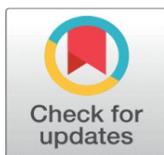


# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: LESSONS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Relebohile Letlatsa  

<sup>1</sup> (PhD), Lecturer, English Department, National University of Lesotho, Lesotho



**Received** 21 September 2023  
**Accepted** 22 October 2023  
**Published** 06 November 2023

## Corresponding Author

Relebohile Letlatsa, [rm.letlatsa@nul.ls](mailto:rm.letlatsa@nul.ls)

## DOI

[10.29121/granthaalayah.v11.i10.2023.4731](https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v11.i10.2023.4731)

**Funding:** This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

**Copyright:** © 2023 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



## ABSTRACT

The researcher has observed that employees at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Southern Africa are aware of the importance of strategic planning, hence the formulation of strategic plans, but the concern arises at the implementation thereof. Therefore, the paper assesses the extent to which HEIs in Southern Africa utilise strategic communication for engagement of employees for implementation of their institutional strategy.

Purposive sampling was used to identify HEIs in Southern Africa. In addition to this, an exploratory research design was used to establish if the strategic plan existed in each institution, and to find out strategies used to implement the strategic plan. The researcher used the explorative study because of the curiosity and desire to understand the influence strategic communication has on the implementation of the strategy.

Strategic plans for the HEIs under study were assessed in order to find out if they indicate engagement of the employees and whether there are particular strategic measures proposed to solicit input of the employees in both the development and implementation of the strategic plan. Strategic plans were analysed to assess the degree to which strategies are implemented in the institutions.

The study not only indicates the drivers, best practices and lessons of a communication strategy, but also suggests that when the organisation takes a strategic approach to communication, communication becomes integral to the formulation and implementation of strategy. It further suggests best ways to implement strategic plan using a communication strategy.

**Keywords:** Strategic Communication, Employee Engagement, Strategy Implementation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Organisational communication is deemed the most significant factor to determine the behaviour of the organisation. Organisation success has got a lot to do with the communicative efforts of such organisation [Grunig et al. \(1992\)](#), hence organisations draw up their vision and mission statements with the aim of achieving such statements through communication. According to the systems approach, an organisation comprises the subsystems whose performance affects the entire system. For instance, one managerial department may contribute to either success

or failure of the organisation, hence management relies on communication professionals to liaise with the organisation's employees.

Like any other organisation, HEIs comprise a very vast number of employees with different languages, race and culture, all of which have to work in unity for the benefit of institutions. It therefore calls for employees to learn and understand cultures of other people. But first of all they have to develop knowledge of their own culture in order to facilitate the cross-cultural relationship they have to maintain [Patel et al. \(2011\)](#). In other words the responsibility of organisational diversity primarily rests on employees' shoulders.

The study therefore assesses the situation of strategy implementation at HEIs in Southern Africa and suggests best ways to implement the strategy using communication. To obtain information from the institutions, the researcher employed a qualitative research approach to analyse strategic plan documents available online from websites of the institutions in order to establish the extent to which the strategy is communicated and implemented.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The link between strategy and its implementation has always been very weak [Argenti et al. \(2005\)](#). The author confirms that top consulting companies have employed countless MBAs to develop strategy for their clients. Academics at top universities have spent their careers developing frameworks explaining how to develop better strategies for top companies. However, only a handful of academics and a cadre of tactical consultants primarily at public relations companies, have struggled with implementation in the area where it matters most; its communication to a set of varied stakeholders. The researcher has observed that employees at HEIs in Southern Africa are aware of the importance of strategic planning hence the formulation of strategic plans and their availability online, but the concern arises at implementation thereof.

An issue faced by HEIs in Southern Africa is the follow-up sessions pertaining to implementation of institutional strategies. These sessions are meant to monitor progress of the strategy in filling up implementation gaps caused by the previous strategies. Both internal and external stakeholders are responsible for these activities. This is an indication that communication strategies of these institutions are not clearly spelt out, as a result the employees are not communicating to achieve the goals and missions of the institutions.

Subsequently, a need exists for a clear articulation of how the managers should be managing the implementation of institutional strategy. However, a well-developed communication management strategy aimed at improving communication channels is needed to address this problem. [Columbine \(2007\)](#) emphasises that communicators have an important part to play in guiding organisations to maintain healthy relationships amongst employees, corporate reputation and brand positioning in their respective markets. It is also apparent that communication is still relegated to a low priority in business.

## 3. OVERARCHING GOAL

The study aims at assessing the extent to which HEIs in Southern Africa utilise strategic communication in order to implement the strategies set up by the institutions. The study not only indicates the drivers, best practices and lessons of a communication strategy, but also suggests that when an institution takes a

---

strategic approach to communication, communication becomes integral to the formulation and implementation of strategy.

### 3.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The study is guided by the following specific objectives:

- To assess the HEIs employee engagement in the implementation of institutional strategic plans.
- To establish trends, at HEIs in Southern Africa, that affect strategic communication

## 4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In order to address the main goal and objectives of the research study, relevant theories were reviewed on the basis of key concepts namely employee engagement and organizational trends that affect strategic communication.

Griffin (2012) discusses the seven traditions of communication theory as the reactions of people (scholars) when they communicate. The traditions inform the study about the communication behaviour in the organisations. For the purpose of this study socio-cultural, cybernetic and systems approach will be dealt with.

Communication as the creation and enactment of social reality has it that the way people view reality is strongly influenced by the language that they have been using since they were infants Griffin (2012). It is language that gives a structure to the way people perceive reality. Theorists therefore believe that it is through the language used in communication that “reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed”.

Furthermore, theorists mostly focus on communication as a system of information processing and they are concerned with establishing the manner in which a system operates, any possibility of a system being changed, and if so, how can one get rid of the change effects in the system. Griffin (2012) uses friendship as a system in which one wants to find out the amount of communication that may exist between the friends, how close the friendship is, how committed friends are to see the relationship go on. The bottom line here is friendships do not exist in a vacuum, so do the organisations. They are systems that exist within a network of subsystems that has the information. This therefore confirms that a system cannot function in a vacuum, there has to be constituent parts of the system to communicate. And as the employees relate in a work situation (institution) they have to show commitment in ensuring achievement of the set goals and strategy.

Organizations are made up of components or subsystems that work together to achieve a shared objective and ensure the success of the organization as a whole. According to Grunig et al. (1992), systems theory places more focus on the interfaces that exist between organizations and the surroundings that surround them, subsystems within the organization, and the organization as a whole. Additionally, Katz and Kahn in Shockley-Zalabak (2005) point out that the majority of formal organizations run on five fundamental subsystems: productive subsystems, which deal with work completed; supportive subsystems, which deal with relationships and needed material support; maintenance subsystems, which integrate people into their functional role; and adaptive subsystems, which are geared for change. and managerial subsystems for coordination and control of the various subsystems.

Theorists recommend an optimization principle that advances maximal output in exchange for minimal input. Environmental feedback and management's capacity for change have an impact on the maximum return for the least amount of input. Systems can therefore be classified as open or closed, mechanical or organic. Shockley-Zalabak further confirms that an open system communicates with its larger surroundings to exchange information. While a closed system restricts communication with the outside world and aims to function alone. The closed organizational system is compared to the closed thermodynamic system by systems theorists, who claim that both will eventually reach a situation of maximum entropy and cease to be capable of performing productive labour. The open system, on the other hand, fights entropy and seeks a dynamic equilibrium among input, throughput, and output. The open system exhibits the law of equifinality and has a sound self-corrective mechanism, [Shockley-Zalabak \(2005\)](#), [Littlejohn \(2002\)](#).

Institutions operate on the basis of objectives and goals which need to be communicated to the employees in order for them to be achieved. In other words, it is upon the management to select means of communicating the message (strategy) to the employees so that the strategy gets implemented. [Littlejohn \(2002\)](#) therefore poses strategy selection and goal as important elements of communication theory. In pursuance of the organisational goal, people have to devise messages based on their goals. This involves the theory of compliance by the employees towards the message disseminated by management. Compliance calls for sufficient resources within the organisation so to provide the expected reaction

Organisational structure plays important role in identifying subunits that are responsible for strategic communication and implementation of strategy. [Steyn \(2003\)](#) proposes a model with which organisational communication strategy can be developed; (a) an analyses of organisation's internal environment has to be made so to take care of corporate profile, vision, mission and factors such as organisational values, culture, policies and strategies; (b) stakeholders and publics have to be identified in both internal and external environment by making an analysis of the organisation's enabling, functional, normative and diffused linkages; however, many organisations have noticed that it is difficult to convince external stakeholders about the organisation's deeds if employees do not accept the message and vice versa ([Cheney & Christensen, 2001](#)); (c) major strategic issues internal and external to the organisation have to be identified, described and differentiated; (d) organisations have to identify implications of individual strategic matter for each stakeholder; (e) decisions must be taken as what should be communicated in order to solve a specific problem, this may be done by formulating strategic communication plan as well as action plans that surround communication goals.

Organizations use a variety of models to achieve their goals both within and outside of the organization. According to [Grunig and White \(1992\)](#) and [Grunig \(1992\)](#) and [Grunig \(1992\)](#), some organizations use a two-way symmetrical model that involves the use of research and dialogue to manage any conflict that may arise, to advance understanding, and to build relationships with the environment, whereas a two-way asymmetrical model advocates for a change in the behavior of the environment without attempting to change the behavior of the organization itself.

According to [Clampitt \(2010\)](#), culture encompasses the entirety of the symbolic environment. In other words, it presents the reality of an aspect, in this case the reality of an organization, including what it is, what it should be, and what it is capable of becoming. It focuses on the activities and interactions that staff members

---

notice. Additionally, it outlines what matters, what causes things in organizations, and how events outside of employees' daily lives affect them. Once more, culture sets the standards and values for employees. Therefore, organizational culture is a group of views and values that are present in the organization, shared by all employees, but manifested in various ways. Culture can promote particular types of growth, encourage specific types of corporate growth, or eliminate certain types of behavior. Additionally, organizational culture may appear stable even though it occasionally seems to be changing in response to new, ongoing challenges. Employees frequently focus their efforts on things that the company values and disregard the rest.

According to studies, a company's culture has an impact on its financial performance. According to [Clampitt \(2010\)](#), businesses that are in line with their culture always succeed. Through the appropriate culture, structure, and strategy, employees are given focus, purpose, and incentive. When senior management is effectively directing actions, a strong culture makes it possible for employees to read their thoughts, which encourages innovation and results in high productivity and profits.

Second, culture affects how an organization analyzes and resolves issues. Due to the adage "that's how we do things here," it is discovered that more important possibilities are not taken into consideration. Additionally, it is thought that culture affects how an organization handles change. If the necessity arises, it might inspire ongoing change that is decisive.

Finally, culture has an impact on customer satisfaction and employee motivation. When an organization outlines some ideals but does not put them into practice, it might have a detrimental impact on employees [Letlatsa \(2018\)](#). Customers can lose motivation when a company makes promises to them, such offering fair prices, but does not follow through. Employees favor managers who prioritize putting the needs of their team before adhering to laws and regulations.

Additionally, [Eisenberg and Riley \(2001\)](#) point out that managers who show an interest in the culture of their workforce frequently value suggestions from various stakeholders and frequently use them to reshape current organizations and build new ones that could serve as alternatives to hierarchical organizational structures that follow top-down models.

Strong organizational cultures can pose problems since they can cause opposition to existing procedures. In other words, the organization's strategies and needs must be consistent with the culture [Clampitt \(2010\)](#). According to Clampitt, it is only advisable for managers to teach employees the organization's values because workers typically do not realize the value of their work until after they have completed it. As a result, workers should translate the organization's rhetoric into individualized, subjective commitments and experiences. On the other hand, managers shape the organization's values, mission, and purpose statements into ones that are neither overly vague nor excessively specific. Additionally, [Eisenberg and Riley \(2001\)](#) note that supervisors that demonstrate an interest in the culture of their staff

Recent events that have occurred in HEIs in Southern Africa are proof of a robust culture that has long been in place. Although South Africa is thought to be a diverse nation, recent raucous political incidents in HEIs do not demonstrate integration. Universities are regarded by society as the ideal institutions to represent moral leadership and to be held in higher regard than the general public. "They should be used as a platform to engage with young minds and address issues around race and difference openly, constructively, and frankly" [Marieclaire \(2014\)](#).

When this information is taken into account and successfully used, it aids a company in realizing the variety of its members and avoiding treating them with contempt [Putnam and Mumby \(2014\)](#).

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 5.1. SAMPLING

In order to achieve representativeness [Teddlie and Yu \(2007\)](#), of the HEIs in Southern Africa, purposive sampling was used to obtain strategic plans from the institutions. This approach was used in order to address research objectives and since this is a case study research, cases that were found to be informative in terms of online availability of strategic plans were used.

Out of 10 Southern African countries, 5 were explored in order to obtain access to strategic plans available online. Therefore, the following universities' strategic plans were accessed; The Copperbelt University (Zambia), University of Malawi- The Polytechnic (Malawi), University of Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe), National University of Lesotho (Lesotho) and University of Pretoria (South Africa), [Table 1](#).

**Table 1**

Table 1 Sampled Universities of Southern Africa		
Institution	Country	Strategic Plan Dates
The Copperbelt University	Zambia	2014-2018
University of Malawi – The Polytechnic	Malawi	2010-2014
University of Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	2011-2015
National University of Lesotho	Lesotho	2015-2020
University of Pretoria	South Africa	2015-2025

The researcher then made use of content analysis for strategic plans to reveal possible trends that affect institutional communication; to establish employees and institutional focus and attention of activities that take place in the institutions; as well as to describe trends in HEIs in Southern Africa that affect strategic communication [Weber \(1990\)](#).

### 5.2. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The level of approach for content analysis was at words and key phrases. Coding was done to illustrate occurrence, frequency and contextual similarity. All meaningful instances of data were coded to allow for generalisation around the content [Babbie and Mouton \(2001\)](#) as thus the use of Computer Aided Qualitative Analysis Software (CAQDAS), Leximancer, enhanced exploration of instances that relate to the coded concepts [Manual \(2005\)](#).

Leximancer was used by the researcher because it provides a map of concepts and themes that recur in the texts and is systematic and graphic in how it presents data. According to [Indulska and Recker \(2008\)](#), Leximancer was used for the following purposes: (a) establishing the key ideas in a text and their relative importance using a scientific and objective algorithm; (b) determining the centrality of a concept; (c) assisting with the application of grounded theory analysis to a textual dataset; and (d) assisting with the visual exploration of textual information for related themes.

By entering text into the CAQDAS algorithm for coding, the researcher improved validity. Thematic development was done automatically through code. In

this instance, concepts from strategic plans in existence at the five HEIs in Southern Africa were analyzed using content analysis. In order to measure the co-occurrence of these concepts, the program additionally examined the relationships between the concepts that were found [Manual \(2005\)](#).

More concepts were grouped together into themes whose significance was denoted by colored circles. In other words, faint circles signify fewer common concepts whereas brighter circles indicate co-occurring concepts more frequently. Each theme is determined by the most prevalent and related concepts.

## 6. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

### Content analysis of strategic plans of HEIs in Southern Africa

This section provides a detailed content analysis of strategic plans of HEIs in Southern Africa that are operational. [Table 2](#) summarises the findings of the content analysis. Subsequent to this, a textual narrative is presented to contextualise the findings.

**Table 2**

Table 2 Findings of Content Analysis		
Word-like	Count	Relevance
Staff	197	100
Student	94	48
Management	93	47
Plan	76	39
Commitment	75	38
Implementation	70	36
Access	53	27
Strategy	35	18
collaborative	29	15
Engagement	20	10
Communication	17	09
Communicate	16	08
Culture	16	08
Channels	14	07
Diverse	11	06
Monitor	9	05
Language	7	04
Trends	7	04
Depend	6	03
Inter	6	03
Structure	5	03
Meetings	5	03
Engage	4	02
formulation	4	02

The researcher analysed content of the HEIs strategic plans to assess constructs used to indicate employee involvement in formulation of strategic plan. This was meant to address the third objective of the study in which the researcher aim at assessing the involvement of institutions of higher learning employees

towards the implementation of the strategy. The following excerpts were extracted from the 5 universities' strategies.

University of Zimbabwe (UZ) *must clearly satisfy the needs of its clients and customers, and internal stakeholders.... The implementation of strategic plan will be the responsibility of all UZ members under the leadership of vice-chancellor, Deans and Directors, Chairpersons and Heads, Deans of faculties will ensure the faculty strategic plans are prepared to dovetail into the overall UZ strategic plan....With regard to the consultation process, each member of the strategic plan sub-committee was assigned to several units in the university to collect necessary inputs from UZ members.*

University of Pretoria (UP) *captures the core strategies of the university over the next 15 years by e.g. embedding community engagement and civic commitment in its academic mission; embracing diversity to enrich the university's intellectual environment and improve graduate outcomes....To establish a corps of staff, university will reward incentives and awards for success and this will be indicated by diversity of staff composition (per department).*

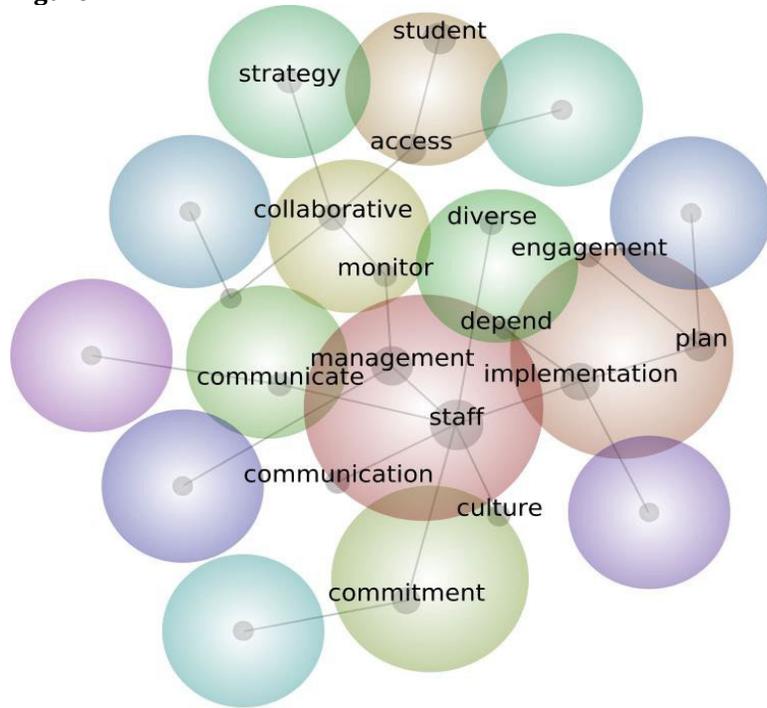
University of Malawi-The Polytechnic *aims at improving governance and management by, inter alia, calling for well-trained and well-motivated academic and administrative staff....Development process was a thoroughly participatory process involving all departments, units, institutes, directorates, schools, and members of council as well as other stakeholders outside the university.... In addition to shared values, all departments, units, directorates, institutes and schools of the university shall aim to address among others, gender equality, trans-/multi-disciplinary collaborations.*

The National University of Lesotho (NUL) *plan's critical success factors include committed leadership to the plan, senior management team, and the buy-in of the internal stakeholders (staff and students).*

Furthermore, the researcher used Leximancer to measure presence and frequency of concepts that appeared in the form of words and phrases from the strategic plans. Relationship between identified concepts was also measured based on the co-occurrence of concepts obtained within the text; as thus Leximancer enabled both content and relational analysis of the documents. A Concept map was generated to illustrate themes and related concepts [Figure 1](#). Themes are clustered according to their importance. In other words, the most important theme appears in the highest percentage of occurrence [Manual \(2011\)](#).

The theme *staff* appears to be the most co-occurring and relates to the concept *management*. It portrays 100 percent connectivity [Table 3](#) with the content of the text. It is the hottest theme as thus this is interpreted as being a positive indication of staff engagement in strategies of the institutions. *Staff* and *management* are the most active elements of the planning and implementation of the institutional strategies. The essence of strategic leadership then lies in communicating in a way that employees and functional units align themselves and move forward towards the commonly shared strategic goals [Puth \(2002\)](#).

**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** Concept Map of Institutions' Strategic Plans

**Table 3**

**Table 3 Theme/Concept Co-Occurrence**

Theme	Connectivity %	Concepts
Staff	100	Staff, management
Student	53	Student, access, culture, language
Implementation	48	Implementation, engagement, depend
Collaborative	36	Collaborative, communicate, monitor, diverse
Commitment	24	Commitment, communication
Plan	23	Plan
Strategy	09	Strategy
Trends	05	Trends
Channels	02	Channels
Meetings	02	Meetings
Inter	01	Inter
Formulation	01	Formulation
Engage	01	Engage

*Student* appears as the second most co-occurring theme. In an institution students act as functional units. 53% of co-occurrence of this theme is another positive sign that strategy focuses on the students whose presence is the core business of institutions. The theme associates with *access*, *culture* and *language*, which may infer that students are highly involved in their organisational culture, the language used as medium of instruction and access to facilities. Puth (2002) supports this by posting that communication must be integrated and proficient at delivering harmonious message to all constituents. That is, the organisation

integrates its communication activities down to specific messages, such as the mandate to be direct in all times. In addition to this, the culture that exists within the institution is bound to affect the way employees communicate because it is through the language they use that meanings are attached to actions performed. It is this view that institutions have to take into consideration the role played by socio-cultural domain in the implementation of strategy [Griffin \(2012\)](#).

*Implementation* is related to *engagement* and *depend*. It is a bit below 50 percent which may be regarded as demarcation of theme importance, 48 percent becomes the rate at which institutions plan to put the strategy into action. Strategy implementation involves “communication, interpretation, adoption and enactment of strategic plans” and management aligns leadership, organisational culture, organisational structures, reward systems and resource allocation based on specific strategies [Cronjé \(2005\)](#).

The next theme is *collaborative* at co-occurrence rate of 36 percent and it is associated with *communicate*, *monitor* and *diverse*. Employees select counterparts to communicate with because they notice some form of similarity in terms of age, education, gender, prestige, social class, tenure and occupation (hence they categorise themselves according to those factors) which are believed to ease communication and increase predictability of behaviour as well as fostering trust (Brass 1995b in [Monge & Contractor \(2001\)](#)).

As the employees relate in a work situation, they have to show commitment in ensuring the achievement of the set goals and strategy. It is apparent that strategies indicate little *commitment* from employees as it co-occurs 24 percent times only. The implementation does not only challenge the management in terms of motivating employees, but also in terms of discipline, commitment and sacrifice required to achieve the implementation [Cronjé \(2005\)](#).

The theme, *channels*, appears least in the text and yet it plays important role in communicating strategies. Institutions should be in a good position to select channels to use to communicate strategy. Strategic communication is used in the organisation to determine ways available to the organisation for effective planning and implementation of strategies. The process requires employees to establish available resources and select potential lines of argument that will allow them to pursue the set goals and missions strategically [Conrad and Poole \(2005\)](#).

*Meetings*, *formulation* and *engage* are themes which co-occur between 1 and 2 percent in the text and yet they are very significant themes which underpin employee engagement in strategy formulation and implementation. Most of the activities that take place in the organisation involve exchange of oral, written and non-verbal messages between people who work toward achievement of same goals. Such activities include holding meetings amongst members of the departments or between the departments, planning how the organisation will interact. [O’Hair et al. \(2011\)](#) attest that employees have to have a good understanding of organisational communication so that they know what alternatives to use when they are faced with tasks that may need to be efficiently and effectively accomplished.

## 7. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Although the strategies indicate that their implementation relies on internal stakeholders, the documents are not in a state of indicating whether it is for real that implementation of institutional intents is actually communicated to employees

---

hence the paper has not captured the rate at which strategy is communicated and implemented.

## 8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is evident that HEIs in Southern Africa have strategies to guide operations of institutions. Content analysis has revealed that strategies do engage employees in formulation and implementation of strategies. The documents however neither disclose the extent to which strategies are communicated and implemented within institutions and whether they do have in place communication strategies nor do they indicate strategy used to communicate institutions' intents. As a result, it is not stated if there are any trends that affect strategic communication.

Therefore, understanding and analysing culture is crucial for all types of organizations and institutions, including businesses, churches, universities, government agencies, student clubs, and others. This increases the requirement to categorize institutional and organizational conducts and practices into recognizable groups and the urge to comprehend the communication context (Eisenberg & Riley, 2001). Then, it is said that patterns of human behaviour and meaning make up organizational culture. Communication is still an interactive feature through which all potential enabling and limiting forces must travel, especially in light of the perception that human behaviours have an impact on social and organizational systems. Employee empowerment and education may arise from regular discussions on organizational culture, identity, and the change process inside institutions.

Moreover, there is a need for employees to know their role in the institution, what is expected of them and what they stand to benefit from decisions made within the institutions. As such, strategic communication emerges as it concentrates on "how the organisation presents and promotes itself" by the help of its internal stakeholders [Hallahan et al. \(2007\)](#).

Additionally, a need exists for a clear articulation of how management should be managing the implementation of strategy. A well-developed communication management strategy aimed at improving communication channels is needed to address this problem. Furthermore, the same communication channels can be used by employees to identify, within organisational structures, oppressive areas which will in turn enable identification of diversity of the members of the organisation [Putnam and Mumby \(2014\)](#). As thus communicators have an important part to play in guiding businesses to maintain healthy relationships with employees, corporate reputation and brand positioning in their respective markets [Columbine \(2007\)](#).

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

## REFERENCES

[Argenti, P. A, Howell, R, A & Beck, K. B. \(2005\). The Strategic Communication Imperative. MITSloan Management Review, 46\(3\).](#)

- Babbie, E. (2007). *The Practice of Social Research* (11th Ed.). USA : Thomson Wadsworth.
- Columbine, N. (2007). Connecting Communication to Strategy to Achieve Better Business Results. *Journal of Marketing*, 7.
- Cowan, D. (2014). *Strategic Internal Communication : How to Build Employee Engagement and Performance*. London : Cogan Page.
- Creswell, J.W., & Clark, P.V.L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). USA : Sage.
- Cronjé, S. (2005). The Drivers of Strategy Implementation. In Ehlers, T & Lazenby, K. (eds). *Strategic Management : Southern African Concepts and Cases*. Pretoria : Van Schaik.
- Eisenberg, E.M., & Riley, P. (2001). Organisational Culture. In Jablin, F.S & Putnam, L.L (eds.), *The New Handbook Organisational Communication : Advances in Theory, Research and Methods*. Thousand Oaks : Sage.
- Farwell, J.P. (2012). *Persuasion and Power : The Art of Strategic Communication*. Washington : Georgetown University Press.
- Griffin, E.A. (2012). *First Look at Communication Theory*. (8th ed.). USA : Mc Grawhill.
- Grunig, J.E. (1992). What is Excellence in Management ? In : Grunig, J.E. et al (eds.), *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*. New Jersey : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Grunig, J.E. & Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing Public Relations*. NY : Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Grunig, J.E., & White, J. (1992). The Effect of Worldviews on Public Relations Theory and Practice. In : Grunig, J.E. et al (eds.), *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*. Hillside, NJ : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Grunig, L.A. (1992). How Public Relations/ Communication Departments Should Adapt to the Structure and Environment of an Organisation and What They Actually do. In: Hallahan, K., et al. (2007). *Defining Strategic Communication*. *Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1(1): 3-35.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15531180701285244>
- Grunig, L.A., Grunig, J.E., & Ehling, W.P. (1992). What is an Effective Organisation ? In: Grunig, J.E. et al. (eds), *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*. Hillsdale, NJ : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hallahan, K., et al. (2007). *Defining Strategic Communication*. *Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1(1): 3-35.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15531180701285244>
- Indulska, M., & Recker, J.C. (2008). Design Science in IS research; A Literature Analysis. In Gregor, S and Jo, S. (Eds), *Proceedings 4th Biennial ANU Workshop on Information System Foundations*, Canberra, Australia.
- Letlatsa, Relebohile Magdalene Matsepo. (2018). "Implementation of a Communication Strategy for Stakeholder Engagement in Institutions of Higher Learning in Lesotho." PhD diss., University of Pretoria.  
<https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.1080/02500167.2023.2260580>
- Leximancer. (2011). *Leximancer manual version 4*.
- Littlejohn, S.W. (2002). *Theories Human Communication*. (7th ed.). Australia: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.
- Claire, M. (2014). *Marie Claire : Think Smart Look Amazing*.
- Mintzeberg, H., Ahlstrand, B., & Lampel, J. (1998). *Strategy Safari : the Complete Guide Through the Wilds of Strategic Management*. London : FT Prentice Hall.

- Monge, P.R., & Contractor, N.S. (2001). Emergence of Communication Networks. In Jablin, F.M., & Putnam, L.L. (eds), *The New Handbook of Organisational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research and Methods*. US: Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412986243.n12>
- O'Hair, D., Friedrich, W.G., & Dixon, L.D. (2011). *Strategic Communication in Business and the Professions*. USA : Pearson.
- Patel, F., Li, M., & Sooknanan, P. (2011). *Intercultural Communication : Building a Global Community*. California : SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446270318>
- Puth, G. (2002). *The Communicating Leader ; The Key to Strategic Alignment*. (2nd ed.). South Africa: Van Schaik.
- Putnam, L., & Mumby, D.K. (2014). *Sage Handbook of Organisational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research and Methods*. Sage. <https://univofpretoria.on.worldcat.org/search?queryString=au:Linda.%20Putnam&databaseList=283.638>
- Raman, M., & Singh, A. (2010). *Business Communication*. India: Oxford University Press. <https://india.oup.com/product/business-communication-9780198077053>
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research Methods for Business Students*. Harlow : PEARSON Education Limited.
- Shockley-Zalabak, P. (2005). *Fundamentals of Organisational Communication : Knowledge, Sensitivity, Skills, Values*. (3rd ed.). USA : Longman Publishers.
- Steyn, B. (2003). From Strategy to Corporate Communication Strategy: a Conceptualisation. *Journal of Communication Management*, 8(2) 168-183. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13632540410807637>
- Teddle, C. & Yu, F. (2007). Mixed Methods Sampling : a Typology with Examples. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), 77-100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689806292430>