



**A conceptual communication model to mitigate
reputational risk within a higher education
institution**

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*I don't give a damn 'bout my reputation
You're living in the past it's a new generation*

*I don't give a damn 'Bout my reputation
I've never been afraid of any deviation*

*An' I don't really care If ya think I'm strange
The world's in trouble There's no communication
An' everyone can say what they want to say
It never gets better anyway*

Adopted lyrics from Joan Jett & the Blackhearts' Bad Reputation (1980)

ABSTRACT

The South African higher education sector has experienced various changes during the last couple of years, from the decolonisation of the academic curriculum to the *#FeesMustFall* protests, and more recently Covid-19. The quest to find solutions to challenges faced within the higher education sector was magnified by poor communication.

Communication is much more than the mere transmission of information; it plays a vital role in daily life and is the basis of all human interaction. This is also true for organisations, including higher education institutions. Effective communication not only helps a business to sell its ideas but also helps to foster respect from peers, superiors and other stakeholders. Communication is the starting point of building relationships between stakeholders, as well as creating trust in management and the goals of an entity. The success of an organisation is solely dependent on its stakeholders' buy-in, their support and teamwork to achieve the strategic and operational goals, which affect productivity and, ultimately, the profit margin.

The reputation of an organisation is an external reflection of internal organisational behaviour and actions, showcasing the ability of an organisation to deliver valued outcomes to its stakeholders. An entity's reputation is affected by the actions of every business unit, department and employee that come in contact with another stakeholder or client. Reputation is frequently regarded as the brand of an organisation, or how internal and external communication occurs, however, it is considerably more complex. It is crucial to understand that the reputation of a higher education institution can be affected by several different risks including but not limited to (i) financial risk, (ii) strategic risk, (iii) operational risk, (iv) compliance risk, (v) teaching risks, (vi) conduct risks, and (vii) ethical risks.

Even though higher education institutions do not have answers to every risk they face, they can be more aware of the increasingly broad spectrum of threats affecting them, especially reputational risks and be more proactive in managing these risks. As such, the purpose of this study was to create a conceptual communication model for higher education to mitigate reputational risk.

The target population and sampling frame for this study constitute the 26 registered South African public higher education institutions. From this sampling frame, a convenience sample of one faculty within a traditional university in Gauteng was chosen. Support staff members, lecturers, researchers and managers within schools, researcher units and business units, as well as faculty management members across the different campuses were invited to partake in this study.

An interpretivist approach was followed, including using several qualitative techniques in order to obtain valuable data. A literature review and document analysis were done to develop a conceptual communication model, from the literature available, but that is also suitable for the higher education sector. The researcher conducted four rounds of Delphi, where focus groups, as well as semi-structured interviews, were held with the primary goal to identify their perceptions, views and comments on the current communication model. The individuals who participated during the focus groups and semi-structured interviews also provided feedback on how the model can be improved. After each round of Delphi, the conceptual communication model was adapted accordingly, to develop the best-suited communication model. The rounds concluded when an end-user agreement was established.

During the research, it became apparent that higher education institutions have no official communication model and rely on the organisational chart (also known as an organogram). The latter poses several shortcomings as the more employees a business has, the more ways communication can occur. Unfortunately, an organisational chart only indicates the formal relationships/communication that occurs and disregard the pattern of social relationships that develop and also often do not show horizontal relationships. An organogram also induces certain structural rigidity and may encourage bureaucracy. Another shortcoming of organograms is that units, actions or functions are separated into different groups, leading to (i) poor or ineffective communication, (ii) lack of understanding between departments and units, (iii) each unit or department can start to focus more on departmental goals and start to neglect the company's objectives and (iv) innovation can be repressed, which may cause the higher education institution to become less competitive during the 4th Industrial Revolution.

In addition to this, it was established that the current “communication model” itself poses a reputation risk, not only to the missed communication lines but also how the communication model is implemented. The way communication occurs is just as important as what is communicated. This research study contributed to developing a conceptual communication model to mitigate risks that may cause reputational damage to the higher education institution. The conceptual communication will, however, only be effective if it is implemented correctly. The lack of implementation leads to frustration, mistrust in the management system and organisational buy-in, which can affect the organisation's reputation. A suggested implementation process was provided during this study to ensure the full impact of the suggested changes to the communication mode and to make these changes part of the new organisational culture.

As this study only focused on developing a conceptual model for an academic faculty of a university, it will be worthwhile to conduct a longitudinal study in order to implement the model fully and to measure its impact on the faculty concerned.

Even though the researcher only focused on developing a conceptual communication model for an academic faculty of a university, challenges faced concerning the ineffective communication received from the University Management Committee was mentioned. A study focusing on developing a conceptual communication model to mitigate reputational risk for the university management university staff will be beneficial. A study focusing on communication between the different support units and towards students can also be considered. Future research, therefore, includes, developing a conceptual communication model for a university environment, in order to mitigate reputational risk within the higher education institution concerned.

Keywords: Risk, risk management, reputation, reputational risk management, communication, communication models, business communication, corporate reputation

OPSOMMING

Die Suid-Afrikaanse hoërondewyssektor het 'n groot aantal veranderinge in die afgelope paar jaar ervaar, van die dekolisering van die akademiese kurrikulum tot die *#FeesMustFall*-betogings en meer onlangs Covid-19. Die soeke na oplossings vir die uitdagings in die hoërondewyssektor is deur swak kommunikasie benadruk.

Kommunikasie is meer as die blote oordra van inligting; dit speel 'n kern rol in die daaglikse lewe en is die basis vir alle menslike interaksie. Dit is ook waar vir organisasies, insluitende hoërondewysinstellings. Effektiewe kommunikasie help nie net 'n besigheid om sy idees te verkoop nie, maar help ook om respek van eweknieë, hoofde en ander belanghebbendes te bevorder. Kommunikasie is die beginpunt om verhoudings te bou tussen belanghebbendes, asook om vertroue in die bestuur te bou en die doelwitte van 'n entiteit. Die sukses van 'n organisasie is uitsluitlik afhanklik van belanghebbendes se organisatoriese inkoop, hulle ondersteuning en spanwerk om die strategiese en bedryfsdoelwitte te bereik, wat die produktiwiteit en uiteindelik die winsmarge beïnvloed.

Die reputasie van 'n organisasie is 'n eksterne weerspieëling van interne organisatoriese gedrag en optrede en toon die vermoë van 'n organisasie om waardevolle uitkomst aan sy belanghebbendes te lewer. Die reputasie van 'n entiteit word beïnvloed deur die optrede van elke sake-eenheid, departement en werknemer wat met 'n ander belanghebbende of kliënt omgaan. Reputasie word gereeld beskou as die handelsmerk van 'n organisasie, of hoe interne en eksterne kommunikasie plaasvind, maar dit is aansienlik meer kompleks. Dit is belangrik om te verstaan dat die reputasie van 'n hoërondewysinstelling deur verskillende risiko's beïnvloed kan word, insluitend maar nie beperk tot (i) finansiële risiko, (ii) strategiese risiko, (iii) bedryfsrisiko, (iv) voldoeringsrisiko, (v) onderrisigo's, en (vii) etiese risiko's.

Alhoewel instellings vir hoër onderwys nie antwoorde het op elke risiko wat hulle in die gesig staar nie, kan hulle meer bewus wees van die toenemende breë spektrum van bedreigings wat hulle beïnvloed, veral reputasierisiko's en meer pro-aktief wees in die bestuur van hierdie risiko's. Daarom is die doel van hierdie studie om 'n kommunikasiemodel vir hoër onderwys te skep wat reputasierisiko sal verminder.

Die teikenpopulasie en steekproefraamwerk vir hierdie studie bestaan uit die 26 geregistreerde Suid-Afrikaanse instellings vir hoër onderwys. Vanuit hierdie steekproefraamwerk, is 'n gerieflikheidssteekproef, een fakulteit in 'n tradisionele universiteit in Gauteng gekies. Ondersteuningspersoneellede, dosente, navorsers en bestuurders binne skole, navorsings- en sake-eenhede, sowel as fakulteitsbestuurslede oor die verskillende kampusse, is uitgenooi om aan hierdie studie deel te neem.

'n Interpretivistiese benadering is gevolg, insluitend die gebruik van verskillende kwalitatiewe tegnieke om waardevolle data te verkry. 'n Literatuuroorsig en dokumentanalise is gedoen om 'n konseptuele kommunikasiemodel uit die beskikbare literatuur te ontwikkel, maar wat ook geskik is vir die hoëronderwyssektor. Die navorser het vier rondtes Delphi uitgevoer waar fokusgroepe, sowel as semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude gehou is, met die primêre doel om hul persepsies, sienings en kommentaar oor die huidige kommunikasiemodel te identifiseer. Die individue wat tydens die fokusgroepe en semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude deelgeneem het, het ook terugvoer gegee oor hoe die model verbeter kan word. Na elke rondte Delphi is die konseptuele kommunikasiemodel gevolglik aangepas om die beste geskikte kommunikasiemodel te ontwikkel. Die rondtes is afgesluit toe 'n ooreenkoms vir die eindgebruiker aangegaan is.

Tydens die navorsing het dit geblyk dat HOI's geen amptelike kommunikasiemodel het nie en op die diagram (ook bekend as 'n organogram) staatmaak. Laasgenoemde hou verskeie tekortkominge in, want hoe meer werknemers 'n onderneming het, hoe meer maniere is daar vir kommunikasie om plaas te vind. Ongelukkig dui 'n organiserings tabel/kaart/diagram slegs die formele verhoudings/kommunikasie aan wat plaasvind en verontagsaam die patroon van sosiale verhoudings wat ontwikkel en toon ook dikwels nie horisontale verhoudings nie. 'n Organogram veroorsaak ook sekere strukturele onbuigsamheid en kan burokrasie aanmoedig. Nog 'n tekortkoming van organogramme is dat eenhede, optrede of funksies in verskillende groepe verdeel word, wat lei tot (i) swak of oneffektiewe kommunikasie, (ii) gebrek aan begrip tussen departemente en eenhede, (iii) elke eenheid of departement kan meer begin fokus op departementele doelwitte en die onderneming se doelstellings begin nalaat en (iv) innovasie kan onderdruk word, wat kan veroorsaak dat die hoëronderwysinstellings tydens die 4de Industriële Revolusie minder mededingend word.

Daarbenewens is vasgestel dat die huidige "kommunikasiemodel" self 'n reputasierisiko inhou, nie net vir die gemiste kommunikasielyne nie, maar ook hoe die kommunikasiemodel geïmplementeer word. Die manier waarop kommunikasie plaasvind is netso belangrik as dit wat gekommunikeer word. Hierdie navorsingstudie het bygedra tot die ontwikkeling van 'n konseptuele kommunikasiemodel om risiko's te verminder wat reputasieskade aan die HOI kan berokken. 'n Voorgestelde implementeringsproses is voorsien sodat die fakulteit die impak van die veranderinge kon sien, maar ook om hierdie veranderinge deel van die nuwe organisasiekultuur te maak.

Die konseptuele kommunikasie sal slegs effektief wees as dit korrek geïmplementeer word. Die gebrek aan implementering lei tot frustrasie, wantroue in die bestuurstelsel en die inkoop van die organisasie, wat die reputasie van die organisasie kan beïnvloed. Aangesien die studie slegs gefokus het op die ontwikkeling van 'n konseptuele kommunikasiemodel, vir 'n akademiese fakulteit binne in universiteit, sal dit die moeite werd wees om 'n longitudinale studie uit te voer ten einde die model te implementeer en die impak daarvan op die betrokke fakulteit te bepaal.

Alhoewel die navorser slegs gefokus het om 'n konseptuele kommunikasie model vir 'n akademiese fakulteit te ontwikkel, is die uitdagings aangaande die oneffektiewe kommunikasie wat ontvang is van die Universiteit Bestuurskomitee (UBK), ook genoem. 'n Studie wat fokus op die ontwikkeling van 'n konseptuele kommunikasiemodel om reputasierisiko vir die universiteitbestuurspersoneel te verlig, sal voordelig wees. 'n Studie wat fokus op kommunikasie tussen die verskillende ondersteunende eenhede en teenoor studente, word ook oorweeg. Toekomstige navorsing vooruitsigte fokus sal dus fokus op die ontwikkeling van 'n konseptuele kommunikasiemodel vir 'n universiteitsomgewing ten einde reputasierisiko binne die betrokke hoëronderwysinstelling te verlig.

Sleutelwoorde: Risiko, risikobestuur, reputasie, reputasierisikobestuur, besigheidskommunikasie, kommunikasiemodelle, reputasiekommunikasie

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBC	British Broadcast Company
CAQDAS	Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software
CEO	Chief executive officer
CESR	Community engagement and stakeholder relations
Covid-19	Novel Coronavirus of 2019
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DVC	Deputy vice-chancellors
ERM	Enterprise risk management
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher educational institution
HES	Higher education sector
KPI	Key performance indicator(s)
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NWU	North-West University
PR	Public relations
RAG	Reach Out and Give

RI	Research and Innovation
Sars-Cov-2	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2
UMC	University Management Committee
VC	Vice-chancellor

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is more than the mere transmission of information; it plays a vital role in daily life and is the basis of all human interaction. Communication is an essential life skill and not only helps to facilitate a process of sharing information and knowledge, but also promotes better understanding and the building of relationships (Kamboura, 2008; O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery & Fisk 1994; Waisbord, 2001; Winbow, 2002). Without communication, no individual, community, group, or institution would be able to exist or prosper (Chitnis, 2005; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 1994; Reardon, 1996; Roberts, 2010; Waisbord, 2001).

This is also true within organisations, as organisations are not faceless units, but are built with and by people. Communication within a business or organisation, hereafter referred to as business communication, is the lifeline of any organisation (Baker, 2002; Conrad & Newberry, 2011; Koschmann, 2012; Kreps, 1986; Reinsch, 1991).

Effective business communication plays a vital role in the existence of a business, as it plays a role in every single department. Communication is visible from product development and customer relations to employer management and managerial interaction. Business communication is even more critical in today's age, as organisations have become very large, operating in and with different geographical areas, languages, and cultures. Business communication is the key to coordinating these various departments, across all borders, to achieve critical organisational objectives, supporting it to be successful and sustainable (Baker, 2007; Dwyer & Hopwood, 2019; Richmond & McCroskey, 2009; Turkalj & Fosić, 2009; Watson & Kitchen, 2010).

Business communication is focused on how management and stakeholders communicate with one another, to improve organisational practices and minimise errors. Once communication within the organisation becomes unclear, the company's core system faces the risk to fall apart, as a common goal is no longer clear and achievable (Baker, 2002; Richmond & McCroskey, 2009; Turkalj & Fosić, 2009).

Allen (1958) argued that communication is delicate and intricate, as it is the sum of all things a person does. He further states that business communication is a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding. The business communication processes can take on different forms, with the objective that every piece of information needs to achieve something and is not aimless chatter or babble. Business communication is focused on continually informing stakeholders, both internally and externally, what is happening within the organisation. The different communiqué within an organisation can take on various forms but should be conveyed in such a manner that it is understood and accepted by all stakeholders. This spreads coherence and credibility, and creates a favourable attitude among its stakeholders (Fenell, 2009; Kreps, 1986; Richmond & McCroskey, 2009).

Effective communication not only helps a business to sell its ideas, but also to help to foster respect from peers, superiors and other stakeholders. Communication is the starting point of building relationships between stakeholders, both internally and externally, creating trust in management and in the goals of an entity (Gray, 2012).

Inside an organisation, this trust leads to the acceptance, by stakeholders, of the envisioned outcome and committing themselves to work hard towards that outcome. This phenomenon is called organisational or employee buy-in and is the full commitment of staff members to help the organisation to obtain its goals, and to find daily activities resonant. Organisational buy-in promotes the willingness and excitement for staff members to go that extra mile for the company and to speak well of the company they are working for. The success of an organisation is solely dependent on stakeholders supporting and working towards the goals of that organisation; therefore, the curtail for the organisation, to invest time and money into a useful communication model, in order to make goals achievable. This will lead to better productivity and ultimately to a better profit margin (Bradley, 2016; Gray, 2012; Kotter & Whitehead, 2010; Lauby, 2015; Lombardo, 2015; Moleleki, 2011). Business communication is the ultimate link between the organisation and its potential/current clients, investors, suppliers, shareholders and the public at large. An organisation wants to capitalise on their strong points, creating a need for their product or service that you cannot resist. Communication fosters loyalty,

respect and trust towards the organisation and everything it represents (Guru *et al.*, 2013).

Even though higher education institutions (HEIs) are focused on delivering students with advanced knowledge in a respective field, they operate in the same manner as any other business or organisation. This study delves into the communication within these HEIs and the risks they face due to ineffective communication.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Business communication is two-fold; the first being to develop, cultivate and maintain corporate identity and brand image, which all stakeholders learn to respect and adore. The second part of business communication is to ensure that stakeholders, both internally and externally, are informed and equipped to work together to achieve the common goal of the organisation (Anon, 2018).

Internal communication is the starting point of business communication and has a direct impact on the reputation of the organisation. In today's connected world, a company's employees share stories, and talk about the company on social media and with friends. Word of mouth is the most influential marketing tool available – it can strengthen or break a company's brand (Filidis, 2016; Jounay, 2019; Nixon, 2016).

If employees are enthusiastic, motivated and engaged in the company, it creates a sense of commitment and affects the productivity of a company. If employees feel valued and satisfied, they will talk about the company in the highest regard, having an impact on the reputation of that company (Filidis, 2016; Jounay, 2019; Nixon, 2016). Effective internal communication helps to ensure that all members of the organisation are working collaboratively towards a common goal. It develops a cohesive culture and empowers employees to make the right decisions in line with the organisation's goals.

Therefore, internal communication and employee experience should be one of the companies' top priorities. Internal communication and organisational buy-in are intertwined with one another; stakeholders need to know and admire the brand in order to support the business. According to Helm, Liehr-Gobbers & Strock (2011), organisational buy-in is essential to the reputation of an organisation. Therefore, attention

should be placed on excellent and practical communication channels within the organisation and both internal and external relationships should be fostered with stakeholders.

The reputation of an organisation is a fragile yet prime, symbolic and strategic objective in order to separate and distinguish itself from competitors. Reputation showcases the ability that an organisation possesses in order to deliver valued outcomes to its various internal and external stakeholder groups. The root of reputation is grounded in the establishment of trust, respect and social capital. Reputation is essentially an external reflection of internal organisational behaviour and actions. In order to thrive, organisations avidly ensure that they live up to the promises that they communicate to the outside world. An entity's reputation is affected by the actions of every business unit, department and employee that comes into contact with another stakeholder or a client (Anthonissen, 2008; Aula & Mantere, 2008; Cravens, Groad-Olivier and Ramamoorti, 2003; Fombrun & Van Riel, 1997; Franklin *et al.*, 2009; Gotsi & Wilson, 2011; Griffin, 2008; Rossouw & Van Vuuren, 2010).

Within the higher education sector, a university's reputation is often reliant on ensuring that the institution concerned is an expert in the fields of study within its purview and that it can disseminate its trade to employees and students alike. Reputation is perhaps the most valuable intangible asset that a business or institution can have. By being an intangible asset, reputation adds value to the other assets and ensures organisational continuity. This also makes it challenging to evaluate and measure. Reputation, therefore, needs to be broken down into specific and smaller components in order to measure and manage it (Anon, 2017c; Lombardo, 2015; Pearson, 2014; Rayner, 2003). Damaging an organisation's reputation affects numerous areas of that entity, including competitiveness, local positioning, the trust and loyalty of stakeholders, media relations, and the legitimacy of operations, even the licence to exist, as well as the procuring and maintaining of customer relationships (Diermeier, 2008; Fombrun Gardberg & Barnett, 2002).

According to Halleck (2015), studies stress the importance of reputation and that a strong reputation not only provides a sustained and competitive advantage, but it also assists businesses to achieve goals more easily among stakeholders.

It is, therefore, crucial to managing the actual and potential risks of an organisation. The publicity an organisation receives, whether it was planned or not, will have a direct effect on that entity's customer base and, ultimately, its income. Due to various social media platforms, unintentional publicity is inevitable. For example, if a lecturer misbehaved toward a student within the class environment, this may go unnoticed by university management. However, after the advent of social media and the increase in the availability of smart devices, the lecturer's behaviour could be documented and widely distributed on social media platforms. This type of publicity can damage the reputation of that programme and university (Aula, 2010; Daley, 2014; Eccles, Newquist & Schatz, 2016; Eckert, 2016). The South African higher education sector has experienced a vast number of changes during the last couple of years; some of these changes have been years in the making, while others are the result of recent disruptions to the sector itself (Looker, Robers & Monk., 2018; Vitter, Obbagy, Ford & Braunsdorf, 2018). The challenges include the decolonisation of the academic curriculum, *#FeesMustFall* protests and restructuring of universities and South African universities. The quest to find solutions to challenges faced within the higher education sector was magnified by poor communication. These risks need to be mitigated as it can have a severe influence on how prospective students, peers and the community perceive the institute. An inadequate communication model leads to ineffective and possibly limited communication between internal and external stakeholders. The latter causes productivity levels, efficiency, innovation and employee morale to be affected. It also causes misunderstandings between employees that subsequently lead to unhealthy and lousy work relationships. Furthermore, limited or inaccurate communication can drive prospective clients to another HEI. Not only does this causes damage to an institution's reputation, it indirectly affects the profit margin.

Even though HEIs do not have answers to every risk they face, they can be more aware of the increasingly broad spectrum of threats affecting them, especially reputational risks, and be more proactive in managing these risks (Vitters *et al.*, 2018)

Institutions are currently identifying and addressing risks in silos, opposed to developing an enterprise approach to risk management (Vitters *et al.*, 2018). This means that risks should be identified by each unit, school and department, but that a consolidated plan

should be implemented across the institution to ensure that these reputational risks are mitigated and managed effectively.

Each stakeholder should play an active role in the enterprise approach to risk management, however, this risk mitigation plan can only begin once the risks within the institution have been determined and managed effectively.

Currently there is no defined communication model for HEIs, the purpose of this study is therefore aimed to create a communication model for higher education to mitigate reputational risk. Reputational risk is becoming increasingly more important for organisations and is directly dependant on the information available to identify potential risks (Pineiro-Chousa, Vizcaíno-González, López-Cabarcos, & Romero-Castro, 2017). This model aims not only to identify the risks, but also to ensure these risks are managed before the reputation and good will of the institution is damaged.

1.3 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

The interpretivist approach is a paradigm that focuses on real world phenomena and is focused on a real-life approach of data collection such as interviews and observations. The interpretive approach aims to understand and interpret the world, and to gain knowledge of a phenomenon. Interpretivism depends on factual information, but also integrates the human view/interest in a study (McAnulla, 2006; Schwartz, 1984; Williams, 2000).

The researcher is attempting to understand the current view of communication within the higher education sector, not only by taking research into account, but also how the research conducted can be practically implemented in order to make a positive change.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following objectives have been formulated for this research:

1.4.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this study is to develop a communication model, designed specifically for the HEIs, in order to mitigate reputational risk.

1.4.2 Theoretic objectives

In order to achieve the primary objective, the following theoretical objectives have been identified:

- Contextualise organisational, business and corporate communication within the higher education sector.
- Identify possible factors that may lead to the organisational buy-in of a suggested new communication model.
- Establish a theoretical framework for reputation and reputational risk within the higher education context.
- Identify a prevalent theoretical communication model.

1.4.3 Empirical objectives

In order to achieve the primary objective of the study, the following empirical objectives have been identified:

- Determine the perceptions towards the current communication model.
- Adapt the identified communication model by incorporating the inputs and suggestions that were provided by staff members, to develop a conceptual communication model suitable for HEIs.
- Determine the perceptions of the new conceptual communication model.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

For this study, multiple mediums were used to gather data with and to achieve the researcher objectives. The use of multiple mediums is known as triangulation and is considered one of the best ways to increase credibility and reliability when using a qualitative research method. Triangulation ensures that different events and relationships are collected from different points of views. In this study triangulation took place by combining content analysis, semi-structured interviews, the participant-observer method and retrospection (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Flick, 2002; Jooste, 2014; Van der Vyver, 2011)

This section summarises the research methodology used in this research.

1.5.1 Study context

Social constructivism is an interpretive research framework, where researchers set out to understand a phenomenon based on past and current knowledge. Researchers, therefore, rely on participants' view of the phenomenon studied, but acknowledge the impact the researcher's background and experiences have on findings (Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2013).

A social constructivist framework, in conjunction with a qualitative research methodology, was used in order to achieve the primary objective, as stated in Section 1.3.1. A social constructivist framework is best-suited to this study because this perspective focuses on the interdependence of social processes in the co-construction of knowledge. This paradigm holds the supposition that individuals seek understanding about life by jointly constructing their understandings of the world. Social constructivism relies on views of participants involved in a particular situation (Atwater, 1996; Au, 1998; Creswell, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009; Palincsar, 1998).

By looking at the qualitative research designs, it can be argued that this is an interactive, in-depth exploratory investigation during which non-numerical perceptions, perspectives, as well as a better comprehension of a specific situation, are formed (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Struwig & Stead, 2007). Qualitative research focuses on all aspects of a specific research topic and thoroughly investigates them in order to gain an understanding of the situation, whereas quantitative research broadly highlights certain tendencies found during the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Strydom *et al.*, 2005; Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). Quantitative research designs, on the other hand, make use of the statistical representation of data. This data are then described, analysed and explained in terms of numbers and statistics (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Bauer, 2000; Keyton, 2001).

1.5.2 Target population, sampling frame and sample size

The target population and sampling frame for this study constitute the 26 registered South African public HEIs. From this sampling frame, a convenience sample of one faculty within a traditional university in Gauteng was chosen.

As the researcher combined two fields of study, there is no single methodology available to guide the researcher. One university was selected to assist in creating a conceptual communication model. Once the conceptual model has been formulated, the researcher can focus on including more universities to the sample size in order to refine the model.

The university selected has eight academic faculties and offers degrees on multiple sites of delivery. Each faculty comprises the following departments:

- A faculty management team,
- academic schools,
- research units and
- business units.

Seventy participants participated in this study, comprising of 30 academic staff members, and 30 support staff members, and eight corporate communication members.

1.5.3 Sampling method

Stratified sampling, which is a probability sampling technique, focuses on the division of the total population into subpopulations or homogenous groups; these groups are also known as strata (Anon, 2017b; Esfahani & Dougherty, 2014).

From the final sampling frame, a stratified sample of staff members within the faculty was selected. The faculty selected was chosen due to its convenience and accessibility to the researcher. Furthermore, the faculty selected works across multiple campuses and strengthens the argument of the importance of communication across the faculty. The faculty selected, comprises the following divisions:

- One faculty managerial team,
- six academic schools,
- eight research units/entities and
- one business unit.

As the researcher investigated one faculty within a HEI to form a conceptual model to mitigate reputational risk, this study is based on the bases of a case study. A case study

is an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to examine complex phenomena in the natural setting.

1.6 MEASURING INSTRUMENT AND DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Several qualitative techniques were used throughout this study in order to obtain valuable data. The starting point of data collection was conducting a literature review and document analysis in order to develop a conceptual communication model, from the literature available, but which is also suitable for the higher education sector.

Reports from a communication audit and a culture survey conducted by the university was evaluated to determine some of the perceptions, views and opinions regarding communication and organisational buy-in. For this study, the Delphi research technique was selected to obtain data from participant through conducting various rounds of focus groups and interviews until group consensus has been reached. The general goal of Delphi is to bring together a group of individuals or experts, who can generate ideas, provide a solution or provide expert advice on research issues, in order to find consensus on the topic (Brown, 1968; Cantrill, Siddald & Buetow, 1996; Gupta & Clarke, 1996; Linstone & Turoff, 2011; Sackman, 1974).

During the rounds of Delphi, both focus groups and semi-structured interviews were used to identify the perceptions, views and comments of the respondents toward the current communication model. The individuals who participated during the focus groups and semi-structured interviews, also provided feedback on how the model can be improved. As the Delphi method was used, the conceptual communication model was adapted accordingly, in order to find the best-suited communication model. The sections below briefly look at each data collection method.

1.6.1 Literature review

A literature review identifies, collects and evaluates multiple resources relevant to a set of research questions, in order to create a comprehensive summary of previous research on a topic. This review of literature offers the researcher a comprehensive summary of previous work done in the field, and provides an up-to-date and complete overview of available literature-specific topics, and is essential in a research study (Coffta, 2019;

Dellinger, 2005; Delport & Fouché, 2005; Hanafin, 2004; Hart, 2018; Kofod-Petersen, 2014; Taylor, 2008; Visser, 2010).

This is an interdisciplinary study of two different topics in order to create a conceptual communication structure to mitigate reputational risks. The researcher utilised one element to overcome another element. Therefore, the study focuses on utilising communication factors and creating an easy flow model to overcome potential reputational risks.

Therefore, for this study, the traditional literature review chapter is divided into two literature analyses. The first focused on defining risks, risks within the HEI sector and the risk management process. The second focused on obtaining knowledge of communication, communication models within the HEI sector and how communication is a reputational risk factor.

The literature review also assisted the researcher in developing a conceptual communication model, by looking at several communication models within successful organisations and higher education sectors.

1.6.2 Document analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure, used in qualitative research studies, to analyse documentary evidence in order to obtain answers to the research questions. It is the act of reviewing the existing documentation of a business' processes or systems in order to extract pieces of information that are relevant to the researcher. Similar to other methods of analysis in qualitative research, document analysis requires repeated review, examination and interpretation (Adams, 2010; Frey, 2018; Love, 2013).

During the document analysis, the researcher reviewed available documentation related to the university and the faculty's communication models and structures.

1.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are preset questions that are posed to respondents in an orderly way. During a semi-structured interview, the interviewer does not strictly follow a formalised list of questions, allowing for focused, conversational, two-way communication (Keller &

Conradin, 2018). An advantage of semi-structured interviews is that respondents are allowed to address issues that are not on the interview schedule. This information provides the researcher with more vibrant and more valuable information, which includes their experience and perception of communication. The interviewer may also ask follow-up questions to clarify any ambiguities (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Gibson & Brown, 2009; Struwig & Stead, 2007).

During this research, the researcher conducted interviews with the faculty's executive dean, deputy deans, directors and deputy directors of academic schools, research directors and research unit directors in order to determine their perceptions, opinions and feelings towards the current communication model. These members also indicated several changes in improving the current communication model.

1.6.4 Focus groups

A focus group is a group of interacting individuals, who have a common interest or characteristics, which is utilised to gain information on a specific topic. This group typically consists of seven to 10 people as well as a facilitator. The aim is to create a comfortable and confidential atmosphere, where individuals are encouraged to share their views, experiences and perspectives on a particular topic (Eysenbach & Köhler, 2002; Kitzinger, 1994; Kitzinger, 1995). By doing a careful and systematic analysis of the group discussions, clues and insights are offered on how a product, service or opportunity is perceived by the group (Gibbs, 1997; Powell & Single, 1996).

The focus groups, just like the interviews, set out to determine the views, perceptions and feelings of staff members on the current communication model. However, the main difference is that the focus groups were conducted with support staff members, and the employees who are tasked to complete the actual tasks, as set out by university management. These sessions focused on the communication they receive, and whether they are enabled to do their work. Several focus group sessions were held with academic staff members as well as with support staff members across the faculty.

1.6.5 Delphi technique

The Delphi technique is a widely utilised social research procedure focusing on gathering reliable group opinions from respondents within their domain of expertise. The objective of this technique is to achieve a convergence or consensus within a group of people who can provide valuable contributions to a specific real-live complex problem (Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Landeta, 2006; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004; Rowe & Wright, 1999).

A conceptual communication model was developed by utilising data that were obtained during the literature review, as well as available information and data from the university and academic faculty. After deciding on the conceptual communication model, the model was discussed during each interview and focus group session. The focus, during each session, was to determine the challenges faced with the model, but also to provide suggestions for improving the model. After each round of Delphi, changes were made to the conceptual model.

After three rounds of Delphi took place, a fourth round was conducted presenting the updated conceptual model to a panel of support staff members, lecturers and faculty management members, as well as to members of the corporate communications team, in order to obtain end-user agreement.

The goal is to determine whether this conceptual communication model is suitable to implement over multiple faculties within the university and the higher education sector.

1.6.6 Statistical analysis

The qualitative data obtained during this study were transcribed verbatim, coded and analysed by using ATLAS.ti 8.0. The data was analysed thematically in order to facilitate the integration, comparison and presentation of findings. Initial codes were assigned to words and phrases of importance as the interviews and focus group's transcriptions were imported into ATLAS.ti 8.0 certain words or phrases were repeated, that lead to the revisiting initial coding, and modifying the list as new data immersed. Modified codes were then organised into categories and concepts according to the most informative or logical manner of sorting.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research complies with the ethical standards for academic research as prescribed by the North-West University. This study served on the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences of the North-West University, with the ethics clearance number NWU-00410-19-A4.

The necessary permission for data collection was obtained from all participating staff members, as well as from the faculty's management team. Participants were informed of the procedure that was followed while conducting the interviews and focus groups, and their anonymity was guaranteed. Upon mutual understanding of the method, participants were asked for their permission to be recorded throughout the interview/focus group session. The interview/focus group transcripts and the signed informed consent documents were kept separate.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the focus and central theme for this study. The research, theoretical and empirical objectives are defined, and the research approach and design for this study are described.

Chapter 2: Risk and risk management

The focus of this chapter is to determine the different risks evident within a higher education sector and to determine an appropriate risk management plan.

Chapter 3: Communication

This chapter focuses on contextualising literature available on business communication, communication models, as well as on corporate reputation. On completion of this chapter, the most suitable and popular communication model for organisations should be identified.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

This chapter discusses the research paradigm design, methodology and data collection methods that were used in this study.

Chapter 5: Conceptual communication model

This section sets out to describe the conceptual communication model within a faculty of a higher education sector.

Chapter 6: Data analysis

This chapter centres around the various rounds of Delphi, in order to get end-user agreement on the conceptual communication model. On completion of this chapter, a confirmed communication model for a faculty within a university are established.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter summarises the study, provides a conclusion given the research outcomes, and provides recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: RISK AND RISK MANAGEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that life is full of uncertainties; each new day brings surprises, which can be either good or bad. It is how we embrace and handle the surprises that transform our world. This statement is also true for the business sector. Each day organisations face various surprises, and if not handled fittingly, it can lead to extensive harm for the organisations, or worse, the organisation's downfall (Institute for Risk Management, 2002; Valsamakis, Vivian & Du Toit, 2004; Young, 2006).

Fortunately, despite the element of uncertainty present in organisations, it is in many cases possible to predict several of these risks before disaster strikes. Once these organisational risks are identified, systems can be designed to minimise the negative impact they might cause. This process of mitigating risks is known as risk management and is essential to all organisations, irrespective of size.

The focus of this chapter is to gain an understanding of the term risk and the different types of risk present within an organisation. If it is clear what types of risks are present and the possible impact that they might have on an organisation, a risk management process can be formed to mitigate these risks. This chapter provides a framework for risk management process within an organisation.

2.2 DEFINING RISK

In order to be able to assign the appropriate risk management process, the term risk should first be understood. Valsamakis *et al.* (2004) are of the opinion that the term risk is a contextual meaning and has no single definition. According to Young (2006), individuals and organisations have different views on risks – some see risk as a potential risk, while others see a potential opportunity to gain an advantageous position.

Risk or being at risk means to be uncertain. It is the possibility of an incident that, if it occurs, may lead to harming the organisation or to loss. It is the exposure to danger, the probability of damage, or the loss of something valuable, caused by internal or external

weaknesses (Cline, 2004; Hansson & Hirsch Hadorn, 2017; Holton, 2004; Kungwani, 2014; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004).

Le Roux (2016) summarises the term risk as to the probability and the magnitude of the loss, disaster or an undesirable event that could prevent an organisation from reaching their corporate objectives.

2.3 BASIC CLASSIFICATION OF RISK

Due to the broad definition of the term 'risk', it can be divided into various categories, offering a better insight into the estimated impact these risks can have on an organisation.

The first classification of risk is **uncertainty**, which means that the future of the situation, as well as the consequences of this situation, is unknown or unpredictable. Moreover, the term uncertainty means the presence of doubt in the decision-making process (Adler & Dumas, 1984b; Business-Dictionary, 2017; Epstein, 1999; Kaplan & Garrick, 1981; Merriam-Webster, 2017; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004). An example of uncertainty within the workplace is when an organisation undergoes restructuring, or a new manager is appointed.

According to Valsamakis *et al.* (2004), **perils and hazards** are the second category of risks. Perils refer to the source of loss, whereas a hazard provides information about the environment surrounding the cause of loss (Applegate, 1991; Garten, 1990; Tchankova, 2002). Examples of hazards include fire, explosion, spillage of hazardous materials, terrorism, workplace violence or student violence, pandemic disease, load shedding that can lead to mechanical failure, failure from suppliers to deliver on time and cyber-attacks (Ruzic-Dimitrijevic & Dakic, 2014).

A third category includes **pure and speculative risks**, where pure risk can be defined as risks or events that are beyond human control, and the possibility for the organisation to suffer loss because of this event is great. Examples of pure risks include a natural disaster, crime, and accidents during work hours (Investorwords, 2017; IRM, 2017; Spacey, 2017b; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004). **Speculated risk**, on the other hand, is a situation where events can end either in a profit or a loss (Investorwords, 2017; IRM, 2017; Spacey, 2019; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004).

Valsamakis *et al.* (2004) are of the opinion that, to date, no conclusive test has been developed to assist in the classification of **insurable and non-insurable risks**. According to him, the rule of thumb is, when risk is pure, it can be seen as insurable. An insurable risk is a situation that a company can protect itself from because it is possible to predict how likely it is for this event to occur; whereas, with uninsurable risks, a company cannot protect themselves, because it cannot be calculated how likely it is to happen to them. An earthquake is an example of an uninsurable risk (Anon, 2009; Baranoff, 2004; Berliner, 1982; Berliner, 1985; Biener *et al.*, 2015; CambridgeDictionary, 2017; CCOHS, 2017).

Fundamental risks result from a multitude of losses and can be traced back to a single source of origin, and affects large groups of individuals and firms, and is usually caused by a natural or social phenomenon (Jaafari, 2001; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004; Vassalou, 2000; Yee, 2008); whereas, a **particular risk** is the exposure to potential loss associated with specific individuals, and is usually insurable. Examples of particular risks include robberies, break-ins and fire (Morgan *et al.*, 2000; Ward, 1999).

Systematic risks are market-related and refer to the risk associated with the chance that the economy, as a whole, may experience extreme fluctuations and events that affect the economy. A business can have little or no control over systematic risks (Kadan, Liu & Liu, 2013; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004). Consequently, unsystematic risk denotes the risks associated with a specific business or line of business within a company, or that the company is engaged in, causing the business to lose value in shares or downturn. Unsystematic risk can be reduced by proper management decisions and diversifying the business portfolio (Akrani, 2012; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004).

2.4 ELEMENTS OF RISK

For an organisation to be able to create an effective risk management plan, it should start by identifying and exploring the basic elements of risk, how it can affect an organisation and possible ways of how these elements can be managed. The following section provides a discussion on how risks can influence an organisation if not managed effectively.

Firstly, different event risks should be identified. **Event risk** is the probability of something happening, an unexpected occurrence, activity or action, which has the potential to affect

the organisation or sector negatively. Event risk is any situation that may affect the functioning of an organisation, or hinder the organisation from reaching its objectives (Aven & Renn, 2009; Marks, 2018). Examples of risk events include introducing and implementing new regulations, the restructuring of a unit or organisation, the loss of a key employee, or intrusion caused by a hacker (Marks, 2018).

Secondly, outcomes should be identified. **Outcome** refers to the result, effect or consequence because of an event, and can be either positive or negative. Outcomes can include profit, financial loss and injury to individuals or can have a legal impact on the organisation (Aven & Renn, 2009; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004). If, for instance, a fire should break out at a plant, the following can be seen as the outcomes of that event: damage of property and loss of income; employees injured during the fire; and whether the fire was caused by neglect of the company, resulting in employees taking legal action against the company. Valsamakis *et al.* (2004) are of the opinion that outcomes of events can often be traced to a specific time and place; this, however, is not the case with positive outcomes.

Thirdly, **sources**, i.e. the place, person or object from which something originates, should be identified (Flage & Aven, 2015; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004). Bauer and Bushe (2003) furthermore, argue that a source can be controlled or uncontrollable. For example, the weather is an example of a planned source that cannot be controlled, whereas production techniques and processes are an example of planned sources that can be controlled.

Lastly, **environmental factors** are elements, in the economic, political, physical, cultural, demographic or technological environment, which can affect how an organisation functions and survives (Bauer & Bushe, 2003; Kokemuller, 2017). In the instance of higher education sectors, environmental factors, such as university ratings, pass rates and student life, can play a role in the decision a school leaver makes, whether or not to enrol in a university. The lack of enrolments at a university will have a direct influence on that university's financial statements (Briggs, 2006; Elliott & Healy, 2001).

2.5 TYPES OF RISK

For most, the concepts of risk and universities seem unrelated to one another. Risk is generally associated with extreme sports, risky behaviour or the financial world, whereas

HEIs are focused on teaching, learning and philosophy. The concept of risk seems irrelevant in such an academic, and what appears a safe, environment. Risk is, however, part of everyday life, and universities are not excluded from this. Some of the risks within universities include academic risks, quality risks, ethical risks, political risks, student-related risks, financial risks and risks of insufficient resources (Md.Sum & Md.Saad, 2017; Raanan, 2009).

Being aware of the specific types of risk can assist an organisation in reducing concerns about these risks and help them to make the best possible long-term decisions. Risk can be categorised into different groups (Young, 2004; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2014). This section looks at financial risk, non-financial risks, business risk, systematic risk and unsystematic risk.

2.5.1 Financial risk

Financial risk focuses on the risk associated with the financial transactions or cash flow of an organisation. The risk arises that an investor can lose money if an investment is made in an organisation that has debt. Therefore financial risk refers to the organisation's ability to manage its debts and cash flow (Brown, 2017; Eshna, 2017; Young, 2006).

Raanan (2009) describes financial risks within a higher education sector as insufficient funds for research, teaching and learning, infrastructure, maintenance and development. The inability of university students to pay their higher education bills is also a financial risk a university should acknowledge, as unsettled bills will have a direct effect on that university's financial statements. An example within the South African context is the inability of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to pay out money to students. The latter affects the ability of students to complete their studies due to inability to pay rent or buy textbooks, leading to a high volume of dropouts, and thereby influencing the income of the university (Sehloho, 2018).

The following sections investigate some of the different types of financial risks available.

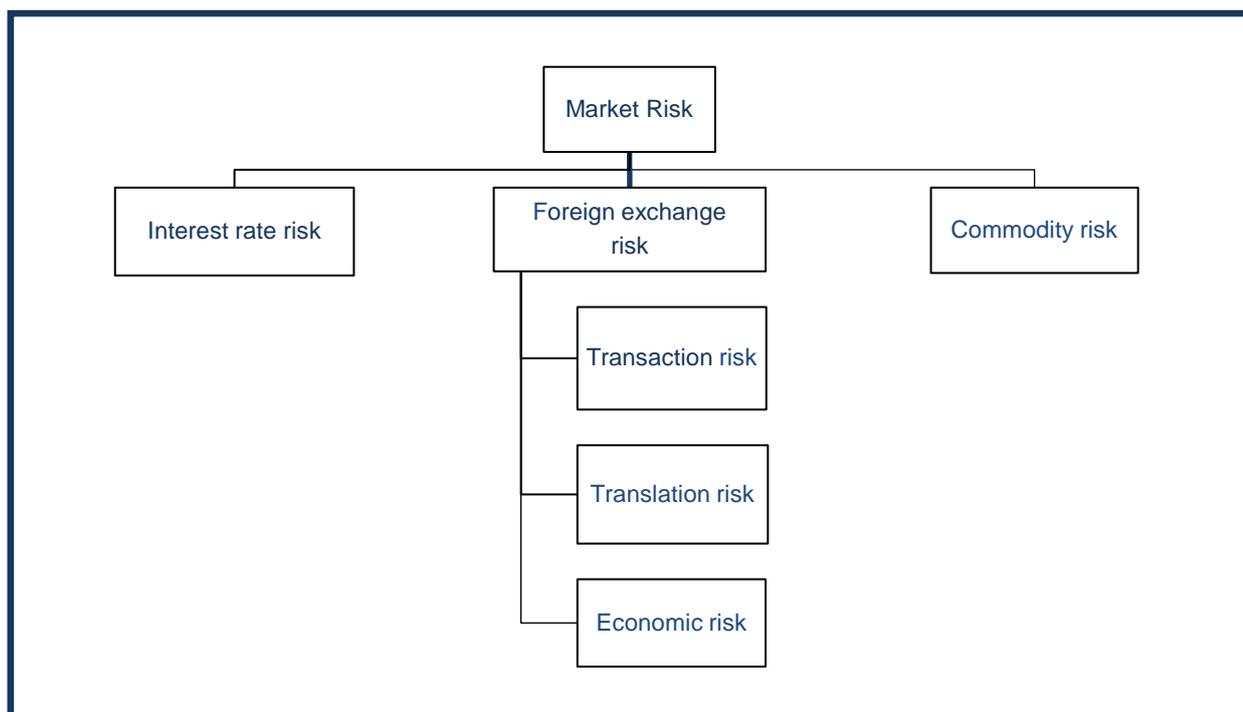
2.5.1.1 Market risk

Market risk is the possibility that the value of an investment may increase or decrease due to factors that influence the overall financial market. If the market price in whole declines, the price of shares may also decline. Market risk is usually beyond the control of the company, and includes events such as natural disasters, economic sanctions, as well as civil and political unrest. It can be argued that by understanding market risk, a better understanding can be gained about price behaviours (Joosub, 2006; Mayo, 2015; Perez 2014; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004).

Market Business News (2017) offers the following description to understand the market risk concept better. When a potential buyer sets out to purchase a new car, research is done on different car models, warranty and service plans and other features that might be important to that buyer. However, regardless of what the type of car the buyer purchases, various risks will affect the driving experiences of the buyer. Some of these risks include potholes, e-tolls and weather conditions. These risks have nothing to do with the chosen car itself, but these risks can affect the satisfaction towards driving. Investments work on the same basis; an investor chooses an investment suited to his needs. As this investment is building and maintained, both national and international factors can have an impact on the value of that investment (Kokemuller, 2017; Roa, 2014; Spacey, 2015; Spacey, 2017b).

Figure 2-1 provides a summary of the different types of market risks that are present within organisations, namely (i) interest rate risk, (ii) foreign exchange risk and (iii) commodity risk.

Figure 2-1 Summary of market risk



Source: Researcher's own compilation

The first leg of the diagram illustrates **interest rate risk**, and exists in interest-bearing assets, due to the possibility of change in the portfolio's value, an increase in market rates, and fluctuations in interest rates between the time of purchase and the portfolio's maturity date (Firer, Ross, Westerfield & Jordan, 2012; Joosub, 2006; Wilkinson, 2013; Young, 2006). For example, should an HEI apply for a loan that institution will firstly seek a financial institution that offers the best interest rates. However, the HEI is still subject to the repo rate. The repo rate is the standard interest rate at which the Reserve Bank loans money to different financial institutions. These interest rates then influence the rate that financial institutions offer an organisation for lending money from them. If the repo rate declines the value of the loan will rise, as the repayments of that loan will be lower. However, if the repo rate rises, it means that there is a depreciation in that loan's value. It will cost the HEI more money to repay the interest rate (Noorali & Santos, 2005; South African Reserve Bank, 2020).

The second leg illustrates **foreign exchange risk**, where an investment's value might change due to fluctuations in foreign currencies. This risk occurs when companies make

investments in different countries, and the currency is not the same as the base currency of the company. The foreign exchange rate is very volatile and needs to be scrutinised (Bartram, 2008; Bartram, Brown & Minton., 2010; Papaioannou, 2006; Young, 2006). For example, if a South African investor holds a bond from an American company, that company pays interest in dollars. In the case where the exchange rate is 1 to 1, the interest payment will be the same in either one of the dominations. Therefore, the amount received in dollars is equal to the amount received in rand. Whereas, if the exchanges rate is 1 to 13, the amount received in dollars will be higher than the amount received in rand. An investment can, therefore, either make or lose value.

A foreign exchange rate can be divided further into three subcategories, namely transaction, translation and economic risk. **Transaction risk** is associated with the time delay from entering into a contract and settling it. Therefore, a company faces the risk that there is a change in the currency exchange rate, after the company entered into a financial obligation, affecting them negatively (Spitz, Anderson, Latham, Guerin and Arbour, 2004; Westland, 2002). **Translation risk**, however, arises when financial data are denominated from one currency to another, causing a difference in the reported figures of a company (Vallely, 2014; Wilkinson, 2013); and **economic risk** occurs when macroeconomic conditions affect international investments. These conditions include economic development, exchange rate, government regulations and political stability (Picardo, 2017).

The third and last leg illustrated **commodity risk**, to be able to define commodity risk, the term commodity should first be defined. A commodity is an economic term, describing items used to satisfy human needs and desires. Petroleum and copper are examples of commodities. Commodity prices tend to be unpredictable due to the under- or oversupply in the physical market. Therefore, commodity risk can be defined as the uncertainty of future market values; the risk that prices of these commodities might change (Joosub, 2006; Kennon, 2016). An example of commodity risk is uncertainty whether the petrol price will increase or decrease. The unexpected rise in petrol prices can influence the price of production of a product, causing a lesser profit than projected. The latter can, in turn, affect the ability of the company to compensate other companies for goods and services (Kowalski, 2016).

2.5.1.2 *Liquidity risk*

Liquidity risk occurs when an organisation or individual is in immediate need to meet short-term financial obligations, without suffering catastrophic losses (Nikolaou, 2009; Spacey, 2017a; Young, 2006). For example, consider the real estate in Bloubergstrand, worth three million rands without buyers. This real estate has value, but due to various market conditions at the time, there are no interested buyers. If the market conditions improved, the demand by potential buyers would likely increase, and the profit may be more significant than the buyer projected. On the other hand, if the real estate owner is desperate for the sale, and unable to wait for better conditions, the real estate will be sold at a significant loss.

Liquidity risk has two subcategories, namely funding liquidity risk and market liquidity risk. **Funding liquidity risk** focuses on an organisation's ability to pay bills or fund liabilities, immediately when it is due. If an organisation is unable to settle its liabilities, that organisation is considered illiquid (Drehmann & Nikolaou, 2009; Drehmann & Nikolaou, 2010; Ritchie, 2016). An example of funding liquidity risk is when an organisation cannot sell an asset because there is no buyer able or willing to trade for it. **Market liquidity risk**, on the other hand, is the situation where it is difficult for an organisation to sell assets swiftly to avoid losing money (Moffatt, 2017; Muranaga & Ohsawa, 1997). Liquidity risk is best explained by the inability of an organisation to sell an asset at fair market value, and not at a significant loss.

2.5.1.3 *Credit risk*

Credit risk occurs when the potential arises that a debtor will not be able to pay the loan that was made, influencing the lender negatively. Credit risk exists within all companies; like other companies, suppliers or foreign partners could fail to meet financial payments, influencing the company negatively (Gordy, 2000; Jarrow & Turnbull, 1995; Joosub, 2006; Jorion, 2000; Saunders, Cornett & McGraw, 2006).

The best way to describe credit risk is to look at the vehicle purchasing process. When the potential buyer decides to purchase a specific vehicle, the dealership does a credit check. This credit check will provide the dealership with information on the ability of the potential buyer to settle the amount due fully (Perez, 2014).

Credit risks can further be divided into subcategories, namely default, exposure and recovery risk, and downgrade risk. **Default risk**, on the other hand, is the probability that a company, or a client, is incapable of making an outstanding payment. **Exposure risk** focuses on the uncertainty regarding future payments of a borrower, due to the rise of premium, and recovery risk refers to the uncertainty as to whether or not a company will be able to recover outstanding payments (Aziz & Charupat, 1998; Browyer, 2011; Young, 2006).

An **economic downgrade** is an adverse change in the rating of security; this occurs when agencies such as Moody's, S&P and Fitch indicate the possibility of default, meaning that the probability arises that a company or country will be unable to make outstanding payments (Brand & Wallace, 2017; Crouhy, Galai & Mark, 2000).

2.5.2 Non-financial risk

Non-financial risks are risks that negatively influence the operations of an organisation, having an indirect influence on the profitability of that organisation (Hervayová, 2014; Young, 2006). Most risks faced within the higher education sector are settled in the non-financial sector (Brewer & Walker, 2011; Md.Sum & Md.Saad, 2017; Raanan, 2009). Depending on the type of organisations, entities adopt different definitions of non-financial risk. The sections below look at the most common non-financial risks present in organisations.

2.5.2.1 Reputational risk

An organisation's reputation is one of the most valuable assets there is. Reputation risk, also known as reputational risk, is anything that threatens to damage the organisation's good name or standing. Reputational risk is any form of negative exposure an organisation receives; any damages towards the trustworthiness of an organisation that may lead to the reduction of revenue and reputational capital (Ching, 2015; Eccles *et al.*, 2016; Honey, 2009; Spacey, 2015a; Young, 2006).

According to Young (2014), the effects of reputation risk may include:

- A loss of customers and business, consequently a loss of income.
- A loss of market shares and investors.

- Damage to the company's image and branding.
- Negatively influencing the employees of the company as they may experience a decline in morale and lose their confidence in the company.

In 2010, Toyota, the Japanese car manufacturing company, not only caused immense damage to their reputation, but also lost billions of dollars. In less than a year, Toyota had to recall approximately 2.3 million cars due to faulty accelerator pedals, another five million cars because of floor mats trapping pedals, and they had to suspend sales of eight of their models in the United States.

In a very short period, Toyota's investors started to flee, loyal customers lost faith in the brand, and the shares lost approximately 22% of their value (BBC, 2010; Madslie 2010; Tannen, 2010). According to the Annual Corporate Reputation study done by Forbes, Toyota was ranked number 17 out of 150 before the crises, then plummeted to number 139, and is currently number 74. The latter indicated how powerful the perceptions of stakeholders are, and that their trust in Toyota is still not restored (Davis, 2012).

According to Vitters *et al.*, (2018) some of the factors that can affect the reputation of a HEI include:

- Campus climate (Diversity and inclusion)
- Well-being of stakeholders (Prevention and response to racism, sexual assault and gender-based violence.)
- Quality of academic programmes
- Integrity of researchers
- Postgraduate employment opportunities

2.5.2.2 *Compliance risk*

Compliance regulations are created to ensure that organisations operate fairly and ethically. Compliance risk, also known as integrity risk, is the risk organisations face when they fail to act per these laws and regulations. Doing a compliance risk assessment assists an organisation to understand the full range of its risk exposure, to prioritise these risks, and to allocate resources for risk mitigation (DeLorenzo, 2006; Harland, Brenchley & Walker, 2003; Tabuena, 2015).

Universities want to ensure the highest standards of operations in education, research, preservation of knowledge and other significant activities. Business and ethical practices serve as control mechanisms throughout HEIs and these institutions are expected to remain compliant with a growing array of government and business regulations. Should an institution fail to meet certain compliance standards, it can lead to loss of funding, loss of accreditation, or, in extreme cases, to lawsuits and criminal charges against the leadership (Deloitte, 2018).

2.5.2.3 *Strategic risk*

A business strategy is an important and valuable plan, developed to help an organisation achieve its objectives. Strategic risk is the risk associated with making the appropriate strategic decisions, whether in the initial selection stage or during the execution phase. Strategic risk can further be seen as the amount of risk a company is willing to take in order to achieve business objectives. Strategic risks, if not managed effectively, can prevent you from capitalising on your opportunities and expose your weakness (Baird & Thomas, 1985; Chapman, 2006; Damodaran, 2007; Young, 2006).

Strategic risks can further be seen as any changes within the business environment that can potentially have a significant effect on the operations and business objectives. Strategic risks can include changes in communication channels, changes in consumer behaviour patterns, a decline in competitive advantage, brand positioning, as well as the risk that your technology and operations strategy will fail (Taylor, 2012; Young, 2006).

If, for instance, an HEI promotes that it is an innovative educational institution, but mainly focus on traditional modes of on-campus teaching. Strategic risk is formed when this HEI loses their competitive advantage to an institution that has adapted to the 4th Industrial Revolution and online teaching and learning delivery methods.

2.5.2.4 *Operational risks*

Operational risk is the potential loss a company faces due to shortcomings and failures in the execution of operations, caused by human error or by inadequate procedures, systems or policies (Sherman, 2017; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004; Young, 2006).

If maintenance is required on both the institution's internet system, and the generator on the campus, but only maintenance on the internet systems can be afforded, the institution take the risk that during load shedding classes, test and other important operations cannot proceed. The latter has an effect on both the operations on campus as well as the timeframe to get the job at hand completed on time. An extension on the deadline of projects and classes can have a financial impact on the institution

2.5.2.5 Business risk

Ferreira (2015) believes that there are various perspectives on business risk, but that to date, there has not yet been a clear description of what business risk entails. This first perspective on business risk focuses on an organisation's ability to generate sufficient revenue to cover its operational expenses. Therefore, business risks can be seen as risks that are related to the operational activities of a company (Janse van Vuuren, 2006; Joosub, 2006; Kremlijak & Kafol, 2014). The second perspective stresses that business risk affects financial risk, and business risk and financial risk equal the total corporate risk of an organisation. Therefore, business risks affect an organisation's ability to provide its stakeholders with adequate investment returns, indirectly affecting the realisation of strategic objectives (Amit & Wernerfelt, 1990). The third perspective divides business risk into categories and subcategories. Business risk can firstly be divided into systematic and non-systematic risks. Systematic risks are market-related risks, whereas non-systematic risks are company-related (see Section 2.3). Business risk can secondly be divided into the following subcategories (Sai Kiran, 2014; Sherman, 2017; Surbhi, 2015; Toma & Alexa, 2012):

- Compliance risk
- Operational risk
- Reputational risk
- Financial risk
- Strategic risk

2.6 RISK WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

HEIs operate in the same manner as any business and therefore have several risks that they need to identify and manage. There are several risks present within HEIs, ranging from market risks to business risks.

For this study, the focus is only placed on the risks that affect the reputation of the HEI. Table 2-1 highlights elements that pose potential damage to the HEI's reputation:

Table 2-1 Risks within a higher education Institution

Risk class	Action and cause
Strategic risk	<p>Strategic risks are risks that the HEI take that could potentially result in loss due an inadequate strategic or business plan. In HEI any element that can influence the core activities of the business, namely teaching learning and research, can be classified as a strategic risk.</p> <p>The institution's strategic plan can pose as a strategic risk, if not designed correctly. New technologies can also threaten or change the strategic plan and business model of an institution.</p> <p>HEIs should focus on marketing their unique advantages, strive to be competitive and be a vital presence in the communities they serve. This will ensure that the HEI's competitive advantage do not decrease and that the public's opinion of them remains strong.</p> <p>Traditional universities that are focused on class-based activities may struggle to establish an innovative culture. For example, During <i>#FeesMustFall</i> protests several institutions were forced to postpone classes or attempt online teaching and learning. However, universities in South Africa face several problems when it comes to online teaching and learning ranging from shortage of IT systems, Wi-Fi to lecturers not being skilled to teach online. With core activities of the institution not</p>

	<p>being met or the quality being substandard, institutions can lose their competitive advantage and credibility.</p>
Operational risk	<p>HEIs are dependent upon certain day-to-day operations to take place in order to ensure their success. Absence of sufficient infrastructure, equipment, failure in IT systems and load shedding can lead to day-to-day activities to be interrupted. Operational losses attract media attention despite the fact that the financial loss may be small. This increased attention poses severe threats to an institutions' reputation.</p> <p>Constant failures in the IT system or human errors can lead to stakeholders losing trust in the institution. The latter can lead to valuable staff members being lost to the competition or to a decrease in student enrolments.</p> <p>Communication or the lack of communication also poses an operational loss. If communication or directives are not clear, employees do not know what is expected from them, resulting in goals and objectives not being met. The latter can lead to quality of programmes and research to be negatively affected, indirectly affecting student enrolment, funding and trust in the institution.</p>
Compliance risk	<p>Educational institutions must comply with laws, regulations and internal policies designed to ensure the smooth running of their core activities.</p> <p>HEIs are also expected to remain compliant with regulations, guidelines and procedures of governing bodies and other companies. This area includes internal and external reporting and may involve financial and non-financial information. Failure to meet compliance standards can lead to consequences ranging from loss of funding, loss of accreditation or in extreme cases, to lawsuits and/or criminal charges against leadership.</p>

	During certain situations, like Covid-19, higher education leadership are expected to remain compliant with growing array regulations.
Teaching risks	<p>Academic risks are those associated with the institution academic's activity and include (i) poor lecturers who are unable to teach, (ii) outdated programmes/courses that do not take new trends and the market needs into account, and (iii) insufficient teaching resources and equipment (classrooms, labs, audio-visual equipment).</p> <p>If an institution stagnates and cannot adapt their academic offerings they will lose their competitive advantage.</p>
Conduct risk	The decisions and behaviours of stakeholders within a HEI can have a negative effect on their customers and services. Conduct risk is therefore any action of an individual that leads to customer detriment or negatively impacts market stability. These risks can range from (i) stakeholders that are not held accountable for poor conduct, (ii) conflict of interest are not identified or managed, and (iii) complicated processes and procedures causes extra layers of bureaucracy that stakeholders try to bypass.
Ethical risks	<p>Ethical behaviour includes honesty, integrity, fairness and a variety of other positive traits. Ethical risks arise when unethical research practices take place, plagiarism occurs, stakeholders are unethically exploited, discriminated against or harassed.</p> <p>An HEI that is perceived to act ethically can increase employee performance, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, increase public and peer opinions about them and become a respected institution.</p>

Source: Researcher's own compilation

2.7 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management can be described as the activity where risks are identified, assessed and prioritised. The aim is to formulate a plan to minimise the probability of these risks or the impact of unfortunate occurrences. Risk management is, therefore, the attempt to control threats to an organisation's capital and earnings (Institute of Risk Management South Africa, 2013; Kungwani, 2014; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004).

Financial risk management is the process of understanding the financial risks of an individual and/or organisation, and using financial instruments to manage exposure to risk (Christoffersen, 2011; Jorion, 2000).

Non-financial risk management aims to construct a framework that allows organisations to handle risks. The risk management framework should outline all of the steps, policies and procedures that management should take, to lessen non-financial risks within an organisation (Reimers & Scheepers, 2016; Stulz, 1996).

2.7.1 Enterprise risk management

The business environment is rapidly changing, and, in order for an organisation to survive, it relies on the organisation's ability to respond to the changing risk landscape with an appropriate risk management approach (Accenture, 2010; Beasley, Branson & Hancock, 2015; Le Roux, 2016). Enterprise risk management (hereafter referred to as ERM) is an active, intrusive, and synchronised integrated approach that challenges the organisation's assumptions towards risk, quantifies this risk, and assists the organisation in controlling these risks effectively. One can argue that ERM is the process of planning, implementing and controlling activities within an organisation in order to minimise the risks of the effects (Accenture, 2010; Beasley *et al.*, 2015; Le Roux, 2016; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004; Young, 2006).

ERM is a strategy that aligns processes, people, technology and knowledge to determine, evaluate and control the risks of an organisation. The ERM process assesses, controls, exploits, finances and monitors risks in order to ensure the organisation meets its objectives (Bromiley, McShane, Nair & Rustambevok, 2015; D'Archy & Brogan, 2001; Le Roux, 2016; Sobel & Reding, 2004).

Therefore, ERM can be seen as more than just the management of risks, but as an approach where the organisations ensure that they are attending to all the risks within the organisation, irrespective of the size of the risk. This process ensures the management of expectations among shareholders about which risks the organisations are willing to take, and it establishes a method for avoiding situations that might result in losses. It also enables the organisation to act proactively in order to gain more rewards than risk losses. Furthermore, ERM forms a communication style recognised by all stakeholders, facilitating the communication of risk information and aiding organisations with the identification of strategic opportunities, the reduction of uncertainty and the growth of its value to its stakeholders. Equally important, ERM creates a risk management culture that is adopted by all the stakeholders of an organisation (Bowen, Cassel, Collins, Dickson, Fleet, Ingram, Meyers, Mueller, Samaniego, Siberón, Wille & Yu, 2006; Standards & Poor, 2008; Bromiley, *et al.*, 2014).

According to Le Roux (2016), an effective and well-constructed ERM programme could:

- Increase risk awareness.
- Align risk appetite and strategy.
- Avoid and/or mitigate risks.
- Enhance risk-based decisions.
- Reduce operational surprises
- Improve resource allocation.

HEIs, like any other enterprise, face several risks and uncertainty. There are a few drivers that are increasing the pressure on HEIs to transform their risk management systems.

According to ERM (2007), Le Roux (2016), Vandenberg (2017) and Whitsett (2019) these drivers include, but are not limited to, the increase of competition in the market place and for faculties, students, staff and financial resources. The reason for this being that there are multiple HEIs but only so many candidates that qualify to attend these HEIs, it is therefore important to ensure that the HEI attractive to prospective students like enhancing student life experience, HEIs can also make more effort to create relationship with feeder schools.

Pressure for increased productivity while reducing costs, it is therefore important for HEIs to focus on drives to provide third stream income to supplement low student numbers. HEIs should also focus on a drive to educate students on new technologies and class-based online learning. It is an HEI's responsibility to empower the students to be able to cope in the 4th Industrial revolution. A focus should be placed on introducing students that had no previous access to technology and to provide them with the tools to enhance their learning opportunities through digital media.

As well as scrutiny from government and the public. Here it is paramount that HEIs adhere to the government and ethical guidelines provided. For example, a research HEI's reputation can be tarnished if they are caught not following ethical research procedures.

ERM provides a proactive risk management process for HEIs that provide them with a plan to assess, implement, monitor and reduce risks across the institution (ERM, 2007; Van den Berg, 2017; Whitsett, 2019). Consequently, institutions should take an ERM approach to risk management and put in all efforts to make this process successful within their institutions.

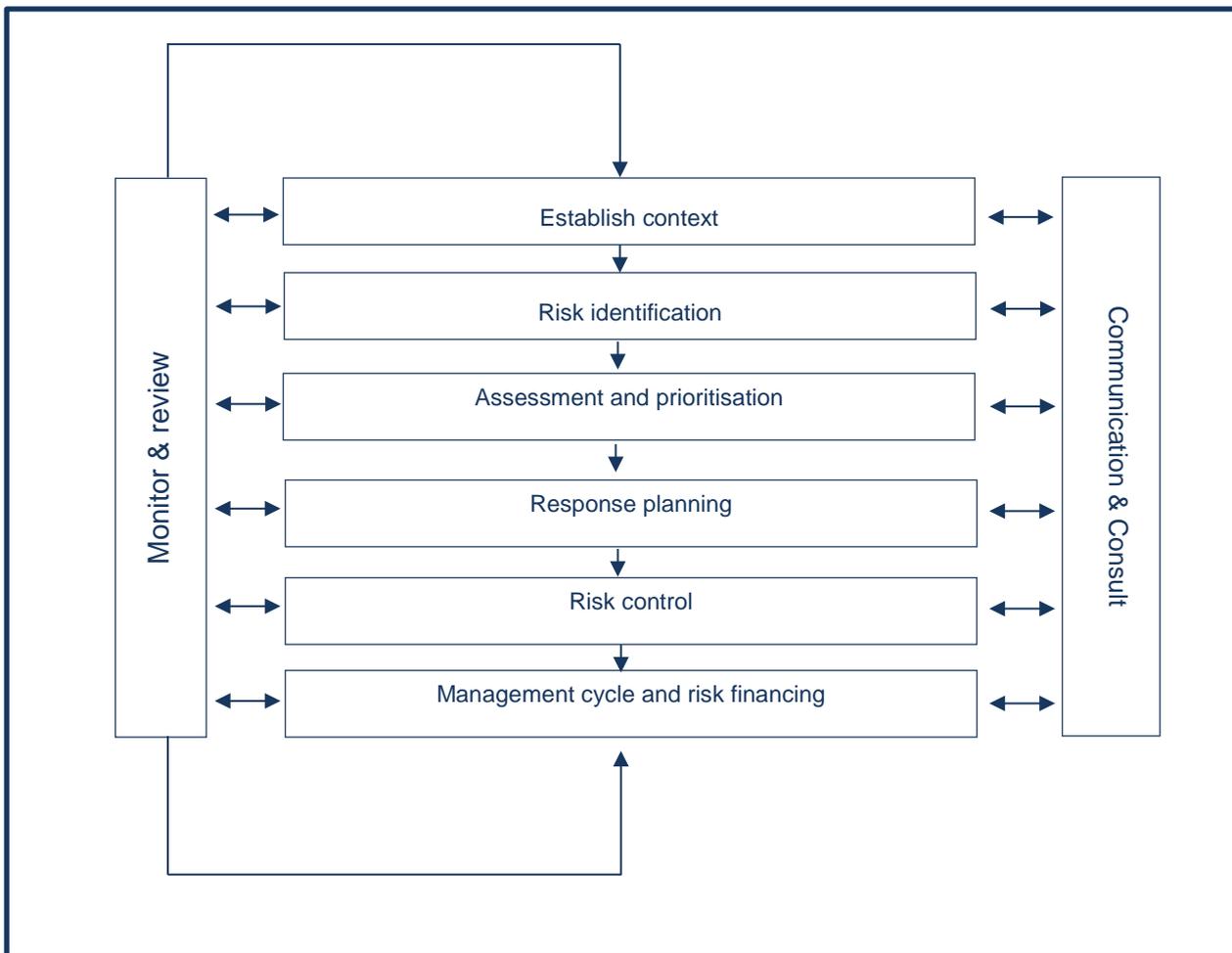
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2.7.2 The risk management process

A risk management process is the process of defining, monitoring and managing potential risks in order to minimise the possible negative impact that it might have on those organisations. An integrated risk management process can be described as practices and processes that are being integrated into daily work activities in order to create a risk-aware culture. This ensures that all stakeholders are vigilant or potential risks, and also improves decision-making and performance because it has an integrated view of how well the organisation manages its risks as a whole (Culp, 2002; Meulbroek, 2002; Miller, 1992).

An integrated risk management process was generated and illustrated in Figure 2-2 (Berg, 2010; IRM, 2002; Renault, Agumba & Ansary, 2016; Stankovska & Dimitrieska, 2017; Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004).

Figure 2-2 Risk management process



Source: Adapted from Berg (2010); IRM (2002); Renault *et al.*, (2016); Stankovska & Dimitrieska (2017) and Valsamakis *et al.*, (2004).

The risk management process starts with obtaining all information about the organisation's current situation; after that, a risk identification process should start, and be prioritised. This identification process should involve all stakeholders. After that, the development of a risk response should be established. This is a process of developing options, determining actions to enhance opportunities and reduce threats. There are three possible responses to business and event risks, namely, to accept the risk, to transfer the risk, or to mitigate the risk (Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004).

During the implementation of the risk control strategy, all activities are conducted to eliminate or reduce the factors that may cause loss to an organisation, minimising the

actual loss that occurs when preventative methods have not been fully effective (Valsamakis *et al.*, 2004).

The risk management cycle and risk financing are to coordinate and efficiently utilise economic resources to ensure the minimisation and/or control of occurrences that may negatively affect an organisation. The second step is ensuring funds to cover the financial effect of unexpected losses. The last step includes the review of risk exposure and repeating the cycle if necessary.

Raanan (2017) affirms that currently there is no risk management system developed for the academia and that HEIs should rely on the expertise of the economy until a risk management model can be developed addressing their specific needs.

2.8 RISK GOVERNANCE

Governance refers to the establishment of actions, structures and processes, as well as the implementation of these structures and processes to ensure that the goals of an organisation are achieved. These sets of norms are implemented by management to ensure that risk-taking activities are in line with the bank's strategy and goals (Abou-El-Sood, 2017; Andrieş & Nistor, 2016; Anon, 2016; Calomiris & Carlson, 2016; Deloitte, 2013; Iqbal *et al.*, 2015; Lundqvist, 2015; Nahar *et al.*, 2016; OECD, 2014; Southall, 2014; Unesco, 2017; Van Asselt & Renn, 2011; Xie, 2016; Xue, 2014; Zwikael & Smyrk, 2015).

For this study, the research acknowledges that there are several governance systems in place within the South African context, but due to the nature of the study, an in-depth investigation of these systems is not necessary. Government systems include:

- The International Organisation for Standards
- The Committee of Sponsoring Organisations of the Tread Way Commission
- Basel Committee
- The King Reports

2.9 CONCLUSION

During this chapter, it became evident that risks are inevitable within the higher education sector, and it is important to identify these needs within the various departments of a university.

This chapter explore the different **financial risks** and **non-financial risks** present within the HEI. The researcher set out to investigate the types of financial risks present within an HEI and provided explanations and examples of market risk, liquidity risk as well as credit risk. In addition to this, the researcher identified the non-financial risks of HEIs and evaluated compliance risks, strategic risks, operational risk, business risk end reputational risk that HEIs may be subject to.

It also came to light that no HEIs can survive without a proactive risk management programme, and that the practice of risk management is becoming essential to the success of that organisation. **Risk management**, similar to any other department or activity in an organisation, starts with planning, preparation, evaluation. This chapter lastly highlighted several methods to manage the risks that the higher education sector faces and concluded with an integrated risk management model that can be used.

The researcher established that **communication** plays a very important role in the risk management process. The researcher provided a definition and context for the term **reputational risk** within the business/economic sector. Chapter 3 focuses on providing clarity on communication within a business. The chapter further investigates the importance of communication and the different models and approaches to communication. The objective during Chapter 3 is also to establish a theoretical framework on why communication can be seen as reputational risk, and why it is important to manage this risk. Lastly, a proposed risk management approach to manage reputational risks of an organisation are provided.

CHAPTER 3: COMMUNICATION WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is a prominent human need and something we do every day. It is so much more than just speaking or the mere transmission of information. We use communication to communicate instructions and to establish authority and control, like stopping your car at a red light. Communication is also vital to establish a sense of social coherence and building relationships with others (Ball, 2015; Kamboura, 2008; Nguyen, 2019; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 1994; Smith, 2017b; Waisbord, 2001; Warner, 2006; Winbow, 2002).

Communication is an essential life skill that enables us to better understand and connect with the people around us. Communication seems like an easy thing to do, yet so many people and companies still struggle with inefficient communication. It often happens that the value and importance of effective communication are overlooked (Anon, s.a.; Nguyen, 2019; Sharan, 2016).

This chapter focuses on exploring the use of communication in the 21st century, both socially and within organisations. It provides the researcher with a framework on the different communication models available in order to establish effective communication within a HEI. The importance of communication within organisations, including HEIs, will be highlighted. In conclusion the chapter explains how communication within a HEI is connected to an organisation's reputation and that communication is a reputational risk and how it should be managed like all other risks of an organisation.

3.2 COMMUNICATION

Communication originated from the Latin term, *Communicare*, and essentially means *sharing*, offering us the simplest definition of communication. Communication is the symbolic, interpretative process of talking and asking questions in order to understand different worlds and to make discoveries (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 1994; Steinfatt, 2009).

Communication can further be defined as a two-way process, where a sender shares information to a receiver, in order to reach mutual understanding. The information the

sender sends can be news, ideas or feelings that connect people and promote understanding. Communication grants all parties an equal opportunity to share their knowledge and encourage individuals to participate freely in conversations in order to contribute ideas and solutions to problems (Ball, 2015; Chandler & Munday, 2011; Chitnis, 2005; Cleary, 2004; Danesi, 2008; Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Heath & O'Hair, 2010; Kamboura, 2008; Lambert, 2019; Littlejohn & Foss, 2005; McCroskey, 1982; Melkote, 1991; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 1994; Osborne, 2007; Servaes, 2000).

Communication has been studied over the decades, and each study has added more depth to this basic definition. According to Cleary (2004), communication is a process where meaning between two or more people is established through the expression and interpretation of messages. Waisbord (2001) believed that the goal of communication is to establish an understanding and relationship between parties, rather than simply conveying information. According to (Yingling, 2008), communication is the way humans act on the information, whether it is verbal or non-verbal.

3.2.1 History of communication

Since the dawn of time, humans have been looking for ways to communicate with one another. The earliest form of communication was man mimicking the sounds of animals and nature, which led to the creation of words in order to explain a situation or object (Anon, 2015b; Anon, s.a.; Ball, 2015; Nguyen, 2019).

Cave dwellers used drawings to communicate with one another, Indians used smoke signals, and the Egyptians used hieroglyphs to relay messages to one another. The Kish tablet, located in Tell al-Uhaymir, in the ancient Sumerian city, has inscriptions considered by some to be one of the oldest forms of known writing. These inscriptions, called pictograms, are forms of imagery that depict a single object or situation, which later led to the creation of the Phoenician alphabet by China (Andrews, 2016; Lambert, 2019; Novak, 2019).

During the decades' communication evolved and matured, bringing new ways (mediums) of delivering messages. Tablets and hieroglyphs were replaced by the invention of paper. As it became easier to communicate, the need soon arose to communicate long-distance, and it is believed that the first long-distance message was delivered in Greece. A

messenger pigeon delivered the results of the first Olympiad to Greek Gods, giving rise to pigeon post (Anon, 2015b; Lambert, 2019; Nguyen, 2019; Sharan, 2016).

In order to ensure that traditions and stories were passed down from one generation to the next, stories were handwritten in books. As the writing of these manuscripts was extremely time-consuming, the need soon arose for a faster way to write messages/stories. Chinese monks, Bi Sheng and Wang Chen, were setting ink to paper by using a method called block-printing, thereby creating the first printing press (Anon, s.a.; Lambert, 2019; Nguyen, 2019; Palermo, 2014).

About 150 years later, the German, Johannes Gutenberg, modernised the Chinese version of the printing press and was able to mass-produce printed materials. William Caxton introduced this medium to Britain, and one of the first newspapers was printed in the 17th century, in England (Lambert, 2019; Palermo, 2014).

In the early 19th century, newspapers and letters (now delivered by the postman and not pigeons) were an effective way of communication, but faced several challenges. As life revolutionised, the desire to perform tasks, including communication, gave rise to several communication systems. By incorporating electricity and communication, the following telecommunication systems were created (Andrews, 2016; Ball, 2015; Lambert, 2019; Nguyen, 2019; Novak, 2019; Sharan, 2016):

- Morse code (1830);
- Telegraphs (1837);
- The fax machine (1843);
- The typewriter (1874)
- The telephone (1876)

Even with all the new technology mentioned above, it was already realised during the 19th century that information should not be too extensive, hefty of text-heavy, and in 1822, Joseph Nicephore Niepce captured the world's first photographic image (Anon, s.a.; Archambault, 2015; Nguyen, 2019).

During the 20th century, telecommunications developed, and soon the combination of electricity, communication and research sparked the beginning of a long wave of better

innovations. In 1901, Marconi sent the first radio message across the Atlantic. This led to the first radio broadcasting in Britain in 1922. Soon after this, the television was invented in 1925, and the British Broadcast Company (also known as the BBC) began regular, high definition broadcasting in 1936. The first personal computer was invented towards the beginning of the 20th century, with very limited functionality and a very high cost (Andrews, 2016; Huurdeman, 2003; Nguyen, 2019; O'Regan, 2016; Sharan, 2016).

The internet was first invented for military purposes, and in the early 21st century, the internet became an important form of communication. It is no surprise that as communication became faster, the human race became more impatient with it. Communication kept up with this need and today we have several communication mediums, from email, news internet sites, video conferencing, e-book readers, to several social media tools (Andrews, 2019; Gharbawi, 1991; Hendricks, 2019; Novak, 2019).

3.2.2 Communication models

Section 3.2.1 offered an appreciation for the term, communication, and how it affects our daily lives. It also provided a timeline of how communication transformed over the decades, having a direct effect on how we communicate in today's day and age. With the enhancement of technology, the need arose to communicate quicker, clearer and being even more connected to one another than we were a decade ago.

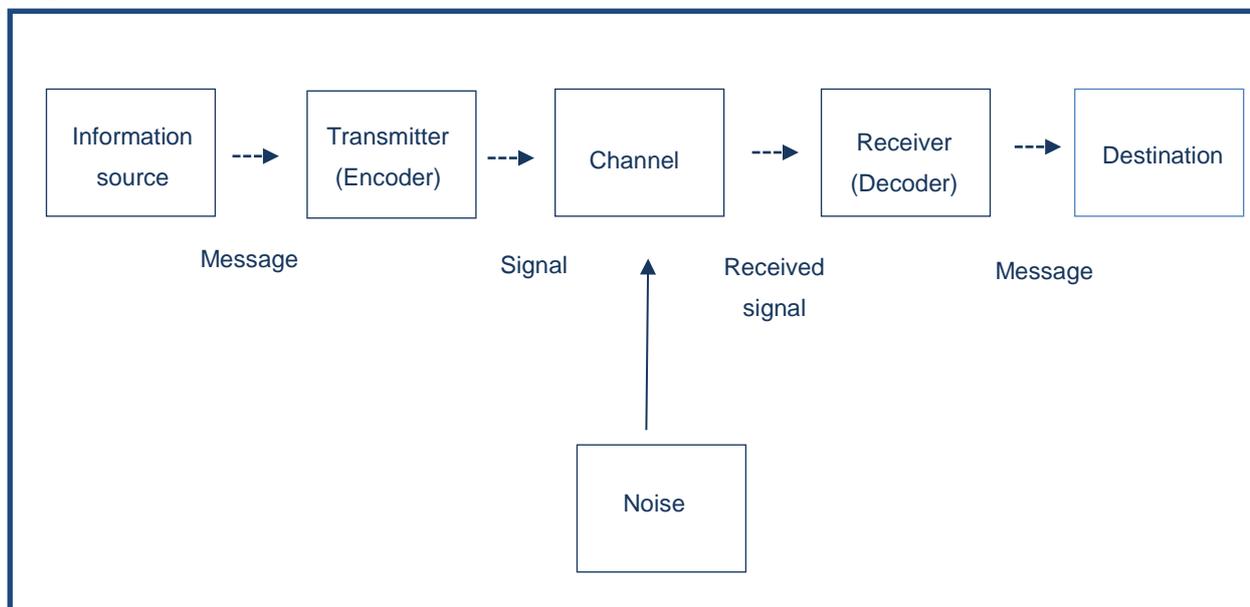
With new technologies and ways to communicate with one other socially, and within a business, the full communication cycle might not be able to take place, hindering two-way communication and feedback. The basic communication model should, therefore, be studied in order to understand the importance of participatory communication.

3.2.2.1 Basic communication model

Adler and Dumas (1984a) view communication as a process between at least two people, and that process begins when one of the individuals wants to communicate with another. The development of a basic communication model reflects the work of Shannon and Weaver in 1942 and are outlined in Figure 3-1. The Figure 3-1 illustrates that the sender needs to share information or ideas with another individual. By using speech and gestures (channel), the sender delivers the intended message to the receiver. The receiver then

decodes the message sent by the sender. During this communication process, some elements influence the receiver to completely comprehend the message sent, which is known as noise (Fougler, 2004; McQuail & Windahl, 2015).

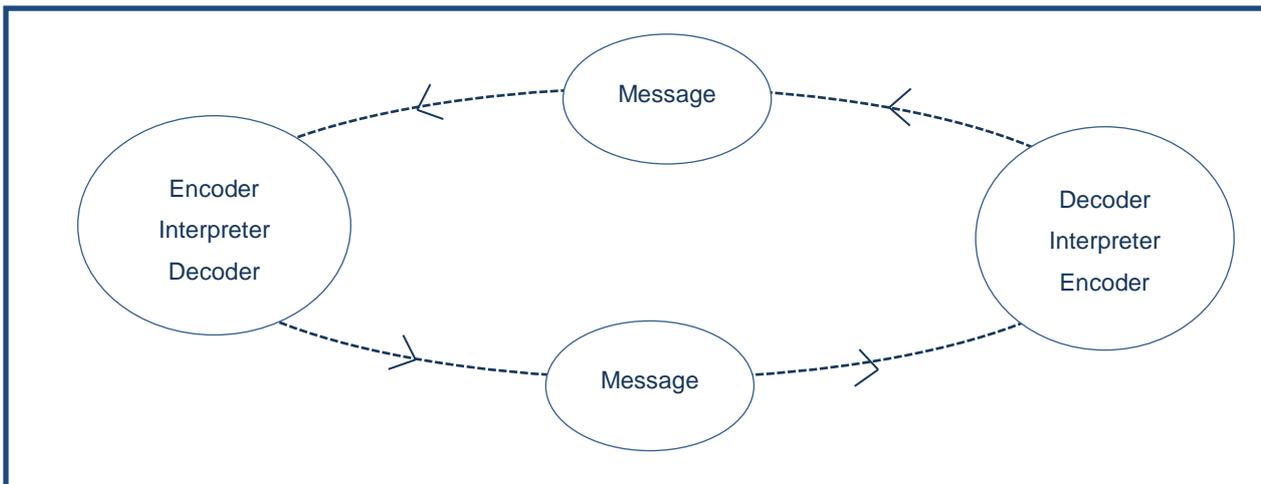
Figure 3-1 Basic communication model



Source: Shannon & Weaver (1964)

Schramm (1971) built on Shannon and Weaver's communication model, indicating that communication is a two-way process, where both sender and receiver have the chance to send and receive messages. Without feedback, it is uncertain whether the receiver received the message and whether the message was understood correctly (Chitnis, 2005; Danesi, 2008; Demers, 2005; Schramm, 1971). Figure 3-2 offers a representation of what two-way communication should look like. Two-way communication is often referred to as participatory communication and is currently seen as the dominant communication model. The participatory approach grants all parties an equal opportunity to share their knowledge, as opposed to one-directional communication aimed at persuading people (De Marchi *et al.*, 2001; Malan, 1998; Melkote, 1991; Nair & White, 1994; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 1994).

Figure 3-2 Schramm communication model



Source: Elkins, Derrick, Burgoon & Nunamaker (2012)

As seen in Figure 3-2, participatory communication grants all parties an equal opportunity to share their knowledge, as opposed to one-directional communication aimed at persuading people. Participatory communication can be described as the process of negotiating and exchanging different meanings, where the individuals are bound within their cultural domains and realities to convey a certain message and to understand it, with a view to a proposed positive change of circumstance. Participation emphasises that all stakeholders should be consulted and considered during projects in order to improve living standards, ranging from the creation of the programme to its implementation, as well as in other decision-making processes (Chitnis, 2005; Jennings, 2000; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Nair & White, 1994; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 1994).

3.3 FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

This section provides a brief definition of verbal/non-verbal communication, as well as written and visual communication. The importance of using standardised messaging systems is discussed further in Section 3.5.3.

Verbal communication is a type of oral communication where messages are transmitted by using the use of sounds and words, which is in contrast with non-verbal communication, where the sender uses gestures or mannerisms to express feelings thoughts, ideas and opinions (Isabelli, 2003; McCroskey, 1982; Wiener & Mehrabian, 1968). **Non-verbal communication** can often provide more insight into a situation than

verbal communication can. If asked a question, a person might filter and decide carefully how to reply in order to avoid conflict; however, the question given by non-verbal communication can assist the receiver of the message in knowing exactly how the sender might be feeling.

An example of verbal communication is saying the words “I am irritated with you”, while the rolling of eyes, foot tapping on the ground and sighing communicate the same message, but without words being uttered.

As described in Section 3.2.1, the first form of **written communication** was by using symbols and transferring these symbols to an object (a tablet, cave walls and later paper). Therefore, written communication can be described as a process of conveying a message by writing standardised symbols to a receiver. Examples of written communication include emails, reports and memos (Horowitz & Samuels, 1987; Manker, 2019).

Visual communication also uses symbols to convey messages; however, the biggest difference between written and visual communication is that written communication uses the alphabet and visual communication makes use of imagery. Examples of these images include public signs (road signs), charts, flags and films, i.e. a message is conveyed by seeing (White, 2019). Visual communication is discussed further in corporate branding, Section 3.6.3.

3.4 BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The field of communication gained momentum and respect during the early 2000s, due to its astonishing progression and interlinked actions that led to discoveries, such as the use of social media platforms and video conferencing. The latter expanded the understanding of different worlds and the validation of human equality (Lustig & Koester, 2006; O’Sullivan *et al.*, 1994; Roberts, 2010; Waisbord, 2001).

Business communication, sometimes referred to as organisational communication, is a subfield of the larger discipline of *communication* studies and can be construed as an integrative communication structure linking all the stakeholders within the entity. Organisational communication is a process where individuals stimulate meaning in the

mind of another individual by using various communication mediums (Kreps, 1986; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 1994; Rahim, 1994; Van Riel & Fombrum, 2007).

3.4.1 Importance of business communication

Efficient organisational communication is essential to the existence of every organisation and all the departments within that organisation. Communication is a key to coordinating all the elements within the organisation, from product development, customer relations to employee management.

Kreps (1986) argues that one of the greatest problems faced within organisations is that man assumes communication is 'an easy thing to do'. This statement, however, is only half-true; it is easy to communicate, the challenge is communicating effectively. An organisation can have as little as five stakeholders or as many as five million stakeholders; the challenge is to communicate with a purpose, sending a unified message to all stakeholders within that organisation. The message conveyed should be in a language or manner that is understood and accepted by all stakeholders within the organisation. The aim of well-planned, functional, clear and open organisational communication is to create a sense of transparency, coherence and credibility within an organisation. Open communication reduces uncertainty, builds trust and relations, and creates a more favourable attitude and positive work environment within an organisation, making collaboration between employees and departments effortless and successful (Kreps, 1986; Richmond & McCroskey, 2009; Smith, 2017a). Richmond and McCroskey (2009) concede and argue that not only is organisational communication essential to organisational success, but communication between two employees or a department can also have a vital impact on the entire organisational system.

3.4.2 Forms of business communication

The basic communication process is visible in all communication situations and may be adapted within different contexts. One element that needs to be considered when looking at organisational communication is the organisational structure. The organisational structure can be defined as the patterns of relationships that exist between various units of an organisation. An organisation's structure can be represented in a graphic representation, known as an organisational chart. This chart shows formal patterns of

communication, as well as the formal connections between individuals within that organisation (Brass, 1984; Lunenburg, 2010; Lunenburg, 2011).

3.4.2.1 Formal and informal communication

Formal communication is using the predefined channels, rules and regulations as set by a business, to communicate with its stakeholders, whereas informal communication is the casual exchanging of information between stakeholders. It is important to take note of both formal and informal communication, as it plays an important role in how stakeholders are being informed and whether they are receiving accurate information (Bochmann & Sunshine, 1980; Marrett, Hage & Aiken, 1975; Weedman, 1992).

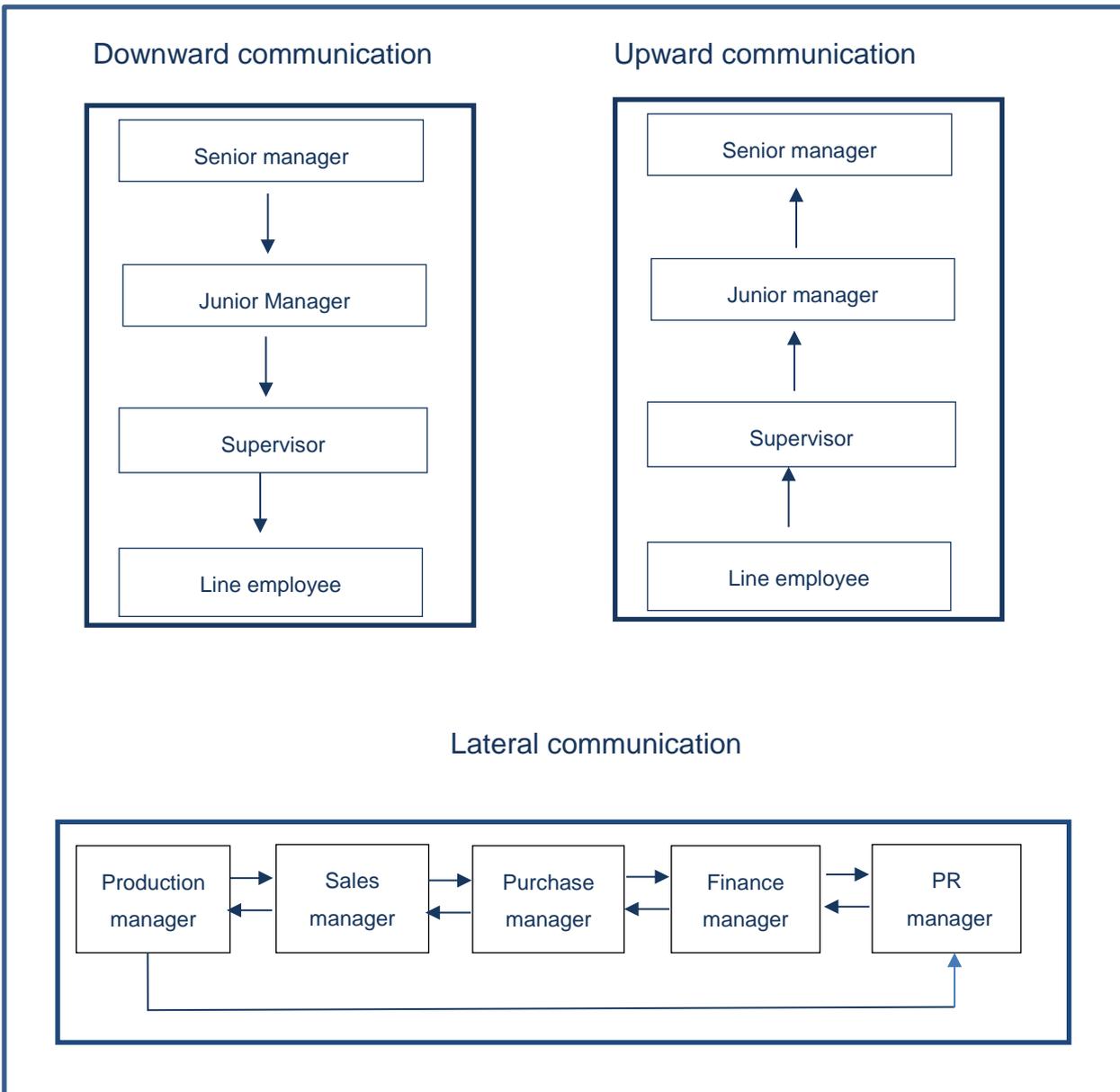
3.4.2.2 Communication flow

Communication flow is a complex system of information, orders, wishes and references. It is the direction in which communication travels, ensures efficiency and ensures that all stakeholders know what is expected of them. Communication flow is made up of two partially complementary systems: formal communication networks and informal communication networks (Turkalj & Fosić, 2009; Zelter, 2011). Within formal communication networks, **downward communication** is dedicated to sending information from the highest level of the structure, through the various levels, until it meets the lowest organisational level. Generally, this downward flow of communication can be seen in organisations with authoritarian leadership (Lunenburg, 2010; Lunenburg, 2011; Rawat, 2017; Zelter, 2011). Upward communication is the direct opposite of downward communication – communication flows from the lowest level of the organisation to the highest level. By using **upward communication**, employees can express their needs, ideas and feelings to management. Upward communication plays an important role in making business decisions and can be seen as similar to a warning system, indicating whether workers are unhappy (Lunenburg, 2010; Hristodoulakis, 2017).

Lateral communication focuses on sending messages between equals, peers or department managers. Therefore, communication between the different managers or directors within an organisational structure. Lateral communication aids in interdepartmental problem-solving, interdepartmental coordination and advice to line departments (Lunenburg, 2010; Zelter, 2011). One problem that may occur with lateral

communication is the specialised language, also known as jargon, which divisions of an organisation may develop. Refer to Heteroglossia in Section 3.5.3 (Anon, 2013b; Hristodoulakis, 2017).

Figure 3-3 Downward, upward and lateral communication



Source: Researcher's own compilation

As seen in Figure 3-3, information is sent by the senior manager down the line to supervisors and employees. This communication flow is a management instrument used to delegate authority and responsibility, increase efficiency, as well as inform stakeholders about an organisation's plans, strategies and procedures. It is also allowing

the issuing of orders and instructions to workers. This form of communication flow can also be time-consuming, can create frustration as explanations to information sent are not given, or that the original messages sent was modified while passing through the various levels (Anon, 2013a; Hristodoulakis, 2017; Lunenburg, 2010; Lunenburg, 2011; Zelter, 2011).

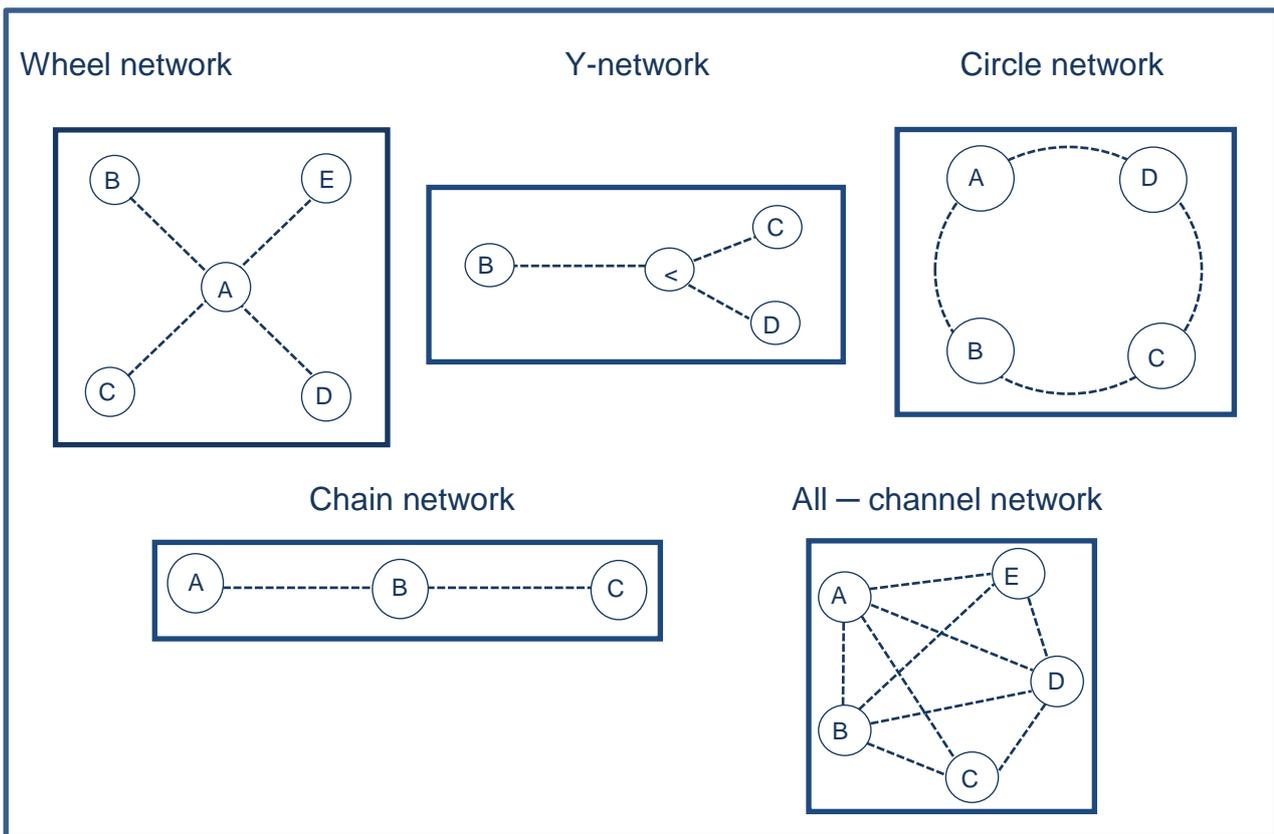
According to Lunenburg (2010), it is ideal to have both upward and downward communication present within the organisational structure. By using upward and downward communication within the organisational structure, Schramm's model of basic two-way communication is implemented within organisations, creating a complex two-way organisational communication system.

3.4.2.3 Communication networks

Momaya (1999) believes that organisations around the world are restructuring from coordinated hierarchies toward a variety of flat flexible structures. Networks highlight the interaction with others in order to exchange information and develop professional or social relationships. Consequently, a network can be seen as the channels through which messages pass from one individual to another.

The purpose of communication networks is to coordinate the activities of stakeholders, to provide mechanisms to direct activities within an organisation, facilitating and ensuring two-way communication within the organisation (Momaya, 1999; Hristodoulakis, 2017). Figure 3-4 provides a better understanding of the different types of communication networks.

Figure 3-4 Example of different communication networks



Source: Researcher's own compilation

The **wheel network**, sometimes known as the star network, has a centralised position for a leader. The leader is the only one who can send or receive messages from stakeholders, and therefore controls the lines of communication. There is little to no communication between the rest of the stakeholders within this communication network. This communication network is mostly found within highly formal organisational structures, which are task-oriented (Anon, 1995; Tanuja, 2017; Hristodoulakis, 2017).

The **Y-network** is slightly less centralised than the wheel. Information is sent from the leader, who sends the information to the various subgroups. This network follows a formal chain of command, where both upward and downward communication takes place within the organisational structure (Anon, 1995; Hristodoulakis, 2017; Tanuja, 2017)

The **circle network** is similar to the chain network, except that information flows in a circular motion instead of a vertical direction. Communication between stakeholders can take place simultaneously, but not all stakeholders can communicate directly with each

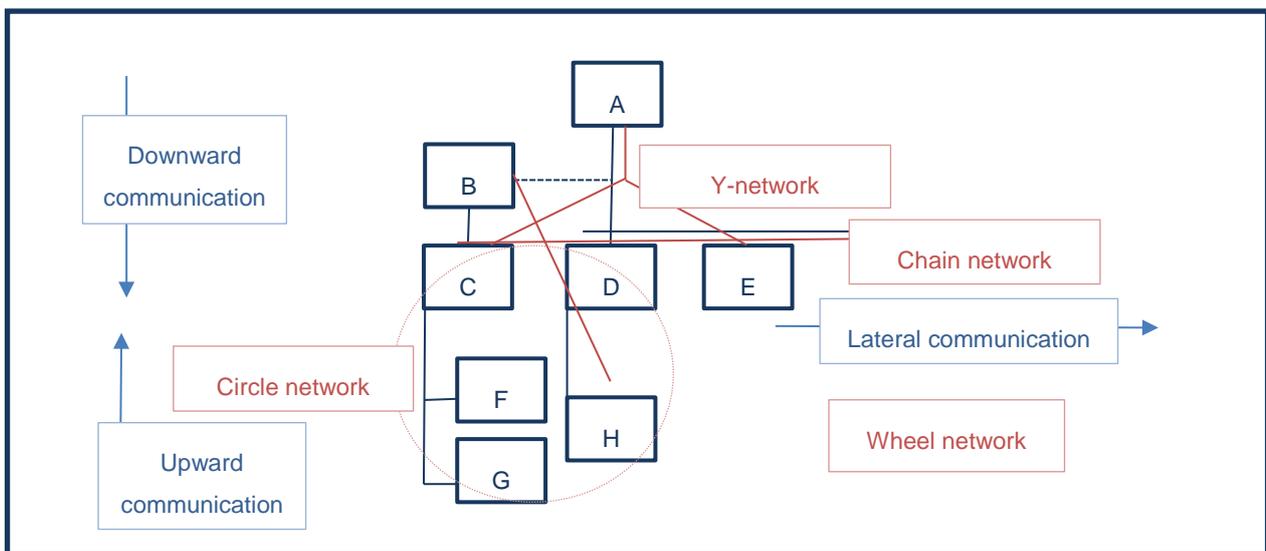
other. For example, *A* can communicate simultaneously with *B* and *D*, but cannot directly communicate with *C*. There is no leader within this communication network, and all stakeholders are equal (Tanuja, 2017; Anon, 1995; Hristodoulakis, 2017).

The **chain network** is very similar to both the circle- and the Y networks; the only exception is that the end members may communicate with only other individuals. The chain network follows a formal chain of command where information can flow both upwards and downwards (Tanuja, 2017; Anon, 1995; Hristodoulakis, 2017).

The **all-channel network** has an element of the circle network present, except that each member of this network can communicate with any other member. This pattern allows for the greatest member participation (Tanuja, 2017; Anon, 1995; Hristodoulakis, 2017)

Within organisations, all of the communication networks, as mentioned earlier, are present. Figure 3-5 below offers insight into the various communication patterns, and networks present within an organisation's communication model.

Figure 3-5 Combined communication structure



Source: Researcher's own compilation

If Stakeholder *A* wants to communicate with Stakeholders *C* and *E*, the *Y-network* communication is utilised, while, if Stakeholder *C* wants to communicate with Stakeholders *D* and *E*, the *chain network* is visible. When Stakeholder *C* communicates with Stakeholder *F*, and Stakeholder *F* communicates with Stakeholder *G*, and Stakeholder *G* responds directly to Stakeholder *C*, the *circle network* is present. If

Stakeholder B communicates to stakeholder H via stakeholder D, the *wheel network* is used.

It became apparent, when looking at Figure 3-5, that if communication within organisations is not managed effectively, chaos can easily be created as there are various networks visible within this model—confusion as to who should communicate what can easily be missed.

3.5 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS, MEDIUMS AND STYLES

The previous section looked at the various elements that need to be taken into account when looking at corporate communication; the following section focuses on communication mediums and styles within a company. The latter is just as important as communication elements but is frequently forgotten when compiling a communication strategy.

3.5.1 Communication mediums

Communication mediums are different types of media that are used to communicate and inform stakeholders within an organisation. When deciding on the media to use within your communication strategy, it is important to decide what the purpose of the communication is and who the receiver or target audience is (Daniell & Malik, 2010; DeBard & Guidera, 2000; Jothi, Neelamaler & Prasad, 2011; Paolini, 1994; Rezvani & Heidari, 2005).

For example, when an organisation decides to disseminate a notification of a workshop, which is open to the public, the following media can be used to get the message across to all its stakeholders (Brezina & Smith, 2017; Daniell & Malik, 2010; Hassall, 2009; Hassan, Chiu & Wilson, 2009):

- Place a printed advertisement in a newspaper
- Email or mass mail
- Place it on the website
- Use social media platforms
- Send out an SMS to their database.

Communication mediums can, therefore, be seen as a tool that is used to communicate the message within organisations.

McLuhan and Gordon (2003) argue that the communication medium or media can be seen as the message, as these mediums and messages shape the form of human associations and actions. Even though this has been proven not to be the case, McLuhan and Gordon (2003) do have a valid and important lesson when it comes to the use of communication mediums. It is crucial that when creating a communication strategy, the communication specialist selects the media that are going to be used with the utmost care. Communication mediums should further communicate the same messages to the stakeholders. There should be a golden thread intertwined in each message.

3.5.2 Communication styles

The following section looks at the way communication mediums are used to inform stakeholders within companies.

Interactive communication is a multidirectional form of communication and is the simultaneous exchange of information between stakeholders. This communication style is used when an immediate response is required from a stakeholder or when sensitive information needs to be communicated, ensuring that this information cannot be misinterpreted. Examples of interactive communication include (Angles & Blattner, 1999; Bretz & Schmidbauer, 1983; Brown, 1999) meetings, phone calls and video conferences.

Push communication, on the other hand, is communication that is delivered by the sender to the recipients. This communication style is used when a company wants to disseminate information but is not looking for an immediate response to the information that was provided. Push communication is when communication is pushed upon a stakeholder (Monnappa, 2017). Although this type of communication style is used so that information can be sent to a large pool of stakeholders, there is no guarantee to ensure that the recipient receives, reads or understands the information that was disseminated. Examples of push communication include (Chung, 2017; Monnappa, 2017) email, posters, billboards, memos, letters and SMSs.

Pull communication is a communication style that provides stakeholders with various platforms where information can be accessed. The stakeholder will access the information only when the need arises, but a project or job will in no way be affected should the stakeholder choose not to access the information. In short, pull communication can be seen as accessing information when you want it, need it or are ready to use it (Goodrich, 2017; Monnappa, 2017). This style is mainly used when communication is, focused on informing stakeholders on elements in the company, such as policies and procedures. The most important aspect to keep in mind when a company chooses to use this communication style is that stakeholders should be aware of the different sites where they can access information. Pull communication examples include (Monnappa, 2017; Goodrich, 2017) websites, self-service employee apps, bulletin boards and intranet.

The ideal is to create a strategy where you use two or more of the communication styles mentioned above (Chung, 2017; Danesi, 2008; Fassin & Buelens, 2011; Finne & Strandvik, 2012; Goodrich, 2017; Huesca, 2008; Monnappa, 2017; Pfeffermann, Minshall & Mortara, 2013; Tamtomo, 2015). A company could, for example, disseminate information of a workshop, on Facebook (push communication) and ask people to register for the workshop (pull communication). The strategy disseminated the information (pushed information) to a large group of people, but the stakeholder is expected to react, and go to a site to register for the workshop (react when they want to use the information received, or are ready to react to the information provided).

3.5.3 Heteroglossia

Communication should be written/displayed by using standardised symbols or in a language that is understood and accepted by everyone. For example, road signs should be standardised so that visitors will be able to understand and adhere to the rules and regulations when visiting a foreign country.

Language is not unitary, and organisations are motivated to form a language, language style and a glossary that are understood, accepted and embraced by all stakeholders. This means creating a mix of languages and worldviews; creating an organisational language and glossary filled with terms, phrases and methods of communication that are understandable by all stakeholders within that organisation (Coglan & Brydon-Miller,

2014; Jooste, 2014; Lauby, 2015; Malan, 1998; Markaki, Sakas & Chadjipantelis, 2013; Ndwalaze, 2011; Richmond & McCroskey, 2009; Sinha & Bhatia, 2016; Turkalj & Fosić, 2009; Wagner, 2006; Zelter, 2011).

This glossary of terms is known as heteroglossia, which denotes different traits into the same language, formalising it to become readable and understandable to the heterogeneous stakeholders of an organisation or institution. This means that in any place, and at any given time within this organisation, the words uttered by staff will have meaning to them, due to a set of conditions that formed part of that organisation's glossary (Alam, 2015; Bailey, 2012; Busch, 2014; Roberts, 2010).

Heteroglossia is prominent in social media channels. Everything a business says and does online is part of a huge, international conversation. Social media presents others to respond to creating voices, on top of voices on top of voices. This creates a combination of different speech types and languages, creating a new context (Ivanov, 2008; Nagle, 2017). It is therefore important that the organisation's voice is clear above these different voices, and that stakeholders speak the same language as the business.

Social media channels are discussed further in Section 3.8.1.

3.5.4 Medium vs message

“It is not what you say, it is HOW you say it.”

(Detz, 2000)

Individuals are bombarded with emails, messages, news and social media updates every day, but even the best content needs an effective distribution strategy, or it will be lost between the masses of information received daily. It is believed that the content, as well as the medium, plays a vital part in the dissemination of information (Bobbitt, 2011; Pavlina, 2005; Relevance, 2013; Schultz *et al.*, 2011).

McLuhan and Fiore (1967) believe that if media is modified, it distracts how a message is conveyed. The study focused on determining the relationship between humans and different types of mediums, and how perceptions are formed due to one's interactions with these various mediums (Bobbitt, 2011; McLuhan & Fiore, 1967; McLuhan & Gordon,

2003; Worchel *et al.*, 1975). This study indicated that there are hot and cool media present within organisations, and argued that the target audience that is intended to receive this message plays a significant role in the selection of the medium (Berger, 1995; Bobbitt, 2011; Marchessault, 2004; McLuhan & Gordon, 2003).

The terms 'hot media' and 'cool media' refer to the degree of interaction a user will have with the medium. For example, millennials (born 1981-1996) will find social media platforms more becoming, whereas baby boomers (born 1946-1964) will find traditional forms of communication more attractive (Berger, 1995; Bringmann, Balance & Krichev, 1969; Gozzi, 1992; Pan & Crofts, 2012; Serafino, 2018). Consequently, it can be seen that the medium is just as important as the message; it is impractical to communicate a message to baby boomers via social media channels, whereas communicating with millennials via mass media, the message will not reach them as they do not utilise these mediums.

3.6 CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

Corporate communication is a set of integrated activities focused on internal and external communication with stakeholders. Corporate communication is aimed at creating and maintaining favourable relationships between stakeholders; it supports marketing activities and disseminates information. Corporate communication further denotes the connection between corporate identity and reputation (Illia & Balmer, 2012; Lah, Susjan & Redek, 2016).

3.6.1 Defining corporate communication

The importance of communication within an organisation cannot be overstated. It is through communication that activities within an organisation are coordinated to offer clients the best possible service or product. It is also through effective communication that a need is created for the business' product and/or services, so that the product/service is promoted, it is given a competitive edge to their competitors, and it motivates customers to go on to action and support the company, ultimately fulfilling their need (Cornelissen, 2008; Karjala & Palojärvi, 2008; Stobierski, 2019; Van Riel & Fombrum, 2007).

However, there is no unitary definition for corporate communication, as, in principle, it is too diverse and overlaps with many other departments of the organisation, such as marketing. Therefore, it can be argued that corporate communication is a set of activities, focused on managing and coordinating all internal and external communications, designed to create a favourable point of view among all its stakeholders (Argenti, 1996; Mazzei, 2010; Mazzei, 2014).

After an in-depth search, it became evident that companies still do not grasp the significance of corporate communication; maybe, it is because they do not see the full picture of the power this department holds. Corporate communication is one of the key factors that determine whether companies thrive or fail. The main reason being that people are why organisations are successful, and by giving them the knowledge to perform well at their job, or in the organisation, is the key to an organisation's success. Corporate communication is the voice of the organisation; it impacts employee productivity, innovation and brand awareness (Anon, 2018; Argenti, 1996; Balmer & Gray, 1999; Bronn, 2002; Cornelissen, 2011; Cornelissen, 2008; Dolphin & Fan, 2000; Foreman & Argenti, 2005; Frankental, 2001; Goodman, 2006; Illia & Balmer., 2012; Kempsey, 2007; Kitchen & Watson, 2008; Knilans, 2012; Le Roux, 2014; Mazzei, 2010; Mazzei, 2014; Nixon, 2016; Pratheeba, 2016; Stobierski, 2019; Van Riel & Fombrum, 2007; Zerfass & Viertmann, 2017).

Abbati (2019), Gallo (2011) and Kreitner (2014) argue that you can have the greatest idea in the world, but if you cannot communicate your vision or idea, it does not matter – because you will not succeed.

3.6.2 Forms of corporate communication

The corporate communication department adopts various disciplines that might pertain to communications. This section looks at the power of internal and external communication, and how it affects an organisation.

Internal communication is information dissemination within the organisation, as well as participatory communication between employees of the organisation. Internal communication has the power to motivate employees and to change their behaviours towards the organisation (Hayward, 2014; Hopkins, 2006).

According to Knilans (2012), examples of internal communication include email, intranet, posters/banners, newsletters, videos, information applications (apps), telephone calls, memos, reports, letters, events, team meetings and face-to-face conversations.

3.6.2.1 Example of effective internal communication:

Dubai International Airport (DBX) and Emirates were created less than 55 years ago, and today it is a modern mecca with 60 000 staff members and 334 000 flights, two million tons of cargo and 57 million passengers annually (Anon, 2003). Internal communication not only ensures the dissemination of information between all the employees of the company, but it also creates loyalty and passion towards the company and promotes two-way communication (Anon, 2013c; Weal, 2014).

Communication is vital between the pilots and the traffic control towers, and miscommunication can mean the difference between life and death. Effective internal communication ensures that management is in control of the message that circulates. When stakeholders are confronted with uncertainties or threats, they tend to go into something called information-seeking behaviour in order to deal with the threat. Information-seeking behaviour is precisely what the name states – individuals require information and explanations and will seek out the information they are looking for. The problem with seeking information is that if the correct, or sufficient communication is not available, individuals may end up with fabricated and false information. Individuals can also become panicked and flustered if sufficient and correct information is not available. It is, therefore, important for communication managers to provide sufficient information to the public regularly (Crijns, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). If, for instance, Emirates staff members do not know of recent gate changes or flight information, the wrong information can be given to travellers. This could lead to passengers being confused and stressed, asking non-Emirates employees for assistance, causing passengers to miss their connecting flights potentially. If passengers miss their connecting flights, Emirates could face a severe loss in profit (Smith, 2017a).

Communication ensures that employees are familiar with the rules and regulations of the company; compliance with these rules ensures coordination, collaboration and safety of staff (Weal, 2014). Not only do the strict rules and guidelines that Emirates enforces

ensure the safety on-board their flights and on terminals, but it also ensures the management of staff members. Emirates staff have strict rules on how they look (uniforms) and the way they work with travellers (Anon, 2003). Communication ensures that employees understand the role they are playing within the organisation and ensures that employees know and understand what is expected from them. This assists in the creation of job satisfaction. Communication shapes relationships between employees and departments, and builds morale and creating trust (Lockley, 2017; Smith, 2017a; Weal, 2014). It can be argued that internal communication shapes the image and the way the company wants to be perceived. The way staff dress and handle clients, how activities within the organisation are handled can influence the way a client feels about the company. Emirates' reputation is built through experience, and the client's experience is influenced once effective internal communication does not take place.

External communication is information dissemination with groups and individuals outside the formal organisational structure. The goals are to facilitate co-operation between these different stakeholders of an organisation and to create a positive organisational image of its products and services (Anon, 2009b; Cheney & Christensen, 2001; Cornelissen, 2008). According to Knilans (2012), examples of internal communication include websites, press releases, emails, newsletters, media interviews, and press conferences.

3.6.2.2 Examples of effective internal communication:

External communication not only persuades customers to take a certain action but also constantly reminds stakeholders of them (Duggan, 2017; Joseph, 2017). Emirates brings out weekly videos about the luxuries of flying with them or informing their loyal clients that they just bought their 100th Airbus A380, creating excitement among their supporters. By issuing these frequent videos, Emirates creates a desire among its stakeholders to travel. These videos send out an important message to stakeholders and promise them excellence, comfortable travel as well as good food and beverages. Stakeholders of Emirates, who are part of the Skywards frequently flyer loyalty programme, get regular updates from the airline. However, external communication is not just about sending out messages to stakeholders, but is also about listening to the feedback these various stakeholders provide. Sending out surveys valuable information which can be obtained to improve the organisation.

External communication is designed to attract new customers and to entice existing customers. External communication is focused on stakeholders outside the organisational structure, and is focused on promoting sales, generating sponsorships, announcing events that support the brand (Neill, 2015). Emirates is a sponsor of numerous events, including football, rugby, tennis, motorsports and golf. Stakeholders constantly seeing the Emirates brand ensure that they remember the airline. External communication is controlled to communicate a favourable image of the organisation to its stakeholders, and that the business builds good relationships with partners, clients and suppliers (Kausar, 2006). External communication helps to build trust towards the brand by being transparent.

3.6.3 Elements of corporate communication

The goal of corporate communication is to create a favourable perception among the various stakeholders of an organisation. Corporate communication includes various activities focused on managing and orchestrating all communication within the organisation and consists of various elements.

Corporate identity, also known as branding, can be seen as the visual image, the way the organisation wants to look to the public. Symbols, colours, uniforms and promotional items are visual elements that companies use to evoke their uniqueness, assist people in recognising and in remembering them (Brønn, 2005; Megan, 2009; Morris, 2003; Simões & Sebastiani, 2017). Nagyová *et al.* (2017) argue that the collection of visual elements promotes the corporate image. Corporate identity is various elements used to define how a company wants to be perceived, and it is the proposition an organisation makes to its stakeholders (Morris, 2003).

If an individual thinks about McDonald's, the fast-food franchise, the following comes to mind (Megan, 2009):

- A gigantic yellow M.
- The red and golden colours used by the restaurant.
- Maybe one of their meals.
- Ronald McDonald

Corporate image is the general idea, view or perception that stakeholders have towards an organisation. It is the feeling they get when an organisation's name is mentioned (Anon, 2017a; Bilieu, 2008; Bronn, 2002; Brønn, 2005; Illia & Balmer, 2012; Kalb, 2016; Megan, 2009; Morris, 2015). According to Morris (2009), after the signage assisted the individual to recognise the fast-food franchise, the individual might feel satisfaction. As a client, you support this franchise because you know the quality of food, the type of service you will receive, as well as the economic aspects, such as what the cost of this product will be; or unhappiness. After all, you might not like the type of food they serve or the service you received. Their recent advertisement might have offended you.

It is therefore important for organisations to work extremely hard on their customers' overall experience, in order to ensure that what the stakeholders see, think and feel, is what the organisation wants these stakeholders to see (Megan, 2009; Morris, 2015).

A **corporate brand** can be seen as the visual elements of a company and the feeling that is created when a stakeholder sees that branding. Branding should motivate stakeholders to support a certain company over another company (Oxenford, 2011). For instance, seeing the giant yellow M, stakeholders know that a McDonalds is near. They will either support the franchise or look for an alternative based on previous experiences.

Mercedes uses the slogan "*The best or nothing*", as part of their branding campaigns. Stating that you are the best can be synonymous with excellence, comfort and good quality. This slogan makes a promise towards stakeholders. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that Mercedes lives up to this promise; otherwise, they will damage their reputation (Ba & Turner, 2015; Frederiksen, 2016).

Among the various factors that affect an organisation's bottom line is **corporate culture** and ethics, as it affects the beliefs, behaviours and attitudes towards the business. Simply stated, it is the essence of how the business does things; the culture will be reflected in its dress code, business hours, turnover, hiring decisions, client satisfaction, and every other aspect of operations (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Denison, 1990; Kotter & Heskett, 2008; Schwartz & Davis, 1981).

Why is corporate culture important? Because when an employee is asked whether they like to work for a company, the answer given is usually a good summary of that company's

culture. It will reflect whether the atmosphere is relaxed and productive, or a stressed environment where employee turnover is high, affecting the bottom lines; therefore, impacting the business reputation (Denison, 1984; Denison, 1990; Schein, 2009; Van der Waldt, 2017).

Halleck (2015) believes that **corporate reputation** can be seen as the collective opinion and the overall value, an individual places towards an enterprise, based on that enterprise's current and past actions and events. Corporate reputation and communication as capital risk are discussed in full in Section 3.10.

3.7 MARKETING

Marketing can be seen as the process of getting stakeholders' attention, creating a desire among stakeholders leading to the selling and distributing of products or services (Lake, 2017).

Nando's is an example of an excellent marketing campaign and shows how efficient and successful marketing can benefit an organisation. Nando's' marketing campaign consists of two elements, the first being social media campaigns, and the second element is witty, controversial advertisements.

Element 1: Social media

Currently, Nando's has a giant social media footprint with approximately 4.5 million social media followers on social media platforms, including Twitter and Facebook. They recently launched an interactive social media campaign called the 'finger selfie' campaign.

This campaign is focused on involving customers with the brand, by encouraging them to take a selfie, using a Nando's serviette as background and your finger to tell the world how you feel about Nando's. By using this method, they are encouraging customers to come to the store and participate, but is also using word-of-mouth marketing to spread the word of Nando's food and the wonderful hope to encourage even more customers to visit the food franchise.

The full extent and power of social media are discussed in Section 3.8.1.

Element 2: Advertisements

Advertisements can be described as paid announcements, calling the public's attention to a business' product or service (Anon 2017). Advertisements can take on various forms, from print to television and radio advertisements.

Nando's has great television advertisements that leave the public talking about it for weeks to come. In 2000, Nando released a video where a blind woman walked into a pole because the guide dog got distracted by the smell of Nando's. Even though the blind community in South Africa was furious and protested, Nando has already had a public relations (PR) plan in place to address this issue. Nando's, therefore, uses risky advertisements and adapts it to address their needs, and draws the public's attention to their brand.

In 2016, a Nando's advertisement was blocked before it could be shown on television; within hours, this Nando's add had over 300 000 views, getting even more exposure.

Element 3: Corporate social responsibility as a marketing element

During the last couple of years, companies started to strengthen their corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects in order to strengthen their reputation and subsequently increase their profit margins. CSR can, therefore, be seen as a marketing element (Anon, 2015a). CSR is a business approach focusing on contributing to the sustainable development of projects and communities. The main focus of CSR is projects focused on assessing and taking responsibility for the company's effects on environmental and social well-being.

KFC asked its clients to donate R2 each time they buy a meal, to 'add hope' to feed underprivileged children. Unfortunately, photographs were released in 2017 showing how KFC handed out free meals (as part of a CSR project) to prisoners. The photo has also shown that the prisoners with their meals enjoyed an adult show, this outraged South African customers and damaged KFC's reputation.

3.8 NEW TRENDS SURROUNDING CORPORATE COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

As indicated in Section 3.1, communication has matured over the decades, and this is no exception to the developments in the field of communication in the 21st century. Corporate communication and marketing departments have to take the following new trends into account (Forbes, 2018; Haak, 2019; Rangwala, 2018):

- Social media channels
- More videos
- Gamification
- Treating employees as clients.
- Building a listening and feedback culture.
- More personalisation
- More images and infographics
- Storytelling

For this study, the research pays specific attention to social media and how these channels have changed the way businesses communicate.

3.8.1 Social media

The term social media is an umbrella term that refers to a collective of online communication channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration (Hendricks, 2019; Leonardi, Huysman & Steinfield, 2013; Rouse, 2019).

Social media was originally designed to interact with friends and family, specifically over different demographics, but was soon adopted by businesses that wanted to take advantage of the popular news communication method (Dollarhide, 2019; Hendricks, 2019).

The power of social media lies in participation, openness, conversation, community and connectivity. Social media enables one to share information to anybody on earth; it enables you to determine your target market more easily because business can track

who is looking at their posts. It enables a business to monitor the general opinion of their businesses, and create a favourable perception of your company by using various social media communication and marketing tools(Lake, 2019; Rapp *et al.*, 2013; Smith, 2009; Walia, 2016).

These amazing online communication forums create the opportunity for people to share their opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives, but one can also see the immediate danger when looking at the power of social media. One wrong move and your business' reputation can be in jeopardy (Jacobson, s.a; Lake, 2019; Rapp, Beitelspacher, Grewal & Huges, 2013; Smith, 2009).

Another challenge when it comes to social media is that it comes with its own term glossary (heteroglossia), which includes the use of (Hootsuite, 2019):

- @ (at, indicating you want to tag a party/person in your post and acknowledge them)
- # (hashtag, this is a simple way to mark a topic and let people follow developing stories easier)
- Gif (an acronym for Graphics Interchange Format, that means it is an image that is both static and animated)
- Emojis (an image used to convey a wide spectrum of emotions)
- Geotagging (This feature enables users to share their content with geographically defined audiences)
- A list of acronyms that social media users should be aware of like (i) ways of shortening conversations, for example, AMA – Ask Me Anything and or (ii) ways to shorten frequently used terms by social media managers, for example, SEO -Search Engine Optimisation.

The latter are only a few examples of the social media term glossary. One can see that combining the social media term glossary and the business glossary to find your business tone of voice, and still be relevant, can be a gigantic work.

It is impossible to say exactly how many different social media channels there are worldwide, but the top social media channels include (Chaffey, 2019; Cohen, 2019; De Vries, Grensler & Leeflang, 2012; Doerr-Stevens, 2013; Pilon, 2019):

- Facebook – A platform used to share photos, videos, stories, messages and information.
- Instagram – A platform focused on sharing photos.
- YouTube – A platform focused on sharing videos.
- LinkedIn – A platform to boost professional networks.
- Pinterest – An idea-sharing platform.
- Twitter – A microblogging site, where people share short messages with one another.
- WhatsApp/Skype/ Zoom/Vidyo: Examples of audio & visual chat platforms.

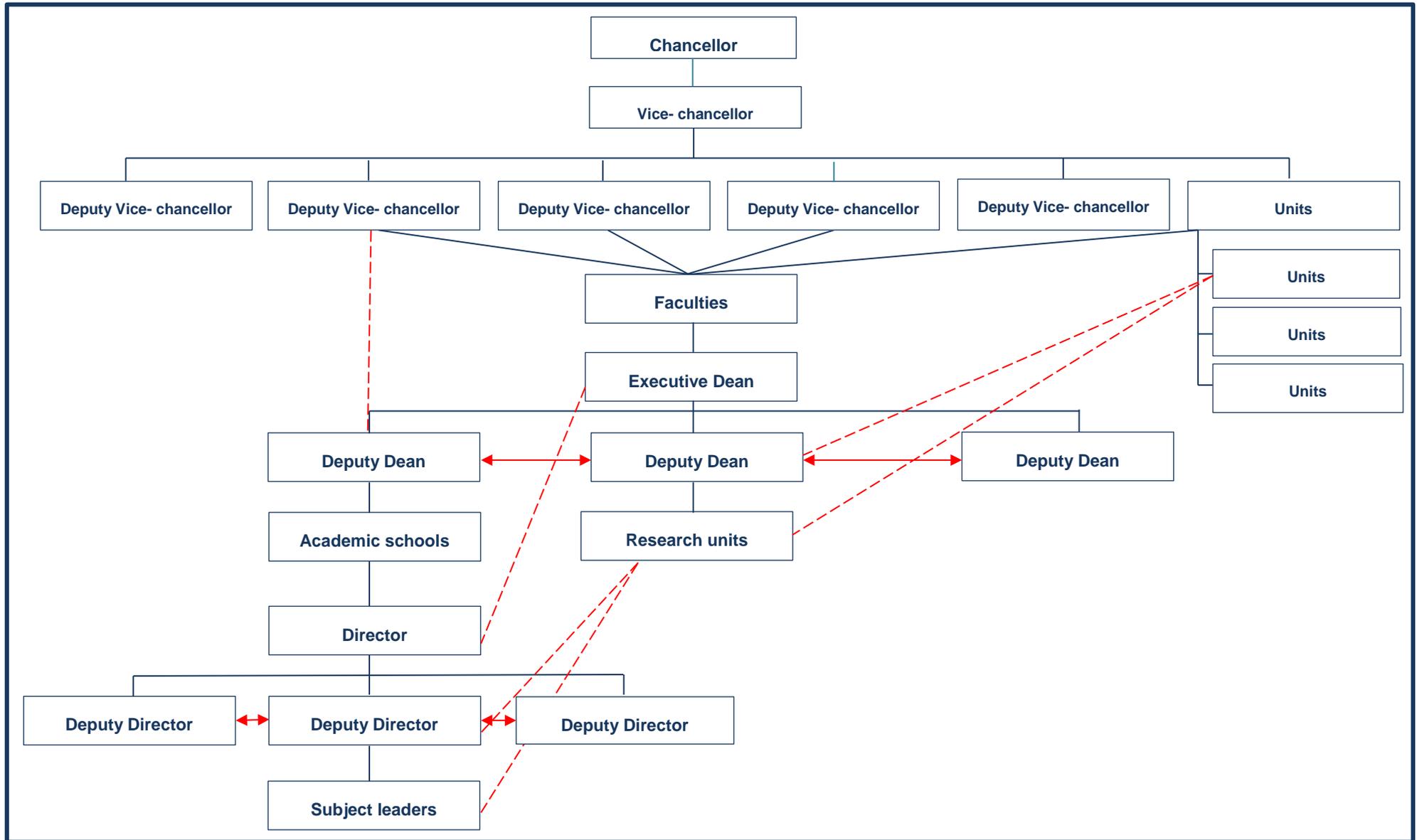
With this abundant number of social media channels available for business, it can be a daunting task to decide what channels to use, and to keep them updated. The importance of Section 3.5.4 *Media vs Message*, becomes evident once again. Organisations need to decide whom they want to communicate with and what their message will be; then only can they choose the right channels (Pan & Crofts, 2012; Smith, 2009; Worchel, Andreoli & Eason, 1975).

A business should not just be on social media because everyone is doing it. A social media strategy must be incorporated with the corporate communication and marketing strategy to ensure that the organisation's brand is strengthened and enhanced, not damaged (Byrd, 2018; Chandria, 2018; Greenwood, Perrin & Duggan, 2016; Walia, 2016).

3.9 COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

Even though HEIs operate in the same way as a traditional organisation, they are also unique as each HEI has its history, traditions, values and a formidable range of expertise. Each of these assets must be exploited, but with growing market competition, HEIs are required to adapt to change, just like any other organisation. In addition to this, HEIs must meet their core commitments of teaching and research while adapting to a series of new situations and challenges. Different organisations use different structures that outline how activities are directed in order to achieve the goals of that organisation. Figure 3-6 demonstrates the hierarchical relationships between the different people, departments, and jobs at different levels within a H

Figure 3-6 Organogram of an HEI



Source: Researcher's own compilation

For this study, the researcher is only focused on the activities that affect or influence academic faculties within a HEI. The figure above illustrates the chain of command of the different departments within a HEI, as well as the reporting lines that are either bottom-up or top-down. For example, an executive dean can communicate directly with the deputy vice-chancellor directly above them or to the deputy dean directly below them, but not with the line worker several steps below or above them (Board, 2010; Hanlon & Jago, 2000, Müller,s.a; Maduenyi, Oke, Fadeyi & Ajagbe, 2015).

In many instances, an organisation that has multiple departments and a substantial number of employees, make use of an organisational chart to illustrate the organisational structure. As HEIs operate in the same manner as organisations, the latter also occurs within HEIs. The challenge is that it is easy to mistake an organisational chart for a communication chart, neglecting important communication channels.

An organisational chart conveys a company's internal structure by detailing the roles, responsibilities and relationships between individuals and departments within an entity. This type of chart also assist stakeholders to see the bigger picture and gain an understanding of how the organisation is designed, the number of levels within the organisation and where each employee fits into the organisation. The more employees a business has, the more ways communication can occur and an organisational chart only indicates the formal relationships/communication that occurs and disregard the pattern of social relationships that develop and also often do not show horizontal relationships. An organogram also induces certain structural rigidity and may encourage red tape. In Figure 3-6, the solid blue lines indicate the direct reporting lines and the red dotted lines represent the communication lines that can occur but that are included in an organogram (Board, 2010; Brisbane Catholic Education, 2006; Hananlon & Jago, 2000; Haskell & Breaznell, 1922 Müller,s.a; Maduenyi, Oke, Fadeyi & Ajagbe, 2015).

Another problem with Figure 3-6 is that units, actions or functions are separated into different groups, leading to (i) poor or ineffective communication, (ii) lack of understanding between departments and units, (iii) each unit or department can start to focus more on departmental goals and start to neglect the company's objectives and (iv)

innovation can be repressed that may cause the HEI to become less competitive during the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Looking at Figure 3-3 (refer to Section 3.4.2), it is clear that downward, upward is present within Figure 3-6 of the communication lines that are visible within a HEI, the lateral communication is, however, not indicated clearly and can result in confusion. Looking at Figure 3-4 (refer to Section 3.4.2), it is not easy to place the different communication networks within the HEI's organisational chart. Therefore, the latter clearly indicates the problems a HEI can face with regard to information flow and person-to-person relationships (Hristodoulakis, 2017; Luneburg, 2010; Shaw, 1964; Tanuja, 2017).

These communication networks (see figure 3-4) are the links that are formed within the organisational structures and are directly related to work efficiency, accountability and responsibility. It also relates to the satisfaction of group members and decision-making process (Luneburg, 2010; Hristodoulakis, 2017).

3.10 BUSINESS COMMUNICATION AND REPUTATION

It requires a great deal of hard work and respectable actions from an organisation to build a good reputation, but only takes one bad action to lose that good name. An old Greek proverb states that it is better to lose an eye than your good name (Eccles *et al.*, 2016).

Reputation, in a business sense, can be defined as the opinions, beliefs and views individuals and/or society have towards an organisation. These opinions can be formed by personal experiences, by listening to peers, friends and relatives' experiences or by reading articles on the topic. Reputation can be seen as the overall quality or character of a company (Daley, 2014; Joosub, 2006).

Janse van Vuuren (2006) offers good examples of how significant the downside can be if a company's reputation is damaged. She uses the example of how an innocent remark was made by the founder of a large jewellery business that nearly cost him his business. The founder made a light-hearted remark during a dinner party, of how the prawns in his salad are more expensive than some of the jewellery in his store. This comment made news headlines the following day, and not only did it cause negative publicity, but his

customers also did not trust his product anymore, seriously affecting the reputation of his business.

Taking the latter into account, one can argue that protecting and the effective management of reputation is a very important element within an organisation or institution and should not be neglected. An impaired reputation may lead to financial, reputational or human resource-related losses within a unit. Therefore, it can be argued that reputational risk is multidimensional and is one of the biggest risks in an entity because reputation accounts for a significant portion of an entity's market value and affects its future viability. Incidents that therefore damage that entity's reputation can result in greater financial loss than the original event (Adler & Dumas, 1984b; Ferreira, 2015; Janse van Vuuren, 2006; Janse van Vuuren, 2016).

According to Schultz and Werner (2005), reputation consists of two main components, namely perceptions and reality. Organisations are devoted to ensuring that they live up to the promises that they communicate to stakeholders. Reputation is perhaps the most valuable asset that a business or institution can have and is an external reflection of internal organisational behaviour and actions. Corporate reputation can be affected by the actions of every business unit, department and employee of an organisation (Aula, 2010; Cravens *et al.*, 2003; Gotsi & Wilson, 2011; Helm *et al.*, 2011).

There is no question that reputation is crucial for the long-term survival of any organisation or institution. A good reputation creates wealth. Perhaps the most critical, strategic and enduring asset that a corporation possesses is its reputation (Cravens *et al.*, 2003).

Reputation is intangible, and therefore not a physical asset, but adds value to the other assets. The latter makes reputation extremely difficult to quantify, as the evaluation and measurement of reputation are challenging, as risk is spread over all the units and divisions of a company. Reputations, therefore, need to be broken down into specific and smaller components in order to measure and manage it (Anon, 2015a; Anon, 2017b; Lombardo, 2015; Pearson, 2014; Rayner, 2003).

3.10.1 Reputation as capital

Capital can be defined as all the financial assets or the financial value of assets which a company owns. Reputational capital, or value of reputation, can be seen as the value associated with the value a business obtains because of its good reputation. If an organisation has a good reputation, the more profit it will make because stakeholders trust the brand. Reputational capital is the total of a company's good name, good works, and their history. Reputational capital is also built over several years (Dam, 2017; Ingbretsen, 2017).

3.10.2 Reputational loss due to ineffective communication

Reputational loss sometimes referred to as reputational damage, is the risk that a company may lose market value, capital or profit, due to damage to the company's reputation (Friesen, 2012).

Table 3-6 illustrates both national and international examples of companies that suffered a loss due to their reputation being damaged and encapsulates the importance of reputation.

Table 3-1 Examples of reputational loss

British Petroleum (BP)

The Deepwater Horizon disaster is the largest oil spill disaster in the world to date, spilling 465 million litres of oil, over 87 days and staining more than 2 kilometres of Mexican coastline (Kaye, 2015; Sherwell, 2015).

The disaster investigation indicated that the Deepwater Horizon was a series of small mistakes and misjudgements. If these risks were identified in time and managed effectively, it would not have snowballed into a catastrophe. The causes of this massive explosion, according to Meigs (2016), were firstly due to **poor maintenance**. The rig's smoke detectors were damaged and did not work, the rig's chief electronic technician's computer was faulty and malfunctioning, and the pipe and valves structure on the ocean floor was poorly maintained. Secondly, **BP was dangerously overconfident**, and lastly, **bad and ineffective communication** took place. The latter added to an already crumbling reputation; the Chief executive officer (CEO) of BP said during a media statement that the oil spill was very small in comparison to the size of the ocean. The CEO ended the media statement by saying that no one wants to resolve this disaster quicker than he wants, because he wants his life back, insinuating that this disaster is wasting his time.

The consequences of this explosion included (Bomey, 2016; Kaye, 2015; Meigs, 2016; Sherwell, 2015; Tannen, 2010; Vidal, 2011):

- This disaster claimed 11 lives, and had a massive ecological effect on marine life.
- The Deepwater Horizon resulted in a \$44 billion (after-tax) loss for BP; this amount included the clean-up cost, fines, settlements, and PR. BP also lost a third of its market size, valued at approximately \$60 billion.
- Tourism was affected in Mexico, and the economy was damaged due to the loss of so many barrels of oil.

- BP is still working hard to gain back the trust of society after this disaster, as well as its credibility.

Coca-Cola

In 1999, Coca-Cola faced a health crisis when several people in Belgium and France had to be hospitalised after consuming Coca-Cola products. French, Belgium, Luxemburg and Dutch governments ordered a ban of all Coca-Cola products, and Coca-Cola had to recall 30 million cans and bottles (Abelson, 1999; Luig, 2012; Schwartz, 1999; Vasiliu, 2012).

The results of the investigation report indicated that firstly the **quality** of the Coca-Cola product was being questioned after several individuals started to complain that the cans had a foul odour to it. The company admitted that the outsides of its cans were chemically contaminated, and this caused the odour. Furthermore, several consumers complained that some Coca-Cola products they use had a strange colour and taste to it. The company stated that this occurred because of poor quality carbon dioxide that was used (Bootwala, 2013; Luig, 2012; Schwartz, 1999; Vasiliu, 2012).

Secondly, the **crises management plan was ineffective**. The first incident that was reported was at a Belgium school. When Coca-Cola was notified of children becoming ill after the consumption of their products, management members set out to investigate and visited the school. One of the mistakes made was that they did not recall the questionable products at the school, resulting in more illnesses being reported at the school after their visit (Bootwala, 2013; Luig, 2012; Schwartz, 1999; Vasiliu, 2012).

Moreover, lastly, the **communication during this crisis to stakeholders was dreadful**. It took Coca-Cola more than a week to release their first statement on the crises. Europe, especially Belgium, was already extremely sensitive to any rumours regarding food poisonings

or food contaminations, as they were recovering from several outbreaks of food contamination. Waiting for this statement to be made, caused anxiety and led to people losing faith in the company.

The crises cost Coca-Cola approximately \$200 million (Luig, 2012; Vasiliu, 2012) and individuals in Europe were scared to consume Coca-Cola products for months after the incident.

Spur Steak Ranches – SA

After a highly publicised incident at a Spur Steak Ranch, a large group of the South African population decided to boycott this popular restaurant group (Raborife, 2017). The causes of this incident included **inadequate training** as staff were not trained to handle these types of situations (Van Zyl, 2017) and an **ineffective crises communication plan**. How Spur handled the situation was unfortunately inadequate and flawed. Their response time in making a statement was too long, the public statements made by Spur sparked even more fury. Therefore, better communication and PR plans are needed during crises. A big mistake Spur made was to obtain expert advice more than a month after the incident (Van Zyl, 2017).

Spur's share price fell with 15 % (approx. R5.17 per share) in the two months after the incident. Some franchises suffered a loss of between 24 and 45% in income since the incident, as a large population of South Africans is still boycotting Spur (Meyer-Janse, 2017).

Source: Researcher's own compilation

3.11 BUSINESS COMMUNICATION AS A REPUTATIONAL RISK

As seen in Chapter 2, reputational loss cases presented, it could be seen that damage to the organisation's reputation was worsened due to a lack of effective communication. If the managers and communication liaisons communicated with their staff and to the public in a meaningful and effective manner, reputational damage could have been minimalised.

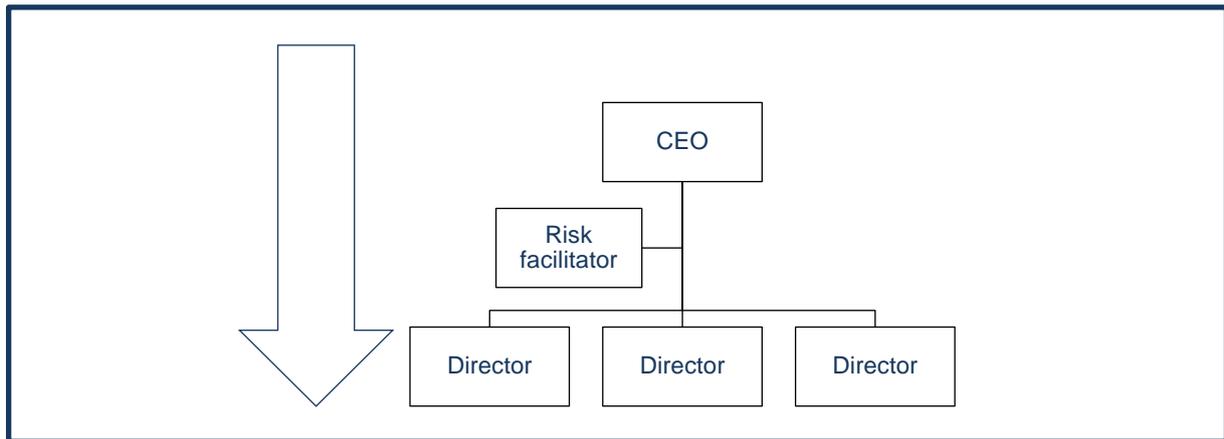
Reputation risk management is not only the job of the risk facilitator, or the director, but should be a task every staff member in the organisation does daily (King II, 2002; Young, 2014; Valsamakis *et al.*,2004).

By communicating risks, a suitable solution can be found. Communication grants all parties an equal opportunity to share their knowledge, as opposed to one-directional communication aimed at persuading people. Staff should be encouraged to participate freely in conversations and to contribute ideas to projects that are planned in conjunction with them. Effective communication emphasises the fact that all stakeholders should be consulted and considered during risk reduction projects in order to improve working standards and ensuring the conservation of the company's valuable reputation (Chitnis, 2005; Jennings, 2000; Melkote, 1991). Communication further manages the expectations among shareholders about which risks the organisations are willing to take and how the organisation is willing to manage risks in order to avoid situations that might result in losses. Frequent communication assists in forming a communication style recognised by all stakeholders. Therefore, communication during the risk management process facilitates and encourages the distribution of risk information and aids organisations with the identification of strategic opportunities, the reductions of uncertainty and the growth of its value to its stakeholders. It also creates a risk management culture that is adopted by all the stakeholders of an organisation (Bowen *et al.*, 2006; Bromiley *et al.*, 2015).

3.12 SUGGESTED COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

It is assumed that most companies make use of the combination communication model (see Figure 3-5). Should the risk management process (Figure 2-2) be integrated into the communication model, it could be illustrated as follows:

Figure 3-7 Communication within the risk management process



Source: Researcher's own compilation

As stated previously, every staff member within an organisation should perform (see Section 2.1) risk management. Within each department, one staff member should take responsibility and act as an internal risk facilitator. The reason for this is that even though each staff member's thoughts and ideas are important and valuable, management cannot speak to all members frequently, because it is too time-consuming. The internal risk facilitator will voice all the concerns of the individuals within the department.

The various risks within the department should be communicated to the risk facilitator. The risk facilitator will establish the context and assess and prioritise the risks identified. The internal risk facilitator will then notify the director and the main risk facilitator of the various risks within the department. It will then be determined which risks are a lower priority and can be handled internally, and which risks should be escalated to the next level. The main risk facilitator is in charge of monitoring and reviewing all the risks within the organisation and communicating them to the managing board. A risk management plan should be implemented to address these various needs (Accenture, 2010; Baranoff, 2004; Brewer & Walker, 2011; Bromiley *et al.*, 2015; Cohen, Krishnamoorthy & Wright, 2017; Le Roux, 2016; Schanz, 2006).

3.13 CONCLUSION

Communication is a basic human need and is vital to surviving. This chapter highlighted how **communication evolved** and changed over the decades.

During this chapter, a basic **communication model** was described that indicated the importance of feedback, so communication should be **participatory** opposed to one-directional communication. This chapter provided the foundation for effective communication models within organisations that can be adapted to form a conceptual communication model for HEIs.

Business communication was defined by looking at communication networks, forms and the flow of communication present within organisations. The value and **importance of communication within organisations** were then established. It was argued that communication is not an easy thing to do' it is not just talking to one another but affects each department within the HEI.

A section was dedicated to the **mediums and forms of communication** used by HEIs and how the message is just as important as the medium. After that, it was established that each organisation forms its unique word glossary, called **heteroglossia**.

A communication or **corporate communications** department is responsible for the communication activities within an HEI. A section within this chapter defined the importance and risks associated with internal and external communications.

Marketing as a communication medium was described, paying special attention to **social mediums**, and how the miss management of these mediums can lead to damage of an HEI's reputation.

The argument was made that a good and favourable **reputation** can be seen as **capital** to an organisation because if an organisation has a good reputation, the more profit it will make because stakeholders trust the brand. The chapter provided several **examples where organisations suffered a loss** due to their reputation being damaged. In several of these cases, the situation was decremented by ineffective communication.

It was established that **communication is reputational risk**, as it influences the profitability of an organisation, and should be managed like all other risks of an organisation in order to avoid loss of income. The last section of this chapter described how **communication could be integrated into the reputation risk management process** in order to assist companies in mitigating communication as a reputation.

The next chapter sets out to explore the different research methodologies, paradigms, designs and data collection methods available for this study. During this chapter the best-suited methods are indicated and described.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology can be described as a systematic analysis of research methods that can apply to a specific study. The research methodology is a systematic strategy; the process the researcher uses to collect data. The research methodology guides the researcher to choose which methods can be applied to a specific study in order to answer the research question or to prove a hypothesis. The research methodology is the broad philosophical foundation a research paper is based on, and focuses on answering the questions of how the data was collected and analysed (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Berg, 2004; Macome, 2002; Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, 2013; Thomas, 2010).

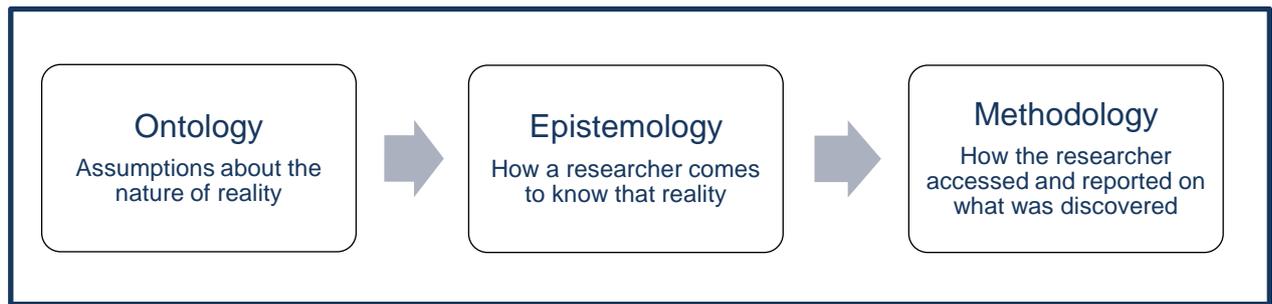
Choosing the correct research methodology is crucial to a study because choosing an unreliable method will produce unreliable results. For this study, the focus is only on exploring quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method research methodologies as the best suitable methodology for this study (Labaree, 2009; Rajasekar *et al.*, 2013).

4.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is a Greek term that means love of wisdom and is the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality and existence. Philosophy is a group of theories and ideas that are related to the understanding of a particular subject. A philosophy enables a researcher to understand how and why someone does certain things. Philosophy can be divided into three groups, namely (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994; Grayling, 1998; Jooste, 2014; Marx, 1967; Teichman & Evans, 1995):

- **Ontology** focuses on the nature of being, existence and reality. It is the study of existence, things that have existence and the nature of reality; what things are.
- **Epistemology** is the study of knowledge, methods of knowledge and justified belief. It focuses on the way we know things.
- The **methodology** focuses on the procedures that can be used to acquire knowledge with.

Figure 4-1 A schematic representation of the different levels of philosophy



Source: Researcher's own compilation

4.3 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Paradigms are preferred ways of understanding and gathering information or knowledge about a phenomenon. It can further be referred to as a worldview, framework, and set of common beliefs, notions or assumptions that focus on how reality is viewed within the social world. It is a shared understanding of reality and provides a model that explains how a problem or phenomenon should be understood and possibly be addressed (De Vos *et al.*, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Kuhn, 1962; McGregor & Murnane, 2010; Reinecke & Helberg, 2010; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Tracy, 2012).

Paradigms differ from one another based on the researcher's view of knowledge and reality, and in the procedures and strategies used to gather collect and analyse data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mack, 2010; Reinecke & Helberg, 2010; Tracy, 2012):

4.3.1 Types of paradigms

There are four main paradigms (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; McGregor & Murnane, 2010; Patel, 2015; Rossman & Rallis, 2003): (i) positivism, (ii) constructivism, (iii) participation, and (iv) pragmatism. These are discussed in the sections to follow.

The positivist paradigm, also known as empirical science or the scientific paradigm, is a study approach that relies on scientific evidence to investigate and explain the true nature of a social phenomenon. Data can be scientifically verified through experiments, statistics and the ability to generalise results. The positivist paradigm is mainly linked to quantitative

studies (Creswell, 2013; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mack, 2010; McGregor & Murnane, 2010; Patel, 2015; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Serva, 2017).

According to Elkind (2004), the interpretive/constructivist paradigm can be seen as accepting of reality as a result of human intelligence; interacting with experience in the real world. Constructivists believe that the human mind builds reality based on perceptions; therefore, different people may experience reality differently. Constructivism is, therefore, a research approach focusing on individuals gaining a better understanding of the world they work and live in. The constructivist paradigm is mainly used by qualitative researchers who believe that this paradigm is based on knowledge being constructed rather than discovered, and focuses on detailed, rich and empathetic descriptions of reality (Atwater, 1996; Au, 1998; Creswell, 2013; Elkind, 2004; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006; Palincsar, 1998; Powell, 2011).

The most distinctive feature of the participatory paradigm is that it involves participation and collaboration between the stakeholders and the researcher. Participatory research methods, therefore, focus on the incorporation of views and opinions of the participants who form part of the study. The participatory paradigm usually has a political objective, meaning that people have the right to participate in a study that seeks to gain a better understanding and knowledge about them (Babbie, 2007; Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Crabtree, 1998; Creswell, 2014; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Heron & Reason, 1997; Seale, 1999; Servaes & Malikhao, 2005; Strydom, 2011). This research paradigm is subjective as it is based on the different perceptions and views of the individuals. A social phenomenon can also be recreated or altered because the perceptions and views on the phenomenon differ from one another. This paradigm can also be objective because the study is based on a phenomenon with factual incidences (Heron & Reason, 1997).

The pragmatic paradigm is a deconstructive paradigm and a set of notions that include mixing methods, techniques, procedures and implementing unconventional approaches to analyse and understand a multifaceted phenomenon. As the pragmatic paradigm uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods, it can be seen as a mixed-methods

research approach. Pragmatism can be seen as a practical approach to a problem and using various methods to solve this problem (Cameron, 2011; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Denscombe, 2008; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Patel, 2015; Yvonne Feilzer, 2009).

4.3.2 Paradigm most suitable for this study

During Section 4.3.1 it became evident that the constructivist approach is best-suited for this study, as the researcher is trying to determine the perceptions and experience people have towards the communication within a university academic faculty. This approach focuses on gaining a better understanding of the current communication model, the challenges and risks, and how it might be possible to improve these risks. The participants involved in this research progress have first-hand experience of the challenges faced with the communication model, and provided practical and realistic improvements on how the model can be enhanced.

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research designs refer to the overall strategy, plan or structured framework, providing the researcher with research processes suitable to solve the research question at hand (Babbie, 2007; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Conrad & Serlin, 2011; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Kothari, 2004). The different types of research designs are the (i) quantitative research design, (ii) qualitative research design, and the (iii) mixed-method research design, which are discussed in the following sections.

4.4.1 Quantitative research design

The quantitative research approach quantifies the research problem by generating an objective, statistical and mathematical representation of data. The data are focused on obtaining numerical data and on determining the relationship between one thing and another (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Bauer, 2000; Bryman, 1984; Creswell, 2003c; Creswell *et al.*, 2010; DeFranzo, 2011; Delport & Roestenburg, 2011; Golafshani, 2003; Hopkins, 2000; Kaplan & Garrick, 1981; Labaree, 2009; Miller, Poole, Seibold, Myers, Hee Sun *et al.*, 2011).

The following elements can be seen as the main characteristics of the quantitative research approach (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Keyton, 2001; Labaree, 2009; Williams, 2007):

- Quantitative research designs are either descriptive or experimental.
- The data are usually used to measure the opinions of large groups or sample sizes that are representative of the population.
- The data gathering takes place in a structured manner.
- The sampling methods, research tools and methods employed are determined beforehand; the study is carefully designed and the methods used are applied extremely rigidly during data collection.
- A study using quantitative research procedures has a clearly defined research question or hypothesis that needs to be answered.
- The data obtained can be replicated.
- A quantitative researcher is only in contact with stakeholders of the research for a short period; no fiduciary relationship is formed between the researcher and the respondent(s) .
- In this type of research, the interaction with stakeholders is not as important as the data that is generated. The only way of measuring different properties of a phenomenon is by assigning numbers, not opinions, to the perceived quantity of things.

Types of quantitative research designs

Creswell (2003b) believes that the quantitative research approach constitutes four fundamental research designs, namely: (i) descriptive, (ii) correlational, (iii) quasi-experimental, and (iv) experimental.

Descriptive research design, also called observational research, focuses on describing situations or phenomena without any interference from the researcher. Descriptive research determines, identifies and describes the characteristics of a phenomenon being studied, but does not make predictions of determining cause and effect. Therefore, it can be argued that descriptive research measures things as they are (Hale, 2017; Hopkins, 2000; Perumal, 2010; Shields & Rangarajan, 2013).

Looking at the **correlation research design**, one should first define the term correlation, which can be described as a relationship between two variables. The function of correlations within research is to figure out which variables are connected. Therefore, correlation research is used to measure the degree of relationship between two or more variables (Creswell, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Kowalczyk, 2017; Perumal, 2010; Qee, 2015; Waters, 2017).

The term quasi means apparently but not real, resembling or seemingly. Therefore, **quasi-experimental research** can be defined as research that resembles experimental research but is not true experimental research. Participants are selected on a non-random basis, and the researcher, therefore, has limited control over the results (Anon, 2003; Bryman, 2006; Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2003a; Creswell, 2003c; Price, Chiang & Jhangiani, 2015; Williams, 2007).

An **experiment** is a procedure carried out under controlled conditions to test or establish a hypothesis. Experimental research assesses two groups of participants simultaneously, where one of these groups have an outcome, and the other do not. After the scores have been conducted, the two sets of results are compared to determine whether the applied outcome affected or not. Experimental research allows the researcher to maintain control over all the factors that may affect the result of the experiment. Therefore, the researcher manipulates one or more variables, and controls and measures any change in variables to ensure a positive outcome (Blakstad, 2017; Creswell, 2003a; Creswell, 2003c; Creswell, 2013; Key, 1997; Quinlan, 2011; Quinlan, Babin, Carr, Griffin & Zikmund, 2015).

4.4.2 Qualitative research design

The qualitative research approach is primarily exploratory research, focused on gaining an understanding of people's social realities, perceptions, motivations and attitudes within a research study. The qualitative research approach is interpretative and naturalistic, meaning that elements are studied in their natural environment and observations are then interpreted and transcribed (Anon, 2003; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; DeFranzo, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Golafshani, 2003; Patton & Cochran, 2007; Rowan & Huston, 1997).

The following elements can be seen as the main characteristics of the qualitative research approach:

- Qualitative research is more flexible, and each investigation is unique, which means that procedures and structure can vary, the information is collected subjectively, after which it is interpreted and described (Anon, 2003; Berg, 2004; Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Brink, 1993; Daymon & Holloway, 2011; De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2006; Keyton, 2001).
- Qualitative research provides an overall picture of a reality that a quantitative researcher would not be able to gain from his data (De Vos *et al.*, 2006).
- The qualitative researcher has the opportunity to study human actions from an insider's perspective, to determine people's opinions, attitudes and perceptions and to adjust his study accordingly (Austin & Sutton, 2014; Raheim, Magnussen, Sekse, Lunde, Jacobsen & Blystad, 2016).
- Qualitative research focuses on all aspects of a specific research topic, and thoroughly investigates them in order to gain an understanding of the situation; whereas, quantitative research broadly highlights certain tendencies found during the research (Anon, 2003; Babbie *et al.*, 2001; De Vos *et al.*, 2006; Wimmer & Dominick, 2013).

Types of qualitative research designs

According to Creswell (2003c) and Creswell (2014), five basic research designs are prominent within the qualitative research design, namely: (i) Grounded research design, (ii) ethnography research design, (iii) phenomenology research design, (iv) narrative research design and (v) case studies. These research designs are described below.

Grounded theory is a research method that applies a structured set of procedures to discover emerging patterns in data. Grounded theory is a systematic research tool that enables researchers to find and conceptualise social patterns and structures within a phenomenon through the process of comparison (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2003a; Goulding, 2005; McCallin, 2009; McGhee, Marland & Arkinson, 2007; Petty, Thomson & Stew, 2012; Quinlan *et al.*, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Tracy, 2012; Yvonne Feilzer, 2009).

Ethnography research is a qualitative research method that focuses on the in-depth examination of culture. This research design enables a researcher to obtain a better and deeper understanding of the shared patterns of beliefs, behaviour and language within a cultural group. The latter is obtained through observation and/or interaction by the researcher with the study's participants (Powell, 2011; Angrosino, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Dewan, 2018; Goulding, 2005; Petty *et al.*, 2012; Quinlan, 2011; Quinlan *et al.*, 2015).

Phenomenological, on the other hand, is a qualitative research method focused on the analysis of individuals' experiences and sensory perceptions, in an attempt to describe how these individuals experience a phenomenon (Giorgi, 1985; Goulding, 2005; Lester, 1999; Osborne, 1990; Petty *et al.*, 2012).

Narratology refers to the structural study of narratives. Narrative as a concept can be seen as the combination of verbal communication, field notes, journals, letters and autobiographies. These narratives are considered a biographical representation of an individual's life, which is used to explore that individual's personal view on events (Anon, 2003; Creswell, 2003c; Koppa, 2018; Petty *et al.*, 2012; Polkinghorne, 2007; Pradl, 1984; Quinlan, 2011; Quinlan *et al.*, 2015; Tracy, 2012; Wright, Brand, Dunn & Spindler, 2007).

Case studies are a research methodology and empirical enquiry that intensively describes and analyses a phenomenon, a single person or a social unit such as an institution, community or group. This method is a process of investigating and recording a phenomenon within its real-life context (Darke *et al.*, 1998; Petty *et al.*, 2012; Quinlan, 2011; Yin, 1994).

Case studies provide the opportunity to analyse a person, a group, event, policies, institutions and operating systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. A case study has also been depicted as an intensive, systematic investigation multi-perspectival analyses. The researcher has the opportunity to not only analyse just the opinion and perspective of one participant, but can examine the interaction and opinions of an entire group of participants in the natural setting to gain an understanding of them (Darke *et al.*, 1998; Hamel, Dufour & Fortin, 1993; Petty *et al.*, 2012; Quinlan, 2011; Stake, 2005; Tellis, 1997; Zainal, 2007; Yin, 1994).

The case study is also a triangulated research strategy that enables a holistic review of a research topic. Triangulation involves the use of multiple methods and is considered one of the best ways to increase credibility and reliability when using a qualitative research method. Triangulation ensures that different events and relationships are collected from different points of views. In this study triangulation took place by combining content analysis, semi-structured interviews, the participant-observer method and retrospection (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Flick, 2002).

4.4.3 Mixed-methods research design

A mixed-methods research approach can be seen as a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods into a single study (Azorín & Cameron, 2010; Cameron, 2011; Creswell, 2003c; Creswell, 2008b; Doyle *et al.*, 2009; Driscoll *et al.*, 2007; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006).

By using a mixed-methods approach, the researcher can capitalise on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative study designs, obtaining a better, and more holistic, understanding of a phenomenon. A multi-method approach is selected when a single approach on its own is deemed insufficient in answering the research questions at hand. Paring quantitative and qualitative research methods can help the researcher verify findings, gain multiple perspectives on a single issue, generate a more comprehensive set of data and enhance the insights attained with the complementary research method (Azorín & Cameron, 2010; Cameron, 2011; Cameron & Molina-Azorin, 2010; Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Denscombe, 2008; Doyle, Brady & Byrne, 2009; Driscoll *et al.*, 2007; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Greene, 2008; Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Mertens, 2010; Sandelowski, 2000; Yvonne Feilzer, 2009).

Types of mixed-method research designs

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), there are two different types of mixed-methods research approaches, namely: (i) the fixed approach, and (ii) the emergent approach.

A **fixed mixed-method design** is where both qualitative and quantitative research methods are predetermined as part of the study, and these two approaches are then implemented as they were arranged. Whereas, the **emergent mixed-method design** is where the need to use both a quantitative and qualitative approach arose during the study (Azorín & Cameron, 2010; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The different types of approaches that mixed methods can follow are discussed below (Creswell, 2003a; Creswell *et al.*, 2010; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Delpont & Fouché, 2005; Delpont & Fouché, 2011; Delpont & Roestenburg, 2011; Klaassens, Boesten, Haarman, Knol, Schuren, Vaughan & De Vos, 2009).

The **convergent parallel design** occurs when both qualitative and quantitative research methods are implemented at the same time during a study. The two methods are equally important in addressing the research problem and run concurrently, yet independently, during the study (Creswell, 2003a; Creswell, 2003c; Creswell, 2008b; Creswell, 2013; Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark & Clegg Smith, 2010; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Explanatory sequential design is a two-phased research design starting with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative data. The qualitative phase, therefore, assists the researcher with the analysis and explanation of a research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Denscombe, 2008; Ivankova *et al.*, 2006; Sweeney, 2016).

Exploratory sequential design is a two-phased research design. In contrast to the explanatory sequential design, the qualitative research phase is implemented first, followed by the quantitative phase. The researcher explores a phenomenon under investigation and then uses quantitative research methods to quantify initial qualitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Delpont & Roestenburg, 2011; Kothari, 2004; Sweeney, 2016).

The **embedded mixed-methods design** is where one type of dataset supports another type of dataset. Therefore, adding a strand of research to a larger study in order to gather supplemental information and to enhance the research design and address the research problem. Should the researcher choose to use the embedded mixed-method design, it does not matter which dataset is the primary set and which one is the secondary set. The

research may add a qualitative study within a quantitative design or may add a quantitative study within a qualitative design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Delpont & Fouché, 2011; Delpont & Roestenburg, 2011)

A **transformative design** is a mixed-methods design that is formed within a transformative theoretical framework, allowing a researcher to challenge basic assumptions of the world through self-reflection. This two-phase design starts with the collection of qualitative data, where the researcher focuses on learning more about the marginalised and underrepresented individuals and communities. The second phase focuses on quantitative data collection to capture data from available extant data sources (Brown, 2014; Creswell *et al.*, 2010; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Delpont & Fouché, 2011; Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib & Rupert, 2007; Mertens, 2010; Sweetman *et al.*, 2010).

The **multiphase design** combines both concurrent and sequential mixed research designs. A concurrent mixed-methods research design can be described as one where the researcher merges quantitative data from a qualitative dataset (Creswell, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Sequential mixed-methods design, on the other hand, involves the exploration of the phenomenon by using various qualitative methods, followed by using quantitative methods, and *vice versa* (Creswell, 2003c; Klaassens *et al.*, 2009; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Therefore, a multiphase mixed-method design uses an iteration of both quantitative and qualitative methods that are sequentially aligned, with each phase building on the previous phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

4.4.4 The research approach most suitable for this study

Sections 4.31 and 4.2.2 delved into the most suitable approach for this study. As the constructivist research approach is mainly qualitative and is the process of gaining knowledge and learning, to solve a problem actively. Qualitative research was discussed in Section 4.2.2 and it was determined that a qualitative approach is the best suitable manner to obtain information. The researcher gained knowledge of the current communication model by interacting with participants' personal experiences towards the communication model, and the qualitative research approach provides the researcher with the possibility to understand the participant's attitude towards the model. This approach has the opportunity to capture changing attitude within target groups as the

research progresses, enabling to explain something which numbers alone are not able to reveal. These experiences will offer the best solution to the problems faced regarding the communication model within academic faculties. It is, therefore, important to include participants in the research process in order to facilitate this process for optimal results. This approach best offers the possibility to gain insight in a specific industry and allows creativity to be a driving force as participants are encouraged to be themselves.

The researcher used a case study as the best-suited type of method within the qualitative research design. As this study is integrating two different fields of study, a case study provides the opportunity to be very targeted and niche-specific, ensuring that the study is not vague or general.

A researcher can use a range of tools that assist to develop an in-depth understanding of the risks and communication models present within HEIs. The latter not only establishes a credible platform to investigate the factors that might affect risk mitigation or communication within an HEI, but it also assists in reducing bias.

Case studies are furthermore known to be problem-centric and solution-centric and serve to answer the question of “why”. This study focuses on developing a conceptual communication model to mitigate reputational risk during, and during each stage, the researcher has the opportunity to ask participants why the model will work and why it will not. As the research develops, give room to the diversity of perspectives as opposed to when one is using only one perspective.

Another advantage of choosing this method is that by using a case study as part of a broader research project, it can assist in exploring common problems in detail. Therefore, providing the researcher with the opportunity to use a conceptual communication model to mitigate reputation risk, developed in this study, as a framework when exploring communication as a reputational risk within other HEIs.

4.5 SAMPLING STRATEGY

According to Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun (1993), a sample is a group from which information will be obtained. It is the part of the population that the researcher will examine in order to gather information. Sampling is the process of selecting a group, objects or units from a population of interest for measurement (Babbie, 2007; Barreiro & Albandoz, 2011;

Bineham, 2006; Blackstone, 2018; Landreneau & Creek, 2009; Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995; Lunsford & Lunsford, 1995; Mack *et al.*, 2005; McLeod, 2014; Moore, Notz & Fligner, 2013; Nieuwenhuis, 2007a; Trochim, 2016).

Landreneau and Creek (2009) and Marais (2013) define a sampling strategy as the approach to be followed to identify the target population, sampling frame, sampling methods and a sample size within a research study. The sections to follow discuss the sampling procedure that was followed in this study.

4.5.1 Target population

The target population is the entire group of individuals or items that will be studied and that the results of the study will be generalised to. These individuals or units that form the target population share the same set of characteristics (Babbie, 2007; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 1993; Gujarati & Porter, 2010; Lavrakas, 2008; McLeod, 2014; Roets, 2013; Trochim, 2016).

The target population for this study consisted of academic, support and temporary staff members, across all the campuses, of one academic faculty within a registered South African public higher education institution (HEI).

4.5.2 Sampling frame

A sampling frame is a list of all the items in your population and is the main source from which the sample will be obtained (Harrison, 2006; Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2003; Särndal *et al.*, 2003).

The sampling frame for this study consisted of all the registered public HEIs in South Africa. The universities in South Africa are divided into three categories, namely (i) traditional universities (that offer theoretically-oriented degrees), (ii) universities of technology (that offer occupational-oriented diplomas and degrees), and (iii) comprehensive universities that offer a combination of both types of degrees. Table 4.1 provides a list of all registered public HEIs in South Africa.

Table 4-1 Registered South African public HEIs

Name of the university	Region	Traditional university/ university of technology/ comprehensive university
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	Western Cape	University of technology
Central University of Technology	Free State	University of technology
Durban University of Technology	KwaZulu-Natal	University of technology
Mangosuthu University of Technology	KwaZulu-Natal	University of technology
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	Eastern Cape and Western Cape	Comprehensive university
North-West University	North West and Gauteng	Traditional university
Rhodes University	Eastern Cape	Traditional university
Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University	Gauteng	Traditional university
Sol Plaatje University	Northern Cape	University of technology
Stellenbosch University	Western Cape	Traditional university
Tshwane University of Technology	Gauteng, Mpumalanga,	University of technology

	Limpopo, and North West	
University of Cape Town	Western Cape	Traditional university
University of Fort Hare	Eastern Cape	Traditional university
University of Johannesburg	Gauteng	Comprehensive university
University of KwaZulu-Natal	KwaZulu-Natal	Traditional university
University of Limpopo	Gauteng and Limpopo	Traditional university
University of Mpumalanga	Mpumalanga	University of technology
University of Pretoria	Gauteng	Traditional university
University of South Africa	All provinces	Comprehensive university
University of the Free State	Free State	Traditional university
University of the Western Cape	Western Cape	Traditional university
University of the Witwatersrand	Gauteng	Traditional university
University of Venda	Limpopo	Comprehensive university
University of Zululand	KwaZulu-Natal	Comprehensive university
Vaal University of Technology	Gauteng, Northern Cape, North	University of technology

	West and Mpumalanga	
Walter Sisulu University	Eastern Cape	Comprehensive university

Source: Adapted from USAF (2018)

4.5.3 Sampling techniques

A sampling technique is a specific process that is followed in order to select a sample. Sampling techniques are divided into two main categories, namely: (i) probability sampling, and (ii) non-probability sampling (Alvi, 2016; Barreiro & Albandoz, 2001; Quinlan, 2011).

4.5.3.1 Probability sampling

In probability sampling, each unit within the population has the same chance of being included in the research study (Babbie, 2007; Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky, 2001; Showkat & Parveen, 2017). The table below focuses on the various probability sampling techniques that can be used in a research study.

Simple random sampling can be seen as the easiest sampling method as each unit from the population has an equal chance of being selected for the sample. Each unit is then assigned a number, to make the selecting process easier, as the number serves as an identification to the unit's value in the sample (Quinlan, 2011; Struwig & Stead, 2007; Strydom, 2011; Zikmund *et al.*, 2013).

During **systematic sampling**, only the first unit from a population is randomly selected, then the next units are selected based on a periodic interval. This interval is calculated by dividing the population size by the desired sample size (Maree & Pietersen, 2007; Struwig & Stead, 2007; Strydom, 2011; Zikmund *et al.*, 2013).

The **stratified sample method**, on the other hand, requires the researcher firstly to divide the population into separate subsections, called strata, which are mutually exclusive. Each strata's units have the same characteristics. Then, the researcher should draw a

sample from each stratum by using a simple random sample (Anon, 2003; Creswell, 2003c; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Struwig & Stead, 2007; Strydom, 2011).

When making use of the **cluster sampling technique**, the researcher divides the population into separate groups, also known as clusters. Subsequently, a simple random or systematic sampling technique is used to select units within each cluster of the population. Every unit forming part of the cluster forms part of the research study (Anon, 2003; Babbie, 2007; Grinnell Jr & Unrau, 2005; Kish, 1995; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Saifuddin, 2009; Showkat & Parveen, 2017; Singh & Masuku, 2014; Strydom, 2011).

4.5.3.2 *Non-probability sample*

In contrast to probability sampling, non-probability sampling refers to sampling techniques in which a unit's likelihood of being selected for participation in the sample is unknown. Non-probability sampling techniques use non-randomised methods to draw samples (Maree & Pietersen, 2007; Showkat & Parveen, 2017; Struwig & Stead, 2007; Strydom, 2011; Zikmund *et al.*, 2013).

Firstly, **convenience sampling** can be defined as a sampling method where a sample is selected from units the researcher has the easiest access to. Therefore, the sample is selected based on the most accessible units (Anderson, 2010; Babbie, 2007; Etikan *et al.*, 2016; Kitchenham, 2004; Marshall, 1996; Petty *et al.*, 2012; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

During **quota sampling**, the researcher plans in advance the number of units that need to be included in a sample, thereby creating a quota to form the sample. These units are then divided into subgroups, and each subgroup resembles the population's characteristics (Babbie, 2007; Cant *et al.*, 2009; Deville, 1991; Moser & Stuart, 1953; Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Showkat & Parveen, 2017; Smith, 1983; Struwig & Stead, 2007).

Snowball sampling can be seen as a ball that is rolled down a snow cliff; once it starts rolling, it picks up snow and gets bigger and bigger (Dudovskiy, 2016). Therefore, according to several authors (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Creswell, 2012; Goodman, 2006; Quinlan, 2011; Strydom, 2011), this sampling strategy is where the researcher recruits the first unit for inclusion in the research study. The first unit then provided the next unit or participant, until data saturation was achieved or the sample size had been achieved.

Lastly, **purposive sampling**, also known as judgement sampling, is a sampling technique where the units that need to be observed are selected according to the judgement of the researcher and are grouped according to a predetermined research objective. Units selected to form part of this sample are selected with a purpose, and units were selected until data saturation is achieved (Babbie, 2007; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Dudovskiy, 2016; Mack *et al.*, 2005; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013).

4.5.4 Sampling methods used in this study

The target population comprises 26 public HEIs within South Africa. From this population, a convenience sample of one faculty within a traditional university was selected. One faculty, from one traditional university, was selected. This faculty has academic, support and research staff members situated on various campuses of the university. The university has approximately 7 000 staff members, of whom 2 000 are support staff, and 4 000 are academic staff; furthermore, 1 000 are extraordinary appointments.

Within this sampling frame, a stratified sample were used in order to divide the population into subpopulation, in total, 150 stakeholders were selected to form part of the study.

The researcher selected one traditional university for this study to assist in formulating a conceptual communication model to mitigate reputational risk. As the researcher is combining two fields of study, there is no single methodology available to guide the researcher and it is formulated as the research progressed.

The university involved in this study provided the researcher the opportunity to contact as many internal stakeholders as needed to formulate the conceptual communication model. The stakeholders included in this study were easy to contact or to reach ensuring that the cost and time required to carry out research to be relatively low. Once a conceptual communication model to mitigate reputation risk was created, the study was expanded, including more faculties and universities.

As this study is qualitative, the sample used is not necessarily representative of the entire HEI, however, the study is replicable. It is important to remember that qualitative research does not need to be representative, but it needs to be replicable (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Delmar, 2010; Moravcsik, 2010; Snodgrass & Shevrin, 2006).

Maxwell (1992) and Williams (2000) observed that generalisation is impossible when using qualitative studies. However, it is possible to get moderate generalisation, where a model can be seen to be a case of a broader set of features. The conceptual communication model to mitigate reputational risk within a HEI can be empirical replicable, meaning that the study can be replicated by using different population in order to remain as near as possible to the original study.

It should also be noted that as this is a qualitative study, the inputs of participants are used. Each participant, depending on the nature of their work, in which academic school or campus they are situated and dependent on the level within the hierarchy they are in, may have different views and perceptions. This model will provide a basis for an adaptive communication model within an academic faculty.

Data saturation or data satisfaction within a research process refers to the point where no more new information is discovered (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Kerr, Nixon & Willd, 2010; Saunders *et al.*, 2018; Tran, Porcher, Tran & Ravaud, 2017; Walker, 2012). Data saturation within this study was reached as soon as no new themes were identified during the rounds of Delphi.

4.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection methods describe the process through which various methods are used in order to gather all relevant information or within a research study (Anon, 2003; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Quinlan, 2011; Struwig & Stead, 2007). This section focuses on describing the qualitative data collection methods that were used in this study.

4.6.1 Literature review

A literature review identifies, collects and evaluates multiple studies and papers relevant to a set of research questions in order to create a comprehensive summary of previous research on a topic (Azorín & Cameron, 2010; Coffta, 2019; Cooper, 1998; Rowley & Slack, 2004).

The review should highlight key sources within the field, as well as describe, summarise and objectively evaluate previous research done. It is the collecting and interpreting of published information on a specific topic. This literature review assists the researcher to

identify, classify, evaluate and interpret available and relevant information on a certain topic, to provide the researcher with an up-to-date and complete overview of the phenomena being studied (Burnard, 2004; Cooper, 1998; Dellinger, 2005).

A literature review allows the researcher to investigate previous studies on the topic, identifying potential problems and mapping out existing solutions, allowing the researcher to do thorough planning, before starting the data collection process (Azorín & Cameron, 2010; Kofod-Petersen, 2014; McGhee *et al.*, 2007; Rowley & Slack, 2004).

A literature review creates a 'landscape' for the reader, providing a full understanding of the history and developments in the field, aiding the reader to understand the theoretical concepts and contributions (Burnard, 2004; Coffta, 2019; Cooper, 1998; Dellinger, 2005; Delport & Fouché, 2005; Taylor, 2008).

A literature review within the social sciences often has an organisational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis. This form of review is a summary of the important information within this field, as well as a re-organisation and reshuffling of relevant information in a way that informs the research on how you are planning to investigate a research problem (Azorín & Cameron, 2010; Hart, 2018; Kitchenham *et al.*, 2009; Kofod-Petersen, 2014; McGhee *et al.*, 2007; Rowley & Slack, 2004; Sykes, 1990; Visser, 2010).

For this study, a literature review was done on business communication and identifying different communication models present within a organisation, which provides the researcher with a framework to develop a conceptual communication model for HEIs. A second literature review was done by analysing the different types of risks and more specifically, reputational risks that are visible within HEIs. Both these literature reviews allowed the researcher to obtain extensive knowledge of what a successful communication model should look like in order to mitigate reputational risk within organisations.

4.6.2 Document analysis

As seen in Chapter 3, the world of communication has rapidly changed over the past decades. A great deal of the collective knowledge of the business is stored in documents and on the company's website and intranet. Document analysis is a systematic process where documentation, both printed and electronic, is evaluated in order to provide a

background on the topic/situation that is being studied (Bowen, 2009; Love, 2013; Salminen, Kauppinen & Lehtovaara, 1997).

The researcher reviewed all the reports available on the communication audit and culture survey that was done within the selected higher education sector from 2017 to 2020. The goal was to determine the perception, views and attitude of employees, working at the HEI, towards the current communication model. The researcher tried to establish whether any of the suggestions made in the audit reports were implemented, and what the effects of these changes were. In instances where the changes were not implemented, the researcher tried to determine why it was not implemented, and what the effect was on the communication model and employees.

Document analysis, in conjunction with other qualitative research methods, is used to combine methodologies of the same phenomenon for the study at hand. The latter is known as triangulation. Triangulation involves the use of multiple methods in order to answer a qualitative research question. Triangulation ensures that different events and relationships are collected from different points of view (Babbie, 2007; Babbie *et al.*, 2001; Berg, 2004; Blakstad, 2017; Bowen, 2009; Creswell, 2003a; Creswell, 2003c; Creswell, 2008a; Creswell, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Flick, 2002; Jooste, 2014).

Document analysis is used because it can be reviewed multiple times and remain unchanged by the researcher's influence. In addition to this, a document analysis can support and strengthen the research as it can provide background information and it helps to track change and development within a HEI. Document analysis is important to this study as it enables the researcher to establish what the academic faculty's current communication model looks like and which HEIs are utilising this model, irrespective of what the literature says.

4.6.3 Interviews

One of the best-known methods for collecting qualitative data are interviews. Interviews can be described as a data collection method, where a conversation between the researcher and a small group of respondents takes place in order to obtain information. During this conversation, the researcher asks the respondents a set of predefined questions and documents their answers and responses, in an attempt to gain a better

understanding of a phenomenon (Babbie, 2007; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Creswell, 2003c; Creswell, 2008a; Creswell, 2013; DePoy & Gilson, 2012; Diccico-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Dudovskiy, 2016; Easwaramoorthy & Zarinpoush, 2006; Fontana & Frey, 1995; Greeff; Keller & Conradin, 2018; Tracy, 2012).

Wimmer and Dominick (2013) believe that interviews offer the researcher the opportunity to obtain valuable information about stakeholders' views, opinions, values, motivations and experiences regarding a phenomenon. They further argue that even though the verbal responses of respondents are useful, the non-verbal responses are sometimes of more value, as non-verbal behaviour during an interview can contribute to the quality of information gathered.

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) and Kaplowitz and Hoehn (2001), interviews can be divided into two main categories, namely individual interviews and focus groups. However, Struwig and Stead (2007), DiCicco and Crabtree (2006) and Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick (2008) argue that interviews can be divided into four categories, namely (i) structured interviews, (ii) semi-structured interviews, (iii) unstructured interviews, and (v) focus groups.

The following section explores the two types of interviews that were used in this study (Struwig & Stead, 2007, DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006; Gill *et al.*, 2008):

Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to ask a set predetermined questions to respondents in order to gather information about a phenomenon. The main difference between structured and semi-structured interviews is that questions during semi-structured interviews can be adjusted and follow-up questions can be directed to respondents (Babbie, 2007; Balkissoon, 2014; DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006; Doyle, 2018; Fontana & Frey, 1995; Mathers, Fox & Hunn, 2002. ; Wimmer & Dominick, 2013).

According to Delpont and Roestenburg (2011), this data collection method enables the collection of rich data while remaining flexible and participant-guided. The latter enables participants' answers to be open-ended, allowing the respondents to answer questions in their own words. Due to respondents being able to express their thoughts, opinions and ideas, this method is ideally suited to exploratory research.

According to Marczak and Sewell (1991), **focus groups** were originally referred to as group-depth interviews and were developed after World War II to evaluate audience responses to radio programmes. A focus group a discussion is a group of interacting individuals, brought together by a researcher, to concentrate on a discussion and the group's interaction on a particular topic. The focus group's goal is to gather data from a group of individuals with mutual characteristics. The ideal size for focus groups is between seven and ten individuals, with six being the minimum and 12 being the maximum. Focus groups can also take on different forms, as in the case of interviews, namely (i) structured focus groups, (ii) semi-structured focus groups, and (iii) unstructured focus groups (Cowton & Downs, 2015; Gibbs, 1997; Kaplowitz & Hoehn, 2001; Kitzinger, 1994; Marczak & Sewell, 1991; McLafferty, 2004; Merton, 1987; Morgan, 1996; Notenbomer *et al.*, 2016; Powell & Single, 1996).

4.6.4 Delphi technique

The Delphi method can be seen as a structured communication-based research method, designed to enhance creative thinking, elicit opinion and gain consensus from a panel of experts. The Delphi method is a systematic, interactive prediction method where experts answer questionnaires in two or more rounds, after which the researcher provides the panel with a summary portraying all the opinions, and the experts are encouraged to revise their previous answers (Brown, 1968; Dalkey, 1967; Gupta & Clarke, 1996; Hasson *et al.*, 2000; Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Linstone & Turoff, 2011; Rowe & Wright, 1999; Sackman, 1974)

According to Haughey (2018), this is an iterative process, and the opinions gained in the first round provide the basis for the second round of questions. The results of the second round feed the next round of Delphi.

The Delphi method was selected for this study as it provides the researcher to gain data from stakeholders, adapt the model and present it during the next round. This process was continued until end-user agreement had been established.

Section 4.6.4.1 provides more details on the four rounds of Delphi that took place during this study.

4.7 INTERVIEW ADMINISTRATION

The following section provides information on the interview administration conducted in this study, i.e. the interview pretest. A pilot and pretest of the interviews schedule can assist with gathering preliminary data to ensure that, during the interview administration, the information presented to the respondents is correct. That valuable information was obtained during the interview sessions. The benefits of interviews and focus groups are the unique ability to uncover the private and incommunicable social world of the respondent, and gain alternative assumptions and world views (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

4.7.1 Pilot testing of the interview schedule

Pre-testing of interview questions before conducting the actual interviews is crucial before the researcher starts the interviewing process. Pre-testing helps to identify or eliminate any obstacles that might occur during interviews, such as ensuring questions are understood in the manner it was intended, ensuring the researcher obtains valuable data. Participants who formed part of the pretest shared the same characteristics as the main population that was used in the study and were excluded from the main sample. Adjustments were made to improve the interview schedule that was used for the main research study (Churchill, 1995; Collins, 2003; Creswell, 2003a; Creswell, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Dikko, 2016; Hurst *et al.*, 2015; Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010; Majid, Othman, Mohamad, Lim & Yusof, 2017; Marais, 2013; McDaniel & Gates, 2013; Zikmund *et al.*, 2013).

The pilot testing can be seen as the rehearsal of the research study, allowing the researcher to test the research approach with a small number of test participants before conducting the main study. The pilot testing also highlights the improvisation that might occur during the major study, and if there is room for improvisation and follow-up questions. By doing a pilot of the interview schedule, the researcher can ensure that the research runs smoothly, and this can dramatically improve the outputs the study (Dikko, 2016; Majid *et al.*, 2017; Pace, Pluye, Barlett, Macaulay, Salsberg, Jagosh & Seller, 2012).

Pre-testing of the interview schedule was done on ten individuals, who are part of the university's corporate communications team and whose daily activities include working

with and for academic faculties. During the pretesting, several suggestions were made to improve the interview schedule, and brought about more depth to the communication model of the respective faculty's communication model that the researcher did not consider. These suggestions and views were worked into the interview schedule.

4.7.2 Interview schedule administration

Once the pilot study is completed, and necessary changes were made to the data collection methods, the larger and actual study can take place. The following sections describe how the interview schedule and questionnaire were administered during the larger study.

Round one of Delphi was two focus groups with the following individuals within the faculty:

- Twenty support staff members of the faculty.
- Fifteen academics with no managerial responsibilities.
- Fifteen academics with managerial responsibilities.
- Twelve members of corporate communication.

The second and third rounds of Delphi were interviews conducted with:

- Four directors of academic schools,
- two deputy directors of academic schools,
- one research director,
- two directors of research units,
- the three deputy deans of the faculty and
- the executive dean of the faculty.

After Round 1 of the focus groups (discussed in Section 4.6.5.1), the focus groups were analysed and transcribed. The changes to the communication model, as indicated by the respondents of the focus groups, were made to the conceptual model. After that, the researcher had interviews during Round 2, to ascertain how the respondents feel regarding the changes proposed by the individuals of the focus group. The changes and opinions obtained during these interview sessions were transcribed, and changes were once again be made to the conceptual communication model. The conceptual model, with the amendments, was then be presented to the faculty management team. The

researcher recorded the opinions of these changes towards the model, as well as the changes they suggest, to create an optimal communication model for this sector.

During the last round, the researcher had a focus group session with members of corporate communication who work with faculties daily to determine their feelings regarding the updated conceptual model, and whether they agree with these changes. This session is important, as it illustrates the communication from a support unit to an academic faculty.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of applying techniques to summarise, describe, interpret, illustrate and understand the meaning of the gathered data. This section focuses on how the gathered data in this research study were organised, conciliated and converted, preparing it to be analysed. Data analysis allows the quantification of data, enabling the research to report on it, and answer the research questions at hand, in order to analyse and report on it (Babbie, 2007; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Dudovskiy, 2016; Zikmund *et al.*, 2013).

4.8.1 Transcribing

Transcribing is the process where the data gathered during interviews and focus groups is converted to written form for further study (Anon, 2003; Bailey, 2008; Creswell, 2008a; Davidson, 2009; Green *et al.*, 1997; Halcomb & Davidson, 2006; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999; Oliver, Serovich & Manson, 2005; Poland, 1995; Stuckey, 2014; Tilley, 2003).

For this study, a verbatim transcribing method was used. The interviews and focus groups were transcribed for further analysis.

4.8.2 Coding

Coding is a process where data are categorised in order to facilitate analysis. During coding, data are divided into different subcategories or themes, allowing the researcher to determine data segments with different themes, symbols and expressive wording (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Creswell, 2008a; Creswell, 2008b; Creswell, 2012; Malhotra, 2010;

Nieuwenhuis, 2007a; Nieuwenhuis, 2007b; Patton & Cochran, 2007; Zikmund *et al.*, 2013)

The table below discusses the different types of coding analysis methods (Babbie, 2007; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Gallicano, 2013; Schurink, Utz & Goritz, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Struwig & Stead, 2007):

Table 4-2 Coding analysis methods

Method	Definition
Open coding	Open coding refers to the creation of labels/categories based on the data's properties. Therefore, the researcher summarises the data into different categories.
Axial coding	Axial coding is where relationships among data are identified. Therefore, connections between different categories are established.
Selective coding	Selective coding is the selection of one category to be the main category.

Source: Researchers own compilation

For this study, ATLAS.ti 8.0, a computer program part of the computer-aided qualitative data analysis software family, was used for data analysis. ATLAS.ti 8.0 is a tool aimed at arranging, reassembling and managing large bodies of textual, graphical, audio and video data, used by a qualitative researcher. This program does not analyse the data, but assists the researcher in the analysis process. This programme assists the researcher to import the raw data into one heuristic unit, and to build visual networks and organise the data into quotations, codes, categories and themes (Friese, 2016; Muhr, 1991; Saldaña, 2009).

During this study, ATLAS.ti 8.0 was used to assist with uncovering and systematically analysing complex phenomena that might be hidden in data. The documents for data analysis, the focus groups and interviews were imported in ATLAS.ti 8.0; after that, open coding was used to identify and create themes and concepts for the study.

Open coding was selected as it allows the researcher to recognise the direction in which the research should be steered to so it can become selective and focused conceptually on a particular social problem. Open coding enables the researcher to identify and organise the raw data into categories of words, actions, and perceptions (Babbie, 2007; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Gallicano, 2013; Schurink, Utz & Goritz, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Struwig & Stead, 2007).

The process of coding and data analysis

Firstly, the qualitative thematic data analysis was used in this study to establish how participants assign meaning to a specific phenomenon by analysing their perceptions, understandings and knowledge. These themes are used to underpin analysis and interpretation. Secondly, changes to the current communication model were analysed (Bell, Duncan & Rainer, 2017; Friese, 2016; Hwang, 2008; Monaisa, 2017; Van Deventer, 2013).

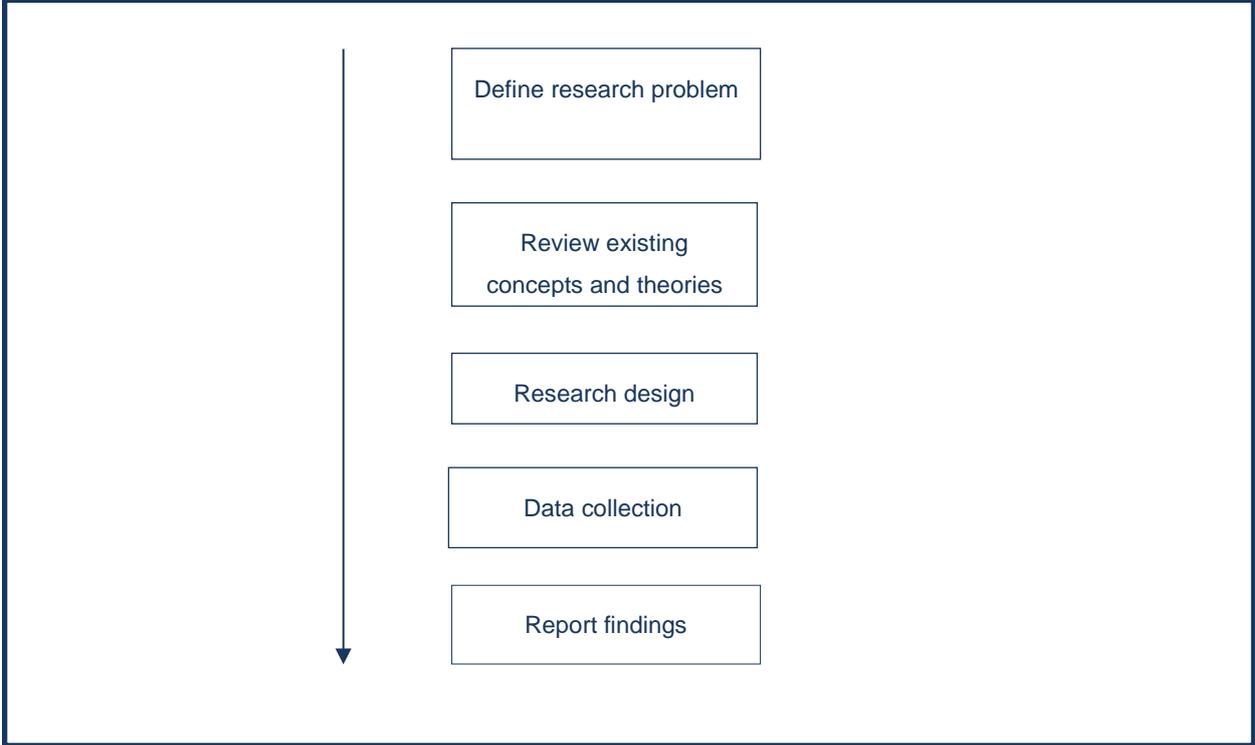
By using ATLAS.ti 8.0, the researcher can carefully code data and discern and document themes consistently and reliably. The data analysis and interpretation were integrated with the literature review to answer the research questions posed in this study, and to develop a conceptual communication model to mitigate reputational risk (Friese, 2016; Hwang, 2008; Lu & Shulman, 2008; Monaisa, 2017; Saldaña, 2009; Smit, 2002; Van Deventer, 2013).

The researcher linked themes together of topics that were discussed frequently, therefore using open coding. Open coding is the labelling of concepts and themes based on their characteristics and properties (Hwang, 2008; Khandkar, 2009; Lu & Shulman, 2008).

4.9 RESEARCH PROCESS FLOW DIAGRAM

The process flow diagram below illustrates the process that was followed to conduct the data collection in this research study. It provides a picture of a step-by-step guide that was followed by the researcher.

Figure 4-1 Research flow diagram



Source: Adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2011)

This research study started by identifying the research context and problem, against this background a primary objective was established. For this study the primary objective is to create a conceptual communication model to assist with mitigating reputational risk within a HEI.

The second leg of this research flow diagram is focused on the literature that is available for this study. Currently there is little to no available literature available on the combination of the fields of Communication and Risk management. The researcher therefore needed to look at each field of research separately, using the information generated to use as the foundation for this study.

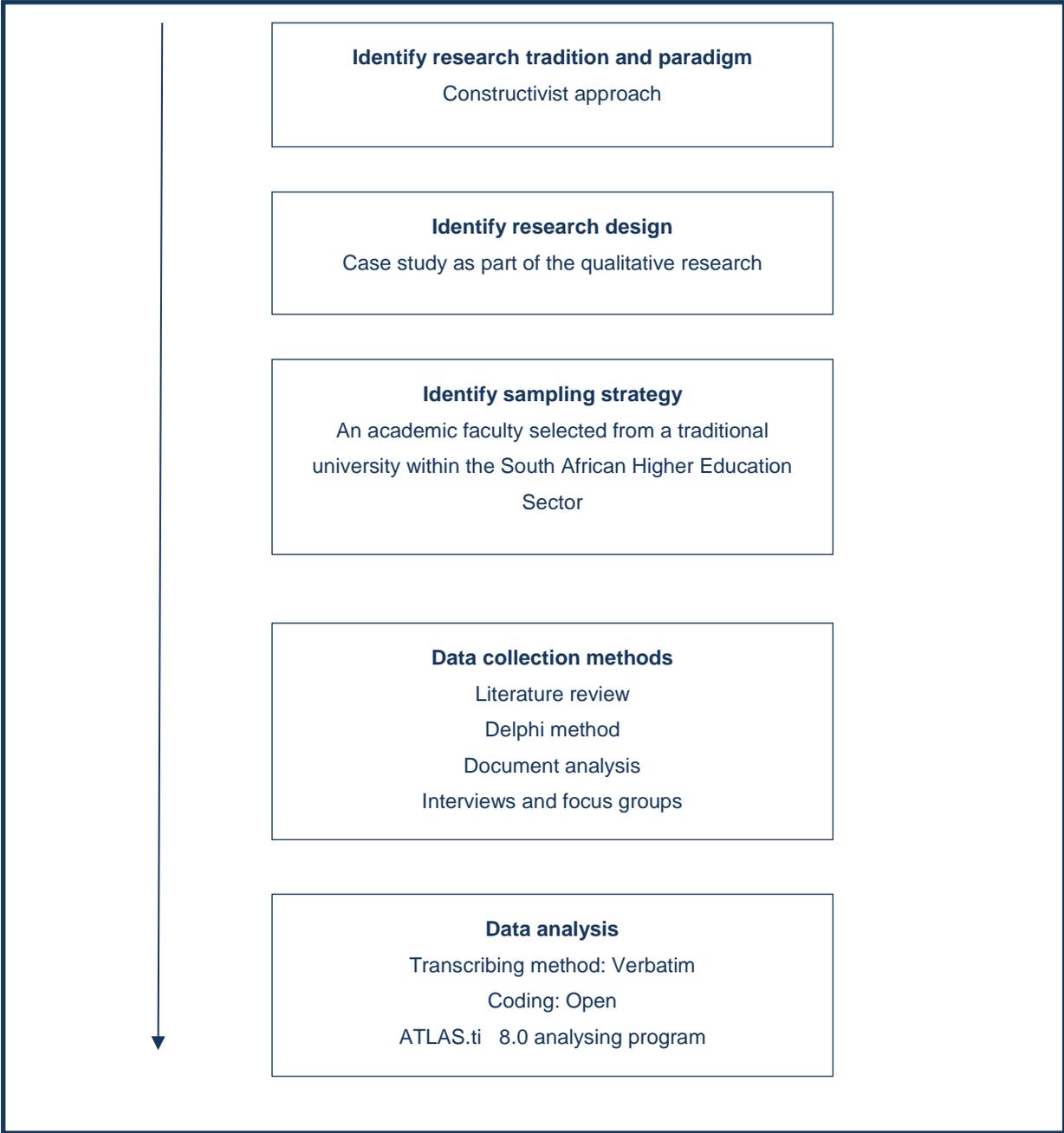
The goal is to create a conceptual communication structure to mitigate reputational risks. The researcher is utilising one element to overcome another element. Therefore, the study focuses on utilising communication factors and creating an easy flow model to overcome potential reputational risks.

For this study there are two literature review chapters, the first focusing on defining risks, risks within the HEI sector, and the risk management process. The second focusing on obtaining knowledge of communication, communication models within the HEI sector, and how communication is a reputational risk factor.

The third leg of the research flow diagram is focused on deciding on the appropriate research design for this study. This leg is described and explained in Figure 4-3. The fourth leg of this study is data collection and is discussed in Figure 4-4.

This study concludes by reporting on the findings, determining if the objectives of this study was met.

Figure 4-2 Research design diagram



Source: Adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2011)

During Section 4.3.1 it became evident that the constructivist approach will be best-suited for this study, as the researcher is trying to determine the perceptions and experience people have towards the communication within a university academic faculty.

Qualitative research was discussed in Section 4.2.2, and it was determined that a qualitative approach will be the best suitable manner to obtain information. The researcher will be using a case study as the best-suited type of methods within the qualitative research design. As this study is integrating two different fields of study, a case study provides the opportunity to be very targeted and niche-specific, ensuring that the study is not vague or general.

A sampling strategy is the approach that will be followed to identify the target population, sampling frame, sampling methods and a sample size within a research study. The target population comprises 26 public HEIs within South Africa. From this population, a convenience sample of one faculty within a traditional university was selected. One faculty, from one traditional university, was selected. This faculty has academic, support and research staff members situated on various campuses of the university. The university has approximately 7 000 staff members, of whom 2 000 are support staff and 4 000 are academic staff. A further 1 000 are extraordinary appointments. Within this sampling frame, a stratified sample was used in order to divide the population into subpopulation, in total, 150 stakeholders will be selected to form part of the study.

The researcher selected one traditional university for this study to assist in formulating a conceptual communication model to mitigate reputational risk. As the researcher is combining two fields of study, there is no single methodology available to guide the researcher, and it is formulated as the research progressed.

The different data collection methods were described (Section 4.6) that will be used in order to gather all relevant information or within a research study. The methods that were decided on included i) the Delphi method, (ii) document analysis, and (iii) interviews and focus groups.

For this study, a verbatim transcribing method was used. The interviews and focus groups were transcribed for further analysis, by using open coding. Open coding allows the researcher to recognise the direction in which the research should be steered to so it can

become selective and focused conceptually on a particular social problem. ATLAS.ti 8.0 was used to assist with uncovering and systematically analysing complex phenomena that might be hidden in data.

Figure 4-3 Data collection diagram



Source: Researcher's own compilation

A conceptual communication model was developed by extracting relevant information from (i) the communication literature review, (ii) reputational risks visible within the HEI sector, and (iii) available documentation on the selected HEI.

The conceptual model was then used during the first round of Delphi. Each of the different rounds of Delphi focused on gaining information on the perception of the current communication model, identifying risks within the model and to identify possible alternations in order to improve the communication model.

For this study, the **first round of Delphi** focused on gathering information from three focus groups that were conducted with three different groups of staff members within the faculty. Group 1 was all the administrative and support staff members within the faculty. Group 2 consisted of 15 lecturers within the different schools of the faculty who have no managerial responsibilities and the third group consisted of eight lecturers within the different schools of the faculty who have managerial responsibilities. This round aimed to determine the staff members' perceptions and attitudes towards the current model, to identify the possible risks, and to focus possible adaptations to the model to ensure optimal success and productivity.

After that, the **second round of Delphi** was held by conducting interviews with deputy school directors, school directors as well as with research directors. The purpose of this round was to determine the perception of the second-level managers on the current model, and to identify possible risks. The suggested adjustments to the model were discussed, and their opinions on these adjustments were recorded. These second-level managers were also asked for their suggestions to the model, in order to improve success and productivity.

The **third round of Delphi** was conducted in order to determine the perceptions and views of the current and adapted communication model by interviewing the faculty management team. Interviews were conducted with three deputy deans as well as with the executive dean of the faculty. The opinions and suggestions made in the previous rounds were discussed with these managers and their view on how to improve the model were added to the conceptual model. Here, the researcher focused on identifying the gap between how staff members perceive the model and how the managerial team perceives

the model and trying to focus on that gap. The focus is to create an optimal working model that optimises communication between parties and minimises the risks.

During the **final round of Delphi**, the adjusted model was shown to a panel of support staff members, lecturers and faculty management members, as well as to members of the corporate communications team, in order to determine if they agree with the suggested changes to the conceptual communication model.

4.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to determine the systematic process the researcher will use to collect data.

Research paradigms assist researchers in organising information and how data are recorded and interpreted. A research paradigm further assists a researcher to answer the research questions of a study. For this study, the **constructivist approach** will be followed, as the researcher is trying to determine the perceptions and experience people have towards the communication within a university academic faculty.

This chapter focused on defining different research paradigm and design and establishing which paradigm and design would be most suitable for this study. Research designs refer to the overall strategy, plan or structured framework, providing the researcher with research processes suitable to solve the research question at hand. The **qualitative research approach** will be used in this study in order to achieve the research objectives as set out in Section 1.4. It was established that the researcher would gain knowledge of the current communication model by interacting with participants' personal experiences towards the communication model.

The **target population** comprises 26 public HEIs within South Africa. From this population, a **convenience sample** of one faculty within a traditional university was selected. One faculty, from one traditional university, was selected. This faculty has academic, support and research staff members situated on various campuses of the university. As this study is qualitative, the sample used was not necessarily representative of the entire HEI, however, the **study is replicable**.

Within this sampling frame, a **stratified sample** will be used in order to divide the population into subpopulation. In total, 75 stakeholders were selected to form part of the study.

Several rounds of **Delphi**, by using **semi-structured interviews and focus groups**, were conducted until an end-user agreement was achieved. Data were **transcribed verbatim** and were **coded by using ATLAS.ti 8.0**.

Chapter 5 sets out to develop a conceptual communication model by evaluating several **communication mediums**. This conceptual communication model was used in different rounds of Delphi until an end-user agreement was established.

CHAPTER 5: CONCEPTUAL MODEL

5.1 INTRODUCTION

At this stage of the study, the theoretical objectives were addressed by the literature review and the results were described in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Empirical theoretical Objective 3 stipulates the exploration of the perception of faculty personnel and management towards the current communication model in order to develop a conceptual Communication and Risk management model for HEIs.

Currently, there is no formal higher education Communication and Risk management model available; each HEIs has several guiding principles that they follow. Figure 5-1 offers a look at the current communication model of an academic faculty within a HEI. One of the main reasons for ineffectiveness is due to the complexity of the model.

5.2 UNDERSTANDING THE HIGHER EDUCATION STRUCTURE

Before establishing a conceptual model for higher educational institutions, it is essential to understand their role. HEIs are focused on providing post-school education, in order to enhance the capacity of the societies these students live in, in order to meet the socio-cultural and developmental needs of a country (Altbach, 2020; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Ferreira, 2005; Knight, 2003; Twigg, 1994).

During the last couple of decades, the landscape of higher education nationally and internationally saw many changes. Universities globally are facing a growing decline in the trust people place in institutions and experts, as well as changes in their role in society. Universities and scientists, among others, no longer command the respect they once did. The reason for this is that society believes that academics are out of touch with the real world, and are in ivory towers (Gast, 2018; Meyer & Schachermayer, 2018). However, universities understand the importance and power of collaboration, and (Webbstock, 2008) believes that universities are not ivory towers and are exceptionally prone to being influenced by social, political and economic issues.

Firstly, universities are faced with a constant financial battle, from obtaining funding in order to run the business, to collecting tuition fees due for services offered. Taking the

latter into account, one can see that campaigns like *#FreeEducation* and *#FeesMustFall*, have a significant impact on an HEI.

The movement was target towards a 0% increase in tuition fees and also to get the government to increase funding towards universities. The 2015 protest ended after the South African minister of higher education announced a 0% intuition fee increase, but the protest was ignited again in 2016 after the announcement of a possible 8% tuition fee increase. By the end of 2016, the Department of Education estimated that the total cost in property damage due to the protest has amounted to over R600 million (Anon; Anon, 2015; Anon, 2016; Booyesen, Godsell, Chikane, Mpofu-Walsh, Ntshingila & Lepere, 2010; Federici, Mwara & McLaren, 2000; Hodes, 2017; Langa, Ndelu, Edwin & Vilakazi, 2017; Luescher, Loader & Mugume, 2017; Luescher, 2016; Nyamnjoh, 2016; Zama, 2018).

The reasons for steep tuition fee increases in 2015 include (Anon; Anon, 2015; Anon, 2016; Booyesen *et al.*, 2010; Hodes, 2017; Langa, Ndelu, Edwin & Vilakazi, 2017; Luescher *et al.*, 2017; Zama, 2018):

1. The rand-dollar exchange rate has fallen by 22%, which has resulted in a substantial increase in the amount of money that institutions pay for resources, which include paying for library books, journals, electronic resources and research equipment that are obtained in dollars and euros.
2. The inflation rate of 2015/2016 was approximately 6%, affecting salary increases for academics, which were set at 7% based on a three-year cycle. These increases are necessary to ensure that institutions retain the best intellectual minds, lecturers and researchers in the country. This inflation rate also affects all other expenses that institutions must cover, including infrastructure, maintenance and security. Unfortunately, most utilities and services are increasing at rates substantially higher than the inflation rate.
3. Another big reason for the year-on-year increase in tuition fees is the year-on-year decrease in subsidy from both the government and the NSFAS funding. It is also important to note that NSFAS funding is to help students, and not the university's financial statements.

The 0% increase in tuition fees affects institutions' **financial resources** and budgets for that coming academic year and the years to come. Institutions budgeted for a 9 to 10.5

% increase in tuition fees, meaning that the 0% increase resulted in a fee shortfall of R150 million and more on the budgets of institutions. The financial shortage in the HEI sector during 2016 is approximately R2.3 billion, of which the Department of Higher Education and Training has contributed R1.9 billion. This means that the HEI institutions still had to survive with a shortfall of R394.7 million (Anon; Anon, 2015; Anon, 2016; Hodes, 2017). Unfortunately, the long-term consequences are that there will be less money for growth. Without money to expand facilities and appoint more staff, it will be challenging to admit more students.

Secondly, during the last couple of years, South Africa's HEIs saw several protests, some of which were economically motivated; others were motivated by **political struggles**. These protests ranged from focused on ensuring universities remove symbols of the country's apartheid past to other protests being called for the decolonisation of the current South African HE curriculum (Altbach, 2020; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Mabokela & Mlambo, 2017; Mosia, 2016; Nicolson, 2016; Tjønneland 2017).

Lastly, the issue of various **social issues** should be taken into consideration; it is no longer strange to study across borders, or even via the internet as the structures of HEIs saw changes. Universities quickly started to change and expand the diversity of course offerings and started to pursue a competitive edge, which will make them unique. The latter also saw changes in the communication models of HEIs, as the models had to be adapted in order to 'speak the language' of the new generations (Altbach, 2020; Altbach & Knight, 2007; de Lima Ferreira & Bertotti, 2016; Ferreira, 2005; Looker *et al.*, 2018; Ramdass & Kruger; Toma *et al.*, 2014; Webbstock, 1999; Webbstock, 2008; Wilkins & Huisman, 2012).

Universities strive to be the most prestigious academic institutions. They are determined to offer the best sports facilities, best and fastest computer networks, exceptional campus services, and being the top-rated research institutions (Altbach, 2020; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Corrigan, 2000; Davis & Farrell, o.a; de Lima Ferreira & Bertotti, 2016; Elliott & Healy, 2001).

Another social issue that needs to be taken into account is that as new generations are entering the HE and workforce structure, new communication mediums are needed. No

longer is transparencies needed – video, internet and video-based learning are the way to go (Ivanova & Smrikarov, 2009; Jones & Shao, 2011).

All these issues not only had a significant influence on HEIs, but also on their communication models. HEI had to relook the way they communicate with all stakeholders to ensure that they do not harm their reputation

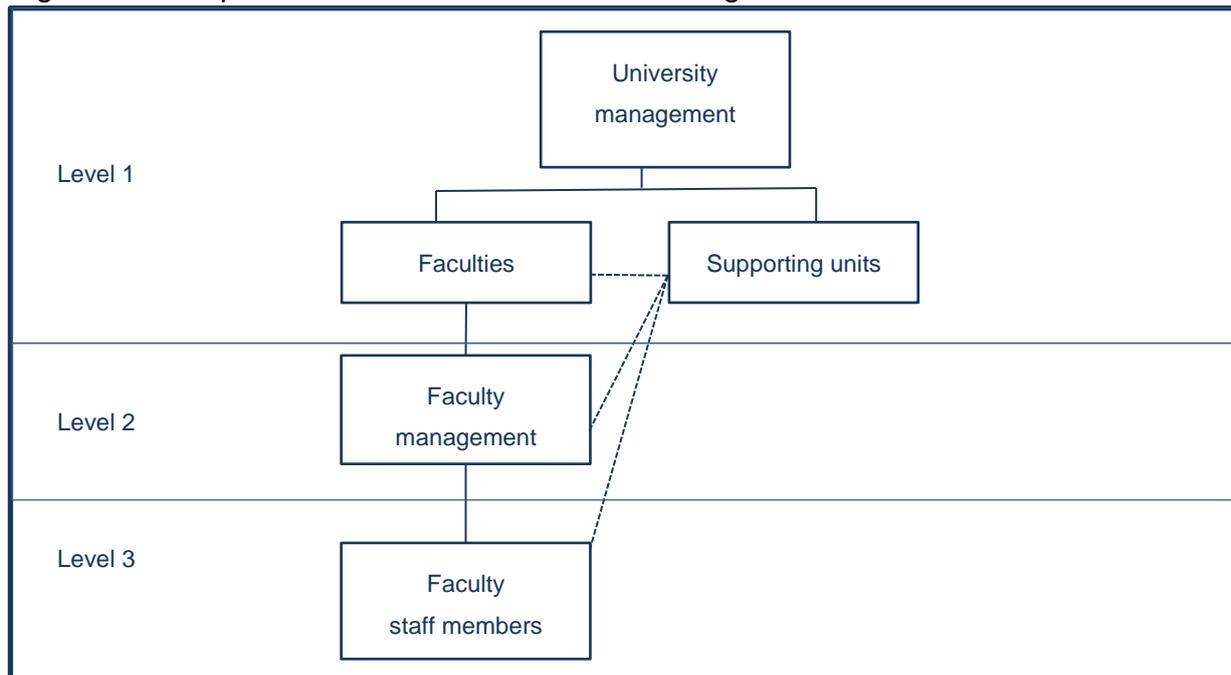
5.3 CURRENT COMMUNICATION MODEL

Figure 5-1 is a simple representation of the entire communication model of a HEI within the South African context. This figure below offers the first view of how communication takes place within the university. The full complexity of communication within each academic faculty and department within the faculty will be discussed as different communication activities within this communication model:

This conceptual model was developed by:

- Examining the university's website's management team pages.
- Looking at the available reporting organigrams of each department and faculty that is available on the intranet.
- Observations that were made by the researcher.
- Inputs from faculty administrative staff, other faculty liaison officers and corporate communication members.

Figure 5-1 Simplified communication model of a higher education institution



Source: Researcher's own compilation

The model in Figure 5-1 is divided into different levels; each of these levels represents different types of communication that can take place within a HEI. Level 1 consists of university management, the second level out of faculty management and their portfolios, and lastly the staff members who are mostly responsible for completing the tasks and activities.

It is essential to understand the different lines and flows of communication within the structure indicated in Figure 5-1, and the structures to follow. The solid lines (-) illustrate formal communication lines towards direct managers and affects staff members' daily activities and tasks. The dotted lines (---) represent occasional communication; even though it may require action, this communication does not take place daily. Communication mainly flows top to bottom (from the higher level to the lowest level). The latter can cause a top-heavy structure and can influence the communication that the ground-level (workers) receives, as discussed in full in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2.2.

The sections to follow focuses on the different managerial levels and the communication activities within each of these levels. These sections, even though based on one academic faculty, are the typical structure of communication that any HEI will have.

5.3.1 Level 1 of the communication model

The first level of the communication model represents the university management of the HEI. Universities in South Africa are governed in terms of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, as amended, as well as the statute of the university, where the management team usually consists of (Abd-El-Salam, Shawky & Ei-Nahas, 2013; Jolobe, 2010; NWU, 2020; O'Meara & Petzall, 2007; Paterson, 1981; Saunders, 2000; UCT, 2020; UP, 2020; Velazquez, Munguia, Platt & Taddei, 2006):

- A chancellor, who acts as the executive or ceremonial head of an HEI.
- A vice-chancellor who acts as the chief executive and is accountable for managing the HEI. The vice-chancellor typically has several advising bodies that assist with the management and administration of an HEI. These advising bodies include a university council, senate and institutional forum. The council is responsible for governance, forming and implementing policies and fostering a positive academic atmosphere among staff and students, whereas, the university senate's primary goal is regulating all teaching, learning, research and academic functions of a university. Lastly, the institutional forum is an advisory committee, advising the council on how to implement higher education policy, in terms of the Higher Education Act and the university statute.
- The deputy vice-chancellors, also known as DVCs, focuses on teaching, learning, research, innovation or operations on a specific campus.
- Executive directors to support units, including finance and facilities, people and culture, corporate relations and marketing, and student life.
- Faculties, has an executive dean, deputy dean, school directors, and other academic departments relevant to a faculty.
- An institutional registrar who servers as statutory secretary to the council, senate and university management.

The ideal is for university management to communicate directly to faculty management regarding matters that will affect them. That, however, is unfortunately not the case; it has happened on several occasions that messages that directly affect the daily working activities of these staff members and faculties either reach them too late, or do not reach them at all.

Several risks can be identified with university management only communicating with faculty management and are discussed in Section 5.1.2.1, as this study's primary focus is the communication within a faculty.

Example of communication challenges faced by the University Management Committee

A decision was made by the UMC management team that no academic school, programme or business unit is allowed to have social media pages. Each of these schools and units should merge their existing accounts to the faculty's social media sites. The message of this decision was, however, not relayed to staff members, and when members of the corporate communication team started the process of merging the school and unit pages with the faculty's page, to create only one platform for the faculty, it caused confusion and dissatisfaction. Management members must communicate decisions to faculty managers so that the message can be filtered down to lectures. The decisions taken by UMC management have a direct effect on the activities of staff members.

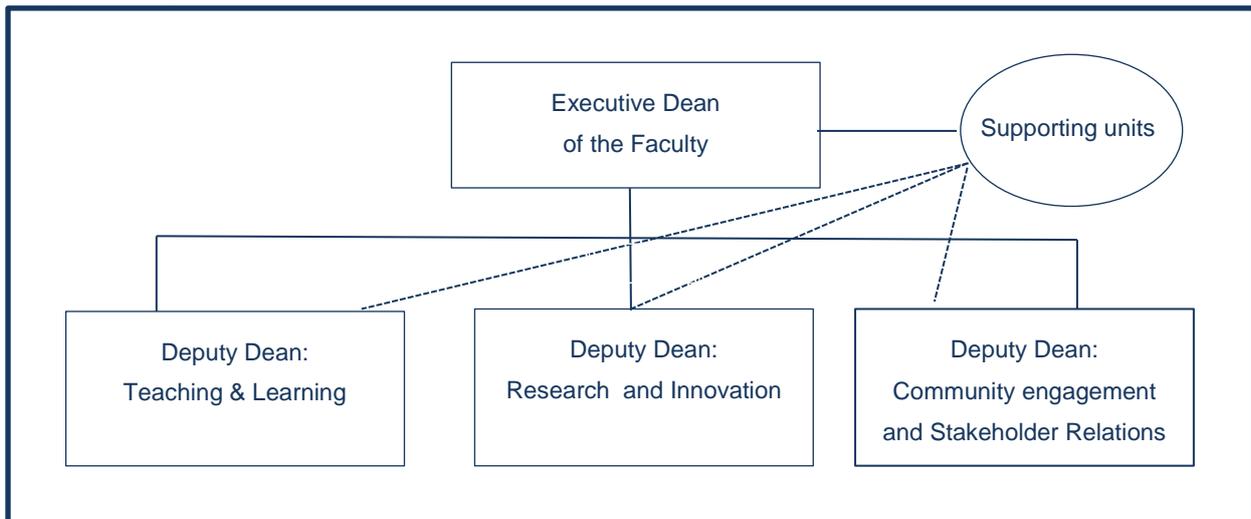
5.3.2 Level 2 of the communication model

The following sections will look at the different communication activities present in Level 2 of the communication model.

5.3.2.1 Activities of the faculty management team

Level 2 of the communication model focuses on the communication activities within an academic faculty and communication with supporting units. Figure 5-2 illustrates the complexity of the communication activities in order to run an academic faculty successfully.

Figure 5-2 Communication activities of faculty management teams and supporting units



Source: Researcher's own compilation

An academic faculty's management usually consists of an executive dean and two to three deputy deans.

The executive dean can be compared to a CEO of an organisation, as each academic faculty operates separate from one another, even though they are part of the same institution. Each faculty has its own budget, focus, objectives and goals, aligned with the institution's mission and vision. The executive dean is the person coordinating these tasks and activities.

There are generally two to three deputy deans within a faculty's managerial team, one deputy dean on each of the campuses on which the faculty offers its courses. Each of these deputy deans has his/her own portfolio and responsibilities, for example, teaching, learning or research.

These groups manage the faculty across all campuses to ensure that activities are coordinated, completed in a timely and orderly fashion. Each of the management members has at least two to three administrative and financial officers, who not only act as points of contact for all staff members, providing support and managing queries, but also assisting the managerial team in completing tasks (marked in the diagram with an X).

As seen in Figure 5-2, there are direct communication lines (solid lines) between the executive dean and the deputy deans, indicating that there is frequent communication between these parties, and that the activities or orders received have a direct impact on the daily activities of this managerial team.

In most instances, the supporting units will communicate directly with the executive dean of the faculty; there is only occasional communication (illustrated by the dotted lines) that takes place between the deputy deans and the supporting units of the university. In some instances, the supporting unit can communicate directly with the deputy dean, depending on the situation, and exclude the executive dean. There are several supporting units present within a university structure. These will be discussed in full in Section 5.2.2.

The current communication model and flow of a faculty's managerial team pose the following risks:

- a) Executive deans and deputy deans do not tend to matters in a timely fashion due to the high volume of communication received, putting pressure on their subordinates whom these tasks are usually delegated to;
- b) Due to the high amount of emails received, the deans can wrongly prioritise emails based on their subject line leading to delegating the task to an individual who is not empowered or appropriately informed to complete the task.
- c) The executive deans read the communication that was sent to them, but does not tend to them because they assume that deputy deans will attend to the matter, and vice versa. The deputy deans assume that if they need to react to the communication, the executive dean will inform them. This leads to activities and matters not receiving the attention they need, influencing the productivity of the faculty and may even lead to reputational or financial loss.
- d) In instances where the executive dean is not aware of a task that was given to the deputy deans, the executive dean may ask another deputy to attend to the matter not only causing confusion, but also leading to double work and less productivity within the faculty. The latter can also annoy staff members as they are asked the same information by different parties.
- e) If management members are expected to sign off on various items, activities and events before it can proceed, it leads to bureaucracy, and them just signing off on

documents to get it off their task list without giving it proper attention. This is a reputational risk for an organisation, as it usually means a department is exposed to red tape and unnecessary procedures. Management trying to be everywhere and tending to all situations may lead to the opposite, *not* tending to matters and causing operational damage. Another reason why this can be seen as a reputational risk is that signing off something that is of poor quality can cause damage to the university's brand of providing excellent higher education. Publishing items of poor quality sends the message to external stakeholders that the university/faculty do not take pride in what they do, nor do they have the skills to do their job; and

- f) Managers not taking communication seriously will filter thought to other managers and staff members. Faculty management members should be empowered to communicate effectively, as this can establish the entire culture of that faculty and influence organisational buy-in and productivity.

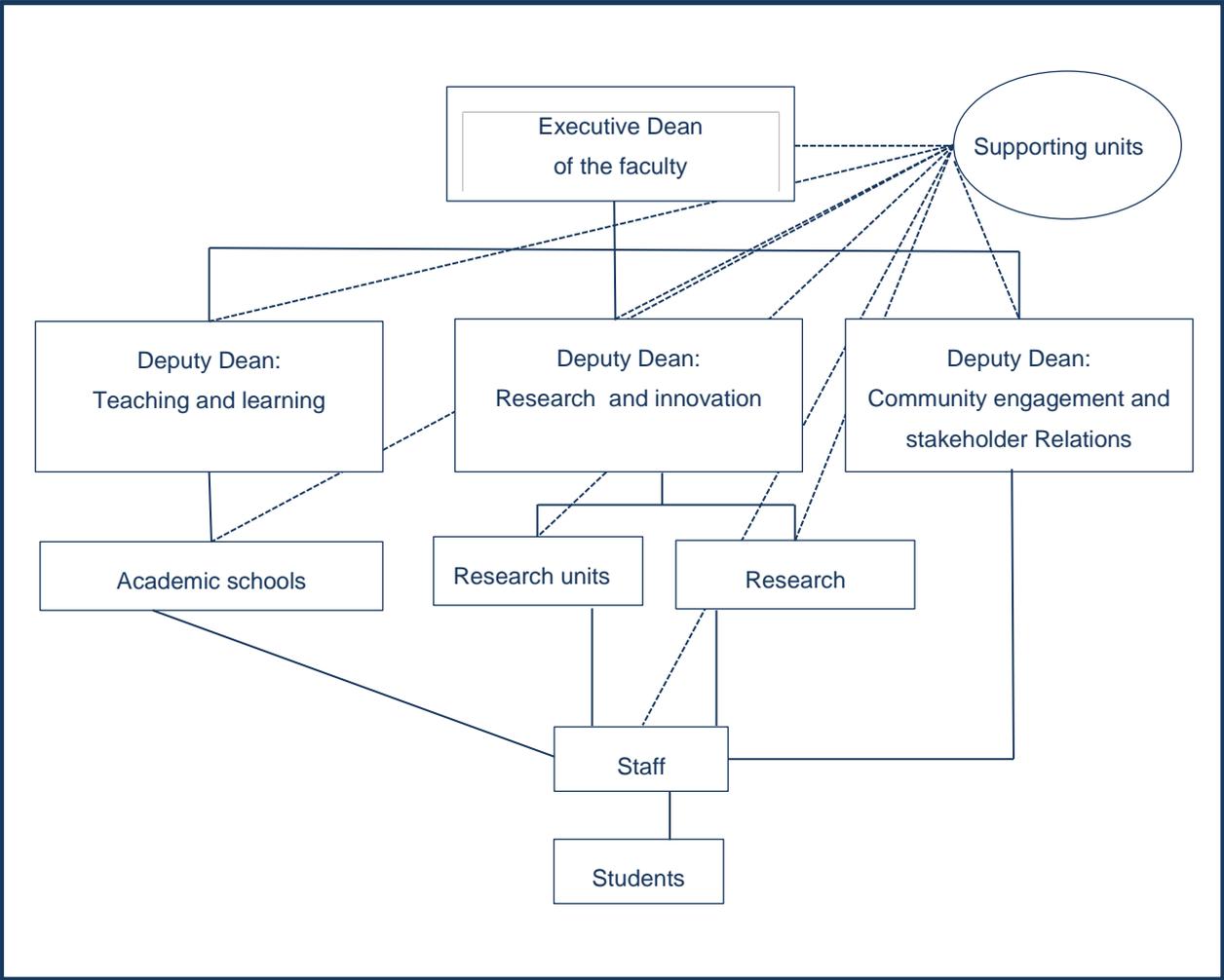
5.3.2.2 *Communication activities from supporting units*

There are several supporting units within a university whose primary focus is to provide services to academic faculties in order for them to achieve their primary goals. These goals include, but are not limited to providing outstanding education to students and delivering graduates who can make a difference in the workplace. Some of these supporting units include:

- Protection services
- Corporate communication and student recruitments
- Finances
- Food and beverage services
- Maintenance and infrastructure
- Residences
- Sports department
- Student counselling and development
- Student life
- Student life cycle administration
- Technical and classroom support

Figure 5-3 illustrates how typical communication activities can occur from supporting units towards academic faculties.

Figure 5-3 Communication activities of supporting units



Source: Researcher’s own compilation

Figure 5-3 demonstrates the complexity of communication that can occur daily within a faculty. Before the relationship between the faculty and supporting units can be described, it should be noted that a faculty has several educational activities that preoccupy them daily. These activities include teaching and learning activities, research activities and community engagement.

Teaching and learning are the core business of any HEI. The second important department relevant within a faculty is research, and can provide the university with an extra income, and even though it is ideal for all staff members to contribute to the research

department, it is not always the case. This is also the case with the third leg, community engagement.

It is important to note that teaching and learning activities, research activities, and community engagement typically take place within a specific academic school. Staff members are not bound to only working within the boundaries of their school; however, that is usually the case, as these school boundaries are within their field of knowledge. That is the reason for placing the academic staff members on the last level, in the middle of the three activity legs.

Depending on the nature of the supporting unit, communication from the unit can be directed to the faculty management team, school directors, research directors and selected staff members within that school. If clear communication roles are not developed, staff members can receive communication several times, from the supporting unit, and again from the school management team, and once again from the deputy dean. This not only causes the repetition of messages, but it can lead to staff members deleting messages without even reading them as they see it as spam.

For example, the executive dean asks that an invitation to a public lecture should be distributed. The message is sent via their office to the deputy deans. In the case of the deputy dean for teaching and learning, the message is delegated to the school directors. In some cases, the administrative officer sent out the message to the entire faculty. The message is sent out by the administrative officers of the respective schools, and if the invitations apply to a research unit, the unit director will also send out the message.

By looking at the model in Figure 5-3, communication from the supporting unit is usually an activity that needs to be completed by the school. For example, student recruitment is organising an open day

The team leader responsible for the open day (student recruitment) will contact the various parties to assist him in the preparation of the open day. The school management team will identify members within their school to assist with organising the open day.

As the task has been delegated, the question to ask is, should future communication on this topic be sent to both the school director and the team members responsible for completing this task, or only the task team? The ideal is that communication is only sent

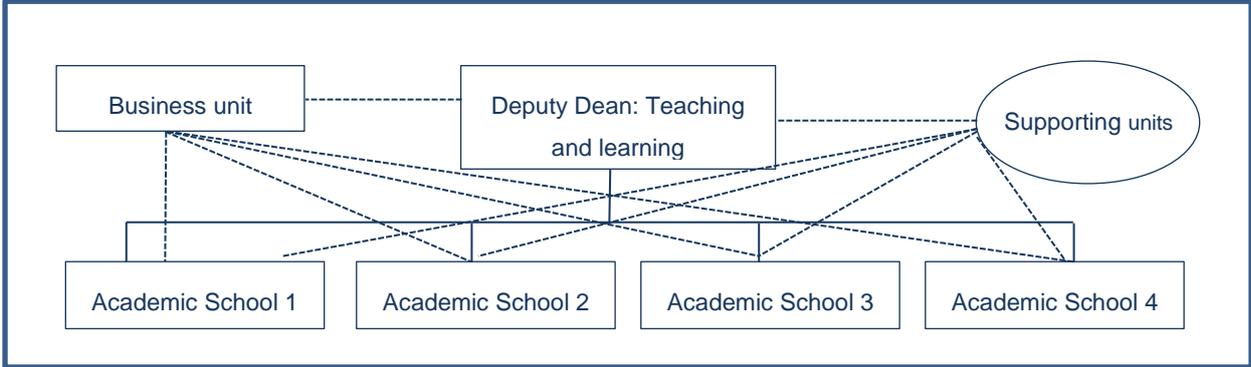
to the task team, and that part of their responsibility is to inform school management of progress, and if need be, to communicate with their school members involved in the project. By doing this, the school management is relieved from some of this communication, but is still informed about the activities within their school. Another positive aspect about this scenario is that a specific person or team takes responsibility for an activity, ensuring that it will be completed, and that communication with the school and its managers will have been filtered, protecting them from endless messages that have nothing to do with them.

This is, unfortunately, not the case; both the school management team and the task team receive information, causing repetition of messages. The latter produces another risk; the individual/task team that was identified to complete the task at hand may start to feel that management does not believe in their capabilities to complete the task, that they are not trusted to complete the task, that they need to be micro-managed. The latter can cause members not wanting to be part of extra-curriculum activities, or worse, lose faith in the organisation, indirectly affecting the reputation (see Chapter 2).

5.3.2.2 *Communication activities within the teaching and learning portfolio*

Figure 5-4 offers a representation of communication activities within the teaching and learning field of a faculty. Each faculty consists of several academic schools that offer academic programmes as well as business units that offer short learning courses and training opportunities.

Figure 5-4 Communication activities within the teaching and learning portfolio



Source: Researcher's own compilation

The deputy dean, with the portfolio of teaching and learning, takes control of all teaching and learning activities within the faculty. These academic activities occur on all the sites of delivery or campuses. The deputy dean is responsible for ensuring the success of the academic offerings.

As seen in Figure 5-4, the role-players who have an effect on the communication activities within teaching and learning, are academic schools, business units and supporting units:

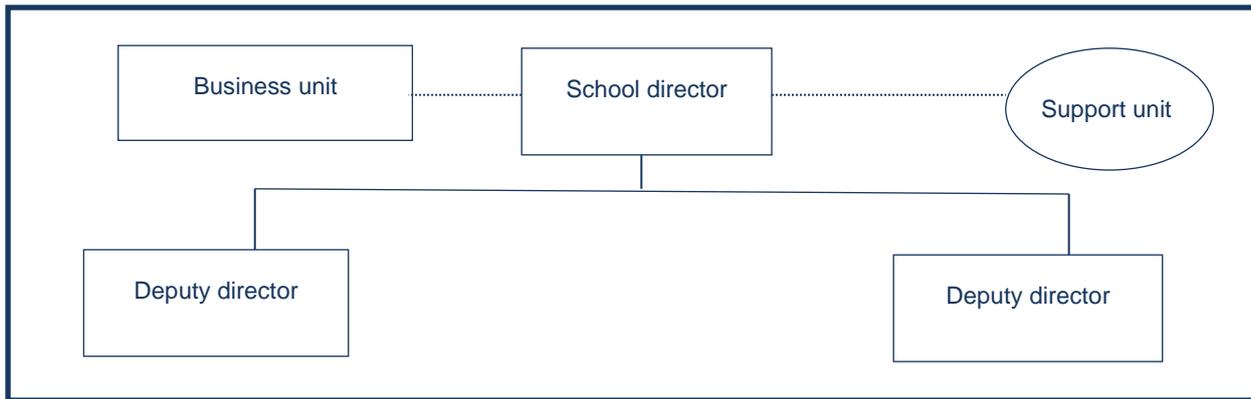
Firstly, **academic schools** offer degrees in a specific field, for example, Accounting, Business management or Economic sciences. Within each school, there are subdivisions known as subject groups (this will be discussed later in this section). Secondly, **business units** are academic units within a university that operate separately from academic schools. These units are a logic element within a university that represents a specific business function, for instance, offering short courses or long-distance learning programmes. For example, if the business unit is focused on entrepreneurship, the offering of the business unit will include ideas to concept workshops or pitch a business idea workshop. It is important to note that business units are reliant on academics' expertise in academic schools and cannot operate without their co-operation and assistance. Academic sessions on entrepreneurship and business management will most probably be done by academics within the Schools of Economics or Management Sciences.

Lastly, there are **supporting units**, but due to their complexity in nature, these units will be discussed in Section 5.2.2.2. Each of these units should be explored separately, as well as what communication activities look like within each of these divisions. Only then can a combined communication model can be explained.

5.3.2.2.1 Communication activities within an academic school's management team

Figure 5-5 assists to explain the role of communication within academic schools:

Figure 5-5 Communication activities of the school management team



Source: Researcher's own compilation

Each school has a management team, similar to the faculty management that is responsible for the operational activities within each academic school. Each school management team consists of a director, and deputy directors. Each of these management team members has one to two administrative officers, to assist the management team members with administrative and operational tasks (illustrated with an X). The communication activities of the administrative officers will be discussed in full in Section 5.2.2.6.

As in the case of faculty management, each school's management team usually operates across all the campuses of the university, except when the course or programme is not offered on a specific campus. Therefore, in most cases, there will be one management team member on each of the campuses.

The ideal situation would be to have three deputy directors, one from each of the different campuses, each taking responsibility for operations on the respective campus, and reporting to the director. Currently, there is one director, and two deputy directors who form part of the management team.

This situation results therein that the director of the school should handle not only the operational activities of one campus, but should also take responsibility for the synchronisation of the school activities across the demographic areas. The latter causes a backlog in communication as the director who needs to act as a deputy director cannot tend to all the communication received. This backlog of communication by the director causes matters such as staff members who might be unhappy not to receive the attention they need, as the director is utilised to capacity. This, as in the case of faculty

management, can add an extra layer to bureaucracy, or can lead to staff members developing ways to bypass the systems, which can affect the reputation of the school. For example, staff members can mention to someone that the school/university does not care about their staff members, and that you are only a number, working to make others rich.

A second risk, as in the case of faculty management, which can arise from this structure, is that directors tend to delegate tasks to staff members who are not equipped to handle the situation. For instance, the executive dean delegated a task to the deputy dean in charge of teaching and learning, who, in his/her turn, delegated to a school director, who delegated it to a staff member. Not only can the assignment get lost during this delegating process, but it can also create confusion on what exactly is expected. The first question to be asked is who takes responsibility to ensure the task is completed? Secondly, is this staff member, who was now handed an assignment that he/she has no background on, equipped to complete this assignment? Do they have the equipment and assistance to complete this task, or does this employee just write something down on paper to get the task done? The latter can have huge effects on the reputation of the institution.

For example, let us say the task was delegated to staff members, to determine how many students currently studying has disabilities

- Does both students and staff member know what is regarded as a “disability” in terms of Section nine of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa?
- How will they determine the number of disabilities without targeting or humiliating students?
- Is staff empowered to use correct disability etiquette like the correct disability terminology and language?
- Is the staff member empowered and emotionally capable to handle the situation? As additional questions may arise, or a student may see an opportunity to ask for help.
- How will the number be determined, by show of hands or using technology? If technology is being used is staff trained and do students have access?

An additional question that arises is, why do staff members need to do this? As part of the application and registration process, students are required to identify disabilities, which will hinder them from studying or active learning. The latter is not to discriminate

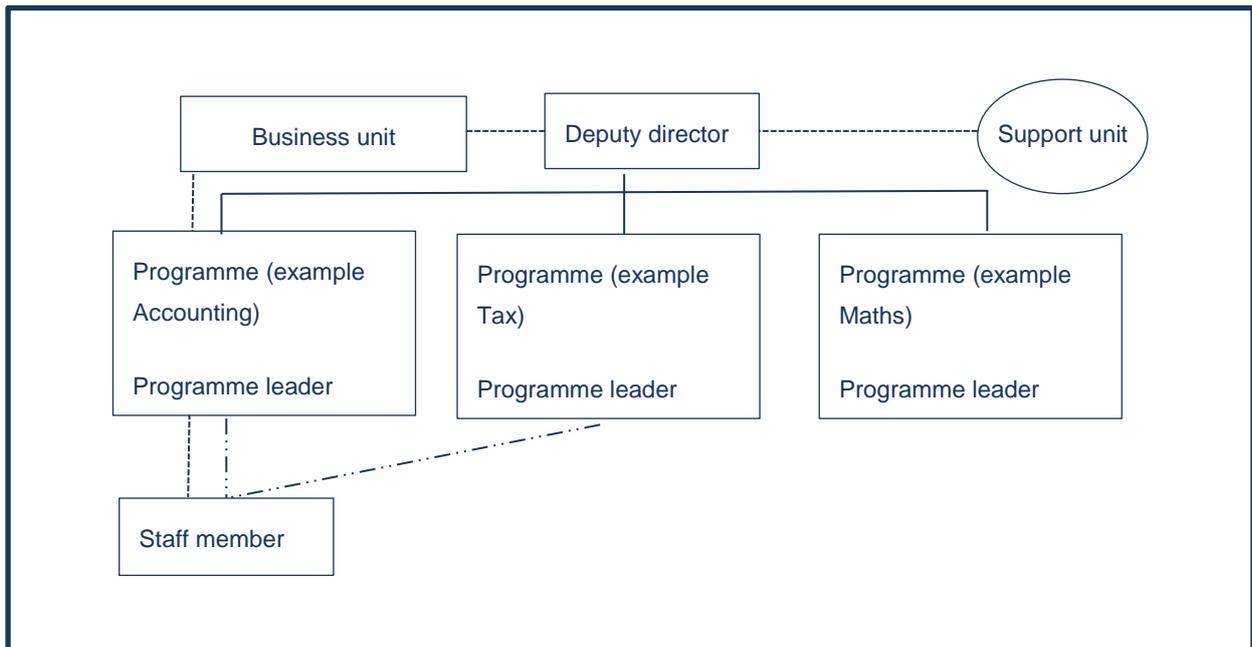
but to ensure staff members are trained to handle the situation and to provide the students with the best possible education.

What is also important to note within the school's managerial system, is to whom the support units and business units should send their requests. Should it be sent to the director who will relay the message, or to the direct party, and only notify the director/deputy director. If, for instance, the business unit sends messages directly to staff members, it can be conveyed that they are giving orders to staff members, which might create tension between the unit and the director, as it is not the unit's prerogative to give out tasks. Furthermore, the question also arises: if going through the director/deputy director, will this buy-in from the director/deputy not provide the unit with a better chance of success, as the director/deputy is also championing the programme/activity?

5.3.2.2.2 Communication activities within an academic school

Each academic school offers several programmes, each programme consisting of a team of staff members. Each programme has a programme leader situated on the campus where the programme is offered. These different programmes leaders then have a coordinating programme leader. This is done to ensure the alignment, consistency and quality of programmes are consistent on each of the campuses. These three programme leaders are coordinated by a programme convener. This is not a second appointment, but rather an extra administrative task for one of the programme leaders. Each programme leader has several lecturers working in the programme presenting different modules for the programme.

Figure 5-6 Communication activities within an academic school



Source: Researcher's own compilation

It is firstly important to note that in most instances, the supporting units do not contact the staff members directly, but might contact programme leaders for assistance. For example, the student academic lifecycle department might contact the programme leader of Accounting if the student is flagged as a high-risk student (meaning that this student might not pass his/her subjects). Business units, however, can currently contact staff members directly, excluding both the programme leaders and the director from any communications.

Communication within a school will differ slightly from individual to individual, depending on the number of modules they present. For this study, two communication scenarios will be highlighted to explain the communication flow within schools.

Scenario A: A lecturer only has one module he/she is responsible for teaching

School management mostly communicates directly to the different programme leaders, and programme leaders communicate to lecturers. School management can, however, communicate directly to lecturers; school meeting is held every quarter.

Lecturers have two managers, namely the programme leader and the school director, and therefore two communication lines. They can receive assignments from both their programme leader and the school director. Globally, one's direct senior is regarded as

the most crucial source of communication; the situation where a lecturer has two communication lines can create confusion.

As seen in Figure 5-6, supporting units can either communicate with the deputy deans or with the school management teams. As mentioned in Section 5.2.2.1, the amount of communication management receives creates a backlog in communication as well as bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is now created on three levels: faculty management, school management, as well as within programme groups. This creates a great deal of difficulty for lecturers to complete their tasks with this extra load of administrative tasks.

Scenario B: A lecturer only has two modules he/she is responsible for teaching

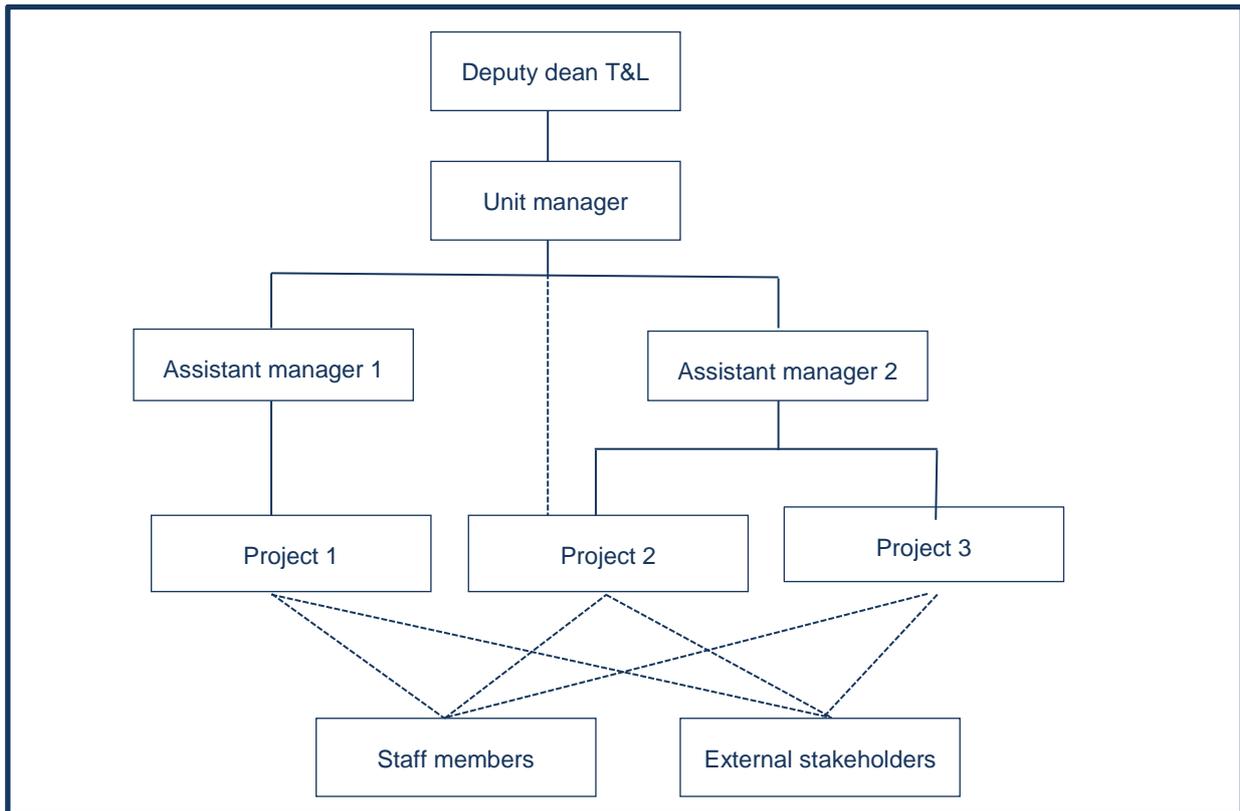
This lecturer has the same communication lines as in Scenario A, but has an extra communication line added to a second programme leader. This lecturer, therefore, has three visible communication lines, facing the risk of overcommunication. Lecturers are overloaded with irrelevant communication and repetitive messages. Should this lecturer receive the same communication from both programme leaders, it creates the risk of communication duplication, and the lecturer can decide to ignore emails, in the hope of reducing some of the communication received.

This scenario can also cause staff members to feel that communication regarding their work is unsatisfactory, leading to lack of organisational buy-in.

5.3.2.2.3 Communication activities within business units

This section explores the communication activities within and from a business unit. As stated previously, the business units are very reliant on the support of staff members within the faculty, and will struggle immensely if they do not get lecturers to share their expertise and help with the projects at hand. However, this assistance is not limited to one faculty, and it is motivated that other faculties also join the initiative.

Figure 5-7 Communication activities within business units



Source: Researcher's own compilation

A business unit has a manager and two assistant managers, but no administrative officers. The business unit's management team reports directly to the deputy dean for teaching and learning. Where an academic school has several programmes they offer, business units have several projects that they are undertaking. For each of these projects, the business unit needs the assistance of lecturers. A business unit programme is as follows:

The business unit is focused on developing female entrepreneurs and started a short learning programme to provide young female entrepreneurs with basic entrepreneurial skills. They offer them the basic knowledge of budgeting, marketing and developing a business model. A lecturer will be needed in each of the fields of study, to empower the female entrepreneurs on a specific topic.

Therefore, as in Section 5.2.2.3.3's scenario section, another scenario can be added, a lecturer involved in an academic school and a business unit. In this incident, taking scenario A into account, where a lecturer is only teaching one module, a second reporting line can also be added should that lecturer be involved in the business unit. Taking

scenario B into account, and the lecturer is teaching two models, and is involved in a business unit, that lecturer now has three reporting lines.

Business units may also make use of external stakeholders to assist with the business unit activities. These activities may include advertising, being a mentor and presenting lectures on specific topics. The risk here is that due to the faculty not having a proper communication model in place, external stakeholders may start to notice bureaucracy and the flaws the faculty system has. In addition to this, external stakeholders can spread this information to the industry, causing either that external stakeholders will start refusing to assist us, or damaging the brand by stating the HEI is a poor service provider.

As the lecturers and the external stakeholders are mainly tasked to run the projects within the business units, the extensive communication lines may influence the effectiveness of the projects, as messages can be repeated, are not targeted, or may not be delivered to the stakeholders it was intended for.

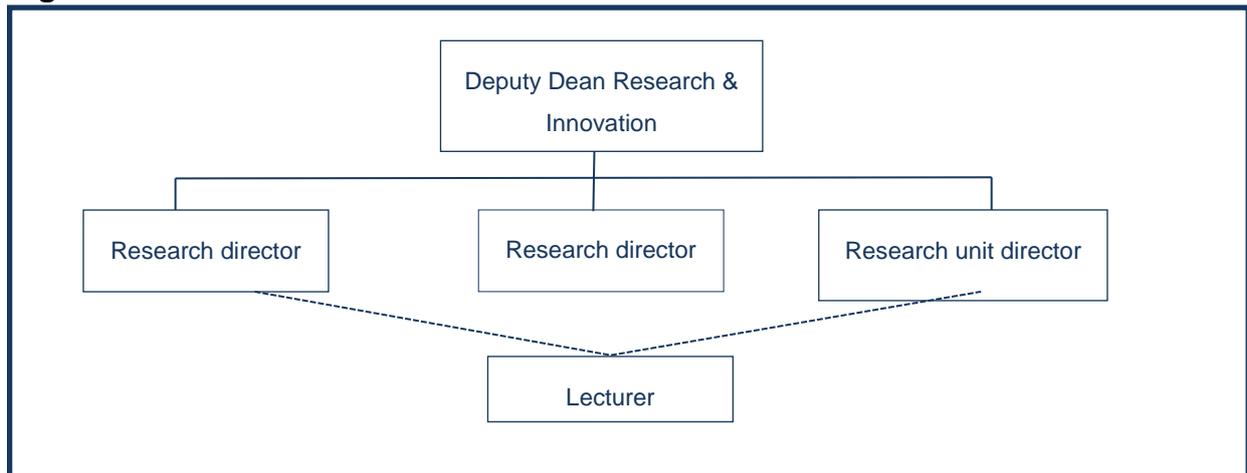
For example, the unit decides to host an event targeted at both internal and external stakeholders. The invitation is sent out by the staff member who is organising the event; he/she asks that the message should be distributed. The message is sent out by the administrative officer to all the academic school members, and again by each school administrative officer.

The ideal would be to make the project leaders the top of the communication lines, ensuring that they receive communication as needed, only communicating with management in report form or when assistance is needed.

5.3.2.3 Communication activities within research

The deputy dean of research is in charge of coordinating all the research activities within the faculty. The deputy dean of research and innovation can receive information and requests from the deputy vice-chancellor for research (see 5.1.1) that either need to be sent to the staff members of the faculty or need to be completed by the office of the deputy dean.

Figure 5-8 Communication activities within the research section



Source: Researcher's own compilation

Figure 5-8 illustrates the communication activities within the research department. As in the case of school directors, the ideal will be to have one research director situated on each campus, freeing up the deputy dean to coordinate and synchronise the research activities of the faculty. The lecturer in the case of this figure is situated on campus A, and therefore will, if need be, communicate with the research director on that specific campus; the research unit director might fall on another campus.

The research director is responsible for the research lifecycle, whereas the research unit director clusters research fields together, forming thematic clusters, providing lecturers with more opportunities to publish articles under this umbrella. The possibility is, however, that lecturers are unsure of the roles of each of these directors, and to whom they should communicate. For example, if a lecturer is specialising in social media, they can do an article on social media and tourism, placing them under the tourism umbrella, but they can also research the impact of social media on the economy, which might place them in another thematic unit. The benefit of having these thematic, umbrella units, is that lecturers in the same field are in frequent contact with one another and can write articles together, expanding the field and being a financial benefit to the organisation.

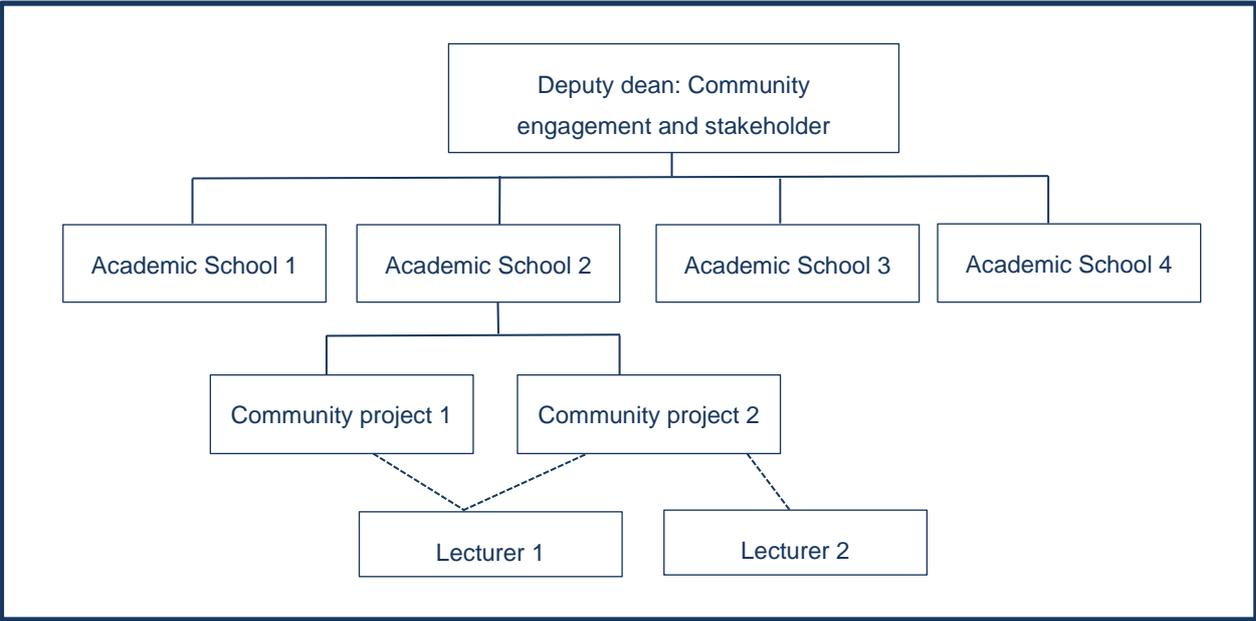
As seen in the previous communication activity models, the same risks are evident here, namely duplication of communication lines, as well as the lack of responsible parties having a direct effect on the motivation of lecturers to publish and influencing productivity.

Therefore, it is vital for the departments to ensure that roles, responsibilities and communication lines are developed, implemented and communicated. The latter will ensure that confusion is limited among staff members, members will not be bombarded with communication and bureaucracy, freeing them to be productive. The more a university publishes articles, book sections and books, the more renowned, prestigious and sought after it becomes, having a positive influence on the reputation of the organisation.

5.3.2.4 *Communication activities of community engagement*

As stipulated by the King reports (Adams & Adms, 2016; Africa, 2002; Africa), 2009; Africa), 2016; Walker & Meiring, 2010), organisations are urged to collaborate with the community, assisting and empowering them to address issues that may impact their well-being. This is also the case for universities.

Figure 5-9 Communication activities within the community engagement and stakeholder relations portfolio



Source: Researcher’s own compilation

This leg, i.e. community engagement and stakeholder relations within a faculty, has a deputy dean, but no directors. The deputy dean is reliant on the community projects that the schools run. Even though the task agreement guidelines of universities state that one-third of a staff member’s time should be devoted to community engagement, this is, however, not the case. Some staff members are involved in more than one project, and

even combining this project with future research, whereas other staff members are not involved in any community projects.

As in the previous communication activities models, the risks are the same, i.e. confusion regarding communication lines, lack of responsibility and unproductivity. This communication model just adds another dimension to the confusion that can be caused by the faculty's general communication model.

As teaching, learning and researchers are seen as the core business activities of a university, community engagement can easily be left behind. It is, therefore, vital for this department to ensure that their communication structure motivates staff members to get involved in community engagement projects.

Community engagement is vital for any business, but so are the management and measuring of the community engagement projects. Schools and units cannot just do community engagement for the sake of doing it; they need to ensure that they respect the community and that their projects are sustainable. If they only go into communities without a plan and purpose, they will cause more harm than good. Members of the community will see these random quick projects as ineffective and feel that they are being used to promote the good works/name of the faculty, without benefitting from it. For community projects to be sustainable and genuinely address the needs of communities, they need to be participatory, empower the community to be self-efficient, and ensure that cultural identity and diversity are embraced (Malan, 1998; Maleko *et al.*, 2011; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Servaes *et al.*, 1996; Servaes & Malikhao, 2005).

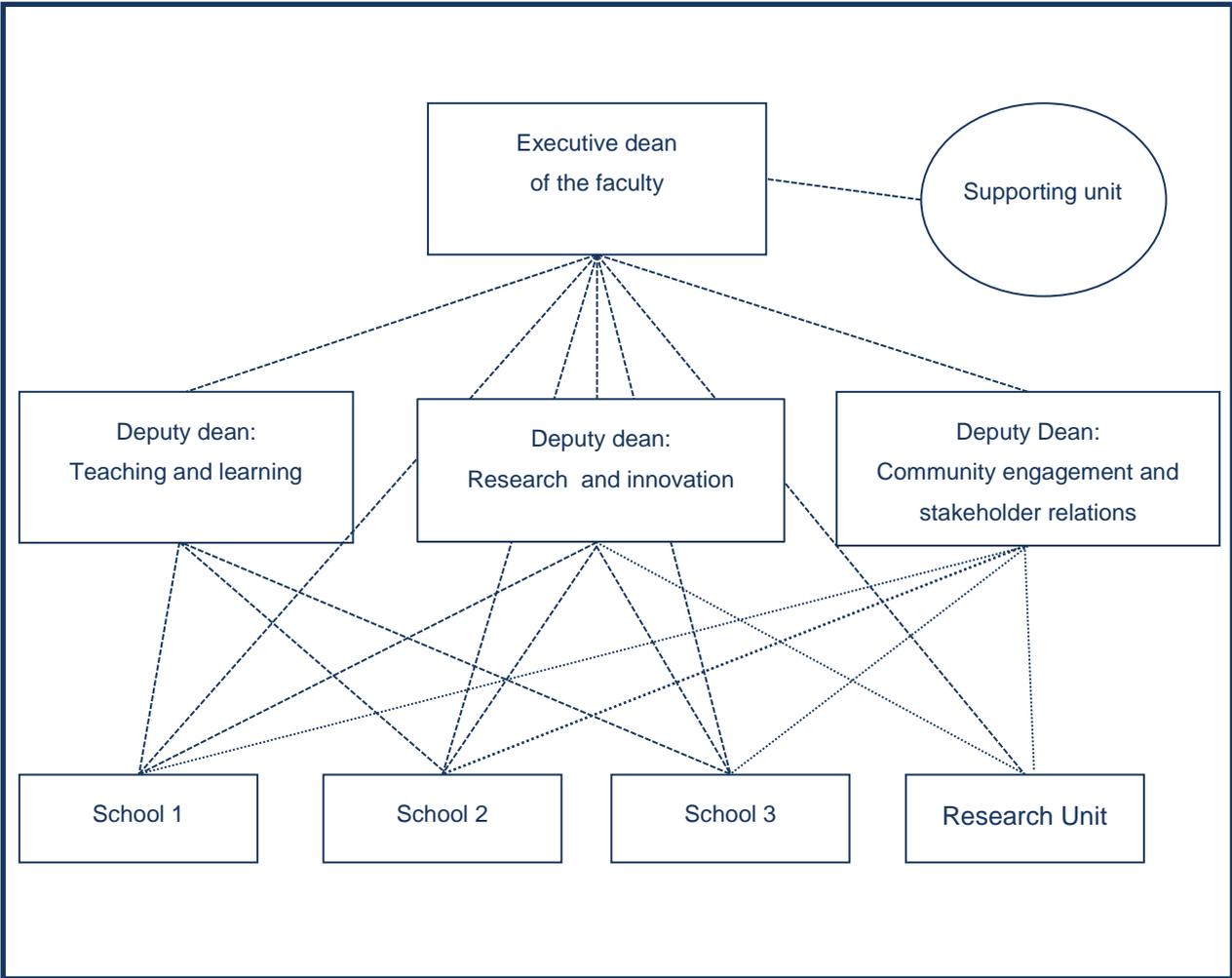
As part of the portfolio of community engagement and stakeholder relations, this deputy dean should assist in the building of relationships and communication with the various stakeholders of the faculty. Their portfolio is very significant, but the second part of their portfolio seems to get lost among the other activities, and attention is only being paid to teaching, learning, research and occasionally community engagement.

5.3.2.5 Communication activities of administrative officers

Administrative officers within an academic faculty play a significant role, as they are in charge of keeping the boat afloat, making payments and ensuring that fundamental tasks

are being completed. Figure 5-9 will use the administrative officers of the executive dean as an example of the communication activities that can occur daily.

Figure 5-10 Communication activities of administrative officers



Source: Researcher’s own compilation

In order to understand the full extent of the role of administrative officers, it is crucial to list the typical tasks that they need to do daily. These administrative officers manage their department head’s **schedule** and ensure their department head is prepared and on time for meetings. They **send out communiqué** such as memos and notifications on behalf of their department head, and ensure tasks are completed on the respective deadlines. It should be noted that communication with staff members occurs across all three campuses. Furthermore, they **make payments** for the department and answer queries from staff members and prospective students and parents.

The following list offers a look at the people whom administrative officers can receive information from, daily:

- Executive dean
- Deputy deans
- Other administrative officers
- School directors and deputy directors
- The school's administrative officers
- Research directors and unit directors;
- Lecturers
- Students and their parents
- Support units

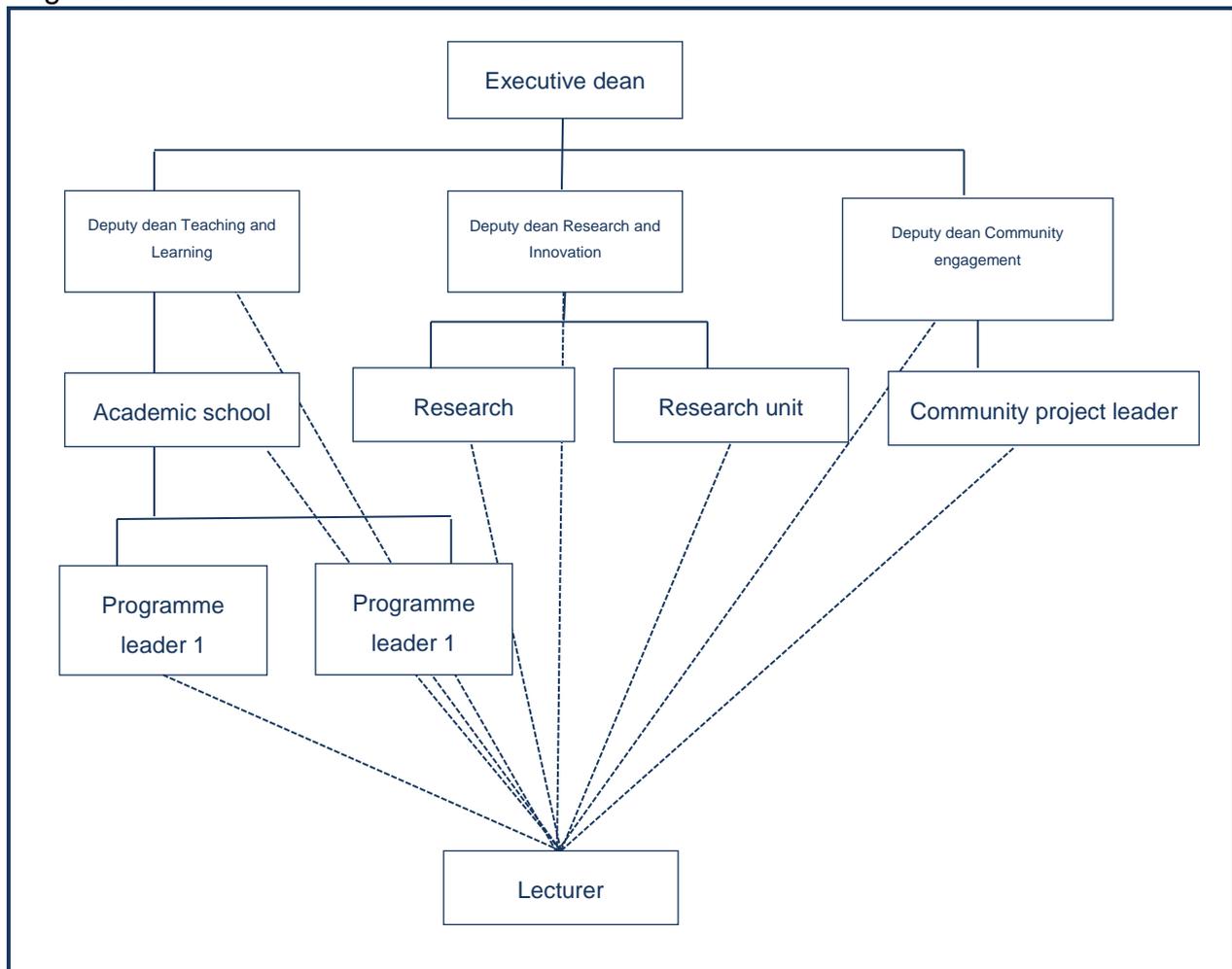
There is no difference in the volume of communication that can be received daily. Looking at the communication mentioned above that the administrative officers receive, and taking their responsibilities into account, it is clear why confusion can occur within the communication model, or how communication can be missed.

The ideal will be to streamline the communication from the executive dean's office, downward and upward, and to create a system that will ensure that the administrative officers are not overwhelmed with the amount of communication received. The latter will also ensure that the upward communication to the executive dean's office will not get lost during the process, tasks will be completed in a timely matter, responsible parties will be identified, and the executive dean will know about what is happening in the faculty.

5.3.3 Level 3 communication activities of lecturers

In Figure 5-1, the simplified communication model demonstrated how the hierarchy flows downward towards the faculties, and indirectly to the lecturers. Figure 5-11 will illustrate how the lecturers within an academic faculty perceive communication activities. Figure 5-11 below will combine the communication activities of the teaching and learning, research and innovation, and the community engagement and stakeholder relations departments, to demonstrate the insurmountable amount of communication lecturers receive.

Figure 5-11 Communication activities of lecturers



Source: Researcher's own compilation

Direct communication may include the following:

- Instructions from their respective programme leader(s).
- Instructions from school director and/or deputy directors.
- Communication with deputy deans.
- Communication with the school, research directors' and/or research unit directors' administrative officers.
- Communication with the deputy dean's administrative officers.
- Communication with community engagement projects leaders and team members.
- Communication with colleagues in the school the lecturer resides in.
- Communication from different types of entities like the lecturer can also receive communication from the following types of entities: Faculty, school, research and/or campus level via newsletters, notifications and social media channels.

It becomes apparent, by looking at the different communiqués that lecturers receive, that overcommunication, miscommunication and duplication of messages can quickly occur.

The current communication with lecturers imposes various risks because the **messages can be missed or be ignored** due to the number of messages being sent. Another risk is mailboxes that are to capacity, **affecting the productivity** of staff members. In addition to this, **bureaucracy** is easily formed, as rules and regulations will be formed by each department to 'smooth out' communication issues, while they are creating them. The bureaucracy can cause lecturers to become demotivated, not only affecting productivity, but also general organisational buy-in.

Staff members can become **unclear on what is expected from them**, as the call to action and directives are not clear in communication. It is also possible that staff members can receive multiple orders, as information is not being sent from a centralised point. The latter can cause staff members to bicker, as they are frustrated, and not sure of who should take responsibility for activities and projects.

The communication model does not indicate whom the lecturers can contact should they be unhappy; who takes the main responsibility for them? With **managers being on different campuses** than the staff members, what is an accurate way of determining whether work is being done and to give accolades? If staff members feel that their work and effort are not being seen, it can cause them to lose interest in the company and become distraught.

The top-heavy system creates a disconnectivity between staff members and their managers. Once this link has been broken, it is easy to lose sight of, or forget the mission and vision of the organisation. Staff members will lose trust and pride in the organisation, staff turnovers will be higher, and productivity and profit will be affected.

5.3.4 Faculty liaison officers

Some of the faculties within the university have faculty liaison officers. The primary purpose of the liaison officer is to establish and maintain relationships between the stakeholders of the faculty. The liaison is mainly responsible for public relations (PR) activities within the faculty, across the various campuses. The aim is to supply information about the faculty, by using a wide range of media, to create and sustain the reputation of

the faculty and its brand (Crijns *et al.*, 2017; Grunig, 1983; Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Kim, 2014; Schultz *et al.*, 2011; Seitel, 2011; Sung & Yang, 2008).

The responsibilities of a liaison officer include (Den Boer & Block, 2013; Friesen, 2012; Kamp, 2008):

- Liaising between the various departments and building relationships.
- Collaborating with internal departments and building a positive relationship with these partners.
- Ensure that senior management is informed about activities within the faculty.
- Developing PR strategies and campaigns.
- Keeping up with PR, marketing, branding and communication trends.
- Developing, updating and maintaining marketing and branding campaigns for the faculty.
- Track media coverage.
- Developing and monitoring social media communications.
- Organise PR-related events.
- Content writing (brochures, reports, press releases etc.).
- Assist with identifying possible risks within the faculty.
- Assist with crisis communication,
- Address inquiries from stakeholders including the media.
- Seek opportunities for the faculty to collaborate with other organisations, universities or sponsors.

The main risk identified is the uncertainty of where and how the liaison officers fit into the faculty's communication model, causing them being underutilised. A second risk is that not all staff members know about or acknowledge the faculty liaison officers. The latter can add to the already-existing confusion within the communication model.

5.4 SUMMARY OF RISKS IMPOSED BY THE COMMUNICATION MODEL

Table 5- provides a summary of all the risks evident in the current communication model of an academic faculty.

Table 5-1 Risks per communication level/activity

UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT	
<p>Challenge 1: Important message by the management teams are not being filtered through to the correct faculties, schools and university staff.</p>	<p>Risk 1: The risk arises that uncertainty and confusion are caused due to unclear directives or not understanding what the goal/objectives of the task are. This can affect tasks to not be completed on time and or correctly, indirectly affecting productivity.</p> <p>Risk 2: If essential messages and directives do not reach the staff members, goals will not be reached. The risk is that the university's core activities not being up to standard. The risk is that the university can lose its competitive advantage, and that stakeholders can start to question the quality of services offered.</p> <p>Risk 3: The UMC's lack of communication being filtered through also poses the risk that staff members don't see the management team as transparent, affecting the confidence and trust staff members have in the management team and their ability to govern the university. This will also affect organisational buy-in.</p>

FACULTY MANAGEMENT

Challenge 1: Communication is not prompt, and important deadlines are missed, or the faculty management staff set unrealistic deadlines.

Risk 1: The risk of not communicating in a timely is that the management team is not setting an example to staff members. If they are not responding promptly, they cannot expect staff members to respond timely, therefore creating a culture of delayed responses is acceptable. This has a chain reaction as this hinders the flow of communication, the meeting of deadlines and goals and consequently, productivity.

Risk 2: The risk arises that staff members are not informed about important decisions affecting their day-to-day activities, causing them to feel unimportant and invaluable.

Challenge 2: Emails are not being prioritised.

Risk 3: Emails not being prioritised can cause confusion, as well as duplication of work. For example, decisions on brochures have already been made, and the work to complete this task has already been done. Then communication or instructions are sent out contradicting the decisions already made. Thus, the risk is being unproductive, wasting effort and time on doing tasks again, and

	<p>managers can be undermined on a decision they have already made, thereby damaging relationships.</p> <p>Risk 4: Another risk with not prioritising emails or ineffectively prioritising emails is that important tasks, that might not seem important to management can be missed. For example, the updating of the website, or creating od marketing procures. The risk is that if the wrong information is communicated to prospective students, it can be seen as false advertising, resulting in integrity to be questioned. Another risk is that prospective students can start to wonder that if the university cannot get communication on the internet to be correct, how will they be able to teach. So, also starting to question the ability of staff members to teach and guilty of services offered.</p>
<p>Challenge 3: Assuming that deputy deans/school management teams will attend to a situation and not creating clear goals, directives and timelines.</p>	<p>Risk 5: A risk with assuming that school management/research directors are taking responsibility for activities, may result in either management members being overworked, or tasks not being completed.</p>

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT/RESEARCH UNIT DIRECTORS

Challenge 1: Tasks are delegated to staff members who are not equipped to handle the task. In addition to these tasks are being signed off without getting the proper attention

Risk 1: The same risks are faced as faculty management with regard to answering emails in a timely fashion, and email prioritisation. However, if school management is uncertain, and they send the information to the rest of the staff, it is more even more difficulties for staff members to understand what the directives and goals are. The reasons for this are that it now needs to be determined by two managers/reporting lines, also causing bureaucracy and even a power struggle.

Risk 2: Tasks being delegated to staff members not qualify to do the work, resulting in work done incorrectly that can lead to various consequences like the quality of project and courses being questioned, the university's staff can look incompetent, and gossip between staff members can occur damaging relationships

Challenge 2: Directors, who are also acting as deputy director, cannot attend to urgent matters as their attention spilt on various tasks. The latter creates a

Risk 3: If managers are not tending to emails, or situations effectively and timely, it may cause staff members to feel that their problems or situations are

backlog in communication and essential matters that directors should attend to are missed or are neglected.	not significant, affecting the happiness of the employees and lead to a decrease in productivity.
LECTURERS	
<p>Challenge 1: Lecturers can be involved in different activities within the faculty different activities (teaching and learning, research, community engagement and/or with a business unit), the chances of them receiving duplicated messages are high, a chance also exists that the emails received are contradictory.</p>	<p>Risk 1: The main risk on this level is that messages can be duplicated and also that contradicting directives can be received. This cause confusion, goals not being addressed which can reflect in the output of the university. In addition to this, if the staff is juggling activities, it can mean that they are not producing quality, and this can harm production and the reputation of the university.</p> <p>Risk 2: Staff members receiving too many emails/ information can lead to them not reading the communication sent. This results in staff not being up to date and not acting in the best interest of the university. For example, should the university go through a rebranding, and staff are not reading their emails, the incorrect branding can be used.</p>

<p>Challenge 2: Staff is uncertain as to who their reporting lines are and what tasks should be a priority.</p>	<p>Risk 3: Staff being uncertain of their reporting lines can affect productivity, as they will be uncertain of their key performance indicators. They will also be multitasking to ensure the jobs of the different managers are completed.</p>
<p>Challenge 3: Alignment of programmes across the campuses can influence the quality of programmes and activities.</p>	<p>Risk 4: The risk arises that the quality of programmes is influenced, thereby damaging the reputation of the institution.</p>
<p>SUPPORTING UNITS</p>	
<p>Challenge 1: Supporting units send out messages are not targeted and sent out to everyone.</p>	<p>Risk 1: Messages that are sent to everyone that is not targeted creates uncertainty of who should take responsibility for the task at hand, resulting in tasks not being completed. This can result in lower outputs, and lower income, as well as the quality and standards of the programmes offered, can be jeopardised because the directives are not clear.</p>
<p>Challenge 2: Directives are not clear, that creates uncertainty about who should take responsibility or what is expected from them.</p>	<p>Risk 2: Lower outputs and lower income, as well as the quality and standards of the programmes offered, can be jeopardised, because the directives are not clear.</p>

<p>Challenge 3: Uncertainty regarding the roles of liaison officers, causing them to be underutilised. Feeling overwhelmed, undervalued and unimportant.</p>	<p>Risk 3: Uncertain Staff members are unhappy, effecting organisational buy-in, led to higher staff turn around and lower productivity. In addition to this, uncertain staff will not go the extra mile and take the initiative, resulting in programmes/ activities stagnating.</p> <p>Risk 4: This can also create a culture that staff will delete messages, as they will see it as unimportant.</p>
<p>Challenge 4: The lack of role clarifications can cause tension between staff members, as people might be working in each other's areas.</p>	<p>Risk 5: Uncertain Staff members are unhappy that will lead to lower organisational buy-in, higher staff turn around and lower productivity.</p> <p>Risk 6: In addition to this, uncertain staff will not go the extra mile and take the initiative, resulting in programmes/ activities stagnating.</p>

Source: Researcher's own compilation

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter displayed what the communication model within an academic faculty of an HEI looks like. All main communication activities within a typical academic faculty were discussed. This chapter also described the challenges that the faculty faces regarding communication with various stakeholders and the risks faced due to these communication problems.

The different communication activities within the faculty's communication model were discussed in this chapter. This chapter indicated how the current model is not ideal, and faces many challenges and needs refining

The main risks identified in the current communication model of an academic faculty is firstly the **communication chain** is too long, due to the structure that is too top-heavy. Managers can take a long time to respond to communication or delegates task causing a backlog and placing pressure on subordinates to complete tasks in a timely fashion.

Secondly, **role clarification** is unclear, equally so this creates confusion on who should send out communication. This suggests that there is a problem with stakeholders taking responsibility for activities and projects as they do not know who is in charge.

In several instances, the **communication lines** (both solid and dotted) is crossed, causing double communication to reach the staff members, not just causing over-communication but can cause miss communication. Furthermore, **communication channels** are not being used effectively, causing staff members on all levels to experience a high volume of emails. The latter causes set deadlines not to be met because requests are made on very short notice.

Messages sent out via delegation, may cause the message's **call to action to be unclear**, that has a direct effect on the productivity of the faculty. Another risk that was identified is that the standard and **quality of programmes** offered by the faculty may be unequal as the management is not present on all the campuses or does not handle situations in the same manner. The latter affects the quality of the programmes offered, as everyone is not playing by the same rules.

The different and multiple **reporting lines** causes the feeling that work is unsatisfactory, and staff do not know what is expected from them. These communication lines also cause problems when updates on issues that directly affect staff and their jobs.

Where there is a **lack of organisational buy-in**, there is a lack of trust and respect for the company, this can harm an organisation's reputations as staff members will speak ill of the organisations, and word of mouth is one of the most potent marketing tools. Currently, there is no formal way of working with prospective students, alumni or external stakeholders, and when they do communicate with these stakeholders, there is no golden thread of communication- communication is irregular.

The various **communication activities and layers caused bureaucracy**, that is demotivating to staff members. Lastly, due to so many parties involved in communication, it creates uncertainties, for example, the academic yearbook is in disarray as different parties have conflicting interpretations of this manual. The latter showcases the problems inside the faculty to the outside world and can affect the reputation of the faculty.

Chapter 6 will look at the rounds Delphi that will be conducted in order to determine the staff member's perceptions and opinions on the current communication model. During these rounds, suggestions will be made by each group on how to improve the current communication model.

CHAPTER 6 ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPTUAL COMMUNICATION MODEL

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the conceptual communication model within an academic faculty of a higher educational institution. The model was developed by looking at the documentation of the university and faculty, as discussed in Section 5.1. After the conceptual model was created, a focus group took place to test the current model and ensure all information is correct and current. During the focus group sessions, questions regarding the model were posed, and changes were made to the conceptual communication model.

After that, the researcher started with the rounds of Delphi, which will be discussed in the next session.

6.2 THE PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collection for this study was done by means of conducting interviews and focus groups over a period of 4 months. The interviews and focused groups were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The researcher also made notes of non-verbal communication during these interview sessions (Botma *et al.*, 2010; Van der Merwe, 2009).

In order to establish inter code reliability, the researcher followed the guidance and opinions as set out by Syed and Nelson (2015). They believe that reliability is established by the process and not a product. Therefore, the research will use the following process:

The first –level categories were based on the main findings of the communication audit report, and the culture report. When analysing the reports, the focus was on gathering information regarding how staff member perceives the university’s communication model.

The texts were analysed by using ATLAS.ti 8.0 while taking Creswell (2009) qualitative analysis approach into consideration. Initial codes were assigned to words and phrases of importance as the interviews and focus group’s s transcriptions were imported into ATLAS.ti 8.0 certain words or phrases will be repeated, that lead to the revisiting initial

coding, and modifying the list as new data emerged. Modified codes were then organised into categories and concepts according to the most informative or logical manner of sorting (Monaisa, 2018; Nell, 2005; Saah, 2019; Van Deventer, 2013).

At the beginning of the first group discussion, participants were informed about the purpose of the research project, and these participants were ensured that their responses were confidential. The latter was vital as it enabled the participants to feel safe and express themselves to the topic spontaneously and lively (Andronie *et al.*, 2019; Bohnsack, 2013).

The researcher's role was non-invasive during the sessions and only clarified misunderstandings, disagreements or stimulated the entire group to participate in the discussions. The researcher started the session stating that the communication audit and culture report was analysed before the first focus group session took place and stated that some of the questions might feel duplicated. The reason for this is (i) that the researcher did not want to provide stimuli to the conversation or make evaluative responses, (ii) did not want to annoy the participants that already took part in the communication audit (Andronie *et al.*, 2019).

The statements of the group discussions were analysed and compared to the first-level topics. Opinions, expressions and perceptions were clustered into relevant categories such as 'leadership behaviours' and 'relationships and trust'. Each of the relevant categories contained topics were at least two participants explicitly mentioned or commented on. Second-order categories were formed by looking at the participants' statements regarding main topics. Each of the second-order categories contains essential features that strengthen the main categories (Andronie *et al.*, 2019; Cook *et al.*, 2006; McFadzean *et al.*, 2011).

Table 6-1 illustrates the main and second-order categories that were identified during the first round of Delphi.

Table 6-1 Main and second-order categories from the initial code set

Main categories	Second-order categories
Role clarification	Directives Reporting structure Bureaucracy
Communication & mediums	Emails Technology
Relationships and trust	Disconnected Interdepartmental Intradepartmental
Unappreciated	Unappreciated Mistrust
Leadership behaviours	Equality Favouritism Micromanagement

Source: Researchers own compilation

During the second round of Delphi, the same process was followed as during Round 1. At the beginning of each interview session, participants were informed about the purpose of the research project and ensured that their responses were confidential. During the interview sessions, the same approach was taken during the first round. The researcher set out to determine the perception regarding the communication model as well as identifying the challenges faced with regard to this model.

After the interviews, the data was analysed, and the initial codes were updated, as seen in Table 6-2.

Table 6-2 Main and second-order categories from the updated code set

Main categories	Second-order categories
Uncertainty	Roles and reporting lines Directives Core activities Bureaucracy
Communication and mediums	Emails Feedback Technology Meetings
Relationships and trust	Disconnected Interdepartmental Intradepartmental
Unappreciated and marginalisation	Unappreciated Marginalisation and centralisation Mistrust
Leadership behaviours	Equality and favouritism Micromanagement

Source: Researchers own compilation

6.3 ROUNDS OF DELPHI

The researcher had five rounds of Delphi, and the model was modified after each round. The different rounds can be described as follow:

Round 1: Firstly, a focus group with support staff members to get their perceptions towards the current communication model, and establish if they could make five changes, what these changes will be.

A focus group was held with academic staff with no managerial responsibilities and a focus group with academic staff with managerial responsibilities. The goal was also to establish their perception towards the model, and identify the changes they would make to improve the model

Lastly, the researcher analysed the documentation of the communication survey that was done by the corporate communications department, on how staff members perceive and react to the communication sent out by the university and faculties. The recommendations that were made during this report was also taking into consideration.

Round 2: After the data of the previous round was transcribed, analysed (please see Section 6.2) and the proposed changes were made to the model, the second round of Delphi began. The researcher held semi-structured interviews with Directors and Deputy Directors of both Academic schools and research unit. The researcher firstly set out to determine their perception these management members have towards the current model. After that, the researcher shared the proposed changes to the communication model, as suggested during the previous round. The response to the changes was documented, and the researcher took note of the additional changes these management team members wanted to be implemented in the communication model.

Round 3: After the data of the previous round was transcribed, analysed (see Section 6.2) and the proposed changes were made to the model, the third round of Delphi began. During this round, interviews were conducted with the faculty management. As in the previous round, the researcher set out to determine their perceptions of the communication model. The proposed changes as set out by the first two rounds where discussed and the respondents were provided with the opportunity to respond to these changes.

Round 4: After the model was modified again, a focus group was conducted with a panel of support staff members, lecturers and faculty management members, as well as to members of the corporate communications team. The goal was to determine if they

agreed with the changes suggested during the previous round. They were also asked if they think that if this model was replicated in their faculties that communication, as a reputational risk, will be mitigated.

6.4 DELPHI ROUND 1

During the first round of Delphi, the researcher (i) analysed the available documentation available on communication and faculty structures of the faculty, (ii) focus groups with support staff members to determine their perceptions towards the current communication model and to determine possible changes to improve the communication model, and (iii) focus groups with academic staff members to determine their perceptions towards the current communication model, and to determine changes that would improve the current communication model.

6.4.1 Analysis of available documentation

The first round of Delphi started by looking at the available documentation on communication and faculty structures. The first report (refer to Addendum A) assisted the researcher to (i) determine the effectiveness of the university's communication initiatives; (ii) to determine the extent to which the strategy has the intended impact in achieving the institutional strategy; and (iii) determine the success of the current communication strategy in developing mutually beneficial relationships with staff (Hamilton-Attwell, 2018).

The second report (refer to Addendum B) assisted in understanding the current culture of the respective university. The university aims to transform and position itself as a unitary institution of superior academic excellence, with a commitment to social justice, and its culture should reflect this (Laetoli, 2019).

Below a summary of both reports will follow that highlights the challenges that staff member experience with regard to communication: about staff, highlighted in both reports included:

Lack of **role clarification** and task responsibilities; too many emails are sent, this includes staff being carbon copied in the middle of threads and duplication of messages. The risk is that staff is **overloaded** with irrelevant information, exacerbated by a large number of **messages that are repeated**, causing them to miss important information

being sent out. The need was determined to empower staff on how to use emails and to create a culture where proper email etiquette is used and promoted.

It is believed that the university uses **too many mediums to communicate** with and that messages do not reflect an innovative, inclusive and future-orientated university. It was also mentioned that the **call of actions in messages are unclear**, that most of the team deadlines set are unrealistic and that communication is not targeted or prioritised effectively.

Staff thought that **feedback** is deficient and needs dire attention. The messages and values of the university are not filtering down to all the levels in the organogram. There is a strong perception that sufficient updates or task-related updates, affecting activities are not given.

It became quite evident in both reports that there is **mistrust** in both the leadership and management system of the university. **Leadership behaviours** were seen as dysfunctional and included the act of **favouritism** and **micromanagement** of staff members. Staff members also feel **marginalised** and that their opinions are not included in the decision-making processes, even though decisions affect their daily activities.

In both reports, specific notes were made to support, empower and value support staff members more. The perception is that the information flow and **relationship** between support staff and academic staff is problematic. There is a feeling of **disconnectedness** between staff members.

It also became evident that the staff feels that a new culture is being forced down on them and that they are not allowed to be unique or innovative. The various **levels of reporting** in the current communication structure cause delayed responses and communication, and in several instances, it seems that all stakeholders are not working towards the same strategic or operational goals. The various reporting lines are seen as adding extra layers of **bureaucracy**, causing more administrative work for all staff members. Furthermore, the staff complained that **technology and technological mediums** are not up to date and not being utilised effectively. It was mentioned that quite a few of the administrative responsibilities could be reduced by effective use of technology.

6.4.2 Focus group analysis

This section offers feedback on the focus groups (refer to Addendum C) that was held. The response of the support staff members and the academic staff members was combined. This was done to ensure the anonymity of the respondents, but also because both these groups are seen as ground-level staff members. They are primarily responsible for teaching, learning and research, and to ensure that assignments, tasks and activities set out by management are completed.

What surfaced quite early in the focus group sessions was that these members **felt unappreciated** and elucidated that they felt what they do were not significant, acknowledged or appreciated. Staff members feeling undervalued and unappreciated can lead to lower productivity and motivation, as well as cause friction in their working environment (Alton, 2019).

'We have to take care of a lot and ensure that, but nobody acknowledges that nobody says thank you. I do not want lavish gifts, and just a hard felt thank you.'

Respondent C

Respondent Q added to this by stating

'They think I am a servant there to serve coffee and tea, and they take it for granted that someone clears up after them, they cannot even push in the chairs or place the cutlery together before they leave a venue. It looks like a pigsty after a meeting.'

Respondent Q

Support staff added to this by stating, that they feel academics look down on them and that their line managers will instead support the academics, then backing them as the support staff.

'I feel as admin staff, and we do not have enough of the support. I feel that our line manager, whether he knows what the whole scenario an email/response sent by me was, that line manager should support and protect me. Maybe if your line managers support you more, then the other people respect you as well.'

Respondent A

This was the response of Respondent A as she explains a situation where a lecturer went to complain about something directly to the director, without speaking to the support staff member involved first. The line manager then sided with the lecturer without consulting the support staff member and receiving their input. As the situation unfolded, it became evident that the lecturer was at fault and that the support staff member did complete the task that was given to them. The fact that administrative staff do not feel trusted is of concern as the lack of trust influences (i) employee morale, (ii) productivity of workers as well as (iii) staff turnover. Trust is essential as it is the basis around which all relationships revolve (Wichtner-Zoia, 2014).

However, during the other focus groups, academics believed that support staff members should be **empowered in communication**.

'I know of the support staff member that does not display professional conduct at all and have been given a warning for this. This is concerning as they are the first line of response. They are what outsiders see first.'

Respondent E

It is therefore clear that staff members in the same school and on the same campus are disconnected from one another. This is problematic because a cohesive environment cannot be built if the staff members do not get along or work towards the same goal, influencing productivity.

'To be quite honest and frank with you, they suck me dry. I do not work with them unless it is crucial to do so.'

Respondent C

This response from Respondent C indicates, as per Delphi Round 1 and 2, that **teamwork and relationships** between staff members on different campuses are lacking. Many benefits can be reaped if good relationships are fostered between employees like (i) improved teamwork and collaboration, (ii) improved employee morale (iii) higher employee retention rates and employee productivity (McFarlin, 2019). It became clear that teamwork and relationships are lacking both internally within schools on the same campus as well as schools situated on different campuses.

Furthermore, Respondent F acknowledged that teamwork between departments is also lacking:

'Everyone thinks their stuff is crucially important there are competing interest the entire time. Today manager A instructs me to attend an important meeting, while manager B also is waiting for something important. It does not feel that they talk to one another, and if you do not tend to both activities immediately, you get into trouble. Because both managers want to show how good their school or unit is, it is like having divorced parents.'

Respondent F

Firstly, what is of concern is that departments are working in silos, as this can create low morale and negatively impact workflows. The second concern is with departments working in silos is that if managers are in competition with one another and trying to make their mark, this can form a **power struggle**. The third concern is that the departments working in silos create a breach in the information flow. Lastly, Respondent F mentioned that it is mentionable that the different managers are not communicating with one another.

During the focus groups, it was noticeable that staff members feel that not everyone is treated equally. Respondent B discussed a situation where payment for office gifts was approved for department x, but when another department wanted to put through a similar payment, it was declined. The reason the transaction was declined was that the university does not buy office gifts. It is believed that there are different rules and regulations for different staff and situations and that the faculty and university are not consequent.

'Not everyone is treated the same, and there are double standards.'

Respondent B

The latter indicates mistrust in the faculty and university's management system, and that the dysfunctional behaviours like **favouritism and equality** are visible on different levels of the organogram. During the different focus groups, respondents agreed and acknowledged that not everybody will get along with one another due to different backgrounds and personalities, and that not each situation is the same as the previous one. The feeling was, however, that by setting clear guidelines on what is acceptable and adhering to these guidelines will ensure equality for all.

Respondents of the focus groups also felt that in order to enhance equality, all staff members should adhere to basic etiquette. This will ensure that a working environment

could be created suitable and enjoyable for everyone, irrespective of your post level or on which campus you are situated on. The following was identified as elements of basic etiquette by the respective focus groups:

- Respecting one another's beliefs and religions.
- Greeting one another, and saying please and thank you.
- Understanding when someone cannot assist, or assist you immediately.
- Cleaning up after yourself (for example pushing your chair into place after a meeting).
- Wearing appropriate, non-offensive and professional clothing.

When discussing how communication is provided to a stakeholder, much frustration was directed to the email system and the lack of **email etiquette**. The respondent felt that too many emails on the same topic are being sent out, this includes duplication of messages. Respondent E summarised communication by email as:

'...its death by email.'

Respondent E

It was also prominent that staff members felt the directives in emails were not clear, and that deadlines were unrealistic. This was evident, in particular the administrative officer's responses that are often carbon copied in the middle of email threads. The concern here is that the risk arises that tasks and assignments are not completed because nobody knows who should take responsibility for them.

'...I have been included now in the middle of something. People assume I know what is going on, so no additional information or instructions are provided. Am I cc'd to take note or should I do something? I also think you need to state in the email this is urgent, provide a deadline. Another frustration is that we get three emails reminding us that we should save the date and that you need to reply. That is unnecessary stuff, so if you got that somewhere in a portal and you send out one request.'

Respondent A

A new problem that was identified was the lack of clear **role classifications and reporting lines**. The lack of role clarification affects daily activities because they are not sure what task should be prioritised. By having too many lines of reporting, confusion can

be caused, and bureaucracy can easily be created, as additional administrative work needs to be put into place to ensure that all stakeholders are on the same page for staff members meet their key performance indicators (KPI).

'... we get like six emails on the same topic, from different directors. So, I am not sure at this stage where the priority lies, to whom I should report. What activities and task should I prioritise, the assignment from manger A or manager B? A while back, we got an email from our director, as he wanted certain information and provided us with a template. A little while later, another email came through from the executive dean, stating she wanted the information in another format. So, what should I do, respond to both?'

Respondent D

Staff members added that long turnaround times on email messages was extraordinarily frustrating, and too often, **no feedback** was received on communication at all. It was also mentioned that messages are duplicated, and staff felt that this was due to the role and task of managers and staff not being clear. Another problem identified is that tasks are required in concise and unrealistic time frames, not taking the staff members workloads and activities into account. Respondents further reacted very strong about the use of phrases like 'compulsory' that are frequently used in emails.

'Using the phrase compulsory, my line manager knows what is needed from me to meet my KPI's, so not everything is compulsory. We should not be forced to attend certain activities or events.'

Respondent F

All the respondents from the first round of Delphi suggested that a campaign is launched indicating the basics of email etiquette.

At my previous company, you were fined if you cc'd in somebody without a purpose or replied to all if it was not necessary. They were extremely strict, and it worked so well.'

Respondent R

According to the respondents, this campaign should address and empower all stakeholders to:

- Know when it is acceptable to reply to all;
- Be selective to who and when individuals are carbon copied into.

- Be clear in the email (for example clear call to action).
- Be clear in the subject line.
- Do not make the body excessively long, be careful of threading of emails;
- Do not assume the individuals receiving the email is informed when a task is being delegated. Ensure they are fully informed. Ensure the email contains the What is needed, by when it is needed and by whom it is needed from.
- Do not use words like compulsory, and it already creates an adverse reaction before an email is read.
- Find another way for reminder emails, for example, instead use the task application in emails. This will ensure that there is not an excessive amount of emails in the inboxes of the stakeholders, but that they are informed and reminded of upcoming deadlines.
- Respond to events.
- Respond in a timely fashion.

It became clear that due to the inadequacies in the emailing structure of the faculty, it directly affects the planning and implementation of projects and events within the faculty. A suggestion was made for a calendar where information can be uploaded, instead of sending emails to advertise events and projects. The latter oppose a problem, as this means of communication is mainly pull communication (refer to Section 3.5.2).

6.4.3 Summary of Delphi Round 1

During this round of Delphi, it was established that the perception towards the current communication model is negative. The following difficulties with regard to the current communication model were identified:

- Uncertainty to whom to communicate/report to.
- Uncertainty on what needs to be done.
- Communication types and mediums are unrefined, and there are too many communication mediums (this includes unclear directives, duplication of messages, no feedback being provided, and inadequate email etiquette)
- Staff members are working disconnected from one another.
- There is mistrust in management and management systems.
- Staff members feel marginalised and unappreciated and undervalued.

- The system is not integrated but is seen as a centralised system.

It became apparent that some of the issues identified with communication do not directly influence the flow of the model, but rather how the communication model is implemented. The way communication occurs is just as important as what is communicated as discussed in Section 3.4.5.

The model needs to be refined by adjusting the manner communication is sent out. Role clarifications should be altered to ensure that stakeholders are identified and tasked to take responsibility for sending out communication. The latter will also eliminate double communication and reduce the chances of confusion. It was also suggested that stakeholders should be empowered to use current communication channels better.

The first round of Delphi, therefore, brought about the following equation

Figure 6-1 Summary of first round of Delphi

$$\text{Model} = \text{Implementation} = \text{Buy-in}$$

Source: Researchers own compilation

The conclusion made during this round is that the model should describe who should communicate to who, and clearly define what should be communicated. By prescribing, who communicates what to who will determine or influence the implementation of the communication model, which will directly affect the buy-in towards the communication model.

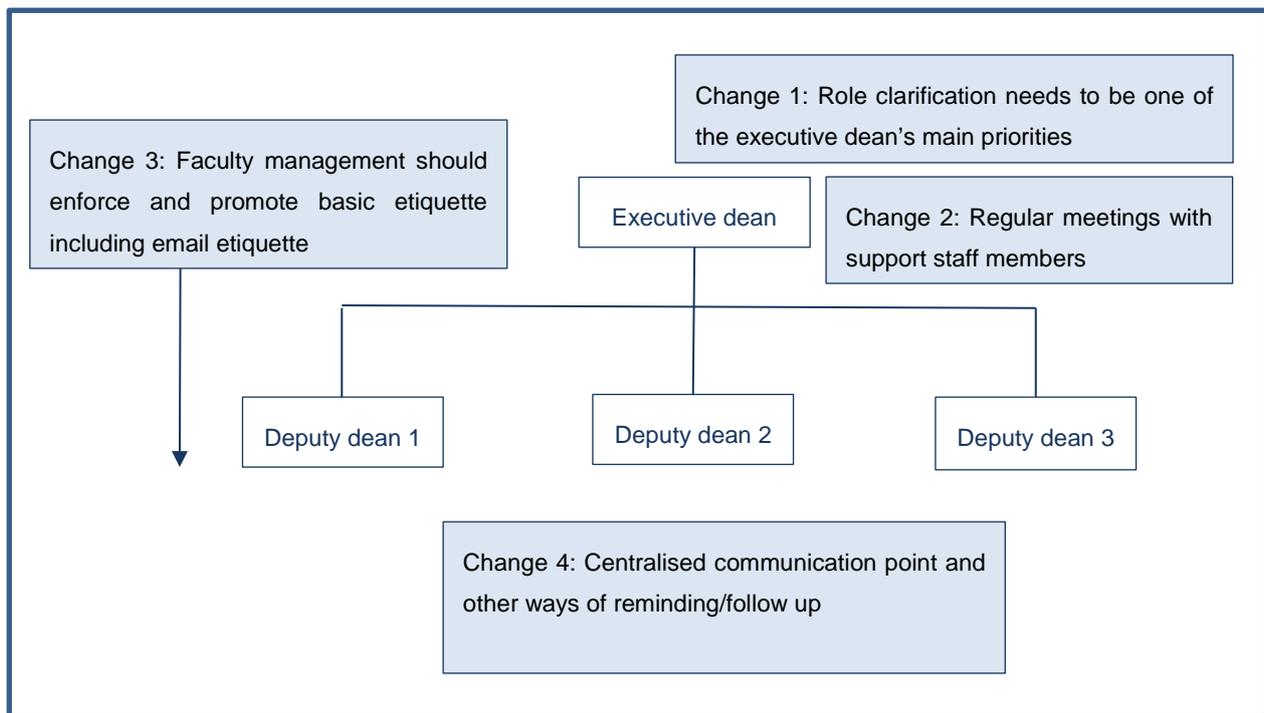
It is worrisome that the staff members that are mainly responsible for ensuring the execution and coordination of activities for departments in the faculty feel they are not valued, and that they are unsure of what is expected from them. If the front line of the faculty does not know their role and expectations, how can they ensure that tasks, projects, events etc. are completed to the best possible standards.

6.4.4 Model modification

Taking the first round of Delphi into account, the researcher has adjusted the first conceptual model. This means that the structure itself might not need to change, but

how it is approached in needs to be adapted. Figure 6-2 will look at the suggested changes that should occur on the faculty management level.

Figure 6-2 Suggested changes for the faculty management team



Source: Researcher's own compilation

Change 1: Role identification and clarification need to be realised and implemented by the executive dean's office. Firstly, it will benefit the executive dean greatly if portfolio guidelines are set up for example if an assignment/email is, teaching and learning related the email should be directed to the deputy dean of teaching and learning, the deputy dean of this department then becomes the responsible party to complete the assignment at hand. Secondly, the executive dean, in collaboration with the faculty management team, create a standardised process that all deputy directors follow convey information and directives. After that, the deputy dean can escalate/delegate the message as needed (this will be discussed further in change 4).

Change 2: The researcher believes that it would be beneficial if the line managers on all levels have a weekly session with their administrative officers to discuss the week ahead, ensuring that everyone is on the same page and that the goals for the next two weeks/month are clear and achievable. This change is threefold, and firstly the administrative staff can ensure and assist managers in completing the tasks in a timely

fashion. Secondly, it will ensure that administrative officers will be able to assist others if there might be uncertainty regarding a task that was maybe delegate to them. This will streamline and simplify the process to get the assignment completed and meet the deadlines. Thirdly, keeping the administrative officer informed they could plan accordingly and ensure the office is equipped and organised for what is needed.

Change 3: The faculty should identify how they want to be defined, and the way they want their staff and students to experience their values, customs and traditions. Through creating a corporate culture, the staff develops a sense of belonging. In addition to this, employees who fit into the culture of their working environment is not only happier but also more productive (Doyle, 2020). One of the first suggested culture classifications and implementations that should take place, as suggested by the *Respondent* of the first round of Delphi is the culture of etiquette and respect.

Staff members should be empowered on email etiquette within the faculty. If the faculty communicates and enforces guidelines to when to carbon copy or to reply to all, the rest of the faculty will start to adhere and follow suit because this will be the faculty's culture.

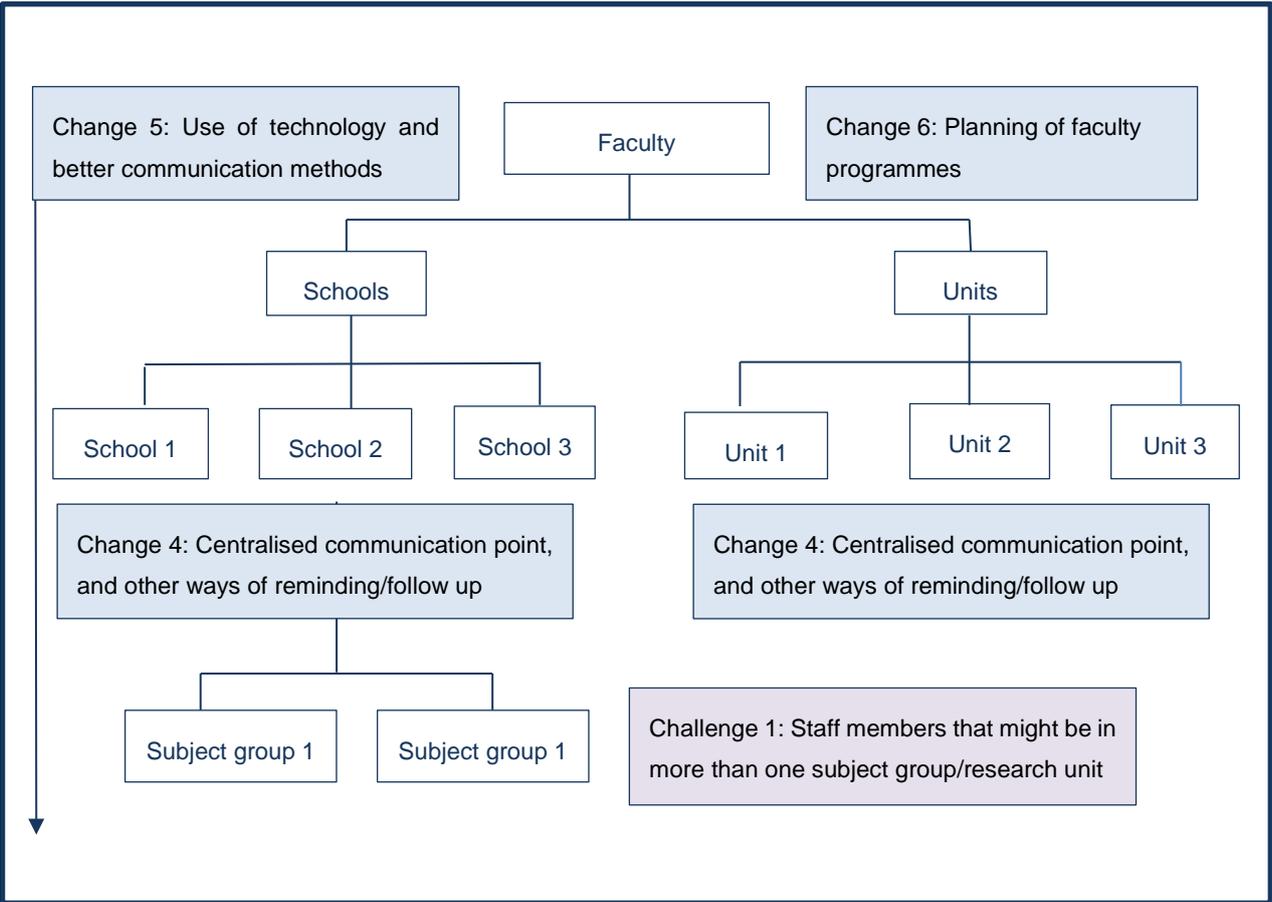
By creating a culture of respect and caring, employees will know that diversity is valued and feel like their contributions are recognised and valued. This can be created by simple acts like greeting one another, tidying up after a meeting, and avoiding gossip (Besner, 2015; Richman, 2015).

Change 4: After a deputy dean received an assignment, a decision should be made (guidelines should be set / a plan / clear directive), on how the assignment will be handled. The messages should be sent by the administrative officer either to the school directors or to all the staff of the academic schools. For example, if there was a request for specific information, it might only be sent to the school directors, and they could further delegate the task, whereas if it an advertisement or a generalised email it can be sent to all from the office of the deputy dean.

Figure 6-2 looks at the suggested changes within each school or unit and acknowledged that there are challenges with the implementation of the changes. For example, they are streamlining communication if lecturers are in more than one subject groups, or a subject group and research unit. The ideal will be if staff members can choose from whom they

want to receive primary information from the subject group leader or research unit. In addition to this, it will be good if each utilises online platforms like the intranet were portfolios, and research units can post important 'general' information that includes messages on bursaries, submission deadline etc. The deputy dean or director can send out a monthly email reminding them of valuable information available on the intranet. This will also ensure that emails are not duplicated, and communication will be sent from a centralised point.

Figure 6-3 Changes towards faculty schools and units



Source: Researcher’s own compilation

Change 4: As in the case of the deputy dean, as soon as the assignment reaches the director, they need to take responsibility for the task. Directors should also determine what needs to happen or who should receive the information. Each school/unit must have clear guidelines on how messages should be distributed and provide clear directives on how tasks should be completed. Again, planning is key to tasks being successful as it

provides clarity, it promotes intentional attitude, it assists with making decisions, provides accountability and saves time (Benson, 2018).

Change 5: As we are entering the fourth industrial revolution, where new technologies and trends are changing the way we live and work, the faculty should optimise the use of technology to increase productivity. Technology enables employees to work faster and more efficient, it encourages innovation and creativity, it assists with coordination, uniformity, accuracy and consistency (Araujo, 2019; Ross, 2016).

By improving the way technology is currently used, the faculty can create a digital workplace, an always-connected environment providing staff members with everything they need to get work done. Digital workplaces hold power to increase employee collaboration, improve efficiency and open up existing silos (Hall, 2018; Zamolo, 2020). In addition to this, by effectively using technology, such as utilising video calling facilities, it will be easy to operate across different geographic areas without unnecessary travelling.

This means that the intranet should be up to date and maintained with relevant and essential information as well as documents needed to perform work assignments. It was also suggested that desktop notifications are used to inform staff members of breaking news and emergencies. In addition to this, staff members should be allowed to unsubscribe from emails they do not want to receive. The desktop notification system will ensure that an important message is sent out to all stakeholder, whether they have opted out of the communication or not. Furthermore, this form of push notifications/communication (see Section 3.5.2) will also enable the university and faculty, to share information to stakeholders on a specific campus like infrastructure updates, campus-specific events and campus-related news without filling others mailboxes unnecessarily (Patel, 2017).

Change 6: Planning for the upcoming week, upcoming month and at least three months ahead will ensure that not everything happens on short notices. By planning effectively and efficiently, the number of short deadlines or unsuspected projects and tasks can be limited.

6.5 DELPHI ROUND 2

During the first round of Delphi the six preliminary themes were identified. These themes are:

- Role clarification and reporting lines.
- Communication types and channels (this included the email system, duplication of messages, lack in feedback; unclear directives and better use of technology-based mediums).
- Relationships between staff members.
- Distrust in the management and university systems.
- The system centralised and not integrated.

During the interviews with the academic school, research and business unit's directory deputy directors of the faculty, similar themes became known as during the first round of Delphi (refer to Addendum F). The identification of the same themes means that frustrations regarding the challenges of the communication model are felt on more than just the ground-level.

In order to highlight the similar themes, the following statement from Respondent I was selected as it addresses the (i) immense amount of **emails** being sent, (ii) unclear **directives**, (iii) unrealistic **deadlines** and (iv) that not all departments being treated **equality**.

'There are frequent communication gaps, take, for instance, the semester test series, there was great uncertainty when the tests should be in. On Campus A it had to be in tomorrow, on Campus B in two weeks, and Campus C as soon as possible. Our tests are aligned, we write the same tests, so now its email, after email,'

Respondent I

In addition to the problems already stated, the lack of adequate and proper planning became known. Examination dates are known by the previous academic year, and therefore the examination office can do planning to when examination papers should be handed in. It is unacceptable that lecturers are placed under immense stress in order to provide examination papers on short notice. Does the question arise why are the dates suddenly changed? Why are the deadlines not the same on all the campuses?

Respondent, I also validated the exciting themes of **marginalisation and centralisation** by declaring that

'Lectures feels marginalised, and that Campus X makes decisions without consulting others.'

Respondent I

The one campus acts superior to the other campuses, increases the possibility of friction between staff members, departments operating in silos resulting in a **power struggle**. Even though the university wants to be a unitary unit, with aligned courses, not everything can be aligned one hundred per cent. The reason for this being that the different campus' face different issue including demographical, economic and cultural differences.

At one campus, students are more financially independent, whereas on another campus students are reliant on food parcels and goodwill. One campus hosts an annual reach out and gives a campaign, known as RAG (Reach Out and Give), while the other campuses do not. Does the question arise why are certain activities aligned and others not?

Staff news should also not be aligned, as this might case news and activities to be generalised and significant campus-specific news to go unnoticed. For example, on campus A, the decision was made to build a new entrance gate less than two kilometres from the previous gate, the staff members were not notified on why this decision was made. However, a generalised letter notification was sent out saying that staff members are prohibited from possession or using cannabis on campus. This was sent out due to staff members on Campus B that was intoxicated. The problem was that most staff members did not know about the incident and was now speculating on what happened. The perception is also that the university only sends out messages to reprimand staff members or to tell them to thank you for what you did, but we expect more and better. Staff thinks that the university and the faculty do not celebrate the achievements of the faculty and does not inform staff members on what is important to them.

There is, therefore, a need to **create and circulate a definition** on what is meant my by (i) a unitary system, (ii) what is meant by the term alignment, and (iii) how alignment can occur effectively between different campuses.

Respondent G provided their unique view on the term alignment:

'Nine plus one equals ten, but five-plus five also equals ten. So does eight plus two. I cannot teach two groups in the same manner, as their point of references differs.'

Respondent G

In all three instances, the goal was to get to the number ten. The way the outcome was reached just differed. The respondent went on to say that at Campus A, the lecturer might use apples to explain the different ways to get to ten. Where on Campus B, this might not be effective due to demographical, economic and cultural reasons. Students might see apples as sacred, and on Campus C, students might have limited resources, and the apples can be put to better use, like feeding a student, causing unrest.

'It feels that if you try to go the extra mile or to be innovative with teaching and learning approaches, you get into trouble. For instance, let say something ground-breaking or relevant in my field of study takes place, and I want to work this into my class, I can't because the lecturers on the other campuses will not do this, and this means the modules/classes are not aligned. This affects the quality of the programmes we offer, and it is extremely demotivating. I mean the accolades will go to the faculty/university as well, and we will deliver relevant students. Everyone will benefit if staff members walk the extra mile.'

Respondent H

Jeopardising the quality of programmes offered at the university is a significant reputational risk. If the quality of the academic programmes defines the value of the service that is offered at the university, and if this is questioned, potential stakeholders will go to other the universities competition.

Other risks identified where the different communication mediums that include both emails and meetings. When looking at **emails**, similar pitfalls were identified as during the first round of Delphi (Section 6.4) this included duplication of messages and unclear directives. Respondent N state that:

'We receive the same communication repeatedly from the executive dean then from deputy deans, but their interpretations/way of communication/emphasis are on very different places. This creates much confusion because the one says this and the other says that. It is also a high risk that the deanery and other support services like student administration simply assume that if a message was sent to the directors that everybody in the school will receive the message, as director I have to resend multiple messages whereas messages could

have been sent once off.'

Respondent N

What became clear from Respondent I was that the managers are carbon copied into too many emails and cannot tend to all matters.

'I can only start reading my email in the evenings. I usually start the email tread by reading the last email in the thread to see if the situation has been dealt with.'

Respondent I

By just agreeing or accepting that the last email in the thread addressed the situations and not gaining, the bigger picture on the situation creates the possibility that the feelings felt by administrative might not be so implausible. It should be noted that the manager most properly does not side against the administrative officers on purpose, but are just to overwhelmed to tend to the situation appropriately.

In addition to the previously mentioned problems regarding emails, the issue of role clarification within the email system has been acknowledged as a problem. This includes messages not being sent according to the organogram protocol, but by crossing communication lines. The correct order of organogram protocol will be for the executive dean to send a message to a specific dean if that message is related to that dean's portfolio. That deputy dean will then decide the method in which they want to proceed in to complete the task at hand. As soon as the method has been decided, the deputy dean will replay the message to the school directors, and the school directors will relay the message to the respective deputy directors. It is not the correct practise for the executive dean to send a message directly to the directors. However, Respondent J provided the researcher with the following example, to indicate that there is crossline communication present in the faculty's structure.

'It happened that the executive dean sent out a message on research and asked another dean to collect and coordinate the in information regarding request and send it back.

However, research is not part of that dean's portfolio. It causes conflict and confusion.'

Respondent J

In addition to **cross line communication**, the lack of using correct **protocol** may cause that a manager openly contradicts its personnel and can lead to confusion.

'Mixed messages are being sent out. For example, the X dean instructed that every lecturer should be part of a research unit, but then another dean communicated that lecturers did not need to be part of a research unit. To whom should we listen?'

Respondent H

Respondents recommended that a **centralised hub** should be initialised where staff members can consult relevant documentation, plans, strategies that were circulated in the past that or which one might have missed. What is worrying is that the university has an intranet site where staff members can obtain this information from, but that is still asking for such a site indicates that the site is not useful. Another benefit of having an information hub (or intranet) is that the information like forms that are sent via emails, can only be uploaded to the intranet for staff to download should they need it. This will minimise the number of emails being sent out.

'The intranet should have the latest information available, including the newest template I should use. Unfortunately, that is not the case, we get the newest template via email and do not update the intranet. The problem is also that the templates and forms change so frequently, I do not know which one to use the one emailed to me or the one on the intranet?'

Respondent H

Another problem faced with emails is delayed response and **feedback**, as in the case of Round 1, the perception is that the university does not provide feedback to staff members regarding important decisions.

'Where was this discussed? How can a decision be made without consultation of executive deans or people involved with the implementation of this? We were not consulted in this matter.'

Respondent H

This was the response of Respondent I when notified that schools are not allowed to have their own social media pages anymore and that all new pages should be merged to faculty pages. The decision was made on UMC level but has not filtered through to the deans and deputy deans. The new social media policy and communication regarding the changes to this policy is only one example of policies and decisions made that have not

filtered through. Other examples include the rebranding of the university and the new language policy.

'We often have to wait days on end without any official communication - management expects us to plan properly and put things in place, but there is no guidance or even worse, no communication when we need it most.'

Respondent O

The directors are incredibly frustrated towards the lack of timeous and focused feedback from especially the UMC about ways in which they should work when things should happen. The latter affect the daily actives of the directors and school staff, resulting in activities needed on unrealistic timelines.

Meetings are the second communication medium that was discussed during the interview sessions. During these discussions, it became clear that the directors and deputy directors have to attend multiple meetings per day

'I am running from one meeting to another. I sit in a meeting thinking, but I have heard this before in the previous meeting. Some of our meetings are with 90 delegates, and the agenda document is 700 pages, that have been sent two days before the meeting. It is impossible to prepare for these types of meetings properly. Then I sit and think how big did you make the structure that we have to have a meeting of this size, and is this truly the most conducive manner of handling this.'

Respondent I

What is of concern is not only the size of these meetings but also the size of the agenda. In several instances, staff members also need to travel between campuses to attend these meetings.

'It takes me three days to prepare for this meeting, then an entire day of travelling and 3-8 hours to travel, depending on which campus the meeting is being held. So, one meeting can take an entire week out of my life.'

Respondent R

There is something to be said for meeting face-to-face, but it is not feasible across different campuses, it is incredibly time-consuming, unproductive and expensive. Stakeholders often travel for meetings or info sessions that turn out to be very basic and

which could instead have done online. However, conducting meeting via online platforms should be utilised optimally and be useful. Otherwise, it will end up being data-intensive and therefore, expensive.

'The most frustrating way of meetings is via Skype/Vidyo/Zoom. There are always technical problems, always people that are not involved, there is uncertainty about the leading and ordering of discussion. It proves to be a tremendous waste of time. It usually takes 20-30 minutes to get everybody online. It once took more than an hour, and we all had to sit and wait.'

Respondent N

As a result of the frequent and large meetings, as well as the number of emails, they are overwhelmed by time-consuming administrative tasks. Due to this **bureaucracy**, the directors are not getting to the heart of what they should be doing — ensuring that quality teaching, learning and research are being conducted in the respective school.

'The university needs to get back to the core business.'

Respondent G

If the university identifies its **core business**, this will be echoed in cohesive messages because the goals and targets are clear. The core business will be the centre of all communication, and staff members will be informed of clear directives because a transparent system will be put into place on how targets should be met. This system will also ensure that the correct reporting protocol is being followed. Respondent J was of the firm opinion that protocol plays an integral part in the communication model and the achieving of goals

'I think a big communication problem is that we do not follow protocol. If a student has a problem, they should first go to that lecture, then to the subject head. If the problem cannot be solved to the deputy director, then the director and then to the deputy dean teaching and learning. However, what happens now they cc the vice-chancellor in social media posts. The same with staff members if they are unhappy with a decision I made, they go over my head to the vice deputy chancellor to overrule me. That is not the way thing should work.'

Respondent J

The statement mentioned above also touches with the theme of **relationships** between colleagues. Effective working relationships affect several levels of the communication

model. Firstly, effective working relationships improve **teamwork** and increased productivity. Secondly, strong relationships ensure that individuals feel safe, protected and that their managers/colleagues support them and have their best interest at heart. Thirdly, good working relationships can make work a more enjoyable environment, and this can have a direct influence on job satisfaction. In addition to this, if colleagues have a good relationship among them, they are more likely to forgive if a mistake is made.

'Even if the roles are not clear if the relationship is strong, we are more likely to forgive each other and are less likely to step on each other's toes.'

Respondent G

Lastly, if relationships are established, and colleagues know one another, and how each works in, it will be more likely to conduct online meetings reducing travelling between campus. The creating of effective relationships should be placed high on each of the directors' tasks list, as this can influence various aspects of their working environment.

However, managers should be cautious not to **micromanage or macromanage** their school's staff members. Micromanagement is the process whereby managers closely observes or controls their employees and the tasks they are busy with. A manager should allow the employees to do their work. Otherwise, the manager is telling the employee that they do not trust them and indicates a lack of freedom in the workplace. Micromanagement, on the other hand, let employees do their work with minimal supervision. The problem with micromanagers is that employees can feel that managers do not give them enough support or feedback to do their jobs.

Both of these managers are visible within the faculty, this quote by Respondent I indicates a more micromanagement style

'I have very high standards for my staff, and I accept them to meet this. I want to know if they are not living up to these standards or not doing their work so that I can check up on them more frequently.'

Respondent I

Whereas the staff members of manager J complained during the first round of Delphi that they feel their manager does not support them.

'I do not see it as I am not supporting them or favouring other people. I treat people differently because they act differently. Some people get more concession because they put more effort into their work and go the extra mile. Others perform better when they are provided with more freedom and space to be creative.'

Respondent J

Another aspect that should be addressed while the university and faculty are getting back to their roots and focus on their core business is to establish clear role descriptions. This uncertainty that managers have can also lead to a form of micromanagement as they are just trying to control situations that are related or affects their academic schools.

'If you look at the organogram, it is supposed to provide us with the communication and reporting lines, that is however not the case. The university established different reporting lines, one line will handle operational matters, and the other reporting line will handle strategic matters. What is an operational matter, and what is a strategic matter? How am I supposed to manage this?'

Respondent J

The lack of role clarification leads to members of the team, not understanding or knowing what their directives are, or staff is doing work that they should not be doing wasting time. Moreover, if nobody is taking responsibility for task and activities, this will result in an unachieved task and influencing the productivity of staff members.

The schools use the following communication channels

- School Newsletter
- Notification is from the director/deputy director's office
- WhatsApp groups
- Emails
- Meetings (school meetings and subject group meetings)
- Online forums (including Skype, Zoom and Vidyo)

6.5.1 Summary of Delphi Round 2

During the second round of Delphi, the already identified themes where refined as follows:

- Uncertainty to whom to communicate/report to (transparent system and protocol is needed).
- Uncertainty on what needs to be done (clear directives needs to be communicated).
- Communication types and mediums are unrefined, and there are too many communication mediums (duplication of messages, providing feedback, inadequate email etiquette, better use of technology, meetings and travel).
- Staff members are working disconnected from one another, and better relationships need to be formed both interdepartmental but also intradepartmental.
- There is mistrust in management and management systems.
- Staff members feel marginalised and unappreciated and undervalued.
- The system is not integrated but is seen as a centralised system.

6.5.2 Model modification

Taking the information that was provided by the directors and deputy directors into account, the following changes to the current communication model is suggested. As in the case of Round 1, the problems faced affecting the implementation of the model, and not the model itself.

Taking the suggestions that were made by Round 1 into consideration, as seen in Figure 6-1, Round 2's participants agreed that role clarification (change 1) is extremely important. It is essential for faculty management to be transparent in whom they communicate with, and what type of information is provided to managers. The correct communication protocol should be taken, and the executive dean should delegate the tasks to the respective deputy dean responsible for the task. By doing this, the executive dean will illuminate cross-communication lines and avoid confusion, and conflicting instructions will also be illuminated. A campaign to empower staff on email etiquette (change 3) was also welcomed.

The directors and deputy directors were open to the suggestion that more apparent and frequent meetings or discussions should take with their administrative staff members, to ensure everyone is on the same page. The latter will also ensure that tasks that are a priority are identified and evaluated every week, ensuring that it is completed in a timely fashion, minimising the number of tasks that might surface with short deadlines.

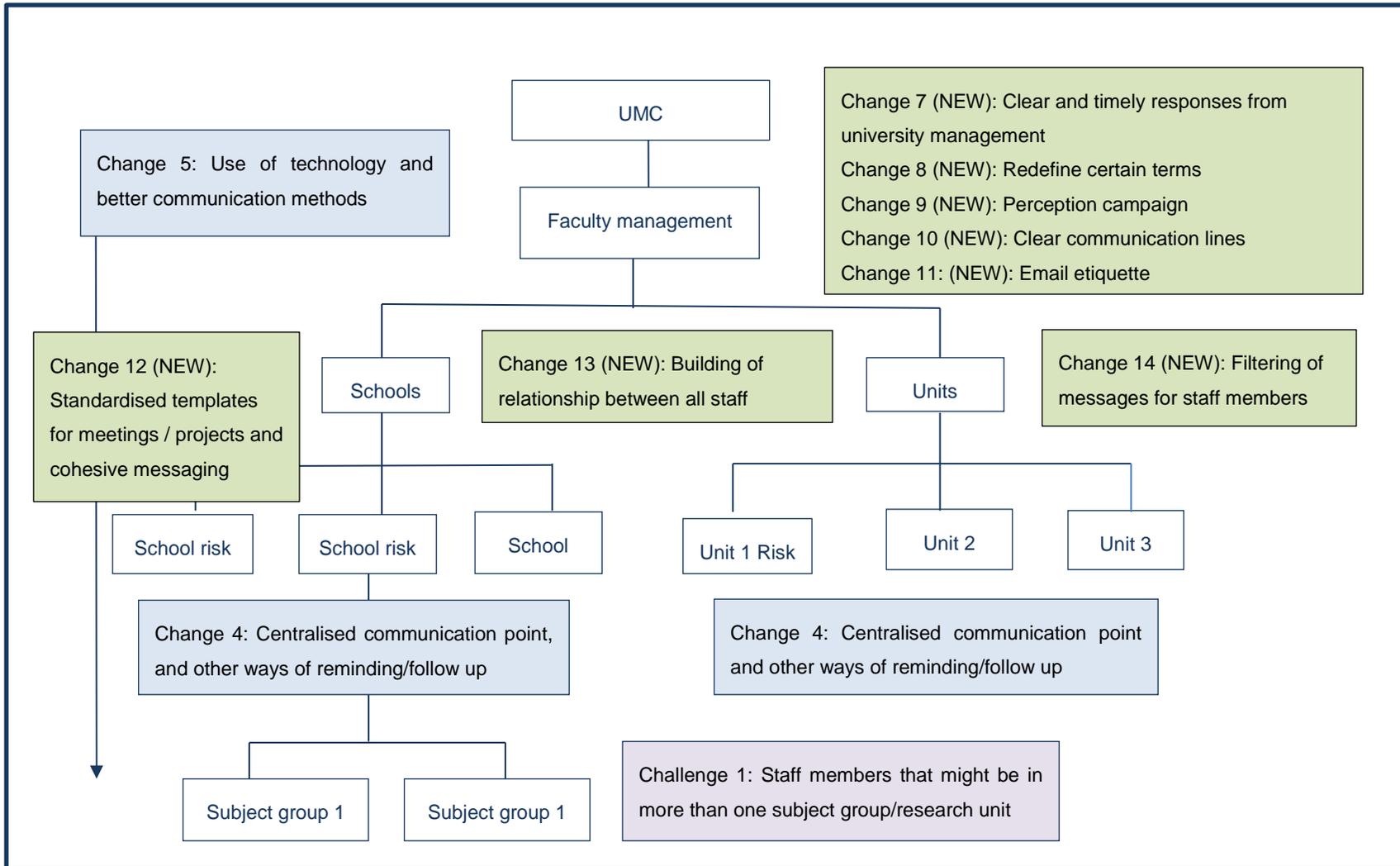
The following additional changes were suggested by participants of Round 2, and these changes will be illustrated by using green blocks and indicating the change (news) as the heading of the block.

Looking at Figure 6-2, which has a more direct influence on the academic schools and their activities, the participants of Round 2 adjusted change 4, as suggested by Round 1's participants. The participants agreed that cohesive messages should be sent out, but added that the organigrams structure of protocol should be respected. If it is needed for the director to communicate with a staff member directly, it is suggested that that staff manager's deputy director is carbon copied. This will ensure the deputy director knows about the activity, avoiding duplication in messages and the possibility of conducting the same task twice. The latter should, however, occur on a minimal basis, and the protocol should be followed as far as possible.

Suggested change 6 of having a planning structure in place of school and faculty activities in place was welcomed. The feeling was that this would make the planning of meetings easier, avoiding meeting conflicts. Suggested change five was accepted, given that, the technology is up to date, maintained and that all parties are empowered to use these mediums.

The following additional changes were suggested by participants of Round 2, and these changes will be illustrated in Figure 6-4, by using green blocks and indicating the change (the word new in brackets) as the heading of the block.

Figure 6-4 Suggested changes to the communication model for schools and units



Source: Researcher's own compilation

Change 7: The different faculties within the university can adopt how the UMC is operating in. This means that the faculty do not have a proper communication structure because the UMC does not have proper structures. The UMC set the example and tone for the rest of the university. What sets apart a good team from an excellent team is the ability for the organisation to work towards a common goal. The UMC needs to set specific goals with clear directives and parameters so that employees know that is expected from them(McQuerrey, 2019)

The UMC should, therefore, work towards having structures in place to communicate decisions that will affect staff members in a clear and timely fashion. It is essential that when the UMC wants communication to reach the faculty, that they already have planning or a clear idea in place.

Change 8: The UMC should redefine on what is meant by terms 'unitary system' and 'alignment'. In addition to this, guidelines should be created to advise staff members how operations should take place if the university is a unitary institution or offers aligned courses.

Change 9: A plan or campaign should be launched to rectify the perceptions that one campus is more important than another campus. This change is in accordance with change number 8, and a university cannot state they are united, unified or, homogenous if all its members do not feel the same. A culture should be created that everyone is important and essential to the faculty and university. This campaign should also focus on addressing the perceptions of the campuses that feel they are being marginalised. It is essential to determine why these staff members feel this way and find solutions to rectify this. This campaign should not only be internally but also externally, as various stakeholders still refer to one campus as the main campus and the other campuses as satellite campuses. The latter goes entirely against the aspiration of being a unitary university.

Change 10: It is essential for faculty management to have a clear working structure in place that will filter through to the school management teams or research directors. Communication lines should be clear and not be overlap or get crossed, the correct protocol for communication should be enforced. The latter will ensure that a responsible party is identified for a task and that instructions given are not in conflict.

Change 11: In addition to the faculty management creating a corporate culture (as discussed in Round one), the emphasis has again been placed on the importance of empowering staff member to follow correct, correct email etiquette. By faculty management setting an example of the culture and way in which the faculty sends emails, other staff members will follow, because their actions are much more meaningful than our words. Managers should lead by example (Collinsdictionary, 2020).

Change 12: It was suggested that specific documentation and procedures within schools be standardised. This will assist in ensuring the same topics and issues are addressed on all the platforms, regardless of the geographical area of the meeting. In order for school directors to be fair to all parties, and make informed decisions, it is essential to compare apples with apples, and providing these directors with the same type of information will ensure equality.

Change 13: School management teams, as well as research units, should pay attention to the building of positive and productive working relationships between employees within their school/ unit, irrespective of where the employees are situated. The building of relationships takes time and should be done constructively. In the case of research directors, it is also essential to build good relationships with the various academic schools and their staff members, as they are reliant on their research outputs.

Change 14: It was suggested that as far as possible deans and directors should screen and filter messages, before sending to staff members. This will ensure that conflicting instructions are not being sent out to staff, or those staff members being included in unnecessary emails when managers tried to clarify directives and project/ task objective.

6.6 DELPHI ROUND 3

During the first two rounds of Delphi, the following themes were identified, and includes the following:

- Clarification on roles and tasks, reporting lines and specific terms are required.
- Communication types and channels need refining (this includes emails, meetings, sending of cohesive messages and better use of technology);
- Building relationships and trust between staff members on all levels.

- Working on building trust in the management and university systems so staff do not feel marginalised or that the system is centralised.
- Working on providing feedback and updates.

During the interviews with the dean and executive dean of the faculty, the researcher set out to determine how the faculty management perceives communication, and how they implement communication in the deanery as well as in each portfolio. In order to do this the researcher adjusted the interview schedule (refer to Addendum C) the reason for this changes include, that the researcher did not want to go into an interview session and convey everything that is wrong with the system, as this could result into management not being open to the interview. In addition to this, the researcher now has the opportunity to determine how management think they are communicating to the faculty, and compare this with the data obtained during the first two rounds of Delphi to identify the gaps in the current communication model.

It, however, became evident quite early on, that the main themes identified during the first two rounds were also crucial to the faculty management team. It reinforces the statement that the problem is not necessary with the system but with the implementation of the system.

Respondent M summarised the communication model by stating that it is a **two-way process** and that it is essential to understand that communication is multifaceted and depended on several and individuals working together.

‘We have to handle communication in such a manner that we acknowledge that there is room for improvement and that communication is lacking. We know that during these challenging times, many gaps in the communication model was identified. However, people do not read their emails, and they do not listen to what is said. They read and hear what they want to or say nobody ever talks to me.’

Respondent M

Communication is a two-part process, one part of the process is sending the message, but the second part involves receiving and responding to communication. The participatory approach of communication is an approach that grants all parties an equal opportunity to share their knowledge information, perceptions and opinions among different stakeholders of an organisation. Stakeholders are encouraged to participate

freely in conversations in order to explore and generate of new understanding aimed at addressing a phenomenon that needs to be improved (Chitnis, 2005; Jennings, 2000; Melkote, 1991).

During this participatory communication approach, individuals are bound within their cultural domains and realities to convey a specific message and to understand it, with a view to a proposed positive change of circumstance (Huesca, 2003; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 1994; Thomas & Mefalopulos, 2009). The latter leads to heteroglossia, which is, discussed Section 3.5.1. In essence, heteroglossia is focused on pull and push forces within communication as well as creating a business glossary with their connotation to words and expressions, unique to that business/field of business (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005).

The **responsibility of communication, therefore, lies with both the sender and the receiver**. Communication becomes more accessible and more productive when each person should take ownership of what and how he or she communicates and is, therefore, not just the responsibility of the managing team. As stated in order to comprehend a message, one needs to understand the message, so communication should be cohesive with clear directives and reasonable deadlines.

How communication is relayed is essential. Respondent M elaborated on the importance of role clarification by stating that the most problems surface when roles and communication lines are crossed

'My biggest frustration is when the executive dean talks to the directors about teaching and learning issues directly, this is when confusion occurs.'

Respondent M

This frustration was also voiced during Round 1 and 2 of Delphi where participant indicated that they receive **duplication of messages** and that the **directives** differ or are unclear.

The main methods of communication that was addressed by faculty management included **emails and meetings**. Sending an email to a colleague is instantaneous and convenient and is a theme that has been prominent in all three rounds of Delphi. As indicated through the different rounds, emails lack real interactivity between sender and

receiver as well as neutral feedback. It is also easy to get lost between masses of emails being sent and missing important information. Utilising emails in such a manner that it is useful, practical and a productive communication tool for an organisation, small changes will need to be imposed in order to change behaviours gradually and not force it on members to quickly.

'I think the first thing we should address when it comes to an email etiquette is to encourage people to read and to respond to emails. I think the faculty should benefit from guidelines on what is acceptable and what not regarding emails. Email is a dangerous platform as people can often and easily misread information; however, one needs to employ a certain amount of tact when emailing staff about important matters.'

Respondent K

Even though emails have become the medium of choice for the university and faculty, it does not mean that it is the most effective way to communicate. Emails can be time-consuming, the decision process can be delayed, misunderstandings can quickly occur, and a message can get lost between the many other emails received daily.

'We should start utilising other mediums of communication other than emails. We use these mediums, like Skype, to conduct meetings with. We can also use WhatsApp, to send when an urgent message is being sent, and use this medium as a double prodded approach. Then somebody cannot say that they missed a deadline or did not get a message. However, staff members must be comfortable with the alternative mediums of communication.'

Respondent K

The faculty uses the following communication channels:

- Faculty Newsletter
- Notification is from the dean/deputy dean's office.
- WhatsApp groups
- Emails
- Meetings (both formal and informal); and
- Online forums (including Skype, Zoom and Vidy).

As in the case of many organisations, **memos** are sent out to inform staff members on specific activities and tasks to be completed. However, a few staff members feel that this

is an autocratic way of communicating. How the memos are written in is essential, as not everyone has a relationship with the sender of the memo. It is therefore essential that the memos are clear, concise and not extensively long. Furthermore, before sending spreading the memo's to other departments, the line managers should ensure they understand what the directives is, before delegating these tasks further. Another problem is that in many instances, the memos are set up and sent out by administrative support staff members, and not all stakeholders are willing to tend to the emails of the support staff as they think it is unimportant.

'Sometimes they will not respond if they see it is my secretary, but the moment they see I am cc'd in, they will respond, or say I was requested by Prof K to do the following.'

Respondent K

This **hierarchy issue** strengthens the argument of the support staff members, that academic staff do not trust them or look down on them. Firstly, a dean or director needs to communicate that they trust their support staff members and that they provide them with specific tasks to complete. Secondly, an environment should be created where the duties of the support staff are not questioned. The support staff member would not do an activity or task if it were not part of a specific directive. The hierarchy structure is not valid if the managers cannot delegate their tasks to support staff members or other staff members.

It is also problematic that a deputy dean needs to be cc'd into o many emails, this only creates bureaucracy and hinders the deputy dean from completing tasks on their table. The latter may also influence other stakeholders, as they might be waiting for approval or feedback.

'Each deputy dean has n portfolio, and I think it is important for that dean to ensure within that portfolio roles are clear. They can also address how activities or tasks will be completed in that department or unit.'

Respondent L

The second method of communication is meetings. Meetings aim to share information, make decisions, negotiate where needed, finding solutions to problems and building relationships. No matter what the reason for the meeting is, the meeting should also be handled effectively. There is nothing more frustrating than to attend a meeting and find

out that the matter could have been handled via a teleconference or online platform. Meetings attendance and full attention during these meetings are also important. Respondent L shared an anecdote, during the interview that came to a shock to the researcher

'I know X so good, so when he went on a rant over this, I started reading my email...'

Respondent L

Active listening during meetings is crucial, especially during UMC meetings where executive deans form part of the meeting. This brings us to the question regarding social media that was raised during Round 2, was the merging and the managing of various social media channels discuss this during the meeting, and the stakeholders were not paying attention. Contrary to what was stated during Round 2 is the manner in how meetings conducted flawed. It became apparent that the problem with meetings is with the way meetings are held, too large groups and agendas and stakeholders not actively participating.

Respondent K boasted about the way meetings are handled in the respective department and believed that this is how meetings should be handled in general in order to be more effective

'I try to ask questions instead of just putting down agenda points. For example, instead of saying online teaching and learning methods, I will ask name five ways we can utilise online teaching and learning methods. This way, members are prepared and involved in the discussion, and the meeting can be effective and constructive.'

Respondent K

Meetings, whether it is a face-to-face meeting or conducted via an online platform, should be handled effectively. The effectiveness of meetings can also be jeopardised by the level of trust between the stakeholders. Trust is a result of building effective relationships. During the interviews, it was decided unanimously, that the fundamental building block of the faculty is the building of relationships and fostering of trust between staff members.

'The most important thing for me when looking at the communication model is the building of relationships, and managers should be visible on all the campuses.'

Respondent L

This **trust and relationships** affect various activities within an organisation. The levels of productivity can reduce significantly is that employees feel untrusted and unsafe within a work environment. Both intradepartmental interactions and interdepartmental interactions are essential within the communication model. Clear communication should be present between a line manager and the administrative officer, but also between the department and other departments.

‘It is also important for the staff members to trust us and feel comfortable to talk to you. I have a weekly session that I have, and it is an open invitation, if you want to talk about something, or want clarification on something, you can come and discuss it with me. This was created to build relationships to address rumours being spread. If I do not know about something, I cannot address it. The faculty management team has an open door policy.’

Respondent M

The question arises of how many staff members utilise these open door policy initiatives or is this where the rumour of favouritism was created. If the same staff members attend these sessions and get concessions, it could lead to the feeling of inequality.

6.6.1 Summary of Delphi Round 3

During the third round of Delphi, the focus was to determine how faculty management perceives communication towards the faculty’s staff members. In some instances, the same difficulties were experienced as by staff during the first two rounds of Delphi, and in other instances, the disparities between faculty management and faculty staff members perceptions.

The following was established during the third round of Delphi:

- Communication is a two-way process and that it is both the sender and the receiver's responsibility to ensure effective communication.
- There is not clear processes and procedures to when, what member of management should send out communication, and this is when confusion and duplication of messages occurs.
- The faculty management team is overwhelmed with emails and the number of meetings they need to attend. This leads to not actively listening during meetings, but

also that important matters do not get the attention they deserve, that can lead to additional/ other problems.

- There are hierarchy issues, and staff does not respond to the administrative staff members requests unless the faculty management member is copied into the request. This affects the implementation of activities and leads to deadlines being missed; and
- Faculty management is focused on establishing trust and relationships between staff members, as they place great importance to being visible on all campuses and ensuring staff knows they have an 'open door policy'.

However, there are several disparities between how faculty management thinks they are communication and how communication is actually taking place. The following section looks at these disparities between these different levels in the communication model.

6.6.2 Identifying the disparities between faculty management and the faculty staff members

As seen in Section 6.4.3 and 6.5.2 (the summary of Delphi Round 1 and 2), **staff members** on different levels are experiencing uncertainty regarding what is expected from them and what work should be done, resulting in uncertainty if the faculty and the university have formulated goals and measurements in place on how to meet these goals. Finally, there is uncertainty to whom they should report activities too.

Staff members feel marginalised and that activities are being centralised, causing a power struggle and departments working in silos. In addition to this, the perception is that messages are not cohesive and that in several instances, there is equality and favouritism between individuals and departments.

Staff members feel that there are too many communication mediums. The latter includes too many emails being sent out, duplication of messages, unclear directives and expecting activities to be completed in unrealistic timelines. It was argued that technology should be utilised better in order to communicate effectively with fewer mediums. Management school is also absorbed in a large number of meetings and travel between campuses that fill up their days, causing them not to attend to their core activities. It was also reasoned that by following correct protocol, many of the communication problems could be solved.

Staff members are disconnected as the interdepartmental and intradepartmental relationships are missing, this also causes friction between different colleagues. Strengthening relationships between colleagues can shape better teamwork, it can produce a sense of unity, and increase productivity. Having a good relationship with your manager is essential too, as relationships are the basis for trust in the workplace. Colleagues need to discuss matters about their working environment honestly with their manager, and by doing this, addressing the mistrust towards management and the university system.

As seen in Section 6.6.1 (the summary of Delphi Round 3), **the faculty management's** communication strategy places importance on building relationships and trust within the faculty. The faculty management invested a lot of time into travelling between the different campus, so staff members can get to know them and build trust. The faculty management also motivates staff members to communicate problems with them, as they believe in an 'open door' policy.

The management acknowledged that they are also overwhelmed by the number of emails being sent and realises that technology needs to be utilised better to facilitate communication. The faculty is currently using a wide range of communication mediums including emails, Skype, WhatsApp and video conferencing facilities.

The visible communication disparities are the first difference that was identified is that manager is spending a significant amount of time on developing relationships and trust. This might affect the school management/research director level, but these initiatives are not filtering down to the staff members. As indicated in Round 1 of Delphi, the staff members are disconnected from one another. The reason for this gap is that it is easier to build a relationship with a smaller amount of people. The deanery consists out of four people, and the six schools have 27 management members. It is feasible for the deanery to meet with directors and deputy directors frequently. The problem occurs when a school with 90 plus members on different campuses needs to get together. The challenges are thus to create innovative situations where smaller groups can build relationships, but still have functions for all staff members to interact with one another.

The second challenge regarding the building of relationships and trust is that the support staff members do not feel trusted nor supported. This is problematic as support staff

members are the managers of the management teams' offices, the lack of trust may have a direct influence organisational buy-in and productivity.

Another gap that was identified was that there is no protocol when it comes to the way messages are relayed. It was indicated in both rounds 2 and 3 that in several cases the executive dean would communicate to school directors directly, causing confusion. The latter also caused directives to become unclear, which filtered down to other staff members.

Similarly, was the issue of uncertainty regarding roles, tasks and reporting lines. Members of the team must know exactly what is expected from them and how they fit into the intricate part of the system. Moreover, managers can only provide support to staff members if they know and familiarise them with the respective staff members. Staff members get lost in the system when they have two reporting lines because the one assumes the staff member is taken care of by the other manager.

In addition to this, the university needs to clarify specific terms within the more prominent structure. The uncertainty on exactly what these terms means causes that goals are not achieved. These terms include unitary system, alignment, operational reporting lines, strategic reporting lines, and the re-evaluation of what their core business is and how staff can go about to achieve these goals.

In general, emails are seen as a problem, but the lack of protocol in how messages are being sent only adds to this immense amount of emails being sent. It was further noted that with each school, the faculty and the university having communication mediums in place, this could easily lead to over-communication and duplication of messages. The faculty, in conjunction with the schools, should establish the communication mediums they want to use, and the need for each of the communication mediums. If staff members receive a combination of the university's communication, the faculty's communication, and the schools' communication that is targeted and has a purpose, the goals can easier be achieved.

Even so, it is still the faculty management, the school management team and research director's responsibility to filter messages that are being sent, ensuring that once communication is sent out to staff members, the directives are clear. Staff members

should not be involved in resolving and interpreting the directives from management. They need clear guidelines on what is expected of them.

In addition to this, the faculty should pay attention to provide feedback to staff members on issues related to tasks and daily activities regularly. Feedback will enable staff members to analyse it they are still in line with the goals and to re-evaluate and adapt if they are not. Feedback will also enable staff members to improve their performance and find possible solutions for possible problems.

Even though the faculty is currently utilising technology, it is not optimally being utilised, and staff members are also not empowered or equipped to use these messages effectively. There are multiple mediums available, and the faculty should identify the mediums they want to use and ensure that staff members are trained and equipped to use these mediums.

6.7 ALL RISKS PRESENT IN THE COMMUNICATION MODEL

Section 5-3 described the risks visible due to the changes faced with regard to the communication model. Table 6-2 presents all the risks present in the communication level if it is not adjusted. The risks identified in chapter 5, is listed again and the risks as identified during the rounds of Delphi, provided. These risks are highlighted in red.

Table 6-2 All risks present in the communication model

UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT	
<p>Challenge1: Important message by the management teams are not being filtered through to the correct faculties, schools and university staff.</p>	<p>Risk 1: The risk arises the uncertainty and confusion are caused due to unclear directives or now understanding what the goal/ objectives of the task are. This can affect tasks to be completed on time and correctly, indirectly affecting productivity.</p> <p>Risk 2: If essential messages and directives do not reach the staff members, goals will not be reached. The risk is that the university's core activities not being up to standard. The risk is that the university can lose its competitive advantage, and that stakeholders can start to question the quality of services offered.</p> <p>Risk 3: The UMC's lack of communication being filtered through also poses the risk that staff members don't see the management team as transparent, affecting the confidence and trust staff members have in the management team and their ability to govern the university. This will also affect organisational buy-in.</p>

Additional risks determined on University management level:

Challenge 2: It was mentioned that there is a mistrust in the management and university systems; In addition to this, the opinion is that system is centralised not integrated.

Risk 4: According to Han *et al.* (2014), trust in an organisation is evaluated by looking at the organisation's management teams reputation, based on past experience. Hurley (2006) further add that a distrustful environment leads to expensive and sometimes problems. Companies that do not foster a trusting culture will have a high retention rate, and employees will not want to work in a full distrust environment. On the other hand, companies that foster a trusting environment and culture will have an advantage of talented employees, because no one would choose to work in a stressful, unproductive environment

Risk 5: In addition to this, without trust between stakeholders, relationships cannot be built. Mann (2018) believes that people who have a friend at work or get along good with colleagues are seven times more likely to be engaged in their jobs. Therefore, not having relationships present in the work environment will affect staff retention rates and productivity.

Challenge 3: It was also determined that a definition needed on terms alignment, unitary in order to understand goals and directives.

Risk 6: The risk with the system being centralised in a unitary system, as it will result in staff members feeling marginalised and unimportant. In addition to this, when staff members feel marginalised, they will not be effective or innovative. This will result in teaching and learning activities to stagnate, and the university

	<p>not being relevant in the current market, thus affecting the quality of the programmes and courses.</p> <p>Risk 7: It is important to determine essential terms that can affect the achievement of goals, without defining and understanding these terms can lead to uncertainty, tasks not being completed successfully or not achieving them at all.</p>
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FACULTY MANAGEMENT

<p>Challenge 1: Communication is not prompt, and important deadlines are missed, or the faculty management staff set unrealistic deadlines. Emails are not being prioritised and are not being addressed.</p>	<p>Risk 1: The risk of not communicating in a timely fashion the management is not setting an example to staff members. If they are not responding promptly, they cannot expect staff members to respond timely, therefore creating a culture of delayed responses is acceptable. This has a chain reaction as this hinders the flow of communication, the meeting of deadlines and goals and consequently, productivity.</p> <p>Risk 2: The risk arises that staff members are not informed about important decisions affecting their day-to-day activities, causing them to feel unimportant and invaluable.</p>
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Challenge 2: Not prioritising emails due to the vast amount of communication received.

Risk 3: Emails not being prioritised can cause confusion, and work being done twice. For example, decisions on brochures have already been made, and the work to complete this task has already been done. Then communication or instructions are sent out contradicting the decisions already made. Thus, the risk is being unproductive, wasting effort and time on doing tasks again, and managers can be undermined on a decision they have already made damaging relationships.

Risk 4: Another risk with not prioritising emails or ineffectively prioritising emails is that important tasks, which might not seem important to management, can be missed. For example, the updating of the website, or creating od marketing procures. The risk is that if the wrong information is communicated to prospective students, it can be seen as false advertising, resulting in integrity to be questioned. Another risk is that prospective students can start to wonder that if the university cannot get communication on the internet to be correct, how will they be able to teach. So, also starting to question the ability of staff members to teach and guilty of services offered.

Challenge 3: Assuming that deputy deans, school management teams or research directors will attend to a situation and not creating clear goals, directives and timelines.

Risk 5: A risk with assuming that school management/research directors are taking responsibility for activities, may result in either these management members being overworked or tasks not being completed.

Additional risks determined on faculty management level

Challenge 4: Role clarification and reporting lines clarification needed.

Risk 6: Uncertainty causes, decrease work engagement which leads to decreased productivity. However, uncertainty is not only harmful to the organisation but also for employees, as it leads to stress anxiety and higher absentee levels (Baas, 2018). If staff members are uncertain what needs to be done and to whom they need to report to, they can become anxious and stressed. Staff members that have more than one reporting line can also easily be missed as they do not have a place to fit into.

Challenge 5: Too many communication types and channels and ineffective communication (this included the email system, duplication of messages,

Risk 7: The risk of ineffective communication mediums, unclear directives and conflicting messages being sent to them, results in staff members meeting uncertain and not being able to achieve goals.

lack in feedback; unclear directives and better use of technology-based mediums);

Risk 8: The risk of having too many communication media is that messages can easily be duplicated, but then again, staff can also ignore messages due to the risk of duplication.

Risk 9: Another risk with regard to this is that communication that is not targeted, is not addressing the audience it is intended for, so staff do not see or understand the importance of the messages being sent.

Challenge 6: Unclear directives and conflicting messages;

Risk 9: Not providing feedback or information to the staff members that might affect their daily activities, will result in uncertainty, lack in organisational buy-in to implement these changes and distrust in the management systems.

SCHOOL & RESEARCH UNIT MANAGEMENT

Challenge 1: These managers can delegate tasks to staff members who are not equipped to handle the task. In addition to these tasks are being signed off without getting the proper attention.

Risk 1: The same risks regarding answering emails in a timely fashion, and email prioritisation as the faculty management team. However, if school management/research directors are uncertain and they send the information to the rest of the staff, it is more even more difficulties for staff members to understand what the directives and goals are. The reasons for this are that it now

	<p>needs to be determined by two managers/reporting lines, also causing bureaucracy and even a power struggle.</p> <p>Risk 2: Tasks being delegated to staff members not qualify to do the work, resulting in work done incorrectly that can lead to various consequences like the quality of project and courses being questioned, the university's staff can look incompetent, and gossip between staff members can occur damaging relationships.</p>
<p>Challenge 2: Directors, who are also acting as deputy director, cannot attend to urgent matters as their attention spilt on various tasks. The latter creates a backlog in communication and essential matters that directors should attend to are missed or are neglected.</p>	<p>Risk 3: If managers are not tending to emails, or situations effectively and timely, it may cause staff members to feel that their problems or situations are not necessary, affecting the happiness of the employees and lead to a decrease in productivity.</p>
<p>Additional risks determined on school and research unit management level</p>	
<p>Challenge 3: Amount of meeting that needs to be attended and the travelling between campuses.</p>	<p>Risk 4: The risk in this level is that, if managers are attending to many meetings they (i) will not have time to do actual tasks/work on their tables (ii) they might be in numerous meetings where the same issues are discussed, causing them not to</p>

	<p>pay attention and maybe making uninformed decisions, which can result in their schools or units being negatively influenced.</p> <p>Risk 5: In addition to this is the amount of travelling that is undertaken by directors to be visible on the different campuses of the university's different campuses is (i) time being lost to do actual work, so affects the productivity of these members, and (ii) it is expensive to travel between the campuses.</p>
<p>Challenge 4: Relationships between staff members are lacking creating staff members to operate disconnected from one another.</p>	<p>Risk 6: If staff members in the schools, even if they are on a different campus, do not have good working relationships teamwork will not be possible causing (i) programmes not to be aligned, meaning that programmes are not equal (ii) goals and objectives cannot be meant, and (iii) friction can occur between staff members, resulting in unhappy staff members.</p>
<p>LECTURERS</p>	
<p>Challenge 1: Lecturers can be involved in different activities within the faculty different activities (teaching and learning, research, community</p>	<p>Risk 1: The main risk on this level is that messages can be duplicated and also that contradicting directives can be received. This cause confusion, goals not being addressed which can reflect in the output of the university. In addition to</p>

engagement and/or with a business unit), the chances of them receiving duplicated messages are high, a chance also exists that the emails received are contradictory.

this, if the staff is juggling activities, it can mean that they are not producing quality, and this can harm production and the reputation of the university.

Risk 2: Staff members receiving too many emails/ information can lead to them not reading the communication sent. This results in staff not being up to date and not acting in the best interest of the university. For example, should the university go through a rebranding, and staff are not reading their emails, the incorrect branding can be used.

Challenge 2: Staff is uncertain as to who their reporting lines are and what tasks should be a priority.

Risk 3: Staff being uncertain of their reporting lines can affect productivity, as they will be uncertain of their KPI. They will also be multitasking to ensure the jobs of the different managers are completed.

Challenge 3: Alignment of programmes across the campuses can influence the quality of programmes and activities.

Risk 4: The quality of the programmes can be in jeopardy, directly affecting the university's reputation.

SUPPORTING UNITS

<p>Challenge 1: Supporting units send out messages are not targeted and sent out to everyone Directives are not clear that creates uncertainty about who should take responsibility or what is expected from them.</p>	<p>Risk 1: Messages that are sent to everyone that is not targeted creates uncertainty of who should take responsibility for the task at hand, resulting in tasks not being completed. This can firstly, result in lower outputs and lower income, as well as the quality and standards of the programmes offered can be jeopardised, because the directive is not clear.</p> <p>Risk 2: This can also create a culture that staff will delete messages, as they will see it as unimportant.</p>
<p>Challenge 2: Uncertainty regarding the roles of liaison officers, causing them to be underutilised. Feeling overwhelmed, undervalued and unimportant.</p>	<p>Risk 3: Uncertain staff members are unhappy that will lead to lower organisational buy-in, higher staff turn around and lower productivity.</p> <p>Risk 4: In addition to this, uncertain staff will not go the extra mile and take the initiative, resulting in programmes/ activities stagnating.</p>
<p>Challenge 3: The lack of role clarifications can cause tension between staff members, as people might be working in each other's areas.</p>	<p>Risk 5: Uncertain Staff members are unhappy that will lead to lower organisational buy-in, higher staff turn around and lower productivity.</p>

	<p>Risk 6: In addition to this, uncertain staff will not go the extra mile and take the initiative, resulting in programmes/ activities stagnating.</p>
<p>Additional risks determined on lecturer and support staff level</p>	
<p>Challenge 4: Staff members feeling they are dispensable, invaluable and marginalised.</p>	<p>Risk 7: If staff members are feeling invaluable, the retention rate of staff members will be very high, as staff members will not stay long at a company that does not value them.</p> <p>If staff members are unhappy, they will tend to be less productive, affecting the profit of the organisation.</p>

Source: Researcher’s own compilation

6.8 HOW THE CORONAVIRUS VALIDATED THE CHALLENGES FACED WITH THE COMMUNICATION MODEL

During the interview administration of the faculty management team, South Africa, as so many countries worldwide have been disrupted by the SARS-CoV-2 (also known as COVID-19 pandemic). The virus has spread across the globe, not just affecting individuals, but it has caused a global economic slowdown and constrained even the most advanced of healthcare systems. This disease caused separation from people's workplaces and friends (Young, 2020).

It is necessary to indicate the problems that were experienced with the communication model during this time, as it validates several of the problems that were discussed in different rounds of Delphi.

The first announcement made by the President of South Africa was that the government had declared a national state of disaster amid the Covid-19 crisis. The Disaster Management Act of 2002 enables the government to execute specific arrangements and adjustment to regulations. One of these regulations saw that preschool, primary, and high schools were ordered to close, and the president announced that the minister of higher education would be in discussions with tertiary institutions. However, hours before the president made the announcement a student at a Johannesburg university was tested positive for this virus. This saw various HEIs calling off contact sessions until further notice.

The university under consideration in this study, sent out messages that evening stating that contact sessions will proceed as planned and further information will follow shortly. Only two days after the national disaster was announced, did the university make a statement on how they will manage this situation. The statement, however, did not address the fears that staff was experiencing, and as a lockdown was not yet implemented, the staff was required to go to the office.

The minister of higher education, Dr Bonginkosi Emmanuel (also known as "Blade") Nzimande, then made a statement that all universities will be closed, and the university being studied made a statement motivating staff members who can work remotely to do so (Chothia, 2020)

'The first message that was sent out regarding the option to work from home was frowned upon from my director. He also only communicated to his staff a couple of days later on the subject. It was as if he did not agree with what the university decided. It felt like we were left in the dark and that our safety was not a priority. The 'ethic of care' factor was definitely missing.'

Respondent S

Even though this decision was made by the minister of higher education in some departments staff members, already anxious was forced to hand in a letter from a doctor if they wanted to work from home

'I had to hand in a doctor's letter if I wanted to work from home. You cannot imagine the vibe that was in the office, and we are scared, uncertain about the future, not able to work. And we were forced to stay in an environment where we felt unsafe. The management does not care about us, and they only care about the outputs we need to deliver.'

Respondent T

As the situation worsened, South Africa witnessed an unprecedented 21-day lockdown that was extended to a further 14 days. In the hopes to compact the virus and flatten this pandemic's infection rate in South Africa. In order to try and salvage the academic year, the university decided to provide students with online teaching and learning. During the planning and implementation phase directives was unclear and confusing.

One communication that was sent out indicating that the academic programme will commence on the 17 of April, communication went out on 19 of April that this date has been extended to 30 April. This communication did not provide clear guidelines, as different faculties provided staff with different orders on how to handle this situation. In addition to this, staff members who are also experiencing the frustrations and frustration of lockdown worked extremely hard to plan the continuation of the curriculum. The constant change in implementation, not only causes frustration but causes teams to reevaluate and redo this task again in order to ensure alignment, influencing productivity.

'The problem was that instructions would be communicated, which would change the next moment. What I have a problem with, was that different levels of management would communicate different messages at the same time. XX will be saying that online teaching and learning would only commence after the end of April while XX would say it starts earlier. Very confusing.'

Respondent BB

Staff members started to feel that management does not have a handle on this situation and that there is a problem in the management system as there is no responsible party that takes charge of the situation.

'Too many cooks spoil the broth. Nobody wants to take responsibility and make decisions. It is a back and forth situation. Yesterday I pleased with them just to decide on the June examinations so that we can plan accordingly.'

Respondent U'

Respondent V added to this by stating

'One thing is communicated on this day and then tomorrow, the arrangements change again. Honestly, I think we looked a bit like fools in our communication to the students. I am sure that the students could pick up on the conflicting/confusing communication that we have received and the communication gaps/problems at our university. Another thing, very often, the students receive communication before the staff, and then they are the ones that inform us of what is going on.'

In addition to this, unrealistic deadlines were highlighted during the lockdown period, as Respondent Z elaborates

'...now we are expected to be on WhatsApp at all times with messages coming through even on weekends. While I understand that this is a massively difficult time, it is unrealistic to expect that I can fill in all forms at the drop of a hat. As a pertinent example, just yesterday, I received an email at 12h29 and was told I needed to reply by 14h00. I was busy with a WhatsApp class and then a Zoom class afterwards. No one under normal circumstances would have walked into my actual classroom and told me to answer an email, yet it feels as if I am expected to keep my students waiting while I answer management's communication.'

Although the university tried to facilitate excellent communication by creating a website for staff members where all relevant information was loaded, there was a lack of cohesive messaging regarding how to handle the crises faced.

'Managers communicate more regularly using eFundi, but top management overrides previous communication and decisions.'

Respondent Y

The following themes were thus emphasised during the Covid-19 pandemic:

- Distrust in the university management and the university system.
- Staff members feeling they are dispensable and not valuable.
- Unclear directives and conflicting messages.
- It is possible to have productive meetings by utilising online platforms.
- Other ways of communicating have been utilised, and this includes the effective use of the intranet.
- That alignment is not always possible, on some campuses the problems faced with regard to online teaching and learning is less than on other campuses, meaning that they can proceed with the academic programme. The problems faced on some of the other campuses are more severe and acquires additional measures and support to be provided to ensure students can continue with the planned curriculum.
- Relationships between staff members are more critical than ever.

6.9 DELPHI ROUND 4

During the final round of Delphi, the suggested changes to the conceptual model were presented to a panel of support staff members, lecturers and faculty management members, as well as to members of the corporate communications team (refer to addenda G). After that, the researcher determined their perceptions regarding the adjusted conceptual model. Where needed further adjustments were made to the conceptual model until the end-user agreement was obtained. The respondent accepted most of the changes stating that:

'It is an excellent first step in the right direction. The culture or vibe currently at the university is not a place where people care about each other. If the atmosphere is more warm and friendly, and people care about each other, people will automatically go the extra mile as they did in the past. Staff want to feel appreciated for the daily work they do.'

Respondent Q

Respondent Z added to this by stating

'I think the above suggestions have much promise. I would suggest also getting academics' input on Teaching and Learning decisions before implementing them. It sometimes seems that those who are making decisions about this are out of touch with what it means actually to be lecturing.'

The only change that was not accepted by the respondents was change number 9. The belief is that a campaign will not rectify the feeling of centralisation and marginalisation. In order to address this culture issue, an in-depth investigation will need to take place to determine why staff members feel this way and what led to them feeling this way. Once the origin of these issues is determined, can the university management teams can begin to address these issues. However, suggested changes will include

- Ensuring management members, are represented on all the sites of delivering.
- Moving the university's management team members, so they are not seated on any of the campuses. The office of the university management and senate should be seen as a head office of a corporate organisation that wants all its stores to perform equally, and also providing each of its stores with the same infrastructure, opportunities and funding.
- By ensuring each campus still, research news relevant to the specific campus will ensure that staff members feel safe and more at home. This also creates the opportunity to celebrate achievements on each campus, creating a caring and productive environment.
- A focus should be placed on breaking down silos, and departments need to understand that they are all working towards achieving a common goal and being a globally competitive institution, delivering world-class graduates.

During this round most of the changes were accepted with minor adjustments:

Change 1: The researcher believes that it would be beneficial if the line managers on all levels have a weekly session with their administrative officers to discuss the week ahead, ensuring that everyone is on the same page and that the goals for the next two weeks/month are clear and achievable. The latter will also ensure that administrative officers will be able to assist others if there might be uncertainty and streamline the process to get the assignment completed.

'This might pose challenges as the directors not always have a complete list of what should be done, making it difficult to set up a 'to do' list a week in advance. Nevertheless, this would help if this could be done as far as possible.'

Respondent V

The research suggests that another layer is worked into this change, that faculty managers also have a weekly or bi-weekly deanery meeting in the beginning, in order to determine priorities, tasks and activities. After that, an update can be sent to the school management team and the research directors, in order for the members to do their planning.

'Improved communication between research and school directors. This can be achieved through regular meetings. Create an online management information system where all information is captured. This would avoid repeated requests for the same information.'

Respondent Y

These changes might seem time-consuming, but on the long run, it will ensure that adequate planning is done for tasks, minimise of unrealistic deadlines, and will ensure that clear directives are given to ensure that staff knows what is to be done, by when and to whom it should be sent. By effectively completing objectives, the universities strategic and operational goals will be met, positively influencing the profit margin.

Another benefit to this change is that staff members will be able to work more closely together, ensuring that work is not being duplicated. This change will also ensure that staff from management, whether faculty, school management teams or research directors, are more in contact with one another. This will not only ensure that staff are not disconnected, but will enable staff to start working together to achieve a common goal.

Change 5: Better use of technology, such as utilising video calling facilities and illuminating unnecessary travelling. Another suggestion included using a pop-up desktop notification system to communicate important messages. In addition to the latter, it was stated that the staff intranet should be up to date so that it can be better utilised for communication purposes. It was also noted that staff members want to be able to 'opt-out' of communication that is not relevant to them.

'Pop-up messages are not likely to be a possibility soon due to IT restrictions. My suggestion would be to rather ensure that email and messaging protocols are such that staff immediately know when something is significant by the use of certain keywords in subject lines and by the person who sends. For example, email directly from the dean, the subject line includes the word "Urgent)". Such mails must not be overused.'

Respondent W

In addition to this, it was noted that IT systems already in places like Nextcloud and Google platforms should be utilised better, and then sending out a daily message notifying that there are new items to be viewed. The latter is precisely what has been happening in the Covi-19 pandemic, and proofs to be successful.

A further suggestion was to integrate **Changes 6 and 3**, by stating that:

Planning should be done for the upcoming week, month and at least three months. This culture of planning should be endorsed by all management members. As in the case of defining terms unitary and alignment, the term culture should be defined. It was noted that the faculty management members should decide what they want to achieve, what type of culture they want to create, and also ensure it is in line with the university's culture.

A culture of etiquette, including email etiquette, should be followed and endorsed by all members of the faculty, not just management team members. In addition to this, it is suggested that clarification should be provided on who is responsible for these changes, what is needed for this change to happen and by when should it be done.

The researcher, therefore, decided that this change should run parallel with change 1. The planning should be done by all management members, whether faculty, school management, subject chairs or research directors. A plan, with clear directives, should be available for staff members, to see how KPI can be met as well as the strategic and operational goals of the unit, school and faculty.

Secondly, by creating a template, the question of what is needed to implement this change is addressed. The research is of the opinion that faculty management often overcomplicates tasks, and less is more. In Table 6-3, a suggested action plan was created and the sections marked with a double x (XX), refers to the responsible party's name to be included.

Table 6-3 Suggested planning framework

Faculty management	School management	Subject chairs	Research directors
<p>Goal: Handing in of June exam papers.</p> <p>Responsible party: XX</p> <p>Deadline Date: XX</p>	<p>School communicate the deadlines for examination papers to be handed in.</p> <p>Provide a date</p> <p>The format/template</p> <p>Recourses if help is required.</p> <p>Responsible party: XX</p> <p>Each school deputy school director to report on XX that all is completed.</p>	<p>Communicate this to respective staff members</p> <p>Assist with the meeting of the deadlines and ensuring alignment of the papers.</p> <p>Responsible party: XX</p> <p>Set deadlines and who is responsible for what.</p>	<p>No action needed, please take note that this is a priority for XX. Please do not overwhelm staff with unnecessary workload.</p>

Source: Researcher’s own compilation

Changes 1, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13 should be grouped into formatting proper structures and clarification of roles.

‘Also, all communication from the dean can go through the director/s, and they can filter messages. Either/or options do not work, and messages are duplicated or ignored because the one-party thinks the other party will tend to it.’

Respondent Y

Respondent V elaborated on this by stating

‘If communication should be sent out urgently, or communication that should reach every one anyway the deans should also be able to send it directly to everyone and not send it to the

director, which sends it to the deputy director, which sends it to the programme leader, who sends it to the lecturers (for example). This would help with speeding up the communication process.'

If this route is followed, the planning done in Table 6-3, will be crucial, as a staff member will need to know what is the goals, to who is responsible, to whom should they report that the task is completed and by when. It should be noted that Respondent M thought that the most significant issues arise when communication lines. Consequently, the faculty management team will need to decide on an option best-suited for the managerial style, in line with the culture of the faculty and the best choice they will ensure goals are met.

The researcher believes that there should be clear guidelines on downward communication and directives. When what is sent by the deans and what is the rest of the management team's responsibility. It is also essential to ensure staff knows about the correct method for upwards communication or feedback channels. This will ensure that management is not bombarded with irrelevant emails and addresses the challenge to the communication model faced by Respondent J, on following the correct protocols.

Change 14 was just elaborated on by stating that managers should screen and filter of messages, before sending to staff members. The latter will illuminate different instructions being sent out or staff members being included in unnecessary emails. Management should first decide on the importance of communication before forwarding it to staff, and the same messages being sent by parties and then forwarded by management results in excessive emails, overloaded inboxes and then missing important information due to having to filter through so many emails.

The following suggested changes was suggested to create a printable document for each school, department and faculty to stimulate the flow of information.

6.9.1 Conceptual communication model for implementation

After four rounds of Delphi, end-user agreement was established on the changes that should be made to the conceptual communication model in order to be effective and mitigate the reputational risks identified.

Change 1: Faculty managers also have a weekly/ bi-weekly deanery meeting in the beginning, in order to determine priorities, tasks and activities. After that, an update can be sent to the school management team and the research directors, in order for the members to do their planning. After that, line managers on all levels have a weekly session with their administrative officers to discuss the week ahead, ensuring that everyone is on the same page and that the goals for the next two weeks/month are clear and achievable.

Change 2: Planning should be done for the upcoming week, month and at least three months. This culture of planning should be endorsed by all management members. As in the case of defining terms unitary and alignment, the term culture should be defined. It was noted that the faculty management members should decide what they want to achieve, what type of culture they want to create, and also ensure it is in line with the university's culture. A culture of etiquette, including email etiquette, should be followed and endorsed by all members of the faculty, not just management team members. In addition to this, it is suggested that clarification should be provided on who is responsible for these changes, what is needed for this change to happen and by when should it be done. Secondly, by creating a template task will be easy to understand a measurable (See Table 6-2).

Change 3: Better use of technology, such as utilising video calling facilities and illuminating unnecessary travelling. In addition to the latter, it was stated that the staff intranet should be up to date so that it can be better utilised for communication purposes. It was also noted that staff members want to be able to 'opt-out' of communication that is not relevant to them. In addition to this, it was noted that IT systems already in places like Next cloud and google platforms should be utilised better, and then sending out a daily message notifying that there are new items to be viewed.

Change 4: An in-depth investigation will need to take place to determine why staff members feel this way and what led to them feeling this way. Once the origin of these issues is determined, can the university management teams can begin to address these issues.

Change 5: A proper management structure needs to be put into place, and transparent clarification of roles is needed. The following questions need to be addressed by the faculty management team:

- Who is responsible for what activity/portfolio?
- How should communication look within the Deanery?
- How will we communicate to staff? (Set up clear guidelines addressing the questions who, what, when were, and how)

Change 6: Decide on a transparent protocol system for downward and upward, communicate this system and enforce it.

Change 7: Where possible standardise documentation and procedures within schools and research units.

Change 8 Management should first decide on the importance of communication before forwarding it to staff, and the same messages being sent by parties and then forwarded by management results in excessive emails, overloaded inboxes and then missing important information due to having to filter through so many emails.

Change 9 Management teams on all levels should pay attention to the building of positive and productive working relationships between employees within the faculty on every level of the communication mode, irrespective of where the employees are situated. Research should be done to find innovative and creative ways to build relationships, where all generation's needs will be addressed. During these sessions, working guidelines can also be established between colleagues.

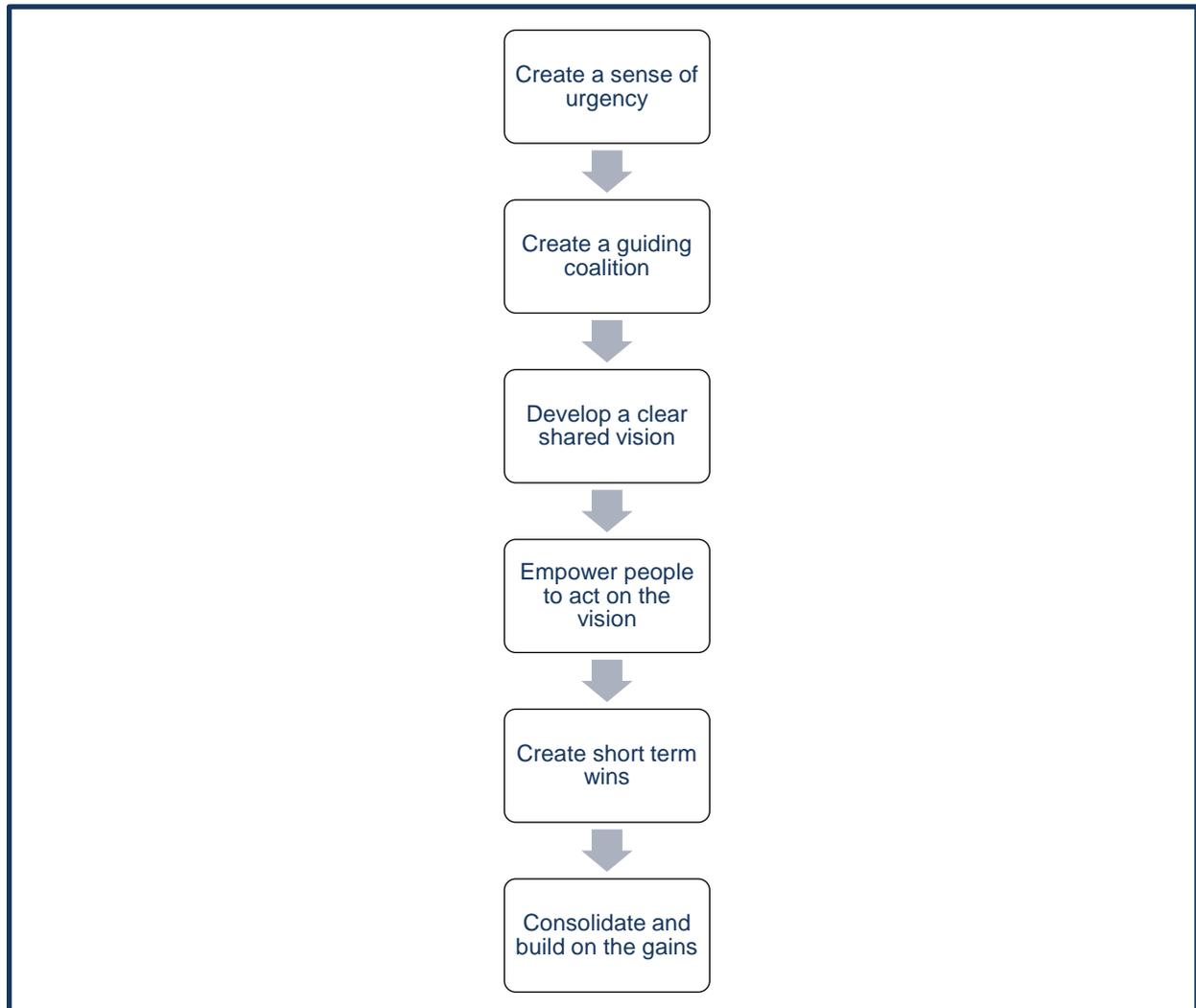
6.9.2 Implementation of conceptual communication model

The ideal will be to get faculty management on board and to convince them that the change will be beneficial and have a positive effect on the productivity and outputs of the faculty. *Respondent AA* thought that

'For successful implementation, management buy-in and sustained commitment are needed. Communication structures need to be practised on the faculty management level before they can be adopted successfully in Schools and Departments. I also suggest that changes happen in phases'

However, management might be reluctant to accept that there is a better way, so the suggestion is to identify a school that is willing to change and to implement the adapted John Kotter's model for change (Gligorovski, 2018; Pollack & Pollack, 2015; Stragalas, 2010).

Figure 6-5 Suggested implementation model for change



Source: Adapted from Gligorovski (2018).

During the first step of implementation, as indicated in Figure 6-5, it helps is the entire faculty wants it. This study identified that there is a need to create a useful communication model. This step also involves finding a possible method of making it possible for stakeholders to let go of the old patterns. It will take strong leadership or highly motivated champions for change, to drive the initial phases and show the impact the changes can have on other stakeholders and motivating them to follow suit. These champions can be any leaders within the faculty and do not necessarily follow the traditional hierarchy

structure. Therefore, it can be argued that step two is identifying a team of members who will support the implementation of the suggested changes to the communication model (Gligorovski, 2018; Stragalas, 2010).

The third step is creating a vision or plan for change, which will involve getting back to the faculty's core business. The first change will involve defining terms like alignment, unitary and what the faculty sees as their core business. After that, time should be spent on determining and defining the different roles and takes within the faculty, as well as who is responsible for communication to be sent out. After this is done, the faculty can start with implementing small changes, like email etiquette and building of relationships (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2012; Calder, 2013; Chappell *et al.*, 2016).

During the next steps, it is important to empower staff members to be able to adjust to the suggested changes and identify any obstacles that might reduce the chances of success. These obstacles can include individuals, traditions, legislations or physical obstacles. Once the obstacles have been identified, find possible solutions (Mento *et al.*, 2002; Rose, 2002; Sidorko, 2008).

Nothing motivates employees more than success, so showcase the victories or impact the changes brought about. It is essential in step five that stakeholders see the quick wins, without this, critics or those not fully on board with the change process might hurt the change process. Quick wins are good, but a victory that the success change project succeeded should not be declared too early, change takes time. It is important to ensure that the changes made becomes permanent, and the new habit. Make a continuous effort to ensure that the changes and the impact of the changes are seen. It should become part of the faculty's culture (Auguste, 2013; Calder, 2013; Mento *et al.*, 2002; Pfeifer *et al.*, 2005; Sidorko, 2008; Smith, 2011).

6.9.3 How will the conceptual model mitigate reputational risks?

In order to mitigate risks, the nature of the risk, and the triggers that may cause risk exposure should be understood. This is what this study set out to do, acknowledging communication as a reputational risk (see Section 3.10). This study further set out to determine a risk management process (see Section 2.6). Then the study determined the risk prominent in the communication model present in the academic faculty being studied.

Managers on all levels must recognise the impact reputation has on successes, by acknowledging risks and effective management process can be integrated with the core management processes, which will assist in the facilitating of these risks (Deloach, 2017).

Effective planning, standardisation, utilising technology, adhering and endorsing policies and procedures the likelihood or severity of unplanned events that can cause reputational damage is reduced. This assumption made by (Webb, 2019), is per the changes that are suggested to the conceptual communication model. In essence, the changes are to create structure, set out a protocol for staff members to follow, and ensure that tasks and roles are clearly defined to ensure the goals can be achieved.

In addition to this, by ensuring effective and clear communication roles, channels and flow, better information will be provided to staff and management members in order to strategic planning and make informed decisions. Similarly, planning reduces the likelihood of unpleasant and sometimes very costly surprises to arise, causing harm to the faculty and university(Harrison, 2019).

Staff will know what is expected from them, what and how goals should be achieved and will be presented with realistic deadlines. The structure provided by the communication process will also ensure that staff members know what the priority, from whom they can receive directives are, and whom to contact should they be struggling or be unhappy.

This leads to the most overlooked reputational risk of all, the disgruntled workforce. Martinuzzi and Freedman (2009) are of the opinion that nobody is more knowledgeable, informed and experienced, about your company's activities, culture and practices than current and past employees. The communication model attempts to inform employees, to ensure all employees, schools and divisions are treated equally and that trusts management and university systems. Utilising effective online communication will also strengthen stakeholder relationships, engagement and building of social capital for the business (Aula, 2011).

All these changes will affect the productivity of staff members, enabling them to produce relevant and globally recognised graduates and researcher. External stakeholders, companies and peers will see the works of the university in high regards, and this will ensure a favourable reputation.

6.10 CONCLUSION

The data collection for this study was done by means of conducting **interviews and focus groups**, that was audio-recorded and **transcribed verbatim**. The researcher also made notes of non-verbal communication during these interview sessions. The first –level categories were based on the main findings of the communication audit report, and the culture report. The data obtained was analysed by using **ATLAS.ti 8.0**, and **initial codes** were assigned to words and phrases of importance as the interviews and focus group's that lead to the revisiting initial coding. **Modified codes** were then organised into categories and concepts according to the most informative or logical manner of sorting

During the **first round of Delphi**, focus groups were held with support staff members and lecturers of the faculty. The **second round of Delphi** was conducted with faculty management members. The **third round of Delphi** saw interviews with faculty management members. After each of these rounds, data was transcribed, and **changes were made to the conceptual communication model**. It was established that the challenges faced are not with the model itself, but **with the manner, in which the model is implemented**. Most solutions provided are aimed at assisting management in implementing the model effectively.

During the interview administration of the faculty management team, South Africa, as so many countries worldwide have been disrupted by the **SARS-Cov-2**. It is necessary to indicate the problems that were experienced with the communication model during this time, as it **validates several of the problems** that were discussed in different rounds of Delphi.

The last section of this chapter provided a **summary of the challenges faced** with the current communication model and the risks associated with these challenges. A **suggested conceptual model for implementation** within the faculty was discussed and was presented to a panel of experts until the **end-user agreement** was established.

Chapter 7 provides a summary of this study and evaluate if the primary and secondary objective of this study have been met. The researcher also discusses the limitations of this study and elaborate on future research possibilities.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this research study was to develop a conceptual communication model designed for HEIs in order to mitigate reputational risk. This study focused on creating a conceptual communication model by reviewing the literature and available documentation of the relevant university and academic faculty. Information on how the conceptual model can be improved was gathered from stakeholders, willing to share their insights, perceptions and understanding about the current communication model and provide possible solutions to solve the challenges faced.

Chapter 7 concludes this study by describing how the theoretical and empirical objectives as set out in Chapter 1 was met. This chapter also provides recommendations on the implementation of the conceptual communication model, and the limitations experienced during the study.

7.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEWS

This section provides a summary of how communication and reputational risk are linked to one another and why a communication model is needed to mitigate communication within the higher education sector.

7.2.1 Risk and risk management literature review summary

The first theoretical objective of this research study was to establish a theoretical framework for reputation and reputational risk within the higher education context. This was achieved in Chapter 2 of this study.

Chapter 2 pointed out that the term risk has no single definition and that each individual and organisation will have its own views on risk. However, the term risk implies that there is a probability for any organisation to suffer loss or harm due to an undesirable event that occurred.

In addition to understanding the term risk, the chapter set out to provide an understanding of the classifications and elements of risk. The latter also created the understanding that

risks form part of our daily lives, and that no one is excluded from being at risk, this includes higher educational institutions. Without taking these classifications and elements into consideration, a HEI will not be able to create an effective risk management plan.

The types of risks within an organisation was discussed, dividing it into two types of risks, namely financial and non-financial. A financial risk focuses on the financial transaction of an organisation, whereas non-financial risks influence the operations of an organisation.

It was established that reputational risk is a non- financial risk, because damage to an organisation's good name, standing or trustworthiness, can influence the organisation's productivity and indirectly the profit margin of that organisation (The term reputation will be discussed in Section 7.2.2).

This section concluded by defining enterprise risk management and provide insight into how an integrated risk management process works. Enterprise risk management is the process of planning, implementing and controlling activities within an organisation in order to minimise the risks of the effects. ERM forms a communication style recognised by all stakeholders, which contributes to the effectiveness of the risk management process (refer to Heteroglossia in Section 7.2.2). In the risk management process, an organisation must recognise and attends to all risks irrespective of the size of the risks.

7.2.2 Communication within organisations literature review summary

The remainder of the theoretical objectives aimed to (1) contextualise organisational, business and corporate communication within the higher education sector; (ii) to identify possible factors that may lead to the organisational buy-in of a suggested new communication model; and to (iii) identify a prevalent theoretical communication model.

Communication is a prominent human need, and something we do every day, no individual or community can survive without communication. Cave dwellers used drawings to communicate with one another, Indians used smoke signals, and the Egyptians used hieroglyphs to relay messages to one another. As the decades prolonged so did communication, in the last 25 years communication and how we communicate has changed rapidly, from the introducing of the world wide web to being connected to information around the clock with numerous social media channels.

Chapter 3 of the literature study on communication also identified the most effective communication model within society and business. The approach is based on two-way communication and requires the receiver to respond and provide feedback. Different forms of communication were studied and included (i) Verbal communication, (ii) non-verbal communication; (iii) written communication and (iv) visual communication.

The chapter then set out to define the term business communication and the importance of communication within a business. Business communication is an integrative communication structure that enables all stakeholders of that business to be linked to one another. Efficient organisational communication is essential to the existence of every organisation and all the departments within that organisation. Communication is key to coordinating all the elements within the organisation, from product development, customer relations to employee management.

The different forms, networks and flow of business communication was explored and included the explaining of (i) formal and informal communication; (ii) upward, downward and lateral communication; (iii) how the all-channel communication network is present in most organisations.

Communication channels and mediums identified the different ways organisations can use to inform their stakeholders. The terms interactive communication, push and pull communication was studied, and included different scenarios of where to use these communication approaches. It was, however, established that the message is just as important as the means of communication. An organisation needs to communicate in such a way that all stakeholders within that unit understand the message and directive given.

This means creating a mix of languages and worldviews; creating an organisational language and glossary filled with terms, phrases and methods of communication that are understandable by all stakeholders within that organisation. The latter is also known as heteroglossia, and in social media, terms are referred to as the voice of the organisation.

The last sections of Chapter 3 investigated corporate communication as a set of integrated activities focused on internal and external communication with stakeholders. The different elements present within corporate communication, namely (i) identity; (ii)

image; (iii) brand; (iv) culture; and (v) reputation was then discussed. In addition to the marketing elements that were discussed, attention was allocated to the effective use of social media, online advertisements and CSR.

Communication and how we communicate is frequently changing, and organisations should take cognisance and adapt to the various trends in order to stay relevant and noticeable. The different current trends were discussed as well as the challenges faced with regard to these trends.

This chapter concluded providing evidence on how communication and the different elements within organisational communication are seen as reputational risks. Reputation opinions, beliefs and views individuals and/or society have towards an organisation. These opinions can be formed by personal experiences, by listening to peers, friends and relatives' experiences or by reading articles on the topic. Reputation can be seen as the overall quality or character of a company. Reputational capital, or value of reputation, can be seen as the value associated with the value you obtain because of its excellent reputation. If an organisation has a good reputation, the more profit it will make because stakeholders trust the brand.

An impaired reputation may lead to the loss within a unit. This loss may include human resources, market value, capital or revenue etc. The argument was made that several businesses witnessed losses, due to their organisation's reputation that was damaged, and in all these instances, the situation was worsened due to a lack of effective communication. It was established that if the managers and communication liaisons communicated with their staff and to the public in a meaningful and effective manner, reputational damage could have been minimalised.

Furthermore, the importance of communication within the reputational risk management was discussed, and it was stated that all risks, irrespective of their size should be communicated and be addressed.

7.2.3 Summary of literature review

Chapters 2 and 3 met the theoretical objectives of this study by (i) contextualising organisational, business and corporate communication within HEIs; (ii) identifying a prevalent theoretical communication model; (iii) identifying possible factors that may

suggest organisational buy-in and trust in a communication model; and (v) establishing a theoretical framework for reputation and reputational risk within the higher education sector.

It was argued that higher education sectors are organisations, faced with numerous risks, including reputational risks, like any other business unit. In addition to this, it was argued, that the lack of effective communication could exponentially increase the extent of the loss an organisation faces if an organisations reputation is already being questioned.

Internal and external communication was evaluated, and the conclusion was made that internal communication is the basis of building trust in an organisation, and this leads to organisational buy-in. Internal communication should, therefore, be managed exceptionally well, and that how messages are being relayed are just as important as the message itself. Finally, it was argued that the risks management model, is currently not effectively managing new communication trends like social media and online conferencing. This is high reputational risk and may result in reputational losses are not managed.

7.3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION FROM THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The empirical portion of the study was divided into sections, namely (i) creating a conceptual communication model for an academic faculty within an HEI; (ii) conducting interviews and focus groups during different rounds of Delphi, to determine the perception and challenges faced with the conceptual communication model; (iii) adapt the conceptual model until an end-user agreement was obtained; and (iv) determine the perceptions towards the new conceptual communication model. The conceptual communication model

The basis of the conceptual model was constructed in Chapter 5, by gathering information using (i) examining the university website's management team pages; (ii) looking at the available reporting organigrams of each department and faculty that is available on the intranet; (iii) observations that were made by the researcher; and (iv) gathering inputs from faculty administrative staff, other faculty liaison officers and corporate communication members.

This conceptual model was selected from the theoretical perspective that internal and external communication opportunities should be possible, as well as the use of different communication mediums. Upward, downward and lateral communication should be present within the communication structure to ensure a participatory communication approach and feedback. Taking these elements into consideration the communication network most suitable in the context of communication present within higher educational sectors, the all-network communication network was selected.

The communication model was divided into three different communication levels, each with its communication activities. Chapter 5 focused the different communication activities but focused on examining the different communication activities that affect the faculty, schools and staff within a faculty daily.

Chapter 5 focused on the challenges faced within each level, as well as in each communication activity, in order to identify the possible risks associated with these challenges. The chapter concluded by providing a summary of the risks identified within each of the communication activities.

The second phase of Delphi Round 1 was to start with the focus group sessions and took place over a period of four months. The conceptual communication model was presented to a panel of support staff members, lecturers and faculty management members, as well as to members of the corporate communications team, in order to obtain end-user agreement.

Available documentation on the university, including a communication audit report and a culture survey, was analysed in preparation for the focus groups and interviews. These documents provided valuable insight towards the staff members' perceptions towards communication and activities within the faculty.

Focus groups and interviews were conducted with (i) support staff members within the faculty; (ii) lecturers with no managerial responsibilities; (iii) lectures with managerial responsibilities; (iv) school, unit and research directors and deputy directors; as well as with (v) the faculty management team of the faculty. The focus groups and interviews were spread out over three rounds of Delphi, during each round of Delphi the goal was to establish the perception staff members had towards the current communication model

and identify the possible challenges experienced with regard to the model. During each round of Delphi, participants were asked to provide possible solutions for challenges experienced.

The interviews and focus groups were recorded, and transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were then analysed by using ATLAS.ti 8.0. Labels, also known as codes, were linked to selected pieces of data. The main themes identified with the current conceptual model included:

- Uncertainty to whom to communicate/report to (transparent system and protocol is needed) as well as uncertainty on what needs to be done (clear directives needs to be communicated).
- Communication types and mediums are unrefined, and there are too many communication mediums (duplication of messages, providing feedback; inadequate email etiquette; better use of technology; meetings and travel).
- Staff members are working disconnected from one another, and better relationships need to be formed on an interdepartmental and an intradepartmental level.
- There is mistrust in management and management systems.
- Staff members feel marginalised and unappreciated and undervalued.
- The system is not integrated but is seen as a centralised system.

After each round of Delphi, the researcher evaluated the data and made the modifications to the conceptual communication model. As the rounds of Delphi progressed, it became evident that the same challenges were experienced on the different levels within the faculty's structure. Several changes were suggested and included:

Role identification and clear task assignment guidelines need to be implemented from the executive dean's office, which will then filter through to the rest of the faculty. The latter also includes who is responsible for communicating messages. It is important for faculty management to have a clear working structure in place that will filter through to the school management teams. Communication lines should be clear and not be crossed, the correct protocol for communication should be enforced.

A year, semester and monthly plan will be beneficial for both the faculty and the different schools. It was also determined that different line managers should have a weekly session

with their administrative officers to discuss the week ahead, ensuring that everyone is on the same page and that the goals for the next two weeks/month are clear and achievable.

It was further determined that clear directives and cohesive messages should be sent out, and in addition to this, staff members on all levels should be empowered on proper email etiquette.

Better use of technology was encouraged, such as (i) utilising video calling facilities and eliminating unnecessary travelling; (ii) pop-up a desktop notification system to communicate important messages and (iii) staff members want to be able to 'opt-out' of communication that is not relevant to them. It was mentioned that for the intranet to be used more effectively, the information on the site should be updated frequently, which is not currently the case. It was also suggested that specific documentation and procedures within schools be standardised.

The UMC should work towards having structures in place to communicate decisions and provide feedback, that will affect staff members in a clear and timely fashion. It is essential that when the UMC wants communication to reach the faculty, that they already have planning or a clear idea in place. The UMC should also redefine terms like a unitary system, and alignment needs to be redefined for all stakeholders to understand these concepts. It was suggested that as far as possible deans and directors should screen and filter messages, before sending to staff members.

A plan or campaign should be launched to rectify the perceptions that one campus is more important than another campus, and that other campuses are being marginalised. This campaign should not only be internally but also externally, as various stakeholders still refer to one campus as the main campus and the other campuses as satellite campuses. The latter goes entirely against the aspiration of being a unitary university.

Lastly, an intensive drive should be launched to build relationships between all staff members, irrespective of their campus or post level. Relationship building should be constructive and empower staff members to work along together better, as this can create a more enjoyable work environment and increase productivity. It has been argued that relationships are the foundation of trust, and trust will address the mistrust currently visible in the management and university system.

7.3.1 End-user agreement on the conceptual communication model and implementation

During the last round of Delphi, the conceptual communication model for faculties within the higher education sector was sent out to the preselected participant, in order to obtain end-user agreement.

The chapter concluded by providing the faculty with nine suggested changes to the current communication model in order to mitigate reputational risks. These changes included:

- A proper management structure needs to be put into place, and transparent clarification of roles are needed, as well as a proper and precise protocol system for downward and upward, communicate this system and enforce it.
- This includes the standardisation documentation and procedures within schools and research units.
- Terms such as unitary institution and alignment should be defined, as this has an effect on the achievement of goals, and the term culture should be defined.
- Planning for the upcoming week, month and at least three months. All management members should endorse this culture of planning. All members of the faculty, not just management team members, should endorse a culture of etiquette and respect.
- The faculty should empower staff members to utilise technology, such better and eliminating unnecessary travelling.
- An in-depth investigation will need to take place to determine why staff members feel this way and what led to them feeling this way. Once the origin of these issues are determined, the university management teams can actively begin to address these issues.
- Management should first decide on the importance of communication before forwarding it to staff, and Management on all levels, management teams should pay attention to the building of positive and productive working relationships between employees within the faculty on every level of the communication mode, irrespective of where the employees are situated.

7.3.2 Conclusion for empirical objectives

Chapter 5 sets out to determine a conceptual model for the faculty being studied by evaluating the available datasets. During Chapter 6, the perceptions towards the current communication model were discussed and evaluated. After each round of Delphi, the communication model was adjusted by incorporating the inputs and suggestions that were provided by the participant in order to develop a conceptual communication model suitable for HEIs. By doing this, the empirical objective to determine the perceptions towards the current communication model was met.

By accepting the conceptual communication model as proposed by the researcher, the faculty will be able to do adequate planning, standardise processes as needed, utilise technology, reducing the likelihood or severity of unplanned events that can cause reputational damage is reduced. In addition to this, by ensuring effective and clear communication roles, channels and flow, better information will be provided to staff and management members in order to strategic planning and make informed decisions.

Similarly, planning reduces the likelihood of unpleasant and sometimes very costly surprises to arise, causing harm to the faculty and university. Staff will know what is expected from them, what and how goals should be achieved and will be presented with realistic deadlines. The structure provided by the communication process will also ensure that staff members know what the priority, from whom they can receive directives are, and whom to contact should they be struggling or be unhappy.

The communication model attempts to inform employees, to ensure all employees, schools and divisions are treated equally and that employees fully trust management and the university systems. Utilising effective online communication will also strengthen stakeholder relationships, engagement and building of social capital for the business.

All these changes will affect the productivity of staff members, enabling them to produce relevant and globally recognised graduates and researcher. External stakeholders, companies and peers will see the works of the university in high regards, and this will ensure a favourable reputation.

The chapter concluded by determining the perceptions of stakeholders to the new conceptual communication model. This chapter met all three empirical objectives that

were set by the researchers, namely to create the conceptual communication model and to determine stakeholders perceptions towards the current communication model, and finally to adapt the communication model, by determining the perceptions of the stakeholders to the new model, and obtaining end-user agreement.

7.4 LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

The recommendations for implementations of the conceptual communication model will increase the effectiveness of the communication and directly influence the productivity within the faculty. However, it will take highly motivated individuals and champions of change before the university can truly realise and accept the impact of this conceptual communication model. The model will not be useful if it is not implemented correctly and effectively. It is, therefore, crucial for faculty management to buy into the suggested changes and support the conceptual model implementations.

There is a lack of previous studies in the research area. In the case of this study, no research has been done on the subject matter. Studies have been done on risk management, communication models and how to communicate regarding risks but not on how to mitigate risks within a communication model or structure. The researcher had to do an extensive literature review on risk, risk management and business communication in order to obtain the desired literature relevant to this study.

The researcher had to conduct several focus groups and interviews, the gathering, transcribing and analysing this amount of data are time-consuming. It was also time-consuming and difficult to characterise the data collected visually. Another limitation with regard to this is that due to the various interviews and focus groups conducted, identifying themes and narrowing them down was a time-consuming process.

During Round 3 and 4 of Delphi, SARS-CoV-2 the novel coronavirus was classified as a global pandemic. South Africa, as many parts of the world, had to adhere to strict social distancing guidelines as well as endure a 35-day lockdown. Due to these regulations, the researcher had to gather data using Skype interviews. By using an online medium to conduct interviews, the chances are higher for interruptions, and it is more challenging to record the non-communication present during the interview effectively.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As this study only focused on developing a conceptual model for an academic faculty of a university, it will be worthwhile to conduct a longitudinal study in order to implement the model fully and to measure its impact on the faculty concerned. The latter will include identifying the various risks within the communication structure and providing possible solutions to mitigate these risks.

It is also important to note that the conceptual model in this study can currently not be generalised and applied to all HEIs, as the implementation phase is not yet complete. It is therefore worthwhile to repeat this study on different types of universities and adapting the conceptual model, accordingly, creating a bigger impact within the field, thus the impact of the communication model. The latter can be ensured by selecting one formerly white only university, one formerly black only university, one formerly technology university.

A study during the implementation phase is ideal because the perceptions and attitudes towards the conceptual communication model and how it is being implemented can be determined. The researcher will also be able to quantify the impact of the recommended changes of the conceptual communication model and be able to make adjustments if needed, to ensure the model can be duplicated in other academic faculties. The findings made during such a study will affect how the implementation process will be suggested to the UMC, affecting their buy-in towards the implementation of a communication model in faculty format.

Even though the researcher only focused on developing a conceptual communication model for an academic faculty of a university, the researcher did mention the challenges faced with regard to the ineffective communication received from the UMC. It will, therefore, be advisable to do a develop a conceptual communication model for the UMC. In addition to this communication within the different support units of the university as well as how these units communicate with the different faculties, can be studied, and a conceptual communication model can be developed. As in the case of the conceptual model of the faculty, it will be sensible to also conduct a longitudinal study in order to implement the model fully and to measure its impact on the UMC and support units concerned.

Once a conceptual model for internal communication of a university has been developed, and implemented, it will be ideal to evaluate the communication between the university, and its customers, the students. The study will focus on communication with prospective, current and postgraduate students, and risks involved when communication is ineffective.

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ANNEXURES

8.1 ADDENDUM A: COMMUNICATION AUDIT REPORT

XX University Communication Audit Report

Compiled by: Dr Amanda Hamilton-Attwell from Businss DNA

November 2018

XX Refers to the University's name and due to Ethical considerations cannot be displayed in this document. This report can be provided on request.

8.2 ADDENDUM B: CULTURE AUDIT REPORT

The XX Way Culture project. The culture assessment version 3.0

Compiled by: Laetoli

November 2019

XX Refers to the University's name and due to Ethical considerations cannot be displayed in this document. This report can be provided on request.

8.3 ADDENDUM C: RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Type	Specification	Respondent
Focus group	Support staff member	A
Focus group	Support staff member	B
Focus group	Support staff member	C
Focus group	Support staff member	D
Focus group	Lecturer with managerial responsibilities	E
Focus group	Lecturer with managerial responsibilities	F
Interview	I School director	G
Interview	Research unit director	H
Interview	School director	I
Interview	School director	J
Interview	Deputy dean	K
Interview	Executive dean	L
Interview	Deputy dean	M
Interview (with follow-up questions via email)	School director	N
Interview (with follow-up questions via email)	School director	O
Interview (with follow-up questions via email)	School deputy director	P
Focus Group	Support staff member	Q

Focus Groups	Lecturer with managerial responsibilities	R
Google questionnaire	Corporate Communications	S
Google questionnaire	Corporate Communications	T
Google questionnaire	Corporate Communications	U
Google questionnaire	Done anonyms	V
Google questionnaire	Done anonyms	W
Google questionnaire	Done anonyms	Y
Google questionnaire	Done anonyms	Z
Google questionnaire	Done anonyms	AA
Google questionnaire	Done anonyms	AA

These transcriptions can be provided on request.

8.4 ADDENDUM D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE DELPHI ROUND 1

1	How do you feel about communication within the faculty? Please elaborate why you feel that way
2	How do you feel about communication within our school/department/unit? Please elaborate why you feel that way
3	What do you tell colleagues, friends, and family about your work (NWU)? Please elaborate why you feel that way
4	What is the biggest issue/challenges/problems that you experience with regard to communication within the faculty? Please elaborate why you feel that way
5	What is your favourite communication medium to use, and what is the medium you like least?
6	How do you feel about communication between you and your colleagues the different campuses?
7	What changes would you make to improve the communication within the faculty?

8.5 ADDENDUM E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE DELPHI ROUND 2

1	How do you feel about communication in the faculty? Please elaborate why you feel that way.
2	How do you handle communication in your school? Please provide examples.
3	What is the biggest pitfalls or issues with communication in the faculty?
4	What is your favourite communication medium to use, and what is the medium you like least?
5	How do you feel about communication between your employees on different campuses?
6	What changes would you make to improve the communication within the faculty?

8.6 ADDENDUM F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE DELPHI ROUND 3

1	Do you think communication is important in the faculty?
2	How do you manage communication within the faculty to ensure everyone receives communication?
3	What frustrates you most of the current communication model?
4	What do you want to change in the communing year with regard to communication?

8.7 ADDENDUM G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE DELPHI ROUND 4

1	Which changes do you agree with regard to the adaption of the conceptual communication model?
2	Which changes do you disagree with with regard to the adaption of the conceptual communication model?
3	Are there changes that you would adjust? Please provide the adjusted change and, if possible, the reason(s) for the change
4	What additional changes would you suggest?
5	How do you think communication has improved/worsened during the Coronavirus pandemic? Please provide examples
6	If a multifaceted approach (all parties work together to improve communication), is taken to implement this conceptual communication model, will you be happier with the way communication is occurring in and from Faculties?
7	Will the approach as in the Word document and question 6, motivate you to be more actively involved in university activities and go the extra mile? If not please explain why you think so
8	How do you suggest we implement this conceptual communication model?

8.8 ADDENDUM H: LETTER CONFIRMING LANGUAGE EDITING

Cecile van Zyl

Language editing and translation

Cell: 072 389 3450

Email: Cecile.vanZyl@nwu.ac.za

27 July 2020

To whom it may concern

Re: Language editing of thesis: A conceptual communication model to mitigate reputational risk within a Higher Education Institution

I hereby declare that I language edited the above-mentioned thesis by Mrs Jani van der Vyver (student number: 20556683).

Please feel free to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Cecile van Zyl', written in a cursive style.

Cecile van Zyl

Language practitioner

BA (PU for CHE); BA honours (NWU); MA (NWU)

SATI number: 1002391



Jomone Müller

Language Practitioner
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DECLARATION OF CONSISTENCY CHECK

27 July 2020

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I, the undersigned, have done a consistency check, figure formatting and reference check as well as translated the abstract of the thesis submitted for the degree *Philosophiae Doctor* in Economics with Risk Management entitled: *A conceptual communication model to mitigate reputational risk within a higher education institution.*

No changes were permanently affected and were left to the discretion of the author. The responsibility of implementing the recommended changes rests with the author of the thesis.

Yours truly

Jomone Müller

8.9 ADDENDUM I: PLAGIARISM DECELERATION



NWU Higher Degrees Administration

SOLEMN DECLARATION AND PERMISSION TO SUBMIT

Solemn declaration by student

I,

declare herewith that the thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation/article entitled (**exactly as registered/approved title**),

which I herewith submit to the North-West University is in compliance/partial compliance with the requirements set for the degree:

is my own work, has been text-edited in accordance with the requirements and has not already been submitted to any other university.

LATE SUBMISSION: If a thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation/article of a student is submitted after the deadline for submission, the period available for examination is limited. No guarantee can therefore be given that (should the examiner reports be positive) the degree will be conferred at the next applicable graduation ceremony. It may also imply that the student would have to re-register for the following academic year.

Ethics number:

ORCID: - - -

Signature of Student

Jani van der Vyver

Digitally signed by Jani van der Vyver
Date: 2020.07.26 09:56:47 +02'00'

University Number

Signed on this day of of 20

Permission to submit and solemn declaration by supervisor/promoter

The undersigned declares that the thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation/article:

- complies with the A-rules and the technical requirements provided for in the Manual for Master's and Doctoral studies and in faculty rules;
- has been checked by me for plagiarism (by making use of TurnItIn software for example) and a satisfactory report has been obtained;
- and that the work was language edited before submission for examination.

Faculty specific requirements as per A-rules: 1.3.2, 433, 4.2.4, 4.10.4, 5.3.2

- complies with regards to faculty rules on submission or acceptance by an accredited scientific journal;
- complies with regards to faculty rules on peer reviewed conference proceedings;
- the student is hereby granted permission to submit his/her article/mini-dissertation/ dissertation/thesis for examination.

Signature of Supervisor/Promoter

Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout

Digitally signed by Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout
Date: 2020.07.27 07:50:15 +02'00'

Date