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Strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to provide a guideline for selection of communication channels during organisational change. The study was conducted across industries in South Africa, with inclusion criteria being the experience of a form organisational in the past three years. The questionnaire for data collection was based on rich media theory (six channels) while for communication satisfaction an instrument of Downs and Hazen (1977) was adapted and utilized. Data was collected online with social media platform such as LinkedIn and Whatsup used for snowball sample as population was unknown. A total of 162 response were obtained, of which ten were excluded as they did not meet the inclusion criteria of experience of organizational change.

There were four main findings of the study. First, Emails was the most dominant forms of communication the management which is media poor media. This communication channel by management were similar to employee preference of communication channels. Second, Of the six constructs, superior communication, communication climate, media quality personal feedback, co-worker communication and corporate information. Five of the six variable were found to have both convergent, discriminant validity and reliable using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Four of the five constructs were found to statistically different from the hypothesis value of '3' indicating that there was high customer satisfaction except for communication climate where participants were undecided. Third, On the media rich, face to face meeting and video conferencing were positively correlated with communication satisfaction with weak to medium strength relationships, while on the media poor showing a weak relationship between emails and posters with some dimensions of communication satisfaction.

It can be concluded that the organisations do not use media rich communication channels, but rather a mixture media rich and media poor and there is a relationship between communication channels and communication satisfaction, with media rich channels having a stronger relationship. These findings should be considered with the context of inadequate generalisability due to the use of snowball sampling technique. It is recommended that practitioners, select communication channels with caution to ensure that key issues (uncertainty, successful transfer of information) are addressed adequately For academic community, more research is required as communication channels evolve with technology to ensure that the portfolio of channels used during organisational change.

Keywords: Organisational change, Communication channels, rich media theory, communication satisfaction

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the rationale and motivation for the research topic: strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change. The problem statement, assumptions and delimitations will be articulated in this section. The research motivation will highlight the following:

- The context of the study
- The purpose of the study
- The significance of the study for practitioners, academia and South Africa.

1.2 Context of the study

Globalisation, technology development, environmental changes and changes in regulations have given birth to a new economic planet, the volatile, uncertain, chaotic and ambiguous (VUCA) world (Bremmer, 2014; Levy B. & Levy, 2016; Shahbaz, Khraief, Rehman, & Zaman, 2016; Dau, Moore, Soto, & LeBlanc, 2017). It is survival of the fittest, or rather, as O'Reilly and Tushman (2013) suggested, “those with ambidexterity, the ability to exploit mature markets and to also compete in new technologies and markets, where change and adaptability are key to survival” (p.3). The high failure rate (fifty to seventy percent) of organisational survival, calls for an urgent need for development of processes that facilitate successful organisational change (Cândido & Santos, 2015; Hughes, 2011 & Kotter, 1995)

To gain competitive advantage, organisations must have chameleon characteristics; hypersensitivity to environmental changes and the ability to change and adapt on time. The work of Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo and Shafiq (2012), Kotter (1995), Pollack and Pollack, (2015) and Shahbaz, Khraief, Rehman and Zaman (2016) acknowledged communication as a critical step in facilitating successful organizational change management.

The challenge for senior managers during organisational change is twofold. Firstly, there is anxiety and uncertainty that can result in resistance to change. Communication, according to Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia and Irmer, (2007) and Ford and Ford (2005) will not be satisfactory if the approach fails to address the uncertainty. Secondly, the rapidly evolving information and communication technology has availed convenient digital communication channels that have

been adopted by workplaces and employees (Thrall, Stecula, & Sweet, 2014). Selecting channels of communication therefore must be strategic and ensure that the channel can facilitate communication that addresses uncertainty during organisational change.

The channel must be able to convey information with accuracy and reduce of uncertainty. The communication channels were categorized according to the rich media theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984,1986) which has anchored the communication channel literature for decades. The richness of the communication channel is essentially based on its capacity to facilitate shared meaning. This is enabled by the ability to facilitate immediate feedback, the use of multiple cues, (verbal and non-verbal), use of natural language permitting conversational style communication and personal focus to direct the message to the relevant recipient. This made face to face communication the preferred communication channel in times of uncertainty.

Globalisation and technology development have resulted in the proliferation of use and adoption of computer and internet mediated communication channels such as video conferencing, email, and instant message texting. These digital channels possess many desirable attributes, especially to global entities, such as cost saving, time flexibility, access to large audiences and elimination of geographical boundaries.

There are reports of increasing use of electronic media channels such as email (classified as poor media channel, according to the rich media theory) by managers (Muhamedi & Ariffin, 2017). However, studies that focus on employees report that employees prefer use of rich media communication channels for communication satisfaction (Cardon and Marshall, 2015). This poses a challenge to managers: how do they strategically select communication channels to facilitate satisfactory communication that results in successful organisational change?

1.3 Problem statement

Strategic selection of communication channels is vital for satisfactory communication during organisational change. Failure to communicate effectively is one the major causes of failure of organisational change. Communication channels play a key role by facilitating exchange of information to reduce the uncertainty and anxiety that results in resistance to change. Technology disruptions have availed disruptive convenient web based communication channels. The convenience is at the expense of cautiously selecting channels with attributes that address specific communication needs (such as uncertainty) during organisational change.

The purpose of the study was to develop a framework for strategic selection of communication channels that facilitate satisfactory communication to contribute to the “how” processes that enable successful organisational change. Anchored in the rich media theory, the research objectives were to establish which communication channels were used by managers organisational change, which channels are preferred by employees and if use of rich media channels influenced communication satisfaction.

1.4 Aims and objectives of study

The aim of this study was to understand the strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change. To investigate the problem and following objectives were developed:

- To determine the dominant communication channels used by organisations, whether they were media rich or poor.
- To investigating the level of communication satisfaction (CS) with the communication channels used by organisations(CCO) during organisational change.
- To understand whether the use of media richness does influence (ICS) communication satisfaction during organisational change.

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of the study was evaluated at an academic, practitioners and country.

1.5.1 Academic

In the change management literature, the focus has been on strategies for implementing change, describing what must be done, but providing little detail of how it should be achieved (Applebaum, 2012 and Pollack & Pollack, 2014). The strategic channel selection framework will contribute to the literature by adding the detail of "how" to the communication processes during organisational change. The quantitative approach provides empirical evidence for further in depth qualitative research on the patterns of communication selection and the impact on communication satisfaction.

1.5.2 Practitioners

From a longitudinal observation of a hundred organisations, Kotter (1995), claimed that twenty five percent of the organisations failed to survive. Whilst Cândido and Santos (2015) and

Hughes (2011) are concerned with lack of empirical evidence for the rumoured organisational failure rate, a fifty to seventy percent failure rate is a cause for concern. Effective communication enables the change that is aligned with the environment, thus giving the organisation a competitive edge and building the resilience that organizations require to survive in this VUCA world. Resilient organisations stabilize the economy of their respective nations and the global economy. As evidence, the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis is still felt today. This study focuses on the processes of the “how” of effective communication. Strategic selection of communication channels will facilitate efficient communication of change, thus facilitating successful organisational change for the organisation to adapt to their environment.

1.5.3 South Africa

The sample for the study is formed by the employees of multisector organisations across South Africa, the findings will therefore give a country specific perspective. In a heavily unionised workforce as in South Africa, communication of major organisational change that affects the employees must be carefully crafted, as exemplified by the Marikana tragedy (Duncan, 2014).

South Africa hosts many multinational organisations which play a role in the economy of the country. These are particularly vulnerable to changes in regulations, therefore organisational changes are inevitable and frequent. Effective organisational change communication is a critical survival tactic. There is a rising interest in the doing business in the rest of the African continent. SA businesses will have to strategically change and adapt to remain competitive. This requires successful management of change which needs effective communication. A framework of strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change will assist organisations in facilitating successful organisational change.

1.6 Scope and Delimitations

The focus of the study is grounded on rich media theory and communication satisfaction, all the other aspects of communication field was not included within the scope of study. This was done to ensure the research was focuses. Communication satisfaction was a tool and not the crux of the study. Similarly , organisational change was used as the context with the study not delving into lower level details of organisation change. At the sample level, the scope was covered across the industry, however, it was limited to people with access to a social media platform, for ease of access and handling of the population. The country South Africa and her

factors that may have affected organisational change were not variables in the study. The country was chosen for convenient access to participants.

1.7 Research overview and topic

The high rate of failure of organisational change suggested that the communication of change must be tailor made to address issues that arise during organisational change. The study focused on communication channels utilised during organisational change only in exclusion of the context of routine organisational communication. Other inherent organisational factors that may affect the choice of communication channels were not considered. The study assumes that all other variables are constant, only communication factors have an influence on communication channels.

1.7.1 Research design

Time constraints, limited experience and the positivist's philosophy of the researcher encouraged a cross-sectional descriptive quantitative approach. This limited the depth of insights into the phenomena that could have been offered by qualitative approach, but objective evaluation especially of the relationship that is offered by the quantitative methods.

1.7.2 Sampling frame

The snowball sampling technique and geographical restriction possibly affected the representativeness of the population by the sample, thus limiting the generalisability of the study.

1.7.3 Choice of theory

The overarching rich media theory was not able to fully explain the phenomena that were observed in the study. Anchoring the study on the theory limited the emergence of other explanations for the phenomena.

1.8 Summary

This chapter provided the rationale and motivation for research of the topic. The problem statement, assumptions and delimitations were articulated. The rest of the report follows the following format:

- Chapter 2: Literature Review. In this chapter the theory was reviewed focusing on communication with a context of organizational change focusing on media rich theory and communication level, and related relationships.
- Chapter 3: Research Hypothesis. In this chapter the research hypothesis is developed which were tested in the study.
- Chapter 4: Research design and methodology. This chapter discussed the approach employed during the investigating, in so far as the design which included the philosophy, approach and strategies. This is followed by methodology which evaluated the unit of analysis, population, sample, data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity and the ethics applied in the study. The chapter is closed off by discussing the limitations encountered during the study.
- Chapter 5: Results. This chapter presents the findings of the study, by first providing the profile of the respondents, the descriptive statistics of the independent and dependent constructs, then testing the relationship. All of this is done to accept or reject the theory within this study setting.
- Chapter 6: Discussion of Results. The findings that are presented in chapter 5 are discussed in this chapter, and comparison is made with the existing theory.
- Chapter 7: Conclusion and recommendations for further research. This is the last chapter of the study, which provides principal finding of the study, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of the literature review was to learn from the plethora of existing research, identify gaps and contribute to theory development (Webster & Watson, 2002).

To adequately cover the topic, the theoretical framework developed in this study transcended three fields of research; organisational change, communication channels and the rich media theory.

A good comprehension of the causes, events and consequences and outcomes of organisational change was important to tailor communication practices to address the specific needs during organisational communication. The communication model was reviewed with an overview of the critical components of the communication process. Potential areas of discourse and effective enhancement were identified. The study focused on the channels of communication and how they can be utilised efficiently to facilitate satisfactory communication during organisational change.

2.2 Grounding of the study

2.2.1 Definition and causes

Moran and Brightman (2001) define organisational change as “the process of continually reviewing and renewing the organisation’s direction, structure and capabilities in response to the changing customer needs as well as the internal and external environment (p112).” These changes can be due to globalization, technology development, environmental changes and changes in regulations (Bremmer, 2014; Levy B. & Levy, 2016; Shahbaz, Khraief, Rehman; & Zaman 2016; Dau, Moore, Soto, & LeBlanc, 2017). To survive Burns (2012) suggests that change must be a constant agenda, both at an operational and strategic level.

2.2.2 Types of change

Hussain, Lei, Akram, Haider, Hussain, and Ali (2016) describe two types of change in an organisation; reactive and proactive change. The reactive change is usually in

response to internal or external forces that pressurise the organization to change, which is becoming normal in the VUCA world. At times the organisation will find it desirable to change and implement proactive change to improve the position of the organisation in the market.

Lewin (1951) identified three phases in planned organisational change. The first phase is the unfreezing stage during which people are required to acknowledge that the change is necessary. The second phase is the transition phase when people move towards accepting the changes and the new practices and behaviours of the changed state is implemented. The third phase, refreezing, is when the changed state becomes the norm.

To get an overview this study did not focus on a specific type or phase of change. According to Kovač (2017), these changes may be facilitated through:

- “Technical and technological change; introduction of new technologies or engineering processes
- Physical change; location and size of the organization
- Organisational change; transformation of existing organizational structure and processes
- Personal change; replacement of individuals or changes in the way of operating of the staff” (p.75).

2.2.3 Effects of change

The challenge in the facilitation of successful organisational change stems from the unintended consequences and the impact these have on the organization and its employees (Diefenbach, 2007). These include uncertainty, occupational stress and employee fear and insecurity about their future in the organisation, which may result in resistance to change or employee turnover. The danger of stress, according to Avey, Wernsing & Luthans (2008) is that it reduces employee commitment and increases reluctance to accept organizational change interventions that facilitates successful organizational change.

Fear and insecurities can be related to history of unpleasant experiences of change and violation of psychological contracts (Rafferty & Restubog, 2017; Heckmann, Steger & Dowling, 2016). The anxiety in anticipation of change and during the change process can also affect employee engagement and performance (Beijer & Gruen, 2016; van den Heuven, Freese, Schalk & van Assen, 2017). According to Graebner, Heimeriks, Huy & Vaara, 2016 and Spoor and Chu (2017), in mergers and acquisitions, anxiety can be exacerbated by loss of identity and failure to develop new organizational identity.

These unintended effects of change will be counter-effective to the intentions of organizational change. To facilitate successful organizational change, they need to be mitigated. The next section reviews the evolution of organizational change literature and attempts in facilitating successful organizational change.

2.2.4 The change model and evolution of organisation change literature

In reviewing trends in organizational change discourse from 1960 to 2008, Oswick and Burnes (2014) noted a rise in the citation of change management. According to Oswick & Marshak (2012), the rise of change management is in response to the VUCA world that continuously disrupts the norm, therefore, change management should be seen as emergent and ongoing process of change.

This was in contrast to the linear discrete bounded process in planned organizational change. According to Bamford and Forrester (2003) and Dawson (2014) these discrete one-dimensional change interventions were likely to generate short term results and worsen the instability of the organization. Planned change dominated the theory and practice of change management for decades and is based principally on the work of Kurt Lewin. In his classic change model Lewin, (1946) described the three phases of change; unfreezing (creating apperception that change is required) changing (moving to new desired state) and refreezing (solidifying the new state as the norm).

According to Bartunek and Woodman (2015) and Cummings, Bridgman and Brown (2016), the model suggested that change is linear, whilst in reality change is

continuous with overlapping stages. Further claims suggested that this could have inspired the simplistic rigid n-step thinking that diverts attention away from detailed processes in implementing change management. Examples include Kotter's model of change Luecke's seven steps and Kanter's ten commandments for executing change (Todnem, 2005). Kotter's first step of recognising the need for revitalization corresponds to Lewin's unfreezing stage, while institutionalizing change corresponds to refreezing. Applebaum Habashy, Malo and Shafiq (2012) and Pollack and Pollack (2014) shared the same sentiments highlighting the paucity of detail in the processes of change management.

According to Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015), most of the studies in the field of change management (1900-2010) focused on how certain principles and practices can help in accomplishing change goals, as well as planning, organising and directing people and resources to effect change. A few studies focus on the psychology and sociology discipline, in trying to establish why and how people do or do not change. Literature focusing on details of the "how" of change, is scarce.

Although Oswick and Burnes (2014) showed a rise in emergent change management and ongoing change processes, there is still a place for planned organizational change. Lessons from Pina e Cunha da Cunha and Kamoche (1999) and Bamford and Forrester (2003), suggested that an interplay between planned organizational change and management of emergent change will give an organization a competitive edge. Many scholars have suggested that this organizational ambidexterity is associated with high organizational performance (Fu, Flood, & Morris, 2016; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013; Sinha & Sinha, 2016; Tushman, & O'Reilly, 1996; Trong, 2017).

Whether it is planned or emergent organisational change, there is consistent inadequacy of the details of how to successfully implement the change in the literature as highlighted by Al-Haddad & Kotnour (2015), Applebaum et al (2012) and Pollack & Pollack (2014). This study focused on change during the actual process of change regardless of the type of change.

2.2.5 Summary

In this section organisational change was defined as “the process of continually reviewing and renewing the organisation’s direction, structure and capabilities in response to the changing customer needs as well as the internal and external environment” (Moran and Brightman, 2001, p.112). Most scholars (Hussain, Lei, Akram, Haider, Hussain, & Ali, 2016) described two types of change in an organisation; reactive and proactive change. Learnings from e Cunha and e Cunha (2003) and Bamford and Forrester (2003), recommend ambidexterity and competence in both to give organisations a competitive edge. This study focused on change during the actual process of change regardless of the type of change.

The literature described unintended effects of change (uncertainty, occupational stress and employee fear and insecurity about their future in the organization) and their dangers in hindering the process of organizational change. To facilitate successful organizational change, these need to be mitigated. From the literature however, there are little details of how to mitigate these unintended consequences. The next section examines the role communication in organisational change.

2.3 Communication

This section will review the definition of communication, the role of communication during organizational change and the communication model.

2.3.1 Definition

Dima, Teodorescu, and Gifu (2014) defined communication, as “the activity of conveying information through the exchange of ideas, feelings, intentions, attitudes, expectations, perceptions or commands, as by speech, gestures, writings, behavior and possibly by other means such as electromagnetic, chemical or physical phenomena, between two or more participants (p 46.)”

There is no consensus in the academic definition of communication in the literature. The definitions vary according to the theoretical frame of reference (Cacciattolo, 2015). Scholars do however agree on the fundamental components of communication which

include the sender and recipient of the message, the message, the channel or medium and the effect (Aider & Thomas, 2003; Miller, 2014). The components of communication were adapted from the Shannon communication model (Shanon, 1994)

2.3.2 The role of communication in organizational change

In an attempt to contribute to the “how” of organizational change, Kotter (1995), advocated communication as one of the key steps in the process of successful organisational change. In the subsequent years, affirming literature surged. Elving (2005) found that communication facilitates readiness for change, thus reducing uncertainty. This was supported by Chain (2011) who found that communication is useful in sharing the vision of the organisation, ensuring clarity of objectives, thus minimising uncertainty. Johanson and Heide (2008), Matos Marques Simoes and Esposito (2014) and Christensen (2014) emphasized the importance of communication in overcoming resistance to change. According to Nelissen and van Selm (2008) employees who were satisfied with the management communication had a positive state of mind on the organizational change. Mishra, Boynton and Mishra (2014) established internal communication as key driver of employee engagement.

However, most of this literature focuses either on benefits of good organisational communication or detrimental consequences from the lack of effective communication. However, the lack of the “how” seems to persist in the literature. As a result, poor communication is still the most frequently mentioned factor in the failure of organisational change as was found by Mosadeghrad and Ansarian (2014) in their thirty-year, meta-analytic study.

2.3.1 Summary

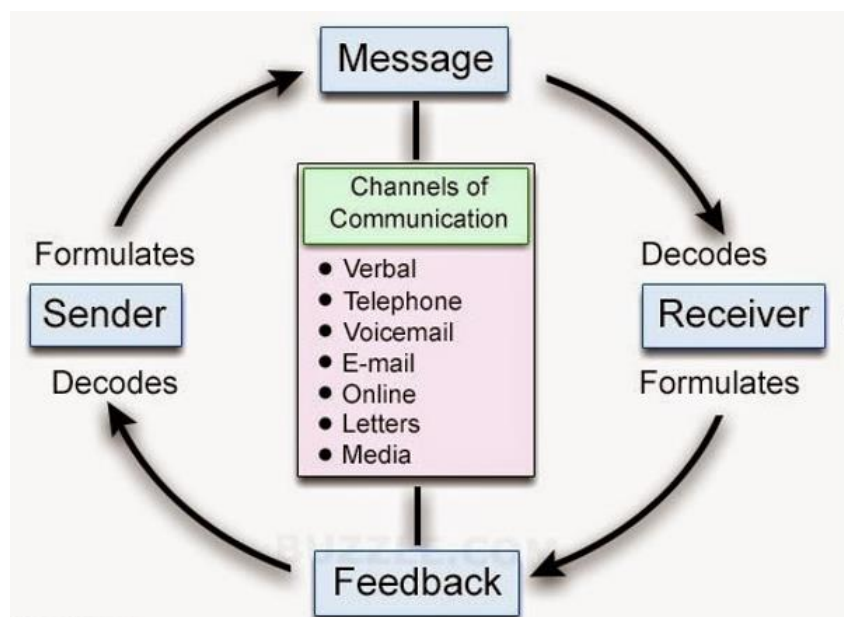
This section highlighted the role of communication in successful change management. However, the literature was lean on the “how” details that are essential in the implementation of change. The next section reviews the communication model and identifies the area of focus of this study that will contribute towards the “how” manual.

2.4 The communication model

Shannon (1949) depicted communication as a simple, sequential, and linear process. His original communication model included a sender, a channel, a message and a receiver. Scholars have explored the different components of the model, such as credibility of the source (Allen 2007), influence of culture (Tong, Tak & Wong, 2015) and language asymmetries (Schomaker & Zaheer 2014, Luring & Klitmøller, 2015). This study focused on channels of communication in the model, contributing to the “how” by developing a framework for strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change.

“Stewart, Malayan and Roberts (2001) reviewed the evolution of the Shannon communication model over the years to include the feedback loop, emotion factor and passivity or activity of the communication channels. Their conclusion was that effective communication is complete when the message has been understood. Lewin (1949) and Benz (2012) also emphasized the participatory process and dialogue during communication. The feedback loop allows the recipient of information to communicate whether the message was fully understood (Figure 1)”

Figure 1 The communication model



Source: Based on Lewin (1949)

The evolution of the communication model highlighted the critical characteristics of a communication channel that will facilitate satisfactory communication. These characteristics are embodied in the rich media theory discussed in the next section.

2.5 The rich media theory

As early as the beginning of the eighties, before the inundation with digital communication channels and social media, scholars like Daft and Lengel (1984, 1986) had identified the need for a framework for communication channel selection for organizational communication. This framework would assist the managers in making the most effective use of communication media to improve organisational

information flow. The result of their work, the rich media theory (Daft and Lengel, 1984, 1986) has become one of the commonly cited theories in the literature of organisational communication media selection. According to Daft and Lengel (1984, 1986), the richness of the communication channel is essentially based on its capacity to facilitate shared meaning. This is enabled by:

The ability to facilitate immediate feedback,

The use of multiple cues, (verbal and nonverbal),

Use of natural language permitting conversational style communication

Personal focus to direct the message to the relevant recipient.


Channels that lack these features were classified as media poor channels. Poor media communication channels facilitate communication clarity when task-relevant knowledge is low. Rich media channels facilitate social perceptions of others and enhance the ability to evaluate interpersonal communication elements such as expertise, deception, agreement, acceptance, and persuasion. They allow synchronous feedback and facilitate efficient information seeking and communication (Daft and Lengel, 1984).

Communication channels were placed on a richness continuum. According to Daft and Lengel (1984), along this continuum, face-to-face communication is the richest medium and an optimal channel for communicating complex information because it facilitates immediate feedback, the use of natural language and multiple cues, and personal focus (Figure 2). Simple announcements, annual reports, and posters are lean (i.e., less rich) and impersonal forms of media channels. In this model emails and phone calls fell in the middle of the media richness continuum.

In practice the theory suggested that organisational leaders should match the level of uncertainty and equivocality in a message with the richness of a channel. Richer channels, such as face-to-face interaction and the telephone, were recommended for ambiguous messages, whereas lean channels, such as a memo, should be used to communicate unequivocal messages, to allow for efficient and effective interactions.

Figure 2 Spectrum of media richness of communication channels (Daft and Lengel, 1984)

Rich media
channels



Communication Channel	Feedback	Cues	Nonverbal	Personal Customisation
Face to Face	Instant	All present	All present	Total customisation
Videocall	Instant	Many	Most	Total
Voice call	Instant	Many	Much	Total
Social Media	Instant to quick	Some	None	Much
Email	Fast	Few	None	Good
Posters	No feedback	none	none	None

Poor media channels

2.6 Technology disruption

With the rapid development of disruptive technology, electronic communication with email and social media use proliferated in spite of being classified as poor media channels by the rich media theory.

In an attempt to explain the phenomenon, Huang (2013), highlighted the benefit of social media which included multivocality, increasing community reach and enabling simultaneous use of information and co-production. According to Treem (2012), social media eliminates geographical boundaries and affords easy access, persistence, editability, and association between individuals and with content.

The literature reveals discord in selection of communication channels. Some scholars found that most managers used email, while they perceived various media in ways that were relatively consistent with information richness theory Markus, (1994) and Muhamedi and Ariffin (2017) witnessed the same phenomenon, concluding that the rich media theory does not explain the choice of communication channels by managers in the digital era. Their findings were in keeping with those of Men (2014) who found that managers used emails most frequently, followed by addressed memo and face to face communication.

The preferences of employees, the recipients of change, were different to the channels selected by managers. Friedl and Verčič (2011) found that the digital age generation still preferred traditional rich media channels in spite of a strong preference for social media in their private lives. Cardon and Marshall (2015) found that professionals regardless of generational group viewed richer traditional communication channels as most effective for team communication. Men (2014) demonstrated that the use of face-to-face communication was positively associated with employee communication satisfaction.

Braun (2015) also found that employees perceived face-to-face communication to be of higher quality than telephone and email communication, and they indicated a preference for more face-to-face communication with their supervisors than they actually had. Turnage and Goodboy (2016) found that communicating employees preferred communicating their opinions in person to a supervisor, instead of sending an e-mail.

In support of the rich media theory, scholars like Kock (2004) and Sheer (2011) argued that the concept of media richness has laid a foundation for understanding human behavior involving electronic communication media. Although electronic media has limited capacity to carry social information compared with face-to-face communication, newer media channels with features such as webcams, embedded audio or video, rapid live feedback online chat functions improve the richness of electronic media. These social media channels with two-way, interactive/dialogical, communal, and relational features have potential to promote employee participation and engagement,

facilitate conversation between employees and the organization, and encourage employees to articulate their opinions (Men 2015).

The rise in the use of email in organisation communication is fueled by the multiple benefits that the rich media theory does not acknowledge. Most employees regard communication with email as a formal method communication, contents are regarded as official (Sisko Maarit Lipiäinen, Ensio Karjaluoto, & Nevalainen, 2014). Formality is important for credibility and validity of information communicated during organisational change.

In addition to transferring information, emails serve as information storage and memory with easy access and reference and use when required. (Elving, 2005, and Tahri, 2017). There is no influence of position geographically, and organisationally (Hall, Lecuona, & Cummings, 2017, Sproul and Kieslser 1987). Emails can reach acritical mass of users and acknowledges time constraints, allowing desired delays in response (van den Hooff, Groot & de Jonge, 2005). The information transferred by email is symmetrical (Sproul and Kieslser 1987).

These attributes have fueled the use of email as a communication channel in the workplace. These findings were acknowledged by Lee (1994); Ngwenyama and Lee (1997); Sevinc and D'Ambra (2004) and Vey, Fandel-Meyer, Zipp and Schneider (2017) in their quest to find alternative tools to measure and demonstrate the richness of email communication as the rich media theory failed to acknowledge these channels. Mitić, Nikolić, Jankov, Vukonjanski and Terek (2017) had similar findings with the use of electronic channels having a strong correlation with all dimensions of communication satisfaction. The challenge for managers is the selection of channels that facilitate satisfactory communication during organisational change in the mist of the technical disruptions.

2.7 Towards a framework for strategic selection of communication channels

Isaac, Kalika and Charki (2008) attributed the confusion to the fact that the existing communication media are layered on top of one another or assessed according to one theory. They advocated well-thought through reorganization and integration of the communication media to harvest maximum benefit. This was echoed by Reinsch, Turner and Tinsley (2008) who acknowledge the unintended use of technologies that is driven by new technologies such as emails that enable time flexibility, productivity and efficiency and desirable delays in responses in certain communicative tasks.

There is a risk of missing out on the benefits of these channels if the focus is on the choice or ranking according to one theory. Isaac et al (2008) and Reinsch et al (2008) introduce a new school of thought. Instead of focusing on the choice of a channels practitioners and scholars must consider creating media portfolios and perhaps embrace the concept of multi communication to distil the benefits from multi channels as seen in General motors' unified communications and collaboration program (Bolton, Murray & Fluker, 2017).

2.8 Summary

From the literature it is evident that employees prefer media rich face -to -face communication during uncertain times. The rich media advocates rich media channels for uncertain ambiguous situations. With technology disruptions, the use of electron mediated channels such as emails by managers seems to be increasing. During organisational change when it is important to reduce uncertainty and anxiety, strategic selection of communication channels is critical for employee communication satisfaction that will facilitate successful organisational change.

2.9 Communication Satisfaction

Kandlousi and Abdollahi (2010) defined communication satisfaction as the level of satisfaction an employee has between the overall communication flow and relationship variables within their organization. It is multidimensional concept where employees can express varying degrees of satisfaction about various types of communication. (Meintjes & Steyn, 2006). According to Nelissen and van Selm (2008) employees who

were satisfied with the management communication had a positive state of mind on the organizational change.

The value of communication satisfaction was further demonstrated by Cullen, Edwards, Casper and Gue (2014) and Yousef (2017). The former found that the resultant perceived organisational support facilitated employee satisfaction and performance. The latter showed that satisfaction with supervisors and coworkers encouraged commitment. Chan and Lai (2017) showed that organizational citizenship behavior, which can be very fragile during organizational change, is influenced by employee communication satisfaction.

The level of communication satisfaction during organisational change is an indication of the potential success or failure of change. It is therefore important to measure the levels of communication satisfaction. The instrument for communication satisfaction was developed by Downs and Hazen (1977). For objective and comprehensive evaluation of communication satisfaction they designed the communication satisfaction questionnaire (CSQ) which evaluates the following dimensions:

- Quality of communication with supervisors and with subordinates
- Nature and impact of peer-to-peer communication (horizontal and informal communication)
- Organisational integration
- Whether there is a shared organisational perspective on issues
- Capacity to give and receive personal feedback.
- Media quality
- The communication climate

The CSQ was validated by Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2007) as an appropriate tool for gaining overall insights into the way employees evaluate aspects of organizational communication. In South Africa, a modified CSQ was tested by Meintjes and Steyn (2006) and was found to be relevant. An adapted version of the CSQ was used in the study to test whether rich media channels and the communication channels used by management result in employee communication satisfaction.

2.10 Summary and conclusion: Literature review

This section reviewed organisational change and the role of communication during organisational change. The common thread identified in the literature was the detailed description, the importance of sound changes management and benefits of effective communication. However, the literature does not offer much detail in the “how” of the processes. The communication model was reviewed and communication channels were identified as the focus of the study.

The evolution of the Shannon Weaver model to include the feedback loop, emotion factor and passivity or activity of the transformation channels highlighted the critical characteristics of communication channel that will enable facilitation of successful communication which are embodied in the rich media theory.

Studies show that employees still prefer media rich face-to-face communication during uncertain times in the organisation. With technology disruptions, the use of electron mediated channels such as emails by managers and organisational leaders is increasing. During organisational change when it is important to reduce uncertainty and anxiety, strategic selection of communication channels become more critical than ever for employee communication satisfaction that will facilitate successful organisational change.

Leveraging on the rich media theory, this study establish which channels are used by management to communicate organizational change, which channels are preferred by employees and whether there are statistically significant discrepancies. It will be established whether the rich media theory is still relevant and if use of rich media channels results in employee communication satisfaction. The findings will contribute to the development of a framework for selection of communication channels during organizational change, providing the “how” in the processes of facilitating successful organizational change. The next section describes the details of how the information above will be sourced and analysed.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to develop a frame work for strategic selection of communication channels that facilitate satisfactory communication to contribute to the “how” processes to enable successful organisational change. Anchored in the rich media theory, the research objectives were to establish which communication channels were used by managers organisational change, which channels are preferred by employees and if use of rich media channels influenced communication satisfaction

According to Markus (1994), Men (2014), and Muhamedi and Ariffin (2017) organisational leadership used email for communication during organisational change while employees preferred face to face communication. The rich media theory recommended rich media communication channels for uncertain ambiguous situations for satisfactory communication. Satisfactory communication reduces employee resistance to change, optimizes engagement and performance (Chan & Lai, 2017; Cullen, Edwards, Casper & Gue, 2014; Yousef 2017). It is therefore important to understand the influence of the media richness of a channel on communication satisfaction. In this chapter, the research hypotheses are developed based on the literature findings and operationalised using previous similar studies (Braun, 2015, Cardon & Marshall 2015).

3.2 Hypothesis 1: Dominant communication channel

The first hypothesis of the study investigated the dominant communication channels used by organisations, whether they were media rich or poor, and the hypothesis was states as follows:

H1₀: The organisations (O) had no preference for dominant communication (NPDC) channels or used media poor communication channels during organisational change

H1_a: The organisations had preference for media rich (PMR) communication channels during organisational change

3.2.1 Hypothesis 1a: Management communication channels

H1_{0a}: Organisational leaders used no dominant media channels or used poor media during organisational change.

H1_{1a} Organisational leaders used media rich communication channels during organisational change.

3.2.2 Hypothesis 1b: Employee preference of communication

H1_{0b}: Employees had preference for rich media communication during organisational change.

H1_{1b}: Employees had no preference for rich media communication during organisational change.

3.3 Hypothesis 2: Levels of communication satisfaction

The level of communication satisfaction in this study was investigated with the following hypothesis:

H2₀: There was no communication satisfaction during organisational change.

H2₁: There was communication satisfaction during organisational change

As discussed in chapter four, there were five dimensions of communication that were assessed. The hypotheses were therefore subdivided into five parts.

3.3.1 Hypothesis 2a: Superior communication

H2_{0a}: There was no communication satisfaction with superior communication during organisational change.

H2_{1a}: There was communication satisfaction with superior communication during organisational change.

3.3.2 Hypothesis 2b: Communication climate

H2_{0b}: There was no communication satisfaction with communication climate during organisational change.

H2_{1b}: There was communication satisfaction with communication climate during organisational change.

3.3.3 Hypothesis 2c: Co-worker communication

H2_{0c}: There was no communication satisfaction with co-worker communication during organisational change.

H2_{1c}: There was communication satisfaction with co-worker communication during organisational change

3.2.4 Hypothesis 2d: Media quality

H2_{0d}: There was no communication satisfaction with media quality during organisational change.

H2_{1d}: There was communication satisfaction with media quality during organisational change

3.2.5 Hypothesis 2e: Corporate information

H2_{0e}: There was no communication satisfaction with corporate information during organisational change.

H2_{1e}: There was communication satisfaction with corporate information during organisational change

3.2.6 Hypothesis 2f: Personal feedback

H2_{0f}: There was no communication satisfaction with personal feedback during organisational change.

H2_{1f}: There was communication satisfaction with personal feedback during organisational change

3.4 Hypothesis 3-influence of media richness on communication satisfaction

Hypothesis 3 was developed to investigate the influence of the media richness on the communication satisfaction, with two sub-hypotheses.

H3₀: The use of rich media channels does not influence communication satisfaction during organisational change.

H3₁: The use of rich media channels does influence communication satisfaction during organisational change

3.5 Summary of the chapter

Three hypotheses were developed to conduct the investigation in the study. These three hypotheses were analysed using relevant research design and methodology, as presented in chapter 4. Flowing from this are the findings of the study, that are presented in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, the research hypotheses were developed. There were three hypotheses which evaluated the dominant communication and preferred communication by the employee, the level of customer satisfaction by the employees and the influence of communication channel on customer satisfaction. The study gave a snap shot view of the strategies in selection of communication channels during organizational change in South Africa.

One of the main disadvantage of cross-sectional study is that the results are static and therefore give no indication of a sequence of events or historical and temporal contexts (Lewis and Saunders, 2012). Also, technological disruptions make digital communication channels vulnerable to rapid disruptive change. The picture may therefore be very different at another time. The value of this study is that it focuses at a specific critical time in an organisation, during change. It is during these turbulent times that valuable lessons are learnt in an organisation, thus in the future, the snap shot view becomes history with extremely valuable lessons.

In this chapter, the research design and methodology are discussed. The flow of the chapter starts with the design, which includes the research philosophy, research approach, method and research strategy (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012) followed by the methodology, which entails the unit of analysis, population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity and ethics applied (Mouton, 1988). The final section of the chapter is discussion of the methodological limitation of the study.

4.2 Research design

There are four elements of research design discussed in this chapter. These include the research philosophy, research approach, research method and research strategy.

The most common research philosophies employed in social science, are interpretivism mainly for qualitative research studies and positivist for quantitative research studies (Saunders et al, 2012). A positivist philosophy was adopted in this study. According to Creswell (1994) and Yilmaz (2013), "to explain a social phenomenon, reality should be studied objectively by the researcher by maintaining a distance between themselves and what is being studied" (p. 311). Thus, an empirical research into a social phenomenon was chosen, "testing a theory consisting of variables which were measured with numbers and analysed with statistics in order to determine if the theory explains or predicts phenomena of interest" (Yilmaz, 2013, p.311). The benefit of multiple attempts to establish cause and effect is improved accuracy in predicting the future. The aim of the study was to review and test an existing theory, the rich media theory, to better predict the effectiveness of communication channels in successful communication of organisational change.

Research approach in social science can use either a deductive or inductive reasoning approach (Bryman, 2012). In inductive reasoning, a new theory is built, while deductive reasoning utilises the existing theory, and test the hypothesis on the research setting of study, after which the existing theory is accepted or rejected. A deductive approach was adopted following the sequence of events recommended by Saunders and Lewis, (2014). This was appropriate as this study was grounded on the known rich media theory (Daft and Lengel, 1984, 1986). The hypotheses developed were based on this theory.

The three most common methods that can be followed during a research include qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. In this study, the quantitative method was utilised as it was appropriate for ranking the use of communication so that there is an understanding whether media rich or media poor communication were employed during organisational change. Quantitative methods permit the test for the correlation of the media richness of communication channels with communication satisfaction. The descriptive approach adopted is appropriate for understanding patterns of the phenomenon when there are new human behaviours (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Welch, 2012). This descriptive approach was adopted for this study. The main disadvantage of descriptive approach is lack of depth of the findings. Description of the patterns of use of communication channels during organisational

communication of change caused by technology disruptions formed a base for further explanatory and exploratory the research.

Research strategies that can be adopted in a research include survey, case study, action research, experimental and ethnographic. A survey using an on-line self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. According to Saunders and Lewis (2014), surveys are useful in identifying characteristics of a particular group, to measure attitudes and describe behaviour patterns. Because of time limits, the survey was appropriate because it is quick, efficient, cost effective and accurate. (Saunders and Lewis, 2014)

4.3. Research methodology

Research methodology focuses on how the research was executed, and the main interest is on sampling, data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity and ethics applied.

4.3.1. Sampling

4.3.1.1 Unit of analysis

Zikmund, Babin and Carr (2010) explained that the unit of analysis is the object that is evaluated in the study. These authors argued that there are four dominant unit of analysis which are individuals, groups, organisational and artefacts. In this study the unit of analysis was the individual; an employee that had experienced organisational change.

4.3.1.2 The population

The overall population was not known for this study but it was formed by all employees who were recipients of change in the organisations that have undergone change in the past three years (2015-2017) in South Africa. The organisations that underwent change in the past three years were identified from reputable media sources and from interactions with social networks, however, there was no source of a complete list. Because there was no sampling frame a non-random snowball technique was employed. According to Saunders and Lewis (2014), the non-random sampling technique can compromise the generalisability of the study. The sample selection across multiple sectors is strategically selected to cover a diverse range of business communities to enhance the generalisability of data. Focusing on specific corporations may limit the data to the specific industrial and organizational context of the selected corporations creating homogeneity which limits the generalisability of the study.

The country South Africa and her factors that may have affected organisational change were not variables in the study. The country was chosen for convenient access to participants. However, the choice served to expand the change management geographically. About sixty-five percent of research in change management is predominantly Anglo American and European (Kuipers, Higgs, Kickert, Tummers, Grandia & Van der Voet, 2014). The African continent falls under the three percent of other countries. For economic growth, the current focus is on the developing economies and the African continent (Punnet, 2017; George, Corbishley, Khayesi, Haas & Tihanyi 2016). A South African perspective (especially with the visible footprint of the South African multinational entities in the rest of the African continent), would contribute to business by providing navigation tools for organisations intending infiltrating the developing economies in the African continent.

4.3.1.3 Sampling method and techniques

Leedy and Ormrod (2014) explained that there are two types of sampling methods, which are probability and non-probability methods. As the population was not known, the non-probability method was utilised in the study using convenient sampling. The organisations that had undergone change were easy to identify, however, attempts to access these proved to be very difficult. Bouckennooghe, De Clerc & Deprez (2014), Schumacher, Schreurs, Van Emmerik & De Witte (2016) and Van Kleef, van den Berg, and Heerdink (2015) suggest that emotion, insecurity and justice related issues may be the cause. Instead of participant corporations, individual employees of various corporations were recruited.

A snowball sampling technique to recruit individual employees who had been recipients of organisational change in the past three years was used. This technique was used by Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) and Dusek, Yurova, and Ruppel (2015) with fair success in hard to reach populations as in the cases of recreational drug abuse and HIV infected individuals because of stigma.

4.3.1.4 Sample size

For an empirical study to be able to make inferences about a population, the sample size must have sufficient statistical power to correctly reject the null hypothesis when a specific alternative hypothesis is true. The objective of the calculation of the sample size is to optimize the sampling effort within the constraint of time, finances and availability of participants.

Suboptimal samples can result in inconclusive inference-making (Green 1991 and Lakens, 2013), whilst collecting data beyond the required level to achieving significant results is wastage of resources. According to Anderson, Kelley and Maxwell (2017), “the sample size necessary to obtain a desired level of statistical power depends in part on the population value of the effect size, which is usually derived from prior studies as an estimate of the population value of the effect to be detected in the future study” (p.1)

Although, the population was unknown, it was expected to be more than 5000. Based on the guidelines by Leedy and Ormrod (2014), when the population is more than 5000, the sample becomes irrelevant, and a sample of about 400 is adequate. In this study, a sample of 400 was targeted. With the snowball sampling technique, the rate of responses cannot be tightly controlled (Goodman, 1961, 2011). A target of 400 was set by opening the network platform which was opened for a short period of time in October 2017 closed with 162 responses. About thirty direct telephone calls and twenty-five emails were sent to primary or entry participants.

The sample size was also verified with Cohen’s statistical power analysis. This study used Cohen’s statistical power analysis to calculate the sample size. The model exploits the relationships among the five factors involved in statistical inferences which include sample size, significance level alpha, effect size, desired power and estimated variance. Using the Cohen table (Cohen, 1992) the calculated sample size for this study was 85, with a predetermined medium effect size of 0.30, a significant level alpha of 0.05 and a statistical power of 0.80. The response platform which was opened for a short period of time in October 2017 closed with 162 responses.

4.3.2. Data collection

4.3.2.1 The data collecting instrument-Questionnaire

A standardised self-administered online questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was designed using the Google forms. This allowed efficient and cost effective electronic distribution of the questionnaire and permitted monitoring of the response rate and quality of data

The standardised questionnaire served to eliminate bias by posing the same questions in the same way to all participants Lewis & Saunders (2014). There was an added advantage of the

ability to include large numbers of participants as required in the quantitative research approach. The online distribution, response and submission saves time and cost and eliminates geographical boundaries.

As Rowley (2014) and Lewis and Saunders (2012) recommended, to ensure content validity the questions were adapted from similar previous studies. (Stephens, Barrett & Mahometa, 2013 and Men, 2014). The questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter explaining what the research is about, its usefulness and how much time was required from the participant. List, category and rating questions with a five-point Likert scale were used. The seven sections of the questionnaire are discussed below.

- **Section 1:** This section included the cover letter introducing the topic and the purpose of the study, with emphasis on the timing of communication, during organizational change. Voluntary participation was emphasised and participants were reassured the of anonymity and confidentiality.
- **Section 2:** The second section was the qualifying section. Participants who qualified for study were employees in who were recipients of organisational change in the past three years in South Africa. To ensure participants understood what organisational change is, a list of examples to choose from was posted (Kovač, 2017). An option to add what have been omitted was availed. This allowed for rejection of responses that did not qualify. Throughout the questionnaire it was emphasized that the communication was during organizational change, not routine organisational communication.
- **Section 3:** The third section examined demographic variables. These were limited to the type of industry, size of organization and role in the organization to keep the questionnaire short and concise. Personal identification variables including age, gender, level of education and the name of the organisation were omitted to ensure anonymity to encourage free and honest answers. This was important for the credibility of findings and population representativeness because of the sensitivity of the subject and the snowball sampling technique as explained above (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981 and Goodman, 2011). The type of industry and size were included to ensure diversity of the sample to improve generalisability of the findings. The list was obtained from standard industrial classification of all economic activities by Statistics South Africa (Appendix 1).
- **Section 4.** This section established the communication channel preferences of organisational leadership to communicate organisational change, as reported by

participants. For more objective assessment the participants were asked to rate the frequency of use rather than chose the channel as multiple channels may have been used, making it hard to choose one. A five-point Likert rating scale was used. Channels spanning across the full range of media richness (Lengel, & Daft 1989). This section tested the first part of hypothesis one.

- **Section 5.** To test hypothesis 2 and 3, this section objectively assessed the desire for rich media channels by asking participants to rank the importance of the following attributes of the rich media channels (Lengel, & Daft 1989):
- **Section 6.** This section assessed communication satisfaction, the dependent variable, with the channels used by management during organizational change (hypothesis 3). For objective assessment the questions were adapted from the communication satisfaction questionnaire (Downs and Hazen, 1977) discussed in the literature review. Only the six dimensions that were relevant to communication channels were included; media quality, corporate information, superior communication, personal feedback, communication climate and co-worker.
- **Section 7.** The participants were asked to select the top three communication channels they preferred as recipients during organisational change to assess if practical behaviour conforms to the rich media theory. The question was posed at the end to create separate it from the question that asks what communication channels are used by managers to avoid confusion as some of the respondents may be managers themselves. This was done to ensure the validity of test for congruence of employee preferred channels with those used by managers.

4.3.3 Collection method

A standardised self-administered online questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was designed using the Google forms. This allowed efficient and cost effective electronic distribution of the questionnaire and permitted monitoring of the response rate and quality of data. An email was first sent to the identified participants to request for their participation. Those with known telephone numbers and within reach were requested by telephone and in person respectively. The link to the questionnaire was then copied and distributed to the agreeable participants via email and WhatsApp. The entry participants were requested and encouraged to recommend, share and forward the link with other recipients of organizational change. The participants were given guidelines to fill the questionnaire and submit their responses on line.

4.3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data was exported from google platform to Excel spread sheets then exported to IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24 for analysis. The variables were measured with numbers and analysed with statistics in order to determine if the theory explains or predicts phenomena of interest (Creswell, 1994 & 2009). Descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted.

4.3.4.1 Data preparation

With digital divide participants who are uncomfortable with or do not have access to social media and internet were excluded. Authenticity has been addressed above, by verification of IP numbers. The data was then checked for qualifiers, and there were ten questionnaires that did not meet this criterion, and were eliminated which left a total of 152 responses for further analysis. The responses were evaluated for missing values, and none of the questionnaire had a missing value of more than 5% as recommended by Shaffer (1999). This was followed by extreme outliers and normality. The final data had normal distribution based on the value of kurtosis and skewness as recommended by Kiline (2011).

4.3.4.2 Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics were conducted to determine the spread (variation) and the central tendency of the data. The spread for the demographic variables was determined using frequency and percentage frequency. The central tendency of the communication channels and communication satisfaction was determined using median and mean with standard deviation. Skewness and kurtosis was used to determine the normality.

4.3.4.3 Inferential statistics

There were three hypotheses in this study. The test for hypothesis one, had two parts. The first part used the Friedman test to appreciate the difference between the different choices of the communication channels, rank the frequency of the choices and determine their significance using Chi-square (X^2). The Wilcoxon sign rank was then used to test the significance differences between the different channels of communication, using the Z-score. Both the Friedman and the Wilcoxon sign rank test significance were determined at 95% confidence interval, with $p < .05$. The second used the MANOVA. The different communication channels used by the organisational / leadership /preferred by the employee were classified as poor media channels (poster, social media or email); mixture of poor and rich media channels and rich media channels (telephone, video conference and face-to-face)

The second hypothesis was tested with the sample t-test, to determine if the observed levels (m) of communication satisfaction were significantly higher or lower than the hypothesised mean (μ) of 3 (neither disagree nor agree – neutral). Hypothesis three was tested with Pearson correlation for the relationship between the type of communication channel and communication satisfaction. The significant channels, were tested with linear regression for variance explained by the relationship.

4.4.4 Data validity and reliability

4.4.4.1 Content validity

Content validity measures the extent to which the items measured are relevant to the content that is being measured. The standardised questionnaire served to eliminate bias by posing the same questions in the same way to all participants Lewis & Saunders (2014). There was an added advantage of the ability to include large numbers of participants as required in the quantitative research approach. The online distribution, response and submission saves time and cost and eliminates geographical boundaries. As Rowley (2014) and Lewis and Saunders (2012) recommended, to ensure content validity the questions were adapted from similar previous studies. The study tested similar constructs to those tested in the previous studies (Stephens, Barrett & Mahometa, 2013 and Men, 2014) This helped to ensure the compatibility between the measurements and questions with the overarching theory.

The questionnaire was tested and modified as per experiences and inputs of participants before the formal survey (Johnston, Dixon, Hart, Glidewell, Schröder, & Pollard, 2014 and Cuervo-Cazurra, Andersson, Brannen, Nielsen & Reuber, (2016).

4.4.4.2 Construct validity

The construct validity was analysed using the partial least square structural equation modelling. Both convergence and discriminant validity were conducted on the existing instrument using average variance extracted from communication satisfaction. The convergence validity was conducted with AVE where a value of 0.5 and higher indicate convergence validity (Table 1). All values indicated acceptable AVE for all dimensions of communication satisfaction construct.

Table 1 Average variance extracted values for convergence validity

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Co-worker Communication	0.803
Communication Climate	0.803
Corporate information	0.780
Media quality	0.838
Personal Feedback	0.745
Superior Com	0.869

After convergence validity, discriminant validity was conducted with Fornell-Larcker Criterion and cross loadings. There was discriminant validity for superior communication, media quality, personal feedback, corporate information. However, there was overlap between co-worker communication and communication with higher than 0.8 cross loadings between these two dimensions, as such one of the dimension (co-worker communication) was removed. After the removal cross loading was obtained for all five remaining dimensions (Table 2).

Table 2 Cross loading of the dimensions for discriminant validity

	Superior Com	Com Climate	Media quality	Pers. Feedback	Corp info
COM1	0.946	0.594	0.403	0.736	0.449
COM2	0.945	0.604	0.371	0.710	0.406
COM3	0.904	0.496	0.341	0.670	0.437
COM4	0.610	0.888	0.628	0.659	0.508
COM5	0.488	0.886	0.621	0.566	0.469
COM6	0.526	0.913	0.633	0.641	0.557
COM10	0.356	0.627	0.903	0.457	0.517
COM11	0.376	0.653	0.927	0.544	0.516
COM12	0.728	0.638	0.458	0.840	0.526
COM13	0.657	0.593	0.509	0.906	0.566
COM14	0.569	0.569	0.453	0.841	0.548
COM15	0.471	0.570	0.541	0.636	0.898
COM16	0.313	0.460	0.501	0.463	0.854
COM17	0.422	0.473	0.449	0.559	0.896

Fornell-Larcker Criterion confirmed the discriminant validity, with each of the loading higher for its own loading (Communication climate = 0.896, corporate information = 0.883, media quality = 0.915, personal feedback = 0.863 and superior communication = 0.932). The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Fornell-Larcker Criterion for discriminant validity

	Com Climate	Corp info	Media quality	Pers. Feedback	Superior Com
Com Climate	0.896				
Corp info	0.573	0.883			
Media quality	0.700	0.564	0.915		
Pers. Feedback	0.696	0.634	0.549	0.863	
Superior Com	0.607	0.463	0.400	0.757	0.932

4.4.4.3 Reliability

The reliability of the five dimensions was analysed using Cronbach Alpha, rho_A and composite reliability. All dimensions showed good reliability with all values about 0.7 (Table 4). This confirmed that these constructs can be utilised to test the relevant hypothesis of the study.

Table 4 Reliability of the dimensions of communication satisfaction.

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability
Co-worker Com	0.877	0.879	0.924
Com Climate	0.877	0.882	0.924
Corp info	0.860	0.877	0.914
Media quality	0.807	0.812	0.912
Pers. Feedback	0.828	0.830	0.897
Superior Com	0.924	0.929	0.952

4.4 Ethics applied

The ethical approval to conduct this study was approved by Gordon Institute of Business Sciences ethics committee. The ethical concerns were addressed by getting the participants' consent. It was emphasized that the participation was voluntary. Anonymity was ensured by excluding all forms of identification in the demographics in the questionnaire (Fry,2014). The raw data is stored safely, and is not easily accessible to unauthorised personnel.

4.5 Methodological limitations of the study

4.5.1 The sampling technique.

The snowball sampling technique introduced bias that could compromise the representation of the population by the sample, which would in turn limit the generalization of the study. To

mitigate the risks, a targeted sampling technique was used to maintain greater control over who receives the initial invitation and the resulting sample in terms of size appropriateness for the study. The entry participants were identified and recruited using personal network contacts and the LinkedIn social media platform for professionals as detailed above. The LinkedIn platform is cross-industry professional network that connects professionals in various fields and, therefore, provides greater ability to target data collection to an appropriate social network.

The online questionnaire survey using emails and social media facilitated a boundary free access to diverse organisations across South Africa with limited resources. The inclusion of all industrial sectors and regions of South Africa increased the sample size and its representativeness (Baltar & Brunet, 2012), improving the generalisability of the study. In this study control variables such as organizational size and the roles of participants in the organisation were used.

4.5.2 Time constraints.

Time constraints only permitted a cross-sectional study. The snapshot view deprived the study of longitudinal information. One of the main disadvantages of cross-sectional study is that results are static and therefore give no indication of a sequence of events, historical or temporal contexts. Also, technological disruptions make digital communication channels vulnerable to rapid disruptive change. The picture may therefore be very different at another time.

4.6 Summary

The study was deductive cross-sectional study and adopted a positivist's philosophy. An online survey using questionnaires was conducted amongst employees who were recipients of organisational change in the past three years in South Africa. The participants were identified from personal networks and professional social media platforms using a non-random snowballing technique. The research took the form of a descriptive quantitative study. Inferential statistics using a combination of parametric and non-parametric tests were used to analyse the data to infer characteristics of a population based on a sample.

CHAPTER 5 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to understand the strategic selection of communication channels that facilitate satisfactory communication to contribute to the “how” processes to enable successful organisational change. Anchored in the rich media theory, the research objectives were to establish which communication channels were used by managers organisational change, which channels are preferred by employees and if use of rich media channels influenced communication satisfaction. In Chapter 3, the research hypothesis was developed based on the literature review in Chapter 2. The design and methodology used to test these hypotheses was presented and justified in Chapter 4. A cross sectional descriptive quantitative design was employed, with the data collected with an online survey using questionnaires. The data was analysed using IBM SPSS 24.

In this chapter the findings are presented. The findings were based on 152 responses after 10 responses were eliminated as they failed to meet the qualifying criteria by indicating that they had not experienced organisational change in the past three years, and as such did not meet the inclusion criteria. In these organisations, there were different type of changes which ranged from change in technology, downsizing, new products or services, change in government policies or regulations and other organisational related changes.

The report starts with the profile of the respondents, followed by the type of the change that the employees experienced, the type of communication used by management as reported by the respondents and the communication channels they would have preferred, and lastly, the relationship between communication channels and the communication satisfaction.

5.2 Demographic information

There were three questions under the demographic section which included the role of the respondent in the organisation, industry of the organisation and the size of the organisation. The profile of the personal characteristics is presented in Table 5. About thirty two percent 32.2% (n= 49) respondents indicated that they were occupying a middle management role followed by senior manager or executive with 24.3% (n= 37), then operative with 17.8% (n= 27). These participants were from various industries, the large number of participants were from financial and insurance activities with 16.4% (n= 25), followed by other activities with 14.5 (n =22) then manufacturing and human health and social work activities with 11.7% (n= 18) each.

The majority of participants, 52,5% (N=85) were from large organisations with more than 1000 employees, followed by 22.4% (N= 36) from organisations with less than 100 employees, then 17.4% (N=29) from organisations with 101 to 500 employees and lastly 8.1% (N=13) from organisations with 501 to 1000 employees.

Table 5 Demographic profile of the participants

Demographic profile		Frequency (n)	Percentage frequency (%)
Your role in the organisation	Senior manager or executive	37	24.3
	Middle management	49	32.2
	Junior or supervisory manager	24	15.8
	Operative	27	17.8
	Other	15	9.9
	Total	152	100.0
Industry of the organisation that underwent change	Financial and insurance activities	25	16.4
	Other service activities	22	14.5
	Human health and social work activities	18	11.8
	Manufacturing	18	11.8
	Education	10	6.6
	Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	7	4.6
	Information and communication	7	4.6
	Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	6	3.9

	Professional, scientific and technical activities	6	3.9
	Other industries	33	21.7
	Total	152	100.0
Size of your organisation (number of employees)	<100	33	21.9
	101-500	25	16.6
	501-1000	11	7.3
	>1000	82	54.3
	Total	151	100.0

5.3 Hypothesis 1: Dominant communication channel

The first hypothesis of the study investigated the dominant communication channels used by organisations, whether they were media rich or poor, and the hypothesis was states as follows:

H1₀: The organisations had no preference for dominant communication channels or used media poor communication channels during organisational change

H1_a: The organisations had preference for media rich communication channels during organisational change

To full investigate this hypothesis two sub-hypotheses were tested.

5.3.1 Hypothesis 1a Dominant communication channels used by organisations

The null hypothesis stated that there were no dominant communication channels used by organisations during organisational change or the channels they used were media poor. The alternate hypothesis stated that the dominant communication channels used by organisations during were media rich (MR).

H1_{0a}: Organisational leaders used no dominant media channels or used poor media during organisational change.

H1_{1a} Organisational leaders used media rich communication channels during organisational change.

The Friedman test was used to investigate the sub-hypothesis, by ranking the dominant communication and the significance of the rank differences (Table 6). The results showed that the most dominant communication channel was email, followed by face-to-face meetings and workshops then posters, newsletter pamphlets. The least used channels were video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing and u-tube. These channels were statistically, different from each other, $X^2(162) = 275.5, p < .05$.

Table 6 Friedman test of dominant communication ranking

Communication	Mean Rank	Median Rank
Emails	5.13	5.00
Face to face meetings/workshops *	4.12	4.00
Posters/newsletters/pamphlets	3.31	3.00
Telephone, voice calls	3.26	2.00
Social media: text messaging, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, WeChat	2.67	1.00

Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube	2.51	1.00
Test Statistics ^a		
N	162	
Chi-Square	275.496	
Df	5	
Asymp. Sig.	0.000	

a. Friedman Test

Furthermore, a Wilcoxon signed rank test for related samples was done to check if there was statistical difference between the related pairs within the communication channels used by organisations. Table 7 summarises the results of the test, with all the pairings being statistically different, except for the following pairs:

- Social media: text messaging, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and WeChat & Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube and
- Posters/ newsletters/pamphlets and telephone/ voice calls.

Table 7 Wilcoxon sign rank test for pair of communication channels

5.3.1.1 Summary sub-hypothesis 1a

The most dominant communication was email which is media poor. The top three channels as reported by the employees are a combination of two media poor (posters and email) and one media rich communication channels. Based on these results, the null hypothesis (H1_{0a}) is not rejected, management has no dominant communication channel, or they use media poor communication during organisational change.

Table 7 Wilcoxon sign rank test for pair of communication channels

Communication channel	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube - Face to face meetings/workshops *	-8.054 ^b	0.000
Telephone, voice calls - Face to face meetings/workshops *	-5.174 ^b	0.000
Emails - Face to face meetings/workshops *	-5.639 ^c	0.000
Social media: text messaging, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, WeChat - Face to face meetings/workshops *	-7.566 ^b	0.000
Posters/newsletters/pamphlets - Face to face meetings/workshops *	-4.834 ^b	0.000
Telephone, voice calls - Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube	-4.575 ^c	0.000
Emails - Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube	-9.818 ^c	0.000
Social media: text messaging, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, WeChat - Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube	-1.310 ^c	0.190
Posters/newsletters/pamphlets - Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube	-4.754 ^c	0.000
Emails - Telephone, voice calls	-8.772 ^c	0.000
Social media: text messaging, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, WeChat - Telephone, voice calls	-3.580 ^b	0.000
Posters/newsletters/pamphlets - Telephone, voice calls	-.416 ^c	0.678
Social media: text messaging, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, WeChat - Emails	-9.477 ^b	0.000
Posters/newsletters/pamphlets - Emails	-8.796 ^b	0.000
Posters/newsletters/pamphlets - Social media: text messaging, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, WeChat	-3.609 ^c	0.000

5.3.2 Hypothesis 1b Channels of communication preferred by employees

The sub-hypothesis 1b, was stated as follows:

H1_{0b}: Employees had preference for rich media communication during organisational change.

H1_{1b}: Employees had no preference for rich media communication during organisational change.

Descriptive statistics on the preferred type of media by the employees (Table 8) show that most of the employees preferred a mixture of media rich and media poor (80.3%), more specifically, face-to-face meeting, emails and telephone. Those who preferred media rich channels constituted of 11.8% (n = 18) and those preferring media poor 7.9% (n = 12).

Table 8 Preferred communication channel by the employees

	Frequency	Percentage
Media poor	12	7.9
Mix	122	80.3
Media rich	18	11.8
Total	152	100.0

MANOVA was employed to analyse hypothesis 1b. The key assumptions of the MANOVA were checked first, which included normality. The data was confirmed as normal based on the guidelines of ± 2 (Kline, 2011). Secondly, the equality of test for the covariance matrices was checked and this assumption was met as both the p-value were higher than $p < 0.001$ (Box's test) (Table 9).

 Table 9 Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices^a

Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices^a	
Box's M	46.182
F	1.319
df1	30
df2	3430.533
Sig.	.115
Tests the null hypothesis that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups.	

a. Design: Intercept+ Media richness

The third assumption is the equality of variance. This was analysed using Leven's test ($p < 0.05$). Table 10 shows that Levine's Test of Equality of Error was upheld for all the factors as the $p > .05$ except for communication climate ($p = .013$).

Table 10 Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

Dimensions	F	df1	df2	Sig.

Superior communication	.293	2	149	.747
Communication climate	4.459	2	149	.013
Media quality	1.168	2	149	.314
Personal feedback	2.698	2	149	.071
Corporate information	1.977	2	149	.142

Due to these results for post hoc test, Bonferroni was used for those that upheld the equality of variance and Tamhane (T^2) for the one that violated this assumption. Table 11 presents the multivariate test results for media richness as a predictor of communication satisfaction. Due to the presence of one of the violation, Pillai's Trace was used and it was found to be significant at 95% confidence ($p < .05$), $F(10, 288) = 1.078$, $p < .05$, Pillai's Trace = 0.071, partial $\eta^2 = .036$.

Table 11 Multivariate test for media richness as a predictor of communication satisfaction

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.876	204.028 ^b	5.000	145.000	.000	.876
	Wilks' Lambda	.124	204.028 ^b	5.000	145.000	.000	.876
	Hotelling's Trace	7.035	204.028 ^b	5.000	145.000	.000	.876
	Roy's Largest Root	7.035	204.028 ^b	5.000	145.000	.000	.876
VAR00034	Pillai's Trace	.071	1.078	10.000	292.000	.379	.036
	Wilks' Lambda	.929	1.085 ^b	10.000	290.000	.374	.036
	Hotelling's Trace	.076	1.091	10.000	288.000	.369	.036
	Roy's Largest Root	.069	2.019 ^c	5.000	146.000	.079	.065

a. Design: Intercept + VAR00034

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Despite this significance, the post hoc test using Bonferroni and Tamhane method for relevant dimensions showed no significant difference between all the pairs (media rich, media poor and mix). It can thus be concluded that type of media preferred by the employees do predict the communication satisfaction. Although this is the case, there is no distinction with post hoc test, and thus the null hypothesis was rejected, and alternative hypothesis was not rejected; "employees had no preference for rich media communication during organisational change organisational change.

5.3.2.1 Summary hypothesis 1b

Employees did not have preference for rich media channels for communication during organisational change. The descriptive statistics demonstrated a high preference for mixed communication channels, 80.3%, N=122.

5.3.3 Conclusion Hypothesis 1

Employees had no preference for either media rich or media poor channels of communications during organisational change. Descriptive analysis showed that the majority preferred a mixture of media rich and media poor channels. Management had no dominant communication channel, or they use media poor communication during organisational change.

5.4 Hypothesis 2 Level of communication satisfaction

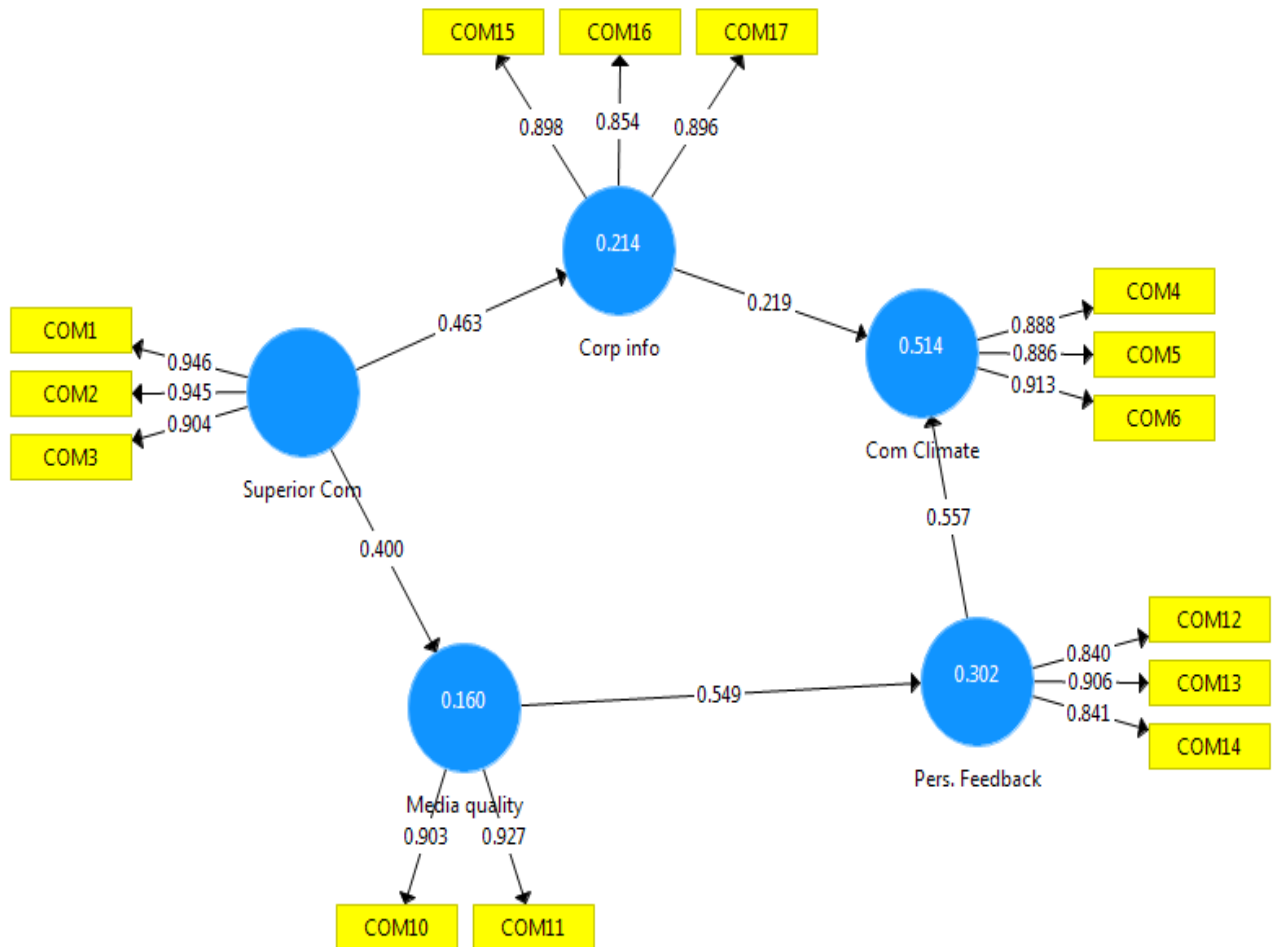
The level of communication satisfaction in this study was investigated with the following hypothesis:

H2₀: There was no communication satisfaction during organisational change.

H2₁: There was communication satisfaction during organisational change

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was done to conduct convergent, discriminant and reliability on the existing instrument by Downs and Hazen (1977). The CFA analysis with PLS-SEM, with all of them having very good loadings (>0.7), (Figure 3). As discussed in chapter four, there were five dimensions of communication that were assessed. The hypotheses were therefore subdivided into five parts.

Figure 3 CFA for communication channels using PLS-SEM



5.4.1 Hypothesis 2a

H2a₀: There was no communication satisfaction with superior communication during organisational change.

H2a₁: There was communication satisfaction with superior communication during organisational change.

5.4.2 Hypothesis 2b

H2b₀: There was no communication satisfaction with communication climate during organisational change.

H2b₁: There was communication satisfaction with communication climate during organisational change.

5.4.3 Hypothesis 2c

H2c₀: There was no communication satisfaction with media quality during organisational change.

H2c₁: There was communication satisfaction with media quality during organisational change

5.4.4 Hypothesis 2d

H2d₀: There was no communication satisfaction with corporate information during organisational change.

H2d₁: There was communication satisfaction with corporate information during organisational change

5.4.4 Hypothesis 2e

H2e₀: There was no communication satisfaction with personal feedback during organisational change.

H2e₁: There was communication satisfaction with personal feedback during organisational change

Hypothesis 2 was tested to understand whether the overall satisfaction is significantly low or high. A one sample t-test was used to test if there was statistical difference between the hypothesised mean (μ) of '3' and observed mean (m) for each dimension. The results in Table 12 showed that four out of five dimensions were statistically significant from the hypothesised mean. If the mean of the dimension is higher than and is statistically different ($p < .05$) from the hypothesized mean of '3', there is communication satisfaction with the dimension.

5.4.5 Results of hypothesis 2

Table 12 presents the one sample t-test form communication satisfaction levels for the five dimensions

Table 12 One sample t-test for communication levels

	Test Value = 3							
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Std Dev	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Supercom	5.827	151	.000	3.52	1.109	.52412	.3464	.7018
Communication climate	.590	151	.556	3.05	1.054	.05044	-.1185	.2193
Media quality	2.058	151	.041	3.17	1.005	.16776	.0067	.3288
Personal feedback	2.119	151	.036	3.17	0.995	.17105	.0116	.3305
Corporate information	8.135	151	.000	3.62	.950	.62719	.4749	.7795

The corporate information had a mean = 3.62 (SD = 0.950), was statistically different from the hypothesised mean of '3', $t(151) = 8.135$, $p < .05$. The null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis could not be rejected, there was communication satisfaction with corporate information communication

Superior communication had a mean of 3.52 and significantly different from hypothesised mean of '3', $t(151) = 5.827$, $p < .05$. The null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis could not be rejected, there was communication satisfaction with superior communication

Communication climate had a mean = 3.05 (SD = 1.054). The mean was not statistically different from the hypothesised mean of '3', $t(151) = .590$, $p > .05$. The null hypothesis was not rejected. The alternate hypothesis was rejected, there was no communication satisfaction with communication climate.

Corporate information communication had a mean of 3.62 (SD = .950) significantly different from hypothesised mean of '3', $t(151) = 8.135$, $p < .05$. The null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis could not be rejected, there was communication satisfaction with corporate information communication

Personal feedback communication had a mean of 3.17 (SD =.995) significantly different from hypothesised mean of '3', $t(151) = 2.119$, $p < .05$. The null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis could not be rejected, there was communication satisfaction with personal feedback communication

5.4.6 Summary hypothesis 2

There was communication will four dimensions (superior communication, communication climate, media quality and corporate information) except for It was concluded that there was no satisfaction with communication climate as the difference from the mean was not statistically different.

5.5 Hypothesis 3-influence of media richness on communication satisfaction

The aim of hypothesis 3 was to establish whether the independent variables communication channels influence on communication satisfaction. The hypothesis stated:

H3₀: The use of rich media channels does not influence communication satisfaction during organisational change.

H3₁: The use of rich media channels does influence communication satisfaction during organisational change

5.5.1 Influence of media rich communication channel on communication satisfaction

A Pearson correlation was performed to investigate the relationship for significance, direction and strength (Table 13). Overall face to face meeting and video conferencing were positively correlated with communication satisfaction with weak to medium strength relationships with the different dimensions. The strength of the correlation was based on the guidelines of Palant (2010). ($r = 0 - 0.09$: no relationship, $r = 0.10 - 0.29$: weak relationship, $r = 0.30 - 0.49$: medium relationship, $r \geq 0.50$). There was no correlation between telephone, $r(152) = 0.098$, $p = 0.230$ and communication satisfaction.

Table 13 Correlation between rich media channels and communication satisfaction

		Face-to-face meeting / Workshop	Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u- tube	Telephone, voice calls
Corp_Info	Pearson Correlation	.223**	.215**	0,098
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,006	0,008	0,230
	N	152	152	152
Super_Com	Pearson Correlation	.390**	.263**	.250**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,001	0,002
	N	152	152	152
Com_climate	Pearson Correlation	.385**	.302**	.195*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,000	0,016
	N	152	152	152
Med_quality	Pearson Correlation	.259**	.183*	0,095
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,001	0,024	0,244
	N	152	152	152
Pers_feedback	Pearson Correlation	.325**	.217**	.222**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,007	0,006
	N	152	152	152

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

As there was a significant relationship between the rich media channels (face to face meeting) and employee communication satisfaction, a linear regression was performed to understand the variance explained by this relationship (Table 14). The model summary model shows a R-square of 0.189 and an adjusted R-square of 0.161. Specifically, the results ($R^2 = .189$; $p < .01$) suggests that superior communication (Super_Com: $\beta = 0.335$, $p = 0.016$) and Communication climate (Com_climate: $\beta = 0.327$, $p = 0.040$) increase employee communication satisfaction by 18.9%. There was no increase from the Corp_Info, Med_quality and Pers_feedback as their p-values were not significant ($\beta = -0.029$, $p = .838$), ($\beta = 0.011$, $p = .940$), ($\beta = -0.078$, $p = .668$), respectively. Based on the results, it can be concluded that rich media channel (face-to-face) is critical to improve employee communication climate.

Table 14 A linear regression on face-to-face communication channel with employee satisfaction level

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.435 ^a	0.189	0.161	1.20836		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Pers_feedback, Med_quality, Corp_Info, Super_Com, Com_climate						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.455	0.431		3.372	0.001
	Corp_Info	-0.029	0.141	-0.021	-0.205	0.838
	Super_Com	0.335	0.138	0.282	2.432	0.016
	Com_climate	0.327	0.157	0.261	2.076	0.040
	Med_quality	0.011	0.144	0.008	0.075	0.940
	Pers_feedback	-0.078	0.181	-0.059	-0.43	0.668
a. Dependent Variable: Face to face meetings/workshops *						

Another rich media communication channel that was significant with employee communication satisfaction was Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube. A linear regression was performance and depicted in Table 15. A linear regression shows, R-square of 0.110 with adjusted R-square of 0.080. This means that 11.0% of communication is done through video conferencing shown by Communication climate (Com_climate: $\beta = 0.302$, $p = 0.037$ will improve employee communication satisfaction. There was no relationship between the video conferencing and other communication dimensions (Corp_Info, Super_com, Med_quality and Pers_feedback) as their p-values were greater than .05.

Table 15 A linear regression on face-to-face communication channel with employee satisfaction level

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.332 ^a	0.11	0.08	1.10428		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Pers_feedback, Med_quality, Corp_Info, Super_Com, Com_climate						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.061	5	4.412	3.618	.004 ^b
	Residual	178.038	146	1.219		
	Total	200.099	151			
a. Dependent Variable: Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Pers_feedback, Med_quality, Corp_Info, Super_Com, Com_climate						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.586	0.394		1.488	0.139
	Corp_Info	0.117	0.129	0.096	0.903	0.368
	Super_Com	0.182	0.126	0.175	1.442	0.152
	Com_climate	0.302	0.144	0.276	2.1	0.037
	Med_quality	-0.071	0.132	-0.062	-0.542	0.589
	Pers_feedback	-0.152	0.165	-0.132	-0.923	0.357
a. Dependent Variable: Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube						

A linear regression analysis was conducted for telephone communication channel and the five communication dimensions which were not significant (Table 16). The ANOVA showed no significant relationship, and this lack of relationship is also evident in model of coefficients.

Table 16 A linear regression on face-to-face communication channel with employee satisfaction level

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.252	5	4.85	2.257	.052 ^b
	Residual	313.742	146	2.149		
	Total	337.993	151			
a. Dependent Variable: Telephone, voice calls						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Pers_feedback, Med_quality, Corp_Info, Super_Com, Com_climate						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.45	0.523		2.77	0.006
	Corp_Info	-0.099	0.172	-0.063	-0.578	0.564
	Super_Com	0.225	0.167	0.167	1.343	0.181
	Com_climate	0.153	0.191	0.107	0.799	0.425
	Med_quality	-0.095	0.175	-0.064	-0.543	0.588
	Pers_feedback	0.145	0.219	0.096	0.662	0.509
a. Dependent Variable: Telephone, voice calls						

5.5.2 Influence of media poor communication channels on communication satisfaction

A Pearson correlation was performed to investigate the relationship for significance, direction and strength (Table 17). Email had the best correlations with communication satisfaction showing positive correlations with all communication dimensions, with the medium strength relationship with corporate information, $r(152) = 0.316$, $p < .01$. Social media had the lowest correlation, with only weak correlation with communication satisfaction dimension, communication climate, $r(152) = 0.210$, $p < .01$ and superior communication, $r(152) = 0.187$, $p < .05$, with the rest not being significant. Posters all shows weak relationship with weak relationship with all the communication satisfaction dimensions.

Table 17 Correlation between media poor channels and communication satisfaction

		Emails	Social media: text messaging, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, WeChat	Posters/ newsletters/pamphlets
Emails	Pearson Correlation	1	1	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	152	152	152
Corp_Info	Pearson Correlation	.316**	0,016	.247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,840	0,002
	N	152	152	152
Super_Com	Pearson Correlation	.280**	.187*	.211**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,021	0,009
	N	152	152	152
Com_climate	Pearson Correlation	.214**	.210**	.186*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,008	0,009	0,022
	N	152	152	152
Med_quality	Pearson Correlation	.252**	0,062	.190*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,002	0,445	0,019
	N	152	152	152
Pers_feedback	Pearson Correlation	.294**	0,129	.181*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,115	0,025
	N	152	152	152

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

A linear regression analysis was conducted for email communication and the results are presented in Table 18. The model summary model shows a R-square of 0.134 and an adjusted R-square of 0.105. Specifically, the results ($R^2 = .134$; $p < .01$) suggest that such communication will in 13.4% there was no relationship between the communication dimensions and email channels.

Table 18 Linear regression between media poor channels (email) and communication satisfaction

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.367 ^a	0.134	0.105	1.13708		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Pers_feedback, Med_quality, Corp_Info, Super_Com, Com_climate						
ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.327	5	5.865	4.536	.001 ^b
	Residual	188.772	146	1.293		
	Total	218.099	151			
a. Dependent Variable: Emails b. Predictors: (Constant), Pers_feedback, Med_quality, Corp_Info, Super_Com, Com_climate						
Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.292	0.406		5.646	0
	Corp_Info	0.257	0.133	0.203	1.932	0.055
	Super_Com	0.19	0.13	0.175	1.461	0.146
	Com_climate	-0.165	0.148	-0.144	-1.112	0.268
	Med_quality	0.161	0.136	0.135	1.191	0.236
	Pers_feedback	0.074	0.17	0.062	0.438	0.662
a. Dependent Variable: Emails						

A linear regression analysis was conducted for social media and the communication dimensions and the results are presented in Table 19 . The model summary model shows a R-square of 0.076 and an adjusted R-square of 0.044. Specifically, the results ($R^2 = .076$; $p = 0.040$) suggest that such social media will in 7.6% increase in communication climate.

Table 19 Linear regression between media poor channels (social media) and communication satisfaction

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.276 ^a	0.076	0.044	1.28994		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Pers_feedback, Med_quality, Corp_Info, Super_Com, Com_climate						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.006	5	4.001	2.405	.040 ^b
	Residual	242.935	146	1.664		
	Total	262.941	151			
a. Dependent Variable: Social media: text messaging, whatsapp, facebook, twitter, instagram, pinterest, wechat						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Pers_feedback, Med_quality, Corp_Info, Super_Com, Com_climate						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.569	0.46		3.408	0.001
	Corp_Info	-0.179	0.151	-0.129	-1.188	0.237
	Super_Com	0.166	0.147	0.139	1.125	0.262
	Com_climate	0.39	0.168	0.311	2.32	0.022
	Med_quality	-0.145	0.154	-0.111	-0.944	0.347
	Pers_feedback	-0.067	0.193	-0.05	-0.345	0.73
a. Dependent Variable: Social media: text messaging, whatsapp, facebook, twitter, instagram, pinterest, wechat						

The model summary model shows a R-square of 0.079 and an adjusted R-square of 0.048. Specifically, the results ($R^2 = .079$; $p = 0.032$). The dimensions had no significant difference. The Corp_Info, Super_com, Com_climate, Med_quality and Pers_feedback as their p-values were not significant ($\beta = 0.301$, $p = .0069$), ($\beta = 0.237$, $p = .142$), ($\beta = -0.016$, $p = .932$), ($\beta = 0.107$, $p = .523$), ($\beta = -0.163$, $p = .439$), respectively (Table 20).

Table 20 Linear regression between media poor channels (posters) and communication satisfaction

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.282 ^a	0.079	0.048	1.40574		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Pers_feedback, Med_quality, Corp_Info, Super_Com, Com_climate						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.833	5	4.967	2.513	.032 ^b
	Residual	288.509	146	1.976		
	Total	313.342	151			
a. Dependent Variable: Posters/newsletters/pamphlets b. Predictors: (Constant), Pers_feedback, Med_quality, Corp_Info, Super_Com, Com_climate						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.863	0.502		1.72	0.088
	Corp_Info	0.301	0.165	0.199	1.83	0.069
	Super_Com	0.237	0.16	0.182	1.476	0.142
	Com_climate	-0.016	0.183	-0.011	-0.086	0.932
	Med_quality	0.107	0.168	0.075	0.641	0.523
	Pers_feedback	-0.163	0.21	-0.113	-0.776	0.439
a. Dependent Variable: Posters/newsletters/pamphlets						

5.5.3 Summary hypothesis 3

The Null hypothesis was rejected. Amongst the rich media channels, face to face and video conferencing significantly positively correlated with communication satisfaction with a weak to medium strength relationship. There was however, an unexpected finding. Amongst the poor media channels, email communication had positive correlation with all the dimensions of communication satisfaction with weak to medium strength relationships. Looking at the linear regression, it was evident that face to face and video conferencing which are rich media channels are predictors of employee communication satisfaction, especially communication climate. However, the telephone was not found as a predictor of employee communication satisfaction. With the media poor communication, email, was found to predict more than social media and posters. In spite of the significance, they were not communication satisfaction dimension specific.

5.5.4 Conclusion of results

The purpose of the study was to develop a frame work for strategic selection of communication channels that facilitate satisfactory communication to contribute to the “how” processes to enable successful organisational change. Anchored in the rich media theory, the research objectives were to establish which communication channels were used by managers organisational change, which channels are preferred by employees and if use of rich media channels influenced communication satisfaction. Inferential statistics using a combination of parametric and non-parametric tests were used to analyse the data to infer characteristics of a population based on a sample.

The results showed that there was no preference or either rich or poor media channels by organisational leaders and employees during organisational change. There was preference for a mixture of channels by both. There was communication satisfaction with only four out of five dimensions of communication satisfaction (superior communication, corporate information, personal feedback and media quality). The findings for communication climate were not significant.

Rich media channels (face to face, telephone and emails) had a positive correlation with communication satisfaction. channels were positively predictive of communication satisfaction. There was however, an unexpected finding. Email communication had a positive correlation with all the dimensions of communication satisfaction with weak to medium strength relationships.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to understand the strategic selection of communication channels that facilitate satisfactory communication to contribute to the “how” processes that enable successful organisational change. Anchored in the rich media theory, the research objectives were to establish which communication channels were used by managers organisational change, which channels are preferred by employees and if use of rich media channels influenced communication satisfaction. According to the rich media theory for satisfactory communication during uncertain times such as during organisational change, rich media channels must be utilised. The literature review revealed that employees preferred rich media channels during organisational change, while managers preferred to use emails. The study focuses on employees of organisations that underwent change from 2015 to 2017 in South Africa across all sectors. The study design adopted was a descriptive quantitative cross-sectional survey. Data was collected from a snowballed non-random sample using questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and a mixture of parametric non-parametric statistical analyses were performed to obtain the results. This chapter reviews credibility of the findings in chapter 5 and later discusses the results in relation to the literature review, research objective and the hypothesis.

6.2 Credibility of findings

Credibility of the results depends on the sample size and validity as well as the correct design, data collection methods and data analysis.

6.2.1 Sample size and relevance

The sample was formed by professional employees of organisations that underwent organizational change in the past three years in South Africa across all industries. The country, or nationality is not a variable tested in the study. The study was conducted in South Africa for convenience of access to participants. Because there was no sampling frame a non-random snowball technique was employed. According to Saunders and Lewis (2014), the non-random sampling technique can compromise the generalisability of the study. However, there was good representation of all industry

sectors and organisation size as presented in chapter five. Coverage of different roles of participants in their organisation was also satisfactory in the results.

Although, the population was unknown, it was expected to be more than 5000. Based on the guidelines by Leedy and Ormrod (2014), when the population is more than 5000, the sample becomes irrelevant, and a sample of about 400 is adequate. In this study, a sample of 400 was targeted. With the snowball sampling technique, the rate of responses cannot be tightly controlled (Goodman, 1961, 2011). A target of 400 was set by opening the network platform which was opened for a short period of time in October 2017 closed with 162 responses.

There was a qualifying question at beginning of the questionnaire to ensure relevance of the sample. Only ten participants out of 162 participants were excluded as they indicated they had not experienced organisational change. A targeted sampling technique was used to maintain control over who receives the initial invitation and the resulting sample in terms of size appropriateness for the study. The entry participants were identified and recruited using personal network contacts and the virtual electronic LinkedIn social media platform for professionals as detailed above. The LinkedIn platform is cross-industry professional network that connects professionals in various fields and, therefore, provides greater ability to target data collection to an appropriate social network.

The sample however may only be representative of the group target by the LinkedIn platform. This may cause bias in the choice of communication channels as this group is in the space of emails. The digital divide also excluded all potential participants who were not in the social media platforms used (email, LinkedIn and WhatsApp).

6.2.2 Research design, data collection and analysis

The standardised questionnaire served to eliminate bias by posing the same questions in the same way to all participants Lewis & Saunders (2014). As Rowley (2014) and Lewis and Saunders (2012) recommended, to ensure content validity the questions were adapted from similar previous studies. The study tested similar constructs to those tested in the previous studies (Stephens, Barrett & Mahometa, 2013 and Men, 2014). The questionnaire was tested and modified as per experiences and inputs of participants before the formal survey. Analysis ensured that missing data, outliers to ensure suitability of the data and normality is conducted

to select correct statistics to employ. Multivariate statistics utilised had all the assumptions met, where violated correct selection of the method of reporting was followed in the results.

6.3 Hypothesis1: Dominant communication channel

The first hypothesis of the study established whether there are dominant communications that were used during organisational change and whether these channels were media rich or media poor.

The first part of the hypothesis stated that there were no dominant channels or organisations used media poor communication channels during organisational change. The alternative hypothesis stated that organisations used media rich communication channels during organisational change.

Based on the results presented in chapter five, the first null hypothesis could not be rejected. The alternative hypothesis (H1a) was rejected. The results indicated that the communication channels used by organisations during organisational change were media poor or there was no dominant pattern. The top three communication channels used most frequently by organisations for communication of organisational change were found be to email, followed by face to face communication and lastly posters. According to the rich media theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984, 1986), only one channel was media rich (face to face), the other two channels (email and posters) were media poor.

These findings were not surprising as other scholars have found that most managers used email to communicate during uncertain situations (Markus,1994). The findings were in keeping with those of Men (2014) who also found that managers used emails most frequently, followed by addressed memos and face to face communication.

The second part of the first null hypothesis stated that employees had no preference for media poor or media rich communication channels during organisational change. The alternate hypothesis states that employees had preference for media rich channels during organisational change. The results showed that there was no

dominant preference for the rich media channels or poor media channels. Most of the employees 80.3% preferred a mixture of media rich and media poor.

These results were not expected as the literature indicated that employees preferred rich media communication channels, mainly face to face communication during organisational change. Braun (2015) also found that employees perceived face-to-face communication to be of higher quality than telephone and email communication, and they indicated a preference for more face-to-face communication with their supervisors than they actually had. Turnage and Goodboy (2016) found that communicating employees preferred communicating their opinions in person to a supervisor, instead of sending an e-mail.

The rich media theory does not explain the high use of email by organisations and surprisingly in this study by employees. Muhamedi and Ariffin (2017) came to the same conclusion. Emails can facilitate feedback, however not as instantly as with face to face communication as it depends on when the recipient of the message decides to respond. Body language cannot be observed with emails. However, Walther (1992) argued that there may be a few cues (tone of email, use of illustrations like diagrams numerical and pictures) in the email and personalized customization can be added.

Perhaps other attributes of emails that are not explained by the rich media theory should be examined. There are multiple lucrative benefits of email that could explain the phenomenon. Most employees regard communication with email as a formal method communication, contents are regarded as official (Sisko Maarit Lipiäinen, Ensio Karjaluoto, & Nevalainen, 2014). Formality is important for credibility and validity of information communicated during organisational change.

In addition to transferring information, emails serve as information storage and memory with easy access reference and use when required (Elving, 2005, and Tahri, 2017). There is no influence of position geographically, spatially and organisationally (Hall, Lecuona, & Cummings, 2017, Sproul and Kiesler 1987). Emails can reach critical mass of users and acknowledges time constraints, allowing desired delays in response (van den Hooff, Groot & de Jonge, 2005). The information transferred by

email is symmetrical (Sproul and Kiesler 1987). These attributes may be more appealing to both managers and employees.

The unexpected findings were those of employee preference of a mixture of rich and poor media channels rather than rich media channels as per findings of the literature review. This could be related to the attributes of email cited above. The non-random snowballed sample may have been biased in the use of email. All participants participated in the online survey. They received the link via email or WhatsApp. This may suggest comfortability and with the channel. The digital divide also excluded the participants who did not have access or were uncomfortable with email. The findings may therefore be applicable to communities similar to the sample, but may not be generalizable to other communities. A study conducted in a more representative sample will be of value. random more. Limited availability and access of video calls and conferencing in organisations may have been a limiting factor in the participant's choices.

6.4 Hypothesis 2: Level of communication satisfaction

The null hypothesis stated that there was no communication satisfaction with the communication channels used by organisations during change. The alternate hypothesis states that there was communication satisfaction with the communication channels used by organisations during organisational change. Each dimension of communication was tested as a sub hypothesis. Kandlousi and Abdollahi (2010) defined communication satisfaction as the level of satisfaction an employee has between the overall communication flow and relationship variables within their organization. It is multidimensional concept where employees can express varying degrees of satisfaction about various types of communication. (Meintjes & Steyn, 2006). Communication satisfaction is important during organisational change as it reduces anxiety and resistance to change (Barret, 2017; Tanner and Otto, 2016), optimizes engagement and performance. It also opens employees to learning

Downs and Hazen (1977) instrument was employed, using six sections. CFA resulted in five dimensions, with co-worker communication, eliminated due to lack of discriminant validity. Of the five set dimensions that were relevant to change there was satisfaction with only four dimensions; superior communication, media quality, personal feedback and corporate information. Satisfaction with communication climate could not be assessed as the mean was

not statistically different from the hypothesised mean of '3' of the communication climate cannot be overlooked during organisational change.

Overall there was satisfaction with communication. This may be due to the fact that organisations used email and face to face, while employees also preferred a mixture of rich media and media poor channels, the main channels being face to face and email. Mitić, Nikolić, Jankov, Vukonjanski and Terek (2017) had similar findings with the use of electronic channels having a strong correlation with all dimensions of communication satisfaction. Men (2014) also demonstrated that the use of face-to-face communication was positively associated with employee communication satisfaction

The satisfaction with supervisor communication and personal feedback require a feedback loop in the communication process, which is enabled by both email and face to face communication. Tanner and Otto (2016) suggest that practitioners should focus on supervisor communication processes during organisational change to reduce employee resistance. Satisfaction with media quality can be attributed to the rich media channel (face to face) in the preferred mix. Face to face communication has all the attributes of the rich media channel that help reduce uncertainty (feedback, multiple cues, natural language style and nonverbal aspects).

Satisfaction with corporate information was not surprising as the top three channels preferred by organisations were a mixture of two media poor and one media rich channel. In practice the rich media theory suggested that organisational leaders should match the level of uncertainty and equivocality in a situation with the richness of a channel. The media poor channels such as email and posters and news letters were to be used to communicate unequivocal messages such as organisational policies and goals. These findings resonate with those of Barret (2017) who found that information seeking and by inference access to information during organisational change reduces resistance to change.

6.5 Hypothesis 3: Influence of media richness communication of communication satisfaction

The null hypothesis stated that the use of media rich channels did not influence communication satisfaction during organisational change. The alternate hypothesis stated that the use of media rich channels did influence communication satisfaction during organisational change.

The Null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis could not be rejected. The use of media rich channels did influence communication satisfaction during organisational change. Face to face communication and video conferencing positively correlated with all communication satisfaction dimensions with a weak to medium strength relationship. Telephone communication positively correlated with only three out of the five communication satisfaction dimensions which is not surprising, considering its position in the rich media spectrum (Daft & Lengel, 1984, 1986).

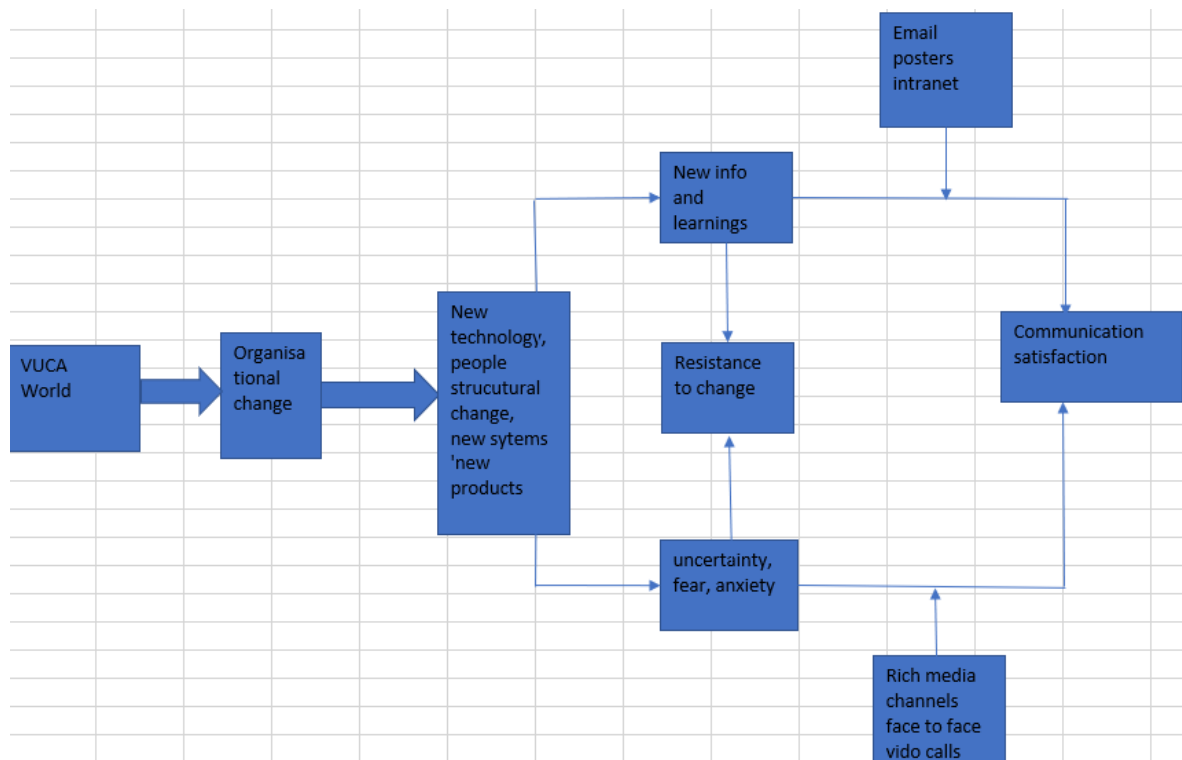
Surprisingly, email communication had a positive correlation with communication satisfaction, with a weak to medium strength relationship. From the empirical findings this is not surprising as both the organisations and employees showed preference for the channel during organisational change. However, from literature review this was not expected as employees articulated that they preferred face to face communication (Braun, 2015, Turnage & Goodboy, 2016 and Men 2015) found that communicating employees preferred communicating their opinions. An alternative explanation could be the nature of the sample or other attributes of emails as elaborated in the discussion of the first hypothesis.

6.6 Proposed guidelines for strategic selection of communication channels

Organisational change can be facilitated through technical and technological change, physical change, organisational change or personal change (Kovač, 2017). The novelty and uncertainty brought about by these changes elicits anxiety and fear that can result in resistance to change. Communication serves to impart information and knowledge to reduce the fear and uncertainty by addressing the concerns of employees and by providing information. The channels used must have capacity to facilitate both issues.

Elving (2005) found that communication facilitates readiness for change, thus reducing uncertainty. This was supported by Chain (2011) who found that communication is useful in sharing the vision of the organisation, ensuring clarity of objectives, thus minimising uncertainty. Johanson and Heide (2008), Matos Marques Simoes and Esposito (2014) and Christensen (2014) emphasized the importance of communication in overcoming resistance to change. According to Nelissen and van Selm (2008) employees who were satisfied with the management communication had a positive state of mind on the organizational change. Mishra, Boynton and Mishra (2014) established internal communication as key driver of employee engagement.

Figure 4 Framework for the portfolio of communication channels during organisational change



Rich communication channels such as face to face communication reduce uncertainty and anxiety. While email communication is media poor according to the rich media theory, it has the advantage of for dissemination of information. It is this synergy that facilitate satisfactory communication (Figure 4).

6.6 Summary

Both the organisational leaders and employees preferred a mixture of rich and poor media channels during organisational change. There was communication satisfaction during organisational change. Rich media channels (face to face and video call/conferencing) had a positive correlation with communication satisfaction. Contrary to the rich media channel ranking, emails had a positive correlation with communication satisfaction with weak to medium relationship strength. The next chapter will conclude the study with recommendations.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

In the VUCA world, organisations need to constantly change and adapt to keep their competitive edge. The high organisational failure rate (more than 50%) calls for urgent intervention in organisational change management (Cândido & Santos, 2015; Hughes, 2011; Kotter, 1995). A key ingredient for successful organisational change is communication (Kotter, 1995). The reality of the VUCA world is that digitisation is shaping the world (Vey, Fandel-Meyer, Zipp & Schneider 2017) and the field of communication is not immune to technological disruptions.

Proliferation and adoption of digital communication channels has left the choice of communication channels to convenience rather than the attributes of the channel to facilitate communication successfully. Information travelling in the wrong channel has slim chances of reaching the correct recipient, let alone the facilitation of satisfactory communication.

The purpose of the study was to develop a framework for strategic selection of communication channels that facilitate satisfactory communication to contribute to the “how” processes that enable successful organisational change. Anchored in the rich media theory, the research objectives were to establish which communication channels were used by organisations during change, which channels are preferred by employees and if the use of rich media channels influenced communication satisfaction.

7.2 Key findings

The preference of email communication by organisations was expected and in keeping with the findings of Markus (1994) and Men (2014). The preference for mixed media channels (face to face and email) by employees contradicted Braun (2015), Turnage & Goodboy (2016) and Muhamedi and Ariffin (2017) who found that employees preferred rich communication channels such as face to face during uncertain times.

Rich media channels (face to face and video call/conferencing) had a positive correlation with communication satisfaction. An unexpected finding was the strong correlation between email communication and communication satisfaction. Email communication was classified poor media channel according to the rich media theory. The findings of this study resonated with the work of Lee (1994); Ngwenyama and Lee (1997); Sevinc and D'Ambra (2004) and Vey, Fandel-Meyer, Zipp and Schneider (2017). The quest for these scholars was to find an alternative tool to measure and demonstrate the richness of email communication.

The impact of the limitations of the study stemming from limited researcher experience and the study design on the credibility of the findings is acknowledged. However, the rising use of email by organisations in the literature together with empirical evidence of a correlation of email use with satisfactory communication in this study, give some credibility to the findings.

The preference of mixed media communication channels by both the leaders and their employees and the strong correlation between use of both email and face to face communication affirm the concept of multichannel communication (Bolton, Murray & Fluker, 2017; Isaac, Kalika & Charki, 2008; Reinsch, Turner & Tinsley, 2008). The concept was reinforced by Togatama and Wljaya (2012) whose qualitative study found that the richness of information is built by more than one communication channel.

7.3 Recommendation to practitioners

As Reinsch, Turner and Tinsley (2008) suggested, managers would do well by integrating the communication channels to harness the resultant synergistic benefits, instead of layering the communication channels and using a single theory to select the channels. The role of communication during organisational change is to exchange information and to reduce anxiety. The communication medium must have adequate capacity for the function. According to Togatama and Wljaya (2012) the richness of information is built by more than one communication channel. From the findings of this study (communication satisfaction with use of both email and face to face

communication) and literature support for multichannel communication, a framework for the portfolio of communication channels is proposed for communication during organisational change (Figure 4).

7.4 Recommendation for South Africa

There was a lack of employee communication satisfaction with the communication climate. Despite this the rich media channels (face to face and video conferences) had a predictive value on employee communication satisfaction, especially with communication climate. The study revealed that there was high email usage by management in communicating change. This may suggest a lack of satisfaction and the dimension, and as such management would do well to employ rich communication channels to improve satisfaction with communication climate.

7.4 Recommendations for academia

The findings of the study may be true for the sample selected. However, generalisability may be limited by the study design. The survey was online using a link sent by email. The preference of email may be biased as the sample was e mail savvy and had access. The findings need to be tested in more random diverse communities to improve generalisability.

The empirical evidence for preference of mixed media channels demonstrated in this study needs further in depth exploratory and explanatory qualitative studies to improve the craft of the framework for the selection of the portfolio of communication channels during organisational change.

The proposed framework for the portfolio of communication channels during organisational change portfolio also needs to be vigorously tested with random diverse samples.

7.5 Conclusion

Organisational change should be the norm for businesses to survive. Key to successful organisational change is communication, which is not immune to the disruptions of the VUCA world. As communication channels evolve with technology, the purpose of communication and main issues to be addressed during organisational change must be kept in mind.

The purpose of the study was to develop a framework for strategic selection of communication channels that facilitate satisfactory communication to contribute to the “how” processes to enable successful organisational change. Anchored in the rich media theory, the research objectives were to establish which communication channels were used by managers organisational change, which channels are preferred by employees and if use of rich media channels influenced communication satisfaction.

The study met the objectives. Both the organisational leaders and employees preferred a mixture of rich and poor media channels during organisational change. There was communication satisfaction during organisational change. Rich media channels (face to face and video call/conferencing) had a positive correlation with communication satisfaction. Contrary to the rich media channel ranking, emails had a positive correlation with communication satisfaction with weak to medium relationship strength. A framework for the portfolio of communication channels during organisational change portfolio was proposed.

For practitioners, the communication channels must be selected with caution to ensure that key issues (uncertainty, successful transfer of information) are addressed adequately to facilitate successful communication that facilitates successful organisational change. When collaborating with communication information and technology developers for their communication systems these issues should be highlighted.

For the academic community, there is more research to be done as communication channels evolve with technology to ensure that the portfolio of channels used during organisational change addresses key issues of organisational change.

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Appendix 1. Industries in South Africa (Statistics South Africa , 2013)

The individual categories of SIC have been aggregated into the following 21 sections.

Section Division Description

A 01-03 Agriculture, forestry and fishing

B 05-09 Mining and quarrying

C 10-33 Manufacturing

D 35 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply

E 36-39 Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities

F 41-43 Construction

G 45-47 Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles

H 49-53 Transportation and storage

I 55-56 Accommodation and food service activities

J 58-63 Information and communication

K 64-66 Financial and insurance activities

L 68 Real estate activities

M 69-75 Professional, scientific and technical activities

N 77-82 Administrative and support service activities

O 84 Public administration and defence; compulsory social security

P 85 Education

Q 86-88 Human health and social work activities

R 90-93 Arts, entertainment and recreation

S 94-96 Other service activities

T 97-98 Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for

own use

U 99 Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies, not economically active
people, unemployed people etc.

Appendix 2. The questionnaire

11/05/2017

Strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change

Strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change

Dear colleague

I am conducting a study on strategic selection of communication channels used by management specifically during organisational change. This will help organisations communicate effectively, thus facilitating successful organisational change. Please assist by filling in the attached questionnaire. This should take no more than 30 minutes of your time. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. Participant confidentiality will be maintained and data will be kept and reported anonymously. By completing the survey, you indicate that you voluntarily participate in this research. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our contact details are provided below.

Supervisor Mr Anthony Wilson-Prangley prangleya@gibs.co.za

Researcher Ms Zuzile Zikalala 16392800@mygibs.co.za or
zuzilezikalala@yahoo.com

* Required

Qualifying Section

1. In the past three years have you experienced organisational change? *

Mark only one oval.

- No
 Yes

2. In the past three years, which of the following organisational changes did you experience? *

Check all that apply.

- Change in technology
 Merger
 Change in organisational structure
 Downsizing
 New systems
 New products or services
 Acquisition
 Change in government policies or regulations
 People changes such as change in management
 Change in remuneration policies
 Other: _____

Demographics

3. Your role in the organisation *

Check all that apply:

- Senior manager or executive
- Middle management
- Junior or supervisory manager
- Operative
- Other: _____

4. Please select the industry of the organisation that underwent change *

Check all that apply:

- Education
- Construction
- Human health and social work activities
- Professional, scientific and technical activities
- Transportation and storage
- Manufacturing
- Mining and quarrying
- Information and communication
- Administrative and support service activities
- Other service activities
- Real estate activities
- Accommodation and food service activities
- Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
- Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
- Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities
- Arts, entertainment and recreation
- Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Financial and insurance activities

5. Size of your organisation (number of employees) *

Check all that apply:

- <100
- 101-500
- 501-1000
- >1000

Untitled Section

Please rank the frequency of use of the listed communication channels by your management team during change in your organisation

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Strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change

6. Face to face meetings/workshops *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Least used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Most frequently used

7. Video calls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Least used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Most frequently used

8. Telephone, voice calls *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Least used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Most frequently used

9. Emails *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Least used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Most frequently used

10. Social media: text messaging, whatsapp, facebook, twitter, instagram, pinterest, wechat *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Least used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Most frequently used

11. Posters/ newsletters/pamphlets *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Least used	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Most frequently used

As a recipient of change communication, please rank the importance of the following, during communication of organisational change

12. Real time two way communication between the sender and the recipient of the message and a quick real time response. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not important at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

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Strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change

13. Being able to assess body language, facial expressions and emotion in addition to the conveyed message *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not important at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

14. Ability to establish a personal focus, enabling presentation of individually tailored messages *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not important at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

15. Ability to utilize natural language permitting normal everyday conversational style communication without conscious planning or premeditation *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not important at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

Communication Satisfaction

Superior communication

16. My superior is open to ideas *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

17. My superior listens and pays attention to me *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

18. My supervisor trusts me *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Communication climate

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Strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change

19. The organization's communication motivates and stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting its goals *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

20. The people in my organization have great ability as communicators. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

21. I receive relevant information on time *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Go-worker communication

22. Horizontal communication with other employees is accurate and free flowing *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

23. Communication practices are adaptable to emergencies *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

24. Informal communication is active and accurate *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Media quality

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Strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change

25. My organisation's publications and communication are helpful in clarifying uncertainty *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

26. The attitudes toward communication in the organization are basically healthy *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Personal feedback

27. My efforts are recognised and acknowledged *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

28. There is transparency about how I am being evaluated *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

29. Superiors know and understand the problems faced by subordinates *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Corporate information

30. I am aware of the changes that take place in the organisation *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

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Strategic selection of communication channels during organisational change

31. I know about government actions affecting my company *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

32. I know my organisational policies and goals *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Your preferred communication channels as a recipient of change during organisational change

33. Please select the top three communication channels that you as a recipient of change prefer to be used by management during organisational change *

Check all that apply.

- Telephone, voicecalls
- Videocalls, Skype, Face time, video conferencing, u-tube
- Face to face meetings/workshops
- Emails
- Posters/newsletters/pamphlets
- Social media: text messaging, whatsapp, facebook, twitter, instagram, pinterest, wechat
- Informal conversations, grapevine
- Other: _____

34. End of survey. Thank you!
