an informal type of communication is existent, i.e. the grapevine. Earlier literature (Proctor and Doukakis, 2003) highlighted that “poor communication was the direct driver of grapevine business”, in the case of the DUT, the study sought to establish whether staff were adequately communicated with during the transition phase and if the culture of the organisation was conducive to receiving and sending information.

2.5 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The word “culture” is used regularly in conversation when describing groups of people or geographic regions, it is meant to encapsulate the dress, language,

customs, acceptable behaviour, and values of that particular or group of people, (Modaff, Dewine & Butler 2008:89). Culture can be described as a way of life of a group in a certain country and region, it provides a lens through which its people interpret, interact with and make sense of their reality.

Schein (2004 cited in Smollan and Sayers 2009: 435) define organisational culture as a set of assumptions, beliefs, values, customs, structures, norms, rules, traditions and artefacts. Shepstone, Currie, Little, Jankowska, Smith & Buehler (2014:92) state that organisational culture is a complex set of shared values, behavioral expectations and common experiences and perceptions. Typically created and developed organically over long periods of time, organisational culture can often be challenging to intentionally influence and alter. It can, at times, be difficult to manage, whether in stasis or flux.

The idea of organisational culture as argued by Alvesson (2002:1) can be said to be the cultural dimension in the central aspects of organisational life, how people in a company think, feel, value or act are guided by ideas, meaning and beliefs of a cultural (socially shared) nature. Although culture does not determine how you will think and behave in every situation, it may help explain pattern of behaviour and thought that characterise you and the group with which you are in association with.

Accordingly to Malley (2009:38) communication reinforces the organisational culture about how things are done, expressing the culture in the organisation which may be evident in its operations. The communication pattern within an organisation is greatly influenced by its structure as well the members and needs of the organisation.

Organisational behaviour within an organisation expresses its culture and it sheds more light as to why things happen a certain way in an organisation that often lead towards managerial efforts in orientating employees towards excellence, this can be expressed very well through past success. Every organisation is created to serve a goal and purpose through members of staff, these goals are more important than all other components because they dictate the organisational structure (Ramachandran, Choy, Chong and Ismail, 2010:5). All too often this structure becomes the process in which operations are carried out and becomes the norm of the company and

organisational culture dwells on perception and interaction with one another, approaches decisions, and solves problems. Another description by Cameron and Quinn (1999 cited in Ramachandran *et al* 2010:5) emphasise that organisation culture is reflected by what is valued, the dominant leadership styles, the language and symbols, the procedures and routines, and the definitions of success that make an organisation unique.

In support of organisational culture it is important that every organisation has a unique way of carrying out their procedures and operations. Alvesson (2002:2) says culture is highly significant for how companies and other organisations function: from strategic change, to everyday leadership and operation of duties, to how managers and employees relate to and interact with their clients or customers as well as to how knowledge is created, shared, maintained and utilised. This therefore clarifies that organisational culture is an important way to operate in especially if those process has resulted in success in time past; it shouldn't be discarded or taken for granted, it gives employees a sense of belonging when operating in a particular atmosphere, it provides a platform for interaction among the staff and management and also improves ways to make their association productive.

Warwick (2007) describes in detail that the key concept in culture is having a sense of responsibility and a willingness to be answerable to others and this is the difference between a group and a team, the most important factor in developing accountability is the quality of leadership and management. He further explains that good leaders and managers generate high levels of accountability in their people; the four key elements of trust are openness/transparency (giving and accepting feedback, transparency in decision making), reliability (doing what you say you are going to do), congruence (saying what you mean) and acceptance (acceptance of others and acceptance of differences), this in the long term builds culture in that organisation, making it effective or lifestyle to which every member adhered to. In most organisations, there is a culture, which reflects its history, managerial approach, managerial styles, attitude versus risk, and relationship with competition, suppliers, and employees. It is what brings different people together to a place where there can be a degree of acceptance and tolerance because of share goals and objectives.

Organisational culture expresses itself in different aspect or settings, in most cases well established organisational culture is being expressed in big firms who have been in existence for years, regardless of whether it's a corporate, private or public company. Alvesson (2002:1) states that organisational culture is one of the major issues in academic research and education, in organisation theory as well as in management practice there are good reasons for this, the cultural dimension is central in all aspects of organisational life.

According to Modaff *et al.* (2008:97) organisational culture appears to share three characteristics:

- a. some aspects of culture is shared - The researchers ascertain that a group of people share common ways of understanding and interpreting organisational phenomena, communication also plays an important role in sharing, and organisational culture provides its members with framework of understanding and interpreting event,
- b. culture is intangible - The researchers explain that it is intangible because it is a construction formed through human interaction that affects and
- c. culture affects human behaviour –according to the researchers culture is affected by the behaviour of all members of the organisation.

Organisational culture provides frameworks for interpreting organisational events as the members experience them on day to day basis, once an individual understand how and why organisational members behave as they do, they must understand that the organisational culture guides and constrains them. This also depends on the kind of worldview that exists within the organisation, whether it a symmetrical worldview, which operates with the use of two way communication system within the organisation and values the contribution and participation of members of staff or asymmetrical worldview which functions on a downward flow of communication, disseminates information and are more task orientated than the concerns of their staff, Modaff *et al.* (2008:97).

There are different organisational cultures that exist within an organisation, Smith and Mounter (2005:30) identifies the four different cultures that exist within an organisation.

The first is **the power culture**, where small organisations are likely to have power culture centred on the founder, in this system the founder is often the voice of the organisation and will at least in its early days, take control of communication, at a later stage professional communicators can be appointed but the founder will remain a prominent factor in both internal and external relations.

The second is **the role culture**, where the emphasis of the role of an organisation is placed on its function and specialism, it may have many procedures and roles, job descriptions are prevalent here as well as procedures for doing things and the rule for settling disputes. These organisations are likely to have been around for some time and operate where economies of scale are important, it can also be slow to change and in reacting to shifts in market forces.

The third is **the person culture**, where the focus is on the individuals as separate individuals who choose to work together, examples: educational establishments and hospitals. There can be real stress and strains with the overarching structure which is largely bureaucratic.

The fourth and final is **the task culture**, this is focused on the job at hand or the project, it is also likely to be a feature in organisation with dispersed operations, although the larger the organisation the more likely it will share characteristics more to the role or person culture. For the internal communicator, this kind of culture will provide fertile ground in terms of materials for publication or broadcast.

The aforementioned culture exists in an organisation depending on how large and how long it has been in existence. According to Smith and Mounter (2005:34) many organisations now include culture change or what is called change management within their services to help organisations identify and manage employees through the main areas of business, cultural and behavioural change. This is done because

large organisational infrastructure shifts are created by change especially in the case of a merger and a transition which often include job losses. It is also vital to engage and energise employees behind the business goal is vital. At the DUT the person culture is predominant as this is the culture that is associated with educational establishments (Smith and Mounter, 2005:30).

Kezar & Eckel (2002 cited in Craig 2004:82) state that academic institutions are considered different than other type of organisations because they tend to be value rational organisations. Academic institutions have ideologies full of symbolism which are often found throughout the organisation. The strength of the organisational culture depends on the ability of members to adapt to external needs and internal integration.

Higher education institutions are beginning to adapt to external forces with strategic and systematic change. Unlike changes that may have occurred in the past within individual processes of an institution, whole organisation involvement and transformation is necessary, such transformation requires internal and external constituency engagement and creative leadership on many levels (Craig, 2004:85).

The origins of higher education institutions have produced a culture that naturally resists change and prefers the comfort of the existing circumstances Freed *et al.*(1997 cited in Craig 2004: 86). There are several explanations for resistance to change, first, change jeopardises the comfort of the group and a change to its shared beliefs is considered a threat to existence, there is fear of losing power and resources. Second, there is the very human tendency to resist imposition of the will of others. Such resistance is an important component of institutional culture based on longstanding traditions and a wide variety of subcultures created by organisational role, institutional position or disciplinary affiliation. The subcultures often flourish within the university environment, supporting their own set of customs, beliefs, and practices that are frequently incongruent with the larger university culture (Craig, 2004: 86).

Many education institutions hold strong organisational cultures, this culture has been based many times on certain principles, which can be the style of leadership,

the vision, symbols, artifacts, traditions, rituals and lastly the people, as identified by Malley (2009:30). Malley (2009) agrees that people are the most vital component in developing an organisational culture, because without people there is no organisation. People are the essence of an organisation and integral part in creating organisational culture. People are the integral part of higher education, it is people who establish and preserve the organisation's culture. It is imperative to hire the right people for right positions, to ensure that standards are followed. People need to be valued as individuals and encouraged to embrace change, innovate and be committed to their work. Academia is in the forefront of the DUT agenda's to be a leading university of Technology in Africa. The DUT has inherited a rich culture of teaching and learning.

The former Natal Technikon and M L Sultan Technikon were in existence for many years. Prior to the merger, each institution had created and developed organically into a culture of their own (Shepstone *et al*, 2014), this therefore created an affinity to naturally resist change, which saw many barriers surfacing.

2.6 BARRIERS TO INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

According to Garg and Agarwal (2012: 40) communication is the key factor in the success of any organisation. When it comes to effective communication, there are certain barriers that every organisation faces. People often feel that communication is as easy and simple as it sounds. No doubt, but what makes it complex, difficult and frustrating are the barriers that come in its way. Longest & Young (2000 cited in Ergen 2011:58) defines communication barriers as anything that filters, blocks or distorts the message or the information during the process of "encoding-sending-decoding". Therefore effective communication can be hindered by any number of barriers at any time.

When determining what barriers might exist to an effective internal communication process within an organisation it is beneficial to utilise the two categories used by Longest & Young (2000 cited in Ergen 2011:58), *viz*: environmental and personal. Guo and Sanchez (2005:85) describe environmental barriers as the characteristics

of the organisation that is derived from its environmental setting and personal barriers are anything that arises from the nature of individuals and their interaction with others. For the purpose of this study the researcher will focus on the literature review on the environmental barriers only.

According to Guo and Sanchez (2005:87) the following are examples of environmental barriers:

- a. *Competition for attention within an organisation.* Multiple and simultaneous demands cause messages to be incorrectly decoded. The receiver hears the message, but does not understand it. Due to inadequate attention paid to the message, the receiver is not really “listening.” *Listening* is a process that integrates physical, emotional, and intellectual inputs into the quest for meaning and understanding. Listening is effective only when the receiver understands the sender’s messages as intended. Thus, without engaging in active listening, the receiver fails to comprehend the message.
- b. *Time.* Lack of time prevents the sender from carefully thinking through and thoroughly structuring the message accordingly, and limits the receiver’s ability to decipher the message and determine its meaning.
- c. *Organisation’s managerial philosophy.* Managerial philosophy can promote or inhibit effective communication. Managers who are not interested in promoting intra-organisational communication upward or disseminating information downward will establish procedural and organisational blockages. By requiring that all communication follow the chain of command, lack of attention and concern toward employees is a sign of a managerial philosophy that restricts communication flows. Furthermore, when subordinates encounter managers who fail to act, they are unwilling to communicate upward in the future, because communications are not taken seriously. Managerial philosophy not only affects communication within the organisation, but also impacts the organisation’s communications with external stakeholders.

- d. *Multiple levels of hierarchy and complexities* such as the size and degree of activity conducted in the organisation tend to cause message distortion. As messages are transmitted up or down, they may be interpreted according to an individual's personal frame of reference. When multiple links exist in the communication chain, information could be misinterpreted. As a result, a message sent through many levels is likely to be distorted or even totally blocked.
- e. *Power or status relationships can also effect transmission of a message.* An unharmonious supervisor–subordinate relationship can interfere with the flow and content of information. Moreover, a staff member's previous experiences in the workplace may prevent open communication due to fear of negative sanctions as a result. For instance, a poor supervisor– subordinate relationship inhibits the subordinate from reporting that the project is not working as planned. Fear of the power and status of the manager is a common barrier to communication.
- f. *Use of specific terminology unfamiliar to the receiver.* Communication between people who use different terminology can be unproductive simply because people attach different meanings to the same words. Thus, misunderstanding can occur due to unfamiliar terminology.

At the DUT, well-informed employees or students are considered ambassadors or marketers for the university. In order for staff to be able to execute their tasks, they have to be efficiently communicated with by Management in a manner that is conducive to receiving the information without distorting the actual message as per the various methods discussed in the abovementioned literature. This is further discussed in the Strategic Employee Communication model in the next section. The model discusses the importance of internal communication in the process of change.

2.7 AN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION MODEL:

STRATEGIC EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION MODEL (SECM)

Strategic internal communication as defined by Omilion-Hodges and Baker (2014:435) is the thoughtful and proactive framing of messages tailored to meet employee's temporal, informational and affective needs.

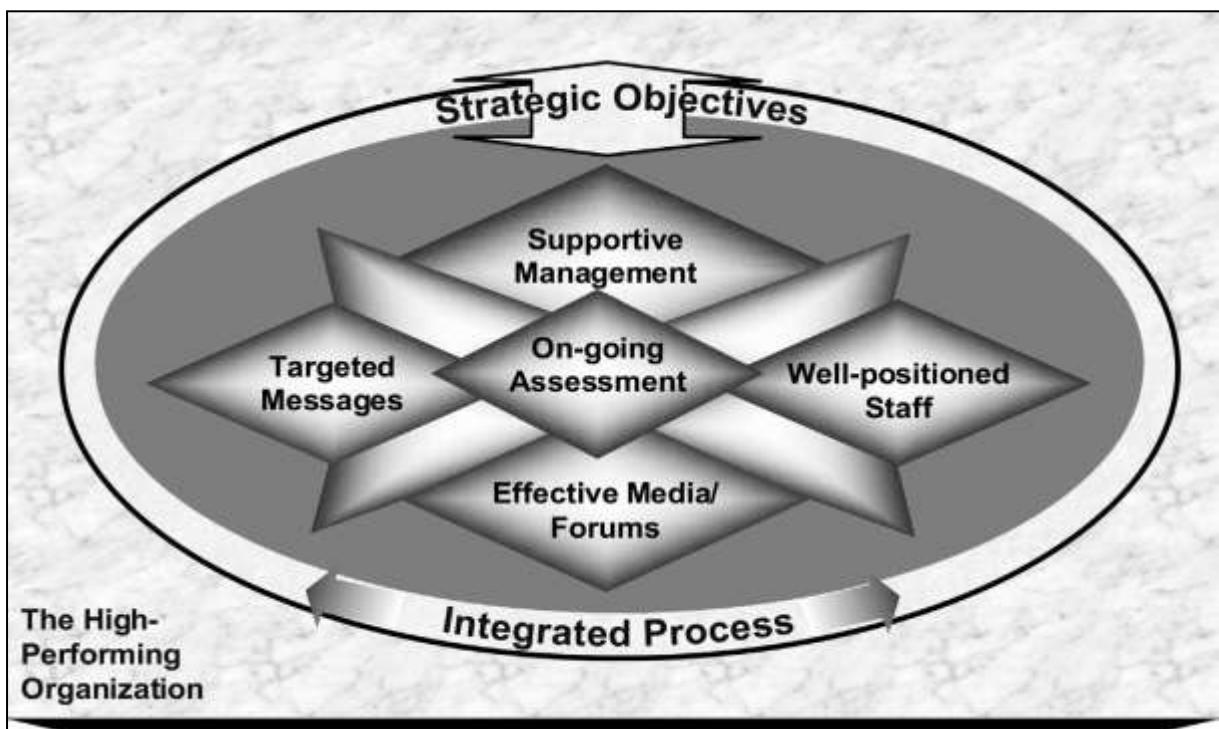
Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Van Ruler, Verčič, & Sriramesh (2007:3) defined strategic communication as the “purposeful use of communication by an organisation to fulfil its mission.” They described strategic communication as “an immature science that evolved from professions practised as crafts” but noted that, Strategic communication differs from integrated communication because its focus is how an organisation communicates across organisational endeavours. The emphasis is on the strategic application of communication and how an organisation functions as a social actor to advance its mission (Hallahan et al., 2009: 7).

White, Vanc and Stafford (2009:66) state that the competitive advantage of strategic internal communication comes not only from the obvious benefits of employee satisfaction and productivity, but also from the positive contributions that well-informed employees can make to a company's external public relations efforts. “Employees can be an organisation's best ambassadors or loudest critics, depending whether and how they get information.” Howard (1998 cited in White, Vanc and Stafford 2009:66). Effective internal communication can enhance corporate reputation and credibility, because employees are viewed as particularly credible sources by external stakeholders (Dawkins, 2004; Hannegan, 2004). Put simply, employees are the face of an organisation and have a powerful influence on organisational success.

This study is conducted within the framework of the Strategic Employee Communication Model based on the model by Barrett (2002). This model can help management understand the strategic role that communication plays in the day to day success of any organisation.

According to Barrett (2002:219) this model is also effective in explaining communication during major change. The purpose of this model is that it captures all the major components of employee communication linking them to each other and to the company's strategy and operations. The strategic employee communication model and change communication approach are designed to accomplish these goals. The model consists of the following components: (1) strategic objectives; (2) supportive management; (3) targeted messages; (4) Effective Media/Forums; (5) Well-positioned staff; (6) On-going assessment and (7) Integrated processes.

Figure 2.1 Strategic Employee Communication Model (SECM)



(Adapted from Barrett, 2002: 219)

2.7.1 Defining the Strategic Employee Communication Model (SECM)

The Strategic Employee Communication Model (SECM) (Barrett 2002:220) (Figure 1) helps Management understand the strategic role communication plays in the day-to-day success of any company as well as during major change and can help overcome the "everything" and the "publication-limited" perceptions on

communication. The model grew out of researching high-performing companies and others to find out what really works when it comes to employee communication. From these examples Barrett (2002) created a best practice composite definition of what successful companies are doing. While no company would exemplify each best practice exactly as presented, high-performing companies demonstrate many of the best practice definitions.

According to Barrett (2002: 221) the model captures all of the major components of employee communications linking them to each other and to the company's strategy and operations. Thus, it works analytically to break employee communication down into manageable, recognisable parts; at the same time, it shows how intertwined and interdependent each part is when employee communication is positioned strategically as it must be to facilitate change. The traditional communication components, such as messages and media are at the heart of the model, but the direct link to the company's strategic objectives and the business planning process and the overlay of supportive management with on-going assessment of individual and company communication move the model from the tactical to the strategic level.

From the research into examples of effective employee communication, the following best practice processes emerged which can be aligned to strategic employee communication at DUT:

- (a) **Strategic objectives.** In high-performing companies, employee communication reinforces the company's strategic objectives. There should be a one-to-one correlation between what the company has established as its strategic objectives and what is listed as the objectives for the communications. In addition, the communications must be structured to translate the central strategic messages (from vision to performance or financial goals) to all employees. The DUT is currently in the process of finalising its strategic plan which clearly states its mission, vision and values. However, the university does not have an approved communication policy, twelve years after the merger.

- (b) **Supportive management.** Top-level and mid-level management must be directly involved in and assume responsibility for communications up, down, and across the organisation. In a major change situation as well as for day-to-day operations, communication is not just what the communication staff does. Managers must model the behaviour they expect of their employees, the old adage of “walking the talk.” They set the tone for an open or closed flow of information. Without them, the channels of communication cannot flow freely. At the DUT staff receive communication mostly from their line managers, an example of such would be the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic’s office that will communicate/filter information down to the Executive Deans for further transmission to Academic Heads of Department to the academic staff.
- (c) **Targeted messages.** Targeted messages are very simply, information tailored to the audience (i.e. messages in different words for different people when necessary), so that the information is relevant and meaningful, at the same time that it is consistent. Thus, each business unit or division must tailor the important messages to its employees, and if necessary, convert the overall message of the corporate center into the digestible and actionable messages the employees can understand and act upon. The DUT’s staff portal has specific electronic message boards for targeted messages, example, DUT Matters – for DUT related messages, DUT Classified exists for staff wanting to advertise their personal items, DUT Research – messages are targeted for the active researchers at the DUT and DUT Faculties exist for faculty related messages.
- (d) **Effective media/forums.** Effective employee communication uses all vehicles to reach its audiences, but most importantly, it relies on direct, face-to-face communication over indirect, print or electronic media. Thus, interpersonal communication training, meeting management, and facilitation skills are necessary for all managers.
- (e) **Well-positioned staff.** The communication staff needs to be close to the most important business issues, involved in the strategic and business planning processes. They must have a “seat at the table.” Being a member of

the senior management team allows the senior communication officer to understand the company's strategy and to participate in the decision making. In addition, the communication staff should be seen as facilitators of change not just as producers of publications. From the time of the merger, at the DUT the Director of Corporate Affairs served on the Senior Management Team.

- (f) **On-going assessment.** The effectiveness of the company's communication needs to be measured company-wide formally and frequently against clearly defined goals on an ongoing basis and throughout the key stages of any major change. In addition, communication effectiveness needs to be evaluated as part of each employee's individual performance appraisal with the appropriate recognition for excellence.
- (g) **Integrated processes.** Communication needs to be integrated into the business processes with communication milestones included in the business plan and as part of the business planning process. Thus, communication should be placed on the agenda of meetings and built into the management discussion of strategic objectives and planning.

By using the model and best practice definitions, Barrett (2002:231) concludes that a company can create very tangible communication goals for employee communication improvement and the change communication program. The model serves as a tool to approach employee communication as a company would any analysis that is, breaking the whole down into manageable, carefully defined parts. These definitions can serve as a benchmark against which companies can measure the potential need for communications improvement in their organisation so that employee communication will help in facilitating the change program.

2.8 THE STRATEGIC EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION MODEL (SECM) TO FACILITATE CHANGE

The above clearly shows that internal communication is a priority during the process of organisational change. To illustrate the role of communication this information is used to construct a questionnaire by incorporating the strategic employee communication model to evaluate how internal communication facilitated change in during the transition process at the DUT.

Barrett (2002:222) states that the design of the change communication program needs to grow out of the size of the change program and the company's current communication practices. Is the proposed change major or incremental? Is the change company-wide or business unit specific? How many employees are involved and affected? How effective are the current communication practices? Are they strong enough to carry a major change program? If the changes are major and essential to company performance, companies cannot afford not to improve the current communication practices if they find them lacking. They must devote the necessary time and resources required to assess and improve employee communication before they launch the change program; otherwise, the change program will never get off of the ground.

Barrett (2002:222) further states that the specifics of any change communication program are particular to the company; therefore, they must come from inside the organisation and not from outside. No one should force the Strategic Employee Communication Model or any other model on a company from the outside. Instead, the Strategic Employee Communication Model and change communication approach should be used to work from the inside of the organisation to determine what is needed and to design the appropriate change communication program to fit those needs. Thus, the model provides an analytical tool to diagnose a company's communication strengths and weaknesses and to frame the change communication plan and resulting program.

The components of the SECM were used to analyse whether the newly merged university had taken into consideration the need to communicate its strategic goals

and objectives to staff members. The SECM further analysed whether management were directly involved in the communication of information to staff during the change. The SECM indicated that communication tailored to its audience is an important component as information needs to be dispersed to different people using different words without changing the meaning. At the DUT there were multi-language users. The model analysed whether communication was tailored for those staff members that did not use English as their first language. The SECM states that effective employee communication uses all vehicles to reach its audiences. The model analysed whether staff were communicated with face to face or via an alternate channel. The model also analysed whether senior communication staff at the DUT were well positioned.

Finally, Barrett (2002:222), states that the action plan can be looked at as one way to map out a company's program, one that has been successful and that can be adapted to a company's particular needs. Each of the three phases contains the specific actions that are to be taken to implement the change communication program. They may vary slightly from company to company, and they will evolve as the change program evolves; thus, the feedback loops indicate information coming in that influences the action plan once the change program is under way. Any action plan is a living plan although phases and most of the actions represented here will need to occur in most change programs.

In conclusion Barrett (2002:222) states that the first phase of analysis and strategy development is critical to the success of any change program. The analytical phase for change communication is often the phase management will omit or minimize because they fail to recognize its significance, fail to see communication planning as strategic, or fail to see their way clear to allowing the time and attention it needs; however, without the careful analysis of the current employee communication situation, the company is shooting in the dark in developing the change communication program. It does not know where the communication breakdowns are and how best to reach the organisation with the key change messages.

The abovementioned literature indicates that internal communication is a priority during the process of organisational change. The components of the SECM were

used to construct the questionnaire to analyse the pivotal role that communication played during the transition process at the DUT.

2.9 SUMMARY

Internal communication is a process within all organisations. Information is distributed to all stakeholders whose welfare depends on the organisation's success. Therefore internal communication is primarily about sharing information to a person or group directly involved with representing the organisation.

The review of literature has revealed that managing employee communication as a strategic process is vital to an organisation's survival and growth. Organisations that have effective internal communication systems thrive. The literature reviewed also emphasises the relevance of the information flow within an organisation.

Literature reviewed with regard to change management indicated that employees undergo significant levels of anxiety, stress and damage to their morale when faced with merger. If change is managed properly employees have a solid understanding of why change is happening. Communication is an integral part of this process.

Reviewed literature on organisational culture indicated that an employee's thoughts, feelings and sense of value are guided by ideas, meaning and beliefs of a cultural (socially shared) nature. This therefore clarifies that organisational culture is an important way to operate especially if the process has resulted in success.

This chapter reviewed the concepts of communication, organisational communication and internal communication. These categories of communication takes place within an organisation that involves coordinating the activities and interpretations of multiple people into an organised, recognisable form.

This chapter used the Strategic Employee Communication Model to understand the role that communication played in the day to day operations of an organisation and highlighted the role communication played during the change process at the DUT.

The next chapter outlines the methodology used in the research, namely, the research framework, the questions posed, the data collection methods and instruments and processes are discussed in detail.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a theoretical framework for understanding the impact of internal communication during the transition process of an institution. This chapter will provide an account of the methodology used in this research. The chapter will describe the research framework, the questions to be posed, the data collection methods/ instruments and processes to be discussed.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:2) research is the process of finding solutions to a problem after a thorough study and analysis of the situational factors. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:2) indicate that research is a process that involves obtaining scientific knowledge by means of various objective methods and procedures. An overview of the different roles of research indicated that the primary purpose of research is to acquire a knowledge base.

The problem statement of this study was to investigate “***the role of internal communication in the transition process at the Durban University of Technology (DUT).***”

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was conducted within a cross sectional, descriptive study, using a quantitative research paradigm. Du Plooy (2002:81) maintains that a research design is a plan of how the research is going to be conducted, indicating who or what is involved and where and when the study will take place. Remenyi and Bannister (2012:126) further iterate that a research design is a plan created by the researcher by which he or she intends to answer the research question in a convincing manner. Sekaran and Bougie (2013:95) concur that a research design is a blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data, based on the research questions of the study.

Furthermore Du Plooy (2002:82) states that a quantitative design is suitable when we want to count and/or measure variables. The objectives of a quantitative design are to predict, describe and explain quantities, degrees and relationships and to generalise from a sample to the population by collecting numerical data. eg surveys, self-administered questionnaires and experimental designs.

Data was collected using a questionnaire survey. According to Du Plooy (2002:170) a survey enables us to collect large amounts of data about variables such as people's lifestyles, attitudes, demographics and motives. Such data collection is relatively inexpensive, may occur in realistic settings and is not necessarily limited by geographical boundaries. The questionnaire for this study was designed to obtain information from academics and administrative staff on their perceptions, attitudes and preferences regarding internal communication during the change process. The questionnaire further sought to inquire about the strategic role played in helping an organisation achieve its goals during a change process. Mail surveys and self-administered questionnaires were directed to the accessible population consisting of DUT academic and administrative staff members.

Remenyi and Bannister (2012: 125) indicate that a questionnaire is a data collection instrument which contains a list of questions. The questions may be a collection of highly structured issues requiring a tick box type reply or it may contain open ended questions in which the informant may supply his or her comments. Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 147) state that a questionnaire is a pre-formulated written set of questions to which the respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives.

According to Du Plooy (2002: 170) in a mail survey, a self-administered questionnaire is sent to individuals in the sample which they fill in and return by the given date. In this study the researcher had to take into account that not all staff in the accessible population had access to electronic mail and internet therefore self-administered questionnaires were hand delivered to the participants.

Du Plooy (2002: 170) further states that a technologically more advanced version of mail surveys is:

1. A computer disk that contains a self- administered questionnaire which they complete on their personal computers;
2. An email containing the questionnaire as an attachment;
3. An email containing a hyperlink that would take the user onto the internet to fill in the questionnaire.

For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was distributed via email in a Micro Soft (MS) Word attachment, through a hyperlink and hand delivered.

3.2.1 Data Variables

The survey research design was utilised to accumulate the necessary information regarding the extent that employees of the DUT perceived the internal communication system to have contributed towards an effectively merged university.

According to Du Plooy (2002: 171) the survey research design has its strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of this research design include: low cost per respondent; a large sample can be drawn; wide areas can be covered; responses can be standardised and it is the best method for sensitive topics.

3.2.2 Study Design

The researcher is an employee of the university, in which the research was undertaken. The researcher in most cases hand delivered and collected the questionnaires from the respondents thus reducing the cost to the researcher. Since the researcher is a long standing employee of the university, staff members familiar with the researcher and were willing to participate in the study.

3.3 TARGET POPULATION

3.3.1 Defining the Target Population

It is often not practical, feasible nor financially viable to investigate an entire population. In such cases we need to draw a sample. Sekaran and Bougie (2013:241) define a sample as a subject of the population. It comprises some members selected from it. In other words, some but not all elements of the population form the sample. A sample is thus the subgroup or subset of the population. By studying the sample the researcher should be able to draw conclusions that are generalised to the population of interest.

Du Plooy (2002:100) states that the term population in sampling not only refers to people but can also be defined as any group or aggregate of individuals, groups, organisations, social artefacts/objects or social interactions or events. He further states that in quantitative research a sample of the population must be drawn in such a way that it is representative of that population. All administrative and academic staff members from across the six faculties and seven campuses were selected. Staff were chosen on the basis that they were under the employ of the DUT from 2002 and that they had experienced the merging of the two technikons and the transition from Technikons to a University of Technology.

Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 240) indicate that population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate. Babbie (2013: 115) defines population for a study as that group (usually of people) about whom we want to draw conclusions. Welman *et al* (2005: 55) define population as a group of potential participants to whom you may want to generalise the results of a study.

Welman *et al* (2005: 126) further define a target population as the population to which the researcher ideally would like to generalise his or her results. Du Plooy (2002: 101) defines a target population as the actual population to which we want to generalise findings. A target population consisting of one thousand, three hundred

and ninety seven (1397) staff members who were employed at the university since 2002 were selected.

3.4 SAMPLING METHOD/SIZE

3.4.1 What is sampling

Sampling according to Trobia (2008: 784) is the selection of a given number of units of analysis (people, households, firms, etc.), called cases, from a population of interest. Generally, the sample size (n) is chosen in order to reproduce, on a small scale, some characteristics of the whole population (N). In this study, the sample population consisted of four hundred (400) staff members from the administrative and academic sector across the campuses.

3.4.2. Probability samples and non-probability samples

Welman *et al* (2005: 56) further break down the sample to be distinguished between probability samples and non-probability samples. Welman *et al* (2005) state that in the case of probability sampling we can determine the probability that any element or member of the population will be included in the sample and in non-probability sampling by contrast we cannot specify this probability. Elements which have a chance of being included have a probability that exceeds zero.

3.4.3 Purposive Sampling

Welman *et al* (2005:69) indicate that in purposive sampling researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population. According to Babbie (2013: 128), sometimes it is appropriate to select a sample on the basis of knowledge of a population, its elements and the purpose of the study. Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 252) state that instead of obtaining information from those who are most readily or conveniently available, it might sometimes become necessary to obtain information

from specific target groups. The sampling here is confined to specific types of people who can provide the desired information, either because they are the only ones who have it, or they conform to some criteria set by the researcher.

For the purpose of this study four hundred (400) staff members at DUT from the administrative and academic staff ambit and across the seven campuses were targeted. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 400 staff members as indicated in the sample. The study identified those staff members who had been employed at the university since the merger in 2002.

3.4.4 Size of Sample

According to Du Plooy (2002:101) due to constraints such as time, cost and personnel we may not always have access to the actual population to which we want to generalise findings. Therefore before drawing a sample we need to make a clear distinction between the target population and the accessible population.

In terms of the large sample to be drawn the sample size was predetermined. The accessible population was drawn from the seven campuses across the university, namely: Steve Biko Campus, ML Sultan Campus, Ritson Campus, City Campus, Brickfield Campus, situated in Durban and Riverside Campus and Indumiso Campus situated in Pietermaritzburg.

3.5 MEASURING INSTRUMENT

3.5.1 Questionnaires

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:147) a questionnaire is a preformulated set of questions to which the respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives. They further state that questionnaires are most useful as a data collection method, especially when large numbers of people are to be reached in geographical regions and they are a popular method of collecting data

because researchers can obtain information fairly easily, and the questionnaire responses are easily coded.

Questionnaires usually contain closed and open ended questions. An opened ended question is categorised as allowing the respondent to answer the question in their own words, Du Plooy (2002: 138). Welman *et al* (2005: 174) indicate that an open ended question is one in which the interviewer asks a question without any prompting with regards to the range of answers expected. The respondents reply is noted verbatim. A closed ended question according to Du Plooy (2002: 138) contains a fixed number of answers from which the respondent has to select one. A closed ended question is one which offers the respondent a range of answers to choose from (Welman *et al* 2005: 174).

Questionnaires are generally less expensive and time consuming than interviews and observation, but they also introduce a much larger chance of nonresponse and nonresponse error. Questionnaires are generally designed to collect large numbers of quantitative data. They can be administered personally, mailed to the respondent or electronically distributed (Sekaran and Bougie 2013:147).

Welman *et al* (2005: 153) indicate in their literature that when compiling a questionnaire the researcher should take the eyesight and the literacy level of the intended respondents into consideration. Not only should the intended respondents be able to read and write, but they should also be able to follow instructions. Du Plooy (2002: 170) states that the use of a self-administered questionnaire also implies that certain individual in the sample may not be able to answer the questions, either due to unfamiliarity with the language used in the questionnaire or illiteracy.

In this study when designing the questionnaire the researcher took into consideration the computer literacy level and whether the staff member had access to a networked computer. Staff belonging to the labourer workforce at the DUT did not readily have access to internet or email facilities nor did they possess adequate computer skills. A further inclusion criteria for staff to qualify to participate in the survey was that staff members were required to be in the employ of the DUT prior to 2002 and during the

time of the merger. These factors were carefully considered when the questionnaire was being drafted and during the distribution phase.

3.5.2 Questionnaire Design

Collecting data via a self-administered questionnaire (by mail or by computer) means that the researcher is not present. When designing such a questionnaire, the researcher has to give careful attention to wording the items, and the types of items formulated, including the formatting and pre-coding of questionnaires (Du Plooy 2002:172)

According to Welman *et al* (2005: 174) when designing a questionnaire, the researcher should seek as much previous research on the topic or related topics as possible. Questionnaire from previous studies should then become part of the input into the questionnaire design process.

Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 149) state that sound questionnaire design principles should focus on three areas. The first relates to the wording of the questionnaire. The second refers to the planning of the issues with regard to how the variables will be categorised, scaled and coded after receipt of the responses. The third pertains to the general appearance of the questionnaire. All three are important issues in questionnaires design because they can minimize bias in research.

Matrix questions consist of a number of closed-ended questions, with each question option scaled. Respondents are asked to select the option that reflects the attitude, opinion or judgment. The same scale is repeated for each question or statement e.g. Likert Scale (Du Plooy 2002: 140).

This study utilised Likert styled questions. According to Du Plooy (2002: 128) when using a Likert scale, subjects as respondents are asked to rate a particular statement by selecting one of these responses: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree, therefore a Likert scale assesses the degree to which respondents agree or disagree with statements about a specific topic or issue. Sekaran and Bougie (2013:211) define the Likert scale as a scale designed to examine how

strongly respondents agree with a statement on a five point scale with the following anchors: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

3.5.3 Questionnaire Format

The format of the questionnaire is just as important as the nature and the wording of the questions asked (Babbie 2013: 237). Du Plooy (2002: 172) further states that careful attention has to be given to the wording of the types of items formulated, including the formatting and pre-coding of the questionnaire.

Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 150) state that the language of the questionnaire should be approximate the level of understanding of the respondent. The choice of words will depend of their educational level. It is essential to word the questions in a way that understood by the respondent. If some questions are either not understood or interpreted differently by the respondent, the research will obtain the wrong answers to the questions and responses will thus be bias. Hence the questions asked, the language used, and the wording should be appropriate to tap respondents attitudes, perceptions and feelings.

In this study, the questionnaire begins with questions regarding biographical data. Then to explore the perceptions, attitudes and preferences of administrative and academic staff a series of closed ended questions were asked, the questionnaire then concludes with opened ended questions. This survey design was chosen because the advantages of using closed questions are that they allow the respondents to make quick decisions to choose among the several alternates before them and they also help the researcher to code the information easily for subsequent analysis (Sekaran and Bougie 2013: 150).

However, some respondents may find even well delineated categories in a closed question rather confining and might avail themselves of the opportunity to make additional comments. This is the reason why many questionnaires end with a final open-ended question that invites respondents to comment on topics that might not have been covered fully or adequately (Sekaran and Bougie 2013: 150).

3.6 RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Research data is any material collected, observed or created for the purpose of analysis to generate original research results irrespective of the format of data. It maybe be digital, paper based in other forms (Research Data 2013). Durnham (2012:1) is in agreement with this as he states that research data, unlike other types of information, is collected, observed, or created, for purposes of analysis to produce original research results.

Research data is defined as recorded factual material commonly retained by and accepted in the scientific community as necessary to validate research findings; although the majority of such data is created in digital format, all research data is included irrespective of the format in which it is created (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) (2012).

Data can be collected in a variety of ways, in different settings field or lab and from different sources (Sekaran and Bougie 2013: 116)

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 113) data can be gathered from primary or secondary sources. Primary data refers to information collected first hand by the researcher on the variables of the interest for the specific purpose of the study. Welman *et al* (2005: 149) concur that primary data are original data collected by the researcher for the purpose of his or her own study at hand.

Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 113) state that secondary data refers to information gathered from sources that already exist. Welman *et al* (2005: 149) state that secondary data are information collected by individuals or agencies and institutions other than the researcher him or herself.

Some examples of sources of primary data are individuals, focus groups, panel of respondents specifically set up by the researcher and from whom opinions may be sought on specific issues from time to time, or some unobtrusive sources such as a trash can. Data can also be obtained from secondary sources, for example,

company records or archives, government publications, industry analyses offered by the media, websites, and the internet and so on.

Welman *et al* (2005: 134) state that each data collection method and measuring instrument has its advantages and drawbacks. They further state that what counts as an advantage for one may qualify as a drawback for another and *vice-versa*. Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 116) state that problems researched with the use of appropriate methods greatly enhance the value of the research.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 116) data collection methods include:

- interviews (face to face interviews, telephone interviews, computer assisted interviews and interviews through electronic media);
- observation of individuals and events, with or without videotaping or audio recording;
- questionnaires which can be personally administered, sent through the mail, or electronically administered;
- and a variety of motivational techniques such as projective tests.

For the purpose of this study, the primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire which was emailed and at times was personally administered to the sampled population.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

3.7.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation

According to Du Plooy (2002: 93) the analysis of data is a very crucial step in the research process, because the analysis and interpretation of data forms the basis of conclusions and recommendations. They also influence whether or not recommendations will be implemented in a particular study.

Remenyi and Bannister (2012:118) state that the data analysis is the phase in the research process where the data collected is considered, processed and tested/assessed for meaning in terms of an hypothesis, proposition, theory or formulation of a new theory.

Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 24) concur that in the data analysis step, the data gathered are statistically analysed to see if the hypotheses that were generated have been supported.

Welman *et al* (2005: 241) state that after research has been conducted according to its planned design, the obtained results must be interpreted. Therefore the design of the study also concerns the statistical analysis and interpretation of the appropriate data obtained for investigating the research hypothesis by measurement of variables.

The issue of data collection was carefully considered when designing this study. The data collected had to answer the problem statement “***the role of internal communication in the transition process at the Durban University of Technology (DUT).***”

3.7.2 Statistical Analysis

For this study, quantitative data was analysed using the SPSS for Windows (version 21.0). SPSS interprets to mean Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. SPSS is available for Windows as well as for Mac OS X.

According to Coakes & Steed (2009) SPSS is a sophisticated piece of software used by social scientists and other professionals for statistical analysis. SPSS serves as a practical introduction to new users and also allows those wishing to undertake more advanced analysis to work their way systematically through each stage. SPSS is suitable across a number of disciplines, including business, health, social sciences, environmental science and geography.

“Once we have collected the data, we have to make sense of it. In order to do this we must organise and code it, so that we can analyse it” (Welman *et al* 2005: 227). Coding means that we have to identify the variable that we want to analyse statistically. “Once we have coded all the data it can be captured on a computer in order to proceed with the analysis.”

Quantitative data analysis involves a statistical analysis of the obtained data. Depending on the level of measurement used for the variables of the research study, specific statistical procedures are applied. These procedures include the mode, median, mean, frequency correlation coefficients, chi-squares, chaid analysis, correspondence analysis, discriminant analysis, standard deviation, z-scores, t-scores and F-tests. (Welman *et al* 2005: 241). This study used the chi-squares testing procedure. According to Trobia (2008:96) the chi-square (χ^2) is a test of significance for categorical variables. Significance tests let the researcher know what the probability is that a given sample estimate actually mirrors the entire population. The chi-square can be used as a goodness-of-fit test, in univariate analysis, or as a test of independence, in bivariate analysis. The latter is the most generally used.

Factor analysis is a statistical technique whose main goal is data reduction. According to Cramer & Howitt (2004:64) factor analysis is used to determine the extent to which a number of related variables can be grouped together into a smaller number of factors which summarize the linear relationship between those 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. Factor analysis was therefore used in this study.

Cramer and Howitt (2004:12) state that Bartlett's test of sphericity is used in factor analysis to determine whether the correlations between the variables, examined simultaneously, do not differ significantly from zero. Factor analysis is usually conducted when the test is significant indicating that the correlations do differ from zero. It is also used in multivariate analysis of variance and covariance to determine whether the dependent variables are significantly correlated. If the dependent variables are not significantly correlated, an analysis of variance or covariance

should be carried out. The larger the sample size, the more likely it is that this test will be significant. The test gives a chi-square statistic. Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to test significance in this study.

3.8 PRE-TESTING

The questionnaire was initially tested amongst a sample of ten (10) staff members from the academic and administrative divisions. Feedback received from the pre-test, noted that the questionnaire lacked detail in terms of clarity of the tools of communication utilised at the DUT during the transition phase.

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

When an organisation is threatened by environmental changes such as a merger the need for communication increases. Internal communication has a pivotal role to play during change or a transformation process. Firstly, although internal communication takes place in all higher education institutions, this study focused on internal communication tools at the DUT and this limited the scope of the study. The findings of this study can only be representative of the effectiveness of the internal communication tools employed by the DUT during the transitioned process and therefore, cannot be generalised to other higher education institutions in South Africa.

3.10 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

According to Wiles, Crow, Heath & Charles (2008:417) the concept of confidentiality is closely connected with anonymity in that anonymity is one way in which confidentiality is operationalised. However, anonymity of data does not cover all the issues raised by concerns about confidentiality; confidentiality also means not disclosing any information gained from an interviewee deliberately or accidentally in ways that might identify an individual. In a research context, confidentiality means:

- (1) not discussing information provided by an individual with others, and

- (2) presenting findings in ways that ensure individuals cannot be identified (chiefly through anonymisation).

For the purpose of this study the researcher undertook to ensure confidentiality and anonymity by ensuring that the questionnaire was designed in such a way that it did not ask the respondent to identify themselves. Also respondents were assured via the informed consent letter that all information gathered would be confidential and not shared with a third party.

3.11 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

According to Babbie (2013: 191) validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration. He further states that reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, yields the same results every-time (Babbie 2013: 188).

Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 225) concur when they state that reliability is a test of how consistently a measuring instrument measures whatever concept it is measuring and validity is a test of how well an instrument that is develop measures the particular concept it is intended to measure. In other words validity is concern with whether we measure the right concepts and reliability with stability and consistency of measurement.

Several types of validity tests are used to test the goodness of measures viz: content validity; criterion-related validity and construct validity (Sekaran and Bougie 2013: 225).

Babbie (2013: 193) refers to content validity as how much a measure covers the range of meanings included within a concept. Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 226) indicate that content validity ensures that the measure includes an adequate and representative set of items that tap the concept.

Welman *et al* (2005:144) indicate that criterion related validity refers to the degree which diagnostic and selection measurements/test correctly predict the relevant criterion. Babbie (2013: 193) states that criterion related validity, sometimes called predictive validity, is based on some external criterion. Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 226) indicate it is established when the measure differentiates individuals on a criterion it is expected to predict.

Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 227) indicate that construct validity testifies to how well the results obtained from the use of the measure fit the theories around which test it is designed. Welman *et al* (2005:142) emphasise that “when we measure something with an instrument, the instrument we use to measure the variable must measure that which it is supposed to measure”. Babbie (2013:192) indicates that construct validity is based on the logical relationship among variables.

Face validity was employed in this study. According to Nevo (1985 as cited in Bornstein 2004:368) face validity is an estimate of the degree to which a measure is clearly and unambiguously tapping the construct it purports to assess. Thus, face validity refers to the “obviousness” of a test - the degree to which the purpose of the test is apparent to those taking it. Tests wherein the purpose is clear, even to naïve respondents, are said to have *high face validity*; tests wherein the purpose is unclear have low face validity. The questionnaire was developed from the objectives, firstly, to examine organisational and other communication tools available at the DUT, secondly, to evaluate staff perceptions regarding tools utilised during internal communication and, thirdly, to determine how internal communication has facilitated the transition process at DUT. Findings were validated through the pre-testing of the questionnaire. Ten (10) staff members, who wouldn't participate in this study, were randomly chosen to read through the questionnaire to identify ambiguity or gaps.

In this study the reliability of this research was ensured by making use of properly constructed questions. To explore the perceptions, attitudes and preferences of administrative and academic staff with regard to the problem statement “***The role of internal communication in the transition process at the Durban University of Technology (DUT)***” - a series of closed ended questions were posed to respondents. The questionnaire ends with a few opened ended questions allowing

respondents to comment on topics that might not have been covered fully or adequately.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Researcher complied with all ethical principles as prescribed by the DUT in order to uphold the integrity of the research. The purpose of the study was explained to all respondents in a covering letter. Each respondent was assured of confidentiality and anonymity. All research information gathered from other sources, publications or other individuals, have been accurately acknowledged in this study.

3.13 SUMMARY

This chapter provided an account of the methodology used in this research. It provided a brief overview of the purpose of the study in terms of the research framework, the questions posed, the data collection methods/analysis, instruments and processes were discussed.

The research design maps out the plan for the research undertaken. The methodology section highlighted the purpose of the defining the population, the size of sample, the sample selection, the data collection methods, how the data was analysed.

The sample was obtained by using purposive sampling and consisted of all administrative and academic staff across the six faculties and across the seven campuses. Data was collected via survey questionnaires and the collected data was analysed using SPSS software.

The limitations of this study were also highlighted in this chapter. The following chapter will look at the findings of the study, including a discussion and interpretation of the results.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three outlined the methodology for this research. This chapter provides a summary of the analysis of data gathered during the research process and presents the results and discusses the findings obtained from the questionnaires from staff. This analysis presents data and arguments from the questionnaires which were used to collect data. The following highlights themes that were derived from the research questionnaire:

Theme 1 – Line Management Communication

Theme 2 - Tools of Communication

Theme 3 - Internal Communication Systems (ICS)

Theme 4 - Change relating to the Transition Process

This chapter further:

- implements the research design and methodology outlined in Chapter Three;
- considers interpretation of DUT staff communications or the lack thereof;
- discusses the analysis of empirical materials as the raw data are converted into final patterns of themes and categories using the Strategic Employee Communication Model.

The findings of this study were deduced from 128 responses at DUT, from staff over the seven campuses, therefore the response rate was 32%. The questionnaire used a Likert scale and opened ended questions to determine attitudes with regard to internal communication during the transition phase of the DUT. Data from the questionnaires were captured on MS Excel so that it can be analysed using SPSS version 21.0. The questions posed were designed to specific themes/sections which are discussed below. For the purpose of this study, questionnaires were used as data collection instrument. The responses from DUT academic and administrative staff members' were summarised with responses placed under the headings: Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. In the discussion in

this chapter percentages are used to indicate staff responses. Data collected from the responses were analysed using SPSS version 21.0.

Interactive open ended questions were employed to uncover whether DUT staff were communicated with during the transition phases and to elicit responses relating to the following issues pertinent to communication during transition: Challenges experienced during transition, communication tools utilised, envisaged changes for current communication strategies, preferences for mode of information sharing, adequacy of information sharing and impact of the merger.

The results of all data collected are presented in the form of graphs, cross-tabulations and figures. In addition, this chapter sets out to answer the following objectives of the study:

- Examine organisational and other communication tools available at the DUT
- Evaluate staff perceptions regarding tools utilised during internal communication
- Determine how internal communication has facilitated the transition process at DUT

The study employed specific strategies such as the use of the Likert scale and open questions to ensure that the main objectives were answered by the data collection and analysis processes, which are summarised below. Data collection techniques focused primarily on the questionnaire which focused on staff experiences and perceptions during the transition phases (appendix 4).

In terms of data analysis techniques, the data from the questionnaires were analysed by specific measurement criteria using SPSS.

Finally, coherence between different data sources was investigated to identify patterns of meaning and to describe the emerging themes in order to explain specific patterns and phenomena.

The questionnaire consisted of 43 items, with a level of measurement at a nominal or an ordinal level. The questionnaire was divided into 6 sections as illustrated below:

SECTION A - Biographical data

SECTION B - Line management communication

SECTION C - Tools of communication

SECTION D - Internal communication systems

SECTION E - Change relating to the transition process

SECTION F - Open Ended Questions

Data from the questionnaires were analysed and organised into the following headings/themes:

- Biographical
- Theme 1: Line management communication
- Theme 2: Tools of communication
- Theme 3: Internal communication systems (ICS)
- Theme 4: Change relating to the transition process
- Open Ended Questions – which questioned the challenges, communication tools used during the transition phase, changes that staff would like to see in the current internal communication, how staff would have liked to receive information and if staff had received sufficient information from their direct supervisor during the transition process.

4.2. 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”. Cronbach’s alpha is a measurement of reliability. The computation of Cronbach’s alpha is based on the number of items on the survey (k) and the ratio of the average inter-item covariance to the average item variance (Kerr, Hall and Kuzoh, 2004:12)

The table below reflects the Cronbach’s alpha score for all the items that constituted the questionnaire.

Table 4.1 - The Cronbach’s alpha score for all the items that constituted the Questionnaire.

	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
SECTION B - Line management communication	7	.881
SECTION C - Tools of communication	7	.618
SECTION D - Internal communication systems	10	.894
SECTION E - Change relating to the transition process	4	.897
Overall	28	.905

The overall reliability score of 0.905 exceeds the recommended value of 0.70. This indicates a high (overall) degree of acceptable, consistent scoring for this research.

All of the sections have high acceptable values except Section C which has a value of 0.618 that is only slightly lower than the standard. Primary amongst the reason for this is that the construct is newly developed and would require further testing

4.3 APPLYING THE FACTOR ANALYSIS TO THE RESEARCH THEMES

Factor analysis was used to establish whether the above sections do, in fact, measure the internal communication and if the factors can then be combined to create a new variable. Factor techniques were applicable to this study in analysing

the questionnaires. The researcher attempted to find out whether communication tools were used during the transition and whether the factors facilitated a transition process at DUT.

Factor analysis is also feasible from the perspective of Bartlett's test. Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant, thus the hypothesis that the inter-correlation matrix involving these variables is an identity matrix is rejected. Thus from the perspective of Bartlett's test, factor analysis is feasible. As Bartlett's test is almost always significant, a more discriminating index of factor analysability is the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measuring of sampling adequacy. For this data set, the values are all greater than 0.50, which is very large, so the KMO also supports factor analysis.

Table 4.2 to Table 4.5 below reflect the KMO and Bartlett's Test of significant for the different sections of this research.

4.3.1 Kmo and Bartlett's Test

Table 4.2 – KMO & Bartlett's test for Line Management Communication

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.877
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	465.289
	Df	21
	Sig.	.000

Table 4.3 – KMO & Bartlett's test for Tools of Communication

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.689
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	278.959
	Df	21
	Sig.	.000

Table 4.4 – KMO & Bartlett's test for Internal Communication Systems

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.883
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	658.544
	Df	45
	Sig.	.000

Table 4.5 – KMO & Bartlett's test for Change relating to the transition process

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.837
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	314.588
	Df	6
	Sig.	.000

The factor analysis involved interpretation of the various sections as outlined in the tables above. Selections from the participants' questionnaires were divided into finer components and explained below in the rotated component matrix.

4.3.2 Rotated Component Matrix

Table 4.6 – Rotated Component Matrix: Line Management Communication

SECTION B – LINE MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION	Component
	1
Communication from the Leadership Team to staff involved in implementation was effective.	.837
Communication on changes during the transition phase was received regularly.	.865
Lines of communication were open to all members of staff.	.866
Job descriptions were communicated openly or clearly to the workforce.	.795
Internal departmental policies were clearly defined.	.789
The workforce was kept informed of new internal departmental policies.	.789
New staff members were introduced to an induction programme.	.441

Table 4.7 – Rotated Component Matrix: Tools of Communication

SECTION C – TOOLS OF COMMUNICATION	Component	
	1	2
<p>The tools of communication viz: email, newsletters, memorandums and group meeting etc. used in the post-merger phase were effective in informing staff of the transition the university was going through.</p> <p>Staff at the university were timeously communicated with via emails, newsletters, memorandums and group meetings during and after the transition period.</p> <p>Communication with staff is mostly via electronic media such as e-mail and the intranet.</p> <p>The internal electronic notice board is an effective mode to communicate current or future activities.</p> <p>The internal electronic notice board is more effective than face to face communication</p> <p>The conDUiT (internal newsletter) effectively communicates the activities of the University.</p>	.117	.915
	.213	.903
	.501	.108
	.786	.244
	.748	.382
	.526	.303

Table 4.8 – Rotated Component Matrix: Internal Communication Systems

SECTION D – INTERNAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS	Component	
	1	2
<p>Effective communication can improve productivity in the workforce.</p> <p>Internal communication systems timeously communicate notices/organisational decisions.</p> <p>Internal communication systems communicate policies of the institution more openly.</p> <p>Internal communications systems contribute to positive staff morale.</p> <p>Internal communication systems create an enabling environment where staff can develop interpersonal relationships.</p> <p>An internal communication system creates an environment that enables staff to respond timeously to notices.</p> <p>Internal communication systems promote a two-way feedback mechanism.</p> <p>Internal communication systems contribute to a positive organisational culture.</p> <p>Internal communication systems are responsive to the organisational needs.</p> <p>Internal communication systems provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between management and staff.</p>	.466	.070
	.082	.870
	.281	.887
	.481	.640
	.653	.455
	.742	.317
	.748	.206
	.837	.226
	.740	.234
	.848	.187

Table 4.9 – Rotated Component Matrix: Change Relating to the Transition Phase

SECTION E – CHANGE RELATING TO THE TRANSITION PHASE	Component
	1
Management identified and discussed actual change or major opportunities during merger process.	.897
Management created a vision and strategy to help guide the change process.	.887
Management continuously used every available tool to communicate the new vision and strategy.	.911
The culture within the organisation has facilitated change.	.813

To re-iterate factor analysis is a statistical technique whose main goal is data reduction. Factor analysis was used by the researcher to represent the questionnaires. With reference to table 4.6, table 4.7, table 4.8 and table 4.9 above the following emerged:

- The principle component analysis was used as the extraction method, and the rotation method was Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation. This is an orthogonal rotation method that minimizes the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor. It simplifies the interpretation of the factors (Steyn, Smit, Du Toit and Strasheim, 1994:161).
- Factor analysis/loading show inter-correlations between variables.
- Items of questions that loaded similarly imply measurement along a similar factor. An examination of the content of items loading at or above 0.5 (and using the higher or highest loading in instances where items cross-loaded at greater than this value) effectively measured along the various components.

It is noted that the variables that constituted the components of “Line Management Communication” (Section B) and the components of “Change relating to the transition process” (Section E) loaded perfectly along one factor. This means that the statements (variables) that constituted these components perfectly measured the components. That is, the component measured what it was that was meant to be measured.

However, only the variables that constituted the components of “Tools of Communication” (Section C) and “Internal Communication Systems” (Section D) split along 2 sub-themes (as indicated by the colour coding). One possibility is that respondents did not clearly distinguish between the questions constituting the components.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.4.1 Section A - Biographical Data

This section summarises the biographical characteristics of the respondents. The table below describes the gender distribution by age.

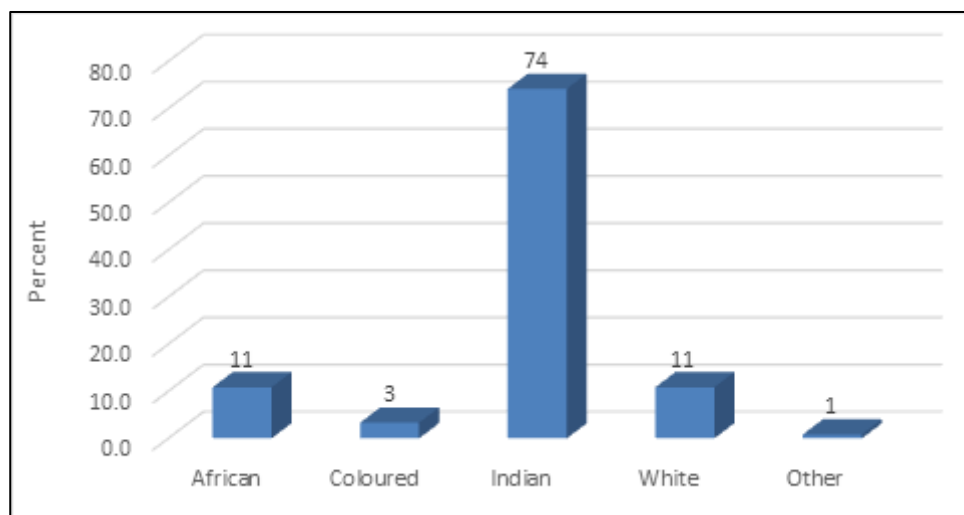
Table 4.10 - Biographical characteristics of the respondents

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Age (years)	26 – 30	Count	0	3	3
		% within Age	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	0.0%	3.9%	2.8%
		% of Total	0.0%	2.8%	2.8%
	31 – 35	Count	2	6	8
		% within Age	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	6.5%	7.9%	7.5%
		% of Total	1.9%	5.6%	7.5%
	36 – 40	Count	6	16	22
		% within Age	27.3%	72.7%	100.0%
		% within Gender	19.4%	21.1%	20.6%
		% of Total	5.6%	15.0%	20.6%
	41 – 45	Count	9	21	30
		% within Age	30.0%	70.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	29.0%	27.6%	28.0%
		% of Total	8.4%	19.6%	28.0%
	46 – 50	Count	7	12	19
		% within Age	36.8%	63.2%	100.0%
		% within Gender	22.6%	15.8%	17.8%
		% of Total	6.5%	11.2%	17.8%
	51 – 55	Count	4	11	15
		% within Age	26.7%	73.3%	100.0%
		% within Gender	12.9%	14.5%	14.0%
		% of Total	3.7%	10.3%	14.0%
	56 – 60	Count	0	4	4
		% within Age	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	0.0%	5.3%	3.7%
		% of Total	0.0%	3.7%	3.7%
60+	Count	3	3	6	
	% within Age	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	
	% within Gender	9.7%	3.9%	5.6%	
	% of Total	2.8%	2.8%	5.6%	
Total		Count	31	76	107
		% within Age	29.0%	71.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	29.0%	71.0%	100.0%

In Table 4.10 on the previous page, the ratio of males to females is approximately 3:7 (29%: 71.0%). Within the age category of 41 to 45 years, 30.0% were male. Within the category of males (only), 29.0% were between the ages of 41 to 45 years. This category of males between the ages of 41 to 45 years formed 8.4% of the total sample.

4.4.2 The figure below indicates the race group of the respondents.

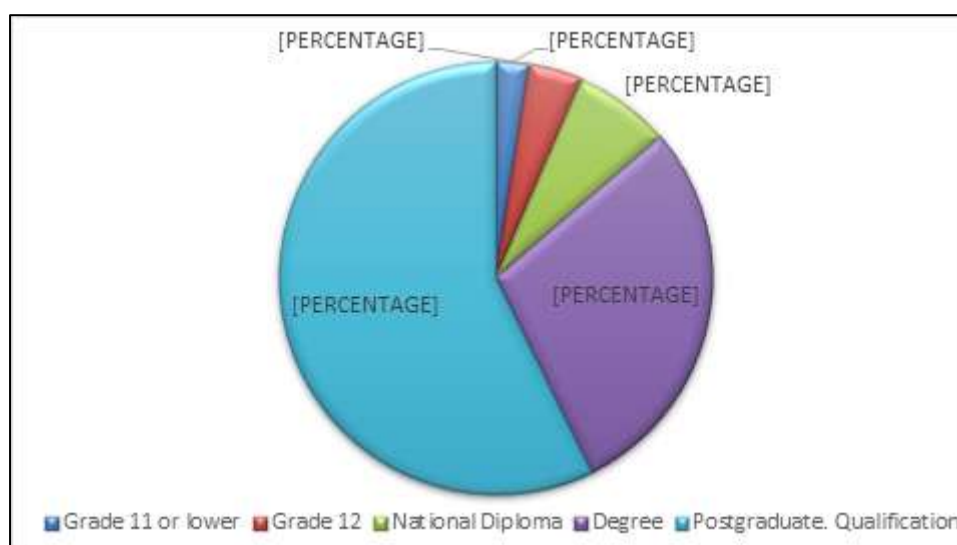
Figure 4.1 - Race group of the respondents



Approximately three-quarters (74%) of the respondents were Indian with the lowest grouping of respondents being Coloured (3%).

4.4.3 The figure below indicates the educational qualification of the respondents.

Figure 4.2 - Educational qualification of the respondents



More than half of the respondents (57%) had a post-graduate qualification. Less than 7% did not have a tertiary qualification.

4.4.4 The faculties to which the respondents belonged are shown in the table below:

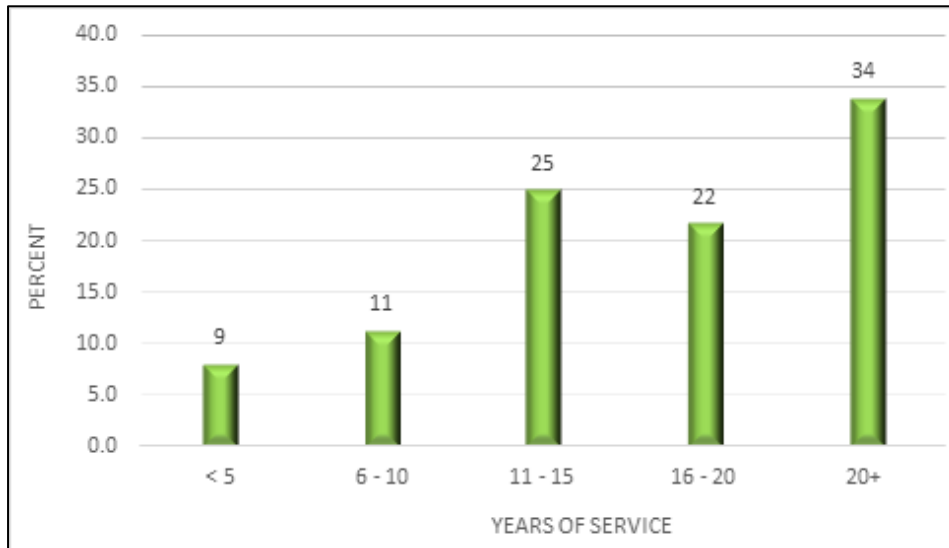
Table 4.11 - Faculties to which the respondents belonged

	Frequency	Percent
Accounting and Informatics	14	11.6
Applied Sciences	10	8.3
Arts and Design	8	6.6
Engineering and the Built Environment	8	6.6
Management Sciences	37	30.6
Health Sciences	8	6.6
Administrative	36	29.8

The faculties of Arts and Design, Engineering and the Built Environment and Health Sciences had the same number of respondents. The most amount of respondents emerged from the Faculty of Management Sciences as this is the largest faculty at the institution.

4.4.5 The total years of service of the respondents is shown below.

Figure 4.3 - Total years of service of the respondents

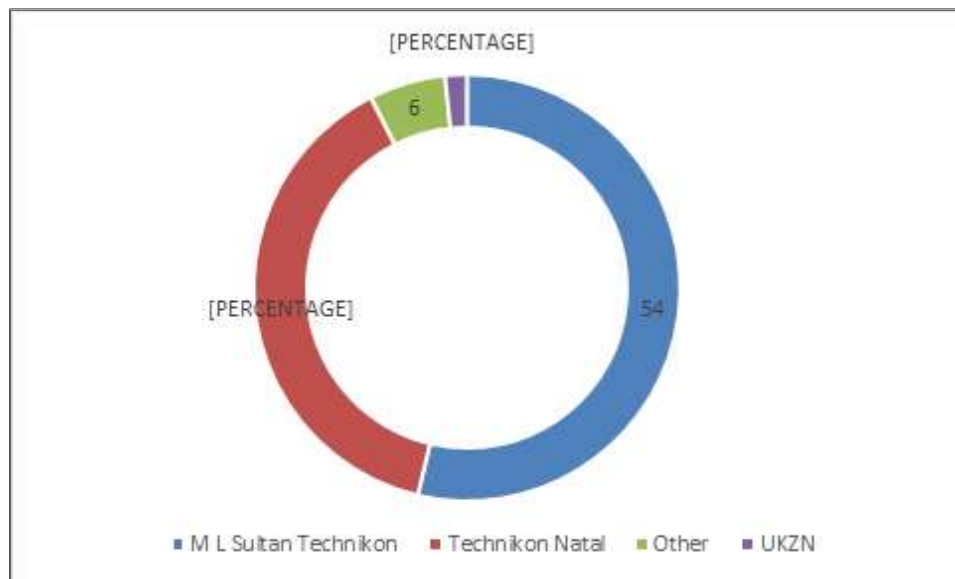


Approximately 80% of the respondents had at least 10 years of service, with a third having more than 20 years of service.

This is useful as it indicates that the respondents are experienced (and qualified) to report their opinions from a point of experience.

4.4.6 The figure below indicates the previous institutions to which the respondents belonged / or came from.

Figure 4.4 - Previous institutions to which the respondents belonged



A little more than half of the respondents (54%) were from the previous ML Sultan Technikon.

4.5 SECTION ANALYSIS

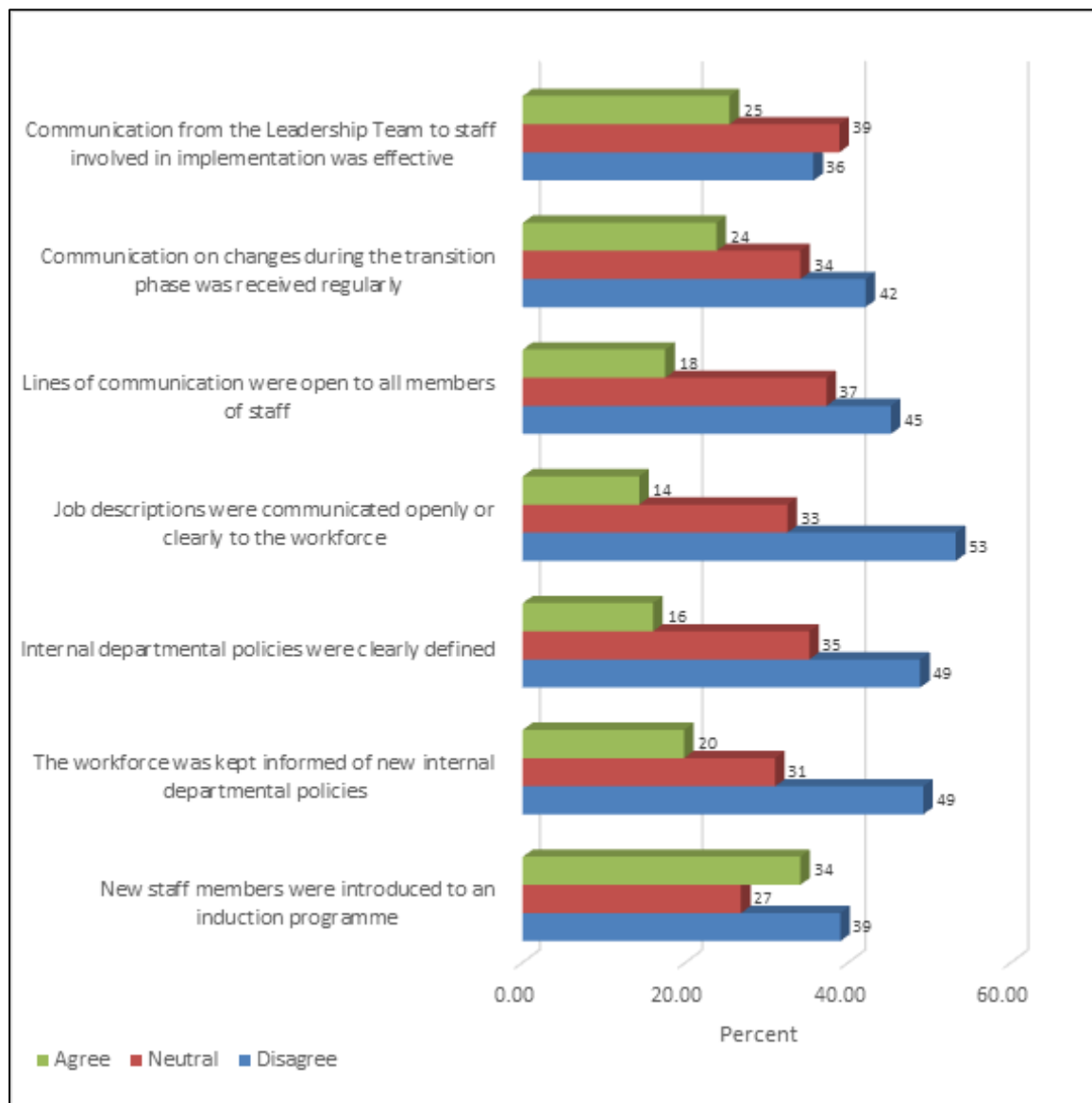
The section that follows analyses the scoring patterns of the respondents per variable per section. Levels of disagreement (negative statements) were collapsed to show a single category of “Disagree”. A similar procedure was followed for the levels of agreement (positive statements). This is allowed due to the acceptable levels of reliability.

The results are first presented using summarised percentages for the variables that constitute each section. Results are then further analysed according to the importance of the statements.

4.5.1 Theme 1: Line Management Communication

a) This section deals with the summarized scoring patterns of line management communication.

Figure 4.5 - Scoring patterns of Line Management Communication



Only 18% of respondents indicated that lines of communication were open to all members of staff, whereas 37% were neutral in their response and 45% disagreed with the statement. Staff felt that their line managers were not able to communicate openly and freely with them. This could perhaps be because line managers

themselves were uninformed from their superiors in management and hence felt incapable to provide feedback to their staff.

When questioned regarding job descriptions only 14% indicated that job descriptions were communicated clearly to the workforce, conversely 53% disagreed and 33% were neutral. Respondents indicated that line managers failed to provide adequate direction due to the uncertainty associated with mergers.

When questioned regarding internal departmental policies only 16% agreed that policies were clearly defined. A large percentage (49%) disagreed with the statement and 35% were neutral. This does not reflect well on the managerial skills of line managers. This would be further elaborated on in chapter five.

The average level of agreement for this section (Line Management Communication) was 22% and the level of disagreement was 45%. It is noted that none of the statements had a higher level of agreement than for disagreement.

The three largest levels of disagreement were for the following:

- Job descriptions were communicated openly or clearly to the workforce (53%)
- Internal departmental policies were clearly defined (49 %)
- The workforce was kept informed of new internal departmental policies (49 %)

Literature reviewed by Neves and Eisenberger (2012: 452) indicate that employees who had open lines of communication with managers were more likely to build effective work relationships with those managers. Also, employees who had open lines of communication had enhanced performance and seen an increase in productivity. Further literature (Gopinath & Becker, 2000) indicated that employees who reported positive and open communication with managers were better able to cope with major organisational changes, such as layoffs and mergers.

b) Chi-square test: Line Management Communication

A 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 “ $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ”. The Chi-square test was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables.

To determine whether the differences were significant, chi-square tests were done by variable (statement). The null hypothesis tested the claim that there were no differences in the scoring options per statement. The results are shown below in table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Chi-square test for Line Management Communication

	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Communication from the Leadership Team to staff involved in implementation was effective.	3.762	2	.152
Communication on changes during the transition phase was received regularly.	6.333	2	.042
Lines of communication were open to all members of staff.	15.476	2	.000
Job descriptions were communicated openly or clearly to the workforce.	28.619	2	.000
Internal departmental policies were clearly defined.	20.368	2	.000
The workforce was kept informed of new internal departmental policies.	16.619	2	.000
New staff members were introduced to an induction programme.	2.780	2	.249

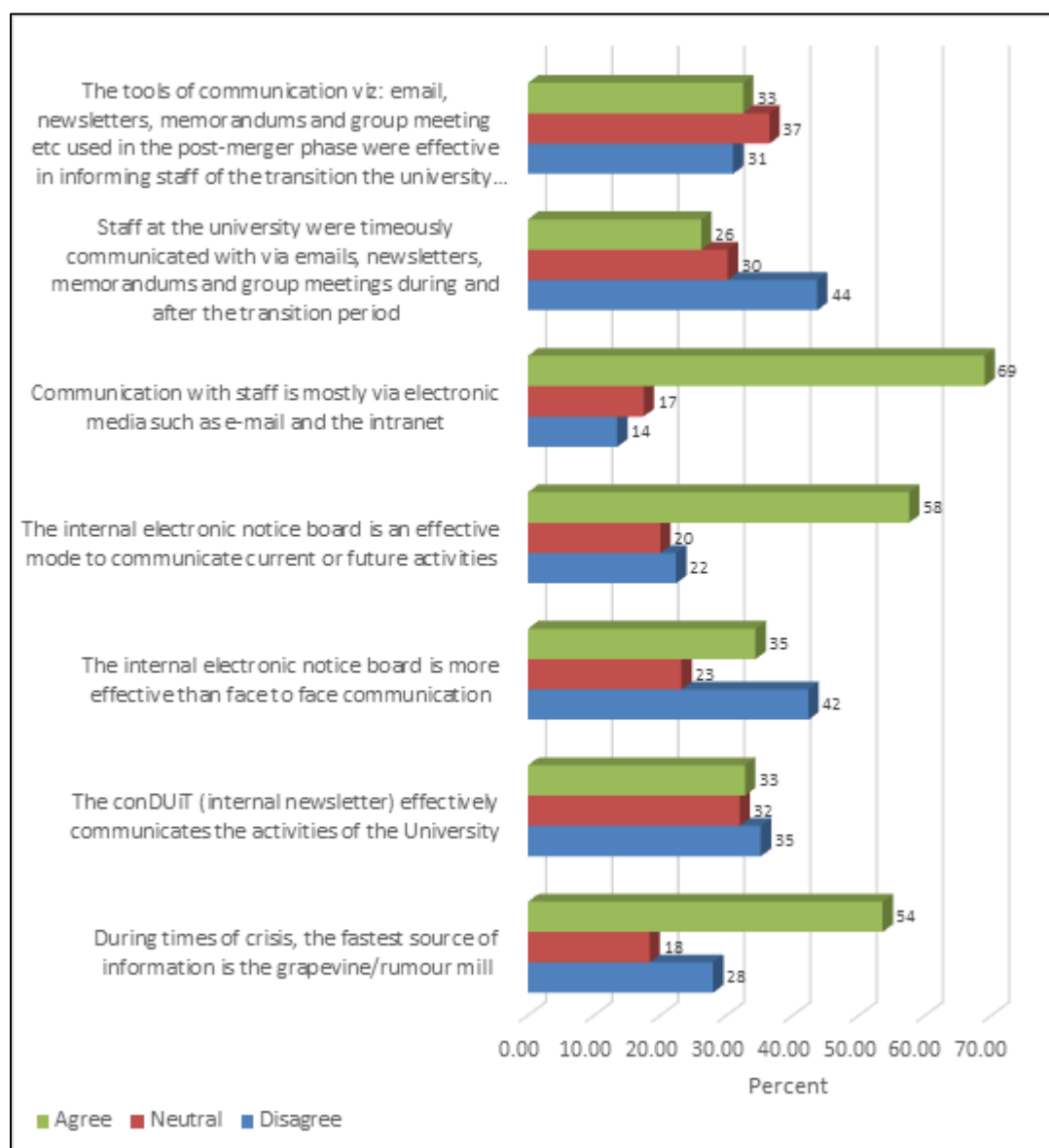
Since all of the sig. values (p-values), except the first and last, are less than 0.05 (the level of significance), it implies that the distributions were not even. That is, the differences between agreement and disagreement were significant (highlighted in yellow). It is noted that the category of “Neutral” also contribute to the p-value.

The relevance to this study implied that except for the first and last sig. values (p-values) from table 4.12, staff at the merged institution felt that communication was not received regularly, lines of communication was not open to staff, job descriptions were not clearly defined, internal policies were not clearly defined and the workforce was not informed of new policies.

4.5.2 Theme 2: Tools of Communication

a) This section deals with the summarised scoring patterns of tools of communication.

Figure 4.6: Scoring patterns of Tools of Communication



The majority (69%) of the sample population stated that internal communication was mostly via electronic mail. The internal electronic notice board was considered an effective mode to communicate from 58% of the respondents; however 42% of respondents preferred a face to face communication.

Turner *et al* (2010: 841) are of the view that email provides a persistent record of its messages, but does not convey non-verbal signals. Face-to-face communication, on the other hand, provides a wealth of information about the communicating parties, gleaned from facial expressions, body language, verbal pauses, and other sources, but generally leaves only an imperfect trace (in participants' memories) of exactly what was said.

DUT began an internal "hardcopy" newsletter called the Conduit and 33% of the sample population stated that it was an effective communication medium that documented the activities of the university, however 35% disagreed.

54% of respondents indicated that during times of crisis (student/staff protest action) the fastest source of information was the grapevine/rumour mill.

Literature reviewed by Fortado (2011:218) indicated that informal communications are far from just idle chatter. Employee's actions are based on their interpretations of events. The grapevine shaped employee sentiments about the organisation and specific people. It would be irresponsible to ignore these social facts.

b) Chi-square tests: Tools of Communication

To determine whether the differences were significant, chi-square tests were done by variable (statement). The null hypothesis tested the claim that there were no differences in the scoring options per statement. The results are indicated in table 4.13 on the next page.

Table 4.13 Chi-square tests: Tools of Communication

	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
The tools of communication viz: email, newsletters, memorandums and group meeting etc. used in the post-merger phase were effective in informing staff of the transition the university was going through.	.619	2	.734
Staff at the university were timeously communicated with via emails, newsletters, memorandums and group meetings during and after the transition period.	6.333	2	.042
Communication with staff is mostly via electronic media such as e-mail and the intranet.	72.619	2	.000
The internal electronic notice board is an effective mode to communicate current or future activities.	33.232	2	.000
The internal electronic notice board is more effective than face to face communication	6.976	2	.031
The conDUiT (internal newsletter) effectively communicates the activities of the University.	.208	2	.901
During times of crisis, the fastest source of information is the grapevine/rumour mill.	24.832	2	.000

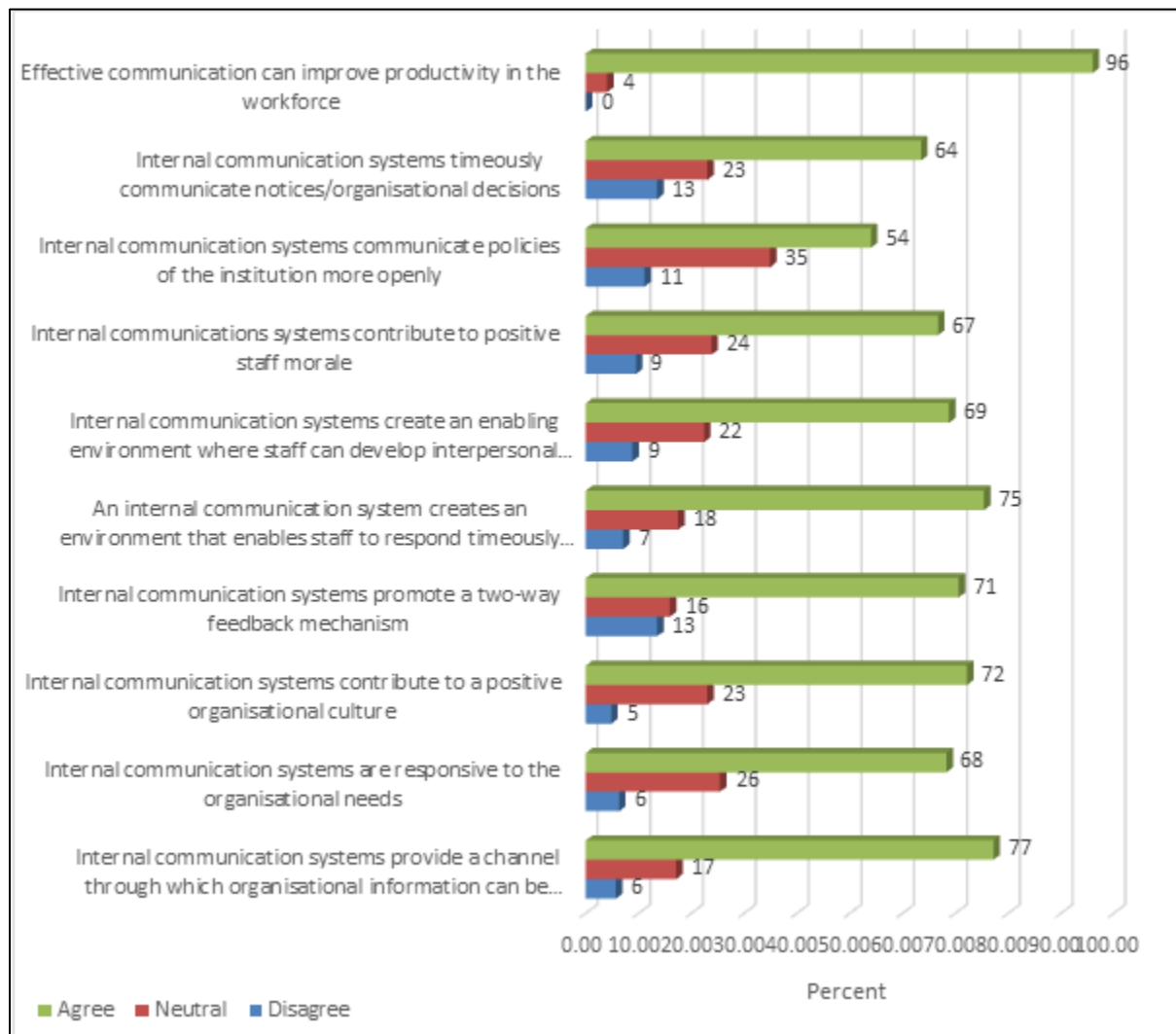
Four of the six p-values in Table 4.13 tested less than 0.05. All but (two) 2 of the statements showed skewed patterns. In some instances these are positive (higher levels of agreement) and in other cases it is negative (higher levels of disagreement) with regard to the Chi-square test for Tools of Communication.

There is a significant relationship between the statements that scored less than 0.05 implying that tools of communication did play a significant role in the dissemination of information during the transition period. There is also a significant relationship between channels of communication, namely: electronic mail, electronic noticeboard and intranet.

4.5.3 Theme 3: Internal Communication Systems (ICS)

a) This section deals with the summarised scoring patterns of Internal Communication Systems.

Figure 4.7 – Scoring patterns of Internal Communication Systems



The majority of the DUT staff (77%) who participated in this study stated that ICS contributed to a positive organisational culture and ICS provided a channel through which organisational information can be shared between management and staff, however, staff felt that ICS was not timeously communicated.

The respondents of the DUT strongly agreed that effective communication can improve productivity on the workplace as 96% of the sample population agreed with the statement.

The sample population was divided as to whether ICS communication policies in the organisation were open or not. 54% thought that Internal Communication policies were more openly available. The researcher speculates that staff did not trust nor fully understand the policies forwarded from management. Furthermore, the following statistic of almost 72% of the sample population agreed that ICS contributed to a positive organisational structure, however, the time factor was considered to be of paramount importance when presented with ICS from management. As many as 75% of the population said that ICS could create an environment that enable staff to respond timeously.

The majority of participants (77%) of the DUT believed that ICS provided a channel through which organisational information can be shared between management and staff, only 6% disagreed and it may be assumed that this percentage had issues of trust between management and staff. Only 17% wished to remain neutral. This percentage was disconcerting to the researcher because it displayed evidence of apathy from the sample population.

The average level of agreement for this section is 71%. The highest level (96%) relates to the belief of respondents that better communication can improve productivity. The lowest level of agreement relates to "Internal communication systems communicate policies of the institution more openly" (54%).

Literature reviewed by White, Vanc and Stafford (2009:66) indicated that the competitive advantage of strategic internal communication are the obvious benefits of employee satisfaction and productivity. In addition, well-informed employees are able to make a positive contribution to a company's external public relations efforts. "Employees can be an organisation's best ambassadors or loudest critics, depending whether and how they get information." Howard (1998 cited in White *et al* 2009:66). Effective internal communication can enhance corporate reputation and credibility, because employees are viewed as particularly credible sources by external

stakeholders (Dawkins, 2004; Hannegan, 2004). Put simply, employees are the face of an organisation and have a powerful influence on organisational success.

b) Chi-square tests: Internal Communication Systems

To determine whether the differences were significant, chi-square tests were done by variable (statement).

Table 4.14: Chi-square tests: Internal Communication Systems

	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Effective communication can improve productivity in the workforce.	106.794	1	.000
Internal communication systems timeously communicate notices/organisational decisions.	53.286	2	.000
Internal communication systems communicate policies of the institution more openly.	34.857	2	.000
Internal communications systems contribute to positive staff morale.	66.857	2	.000
Internal communication systems create an enabling environment where staff can develop interpersonal relationships.	74.224	2	.000
An internal communication system creates an environment that enables staff to respond timeously to notices.	102.333	2	.000
Internal communication systems promote a two-way feedback mechanism.	79.000	2	.000
Internal communication systems contribute to a positive organisational culture.	92.048	2	.000
Internal communication systems are responsive to the organisational needs.	76.000	2	.000
Internal communication systems provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between management and staff.	109.073	2	.000

All of the p-values from the above statements are less than 0.05. It is observed that the levels of agreement are much higher than disagreement (right skewed). This shows that there is a significant relationship in the way that respondents rated internal communication systems.

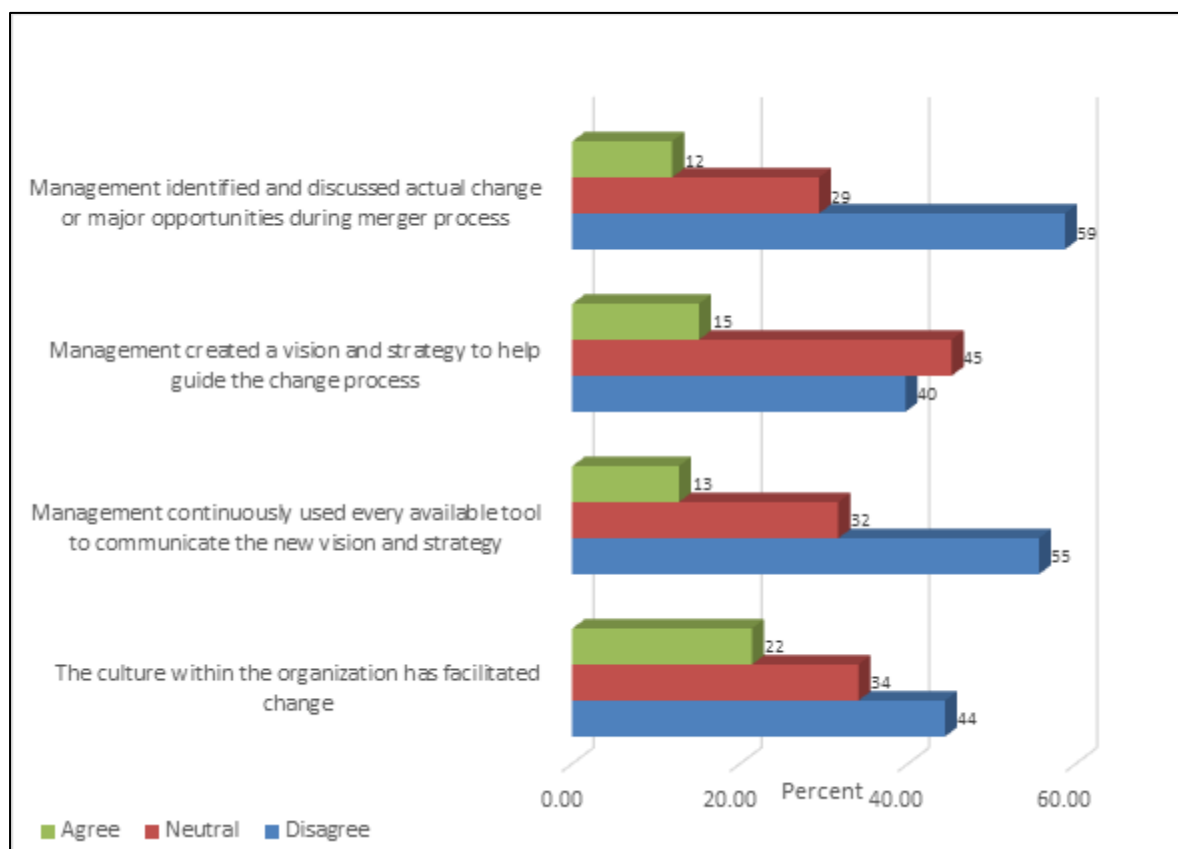
Respondents were positive and in agreement that internal communication systems improve productivity in the workforce; timeously communicate notices/organisational decisions, communicate policies of the institution more openly; contribute to positive

staff morale; create an enabling environment where staff can develop interpersonal relationships; creates an environment that enables staff to respond timeously to notices; promote a two-way feedback mechanism; contribute to a positive organisational culture; responsive to the organisational needs and provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between management and staff.

4.5.4 Theme 4: Change Relating to the Transition Process

a) This section deals with the summarised scoring patterns of change relating to the transition process.

Figure 4.8 - Scoring patterns of Change Relating to the Transition Process



Only 12% of respondents agreed that management had identified and discussed actual changes or major opportunities, 59% of the respondents disagreed and 29% of the respondents were neutral.

When questioned whether management created a vision and strategy to help guide the change process only 15% of the staff agreed with the statement, 40% of respondent disagreed with the statement and 45% of the respondents were neutral.

Majority of the respondents (55%) disagreed with the statement that management continuously used every available tool to communicate the new vision and strategy, 13% of the respondents agreed with the statement and 32% of the respondents were neutral.

The general pattern shows higher levels of disagreement (average = 50 %) than levels of agreement (15%).

In the view of Gilley *et al* (2009: 75) organisational leadership behaviours have a direct influence on actions in the work environment that enable change. Leaders may function as change agents by creating a vision, identifying the need for change and implementing the change itself. Organisations remain competitive when they support and implement continuous and transformational change Cohen (1999 cited in Gilley *et al* 2009: 75). On the other hand Guo and Sanchez's (2005:87) report on environmental barriers bears reference that Managerial philosophy can promote or inhibit effective communication. Managers who are not interested in promoting intra-organisational communication upward or disseminating information downward will establish procedural and organisational blockages.

b) Chi-square tests: Change relating to the Transition Process

To determine whether the differences were significant, chi-square tests were done by variable (statement). All of the differences are significant. The results are shown table 4.15 on the next page.

Table 4.15: Chi-square tests: Change Relating to the Transition Process

	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Management identified and discussed actual change or major opportunities during merger process.	42.333	2	.000
Management created a vision and strategy to help guide the change process.	19.476	2	.000
Management continuously used every available tool to communicate the new vision and strategy.	34.857	2	.000
The culture within the organisation has facilitated change.	10.048	2	.007

All of the p-values from Table 4.15 are significant as they scored less than 0.05. It is observed that the levels of disagreement are much higher than agreement (left skewed). This shows that there is a significant relationship in the way that respondents rated change relating to the transition process. It is noted that the category of “Neutral” also contribute to the p-value

Respondents disagreed with management’s communication role during the transition phase and felt that management had not identified and discussed actual changes or major opportunities during the transition process.

4.5.5 Analysis of Open Ended Questions

The aim of this study was to evaluate the role of internal communication in the transition process at the DUT. The findings which emanated from the questionnaire are now summarised according to each of the research objectives.

Objective one - to examine existing organisational communication tools utilised in the communication process at the DUT.

The open ended question “During the merger what communication tools were utilised in communicating changes?” was used in the questionnaire to determine which communication tool was preferred by DUT staff. The overall perception from the open ended questionnaire was that staff felt that electronic mail and electronic noticeboards was the most useful communication tool to disseminate information

from top management to employees. The data showed that email communication was a positive communication tool due to its contemporary characteristic and relevance.

Objective two - to evaluate staff perceptions of the current methods of communication utilised in the internal communication process.

The open ended question “What changes would you like to see in the current internal communication system at DUT?” was used by the researcher to determine staff perceptions to current methods of communication. The preceding objective identified email and electronic noticeboard as the most useful communication tool to disseminate information, however respondents indicated that they would like to see a change from electronic communication to face-to-face communication.

To quote a respondent:

For normal day to day information, electronic communication is fine. In the case of transition, strong face to face communication can be effective. Electronic communication may not convey much in terms of integrity and commitment. There are times when a personal touch or reassurance is needed.

Objective three - to determine how internal communication has facilitated the transition process at the DUT.

The open ended question “Do you think you received sufficient information from your direct supervisor during the transition process?” was used by the researcher to determine whether internal communication has facilitated the transition process at the DUT. According to data received 78% of the respondents indicated that they received little or no internal communication from their direct supervisor regarding the transition process. It is fair to assume that communication between a staff member and his line manager was nonexistent. The data indicated that line managers were ill-informed of the transition process. They too were dependent upon electronic mail and noticeboard communication.

4.6 APPLICATION OF STRATEGIC EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION MODEL (SECM)

In this section the concepts of the SECM are applied to the data analysis acquired during the data collection phase. The following defining features of Barrett's (2002) model were explained in Chapter two, and summarises how each feature is related to this study.

Chapter Two highlighted seven major components characteristics of the model. During the first component (strategic objectives) there exists a one to one correlation between what the company has established as its strategic objectives. During the second component (supportive management) top level and middle level management must be directly involved in and assume responsibility for communications up, down and cross the organisation. In the third component targeted messages is information tailored for the audience. The fourth component – effective media/ forums uses direct, face to face communication over indirect, print or electronic media. The fifth component: well positioned staff relies on a communication staff member being part of a senior management team. The sixth component – ongoing assessment is when the company is measuring its goals throughout the key stages of any major change. The final component (the integrated processes) is the inclusion of communication in the institution's business plan.

4.6.1 Component 1 – Strategic Objectives

According to the data received from respondents there did not exist a one to one correlation between what DUT established as its strategic objectives for the merger and what was listed as objectives for communication. Communication was not structured to translate central strategic messages to all employees. Only 12% agreed that management had identified and discussed actual change or major opportunities during the merger process.

4.6.2 Component 2 – Supportive Management

This section correlates with line management communication. The data indicated that top and middle management were not directly involved and did assume responsibility for communications across the organisation. Only 13% had indicated that Management had continuously used every available tool to communicate the new vision and strategy.

4.6.3 Component 3 – Targeted Messages

The data gathered did not provide conclusive evidence to state that targeted messages were tailored for the audience. An important point to note was the fact that the merger between the two Technikons was the first in the country. Hence it may be assumed that management was experiencing a learning curve as to how to target messages towards staff across both institutions.

4.6.4 Component 4 – Effective Media/Forums

This section correlates to Tools of communication. Whilst the managerial teams from both institutions had attempted to use direct face to face, print and electronic media; it was noted from data gathered that the electronic media i.e. email facility proved to be the most effective process to disseminate information related to change process. 69% of respondents had agreed with the aforementioned statement.

4.6.5 Component 5 – Well Positioned Staff

Even though during the transition phase, the communications department played a minor role, 77% agreed that internal communication systems provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between management and staff.

4.6.6 Component 6 – On-going Assessment

In terms of this process from the model, there is no data that reflects that there was an ongoing assessment whereby the DUT could have measured its goals through the transition process.

4.6.7 The Final Component - The Integrated Processes

Data gathered does not reflect that communication was integrated into the organisation's business plan during the transition phase. 56% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that Management continuously used every available tool to communicate the new vision and strategy.

4.7 SUMMARY

The findings of the study indicated that certain practices are consistent with the literature reviewed while other practices lack a strategic communicative approach. The majority of the respondents were of the view that line management communication was not open and upward communication was not encouraged during the transition process. Majority of the respondents indicated that they would like management to take a far more effective role in communicating with them.

Most of the respondents indicated that electronic media was the most popular internal communication tool used; however some staff members still preferred if Management communicated face to face with staff. Another popular internal communication tool was the grapevine/rumour mill.

The majority of the responses to internal communication systems (ICS) agreed that effective communication increased productivity in the work place, increased morale amongst staff and contributed towards a positive organisational culture. There were very few responses that disagreed with the aforementioned.

A vast majority of the respondents indicated that Management did not communicate openly during the transition process. Staff believed that they were not communicated with and that Management did very little to create a vision and strategy to help guide the change process.

The next chapter focuses on the summary, recommendations and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four elaborated on the analysis of data gathered during the research process. This chapter concludes the study and presents a summary based on the findings and the final recommendations of the study. The conclusions are based on research findings on the staff responses to the questionnaires. The researcher will name each recommendation, and explain where and how it may be implemented.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the role of internal communication in the transition process at the DUT. A target population consisting of one thousand, three hundred and ninety seven (1397) staff members who were employed at the university since 2002 were selected.

The Literature review (Chapter two) reviewed relevant literature to define and understand organisational communication, organisational culture, internal communication and change management. The literature review also provided an overview of the change in the educational landscape since the apartheid era.

The theoretical approach of Barrett's (2002) Strategic Employee Communication Model was researched and applied in the context of the study. The reviewed literature revealed that communication is the glue that binds together various components of an organisation and the degree to which an organisation achieves its objectives is largely determined by the efficient flow of communication.

Chapter three discussed the Research Methodology employed in the study. This study was conducted using a quantitative research paradigm. This chapter explained in detail how the research was executed.

Chapter four displayed the results and discussion. In this chapter four themes emerged after the data was analysed namely:

Theme one: Line management communication;

Theme two: Tools of communication;

Theme three: Internal communication systems and

Theme four: Change relating to the transition process.

Questionnaires were administered to a sample population consisting of staff members that were in the employ of the DUT since 2002, across all campuses. The results of this study were then correlated with the literature review and the Strategic Employee Communication Model. The analysis revealed that the majority of the staff believed that effective communication can improve productivity in the workplace. The study also revealed that staff felt that they were not effectively communicated with during the change process.

5.3 CONCLUSION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to evaluate the role of internal communication in the transition process at the DUT. The following section presents the conclusions to the study based on the objectives set out in Chapter One.

Objective one sought to examine organisational and other communication tools available at the DUT.

The Literature review provided an understanding of organisational communication and the tools used in communication. It was found that during the transition phase the DUT did not have a communication policy. Staff members perceived the internal electronic notice board as the most effective mode to communicate current or future activities. However, majority of the staff surveyed preferred face to face communication. It was also found that during times of crisis the grapevine/rumour mill was the fastest communication tool.

Object two sought to evaluate staff perceptions regarding tools utilised during internal communication.

The Literature review provided an in-depth review into internal communication. The results of the analysis reflected that staff preferred to be communicated with via electronic medium, and the majority of staff believed they were kept up to date via email communication with regard to the transition process.

Objective three sought to determine how internal communication has facilitated the transition process at the DUT.

The theoretical approach of Barrett's Strategic Employee Communication Model to facilitate change was utilised. The analysed data reflected that majority of the respondents felt that Management did not identify and discuss actual change or major opportunities during the merger process; Management did not use every available tool to communicate the new vision and strategy and that the culture within the university did not facilitate change effectively.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made:

- The study revealed that during the transition phase there was a need for open lines of communication between management and staff to ensure that there was effective sharing of information. This is of paramount importance especially during times of crisis.
- The study revealed that during the transition process in times of crisis the grapevine/rumour was the fastest form of communication. In order to control the flow of information through the grapevine/rumour mill, timeous and accurate communication must take place.

- The study indicated that during the transition process departmental policies were not clearly defined. It is therefore the responsibility of policy makers at the DUT to ensure that there is full participation of all the members in policy formulation.
- The study revealed that during the transition process the majority of the respondents believed that the intranet and electronic mail at the DUT was utilised optimally, for the purpose of internal communication. This is good practice and it is therefore imperative that the intranet should provide timeous and up to date information.
- The study revealed that during the transition process there was an absence of information, with regard to job profiles. It is the responsibility of the line manager together with the Human Resources Department to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the job description of all staff members.
- The study revealed that during the transition process although it was not logistically feasible to continuously hold “face to face” meetings, it was determined that staff especially the older generation preferred face to face communication rather than electronic communication.
- The study also revealed that during the transition process there was a need for a communication policy at the DUT, with a specific reference to E-communication. E-communication is a modern phenomenon. It is not just another tool to communicate with. It is a new way of communicating by combining text, graphics, video and sound. At the DUT currently, staff are communicated with mainly through email and the staff portal (intranet). However various departments make use of social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to communicate with staff and students. A communication application would be a better and more up to date e-communication tool to use in the future.

5.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research could draw on concepts and theories discussed in this study to assess the value of internal communication to employees and their organisations during times of change.

5.6 CLOSING STATEMENT

Living and coping with change is a fact of life for organisations and individuals within them (Daly *et al* 2003). The success of any change programme depends on the organisation's ability to communicate effectively with its employees.

The study found that staff at the DUT had limited communication from Management during the change process. During times of change employees have a heightened sense of insecurity. Feelings of isolation further exasperate their sense of insecurity. However, if employees are made to feel a sense of belonging to the organisation, this gives them a sense of purpose, which in turn has a positive effect on employee morale, productivity and confidence in one's employer. From the analysis DUT staff revealed that effective internal communication can improve productivity in the workforce. It is therefore evident that internal communication is a key factor during organisational change.

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LIST OF ANNEXURES

Annexure 1 - Permission to conduct Research at the DUT Letter



*Research Management and Development
Durban University of Technology
Tromso Annex, Steve Biko Campus
P.O. Box 1334, Durban 4000
Tel.: 031-3732576/7
Fax: 031-3732946
E-mail: moyos@dut.ac.za*

11th June 2012

Ms. V. Govender
c/o Department of Public Relations Management
Durban University of Technology

Dear Ms Govender

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE DUT

Your email correspondence dated 5th June 2012 in respect of the above refers. I am pleased to inform you that the Institutional Research Committee (IRC) will grant permission to you to conduct your research at the Durban University of Technology.

We would be grateful if a summary of your key research findings can be submitted to the IRC on completion of your studies.

Kindest regards,
Yours sincerely



PROF. S. MOYO
DIRECTOR: RESEARCH MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (ACTING)



Annexure 2 - Permission to access information for research at the DUT



*Directorate for Research and Postgraduate Support
Durban University of Technology
Tromso Annexe, Steve Biko Campus
P.O. Box 1334, Durban 4000
Tel.: 031-3732576/7
Fax: 031-3732946
E-mail: moyos@dut.ac.za*

14th June 2012

Mr R Naicker
c/o Department of Management Information

Dear Mr Naicker

PERMISSION TO ACCESS INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH AT THE DUT

Please note that Ms Vaneshree Govender, Masters Student in the Department of Public Relations Management has been granted permission to access information for research purpose at the DUT.

Kindest regards.
Yours sincerely



PROF. S. MOYO
DIRECTOR (ACTING): RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE SUPPORT



Annexure 3 - Informed consent letter

INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Public Relations Management
Durban University of Technology
P O Box 1334
Durban
4000

5 June 2012

TITLE OF PROJECT: The role of internal communication in the transition process at the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

Dear Participant

I am undertaking a research project that aims to evaluate the role of internal communication during the transition process at the DUT. This study is guided by three objectives: firstly, to examine corporate and other communication tools available at the DUT, secondly, to evaluate staff perceptions regarding tools utilised during internal communication and, thirdly, to determine how internal communication has facilitated the transition process at DUT. This study is limited to the DUT. Academic and administrative staff will be interviewed.


To enable me to conduct this research I would be most grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire which will take you a few minutes. Participation in this project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. The information that you will provide will make an important contribution to the success of this study.

Your input will be treated as strictly confidential and you can be assured that no information will be divulged to any third party.

Should you require further clarity please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you

Yours sincerely



MS. V. GOVENDER
(Student Number: 19551426)
031 3732558 or 083 574 3807



DR R. RAMPERSAD
Supervisor
Public Relations Management
TEL: 031 – 373 6876



MS. N RAMLUTCHMAN
Co-Supervisor
Public Relations Management
TEL: 031 373 6827

Annexure 4 - Questionnaire

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The aim of this study is to evaluate the role of internal communication during the transition process at the Durban University of Technology. This study is guided by three objectives: firstly, to examine organisational and other communication tools available at the DUT, secondly, to evaluate staff perceptions regarding tools utilised during internal communication and, thirdly, to determine how internal communication has facilitated the transition process at DUT. This study is limited to the DUT. Academic and administrative staff will be interviewed.

Please complete the questionnaire by selecting the option that reflects your response to the statement.

SECTION A - BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

GENDER			Male			Female						
RACE			Black		Coloured		Indian		White		Other	
AGE	26 – 30	31- 35	36 – 40	41 – 45	46 – 50	51 – 55	56 – 50	61+				
EDUCATION LEVEL	Grade 11 or lower		Grade 12	National Diploma		Degree		Postgrad. Qual.				
FACULTY	Accounting and Informatics	Applied Sciences	Arts and Design	Engineering and the Built Environment	Management Sciences	Health Sciences	Administrative					
DEPARTMENT												
JOB DESIGNATION												
YEARS OF SERVICE												
0 – 5		6 – 10		11 - 15		16 – 20		20 +				
PREVIOUS INSTITUTION												
M L Sultan Technikon				Technikon Natal				Other				

SECTION B - Line management communication

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Communication from the Leadership Team to staff involved in implementation was effective.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Communication on changes during the transition phase was received regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Lines of communication were open to all members of staff.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Job descriptions were communicated openly or clearly to the workforce.	1	2	3	4	5

5	Internal departmental policies were clearly defined.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The workforce was kept informed of new internal departmental policies.	1	2	3	4	5
7	New staff members were introduced to an induction programme.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C - Tools of communication

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The tools of communication viz: email, newsletters, memorandums and group meeting etc. used in the post-merger phase were effective in informing staff of the transition the university was going through.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Staff at the university were timeously communicated with <i>via</i> emails, newsletters, memorandums and group meetings during and after the transition period.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Communication with staff is mostly via electronic media such as e-mail and the intranet.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The internal electronic notice board is an effective mode to communicate current or future activities.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The internal electronic notice board is more effective than face to face communication	1	2	3	4	5
6	The conDUIt (internal newsletter) effectively communicates the activities of the University.	1	2	3	4	5
7	During times of crisis, the fastest source of information is the grapevine/rumour mill.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D - Internal communication systems

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Effective communication can improve productivity in the workforce.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Internal communication systems timeously communicate notices/organisational decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Internal communication systems communicate policies of the institution more openly.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Internal communications systems contribute to positive staff morale.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Internal communication systems create an enabling environment where staff can develop interpersonal relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
6	An internal communication system creates an environment that enables staff to respond timeously to notices.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Internal communication systems promote a two-way feedback mechanism.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Internal communication systems contribute to a positive organisational culture.	1	2	3	4	5

9	Internal communication systems are responsive to the organisational needs.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Internal communication systems provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between management and staff.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION E – Change relating to the transition process

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Management identified and discussed actual change or major opportunities during merger process.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Management created a vision and strategy to help guide the change process.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Management continuously used every available tool to communicate the new vision and strategy.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The culture within the organisation has facilitated change.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION F

1. What challenges experienced during the transition phase have been generally experienced with regards to the internal communication system at DUT?
2. During the merger what communication tools were utilised in communicating changes?

3. What changes would you like to see in the current internal communication system at DUT?

4. If you have not already indicated, please state how you would like to receive such information (through which channels would you prefer to receive information)?

5. Do you think you received sufficient information from your direct supervisor during the transition process?

6. Do you think that the merging of the two technikons has had a positive impact on the new University?

Thank you for participating in this study