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MEASURING INTEGRATED INTERNAL COMMUNICATION: A SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDY

ABSTRACT

The multidisciplinary concept of communication as it manifests itself in organisations is becoming more and more important; hence, it is suggested that it should be measured to determine the satisfaction of employees with integrated internal communication (IIC). The purpose of this study was, therefore, to develop a measuring tool for IIC to address limitations in the existing instruments that are arguably outdated and no longer address current trends. A sequential exploratory mixed methods approach was used to explore existing communication audit instruments that were used as the basis for the development of a new integrated internal communication audit (IICA) that was tested to evaluate the communication strengths and weaknesses at the University of South Africa library. The findings revealed that the IICA tool was an adequate tool for measuring the library's IIC systems, with a Cronbach's alpha of .950, which is seen as excellent. The results indicated that employees preferred communication systems that provided them with timeous, transparent, and continuous communication. Employees' preferred communication channels included email, face-to-face meetings, info-web, and written communication like letters and memos. The IICA tool recognises the importance of organisational values, employment equity, customised service and ubuntu that are not evident in previous instruments; hence, the results make a unique contribution to the field of organisational communication.

Keywords: integrated internal communication, communication audit, measuring tool, communication channels, media richness, organisational culture, communication experiences

INTRODUCTION

The existing communication audit instruments developed over time by various researchers have limited the ability to address new developments and current trends, particularly in the University of South Africa (Unisa) library, where the primary focus is on scholarly information resources. As

communication in organisations is not static, such instruments should be refined to make them relevant to different environments, recognising existing trends, both national and global. This study addresses the internal communication challenges faced by communication practitioners and organisational communication researchers in the field of organisational communication.

A communication audit is usually conducted when organisations experience changes imposed by internal and external factors. Most studies on communication audits have been conducted internationally (Denison *et al*. 2014), but little research has been conducted on the review of communication audit instruments in the South African library context. Scholars (Steele & Plenty 2015; Zwijze-Koning & De Jong 2015; Wilkinson & Weitkamp 2016) have categorised communication that occurs in organisations into two approaches: communication within organisations and organisations as communication. The approach of organisations as communication focuses on communication from two perspectives: the constructive and the constitutive views. This study adopts the constitutive view of communication that looks at communication as a platform for questioning and investigating key organisational realities and complexities by exploring and examining communication processes in search of a more favourable organisational outcome for employees (Koschmann 2012).

Subsequently, a measuring tool for integrated internal communication (IIC) for the library, called the integrated internal communication audit (IICA), has been developed and tested. Against this background, this study set out to answer the following research question: What is the most adequate tool for measuring integrated internal communication in the Unisa library? To investigate the research question, a sequential exploratory mixed methods approach was adopted. This study is limited to all communication between employees at the Muckleneuk campus of the Unisa library, and is designed to achieve the following objectives: to conduct a theoretical exploration of IIC audits; to conduct a theoretical review of internal communication audits; to explore the communication needs of employees; to explore the internal communication systems; and to explore the latest developments in the field of organisational communication to propose a new measuring tool for IIC.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organisational communication research has evolved over time to the point where researchers have become interested in addressing communication problems that emanate from the interactions of people within organisations. This has resulted in the need to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the communication that takes place in the internal organisational environment, referred to as internal communication, which is an integrated process (Rajhans 2012). This study intends to identify the gaps and inconsistencies in existing communication audit instruments, to address communication challenges and complexities in organisations like the use of rich media or media richness that facilitates the flow of both formal and informal communication in an organisation (Pierce 2012; Horn 2014), to encourage task-media/channel fit in the transmission of quality information (Wilkinson & Weitkamp 2016), to provide real-time feedback in the communication process (Cheney *et al*. 2011), to promote

two-way symmetrical communication that facilitates relationships between internal stakeholders (Chmielecki 2015), and to encourage the use of adequate information communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in the communication process (Siddike *et al*. 2011).

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that underpins this study is guided by the excellence theory (Grunig 2013), the information theory (Horn 2014; Woodward, 2014), and the media richness theory (Hasel 2011; Chang *et al*. 2017). While the information theory facilitates the flow of information in the organisation to cultivate long-term relationships, the media richness theory recognises the communication channels in terms of the task-media fit to make sure that the chosen medium transmits quality information. Subsequently, the excellence theory identifies real-time feedback as important in facilitating two-way symmetrical communication.

Empirical literature review

The internal communication audit perspectives that provide background information on internal communication audits include studies conducted by international organisational communication researchers such as Crino and White (1981), Carvalho (2013), Steele and Plenty (2014), Zwijze-Koning and De Jong (2015), and Daniela and Janetta (2015). Studies conducted in South Africa include Nhlapo (2000), Antonis (2005), Meintjes and Steyn (2006), Jensen et al. (2013) and Wagner (2013).

In conducting internal communication audits, organisational communication researchers make use of the following measuring instruments, designed to meet ever-changing organisational needs (Crino and White 1981; Hecht 1978) that inform this study: the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) and the International Communication Association (ICA) audit, adapted and complemented by the Organisational Culture Survey (OCS) and the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). Hence, the focus of communication audits has shifted to include the study of power relationships, participative culture, organisational structure, organisational communication systems, gender, and diversity of the workforce (Hargie & Tourish 2009; Grunig 2013). This shift resulted from researchers' need to identify the realities held by employees, to explore individual perceptions of communication, to explore the gaps in communication systems and channels, and to identify the common understanding of organisational life (Hargie & Tourish 2009).

In addressing those challenges, this study integrates different viewpoints on internal communication audits. The concept of the integration of communication audits becomes central in the development of the IICA based on recommendations made by Mao and Hale (2015) who complemented and/or converged one or more measuring instruments with the purpose of improving the validity and reliability of the measuring tool used. Moreover, Oliver (2004) argues that evaluation tools are not a one-size-fits-all approach; they should be tailored to the specific needs of the organisation under investigation.

Conceptual framework

In this study, the integration process results in the development of the proposed IICA conceptual framework, which consists of the following seven constructs: informational, relational, informational/relational, communication channels, organisational outcomes, organisational culture, and communication experiences. The proposed IICA conceptual framework as presented in Figure 1 addresses additional realities experienced in the Unisa library, such as the multicultural environment, the transformation agenda, employment equity and affirmative action.
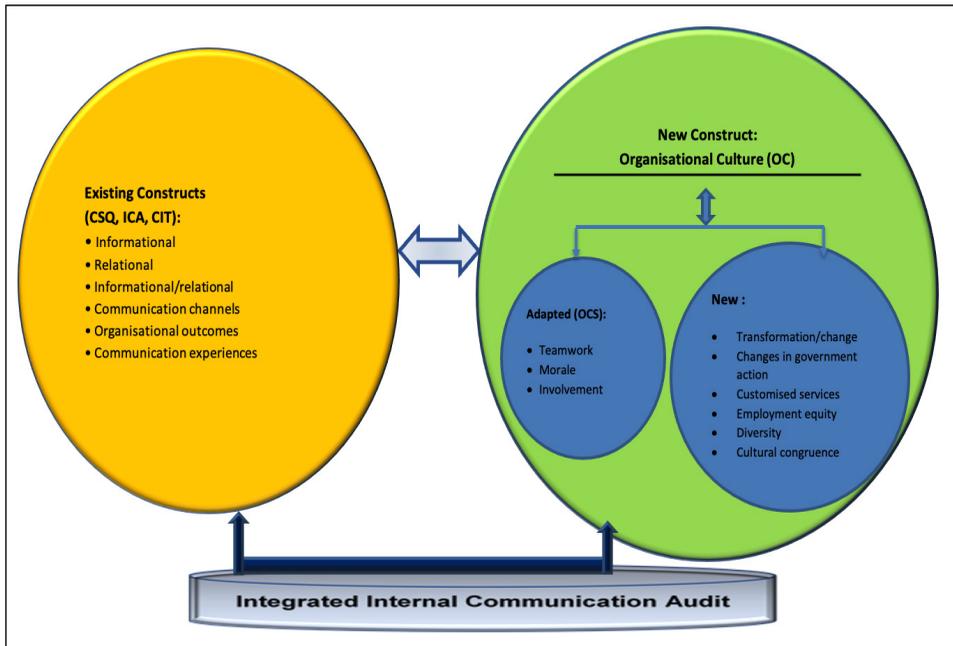
(Source: Developed by researchers)

FIGURE 1: THE PROPOSED IICA CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

METHODOLOGY

The case study was identified as the most feasible method of conducting research, given the objective of the study. The exploratory sequential mixed method design that combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Creswell 2015) was used to collect data to ensure the richness of data in answering the research question (Kumar 2014).

The target population comprises employees at the Muckleneuk campus of the Unisa library. The sample for the qualitative phase consisted of 15 participants comprising members of management, two African males, and 13 females from different racial

groups. The library environment is female dominated, thereby resulting in gender disparity (Statistics South Africa 2017; Unisa Library 2015). The sample size was determined by means of data saturation (Quinlan *et al*. 2019). A semi-structured interview schedule (Kumar 2014) was used to conduct the interviews and the information obtained through interviews was used to develop a survey questionnaire.

Stratified random sampling (Walliman 2011) was used to determine the sample for the quantitative phase of the study. An online self-administered survey questionnaire created by using the SurveyMonkey software was used to collect quantitative data. The pre-testing of the survey questionnaire was conducted with a sample of 20 participants, to test the reliability of the IICA tool. The final survey was administered to the larger population at the Unisa library, and out of the 222 employees, 72 responses (64.9%) were received.

The items included in both instruments, the interview schedule and the survey questionnaire, measure employees' perception of different aspects of the communication process of the library as the perceptions of employees are influenced by the internal communication of an organisation (Daniela & Janetta 2015).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The qualitative data was analysed by using ATLAS.ti. A thematic approach was used and the following six main themes were analysed that were informed by both the existing literature and the interviews: availability of an internal communication measurement instrument, communication audit constructs, internal communication systems, exploring the latest developments or emerging trends in the field of organisational communication, the multicultural perspective, and general issues. In terms of the interviews, most of the participants agreed that a general lack of communication from top management on changes taking place in the library sent contradictory messages to clients, and that results in rumours. The majority of the participants were of the view that managers imposed their views on subordinates. The identified communication channels that comprise the internal communication system of the library include face-to-face communication, written communication, email, newsletters, telephone, and social media.

The preferred communication channels include face-to-face communication, email, telephone and the social media channels such as SMS and WhatsApp, as presented in Figure 2. Participants identified email as the most preferred channel because it provides written evidence, while face-to-face was identified as the second-best channel that provides a good platform for sharing information, clarifying matters during misunderstandings and disputes, providing feedback, and resolving conflicts without wasting time.
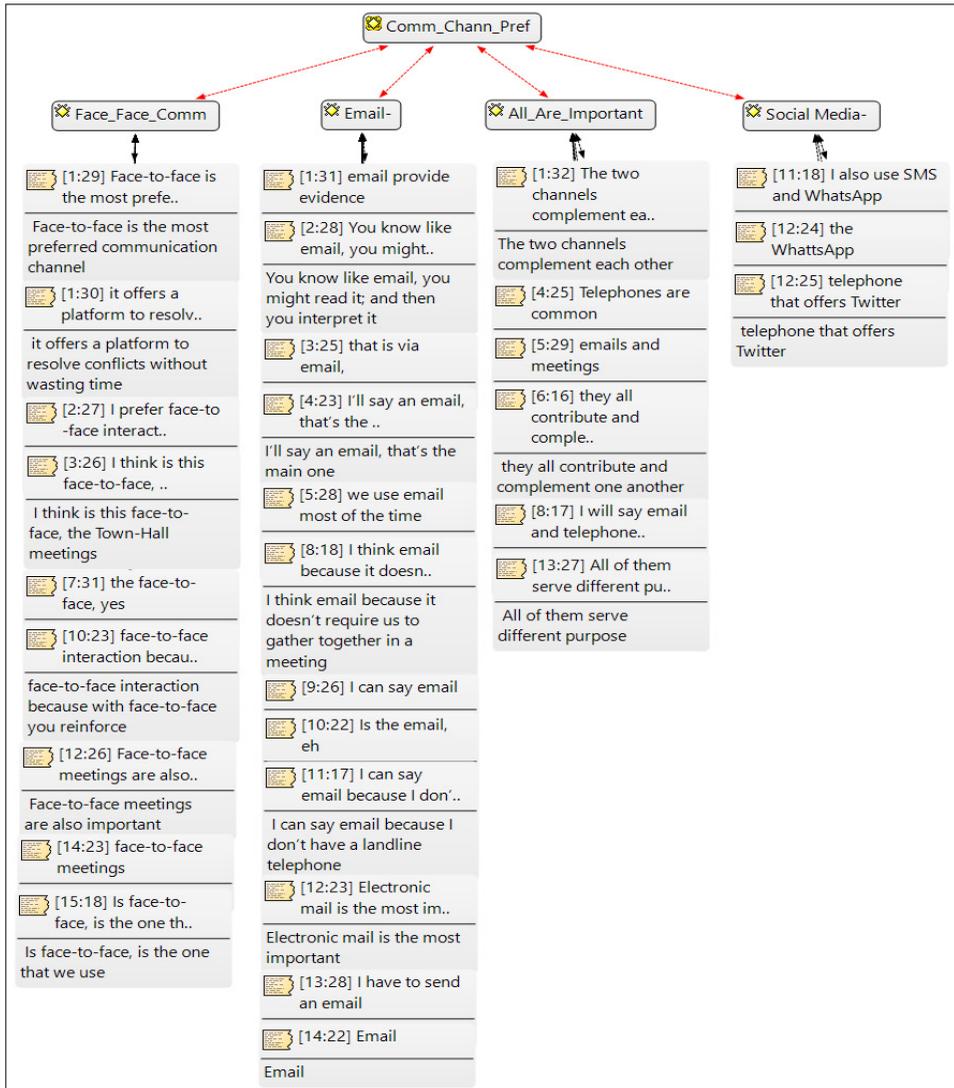
(Source: Generated by the authors using ATLAS.ti)

FIGURE 2: PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES ON PREFERRED
COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The following areas of improvement or gaps in the communication system of the library were identified by most of the participants: clear channels of communication, improved communication between managers and employees at lower levels, knowledge sharing and management of tacit knowledge, the recognition of social media for internal communication, and regular communication through the newsletter. The participants

emphasise the sharing of tacit knowledge between retiring and young employees, and that tacit knowledge should be converted into explicit knowledge that can be stored in written form for future usage. Hartwich *et al*. (2007) refer to tacit knowledge as knowledge that employees carry in their minds, and that cannot be accessed or extracted. This study considered the transfer of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge as the best practice. The findings were in line with existing literature that indicates that employees used the existing channels to facilitate the directional flow of communication that took the form of upwards, downwards and horizontal direction (Hasel 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative data was analysed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software package and the results on the reliability of the IICA tool, the socio-demographic characteristics and the IICA constructs confirm the viability of the IICA tool. The views of participants were not influenced by their socio-demographic characteristics.

Reliability of the measurement tool

Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the measurement tool. Cronbach's alpha is a coefficient of internal consistency commonly used as an estimate of reliability. Manerikar and Manerikar (2015) propose that, if Cronbach alpha is ≥ .9, reliability is excellent (high-stakes testing); ≥ .7 is good (low-stakes testing); ≥ .6 is acceptable; ≥ .5 is poor; and < .5 is unacceptable. Most scales had a reliability of over .7, with the exception of the construct *feedback on communication sent,* which was acceptable. In this study, Questions 1 to 8 of the survey questionnaire focused on the demographics. The reliability analysis was conducted on Questions 9 to 18. The reliability of the entire instrument gave a Cronbach's alpha of .950, which is seen as excellent. It can be concluded that the measurement tool was reliable. The results of the reliability analysis are provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1:   RELIABILITY RESULTS OF THE CONSTRUCTS

Construct	No. of items		Cronbach's alpha	Acceptable level
Q9. Information received	7		.801	Good
Q10. Information desired	7		.821	Good
Q11. Sources of information	9		.705	Good
Q12. Feedback on communication sent	6		.620	Acceptable

Construct	No. of items		Cronbach's alpha	Acceptable level
Q13. Information received through formal channels of communication	10		.785	Good
Q14. Information received through informal channels of communication	9		.916	Excellent
Q15. Relational	8		.835	Good
Q16. Informational/ relational	9		.808	Good
Q17. Organisational outcomes	7		.894	Good
Q18. Organisational culture	19		.914	Excellent
Total	*91*		*.950*	*Excellent*

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

In terms of the socio-demographic characteristics presented in Table 2, out of an intended target population of 111, a total of 72 library employees participated in the study, giving a response rate of 64.9%, with a standard deviation of 19.7. The independent *t*-test and the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine whether the views of the respondents who participated in the study differed in terms of their socio-demographics. The Levene's (1960) test of homogeneity of variances was used, and the t-test was done at the 5% level of significance and a p-value of less than .05. The results indicated that the views of the respondents were not influenced by their gender, educational qualifications, current position, directorate, or years of experience. The IICA tool was consistent in measuring the views of people from different demographic backgrounds.

TABLE 2:   SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF
        THE RESPONDENTS

Socio-demographic characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	26	36.1%
	Female	46	63.9%
	Total	72	100.0%
Race	Blacks	52	73.3%
	Whites Coloureds Indians	17 1 1	23.9% 1.4% 1.4%
	Total	71	100.0%
Age	Below 30 years	6	8.3%
	30–39 years	26	36.1%
	40–49 years	13	18.1%
	50–59 years	22	30.6%
	50 years and above	25	6.9%
	Total	72	100%
Educational qualifications	Matric/Grade 12 or below	10	13.9%
	Certificate/Diploma	9	12.5%
	Bachelor's degree	19	26.4%
	Honours degree	23	31.9%
	Postgraduate degree	11	15.3%
	Total	72	100.0%
Current position	Middle management/ supervisor	9	12.9%
	Specialist	20	28.6%
	Administrative staff	40	57.1%
	Other	1	1.4%

Socio-demographic characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	Total	70	100.0%
Directorate	Information Resource Distribution	26	37.1%
	Information Resource Content Management	13	18.6%
	Library Corporate Services	17	24.3%
	Client Services	14	20.0%
Years in current position	Total	70	100.0%
	Less than a year	11	15.3%
	3–5 years	15	20.8%
	6–10 years	31	43.1%
	More than 10 years	15	20.8%
	Total	72	100.0%

The communication audit constructs

Data analysis was also conducted on the seven communication audit constructs: informational, relational, informational/relational, communication channels, organisational outcomes, organisational culture, and communication experience. The results indicated that the respondents preferred communication systems that provided them with more, timeous, transparent and continuous communication. For example, 92.3% (n=60) said that they would like to receive information on the performance of the library more often, with a mean of 4.48 ($M = 4.48, SD = .79$). A total of 80.3% (n=53) indicated that they often received information on personnel news (e.g. new appointments, changes in remuneration packages), with a mean of 4.00 ($M = 4.00, SD = .96$). Similarly, 81.4% (n=56) said that they currently received information mostly from their immediate supervisor, with a mean of 4.25 ($M = 4.25, SD = .95$). In addition, 41.2% (n=28) indicated that regular communication from management created an atmosphere of trust in the library. In terms of the informational/relational construct, many of the respondents, 83.6% (n=56), indicated that their immediate supervisor often provided feedback on the communication that they had sent, with a mean of 4.30 ($M = 4.30, SD = .82$). The results further revealed that 81.4% (n=57) agreed that their relationship with their supervisor was excellent, to such an extent that supervisors alerted them when they made mistakes, with a mean of 3.79 ($M = 3.79, SD = .9$). The level of agreement on informational/relational constructs are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3: LEVEL OF AGREEMENT ON INFORMATIONAL/RELATIONAL CONSTRUCT

Level of agreement on informational/ relational	Level of agreement					Mean	Std dev
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree		
Q16b. My supervisor alerts me when I make mistakes	11.4% (8)	70.0% (49)	10.0% (7)	2.9% (2)	5.7% (4)	3.79	.90
Q16a. My supervisor listens to me	12.9% (9)	64.3% (45)	11.4% (8)	4.3% (3)	7.1% (5)	3.71	1.00
Q16c. I trust my supervisor	11.6% (8)	56.5% (39)	20.3% (14)	5.8% (4)	5.8% (4)	3.62	.97
Q16d. I receive constructive feedback from my supervisor on my performance appraisal	17.4% (12)	53.6% (37)	11.6% (8)	5.8% (4)	11.6% (8)	3.59	1.19
Q16e. The Library encourages continuous staff development through talent management programmes	7.4% (5)	47.1% (32)	33.8% (23)	1.5% (1)	10.3% (7)	3.4	1.02
Q16f. The Library's communication makes me to identify with the institution	9.0% (6)	32.8% (22)	41.8% (28)	9.0% (6)	7.5% (5)	3.27	1.01

Level of agreement on informational/ relational	Level of agreement					Mean	Std dev
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree		
Q16g. Regular communication from management creates an atmosphere of trust in the Library	5.9% (4)	35.3% (24)	35.3% (24)	14.7% (10)	8.8% (6)	3.15	1.04
Q16i. Communication practices are flexible to suit organisational emergencies	3.0% (2)	37.3% (25)	34.3% (23)	13.4% (9)	11.9% (8)	3.06	1.06
Q16h. The attitude toward communication at the Library is basically healthy	5.9% (4)	32.4% (22)	32.4% (22)	19.1% (13)	10.3% (7)	3.04	1.09

The preferred channels of communication included face-to-face meetings [73.8% (n=48) with a mean of 3.22 ($M = 3.22, SD = 1.01$), info-web [73.8% (n=48) with a mean of 3.37 ($M = 3.37, SD = .98$), written communication such as letters and memos [72.3% (n=47) with a mean of 3.20 ($M = 3.20, SD = .99$), emails [76.9%, (n=50) with a mean of 3.58 ($M = 3.58, SD = .92$), lib-com [60.3% (n=38) with a mean of 3.29 ($M = 3.29, SD = 1.21$) and the newsletters [54.7% (n=35) with a mean of 2.81 ($M = 2.81, SD = 1.23$). Less than 50% of the respondents indicated that they receive some information from the following informal channels of communication: grapevine 30.1%, SMS 37.7%, Facebook 32.8%, MySpace 13.6%, WhatsApp 29.5%, Instant Messenger 14.8%, Twitter 21.3%, and Instagram 11.5%. Major findings are that 91.4% (n=64) indicated that they want to be engaged on a regular basis on changes taking place in the library, with a mean of 4.53, which was close to 5 ($M = 4.53, SD = .76$) and 87.5% (n=56) want to receive information on employee benefits, with a mean of 4.44 ($M = 4.44, SD = .75$).

Results on the construct on the amount of information received through informal channels of communication revealed that 59.1% (n=39) of the respondents indicated that they received great information from informal face-to-face conversations with a mean of 3.08 ($M = 3.08, SD = 1.15$). Less than 50% of the respondents indicated that they received some information from informal channels like the grapevine, SMS, Facebook, MySpace, WhatsApp, Instant Messenger, Twitter, and Instagram. The percentages were 30.1%, 37.7%, 32.8%, 13.6%, 29.5%, 14.8%, 21.3% and 11.5%

respectively. Moreover, 52.5% (n=31) of the respondents indicated that they received very little information through MySpace, with an average of 2.31 (*M = 2.21, SD = 1.64*); 55.7% (n=34) received very little information through Instant Messenger, with a mean of 2.20 (*M = 2.20, SD = 1.59*); and 60.7% (n=37) received very little information through Instagram, with a mean of 2.13 (*M = 2.13, SD = 1.62*). Furthermore, the respondents indicated that they received a significant amount of information through informal face-to-face conversations.

The construct of organisational outcomes was assessed by using a 5-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A total of 61.4% (n=43) agreed that they did get recognition for outstanding achievements with a mean of 3.39 (*M = 3.39, SD = 1.05*). More than half, 53.6% (n=37), agreed that they were informed of their progress in the Library up to this point in time, with a mean of 3.33 (*M = 3.33, SD = 1.00*). Fifty percent (50%) agreed that they received regular updates on the Library's achievement of objectives, with a mean of 3.22 (*M = 3.22, SD = 1.05*). All standard deviations were close to one, indicating that the majority gave ratings between 3 and 5 (±1 standard deviation from the mean).

In terms of the construct of organisational culture, the majority of the respondents, 69.7% (n=46), agreed that they participated in staff meetings that were held on a regular basis, with a mean of 3.64 (*M = 3.64, SD = .97*). A total of 62.7% (n=42) agreed that the Library accommodated the communication needs of people with disabilities, such as audio equipment, with a mean of 3.46 (*M = 3.46, SD = 1.04*), and 55.4% (n=36) agreed that they made sure that information services were customised to the specific needs of an individual client, with a mean of 3.45 (*M = 3.45, SD = 1.02*). A total of 57.9% (n=40) agreed that the Library values, as contained in the Service Charter, were clearly communicated to them, with a mean of 3.41 (*M = 3.41, SD = 1.03*), 64.8% (n=44) agreed that the people they worked with functioned as a team, with a mean of 3.38 (*M = 3.38, SD = 1.15*), and 54.5% (n=36) agreed that they had a say in decisions that affected their work, with a mean of 3.35 (*M = 3.35, SD = 1.13*).

The results on communication experiences indicated that the experiences of the employees regarding the communication system of the Library were both positive and negative. Less than half of the respondents (45%) indicated that the Library's communication system is effective. A few respondents (21%) reported the ineffectiveness of the communication system, and 34% of the respondents indicated that there was neither effective nor ineffective communication. Negative communication experiences were mostly encountered with members of top management, and those included poor or lack of communication, and lack of feedback and transparency on the minutes of meetings and on the achievement of goals and objectives of the library.

Based on the above results, it could be argued that the employees are satisfied with some of the communication that takes place in the Library. This was confirmed by the views of the respondents who agreed that they participated in staff meetings that were held on a regular basis; the Library accommodated the communication needs of people with disabilities, such as audio equipment; they made sure that information services were customised to the specific needs of an individual client; the Library

values, as contained in the Service Charter, were clearly communicated to them; the people they worked with functioned as a team; and that they had a say in decisions that affected their work.

Degrees of relationships between the constructs

The Pearson correlation analysis, which analyses the strength of the linear relationship between two normally distributed constructs, was used to determine the extent of the relationship between constructs (Hauke & Kossowski 2011). In terms of the proposed guideline, r represents the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The "eyeball method" proposes that an r equal to 0 to .2 reflects a weak or non-existent relationship, .2 to .4 a weak relationship, .4 to .6 a moderate relationship, .6 to .8 a strong relationship, and .8 to 1.0 a very strong relationship. The correlations, which were done at the 5% level of significance (Salkind 2018), are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4: PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS OF THE CONSTRUCTS

Construct	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Information received	3.36	-									
2. Information desired	4.34	.399**	–								
3. Sources of information	3.36	.620**	.284*	–							
4. Feedback on communication sent	3.39	.312**	.087	.584**	–						
5. Amount of information received through formal channels of communication	2.99	.339**	.216	.498**	.409**	–					
6. Amount of information received through informal channels of communication	2.50	.287*	.247*	.363**	.212	.630**	–				
7. Relational	3.24	.186	-.124	.270*	.080	.174	.234	–			
8. Informational/ relational	3.44	.333**	.080	.201	.026	.456**	.366**	.435**	–		
9. Organisational outcomes	3.13	.462**	.127	.433**	.201	.412**	.220	.401**	.567**	–	
10. Organisational culture	4.42	.262*	-.076	.260*	.193	.347**	.165	.596**	.554**	.667**	–

* $p<.05$ and ** $p<.01$

In terms of the relationships between the constructs, the results of the correlation coefficient analysis revealed two types: strong relationships and weak relationships. Examples include the construct on information received that had a strong relationship or statistically significant positive correlation with information desired; source of information; feedback on communication; amount of information received through formal channels of communication; amount of information received through informal channels of communication; and relational, informational and organisational culture. On the other hand, information desired had a weak statistically significant positive relationship with the factor on sources of information and the amount of information received through informal channels of communication.

The composite construct on information sources had a moderately significant positive correlation with feedback on communication sent, information received through formal channels of communication, and organisational outcomes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The identified communication audit instruments (CSQ & ICA), complemented by the OCS and the CIT, were adapted positively to develop and test the new proposed IICA tool in the Unisa library. The research findings answered the research question by recommending the IICA tool as the most adequate tool for measuring IIC in the Unisa library, with a Cronbach's alpha of .950, which is excellent. However, this is the first time the instrument has been used to test the South African multicultural perspective and to integrate the OCS and the CIT with the communication audit instruments, and it was tested at only one institution. Given that South Africa is a developing country, the IICA tool recognises the importance of some constructs from existing research, with specific emphasis on the following additional constructs: organisational values, employment equity legislation, and the variables of customised service, diversity, and ubuntu. These additional constructs are not evident in previous communication audit instruments or in the findings of previous studies; hence, it is posited that the results make a unique contribution to the field of organisational communication. It is therefore recommended that the study be replicated in other institutions and organisations to validate the results and to further explore the impact of telecommuting on IIC. The measuring tool can also be used as a benchmark for future studies.

The need for this study is best summarised by Carvalho (2013: 374) as follows:

> The communication audit helped one realise that IC needs to be improved to achieve higher levels of internal and general market orientation, which can lead to better organisational performance and job satisfaction. Thus, an improved IC instrument and good internal organisation, with clear functions and responsibilities, and assertiveness towards all organisational stakeholders, are needed to enhance organisational success.

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