

The communication approach of the *loveLife* HIV/AIDS prevention programme

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
OPSOMMING	iii
INDEX OF FIGURES	v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background	1
1.1.1 The problem of HIV/AIDS	1
1.1.2 HIV/AIDS: a developmental issue.....	3
1.1.3 Development communication as a framework for HIV/AIDS prevention.....	4
1.1.4 HIV/AIDS prevention programmes in South Africa.....	5
1.1.4.1 <i>Khomanani - Caring Together</i>	6
1.1.4.2 <i>Soul City and Soul Buddyz</i>	7
1.1.4.3 <i>loveLife</i>	8
1.2. Problem statement.....	13
1.3 Research questions.....	13
1.4 Research objectives	14
1.5 Central theoretical assumptions	15
1.6 Research methodology	15
1.6.1 Literature review	16
1.6.2 Empirical study	17
1.6.2.1 Qualitative content analysis	17
1.6.2.2 Semi-structured interviews.....	18
1.6.2.3 Focus group discussions	19
1.6.2.4 Triangulation	19
1.7 Chapter overview.....	20

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY ON THE NORMATIVE COMMUNICATION THEORIES OF MODERNISATION AND THE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH REGARDING HIV/AIDS PREVENTION	22
2.1 Introduction	22
2.2 Health Communication.....	23
2.2.1 Social Learning Theory	24
2.2.2 Health Belief Model (HBM)	26
2.2.3 Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour	27
2.2.4 Entertainment education strategy.....	29
2.2.5 Social Marketing Theory	29
2.2.6 Conclusion regarding theories, strategies and models.....	31
2.3 Developments in the theoretical premise of Development Communication	31
2.3.1 Brief overview of the progression of development communication theory	31
2.3.2 The modernist and postmodernist paradigms.....	32
2.3.3 Early development communication: Modernisation theory.....	34
2.3.4 Criticisms on modernisation	38
2.3.5 Participatory two-way communication	40
2.4 Theoretical premises of participatory communication	42
2.4.1 Freireian participatory communication	43
2.4.1.1 Broadening the concept of Freireian participation.....	44
2.4.2 Involvement as participation	45
2.4.3 Empowerment as participation.....	47
2.4.3.1 Difficulties with empowerment in participation	49
2.4.4 Public relations and excellence theory: lessons in participation	50
2.4.4.1 Game theory in the excellence study	50
2.4.4.2 The role of the communication practitioner or development communicator	53
2.4.5 Habermasian communicative action	56
2.4.6 Criticism regarding participatory communication.....	60
2.4.7 Persuasion and behavioural change in light of participation.....	62
2.5 The middle ground between modernisation and participation	64
2.6 Conclusion	64

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	67
3.1 Introduction	67
3.2 Research approach	68
3.3 Research design and methodology	70
3.3.1 Qualitative Content analysis.....	70
3.3.1.2 The process of qualitative content analysis	71
3.3.1.2.1 Sampling of texts.....	71
3.3.1.2.2 Coding.....	75
3.3.1.2.3 Reliability	76
3.3.1.2.4 Codebook	76
3.3.1.2.5 Formulation of criteria and constructs	77
3.3.2 Interviewing	86
3.3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews.....	86
3.3.2.2 Interview Sampling	87
3.3.2.3 Recording and note-taking	88
3.3.2.4 The interview guide	88
3.3.2.5 Transcription of the interviews	88
3.3.2.6 Analysis	89
3.3.2.7 Criticism of semi-structured interviews	89
3.3.3 Focus Group discussions.....	90
3.3.3.1 Focus group implementation.....	91
3.3.3.2 Description of the groundBREAKER and <i>mpintshi</i> focus group	91
3.3.3.3 Description of participant focus group.....	92
3.3.3.4 Problems encountered with the focus group discussions.....	92
3.3.3.6 Criticism of Focus Groups.....	93
3.4 Ethical Considerations	93
3.5 Conclusion	94

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF <i>LOVELIFE</i>'S COMMUNICATION	95
4.1 Introduction	95
4.2 A brief description of <i>LoveLife</i> 's programme and the terms used in analysis	96
4.3 <i>LoveLife</i> 's description of its communication approach and practices	96
4.3.1 <i>LoveLife</i> 's description of its communication approach and practices in the policy documents and reports analysed	96
4.3.1.1 Document 1: <i>Communicating loveLife</i> (<i>loveLife</i> , 2003)	97
4.3.1.2 Document 2: <i>Report on activities and progress 2006</i> (<i>loveLife</i> , 2007a).....	102
4.3.1.3 Document 3: <i>LoveLife's Communication strategy</i> (Harrison, 2007)	107
4.3.1.4 Document 4: <i>Talk about it: June 2007</i> (<i>loveLife</i> , 2007e)	110
4.3.1.5 Document 5: Inside Out #9: April to June 2007 (<i>loveLife</i> , 2007f)	111
4.3.1.6 Conclusion regarding the analysis of the policy and reportive texts.....	112
4.3.2 <i>LoveLife</i> 's description of its communication approach according to head office	112
4.3.2.1 Interview 1: David Harrison	112
4.3.2.2 Interview 2: Botha Swarts	113
4.3.2.3 Interview 3: Thulile Seleka	113
4.3.2.4 Interview 4: Angela Stewart-Buchanon	113
4.3.2.5 Analysis of the interviews.....	114
4.3.2.6 Conclusion regarding analysis of the interviews at head office	120
4.3.2.7 Conclusion regarding the public side of <i>loveLife</i> 's communication	121
4.4 <i>LoveLife</i> 's apparent communication approach and practices	121
4.4.1 Document 1: <i>Lovefacts for a love life generation</i> (<i>loveLife</i> , 2007b).....	121
4.4.2 Document 2: Love them enough to talk about sex (<i>loveLife</i> , 2007c).....	123
4.4.3 Document 3: <i>Uncut: September 2007</i> (<i>loveLife</i> , 2007d)	125
4.4.4 Conclusion regarding the public side of <i>loveLife</i> 's communication	126
4.5 The perception of <i>loveLife</i> 's communication approach and practices by peer-motivators and programme participants	126
4.5.1 Perceptions of groundBREAKERS and <i>mpintshi's</i> at the Orange Farm Y-Centre in Gauteng	126
4.5.2 The perception of participants at the <i>loveLife</i> Y-Centre in Orange Farm in Gauteng	131
4.5.3 Conclusion on the Orange Farm Focus Groups.....	132
4.6 Conclusion	132

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	136
5.1 Introduction	136
5.2 Review and interpretation of findings.....	136
5.2.1 The principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication applicable to improved HIV/AIDS prevention programmes	137
5.2.2 <i>LoveLife's</i> communication.....	140
5.2.2.1 <i>LoveLife's</i> communication approach and practices in terms of the principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication	140
5.3 Final conclusion and recommendations	149
ADDENDUM A: <i>LOVELIFE-SPECIFIC TERMS / ACTIVITIES</i>	152
ADDENDUM B: <i>LOVELIFE'S MEDIA ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN EVOLUTION</i>	156
ADDENDUM C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR <i>LOVELIFE HEAD OFFICE</i>.....	174
ADDENDUM D QUESTION SCHEDULE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS.....	176
ADDENDUM E: SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	177
BIBLIOGRAPHY	179

ABSTRACT

loveLife, the South African national HIV/AIDS prevention programme for youth, is known for its brand-oriented billboards and mass media campaign that ranges over various print-, broadcast- and alternative media.

However, the organisation also implements a national grass-roots peer motivation programme where various activities are co-ordinated by youths (GroundBREAKERS and Mpintshis) from the community.

The organisation has been criticised for its communication approach, with many researchers primarily focusing on the organisation's mass media and billboards.

This study investigates the communicative approach(es) in *loveLife*'s programme implementation in the light of the normative theory of participatory communication. The focus of this study is to identify how *loveLife* describes its communication approach, what communication approach the organisation employs and how the organisation's communication approach is perceived by a sample of its target audience.

The research was conducted by means of a literature review, qualitative content analysis of *loveLife*'s policy documentation and a selection of the organisation's media. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted at head office, which are contrasted with focus groups with the participants at an implementation site.

Broadly, it was found that *loveLife*'s programme is more participatory than most critics would expect and that the organisation attempts to put its primary focus on face-to-face communication. But, there is also tension in what *loveLife* communicates on a national level and how it relates to grass-roots activities as the national / media-driven communication is more modernistic in its approach, whereas the grass-roots communication is more participatory.

Keywords: HIV/AIDS, youth, behavioural change, *loveLife*, health communication programmes, social marketing, participatory communication, two-way symmetrical communication, public relations, campaigns.

OPSOMMING

loveLife, die Suid-Afrikaanse nasionale MIV/VIGS-voorkomingsprogram vir die jeug, word geken aan brand-georiënteerde buitelugreklameborde en 'n massamedia-veldtog wat oor verkeie gedrukte-, uitsaai- en alternatiewe media strek.

Maar, die organisasie implementer ook 'n nasionale grondvlak eweknie-motiveringsprogram, waar jongmense uit die gemeenskap (genaamd GroundBREAKERS en Mpintshis) verskillende aktiwiteite koördineer.

Die organisasie is al vir sy kommunikasiebenadering gekritiseer, met navorsers wat gewoonlik op die massiekommunikasieveldtog en veral buitelugreklameborde fokus.

Hierdie studie ondersoek die kommunikasiebenadering(s) van *loveLife* se program-implementasie in die lig van die normatiewe teorie van die deelnemende benadering tot ontwikkelingskommunikasie. Die fokus van hierdie studie is om te identifiseer hoe *loveLife* sy eie kommunikasiebenadering beskryf, watter kommunikasiebenadering die organisasie implementer en wat 'n gedeelte van die teikengehoor se persepsie van die organisasie se kommunikasie is.

Die navorsing behels 'n literatuurstudie wat die basis vorm van 'n kwalitatiewe inhoudsanalise van *loveLife* se beleidsdokumente en 'n seleksie van die organisasie se gedrukte media. Semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude is by die organisasie se hoofkantoor gedoen. Laastens is die bogenoemde gekontrasteer met deelnemerfokusgroepe by een van die implementeringspunte.

Breedweg is bevind dat *loveLife* se program meer deelnemend is as wat gewoonlik in navorsing gevind word en dat die organisasie poog om sy primêre fokus op een-tot-een kommunikasie te plaas. Maar, daar is ook 'n diskrepans in hoe dit wat *loveLife* op nasionale vlak gekommunikeer word met die grondvlak skakel aangesien die nasionale / media-gedreve kommunikasie meer modernisties in benadering is, teenoor die

grondvlakkommunikasie wat meer deelnemend is.

Sleutelwoorde: MIV/VIGS, jeug, gedragsverandering, *loveLife*, gesondheidskommunikasieprogramme, sosiale bemarking, deelnemende kommunikasie, twee-rigting simmetriese kommunikasie, skakelkunde, veldtogte.

INDEX OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour	28
Figure 2: Ladder of social participation	46
Figure 3: British Department of Health model of participation and involvement.....	47
Figure 4: Four models of public relations	51
Figure 5: Game Theory.....	52
Figure 6: Roles within the public relations excellence theory	54
Figure 7: Theory of communicative action	57
Figure A1: A poster / billboard from “Foreplay” launch campaign – 1999	157
Figure A2: “Talk about it before accidents happen”-billboard – Phase 1 / 2000.....	157
Figure A3: “I had sex. Will I die?” billboard – phase 2 of 2000	158
Figure A4: “The Future ain’t <i>what it used to be</i> ”-billboard – phase 3 of 2000	158
Figure A5: “Shaping the future: Choices” – 2001	159
Figure A6: “Shaping the future: His & Hers” taxi side panel – 2001	159
Figure A7: “Shaping the future: Love yourself enough?” – 2001	160
Figure A8: “Is this your relationship?”-billboard – phase 1 of 2002	161
Figure A9: “Contrasting Quotes”-billboard – phase 2 of 2002	161
Figure A10: “Everyone he’s slept with...”-billboard - phase 1 of 2003.....	162
Figure A11: “Love...”-billboard – phase 2 of 2003	163
Figure A12: “2010 – love to be there...”-billboard/poster – final phase of 2003	164
Figure A13: “Pilot, graduate and mother”-billboards – 2004	165
Figure A14: “Get attitude”-teaser poster from 2005	166
Figure A15: “Get attitude”-teaser billboard with born free sticker	166
Figure A16: “Born free” billboards – final phase of 2005	167
Figure A17: The billboards from the first phase of 2006	168
Figure A18: The billboards from the first phase of 2006	170
Figure A19: The billboards from the 2007 campaign.....	171
Figure A20: The “Make your Move” billboard from 2008	172
Figure A21: What’s your formula campaign from 2009	173

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Two and a half decades since the discovery of the virus that causes AIDS, scientists have found a cocktail of drugs to keep many of those infected alive, but they have been unable, despite vast resources lavished on the problem, to motivate people to remain free of HIV by reducing their sexual partners, delaying the onset of sex or using a condom.

Rena Singer (2005)

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The problem of HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS¹ is one of the most pertinent issues facing society today. Since 1983 when the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and its etiological² link to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) was discovered, the epidemic has spread such that by the end of 2007 projections indicated approximately 33 million infections worldwide, with an estimated 25 million AIDS-related deaths (Avert, 2009a). One of the regions where this pandemic has had the greatest impact is sub-Saharan Africa. This region accounts for close to 10% of the world's population, with 67% of people living with HIV (22 million). In comparison to the rest of the world, the prevalence in North America, Western and Central Europe was a mere 0.4% of people (2 million) in 2007 (UNAIDS/WHO, 2008).

Within sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa has been determined one of the countries with the highest incidence of HIV infection worldwide (Avert, 2009b; Bennett, Ng'weshemi & Boerma, 1997:9; Shisana & Simbayi, 2002:1), and one of the fastest growing HIV epidemics in the world (Gouws, 2005:74). The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV

¹ The use of the term *HIV/AIDS* is widely debated in the literature. It will be used in this manner throughout the dissertation (unless in quotes), as this is the form used mostly by *loveLife* in their documentation. However, where there is specific reference to HIV (or AIDS) as a singular concept, the term will be used as it is.

² The term *etiology* refers to the medical investigation of the origin and characteristics of diseases.

and AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization¹ (WHO; 2008:2) conservatively estimated that the number of infections in South Africa would have reached 5.7 million by the end of 2007. This translates to an estimated prevalence rate of 18.1% in the age bracket of 18 to 49 (with low and high estimates of 15.4% and 20.9%, respectively). In comparison, the adult (18 to 49) prevalence is estimated to be 5% in sub-Saharan Africa. South Africa also had the fourth highest adult prevalence in the region (and the world), after Swaziland (26.1%), Botswana (23.9%) and Lesotho (23.2%) at the end of 2007 (UNAIDS/WHO, 2008). The last statistics by UNAIDS/WHO (2009) indicated prevalence in South Africa to be 16.9%, this echoes the stabilising trend found by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) prevalence study of 2008 (Shisana *et al.*, 2009).

South African Minister of Health, Aaron Motsoaledi (2009) acknowledged that although the South African population accounts for only 1.7% of the world's population, it accounts for 17% of the world's HIV/AIDS burden. In the same context, Motsoaledi (2009) mentioned that in eleven years (from 1997 to 2008) the rate of death doubled in South Africa, from 300 000 to 756 000 – a figure that he attributed to HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the South African life expectancy fell to 47 years, owing to HIV/AIDS.

The South African Department of Health's study (2008) on HIV prevalence amongst women attending antenatal clinics estimates that 28% of pregnant women were living with HIV in 2007. Because infection rates vary amongst different groups of people, these statistics cannot be extrapolated to other (non-pregnant) groups. It does however indicate that the disease adversely affects women who are sexually active.

The Human Sciences Research Council (Shisana *et al.*, 2009:30) 2008 survey on HIV prevalence, incidence, behaviour and communication indicated an estimated HIV prevalence of 10.6% in 2008. This translates to 5.2 million people living with HIV in the South African population.

It is clear from the above-mentioned estimates on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in South

¹ The organisation's name is in American English, hence the spelling.

Africa that the epidemic has reached exceptionally severe proportions in the South African context. In order to understand the South African context, one needs to acknowledge the developmental context of the country.

1.1.2 HIV/AIDS: a developmental issue

It is evident from the statistics from the previous section that HIV/AIDS has hardly affected the West, or First World. The prevalence amongst adults is extremely low in the United States and Europe, at 0.4% compared to 5% in sub-Saharan Africa, which is part of the developing world (UNAIDS/WHO, 2008). South Africa is one of the sub-Saharan African countries hardest hit by the epidemic.

In 1999, then President Thabo Mbeki caused an international furore by claiming, *inter alia*, that poverty was an important ‘cause’ of AIDS when he was interviewed on the issue in *Time* magazine (Willan, 2004:112). Although the implications of this statement are clearly problematic and have contributed to much confusion regarding HIV/AIDS prevention in South Africa, the statement displays an insight into the context of HIV/AIDS in Africa.

The disease has in recent years moved beyond a mere medical problem to a ubiquitous issue that spans across the broader society. The pandemic has furthermore been promoted as a humanitarian crisis that has had a greater impact in the developing world, where high levels of poverty, illiteracy and socio-economic marginalisation have exacerbated it (HESA, 2008). For many South Africans, the struggle against developmental issues such as “poverty, unemployment, lack of education and other health problems” takes precedence to HIV/AIDS (Squire, 2007:9). Furthermore, these issues play an important part in the incidence of the disease, with poorer communities being the worst affected. According to Tsafack-Temah (2008:4), it is essential to view HIV/AIDS as a problem that is not only a health issue, but also a problem that has cultural, economic and sociological determinants, such as gender inequality.

Schoepf (2003:30) considers HIV/AIDS as a disease of under- or uneven development. UNAIDS (2002) goes further by terming the effect of HIV/AIDS “un-development”; that is,

development accomplishments are obliterated by this scourge. Fourie (2006:5) also emphasises that HIV/AIDS is a developmental issue that needs to be addressed through “socially inclusive, long-term strategies”. Hence, it can be concluded that strategies that address HIV/AIDS in the South African context need to be addressed within a development context (informed by development communication), as the disease is driven by and deepens underdevelopment or developmental issues.

1.1.3 Development communication as a framework for HIV/AIDS prevention

As HIV/AIDS has been identified as a developmental issue, the theories and principles of development communication have become key to HIV prevention. Development communication is shifting away from “one-way, top-down” communication techniques towards a participatory communication approach (Richardson, 2003). The top-down or modernist approach targeted the economic growth of countries towards the example of developed countries (Yoon, 2003), whereas the participatory approach to development communication as a norm, amongst other aspects, requires community participation at all levels of implementation.

The same trend occurred in the 1970s within the domain of public relations through Grunig's (1989:21) coining of the two-way symmetrical public relations model. He deemed two-way asymmetrical communication as “unethical, socially irresponsible and ineffective”. This is particularly relevant in the consideration of behavioural change concerning HIV/AIDS. This form of communication requires a major change in perceptions and values, which is a far more complex process than buying a product, as no tangible reward to sustain the change in behaviour is apparent (Andreasen & Kotler, 2003:330; Sheth, 2000:613).

Within the shift of development communication from disseminative modernist programmes to programmes that focus on inclusive participatory approaches, programmes that fall within the new participatory paradigm are likely to be more successful in the sphere of HIV/AIDS prevention. This assumption is based on empirical studies that have proven that programmes that are more participatory have greater success. For example, Huesca

(2000:73–84) empirically illustrates the way a participatory approach increased the effectiveness of the Border Committee of Working Women, a non-profit organisation in Mexico that helps improve the working conditions of sweatshop workers. In Calcutta (India), the Sonagachi Project – a community-oriented project aimed at sex workers – is widely regarded to have had a remarkable outcome in terms of HIV prevention amongst participants. This significant result is attributed to the participatory approach adopted (Gupta, Parkhurst, Ogden, Aggleton & Mahal, 2008; Jana, Bandyopadhyay, Saha & Dutta, 1999; Cohen, 2004). Lastly, the success of Uganda's reduction of HIV prevalence has been linked to the creation of an open, enabling environment for confronting the epidemic, that is the cultivation of a participatory environment in the country (Parkhurst, 2001; Gupta *et al.*, 2008).

1.1.4 HIV/AIDS prevention programmes in South Africa

Although South Africa's approach to HIV/AIDS has been greatly criticised, specifically in reference to the statements and policies of former President Thabo Mbeki and the former Minister of Health Mantho Tshabalala-Msimang (Squire, 2007:44), the country has provided a platform for HIV prevention within its revised new National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (NPS) of 2006, which is aimed at structuring HIV/AIDS initiatives in the country between 2007 and 2011. This plan focuses on four areas: prevention; treatment, care and support; research and monitoring; and human rights and access to the law.

In 2008, Barbara Hogan was appointed as the new Minister of Health, effectively ending her predecessor's denialism of the HIV issue. In 2009, Aaron Motsoaledi replaced Hogan in President Jacob Zuma's cabinet. On 29 October 2009, Zuma delivered a historic speech on HIV/AIDS to the National Council of Provinces, which was considered to be an official indication of the demise of state-supported denialism of HIV/AIDS. In this speech, Zuma (2009) recognised that South Africa has very high awareness levels of HIV/AIDS, but that "we should now seriously work to convert this knowledge into a change in behaviour". Furthermore, he acknowledged the NPS and indicated government's commitment to strengthening the programmes already in place with "renewed energy in the fight against AIDS".

The national government, along with the provincial governments, conducts HIV/AIDS communication activities mainly through the Departments of Health and Education, and in some provinces through Provincial and Local Aids Councils, providing an interdepartmental focus on HIV/AIDS. A number of national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) conduct communication activities at national level. The most prominent programmes and campaigns run in South Africa include *Khomanani*, *Soul City* and *loveLife*.

1.1.4.1 *Khomanani* - Caring Together

Khomanani ('Let us work together') is the primary national HIV/AIDS campaign in South Africa (Parker, Rau & Peppa, 2007:53). It was launched in August 2001 and is managed by the Department of Health (DoH), with its planning and execution implemented by private-sector agencies contracted through the biennial state tender process (Bateman, 2006).

The initiative's communication channels include a mix of conventional advertising, public service announcements, social mobilisation activities and unconventional advertising, through which multiple messages are communicated. *Khomanani*'s (2007) vision is to develop simple, groundbreaking and effective messaging that is aimed at promoting a general healthy lifestyle amongst South Africans (and is therefore not only focused on HIV/AIDS, although HIV/AIDS is addressed in most of the organisation's integrated focus areas).

Collinge (2005:207) describes *Khomanani* as several campaigns rolled into one, with each sub-campaign designed to support a particular aspect of the NPS. According to the South African Department of Health (2003), *Khomanani* "reached 400 000 South Africans through social mobilisation efforts – plus millions countrywide through print and electronic media exposure" in six months.

In 2006, a botched government tender process halted the functioning of the *Khomanani*

programme, which placed the campaign under scrutiny (Bateman, 2006:766). According to Collinge (2005:221), the tender process negatively affected the effectiveness of the *Khomanani* campaign, yet the same process ensures that the campaign's effectiveness is measured and activities are adjusted regularly. The HSRC (Shisana *et al.*, 2009:68, 76) survey indicated that *Khomanani* had the lowest reach of the larger national prevention programmes, with 40% of the respondents indicating awareness of the programme. The programme has been operational again since 2007.

1.1.4.2 *Soul City* and *Soul Buddyz*

The *Soul City* Institute describes itself as a "dynamic and innovative multi-media health promotion and social change project. Through drama and entertainment *Soul City* reaches more than 16 million South Africans" (*Soul City*, 2006). *Soul City*'s approach is described as entertainment education by Coolidge (2006), and Singhal and Rogers (2003:303).

Soul City's campaign is primarily focused on adults and was initiated in the early 1990s, whereas *Soul Buddyz* is focused on children and was launched in the early 2000s (Shisana *et al.*, 2009:58). Apart from prevention, *Soul City* aims to transform the social context of the epidemic with regard to attitudes, stigmatisation and social norms.

Soul City's television series, run in partnership with BP PLC and Old Mutual, was launched in 1994, with eight series aired to date. The series addresses broader health issues in the form of a television soap opera or drama in which characters interact in various situations. The series is supported by radio, advertising and advocacy in various forms of media, as well as a life skills booklet addressed at Grade 7 learners. The organisation claims that it is the second most-watched series in South Africa (*Soul City*, 2007).

The HSRC (Shisana *et al.*, 2009:59–60) survey found that *Soul City* and *Soul Buddyz* increased their reach between 2005 and 2008, with 75.3% of the respondents indicating awareness of the programme and more than 50% of the most at-risk populations being reached by the programme (excluding males in the age bracket of 50 and older). The survey also indicated that the child-directed campaign of *Soul Buddyz* also had an

extensive reach in other demographic groups (not only children at whom the campaign was targeted).

1.1.4.3 *loveLife*

*LoveLife*¹ is a national HIV/AIDS prevention programme for youth, launched in 1999. It is considered to be the largest HIV/AIDS prevention programme ever launched in South Africa, owing to its annual budget of approximately R200 million since 2003 (Stadler & Hlongwe, 2002; Bechan, 2003; Collinge, 2005). *LoveLife* is specifically aimed at pre- and newly sexually active adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 (*loveLife*, 2003b) and is the “largest youth focused HIV prevention campaign in South Africa” (Pettifor *et al.*, 2004:6).

Considering the organisation’s communication approach, the general public² tend to associate *loveLife* with its mass media billboard campaign. However, from its inception, *loveLife* has aimed at combining face-to-face communication and social programmes with a highly visible branded mass media programme (Collinge, 2005:203).

Templeton (2003) and Clacherty (2003) explain *loveLife*’s strategy as three-pronged. Firstly, it creates awareness of HIV/AIDS amongst its target audience through media. Secondly, it seeks to develop support services to assist the youth in understanding and reacting to their messages. Thirdly, it aims to monitor and research its organisational impact continually.

¹ In this section, *loveLife* is briefly described, as more detail will be given in Addendums A and B, as well as in Chapter 4 in which the analysis is presented.

² The general public doesn’t fall into *loveLife*’s target audience of 12 to 17 year olds and thus has less chances to come into contact with the organisation’s other communication channels such as face-to-face communication.

The organisation describes its multi-faceted communication strategy as follows:

... for example, billboard and taxi advertising positions the *loveLife* brands, provokes debate and provides a contact number for help around sexual and reproductive health, sexuality and HIV/AIDS. Television, print and particularly radio allows for greater interaction and discussion, while *loveLife*'s service delivery and outreach allows young people to interpret and engage with issues relevant to their lives (*loveLife*, 2003b:2).

LoveLife's programme consists of more than a media campaign, as the organisation runs seventeen Youth Centres (Y-Centres). Apart from these, the organisation runs the National Adolescent Friendly Clinic Initiative (NAFCI clinics) and franchises through which youths are involved at a one-to-one level.

LoveLife maintains that the programme is highly effective and that it has a revolutionary approach, indicating through research (see for example Pettifor *et al.*, 2004:68) that the campaign is highly recognised within its target market. The organisation continuously claims that its brand is highly recognised and that its programmes are familiar to 62% of their target audience (*loveLife*, 2004). In this regard, Harrison (2008a) notes that *loveLife* is the only HIV/AIDS intervention programme in the world that is endorsed by the WHO. The HSRC (Shisana *et al.*, 2009) survey indicated that *loveLife* had a high success rate in terms of awareness, with 79.1% of youth in the age bracket of 15 to 24 being reached by *loveLife* in 2008 (compared to 67.7% in 2005) and 71.2% of adults in the age bracket of 25 to 49 (compared to 48.7% in 2005). Overall, according to the HSRC survey *loveLife*'s programme reached 67.3% of the respondents in the survey, indicating that it is the most recognised HIV/AIDS campaign in South Africa.

Zisser and Francis (2006:195) indicate through research on *loveLife*'s 'Get Attitude' campaign that *loveLife* has succeeded in gaining the awareness of the South African youth. Furthermore, they found that this group applies the 'Get Attitude' message to their

own lives¹. Despite this, they claim that for those not familiar with the organisation, the message is not clearly linked with HIV/AIDS prevention.

Others (Delate, 2001:15; Smith, 2002; Bechan, 2003:63–65; Jordaan, 2006; Martins, 2007; Prinsloo, 2007) have also criticised *loveLife*. Some have criticised that mere awareness is not an indication of effective behavioural change, while others have indicated that *loveLife*'s messages do not necessarily reach their target market successfully, are not always clearly understood and do not lead to change in behaviour. Owing to this discrepancy between awareness of the programme and behavioural change, *loveLife*'s communication approach can be questioned.

Shortly before World AIDS Day in 2002, Smith (2002) wrote the following in a *Mail & Guardian* article on *loveLife* and HIV/AIDS prevention:

loveLife's advertising campaigns are up the pole. They are useless, ineffective and obscure ... Never has more money been spent on more incomprehensible advertising.

According to Delate as quoted by Singer (2005), *loveLife* could be compounding the issue of HIV/AIDS as it glamorises sex. "When you see many *loveLife* [adverts] you think sex. That's it." This leads Singer (2005) to label *loveLife* an "expensive experiment in social engineering in the absence of proven methods".

Prinsloo (2007:30) suggests that although *loveLife* uses the framework of consumer culture as an entry point in order to engage with their target audience (referring to *loveLife* positioning its brand among other popular brands in consumer culture), the communication takes place in an idealist world that is quite removed from the actual context in which youths need to negotiate, and thus the HIV/AIDS prevention messages could fail. Furthermore, *loveLife*'s image of the life of youths, as presented in their campaigns, is glamorised and therefore the programme fails to address those young people who are

¹ For more information on the 'Get Attitude' campaign, see Addendum B.

already living with HIV.

Parker (2003) has emerged as one of *loveLife*'s most vocal critics, pointing out flawed research reporting and interpretation of research results, and *loveLife*'s competitive approach to other HIV/AIDS intervention programmes in the country. He demonstrates that *loveLife* created a hegemonic ideology with a specific group of partners that would all ensure that the programme retained support (Parker, 2004). In essence, Parker investigates the interrelation amongst claims about HIV/AIDS, *loveLife*'s success and the structural partnerships that would justify the claims. Owing to the structural partnership between *loveLife* and those that conduct the primary research on the organisation, Parker questions whether findings of *loveLife*'s effectiveness are objective. He also illustrates the way these claims are continually reiterated, despite other researchers contesting or questioning the organisation's research and its findings.

In an analysis of the reception of the 2004 billboard campaign, Jordaan (2006) found the messages to be ambiguous, as the culture and language differences of the South African audience are not considered. In the same study (Jordaan, 2006:121), *loveLife* is also criticised for branding without linking the brand to a specific product.

Martins' (2007) reception analysis of the *loveLife* 'Face It' campaign demonstrated that there were a multitude of interpretations of the billboards, and that urban youth could associate more easily with *loveLife*'s messages than rural youth. The study also found that the billboard's objectives were not sufficiently straightforward, forcing respondents to negotiate their meaning.

Saal (2008) indicates that teenagers interviewed in his study did not significantly identify with *loveLife*'s English teenager language used in the text. Francis and Rimensberger (2005:102) conclude that in their analysis of *loveLife* messages in magazines, "no clear message emerged in terms of guiding young people into a healthy sexuality that can work

in a real context". Bechan (2003) has also criticised *loveLife* for its contradictory, vague messages, stating that *loveLife*'s advertisements have taken the:

... **top-down** [own emphasis] approach to development communication as opposed to the more democratic participatory communication model where communities are researched at grassroots level to ascertain their needs and existing knowledge.

In contrast to this criticism, *loveLife* has operated under the slogan 'Talk about it', which encourages open, early and frank discussion of sex and sexuality in order to reduce HIV/AIDS infection, sexually transmitted infections and teenage pregnancy in the target group (*loveLife*, 2003c). At face value, this slogan indicates a form of participatory communication, as it encourages dialogue amongst young people, their parents and *loveLife* through events such as *loveLife Games*¹ and the Born Free Dialogues, or through their national helpline, *thethaJunction*.

¹ Addendum A provides a list of *loveLife*-specific terms and a description of activities.

1.2. Problem statement

Considering the above-mentioned criticism, *loveLife*'s communication appears to be directed towards modernist approaches, from which participatory communication models departed. But, participation in communication is not easily grouped as purely either disseminatory or participatory; therefore it would be oversimplifying to categorise an organisation's communication as only one or the other. Instead, participation in communication (participativeness) should be viewed as a continuum.

The level of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication in *loveLife*'s communication approach has a direct influence on the programme. It has been found that HIV/AIDS prevention programmes tend to be more successful when participatory approaches to communication (such as the participatory model from development communication and the two-way symmetrical model from public relations) are adopted (Grunig, 1989:22).

Considering this somewhat ambiguous background and controversy regarding *loveLife*'s communication approach within a developmental context (and the HIV/AIDS pandemic), the following general research question arises: What is the underlying or implicit communication approach¹ of the *loveLife* HIV/AIDS prevention programme?

1.3 Research questions

In order to be able to answer the above overarching question, the study was aimed at addressing the following research questions:

- What principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication are applicable to improved HIV/AIDS prevention programmes along the continuum from modernisation to participation?

¹ The possibility that *loveLife* applies a combination of approaches is acknowledged, but for the purpose of grammar and simplicity the questions only refer to approach.

- How does *loveLife* describe its communication in terms of the principles of participatory communication?
- To what extent does *loveLife*'s printed communication reflect the principles of participatory communication?
- How is *loveLife*'s communication perceived by participants at one of the organisation's sites in terms of the principles of participatory communication?

1.4 Research objectives

In accordance with the overarching and specific research questions, the following general research objective and specific research objectives were set.

The **general research objective** was to determine the underlying communication approach of the *loveLife* HIV/AIDS prevention programme. This study attempts to clarify the basic principles of participatory communication (which is generally considered a vague, immeasurable concept) in terms of constructs, in order to compare *loveLife*'s communication approach to the principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication. This is expected to provide a better understanding of the continuum of participativeness.

In response to the general research objective, the following **specific research objectives** were set:

- to identify the principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication that are applicable to improved HIV/AIDS prevention programmes along the continuum from modernisation to participation;
- to investigate *loveLife*'s description of its communication in terms of the principles of participatory communication;
- to determine the extent to which *loveLife*'s printed communication reflects the principles of participatory communication; and

- to investigate the perception of *loveLife*'s communication by participants at one of the organisation's sites in terms of the principles of participatory communication.

1.5 Central theoretical assumptions

Theoretically, the researcher has adopted the approach that theories progress along a continuum of participativeness. Therefore the study does not ignore specific theories or models used for behavioural change, but rather attempts to define and measure aspects of participativeness than pinpoint a specific theory.

Participatory communication, as applied in the fields of development communication and the excellence theory in public relations, provides a framework for health communication, through which programmes and campaigns can be adjusted sufficiently to adhere to cultural sensitivity, increased message feedback and heightened interactivity, therefore increasing the sustainability of the programme (Grunig, 1989; Yoon, 2003; Qakisa, 2003:60; Melkote, 2002:426). Thus, HIV/AIDS prevention programmes could be improved, if they were to be more participatory.

1.6 Research methodology

The research methodology consists of the following, a literature review and an empirical¹ study. The latter includes qualitative content analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The research methods were triangulated in order to ensure the internal validity of the study.

¹ It is acknowledged that there are different uses of terminology within the field of qualitative research. Although the term empirical is not always used in qualitative research, it was used in this study in order to discern the research activities from one another.

1.6.1 Literature review

The literature review aimed to outline progress of development communication with a focus on the participatory approach in health communication in order to provide constructs according to which the participativeness of *loveLife*'s communication can be assessed. To this end, an extensive study of literature was undertaken across a broad spectrum of sources in books, periodicals, conference proceedings and various other Internet resources.

In order to ascertain the uniqueness of the study, the following databases were consulted: EBSCOhost, Nexus, Library Catalogues, MCB Emerald and various Internet sources. This search found that although research has been conducted and is currently being conducted on *loveLife* (Stadler & Hlongwa, 2002; Bechan, 2003; Delate, 2001; Parker, 2003; 2004; Jordaan, 2006; Zisser & Francis, 2006; Martins, 2007; Prinsloo, 2007; Saal, 2008), studies rarely adopt the participatory or developmental approach to the organisation's communication and are mostly limited in focus to *loveLife*'s billboards and/or media campaign. Few studies have investigated *loveLife*'s communication holistically.

In terms of the above-mentioned studies on *loveLife*, the following themes were addressed. Delate (2001), Bechan (2004), Jordaan (2006) and Martins (2007) focused on either the semiotic reading or focus group interpretations of *loveLife* billboards. Stadler and Hlongwa (2002) conducted an overview of the reach of the campaign and the recall of its messages. Parker (2003; 2004) investigated *loveLife*'s partnership structures as part of an ideological hegemony. Prinsloo (2007) focused on *loveLife*'s framing of HIV/AIDS in the South African context. Francis and Rimensburger (2005) conducted content analysis of *loveLife* communication in three magazines. Collinge (2005) compared the organisation to *Soul City* and *Khomanani*, and was therefore limited in focus on the organisation.

1.6.2 Empirical study

The empirical study aimed to determine the communication approach of *loveLife* and investigated *loveLife*'s communication in comparison to the principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication. This was achieved through qualitative content analysis, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and triangulation of sources and methodology.

1.6.2.1 Qualitative content analysis

Content analysis is a formal research tool that is used to determine the presence (or absence) of certain words, themes or concepts in various forms of media (Du Plooy, 2001:191). Qualitative content analysis focuses on the “whole and the totality of impression (Gestalt) than on parts of the whole” (Holsti, 1969:9). Informal categories would therefore result in a broader perspective of the organisation’s intent and approach.

The analysis was qualitative in nature – identifying the present (and absent) content within the data. This method was followed rather than specific pre-coding based on frequencies, which occurs in quantitative analysis. A qualitative content analysis was conducted on policy documents and a selection of media used in the campaign. The principles of *loveLife* were examined, as expressed in policy documents and the media distributed during the 2007 campaign in the form of brochures and magazines. This was done because it was expected that the policy documents would yield a clearer and more direct indication of the intended communication approach of the organisation and the programme’s description of its communication, while the 2007 campaign media were expected to provide an insight into the implementation of communication.

Regarding the period of study, policy documents that influenced communication in 2007 and material compiled in 2007 were considered. Thus, the annual report on *loveLife*'s activities for 2006 was included as a document generated in 2007. The guide document “Communicating *loveLife*” (*loveLife*, 2003a) was also included because the organisation had not updated it and regularly used it as a basis for communication regarding the

programme.

This period was selected both because it limits the scope of the study and because 2007 is the period directly before *loveLife* shifted¹ its overall slogan from 'Talk about it' to 'Make your move', which offers an opportunity to examine the organisation's communication approach on a singular campaign idea, whilst giving an indication of the organisations communication approach at a set period of time.

1.6.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were considered an appropriate method by which to gain insight into *loveLife*'s communications approach. This was deemed to be the case as such interviews granted the researcher the opportunity to add and leave out questions in the interview process, while considering the relevance of information (Laws, 2003:286).

In order to gain insight into the communications approach and ascertain the organisation's view of itself in terms of the programme and organisational philosophy, interviews were conducted with the Chief executive officer (CEO), Media and information manager, Head of training and the Regional manager for South Gauteng. These interviews were subject to the willingness and availability of the intended parties. The initial intention was to interview three individuals, but the organisation assisted in arranging interviews with the abovementioned four individuals.

¹ For more information regarding *loveLife*'s campaign roll-out and the shift from "Talk about it" to "Make your Move" see Addendum B which describes the organisation's campaign evolution.

1.6.2.3 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions are interviews that involve a predetermined group of people (the focus group), during which a discussion between the individuals is moderated by a trained moderator according to a interview guide similar to that used in semi-structured interviews (Greenbaum, 1998:2–3). The focus group needs to be of a manageable size in order to encourage participation. In this study, the focus group was limited to 15.

Two focus group discussions were held with programme participants at the Orange Farm Y-Centre with the purpose of ascertaining the manner in which communication within *loveLife* filters down to the groundBREAKER¹ (facilitator) and *mpintshi* (volunteer), as well as the grass-roots participant level.

1.6.2.4 Triangulation

Triangulation of sources and methodology was implemented in order to ensure internal validity within this study. Internal validity was specifically important due to the qualitative nature of the study, as this is one of the biggest points of criticism that qualitative studies garner from the quantitative discipline.

Specific role-players within *loveLife* were consulted (see 1.6.2.2 and 1.6.2.3) and this was used to verify the content analysis of policy documents with actual practice. As this study is qualitative in nature, content analysis, interviews and focus group discussions were used to determine the organisation's communication practices and to gain further insight into its perceptions of its communication approach. These methods provided an opportunity to compare what the organisation said it does to what it appears to do and participants at the Y-Centre's perceptions thereof.

In addition to the above, theoretical triangulation was achieved by applying theories from development communication and public relations. This was done with the purpose of furthering the understanding of the principles of development communication theory.

¹ Addendum A contains a glossary of *loveLife*-specific terms.

1.7 Chapter overview

The context and background of the problem pertaining to this dissertation were outlined in this chapter. It also provided a contextualization of the study along with the research questions, objectives, methodology and research scope. The following table indicates the demarcation of the remaining chapters:

Table 1.1 Overview of chapters:

- Chapter 2: This chapter will present the results of the literature review on development communication focusing on the subfield of health communication. The primarily focus is on the shift in development communication's approach from modernisation to participatory communication. The principles of participatory communication will be explored in an attempt to concretise the concept of *participation*.
- Chapter 3: This chapter will detail the research design and methodology of the study, examining qualitative content analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions as research methods.
- Chapter 4: This chapter will present an overview of *loveLife*'s campaign and the analysis and evaluation of *loveLife*'s HIV/AIDS prevention campaign. These will be given in terms of the organisation's statements about itself (analysis of policy documents, semi-structured interviews at head office), its communication practice (selected campaign material and focus group discussion with groundBREAKERs) and perceptions of the organisation at grass-roots level (semi-structured interviews with participants at the Y-Centre).
- Chapter 5: This chapter will conclude the dissertation, through summarising the chapters and main findings. Each of the research questions will be linked to specific findings, in order to demonstrate the fulfilment of each objective. Lastly, broad recommendations will be made to *loveLife* regarding their communication approach.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY ON THE NORMATIVE COMMUNICATION THEORIES OF MODERNISATION AND THE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH REGARDING HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

2.1 Introduction

In chapter 1, the context and complexity of HIV/AIDS prevention in South Africa was outlined. In that chapter it was indicated that this dissertation would focus on the participatory approach in order to ascertain how *loveLife*'s communication approach adheres to the principles of the participatory approach to development communication.

It was also discussed in chapter 1 that *loveLife* operates in the South African context, with a specific focus on youth in impoverished township- or rural areas (see Section 1.1.4.3). In preparation of an analysis of *loveLife*'s communication, it is necessary to consider communication theories in a developmental context, as the organisation's primary target audience involves communities faced with developmental issues. This chapter explores the aspects of theory that may be relevant to *loveLife*'s communication approach and thus aims to address research objective 1: *to identify the principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication that are applicable to improved HIV/AIDS prevention programmes along the continuum from modernisation to participation*.

Firstly, in order to address this objective, the progression of development communication theory in the context of health communication is explored with modernisation as a starting point. Secondly, in contrast to modernisation, the participatory approach to development communication (and similar theories in communication, such as two-way symmetrical communication from public relations theory) is explored as a normative¹ model for HIV/AIDS or health communication.

¹ A normative model is a model that provides a standard of how things should be done or according to which activities should be structured. Within this study, the normative model will also provide a standard of measurement of *loveLife*'s communication approach.

This chapter serves to present the results of the literature review regarding the theoretical aspects of the modernisation and participation approaches to communication. Throughout this chapter, the theoretical discussions culminate in *specific theoretical perspectives*, which will be used as a measuring instrument by which the continuum of participativeness and thereby the communication approach of organisations may be ascertained. These constructs gained from the theoretical perspectives will then be used to assess the communication approach of *loveLife* (in chapter 4). These theoretical perspectives should be read in conjunction with the theoretical assumptions (see Section 1.5).

2.2 Health Communication

In a study that focuses on the communication approach of an HIV/AIDS prevention programme such as *loveLife*, it is necessary to examine health communication broadly in order to gain an understanding of possible communication approaches such programmes may have. Health communication may focus on disease prevention and behaviour change, such as public health campaigns or programmes (as in the case of *loveLife*), with sub-areas such as health product and medicine provision, practitioner–patient communication, organisational communication on health issues, policy or any other forms of communication pertaining to issues of health.¹ This section focuses on prevention, as it is the primary focus of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes.

In the literature on health communication campaigns, awareness and knowledge about a specified issue are considered short-term goals, attitude change about the issue is considered a mid-term goal, and behaviour change is considered a long-term goal (Mendelsohn, 1973). Although the progression from awareness to attitude change to behaviour change may appear straightforward and logical, most theories grapple with the problem of what Mendelsohn terms the “knowledge gap” between these stages.

¹ Thompson, Dorsey, Miller and Parrott (2003) and Glanz, Rimer and Lewis (2002) provide an overview of other aspects in this field not addressed in this study.

There are various theories that give insight to achieving the short- to long-term goals of health communication. The field of health communication addresses these goals in terms of issues of disease prevention, health promotion, health-care policy and the enhancement of the quality of life and health of individuals within the community (Ratzan, 1994). A range of theories, strategies and models that investigate disease prevention are investigated in this section. As these theories, strategies and models tend to be applicable to various communication situations, only those aspects pertinent to disease prevention will be discussed. The primary theories, strategies and models applicable to disease prevention are (with primary sources in brackets): Social Learning Theory (SLT; Bandura, 1977), the Health Belief Model (HBM; Rosenstock, 1966), Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and the more recent Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour, Health Promotion Model (Bracht, 1999) entertainment education and Social Marketing Theory (Sargeant, 1999; Andreasen, 1995). Some of these will be discussed in the following section in order to provide the context of disease prevention theory.

2.2.1 Social Learning Theory

Bandura and Walters (1963) developed the Social Learning Theory. This theory focuses on behaviour modelling through which a person observes the behaviour of others and forms new behaviours on the basis of the observed behaviour. A person's observed behaviour is organised in his or her memory into coded information that serves as a guide for future action (Bandura, 1977).

Essentially, the theory explains that behavioural change is based on a person's observation of others' behaviour and the outcomes thereof. This could be seen in the imitation of the behaviour of, for instance, a peer-educator or opinion leader within a group of people. Modelling within the SLT may involve a living model (a person demonstrating a certain behaviour) or a symbolic model (a representation of behaviour within the media such as television, video or computer games).

A person's environment often supports or discourages behaviour change through support and punishment modelling (Bandura, 1969). Behavioural change is affected by the support or criticism that those in a person's direct environment direct towards the behavioural change. Environmental influences of support and punishment indirectly affect behaviour change and would never be the only cause for behaviour change (Bandura, 1997).

Bandura (1997) explains that firstly, should the role model (person whose behaviour is being imitated) support and encourage the behavioural change; this would support and strengthen the new behaviour. This aspect can be viewed in the context of socialisation and peer pressure, as people tend to follow the behaviour of others owing to association or the desire to 'fit in'. Secondly, observers or third parties, such as teachers or parents, could complement and enhance the behaviour by supporting it. This aspect addresses peoples' need for acknowledgement and support in terms of behaviour. Lastly, the change of behaviour in itself could strengthen the behavioural change by means of enjoyment or fulfilment. Once a person realises that a new behaviour is beneficial, he or she tends to continue with it. In this context, self-regulation and self-meditation may be seen as key to actual behaviour change.

Bandura (1997) gives four conditions that need to be met before a person would emulate a role model's behaviour:

- **Attention:** A person will only model behaviour once he or she is aware of the difference in behaviour and the perceived benefits thereof.
- **Retention:** The observer needs to be able to remember the demonstrated behaviour in order to follow it. If there is repetitive exposure to certain behaviour, it is more likely that the behaviour would be mimicked.
- **Motoric reproduction:** Should the model's behaviour be too complex to repeat, behaviour change could be discouraged.
- **Motivation:** A person's desire or willingness towards certain behaviour or the outcomes thereof has a direct influence on whether he or she will be open to changing their behaviour.

Thus it would be important to address the issues of awareness, exposure, understanding and willingness to change behaviour of a target audience to effectively affect behavioural change.

Social Learning Theory provides an overview of the way people tend to approach the behaviour of others and the way they may react towards it. It does not however guarantee behaviour change, as no one is able to affect the perceptions of others directly. An organisation may try to exemplify certain preferred behaviours in terms of HIV/AIDS prevention, and even address issues such as the encouragement and creation of an environment supportive of behavioural change, but SLT demonstrates that the choice of behaviour change is personal and more complex than merely telling or showing people what to do (Waisbord, 2003:13).

2.2.2 Health Belief Model (HBM)

The HBM is a psychological model developed in the 1950s by a group of social scientists that attempts to explain and predict health behaviours by focusing on the attitudes and beliefs of individuals. The purpose of the model was to explain the widespread failure of people to engage with preventative programmes (Rosenstock, Strecher & Becker; 1994:5).

The HBM consists of a range of components that help predict and shape health behaviour. The core of this model is that individuals will take action regarding a health issue if they:

- view themselves as being susceptible to the condition (perceived susceptibility);
- believe that the condition has potentially serious consequences (perceived severity);
- believe that something can be done in order to reduce either their susceptibility or the severity of the condition (perceived benefits); and
- believe that the barriers to (or costs of) taking action are outweighed by the benefits (Porche, 2004:52).

As seen above, the HBM provides an insight into barriers as being an important influence on behaviour change. Barriers may be psychological (for example, humiliation), structural (for example, lack of transport or limited access) or financial (for example, unaffordability of material needed to change behaviour). Janz and Becker (1984) observe that barriers are the most significant predictors of behaviour change (albeit negative). This indicates that barriers tend to impact negatively on any form of communication and consideration of these barriers should form part of communication planning. Within the context of HIV/AIDS prevention, this means that should barriers be sufficiently addressed by the communication, there should be a greater likelihood of behaviour change.

A second option within the HBM would be to endeavour to communicate the perceived benefits of behaviour change. Should the benefits be able to address the aspects of both perceived susceptibility and severity or threat, individuals are more likely to change their behaviour.

2.2.3 Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was proposed by Fishbein in 1967. This theory was later extended by the Theory of Planned Behaviour to become the Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour.

According to the TRA, individuals will behave according to the intention that they have regarding the behaviour. This intention is, in turn, the result of their attitude towards the behaviour linked with their subjective norm (the belief of how the individual considers those around him or her will view the behaviour in question; (Ajzen & Albarracin, 2007:6).

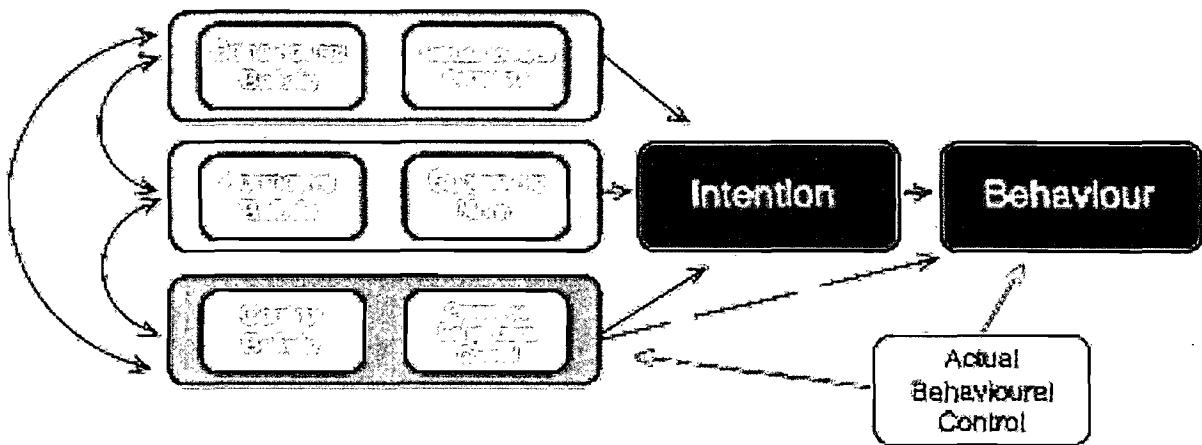


Figure 1: Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour (adapted from Ajzen, 2002).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour extended the model by adding an extra influence to the intentions of an individual. The perceived behavioural control (the bottom set of influencers in figure 1) indicates whether the individual thinks he or she has the ability to perform a specific behaviour, and whether he or she has the power to change the behaviour (thus, whether the individual feels capable in terms of his or her volitional control to change his or her behaviour; Porche, 2004:57).

Usually, behaviour change from this model is possible if the individual's own attitude is positive towards the behaviour change and if he or she thinks that those around him or her would approve of the behaviour change. In terms of communication, messaging regarding new behaviour should address the attitudes of individuals within their contexts in order to affect a favourable outcome.

2.2.4 Entertainment education strategy

According to Singhal and Rogers (2004:5), “Entertainment Education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members’ knowledge about an issue, create favourable attitudes, shift social norms and change overt behaviour.” Thus, an entertainment education campaign is aimed at creating a popular form of media with which an audience will associate in order to educate that audience of the issue that needs to be addressed.

In order to increase the effectiveness of entertainment education, Singhal and Rogers (2004:5) advise that the viewing and use of the entertainment education product be paired with interpersonal discussion in order to stimulate a further exploration of the intended message, with the media message serving as an extension of the Agenda Setting Theory. Rogers (2004:284) indicates that higher involvement of audience members ensures a more effective entertainment education product.

2.2.5 Social Marketing Theory

In 1969, Kotler and Levy (1969:11) suggested that marketing could be viewed as an all-encompassing societal activity that could also be applied to non-commercial environments and activities. Such marketing is termed *social marketing*. According to Jacobson (2003b:7), social marketing has clear elements of modernisation theory’s practices of diffusion. Waisbord (2003:6) indicates that this approach is rooted in the diffusion of innovations and behavioural change models:

Social marketing’s focus on behaviour change, understanding of communication as persuasion (“transmission of information”), and top-down approach to instrument change suggested an affinity with modernisation and diffusion of innovation theories.

Andreasen (1995:3) defines *social marketing* as the implementation of the concepts developed in commercial marketing to address social issues by inciting behavioural

change. In a later study, Andreasen and Kotler (2003:329) state, "social marketing programmes are generic marketing programmes carried out to change behaviours that are in the individual or society's interests". Although initial definitions of social marketing tended to focus the model on the products involved with social change, such as condoms or Anti-Retrovirals (ARVs), Andreasen (2002:4) explains that social marketing is now primarily used to address behavioural challenges.

The marketing technologies implemented in social marketing are evident in the marketing mix, which is also referred to as the 4 P's of marketing (McCarthy, 1960; Kotler, Roberto & Lee, 2002). The original marketing mix is explained by Fine (1981:19) and Sargeant (1999:14) in the following way:

- **Product (or market entity):** This aspect entails what a consumer will gain from the marketing process. Customers' needs are considered in the design, information and branding of a product or service, as well as the way these needs could be addressed.
- **Price:** This aspect of marketing considers the cost of the product, specifically the comparison of the cost to other similar options. Non-monetary sacrifices regarding the product are also anticipated.
- **Place:** This aspect refers to the physical position of the product or service in terms of accessibility and distribution. It also refers to the channels or media that may be used in marketing. This translates into consideration of location of messages.
- **Promotion:** This aspect considers promotional tools that may be implemented to stimulate interest in consumers' minds regarding the product. Promotion includes advertising, sales promotion, publicity and personal selling, as well as elements of direct and online marketing (Belch & Belch, 2001:14).

The 4 C's of marketing were later proposed to replace the original 4 P's. This shift has however not been echoed in the context of social marketing yet.

2.2.6 Conclusion regarding theories, strategies and models

Although theories, strategies and models are important in the academic context, very few health communication programmes are consciously informed by a specific theory as they rather respond to the successes and failures of other campaigns (Paisley, 2001:21). As programmes do not necessarily subscribe to specific theories and theories are adjusted with time, it is advisable to examine organisations holistically in terms of a normative communications approach. Another reason for examining organisations holistically is that the above-mentioned theories do not always sufficiently address the complexities of developmental issues such as HIV/AIDS in a contextual manner.

As discussed in Chapter 1, South Africa has a developmental context with regard to HIV/AIDS communication. Therefore, a normative approach should be found within the realm of development communication. This is elaborated on in the next section.

2.3 Developments in the theoretical premise of Development Communication

The following section will outline how development communication has progressed over the years in order to give an explanation of how there was an initial modernistic approach which has more recently become increasingly participatory. It will also be shown how the approaches have progressed.

2.3.1 Brief overview of the progression of development communication theory

Development and development communication are defined in many different ways. As Waisbord (2003:2) proposes, definitions of development communication are numerous, as they reflect the “scientific premises of research” and the interests and political agendas of organisations in the field of development. Thus, each approach to development is based on its own definitions of the concept and on what ideal communication or development in itself should be.

For the purpose of this study, *development communication* is defined as communication directed towards the positive advancement of communities. Development can be seen as a positive change whereby communities advance not only in terms of material wealth, but also in terms of social, political, cultural and human well-being that includes freedom, equality and human rights (Moemeka, 2000:7). In this study, key to defining development communication is that communication is not separated from the development process and results in the improved quality of people's lives, which is not primarily measured in economic terms.

Generally, the approaches to development have gradually changed from an economic to a community focus. This change can be linked to Western society's shift in paradigm from a modernist to a postmodernist perspective.

2.3.2 The modernist and postmodernist paradigms

Within modernisation, development was approached in broad economic terms, through which industrialised countries attempted to force poorer countries to aim to become more 'developed' in terms of material wealth. An implicit thought of modernisation was that the reason for poorer nations' underdevelopment was their cultural beliefs and practices that hindered economic growth and advancement (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006:xvi). Knowledge and information were viewed as the answer to the 'illiterate' and uninformed Third World's problems, and were usually promulgated by means of powerful media strategies.

The pre-modern or traditional world found its stability and direction through religion or magic, while the modern world was dominated by progress as a product of rationality and science. The legitimacy of progression or advancement within modernism was found in the belief that the scientific expert had in the ultimate discovery of scientific truth (Kelly & Charlton, 1995:78). The effect was that modernisation overwhelmed local culture and disregarded indigenous knowledge, and was thereby quite ineffective as communities rejected the “arrogant manner” in which modernists directed their actions. The ‘developing’ world rebelled against the ‘developed’ world’s insensitivity towards culture and tradition. In commenting on this, Moemeka (2000:5) terms these modernist approaches as “one-way communication or information dumping”.

From a modernist perspective, it was inevitable that development would be linked to these central tenets by means of which society could progress in accordance with the ‘universal truth’ of science. As people became disillusioned by the mechanistic, more economic, progressive approaches of modernisation, they began to (and still are) abandoning modernisation in favour of approaches that are participatory or two-way (Dervin & Huesca, 1999; Naidoo & Wills, 2005:109).

Postmodernism¹ refers to the various movements and ideas of the late twentieth century that were a reaction to modernism’s premise of the ultimate bedrock of scientific truth, fact or morality that may be discovered (Alvesson, 2002:19). Postmodernism rebelled against the modernist opinion of science as universal truth, progressing towards a conviction that there is no ultimate truth whatsoever and that everything needed to be addressed subjectively. These participatory approaches incorporated local culture and indigenous knowledge, and facilitated development instead of enforcing it. The result would be that communities would be enabled to determine their identities, needs and ways in which they could better their own lives. Effectively the postmodernist rebellion brought about a society that was distrustful of expert scientific opinion (as this could lead to the possibility that

¹ Although definitions of postmodernism tend to contain various tenets and approaches, the more moderate approach of this meta-theory (as explained above) echoes the views of Alvesson (2002) and is implied in the use of the term in this study.

science could be the basis of ultimate truth), thereby culminating in a view of development in which the expert's role is downplayed or even disregarded.

This progression from a modernist to a postmodernist perspective is apparent in various aspects of society. As a shift in paradigm, it illustrated shifts in the theories of art, literature, music and the sciences (Barry, 1995:81). Communication theory echoed this paradigm shift.

2.3.3 Early development communication: Modernisation theory

The early approaches to development communication are often referred to as the *dominant paradigm* or *modernisation* and included amongst others the theories of Diffusion of Innovations and Social Marketing (see 2.1.5) and Health Promotion Model. Modernisation began internationally in the late 1950s, and focused on the Third World as economically weak and culturally backward societies in need of development.

Servaes (1995) illustrates that within the framework of modernisation, *development* was defined in economic terms as a form of evolution. This implied that development was conceived as directional and cumulative, predetermined and irreversible, progressive and imminent with reference to the nation state:

To be a modern society, the attitudes of 'backward' people – their traditionalism, bad taste, superstition, fatalism, etc – which are obstacles and barriers in the traditional societies have to be removed (Servaes 1995:12).

Early communication models, following the modernisation paradigm, considered the process of communication as messages sent from a sender to a receiver (see for example Lasswell, 1948). This implied that the sender was more important in the communication process than the receiver. This was based on, what is probably the most basic communication model, the Sender-Receiver model of Shannon and Weaver – which incidentally originated in engineering studies to illustrate the transfer of messages between machines (Waisbord, 2003:3). In true modernist fashion, this mechanistic model would be used to shape development communication inherently.

Initial development communication programmes originating in, *inter alia*, the Marshall Plan which was the USA's redevelopment plan of post-second world war Europe, centred on modernist terms in which developmental issues were caused by information and cultural deficits that were to be addressed in economic terms (Waisbord, 2003:2). These campaigns began in the 1960s (Snyder, 2002:458) and flowed from the dominant paradigm of development in academic circles from 1945 to the late 1960s.

As modernisation's communication for development was viewed purely in terms of transfer of knowledge or as persuasion, the resulting process was linear and unidirectional, considering beneficiaries as "mere passive receivers of a finished reality" (Thomas, 1994:54). This aspect of viewing audiences or communities as passive receivers is evident in the Magic Bullet Theory or Hypodermic Needle Theory, which originated as propaganda theory in World War II (Servaes, 1986:213). This theory portrayed media audiences as passive entities that would accept behavioural change in a uniform fashion without the ability to resist messages sent to them.

Lerner and Schramm, along with Rogers, were the most influential academics in terms of early development communication theory (Kumar, 1994:76). Development communication literature broadly recognises that Lerner's *The passing of traditional society* (1958) and Schramm's *Mass media and national development* (1964) were the first texts to link scientifically the use of media (and implicitly communication) and development for the creation of a development model for Third World countries in accordance with modernisation theory (Burton, 1998; Morris, 2003:226; Snyder, 2002:458).

As supporters of modern technology, it was inevitable that proponents of modernisation would also see the mass media as integral to development communication. In terms of the role of the media in modernisation, Schramm (1964:47) emphasised that the media is "the magic multiplier" that would rapidly spread information through an entire population and that the development of media such as newspapers and radio were integral to development.

Lerner (1958:47, 54) viewed development as a change from a traditional to a modern society. From this perspective, development communication was focused in the use of mass media in order to raise levels of literacy and expose communities to the ideals of modern society. The mass media was considered an important channel for modernisation, by which messages could be distributed, as well as an indicator of the level of modernisation (Waisbord, 2003:3). An over-reliance on mass media in a one-way or top-down manner is indicative of a modernist approach. Modernisation is described by Malan (1996:14) as “top-down, one-way, mass communication, big media, high tech, international, Westernised, Eurocentric, non-African, anti-traditional, academic, modernist, product-and profit-centred, imperialist strategies by Western manipulators to enslave the illiterate and impoverished, underdeveloped souls of the Third World!”

Theoretical perspective 1:

Communication interventions that display an over-reliance on mass media by means of dissemination of information in a top-down manner tend to be more modernist in approach in the context of the continuum¹ of participation.

In 1962, Rogers proposed that development communication function in terms of the diffusion of innovations whereby new ideas introduced in a society would lead to development. Diffusion models aim to change behaviour by providing information or new ideas (innovations) to change the underlying attitudes behind undesirable behaviour (Morris, 2003:226). In other words, if sufficient information were given to a specific group of people, the group would change their attitudes and thereafter change their behaviour.

¹ The continuum of participation (as discussed in 1.2) refers to the fact that modernisation or participation are not static points according to which a communication approach could simply be attributed to. Thus, references to a communication approach are done in terms of being more or less modernist, or more or less participatory according to the normative model.

Rogers' (1962:254) Diffusion of Innovations Theory emphasised the role of change agents or opinion leaders in the development process. Change agents are experts who attempt to influence the adoption of innovations by ensuring that a perceived need, and even a necessity for change, is created in a community.

Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) adapted the process model of communication (Source-Message-Channel-Receiver; SMCR) of Berlo (1960) for the Diffusion of Innovations Theory. In the context of diffusion theory, SMCR explained the unidirectional flow of a message (or innovation) to a receiver (community) – even though the original model was intended to contain reciprocity. Rogers and Shoemaker appended an 'E' for effect to the model thereby rendering it SMCRE – and completely removing the possibility of feedback in the model.

MacBride (1980:6) summarises the early stages of development communication as:

The former models used communication especially for disseminating information, for getting people to understand the 'benefits' proposed by development and the 'sacrifices' it demands. The imitation of a development model, based on the hypothesis that wealth, once acquired, will automatically filter down to all levels of society, included the propagation of communication practices from top to bottom ... The effects were a long way from the effects that were expected.

In a sense, modernists expected traditional Third World societies to become adequately developed by imitating the processes endemic to modern society, as modern society held the blueprint for civilisation. According to Rogers (1993:38), "the obvious way for Third World countries to develop was for them to become more like the industrial countries in the First World". This is echoed in Escobar (1995), who states that modernisation has a missionary ideology that stems from the original post-colonial history of the Third World. Salmon (1989:19–20) notes, "any effort to engineer change in a society is a value-laden activity, one in which not all persons agree on the ends pursued and the means employed to achieve these ends."

Firstly, these modernist approaches addressed information deficits by the one-way provision of information in an expert-driven, or “one-way, top-down” manner (Richardson, 2003). Communication for behavioural change and knowledge transfer were the ‘solution’ to the information problem inherent to underdevelopment. The top-down or modernist approach directed the economic growth of countries towards the example of developed countries (Yoon, 2003), which is in accordance with the progression or advancement that modernism as paradigm strived for (as discussed in Section 2.3.2). Secondly, culture was considered a ‘bottleneck’ for development and traditional culture an impairment of the adaptation of ‘civilised’ thought and behaviour. In modernist communication, culture was something that could be disregarded.

Theoretical perspective 2:

Communication interventions in the modernist tradition are limited in cultural sensitivity.

In summation, approaches to development communication rooted in modernisation could thus be defined as being expert-driven, one-way, top-down in approach and would primarily make use of the mass media in order to instil economic growth in a passive audience with little regard to their cultural backgrounds. It is important to note that in the period that modernisation was the primary foundation for development communication approaches, with it already being abandoned as early as the 1970s, not all of these aspects were always present in the theory.

2.3.4 Criticisms on modernisation

With regard to culture, a criticism on modernisation is primarily the over-simplification of developmental issues (Rogers, 1993). Modernist development communication was mechanistic in approach; developmental problems were seen as information deficits and the complexity of cultural and contextual issues were often disregarded. Indigenous knowledge was viewed as unsatisfactory as it was unscientific and often considered part of the information deficit facing traditional communities. Mowlana and Wilson (1990) gave further criticism against the modernisation approach to development as its inability to consider the human factor, its ethnocentric neglect of the cultural environment from a

purely Western perspective and neglect of social networks and natural social change. In a continued form of imperialist or colonialist rule, the receivers of modernist development were placed in a continued state of exploitation.

Moreover, that the modernisation paradigm of development communication regarded communication as a one-way, top-down form of communication reflects the modernist Western vision of progress; one that is informed by philosophy and science. The implicit assumption was that those behind communication messages were correct and that communities to whom the messages were communicated did not know any better.

In essence, modernisation was ineffective, as communities rejected messages that did not involve them or address their specific needs. This is because these communities are in fact not passive receivers in need of mere information. This rejection was compounded in the instances where communities did respond to messages but had their culture ignored or even threatened, as mentioned previously.

As discussed above, modernisation asserted that society would form new attitudes and motivations through the consumption of mass media messages. Flowing from the resultant attitude and motivational change, people would be more politically active. Modernist development would thus be the result of urbanisation, literacy, media participation or consumption, and political participation. Development in itself increased the participation of members of society, but it is however not what is meant by participation within a participatory model of development communication.

The criticisms discussed above led to certain departures from the modernisation paradigm of development, such as the Dependence Theory, but the primary reaction to modernisation can be seen in the participatory approach to development communication. As people became disillusioned by the mechanistic, economic, progressive approaches of modernisation, participatory or two-way approaches became more favoured (Dervin & Huesca, 1999; Naidoo & Wills, 2005:109). Later approaches to development communication incorporated local culture and indigenous knowledge and facilitated development instead of enforcing it. This empowered communities to determine their

identities, needs and way to better their lives.

The shift from a modernist approach to a participatory approach was not a direct or sudden one. The primary intermediate movements or approaches were the Dependency or Structuralist approach and Multiplicity, which are discussed in detail in Waisbord (2003) and Kumar (1994). As this study focuses on participation, these developments are not directly relevant to this study.

It is important to note that although modernisation has lost its popularity, certain tenets of its philosophy or approach are still evident in various development programmes. Some development projects still approach development in terms of this outdated paradigms, while others mask their modernist approaches with forms of development speak.¹

2.3.5 Participatory two-way communication

The current primary normative theory in development communication is participatory communication. This theory aims at involving communities in their own development in an active and involving manner. "Dialogue is at the heart of participatory communication, as it provides people from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to share ideas, inform others, persuade some – and first and foremost listen" (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006:xiv).

Dervin and Huesca (1999:172) use the metaphor of *horizontal* communication in order to describe participation. This horizontality implies a structural change to modernist communication wherein power imbalances were acknowledged, and changed towards equality. Servaes (1996:34) emphasises horizontalisation, de-professionalisation, access, symmetrical exchange, active social participation, and integrated media and technologies as crucial to a user-oriented approach to communication. This does not exclude outside

¹ For the purposes of this study, the outline of the modernisation paradigm of development communication and its primary tenets is viewed as sufficient. For an in-depth exposition of the modernisation or dominant paradigm, see: general history of modernisation and development (Waisbord, 1999; Melkote, 2002), economic development and modernisation (Rostow, 1960), Diffusion of Innovations (Higgins, 1996; Rogers 1995; Haider & Kreps, 2004) and criticism of modernisation (Mowlana & Wilson, 1990; Servaes, 1995; Malan, 1996).

experts. As Servaes (1999:154) notes:

Participation does not imply that there is no longer a role for development specialists, planners, and institutional leaders. It only means that the viewpoint of the local public groups is considered before the resources for development projects are allocated and distributed and that suggestions for changes in the policy are taken into consideration.

Within participatory communication, the process is key: integral to the communication is the two-way character that facilitates people and communities to come together in dialogue, listen and respond. Thus, the entire communication process is of value instead of the mere content of the messages. Owing to the nature of this communication approach, participatory communication's messaging feeds from indigenous knowledge and traditions, in other words, from within the reality of the community itself.

A focus on the process of communication advances the sharing of meanings and the significance of relationship-building within communication (Servaes, 1996b:33). The strength of this approach is summarised by Melkote (1991:270) as helping to develop or strengthen a community's cultural identity, may facilitate self-expression of members of that community and serve as a means by which to diagnose and address the community's problems.

Within the domain of public relations, there was also a move towards a participatory approach in the 1970s, as evidence by Grunig's (1989:21) two-way symmetrical public relations model. He deemed two-way asymmetrical communication as "unethical, socially irresponsible and ineffective". In Section 2.4.4, this aspect of public relations theory will provide an indicator of participation.

In his definition of the participatory model of development communication, Servaes (1995) provides the following regarding a participatory communication programme: "[participation] ... stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities and of democratisation and participation at all levels – international, national, local and individual." Thus, it can be deduced that participatory communication requires participation amongst all role-players at

all levels of development. Ideally, this participation will reflect an involvement at all stages of the process.

Participatory communication is a variable term in the sense that it encompasses participation at various levels; although the defining factor is that the participatory approach rejects the modernist top-down approach and views it as ineffective (Jacobson, 2003a:95). In reaction to modernisation, participatory communication includes the communities (or grass-roots) in which projects or programmes function in a broader sense rather than merely viewing them as passive audiences.

2.4 Theoretical premises of participatory communication

Participatory communication does not have a specific procedure to be followed in order to obtain a specific outcome. As participation is quite a vague concept owing to its non-prescriptive and even uncommitted stance on the functioning of the process of communication, it is quite difficult to define. Deshler and Shock (in White, 1994:16) conducted an early study on the participatory approach in development and concluded that it is difficult to measure, conceptualise or even determine indicators of participation, as the conceptual framework for this approach was lacking.

Owing to the postmodernist nature of the participatory process, it would be inappropriate to expect specific requirements regarding implementation of the participatory approach (as postmodernism rejects any specific claims of scientific endeavour). Within this context, the definition of true participation becomes complex.

Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between participation as a fringe benefit to development versus participation as an actual goal within the programme. If participation is a mere add-on or means to an end in the development process, the motive of the development would still be modernisation. Very often, the 'fashionable' terminology of participation is added to development proposals and documents in order to create the impression of participatory development. Bordenave (1994:38) provides an example of participation as a fringe benefit to development in the manner in which governments in the

Third World invite public participation in its projects “in order to pacify or acknowledge the rhetoric of participation”. Within the context of power, it is possible to suggest that on condition that the media and communication mechanisms are controlled exclusively by privileged classes, “participation will remain a political catchphrase for manipulative development” (Otto, 2004:61). True participation, however, calls for “development by the people, of the people and for the people” (Childers, 1990:390). In other words, participation requires a shift of power.

In the following section, which presents the study’s central theoretical arguments, an overview of theory regarding participatory communication is given. This is done with the purpose of creating an instrument for measuring the level of participation in a programme and thereby helps to define participatory communication in terms of criteria by which participation may be measured. First, the description of participatory communication according to its founder is given. Thereafter, involvement and then empowerment are reviewed as contributors to participation in development. Next, the similarities between the participatory approach and public relations theories are highlighted. Lastly, the aspects of Habermasian communicative action are related to participatory communication.

2.4.1 Freireian participatory communication

Paolo Freire is viewed as the father of the participatory communication as movement (Theranian, 1996:44; Jacobson, 2003b:3). His views are therefore a good starting point in defining participatory communication and measures thereof.

Freire’s (1970) view of participation had a strong emphasis on dialogue (the exchange of ideas instead of traditional diffusion) as a process that is crucial in the personal transformation of individuals at community level. The Freirian dialogue is one of ‘conscientisation’, that is dialogue aimed at the exposing of unwarranted power imbalances and directing this consciousness towards social change. For Freire, who worked in the field of adult education, the facilitator’s (educator’s) role is to enter into dialogue and “simply offer the instruments with which he [the participant] can teach himself to read and write.” Freire (1970:42) emphasises that the process cannot be accomplished

from the top down, but only from inside out, from within the community's own context.

Thomas (1994:51) explains that participatory, dialogic and reciprocal aspects of communication are key in a dialogic encounter from the Freireian perspective. This implies encounters in which the normal distinctions (developer as expert versus community as mere receivers) are removed and the developer (or educator from Freire's educational perspective) would serve as a catalyst and not as a prescriptor of a finished body of knowledge. In order to reach this form of participation, the basic commitment of both the developer and the community is based on mutuality and respect for one another (Thomas, 1994:52).

Theoretical perspective 3:

Participatory communication is dialogic, reciprocal and free of power imbalances. The developer serves as a mere catalyst and is seen as an equal, owing to mutuality and respect.

2.4.1.1 Broadening the concept of Freireian participation

Jacobson (2003b:2) postulates that the implication of viewing participation only from a purely Freireian perspective would imply that mass media, owing to its larger scale and lack of transformative dialogue, is not participatory. More recently, theorists have however highlighted forms of media such as community radio as being participatory even though they lack the characteristics of traditional dialogue. It should also be understood that forms of mass media might be participatory in spite of possibly being focused on an area larger than a community (Thomas, 1994:54).

In terms of the use of mass media in participatory contexts, Waisbord (2003:19) cautions that media should always be used to supplement interpersonal methods in the Third World contexts because the media is often perceived as foreign, with inherent traces of linearity.

Theoretical perspective 4:

Media-based programmes may be participatory as media can be used in a participatory manner. In a participatory framework, mass media should be used to support or supplement interpersonal methods instead of merely disseminating information.

2.4.2 Involvement as participation

The participatory approach to development communication moved beyond the thesis proposed by Freire. In order to be participatory, communication would have to address the communication act in addition to examining the involvement (and opportunities for involvement) of all parties in the development process.

Coetzee (2001:126) states that “participation and self-reliance in the development context implies and emphasises the necessity to involve those people who are the supposed beneficiaries of development.” He states further that it is a break of the “monopoly of knowledge” and a freeing of the creative capacity of what has traditionally been viewed as the bottom or grass-roots. Arnstein (1969; cited by Naidoo and Wills, 2005:113) provides a ladder of social participation (Figure 2) that differentiates between activities on the lower rungs of non-participation, where citizens are given a voice as a way of involving them while they remain recipients of services instead of receiving actual influence in projects. The next rungs constitute tokenism, where consultation activities seek to identify the community’s needs and views before making decisions. Actual participation is evident on the highest rungs, where there is involvement and actual commitment to integrating the community’s views in wider processes. The top rungs indicate user-led activities in which the agencies or experts assume a role of facilitation in assisting the community to achieve

its goals. Although Arnstein's model may be criticised for oversimplifying participation, the idea that community engagement may be hierarchical and that practitioners should aspire to higher levels of involvement to be more participatory is valid (Naidoo & Wills, 2005:114).

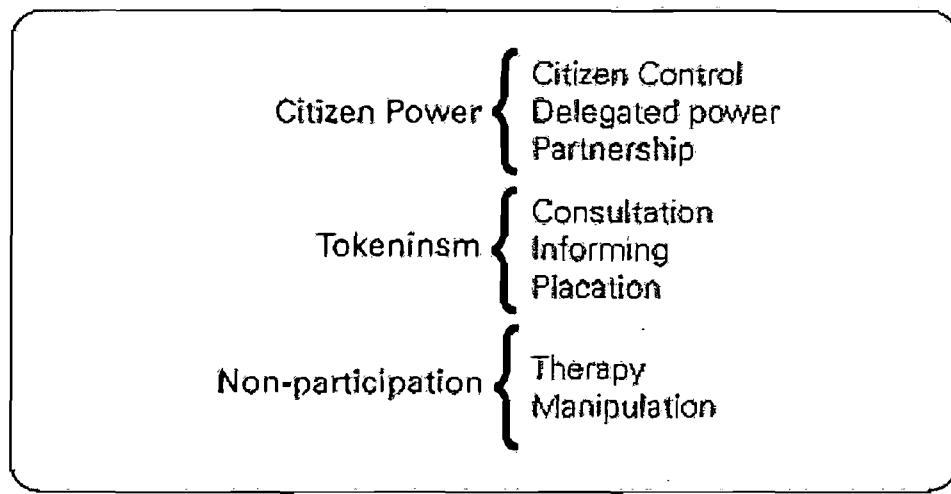


Figure 2: Ladder of social participation (Arnstein, 1969)

In reaction, it may be argued that the context and the nature of the project and communication will dictate different levels of participation. For instance, within health information campaigns such as those addressing HIV/AIDS, the communication would flow from information provided by an 'expert'. The communication would thus be directed towards information dissemination, but this should not discount the opportunity to involve the community. It is important to consider the applicability of the involvement contextually, without using it as an excuse to revert to modernist thinking.

The British Department of Health (2003) provides a more complex model, indicating participation and the levels of involvement in health communication (Figure 3). Although the model was not developed from a communicative background, it demonstrates representation of the levels of involvement along a continuum from the giving of information to partnerships, where communities have joint ownership of a project. From a communicative perspective, the giving of information could also include media-driven campaigns and forms of marketing and advertising.

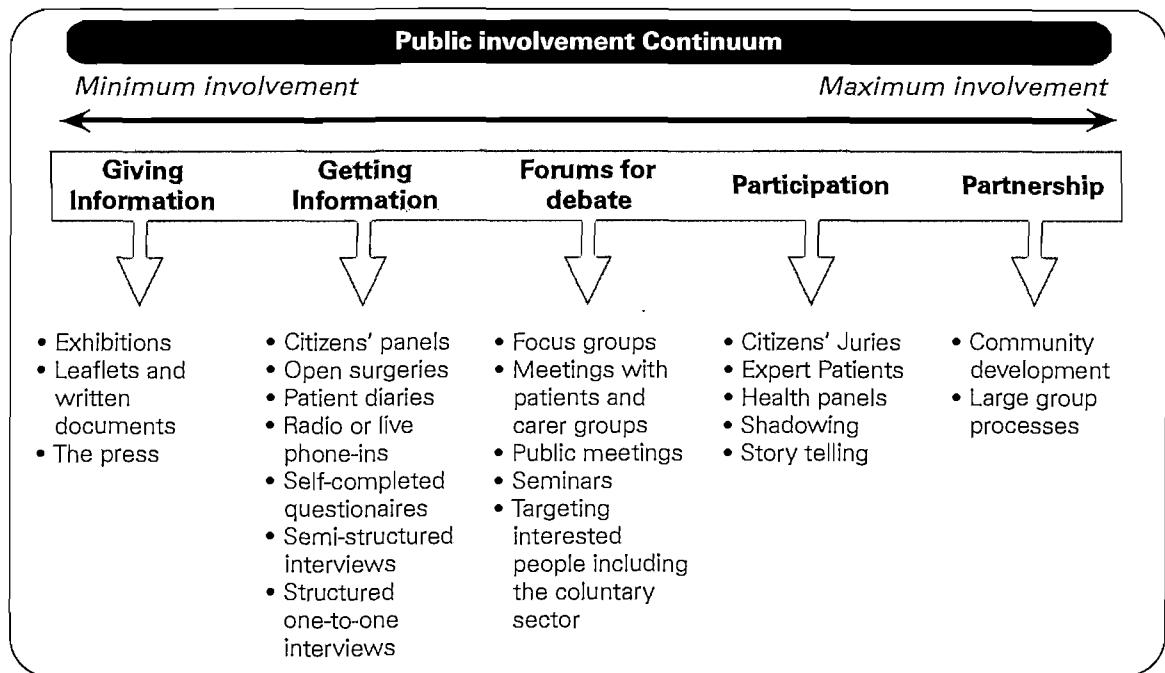


Figure 3: British Department of Health (2003) model of participation and involvement

Theoretical perspective 5

Participation requires that the recipients of development are involved in the process of knowledge generation. This requires moving from manipulation, tokenism and information dissemination towards community-driven communication, delegation of power and partnership in which all parties generate knowledge.

2.4.3 Empowerment as participation

The difficulties in focusing only on involvement in participatory communication is evident from the initial ineffective changes to top-down communication in South America. Dervin and Huesca (1999:172) point out that when modernists enticed locals to adopt their top-down approaches, they would adapt messages to the local context while getting "feedback

(input after the fact) and feed-forward (input before the fact)". The argument is that the purpose of participation should not be adoption of modernist ideals, but rather the empowerment of those involved. Thus, even though citizen input and formative evaluations might appear participatory, this may not be truly indicative of participation. In Figure 3, actual empowering participation is only evident at the participation and partnership levels (those levels of higher involvement). This indicates that empowerment and true involvement go hand-in-hand.

Empowerment also stems from the dialogical communication process (Rogers & Singhal & Rogers, 2003:82):

The empowerment process fundamentally consists of dialogic communication. Individuals gain a belief in their power to achieve desired goals through talking with others, particularly peers ... The process of empowering individuals occurs especially in small groups.

According to Snyder (2002:463), the ultimate empowerment would be to have a member from the community lead the community in designing and implementation of their own intervention. Servaes (1999) argues that authentic participation requires a change in the distribution of power and that both political and economic power needs to be shared in an equitable manner as a prerequisite for participation. Thus, structural change that involves the redistribution of power leads to participation.

According to Yoon (1996:10), empowerment may be equated to placing people in charge of the process, while experts remain in the background. Development in itself is intended to liberate and emancipate people in order to enable them to meet their basic needs (Servaes, 1999:93). Gray-Felder and Deane (1999) view empowerment as enabling people to realise "what they want and how they can get it." Empowerment should give people the confidence and conviction to assume ownership of communication processes and the contents thereof in their communities.

Within organisations, a starting block to reaching empowerment (and thereby greater participation) may be to implement structural change in order to enable empowerment

(Servaes & Arnst, 1999:118). The irony is, however, that structural change is necessary for empowerment as a means of increasing participation, while actual restructuring can only be initiated by participation.

2.4.3.1 Difficulties with empowerment in participation

Servaes and Arnst (1999:115) explain that true participation challenges the power relationships in society, but imply that those in power are expected to resist such efforts to reallocate their power. In the same manner that modernisation disregarded the aspects of culture in development, empowerment holds its own cultural challenges. Morris (2003:233) mentions that the emancipatory aspects of empowerment may run counter to community norms. For instance, in certain African cultures in which hierarchy is a clear aspect of cultural norm (Hofstede, 2005:13), grass-roots participation may be culturally inappropriate. The imposition of empowerment model may directly undermine a community's cultural values.

However, this is not a problem when culture is viewed from the perspective of being fluid and dynamic instead of static in 'traditional' definitions. Participatory researchers, who are aware of the impact of programmes of the shifts in power, are differentiated from modernists who did not acknowledge any effect of development on local cultures. Melkote and Steeves (2002) mention that precisely the marginalised individuals in a community, such as women, the poor and other minorities, should be the focus of participatory empowerment.

Theoretical perspective 6:

Participatory communication requires empowerment in terms of the enablement of communities to assume ownership of their own situation. Empowered communities are in charge of the communication process, with the expert remaining in the background.

2.4.4 Public relations and excellence theory: lessons in participation

Although dialogue, involvement and empowerment in development already give certain measurable aspects regarding participation, the conceptualisation of participatory communication may greatly benefit from similar (more concretised) theories in public relations. Wilkins and Mody (2001:386) cite that changes in the field of development communication often reflect the changes in the broader field of communication, as well as those in the humanities and social sciences. Thus, a study of the participatory approach could also be informed by the two-way symmetrical approach, which stems from public relations theory.

Amongst others, Berkowitz and Muturi (1999), Taylor (2000), Fourie (2004) and Steyn and Du Plessis (2005) note the similarities between the two-way symmetrical approach to corporate communication¹ and the participatory approach to development communication. The focus of public relations is the use of communication to establish, maintain or change relationships between organisations and publics (Taylor, 2000:179). Therefore, its conceptual tools may well provide new and useful insights that may inform participatory communication. Grunig (1989:22) who along with Grunig and Dozier are the key proponents of the two-way symmetrical public relations model, mentions that HIV/AIDS prevention programmes tend to be more successful when participatory approaches to communication are used. This section investigates the way two-way symmetric communication in the context of the excellence theory, as proposed by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) for public relations, could inform HIV/AIDS prevention programmes within a developmental context for the purpose of two-way participation.

2.4.4.1 Game theory in the excellence study

The first aspect of the public relations excellence theory that may help to understand and measure participation lies in the game theory in the excellence study (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig 1995). Berkowitz and Muturi (1999:10) focus on the excellence study as a parallel to the participatory discussion in development communication, as both these theories

¹ The terms corporate communication and public relations are used interchangably in this section.

focus on understanding the people being communicated with and adapting the organisation in accordance with the needs of the community.

Public relations theory has progressed from an asymmetric view, in which public opinion research crafts persuasive communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:3-45; cf. Grunig, 1992), to a two-way symmetric view, in which the organisation is brought in line with the public's expectations through "informed understanding" (Figure 4). Alternatively, this could translate into an organisation and its publics reaching a mutually acceptable outcome through balanced communication (Dozier *et al.*, 1995:48). Balanced communication would thus refer to communication that is more symmetrical and two-way in nature.

Characteristic	Press agency/publicity	Public information	Two-way asymmetrical	Two-way symmetrical
Purpose	Propaganda	Dissemination of information	Scientific persuasion	Mutual understanding
Nature of communication	One-way; complete truth not essential	One-way; truth important	Two-way; imbalanced effects	Two-way; balanced effects
Nature of research	Little; 'counting house'	Little; readability, readership	Formative, evaluative of attitudes	Formative; evaluative of understanding
Communication Model	Source \Rightarrow receiver	Source \Rightarrow receiver	Source \Rightarrow receiver \Leftarrow feedback	Group \Rightarrow group \Leftarrow

Figure 4: Four models of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:22)

In the same way that two-way symmetric communication has the purpose of mutual understanding, the concept of reaching a win-win situation in communication has been

adapted from game theory, as demonstrated in Figure 5. Dozier *et al.* (1995:47) propose communication as a game in which both the organisation and its publics pursue their own interests. The figure illustrates the communication context in which the goal is one of balance or equilibrium, that is a win-win zone. On either side of this win-win zone, unsatisfactory and unstable relationships lead to some form of exploitation.

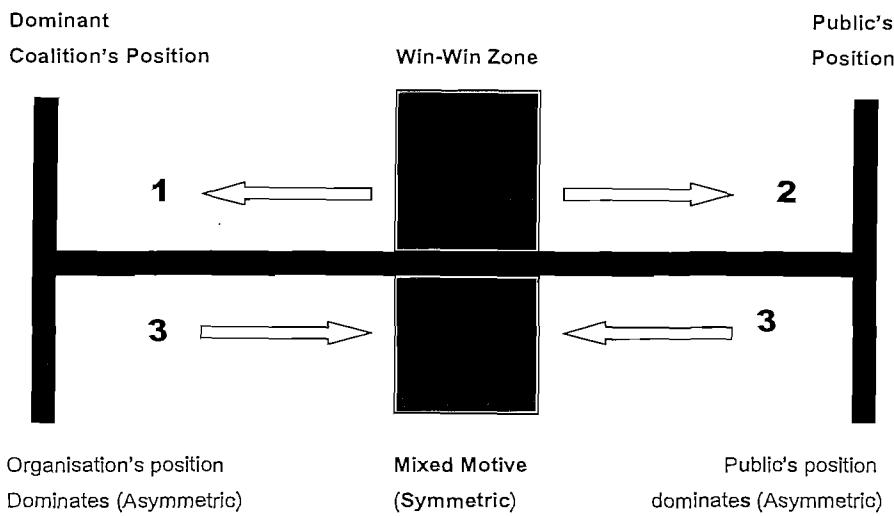


Figure 5 Game Theory from Dozier, et al. (1995:48)

Traditionally, development communication has focused on directing communities towards the developer's position or innovation by use of communication. This is in accordance with the first part of the figure, in which asymmetric communication is implemented to direct a community towards an expert's view such as A (arrow 1 in Figure 5). This approach can be seen as "manipulative and persuasive" (Dozier *et al.*, 1995:49). In contrast, arrow 2 indicates activist publics attempting to coerce the organisation into adopting their agenda. For instance within the context of HIV/AIDS prevention, this could be seen in a message in which an organisation attempts to enforce a principle such as abstinence on a community in which there is already a high incidence of sexual activity.

When communication is used to find a middle ground (arrow 3) communicators negotiate a relationship or win-win zone. This is two-way symmetrical communication and aims to reach a point of "pure cooperation", which according to Berkowitz and Muturi (1999:10) is in accordance with the participatory model of development communication. In participatory communication, development agencies within this framework no longer direct local people towards their point of view, but rather reposition themselves in accordance with the community's true needs. Within the earlier example regarding abstinence, this could be seen in terms of a community being encouraged to negotiate safer sex options such as condom usage or faithfulness, thereby reaching a point of cooperation between the parties involved. Dozier *et al.* (1995:50) also point out that symmetrical practices lead to longer-term relationships, although they are expensive.

Theoretical perspective 7:

Based on the excellence theory, a participative participatory agent repositions itself according to the community's true needs instead of its expert view and uses communication in a two-way symmetrical manner. This communication is aimed at reaching a win-win situation instead of one of persuasion and manipulation.

2.4.4.2 The role of the communication practitioner or development communicator

A second parallel with the excellence study is evident in the role of the development communicator in the process of communication (Berkowitz & Muturi, 1999:11). As the roles of the communicator are considered in development communication theory, the excellence study (Dozier, 1992:329–331,) builds on four communicator or practitioner roles. These are demonstrated in Figure 6.

1. Communication technician (one-way/press agency and public information models)
2. Expert prescriber (publicity and press agency and at times two-way asymmetrical)
3. Communication facilitator (one-way/public information)
4. Problem-solving process facilitator (two-way symmetrical)

Figure 6: Roles within the public relations excellence theory (Grunig & Hunt 1984:22; Dozier, 1992)

The **communication technician** can be viewed in a development context as the traditional communication expert who controls the communication as described in Section 2.3.2 (modernist one-way approaches). This agent provides the technical communication and journalistic skills that are necessary to implement the decisions of others. Thus, the agent does not play any managerial role and conducts little research in the planning or evaluation of its work (Steyn & Puth, 2000:15; Grunig & Hunt, 1984:91). This form of communicator is linked to what Grunig and Hunt (1984:21–22) describe as the press agency and public information campaigns, referring to one-way or disseminative communication. Research is at most limited to investigating readability and readership. Primarily the communication technician subscribes to a one-way communication model, owing to its lack of strategic involvement in the communication process.

The **expert prescriber** is described by Dozier (1992:329) as an expert almost like a doctor, who prescribes while management obeys. The problem is that management assumes a passive role and all problems become those of the communication expert. Berkowitz and Muturi (1999:11) explain that the biggest drawback of this communicator role is that communication decision-making is separated from programme decision-making. As this practitioner autonomously manages all communication, the communication is limited to one-way (publicity or press agency) or at the most two-way asymmetrical communication (Steyn & Puth, 2000:15). Expert prescribers usually implement lower levels of formative and/or evaluative research.

The **communication facilitator** could echo the development communicator, as described by Agunga (1997:263), as a “go-between for the program and local people”. Communication facilitators serve as interpreters or communicative links that are concerned with the process, quality and quantity of information flow between management and publics (Dozier, 1992:330). Communication facilitators can be considered mediators or intermediaries who broker a two-way symmetrical flow of communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:22).

The ideal role from the excellence study is that of the **problem-solving process facilitator**. In development, such a communicator can be seen as a “relationship facilitator” (Berkowitz & Muturi, 1999:12). As this communicator role involves programme changes in accordance with the programme communications, the implications of programme decisions can be steered by its relationships with the public.

Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002:11) explain that good relationships between organisations and their communities (in the case of development communication) are two-way and symmetrical, indicating that the interests of the organisation and those of the communities are balanced through the relationship. The communicator cannot be viewed as more important than the community.

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984:91), the problem-solving facilitator involves a wider number of organisational members and publics in order to implement communication programmes. As this role is linked to the two-way symmetrical model, the problem-solving process facilitator will implement formative and evaluative research regarding understanding (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:22).

The problem-solving process facilitator is the opposite of the expert prescriber and is essential in practising the two-way symmetrical process. In context of equating the two-way symmetrical model with the participatory approach (see Fourie, 2004; Steyn & Du Plessis, 2005; Berkowitz & Muturi, 1999), it is essential that the role of the development communicator be in accordance with that of a problem-solving process facilitator in public relations theory.

It is important to note that according to Dozier *et al.* (1995:56) certain aspects of every role are found in most contexts and that the roles are often found in a more organic form. Thus few communicators in organisation ever fit directly into one of the roles and one has to acknowledge that a communicator can display a combination of the abovementioned roles.

Theoretical perspective 8:

A development communicator in the participatory approach should be in accordance with a problem-solving process facilitator in the excellence theory of public relations. Thus, a participatory development communicator should be a relationship facilitator; relationships with the community should steer programme decisions within the framework of the communication strategy.

2.4.5 Habermasian communicative action

A last theoretical premise of participatory communication can be found in the theory of communicative action of Habermas (1984, 1989). In development communication theory, Jacobson (2003a:89) uses Habermas' theory of communicative action to address the definitional problems regarding participatory communication, as discussed in Section 2.4.3.1.

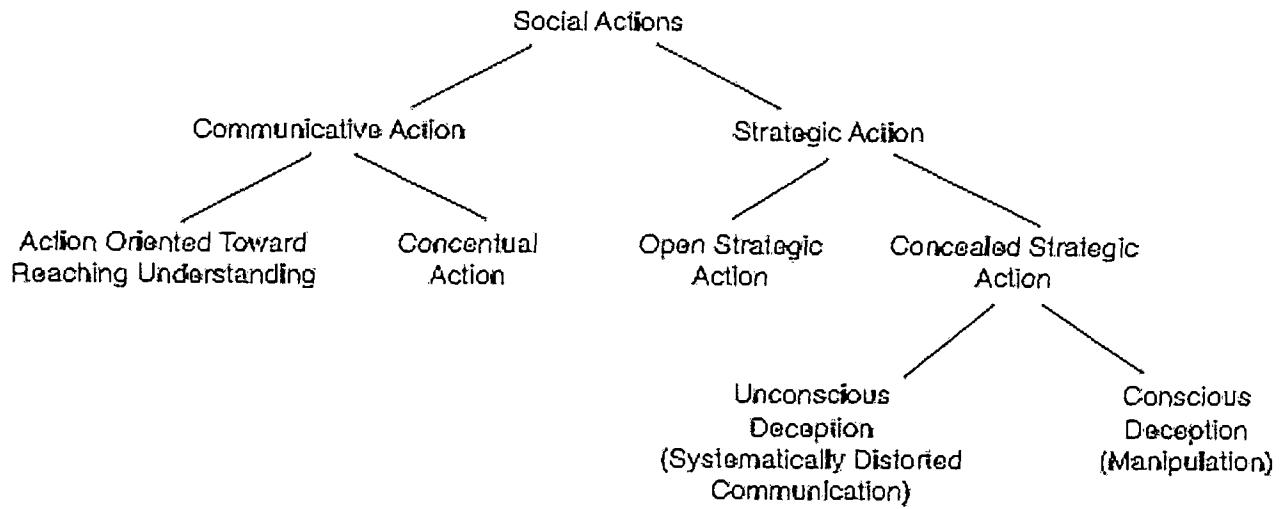


Figure 7: Theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1984:333)

Within Habermas' theory of communicative action, action towards reaching understanding is the ideal form of interaction in which "all participants harmonise their individual plans of action with one another and thus pursue their illocutionary aims *without reservation* [emphasis in the original text]" (Habermas, 1984:294). Plainly put, Habermas theorises that there is a point at which those in a participatory situation may freely communicate their ideas (see Figure 6 for the distinction between action oriented towards reaching understanding and manipulation or deception).

Habermas (cited¹ by Jacobson, 2003b:13) then gives the following conditions for action to be communicative:

Participants in communication must be free to 'call into question any proposal,' to 'introduce any proposal, to 'express any attitudes, wishes, or needs.' There must be a 'symmetrical distribution of opportunities to contribute' to discussion. There must be adequate time to arrive at agreement. Outcomes must be determined through 'good reasons,' or the 'force of the better argument,' and more.

Mitrović (1999:221) indicates that Habermas places emphasis on the role of the speech

¹ This is given as a secondary reference due to differences in translation.

act in communication as in speech there is the ideal context for rational discourse, argumentation and communicative action. Thus, Mitrović argues that Habermas requires the abolishing of compulsion in communication, and the development of universal communication ethics and adequate democratic procedures for communication.

As Barranquero (2006:923) explains, communicational understanding stems more from reason from within communicative action and not so much mere knowledge. Thus, the communicative action situation creates an opportunity for reason and debate, which increases participants' ability to understand one another.

Hirschheim and Klein (2003) expand on Habermas' theory and describe four sets of conditions to foster communicative action. These are:

- (i) all participants should have equal opportunity to raise issues, points and counterpoints to other views, thus perceived disagreements should be open for discussion;
- (ii) all participants placed on equal footing to give or refuse orders, insist on gaining deeper understanding through clarifications that must be provided, aimed at diffusing asymmetrical power distribution among participants;
- (iii) all participants should have the opportunity to question clarity, veracity, sincerity and social responsibility of the actions proposed, aimed at testing legitimacy and correctness of 'factual, instrumental, and normative claims';
- (iv) all participants have an equal opportunity to articulate feelings of doubts or concerns, aimed at exposing manipulative intents, ulterior motives etc., and also ensure that members who lack the felicity of expression are also heard.

Habermas' theory of communicative action (1984) further states that all social action assumes a basic set of norms. According to Byrne (2004:27), these norms create the environment in which all participants (or actors in Habermasian terms) communicate fully and openly. This implies that all actors accept the outcome of open and rational argumentation. Communication breakdowns occur when these norms are not respected.

Another aspect of ideal communication that Habermas (1984) focuses on is that of

discourse – a form of communication in which participants subject themselves to the “unforced force of the better argument” or the context that is referred to as the “ideal speech situation”. The ideal speech situation is one in which dialogue is not dominated by any of the participants, or their points of view, and in which all participants have an equal discursive opportunity within the context of the exchange. It is a transparent environment that cultivates the equality of all participants because each participant has an equal opportunity to participate. The ultimate ideal of discourse (or dialogue) within the ideal speech situation is to reach an undistorted consensus about an issue that is of importance to all the participants.

The concepts of *communicative action* and the *ideal speech situation* may appear idealistic in nature, with academics from various disciplines criticising Habermas for his naïveté in proposing a powerless environment or authentic consensus. Yet, as Morrow and Torres (2002:51) explain, that people act as if communicative action and the ideal speech situation are attainable, their collective learning might transcend the conflicts that originate from traditional power imbalances. The anticipation of the ideal speech situation becomes a critical standard against which a realised consensus can be brought into question and checked.

Theoretical perspective 9A:

Participatory communication is non-manipulative and is evident in communication action oriented towards reaching understanding and the ideal speech situation. This means that all participants should be free to discuss disagreement, and to question all actions in terms of the legitimacy thereof. All participants should have equal discursive opportunity and no person or opinion should take preference. Open and rational argumentation leads to communicative action in the participatory context.

All the aspects discussed as theoretical premises or conceptualising of participation could be combined as conditions or categories in investigating the participativeness of a development communication programme.

2.4.6 Criticism regarding participatory communication

Although participatory communication may be viewed as a more appropriate approach to developmental issues, it is not free of criticism. The primary criticism against participatory communication is targeted at the general lack of formal definition of the approach and lack of prescriptive means by which to formally measure or implement the implied participation. As a part of its premise, the participatory approach provides no specific guidelines regarding what should be done in a project, as each community and their situation is unique and the process of solving developmental problems has to form part of the participatory process.

Many sources on participatory communication offer the criticism that participation is difficult to define and implement, as there is no single generally accepted definition of *participation* (Jacobson, 2003:3; Snyder, 2002:462–463; Mato, 1999:58; Gumucio-Dagron, 2001:8; Waisbord, 2003:21). In addition, Cadiz (2003) points out that a problem in the implementation of participation lies in the term's rhetorical use. According to Jacobson (2003b:1), another problem regarding participation is that there are different views with regard to the nature, purpose or place of participation. Servaes (1996a:15) states: "To some participation is a means to reach a certain goal; to others, participation is an end in itself".

This varying view of participation and its functions leads to criticism of the participatory model, as it is often viewed as vague and unspecific, and therefore unattainable. This can partly be attributed to the postmodernist roots of this approach, according to which no specific method could or should be subscribed to. As a postmodernist approach, the subjectivity and uniqueness of every situation and group of people should be considered, rather than following a scientifically determined process. From a scientific perspective, this criticism is clear, but philosophically it is inevitable that an approach rooted in

postmodernism will be unspecific in method. This vagueness in terms of the implementation of participation is viewed as a negative aspect because development practitioners are not offered a procedure to implement a programme participatively.

This study has, in its survey of various aspects of participation, aimed at providing specific guidelines, in order to address this criticism in that clearer and specific attributes were provided in order to better understand and identify participatory communication in practice.

Harrison (2003:102) voices another criticism in calling proponents of participatory approaches "priests of humanistic plurality" who oversimplify development in a naïve or romantic manner with elementary dichotomies of top-down or bottom-up. This echoes Waisbord's (2003:22) criticism of social marketers, who view participatory approaches as too idealistic, while participatory approaches offer recommendations with "limited impact".

Criticism regarding empowerment and the impact thereof on the relationships and traditional systems in the society refers to the way in which participatory approaches are directed towards creating an 'equal' environment for participation, often resulting in fragmented communities (Yoon, 1996:13). This is a problem primarily faced when NGOs or organisations leave communities in the middle of a process and withdraw without new structures having formed in the community.

2.4.7 Persuasion and behavioural change in light of participation

In considering participatory communication in the context of HIV/AIDS, the relevance of participation in the case in which information is primarily focused on persuasion is brought into question. Above all, if the normative theory of participation is considered in this context, the concepts of persuasion on the one hand and participation on the other appear to be in conflict.

As Hornik (1988:113) states, “the central theoretical problem in the field of purposeful communication is explaining the gap between knowledge and behaviour”. Thus, persuasion at the level of HIV-prevention needs to surpass attitude change; it needs to engage with peoples’ way of doing.

Steyn (2004:59) mentions that persuasion is in accordance with the asymmetrical view of public relations, as it tends to be characterised by manipulation. (In Section 2.4.4.1, it was pointed out that participatory communication is essentially the equivalent of two-way symmetrical communication in which the goal is conflict-resolution and creation of understanding.) How can an agent of communication be persuasive, while encouraging participation or two-way symmetrical communication, which may appear to ignore the expert knowledge of the persuader? This question has already been partly answered (Section 2.4.5) in terms of Habermas’ communicative action. Therein, the role of participation in communicative action is one in which a message would be considered in terms of a shared understanding, in which communication would form shared meaning, as opposed to a message that is blindly passed to a group of people. In the instance of communicative action, it is also the case that the communication will be free from manipulation.

Habermas (1984) refers to open strategic action through which the persuasive message is passed on to a community for the purpose of information and which may be a participatory form of communication. This is not the ideal form of communication in which participants

create their own meaning, but it allows persuasion without manipulation. In this case, it is important that all participants are aware that persuasion is the outcome of the exchange and that communities still have the opportunity to question the persuasive message.

Thus, participatory persuasion allows for discussion and even calling an expert's view into question. The result is that the indigenous knowledge that an outsider may have ignored when formulating a message is also considered when that message is debated and discussed. In terms of mass media and persuasion, the involvement of communities in the production of persuasive messages has been addressed. Should the community not have been involved in message production, the existing message may and should still be discussed and analysed from a local perspective as a participatory form of persuasion.

Snyder (2002, 462) mentions that in HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns in Uganda it was found that greater participation led to improved message quality, as the local knowledge and context could better be integrated into the messages. Essentially, a community that has had the opportunity to discuss an issue will assume ownership of the idea and the 'knowledge gap' will more easily be bridged.

Mody (1991) offers a model in which participatory approaches may be used in terms of persuasion, in which the indigenous knowledge and the input of the community are central to the development of a participatory persuasive campaign. Persuasion, from the perspective of participation, needs to be in the context of a conversation in which there is ample opportunity for discussion. This creates a problem for mass media campaigns (which were earlier pointed out as being primarily modernist), as a stand-alone media campaign creates little space for question or feedback in general.

Theoretical statement 9B:

If persuasive messages form part of participative communication, there needs to be ample opportunity for discussion, questioning of the ideas and debate.

2.5 The middle ground between modernisation and participation

Up to this point, the modernisation and participatory paradigms have been presented as a set dichotomy of extremes, implying that development communication is either modernist or participatory. However, this is not the case, as many communication interventions lay along the continuum between the two paradigms.

Jacobson (2003a:90) cautions that participation was not a concept foreign to modernisation theory. As he explains, communication played a central role in modernisation and that participation featured in the seminal version of modernisation as developed by Lerner (1958) in the forms of media participation and political participation.

Modernisation theory did not remain in its non-participatory state either. For example, in a period of over twenty years, Rogers, the father of Diffusion of Innovations (which is originally a modernisation theory), revised his theory, moving it from a solely one-way process of message transmission towards a definition that incorporates participatory aspects. In explaining the convergence model, a later incarnation of the diffusion theory, Rogers (1983:xviii) defines “communication … as a process in which the participants create and share information with one another to reach a mutual understanding”. The result is that communication theory in general is becoming more participatory, although certain tenets of the original modernisation philosophy remain. In essence, all communication (including modernisation) will become more participatory, the problem lies within the definition of participation and the levels at which the participation formed part of the programmes.

2.6 Conclusion

It is evident from the overview of theoretical approaches to development communication that neither the development communication context, nor the HIV/AIDS context is simple. The theories in these fields have developed over a long period, with various perspectives providing possible solutions to the problems of development and HIV/AIDS.

Although the two paradigms within development have been indicated as two poles, it is important to note that the progression of the theory should rather be viewed in terms of a continuum than a categorisation. Although theories may have their roots in modernisation, they often adopted participatory aspects with time, while participatory programmes that are not effectively implemented may include aspects of modernist philosophy's non-participatory aspects. Campaigns within this context would thus be able to be placed on a continuum of participation, whether the underlying approach is more modernist or more participatory.

This chapter has explained the differences in approach between the modernisation and participatory paradigms to development, thereby explaining the theoretical context of this study. Specifically in the explanation and conceptualisation of the participatory communication, the concepts of dialogue (2.4.1), involvement (2.4.2), empowerment (2.4.3), symmetry in communication (2.4.4.1), communicator roles (2.4.4.2), communicative action (2.4.6) and the role of questioning in persuasion (2.4.7) were identified as key to participation.

In this chapter, the theory implied that communication interventions that rely strongly on mass media tend to be modernist in nature. These interventions also tend to be culturally insensitive. Within this context, a development specialist is an expert who sends his or her messages to a passive community with the intention of swaying them with the expert knowledge given to them.

In contrast, programmes that empower communities within their own contexts, relying on dialogue and reciprocal two-way symmetrical communication, respond to the community's needs. These initiatives are community-driven and the specialist assumes the role of a catalyst or an equal. True participation does not rely on manipulation but functions through discourse in which any participant's opinion or perspective is valid. This does not mean that communities are left to their own devices, but rather that the discourse provides the opportunity for participants to understand fully the ideas generated in the process of participation and communication.

Thus, the analysis of *loveLife*'s communication, as presented in Chapter 4, will use the theoretical perspectives gained from this chapter to ascertain the organisation's communication approach. As many approaches in communication theory have shifted, the primary analysis will be based on the levels of participation, as this should indicate to what extent the organisation has shifted from the modernist paradigm.

The theory of this chapter was unfurled in theoretical perspectives that were applied to the empirical enquiry of this study in order to identify the levels of participation in the communication approach of the *loveLife* HIV/AIDS prevention programme. The next chapter will provide more detail of the research design and methodology that was used to investigate *loveLife*'s communication approach.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research approach and methodology that was followed in this study. Chapter 1 contained a general overview of the qualitative methods that were employed in this study, while this chapter provides a more detailed description of the research process. Qualitative research is contrasted with quantitative research in order to illustrate the way the former approach echoes the shift in philosophy found in communication theory (described in Chapter 2). Qualitative research is then described with a focus on the methods selected for this study: qualitative content analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

The research methodology was designed to address the research objectives presented in Chapter 1. The research design included a literature review, which was given in Chapter 2, in which the literature was reviewed on the principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication that are applicable to more effective HIV/AIDS prevention programmes. These principles were identified and condensed into specific theoretical perspectives. The theoretical perspectives were then grouped into constructs that were used for the qualitative content analysis of the policy documents, campaign activities and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions conducted at head office and a Y-Centre. The research approach and methodology are discussed in this chapter. The chapter closes with a discussion of the limitations of the methodology, including problems faced in conducting the research.

The framework of the participatory approach is used as a normative outline (condensation of the theoretical perspectives from Chapter 2 into constructs), in order to fulfil research objective 2: *to investigate loveLife's description of its communication in terms of the principles of participatory communication*. This means that the aim is to examine the levels of participativeness that the organisation displays, instead of forcing the organisation into a pre-conceived theoretical framework. Through this, the study would determine the

underlying approach of the programme, instead of matching the communication to a theory that may be removed from the actual communicative approach of the organisation.

3.2 Research approach

Researchers typically approach their research from either a quantitative or a qualitative perspective. The qualitative was viewed as ‘soft’ research, while the quantitative has been viewed as cold or decontextualised and inflexible (Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 1998). In definition of these terms, Bauer, Gaskell and Allum (2000:7) explain that:

Quantitative research deals with numbers, uses statistical models to explain data, and is considered ‘hard’ research ... By contrast qualitative research avoids numbers, deals with ‘interpreting’ social realities, and is considered ‘soft’ research.

Bernard (2006:452) explains that quantitative research broadly involves “reducing people to numbers”, whereas qualitative research and analysis tends to “reduce people to words”. Thus, the quantitative researcher represents their data through predetermined codes, while the qualitative researcher presents their data it in a more descriptive manner.

Quantitative research is more highly formalised and the research process is more exactly controlled as seen in the physical sciences in which the replicability and reliability of research is key to the formalising of research hypotheses. The quantitative process is aimed at proving or discrediting specific hypotheses. As the quantitative methods may be more easily repeated owing to the specifics of the methodology, physical scientists tend to view these forms of research as true or actual science that tends to be more objective, standardised, specific and statistical in nature (Fouché & Delport, 2006:73).

In contrast, the qualitative paradigm tends to focus on the philosophical or interpretative aspects of reality. Qualitative research tends to be less strictly formalised with a scope of study that is more open. This form of research tends to provide a more holistic (or less pre-defined) picture of reality with the possibility that the research may be adapted in terms of question or actual findings. Owing to its subjective nature, there is limited generalisation of

findings. Fouche and Delport (2006:74) stress that the qualitative approach tends to give an insider view of reality and may interpret the beliefs, opinions and values of a group of people.

Although the arguments of standardisation and reliability are important within the research context, the qualitative research approach provides the possibility for impressions or interpretations that arise within the research process to form part of the analysis. This is an important aspect in which research focuses on the informal or unstructured links in, for instance, everyday processes of human life. In terms of this study, the qualitative approach is more suited, as the communication approaches of organisations such as *loveLife* cannot easily be quantified or demarcated or meaningfully analysed quantitatively.

In terms of the distinction between modernism and postmodernism, as discussed in Chapter 2, the distinction between a quantitative and qualitative method can respectively be linked to each of these two paradigms. In the same scientifically clinical manner with which modernism views the world, researchers in the quantitative paradigm argue that science stems from what can be seen, proved and counted. In a more postmodernist manner, the qualitative approach argues that the purely ‘scientific’ approach to research, specifically in the social sciences, needs to investigate the opinions and attitudes of people in order to understand certain phenomena, rather than quantify these, as they cannot be directly seen or measured. The original modernist or quantitative ideals of research were focused strongly on aspects of objectivity and reliability, although in recent times the subjective reality of human endeavour has caused this ideal to change to a “*striving for objectivity [emphasis in the original text]*” (Bernard, 2006:5).

In terms of a choice of research styles, Holsti (1969:7–8) explains that researchers should not focus on the quantitativeness or qualitativeness of a study as such, but should rather focus on the theoretical relevance of the research methodology used.

In a study that has thus far followed a postmodernist theoretical structure (the participatory approach as discussed in Chapter 2), it is apt to employ a research design that is largely qualitative. A qualitative approach will focus on reaching an understanding of the research

topic, or providing a picture of reality instead of plainly forcing it into quantitative perspective.

At this point, it is also important to note that this extreme rift between the quantitative and qualitative paradigms has dissipated in the past decade. Many studies have assumed a combined approach of these paradigms. The latest argument has been that any paradigm, or mixture thereof, used in research should depend on the appropriateness of the methodology within the context and research objectives of the specific study.

3.3 Research design and methodology

As the field of qualitative research has been described above, the specific research methodology used in this study is discussed. In the discussion of each of the methods applied, a description of the implementation in this study is also given. The methods used were qualitative content analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

3.3.1 Qualitative Content analysis

As part of the process of communication, people informally structure and analyse the messages that they receive. This process of analysis is aimed at understanding the contexts and topics of communication. In the same manner, researchers may have a method of analysing messages for the purpose of gaining an understanding of the patterns, themes and the contexts wherein the messages function. In this context, Hofstee (2006:125) explains that content analysis is invaluable for an in-depth understanding of a text or collection of texts.

Content analysis is a formal research method by which texts (which may include texts beyond the literary)¹ may be analysed for their themes and subjects. Weber (1985:9) describes content analysis as a research method by which a set of procedures is implemented in order to make valid deductions from text. These deductions or inferences

¹ Originally, texts were viewed as only literary in definition, but the philosopher De Saussure (cf. 1916) extended the concept of texts to include other forms of expression, for instance art or film.

may provide perspectives on the sender, the message or the receiver of the message.

As a research tool, content analysis is used to determine the presence (or absence) of certain words, themes or concepts in various forms of media (Du Plooy, 2001:191). The method of content analysis is traditionally viewed as purely quantitative, as Neuendorf (2002:1) describes content analysis as “systematic, objective and quantitative”. Neuendorf (2002:5, 4) states that qualitative methods are not included in the definition of *content analysis*, as content analysis should not provide a detailed description or ‘gestalt’ of the text. Traditionally, the quantitative form of content analysis takes specific numbers of variables and translates them into a numerically based summary of a selected text through a statistical representation of the frequency of coded features in a text (Neuendorf, 2002:14).

However, with time the method has also been adapted towards a more qualitative application. Bauer (2002:132) demonstrates that content analysis is a hybrid method in terms of the quantitative–qualitative divide, as it can be strongly quantitative, in statistically interpreting codes, or more qualitative, in extracting primary themes or ideas.

3.3.1.2 The process of qualitative content analysis

The process of qualitative content analysis involves sampling of texts, coding, reliability, codebook, formulation of criteria and constructs. These aspects are discussed in the sections that follow.

3.3.1.2.1 Sampling of texts

Bauer (2000:136) explains that there are two kinds of texts that can be used for content analysis, the first are texts that are made in the process of research (such as, interview or focus group discussion transcripts) and the second are texts that have been produced for other purposes (such as, corporate memos, newspapers and forms of media). Bauer further explains that all forms of texts may be analysed to provide answers to a researcher’s questions.

The content analysis process involves two aspects of sampling. The first is identifying the *corpus* of texts that need to be analysed. Here it is important to examine aspects of representation, the number of texts available and the research objectives of the specific study (Bernard, 2006:509; Bauer, 2002:137). If a study is focused on a small number of texts, it would be difficult to decide on what may be omitted, while a large number of texts may justify a sampling of texts.

In terms of this study, all available policy documents of *loveLife* were analysed. A selection of material distributed by the organisation in 2007 also formed part of the analysis. The sample was limited to 2007 in order to ensure a manageable number of texts to analyse, but also to provide a view of the organisation by means of a snap-shot directly before they shifted their campaign focus from the slogan 'talk about it' to 'make your move'.

The following are available policy documents and general communication material distributed by the organisation. These include documents used for communicating to both internal and external stakeholders.

In terms of the analysis, the documents were grouped into policy documents and reports, and documents distributed directly to the public. The reason for this would be that the organisation would tend to describe its communication in the first set of documents, whereas it would communicate with a more external audience in the second set of documents.

3.3.1.2.1.1 Policy documents and reports

The following policy documents of *loveLife* were analysed as part of the sample of material from the organisation. Each document will be described briefly.

Communicating loveLife (loveLife, 2003a)¹

This publication is an internal document that *loveLife* uses in order to ensure that staff in the organisation are aligned in terms of understanding and communication regarding *loveLife* and what ideals the organisation represents.

Report on activities and progress 2006 (loveLife, 2007a)

Annual reports are mandatory documents that are integral to providing an insight into the organisation's image of itself. *LoveLife's* annual report for 2006 was compiled and published in 2007. The report provides a view of the organisation's strategic positioning, functioning and reporting on events.

loveLife's Communication strategy (Harrison, 2007)

This is a document that the CEO, Dr. David Harrison, compiled in order to give communication professionals an idea of what *loveLife's* communication strategy was at that stage. The document can be considered as an internal critical reflection on the organisation's communication.

Talk about it: June 2007 (loveLife, 2007e)

This quarterly publication (a four-page newsletter) is aimed at stakeholders, such as partner organisations, businesses and funders. It provides a broad overview of recent activities.

¹ Although this policy document dates from 2003, it was included in the analysis as it is still used as an internal document and would have influenced *loveLife's* communication for the period of analysis.

Inside Out is the quarterly internal newsletter of the organisation, in which the staff, peer motivators and volunteers across all sites receive news on activities or achievements. According to *loveLife* (2007a:31), this publication “ensures a widespread internal consistency and understanding of the campaign.”

3.3.1.2.1.2 Publications available to the general public

The following is the analysed sample of *loveLife*'s publications that were available to the general public. Once again, each document is briefly described.

Lovefacts for a love life¹ generation (*loveLife*, 2007b)

This publication is a brochure that *loveLife* uses to convey key information to its youth target audience about the organisation, and HIV/AIDS and sexuality. The brochure was first published in 2007 and therefore represents new views from the organisation. It was expected to replace previous youth brochures such as the original *loveLife* fact sheets, the 'Loving life' booklet and 'Health rights for young people' booklet.

Love them enough to talk about sex (*loveLife*, 2007c)

This publication is another brochure that was published in 2007, which represents newer views from the organisation, although this publication is aimed at parents. It deals with aspects of sexuality and HIV/AIDS within the context of *loveLife*'s 'love life generation'.

Uncut: September 2007 (*loveLife*, 2007d)

This publication is *loveLife*'s magazine that is distributed by means of various newspapers

¹ In 2007, *loveLife* ran a campaign on the love life generation (clearly written in two words in order to indicate the extent to which this generation loves life). See Addendum B for more information on *loveLife*'s campaign roll-out.

across the country. *LoveLife* claims that it has the “widest print run of any [South African] youth publication” (*LoveLife*, 2007a, 27). *Uncut* is aimed at interaction with the youth. The publication contains information on a healthy lifestyle and is distributed monthly.

3.3.1.2.2 Coding

Coding in content analysis involves a process of classification of words, themes or concepts within the sampled text. This may be done from a perspective of a hypothesis that needs testing or from the text itself or a combination thereof. This study implements a combination of the two as qualitative content analysis seeks to create a coherent coding frame in which a single theme is found from which all codes may flow (Bauer, 2000:141).

The process entails taking field notes while reading through a text. These running notes on the coding may provide further insight into the relation of themes in a text. The process is iterative and allows the analyst to become increasingly *grounded* in the data, which facilitates a deeper understanding of a text. Initially, the analysis involves gaining a holistic¹ view of the text, or texts that need to be analysed, by deductively finding themes of analysis. Thus the whole body of texts is first examined and the primary theme extracted. Through this analysis a coherent coding frame can be developed.

In classical or quantitative content analysis, a frequency count of certain words or codes is done, but with qualitative content analysis the focus is on the quality or emphasis of themes that form codes. The coding frame needs to address the theoretical perspectives and texts under analysis. In this study, the coding was conducted within the scope of the theoretical perspectives gained from the literature study. Thus, the theoretical perspectives were concretised into theoretical constructs in order to create a coding frame that could be used to determine the extent to which aspects of the normative model of participatory or horizontal two-way communication can be identified in the texts analysed.

¹ A holistic view of the text refers to the text as a whole, thus indicating that the text is firstly seen for what it is and that a researcher should take the context of statements within a document into account in the analysis.

Actual coding involves the recording and emphasis of certain themes as they arise from the text. Thereafter, these themes are organised into a coding frame according to emphasis, frequency and importance of the codes. A coding frame is tested and refined through a pilot analysis. Coding is revised as the analysis progresses. In analysing the texts in this study, the coding frame was continually revised in order to ensure that nuances within the language used by the organisation, such as terminology or phrasing that differs from the original coding frame, would be included in the analysis.

3.3.1.2.3 Reliability

Reliability indicates the level of objectivity of a study and refers to the extent to which a research process can be reconstructed with a similar result (Du Plooy, 2003). Reliability is addressed in this study in the sense that there may be agreement amongst various analysts of the same text. Thus, it may involve a second interpretation of a text or texts after a period in order to ensure a personal reliable consistency or stability in the coding interpretation. If a different result is found, the reliability of the method may be brought into question. Another researcher in the same field may also conduct a similar coding in order to ensure reliability (Bauer, 2000:143).

As analysis in this context involves human judgement, it is important to decide on an acceptable level of reliability instead of a perfect reliability. In this study, the same texts were analysed by the same researcher over an extended period of time. These analyses were discussed with supervisors in order to gain outside advice and a measure of objectivity. The various analyses conducted in each instance were also compared in order to check the extent to which the analyses were similar.

3.3.1.2.4 Codebook

The last phase in classical content analysis involves the creation of a data file for statistical analysis, the determination of the rationale of the coding frame and the calculation of the frequency and distributions of the codes.

In qualitative content analysis, the *codebook* is not as set as with quantitative content analysis. In this context, the codebook refers to the recording of the field notes taken in the initial analysis, with initial observations on the effectiveness of the coding and a description of primary themes that are present or absent. The indication of the presence and absence of themes entails that not all themes will be present in all texts and that a qualitative analyst would be just as cognisant of that which is not addressed as to that which is addressed.

In terms of this study, a 'codebook' was developed through the formation of constructs gained from the specific theoretical perspectives given in Chapter 2. This codebook of constructs was adapted and refined in the process of the content analysis of the texts used in this study. The next section gives a clear indication of the formulation process as well as a description of the constructs that formed the so-called codebook for this study.

3.3.1.2.5 Formulation of criteria and constructs

The constructs were developed, prior to analysis, from the theoretical perspectives (Chapter 2). As the theoretical overview in Chapter 2 primarily addressed participation and indicators of participativeness, the constructs were therefore aimed at evaluating the organisation in terms of an interpretation of the normative model of participatory communication.

As the first two theoretical perspectives were based on Modernisation theory, it was decided to rephrase those perspectives so that they would be from the participatory perspective.

Original Theoretical perspective 1

Communication interventions that display an over-reliance on mass media by means of dissemination of information in a 'top-down' manner tend to be more modernist in approach in the context of the continuum of participation.

Revised Theoretical perspective 1

Communication interventions that are more participatory on the continuum of participation rely less on mass media for dissemination of information, and would have more horizontal media implementation.

Original Theoretical perspective 2:

Communication interventions in the modernist tradition are limited in cultural sensitivity.

Revised Theoretical perspective 2:

Participatory Communication interventions display a greater cultural sensitivity.

Due to Theoretical perspective 9A and 9B dealing with the same concept, these were consolidated into a single Theoretical perspective 9.

Theoretical perspective 9 A

Participative communication is non-manipulative and can be seen in communication action oriented toward reaching understanding and the "ideal speech situation". This means that all participants should be free to discuss disagreement, and to question all actions in terms of the legitimacy thereof. All participants should have equal discursive opportunity and no person or opinion should take preference. Open and rational argumentation leads to communicative action in the participative context.

Theoretical statement 9B

If persuasive messages form part of participative communication there needs to be ample opportunity for discussion, questioning of the ideas and debate.

Revised Theoretical perspective 9

Participative communication is non-manipulative and can be seen in communication action oriented toward reaching understanding and the “ideal speech situation”. This means that all participants should be free to discuss disagreement, and to question all actions in terms of the legitimacy thereof. All participants should have equal discursive opportunity and no person or opinion should take preference. Open and rational argumentation leads to communicative action in the participative context. Persuasive messages can be participative if the abovementioned aspects are addressed.

The constructs were also defined in terms of the two poles of the continuum of participativeness from pole A, which is participatory, to pole B, which non-participatory. The theoretical perspectives presented in Table 3.1 were analysed for the primary concepts that constitute either participatory or non-participatory communication (these concepts are given in bold).

Table 3.1 Theoretical perspectives

<p>(Revised) Theoretical Perspective 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Communication interventions that are more participatory on the continuum of participation rely less on mass media for dissemination of information, and would have more horizontal media implementation.
<p>(Revised) Theoretical Perspective 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Participatory Communication interventions display a greater cultural sensitivity.
<p>Theoretical Perspective 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Participatory communication is dialogic, reciprocal and free of power imbalances. The developer serves as a mere catalyst and is seen as an equal, owing to mutuality and respect.
<p>Theoretical Perspective 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Media-based programmes may be participatory as media can be implemented in participatory manners. In a participatory framework, mass media should be used to support or supplement interpersonal methods instead of merely disseminating information.
<p>Theoretical Perspective 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Participation requires that the recipients of development are involved in the process of knowledge generation. This requires moving from manipulation, tokenism and information dissemination towards community-driven communication, delegation of power and partnership in which all parties generate knowledge.
<p>Theoretical Perspective 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Participatory communication requires empowerment in terms of the enablement of communities to assume ownership of their own situation. Empowered communities play a major role in the communication process, with the expert remaining in the background.

Theoretical Perspective 7:

- Based on the excellence theory, a participatory development **agent repositions itself** according to the community's **true needs** instead of its **expert view** and uses communication in a **two-way symmetrical** manner. This communication is aimed at reaching a **win-win situation** instead of one of **persuasion** and **manipulation**.

Theoretical Perspective 8:

- A development communicator in the participatory approach should be in accordance with a **problem-solving process facilitator** in the excellence theory of public relations. Thus, a participatory development communicator should be a **relationship facilitator**. **Relationships** with the community should **steer programme decisions** within the framework of the communication strategy.

(Consolidated) Theoretical Perspective 9:

- Participatory communication is **non-manipulative** and is evident in **communication action** oriented **towards reaching understanding** and the ideal speech situation. This means that all participants should be **free to discuss disagreement**, and to **question** all actions in terms of the legitimacy thereof. All participants should have **equal discursive opportunity** and no person or opinion should take preference. **Open and rational argumentation** leads to communicative action in the participatory context. Persuasive messages can be participatory if the above-mentioned aspects are addressed.

The primary concepts, given in Table 3.2, were grouped in order to distinguish broad themes that could in turn be grouped to form broad constructs. These concepts indicate the position of the constructs along the continuum of participativeness. Some of the concepts were not directly gained from the theoretical perspectives, as they were deduced indirectly.

Table 3.2: Concepts derived from theoretical perspectives¹

Participative concepts	Non-participative concepts
Dialogic, reciprocal	Disseminative
Development agent as catalyst/equal in background	Development agent as expert
Empowered/free of imbalances/balanced power	Imbalanced power
Community-driven	Expert-driven
Media is supportive of initiative	Media drives the initiative
Community involvement	Passive community
Empowerment	Manipulation
Open (and rational) argumentation by all	One-directional/persuasion/ manipulation
Communication action	Manipulation
Partnership	Information
Enablement	Disenablement / Impediment
Ownership	Uninvolved community/non-commitment from community
Repositioning of agent	Repositioning of community
Community's needs	Expert view
Two-way symmetrical	One-way imbalanced
Win-win situation	Persuasion/manipulation
Problem-solving facilitator	Prescriptive expert
Long-term relationship	Short-term client
Open to disagreement	Closed to disagreement
Delegation of power	Tokenism
Equal discursive opportunity	Unbalanced or dominated discussion
Debate, questioning	Monologue, talking down to/telling

¹ The concepts were given in order according to the theoretical perspectives. The concepts were grouped where a repetitive concept was found.

These concepts were then restructured in order to form constructs using criteria according to which the constructs could be identified or defined. Each construct was formulated according to a participatory (A) and a non-participatory pole (B), in order to distinguish the organisation's positioning on the continuum of each aspect of participatory communication. Thus, an A next to a construct indicates participatory, while a B indicates non-participatory.

Construct 1 A: Dialogue

Reciprocal communication is free and open communication between the community or audience and the organisation, in which there is communication action and openness to disagreement. Conflict or difference in opinion is viewed as enhancing dialogue and involvement of participants. This construct is indicative of the extent to which participants are involved in the sharing of ideas relating to the programme's message. It includes message formulation and/or debate at a grass-roots level. The community is active in the programme. The communication is directed towards reaching understanding from both the organisation and the community's side.

Construct 1 B: Dissemination/manipulation

Communication is linear or one-directional and aimed mainly at persuasion or manipulation. The communication is mainly directed at understanding of the organisation's point of view from the community's side. Either the community is not involved in message formulation, or they may be talked down to. The participants are inactive or passive in the programme. Pseudo-involvement may be more of a persuasive nature with only certain information shared with the community. Conflict and disagreement are viewed as negative and to be avoided.

Construct 2 A: Facilitator

The development agent is viewed as a catalyst, or an equal that works in the background. The development agent is a problem-solving facilitator. The communication is aimed at stimulating thought and is interpretative.

Construct 2 B: Prescriptive expert

The development agent is viewed as an expert and communication stems from an authoritative view. The community is also repositioned towards the scientific view. The communication is prescriptive.

Construct 3 A: Relationship/PR orientation

Communication and the programme have long-term, sustainable relationship goals. The communication is directed towards a win-win situation and the community is viewed as an important public or stakeholder. In terms of the media, the message is open for interpretation and the audience is not expected to react uniformly to what is communicated to them.

Construct 3 B: Client/marketing-orientation

The community is viewed as a target audience or a client that will be served in a short-term context. The communication is based on marketing and branding approaches with target audience, product, positioning, price, promotion and exchange philosophies. The message is delivered as a pre-packaged solution, thus the correct packaging thereof is considered important.

Construct 4 A: Symmetric media

Communication is two-way and balanced. There are ample opportunities for qualitative feedback. The use of media is supplementary to the initiative and is only viewed as a supportive tool.

Construct 4 B: Media-driven

Mass media drives the communication, for which information plays an important role. Communication tends to be one-way or imbalanced with messages that are more persuasive. The media is the primary tool for information delivery.

Construct 5 A: Equality

The programme is aimed at empowerment, enablement, community ownership or the balancing of power. Imbalances are addressed. The community drives the programme and power is delegated to the participants. There are efforts to restructure or change in order to address inequalities in the system.

Construct 5 B: Imbalanced power

The community is passive and the organisation has control of communication. Positions of community power are merely tokenistic. The organisation is rigid and unchangeable.

Construct 6 A: Grass-roots specific

The programme is directed towards specific issues as experienced at community level (grass-roots). Cultural sensitivity and community specific needs are considered in communication.

Construct 6 B: National generalisation

The programme considers broad varied themes that are implemented at national level with little or no regard for grass-roots needs.

The above-mentioned constructs were used as the basis for the coding for the content analysis. The following section details the semi-structured interviews.

3.3.2 Interviewing

Interviewing as a research method covers a wide variety of interactions in the research setting. This may include informal conversations or unstructured interviews, in which there is a minimum control over responses; semi-structured interviews, in which there is a general script with the possibility of open-ended discussion; and highly structured, quantitative interviews, in which the interview is succinct and within a pre-determined set of questions (Du Plooy, 2002:176). The aim of interviews is to gain insight into a matter that cannot be ascertained from written texts and to understand a situation from the perspective of those involved.

3.3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews rely on an interview guide instead of an interview schedule, such as would be used in structured interviews. An interview schedule is an explicit set of instructions for the oral administering of questionnaires, while an interview guide facilitates certain topics of discussion without the full control that the structured interview requires (Du Plooy, 2002:177). Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher an element of control and focus in an interview situation that is likened to a structured conversation (Mason, 1996:35), while it allows the interviewer and respondent to follow new or unanticipated leads. The ability to probe or allow elaboration on a topic or theme in the interview process is the strength of the semi-structured interview (Bernard, 2006:232).

The written interview guides used in semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to replicate the interviews. Should there be more than one interviewer, the guide ensures that the same themes are addressed in each interview.

It is important for the interviewer to be aware of the non-verbal and the verbal cues

displayed by interviewees, and accordingly give attention to these. Non-verbal cues indicate interviewees' feelings, such as excitement or discomfort, regarding topics discussed. It is important to have sufficient probes should more information be required, as indicated by such cues and aspects of what is not said.

3.3.2.2 Interview Sampling

In the same way that the policy documents were sampled for the content analysis, those to be interviewed were sampled. Interviews were held with staff employed in the *loveLife* head office that were primarily involved with policy and communication. *LoveLife*'s communication office was contacted by e-mail, requesting interviews with staff members at head office who were directly involved with *loveLife*'s communication and who could potentially elucidate the organisation's communication practices. Interviews were arranged by the organisation with the CEO and three other people at head office who were available on the day that the CEO was in Johannesburg, as he had recently relocated to Cape Town. The people interviewed were (in order of interviews):

- David Harrison (CEO);
- Botha Swarts (Corporate Communications Manager);
- Thulile Seleka (Area Manager: Southern Gauteng); and
- Angela Stewart-Buchanon (Skills Development Manager).

During the interviews, field notes were made and indications given of where the interview guide was adapted according to the insights gained from the respondents' responses. The interview guide was adapted according to the position held by the interviewee, as some of the questions were pertinent to the knowledge and position of each person. Thus, the questionnaire was adapted in two ways during the interview process, as is typical of a semi-structured interview (as explained above).

3.3.2.3 Recording and note-taking

It is useful for interviewers to make use of recording equipment in the interview situation, as it provides an audio recording that may be replayed in order to determine the nuances and exact words of the interview. As with any form of technology, it is important to consider that the equipment should be tested prior to use. Note-taking remains important in terms of leading the interview, noting non-verbal cues and providing the interviewer with a back-up of the interview should any technical problem occur (Bernard, 2006:232).

In this study, the recorder stopped functioning before the last interview was conducted at head office. Thus, the interview with Thulile Seleka was recorded solely using field notes taken by the researcher. This did not cause any problem, however, as the researcher was aware that the interview was not being recorded and therefore took sufficiently detailed notes of the interview. The respondent was also aware of the situation and was comfortable with allowing for detailed notes to be taken.

3.3.2.4 The interview guide

In this study, the themes identified in the final analysis of the texts through the qualitative content analysis were used as a basis for the interview guide. These themes focus on the coding of the theoretical perspectives and the underlying themes as observed in *loveLife*'s policy documents. An open-ended interview guide that aims to address the aspects of *loveLife*'s communication approach and its adherence to the principles of the normative participatory theory were developed from the constructs. See Addendum C for the interview guide used at the *loveLife* head office.

3.3.2.5 Transcription of the interviews

The researcher himself transcribed the interviews from the field notes and the recordings. In transcribing the interviews, correlations and/or contradictions as to the analysis of policy documents were considered and the codebook was once again updated accordingly.

3.3.2.6 Analysis

Transcripts of the interviews were analysed by means of a content analysis using the same constructs that were used in the analyses of the texts.

After analysis of the interviews, the HIV-related content of the programme's implementation was investigated, as this did not form part of the initial constructs. A question regarding in what manner HIV/AIDS is addressed through the programme was added to the focus group discussion with the peer-motivators (groundBREAKERs and *mpintshi*'s).

In 2008, *loveLife* moved away from the 'Talk about it' slogan to the 'Make your move' slogan. During the interviews and later in the focus group discussions (section 3.3.3), the concepts of the 'Make your move' campaign were used quite often. However, as the content analysis was conducted on the previous year's information, the information differed at times. This change was considered in the final data analysis.

3.3.2.7 Criticism of semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews as a form of survey research have the primary weakness of being generally weak in terms of validity (Babbie, 1983:238). Although semi-structured interviews tend to provide an opportunity for an open-ended response, the artificiality of the interview situation strains the validity of obtained data. This refers to the possibility that a person could provide answers that he or she expects the interviewer wants, or could provide limited information. It is the aspect of limited information or surface-level analysis that is endemic to survey-based research (Mouton, 2001:153).

As with all forms of observation research, it is important to be conscious of the innate or likely limitations of the research method in order to rectify (at least partially) the problems. In the case of semi-structured interviews, repeating the same questions to for instance different members of an organisation should test the validity of the answers obtained

through this method and can provide a deeper understanding of an issue.

Lastly, semi-structured interviews are context specific. This was not a problem in this study, as the context of the organisation is the primary focus of the research.

3.3.3 Focus Group discussions

As the name indicates, focus group discussions provide a focused discussion. This qualitative method provides an enhanced understanding of an issue as it reveals a wide range of opinions, some of which the researcher might not expect (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Focus groups are a means of interviewing people in a group for the purpose of gaining insight into the way in which the group interacts (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002:182). A trained moderator would facilitate these group discussions according to an interview guide similar to that used in semi-structured interviews (Greenbaum, 1998:2–3). The focus group needs to be of a manageable size in order to encourage participation.

The sampling of participants for a focus group may be based on common demographics, attitudes or involvement with an issue. Bernard (2006:23) warns that although a focus group should involve people that are quite homogenous, the participants should preferably not know one another, as “familiarity tends to inhibit disclosure” (Krueger, 1994:18). This aspect needs to be balanced with the idea that members of a focus group should display a shared trait or combined quality of interest to the researcher. As the focus group discussions in this study were for the purpose of dialogue and discussion (owing to the nature of the HIV/AIDS prevention programme) on shared involvement with *loveLife*, it was not considered a problem that the participants may know one another quite well.

3.3.3.1 Focus group implementation

In the final part of the study, focus group discussions were conducted at the *loveLife* Y-Centre in Orange Farm. This site was selected because it is a prominent site for the organisation and offered relatively easy access to a larger number of people involved with the programme as opposed to merely visiting a *loveLife* site such as a school.

Focus group discussions were held with two focus groups. The first focus group was formed from management at the Y-Centre in terms of peer-motivators (groundBREAKERS and *mpintshi's*). The second focus group was formed from participants in the Y-Centre's programme.

See addendum D for the question guide used in both focus groups. The question guide was developed from issues that were uncertain from both the texts analysed as well as from the interviews, or to triangulate and confirm that that which had been mentioned in either the documentation and interviews.

3.3.3.2 Description of the groundBREAKER and *mpintshi* focus group

This focus group consisted of fifteen participants, and the focus group discussion was held in the computer centre of the Y-Centre. The participants in this focus group were used to panel discussions and debate, owing to the way in which the programme is implemented. They were therefore comfortable with speaking in the focus group. After initial hesitation to participate, the discussion became more relaxed, with some of the participants joking and interjecting one another's comments. All of the participants participated. Two respondents tried to dominate (see Section 3.3.3.6), which was managed by the moderator by addressing specific questions to the quieter respondents.

3.3.3.3 Description of participant focus group

Owing to activities within the programme at the Y-Centre and time constraints, the second focus group discussion was held as a focus group discussion with migrating members. It could thus rather be viewed as a series of semi-structured interviews with eight (migrating) participants. There were two to three people in the discussion at a time.

A pure focus group discussion amongst these participants may have been uncomfortable or difficult to moderate, as there was a clear difference in the openness of these participants in comparison to their peer-motivators (focus group discussion with peer-motivators). This is likely because the peer-motivators are more used to dialogue and expressing their views. As could be expected, the programme participants at the Y-Centre were quite a bit shier than the peer-motivators, but they were still open to discussion. These discussions subsequently yielded less information about the organisation's communication approach and practices, also because their knowledge of the organisation was more limited than that of the peer-motivators.

3.3.3.4 Problems encountered with the focus group discussions

The most significant problem with the focus group discussions was that the planned focus group with grass-roots participants could not take place in a structured group form. Rather the participants spoke to the moderator in groups of two or three, which helped keep the conversation natural and informal, while the group remained small enough for the participants to be able to give their opinions without being over-shadowed by dominant focus group members.

These discussions bridged problems that could have arisen should one-to-one interviews have been conducted, in which it would have been likely the participants would have been overly shy and not have spoken freely. In this situation, the problem solved the dominance issue endemic to focus group discussions and discomfort or shyness issues endemic to interviews, thereby providing sufficient indication of the opinions of the programme participants at the Y-Centre.

3.3.3.6 Criticism of Focus Groups

One of the biggest issues with focus groups is that there might be a formal or informal (self-appointed) group leader who dominates the conversation or forces his or her views on other participants (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006:130). In such a case, the researcher needs to be observant of the balance of the discussion and encourage a balanced conversation.

Focus groups are also criticised for gathering qualitative instead of quantitative data, and may indicate the ‘why’ or ‘how’ instead of the ‘how many’ or ‘how much’ of an issue. In this study, this ‘disadvantage’ was the reason for using the method, as the study sought insight into the communication approach and practices of the organisation.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Owing to the sensitivity and confidential nature of the research, all ethical and considerations in terms of persons and information disclosure were adhered to. The Information Department at *loveLife*'s head office ensured access to participants at both head office and at the Orange Farm Y-Centre. But as the research did not deal with HIV-status disclosure, there was not much of a problem in this regard. Those interviewed at the *loveLife* head office gave permission for their names to be used in the report of this study.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the overview of the research methodology followed in this study. It has outlined how the research design of qualitative content analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were planned and implemented. In each instance the methodological theory was given along with an explanation of how the methods were implemented. Where relevant, problems encountered during the study were outlined along with the steps taken to ensure the validity of the research process.

The next chapter will detail the analysis of *loveLife*'s communication approach. The analysis examines what the organisation **says** it does (content analysis of policy documents and interviews at head office), what the organisation **does** (programme activities and focus group discussion with groundBREAKERs and *mpintshi's*) and how the community **perceives** what the organisation does (focus group discussion with participants at Y-Centre). The purpose of the analysis is to address the remaining research objectives and to ascertain whether any dominant communication approach is evident from any (or a combination) of the three points of analysis.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF *LOVELIFE*'S COMMUNICATION

4.1 Introduction

As mentioned in the conclusion of the previous chapter, an analysis of *loveLife*'s policy documents, selected media, and transcripts from interviews and focus group discussions was conducted in order to address the last three research objectives. These research objectives are:

- *to investigate *loveLife*'s description of its communication in terms of the principles of participatory communication;*
- *to determine the extent to which *loveLife*'s printed communication reflects the principles of participatory communication; and*
- *to investigate the perception of *loveLife*'s communication by participants at one of the organisation's sites in terms of the principles of participatory communication.*

This chapter presents the analysis and evaluation of *loveLife*'s communication approach and practices in terms of three aspects: *loveLife*'s description of its communication approach and practices, *loveLife*'s apparent communication approach and practices, and the perception of *loveLife*'s communication approach and practices by participants. Firstly, **how *loveLife* describes its communication approach and practices** was investigated (Section 4.3) through analysis of policy documents and semi-structured interviews at head office. Secondly, **how *loveLife* appears to communicate** was investigated (Section 4.4) through analysis of selected publications, in order to determine what the organisation's own media indicates regarding its communication approach. Lastly, **how *loveLife*'s communication approach and practices are perceived by participants** was investigated (Section 4.5) through an analysis of a focus group discussion with groundBREAKERS and *mpintshi*'s conducted at the Orange Farm Y-Centre, and one held with programme participants at the Y-Centre. The method of analysis was discussed in Chapter 3.

4.2 A brief description¹ of *loveLife's* programme and the terms used in analysis

In this study, the term *programme* has been used to indicate all aspects of the organisation's communication, including both the campaign and the grass-roots implementation. At the sites (Y-Centres, schools, clinics and franchises), the programme is implemented through activities (for example, debating, sports, radio-production and computers-skills) and the *loveLifeStyle* programme. In this study, any aspects of programme implementation at sites are referred to as the grass-roots or face-to-face programmes.

The *loveLifeStyle* programme is a set of peer education modules presented by *mpintshi's* under the guidance of groundBREAKERS. These modules include the compulsory modules 'Bodywise', 'Motivation' and 'Health and Sexuality'. Other modules include 'Debating' and 'Creative Problem-solving'. All participants at *loveLife's* sites have to complete the compulsory modules in order to gain access to other modules and activities. This aims to ensure that HIV/AIDS and related issues are addressed at all of the organisation's sites.

4.3 *LoveLife's* description of its communication approach and practices

In this section, the analysis and interpretation is focused on what *loveLife* says about its communication approach and practices. This information was gained from policy documents, a document in which *loveLife's* CEO reflects on the organisation's campaign, communications with its stakeholders and head office staff members' description of the organisation's communication approach and practices.

4.3.1 *LoveLife's* description of its communication approach and practices in the policy documents and reports analysed

A qualitative content analysis was done on several of *loveLife's* policy documents and

¹ For a more detailed description of *loveLife's* programme, campaign timeline and activities, see Addendums A and B.

reports as discussed in chapter 3 (section 3.3.1.2.2). All of these documents provide a view on the organisation's image of itself. Each text is described briefly in the sections that follow. After each description, the analysis of the text is presented according to each of the constructs explained in Chapter 3.

4.3.1.1 Document 1: *Communicating loveLife* (*loveLife*, 2003)

Description

Communicating loveLife is an internal manual that explains the organisation's communication policy. The manual is used in order to explain *loveLife*'s philosophy and ways in which to communicate within and about the organisation.

Analysis

In terms of the construct **Dialogue** ⇔ **Dissemination/manipulation**, *loveLife* exhibits indications of both sides of the construct within this document, although the disseminatory aspects are not overtly visible.

In *Communicating loveLife*, there are various indications that the organisation believes in the concept of *dialogue*. Dialogue is evident in the organisation's slogan: 'Talk about it'. It is a slogan that embodies the aspects of "billboards ... [that] provoke debate" and the belief that young people are more likely to "internalise positive behaviour" if they "talk about it (communicate more effectively)" (p. 2). Throughout *Communicating loveLife*, phrases such as "open communication" (p. 5), "provoke discussion" (p. 2, 9), "open discourse" and "engage actively" (p. 12), "openly, honestly and assertively" (p. 13), "negotiating" (p. 13) and "shared responsibility" (p. 24, 28) indicate that *loveLife* feels strongly about dialogue.

The organisation emphasises that it "does not prescribe answers to young people [own emphasis]" (p. 2), and that "interaction and discussion" allow the youth to "interpret and engage" with issues such as HIV/AIDS, which could be indicative that it is not

disseminative or manipulative. This section also makes it clear that the aim of the organisation's programme is for the youth to reach an "understand[ing of] the messages in a more integrated way" (p.2).

The use of the phrase "to positively *influence* adolescent sexual behaviour [own emphasis]" (p. 6) indicates possible aspects of manipulation. The researcher, however, argues that debate and dialogue involve aspects of argumentation and that it would be acceptable in a dialogic situation to influence another party to accept the agent's point of view. (This aspect was discussed in Chapter 2 in the explanation of Freireian dialogue, Section 2.4.1, and Habermasian communicative action, Section 2.4.5). In terms of Communicative Action, the idea of discourse involves an active exchange of ideas and on condition that these ideas are discussed in a manner in which participants are permitted differing opinions and the discussion is formed around those opinions, the dialogue is in fact more participatory. In this case, it is difficult to ascertain from the document whether this is really the case.

There is an indication that "talking enables young people ... to get information" (p. 12–13), which may indicate that 'talking' is plainly a way in which information may be disseminated. The use of the phrase "communicating *to*" or "talking *to*" (own emphasis; p. 13) instead of 'communicating *with*', which indicates dissemination. These nuances appear to be mere semantics, but the specific choice of formulation may indicate an indirect aspect of dissemination.

In *Communicating loveLife* (p. 43), it is indicated that facilitators (or peer motivators) should not "talk at people all the time" but that they should rather "throw questions or challenges out to the group in between talking, encourage discussion, but always conclude with key points." This indicates that debate should be utilised in order to avoid mere 'talking to' participants.

The question that arises is one that involves the other side of the debate and that is whether the organisation would permit conflicting views in a discussion and whether argumentation, persuasion and influence are instruments permitted on both sides of the

'debate'. (This is one of the issues that was investigated in both the interviews at head office and the focus group discussions at the Y-Centre). If this is not the case, the organisation would not truly be dialogical, and could be perceived as manipulative in terms of gaining participants' trust without giving the same participants a true voice. *LoveLife* (p. 12) claims that it "created opportunities for active interaction" which is an indication that the organisation realises that it cannot only rely on dissemination in which the audience would be passive receivers, but that it encourages open participation.

The question arises whether *loveLife* necessarily implements its programme in the same way that it describes it. It is easy for an organisation to claim that it does not prescribe or that discourse should be open, but it is still necessary to investigate whether what is mentioned in policy is what is practised at the various levels of the organisation.

In terms of the construct **Facilitator ↔ Prescriptive expert**, certain aspects of facilitation have already been addressed in the analysis on dialogue, as both constructs deal with the way thought is stimulated in communication. In analysing this construct, it is important to ascertain whether there is an indication of whether the groundBREAKER or *mpintshi* or any other *loveLife* representative acts as a facilitator, or whether the approach is one that stems from a prescriptive expert view.

Facilitation was evident in *Communicating loveLife* in terms of the organisation aiming to "inspire young people to develop" (p. 2003:14). This may be indicative of a catalyst role for the communicator. (This was discussed in Section 2.4.1).

LoveLife encourages its staff and facilitators to guard against using "language, words accents or behaviours which sets [them] apart from the audience" (p. 42), which may indicate that there should be an active attempt to blend in rather than to stand out. The role of the staff member to be more like a problem-solving facilitator is evident in the advice that "examples, stories and role plays" should be used to "encourage discussion, debate, dialogue, problem-solving and the exploration of alternatives". In those cases in which an audience is able to explore options for themselves, there appears to be more of a facilitator's role in communication. There is a clear non-expert approach in the

statement: “If you don’t know, say so – don’t make it up – that’s why we have *thethaJunction* and other team members¹ to assist” (p. 42).

In terms of the construct **Relationship/PR orientation ⇔ Client/marketing-orientation**, the organisation uses much marketing speak throughout this document – the organisation is famous for being a “lifestyle brand”. Terms such as “brand/ing/ed” (p. 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 44), “campaign” (p. 2, 4, 6, 11, 31;), “promote/s” (p. 5, 6, 9, 14, 17–19, 30, 32, 33), “position” (*loveLife*, 2007a:2), “sell” (*loveLife*, 2003a:11) “aimed” or “targeted/ing” (p. 6, 11), “product” (p. 11) and “competing” (p. 11) all indicate an orientation to marketing.

On the other hand, it has been indicated that organisation’s grass-roots programmes tend to bring forward a relationship dimension. The organisation refers to “sustained” development (p. 13), which indicates a longer-term approach. For instance, the brand of *loveLife* is indicated to embody “self-esteem, values, motivation, hope, optimism and a belief in the future” (p. 6). Here the organisation presents a clear dichotomy in which a branding/marketing approach is explained in terms of relationship values. This indicates that the organisation aims to foster longer-term relationships from within the framework of a marketing paradigm. Although this is in accordance with some of more recent marketing practices, such as relationship marketing, it could be questioned what the organisation would see as more important: the brand or the message or the actual relationship.

In explaining its communication, *loveLife* (p. 11) points out that it needs to compete with brands such as Diesel, Coke or BMW in terms of the youth’s attention and association. Thus “the ‘product’ [*loveLife*] is trying to sell is a positive lifestyle experience” using the “language of advertising”.

Communicating loveLife (*loveLife*, 2003a:41) refers to the “audience” instead of the ‘participants’, which may indicate that in thinking about the one-to-one or small group interaction there may be less of an orientation to relationship-building as the group may still be viewed as a passive target instead of actual people. (This is an aspect that is

¹ The team members should refer to other peer motivators such as other groundBREAKERS.

clarified from the later analysis in terms of the focus group discussions conducted at the Y-Centre – see Section 4.4).

On the other hand, there are references to “motivation” (p. 13, 15) that may indicate an interest in a more relationship-oriented approach. The question that could not be answered from the mere analysis of this document was whether the aim for motivation was to increase the “selling of the lifestyle” or whether there was an actual interest in the target audience. (This aspect is addressed in the analysis of the interviews at head office and focus groups – see Section 4.4).

In terms of the construct of **Equality ↔ Imbalanced power**, the analysis focused on two aspects. Firstly, the way the organisation deals with messaging regarding inequality in the sexual context was ascertained, as power imbalances are endemic to the HIV/AIDS context in which sex is often described as a power struggle. Secondly, the analysis focused on the balance of power within the organisation itself.

In terms of messaging regarding power in the sexual context, *Communicating loveLife* (p. 14) describes the context in which girls are ‘forced’ into sex by their partners and that it aims to address the disempowerment of peer pressure, coercion and transactional sex. Thus in addressing issues such as the “negotiation” around sex and “gender equality” (p. 14), the organisation is working towards creating a situation that is more equal. The organisation explains that it focuses on aspects of self-esteem, motivation and assertiveness for “negotiating gender relations and sexual limits” (p. 13). A section of *Communicating loveLife* focuses on sexual rights and positive sexuality, which in turn facilitates a more equal approach to sexuality (p. 26).

With regard to the addressing of power relations within the organisation, there is an indication that communication should take place in an environment without “the fear of discrimination or [r]ejection” (p. 13). *LoveLife* encourages balance in the communication of its participants in terms of their sex lives, but this does not necessarily indicate whether the communication between the organisation and the participants is balanced.

In the section in which *loveLife* describes its implementing partners there is an indication of a central co-ordination (p. 10) that may indicate a top-down approach from management. In analysing the interviews conducted at *loveLife*'s head office, it was important to determine the organisation's view of its structure and whether there is sensitivity for bottom-up communication that is not only heard, but also forms part of the actual implementation.

Although there is no direct evidence of the **Grass-roots specific ↔ National generalisation** construct in this document, the tone of this document does indicate that there is a necessity to provide a platform for participants to negotiate their own problems.

4.3.1.2 Document 2: Report on activities and progress 2006 (*loveLife*, 2007a)

Description

This is the organisation's annual report that was compiled and published in 2007.¹ The report provides a view of the organisation's strategic positioning, its functioning and reporting on events. Annual reports are mandatory documents that are integral to providing an insight into the organisation's image of itself.

Analysis

In this publication, evidence of the construct of **Dialogue ↔ Dissemination/manipulation** corresponds with that of *Communicating loveLife*. *LoveLife* is found to lean towards dialogue in the statement that the "primary role of the billboards is to prompt *thought* and *discussion* ... [own emphasis]" (*loveLife*, 2007a:7). Aspects that indicate opportunity for debate may be seen in the use of Born Free Dialogues – community forums that bring together teenagers and parents to debate certain issues (p. 10) and the *loveLifeStyle* peer education programmes that are run throughout South Africa and contain modules such as 'Debating' and 'Creative Problem-solving' (p. 69). *LoveLife* (2007f:4) explains their involvement in the National Schools Debating Championship as a "valuable skill" that "stimulates thinking beyond the ... classroom."

¹ The focus of the analysis was on 2007, thus this report was analysed as it was published in 2007.

However, it still needs to be established whether feedback from communities is merely for the sake of basic opinion research, or whether there is actual community ownership of the campaign. It is unclear as to the extent to which the community is truly involved in campaign formulation. In *Report on activities and progress 2006* (p. 15), it is indicated that the community is “keen to offer suggestions as to how the characters develop”, but it needs to be established whether these suggestions are documented formally and the extent to which the community may influence the roll-out of the campaign in terms of message formulation.

The disseminative nature of *loveLife*’s communication becomes evident in the media side of the programme. In the description in *Report on activities and progress 2006* (p. 9) on the way that billboards are used to “prompt discussion”, it may be noted that the level of discussion depends on the amount of face-to-face communication that flows from the media trigger. If the levels of engagement are low, there is always the possibility that debate is merely a tool that serves in creating better disseminative or persuasive marketing messages.

On the other hand, the earlier statement that the “primary role of the billboards is to prompt *thought* and *discussion* … [own emphasis]” (p. 7) also indicates that the media side of the campaign may be more of a prompt instead of a driver of communication (This aspect was investigated in the interviews and focus group discussions). Media may serve as a prompt in only creating awareness or ensuring retention of a message or the brand, whereas a driver of communication would in fact be media implemented for the purpose of information dissemination.

In this publication, the organisation however questions the disseminative (or media) side of its own programme, stating: “Significantly, this strong association between participation in *loveLife* services and lower rates of HIV/AIDS could not be shown for young people who were only exposed to the media products of *loveLife*, suggesting that face-to-face interaction is critical for behavioural change” (p. 69). This also indicates a possible understanding that change should primarily take place at a **grass-roots** level regarding

the **Grass-roots specific ⇔ National generalisation** construct.

In terms of the **Symmetric media ⇔ Media-driven** construct, it is clear that *loveLife* has a strong **media** component as part of its programme. *LoveLife* (p. 7) has a “tried and tested multi-media strategy” that uses billboards, water tanks, TV, radio, cinema, outdoor television screens, magazines, publications, newspapers, the Internet and public relations to reach 80% of their target audience (youths between 12 and 17).

Report on activities and progress 2006 (p. 10) indicates that the organisation views its billboards purely as a means to prompting discussion. Therefore, there is a message that it is media-driven but the use of the call centre (*theThetaJunction*) provides a channel for feedback and symmetric communication. The organisation refers to the volume of calls to its call centre as a measure of the effectiveness of the media – the call centre “average[es] close to 300,000 calls per month” (Harrison, 2007:16).

As the campaigns are “challenging” or “confrontative” (p. 5), the media implementation appears to ask for reaction and feedback, which may be indicative of symmetric media usage. The strengthening of feedback was a priority in the programme (p. 6) in the organisation acknowledging the importance of symmetric communication in this action.

Report on activities and progress 2006 however indicates that *Uncut* (the organisation’s magazine) received very little feedback in 2006, with 765 e-mails and 158 letters to the editor (excluding competitions and give-aways) although 7 582 400 copies of the magazine were distributed. The question and answer column Mizz B (counsellor) received 241 e-mails and 116 letters (p. 30).

In the report on the website, *loveLife* claims that “poll questions ... sustain interaction and draw[s] information to use as strategic planning” (p. 34). This is a form of feedback going back into programme implementation, although the Internet may be viewed as a minority medium that is primarily available to the elite.

A move towards more a symmetric approach to media is evident in *Report on activities*

and progress 2006, in which it is indicated that the “focus on parents has been shifted from a media to a community level” (p. 37) in the implementation of Born Free Dialogues, a programme through which parents and teenagers debate issues relevant to their situation.¹ The implementation of “radio production workshops” (p. 24) is also a bottom-up media development that fosters community involvement in media production and balances power with regard to the functioning of the media.

In terms of the **Facilitator** ↔ **Prescriptive expert** construct, the word **“facilitate/facilitating”** is found in *Report on activities and progress 2006* (p. 10, 43), although the mere use of the word does not ensure actual facilitation. The organisation refers to “challenging” society (p. 12), which may be indicative of catalytic facilitation. The **expert** side of the construct is evident in the professionalisation of training (p. 6) through which SETA accreditation and SAQA certification processes may remove the community voice by ensuring expert views. Expert views are, however, an important part of the message, owing to the nature of HIV/AIDS as a topic. It is important to note that professionalisation may increase levels of trust that in turn may work against ambiguity and disinformation regarding issues of sex and HIV/AIDS. Thus, a certain level of expert view is required in the context in which *loveLife*.

The construct regarding expert views is evident in the centralist structure of the organisation through which various activities are overseen by regional and national management teams (p. 5). Thus, there is a possibility that the alignment of expert views may stem from a central management structure. (This aspect is further explored in the analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions).

In terms of the construct **Relationship/PR orientation** ↔ **Client/marketing-orientation**, the **marketing-orientation** of the organisation is visible in *loveLife*'s (p. 2) claim that it needs to position itself within a national portfolio of HIV/AIDS prevention. This could be indicative of this same competitive marketing orientation. On the other hand, the report

¹ See Addendum A for more information on the Born Free Dialogues in the discussion of *loveLife*'s programme.

indicates **partnerships** with other organisations (p. vi), although this list of partnerships doesn't include other programmes of the same nature. Instead partners include the media, *loveLife's* franchisees and funders. This could indicate that the organisations partnerships are influenced by the competitive nature of the marketing orientation. *Report on activities and progress 2006* refers to "formative research" (p. 4) through which the audience's needs are researched in order to improve the marketing message. The extent to which *loveLife's* research and feedback mechanisms are only means by which to understand the target market needs to be ascertained. Thus, it is necessary to investigate further the extent to which the research is truly qualitative and flowing from dialogue.

In terms of the construct **Equality ⇔ Imbalanced power**, *Report on activities and progress 2006* indicates that peer-motivators (p. 44) are viewed as more equal to participants, balancing the power in communications.

The organisation explains that it focuses on aspects of self-esteem, motivation and assertiveness for "negotiating gender relations and sexual limits" (*loveLife* 2003a:13) and aims to "equip" (*loveLife*, 2007a:14) and "enable" (p. 10). This may be seen as an objective to empower participants in order to gain dialogue. Also in the franchise model of the organisation, *loveLife* aims to "build capacity of [community-based organisations] CBOs/NGOs" in order to empower the communities to help themselves.

It has been mentioned that *loveLife* made the strengthening of feedback a priority in *Report on activities and progress 2006* (p. 6), but the action plan included very little actual bottom-up strategies, with most of the strategies being disseminative and top-down, for example "week-by week communication of priorities" to the regions, "keep[ing] stories flowing" and "centralising functions" such as administrative and financial management. Thus, it appears that the acknowledgement for the need of two-way symmetrical communication is wrongly implemented in a top-down disseminative strategy.

In the use of peer-educators (or peer-motivators as the organisation sometimes refers to them), there is an indication that *loveLife* is in some way focusing on a **grass-roots specific** programme (within the construct **Grass-roots specific ⇔ National**

generalisation). Community forums form part of the media evaluation (p. 10).

In the terms of the construct **Symmetric media ↔ Media-driven**, *Report on activities and progress 2006* (p. 37) states that “*loveLife’s focus on parents has been shifted from a media to a community level*” in the implementation of Born Free Dialogues, as previously mentioned. That the media planning is done in nine languages on eleven SABC radio stations (p. 20) and that the billboards were executed in African languages (p. 10) indicates that the organisation recognises the need for culturally and language-specific media.

As previously mentioned, “radio production workshops” (p. 24) help to bring the grass-roots issues to communities. However, tension in terms the **Grass-roots specific ↔ National Generalisation** construct is visible in the organisation explaining that the *InsideOUT* internal newsletter “ensures widespread internal consistency and understanding of the campaign” (p. 31). This way of viewing consistency demonstrates that there is a fear of dilution of the message when it travels to the sites (or grass-roots). It also demonstrates that the organisation is conscious that the national structure is problematic in terms of communicating messages.

4.3.1.3 Document 3: *loveLife’s Communication strategy* (Harrison, 2007)

Description

This publication is a critical reflection by the organisation on what it was doing and envisioned to do. This document was distributed to communication experts contacted by the organisation to advise it on effectiveness in its communication. It was “intended to give insight into the logic and current strategy of *loveLife*” (Harrison, 2007:1).

Analysis

In terms of the construct **Dialogue ↔ Dissemination or manipulation**, this document strongly indicates, “one of *loveLife’s* key objectives is to get South Africans ‘talking about it’

– ‘it’ being the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its main drivers” (p. 10). The ideas of dialogue are further underlined in a discussion on the organisation’s substantiation of its communication strategy “through face-to-face interaction in the *loveLifestyle* programme via peer motivators,” by “promoting discussion” (p. 13). Furthermore it is mentioned that the outdoor media has the purpose of “promoting dialogue,” “prompt[ing] discussion,” “provoking discussion” (p. 16) in broader society, and while “having little prospect of changing behaviour … open discussion about factors driving the epidemic” (p. 17). The organisation indicates that it desires for young people to be “allow[ed] to be active participants in the process” (p. 10). The correlation between “open communication between parents and their children … and low risk sexual behaviour” (p. 9) also indicates that the organisation encourages open communication or dialogue.

The dissemination or manipulation side of this construct is directly addressed by the organisation in “We [South Africans] fixate on ‘messaging’ – telling people what they should and shouldn’t do” (p. 5). According to Harrison (2007:2), “information (‘messaging’) is only a small part of behaviour change communication. In fact motivation – rather than factual messaging – may be the main catalyst for behaviour change”.

The above-mentioned statement indicates a direct link to the **facilitator**-role of the organisation in reference to the **Facilitator ↔ Prescriptive expert** construct. The facilitator role of the organisation is also indicated in the organisation’s aim to “facilitate dialogue between adults and teenagers about HIV and AIDS, sex, gender relations and other difficult issues such as sexual coercion, peer pressure, crime, drug and alcohol abuse” (p. 18). In a discussion on the involvement of parents in the communication process, the organisation indicates “… we have strong evidence that negative perceptions of *loveLife* are often changed by experiencing its programmes” (p. 9).

Regarding the **Relationship/PR orientation ↔ Client/marketing-orientation** construct, Harrison (2007:2) states that “the limitations of applying marketing principles to meet … objective(s) [of behaviour change] must be immediately recognized”, and indicates that “one of the most common failures of behaviour change campaigns is a failure to sustain the effort long enough and with sufficient intensity”, (p. 1) directly implying that a longer-

term or more PR orientation is what is needed to be effective in communication.

On the other side of the construct, the organisation indicates a branding orientation (although being directly critical of it), indicating that “its ‘product’/brand is young people who have adopted this lifestyle”, but also specifying the “intangibility of the product/brand” (p. 2). The document further includes a “market analysis” instead of a more PR-related stakeholder analysis, and a clear indication of the “brand personality”, indicating a marketing orientation. This orientation could stem from the media side of the organisation, but references to the marketing orientation indicate that the organisation is aware of the limitations of the marketing vehicle.

In the same way that *loveLife* is aware of its limitations with regard to marketing, the organisation also acknowledges “communication through marketing alone is unlikely to affect sustained behaviour change” (p. 2). This indicates that although the organisation utilises media (**Symmetric media ⇔ Media-driven**), the purpose of the various media platforms such as billboards to: “Prompt discussion … position the brand and point to its toll-free help lines and outreach services” (p. 16) but also to “keep *loveLife* in the public mind” (p. 16).

The organisation wanted to extend its media coverage to include more symmetric media platforms in terms of cellphone and text-messaging technologies at the stage of the interviews. This was later implemented – see the description of Mymsta’ in Addendum A.

In terms of the construct **Equality ⇔ Imbalanced power**, the organisation argues that individual change would be limited in effectiveness if it did not address issues that “create real opportunities for young people and support institutional development and change” (p. 2). Hereby *loveLife* clearly points out that the inequality inherent in South African society, or the “realities of life often militate against safe sexual behaviour” (p. 3). This indicates that the organisation believes that addressing the inequalities in society, such as poverty and lack of education, would help empower young people to “be in control of their future” (p. 15). Throughout the document there are references to “enabling” or “inspire in young people a sense of purpose” (p. 11) and “not seeking to ‘close the circle for them, but

allowing them to be active participants in the process" (p. 10). The organisation empowers the youth such that it "permits young people to assess their own risk and make their own decisions" (p. 15).

The **Grass-roots specific ↔ National generalisation** construct is evident in the emphasis on the importance of the face-to-face interaction within the programme. *LoveLife's* rationale of its communication strategy: "Simply put, *LoveLife* seeks to start where young people are at, and get into their heads and hearts in order to create a sense of purpose, belonging and identity with an Aids-free future." That the organisation aims to meet young people where they are, instead of "where we expect young people to be", indicates that the organisation is directed towards grass-roots needs.

Furthermore, the decentralisation of the organisation's budget indicates that the organisation feels strongly about its grass-roots programme. Harrison (2007:20) indicates that in 2005, 68% of the budget was allocated to services and outreach, in comparison to 26% for media and 6% for management and administration.

4.3.1.4 Document 4: *Talk about it*: June 2007 (*LoveLife*, 2007e)

Description

This publication (a four-page newsletter) is aimed at stakeholders such as partner organisations, businesses and funders. It provides a broad overview of recent activities and is published every three months.

Analysis

In terms of the construct **Relationship/PR orientation ↔ Client/marketing-orientation**, the existence and slant of this publication indicates a broad PR orientation, as the organisation has a specific medium that is aimed at stakeholders. This is echoed in the statement that one of the "pillars of [the organisation] is service delivery, institutional support and capacity building" (*LoveLife*, 2007e:2) which may be viewed as PR-orientated functions.

There is an indication that *loveLife* develops long-term relationships or at least interest towards its volunteers (groundBREAKERs and *mpintshi's*) in the way that it organises bursaries to further their studies (p. 3). The organisation has also placed some of their groundBREAKERs with organisations such as Primi Piatti (p. 4) which indicates that *loveLife* is not only fostering a relationship for their own gain. The volunteers are sourced from the grass-roots and work their way up in the organisation.

4.3.1.5 Document 5: Inside Out #9: April to June 2007 (*loveLife*, 2007f)

Description

Inside Out is the quarterly internal newsletter of the organisation, through which the staff, groundBREAKERs and *mpintshi's* across all sites may receive news on activities or achievements. According to *loveLife* (2007a:31), this publication "ensures a widespread internal consistency and understanding of the campaign."

Analysis

In this publication (p. 1), there may be disseminative language in the statement that "feedback from the communities we work with and it will give us opportunity to engage them further through all our platforms [own emphasis]". It is uncertain what feedback and engagement refer to. There is a possibility that these actions are merely used to gain insight in order to further engage. The organisation's aim appears to be persuasive and not necessarily dialogical in reference to the construct of **Dialogue ↔ Dissemination/manipulation**.

The same aspects of training as mentioned in Section 4.3.1.4 are addressed in *Inside Out* (p. 3). Bursaries are offered to former groundBREAKERs and *mpintshi's*. This demonstrates that the organisation may have a longer-term relationship orientation towards its volunteers in terms of the construct **Relationship/PR orientation ↔ Client/marketing-orientation**.

4.3.1.6 Conclusion regarding the analysis of the policy and reportive texts

From the texts analysed, it appears that *loveLife* approach its communication in a participatory manner. However, this indication in the texts does not prove that what the organisation states in its documentation is actually implemented. There are aspects in the documentation that indicate a modernist orientation to a small degree, although these may also not be necessarily indicative of the organisation's actual communication.

The *Report on activities and progress 2006* gives a clear explanation of its media campaign, which appears to be modernist owing to the media's nature (as explained in Chapter 2).

In its policy documents, *loveLife* stresses the importance of dialogue and facilitation in its communication. The organisation appears to have certain participatory aspects within its description of its own communication in policy documents and reports. These aspects were clarified in the interviews at head office.

4.3.2 *LoveLife's* description of its communication approach according to head office

After the completion of the content analysis of policy and reports, interviews were held at *loveLife's* head office in Sandton. Each interview is described briefly in the sections below. After the description, the analyses of the interviews are presented according to each of the constructs explained in Chapter 3.

4.3.2.1 Interview 1: David Harrison

Harrison, a qualified medical doctor, joined the organisation as CEO nine months after it was begun in 1999. In the interview, Harrison displayed a passion for young people and an interest in finding ways of communicating about HIV/AIDS that went beyond his medical background as a trained physician. The primary tone of the interview was one of optimism, with the primary idea being that if young people were to be able to have hope and see a future, they would make their decisions about various aspects of their lives from that perspective. Harrison left the organisation early in 2009.

4.3.2.2 Interview 2: Botha Swarts

Swarts joined the organisation in 2004 and has mostly been involved with the media and communications. Initially, Swarts started as media analyst, but with time he moved towards communication management, working with “all media clients, publications, communication strategy, implementing strategy into programs” – explaining how every aspect of the programme uses the “media as a draw card in our programs.” At the time of the interview, Swarts worked as the Corporate Communications Manager, but this position had grown to involve working with the media implementation and corporate communication. Corporate communication entails ensuring that *loveLife*’s corporate partners are kept up to date on activities and given specific coverage in the various media forms according to the investment gained from the partnerships. This interview provided specific insights into the media campaign of the organisation.

4.3.2.3 Interview 3: Thulile Seleka

At the time of the interview, Seleka was the Southern Gauteng Area Manager. She thus oversaw the implementation of the programme at various sites in the area, including schools, clinics and the Orange Farm Y-Centre. Seleka had also previously worked as the CEO’s secretary, was involved with and organised the *loveLife Games*, and had worked with the community and at youth festivals. Seleka was not working directly in head office and could therefore provide insights into management of the implementation of the programme. She left *loveLife* in the course of 2008.

4.3.2.4 Interview 4: Angela Stewart-Buchanon

Stewart-Buchanon has been with the organisation since 2001, starting as a consultant to the organisation’s Marketing and Communications Department. In 2002, she moved towards media-related work. Currently she heads the *loveLife* mentoring programme in which she partners *loveLife* with other organisations for job, internship or mentoring opportunities for groundBREAKERS.

Broad insights gained from this interview were that *loveLife* feels strongly about equipping the community with skills through the groundBREAKER and *mpintshi* programme and the empowerment of the groundBREAKERS involved in the programme. According to Stewart-Stewart-Buchanon (2008) there is an effort to provide continued support for those that have gained leadership skills from their involvement in the grass-roots programme. This includes attempting to find partners that are willing to provide a future for groundBREAKERS after they have completed their year in the organisation. For example, there is a current partnership with Kelly (a recruitment agency) to provide future placements in, for instance, a call-centre environment. This indicates that the organisation does not only feel strongly about the cause of HIV/AIDS prevention, but is also focused on providing employment options to those involved with the programme. In this way, the organisation assumes a longer-term view of the issue that it addresses.

4.3.2.5 Analysis of the interviews¹

In terms of the **Dialogue ↔ Dissemination/manipulation** construct, the interviews indicated a clear consciousness within the organisation of dialogue. According to Stewart-Buchanon (2008), “the concept of *loveLife* is that it needs to be young people always feeding into the campaign”. This indicates that the organisation is dialogic, with a respect for the opinions of the youth. In terms of how management see the functioning of the organisation at grass-roots level, there are clear indications that the organisation expects the participants to interpret the communication in their own context in their own way.

Harrison (2008) explained the functioning of the brand:

The brand concept only goes so far. Ultimately the brand must drive demand; it must create a sense of cohesion. It helps to give us entry in a community, so you go to communities and you say ‘*loveLife* wants to come in,’ you don’t have to go through two years of community consultation. ‘Ah, *loveLife*. Yes, we’d love to have you in our clinics.’ That has been the response of communities across the country, that’s the role of the brand.

¹ The reporting on the analysis of the interviews is done differently to the document analysis due to the fact that the respondents made similar statements that would be quite repetitive if discussed separately.

At a local level, in one way the decentralisation and localisation strengthens the brand because it's given substance by young people. You've got 400 energetic young people engaged around this issue and it gives real meaning to the brand.

On the other hand, from a marketing point of view, clearly the further out you go the more tattered the brand, you can say its frayed at the edges if you like and as you said in terms of the cascade model of communication. So I think we certainly have tried to ensure that the Kentucky they get here is the same Kentucky they get out there. Having said that, the whole concept is not based on the idea of trickle down brand, it is based on the notion of a community mobilisation of a community taking ownership and lighting the fire and having their own brand of *loveLife*. So when I go into a community and I see *loveLife* graffitied on the wall, not in our font, and with the 0800 number, for me, that is fantastic, that is ownership. It's a delicate balance - one where we don't (we meaning, me and the media team) necessarily agree. I don't necessarily have a problem with perversion of the brand at the margins.

There are various constructs evident in this statement. The organisation's CEO expects the communities to assume ownership of the programme, even to such an extent that communities may even have their own informal expressions in the way that they graffitied the organisation's logo on their own. This clearly indicates a grass-roots specific orientation regarding the construct **Grass-roots specific ⇔ National generalisation**.

However, there is an indication that the CEO and the media team do not always agree. This indicates that there may be aspects of questioning the level at which the grass-roots participants should be able to express their ownership of the brand, on the one hand. On the other hand, this disagreement is one of quite a few indications that the organisation has a culture of questioning and discussion, which falls into the construct regarding dialogue in terms of communicative action (Habermasian communicative action, see Section 2.4.5).

Both Swarts (2008) and Harrison (2008) underlined the above-mentioned aspects of questioning and disagreement within the organisation in reference to differences in opinion between them regarding the latest campaign, which referred to the 2008 campaign launched shortly after the interviews. Harrison (2008) explained that questioning and argumentation regarding the programme at head office and at grass-roots would "happen all the time ... in fact *loveLife* structures it like that, the face-it sessions, the debates are structured deliberately to evoke a range of opinions. And again, we don't have the message that we want to give to young people, we want them to think about these issues and understand how they need to respond." Seleka (2008) added that the greatest strength of *loveLife*'s communication "lies in our nature of being confrontational." The aspect of confrontation and discussion further underlines the dialogic basis from which the programme is envisioned. Thus, the organisation is consciously structuring its communication in order challenge young people discuss the messages in order for them to reach a shared understanding of what the message mean to them. This would be indicative of how the organisation facilitates participation.

In terms of the construct **Symmetric media ⇔ Media-driven**, the indication given from all the respondents was that the media campaign aspect of the programme only provides a structure or a platform on which the programme could be implemented. In the same way that *Report on activities and progress 2006* (*loveLife*, 2007a:9) indicates that billboards "prompt discussion", the respondents stated that the media aspect of the programme sets the stage for implementation of the programme. Explaining the way the media is used in terms of a tool for participation, Stewart-Buchanon (2008) explained: "*Uncut* goes to every *loveLife* site, in addition to being put in the newspaper. So when a groundBREAKER goes into a school, they're taking a copy of *Uncut* and often what they discuss that day, is in the current issue of *Uncut*, so that is how it gets to a very local level".

Although the expectation was that Harrison would see the media as *loveLife*'s greatest strength, he said:

The young people themselves, and you know *loveLife* is clearly premised on the idea that young people change other young people's behaviour ... The rest, the media is the backdrop; the means of engagement; it's a way of shaping the

discourse and creating a larger than life campaign that young people want to be part of. The national media must draw young people into the face-to-face programmes.

Harrison (2008) cited *loveLife*'s "greatest weakness as only being able to reach about 40% of young people face to face, which should be 80% [in its grass-roots programme]". This indicates that at head office there is the intention that the media campaign should serve as a means by which to **facilitate** grass-roots, face-to-face programmes (**Facilitator ⇔ Prescriptive expert**).

Regarding the call centre, Stewart-Buchanan (2008) stated:

When you've got nobody to talk to, and you can't ask your mom, or your dad or whoever is your guardian, phone *loveLife*, and they will support you, so we set ourselves up as the big brother; big sister who will give you the factual information so that you can make the decisions in the context of your life as best for you.

This statement indicates that *loveLife* wishes to facilitate decision-making without prescribing. Seleka (2008) explained that the organisation provides a platform for the youth of a community to become involved with various projects of other organisations in the area. There is a reporting system that is necessary for funding reports, but there are no prescriptions as to what may and may not be done in terms of implementation. In the regions, project implementors do not need to "ask for permission". In a sense, the programme becomes the property of the community, which is indicative of a participatory approach. The only obstacle that hinders the freedom of implementation according to the community's needs is the lack of an expansion budget. Thus funding affects the possibilities for expansion in an area.

Stewart-Buchanan (2008) confirmed that there is autonomy in the implementation of the programme:

They wouldn't need to come and ask our approval to meet with somebody, but we do put a restriction on them in terms of if you were to approach a national

funder, or as example to want to approach Coca-Cola for an event ... let the national office corporate department know as they might be getting involved in something and you don't want to jeopardise that kind of a relationship over one thing, but if you were to approach a local print shop and ask for a pamphlet for an event, they don't need to ask anybody's permission because its not impact at all on the bigger *loveLife*.

This indicates that although there is a centralised reporting structure, the organisation believes in a decentralised implementation of its programme.

Seleka (2008) mentioned that there are set implementation targets within the organisation. *Mpintshi's*, for instance, need to have 80% of their participants complete the *loveLifeStyle* programme, otherwise the organisation may not affect their communities with its messaging, which would result in participants in a type of social club that does not serve its purpose. In this sense, target setting helps to create structure within a participatory context and keeps the programme on track. Although this indicates elements of top-down communication, structured communication could still be participative. Whether these targets are realistic and whether there is a transactional decision-making as opposed to a prescription when it comes to the setting of the targets should be determined as the level of prescriptiveness would affect the participativeness of the communication (this was one of the aspects looked into in the focus group discussions).

With regard to the tension in terms of the construct **Grass-roots specific ⇔ National generalisation**, the organisation appears to develop the national media programme with the local grass-roots programme in mind. In describing the *loveLife* communication strategy, Swarts (2008) explained that the yearly strategy is set according to available national research such as the Nelson Mandela Reproductive Survey:

That strategy would be communicated to the provincial managers (pm's) who discuss it with the groundBREAKERS (gBs) and mpintshis to see how it fits into a programmatic level. The difference between us [*loveLife*] and most other organisations would be that most other organisations leave it at that, whereas we design our communication strategy in such a way that it has to be implemented differently in each province ... we only give an indication of where the

organisation is going to – the implementation is the Provincial Managers' and groundBREAKERS' responsibility ... we realise that the programme is implemented by the gBs and therefore it is important for us to get feedback from them.

Seleka (2008) echoed this statement: "Our training is designed to bring the campaign content to what happens on the ground. This ensures that the message content translates into actual application. The campaign just helps to ensure that the organisation moves in the same direction nationally. It provides direction ... The face-to face programmes keep the media campaign alive."

In this sense, there is an indication that head office views the programme as being decentralised, with the true ownership of the campaign being at grass-roots level. Seleka explained:

The groundwork is more critical ... than what happens at head office. In the past the National office used to be an implementation arm as well, but these days it is more there for policy and processes. It is a procedural support structure. We used to have implementation teams that worked form the head office, but often it was too far to get to most areas to be effective. Now we rather work with empowered ground teams. They are given the skills to function, but we have found that as they come from the community they have more credibility on the ground. Our wealth is on the ground and our groundBREAKERS and mpintshis are key to our getting the message across.

In describing the extent to which the roll-out of the campaign may be varied in the grass-roots programmes, Seleka (2008) explains:

There are also language and cultural differences. You will find that the campaign that roles out is the same, but the feel of it will differ from place to place. Sometimes you'll find that an area functions well on born-free dialogues and they'll have more of those, or otherwise there will be more youth festivals, or no festivals at all. The success lies in the response from the community. You need to respond to their needs and that involvement of the community makes the

programme dynamic and exciting ... That approach ensures that *loveLife* is applicable in any context. The group or participants need to be *loveLife*. This is not some cult where people are conditioned into a way of being and thinking.

4.3.2.6 Conclusion regarding analysis of the interviews at head office

There were strong aspects of participation in the presentation of the programme by head office although at times, respondents' answers appeared rehearsed, in order to position the organisation as participatory. It is possible that *loveLife* could be window-dressing the programme, and that true participativeness could only be confirmed by an actual visit to a site. Although the analyses of both the documentation and interviews indicate high levels of participation, these analyses only provide an insight to the thinking at head office, as the publications originate from head office.

The interviews demonstrated that *loveLife* views its communication as stimulating dialogue, having strong emphasis on the face-to-face *loveLifeStyle* programme, with the media serving as a means by which to create awareness of the organisation in order to engage with communities more easily. Head office functions as a facilitator and has ceased the implementation function previously run from head office.

After the interviews, the HIV-related content of the programme's implementation was examined in detail. This did not form part of the initial constructs. A question regarding in what manner HIV/AIDS is addressed in the programme was added to the question schedule for the focus group discussion with groundBREAKERs and *mpintshi's*.

Broadly, *loveLife* appears to describe its communication as participatory. The next section investigates the extent to which this participativeness is evident in the organisation's communication practices.

4.4 LoveLife's apparent communication approach and practices

LoveLife's public communication is primarily evident in the context of its mass media campaign, which is often condensed to the level of its outdoor advertising and billboard campaign. While many researchers have investigated the content of *loveLife's* mass media campaign, this has not been included in a broader analysis of the organisation.¹ In order to analyse the public aspect of the organisation, the following publications distributed by *loveLife* were analysed: *Lovefacts for a love life generation*, *Love them enough to talk about sex* and *Uncut*: September 2007.

4.4.1 Document 1: *Lovefacts for a love life generation* (*loveLife*, 2007b)

Description

This is a brochure that *loveLife* uses to communicate information regarding the organisation and HIV/AIDS and sexuality to its youth target audience. The brochure was first published in 2007 and therefore represents new views from the organisation. It is expected to replace previous youth brochures.

Analysis

In terms of the construct **Dialogue ↔ Dissemination/manipulation**, dialogue is addressed in this brochure in the encouragement to “talk to your partner about HIV/Aids ...” (*loveLife*, 2007b:16) or “talk as a family about how to feed and protect yourselves” (p. 21), “NEVER be afraid to say NO or speak your mind” (p. 27). There is also a section that explains that talking about sex and relationships is key to understanding and gaining knowledge of HIV/AIDS and healthy sexuality (p. 36). In terms of encouraging dialogue, *loveLife* suggest “talk[ing] to someone you trust” (p. 34, 39), attending a clinic (p. 47, 52),

¹ A description of the roll-out of *loveLife's* campaign is given in Addendum B. The description of the campaign roll-out in Addendum B also incorporates other researchers' views on the campaign elements. For indications of other researchers' studies of aspects of *loveLife's* campaign, see the discussion of *loveLife* in Section 1.1.5.

speaking to a counsellor (p. 39) and calling *LoveLife*'s call centre *theThetaJunction*, (p. 19, 23, 33, 34, 39, 47, 49, 52, 53, 58, 65, 71, 74) or the National Aids Helpline (p. 19, 58, 61, 65).

That various call centre numbers are provided in this publication may indicate **facilitation** in terms of the construct **Facilitator ↔ Prescriptive expert**. The question-and-answer form of the booklet facilitates information transfer. The questions appear to stem from the point of view of an inquisitive teenager with answers that explore information without being prescriptive. Indicative of a prescriptive expert role, a health issue such as HIV/AIDS needs to be based on an **expert** view that distinguishes scientific fact from myths, beliefs or broad rumours. This is evident in the clear, concise information provided in the booklet (*loveLife*, 2007b).

Under the heading “The power to decide” (p. 6) the organisation indicates that the youth “... themselves – and no one else” have the power to decide about their future. This indicates aspects of empowerment (**Equality ↔ Imbalanced power**) and that the organisation believes in facilitation. There is also a section (p. 37) that addresses how to say no and what to do in various sexual situations. Young people are encouraged to stand up for themselves, which indicates empowerment.

The organisation addresses gender power imbalances in the sexual context in “males forcing girls to have sex against their will and sexual violence play a big role in the spread of HIV among teenage girls” (p. 9). The issues of gender power relations are also echoed in “men and women are treated equally” (p. 20) and the “love life generation is built on equality of the sexes” (p. 39).

In a section on “What love is” (p. 26), it is stated that respect, trust and communication are integral to a relationship and that “a partner should never treat you in a way that makes you feel less than what you are and visa versa”. That these imbalances are addressed by the organisation is indicative of the way in which it would communicate its message in an equal manner. This demonstrates that *loveLife* encourages balanced communication in its target audience, this is an indirect indication that the organisation is mindful of balance in

its broad philosophy. This is also evident in the encouragement that the youth "have control over [their] own li[ves]" (p. 14) and that "we are in this together" (p. 22), which indicates a relationship orientation in the organisation's communication.

Lastly, in terms of the construct **Grass-roots specific ↔ National generalisation**, this is a general publication targeted at all young people across the country and thus it has a generalised **national** orientation. It could be queried whether this publication is directly appropriate for its purpose, as a more grass-roots specific publication would contain more aspects of language and culture pertaining to specific areas, which may better target young people across the country.

4.4.2 Document 2: Love them enough to talk about sex (*loveLife*, 2007c)

Description

This is a brochure aimed at parents that was published in 2007. It addresses aspects of sexuality and HIV/AIDS within the context of *loveLife*'s campaign of the 'love life generation', which was run in 2007.

Analysis

Regarding the **Dialogue ↔ Dissemination/manipulation** construct, this publication encourages dialogue as parents are warned that their concern for their children often leads to dictating their behaviour and that young people should be helped to "talk openly" and "feel part" (*loveLife*, 2007c:2). There is also discussion on parents talking to their parents (that is, the youth's grandparents) about the same issues (p. 11), in order to encourage broader openness regarding the issues of sex and HIV/AIDS in the extended family.

There is also an indication of the openness to disagree in encouraging parents to respect the decisions of their children, while being "someone they can turn to when things get rough" (p. 3). This concept is echoed in an encouragement towards openness and

dialogue not only about HIV/AIDS, but also sex, unemployment and other struggles (p. 7), as “talking honestly and openly *with* your children about this will help them avoid ending up in similar situations [own emphasis]”. There is also a section that explains the benefits of talking and dialogue between parents and their children (p. 20). The indication of two-way communication as a form of dialogue is also evident in the description of the way to communicate in “you need to listen to them as well as talk to them” (p. 25).

There is provision for dissent and argumentation, which is crucial for two-way dialogue (as explained in Chapter 2) in the warning “don’t expect those beliefs and values to be exactly the same as yours” (p. 24). In this, the organisation also creates an opportunity for the ideal speech situation in its audience.

Regarding the **Facilitator ↔ Prescriptive expert** construct, the aspect of the facilitator is evident in the encouragement to make use of *loveLife*’s call centre in order to gain support or information and publications (p. 14). The publication also provides suggestions for dealing with teenagers, instead of prescribing specific answers (p. 18). The overall tone of this publication indicates sensitivity towards not prescribing an answer to the reader, but providing suggestions for possible ways in which parents can facilitate their own children’s sexual discovery.

As mentioned in the discussion of the *loveFacts* booklet (*loveLife*, 2007b) (see Section 4.5.1), HIV/AIDS as a health issue needs to be addressed from the perspective of an **expert**. In the parents’ booklet (*loveLife*, 2007c) facts are once again clearly and concisely presented.

In relation to the **Relationship/PR orientation ↔ Client/marketing-orientation**, this publication contains a section on “building a relationship”. In this section, statements such as “change takes time” and “don’t expect things to change after one conversation” and “don’t give up” (p. 27–28) indicate that the organisation understands that behavioural change needs to be linked to a long-term sustained committed effort.

In terms of the **Equality** \Leftrightarrow **Imbalanced power** construct, the publication specifically communicates to parents that they need to understand and address the pressures young people face in terms of HIV/AIDS regarding coercion and power relations in the sexual context (p. 7). Within this context it is stated that parents cannot “expect them to respect women if you disrespect or abuse their mothers” (p. 3).

In terms of the **Grass-roots specific** \Leftrightarrow **National generalisation** construct, cultural sensitivity and consideration are evident in a paragraph that addresses initiation into manhood and circumcision (p. 9), indicating a sensitivity to the **grass-roots** context. This is echoed in an affirmation of families having their own values, beliefs and experiences, which suggests that parents should deal with HIV/AIDS in relation to their own context.

4.4.3 Document 3: *Uncut: September 2007* (*loveLife*, 2007d)

Description

This publication is *loveLife*'s monthly magazine, that is distributed by means of various newspapers across the country, aimed at interaction with the youth. *LoveLife* claims that it has the “widest print run of any [South African] youth publication” (*loveLife*, 2007a:27).

Analysis

In terms of the **Dialogue** \Leftrightarrow **Dissemination/manipulation** construct, *Uncut* (*loveLife*, 2007d:40) contains a column called Mizz B, in which questions on sex, relationship and life are answered. Although the answering of questions cannot be viewed as true dialogue or reciprocal communication, it indicates channels for feedback. Articles close with an invitation to readers to send their opinions on stories through the post or by e-mail as another feedback mechanism.

In terms of the construct **Facilitator** \Leftrightarrow **Prescriptive expert**, the facilitator role of the publication is indicated in the publication of reader letters in which opinions are voiced.

Responses to these letters from other readers or participants from within the organisation – instead of a clear expert, are also published.

4.4.4 Conclusion regarding the public side of *loveLife*'s communication

With reference to the public aspect of *loveLife*'s communication, there appears to be more of a national generalisation. This may be due to the inherent national scope of the texts selected for analysis. The communication tends to be disseminative in nature, but there is an encouragement of dialogue as well. The statements in the publications encourage debate and discussion, and the use of the call centre in order to give feedback and create a communication loop or create opportunities for dialogue.

As *loveLife*'s communication approach in relation to each construct could not be pinpointed with certainty through the analysis of these texts, it was necessary to investigate participants' perceptions of the organisation. This was investigated through focus group discussions. The results of these discussions are discussed in the next section:

4.5 The perception of *loveLife*'s communication approach and practices by peer-motivators and programme participants

This section presents the analyses of the perceptions of the peer-educators and participants within the *loveLife* programme. Although the groundBREAKERS could be considered as part of the organisation, rather than participants, they were included in the focus group discussions because the groundBREAKERS and *mpintshi's* are peer-motivators and in this way also form part of the community in which the organisation functions.

4.5.1 Perceptions of groundBREAKERS and *mpintshi's* at the Orange Farm Y-Centre in Gauteng

The majority of the 15 focus group participants became involved with *loveLife* through an

acquaintance, events or visits from a groundBREAKER to their school. None of the respondents gained knowledge or were drawn to the organisation through media such as billboards or the *Uncut* magazine. Motivation and activities also featured highly on the list of reasons that these young people came to the centre.

In terms of the construct **Dialogue ↔ Dissemination/manipulation**, one of the participants explained that: "The programme lies within you as a person, you personalise each and everything that you teach, each and every one interprets it from their perspective. That makes what we do effective." This statement also indicated **ownership**.

This underlines the aspect of youth reaching their own understanding of concepts through dialogue. In terms of questioning and dissent, the focus group discussion echoed the answer from the respondents at head office regarding face-it sessions. There is comfort in disagreement "and a whole lot of fighting and arguments depending on how we [participants at the centre] understand each other or not." When asked how the winner would be determined in such arguments, the answer was that the "mass" would be the deciding factor. "If I were to have a conflict with him, if the mass go with him, then we do what he was saying, because obviously I cannot stand by one thing when everyone says another thing".

On being asked whether the youth were tiring of HIV/AIDS messaging, one participant said:

People are not tired of talking about it actually, they are tired of listening to it. We as *loveLife*, we are not talking about it, we do, and that's why we now say, 'make your move'. So we facilitate, we don't direct. The people bring it and we discover as a group. It's not as if we just give you a method.

This statement enforces the dialogical nature of the communication approach and practices of the organisation.

Indicative of central coordination in terms of the **Equality ↔ Imbalanced power** construct, the participants acknowledge that they have certain tasks that they need to accomplish, but that they "also develop their own tasks". There is mention of deadlines

and following the protocol, as “certain topics need to be discussed in an area ...” This indicates that there is more of a shared responsibility, but that there is a clear line function within the organisation. This is not necessarily non-participatory, as it provides structure to the programme implementation.

One participant mentioned that all programmes and activities run in the centre are important and that no programme or activity at a site can be considered “superior to another, because all the programmes are delivering the message of *loveLife*”. This indicates an equal-mindedness by the groundBREAKERS and *mpintshi's*.

When asked what aspects of *loveLife* the focus group were not happy about, or would like to see changed, one participant explained that communication in the context of reporting was problematic. He felt that in the reporting process, “a page will be removed from the initial report” for each level of the structure, from groundBREAKER, to area coordinator, to regional manager to head office. The initial “book would end up being two pages by the time it reached head office”. This perception could indicate that the reporting structure created an impression of not feeling valued or not having the voices from the grass-roots implementers heard at a higher level. This also illustrated that although the intention may not be to have a linear top-down structure, the groundBREAKERS experienced an imbalance of power. One participant mentioned “nepotism and favouritism” with supporting nods from other participants, which could illustrate that not all the participants feel equal.

Another aspect of the organisation that a participant would like to see addressed is that messages sent to the centre do not reach everyone uniformly and that “we cannot hear the same thing at the same time. What we often find is confusion because there [sic] is not always what we hear, is very different to what [others at the centre] know.” This could indicate that although there appears to be dialogue at certain levels, communication from managerial level does not necessarily receive the same dialogic treatment as messages in the programme. Typically, a national programme will suffer dilution. This indication of confusion could be indicative of the organisation’s lack of being prescriptive in terms of what it communicates to the participants.

In terms of the **Grass-roots specific ↔ National generalisation** construct, the participants in the focus group confirmed that the programme implementation differs across the country. One participant qualified the difference in approach to the programme implementation as personalised and that “brains which are here, are not brains which are at other places.”

In terms of the **Facilitator ↔ Prescriptive expert** construct, another participant said:

Basically *loveLife* gives you the go-ahead, they actually open their hands. It's up to you whether you want to initiate a programme or a new thing. It's up to you, just come to them, approach them, then it's going to work, because we go with them. They do not act as leaders who are arrogant, who do not allow anything to happen. They allow you to do things and explore those ideas ...

This indicates that the groundBREAKERS feel empowered to be able to implement their own ideas. They have ownership of the programme and this confirms that head office allows the peer-motivators a certain amount of free reign. The organisation has a facilitator role. Another participant added that this allows for creativity in the programme implementation.

Concerning the **Symmetric media ↔ Media-driven** construct, the participants recognise that the media campaign is present, but they feel strongly that young people will be affected the most directly through the sites and grass-roots programmes. The participants however felt that a national *loveLife* television programme that emulates the Y-centre would reach more people than would be possible in the current manner, as long as it is “with people from the ground, not just people from the top.” The participants also felt that a *loveLife* radio station at a national level would also effect a difference. Thus even if the media campaign is underplayed in terms of its effect in the rest of the discussions, this group felt that broadcast media could be effective extensions of *loveLife*'s media campaign.

When asked about the HIV/AIDS contents of the programme, the participants explained that the core of HIV/AIDS information lies in the compulsory modules in the *loveLifeStyle*

programme of 'Bodywise', 'Motivation' and 'Health and sexuality'. "When you reach here, there are certain processes that you have to go through".

But, there is also a clear indication that HIV/AIDS is integrated in every programme at the centre. For example:

... and then in sports and rec[reation] you can send the message through 'delay, reduce and protect'. For example, a basketball player will delay, by delaying the game, see what the opponent has for you, because if you play fast, you cannot see what the opponent has organised. So you need to delay the game so that you can have control. And then you come to reduce, you need to reduce the number of faults, and not get a red card, and once you get a red card – you're out. And then you have again: protect, you always protect, you always defend. You have delay, reduce and protect and we bring that to HIV and AIDS. You delay from having sex; you reduce the number of partners you have and you protect yourself and the other person. So it also addresses HIV and sex.

Lastly, an interesting aspect noted in this focus group discussion came from a question as to what the Y-Centre in Orange Farm was addressing at that stage:

Ignorance. People who ignore the centre – the very same people who used to come here regularly, you know, and they thinking that they know a whole lot about the centre and we the people who come here, they think that we are wasting our time. Because when they came to the centre, they never knew what they wanted and they wasted their time. So for them we are wasting our time coming here, because they never got what they actually wanted.

This indicated another aspect of the programme as to the dynamics of people moving in or out of a centre. In reply to why participants believed people left the centre the response was that people either got too old or too cool, feeling they do not need to go to "an after-school care". However, HIV/AIDS intervention programmes such as *loveLife* are targeted at certain age groups (in this instance 12 to 17-year-olds). It would thus be natural for people to leave the centre once they reach an age at which they do not necessarily fit in anymore. In effect, people leaving the centre due to age, would help the organisation

focus its communication on a specific target audience at a Y-centre or other type of site.

Society is not homogenous, and thus people could leave the centre due to the fact that they do not associate with it or the other people who go to the centre. Communities have various social groups, and this could merely be an indication that not all groups are likely to visit a site. Therefore, there should be an increase in sites in an area, or those that do not associate with the activities at the hub should be reached through other methods. A last possibility is that there could be saturation in HIV/AIDS knowledge in the specific group, which causes people to move on.

4.5.2 The perception of participants at the *loveLife* Y-Centre in Orange Farm in Gauteng

Eight participants gave their insights into their perception of the organisation, but as these participants were not as informed about the organisation as the participants from the previous focus group, not all the constructs were evident in the analysis. This is because they have limited contact with the organisation through the groundBREAKERS and *mpintshi's*.

As with the discussion above, all of the participants came to the centre based on one-on-one contact with friends, family or a groundBREAKER that they had befriended. Again the media did not play a large role in what participants indicated for their initial awareness of the organisation. This affirms that the face-to-face part of the programme has an effect and that *loveLife* functions on a personal **relationship level (Relationship/PR orientation ⇔ Client/marketing-orientation)**.

The participants had varied favourite activities or modules within the *loveLifeStyle* programme at the centre, ranging from sport, motivation and the opportunity to develop. As one participant said: "you get to interact with interesting people, with whom you can share thoughts", which indicates an awareness of the opportunity for dialogue at a grass-roots level.

For the participants, the most important aspects of *loveLife* were focused on the motivation aspect of the *loveLifeStyle* programme, as motivation helped foster “self-confidence and knowing yourself”. Another participant added that the motivation helped him see that there is a future, and that there may be hope for it. Another said that the motivation helped her deal with people and understand how to communicate. This indicates an empowering side of the programme.

One participant that had only come to the centre for two weeks explained how the conversations on HIV/AIDS were conducted “in the simplest way”. He said further that he gained the most from *loveLife* in having the opportunity to gain information about the disease “without having to feel as if it’s not applicable to you.”

4.5.3 Conclusion on the Orange Farm Focus Groups

In these interviews, aspects of **dialogue** and **empowerment** were mentioned. It was also observed that **relationships** are better than the **media** in involving people with the organisation in this area. The focus groups also confirmed that the organisation is in fact perceived as being more participatory on the continuum of participation from the point of this specific sample group.

4.6 Conclusion

This section has interpreted the organisation’s communication according to *loveLife*’s description of its own communication approach and practices, the organisation’s apparent communication approach and practices, and the perception of *loveLife*’s communication approach and practices at the Y-Centre in Orange Farm.

In examining evidence of the construct **Dialogue ↔ Dissemination/manipulation** in the analyses of the texts, interviews and focus group discussions, it appears that *loveLife* speaks about both dialogue and dissemination. The disseminatory aspects in the organisation’s documents are not overtly visible, and there seems to be a greater

inclination towards a dialogic approach according to which communication relates to the sharing of ideas and communication is not solely prescriptive. From the analyses, it appears that *loveLife* values and adheres to the principles of dialogue. In terms of this construct, the texts did not provide a clear indication regarding the extent to which *loveLife* tolerates or is open to disagreement within its programme. In both the head office interviews and the focus group discussions, there was an indication that questioning and disagreement was encouraged. Thus, the organisation appears to embrace aspects of dialogue in its communication. As *loveLife*'s grass-roots programme does not reach all possible people exposed to its campaign who form part of the target audience, it is not certain that the media campaign on its own provides sufficient information and motivation for the encouragement of dialogue.

Regarding the construct **Facilitator ⇔ Prescriptive expert**, *loveLife* appears to describe itself as a facilitator, and its communication practices too appear to be perceived in this way. Although there are indications that the organisation assumes a facilitator role, it does not seem possible to ensure that the message reaches the target audience if management does not participate in the organisation's activities. This means that the organisation acknowledges that it is more than a mere media- or billboard-driven campaign.

In terms of the **Relationship/PR orientation ⇔ Client/marketing-orientation**, *loveLife* has a tension that stems from a national media campaign that inevitably has a marketing orientation on the one hand and a grass-roots programme that functions on an inherent relationship/PR orientation on the other.

From the interviews, it appears that *loveLife* focuses on relationship-building. There is also awareness that a national campaign places strain on communication in the acknowledgement from staff at head office that programmes that need to run over a large geographic area face message dilution.

In the analyses of *loveLife*'s policy documents, it was found that the organisation has a longer-term view in its communication approach. A future orientation in the organisation's communication approach indicates that *loveLife* focuses on relationships. The participants

at the Y-Centre also displayed a future-oriented attitude. Although the texts indicated that the organisation appears to be in two minds regarding **Relationship/PR orientation** ↔ **Client/marketing-orientation**, it is aware of the problems of media campaign functions with relation to the grass-roots education. Although the campaign merely “sets the stage” for the grassroots implementation, the organisation is directed towards public relations and relationships.

The tensions of media campaign versus peer education also feature with regard to the construct **Symmetric media** ↔ **Media-driven**. The analyses of the texts indicated that the organisation values dialogue, and thus that the media is used more symmetrically and that it's not viewed as a stand-alone campaign. This view was supported by the Y-Centre focus group discussion, which indicated that most participants at this centre became aware of *loveLife* through interpersonal channels and not the media campaign as expected.

Regarding **Equality** ↔ **Imbalanced power**, the organisation's approach became more evident from the analyses of the texts according to evidence of the **Dialogue** ↔ **Dissemination/manipulation** construct it was indicated that the organisation appears to favour free thought, negotiation and dialogue, which equates to a more equal approach to the communication context in terms of the continuum of participation. In the discussion of the **Facilitator** ↔ **Prescriptive expert** construct, it was indicated that the organisation appears to aim to facilitate communication instead of driving it whilst merely catalysing dialogue in the community, which indicates that the power imbalances are lessened, owing to the absence of an expert role and the presence of a peer-motivator.

One aspect regarding power relations is evident in the centralized structure of the organisation. The structure of the organisation appears to be directed in this manner in order to facilitate reporting, and the sites appear to be free to address the issues pertinent to their own contexts. Thus, the organisation indicates what can be communicated about, while the sites adapt this for their own contexts. The sites thus have a certain sense of autonomy.

As with the previous constructs, the policy documents indicated tension within the construct of **Grass-roots specific ↔ National generalisation**. In the interviews, it was ascertained that there is room for grass-roots specific aspects in the implementation, as the various sites are permitted to adapt the broader programme to suit their needs. However, the peer motivation programme follows a set curriculum with compulsory modules presented as part of the *loveLifeStyle* programme at the sites. It appears that although these modules are set, they are presented in a way that is adaptable to the needs of each site (and the region within which it functions). This chapter concludes that *loveLife*'s communication approach and practices appears to be participatory, as the analyses demonstrated a strong reliance on the peer education programmes implemented through the groundBREAKERs and *mpintshi*'s.

In the following chapter, the summary and inferences from the analyses discussed in this chapter will be presented.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the analysis and interpretation of the communication approach and practices of *loveLife*. Throughout this analysis, there was a triangulation of sources in order to provide an accurate impression of the organisation's communication approach and practices. Thus far, preliminary findings have been proposed in order determine the underlying communication approach and practices of the *loveLife* HIV/AIDS prevention programme.

In this chapter, the general research objective of this study (*to determine the underlying communication approach of the loveLife HIV/AIDS prevention programme*) is addressed with reference to the specific research objectives postulated in Chapter 1. These research objectives are:

- *to identify the principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication that are applicable to improved HIV/AIDS prevention programmes along the continuum from modernisation to participation;*
- *to investigate loveLife's description of its communication in terms of the principles of participatory communication;*
- *to determine the extent to which loveLife's printed communication reflects the principles of participatory communication; and*
- *to investigate the perception of loveLife's communication by participants at one of the organisation's sites in terms of the principles of participatory communication.*

5.2 Review and interpretation of findings

The specific research questions are used to guide the summary of findings. Due to the first research question being addressed in the literature review (chapter 2), it will first be presented. Thereafter the last three questions will be answered in summation of the description of the analysis of the empirical study as discussed in Chapter 4.

5.2.1 The principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication applicable to improved HIV/AIDS prevention programmes

This research objective was the focus of Chapter 2. The chapter explained participatory and two-way communication, and identified concepts key to participation such as dialogue (2.4.1), involvement (2.4.2), empowerment (2.4.3), symmetry in communication (2.4.4.1), communicator roles (2.4.4.2), communicative action (2.4.6) and the role of questioning in persuasion (2.4.7).

In the literature review it was ascertained that an organisation's communication will improve if it is, within the continuum of participation, more dialogic and reciprocal, and creates the opportunity for the community to become an equal partner in terms of communication. In section 1.1.3 it was also noted that research has shown how more participatory programmes tend to be more effective in reaching their goals. If an organisation is more participatory in its communication, it should have a greater chance of success in its communicative endeavours. That puts the community members into a position in which they may discuss, question and disagree with the expert and are able to move towards the generation of their own understanding, while the expert or organisation fulfils the role of facilitator or catalyst (see chapter 2 for an explanation of each of these concepts). Ideally, the communication will be directed towards dialogue in order to reach a win-win situation instead of one that is prone to manipulation.

Chapter 2 also presented the results of the literature review conducted, which culminated in the theoretical perspectives presented in Table 5.1 with the aim of indicating the continuum of participativeness. These perspectives were concretized into the form of constructs in Chapter 3 and used in Chapter 4 to analyse the empirical data.

Table 5.1 Theoretical perspectives

<p>(Revised¹) Theoretical Perspective 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Communication interventions that are more participatory on the continuum of participation rely less on mass media for dissemination of information, and would have more horizontal media implementation.
<p>(Revised) Theoretical Perspective 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Participatory Communication interventions display a greater cultural sensitivity.
<p>Theoretical Perspective 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Participatory communication is dialogic, reciprocal and free of power imbalances. The developer serves as a mere catalyst and is seen as an equal, owing to mutuality and respect.
<p>Theoretical Perspective 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Media-based programmes may be participatory as media can be implemented in a participatory manner. In a participatory framework, mass media should be used to support or supplement interpersonal methods instead of merely disseminating information.
<p>Theoretical Perspective 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Participation requires that the recipients of development are involved in the process of knowledge generation. This requires moving from manipulation, tokenism and information dissemination towards community-driven communication, delegation of power and partnership in which all parties generate knowledge.

¹ Theoretical perspectives 1, 2 and 9 were revised in section 3.3.1.2.5 due to the fact that they were either (1 and 2) written from the modernist perspective from the literature review, or (9A and B) dealt with a similar concept.

Theoretical Perspective 6:

- Participatory communication requires **empowerment** in terms of the **enablement** of communities to assume **ownership of their own situation**. Empowered **communities play a major role** in the communication process, with the **expert** remaining in the **background**.

Theoretical Perspective 7:

- Based on the excellence theory, a participatory development **agent repositions itself** according to the community's **true needs** instead of its **expert view** and uses communication in a **two-way symmetrical** manner. This communication is aimed at reaching a **win-win situation** instead of one of **persuasion** and **manipulation**.

Theoretical Perspective 8:

- A development communicator in the participatory approach should be in line with a **problem-solving process facilitator** in the excellence theory of public relations. Thus a participatory development communicator should be a **relationship facilitator**. **Relationships** with the community should **steer programme decisions** within the framework of the communication strategy.

(Revised) Theoretical Perspective 9:

- Participatory communication is **non-manipulative** and is evident in **communication action** oriented **towards reaching understanding** and the ideal speech situation. This means that all participants should be **free to discuss disagreement**, and to **question** all actions in terms of the legitimacy thereof. All participants should have **equal discursive opportunity** and no person or opinion should take preference. **Open and rational argumentation** leads to communicative action in the participatory context. Persuasive messages can be participatory if the above-mentioned aspects are addressed.

The above-mentioned concepts were concretised into polarised constructs through which *loveLife*'s communication was analysed along a continuum of participativeness from modernisation to participation. The constructs that indicate participatory communication

are dialogue, equality, facilitator, symmetric media, relationship/PR orientation and grass-roots specific. Each of these constructs was polarised (see section 3.3.1.2.5) in order to make them more easily identifiable in the analysis of *loveLife*'s communication.

5.2.2 *loveLife*'s communication

This section will describe *loveLife*'s communication approach and practices in terms of the principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication in accordance with the general research objective. In this section, the theoretical perspectives compiled from the literature review are used to guide the findings.

5.2.2.1 *LoveLife*'s communication approach and practices in terms of the principles of participatory and two-way symmetrical communication

Revised theoretical perspective 1:

Communication interventions that are more participatory on the continuum of participation rely less on mass media for dissemination of information, and would have more horizontal media implementation.

Initially, *loveLife* appears to have a strong mass media-driven campaign, as its radio, television and billboard messaging comes to mind directly at the mention of the organisation's name. In the analysis of *loveLife*'s description of its communication approach and practices, the reasons for the use of mass media were clear, but there was no direct indication of a disseminatory approach to the use of media. This was echoed in the interviews with head office staff, in which it was explained that the mass media aspect of the campaign served to set the stage for the grass-roots implementation.

LoveLife's publications carried information messages but contain numerous calls for feedback to ensure that the messages are not received in a merely disseminatory manner. *LoveLife*'s media always carry *thethaJunction*'s number, helping the audience to contact and give feedback to the organisation.

Participants at *loveLife*'s Orange Farm Y-Centre gave little or no indication of being influenced by *loveLife*'s mass media. This indicates that their experience was strongly interpersonal.

Overall, *loveLife* does not rely on media platforms as its primary form of communication. From the analyses, it is clear that the organisation views its media campaign as a way in which to involve its target audience in its programmes. The media campaign serves as a means of stimulating debate and creating a platform of association for the campaign's target audience. Although *loveLife* has a strong media component to its campaign, it does not overly rely on mass media and can therefore be seen to use the mass media to encourage participation in its grass-roots programme.

Revised Theoretical perspective 2:

Participatory Communication interventions display a greater cultural sensitivity.

In the analysis, indirect aspects of *loveLife*'s cultural sensitivity were identified. *LoveLife* provides the opportunity for sites to manage their own programmes according to their traditions and practices, which indicates cultural sensitivity.

In the analysis of documentation, there was an indication that the organisation uses various languages in broadcast radio, but that other media have been in English (with the exception of the traditional language billboard of 2006). At the Y-Centre in Orange Farm, it was mentioned that indigenous languages are used.

There was also an acknowledgement that the programme's implementation differs across the country and that various communities add their flavour to it. The participants also

agreed that they would have events at the Y-Centre that would be relevant to their community, while other sites would not necessarily be interested in the same events. From this, *loveLife* has a participatory approach regarding the way in which it approaches culture.

Theoretical perspective 3:

Participatory communication is dialogic, reciprocal and free of power imbalances. The developer serves as a mere catalyst and is seen as an equal, owing to mutuality and respect.

Overall *loveLife*'s communication is directed towards creating and facilitating dialogue. The organisation feels strongly about people talking about the issues around HIV/AIDS. In the non-prescriptive way that the organisation approaches its grass-roots programmes, it is also clear that the organisation wishes to understand the experiences and situations of youth and not only give them information. There are numerous opportunities for dialogue within the organisation. The participants at Y-Centres are involved in the programme in terms of peer motivation and media production, such as radio – a medium that encourages dialogue in communities.

LoveLife only reaches 35 to 40% of youth through peer education, thereby having a disseminatory effect on those not involved in the *loveLifeStyle* programmes – being evidence that the organisation's structure creates a barrier to dialogue. On the other hand, the call-centre number that is available on all forms of mass communication creates the opportunity for two-way symmetrical communication.

As the *loveLife* is a HIV/AIDS prevention programme, the disseminatory aspects of the organisation's communication of health issues would be acceptable. In terms of the opportunities created for participants or the target audience to "talk about it"; *loveLife*'s communication is participatory. The catalyst role that *loveLife* plays in terms of its communication is clear in the way in which the programme is structured towards peer

motivation instead of peer education. In the interviews and focus group discussions, it was indicated that the organisation “open[s] their hands”, “provide[s] a platform”, and participants “don’t need to ask anybody’s permission”.

The organisation fares very well in meeting the criteria set in this theoretical perspective, but does not communicate this.

Theoretical perspective 4:

Media-based programmes may be participatory as media can be implemented in a participatory manner. In a participatory framework, mass media should be used to support or supplement interpersonal methods instead of merely disseminating information.

In terms of how *loveLife*'s media meets the requirements of being supplemental to more interpersonal means of communication, the initial indication is that the organisation has a strong mass media component. In terms of the content in the billboard media campaign, it is quite clear that little information is disseminated, as short statements or questions are raised instead of much information being transferred.

In the instance of the participatory use of media, the organisation ensures that the target audience responds to the media by activating media messages through localised media such as radio. In terms of effecting interpersonal aspects in the media campaign, *thethaJunction* was constantly mentioned, which provides opportunity for more symmetric reaction to the media campaign. The confrontational nature of *loveLife*'s media campaign indicates that the organisation desires to effect reaction and therefore challenges the media user to give feedback and engage with the programme at a more symmetric level.

From the analysis, *loveLife* functions at both a media and a grass-roots specific level, which means there will always be a certain tension between the national and local contexts. The organisation needs to provide better indications that the media feeds into other communication channels. In the media campaign itself, it is not evident that the

organisation has other forms of communication (such as the *loveLifeStyle* programme), creating the impression that the mass media of the campaign constitutes the entire programme.

Theoretical Perspective 5:

Participation requires that the recipients of development are involved in the process of knowledge generation. This requires moving from manipulation, tokenism and information dissemination towards community-driven communication, delegation of power and partnership in which all parties generate knowledge.

As with the discussion on theoretical perspective 3, the direct result of employing dialogue is that *loveLife* creates a situation in which communities begin generating their own solutions (or knowledge) regarding the problems they face in the HIV/AIDS context. As the *loveLifeStyle* programme relies on peer-motivators, there is a strong aspect of community-driven communication, and recipients are less likely to feel that they cannot take part in the communication process as they feel that they can trust their peers more. The organisation partners with other organisations beyond the bounds of the programme, thereby ensuring that the community is more involved and more accepting of the organisation's activities.

One of the aspects that Harrison (2007:10) mentions as one of the greatest criticisms levelled against the organisation that they do not focus on a "clear message to young people". He states that there is "evidence that young people know about HIV and how to prevent it"; therefore, *loveLife* argues that "youth-focused communication should not seek to 'close the circle' for them, but allow them to be active participants in the process." This clearly indicates that *loveLife* aims to have the participants in their programmes generate their own knowledge instead of merely telling them what to do.

Although there are set modules in the *loveLifeStyle* programme that are compulsory for all participants in the organisation's activities, the courses only serve as a basis upon which the themes of HIV/AIDS are introduced. The recipients are given the opportunity to express themselves and negotiate their own perspectives on issues. That facilitators do

not talk down to or preach to participants signifies that there is room for open discussion, leading to more personalised solutions to problems.

LoveLife needs to communicate more on the way it enables youth to find their own answers to the HIV/AIDS problem and to other problems they may face in their lives.

Theoretical perspective 6:

Participatory communication requires empowerment in terms of the enablement of communities to assume ownership of their own situation. Empowered communities are in charge of the communication process, with the expert remaining in the background.

LoveLife does not run its programme in a vacuum but acknowledges that structurally HIV/AIDS is compounded by the inequalities inherent to South African society (such as poverty, inequality and the development context). The issues of imbalanced power relations in society also form part of the programme and the way the organisation aims to help young people to “be in control of their future” (Harrison, 2007:15).

Throughout the analysis, the aspects of enablement and empowerment were clear. In the way that the programme is adapted according to the needs and cultures of various communities and partnerships within communities are encouraged, there is the opportunity for communities to assume ownership of the programme. As with any national organisation, *LoveLife* has structural, reporting and disciplinary processes, but there appears to be fluidity in the organisational structure. Instead of the community being mere passive receivers, there is the opportunity for participants to drive the communication of the message. Thus, from the analysis, *LoveLife*’s communication is directed towards equality.

One problematic aspect regarding the specific Y-centre used in the study’s orientation to the community in which it operates was observed from the focus group discussions. The participants referred to people who leave the centre and who think that those at the centre waste their time. Although the participants replied that the reason for this could be age,

this is a worrying aspect. If participants “outgrow” *loveLife*, will they outgrow what they learnt there too? This could be an isolated situation, or otherwise it could indicate that not everyone in the broader community supports the programme, which may harm what the organisation is doing. This, along with the criticism that the organisation reports from older people could have a detrimental effect on the reputation of the organisation. *LoveLife* needs to address the issue of its reputation in order to ensure higher buy-in and support from communities.

Theoretical Perspective 7:

Based on the excellence theory, a participatory development agent repositions itself according to the community's true needs instead of its expert view and uses communication in a two-way symmetrical manner. This communication is aimed at reaching a win-win situation instead of one of persuasion and manipulation.

Although expert views were evident in *loveLife*'s communication (as they need to be in terms of HIV/AIDS prevention), these views are mostly from a non-prescriptive position. It is also important to acknowledge that HIV/AIDS communication will necessarily contain certain expert knowledge in order to express facts or dispel certain myths around HIV/AIDS.

Although *loveLife* is an HIV/AIDS prevention programme, the organisation also addresses other issues that the youth face in their day-to-day lives. For instance, training in the use of technology such as computers may not have a direct link to HIV/AIDS prevention, but helps young people to better prepare themselves for their futures. This is an indication that the organisation is sufficiently fluid to reposition itself towards the communities' needs.

As the organisation's purpose is to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, it could easily create a singular programme that only focuses on that. But, in order to get the youth more involved in the programme, *loveLife* hosts various activities that vary across the country. This indicates that the organisation does not serve its own interests, but also cater for the communities' needs.

In terms of two-way symmetrical communication, which is a normative ideal, the organisation appears to wish to not only gain feedback, but also stimulate dialogue on the issues it addresses. This indicates that although the organisation needs to persuade its target audience with regards to sexual behaviour, it gives its participants the opportunity to discuss what healthy sexual behaviour would be for them.

Theoretical Perspective 8:

A development communicator in the participatory approach should be more in line with a problem-solving process facilitator in the excellence theory of public relations. Thus a participative development communicator should be a relationship facilitator; relationships with the community should steer programme decisions within the framework of the communication strategy.

As *loveLife* views itself as a lifestyle brand and has a strong mass media or advertising component, it was initially expected of the organisation to be more focused on marketing than on relationship building or public relations. However, from the analysis of the policy documents and interviews it emerged that branding and marketing form only a small part of the organisation's communication approach.

After the analysis, there were indications of a long-term relationship orientation in terms of the organisation's communication practices. The communication is directed towards the future and there are indications that *loveLife* believes in sustained development and that it believes that behaviour change campaigns fail because of their inability to "sustain the effort long enough" (Harrison, 2007:1).

Unfortunately, the organisation is not accessible to all those who are exposed to its publications, and this creates the problem that for those who do not actively participate in the programme, the organisation has a more marketing or branding orientation. Thus, those who cannot attend the face-to-face programmes will not necessarily be able to receive the message in the same way as those who participate at the various sites. The

loveLifeStyle programme is structured around the concept of peer motivators, with motivation being key. This indicates that for those who participate in the grass-roots programme, there is a stronger aspect of a relationship orientation.

Thus, it would seem that *loveLife* is in two minds in terms of its communication as there is tension between the brand implementation and the face-to-face programmes. However, if the “brand is young people who have adopted” the *loveLife*-lifestyle (Harrison, 2007:2), *loveLife* appears to wish to be relationship oriented.

It is unclear to what extent decisions of communication strategy at a media level are influenced by community relationships. In this aspect, there were indications that groundBREAKERs and *mpintshis* are involved in terms of steering the campaign in various phases, but it was not evident that the relationship aspect was considered in media generation or the formulation of the broader communication strategy.

The analysis demonstrated that there was a focus on addressing the needs of the communities at grass-roots level. Regarding the mass media aspect of the campaign, issues that were experienced by participants at various sites feed into the national campaign. Thus, the national campaign is developed with the local campaign in mind. The intention is that campaign content is translated to grass-roots level.

Theoretical perspective 9:

Participatory communication is non-manipulative and is evident in communication action oriented towards reaching understanding and the ideal speech situation. This means that all participants should be free to discuss disagreement, and to question all actions in terms of the legitimacy thereof. All participants should have equal discursive opportunity and no person or opinion should take preference. Open and rational argumentation leads to communicative action in the participatory context. Persuasive messages can be participatory if the above-mentioned aspects are addressed.

In terms of the creation of an ideal speech situation, the nature of *loveLife*'s *loveLifeStyle* programmes is such that the peer-motivators foster an environment in which there is an opportunity for everyone to discuss issues freely. The same can be said in terms of how in the media *loveLife* encourages parents (and grandparents) to understand that their children will not necessarily see things the same way they do.

In terms of the interviews and focus group discussions with groundBREAKERS and *mpintshi's*, it was clear that the organisation creates opportunities to discuss disagreement, and that dissent and disagreement are crucial aspects in ensuring that the target audience understands the message. That the organisation includes aspects of debate in the grass-roots programme could be an indication that it trains participants to use open and rational argumentation not only as a life skill, but also as a skill to be used within the programme.

LoveLife is clearly directed towards persuading young people to change their behaviour, as that is the purpose of the organisation. The analysis demonstrated that in addition to this, the organisation wishes to create an opportunity for discussion, rather than merely tell participants what to do, in order to facilitate true internalisation of the message.

5.3 Final conclusion and recommendations¹

From the analysis of *loveLife*'s communication, the organisation's approach is located on the more participatory pole on the continuum of participativeness. The most significant problem with the organisation's communication approach is that there is a clear tension between the strongly Westernised brand-oriented media campaign, for which other researchers have also criticised the organisation, and the more culturally sensitive dialogic peer education or *loveLifeStyle* programme.

Unfortunately the organisation's brand does not directly personify the organisation's actual

¹ ¹ In order to ensure the clarity of this chapter, it was decided to put recommendations for further research in Addendum E.

behaviour and because of this dichotomy, the most visible aspect of *loveLife*'s communication is easily criticised. In terms of the applicability of the messages in the mass media aspect of the campaign, it is argued that the Westernised imagery of the *loveLife* brand is not as culturally relevant as a participatory programme should be.

LoveLife may need to foster a positive image in the public of what it stands for and what it does. Owing to the high awareness of *loveLife*, people tend to view a brand, and they tend to assume that the cryptic message on the billboard represents the entire campaign. For those not able to access *loveLife*'s *loveLifeStyle* programme, these cryptic messages could have problematic consequences, in terms of people's understanding of the intended message and their reaction to it. Although the call centre provides an opportunity to gain additional information about the messaging, it remains doubtful whether an HIV-information-fatigued¹ young person would phone the call centre in every instance of being unsure of what a billboard means.

Ideally, an expansion of the grass-roots peer motivation programme would ensure that these issues are addressed. However, owing to the large amount of funds that the organisation already receives, it would not necessarily be an option to get more funding to increase the grass-roots programme.

The 2008 National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey (Shisana *et al.*, 2009:) indicated that HIV/AIDS prevalence has decreased amongst youth aged 15 to 25, from 10.3% in 2005 and to 8.6% in 2008. The HSRC (Shisana *et al.*, 2009:36) reports that this decrease is even higher when compared to the HIV/AIDS incidence levels amongst youth aged 15 to 19.

In terms of programme evaluation, it is impossible to link directly the work of an intervention such as *loveLife* to this decrease (it would be impossible to isolate a control group in order to be able to gain sufficient data on the effect of an intervention). However,

¹ In the context of HIV/AIDS prevention in South Africa, many people tend to claim HIV-information-fatigue, whereby they claim to have heard a lot about HIV/AIDS and specifically avoid communication related to the pandemic.

it is possible that *loveLife* could be responsible for at least a part of these statistics, as the programme is directly linked to this specific age group.

In terms of the excitement and enthusiasm evident at the Orange Farm Y-Centre, it would be difficult to claim that *loveLife* has had no effect on South Africa's youth. There is something contagious about the way in which the young people at the centre spoke about what they do in the organisation, and this provides hope within the context of South Africa's dire HIV/AIDS situation. In response to what *loveLife* means to him, one participant from the groundBREAKER and *mpintshi* focus group said:

I would say that *loveLife* is the future; it is the future in the way in which it changes one's life ... The billboards are there, the Uncuts are there, and the other elements are there (in TV and radio), but there is something that is beyond that. And that is what we see all straight, [sic] whenever you are in here. Because here you can grow your abilities, something that you are born with, but you were not aware of, but whenever you come here, you are being trained and then you become aware of your personality and your character and the person that you actually are.

So *loveLife* is an ongoing campaign, it's not gorina end, and its still going to change people's lives. And we're still going to do it in the future, that's why I say *loveLife* is the future.

ADDENDUM A: LOVELIFE-SPECIFIC TERMS / ACTIVITIES

BORN FREE Dialogues: These are events that are organised and facilitated by *loveLife*, from the various sites, “for parents and their children to get together to debate issues that affect their lives, their relationships, and their futures” (Burnett, 2007:5). These community-based discussion events are designed to encourage open communication between parents and their children “about sex and other difficult issues”.

goGogetter programme: ‘Gogo’ is an affectionate term for grandmother. This is a new programme started by *loveLife* in 2008. This is a network of 500 grandmothers across the country who each take responsibility for 20 children. The goGogetters identify and support youths in their community and report to Line Managers and groundBREAKERS at *loveLife* sites in their respective regions. A part of the goGogetter’s task is to ensure that young people stay in school, as there is a regard for the opinions of older people in South African society and due to the large amount of child-headed households in the country (approximately 120 000).

GroundBREAKER (gB): GroundBREAKERS are “volunteers, aged 18-25, who are placed within various *loveLife* initiatives for a year” (*loveLife*, 2003:9). The groundBREAKERS serve as facilitators in terms of the implementation of the *loveLifeStyle* programme. The organisation further describes the groundBREAKER-programme as a youth development programme within which the participants are trained focusing on their development as young people, but also on the skills they need to implement the *loveLife*-programme.

There are around 1,200 groundBREAKERS nationally that serve as co-ordinating peer educators that in essence drive the implementation of the organisation’s activities at a grassroots level. They also receive a “monthly stipend of R800 each to impart healthy lifestyle messages face to face” (Bateman, 2007:160). GroundBREAKERS are recruited primarily from the pool of *mpintshi*’s – volunteers who have been actively engaged in *loveLife*’s programmes.

GroundBREAKERS are also referred to as gBs in the organisation.

loveLife Games: These are a sporting and debate event that is run on a regional and national level throughout each school year. The event draws teams from *loveLife*'s site-based activities and provides the opportunity to draw a larger group of young people into the sites.

loveLifeStyle Programme: This peer motivation programme is run at all of *loveLife*'s sites according to a set curriculum. It contains various modules, of which 'Bodywise', 'Motivation' and 'Health and Sexuality' are compulsory, due to these modules being the primary modules where HIV/AIDS related issues as well as the drivers to HIV/AIDS are addressed. The programme also contains modules such as 'Debating' and 'Creative problem solving'. The

Mpintshi: *loveLife*'s youth facilitators or peer educators are called *mpintshi*. The term is derived from 'Izimpintshi' – an Nguni colloquial expression for 'chommies' or 'buddies'. Each groundBREAKER has the task to recruit up to five volunteers from the community (aged between 12 and 17 years) who they have to train, mentor and support.

There are around 5,000 *mpintshis* in the programme that serve as peer educators or motivators to those that become involved at the various sites. *Mpintshis* do not receive any remuneration and "their commitment to *loveLife* is thus rewarded only with a training package, some transport money, and *loveLife*-branded clothing" (Burnett, 2007:3).

Mymsta: This is *loveLife*'s social networking site that was launched in 2008. The site may be accessed via computer or cellphone and gives young people the opportunity to connect with one another.

Sites: *loveLife*'s grass-roots programmes and activities are run at various kinds of access points, referred to as sites. These range from: Y-Centres, franchises, NAFCI-clinics schools and outlets. There were 4,266 sites across the country by early 2008 (VOSEA,

2008:10).

Y-Centre: Y-Centres (referring to Youth-centres) are larger *loveLife* sites that serve as regional contact points. A variety of programmes are run from each and up to ten (prior to 2005) or eight (after 2005) groundBREAKERS are placed at each centre (Burnett, 2007:2; VOSEA, 2008:8). There were 17 Y-Centres by mid 2008 with an 18th scheduled to open early in 2009 (Swarts, 2008).

***loveLife* franchises:** The franchise concept started as support implementation to various community based organisations. These organisations initially paid a fee in order to implement certain *loveLife* programmes. These were phased out with when *loveLife* implemented outlets in 2005.

NAFCI – The National Adolescent Youth Friendly Clinic Initiative: This is a major drive of *loveLife* in partnership with the National Department of Health to establish a youth-friendly environment at clinics across the country. Traditionally when young people would visit a clinic and enquire about condoms, sexually transmitted diseases or HIV/AIDS, clinic staff would ‘preach’ to them or tell them that these were ‘adult’ issues. The NAFCI initiative creates a welcoming environment for youth at clinics and usually has a *loveLife* site linked to it.

School sites: Schools either allow *loveLife* to provide extra-curricular activities at their schools outside normal school times (implementations sites), or they allow groundBREAKERS and mpintshis to present lifeskills and sexual education programmes on both a formal and an extra-curricular level (implementation and partner-sites). *loveLife* was involved at around 3,200 schools by 2008 (VOSEA, 2008:10).

***loveLife* Outlets:** In 2005 *loveLife* started a new kind of site which it calls outlets where there would be a partnership with either a community based organisation, a clinic or school that allows *loveLife* to implement its programmes and peer education activities (Burnett, 2007:2).

ThethaJunction: The meaning of the term *thetaJunction* is “place to talk” and this is *loveLife*’s toll-free national sexual health helpline (0800 121 900). This service provides youth with information and counselling, and also refers them to support services and clinical care should it be needed. There is also a special helpline for parents (0800 121 100) in order to advise them on how to communicate to their children.

Uncut: *loveLife*’s lifestyle magazine, which is distributed via newspapers that the organisation has partnered with. At this stage the magazine is distributed via Independent Media’s newspapers. This magazine was previously known as S’camto Uncut.

ADDENDUM B: LOVELIFE'S MEDIA ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN EVOLUTION

In this section *loveLife*'s campaign rollout since 1999 is described.

loveLife indicates that one of the ways that it communicates its message is through a national media campaign, which has mainly taken the form of billboards and taxis (*loveLife*, 2003c:19). *loveLife*'s campaign has run on various forms of media, but the discussion of the key themes used in the campaign will primarily focus on outdoor advertising, as this is the most visible aspect of the organisation. Where there are links to other media it will be addressed briefly.

In retrospect the key themes in the campaign have been:

1999: "Foreplay"

This was a teaser campaign to introduce *loveLife*. The campaign made use of celebrities and was primarily built around billboards (see figure A1). The concept was based on the idea of creating an expectation and to introduce *loveLife*.

This part of the campaign had no branding or call centre numbers, as the organisation did not want to have a direct association of the brand of *loveLife* with celebrities, as unwanted aspects of the celebrities' lives could then be linked to the brand.

This stage of the campaign didn't necessarily show clear participative aspects except for the possibility of dialogue as to what the cryptic billboards meant.

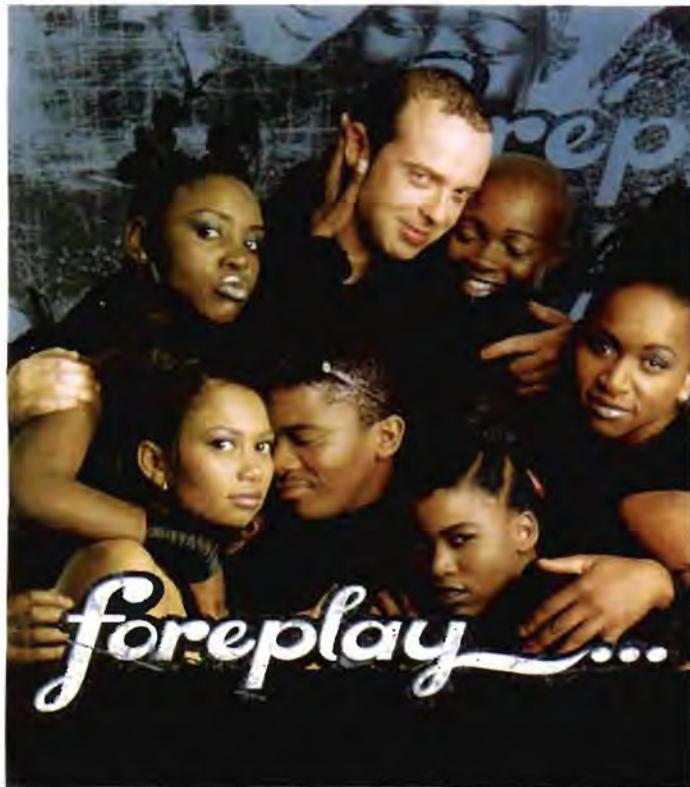


Figure A1: A poster / billboard from the “Foreplay” launch campaign – 1999.

2000



Figure A2: The “Talk about it before accidents happen”-billboard – phase 1 of 2000.

Phase 1: “Talk about it”

This message was geared towards starting up dialogue about sex and sexuality. This campaign was focussed on linking sex and sexuality to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The themes are described as “get to the point”, ‘naked truth’, ‘oral sex’ and ‘talk about it, before accidents happen” (see figure A2).



Figure A3: "I had sex. Will I die?" billboard phase 2 of 2000.

Phase 2 "Talk about it" – definitive sexuality (see figure A3). This phase of the campaign would promote discussion and debate via quotes.



Figure A4: "The Future ain't what it used to be"-billboard – phase 3 of 2000.

Phase 3 "the future ain't what it used to be:? HIV+" – This part of the campaign made the connection between sexual behaviour and the HIV/AIDS epidemic (see figure A4).



Figure A5: "Shaping the future: Choices" – 2001.



Figure A6: "Shaping the future: His&Hers" taxi side panel - 2001.



Figure A7: "Shaping the future: Love yourself enough?" – 2001.

2001

"Shaping the Future" – This is a campaign that continues on the third phase of the campaign from the previous year. It shows how the youth may shape the future through: making informed choices, sharing responsibility in relationships and adopting a positive approach to personal sexuality (see figures A5, A6 & A7).

According to the organisation (*loveLife*, 2003c) the campaign also linked the aspects of HIV/AIDS and the future in stimulating thought about the impact of infection, and the youth's current choices, on their future.

Richard Delate (2001) did a semiotic analysis of the His & Hers billboards used in this campaign. Jeanne Prinsloo (2007) refers to this campaign in her article that broadly touches on the campaign rollout up to 2005.



Figure A8: "Is this your relationship?"-billboard - phase 1 of 2002.



Figure A9: "Contrasting Quotes"-billboard that was implemented in the second phase of 2002.

2002

loveLife (2003c:20) describes the campaign as a continuation of the positive lifestyle it advocates for young people. The campaign focused on the determinants of unprotected sex: transactional sex, peer pressure, sexual coercion or force, low self-esteem and

pessimism about their lives and future. A strong feature of this campaign's message was to highlight the aspects of personal and shared responsibility in terms of sex.

The campaign functioned on two phases of which the first asked questions or made statements around the abovementioned themes (see figure A8), and the second used contrasting quotes in which two parties "talk about" sexual issues (see figure A9).

See Laura Templeton's (2003) review of this campaign.

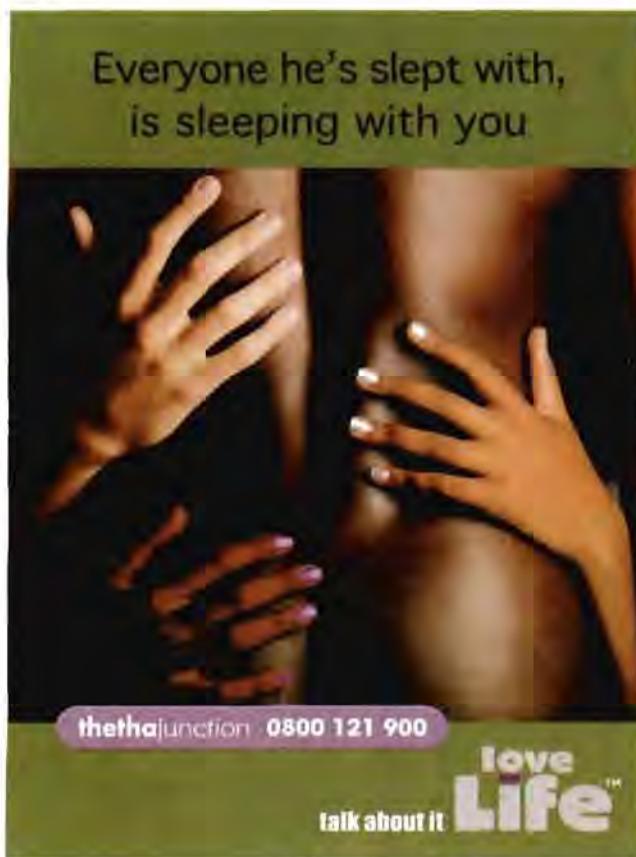


Figure A10: "Everyone he's slept with..."-billboard - phase 1 of 2003.

2003

In contrast to the campaign from 2002, the following year's campaign took a more visual approach addressing the same aspects of high-risk behaviour that was addressed in the previous year. The aspects of control over one's sexuality and destiny, coercion, protection, delay and reduction of sexual partners (also referred to by *loveLife* as the

drivers of high risk behaviour) were addressed (see figure A10).



Figure A11: "Love..."-billboard – phase 2 of 2003.

In the second phase the message of the campaign focused on the values that underpin longer-lasting relationships namely love, respect and dignity (see figure A11).

The last poster tapped into the South African optimism surrounding the country's bid to host the 2010 Soccer World Cup, linking sexual behaviour to future aspirations in the sense that the target audience need to make decisions in the present to secure a future (see figure A12).



Figure A12: "2010 – love to be there..."-billboard/poster – final phase of 2003.

Throughout the year a parent campaign encouraging parents to talk to their children about sex and HIV/AIDS was also displayed.



Figure A13: "Pilot, graduate and mother"-billboards – 2004.



2004

The creative campaign concepts for 2004 built on the 2010-related billboard of the previous year's pay-off line: "love to be there". The purpose was to motivate young people to "secure their future prospects" (*loveLife*, 2005:26) and in terms of execution it juxtaposed a child's drawing of an idealised future with that of an actual person having attained that goal.

The purpose of this campaign was to connect current high-risk behaviour with its impact in terms of one's future aspirations.

The campaign was applied to the following themes: Good education, employment and career orientation and happy stable relationships (see figure 13). Danie Jordaan (2006) did a study that focuses on three billboards from this campaign.

2005

The campaign in 2005 was based on the idea that one's actions are shaped by one's attitude on a personal and societal level. One of the reasons would be that a better attitude would address issues of coercion or low self-esteem, thereby affecting sexual behaviour.

The first phase of the campaign was based on the slogan "get attitude" (see figure A14). For a critique on this campaign, see Zisser and Francis (2006).



Figure A14: "Get attitude"-teaser poster from 2005.



Figure A15: "Get attitude"-teaser billboard with born free sticker.

In the second part of this campaign *loveLife* aimed to change the youth's attitudes with the purpose of creating a new generation with a new way of thinking. The second phase of the campaign was aimed at the "Born free generation" (see figure A16).



Figure A16: "Born free" billboards – final phase of 2005.

2006

In 2006 *loveLife* addressed the issue of HIV/AIDS in a more direct manner with a campaign that could be seen as more confrontational than those of previous years. The message is much like a wake-up call that brings the issue of HIV/AIDS back to the direct agenda of *loveLife*. This is, according to *loveLife* (2007:7) the first time that the organisation used the term "HIV" so "strongly and directly" in its campaigns.



Figure A17: The billboards from the first phase of 2006.

The first phase of the campaign contained slogans such as: "HIV – Face it", "HIV loves sleeping around", "HIV loves skin on skin" and four billboards in Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana and ... which translates to: "HIV loves the expectation that child-bearing proves womanhood" (See figure A17). It was the first time that *loveLife* used African languages in its media (*loveLife*, 2007:7).

The billboards addressing childbearing and teenage pregnancy were aimed at the phenomenon that young women would leave school and directly become involved with older men – often becoming pregnant. One of the reasons for this would be that older men have more expendable income, can offer greater support and security. *loveLife* (2007:10) sites the HSRC (2005) report on HIV prevalence where 29% of girls who had a partner

who was more than 5 years their senior, had contracted HIV/AIDS. For young women to be involved with older men would increase their vulnerability to contract HIV/AIDS, and therefore the message was aimed at addressing this issue.

Shortly after implementation, the organisation received complaints from interest groups that argued that these billboards had the potential to stigmatise pregnancy. The organisation then changed the message to: "Face it: Teen pregnancy increases risk of HIV". The new message was formulated to still focus on pregnancy as a driver for HIV/AIDS infection in society, without possible alienation of any sector of the community due to possible ambiguity regarding its messaging.

See Martins (2007) for a critique on this series of billboards.

In phase 2 of 2006's campaign, the message shifted towards challenging South African youths to take decisive action to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. The creatives were designed with photographic black and white images that modelled responsible behaviour that the organisation would like the youth to emulate.

The five messages were: "You can't pressure me into sex", "NO 'til we know", "Prove your love, protect me", "If its not just me, you're not for me" and a parent focused message: "If you're not talking to your child about sex, who is?" (see figure A18).



Figure A18: The billboards from the first phase of 2006.

These billboards aimed to address the aspects of responsible behaviour in the contexts of coercion, testing, condom usage, and multiple sexual partners.

This campaign ran concurrently with Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on the SABC channels in the form of two-minute mini-drama inserts that chronicle the lives of ordinary youngsters from various racial backgrounds in a group of friends. These characters were used as models in the second phase's billboards in order to link the media used in the campaign.



Figure A19: The billboards from the 2007 campaign.

2007

In *loveLife*'s campaign for 2007, the organisation continued the concept of future orientation and the idea of a "born-free generation" as in 2005, by implementing a campaign which calls the youth to rally around the idea of a *loveLife* generation, which is characterised by passion and hope.

The campaign's messages centred on the "*loveLife* generation", the "got-ambition generation", the "power-to-decide generation" and the "don't-want-HIV generation". Each of these themes would be implemented over a period of three months (See figure A19).



Figure A20: The “Make your Move” billboard from 2008.

2008

In 2008 *loveLife* decided to phase out the original slogan: “Talk about it”, replacing it with “Make your Move”. According to Harrison (2008:47), the shift made in the campaign is to “go beyond prompting sexual behaviour “towards changing the youth’s “perception of day-to-day opportunity”.

‘Make your move’ aims to cultivate a look-for opportunity mindset – encouraging young people to think outside the limits of their immediate environment; promoting personal initiative, motivation and responsibility; building their ability to navigate day-to-day pressures and expectations, and linking them to information about new prospects for further education, personal development, careers and jobs.

Harrison (2008:47).



Figure A21: What's your formula campaign from 2009.

2009

loveLife's campaign for 2009 revolved around the slogan: 'What's your formula?' The formula given in the campaign is L^2M^3 (L^2 = loving life; M^3 = making my move) – clearly building on the previous year's campaign of "Make your Move".

The campaign was launched by use large-scale projections of the L^2M^3 creative onto specific buildings across the country in order to keep the *loveLife* brand positioned as youthful and innovative.

The aim of the campaign is once again to get young people thinking about their futures. This campaign moves forward from the previous year in that it encourages young people to question who they are, thus focusing on identity and self-worth.

According to *loveLife* (2009), the campaign will be implemented in an integrated way, spanning over the print and broadcast media, whilst also forming part of the programme activities at the various hubs.

ADDENDUM C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR *LOVELIFE* HEAD OFFICE

(Questions were varied according to position of respondent)

1) Demographic information. Name, position, years with organisation.

What is your background within *loveLife*, if any?

2) How would you describe *loveLife*'s communication approach?

What are the primary elements of the *loveLife* programme?

What would you see as the greatest strengths of *loveLife*'s communication?

3) Are there any theoretical frameworks that could be linked to this approach?

4) What does the grass-roots programme entail?

5) Could you describe the *loveLife* brand?

How does branding/marketing affect the grass-roots implementation of the programme?

Could you describe the link between the media campaign and the grass-roots programme? How are the media messages developed (individual /team/ expert/ community/ funder)?

Are you aware of possible tensions between community involvement and marketing/branding orientation?

6) To what extent is the programme centrally co-ordinated? What are the reasons for this?

(This allows for central or decentralized options with the opportunity to explain more about the underlying philosophy.) To what extent does the programme allow for site-specific implementation?

7) To what extent may staff question the direction or the implementation of the programme? And grass-roots participants? How are conflicting views and questions handled? In policy documentation it is mentioned that *loveLife* is non-prescriptive to the youth – how does this correlate?

8) There is a lot of reference to motivation in the reports and policy documents, what would motivation entail within the organisation?

9) How participatory is the programme, how much does the programme involve the community and in what ways?

10) *loveLife* makes use of research in various forms, could you describe the research that is done for media rollout and programme implementation? To what extent is the research quantitative (numeric scales, cold, pre-determined) or qualitative (interpretative, geared towards understanding, value-based)?

11) To what extent is HIV/AIDS addressed in the programme, as it doesn't seem to be directly addressed in your media. What could be the reasons for this?

ADDENDUM D QUESTION SCHEDULE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

How did you get to know about *loveLife*? How did you get involved?

Did anyone come to *loveLife* due to the billboards or Uncut or other media?

What does *loveLife* mean to you?

What is the most important aspect of *loveLife*?

Are there disagreements at the Y-centre and about what do you disagree?

If there are, how are disagreements dealt with?

To what extent are you told what to do at the Y-Centre from the Area Coordinator or head office?

Is the programme the same all over the country?

What are the biggest issues that you in Orange Farm are addressing at this moment?

In terms of HIV/AIDS in the *loveLife* programme in what ways is the message on HIV/AIDS prevention part of what you do?

What about *loveLife* don't you agree with or like at this stage?

ADDENDUM E: SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, it would still be hard to generalize the findings with such a small sample group in terms of the grass-roots interviews.

A first suggestion would be to broaden the scope of such interviews in order to look at how the implementation of the *loveLife* programme differs across various sites, such as Y-centres in different provinces, but also to compare the experiences of those at a Y-Centre with those from a school, a NAFCI-clinic and a franchise.

The franchise aspect of *loveLife* could be researched on its own in order to look at how another organisation (such as a faith based organisation) responds to *loveLife*'s communication and whether it dilutes its own stance or whether it adapts *loveLife*'s communication.

More research should be done to look at participants at various hubs in order to gain greater insight into how the organisation affects their behaviour. Also due to the nature of HIV/AIDS as disease, further research will always be necessary to do further research to ascertain the effectiveness of *loveLife*'s programme. The programme may seem to be participative, but in effect, *loveLife* remains an HIV/AIDS prevention programme and it needs to be ascertained if the participativeness is increasing the organisation's effectiveness in reality.

The way in which *loveLife* communicates with parents could also provide an interesting research topic. To what extent do parents embrace the organisation and do parents make use of services provided by *loveLife*. Aspects such as the BornFree dialogues could also be investigated in this regard.

It would be recommended to look at the perceptions of those that have been part of a *loveLife* programme after they have moved on from the organisation in order to gauge the effect their contact with the organisation had on their behaviour.

Another research possibility would be to look into the perceptions on the organisation's communication for those who do not have access to the grass-roots programme in order to see if the media campaign is understandable without mediation, but also to find whether the media campaign has any effect on its own.

A comparative study between *loveLife* and other HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives (such as Khomanani and Soul City) using participativeness as a measure could provide a greater insight into prevention programmes on a broader scale.

This study primarily looked at *loveLife* up to the launch of the Make your move-campaign. This new direction for the programme needs to be researched as it departs from mere talking to encouraging an actual move.

loveLife's new Mymsta' initiative also needs investigation for the use of social networking new media and technology in HIV/AIDS prevention. Similarly, the new goGoGetter initiative also needs investigation for the generational effect that it has in HIV/AIDS prevention (see Addendum A for more information on these initiatives).

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