

Investigating the best practices for alumni relations in business schools

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ABSTRACT

Alumni are considered the most important assets of any university, business schools included. As such business schools need to find a way to stay in touch with their alumni. With the growing technology and the presence of social media it poses a communication game changer. As such business schools will need to find the most suitable platform with which to communicate with their alumni.

The aim of the study was to investigate the best practices for alumni relations at the business schools. In order to achieve this objective the top ten international and local business schools were analysed on how they manage their alumni relations in order for that to be a guideline for this study; previous studies on alumni relations were also investigated.

A self-administered questionnaire was developed in a manner that it could assess the needs of alumni, and was distributed to NWU Potchefstroom Business School current students and alumni as the study population. Current students were included in the study because they are prospective alumni. Through the results it became evident that newsletters and Facebook was the most preferred communication channel for the business school use while Twitter was the least preferred by the groups involved. The study also indicated that most respondents are not reading the NWU PBS communication because of time constraints.

Prestige days, networking, and sharing industry experience were the most preferred benefits and activities that were rated high. Lastly through the information obtained the profile of each group involved was drawn which will aid business schools in meeting the needs and knowing the best communication channels to use for their audience. Major findings and conclusions were discussed and recommendations made.

Key terms: Business schools, alumni, alumni relations, social media, communication

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CHAPTER 1

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the *alma-mater* and alumni starts during the time a student is studying at the university in general and specifically in this study the business school and this experience determines the nature of the relationship going forward. This should be maintained and cultivated by well managed communication systems (Hummel, 2010; Merkel 2010). According to Gaier (2005) the higher the level of satisfaction with the academic experience as a student the more likely the student will participate as an alumnus in the events of the business school and/or donate financially.

In order to build the relationship continuous communication with alumni is of importance as it provides the business school (and university) with the picture of how well graduates are progressing in their respective careers, therefore the goal of the business school should be to generate participation from this group of graduates or alumni. A proper communication mode needs to be established that will be best suited to meet the needs of the alumni.

With the advent of globalisation and modern modes of communication, the world is becoming more accessible or its shrinking and these present new challenges on the mode of communication which the business school should employ to keep or stay engaged with the alumni (Doolittle-Soukas, 2012). This becomes a challenge because students may travel abroad to study and even be employed abroad; thus they are no longer located in the vicinity around the school where they studied but are located anywhere in the world (Doolittle-Soukas, 2012). As such business schools need a proper communication platform or strategy to ensure it reaches the alumni.

In this age of many available social media, networking is part of an everyday life whether one knows about it or not, no matter the culture or age. Networking ensures that no connection is lost since it can be abridged easily with the help of internet or

social media (Doolittle-Soukas, 2012). This modern communication allows networking or interaction to stay alive. Networking provides an opportunity to learn from each other's experience and share ideas anywhere in the world. This is even more important for graduates of business schools as they will continue to learn even after the classroom.

Hence the importance of having contact among alumni so the school can evaluate whether they are providing relevant knowledge and skills. Institution can use this info as litmus test to the relevance of the content they are delivering. Then there is a great importance in the school to interact with the majority, if not all students instead of the selected few who are the top executives in their industries.

Having a contact not only does it help the management of the school but it also helps the alumni themselves as they can share the best business practices and help each other to grow. The alumni association is usually formed by the school and is formed to continue communication long after they had graduated from the school and provide an atmosphere to network and engage with each other regardless of the geographical area.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

With digitisation and the internet enabling communication from everywhere around the globe using different platforms, there is a need to investigate a proper and most preferred channel of communication that can be employed by the business school to ensure that the alumni fully engage.

Alumni remain the most important asset in an institution of higher learning hence their needs should be taken into consideration since they represent the brand to the society (Chi *et al.*, 2012). The relationship between *alma-mater* and alumni should be maintained and this will be possible when the school knows what mode of communication to employ, the frequency of the communication and what events or activity to host for the alumni. The above can determine the student participation rate in the events or activity of the school.

With the growing technology there is a variety of communication models and each age group should be catered for depending on the mode of communication which is preferred to ensure maximum participation that can benefit both the school and alumni. As the number of alumni grows it includes different age groups that need to be addressed.

1.3. OBJECTIVES

Main objective

The main objective of this study is to investigate the best practices for alumni relations in the business school.

Secondary objectives

- What communication channel should be employed to keep in touch with the alumni?
- Are the current communication channels reaching the audience?
- Is there a difference between the communication needs of current students and alumni?
- What type of activities and events do the alumni prefer to attend or participate in?
- Is there a comparison between the mostly used social platform, trends from other business schools and alumni and current students of North-West Potchefstroom Business School?
- To develop a profile for the alumni and current students

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research approach to be followed in this study.

1.4.1 Literature study

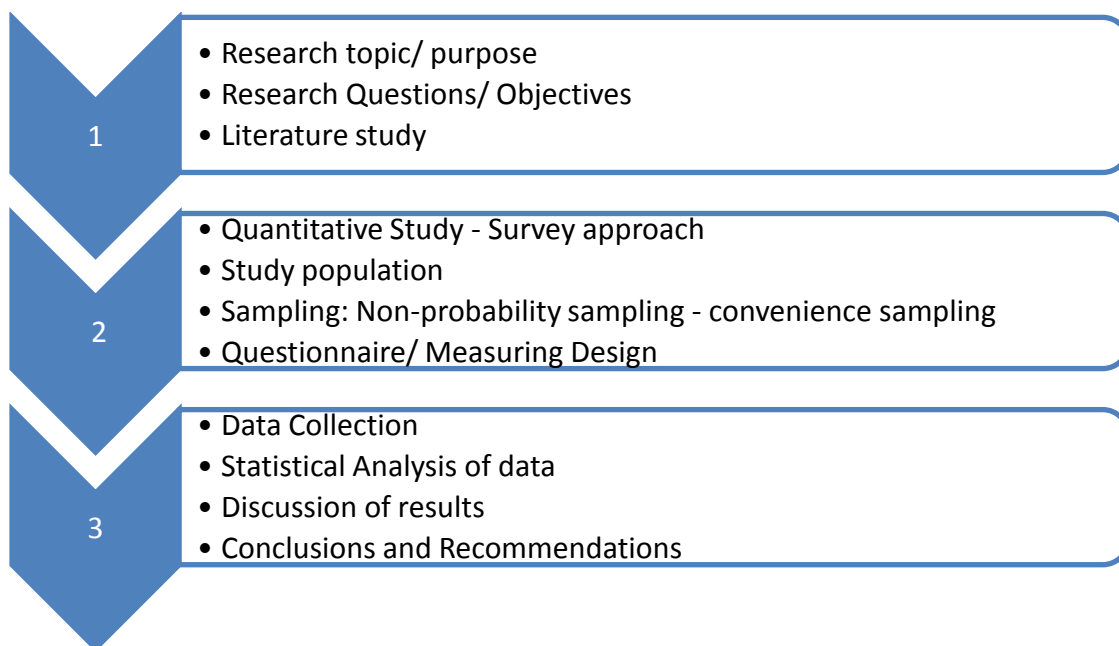
A literature study was done to bring clearer understanding of the concept at hand and broaden the knowledge. This study covered literature on alumni relations, social media communication channels and analysis of the top ten business schools in the world and in South Africa (SA). In order to achieve these goals the sources that were

consulted for the literature study include Internet searches, journal articles, textbooks and academic internet articles using databases such as Google Scholar and Science Direct.

1.4.2 Empirical investigation

This study follows a quantitative research approach. Figure 1.1 below shows the research approach followed, where a study population identified for this study is North West University Potchefstroom Business School (NWU PBS) alumni and prospective alumni. Self-administered questionnaires consisting of four sections were distributed electronically to the alumni and by hand to the current students. The study follows a non-probability sampling method and convenience sub-sampling as the data used was for those who had responded. Data was analysed using descriptive statistical analysis and effect sizes and results were discussed, conclusions and recommendations made.

Figure 1.1: Research approach



(Source: own compilation)

1.4.3 Scope of the study

The study focused on the functioning of alumni, the possible communication channel to be employed to harness the alumni-alma mater relationship.

1.4.4 Contribution of the study

The study seeks to add to the existing body of knowledge of the alumni-alma mater relationship and how this relationship should be managed to ensure both parties are benefiting and ensuring that alumni stay engaged. This study will be of practical significance to North-West University Potchefstroom Business School as it will provide information on the needs of their alumni and how to effectively manage the alma mater-alumni relationship.

An understanding of the best practices for alumni will provide the school with a tool to ensure that the needs of the alumni are met which will satisfy their needs as customers. The study also provided information on what communication mode to use which the alumni prefers as this generates a certain degree of participation.

1.4.5 Limitation of the study

A possible limitation is that the study was done on a sample of the NWU PBS alumni and current students and that the findings and recommendations might not be representative of the business schools either internationally and in South Africa.

1.5 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Alumni relations study orientation

This chapter introduces the content of the study, explains why the topic was chosen and discusses the objectives of the study.

Chapter 2: Alumni Relation and communication channels

This chapter discusses the theoretical basis of the study and what previous researchers have done. Benefits of alumni relations to the school and alumni are also addressed. Social media as a communication channel is also discussed.

Chapter 3: Business School overview

This chapter studies the top ten ranked business schools internationally and in South Africa, looking at management and functioning of the alumni relations of the top ranked business schools, what forms of communication channels are employed for maximum benefit to the school and alumni themselves; and the benefits the business school is offering to the alumni.

Chapter 4: Empirical Investigation and Results discussion

Chapter four explains how the research was done, research methods employed and discusses how the sample was chosen and the sampling type. This chapter also present the findings of the study followed by a detailed discussion of the results.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

A summary of the research is provided on this chapter and explains the limitations of the study. Recommendations on the functioning and best practices pertaining to the business schools' alumni in general, in relation to the benefit of both the school and alumni, are discussed.

1.6 SUMMARY

The growth of Internet has brought different forms of communication platforms to choose from. This necessitates that every institution including business schools investigate the platform best suited for them and their audience. This chapter briefly discusses the background of the alumni relationship and the importance of having the proper communication channel. The chapter also discusses the research purpose, objectives and outlines the research approach. The next chapter provides a comprehensive literature survey and theoretical framework of the research. The next chapter will address the literature regarding alumni relations and communication channels that may be revealed as most important for proper and effective modes of communication.

CHAPTER 2

ALUMNI RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:64) explain that a literature review describes the theoretical perspective and previous research findings regarding the topic of interest. Thus this chapter focuses on literature about the importance of alumni relations and the role towards the school and society. The chapter further explains the benefits of having alumni association, the predictors of alumni association membership and communication channels that can be used by the school to keep in touch with alumni.

2.2 IMPORTANCE OF ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

Alumni are regarded as the most important assets to any university; and are seen as a group of staunch devotees that support their *alma mater* and represent the university both nationally and internationally (Chi *et al.*, 2012). In United States of America (USA) alumni have been part of universities for up to 180 years. They are assets because they can provide funding to the institution and are the brand which speaks volumes of the institution where they once studied (Doolittle-Soukas, 2013).

Alma mater should therefore remain proactively engaged with the alumni. One way of staying engaged is to keep communication channels open that can help build the relationship. With the increasing modes of communication, the world is becoming more accessible or smaller and this “shrinking” as it were presents a new challenge for the universities and their alumni (Doolittle-Soukas, 2013).

Communication challenges are also brought about by the demographic shifts and growth in science and technology (Rostek, 2012). Business schools need to know what mode of communication is suitable for different generations’ group in order to proactively engage them long after they have graduated.

Due to the shrinking world, otherwise called the global village, students no longer have to choose a university close to home; they can travel half way around the globe

to attend the school of their choice. This means that a group of alumni no longer remain in the vicinity of the university they graduated from. This necessitates that the communication or engagement between the alumni and university needs to be operated in a manner that it will accommodate the change and still meet the information needs of the students (Doolittle-Soukas, 2013).

Institutions usually form alumni associations or network to keep in touch with their alumni from all over the world and for the alumni to continue sharing knowledge and experience. Alumni associations are organised groups of people who share the same experience of having attended an institution at a specific time in their life (Alumni Association Formation, 2012).

Walaba (2014) states that alumni associations refer to the part of the organisation or business schools that deals with bringing people together of current and past members with the aim of pooling resources together towards the success of that business school.

However for effective relationship building it is important for the institution to manage the information needs of the alumni. This will also help the institution to know what content and frequency this stakeholder group needs information. As a result of having established open and direct communication channels with the alumni critical information can be disseminated to them on an ongoing basis. Relevant information can thus be channelled back and forth towards building customer relationships and service delivery (Barnard, 2007).

The establishment and nurturing of mutually beneficial relations between a university and its alumni, as the primary stakeholder, should be a priority for any university that wants to prosper and grow in the fast changing and highly competitive market.

Walaba (2014) states that alumni association plays an important role in two ways, the first is that it offers a platforms for current students and alumni members to exchange ideas academics and careers; second is that it can also be utilised for marketing and promoting the programmes of the institution. Barnard (2007) indicates that the alumni potential for becoming the lifelong learning candidates and

their community development responsibility can make a meaningful contribution to the way the institution is perceived by the prospective, existing internal and external clients.

In addition through the institution advisory boards, alumni are lending their experience and expertise to the higher education institution leaders formulates strategic directions for the institutions (Weerts *et al.* 2010). This in turn helps the institution to grow and ensure that it is still meeting the needs of students and community at large.

2.3 PREDICTORS FOR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

For the alumni to join the association they can be dependent on their assessment of whether their needs were met during their time studying at a university, thus any emotional attachment to the school that had been build. The perception of whether the kind of information provided and gained by joining will be useful or of beneficial use to the association and institution and can also be a determining factor (Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2008; Hummel, 2010).

A study done by Newman and Petrosko (2011) found the following to be reasons why students become alumni association members:

- Graduates or students who spent most of their time living on campus were more likely to be an alumni association member because they have a high level of commitment and loyalty to their alma mater.
- Graduates' perception of the alumni association plays a major role as predictors of membership.
- Awareness of other members of the alumni play a role in alumni membership.

Johnson *et al.* (2010) also concluded that business schools having specialised MBA programmes result in alumni from the programme being more connected, more committed than alumni of a traditional MBA. Specialised MBA programmes are those programmes which are industry specific like real estate management, health care and sports management (Johnson *et al.*, 2010).

Newman and Petrosko (2011) also state that graduates who were employed at the institution are probably less likely to become alumni association membership because they might be enjoying the benefits provided to alumni as an employee hence they might not see a need. They also state that demographic variables such as age does affect membership as young graduates might not want to be members because they feel that being a member means contributing financially and these young graduates might still be owing on loans which was utilised to finance their studies thus not being able to contribute.

2.4 ROLE OF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Alumni associations play a role both in the school and the society. The following section discusses the different roles associated with alumni associations.

2.4.1 The school

Walaba (2014) states that the role of is to mobilise former graduates to participate more actively in the university business. This is because alumni can contribute to the betterment of the university either financially or provides advice on the functioning of the alumni association. Gaier (2005) states that alumni promote the university to key stakeholders such as prospective students, corporations and community leaders.

2.4.2 The society

Alumni contribute to the society by marketing university products so that members of the society can benefit from what the university have to offer (Walaba, 2014).

2.5 BENEFITS OF HAVING AN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The following section discusses the benefits of having an alumni association in detail.

2.5.1 Alumni as a brand ambassador

Alumni are the real measure of the institution or school's brand because their reputation rests on the manifestation of its graduates. This can make a meaningful contribution to the way the institution is perceived by external or internal clients; public as well as competitors (Barnard, 2007).The institution will also gain exposure

when a well-known and respected leader is perceived to be good and it is known from which institution they had studied.

2.5.2 Alumni as a mentor or coach

A decision to choose a career is one of those important decisions that people tend to make and it has an impact on every aspect of their lives. Mentoring is therefore an important aspect as it is helpful in nurturing and sharing to promote personal and professional growth (Chi *et al.*, 2012). For the students who are leaving high schools and are about to join institutes of higher learning, this play a vital role as it provides them with guidance and the direction they should take; it helps them to make an informed decision regarding their careers. This is also valid for those intending to enrol at any business school. They are the role-models which mean they are well placed to offer support to the students as they start their careers and to those who are halfway in their studies.

2.5.3 Alumni can act as guest speakers

Alumni can become the guest lecturers at the institution where they studied when there are functions and events. The alumni will be sharing on the experience from the industries on how they had combined the theoretical knowledge and experience gained in order to succeed and this can provide valuable points to the current students (Ferris State University, 2015). Sharing enables the current student to know what is happening in the corporate world so they are better prepared when it is their turn to leave school.

2.5.4 Financial benefit

According to Chung-Hoon *et al.* (2007) institutions of higher education are facing dwindling public financial support. They also state that as government appropriations to higher education decrease, institutions are finding themselves having to rely more on private contributors. These private donors can be alumni who are giving to the institutions that helped them to make it in life.

Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2008) concluded that a strong and vibrant alumni association offers potential source financing since alumni are likely to feel more strongly connected to the institution and will donate to the institution. "When alumni

of a specialised MBA programme feels more connected, committed and identify more strongly with their programmes, these relationship perceptions further lead to increased alumni donations and willingness to help the programme” (Johnson *et al.*, 2010).

2.5.5 Lifelong learning experience

Institutions can also generate revenue from bringing their alumni back to the institution to enrol again and do some short courses at a discounted cost. Barnard (2007) states that DePaul University in the United States generate more revenue through returning alumni than through institutional fundraising efforts. Lifelong learning can be able to keep alumni connected to the school and remain loyal.

2.5.6 Career services

In the information age staying connected can be very beneficial; for example, in an alumni network being connected means one is learning from others and enhancing their knowledge and skills. This is so because the alumni network comprises individuals from different or the same industries and while they share their challenges and experience, it becomes opportunities to learn (Chi *et al.* 2012).

It is from this network where jobs are posted, career coaching and advising and providing a new opportunity arise. Some industries, when they want to hire, might even look at these networks for the possible candidate to hire (Barnard, 2007). These are the kind of services which offers coaching for career development and planning to ensure alumni growth in their careers.

2.6 Communication platforms used by business school alumni association

Communication is a critical factor in all organisations that seeks to transfer messages to their customers and to sustain the relationship; this includes business schools. In order for the business school to convey the message both to the alumni and prospective alumni it needs a medium from which to transfer the message. The following sections present three ways of communication which can be used by business schools.

2.6.1 Email

Email is seen as the inexpensive, fast way to communicate with university constituencies, especially alumni (Moore & McLaughlin, 2007). Even though it is seen in this light it does not mean that email is the preferred way of communication. But alumni relation offices that are charged with maintaining communication with alumni, email offers an opportunity to reach targeted individuals while reducing printing and communication costs (Moore & McLaughlin, 2007).

2.6.2 Newsletters

New technologies have enabled communication offices to be in touch with alumni more frequently and consistently not only through printed communications. This is because electronic newsletter can be sent via email on a monthly or quarterly basis depending on the frequency of the publication. The newsletter helps to sustain connection between the alumni and alma mater as it keeps alumni up-to date with the activities and new development within the institution (Levine, 2009).

2.6.3 Social media

With the growth of Internet technology, communication platforms have been revolutionised (Rostek, 2012). This presents a new way of communicating that business schools like any other business should consider to ensure they employ the communication which will enable the students and alumni to stay engaged.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as an internet based application that allows the creation and exchange of content that a user generated. Through the social media platform everyone is able to exchange information.

Before the emergence of modern communications people were separated by distance in geographical locations. It was easy to lose connection once people moved from one place to the other. Distance has now been bridged because of the growth of science and technology, since this growth brought about Internet, social media and email which allow people to communicate and interact with each other regardless of their geographic area (Doolittle-Soukas, 2013).

Users of social media have the ability to share or generate any type of information which they wish to share be it educational or social. Amongst other things social media and social networks meant the revolution in human relations (Mora *et al.*, 2015). Al-Khalifa and Garcia (2013) highlighted that the use of social media plays a vital role in education which includes providing a medium to share ideas as well as allowing the students to build their own communities to collaborate with each other, facilitating the art of learning and reaching out to students in order to understand and to teach each other.

Figure 2.1 below shows the different types of social media platforms currently available to be used for communication purposes.

2.6.3.1 Types of social media

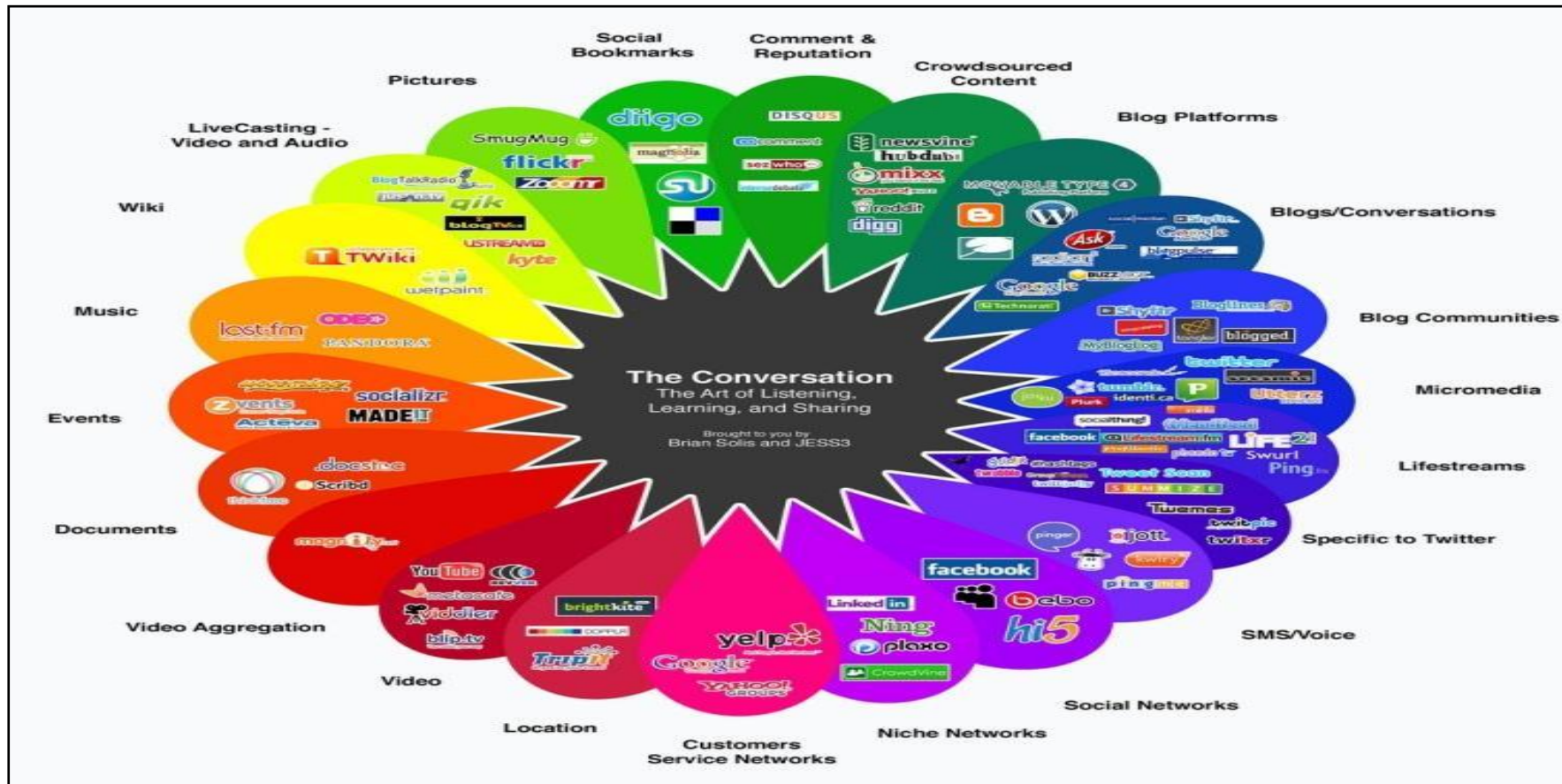
Due to growing technology, there is a variety of social media represented by figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 shows different types of social media which are currently available and can be used as mode or channel of communication to maintain the relation between *Alma mater* and alumni.

Though the list for social media looks extensive and complicated it can be categorised into six forms of social media namely (Doolittle-Soukas, 2013):

- Social networking sites – service in which users set up a profile in order to establish connections with others. This include Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Blogs – these are online journals; this includes Word press or Blogspot;
- Microblogging sites – this is much like online text message. The message has a limited number of characters. Example includes Twitter.
- Content communities or Media sharing sites – A place for sharing videos or pictures. YouTube, Flickr.
- Podcasts – Audio and Video files (iTunes).
- Wikis – User updates websites. It is a kind of encyclopaedia updated by the people that use them.
- Social news sites – Services which allow other users to vote on news articles and links to external articles; this includes Dig and Reddit.

Figure 2.1: Types of Social Media



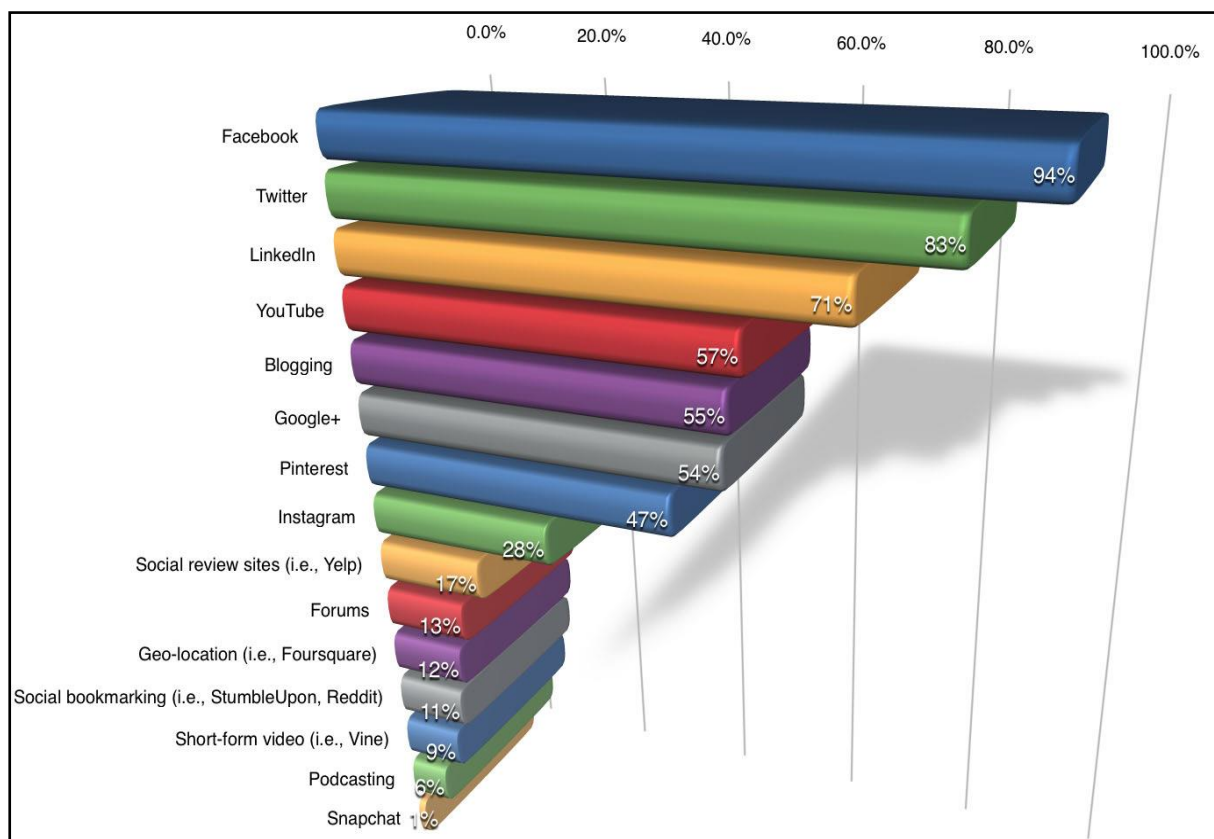
(Source: Solis, 2008)

Figure 2.2 below shows the mostly used or popular forms of social media which will be linked with the ones different business schools are using to communicate with alumni and for the purpose of this study media below will be compared as well with the ones the respondents prefer as a communication mode from the business school.

2.6.3.2 Commonly used platform

Though the list of available social media is extensive there are those platforms which are the most commonly used form of communication according to a study done by Stelzner (2014) and is shown in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: Commonly used social media platform



(Source: Stelzner, 2014)

Electronic communication which includes social media is connecting people in a way never experienced before and this will continue to grow at a faster rate. Therefore alumni organisations should leverage this trend to improve their services to the alumni especially to the X, Y and Millennial generations (Rostek, 2012). Fig 2.2 above shows the most used social media as indicated by the percentage.

2.6.3.3 Benefits of social media platforms to an organisation

Social media offers a new way to engage with its members in different geographic locations at the time which is convenient to them as it provides a platform to share current and most relevant issues. Use of social media is growing at a faster rate, it can be used as a tool to market the business and drive growth of the business. This also helps in strengthening the brand (Dewing, 2010).

Engaging in social media strengthens the brand experience which will support brand building. A company becomes more attractive to the customers, current and potential employees if it has a well-built brand. Through social media, the company can reinforce the brand name into the minds of the consumers, thereby building brand at the same time (Edosomwam *et al.*, 2011).

2.7 SUMMARY

Alumni are seen as the most important assets to any university; this includes business schools (Chi *et al.*, 2012). Because of this it is very vital for the business school to keep in touch and maintain the relationship with them. Maintaining relationship means that a preferred method of communication needs to be established. There is an email, newsletter and social media mode which can be used for communication purposes to keep them engaged and up-to-date with the activities of the school.

Due to the growing technology, electronic communications which includes social media is growing at a faster rate therefore for business schools to continually engage with alumni and current students and the most preferred social platform should be identified. The following sections discusses the business schools and communication channel they employ to stay engage with the alumni and students, and further looks

at the two organisations that does business school ranking both internationally and in South Africa.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSES OF THE BUSINESS SCHOOLS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents the essence of the business schools, discusses the business school ranking agencies. The chapter further analyses the top international business schools and top ten South African business schools investigating their alumni associations and the communication channels employed to keep in touch with the alumni.

3.2 BUSINESS SCHOOLS OVERVIEW

Business schools are not only designed to confer qualifications like Masters in Business Administration (MBA), but are specifically for equipping its graduates with the business knowledge that will enable them to become leaders in the business world. Those leaders should apply what they have learned in class to change, improve and influence the way the business is done as well as becoming innovators.

MBA graduates are perceived by many to be the corporate elite in the domain of management education and hence there has been a worldwide increase in the number of business schools that offer this business qualification (Opoku *et al.*, 2006). The increase in the number of business schools show the importance of business education to equip a new generation of leaders with tools necessary to compete with their local and international counterparts.

The first business school has its roots in Europe in 1819 influenced by a trader Vital Roux and economist Jean-Baptiste Say and its campus was in Paris, France. The curriculum of this school was a combined theoretical and business approach, with the insistence that business schools should be international in scope. Belgium followed in 1852 with the founding of their business school, the curriculum they offered was similar to the one in France (Kaplan, 2014).

In United States (US) Wharton School of Finance and Commerce was the first business school to be founded in 1881, Harvard followed 25 years later in 1908 and

pioneered both the case study approach and the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree. More business schools started to emerge like the University of Chicago Booth business school in 1898 and Columbia Business School in 1916 (Kaplan, 2014). Then this led to the establishment of Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) an accreditation institution that enabled US business schools to be standardised. However this standardisation was only for the US schools as they did not encourage global perspective of business schools (Kaplan, 2014).

In 1997 European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) was created and this was prompted by the need to develop an accreditation system targeted those business schools globally which were trying to impact beyond their domestic frontiers (Urgel, 2007). This accreditation focuses on ethics, responsibility, sustainability, corporate connections and internationalisation (Joseph, 2014).

EQUIS was followed by the Association of the MBAs (AMBA); AMBA moved to accreditation of business schools outside the United Kingdom (UK) (Urgel, 2007). The focus for AMBA is high quality programmes that reflect changing trends and innovation in postgraduate management education (Joseph, 2014).

Significance of the international rankings of the schools led to a worldwide standardisation and this was used as a “magnet” to attract or recruit students. Schools aiming to achieve a high ranking must comply with various ranking criteria. One of the most important rankings is that of the British Financial Times (FT) (Kaplan, 2014).

3.3 BUSINESS SCHOOL RANKINGS

Business schools globally operate in a market driven environment and rankings are part of the environment. Rankings have a significant impact on a business school's ability to attract top scholars, while other schools use the rankings to support their excellence of quality education (Wilkins & Huisman, 2012).

Business school ranking provide prospective students with information resources that help them to choose the program which suits their needs and wants (Wilkins &

Huisman, 2012). Therefore high ranked schools can be flooded with applications for admissions since it will be considered an institution that provides quality education according to the students.

Meglio (2011) warns that prospective students and any other person must understand what each ranking measures because it can be misleading. This is due to the fact that there are different media which publish the rankings where business schools have been ranked differently.

There are many different agencies that rank business schools but that is not the focus of this study. Therefore Financial Times of London has been chosen for the business schools internationally while pmr.africa has been chosen for the business school ranking in SA. Below is a detailed description of ranking agencies and the measure they use to rank.

3.3.1 International ranking

Financial Times of London (FT) is the leading international business newspaper with a worldwide circulation of 10 million readers daily. FT is an operating division of the Pearson group which publishes textbooks used in many schools. Given its position of being the world's most international newspaper, they saw an opportunity into the growing market of the business school rankings by concentrating on international MBA programs (Davies &Salterio, 2007).

FT saw its first publication of the business school ranking in 1999 of what it considered to consider the top 50 MBA programs in Europe and North America (Davies &Salterio, 2007). Over the years FT has changed to focus on all business schools globally in their rankings. The table below shows some of the measures or categories which are used by FT to rank the schools:

Table 3.1: Measuring criteria for business school rankings

Category	Descriptions
Audit year	the most recent year that the school has been audited
Salary	average alumnus salary three years after graduation
Percentage increase	percentage increase in the weighted salaries
Value for money	a short-term indicator that measures the time taken to recover all costs of the MBA including lost salary
Career progress	the extent to which the alumni have progressed, measured by the size of the company and seniority level
Aims achieved	the percentage of respondents who fulfilled the aims they associated with MBA

Source: Adapted from Davies and Salterio, 2007 & FT Global rankings for 2015

The ten business schools that will be discussed below have been ranked as the top ten business schools internationally by FT using the measures mentioned in the table above.

3.3.2 African Ranking

Pmr.africa is an organisation which does consulting, research and risk management services. This organisation is also responsible for the ratings of the business schools in South Africa. The research is done by sending out survey questionnaires to different workplaces and interview human resource managers, directors or line managers of various companies which employ MBA graduates (pmr.africa, 2014).

The list below shows the criteria used to rate business schools (Pmr.Africa, 2014):

- Academic knowledge;
- Application of knowledge in the workplace;
- Communication skills/abilities;
- Ethical business conducts;
- Strategic management; and

- Emotional intelligence.

The following sections will take a closer look at the alumni association of the top ten business schools internationally and locally, and then assess which social media should business schools be using as a platform to communicate with their alumni. Conclusions will be drawn from there to assess which are the common ones and assess its relevance to meeting the needs of alumni.

3.4 Analyses of the top business schools internationally

Financial Times (FT) ranking business schools using criteria such as but not limited to value for money and career progress on the alumni (Davies & Salterio, 2007). The business schools discussed below are found to be on the top ten internationally according to FT ranking. The following points will be looked at for each business school:

- Number of alumni.
- Whether the alumni is standalone focusing only on MBA students or its all inclusive of the school's programme.
- Does the school have a vision or a mission?
- What mode of communication is used between the alumni and the alma mater?
- What social media platform is used to keep in touch and stay engaged?

3.4.1 Harvard Business School

Harvard Business School (HBS) was founded in 1908 and it was the first MBA programme in the United States (US). The school has the following programmes: full-time MBA, Executive MBA (those offered on a part-time basis and targeted for those students who are working full-time), Doctoral programmes and HBX which is an online programme (Harvard Business School, 2015).

The school has about 81 508 alumni which includes all students who have studied at HBS who are from 167 countries with 106 alumni clubs. However the alumni clubs are grouped according to programmes which then allows them to be more

interactive within groups (Harvard Business School, 2015). MBA alumni have platforms to share how getting the qualifications has accelerated their careers and what differences have they brought to the business environment as leaders or innovators.

Online media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn enable alumni to network. Alumni directories (databases) are mainly used to find the details of other alumni. Class reunions and club meeting which gets organized are designed to keep them connected to each other while the school has a magazine which is used for publishing any other insightful information which might benefit the alumni from business to educational. Harvard Alumni Association does not state the mission and vision of the alumni association (Harvard Business School, 2015).

One of the benefits for being HBS alumni is the career services where alumni gains access to career coaching and could apply for jobs that are posted.

3.4.2 London Business School

London Business School has been offering business education for the past 50 years and has triple accreditation EQUIS, AACSB and AMBA. The school offers the following programmes: MBA, Executive MBA, Executive MBA global, Executive education, PhD, Masters Programmes and entrepreneurship summer school (London Business School, 2015).

The School currently has 39 000 alumni from 150 countries with 87 alumni clubs and this has been possible from the operations of their two campuses, London and Dubai. The school does not have separate alumni groups per programme; for example, MBA alumni, but a combined one for all previous students of the school. From the 87 alumni clubs that are in existence alumni are encouraged to join those that are closest to them so they can stay informed and interact with other students. There is no vision or mission for the alumni association of the school (London Business School, 2015).

The alumni stay in contact with each by joining alumni clubs, attending alumni events and using alumni portals. The following social media are available for keeping in

touch: Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google+, Twitter and Instagram. For the alumni to become involved with the institution they are encouraged to help during admissions, working with students by coaching them and recruiting the talent by offering the internship (London Business School, 2015).

The school offers the following benefits to the alumni (London Business School, 2015):

- Alumni career centre for career coaching
- Lifelong learning where a student can get a discount for enrolling again with the institution especially when doing executive courses.
- Online library database
- Campus facilities like fitness centre and library
- Gift shop discounts

3.4.3 The Wharton Business School, University of Pennsylvania

This was the first business school and was established by Joseph Wharton in 1881 as the first business college at the University of Pennsylvania. Currently the school offers the following programmes: Undergraduate business degree, full-time MBA, executive MBA (part-time MBA), executive education and Doctoral programmes (Wharton Business School, 2015).

The school has approximately 93 000 alumni all over the world from their entire programmes. The alumni can interact with each other through the 75 regional clubs, tours that are organised throughout the year and class reunions. The alumni also can connect to each other through Wharton connect (the school's online community) where they have to create their profile when joining the community, the main component of the profile is name, class year, geographical area and the company which the alumni is working for (Wharton Business School, 2015).

Alumni groups are divided into undergraduate alumni and MBA alumni. MBA alumni have their own network where they can communicate with each and have

discussions using Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Flickr or YouTube (Wharton Business School, 2015).

Wharton Business School has the following benefits for the alumni (Wharton School, 2015):

- Lifelong learning; and
- Career management (which includes career advice, access to jobs and a resume book which gives an alumnus an opportunity to load their resume where it can be accessed by world class employers).

3.4.4 Stanford Graduate School of Business

Stanford Graduate School of Business (GSB) was established in 1925; the idea behind creating this business school has been to establish it as a global leader in management education through educational programmes designed to develop insightful principled global leaders. To achieve this they offer programmes like MBA, Executive education PhD and MSc (Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2015).

The business school has approximately 28 190 alumni which is an all-inclusive alumni association for all the students and the students pay membership fees. The mission of the GSB alumni association is to engage and serve Stanford GSB alumni throughout out their lives and to advance the school in its mission to develop innovation, principled and insightful leaders who change the world. In order to achieve this a board of directors is nominated to serve the alumni association on a three-year tenure (Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2015).

There are alumni communities which student can interact with each other but groups are for specific gender of ethnic groups for example GSB Black alumni, GSB Hispanic alumni, GSB Women alumni and the general one where everyone can become part of. Alumni can also connect and talk to each through the online community and one can be able to locate classmate or connect with alumni from all programmes. The online community is where discussion is held. The Stanford GSB alumni are also using LinkedIn to help group discussion and keeping in touch (Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2015).

Alumni members enjoy the following benefits (Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2015):

- Job search resources: access to browse through jobs if looking for new employment;
- Career and life transition: changing jobs or career advancement;
- Research resource: access to research materials made for those who want to study further;
- Career video library: videos with exclusive insights on the events; and
- Hire alumni and students: employers can post jobs if they want to hire Stanford graduates.

3.4.5 Insead Business School

The school was founded in 1957 and saw the first intake of the MBA full-time class happening in 1959 and a year later the same class graduated. This was the class which started the Alumni Association in this school in 1961. Currently the school has grown and it is offering full-time MBA, executive MBA (part-time), executive education, Masters in Finance and PhD programmes (Insead Business School, 2015).

The programmes are offered at three campuses namely, in Europe (France) this being the main campus, Asia (Singapore) and the newly formed Abu Dhabi campus. At all their campuses they have a total of about 50 478 alumni in 174 countries with 154 nationalities. The purpose or mission of the alumni association is to support its members throughout the world with a comprehensive and wide range of professional activities to nourish their network and to promote Insead (Insead Business School, 2015).

They also have six global associations representing different industries ranging from energy, health networks and technology (Insead Business School, 2015).

The alumni stay connected through:

- Myinsead communities: online communities comprised of alumni who have created their profiles;

- Insead global network: a social networking platform connecting the school and the alumni;
- Reunions: organised per classes; and
- Alumni events, for example, forums, conferences, networking events or golfing sessions.

These mediums of communications are useful for rekindling the Insead experience among students. Students can also utilise platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ to keep in touch with each other or to share any other information which they deem beneficial to other students (Insead Business School, 2015).

The alumni members have the following benefits (Insead Business School, 2015):

- Access to invaluable academic journals like the Economist and Journal of management ;
- Lifelong career development support and coaching;
- Opportunities to attend high-level social events;
- Access to Kellogg, Harvard, and Stanford career services;
- Lifelong learning;
- Online access to Insead library; and
- Lifelong Insead email usage.

3.4.6 Columbia Business School

Columbia Business School (CBS) in New York City, US was founded in 1916 and today the school has evolved to meet the needs of the ever changing business world. This has been possible through their programme offering which involves both full-time and Executive (part-time) MBA; PhD programme; Executive education; Masters of Science and Undergraduate programme which includes programme like Financial Accounting or Marketing Management (Columbia School of Business, 2015).

The School has approximately 40 000 alumni covering their entire programme. The method of engagement which is employed is through organised class reunions, alumni clubs which can either be domestic or international and annual dinners. In

order for the alumni to stay connected to the school and to each other the following online methods are utilised (Columbia School of Business, 2015):

- Online network the alumni continually interact with each other either by region or year of graduation;
- Online communities which can either be MBA or Executive MBA communities;
- Social media; Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn; and
- Career network which helps the alumni who are looking for jobs so they can expand and improve their career either by providing advice preparation of the interview.

CBS has some benefits which alumni can enjoy which are (Columbia School of Business, 2015):

- Signature events: these events include networking events and alumni clubs meeting;
- Research resources: this is direct access to the library resources which is aimed for those who want to further their studies;
- Lifetime email forwarding, this is an opportunity for the school email to redirect mails to your personal email;
- Career services, this is individual career advice or preparation for interviews; and
- Go back to class; alumni have access to any programme if they want to improve their skills.

3.4.7 IESE Business School

IESE business school was founded in 1958 as the Graduate School of Business, when executive education was scarcely known outside US. During its establishment it was only focused on the Advanced Management Programme and four years later the school established the first two-year MBA programme in Europe. Currently the school has two campuses in Barcelona and Madrid; and facilities in New York, Munich and Sao Paulo (IESE Business School, 2015).

Currently the school offers a variety of MBA programmes which are the traditional or full-time MBA, Executive MBA, Global executive MBA and the World executive MBA, Executive education and PhD studies (IESE Business School, 2015).

The alumni association was founded in 1959 by the efforts of graduates of the first Executive programme with the aim of cultivating the dynamic forum for continued learning, networking and enrichment and enabling the connection to school and with each other. The mission of the association is to offer lifelong learning, professional support and networking opportunities for the graduates (IESE Business School, 2015).

The aim of the association is to foster professional and societal relationships among IES alumni, to increase awareness of IESE and its activities, to maintain and nurture relationships and collaboration between Alumni and IESE, to support the school's teaching, research and social objectives, and to support IESE in its overriding goal of helping companies better serve the people and society through its diverse educational activities and ongoing development of research and teachings (IESE Business School, 2015).

The association has a governance board and executive committee which are mainly responsible for operation and functioning of the association. All programmes are represented on the Board by their class delegates (IESE Business School, 2015).

The alumni association does not only cater for the MBA but the entire student body who graduated from the school. Engagement is maintained through the following (IESE Business School, 2015):

- Global class reunions which are normally held once a year;
- Club alumni which are per region;
- Reunions and meetings; and
- Social networks which are Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Alumni can enjoy the following benefits (IESE Business School, 2015):

- Use of IESE facilities: alumni can pre-book to use the rooms for their meetings;
- Library services which include service like lending services;
- Entrepreneurship: alumni can receive coaching, training and networking opportunities; and
- Career development which is career coaching and advice.

3.4.8 Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management

Having celebrated 100 years of management education in 2014, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan School of Management prides itself in the impact they have made by its faculty to their students and the world. The school have managed to have the impact through their programme offering which are: MBA and Executive MBA programmes, Executive education, PhD programmes, Masters in Finance and Undergraduate degrees such as Management in Sciences(MIT Sloan Business School, 2015).

By offering these programmes the school has about 120 000 alumni and the alumni is not divided by programme offering. Their alumni board members are made of 30 alumni from around the world and the network committee which is responsible for structuring the alumni engagement and seek ways to improve and expand to ensure maximum participation and enduring experience (MIT Sloan Business School, 2015).

The school is ensuring maximum engagement with its alumni through the following programmes (MIT Sloan Business School, 2015):

- Alumni club per region: students are encouraged to join their local alumni for easy participation and networking;
- Mentoring programme: students get involved into a mentoring programme facilitated by alumni from different industries;
- Social 5: connecting the graduates from the last five years per region and hosting events; and

The social hubs where alumni can meet and interact with each other comprise Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Storify and Flickr.

Being alumni of MIT, one gets to enjoy the following benefits (MIT Sloan Business School, 2015):

- Lifelong learning, courses which are able to keep one sharpening the skills;
- Corporate connection, giving their alumni access to some of the experts from industries;
- Alumni career services, alumni qualify for career coaching, can view employers who are looking to hire MIT graduates and can post resumes which employers can view; and
- Access to campus fitness facilities and museums.

3.4.9 University of Chicago Booth School of Business

The business school which was founded in 1898 is situated in Chicago and has received its accreditation in 1916. The school has four campuses: two in Asia; that is Hong Kong and Singapore which is the newest established campuses in 2014; the other in Europe situated in London; and two in the city origin which is Chicago (Booth School of Business, 2015).

It offers the following programmes full-time, (part-time) Executive MBA, PhD programmes, executive education and Summer business scholar which provides a model academic environment for future leaders from diverse backgrounds while they explore disciplines such as marketing, finance and accounting (Booth School of Business, 2015).

There is no specialised alumni per programme offering, all who studied here are handled as a large group of alumni which comprise 48 000 members with over 70 alumni clubs for the graduates to socialise, network and learn. They ensure maximum engagement of the alumni through (Booth School of Business, 2015):

- Alumni are invited to support the admission process;
- Share their experience and expertise with students;
- Share their experience with alumni by being the guest speaker in one of their functions; and

- Alumni can use social media such as Facebook or LinkedIn to stay connected with alumni community.

These are the benefits of being alumni at this school (Booth School of Business, 2015):

- Career services which include career advancement and career change advice, job posting and access to Chicago Booth resume database;
- Alumni have the opportunity to use Chicago Booth email for life; and
- Branded Business cards.

3.4.10 Haas School of Business

Haas Business School is situated in California in the United States and was founded in 1898 which makes it the oldest business school in the public institution. It offers the following programmes full time and executive MBA; PhD programmes; executive education; Masters in Financial Engineering and undergraduates courses like Bachelor of Science degrees (Booth School of Business, 2015).

The institution does have an alumni network; however, the MBA does have its own network which comprises 16 000 members and this is how the school keeps them engaged (Booth School of Business, 2015):

- Workshop and Events, this is designed to keep one on top of the career trend;
- Advising and coaching in order to help alumni make better career choices to progress and grow;
- Online resources: the online resources include but are not limited to LinkedIn. This online service is designed to enhance networking among alumni; keeping them informed in what is going on in the industry of their choice;
- MBA career network; and
- Mid-career resources where leadership expertise are shared from alumni.

Being Haas Business School alumni one benefits in the following ways (Haas School of Business, 2015).

- Engage: where the alumni engage with other alumni. There are various forms of engagement that can be utilized for example LinkedIn;

- Advance: through the engagement advancement happens because one enjoys the benefits of receiving weekly job boards, newsletter or career advising as well as receiving invites of the webinars which are beneficial;
- Learn: the defining principle of “being a student always” is practiced. This involves getting a discount for executive education and receiving publications in order to stay abreast with the newest trend; and
- Share: this provides an opportunity to share the expertise and experience either through Facebook or LinkedIn.

The communication platforms of the business schools globally have been summarised to see which ones are common in the section to follow.

3.5 Forms of communication used by top ten international business schools

Communication platforms which are used by different international business schools have been looked at and is tabulated by the table 3.2 below. The ones with the number below 5 is referred to as not common among the business schools (for the purpose of this study), therefore the ones with higher than 5 which are LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and alumni clubs is used as guiding in designing a measuring instrument to see which ones would the alumni and current students prefer.

Table 3.2: Summary of the forms of communication that are being used by top ten ranked business schools globally

Forms of Communication										
Business school	LinkedIn	Twitter	Facebook	Newsletter/ Magazine	Social Events /Class Reunion	You tube	Instagram	Google +	Alumni Clubs	Flickr
Harvard	x	x	x	x	x				x	
London	x	x	x				x	x	x	
Wharton	x	x	x			x			x	x
Stanford	x								x	
Insead	x	x	x						x	
Columbia	x	x	x				x	x		
IESE	x	x	x		x				x	
MIT Sloan	x	x	x				x		x	x
Chicago Booth	x		x							
HAAS	x		x							
Total	10	7	9		2	1	3	2	5	2

(Source: Own compilation)

3.6 SUMMARY OF THE BENEFITS OF THE ALUMNI

Benefits which different business schools are offering to their alumni have been studied and are shown by Table 3.3. Only those benefits which most business schools are offering and have a score 5 and above are regarded as the most common ones, and have been used as instruments to assess whether the graduates and students prefer them or otherwise.

Table 3.3: Summary of the benefits offered to the graduates by top ten business schools globally

Benefits to the Alumni								
Business school	Career Services	Email for life	Lifelong learning	Campus Facilities	Library	Social Events	Discounts	
Harvard	X							
London	X		x	x	x		x	
Wharton	X		x					
Stanford	X				x			
Insead	X	x	x		x	x		
Columbia	X	x	x		x	x		
IESE	X			x	x	x		
MIT Sloan	X		x	x				
Chicago Booth	X	x						
HAAS	X							
	x							
Total	10	3	5	3	5	3	1	

(Source: Own compilation)

The following section investigates the top ten business schools in SA.

3.7 ANALYSES OF THE TOP 10 BUSINESS SCHOOL IN SA

Below is a discussion of the top ten business school in SA as rated by pmr.africa.

3.7.1 University of Stellenbosch Business School

The Stellenbosch Business School (USB) is the first business school in SA and was established in 1964 and has just celebrated 50 years of existence in providing business education to business leaders. The school started with a part-time MBA but currently they also offer the degree full-time. USB is the first African-born University to be awarded three international accreditations (Triple Crown) namely, EQUIS, AMBA and AACSB. The school is operating outside South Africa in countries like Botswana, Namibia and even Europe (University of Stellenbosch Business School, 2015).

The USB offers the following programmes: MBA, Masters Degrees, PhD programme and executive education. Therefore the alumni involve all those who have studied one of the above courses (University of Stellenbosch Business School, 2015).

The Alumni Association (AA) of the business school was started in 1979 by the part-time students. The vision of the AA is to be the most desired association in Africa while their mission is to grow South Africa and Africa. The AA of the USB is run by the Business School independently of the mother university (University of Stellenbosch Business School, 2015).

Their alumni have 17000 members and the AA communicates with them in two ways; through the regional offices located in SA, African regions, UK and Europe; and through the electronic newsletter. The school engages the students through these social media: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (University of Stellenbosch Business School, 2015).

The governing body of the School comprises the President; The EXCO chairperson of the alumni association (AA) is responsible for the operation and strategy of association; and the regional committee which is the one which keeps contact between the alumni and the school (University of Stellenbosch Business School, 2015).

USB offers the following benefits to its alumni (University of Stellenbosch Business School, 2015):

- Lifelong learning
- Career services which include personal development, advice on planning and developing a career and access to the USB career portals.

3.7.2 Gordon Institute of Business Science: University of Pretoria

Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) was founded in 2000 and it is based in Johannesburg. It offers the following programmes: full-time, part-time, modular MBA, Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (PDBA), Programme for Management Development (PMD), PhD programme and executive education (GIBS 2015).

The alumni in this school comprise those who have studied MBA and PDBA and its alumni office is run by the alumni liaison and the marketing and alumni manager. They keep in touch with the alumni through the LinkedIn, class reunion and social events like gala dinners which are planned throughout the year (GIBS, 2015).

Benefits that alumni enjoy (GIBS, 2015):

- Discount on executive education and on conferences;
- Exclusive evenings with the local and international speakers;
- Invitations to social events; and
- Access to GIBS campus at a nominal fee, library included.

3.7.3 Milpark Business School

Milpark Business School was established in 1997 and was one of the first private providers of higher management education in SA. The school has teaching offices in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. They offer the following programmes: Certificate in Management, Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration, MBA and executive education (Milpark Business School, 2015).

The alumni group of Milpark communicate and network with each other through Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and currently there is no Alumni Association or governing body which handles alumni issues. All the students who have studied at Milpark can join the alumni network; there is no dedicated association either to MBAs, executive education or any other faculty (Milpark Business School, 2015).

3.7.4 University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business

The Graduate School of Business (GSB) is one of the business schools in SA that have a Triple Accreditation like USB above and is ranked number 56 by FT ranking globally. GSB offers the following programmes: MBA and Executive MBA, Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration, executive education, and Masters in Commerce and PhD programmes (University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, 2015).

Alumni involves those who have done MBA and executive MBA and are about 23 000 alumni spread in 68 countries. The alumni's office keeps in touch regularly with the alumni through the electronic resources which are newsletters, free email account, Facebook and LinkedIn. However class reunions and any networking events are organised occasionally to allow alumni to network (University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, 2015).

These are the benefits that alumni can enjoy (University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, 2015):

- Discounts on executive education courses;
- Access to the library at a specified annual fee;
- Job search facilities;
- Networking opportunities with various guest speaker programmes; and
- Participation in regular alumni breakfasts and *adhoc* GSB events like graduate events.

3.7.5 North West University (NWU) Potchefstroom Business School (PBS)

Potchefstroom Business School is part of the Northwest University (NWU) and it was started in 1965 by providing postgraduate management education to the business society. The business school has grown to be one of the independent business schools and has been accredited by the AMBA. The school now offers the following programmes: part-time MBA, Postgraduate Diploma in Management, PhD and various executive programmes (PBS, 2015).

The alumni was started in 1998 and has 2500 members and comprise of those who have studied MBA, whose details are on the website and the school is keeping contact with. Twitter and Facebook are being utilized by the school to post any news and alumni are networking with each other on these media platforms. The school also utilizes a quarterly electronic magazine which is sent to the students to keep in touch with them and to update them on any activities that are happening at the school (PBS, 2015).

Benefits to the alumni are (PBS, 2015):

- Invitation to the prestige day and other events like expos and gala dinners; and
- Access to career services.

3.7.6 Mancosa

Mancosa is a private higher education institution founded in 1997 in order to offer management education which is easily accessible. The school has the following programmes: MBA, degree and honours in different fields like marketing, advanced and higher certificates in different fields like management studies, Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management and executive education. The school has been offering the MBA degree since its inception. In October 2014 Mancosa formerly opened a Graduate School of Business in Durban, a campus solely dedicated to the postgraduate business education (Mancosa, 2013).

The institution does have an alumni relations office to manage alumni activities and students are able to make contact with them through this office. The only form of communication which they use is through the quarterly newsletter. There are no specified benefits for the alumni (Mancosa, 2013).

3.7.7 Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Business School (NMMU)

NMMU Business School was founded in 2005, situated in Port Elizabeth and it is the youngest business school in SA. The institution offers business education through the following programmes: MBA, PDBA, PhD programmes and executive education which includes Management Development Programme (NMMU Business School, 2015).

The school has about 80 000 alumni around the world but it is not clear as to whether these are business school graduates or it includes the graduates from parent university as well. Alumni can keep in touch with the business school and each other through LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (NMMU Business School, 2015).

Benefits to the alumni (NMMU Business School, 2015):

- Referrals and information of upcoming job opportunities;
- Assistants with networking opportunities;
- Discounted rates on executive education;
- Discounted library membership benefits; and
- Free electronic and printed newsletter.

3.7.8 Rhodes Business School

Rhodes Business School was established in 2000 and aims to produce leaders with sustainability through the programme offering which includes MBA, PhD programme, Post Graduate Diploma in Enterprise Management (PDEM), MBA aligned short courses and executive short courses (Rhodes Business School, 2015).

The alumni committee of the school consists of those who are alumni themselves. The mode of engagement with the alumni which is used is through an annual electronic newspaper. Social media like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are available as a medium of communication (Rhodes Business School, 2015).

3.7.9 Wits Business School

The mission of the alumni association at WBS is to be regarded by students, staff, businesses, competitors and other stakeholders as the premier business school in Africa. WBS wants to achieve this through the programmes which comprise four departments namely: MBA, Masters of Management such as Masters in strategic marketing, Postgraduate Diploma in Management, PhD, executive education and leadership and events (Wits Business School, 2015).

There is an appointed alumni association committee for the business school which heads up the alumni group. Their alumni groups are categorised by the programmes (programmes explained above), however the one which seems more active is the MBA because it does have an online community website where the MBA alumni communicates with each other discussing and sharing any information relating to business. Their alumni association is a standalone and is not attached to the university alumni. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are utilised as a form of

networking among students and for the school to post information (Wits Business School, 2015).

3.7.10 Regenesys Business School

Situated at the hub of business in Sandton, the school has been offering private management education for the past 16 years. The school offers bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, diplomas and a higher certificate (Regenesys, 2015).

In order to enhance an ongoing relationship and reinvigorate engagement with the past students the school provides a platform of communication through its alumni association. The alumni involve graduates, students and staff in all programmes which the school is offering. The alumni of Regenesys stay in contact with each other through Facebook, Twitter and Google+ (Regenesys, 2015).

The vision of the alumni association is to engage, inform and inspire Regenesys alumni to stay connected to the business school and to support Regenesys' lofty vision of becoming the leading institution of management and leadership development by 2020 (Regenesys, 2015).

Benefits the alumni enjoy are (Regenesys Alumni, 2015):

- Career development: post qualification coaching;
- Access to facilities including research library;
- Access to leadership development and networking events;
- Discounts on short learning programme and continuing education; and
- Regenesys loyalty programme.

3.8 SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

Communication platforms that different business schools in SA are using have been investigated and are indicated by the table 3.4 below. The ones with the number below 5 is referred to as not common among the business schools, therefore the ones with higher than 5 which are LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and newsletters are used as guiding in designing a measuring instrument to see which ones the alumni and current students prefer.

Table 3.4: Summary of the forms of communication mode that is being used by SA top ranked business schools

Forms of Communication							
Business school	LinkedIn	Twitter	Facebook	Newsletter	Social Events/Class Reunion	You tube	Google +
USB	x	x	x	x	x		
GIBS	x				x		
Milpark	x	x	x				
GSB:UCT	x		x		x		
PBS	x	x	x	x			
MANCOSA				x			
NMMU	x	x	x	x		x	
Rhodes	x	x	x	x	x		
WBS		x	x			x	
Regenesys		x	x				x
Total	7	7	7	5	4	1	1

(Source: Own compilation)

3.9 SUMMARY OF THE BENEFITS OF THE ALUMNI

Benefits which different business schools are offering to their alumni have been studied and are shown by Table 3.5. Only that benefit which most business school are offering and has a score 2 and below is regarded as the most common ones, and has been used as instrument to assess whether the graduates and student will prefer them or otherwise.

Table 3.5: Summary of the benefits offered by the SA top ranked business schools to the graduates

Benefits to the Alumni								
Business school	Career Services	Email for life	Lifelong learning	Campus Facilities	Library Access	Social Events	Discounts	Job Search Facilities
USB	x		x					x
GIBS							x	
Milpark			x		x			
GSB:UCT					x	x	x	x
PBS	x					x		
MANCOSA								
NMMU					x		x	x
Rhodes								
WBS								
Regenesys	x				x	x	x	
Total	3	0	2	0	4	3	4	3

(Source: Own compilation)

Business schools like Wits or Rhodes and the benefits they offer are not documented therefore the highly recognised benefits are career services, library access, social events, discounts and job search facilities.

3.10 SUMMARY

The literature review indicates that alumni are a very important asset to the school in that they represent the school at their workplace where they put into practice what they have learned.

The most common benefits which the global business schools offer to their alumni as indicated by the table above is Career Services, lifelong learning and access to the library (see table 3.3). The most common benefits to the alumni by the business schools in SA are library access, discounts and job search facilities (see table 3.5). Note that some institutions like Rhodes, Mancosa and Wits' benefits are not mentioned. In summary the most common benefits that are offered by the most business schools is library access.

There are various forms of communication which the business schools use to keep the alumni engaged and keep in touch with them, and the dominant form of

communication which is commonly used is social media. This is due to the growing technology uses in the world.

The most commonly used social media which are used by the business schools globally for communication with their alumni (as represented in Table 3.2) are LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and alumni club while the most common benefits are offered to the alumni by business schools are career services, lifelong learning and library services.

The most commonly used social media which are used by the business schools in SA for communication with their alumni (as represented in Table 3.4) are LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and newsletters. The most common benefits are career services, library access, social events, discounts and job search facilities.

The following section is Chapter 4 which presents the results of the empirical study.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the quantitative study conducted on the alumni and current students of the NWU Potchefstroom Business School and it explains how this study was conducted. The chapter describes the target population, sampling, the research instrument used, and collection of the data, how the data was analysed and results are subsequently interpreted in order to reach the objectives of the study. The following chapter will present recommendations and conclusions.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 Research Process

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:2) define research as a systematic approach of collecting, analysing, and interpreting information in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon which one is interested in. Saunders *et al.* (2009:5) further state that research is something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way thereby increasing their knowledge. Salkind (2008:2) also states that research should be undertaken for the betterment of the society. The main objectives of this research were to assess the needs of alumni and current students at business schools in how the alumni relations of the school should be managed that will best satisfy their needs.

4.2.2 Research design

Research design is the plan according to which the research is obtained and information or data collected (Welman *et al.*, 2012:102). The plan will aid in answering the research objectives which are:

- What communication channel should be employed to keep in touch with the alumni?
- Is there a difference between the communication needs of current students and alumni?

- What should be the frequency of communication between the business school and alumni?
- What type of activities and events do the alumni prefer to attend or participate in?
- Is there a comparison between the mostly used social platform, trends from other business schools and alumni and current students of NWU Potchefstroom Business School?
- To develop a profile for the alumni and current students

By answering these questions the main research objective of this research will have been achieved (Welman *et al.*, 2012:102).

Quantitative research design is the type of research design that follows structured methods to evaluate the objective data and for this research information is gathered as numbers which can be summarised by statistical analysis, and interpretation will follow (Welman *et al.*, 2012:10; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:179).

Qualitative research design is the type of research design which follows flexible methods to investigate the subjective data that are produced by the mind of the respondents. This design can follow an observation or interview method to gather data (Welman *et al.*, 2012:10; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:134).

This study followed a quantitative approach where data was collected through a survey using a self-administered questionnaire to generate data in order to reach the objective of the study.

4.2.3 Study population

Population is defined as the study objects and can consist of individuals, groups, organisations or events (Welman *et al.*, 2012:52). The population is chosen because they possess the characteristics or are exposed to certain conditions which the researcher was questioning and can assist in answering those questions.

The target population used in this study was alumni and current students of NWU Potchefstroom Business School also representing potential alumni. The database consisting of NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni was accessed in order to

find their contact details and the questionnaire was sent electronically to the alumni and current students from the available database. The structured questionnaire was sent to the alumni electronically and only 90 questionnaires were returned.

Questionnaires were also handed out to the Postgraduate diploma in Management and current MBA students of the NWU Potchefstroom Business School and 128 completed questionnaires were received from the current students. Current students were involved in this study because soon they will be alumni; it is better to be proactive and find out about their needs so that when they have completed their studies and become alumni the school can be better prepared to meet their needs.

Saunders *et al.* (2009:213) define non-probability sampling as the probability of each case being selected from the total population and used for data collection is not known. They further state that convenience sampling involves selecting those that will be easy to access for data generation. Therefore for the purpose of this study non-probability sampling and convenience were used.

4.2.4 Measuring instrument

A structured questionnaire was used in this study and was developed using information obtained from the literature review from the previous chapters as a guideline especially the mode of communication that other business schools are using.

According to Welman *et al.* (2012:148) a pilot study in the development of a measuring instrument is conducted to detect possible flaws and to identify ambiguous formulated items. A pilot study was done by sending the questionnaire to four the current MBA students and five NWU PBS staff members in order to see how the questionnaire would be understood by respondents. The questionnaire was edited from the comments and finalised.

The questionnaire for this research was divided into four sections namely:

Section A. Demographic information – Respondents had to indicate aspects like their age and population group, graduation year, highest qualifications, province where they are located and their preferred language of communication.

Section B. Accessibility of technology – Respondents had to indicate which social media platform they were using at the time to communicate and how often are they engaged in these social media, which one will they prefer NWU Potchefstroom Business School to use to communicate important information to them. Respondents were also asked to indicate if they are aware of news publications of NWU Potchefstroom Business School.

Section C. Benefits and alumni events–In this section respondents were asked to indicate which activities or events they would prefer to attend or like to be part of.

Section D. General Information–This section was used to assess the perception of the respondents towards the school in this case the NWU Potchefstroom Business School.

4.2.5 Data collection

In business research there are different methods of data collection. The method chosen will be dependent on the type of research design being used. Data can be collected by observation, survey or experiment from secondary or primary sources (Sakunasingha, 2006:99). Primary (new) data is the data collected for that specific research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:256). This study follows a survey method of data collection through a self-administered questionnaire.

The study was done on the alumni and current students of NWU Potchefstroom Business School. The alumni were mainly those who have already joined the alumni association of the school, knowing about their needs ensure one to know whether their needs are currently met or not. The current students will soon become alumni and what a better way to find out about their needs and expectation of the alumni relations as this will guarantee that the school becomes proactive in handling alumni relation matters.

4.3 EFFECT SIZE

An effect size is a measure of the size of effect be it the strength of the relationship between variables. It is also an objective and standardised measure of the magnitude of an effect. Effect sizes are helpful because it provides a measure of the importance of an effect (Field *et al.*, 2012:57)

Practical effects are interpreted in the following way according to Cohen (1998) as cited by Steyn and Ellis (2003:52):

- Small effect of no practical significance: $d = 0.2$
- Medium effect of visible significance: $d = 0.5$
- Large effect of practical significance: $d = 0.8$

Practical significance has been done in order to assess the significance of the current students and alumni in relation to relevance of communication, frequency of receiving the news and preference of events of the alumni association. The table below shows the results and a discussion follows thereafter.

Table 4.1a: Effect size on student's status

Item		Student status	n	Mean	Std dev	Effect size (d)
B8	Relevance of the communication platform	Alumni	101	2.65	0.47	0.5
		Current student	66	2.89	0.49	
B9	Frequency of receiving the news from NWU PBS in the past	Alumni	93	1.34	0.42	0.2
		Current student	58	1.47	0.60	
C6	Alumni association events preference	Alumni	98	2.58	0.57	0.04
		Current student	61	2.60	0.55	

(Source: Own compilation)

Item B8: Relevance of the communication platform

On the relevance of the communication platform respondents were requested to indicate the relevance of different communication platforms like newsletters, SMS, email, NWU Potchefstroom Business School website, Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook. Based on the results appearing on the table above there is a medium effect between the current student and alumni as the effect size equals $d = 0.5$.

Item B9: Frequency of receiving the news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School in the past

On the frequency of receiving the news respondents were requested to indicate how often they had received news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School in the past. The measuring scale was 1 representing never, 2 representing occasionally, 3 representing often and 4 representing very often. The practical significance on this item is small because $d = 0.2$ which indicate that there is no practical significance between the two groups

Item C6: Events preference

This item has twelve items (events) which respondents were asked to indicate their preference on. The measuring scale was 1 representing least preferred to 4 representing most preferred. The practical significance on this item is 0.04 which indicate a small significance between the two groups.

Table 4.1b: Effect size of generational age group

Item		Generational age group	n	Mean	Std dev	Effect size (d)	
						1&	2&
B8	Relevance of the communication platform	Baby boomers	37	2.58	0.39	0.43	0.09
		Generation X	102	2.83	0.57		
		Generation Y	75	2.77	0.58	0.33	
B9	Frequency of receiving the news from NWU PBS in the past	Baby boomers	35	1.31	0.41	0.19	0.03
		Generation X	89	1.42	0.61		
		Generation Y	68	1.44	0.56	0.24	
C6	Alumni association events preference	Baby boomers	37	2.41	0.57	0.42	0.22
		Generation X	95	2.68	0.65		
		Generation Y	69	2.54	0.60	0.22	

(Source: Own compilation)

Item B8: Relevance of the communication platform

On the relevance of the communication platform respondents were requested to indicate the relevance of different communication platform like newsletter, SMS,

email, NWU Potchefstroom Business School website, Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook. Based on the results appearing in the table above small to medium effect is shown among the three groups as the effect size is 0.43 and 0.33; accompanied by a small to no effect represented by an effect size of 0.09.

Item B9: Frequency of receiving the news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School in the past

On this item respondents were requested to indicate how often they had received news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School in the past. The measuring scale was 1 representing never, 2 representing occasionally, 3 representing often and 4 representing very often. Based on the results appearing in the table above small to medium effect among the three groups as the effect size is 0.24 and 0.19; accompanied by a small to no effect represented by an effect size of 0.03.

Item C6: Events preference

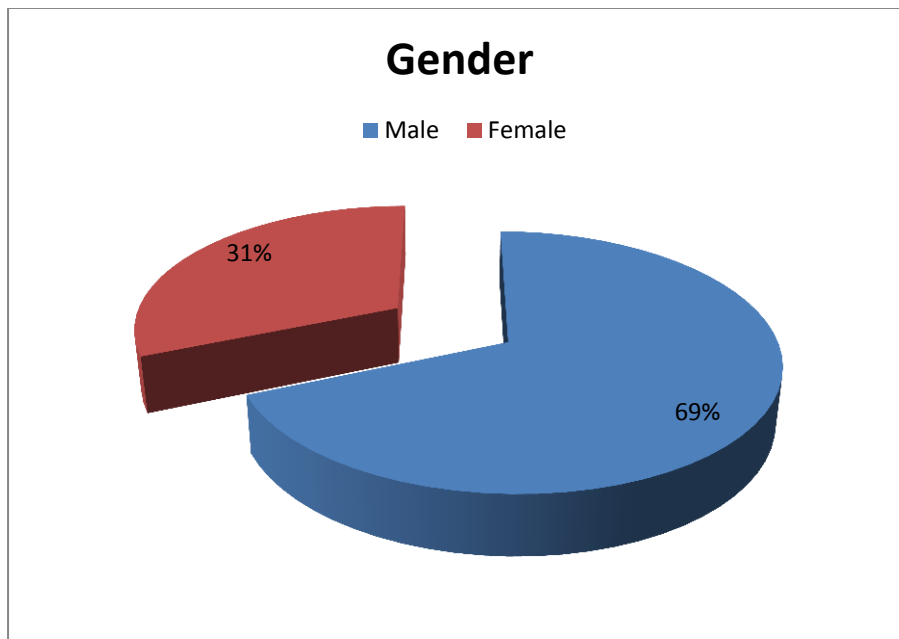
This item has twelve items (events) which respondents were asked to indicate their preference. The measuring scale was 1 representing least preferred to 4 representing most preferred. The practical significance on this item is from small to medium represented by 0.42 and 0.22.

4.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

This section presents the results of the research study that was conducted using the questionnaires.

4.4.1 Gender

Figure 4.1: Gender



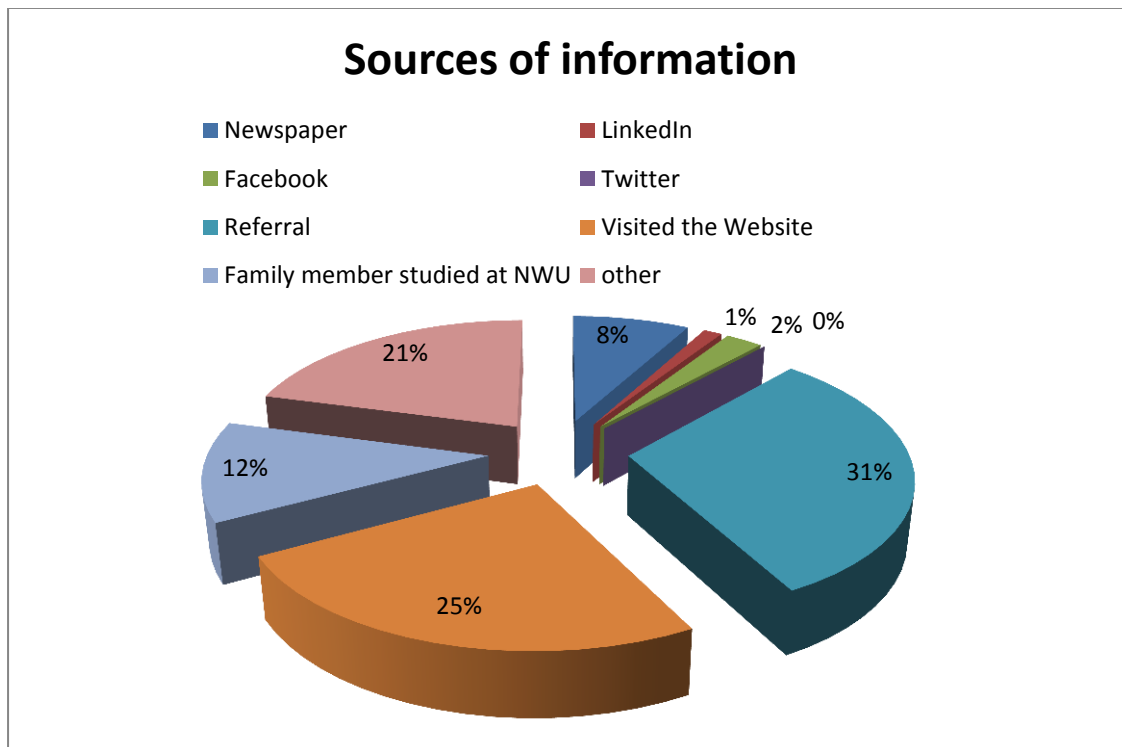
(Source: own compilation)

The figure above shows that of the total sample comprised 69% (149) males while females were 31% (68).

4.4.2 Source of Information

Figure 4.1 below shows the type of source which the respondents have used in order to find information about NWU Potchefstroom Business School when deciding to study at the school. The figure shows to what extent the respondents are using the source to get the information which will be beneficial or help to make a decision of where to study.

Figure 4.2: Sources of information



(Source: Own compilation)

The figure above shows the source which the respondents used to get information about the NWU Potchefstroom Business School. The least used source of information is Twitter with 0%, followed by LinkedIn with 1%, followed by Facebook with 2%, then the newspaper with 8%, family member with 12%, other sources with 21%, website with 25%, and the most frequented source of information is referral with 31%.

4.4.3 Analyses of the results of the whole group per different sections

Section B: Accessibility of technology

This section had ten items which investigated whether the respondents have access to technology as a communication channel, which social media they use, the preferred channels of social media which the business school can employ to communicate with them and the relevance of these channels to them. Each item will be analysed separately in the section below.

Item 1: Frequency of receiving news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School

This item requested respondents to indicate how often they have received any news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School. They were asked to choose from:

- 1 which represent never,
- 2 representing sometimes,
- 3 representing very often, and
- 4 representing regularly.

The table below shows how the respondents have score this item and discussion will follow after that.

Table 4.2: Frequency of receiving news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School

Frequency	%
Never	3.27
Sometimes	39.72
Very Often	16.36
Regularly	40.65

(Source: own compilation)

Item 2 and 3: Familiarity with “Alere Flammam” and receiving of “Prontuit”.

“Alere Flammam” and “Prontuit” are two quarterly electronic newsletters which are normally distributed to the current students (prospective alumni) and alumni of the NWU Potchefstroom Business School electronically. The two electronic publications cover the activities which are taking place at NWU Potchefstroom Business School. On these two items the respondents were asked to indicate whether they are familiar with the publications and asked whether they received it. They were expected to tick Yes or No. The table below shows the percentage of those who said yes and those who said no.

Table 4.3: Familiarity with “Alere Flammam” and receiving of “Prontuit”

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Familiarity with “Alere Flammam”	25.70	74.30
Receiving “Prontuit”	50.24	49.76

Source: own compilation

The results from the table shows that 25.7% of the respondents' receive "Alere Flammam" publications while 74.30% say they do not receive the publication. The table also shows that there is an almost equal split between those who say "yes" they are receiving the "Prontuit" publication indicated by 50.24 and those says "no" they do not receive it (49.76%).

Item 4: Frequency of reading NWU Potchefstroom Business School communiqués

On this item respondents were asked how often they read any news that is from NWU Potchefstroom Business School. They were asked to choose from:

- 1 which represent never,
- 2 representing sometimes,
- 3 representing very often and
- 4 representing regularly.

The table below shows how the respondents have scored this item and a discussion will follow after that.

Table 4.4: Frequency of reading Potchefstroom Business School communiqués

Reading Frequency	%
Never	14.55
Sometimes	53.52
Very Often	20.19
Regularly	11.74

(Source: own compilation)

More than half of the respondents stated that they read the communication sometimes: this is shown by 53.52%, followed by 20.19% who state that very often they read the news, then 14.55% stating that they never read the publication and the least percentage comprised those who stated that they read the news regularly (11.74%). When asked to explain why they do not read the matter released to them the majority of the respondents stated that time constraint is the reason why they do not read communications.

Item 5: Social media usage

On this item respondents were asked to indicate which social media they use. They were asked to answer yes or no. Table 4.5 below shows the percentage yes and percentage no and a discussion follows after.

Table 4.5: Social media usage

Ranking	Social media	Usage	
		Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Facebook	79.68	20.32
2	Twitter	40.27	59.73
3	LinkedIn	77.65	22.35
4	YouTube	71.43	28.47
5	WhatsApp	92.27	7.73
6	Other	25.64	74.36

(Source: own compilation)

Based on the table above WhatsApp is the most widely used social media platform with 92.27% usage from the respondents, followed by Facebook with 79.68%, then LinkedIn with 77.65%, YouTube with 71.43%, Twitter which is the least used by the respondents with 40.27%, while the respondents also indicated the usage of 25.64% of other social media like Instagram, Vimeo and GroupWise.

Item 6: Frequency of social media usage

In this item respondents were asked to indicate how often they use different social media. The scale measurement is;

- 1 representing annually,
- 2 representing monthly,
- 3 representing weekly and
- 4 representing daily.

The table below shows the average results scored by the respondents. Discussion of the results will follow after the table.

Table 4.6: Frequency of social media usage

	Social media	mean	Std dev	1=annually	2=monthly	3= weekly	4= daily
1	Facebook	3.33	0.12	6.41	8.33	30.77	54.49
2	Twitter	2.52	0.84	26.67	18.67	30.67	24.00
3	LinkedIn	2.61	1.18	11.33	29.33	46.67	12.67
4	YouTube	2.77	0.89	9.84	24.59	44.26	21.31
5	WhatsApp	3.98	0.12	-----	-----	1.53	98.47

Note: ----- no response from the group

(Source: own compilation)

WhatsApp has shown to be the one being used on a daily basis with 3.98 mean value and daily usage of 98.47 % among the respondents, followed by Facebook with 3.33 mean value and usage of 54.49% daily showing that the respondents are using it between weekly and daily, then YouTube with a mean value of 2.77 indicating that it is being used by the respondent between monthly to weekly, LinkedIn with a mean value of 2.61 showing that it is being used between monthly and weekly, and the least used platform being Twitter between monthly and weekly is shown by a mean value of 2.52.

Item 7: Preferred platform of communication

This item measured the preferred communication platform which the respondents prefers NWU Potchefstroom Business School to use as a medium of communication to convey messages. The respondents were expected to tick “yes” or “no”. The table below shows the results of how they had responded to the question.

Table 4.7: Preferred platform of communication

Ranking	Communication channel	Preference	
		Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Newsletters	87.57	12.43
2	Alumni Clubs (Regional Chapter)	54.14	45.86
3	Facebook	59.48	40.52
4	Twitter	20.69	79.31
5	LinkedIn	57.24	42.76
6	Other (Specify)	43.10	56.90

(Source: Own compilation)

The results from the table above shows that the most preferred channel respondents prefers is newsletters with 87.57% of the respondents saying yes to it, followed by Facebook with 59.14%, LinkedIn with 57.24% preference, alumni clubs with 54.14 %, the least preferred communication channel being Twitter with 20.69% preference from respondents. The respondents also indicated that there are other communication channels which they prefer like email and webinars with 43.10% preference.

Item 8: Relevance of communication channel

In this item respondents were asked to rate the relevance of different communication channels to the respondents, the scale used had a scale of:

- 1 which represents irrelevant,
- 2 representing not so relevant,
- 3 representing relevant and
- 4 representing highly relevant.

Table 4.8 below shows how the respondents have rated this item and results are displayed as mean values.

Table 4.8: Relevance of communication channel

	Social media	mean	Std dev	1=irrelevant	2=not so relevant	3= relevant	4= highly relevant
1	Newsletters	2.99	0.85	8.00	12.50	52.50	27.00
2	Facebook	2.61	1.18	30.35	5.97	36.32	27.36
3	Twitter	1.78	0.89	48.92	28.49	18.28	4.30
4	LinkedIn	2.52	0.98	20.33	21.98	42.86	14.84
5	Networking	2.89	0.77	8.76	9.79	65.46	15.98
6	Events	2.45	0.81	8.81	48.70	31.09	11.40
7	SMS	3.02	0.91	1.42	6.16	55.92	36.49
8	email	3.27	0.64	6.50	22.50	54.00	17.00
9	NWU Potchefstroom Business School Website	2.82	0.79	12.24	46.43	30.10	11.22

(Source: own compilation)

Item 9: Frequency of receiving news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School from the following platforms previously

This item measured the frequency with which the respondents have received news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School in the past. The scale used was:

- 1 representing never,
- 2 representing occasionally,
- 3 representing often and
- 4 representing very often.

Table 4.9 below shows how the respondents have rated this item and is displayed by mean value.

Table 4.9: Frequency of receiving news from Potchefstroom Business School in the past

	Communication channel	Mean= scale of 1 to 4	Std dev	1=never	2=occasionally	3= often	4= very often
1	Newsletters	2.40	0.84	12.24	46.43	30.10	11.22
2	Facebook	1.47	0.82	71.51	11.83	14.52	2.15
3	Twitter	1.10	0.35	91.76	6.59	1.65	-----
4	LinkedIn	1.15	0.42	87.57	10.81	1.08	0.54
5	Events	1.61	0.61	45.56	47.78	6.67	-----

Note: ----- denote no response from the group

(Source: own compilation)

Item 10: Frequency of receiving any communication

On this item respondents were asked to indicate how often they would like to receive any communication from the business school. They had to choose from the following options: when there is a matter which affects the business school; when there is a matter of great significance; annually, once per semester, quarterly, once a month, or they can specify any other frequency of their choice.

Table 4.10: Preferred frequency in receiving any communication

	Options	%
1	Only when matters arise which affect the school	19.71
2	When there is a matter of great significance	18.27
3	Once annually	5.29
4	Twice annually	8.65
5	Four times annually	13.94
6	Once a month	32.69
7	Other (Specify)	1.44

(Source: own compilation)

Some 1.44% have chosen others options and indicated they would prefer once every three months, weekly or every month for shorter bulletins.

SECTION C: Benefits and alumni events

This section comprised six items where the respondents were requested to give information about how they have joined the NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association; do they think they will benefit from being part of the association; what type of events would they like to participate, attend or prefer and what benefits do they hope to get by being part of the alumni association.

Item 1: Platform used to join the NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association

On this item respondents were asked to indicate how they have joined the alumni association. Options to choose from was:

- 1 online,
- 2 during graduation,
- 3 immediately after graduation and
- 4 not yet an alumni.

Table 4.11 below shows the results of their response to this item.

Table 4.11: Platform used to join the NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association

	Joining	%
1	Online	13.92
2	During Graduation	13.92
3	Immediately after Graduation	20.62
4	Not yet an Alumni (Briefly explain)	51.55

(Source: own compilation)

Item 2: Would you benefit by being part of the alumni association?

On this item respondents were asked to indicate whether they think they would benefit by being part of the association. By answering this item they were expected to tick 'yes' or 'no'. The table below shows the results and discussion of the results will follow below the table.

Table 4.12: Would you benefit from joining the alumni association?

Would you benefit from the alumni association?	%
Yes	74.36
No	25.64

Source: own compilation

When asked to briefly explain the answer most of the respondents said the benefit can be networking and staying up-to-date with the developments at NWU Potchefstroom Business School.

Item 3: Activity participation

In this item the respondents were asked to indicate which activities they would consider participating in. Activities to choose from were alumni member professional development, promoting the alumnus or their organisation, student recruitment events, networking, prestige days, sponsorship from alumni's companies and sporting days. They had to indicate their preference by ticking 'yes' or 'no'. The table below shows the results from the respondents and discussion of the results will follow below the table.

Table 4.13: Activity participation

	Activity	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Alumni member professional developments	74.43	25.57
2	Promoting yourself/ your organisation	71.86	28.14
3	Student recruitment events	35.63	64.38
4	Alumni event: Networking	79.89	20.11
5	Alumni event: Prestige day (with prominent guest speaker from industry)	74.43	25.57
6	Sponsorship from your company	31.85	68.15
7	Sporting Day (Golf day or Bicycle day)	43.29	56.71

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 4: Events attendance

In this item respondents were asked to indicate events which they will attend by ticking Yes or No. Events which they had to choose from were annual alumni dinners, class reunions, professional development seminar, informal alumni social events and prestige day. The table below shows the results from the respondents.

Table 4.14: Events attendance

	Events	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Annual alumni dinner	64.04	35.96
2	Class re-union	75.00	25.00
3	Professional development seminar	83.80	16.20
4	Informal alumni social events	56.80	43.20
5	Prestige day	72.83	27.17

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 5: Benefits by staying connected to NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association

This item measured the respondents' opinion on what kinds of benefits do they hope to get by staying connected to the NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association. The benefits which were listed were networking, landing a new job, reconnects with old classmates and sharing industry experience. The scale of measurement was 1 being the least preferred to 4 being the most preferred. The table below shows the results of the respondents on this item.

Table 4.15: Benefits from NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association

	Benefit	Mean: scale of 1 to 4	Std dev	1=least preferred	2= slightly preferred	3= preferred	4= most preferred
1	Networking	3.31	0.84	2.96	15.27	29.56	52.22
2	Might land a new job	2.61	1.16	27.03	12.43	32.97	27.57
3	Reconnects with old classmates	2.65	0.97	14.51	26.94	37.31	21.24
4	Sharing industry experience	3.19	0.88	7.54	8.54	41.71	42.21

(Source: own compilation)

Item 6: Events preference

On this item respondents were asked to indicate their preferences on events or activities from the alumni association. The events or activities which they asked to rate was alumni mentoring opportunities, guest speakers, alumni donation opportunities, executive education possibilities, becoming a board member of the alumni association, affinity of loyalty cards, alumni events, exceptional contribution to society, career services available to alumni, reading about memoriam, news from the alumni association and corporate gifts or clothing for alumni.

The scale which was used to rate was 1 being the least preferred to 4 being the most preferred. The table below shows the results.

Table 4.16: Events preference

	Activity and events	Mean: scale of 1 to 4	Std dev	1=least preferred (%)	2= slightly preferred (%)	3= preferred (%)	4= most preferred (%)
1	Alumni mentoring opportunity	2.69	1.04	17.37	22.11	34.21	26.32
2	Guest speakers	2.87	1.20	21.99	13.09	20.42	44.50
3	Alumni donation opportunity (Financially)	2.72	1.24	27.47	12.09	21.43	39.01
4	Executive education possibilities	3.11	1.13	15.87	10.58	20.11	53.44
5	Board Member of the Alumni Association	2.66	1.27	28.96	15.85	15.85	39.34
6	Affinity cards (Loyalty card)	2.78	1.22	23.56	17.24	17.24	41.95
7	Alumni events	2.42	0.88	11.64	49.74	23.81	14.81
8	Exceptional contribution to society	2.29	0.89	17.65	47.06	24.06	11.23
9	Career services available to alumni	2.45	0.87	12.57	43.46	30.89	13.09

10	Reading about Memoriams	1.98	0.77	27.07	50.83	18.78	3.31
11	News from alumni association	2.26	0.76	10.75	60.22	20.97	8.06

(Source: Own compilation)

SECTION D: General information

The measuring scale employed was 1 representing strongly disagree, 2 representing disagree, 3 representing agree and 4 representing strongly agree. The table below shows the results of the respondents shown as mean value and also indicate percentage per item. Discussion of the results will follow in the table below

Table 4.17: General information

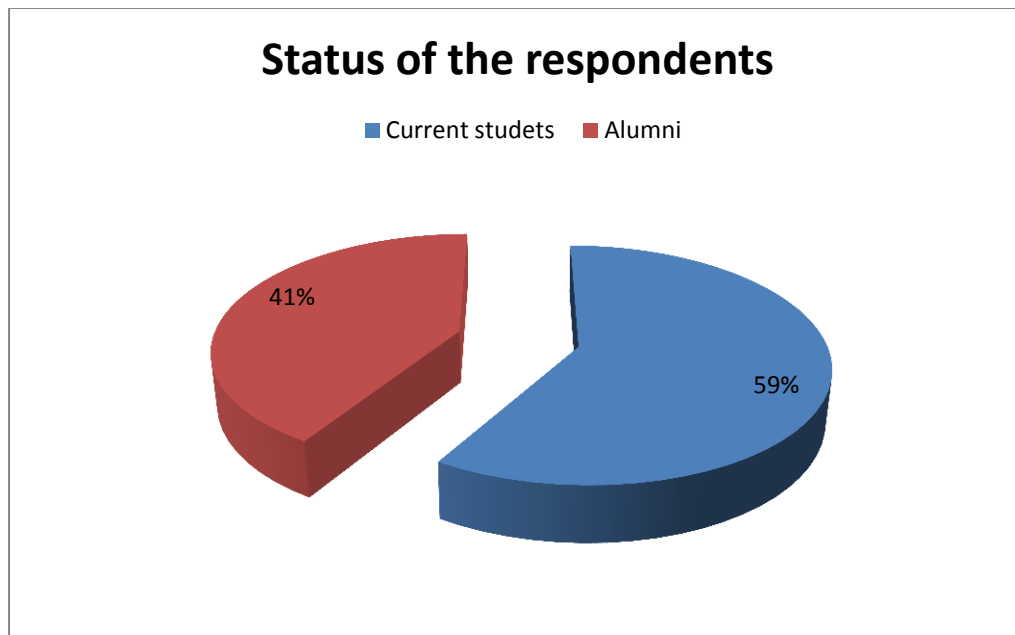
	Statement	1= strongly disagree (%)	2= disagree (%)	3= agree (%)	4= strongly agree (%)	Mean value: scale of 1 - 4	Std dev
1	I would join an alumni club in my area	4.41	9.80	54.41	31.31	3.13	0.76
2	Staying connected to the alumni is beneficial	3.86	14.49	68.60	13.04	2.91	0.65
3	Staying connected to the NWU PBS is beneficial	4.85	6.31	70.87	17.96	3.02	0.66
4	I feel that I am part of the NWU PBS community	6.80	21.36	59.22	12.62	2.78	0.75
5	I would refer someone to study at PBS	3.41	6.34	59.51	30.73	3.17	0.69
6	I am satisfied with the quality of education I received at PBS	2.91	5.34	36.41	55.34	3.44	0.73
7	The education received prepared me for my career	2.94	4.90	46.08	46.08	3.35	0.71
8	I am well informed about the activities at PBS	6.34	32.68	50.24	10.73	2.67	0.76
9	I would be interested in alumni branded apparel (t-shirts, jackets or laptop bags)	14.15	30.73	39.02	16.10	2.57	0.92
10	I would be willing to pay for membership fee	12.62	50.00	28.16	9.22	2.34	0.82
11	I would prefer a NWU PBS App developed for alumni members	10.78	41.18	32.35	15.69	2.53	0.88

(Source: Own compilation)

4.4.4 Analyses of the results based on the status of the respondents

The following section presents analysis of the results from the respondents based on the status implying results of alumni and prospective alumni (postgraduate diploma and current MBA students). The figure below shows the representation of each group.

Figure 4.3: Status of the respondents



(Source: Own compilation)

The following section will investigate the response of the current students and alumni, and subsequently compare the two groups.

SECTION B: Accessibility of technology

This section had ten items which investigated whether the respondents have access to technology as a communication channel, which social media they use, their preferred channels which the business school can employ to communicate with them and the relevance of this channels to them. Each item will be analysed separately in the section below.

Item 1: Frequency of receiving news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School

In this item respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they are receiving any news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School. The scale which was used to measure was 1 representing never, 2 representing sometimes, 3 representing very often and 4 representing regularly. The results are shown in the table below and discussed afterwards.

Table 4.18: Frequency of receiving news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School

	Frequency	Current student (%)	Alumni (%)
1	Never	4.03	2.25
2	Sometimes	48.39	28.09
3	Very Often	24.19	5.62
4	Regularly	23.39	64.04

(Source: Own compilation)

But on average the current students have a mean value of 2.66 while the alumni group has a mean value of 2.62, which means that both groups are receiving the news sometimes to very often. The way the percentage results are spread (see table above) within the groups is the differentiating factor between the two groups.

Item 2 & 3: Familiarity with “Alere Flammam” and receiving the “Prontuit” newsletters

“Alere Flammam” and “Prontuit” are two quarterly electronic newsletters which is normally distributed to the current students (prospective alumni) and alumni of the NWU Potchefstroom Business School. The two electronic publications cover the activities which take place at NWU Potchefstroom Business School. On these two items the respondents were asked to indicate whether they are familiar with the publication or whether they receive it. They were expected to tick yes or no. The table below shows the percentage of those who said yes and those who said no. The table below shows the results of current students and alumni.

Table 4.19: Familiarity with “Alere Flammam” and receiving the “Prontuit” newsletters

	Yes (%)		No (%)	
Publication	Current student	alumni	Current student	alumni
“Alere Flammam”	13.01	43.33	86.99	56.67
“Prontuit”	55.28	42.35	44.72	57.65

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 4: Frequency of reading NWU Potchefstroom Business School communiqué

In the item the respondents were asked to indicate their frequency of reading the communication from the Potchefstroom Business School. The measurement scale was from:

- 1 which represent never,
- 2 representing sometimes,
- 3 representing very often and
- 4 representing regularly.

The table below present the results of the current students and alumni.

Table 4.20: Frequency of reading NWU Potchefstroom Business School communiqué

	Frequency	Current students (%)	Alumni (%)
1	Never	19.35	7.95
2	Sometimes	57.26	48.86
3	Very Often	16.94	23.86
4	Always	6.45	19.32

(Source: own compilation)

When asked to briefly explain why they never read the communication most said it is time constraint.

Item 5: Social media usage

This item asked the respondents to indicate which social media they are using, the measuring scale was to tick yes or no. The table below presents the results of both current students and alumni, discussion of the results follows thereafter.

Table 4.21 Social media usage

		Yes (%)		No (%)	
	Social media	Current students	alumni	Current students	alumni
1	Facebook	85.71	71.60	14.29	28.40
2	Twitter	46.75	32.39	53.25	67.61
3	LinkedIn	74.74	80.72	25.26	19.28
4	YouTube	80.95	60.53	19.05	39.47
5	WhatsApp	93.22	90.91	6.78	9.09

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 6: frequency of social media usage

- This item requested the respondents to indicate the frequency of the named social media. The measuring scale is:
- 1 representing annually,
- 2 representing monthly,
- 3 representing weekly and
- 4 representing daily.

The table below presence the results from the two groups.

Table 4.22a: Frequency of social media usage (current students)

	Social media	Mean	Std dev	1=annually	2= Monthly	3= weekly	4= Daily
1	Facebook	3.39	0.89	6.38	8.51	24.47	60.64
2	Twitter	2.40	1.22	33.33	20.83	18.75	27.08
3	LinkedIn	2.52	0.90	15.66	28.92	43.37	12.05
4	YouTube	2.79	0.92	12.68	16.90	49.30	21.13
5	WhatsApp	4.00	0	-----	-----	-----	100.00

Note: ----- denote no response group

(Source: Own compilation)

Table 4.22b: Frequency of social media usage (alumni)

	Social media	Mean	Std dev	1=annually	2= Monthly	3= weekly	4= Daily
1	Facebook	3.22	0.86	6.56	8.20	40.98	44.26
2	Twitter	2.69	0.93	15.38	15.38	53.85	15.38
3	LinkedIn	2.71	0.78	6.06	30.30	50.00	13.64
4	YouTube	2.72	0.86	6.00	36.00	38.00	20.00
5	WhatsApp	3.96	0.19	-----	-----	3.85	96.15

Note: ----- denote no response group

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 7: Preferred platform of communication

From this item the respondents were asked to tick yes or no to indicate their preferred form of communication which they prefer NWU Potchefstroom Business

School to use to communicate with them. The table below indicates the response of the current students and alumni.

Table 4.23: Preferred platform of communication

	Platform	Yes (%)		No (%)	
		Current student	alumni	Current student	alumni
1	Newsletters	82.98	93.24	17.02	6.76
2	Alumni clubs (Regional Chapter)	48.57	61.29	51.43	38.71
3	Facebook	65.56	50.00	34.44	50.00
4	Twitter	20.31	21.57	79.69	78.43
5	LinkedIn	55.13	59.09	44.87	40.91

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 8: Relevant communication platform

On this item the respondents were asked to indicate the communication channel which is relevant to them. These were the channels which they had to indicate: newsletters, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Networking, Events, SMS, email and NWU Potchefstroom Business School website. The measuring scale was 1 representing irrelevant, 2 representing not so irrelevant, 3 representing relevant and 4 highly relevant. The table below presents the results of the current students and alumni.

Table 4.24a: Relevant communication platform (current students)

	platform	Mean	Std dev	1=Irrelevant	2= Not so relevant	3= relevant	4= Highly relevant
1	Newsletters	2.75	0.88	12.50	16.96	53.57	16.96
2	Facebook	2.92	1.08	16.96	10.71	35.71	36.61
3	Twitter	1.91	0.97	43.69	29.13	19.42	7.77
4	LinkedIn	2.60	1.07	20.56	23.36	31.78	24.30
5	Networking	3.06	0.83	7.62	8.57	54.29	29.52
6	Events	2.75	0.91	10.38	25.47	43.40	20.75
7	SMS	3.14	0.90	6.96	13.91	37.39	41.74
8	email	3.58	0.64	2.50	0.83	33.63	63.33
9	NWU Potchefstroom Business School website	2.98	0.88	6.36	20	42.73	30.91

(Source: Own compilation)

Table 4.24b: Relevant communication platform (alumni)

	platform	Mean	Std dev	1= Irrelevant	2= Not so relevant	3= relevant	4= Highly relevant
1	Newsletters	3.27	0.69	2.30	6.90	51.72	39.08
2	Facebook	2.20	1.20	47.73	-----	36.36	15.91
3	Twitter	1.62	0.76	54.88	28.05	17.07	-----
4	LinkedIn	2.39	0.81	20.27	20.27	59.46	-----
5	Networking	2.68	0.65	10.23	11.36	78.41	-----
6	Events	2.08	0.47	6.98	77.91	15.12	-----
7	SMS	2.85	0.88	8.33	22.62	45.24	23.81
8	email	2.87	0.34	-----	13.33	86.67	-----
9	NWU Potchefstroom Business School website	2.62	0.61	6.74	24.72	68.54	-----

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 9: Frequency of receiving news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School in the past

The respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they had received news from the channels listed below from NWU Potchefstroom Business School in the past. The measuring scale was 1 representing never, 2 representing occasionally, 3 representing often and 4 representing very often. The tables below present the results of the current students and alumni.

Table 4.25a: Frequency of receiving news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School in the past (current students)

	Platform	Mean	Std dev	1=never	2= occasionally	3= often	4= very often
1	Newsletters	2.21	0.84	18.69	48.60	25.23	7.48
2	Facebook	1.56	0.84	63.00	22.00	11.00	4.00
3	Twitter	1.11	0.40	91.84	5.10	3.06	-----
4	LinkedIn	1.13	0.46	91.00	6.00	2.00	1.00
5	Networking	1.59	0.70	53.61	34.02	12.37	-----

(Source: Own compilation)

Table 4.25b: Frequency of receiving news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School in the past (alumni)

	platform	Mean	Std dev	1=never	2= occasionally	3= often	4= very often
1	Newsletters	2.63	0.81	4.55	44.32	35.23	15.91
2	Facebook	1.38	0.79	81.18	18.82	-----	-----
3	Twitter	1.08	0.28	91.57	8.43	-----	-----
4	LinkedIn	1.17	0.37	83.33	16.67	-----	-----
5	Networking	1.65	0.48	35.37	64.63	-----	-----

(Source: Own compilation)

The least channel used is Twitter with a mean of 1.08 and the majority (91.57 %) indicated they had never received communication from NWU Potchefstroom Business School through this channel.

Item 10: Frequency of receiving any communication

The respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they prefer to receive communication from the NWU Potchefstroom Business School. Options which they had to indicate from are presented in the table below. The table below present the results for the alumni and current students.

Table 4.26: Frequency of receiving any communication

	Frequency	Current students (%)	Alumni (%)
1	Only when matters arise which affect the school	27.35	8.89
2	When there is a matter of great significance	26.50	7.78
3	Once annually	9.40	-----
4	Twice annually	7.69	10.00
5	Four times annually	5.13	25.56
6	Once a month	23.93	44.44
7	Other (weekly and once every three months)		3.33

(Source: Own compilation)

The table above indicates that alumni wants to be contacted once a month at most with 44.44% and the least when there is a matter of great significance with 7.78 %. While the current students indicate that at most they would want to contact when the matter arise which affects the school (27.37%) followed by when there is matter of great significance (26.50%) and least four times annually with (5.13%).

SECTION C: BENEFITS AND EVENTS

This section comprised six items where the respondents were requested to give information about how they have joined the NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association; do they think they will benefit from the being part of the association; what type of events would they like to participate in, attend or prefer and what benefits do they hope to achieve by being part of the alumni association.

Item 1: Platform used to join the NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association

On this item respondents were asked to indicate how they have joined the alumni association. Option to choose from was:

- 1 representing online,
- 2 representing during graduation,
- 3 representing immediately after graduation and
- 4 not yet an alumni.

The table below shows the results of their response to this item.

Table 4.27: Platform used to join the NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association

	Joining	Current students (%)	Alumni (%)
1	Online	8.26	20.24
2	During Graduation	11.01	17.86
3	Immediately after Graduation	3.67	42.86
4	Not yet an Alumni (Briefly Explain)	77.06	19.05

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 2: Benefits from being alumni

The respondents were asked to indicate by tick yes or no if they think they will benefit from being an alumni member. Table below shows their response and discussion of the results follows thereafter.

Table 4.28: Benefit from being alumni

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Current student	73.33	26.67
Alumni	75.28	24.72

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 3: Activity participation

On this item the respondents were asked to tick yes or no to indicate which activity they would prefer to participate in. The table below shows the response of the current students and alumni.

Table 4.29: Activity participation

	Activity	Yes (%)		No (%)	
		Current students	alumni	Current students	alumni
1	Alumni member professional developments	73.68	75.31	26.32	24.69
2	Promoting yourself/ your organisation	74.19	68.92	25.81	31.08
3	Student recruitment events	44.94	23.94	55.06	76.06
4	Alumni Event: Networking	80.41	79.27	19.49	20.73
5	Alumni Event: Prestige day (with prominent guest speaker from industry)	71.58	77.78	28.42	22.22
6	Sponsorship from your company	43.18	16.18	56.82	83.82
7	Sporting Day (Golf day or Bicycle day)	51.65	32.88	48.35	67.12

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 4: Events attendance

Respondents were asked to tick yes or no to indicate whether they will attend the events as stated below on the table. The table shows the results of the current students and alumni.

Table 4.30: Events attendance

	Activity	Yes (%)		No (%)	
		Current students	alumni	Current students	alumni
1	Annual Alumni Dinners	68.32	57.89	31.68	42.11
2	Class Re-union	73.47	76.71	26.53	23.29
3	Professional development seminars	82.65	85.19	17.35	14.81
4	Informal alumni social events	58.95	54.05	41.05	45.95
5	Prestige days	76.84	67.95	23.16	32.05

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 5: Benefits by staying connected to NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association

This item measured the respondents' opinion on what kinds of benefits do they hope to get by staying connected to the NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association. The benefits which were listed were networking, landing a new job, reconnects with old classmates and sharing industry experience. The scale of measurement was: 1 being the least preferred to 4 being the most preferred. The table below shows the results of the respondents on this item.

Table 4.31a: Benefits by staying connected to NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association (current students)

	Benefit	Mean	Std dev.	1=least preferred	2= slightly preferred	3= preferred	4= most preferred
1	Networking	3.47	0.79	3.48	7.83	26.96	61.74
2	Might land a new job	2.94	1.06	13.64	18.18	29.09	39.09
3	Reconnects with old classmates	2.56	1.02	19.63	24.30	36.45	16.93
4	Sharing industry experience	2.99	0.92	9.09	15.45	42.73	32.73

(Source: own compilation)

Table 4.31b: Benefits by staying connected to NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association (alumni)

	Benefit	Mean	Std dev.	1=least preferred	2= slightly preferred	3= preferred	4= most preferred
1	Networking	3.09	0.86	2.30	25.29	33.33	39.08
2	Might land a new job	2.11	1.12	47.30	4.05	39.19	9.46
3	Reconnects with old classmates	2.75	0.90	8.24	30.59	38.82	22.35
4	Sharing industry experience	3.42	0.77	5.68	-----	40.91	53.41

Note: ----- denote no response group

(Source: own compilation)

Item 6: Activity and events preferred

On this item respondents were asked to indicate their preferences on events or activities from the alumni association. The events or activities which they asked to rate was alumni mentoring opportunities, guest speakers, alumni giving opportunity, executive education possibilities, becoming a board member of the alumni association, affinity of loyalty cards, alumni events, exceptional contribution to society, career services available to alumni, reading about memoriam, news from the alumni association and corporate gifts or clothing for alumni.

The scale which was used to rate was 1 being the least preferred to 4 being the most preferred. The table below shows the results.

Table 4.32a: Activity and events preferred (current students)

	Activity and events	Mean	Std dev	1=least preferred (%)	2= slightly preferred (%)	3= preferred (%)	4= most preferred (%)
1	Alumni mentoring opportunities	2.79	1.03	14.71	20.59	35.29	29.41
2	Guest Speakers	2.52	1.01	20.79	23.76	38.61	16.83
3	Alumni donating opportunity (Financially)	2.51	1.02	22.22	22.22	38.38	17.17
4	Executive education possibilities	2.77	1.03	15.69	19.61	36.27	28.43
5	Becoming a Board Member of the alumni association	2.35	1.03	25.00	30.21	29.17	15.63
6	Affinity cards (Loyalty card)	2.48	1.02	19.79	31.25	30.21	18.75
7	Alumni events	2.87	0.95	10.89	18.81	42.57	27.72
8	Exceptional contribution to the Society	2.62	0.97	13.86	30.69	34.65	20.79
9	Career services available to Alumni	2.84	0.92	10.69	18.45	46.60	24.27
10	Reading about Memoriam	2.09	0.90	29.79	38.30	25.53	6.38
11	News from alumni association	2.47	0.93	15.31	37.76	31.63	15.31
12	Corporate gifts/ Clothing for alumni	2.52	1.06	21.43	26.53	30.61	21.43

(Source: Own compilation)

Table 4.32b: Activity and events preferred (alumni)

	Activity and events	Mean	Std dev	1=least preferred (%)	2= slightly preferred (%)	3= preferred (%)	4= most preferred (%)
1	Alumni mentoring opportunities	2.57	1.06	20.69	24.14	32.18	22.99
2	Guest Speakers	3.29	1.28	23.60	-----	-----	76.40
3	Alumni donation opportunities (Financially)	2.98	1.43	34.15	-----	-----	65.85
4	Executive education possibilities	3.51	1.11	16.28	-----	-----	83.72
5	Becoming a Board Member of the alumni association	2.99	1.42	33.72	-----	-----	66.28
6	Affinity cards (Loyalty card)	3.14	1.36	28.57	-----	-----	71.43
7	Alumni events	1.89	0.36	12.64	86.21	1.15	-----
8	Exceptional contribution to Society	1.88	0.57	22.35	67.06	10.59	-----
9	Career services available to alumni	1.97	0.52	14.94	73.56	11.49	-----
10	Reading about Memoria	1.86	0.58	24.42	65.12	10.47	-----
11	News from alumni association	2.02	0.37	5.75	86.21	8.05	-----
12	Corporate gifts/ Clothing for alumni	2.0	0.50	12.50	75.00	12.50	-----

Note: ----- denote no response from the group

(Source: Own compilation)

SECTION D: General information

This section measured the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with statements like I would join an alumni club in my area; staying connected is beneficial; I would someone to study at NWU Potchefstroom Business School; I would be interested in alumni branded clothing; I would be willing to pay a membership fee and prefer alumni App to be developed for alumni.

The measuring scale employed was:

- 1 representing strongly disagree,
- 2 representing disagree,
- 3 representing agree and
- 4 representing strongly agree.

The table below shows the results of the alumni and current students shown as mean values and also indicate percentage per item.

Table 4.33 follows on the next page

Table 4.33: General Information

	Statement	1= strongly disagree (%)		2= disagree (%)		3= agree (%)		4= strongly agree (%)		Mean value: scale of 1 - 4		Std dev	
		Current student	alumni	Current student	alumni	Current student	alumni	Current student	alumni	Current student	alumni	Current student	alumni
1	I would join an alumni club in my area	5.26	3.37	17.54	-----	48.25	61.80	28.95	34.83	3.01	3.28	0.83	0.64
2	Staying connected to the alumni is beneficial	3.42	4.49	22.22	4.49	52.14	91.01	22.22	-----	2.93	2.87	0.76	0.46
3	Staying connected to the PBS is beneficial	6.03	3.37	6.90	5.62	55.17	91.01	31.90	-----	3.13	2.88	0.79	0.42
4	I feel that I am part of the PBS community	6.90	6.74	27.59	13.48	43.10	79.78	22.41	-----	2.81	2.73	0.86	0.58
5	I would refer someone to study at PBS	4.35	2.25	6.96	5.62	33.91	92.13	54.78	-----	3.39	2.90	0.80	0.37
6	I am satisfied with the quality of education I received at PBS	4.31	1.12	7.76	1.12	39.66	32.58	48.28	65.17	3.32	3.62	0.80	0.57
7	The education received prepared me for my career	3.48	2.27	7.83	-----	46.09	46.59	42.61	51.14	3.28	3.47	0.76	0.62
8	I am well informed about the activities at PBS	9.57	2.25	32.17	32.58	39.13	65.17	19.13	-----	2.68	2.63	0.89	0.53
9	I would be interested in alumni branded apparel (t-shirts, jackets or laptop bags)	13.04	15.73	19.13	44.94	39.13	39.33	28.70	-----	2.83	2.24	0.99	0.71
10	I would be willing to pay for membership fee	10.34	15.73	29.31	76.40	43.97	7.87	16.38	-----	2.66	1.92	0.87	0.48
11	I would prefer a NWU PBS App developed for Alumni members	8.77	13.48	15.79	73.03	47.37	13.48	28.07	-----	2.95	2.00	0.89	0.52

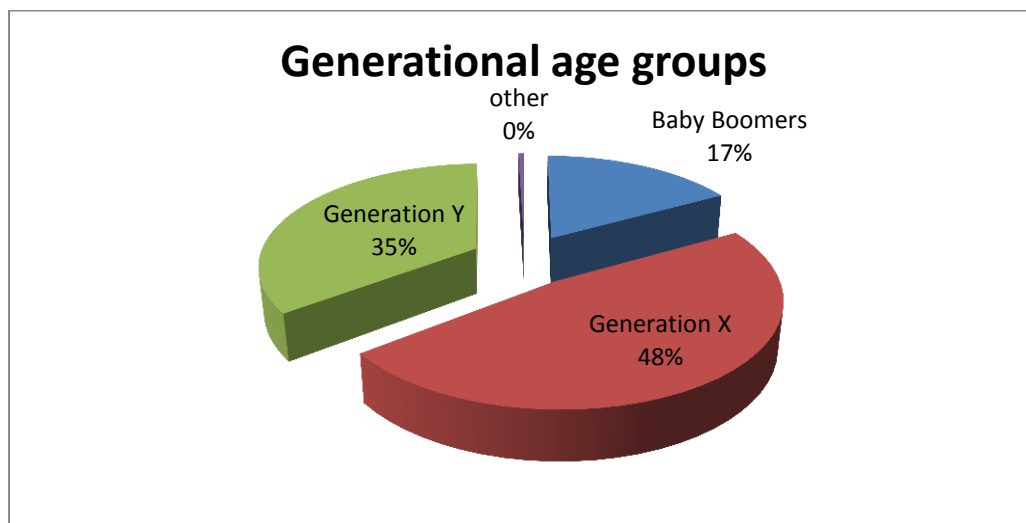
Note: ----- denote no response from the group

(Source: Own compilation)

4.4.5 Analysis of the respondent generational age groups

This section involves analysing the use of social media (part of Section B of the questionnaire) of different generational age groups, to see how three generational groups are using the social media as a form of communication and their preference in relation to the communication from the business school.

Figure 4.4: Generational age groups



(Source: Own compilation)

The figure above represents the different generational age groups of the respondents who took part in the research and their participation rate. Baby boomers are those who were born between 1946 and 1964 and their participation rate is 17%; generation X are those who were born between 1965 and 1979 and their participation rate in the study is 48%; generation Y is those who were born between 1980 and 1994, their participation rate is 35%; and others are those respondents who never specified their age group.

SECTION B: Accessibility of technology

This section had ten items which asked respondents to indicate whether they have access to technology as communication channels, which social media they are using, and their preferred and relevant channels which the business school can employ to keep in touch with them. Each item will be analysed separately by analysing its relationship with three generational groups.

Item 1: Receiving any news from Potchefstroom Business School

On this item respondents were expected to indicate whether they are receiving any news from the business school. Options to choose from were:

- 1 which represent never,
- 2 representing sometimes,
- 3 representing very often and
- 4 representing regularly.

Table 4.34: receiving any news from Potchefstroom Business School

	Frequency	Baby boomers (%)	Generation X (%)	Generation Y (%)
1	Never	2.70	1.94	5.48
2	Sometimes	32.43	34.95	50.68
3	Very Often	10.81	18.45	16.44
4	Regularly	54.05	44.66	27.40

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 2& 3: Familiarity with “Alere Flammam” and “Prontuit” Newsletters

“Alere Flammam” and “Prontuit” are two quarterly newsletters which are normally distributed to the current students and the alumni electronically from NWU Potchefstroom Business School. The two publications cover the activities which are taking place at the business school. On the two items the respondents were asked to indicate by ticking yes or no to familiarity to “Alere Flammam” and receiving “Prontuit”. The table presents the results of the response from three generational groups.

Table 4.35: Familiarity with “Alere Flammam” and “Prontuit” Newsletters

Generation	Familiarity with “Alere Flammam”: %	Receiving of “Prontuit” Newsletters: %
Baby boomers	32.43	34.29
Generation X	31.37	53.54
Generation Y	14.86	52.70

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 4: Reading frequency of Potchefstroom Business School communications

On this item the respondents were asked to indicate how often they read the news received from the business school. Options to choose from were:

- 1 which represent never,
- 2 representing sometimes,
- 3 representing very often and
- 4 representing regularly.

Table 4.36 below shows the results of respondents.

Table 4.36: Reading frequency of Potchefstroom Business School communications

	Frequency	Baby boomers (%)	Generation X (%)	Generation Y (%)
1	Never	10.81	6.93	27.03
2	Sometimes	40.54	56.44	56.76
3	Very Often	29.73	20.79	13.51
4	Regularly	18.92	15.84	2.70

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 5: Social Media Usage

On this item respondents were asked to indicate by ticking yes or no on their use of different social media as mentioned in the table below. The table below shows the results of the response.

Table 4.37: Social media usage

	Factor	Baby boomers : %	Generation X: %	Generation Y: %
1	Facebook	62.86	79.76	88.06
2	Twitter	14.81	36.23	57.69
3	LinkedIn	77.14	80.46	73.21
4	YouTube	54.84	65.22	86.67
5	WhatsApp	89.19	89.69	97.22

(Source: own compilation)

Item 6: Frequency of social media usage

The item requested the respondents to indicate the frequency of social media usage. The measuring scale is:

- 1 representing annually,
- 2 representing monthly,
- 3 representing weekly and
- 4 representing daily.

The results are presented below by the three tables each representing a generation.

Table 4.38a: Frequency of social media usage (baby boomers)

	Social media	Mean: scale of 1 to 4	Std dev	1=annually (%)	2= monthly (%)	3= weekly (%)	4=daily (%)
1	facebook	3.09	0.90	8.70	8.70	47.83	34.78
2	Twitter	2.40	1.14	20.00	40.00	20.00	20.00
3	LinkedIn	2.77	0.82	3.85	34.62	42.31	19.23
4	YouTube	2.59	0.90	10.53	36.84	36.84	15.79
5	WhatsApp	3.96	0.25	-----	-----	6.45	93.55

Note: ----- denote no response group

(Source: own compilation)

Table 4.38b: Frequency of social media usage (generation X)

	Social media	Mean: scale of 1 to 4	Std dev	1=annually (%)	2= monthly (%)	3= weekly (%)	4=daily (%)
1	Facebook	3.28	0.89	5.80	11.59	31.88	50.72
2	Twitter	2.68	1.11	22.58	12.90	38.71	25.81
3	LinkedIn	2.59	0.84	10.53	31.58	46.05	11.84
4	YouTube	2.65	0.79	8.70	28.26	52.17	10.87
5	WhatsApp	3.99	0.11	-----	-----	1.12	98.88

Note: ----- denote no response group

(Source: own compilation)

Table 4.38c: Frequency of social media usage (generation Y)

	Social media	Mean: scale of 1 to 4	Std dev	1=annually (%)	2= monthly (%)	3= weekly (%)	4=daily (%)
1	Facebook	3.48	0.86	6.35	4.76	23.81	65.08
2	Twitter	2.37	1.15	31.58	21.05	26.32	21.05
3	LinkedIn	2.53	0.91	17.02	23.40	48.94	10.64
4	YouTube	2.91	0.96	10.71	17.86	41.07	30.36
5	WhatsApp	4.00	0	-----	-----	-----	100.00

Note: ----- denote no response group

(Source: own compilation)

Item 7: Preferred platform of communication

This item asked the respondents to indicate which of the mentioned social media they prefer as the channel of communication that the school can use to provide information.

4.39: Preferred platform of communication

	Factor	Baby boomers : %	Generation X: %	Generation Y: %
1	Newsletters	96.80	89.61	80.00
2	Alumni clubs (Regional Chapter)	57.69	53.45	54.17
3	Facebook	37.04	65.67	62.07
4	Twitter	4.05	25.49	23.81
5	LinkedIn	53.57	63.77	48.94

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 8: Relevance of the communication platform

On this item the respondents were asked to indicate the communication channel which is relevant to them. This was the channels which they had to indicate; newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Networking, Events, SMS, email and NWU Potchefstroom Business School website. The measuring scale was 1 representing irrelevant, 2 representing not so irrelevant, 3 representing relevant and 4 highly relevant. The table below presents the results of the current students and alumni.

Table 4.40: Relevance of the communication platform for all groups

		Baby boomers						Generation X						Generation Y					
		Mean : scale of 1 to 4	Std dev	1= irrelevant (%)	2= not so relevant (%)	3= relevant (%)	4= highly relevant (%)	Mean	Std dev	1= irrelevant (%)	2= not so relevant (%)	3= relevant (%)	4= highly relevant (%)	Mean: scale of 1 to 4	Std dev	1= irrelevant	2= not so relevant	3= relevant	4= highly relevant
1	Newsletters	3.22	0.59	----	8.33	61.11	30.56	3.16	3.16	5.32	9.57	48.94	36.17	2.61	0.89	15.94	18.84	53.62	11.59
2	facebook	1.97	1.21	58.33	-----	27.78	13.89	2.60	1.19	29.67	8.79	32.97	28.57	2.92	1.05	17.81	5.48	43.84	32.88
3	Twitter	1.45	0.68	64.52	25.8	9.68	-----	1.85	0.84	46.51	26.74	22.09	4.65	1.85	0.92	44.12	32.35	17.65	5.88
4	LinkedIn	2.35	0.92	26.47	14.71	55.88	2.94	2.65	0.79	11.69	23.38	46.75	18.18	2.37	1.05	27.14	24.29	32.86	15.71
5	Networking	2.69	0.68	11.43	8.57	8.00	-----	2.96	0.11	6.74	7.87	68.54	16.85	2.90	0.88	10.14	13.04	53.62	23.19
6	Events	2.20	0.47	2.86	74.29	22.86	-----	2.41	0.80	9.09	51.14	29.55	10.23	2.62	0.93	11.59	33.33	36.23	18.84
7	SMS	3.18	0.80	2.94	14.71	44.12	38.24	2.98	0.92	7.29	20.83	38.54	33.33	2.99	0.83	10.14	14.49	42.03	33.33
8	email	2.97	0.44	-----	10.81	81.08	8.11	3.26	0.60	-----	8.00	58.00	34.00	3.44	0.81	4.11	1.37	41.10	53.42
9	NWU PBS website	2.83	0.45	-----	19.44	77.78	2.78	2.88	0.77	4.40	23.08	52.75	19.78	2.74	0.41	12.50	22.22	44.44	20.83

Note: ----- denote no response group

(Source: Own compilation)

Table 4.41: Frequency of receiving news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School in the past

		Baby boomers						Generation X						Generation Y					
		Mean : scale of 1 to 4	Std dev	1=never (%)	2= occasionally (%)	3= often (%)	4= very often (%)	Mean	Std dev	1=never (%)	2=occasional y (%)	3= often (%)	4= very often (%)	Mean: scale of 1 to 4	Std dev	1=never (%)	2= occasionally (%)	3= often (%)	4= very often (%)
1	Newsletters	2.50	0.78	8.57	37.14	45.71	8.57	2.55	0.84	5.38	51.61	25.81	17.20	2.12	0.83	23.88	44.78	26.87	4.48
2	facebook	1.29	0.72	85.29	14.71	-----	-----	1.49	0.87	71.76	1059	14.12	3.53	1.54	0.81	63.64	19.70	15.15	1.52
3	Twitter	1.03	0.18	96.88	3.13	-----	-----	1.11	0.35	90.48	8.33	1.19	-----	1.12	0.41	90.77	6.15	3.08	-----
4	LinkedIn	1.09	0.29	90.91	9.09	-----	-----	1.15	0.36	84.71	15.29	-----	-----	1.17	0.54	89.39	6.06	3.03	1.52
5	Events	1.63	0.49	37.50	62.50	-----	-----	1.57	0.59	47.56	47.56	4.88	-----	1.66	0.69	46.15	41.54	12.31	-----

Note: ----- denote no response group

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 9: Frequency of receiving news from the NWU Potchefstroom Business School in the past

In this item respondents were asked to indicate which platform they have received any news from in the past from the business school. The measuring scale was:

- 1 representing never,
- 2 representing occasionally,
- 3 representing often and
- 4 representing very often.

The results from the three groups are presented in the table below and discussion follows thereafter.

Item 10: Frequency preference of receiving news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School

On this item respondents were expected to indicate their preference in terms of frequency of receiving news from the business school. The item had six items to choose from as indicated in the table below. The table also presents the results of the respondents per generation group.

Table 4.42: Frequency preference of receiving news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School

		Baby boomers : %	Generation X %	Generation Y: %
1	Only when matters arise which affect the school	10.81	21.21	21.13
2	When there is a matter of great significance	13.51	16.16	23.94
3	Annually	8.11	3.03	11.27
4	Twice annually	27.03	10.10	7.04
5	Quarterly	37.84	13.13	8.45
6	Once a month	2.70	2.02	28.17

(Source: Own compilation)

SECTION C: Benefits and events

This section comprised six items where respondents were requested to provide information about how they have joined NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association; do they think they will benefit from being part of the alumni association; what type of events do they like to participate in or attend and what benefits do they hope to get by staying in touch with the business school.

Item 1: Platform used to join alumni association

The respondents were requested to indicate by ticking yes or no to indicate which platform they have used to join alumni association. Table 4.43 below presents the results and discussion follows thereafter.

Table 4.43: Generational group and platform used to join NWU PBS alumni association

	Baby Boomers %	Generation X %	Generation Y %
Online	27.78	12.09	7.58
During graduation	8.33	16.48	13.64
Immediately after graduation	44.44	21.98	6.06
Not yet an alumni	19.44	49.45	72.73

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 2: Benefit from alumni association membership

In this item the respondents were requested to indicate by ticking yes or no whether they see any benefit of joining NWU PBS alumni association. The table below shows the results.

Table 4.44: Benefit from alumni association membership

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Baby Boomers	61.11	38.89
Generation X	70.13	29.87
Generation Y	73.85	26.15

(Source: Own compilation)

The three generational groups that have been studied showed that there is a benefit from being part of alumni association of NWU Potchefstroom Business School this is shown by the higher percentage of those who believe than those who do not.

Item 3: Activity participation

This item requested respondents to indicate which activity they will participate in by ticking yes or no on the activity mentioned below in the table. The table below presents the results

Table 4.45: Activity participation

Factor	Activity	Baby Boomers %	Generation X %	Generation Y %
1	Alumni member professional developments	71.88	72.62	78.33
2	Promoting yourself/ your organisation	61.29	70.13	79.66
3	Student recruitment events	22.22	32.43	45.76
4	Alumni Event: Networking	80.56	79.01	80.65
5	Alumni Event: Prestige day (with prominent guest speaker from industry)	78.79	75.00	71.43
6	Sponsorship from your company	7.69	31.51	42.11
7	Sporting Day (Golf day or Bicycle day)	24.14	41.89	54.10

(Source: own compilation)

Item 4: Activity attendance

Respondents were requested to indicate the activity which they would attend by ticking yes and no. Table below shows the results from three generational groups and discussion of the results will follow below.

Table 4.46: Activity attendance

	Activity	Yes (%)			No (%)		
		Baby boomers	Generation X	Generation Y	Baby boomers	Generation X	Generation Y
1	Annual Alumni Dinner	64.52	62.20	65.63	35.48	37.80	34.38
2	Class Re-union	74.07	72.50	78.13	25.93	27.50	21.88
3	Professional development seminar	87.50	86.05	78.69	12.50	13.95	21.31
4	Informal alumni social events	55.82	49.35	66.67	44.83	50.65	33.33
5	Prestige days	70.97	70.37	77.05	29.03	29.63	22.95

(Source: own compilation)

Item 5: Benefit preference

On this item respondents were requested to indicate which benefits they hope to get by being part of the alumni association. The measuring was 1 represent least preferred, 2 representing slightly preferred, 3 representing preferred and 4 representing highly preferred. The table below presents the results of the respondents and discussion follows thereafter.

Table 4.47a: Benefit preference (Baby boomers)

	Benefit	Mean : scale of 1 to 4	Std dev	1= least preferred	2= slightly preferred	3=preferred	4= highly preferred
1	Networking	2.8	0.84	2.70	37.84	35.14	24.32
2	Might land a new job	1.72	1.03	62.07	10.34	20.69	6.90
3	Reconnect with old classmates	2.71	0.97	8.82	38.24	26.47	26.47
4	Sharing industry experience	3.24	1.01	13.51	-----	35.14	51.35

(Source: Own compilation)

Table 4.47b: Benefit preference (Generation X)

	Benefit	Mean : scale of 1 to 4)	Std dev	1= least preferred	2= slightly preferred	3=preferred	4= highly preferred
1	Networking	3.48	0.77	3.16	7.37	27.37	62.11
2	Might land a new job	2.65	1.14	24.42	13.95	33.72	27.91
3	Reconnect with old classmates	2.74	0.94	11.11	26.67	38.89	23.33
4	Sharing industry experience	3.32	0.81	5.43	5.43	40.22	48.91

(Source: own compilation)

Table 4.47c: Benefit preference (Generation Y)

	Benefit	Mean : scale of 1 to 4)	Std dev	1= least preferred (%)	2= slightly preferred (%)	3=preferred (%)	4= highly preferred (%)
1	Networking	3.32	0.83	2.86	14.29	30.00	52.86
2	Might land a new job	2.91	1.05	15.94	11.59	37.68	34.78
3	Reconnect with old classmates	2.48	1.00	22.06	22.06	41.18	14.71
4	Sharing industry experience	2.96	0.86	7.25	17.39	47.83	27.54

(Source: Own compilation)

Item 6: Events preference

Respondents were asked to indicate their preference of the events or activity. The measuring was:

- 1 representing least preferred,
- 2 representing slightly preferred,
- 3 representing preferred and
- 4 representing highly preferred.

The table below presents the results of the respondents and discussion follows thereafter.

Table 4.48a: Events preference (baby boomers)

	Benefit	Mean : scale of 1 to 4)	Std dev	1= least preferred (%)	2= slightly preferred (%)	3=preferred (%)	4= highly preferred (%)
1	Alumni mentoring opportunity	2.33	1.17	36.11	13.89	30.56	19.44
2	Guest Speakers	2.82	1.46	37.14	2.86	-----	60.00
3	Alumni giving opportunity (Financially)	2.54	1.52	48.57	-----	-----	51.43
4	Executive education possibility	3.31	1.28	22.86	-----	-----	77.14
5	Becoming a Board Member of an Alumni Association	2.76	1.50	41.18	-----	-----	58.82
6	Affinity cards (Loyalty card)	3.09	1.38	29.41	-----	2.94	67.65
7	Alumni events	1.97	0.51	11.11	83.33	2.78	2.78
8	Exceptional contribution to Society	1.85	0.70	32.35	50.00	17.65	-----
9	Career services available to Alumni	1.97	0.64	18.92	67.57	10.81	2.70
10	Reading about Memoria	1.86	0.58	22.86	65.71	11.43	-----
11	News from alumni association	2.00	0.42	8.57	82.86	8.57	-----
12	Corporate gifts/ Clothing for alumni	1.92	0.55	19.44	69.44	11.11	-----

Note: ----- denote no response from the group

(Source: Own compilation)

Table 4.48b: Events preference (Generation X)

	Benefit	Mean : scale of 1 to 4)	Std dev	1= least preferred (%)	2= slightly preferred (%)	3=preferred (%)	4= highly preferred (%)
1	Alumni mentoring opportunity	2.85	1.04	12.64	24.14	28.74	34.48
2	Guest Speakers	3.07	1.18	18.60	9.30	18.60	53.49
3	Alumni donating opportunity (Financially)	3.02	1.16	18.52	9.88	22.22	49.38
4	Executive education possibilities	3.28	1.04	11.49	9.20	18.39	60.92
5	Becoming a Board Member of the alumni association	2.78	1.27	25.00	16.67	11.90	46.43
6	Affinity cards (Loyalty card)	2.91	1.21	21.33	13.33	18.67	46.67
7	Alumni events	2.33	0.89	13.95	52.33	19.77	13.95
8	Exceptional contribution to society	2.35	0.88	12.64	52.87	20.69	13.79

9	Career services available to Alumni	2.43	0.87	11.49	47.13	27.59	13.79
10	Reading about Memoria	2.02	0.76	22.89	56.63	15.66	4.82
11	News from alumni association	2.67	0.73	8.14	65.12	18.60	8.14
12	Corporate gifts/ Clothing for alumni	2.26	0.78	11.49	59.77	19.54	9.20

(Source: Own compilation)

Table 4.48c: Events preference (Generation Y)

	Benefit	Mean : scale of 1 to 4)	Std dev	1= least preferred (%)	2= slightly preferred (%)	3=preferred (%)	4= highly preferred (%)
1	Alumni mentoring opportunity	2.68	0.94	13.64	24.24	42.42	19.70
2	Guest Speakers	2.67	1.07	18.84	21.74	33.33	26.09
3	Alumni donation opportunity (Financially)	2.43	1.10	27.69	21.54	30.77	20.00
4	Executive education possibilities	2.77	1.09	18.18	18.18	31.82	31.82
5	Becoming a Board Member of an alumni association	2.41	1.11	28.13	23.44	28.13	20.31
6	Affinity cards (Loyalty card)	2.45	1.10	23.44	31.25	21.88	23.44
7	Alumni events	2.76	0.91	9.09	28.79	39.39	22.73
8	Exceptional contribution to society	2.41	0.93	16.92	38.46	30.77	13.85
9	Career services available to Alumni	2.71	0.89	10.61	25.76	45.45	18.18
10	Reading about Memoria	1.97	0.87	35.48	35.48	25.81	3.23
11	News from alumni association	2.39	0.90	15.63	42.19	29.69	12.50
12	Corporate gifts/ Clothing for alumni	2.49	1.08	23.81	23.81	31.75	20.63

(Source: Own compilation)

SECTION D

This section measured the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with statements like I would join an alumni club in my area; staying connected is beneficial; I would refer someone to study at NWU Potchefstroom Business School; I would be interested in alumni branded clothing; I would be willing to pay a membership fee; and prefer alumni App to be developed for alumni.

The measuring scale employed was:

- 1 representing strongly disagree,
- 2 representing disagree,
- 3 representing agree and
- 4 representing strongly agree.

The table below shows the results of the alumni and current student shown as mean value and also indicate percentage per item.

Table 4.49a: General information (Baby Boomers)

	Statement	Mean : scale of 1 to 4)	Std dev	1= strongly disagree (%)	2= disagree (%)	3=agree (%)	4= strongly disagree (%)
1	I would join an alumni club in my area	3.43	0.65	2.70	-----	48.65	48.65
2	Staying connected to the alumni is beneficial	2.83	0.60	8.11	2.70	86.49	2.70
3	Staying connected to the NWU Potchefstroom Business School is beneficial	2.83	0.55	5.41	8.11	83.78	2.70
4	I feel that I am part of the NWU Potchefstroom Business School community	2.59	0.79	13.51	18.9	62.16	5.41
5	I would refer someone to study at NWU Potchefstroom Business School	2.97	0.44	2.70	2.70	89.19	5.41
6	I am satisfied with the quality of education I received at NWU Potchefstroom Business School	3.67	0.53	-----	2.70	27.03	70.27
7	The education received prepared me for my career	3.43	0.65	2.70	-----	48.65	48.65
8	I am well informed about the activities at NWU Potchefstroom Business School	2.70	0.57	2.70	27.03	67.57	2.70
9	I would be interested in alumni branded apparel (t-shirts, jackets or laptop bags)	2.18	0.91	27.03	32.43	35.14	5.41
10	I would be willing to pay for membership fee	2.00	0.62	16.22	70.27	10.81	2.70
11	I would prefer a NWU Potchefstroom Business School App developed for alumni members	2.11	0.70	16.22	59.46	21.62	2.70

(Source: own compilation)

Table 4.49b: General information (Generation X)

	Benefit	Mean : scale of 1 to 4)	Std dev	1= strongly disagree	2= disagree (%)	3=agree (%)	4= strongly disagree (%)
1	I would join an alumni club in my area	3.09	0.76	5.21	8.33	58.33	28.13
2	Staying connected to the alumni is beneficial	2.93	0.63	3.03	14.14	69.70	13.13
3	Staying connected to the Potchefstroom Business School is beneficial	3.08	0.62	3.06	6.12	70.41	20.41
4	I feel that I am part of the Potchefstroom Business School community	2.82	0.64	3.06	21.43	65.31	10.20
5	I would refer someone to study at Potchefstroom Business School	3.18	0.69	3.09	8.25	60.82	27.84
6	I am satisfied with the quality of education I received at Potchefstroom Business School	3.45	0.72	3.06	4.08	36.73	56.12
7	The education received prepared me for my career	3.40	0.69	2.08	5.21	43.75	48.96
8	I am well informed about the activities at Potchefstroom Business School	2.63	0.79	7.22	35.05	45.36	12.37
9	I would be interested in Alumni branded apparel (t-shirts, jackets or laptop bags)	2.71	0.82	7.22	29.90	47.42	15.46
10	I would be willing to pay for membership fee	2.31	0.82	12.24	54.08	23.47	10.20
11	I would prefer a NWU Potchefstroom Business School App developed for Alumni members	2.50	0.88	9.38	47.92	26.04	16.67

(Source: own compilation)

Table 4.49c: General information (Generation Y)

	Benefit	Mean : scale of 1 to 4)	Std dev	1= strongly disagree (%)	2= disagree (%)	3=agree (%)	4= strongly disagree (%)
1	I would join an alumni club in my area	3.01	0.79	4.29	17.14	51.43	27.14
2	Staying connected to the alumni is beneficial	2.90	0.71	2.86	21.43	58.57	17.14
3	Staying connected to the NWU Potchefstroom Business School is beneficial	3.02	0.76	7.14	5.71	64.29	22.86
4	I feel that I am part of the NWU Potchefstroom Business School community	2.80	0.86	8.57	22.86	48.57	20.00
5	I would refer someone to study at NWU Potchefstroom Business School	3.34	0.78	4.29	5.71	41.43	48.57
6	I am satisfied with the quality of education I received at NWU Potchefstroom Business School	3.31	0.79	4.29	7.14	41.43	47.14
7	The education received prepared me for my career	3.27	0.76	4.29	5.71	48.57	41.43
8	I am well informed about the activities at NWU Potchefstroom Business School	2.67	0.79	7.14	31.43	48.57	12.86
9	I would be interested in alumni branded apparel (t-shirts, jackets or laptop bags)	2.58	1.0	17.14	30.00	30.00	22.86
10	I would be willing to pay for membership fee	2.56	0.85	11.43	32.86	44.29	11.43
11	I would prefer a NWU Potchefstroom Business School App developed for Alumni members	2.80	0.89	10.00	21.43	47.13	21.43

(Source: own compilation)

4.4.6 Profiling the needs of respondents

From the discussion of the results above one is able to profile the needs of the total group, current students and alumni; and also the profile of the three generational age groups which will assist in knowing what the students and alumni wants. To achieve that one objective of the study will be realised and the business school can then be better equipped to meet the needs of the alumni. The needs of the student and alumni will be profiled in two categories namely communication needs and events, activities and benefits.

Table 4.50: Profile of the total group

	Profile of the total group
Communication needs	• Newsletters • Facebook • SMS • Email • LinkedIn
Events and activity	• Networking • Prestige days • Class re-union • Professional development seminar • Alumni member professional development • Promoting oneself or the organisation
Benefits	• executive education • Possibilities • Sharing industry experience • Networking

(Source: own compilation)

Table 4.51: Profiling the needs of alumni and current students

	Profile of the current student	Profile of an alumni
Communication needs	• Newsletters • Facebook • SMS • Email	• Newsletters • Alumni club • SMS • Email
Events and activity	• Prestige days • Networking • Professional development seminar • Alumni member professional development • Alumni events	• Prestige days • Networking • Class reunion • Alumni member professional development
Benefits	• Sharing industry experience • Career services • Networking	• Sharing industry experience • Networking • executive education possibilities • Loyalty and affinity cards

(Source: own compilation)

The communication needs of the two groups differ in that though the communication channels are similar but the differentiating fact is that current students prefer Facebook while alumni prefers alumni clubs.

Alumni groups prefer class reunions while current students do not prefer it; the common activity in the two above profiles is that they both prefer alumni member professional development which indicates that both groups rank their individual development very high. This means the school can also assist in organising those events.

Sharing industry experience can be beneficial for both groups as it will allow members to learn from others' experience and can be a networking experience.

Table 4.52: Profiling the needs of the three generational groups

	Profile of a Baby boomer	Profile of Generational X	Profile of Generational Y
Communication needs	• Newsletters • SMS • Email • Potchefstroom Business School website	• Newsletters • Email • Facebook • SMS • LinkedIn • Networking • Potchefstroom Business School website	• Newsletters • Facebook • SMS • Email • Networking
Events and activity	• Networking • Alumni professional development • Prestige day • Professional development seminar • Class re-union	• Networking • Prestige days • Class re-union • Professional development seminar • Promoting self or organisation	• Networking • Prestige day • Class re-union • Promoting self or organisation • Alumni professional development
Benefits	• Sharing industry experience • Networking • Executive education possibilities • Loyalty or affinity cards	• Networking • Sharing industry experience • Guest speaker • Executive education possibilities	• Networking • Sharing industry experience • Coming back executive education • Alumni events • Landing a new job

(Source: own compilation)

- From the profile of the generational group above baby boomers do not prefer technology as their communication channel to use as compared to the other two generations.
- Networking and prestige days are common events that the three groups prefer.
- Sharing industry experience, coming back for executive education and networking are the most preferred benefits by all three groups.

Therefore there is no vast difference in the profiles of the three generational groups as they all prefer either prestige days as an event and executive education possibilities as a benefit. The difference exists only in the communication channel or mode.

4.5 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

In addition to the above quantitative questions respondents were asked qualitative information where they had to explain some of their responses. Responses were summarised per question below:

Item B4: How often do you read any of the NWU Potchefstroom Business School communiqué? Briefly explain.

On this item respondents were asked to briefly explain their response of reading communication from the NWU Potchefstroom Business School. In summary respondents explain that time constraints in their busy schedule were the reason behind reading less of the business school communication.

Item C2: Would you benefit to be part of the alumni association? Briefly explain.

Respondents were asked if they would benefit from being part of the alumni association.

In summary most respondent wrote that being part of the alumni association would help them network with other members, and stay informed on the activities of the business school.

Item D12: Any suggestions regarding the effective functioning of the alumni association?

Item D13: Any recommendations on how NWU Potchefstroom Business School can make the Alumni Association interesting and appealing to you?

In summary of item D12 and D13 respondents indicated that effective communications, participation, regular updates on the activities and development of the school and networking can make a good and effective function of the business school's alumni association (See detailed comments in appendix C for details on some answers from the respondents).

4.6 SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with the empirical study and analysing the results obtained from the respondents after administering the questionnaires. The assessment of the measured items per section was done by analysing the mean of the results in order to understand what the respondents are saying. This was done so that the objectives of the study could be achieved which are to define the needs of the business school students and alumni and for the business school to know the needs and preference of their audience.

The needs of the current students, alumni, baby boomers, generation X and generation Y were analysed and eventually the profile of each was designed from the results of the analysis. The effect sizes of the different groups were measured to see the practical significance between groups and small to medium effect was obtained.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter aims at providing conclusions of the study based on the results obtained; conclusions will be drawn in line with the research objectives of this study. The main objective of the study was to investigate the best practices for alumni relations in the PBS business school and the following sections will discuss conclusions on the sub-objectives employed in order to reach the main objective. Thereafter recommendations and limitations to the study will be discussed.

5.2 FINDINGS

5.2.1 Findings from literature review

The top five most commonly used social media globally are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Blogging. An analysis done on the top ten business schools globally has revealed that business schools are using social media to keep in touch with their alumni as the alumni are an asset to the business schools and they represent the brand wherever they are. The top ten international business schools are using the following common social media platforms to keep in touch with their alumni; LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Alumni clubs. The top business schools are offering the following common benefits: career services, lifelong learning and library access.

The top ten South African business schools are using the following social media to keep in touch with their alumni and ensure they stay engaged: LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and newsletters. The business schools also offer the following benefits to their alumni: career services, library access, discounts and job search facilities.

5.2.2 Findings from empirical investigation

The empirical investigation of the study has yielded the following findings:

- **Generational age groups and communication channel**

The study has shown that generational age groups have an effect on the social media usage and choosing the preferred channel of communication. Baby boomers prefer newsletters as a channel of communication as compared to using social media like Facebook or Twitter, while generation X and Y prefer to use social media as a form of communication with generation Y on the lead. Therefore different generational groups have different communication needs.

This finding supports the statement by Bolton *et al.* (2013) which says members of generation Y grew up with computers; they have mastered its use in many aspects of their lives particularly communication and they are often described as technologically savvy.

- **Twitter**

Twitter is one of the most commonly used social media platforms and even among the top social media which the business schools are using both globally and in SA, but according to the study the results has shown Twitter to be the least preferred communication channel which the respondents are using or the one which the school can use to communicate with them (Refer to table 4.7 and 4.40).

Even though that is the case looking at results from generational groups generation Y is using it more than the other generations so business schools should not ignore using Twitter because as with time the business schools will be full of this generation who prefers it and business schools will have to cater for them (Refer to table 4.37).

- **Communication frequency**

Current students prefer to be contacted when there is a matter which affect the school and when there is matter of great significance. But the alumni prefers once a month.

Therefore the business school can contact the students when there is matter which affects the school, matters of great significance and once a month because this indicates the need for students to be kept informed about the activities and developments of the school.

- **Benefits**

The table below compares the benefits offered by top ten international and local SA business schools and those which NWU Potchefstroom Business School students and current alumni said they prefer.

Table 5.1 Comparison of the benefits

Benefits from international business school	Benefits from SA business school	Benefits from NWU Potchefstroom Business School (alumni and current students)
Career services	Career services	Executive education possibilities
Lifelong learning	Library access	Sharing industry experience
Library access	Discounts	Networking
	Job search facilities	

(Source: Own compilation)

There is a vast difference between what is offered in international schools, SA schools and the alumni and current students of NWU Potchefstroom Business School responded they would like. Therefore in order to truly know what the students or alumni needs consultation with them in the form of research is essential in order for the business school to understand the needs of students and alumni, this also put them in a better position to cater for them.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions regarding the objectives of the study were:

- **The current communication channels**

The information obtained from figure 4.2 indicates that most of the respondents are relying on referrals from others or NWU Potchefstroom Business School website (with percentage usage of 31% and 25% respectively) in order to get information when deciding to study at the school, while the least used source is LinkedIn with 1% usage and Twitter is not being widely used at all. This means that the school can focus on putting more information which can be beneficial on their website.

Alumni receive news regularly as compared to the current students. Newsletters are one of the preferred channels of communication but the majority of the current students are not familiar nor receive the newsletter on a regular basis. Social media like Facebook are not being effectively used by the school to communicate and keep the students and alumni engaged as the respondents they had not receive information from the school through social media.

Therefore the current communication channel is not completely reaching all the intended recipients. NWU Potchefstroom Business School should develop strategies to ensure the communication of the two newsletters increase in reaching all the intended audience because the message it carries is relevant for all groups.

- **Difference between the communication needs of current students and alumni**

Current students who are the prospective alumni prefer newsletters, Facebook, SMS, and email while the current alumni prefer alumni clubs, newsletter, SMS and email. The communication needs of the two groups looks similar; the only differentiating factor is that current students prefer Facebook while alumni prefer alumni clubs. The two groups can be served

simultaneously but one needs to take into account the generational group which is dominant in order to meet the needs of the alumni.

The following objective elaborates more on this communication platform.

- **Communication channel to be employed to keep in touch with the alumni and current students**

Based on the discussion on Chapter four, NWU Potchefstroom Business School should utilize the following channels to communicate with their target audience which is the current students of the NWU Potchefstroom Business School and alumni in order to remain engaged:

- Newsletters: this is the most preferred among all the analysed groups. From objective 1 it is indicated that the students are not receiving the newsletters as they would hope. Therefore business school should ensure that the database has the contact details of the entire groups of population to ensure newsletters are reaching the intended participants as this is the most preferred communication platform.
- Facebook: this platform is the second most preferred by the students and the most widely used on a personal level. The business school should be active in using this social media platform to post the most important information about the school as most of the population are using this platform.
- Alumni clubs: alumni clubs are the third most popular platform among the respondents. The school should initiate the process of having these clubs in different provinces or regions where there are representatives as this can also help in networking. Gauteng is the province with the highest percentage of representatives (see Appendix A) of the business school and more than one alumni clubs can be established.

These are the other platforms which the group of respondents deem relevant to them:

- Email and SMS: the school will need to keep updated contact details of the students and alumni to ensure that all the messages reach the intended recipient.

- NWU Potchefstroom Business School website: important information or articles can also be posted on the website in order to keep the communication on-going.

The business school should therefore employ the above mode of communication to stay engaged with the students and the alumni.

- **Comparison between the mostly used social platforms, trends from other business schools (as summarised in Chapter 3) and alumni and current students of NWU Potchefstroom Business School**

Table 5.2: Comparison of the communication platform

NWU Potchefstroom Business School common platform	Platform from SA business school	Platform from international business school
Newsletters	Newsletters	Alumni Club
Facebook	Facebook	Facebook
Alumni clubs	Twitter	Twitter
email	LinkedIn	LinkedIn

(Source: Own compilation)

Based on the table above communication preference of the NWU Potchefstroom Business School current students and alumni do not differ much from trends by other business school. The only slight different is that Potchefstroom Business School students and alumni does not prefer Twitter as a mode of communication while the business schools internationally and others in SA are using it to stay engaged.

- **The type of activities and events that current students and alumni prefer to attend or participate in**

Events to participate in: the events which current students like to participate in are networking events, alumni members' professional development and promoting themselves or their organisation. Alumni prefer to attend networking events, prestige days and alumni member professional development.

Events to attend: events which the current students said they would like to attend are prestige days and alumni member professional developments seminars; the alumni prefer to attend class reunion and alumni member professional developments seminars.

Therefore business schools should consider hosting the events as preferred above by the respondents and allow students/alumni to participate.

- **Benefits which students and alumni hope to get by being a member of the alumni association**

Benefits which the entire population showed preference to are networking, coming back for executive education and sharing industry experience. Since the respondents in this study comprised current students (post-graduate students and current MBA students) and alumni; alumni and current MBA students who have industry experience can be utilised to fulfil this benefit which can also serve as a networking opportunity.

5.4 EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

The measurement of the success of this study is based on achieving the stated objectives which were the main and secondary objectives.

5.4.1 The main objective

The main objective of the study was to investigate on the best practices for alumni relations in the business schools. This objective was achieved because the profiles of current students, alumni and different generational age groups have been drawn with which this profiles allows the alumni relations office of the business schools to know their audience better, be in a position to serve them better and be relevant at the same time.

5.4.2 Secondary objectives

The secondary objectives of the study were:

Communication channels to be employed have been achieved because the questionnaire involved requesting the respondents to indicate the most preferred

modes of communication through that conclusion was reached by assessing which ones the majority prefers.

Respondents were asked which channels they use to get information of where to study and were also requested to indicate which channels do they access information from, through this one is able to know whether the current channels are reaching the audience or not.

By involving the current students and alumni as respondents of the study, differences in their communication needs and activities or benefits can be observed.

By knowing the preference of each group involved in the study, the profile of each group was drawn.

The Top Ten business schools internationally and in SA were scrutinized and the most common communication channels were summarized and compared with the results from the study.

The profiles of each group respondents have been developed (see table 4.5.1 and 4.5.2) and this should give the business school a better understanding of the needs of the students.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

- For the relationship between current students, alumni and alma mater to grow business schools should provide students an option where the student can update the contact details instead of the school contacting them when they need an update.
- The business schools should organise functions or events which can be utilised for professional development, sharing of the industry experience, reconnecting with old classmates or class re-union while allowing one of the alumni to be a guest speaker.

- Since the alumni club is a preferred channel of communication for the business school, every region where there are representatives there should be an alumni club.
- When a business school wants to implement any communication strategy they need to take into account the generational age groups which are being served to ensure they are reaching the target audience.
- Alumni relations offices should do their own assessment of their situation in order to ensure they are being relevant.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitation which was identified was that the study was conducted on the NWU Potchefstroom Business School community and conclusions drawn might not be generalised to any other business school.

5.7. Future research

It is recommended that future research can look into what kind of information or messages does the alumni and current student wants to receive.

5.8 CONCLUSION

It is evident from the empirical investigation that in order for the business school's alumni relation office to understand their audience, time needs to be taken to assess their needs so that alumni relations or business schools can best meet them. This chapter describes the conclusion of the study from the literature review and empirical study; and also provided recommendations.

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APPENDIX A: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	149	68.66
	Female	68	31.34
Age (yrs.)	69 – 51(Baby Boomers)	37	16.97
	50 - 36 (Generation X)	104	47.7
	35 – 21 (Generation Y)	76	34.86
	other	1	0.46
Marital Status	Married	149	68.66
	Single	48	22.12
	Widowed	4	1.84
	Divorced	14	6.45
	Living together	2	0.92
Population group	African	57	26.27
	Coloured	7	3.23
	White	148	68.2
	Asian	5	2.3
Home language	English	23	10.75
	Afrikaans	136	63.55
	Tswana	10	4.67
	Sepedi	4	1.87
	Zulu	13	6.07
	Ndebele	3	1.4
	Xhosa	5	2.34
	Venda	2	0.93
	Tsonga	4	1.87
	SiSwati	1	0.47
	Sotho	10	4.67
	Other	3	1.4
Language of communication	English	114	52.29
	Afrikaans	101	46.33
	other	3	1.38
Province	Gauteng	105	48.17
	Limpopo	63	28.9
	Mpumalanga	6	2.75
	Eastern Cape	9	4.13
	Western Cape	4	1.83
	Northern Cape	3	1.38
	Free State	21	9.63
	Kwazulu Natal	3	1.38
	Other	4	1.83

APPENDIX A: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (continued)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Graduation Year	1964 -1974	1	0.48
	1975 - 1984	2	0.95
	1985 - 1994	24	11.43
	1995 - 2004	59	28.1
	2005 - 2015	124	59.05
Campus	Vaal Triangle	34	18.78
	Potchefstroom	145	80.11
	Mafikeng	2	1.1
Method of delivery	Full time	92	44.23
	Part time	97	46.63
	Distance learning	19	9.13
Are you an alumni	Yes	101	50.75
	No	30	15.08
	Still Busy	68	34.17
Highest Qualification Obtained from NWU	B-degree	43	23.24
	Postgraduate diploma/Honours	38	20.54
	MBA	84	45.41
	PhD	8	4.32
	Other	12	6.49
Employment sector	Government Institution	23	11.44
	Private Sector	115	57.21
	Own Business	13	6.47
	Parastatal/Education/NGO	32	15.92
	Other	18	8.96
Industry of Employment	Agricultural/Hunting/Fishing Forestry	22	11.06
	Mining	22	11.06
	Manufacturing	33	16.58
	Electricity/Gas/Water	11	5.53
	Wholesale and retail trade	7	3.52
	Construction	2	1.01
	Catering and accommodation	3	1.51
	Transport/Storage/Communication Services	6	3.02
	Finance/Insurance/Real Estate/Business Services	23	11.56
	Community/Social and Personal services	6	3.02
	Government Institution	22	11.06
	Other	42	21.11

APPENDIX A: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (continued)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Occupational Category	Supervisor/Team leader/Junior Management	30	15.08
	Middle management	84	42.21
	Top Management	36	18.09
	Director	23	11.56
	Other	26	13.07
Salary Scale	R10 000 or less	9	4.64
	R11 000 and R20 000	21	10.82
	R21 000 and R30 000	29	14.92
	R31 000 and R40 000	36	18.56
	R41 000 and R50 000	26	13.4
	R51 000 and R60 000	22	11.34
	R61 000 and R70 000	13	6.7
	R71 000 and above	38	19.59
Movement since graduation	Never	63	31.66
	Once	40	20.1
	Twice	49	24.62
	3 to 5	33	16.58
	More than 5 times	14	7.04
Promotion	Yes	146	75.26
	No	48	24.24
Worked outside South Africa	Yes	42	21
	No	158	79

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participants

The aim of this research is to help the NWU Potchefstroom Business School with a needs assessment of our graduates and students to enable them to engage with each other in a more productive way. This will also help to find a more effective way to manage the network of the graduate and Alma mater

It will be greatly appreciated if you would assist me in completing the following questionnaire which will only take a few minutes of your time. Individual responses to this questionnaire will remain anonymous

The programme manager

NWU Potchefstroom Business School

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

For each question, please mark your preferred answer with an “X” in the relevant box (next to the number). If your answer to the question is “other”, please specify briefly in writing.

1. Are you

Male	1	Female	2
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2. In which year were you born / what is your age

1946 – 1964 (69 – 51 years)	1
1965 - 1979 (50 – 36 years)	2
1980 – 1994 (35 – 21years)	3
Other (Specify)	4

3. Marital Status

Married	1	Single	2	Widowed	3	Divorced	4	Living together	5
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4. What population group are you

African	1	Coloured	2	White	3	Asian	4
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5. What is your home language (tick one which is applicable)

English	1	Xhosa	7
Afrikaans	2	Venda	8
Tswana	3	Tsonga	9
Sepedi	4	SiSwati	10
Zulu	5	Sotho	11
Ndebele	6	Others (Briefly Specify)	12

6. What is your preferred language of communication (tick one which is applicable)

English	1
Afrikaans	2
Other (Specify)	3

7. Which province are you located

Gauteng	1	Western Cape	6
Northwest	2	Northern Cape	7
Limpopo	3	Free State	8
Mpumalanga	4	Kwazulu Natal	9
Eastern Cape	5	Other (Specify)	10

8. In which year did you graduate?

1964 – 1974	1
1975 – 1984	2
1985 – 1994	3
1995 – 2004	4
2005 – 2015	5

9. From which campus did you graduate from

Vaal Triangle	1	Potchefstroom	2	Mafikeng	3
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10. Were you studying (method of delivery)

Full time	1	Part time	2	Distance learning	3
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11. Are you currently an Alumni

Yes	1	No	2	Still busy with my studies at Potchefstroom Business School	3
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12. Indicate the highest qualification(s) you obtained from North West University (NWU) (tick all applicable)

B-degree	1
Postgraduate Diploma/ Honours	2
MBA	3
PhD	4
Other (Specify)	5

13. Which of these Executive courses did you study from NWU Potchefstroom Business School? (tick Yes or No in each row)

		Yes	No
13.1	Fundamental Management Programme	1	2
13.2	Middle Management Programme	1	2
13.3	Advanced Management Programme	1	2
13.4	Project Management	1	2
13.5	Other (Specify)	1	2

14. In which sector are you working (tick only one)

Government institution	1
Private Sector	2
Own Business (Self- Employed)	3
Parastatal/ NGO/ Education	4
Other (Specify)	5

15. In which industry are you working (tick only one)

Agricultural/Hunting/Fishing /Forestry	1
Mining	2
Manufacturing	3
Electricity/ Gas/ Water	4
Wholesale and retail trade	5
Construction	6
Catering/ Accommodation	7
Transport/ Storage/ Communications	8
Finance/ Insurance/ Real Estate/ Business Services	9
Community/ Social and Personal Services	10
Government Institutions	11
Other (Specify)	12

16. Occupational category

Supervisor/Team Leader/Junior Manager	1
Middle management	2
Top Management	3
Director	4
Other (Specify)	5

17. Indicate your net monthly income

R10 000 or less	1
R11 000 – R20 000	2
R21 000 – R30 000	3
R 31 000- R40 000	4
R41 000 - R50 000	5
R 51 000- R60 000	6
R 61 000- R70 000	7
R71 000 and above	8

18. How many times have you moved to another companies or moved to another department since graduation

Never	1
Once	2
Twice	3
3 to 5 times	4
More than 5 times	5

19. Any promotions since graduation

Yes	1	No	2
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20. Have you worked outside South Africa

Yes	1	No	2
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21. Where did you hear about NWU Potchefstroom Business School when deciding to study here (tick Yes or No in each row)

		Yes	No
21.1	Newspaper	1	2
21.2	LinkedIn	1	2
21.3	Facebook	1	2
21.4	Twitter	1	2
21.5	Someone referred you	1	2
21.6	Visited the website	1	2
21.7	Family member who studied at NWU	1	2
21.8	Other (Specify)	1	2

SECTION B: ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY

For each question, please mark your preferred answer with an “X” in the relevant box (next to the number). If your answer to the question is “other”, please specify shortly in writing.

1. How often do you receive any news from NWU Potchefstroom Business School

Never	1
Sometimes	2
Very Often	3
Regularly	4

2. Are you familiar with the “Alere Flammam” publication of the NWU Potchefstroom Business School

Yes	1	No	2
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3. Do you receive the “Prontuit” newsletter from the NWU Potchefstroom Business School

Yes	1	No	2
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4. How often do you actually read any of the NWU Potchefstroom Business School communiqué (tick one which is applicable)

Never	1
Sometimes	2
Very Often	3
Always	4

Briefly explain your answer _____

5. Which Social media do you use (tick Yes or No per row)

		Yes	No
5.1	Facebook	1	2
5.2	Twitter	1	2
5.3	LinkedIn	1	2
5.4	YouTube	1	2
5.6	WhatsApp	1	2
5.7	Other (Specify)	1	2

6. How often do you use these social media to communicate (tick your preference per platform)

		Annually	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
6.1	Facebook	1	2	3	4
6.2	Twitter	1	2	3	4
6.3	LinkedIn	1	2	3	4
6.4	YouTube	1	2	3	4
6.5	WhatsApp	1	2	3	4

7. Through which platform would you prefer NWU Potchefstroom Business School to keep in touch with you (tick Yes or No in each row)

		Yes	No
7.1	Newsletter	1	2
7.2	Alumni Clubs (Regional Chapter)	1	2
7.3	Facebook	1	2
7.4	Twitter	1	2
7.5	LinkedIn	1	2
7.6	Other (Specify)	1	2

8. Indicate the relevance of the following communication platform to you (tick your preference in each row)

		Irrelevant	Not so relevant	Relevant	Highly relevant
8.1	News letter	1	2	3	4
8.2	Facebook	1	2	3	4
8.3	Twitter	1	2	3	4
8.4	LinkedIn	1	2	3	4
8.5	Networking	1	2	3	4
8.6	Events	1	2	3	4
8.7	SMS	1	2	3	4
8.8	email	1	2	3	4
8.9	NWU Potchefstroom Business School Website	1	2	3	4

9. In the past how often have you received information about NWU Potchefstroom Business School from each of these sources (tick your preference in each row)

		Never	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
9.1	News letter	1	2	3	4
9.2	Facebook	1	2	3	4
9.3	Twitter	1	2	3	4
9.4	LinkedIn	1	2	3	4
9.5	Events	1	2	3	4
9.6	Other (Specify)	1	2	3	4

10. How often would you prefer to receive communication from the NWU Potchefstroom Business School (tick one which is applicable)

Only when matters arise which affect the school	1
When there is a matter of great significance	2
Once annually	3
Twice annually	4
Four times annually	5
Once a month	6
Other (Specify)	7

SECTION C: BENEFITS AND EVENTS

For each question, please mark your preferred answer with an “X” in the relevant box (Next to the number). If your answer to the question is “other”, please specify briefly in writing.

1. How have you joined the NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association (tick one which is applicable)

Online	1
During Graduation	2
Immediately after Graduation	3
Not yet an Alumni (Briefly Explain)	4

2. Would you benefit to be part of the Alumni Association

Yes	1	No	2
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Briefly Explain

3. Which of these activities would you consider participating in (tick Yes or No per row)

		Yes	No
3.1	Alumni member professional developments	1	2
3.2	Promoting yourself/ your organisation	1	2
3.3	Student recruitment events	1	2
3.4	Alumni Event: Networking	1	2
3.5	Alumni Event: Prestige day (with prominent guest speaker from industry)	1	2
3.6	Sponsorship from your company	1	2
3.7	Sporting Day (Golf day or Bicycle day)	1	2
3.8	Other (Specify)	1	2

4. What kind of Alumni Association events would you like to attend (tick Yes or No in each row)

		Yes	No
4.1	Annual Alumni Dinner	1	2
4.2	Class Re-union	1	2
4.3	Professional development seminar	1	2
4.4	Informal alumni social events	1	2
4.5	Prestige day	1	2
4.6	Other (Specify)	1	2

5. What kinds of benefit do you hope to get by staying connected to the NWU Potchefstroom Business School alumni association - rank the options below in order of your preference between 1 and 4, **1 being the least** preferred while **4 being the most** preferred (tick your preference row)

		Scale			
5.1	Networking	1	2	3	4
5.2	Might land a new job	1	2	3	4
5.3	Reconnects with old classmates	1	2	3	4
5.4	Sharing industry experience	1	2	3	4
5.5	Other (Specify	1	2	3	4

6. Indicates your preference of the following events regarding Alumni Association- rank the options below in order of your preference between 1 and 4, **1 being the least** preferred and **4 the most** preferred (tick your preference per row)

		Scale			
6.1	Alumni mentoring opportunity	1	2	3	4
6.2	Guest Speaker	1	2	3	4
6.3	Alumni giving opportunity (Financially)	1	2	3	4
6.4	Coming back for an Executive education	1	2	3	4
6.5	Board Member of an Alumni Association	1	2	3	4
6.6	Affinity cards (Loyalty card)	1	2	3	4
6.7	Alumni events	1	2	3	4
6.8	Exceptional contribution to the Society	1	2	3	4
6.9	Career services available to Alumni	1	2	3	4
6.10	Reading about Memoriam	1	2	3	4
6.11	News from Alumni Association	1	2	3	4
6.12	Corporate gifts/ Clothing for Alumni	1	2	3	4

SECTION D: GENERAL INFORMATION

Indicate the Extent to which you Agree or Disagree with the following statements

1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Agree	4 = Strongly Agree				
	Statement	Scale					
1	I would join an alumni club in my area	1	2	3	4		
2	Staying connected to the alumni is beneficial	1	2	3	4		
3	Staying connected to the Potchefstroom Business School is beneficial	1	2	3	4		
4	I feel that I am part of the Potchefstroom Business School community	1	2	3	4		
5	I would refer someone to study at Potchefstroom Business School	1	2	3	4		
6	I am satisfied with the quality of education I received at Potchefstroom Business School	1	2	3	4		
7	The education received prepared me for my career	1	2	3	4		
8	I am well informed about the activities at Potchefstroom Business School	1	2	3	4		
9	I would be interested in Alumni branded apparel (t-shirts, jackets or laptop bags)	1	2	3	4		
10	I would be willing to pay for membership fee	1	2	3	4		
11	I would prefer a NWU Potchefstroom Business School App developed for Alumni members	1	2	3	4		

12. Any recommendations on how NWU Potchefstroom Business School can make Alumni Association interesting and appealing to you?

13. Any suggestions regarding the effective functioning of the Alumni Association

Thank you for your time and effort

APPENDIX C: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR



12 November 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Letter of confirmation of language editing

The dissertation *Investigating the best practices for alumni relations in business schools* by KC Tshisikhawe (20203330) was language, technically and typographically edited. The citations, sources and referencing technique applied was also checked to comply with university guidelines. Final corrections as suggested remain the responsibility of the student.

Antoinette Bisschoff

Officially approved language editor of the NWU since 1998
Member of SA Translators Institute (no. 100181)