

# **Internal communications' effect on reputational perception of Student Academic Lifecycle Administration at the NWU**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Internal marketing communication in any organization is a vital element to contribute towards the attainment of objectives, retention of staff and creating a cohort within the company. Friction among staff, discrepancies, lost revenue, damaged relationships and unproductivity can be the result of poor internal marketing communication in an organization.

At the NWU, certain divisions render certain services and functionalities. Within all faculties across all campuses, the Student Academic Lifecycle Administration (SALA) division was designed to ensure that faculties adhere to rules and regulations.

But the functionalities and support that this division supplies were not communicated at all to the rest of the University. This division is now being perceived as an enemy within the NWU, as well as extremely ostracized with a poor reputation.

This study looked at the abovementioned specifics through surveys and benchmarked against previous research findings as well as companies where internal marketing communication is taking place.

The primary objective of this study is to ascertain the effect that internal marketing communication has on the reputational perception of the SALA division in the faculty of Health Sciences at the university.

**Keywords:** Perception, reputation, internal marketing communication, communication, marketing management.

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## **KEY TERMS**

### **Academic lifecycle of students**

Is a holistic and data-informed approach focusing on the entire student journey, commencing at admissions through to alumni to ensure student success.

### **Central Applications and Admissions Office**

This office was established as part of the restructuring process of the University. All applications from prospective students are managed by this office which is based at the Potchefstroom campus.

### **Brand awareness**

Brand awareness is the ability of an audience to recognize a brand. It is a key consideration in strategy, marketing management, advertising and consumer behaviour.

### **Brand loyalty**

Brand loyalty is the feeling of positivity and dedication towards a brand making customers or consumers choosing the brand again in future despite changes in the environment or competitors actions.

### **Corporate or organization reputation**

Corporate reputation means being known for having a specific characteristic. It is the stigma that a company or business is apprehended by external as well as internal participants. This is based on past actions but also on the probability of the future behaviour of the business.

### **Corporate Identity**

Corporate identity includes all logos, colours and symbols of a company that adds to the public image of the business.

### **Demographics**

Demographics takes into consideration gender, race, age, income and social class and is used in segmentation in marketing.

**Direct marketing**

This is when the company deals directly with the end-user and there is no middle man used. Communication takes place directly with the primary target audience.

**Hashtag**

This is a keyword or phrase that is used without any spaces with a hashtag (#) in front of the phrase or keywords. This is mostly used on social media as a way for an audience to interact about the same topic.

**Internal marketing**

This is the means of a marketing plan used that takes place internally, targeted to staff within a company to obtain their favour and loyalty.

**Marketing automation**

Marketing campaigns get automated by using marketing automation as a tool to distribute the correct message to the correct audience at the correct time and is achieved through behaviour based strategies.

**Market research**

Business decisions get improved through high intelligence research and development. It is the activity of obtaining information regarding the preferences and needs of customers, consumers or a target market.

**Public relations**

Public relations entail the maintenance and reputation of a business or entity and its brand.

**Target marketing**

A certain audience on which the business sets its marketing efforts.

**Tagline**

A tagline is a phrase or slogan used in advertising that is associated with a specific organization or company. E.g. Nike – just do it.

## Roadshow

A roadshow is a series of organized marketing events that take place in different locations to promote organizations services or products. It is an excellent tool for marketing.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
B2B	Business to business
B2C	Business to customer
CAAO	Central Applications and Admissions Office
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NWU	North-West University
RDGC	Research Data Gatekeeper Committee
REC	Research Ethics Committee
SALA	Student Academic Lifecycle Administration
SFA	Senior Faculty Administrator
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science

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# **CHAPTER 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The Student Academic Lifecycle Administration (SALA) division originated at the North-West University (NWU), to act as a driver to achieve certain objectives and to administer an essential functionality.

SALA services are managed centrally within faculties and are situated on all three campuses. The main objective of the strategic placement is service delivery that is intended to ensure continuity and alignment, by providing efficient and effective academic administrative support services. Outcomes will be achieved by improving processes and structures, as well as by applying policies and rules correctly and systematically.

SALA is therefore appointed by the Registrar to act as the gatekeepers of the NWU to ensure that faculties, departments and all entities act according to policies and procedures of the NWU. SALA ensures that regulatory compliance is adhered to by all role players that take part in the lifecycle of the student (Nwu.ac.za, 2017).

Internal communication helps navigate the perceptions of people about a situation and also facilitates crisis management in the short and long term. SALA has a direct influence on the daily operations of faculties, departments and other entities. Due to the limitation on efficient internal communication structures between the SALA division and the rest of the organization, the latter perceives the division as a threat rather than a driver to accomplish goals.

## **1.2 Background to the problem**

Since the SALA divisions' establishment in 2017, the division did not engage in any internal marketing communication campaigns. This resulted in a lack of communication to the rest of the University to clarify the role and responsibilities of this new division and the impact this division will have on the rest of the University. SALA has a direct influence on the daily operations of faculties, departments and other entities. Due to the limitation on efficient internal communication structures between the SALA division and the rest of the organization, the latter perceives the division as a threat rather than a driver to accomplish goals.

The purpose of this research is to study the effect that internal marketing communication has on the reputational perception of the SALA division. The perceptions of the target audience were tested with this research (Nwu.ac.za, 2019).

There are several essential questions to ask, namely:

- What does organization reputation entail?
- What role does reputation play towards organizational values?
- Can organization reputation create or destroy corporate values?
- Can organization reputation hinder the pursuit of strategic opportunities?
- How can reputation be measured and where does it come from?
- How can organization reputation be managed?

Organizations can be stigmatized and have bad reputations that can arise from poor performance or that can be linked to certain specific activities that took place within the organization. Reputation and regulation are interdependent because regulatory institutions mould what stakeholders are expecting of organizations (Hetze, 2016:284).

It often happens that regulators like SALA acquire reputations that management struggles to deal with. SALA needs to manage how they are perceived if the division wants to survive and effectively fulfil its role. SALA may seek to forge a narrow domain of responsibility to limit its exposure to fields that fall outside of their direct expertise to avoid blame for ineffective regulation. This strategic move may halt the tendencies and blame towards empire-building (Wood, 2004:49).

Organization reputation functions as a regulatory mechanism where the party affected have a direct connection with the offending organization and in turn, can directly harm the organization. Reputation does not effectively regulate behaviour that causes harm to those who cannot return the favour (Arvinen-Muondo & Perkins, 2013:34).

Internal communication forms part of the objectives of the SALA division. The staff within this division frequently communicates with the rest of the staff members of the faculty. Perceptions are formed through communication between individuals. Therefore, perception and the effect of internal communication was tested in this study (Marynissen, 2011).

### **1.3 Problem statement**

In the previous discussions, it was mentioned that perceptions can be based on the quality of communication that takes place. Effective internal communication can influence the perception that people have towards a division. The problem identified is stated that internal marketing communication in the SALA division was not implemented since restructuring took place, which influenced the perceptions that staff has towards this division, this, in turn, caused reputation damage towards SALA.



## **1.4 Literature study**

Internal marketing communication ensures that an organization is equipped with the capabilities to be sustainable in the long run. Internal and external communication takes place in the company to develop a corporate culture and a unique image of the organization. This, in turn, let customers and employees have a certain perception of the company. Some researchers tend to state that the latter becomes the personality of the company (Erasmus-Kritzinger *et al.*, 1999:3).

Internal marketing communication can take place in many forms in a company, which is written, oral or non-verbal. It is a matter of conveying a message to customers or employees, whether it be instructions, information or a form of advertising directed towards a specific group of people. The lack of proper internal marketing communication can influence motivation within the workplace (Adewale, 2013).

Fellow staff members tend to question processes, policies and procedures in their quest to a sense of reason and purpose. They need to comprehend the objectives of the company and in turn wants to be valued by management (Williams, 2012). Internal marketing communication can be seen as a navigation mechanism that steers employees as well as customers in a certain direction. In turn, it creates customer value and employee retention that contributes towards sustainable development for the company (Kellens *et al.*, 2012).

It is significant to note that SALA renders a service to fellow employees within the university environment and are perceived as consumers of services rendered and therefore customers in this study. Service excellence is one of the major objectives of the SALA division (Nwu.ac.za, 2017).

## **1.5 Research questions**

### **1.5.1 Primary question**

What effect does internal marketing communication have on the reputational perception of the SALA division within the Faculty of Health Sciences at the NWU?

### **1.5.2 Secondary questions**

- What influence does internal marketing communication have on employees in SALA?
- What effect does marketing strategy have on the division's overall business vision and mission?

- How do other divisions perceive SALA prior to the implementation of an effective marketing approach?
- What impact does marketing strategy have on corporate relationships between the SALA division and other divisions?
- What influence does the reputation of the organization have on the marketing strategy approach?

## **1.6 Objectives**

### **1.6.1 Primary objective**

The primary objective of this study is to ascertain the effect that internal marketing communication has on the reputational perception of the SALA division in the faculty of Health Sciences at the university.

This study investigated the effect of internal marketing communication in the SALA environment and reflected on previous research studies on reputation, perceptions, service delivery and organizational behaviour.

This study provides management with insight into the effect of internal marketing communication on the reputation of the SALA division. This new division operates under the mandate of the Registrar, with a Chief Director and three Campus Directors, one on each Campus. The delegation of authority further rolls out to eight Senior Faculty Administrators, and many administrative staff members positioned all over the three Campuses (Nwu.ac.za, 2019).

### **1.6.2 Secondary objectives**

- To establish the influence of internal marketing communication on employees in a company.
- To establish the effect of marketing strategy on the SALA division's vision and mission.
- To learn what other divisions' perceptions are prior to an effective marketing communication approach.
- To establish the effect of reputation on a marketing communication strategy approach.
- To establish the influence of the organizations' reputation on the marketing strategy approach.

## **1.7 Research methodology**

### **1.7.1 Research design**

This quantitative study was concluded utilizing a measuring instrument in using scaled questions that tested the perceptions of the target group. The questions were grouped into three factors, i.e. internal marketing communication, service delivery and perception. The questionnaires were distributed via email to the selected participants. A qualified Statistician analysed the data through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software and gave valuable insight to the research.

### **1.7.2 Assessing and demonstrating the quality and rigour of the proposed research design**

The framework of this study was built around the following categories:

- Conduct of research.
  - This includes the appropriateness of methods and techniques used for the research questions.
- Conceptual significance of the research.
  - This relates to the selection of the topic.
  - Use of applicable theory and its approach.
  - Contributions to knowledge delivered in this field of study.
  - Future research initiatives must be made possible through this study.
- The practical significance of the research.
  - Application of the nature of the discipline and its assessment.
  - It is important to be able to have an impact on the organization.
- Presentation of the research.
  - A reflection on the reporting of the research in terms of professionalism.
  - A view on the effect on the target audience of the research.

Greater insight is gained through this approach by exploring the general concept of SALA and the risk of researcher bias is reduced.

## **1.8 Sampling of population**

Purposive sampling was chosen because of the internal operational structure of the division and the effect of SALA on certain staff. This made purposive sampling the rational choice (Fielding, 2017:182). This method was used as the elected respondents were known and relevant to provide

credible and accurate data, it saved time and led to the collection of rich data. The chosen participants are accessible and therefore fit for the nature of this study.

The population consisted of staff members from the Faculty of Health Sciences only, this group consisted of academic and support staff. Only staff who are operationally involved with SALA could be targeted. The total number of staff involved with SALA tasks on a daily basis is 70 within the Faculty. A total number of 25 respondents completed and returned the questionnaire. This equals to 35,7% of the total population who were identified as suitable participants to the study. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.

## **1.9 Ethics**

The NWU has a Research Ethics committee that evaluates each research proposal to identify possible risks towards the University as well as the target groups. In this study, no demographics were included and the respondents completed the questionnaires anonymously. In the following chapter, the relationship between, as well as the importance, of marketing communication, perception and reputation will be discussed in detail. However, this study was approved by the Scientific Committee of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences as well as the Research Ethics committee with reference number NWU-01425-19-A4.

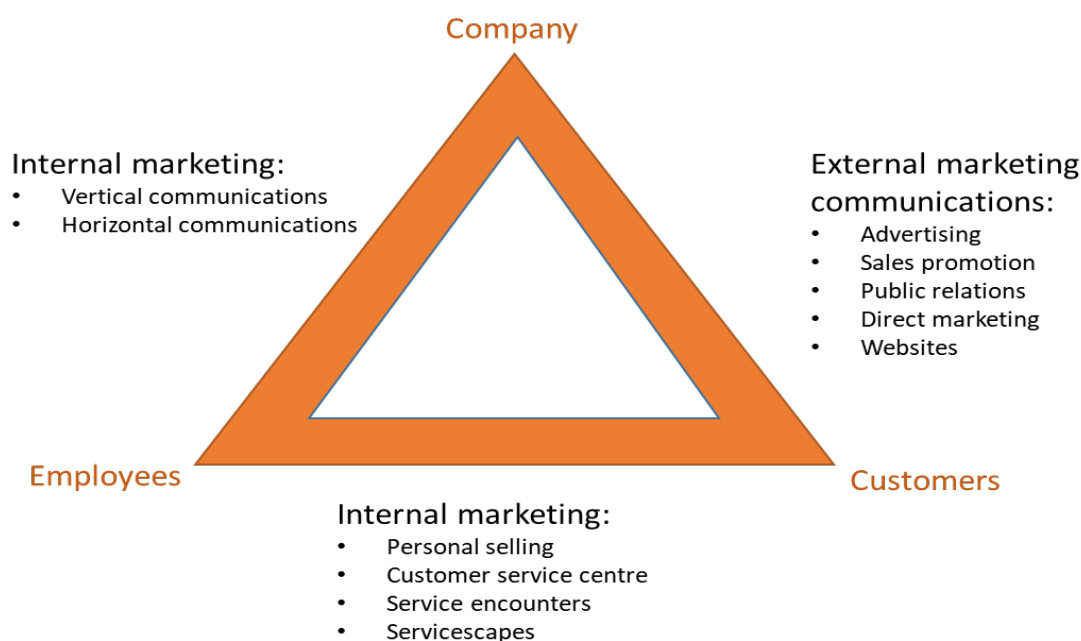
## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY

### MARKETING COMMUNICATION

#### 2.1 Introduction to marketing communication

The primary objective of marketing communication is to communicate events, sales, goals and successes of the company to the clients. This includes communication regarding new products or services, which is the main objective. A uniform brand image and brand promise can easily be conveyed by marketers even with limited sources. Websites, targeted magazines, cinema advertising, direct mail and sales promotions are vehicles of communication of goods and services that are available to customers. Although Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, blogs and virtual marketing amplifies the previous methods. Service interactions with customers contribute to the complexity, volume and variety of information, that customers receive. A major challenge for marketers of service is when a company have no control over outside resources when they want to ensure delivery of a consistent message (Udofot *et al.*, 2015:152).

A company who distributes information via various methods must ensure that customers receive the same message as well as any marketing communication material. These methods include marketing communications messages distributed directly from the company, as well as messages sent to customers by employees. Figure 2.1 illustrates an enhanced version of the services marketing triangle. It highlights two types of communication (Parente & Strausbaugh-Hutchinson, 2015:143).



## **Figure 2-1: The service marketing triangle**

Source: Adopted from Kachniewska *et al.*, 2006.

### **2.2 External marketing communication**

External marketing communication entails traditional channels such as advertising, corporate websites, public relations and promotion of sales. Interactive marketing communication entails messages conveyed by employees to customers through those channels, like personal selling customer service interactions, service encounter interactions and Servicescapes. Servicescape is a model developed by Booms and Bitner to emphasize the impact of the physical environment in which a service process takes place (Bitner, 1992:59). Service companies need to ensure consistency of these interactive messages, amongst themselves, as well as with those sent through external communications. To achieve this, the third side of the triangle, namely internal marketing communications, must be managed to ensure the accuracy of information from the company to employees. Messages must be accurate and consistent with what is being heard or seen by customers (VanAuken, 2015:34).

It is evident in B2B situations and B2C instances that there is a need for integrated marketing campaigns. In B2B situations, a problem surface because multiple segments of a service organisation have to deal with a client and internal communication does not take place sufficiently. In many companies, integrated marketing communication is not the norm. Different sectors in the company take responsibility for different aspects of communication. Integrated marketing communication builds a strong brand identity by bonding and strengthening all messages and images in the market place (Dib & Simkin, 2007:29). Therefore, all corporate messages, images, positioning, and identity are synchronized throughout all locations, which indicates that public relations materials are a mirror image to the direct mail campaign and advertising is a mirror image to the website of the organization (VanAuken, 2015:9).

The demographics of the workforce are changing. From Generation X onwards, people are more discerning about how their employers listen and talk to them. This generation also does not have time to get involved in office politics and they demand feedback, transparency and better teamwork. Their work methods differ and for them to be successful, they require tools and resources, here internal communication plays a vital role to align people behind mutual goals (Wood, 2004:48).

## **2.3 Internal marketing communication**

Internal communication is a key business function which, for the following reasons, is becoming more significant:

- A drive for purpose.
- Remain in control of the message as well as its' origin.
- Supporting and empowerment of middle management.
- Keeping the brand promise and satisfying the customers.
- Internal communication is vital.
- Creating a healthy work environment.
- Curb rumours and improving transparency (GmbH, 2019).

### **2.3.1 A drive for purpose**

Employees tend to question, in a quest to a sense of reason and purpose. Employees need to understand goals, how it must be achieved and what value they contribute to the organization. They want to feel that they are valued and require a sense of belonging. The latter is specific characteristics of the Millennials and Generation Z, who relies on interaction and feedback in the work environment. These generations were raised in the era of social media and are used to an endless flow of comments, likes, and shares. Purpose includes visualisation of actions on contributions made. For example, it is highly motivating and effective to update the organizations' LinkedIn profile with achievements of staff or a department. Attaining objectives contributes to a feeling of teamwork and growth in an organization (Williams, 2012).

An effective and efficient internal communications system can inspire employees to work towards mutual goals. Through sharing of information with employees by involving them on reasons "why", companies can meaningfully involve them in the "what" (Amit, 2018).

### **2.3.2 Remain in control**

It is a poor form that employees must learn important broadcasts from an external source and not from their management. It is intimidating to organizations that broadcasts and information are simply accessible on smartphones as well as other media devices, anytime and anywhere. Organizations can deal with this type of competition through learning to equal or even surpass that external speed and to also reveal internal opinions in daily operations (Barnett *et al.*, 2011:296).

It is essential to make sure that information is gathered from the correct source, that it's timely and also reaches all staff. A distinct yet versatile and quick editing process is needed with a short

chain of approval in the command chain. Companies must establish fast, reliable and interactive channels to reach all staff. New policies, procedures, technology and skills are necessary to create trust and transparency. Instead of leaving data vulnerable to individual confusion, the latter will ensure that organizations remain in control of outgoing communications (Donaldson *et al.*, 2012).

### **2.3.3 Supporting and empowerment of middle management**

The norm of the organization is a top-down approach when distributing information in an organization. Although this approach may cause delays, limits feedback and is completely dependent on the individual communication effort of every staff member within the chain of the hierarchy. A lot of out-going communication is taking place in organizations, but the challenge is that the messages are not always reaching the staff that is actually doing the job. Internal communication will strengthen this chain more effectively (Udofot, 2015:151).

By empowering middle management with the necessary information and resources, middle management can become the greatest possible communicators and leaders for their staff. Through sharing general information via a central communication system, the workload and weight on middle management will be reduced.

Internal communication provides important resources for organizations to get to know their employees better and thus to prepare better managers. This is critical to Millennials because they often feel ill-equipped for their new roles (Dibb & Simkin, 2007:195).

### **2.3.4 Keep the brand promise and satisfy the customer**

Customers expect the company to uphold its promise which applies to consumers as well as business clients. Organizations ensure that this is accomplished by internal communication to frontline workers in a broad decentralized company with a large number of middle managers.

Clear communicated goals, well-educated, professional and qualified workers will boost the brand considerably and contribute to sustainable development (Outspoken Media, 2010).

Customer experience is the utmost persistent directive for marketers and it was the highest position of marketing technology investment in 2016 and it steered innovation spending again in 2017. A Gartner survey established that 89% of companies were expected to compete mostly based on customer experience, as opposed to 36% in 2013. Therefore, 50% of consumer product investments were based on developments in customer experience. Superior brands are built from the inside out. It is best, to begin with, the workers and their morale and trust will be reflected directly on the clients (Gartner, 2019).



### **2.3.5 Internal communication is vital**

Timely and proactive communication is the key to managing an internal or external crisis in a company. How staff and external stakeholders manage an incident can be negative, neutral or positive is a major determinant if the incident progresses into a full-blown crisis or not. Studies on internal crisis interaction showed that managers frequently communicate substantially less with staff during a crisis (Shimp & Andrews, 2012).

Internal communication helps navigate the perceptions of people about a situation and also facilitates crisis management in the short and long term. The difference between short and long term plans is that when managing short term, it addresses the immediate incident, while a long term plan will focus on protecting the company's reputation as well as contingency plans as prevention of history repeating itself. To successfully manage crisis situations, a sufficient organizational structure, channels and plans need to be in place. Internal communication will allow management to successfully deal with situations (Kellens *et al.*, 2012).

### **2.3.6 Create a healthy work environment**

An improved work environment will assist companies to retain employees and attract new talent. The personnel turnover rates are rising and especially Millennials, are known to frequently change jobs. A figure of up to 40% of Millennials states that they are willing to change their career within the next two years. Companies need to implement measurements to retain those employees.

Efficient internal communication delivers frequent feedback as well as purpose that will increase employee engagement and therefore decrease turnover rates, ultimately reducing costs for the company.

Whether an organization wants to develop new talents or retain talent, workers must familiarize themselves with their employers. An effective internal communications system and an open working environment will give a company a competitive advantage in today's highly competitive market. Eventually, the greatest advertisement for a company is happy employees and satisfied customers (Robbins *et al.*, 2003:117).

At the moment, the message that the SALA division is delivering does not grasp the attention of the target market. The needs and wants of the target market need to be addressed. Clear and transparent communication needs to reach the target market to convey the message regarding the undertaking and intentions of the SALA division.

Comprehensive understanding of the wants and needs of the target market is essential, as this will contribute to the benefit of employees. If communicated effectively, the unique selling

proposition of the division will contribute towards better sales of their services. Although the message must be fact-based, compelling and forceful enough to capture the attention of the audience (Amit, 2018).

### **2.3.7 Curb rumours and improving transparency**

Informal communication has its upsides and its drawbacks. Obtaining information through grapevine or word-of-mouth can sometimes help employees interpret management feedback, sometimes reach those who might otherwise have overlooked the original message, and provide a more flexible approach to formal communication. The grapevine leads to better working relationships and spreads information and advice that can make the job more efficient.

Although informal communication can distort the meaning of information, it can encourage rumours and misunderstandings and is difficult to control.

Effective internal communication may contribute to maximizing the benefits of informal communication. When interacting regularly and effectively, it will slow down the rumour mill and help employees understand information and instructions.

In their interactions with various levels of management, employees put a high emphasis on accountability, going as far as calling it the top factor in evaluating their workplace, happiness and satisfaction. A generation of core cynical workers and customers need a rumour-free environment as well as openness (Finne & Grönroos, 2017).

Figure 2.2 depicts the cycle of internal communication within a company. Better internal communication will lead to the creation of an improved work environment for staff members. This will result in higher employee engagement which in turn will improve productivity levels amongst staff and contribute to improved sustainability for the company.

Therefore, internal communication not only contributes to the well-being of employees but evidently to the revenue of the company (Barnett *et al.*, 2011). In the next section, the role of internal marketing communication will be discussed.



**Figure 2-2: The cycle of internal communication**

Source: [https://s30131.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Comm\\_Circle.png](https://s30131.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Comm_Circle.png) [Accessed 7 Dec 2019].

## **2.4 The role of internal marketing communication within an organization**

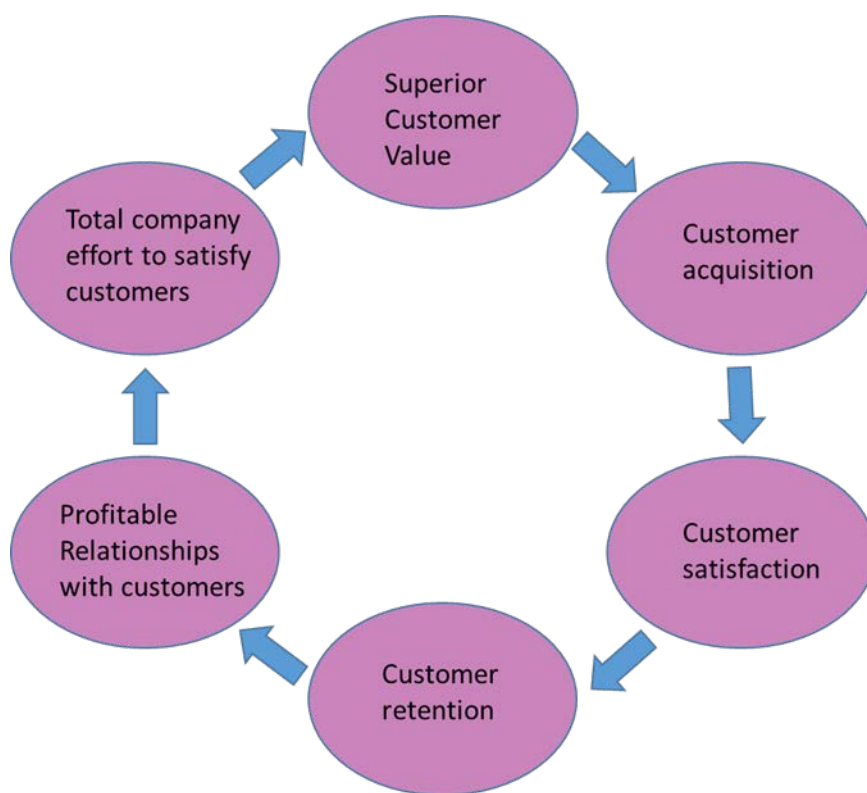
Internal marketing communication has become a vital strategic activity to enhance the capabilities of a company to ensure long term sustainability and competitive advantage. It is an ongoing customer lead approach that enables the company to adapt and change their business environment.

Many companies fail the mark through thinking inside out despite a true interest in meeting customers' needs and expectations. Companies assume they know what the customer wants and deliver service accordingly (Finne & Grönroos, 2017).

When companies strive towards implementing the marketing communication concept, they also tend to build long-term customer relationships. To create mutually beneficial relationships with customers, everyone in the company must work together to gain customer value, before and after every encounter with the customer. The company needs to deliver its' promise to customers to ensure a long term relationship with the customer and lifetime value of future support by the

customer. A service provider and customer relationship are weakened when the customers' value is reduced or when the benefits to the customer are reduced (Oko & Kalu, 2014:44).

Figure 2.3 illustrates the important marketing communication concepts as stated above. Customer satisfaction becomes the focus when companies strive towards the marketing concept. In order to attract customers in the first place, and to retain them, companies must offer superior value. If customers have a good experience with a service provider or retailer, they will make use of services again, and refer others to make use of that company. That is when it becomes profitable and therefore contributes to sustainability. This also inspires companies to improve service and excel in their endeavours. Consequently, companies only win when adapting to the marketing concept, and both parties benefit (Lee *et al.*, 2014).



**Figure 2-3: The marketing communication concept**

Source: adopted from Valarie *et al.*, 2009:501

Marketing ethics and corporate social responsibility also become a concern for organizations that adopt the marketing communications concept. A company that is customer orientated, will not necessarily be unethical in their operations, although managers in the organization may have other values. This is when problems occur when there is a difference in marketing ethics. If a person operates alone, it can potentially damage a company's' reputation. A companywide focus builds a foundation for marketing ethics and assists in avoiding problems. The company is guided

by this philosophical concept. In the company, the marketing manager plays a key role to ensure the company achieves its objectives (Gmbh, 2019).

The marketing management process comprises:

- Planning of marketing activities.
- Directing the implementation of the plans.
- Controlling the plans which were implemented.

The subsequent information forms part of the tasks of managers. In figure 2.4, the relationship between the three tasks in the marketing management process is presented.



**Figure 2-4: The marketing management process**

Source: Adopted from Matthyssens *et al.*, 2006.

To develop a profitable marketing strategy and to discover opportunities are both parts of marketing strategic planning. Marketing strategy stipulates a target market and marketing mix associated with it and forms a bigger picture of what a company will do in a certain market (Lee *et al.*, 2014:76).

It needs two interconnected measures, namely:

- A target market – a group of consumers or customers that an organization wants to appeal to.
- A marketing mix – the controllable variables collected by the company to satisfy the target group.

A market strategy targets specific customers that are known as target marketing which differs from mass marketing. Target marketing is a promotional strategy that is customized to suit unique and targeted consumers (Yohn, 2018).

## **2.5 Brand identity**

To ensure visibility of departments within the NWU environment, entities and departments are allowed to make themselves recognizable, although within corporate identity guidelines. The division needs to develop its own individuality to enhance visibility, within the regulatory framework of the NWU.

To distinguish themselves from each other, faculties adopted taglines. The tagline for Health Sciences is “Your Health Starts Here.” SALA does not have a tagline but can adopt a tagline that will back the consistency of internal communication (Nwu.ac.za, 2019).

SALA is not currently involved in any marketing or presentational campaigns. The result for marketing communication not taking place is opinions and perceptions that derives from assumptions rather than experience. In the SALA structure, there is no personal relations office and since restructuring the brand wasn’t introduced or launched to inform employees of their role, existence and functions within the NWU (Van Auken, 2015).

## **2.6 Reputation**

To elaborate on what reputation of an organization entails, it can be described as a “collective assessment of an organizations’ attractiveness to a specific audience with whom the organization competes for resources” (Doorley & Garcia, 2015).

The management of organization reputation is a continuous process to establish successful networking and creating strategic marketing implementation plans. Actions of organizations have an important influence on the organization reputation. The means of communication of the

organization is imperative to managing its reputation. When parties evaluate an organization, they evaluate the actions as well as the manner of communication of the organization. The most challenging phases of managing reputation are the management of unexpected negative events and mending damaged reputations (Barnett *et al.*, 2014).

Marketing communication can shape your organization reputation in the following ways:

- Marketing efforts can be more effective in building an organization reputation by acknowledging the needs of your stakeholders.
- Focus on delivering content of high quality that caters towards the needs of the target audience.
- Content marketing strategy will shape the stakeholders' perception of the organization and will boost engagement.
- Marketing content can be personalized to address a specific audience with specific needs.
- The marketing content must:
  - Promote discovery.
  - Raise awareness.
  - Encourage engagement from audiences.

Corporate reputation is derived from staff members who drive the company and operations. Each employee is the face of the company and with every communication, credibility is established. Internal communication is a vital segment of corporate communication (Marynissen, 2011).

The overall corporate image and product strategy needs to take a systematic look at things like public relations, regulations, advertising, human resources, finance, operations and management. Operations need to be involved in the creation of an overarching communication agenda across functions, hierarchies and business lines (Hetze, 2016:296).

Important findings from several researchers support the following statements:

- Companies cannot control the perceptions of stakeholders but have the power to influence them.
- The quality of perception across stakeholders should be monitored.
- Reputation is an asset to the organisation.
- Reputation should be included in management reports and best dealt with as "reputation risk" within the risk section.
- The Board needs to take ownership of reputation (Clow & Baack, 2016)

Risk occurs when the company fails to meet the expectations of a particular group. Managing expectations is the key to effective risk management of reputation (Easterby-Smith, 2011).

Guy Jubb stated that “corporate reputation as a concept embodies the image and values of a company, and was therefore intimately linked with the concept of corporate responsibility”.

A company creates and controls a brand, but reputation is attributed to it by others. An organization's reputation is determined by its success, policies and employees, but it is ultimately the investors that determine the organization's reputation (Dubey, 2015:68). Reputation is a perception of a character. As far as a person is concerned, it is what you expect from them to be based on your knowledge of them, and as far as a business is concerned, this character is also a reflection of behaviour. What the results were in certain situations and what could be expected to happen in the future. Behaviour is a good indicator of the priorities of management (Gartner, 2019:457).

Figure 2.5 illustrates the marketing communication process. “Marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships to capture value from customers in return” (Kumavat, 2012).



**Figure 2-5: The marketing communication process**

Source: Adopted from Kumavat 2012.

## 2.7 Perception

Perception is a reality that holds true for marketers who seek to raise awareness, consider and purchase services or products. Consumer perceptions of a brand, its values, products and services can have a dramatic impact on consumer habits. If a company can promote positive perceptions focused on these aspects, then a sustainable, loyal and growing client base can be established (Marynissen, 2011:194).



The process of selecting, organizing and interpreting information into a meaningful and coherent viewpoint is characterized by perception and can be described as how we see the world around us. Nonetheless, how individuals pick, organize and interpret these stimuli is an extremely personal process based on the needs, beliefs, past experiences and aspirations of each individual. Two people may experience the same stimuli (Amit, 2018:22).

Consumers behave and react, not based on objective reality, but their expectations. Therefore, customer expectations are much more important to marketers than their comprehension of objective reality. Marketers need to understand the perception and related concepts to determine what factors influence purchasing decisions (Udofot *et al.*, 2015:151).

In terms of consumer behaviour, two inputs interact to make personal judgments that ultimately drive consumption:

- Physical stimuli from the outside environment.
- People's expectations and motives based on past experiences.

Physical stimuli are any form of contribution that impacts your sense of sight, smell, touch, hearing or taste. This could be anything from marketer-created stimuli such as a billboard or a display ad to stimuli that are more native to the environment.

External stimuli can impact many stages of the consumer decision-making process, making it a critical consideration for marketers.

For example, consider the first three stages of this process:

- Problem recognition: Problem recognition can be triggered by internal and external stimuli. In the event of external stimuli, advertisements that are heard and seen by customers and interactions with family or friends may cause users to believe that they are in need of fulfilment.
- Information search: External stimuli created by marketers are a critical component of the information search phase, especially for high involvement or new products or services. Consumers frequently browse websites, blogs, affiliates and discussion forums for insight into various options to fulfil their needs.
- Alternative evaluation: When evaluating various alternatives, consumers often look to create a list of determinant attributes, the most important attributes that drive attainment of a product or service, and they evaluate each alternative against those determinant attributes. Marketers can create external stimuli in the form of advertising to identify and communicate determinant attributes (Basalingappa & Kumar, 2018:152-155).

A large part of the marketing communication discipline is geared to stimulate the consumer's perceptions positively. Best practices in doing so include:

- Identifying your services' value proposition:
  - To influence perceptions, define and document the organisations' value proposition. This is the bigger picture, brand promise and the benefit the service uniquely provides. Defining the value proposition requires a thorough understanding of the target customers' unmet needs and how the service rendered will fulfil those needs. Identifying gaps where customers face unfulfilled needs that are not met by competitors can help determine value proposition for services.
- Developing a holistic market communications strategy to influence perceptions: Marketers should document and share their strategic goals on an annual, bi-annual or quarterly basis depending on their company's cadence. Doing so will enable them to identify and prioritize activities for the period, and one of those activities might include building, influencing or changing consumer perceptions about their product or service.
- Developing a multichannel tactical strategy: Once the service's value proposition is established as well as a marketing strategy it is advisable to develop a tactical plan that includes the marketing tactics to launch during a specific period, the objectives of each tactic, the channel, the spend and quantitative metrics that needs to be measured. In order to more persuasively influence consumer perceptions, it is advisable to consider incorporating experiential marketing tactics into the plan. Experiential marketing can contribute more to the senses of a consumer and can thus influence consumer perceptions.
- Awareness of sensory adaptation: Consider how often the consumers experience sensory adaptation, the phenomenon of getting used to marketing tactics that stimulate certain sensations. Sensory adaptation often leads to a reduction in the perception of specific stimuli in the environment, such as marketing tactics. That's why consistently evaluating the performance of the company's' tactics and refreshing the creative is critical (Kellens *et al.*, 2012:24-39).

According to the 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer, 48% of American consumers do not trust companies. With so much distrust in businesses, marketers have a responsibility to positively influence consumer perceptions, especially if they have a strong value proposition that clearly improves the lives of their customers. Doing so doesn't have to be guesswork. Grounding a tactical plan, or the stimuli that are created, in a well-researched value proposition, could enable

the company to positively influence consumer perceptions and therefore their reality (Kellens, *et al.*, 2012:44).

## **2.8 The effect of internal communication on perception and reputation**

“An organization’s reputation is a reflection of how it is regarded by its multiple stakeholders. Its reputational stance can help the organization obtain trust and credibility in society, which will assist in the achievement of its objectives and goals” (Shimp & Andrews, 2012).

Without the support of employees, it is nearly impossible to have a good corporate reputation. The company's external reputation will also not be good without a good internal reputation. If employees lack confidence in the management system, they can share feelings and thoughts with everyone, thus seriously damaging the reputation of the company and invalidating future achievements (Perreault & McCarthy, 2002).

To elaborate on what reputation of an organization entails, can it be described as a collective assessment of an organizations’ attractiveness to a specific audience with whom the organization competes for resources (Doorley & Garcia, 2015).

The value created by reputation is a very significant intangible asset to organizations and results from observations of the organizations' behaviour, that is what the organization is doing. Reputation is a reflection of the judgements of an organization. Brand can be seen as a predecessor to reputation and forms part of the organizations' management strategy, although it does not apprehend the extensiveness or value of reputation.

It happens often that regulators like SALA acquire reputations that management struggles to deal with.

Marketing communication can shape your organization reputation in the following ways:

- Marketing communication efforts can be more effective in building an organization reputation by acknowledging the needs of your stakeholders.
- Focus on delivering content of high quality that caters towards the needs of the target audience.
- Content marketing strategy will shape the stakeholders’ perception of the organization and will boost engagement.
- Marketing content can be personalized to address a specific audience with specific needs.
- The marketing content must:
  - Promote discovery.

- Raise awareness.
- Encourage engagement from audiences.

In real terms, the key benefits of a solid corporate reputation are:

- Improvement of the customers' perception regarding the quality of service.
- Improvement of the skill of hiring and retaining qualified staff members.
- Raising the confidence of employees and in return, productivity.
- Protecting the value of the company by reducing the impact of analysing crisis and competitive attacks.
- Assisting in international development in terms of market penetration as well as advancing alliances.
- Ascertaining good credibility, as well as diminishing risks for the company and rising the market value.
- Differentiation of the company from its competitors and the establishment of better market positioning.

Behaviour that promotes corporate reputation needs to be deeply rooted as well as embedded in the identity of organizations. "Organizations compete based on their ability to express who they are and what they stand for" (Nicotera, 2019).

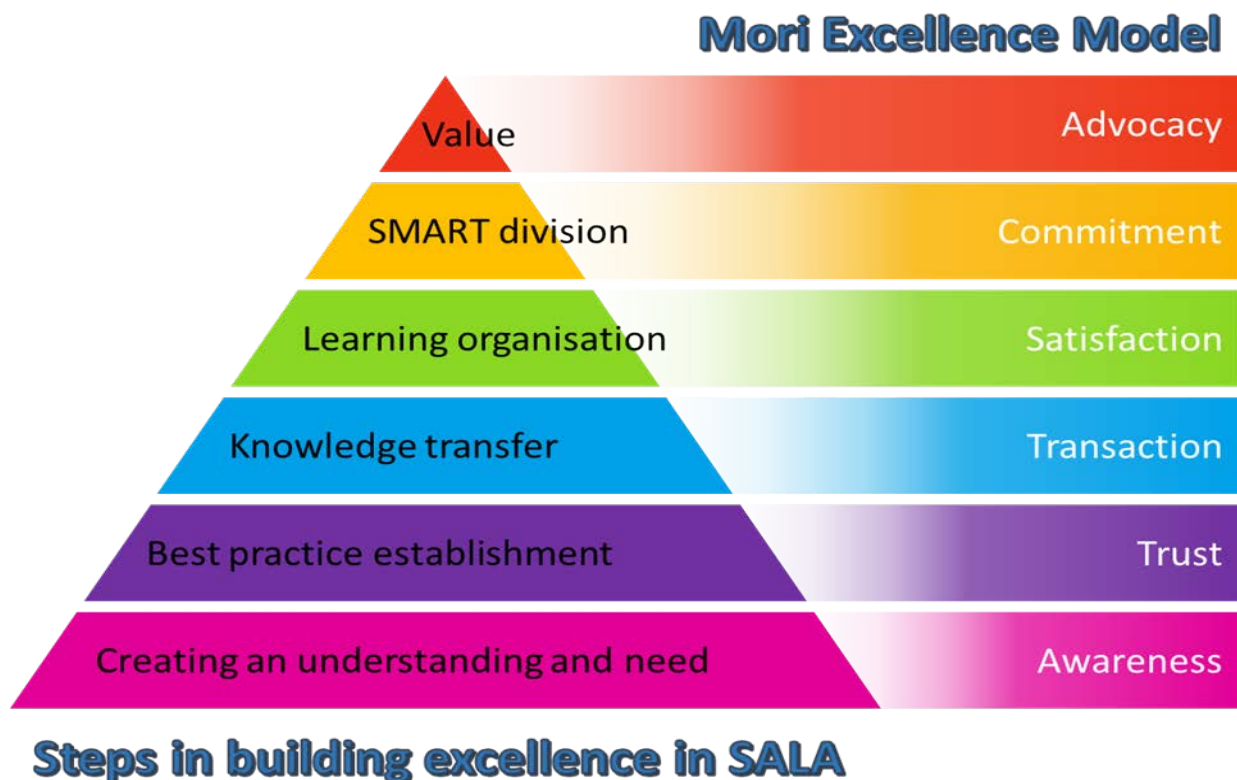
Employees influence the perception of stakeholders about their own company. The need for employees to act as advocates of their companies to create a change in the perceptions and behaviour of other stakeholders is becoming apparent. The Mori Excellence Model illustrates the extent of employees' relations with their companies. The attitudes shown apply to all stakeholders and constitute the main subjects of both internal communication and corporate reputation. Different credibility research focuses on the potential negative effect of business leaders on the reputation of their organization. Here studies stress the importance of emotional factors (markets.businessinsider.com, 2019).

The Mori Excellence Model in figure 2.6, offered in Greece exclusively by Focus Bari, has been developed by MORI (currently IPSOS MORI), one of the leading British market research companies, with which Focus Bari has been in the same network for 15 years. This model measures the relationship between a business enterprise and all related target groups, i.e. consumers, customers, suppliers, personnel, and investors (markets.businessinsider.com, 2019).

For each target group, MEM defines the position in which a company is located in the pyramid of excellence, which forms the basis for future goals and objectives; the idea is that for every successful contemporary corporation, satisfied consumers, customers, suppliers or investors are

the best advertising “vehicles”, endorsing the image of goodwill and excellence that the specific corporation has built among them. According to the MEM, there is a specific relationship hierarchy model, through which a corporation can target and achieve success, and this model can schematically be drawn in the form of a pyramid, the Pyramid of Excellence (Fielding, 2017).

The utmost value of this project can be achieved by repetition of the study in stable periods, thus enabling optimum evaluation of the company's achievements over time, both on its own and concerning its competitors (Huskinson & Greenwood 2017).



**Figure 2-6: The Mori Excellence Model**

Source: Focus.gr. (2017). [online] Available at: [http://www.focus.gr/images/MEM\\_en.gif](http://www.focus.gr/images/MEM_en.gif) [Accessed 2 Dec. 2019].

Through awareness, an understanding and need to make use of the SALA division will be prospered at employees. Being aware creates the opportunity to make changes which will lead to changed behaviour (Huskinson & Greenwood 2017).

Best practice establishment creates trust. Smart leaders know that committed employees contribute to their work creativity and passion. This implies more minded people looking for better solutions or processes. All of this is deeply important to retain employees. “Trust as a variable is too important to ignore” (Welter 2012). Welter argue that removing trust from relationship models

reduces its quality, meanwhile, including trust will shift the perspective to interpersonal ties and relationships.

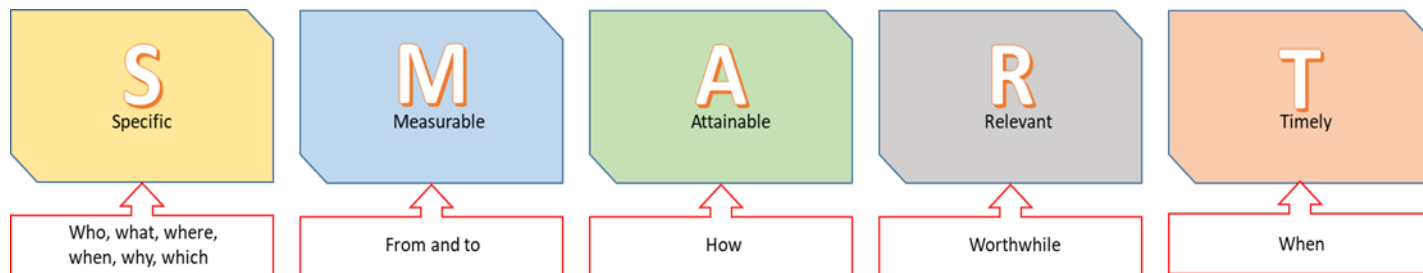
The ability to effectively transfer expertise to businesses is crucial for fostering productivity in organizations. The transition of information in divisions stems from multifaceted systems in which the characteristics of the service provider and its members and those of the consumers are the extremes of the process (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2011). To exploit knowledge, companies need to share as much knowledge as possible (Lamb, 2016). By reducing barriers, knowledge transfer is encouraged. Knowledge sharing also implies a risk assumption linked to behavioural uncertainty, which means that the recipient of the information can harm the donor by leaking or exploiting the information to their advantage.

Knowledge transfer can be improved by:

- Members learning intent.
- Trust.
- Shared ethical values.
- Individuals' willingness to contribute their knowledge to the system.
- The rate at which individuals access knowledge within the system (Roehrich & Caldwell, 2012).

Job satisfaction is a mental, physical and environmental pleasure derived from an employees' job; it can be described as the affective and cognitive behaviour of an employee towards certain aspects of his/her work (Ladzani, 2016:10). Some researchers emphasize that learning operations have a beneficial effect on work results, such as satisfaction at work and employment performance (Yang *et al.*, 2004). Learning organizations could be a tool for retaining their employees and motivating their staff, due to any changes, to be more competitive, accessible and creative.

With reference to the illustration in figure 2.7 of the SMART concept. SMART commitments are commitments for action, development of processes and delivery mechanisms. Commitments need to be reviewed. Employees need a thoughtful response to the question: "Why?" as in, "Why are we doing this?" Under pressure, most leaders jump straight to how and what. Simon Sinek stated that the most successful leaders "start with why." The best way to empower employees during chaotic change is to get them working on building something new. Leaders who say, "It will be business as usual," are naïve. With a merger of equals, nothing will remain the same. The smart play is to give employees small assignments to re-assess, refine, rebuild or re-imagine how the new entity will make the world better for more people (Robbins *et al.*, 2003:109).



**Figure 2-7: The SMART concept**

Source: Adopted from Ogbeiwi, 2017:327.

The Value of Advocacy – Action to plead or argue for something, such as a reason, idea or policy. Advocacy supports something important to you. Advocacy is the act or process of supporting a cause. Creating a metric to monitor customer satisfaction is important for advocacy marketing (Ogbeiwi, 2017:331). The cause of the SALA division is to simplify the tasks of academics for them to focus on what they do best, which is teaching students.

## 2.9 Conclusion

Looking into the effect that internal marketing communication has on a company, it is evident from the above-mentioned research gathered through various resources, that companies retain the support of customers, consumers and employees through effective and efficient internal marketing communication. Reputation and perception are transformed through the implementation of internal marketing communication processes. The significance of reputation and perception is confirmed by several researchers as well as the result of the absence thereof. The research evidence collected is supportive of the study and made it even more vital to investigate the effect that internal marketing communication has on the reputational perception of the SALA division.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The term research methodology can be described as a structured process for conducting research (Bickman, 2000). The research methodology includes research design, gathering of data and analysis of data. The methodology supports structured data collection management and prescribes what the researcher has to do to address the research question. This study was conducted through structured scaled questionnaires that were distributed via e-mail to a target group of employees employed within the Faculty of Health Sciences. This research strives to generate ideas to assist the division in establishing a good reputation and contribute to service excellence.

Research design is a roadmap that provides details throughout this project. Successful execution of the research design must always result in the provision of all the information needed to solve the research problem and provide minimal expenditure, time and effort for the collection of the relevant data (Bickman, 2000).

### **3.2 The research problem and purpose of the study**

Based on the aforesaid discussion the problem identified was stated that internal communication in the SALA division was not implemented since restructuring took place, which influenced the perceptions that staff has towards this division.

The objective of this study is to provide management with insight into the effect of internal marketing communication on the corporate reputation of the SALA division to enhance the sustainability of this division.

The division's mandate is to ensure that the procedures and structures are streamlined and to enforce the academic rules and regulations effectively throughout the students' lifecycle (Nwu.ac.za, 2017). The challenges the division is facing are interrelated to a lack of a sustainable internal marketing communication strategy implementation. A marketing vision needs to be cultivated throughout the division through the development of a successful communication tool.

Currently, there exists a clear cut between SALA and the faculties, this disunion hinders the successful implementation of policies and procedures in the faculties. The probability exists that because of insufficient communication and brand awareness, the faculties are unsure about the



functionalities of the SALA division, which in turn is the result of mistrust and causing uncertainty amongst staff.

The study will provide the SALA division insight on what the reputation of SALA was before the implementation of a strategic marketing approach and what impact the marketing approach had on the division in terms of its reputation, sustainability as well as the effect it had on achievement of its objectives.

### **3.3 Research questions**

#### **3.3.1 Primary research question**

What effect does marketing communication have on the corporate reputation of the SALA division?

#### **3.3.2 Secondary research questions**

- What effect does marketing strategy have on the division's overall business vision and mission?
- How do other divisions perceive SALA prior to the implementation of an effective marketing approach?
- What impact does marketing strategy have on corporate relationships between the SALA division and other divisions?
- What influence does the reputation of the organization have on the marketing strategy approach?
- What influence does internal marketing communication have on employees in a company?

### **3.4 Research objectives**

Clarke and Charmaz (2014) stated that "research objectives derive from the research purpose". They also stated that the objectives have to be simple, rational and achievable. It is highly unlikely that the study can succeed in a competent and credible approach if the targets are not clear.

#### **3.4.1 Primary objective**

The primary objective of this study is to ascertain the effect that internal marketing communication has on the reputational perception of the SALA division in the faculty of Health Sciences at the university.

This study investigated the effect of internal marketing communication in the SALA environment and reflected on previous research studies on reputation, perceptions, service delivery and organizational behaviour.

This study provides management with insight into the effect of internal marketing communication on the reputation of the SALA division. This new division operates under the mandate of the Registrar, with a Chief Director and three Campus Directors, one on each Campus. The delegation of authority further rolls out to eight Senior Faculty Administrators, and many administrative staff members positioned all over the three Campuses (Nwu.ac.za, 2017).

The research objectives and characteristics of the population determine who as well as the number of respondents to select. According to Dubey (2015), business success studies form part of and is evident of the ways how strategic marketing contributes towards organizational reputation and performance. A thorough situation analysis was used as a basis for the development of effective internal marketing communication plans and strategies (Adewale, 2013).

Questions contained in the survey have a direct correlation to the objectives of SALA. Through this strategic approach, job performance and productivity are evident in establishing whether the employees are aware of its core objectives or not. This information will contribute to sustainability as well as productivity of the division in delivering meaningful results.

The evidence that was gathered by the survey is highly supportive of the research questions pertaining to the organization reputation of SALA. Regardless of the chosen method, quality research includes collecting quality data (Donaldson *et al.*, 2012).

It contributes to the successful establishment of internal marketing communication planning activities namely:

- Underlining a formal planning approach.
- Undertaking a comprehensive situation analysis.
- When developing plans – using market research-based information.
- Adopting a proactive approach for the future.
- Assisting in setting long term objectives.
- Contributing to value-added service delivery.
- Monitoring performance relative to planned objectives.
- Securing a sound future for the SALA division.
- Embracing new initiatives.
- Creating customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

(Rogala, *et al.*, 2013)

### **3.4.2 Secondary objectives**

- To establish the influence of internal marketing communication on employees in a company.
- To establish the effect of marketing strategy on the SALA division's vision and mission.
- To learn what other divisions' perceptions are prior to an effective marketing communication approach.
- To establish the effect of reputation on a marketing communication strategy approach.
- To establish the influence of the organizations' reputation on the marketing strategy approach.

### **3.5 Research approaches**

Fielding (2017) define quantitative research as “a type of scientific research that uses a pre-defined set of procedures to address a research question, collect evidence and produce findings that were not predetermined”. In addition, quantitative research focuses on understanding the research problem through the eyes of the population involved. For this study quantitative research has been chosen because it is versatile to obtain clarifications and highlights issues which the researcher may miss and which are more evidential.

Qualitative research is a form of conclusive research involving fairly structured data collection procedures. Data is collected by measuring things and analysed through numerical comparisons and statistical inferences. The data of this study was reported through statistical analyses (Vogt, 2011).

Physical fieldwork commenced once the design of the quantitative-based questionnaire survey, as well as identification and sampling of the population, were completed. It is a quantitative research technique which assists the researcher to make valid interpretations. When the data was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet, SPSS was used to analyse the data into meaningful information.

In order to verify whether a relationship exists between statements and responses (applicable to scaled questions), most choices are comparable in all questions. Reliability and validity of the data collected in this study were achieved through constant comparison and accuracy (Bearden and Netemeyer, 2012).

Thus, in summary, this empirical study used a survey approach which included scaled questions. The questionnaire was tailored to specifically focus on the purpose of the study.

Quantitative data was used in the form of structured surveys that were distributed via e-mail to the respondents. The advantages of questionnaires include increased data collection speed, low or no cost requirements and higher levels of objectivity compared to many alternative methods of primary data collection. Nonetheless, questionnaires have certain drawbacks, such as the choice of random responses by respondents without properly reading the question or statement. Furthermore, due to the absence of a relevant question, respondents are generally unable to articulate their additional thoughts on the matter. Respondents were asked to respond via e-mail to the survey. The benefits of computer questionnaires include their low cost, time efficiency and a lack of pressure on the respondents so that they can reply in time to provide more precise answers. The main weakness of the e-mail questionnaires is, however, that respondents can sometimes not bother to answer it and can ignore the questionnaire (Basalingappa *et al.*, 2018:158).

The long term direction of SALA will be determined by the success of its strategic internal marketing communication practice as well as its strategic marketing planning. The role of marketing is no longer perceived as a set of short term activities pertaining to promotional campaigns (Perreault & McCarthy 2002).

### **3.6 Research design**

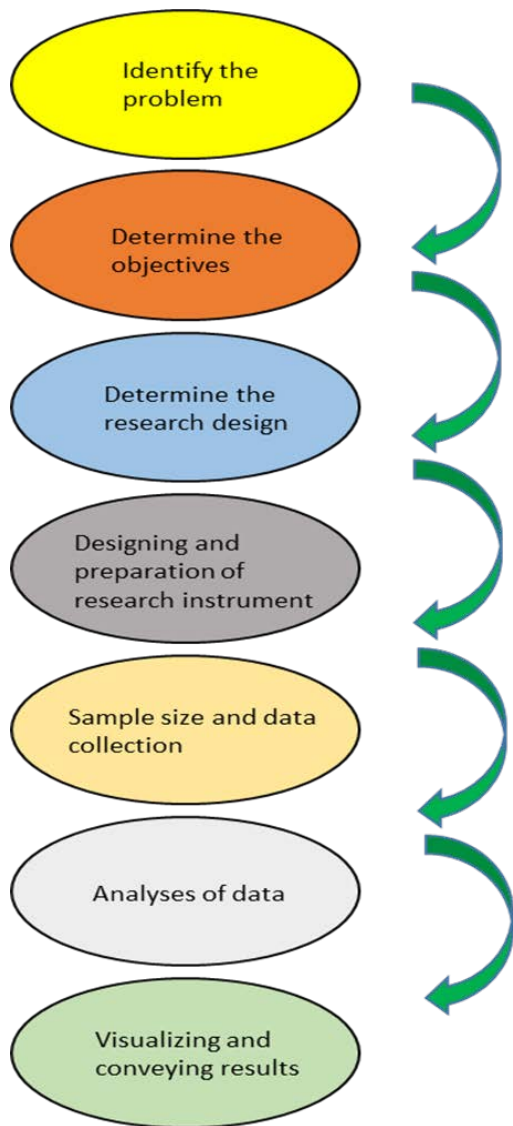
A research design is a plan for conducting research in order to answer the research question. The research design is built upon the objectives of the study as well as the identification of the problem identified.

It is imperative to comprehend the reasons for the research design. The objectives of an exploratory research design are to obtain background information, establish research priorities and define terms. The descriptive research design measures marketing occurrences at a given time.

Quantitative research was used to gain insight into basic reasons, intentions and beliefs of the respondents. This method gave insight to the issue at hand and assisted in the development of suggestions for potential qualitative research. The strategy used for this study and research design is survey-based.

According to Fielding (2017), the research plan is “a logical description of how data is collected and analysed to address the research question”. This resulted in a thorough understanding of why people have certain understandings and elucidate their behaviour and decision making. The framework allowed the researcher in-depth insight to evaluate issues and subjects.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the steps taken in the research design.



**Figure 3-1: The research design and steps**

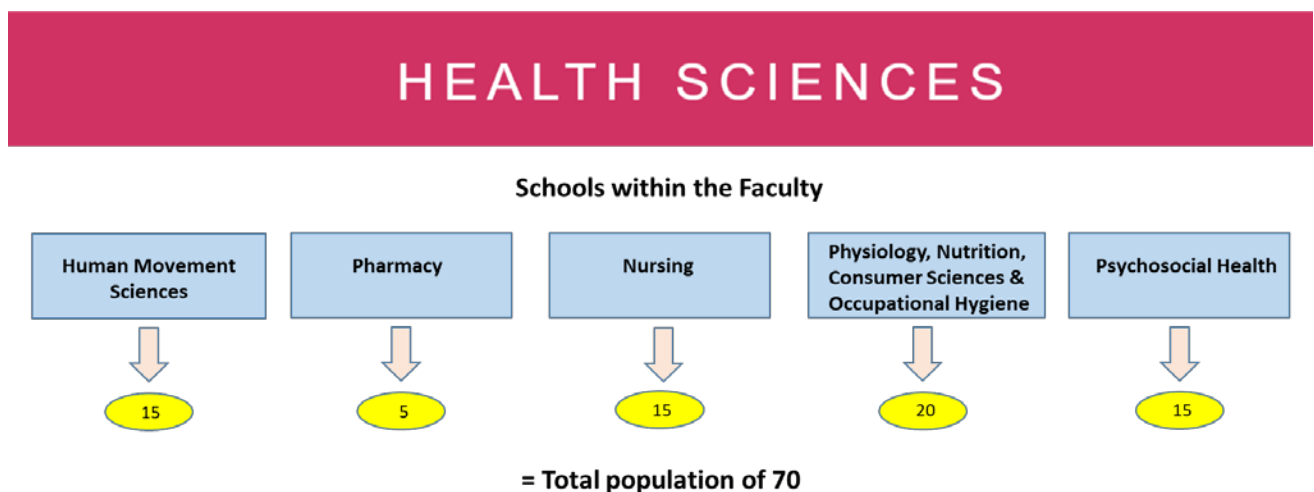
Source: Wp.com. (2017). [online] Available at: <https://i1.wp.com/revisesociology.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/quantitative-research-stages1.png?resize=689%2C1525&ssl=1> [Accessed 2 Dec. 2019].

### 3.7 Population

A research population can be defined as a wide collection of people or objects that are the main focus of a scientific study, generally, this population has necessary qualities which in turn, assist in simplifying the findings. Heterogeneous populations can result in maximum variations in

responses, but a sample is normally determined to be representative of the population as a whole. A sample is a section of the population that is selected and needs to be accessible to the whole study population to collect data correctly and easily. The sample size is also essential to the accuracy and integrity of the study. The sample size refers to the actual number of research respondents, and the number of participants is typically determined by the scope of the study, its budget, time and its availability (Muralidharan, 2014).

For this study, the population comprised of sensibly selected academic and support staff within the Faculty of Health Sciences and SALA staff that works within the Faculty, as illustrated in figure 3.2. To create a well-balanced, credible and representative study, both support and academic staff were included. The support staff renders administrative support to academic staff in faculties. Furthermore, making use of both academic and support staff for the study population generates a wide-ranging set of opinions pertaining to SALA (Nwu.ac.za, 2017).



**Figure 3-2: Outlay of the population**

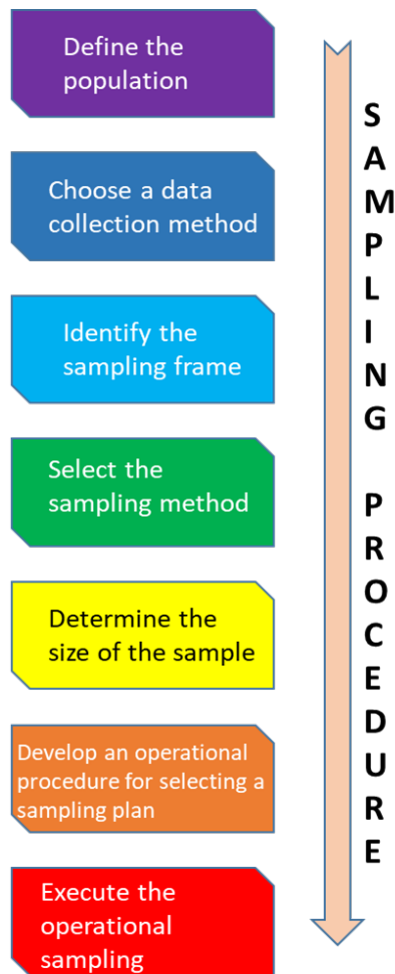
There are five schools within the Faculty of Health Sciences that comprises of both academic and support staff that influence the daily operations of the SALA division (Nwu.ac.za, 2017).

### 3.8 Sample size

The sample size refers to the actual number of respondents selected to participate in the study. The sample is selected from the entire population to provide a reliable and valid response to the study. Muralidharan (2014) defines the target population as “a body of people or to any other collection of items under consideration for the purpose of the research”.

In this study, the sampling frame consists of only employees of the NWU, and only within the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Muralidharan (2014) used the following steps in figure 3.3, for an accurate sampling procedure.



**Figure 3-3: The sampling procedure**

Source: Adopted from Muralidharan (2014).

### **3.9 Sampling method and sampling technique**

The study made use of twenty-five (25) respondents from the Faculty of Health Sciences, including academic and support staff members, as well as SALA staff members that are employed within the Faculty (Nwu.ac.za, 2017). This equals a total of 35.71% who responded to the survey out of the total population of 70 staff members. Thus, 25 out of 70 equals 35.71%. Purposive sampling was used as the elected respondents were known and the correct persons to provide

credible and accurate data. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgement when electing participants from a population. Purposive sampling is appropriate since the researcher is familiar with the participants, it saved time and led to the collection of reliable data. The chosen participants are accessible and fit for the nature of this study (Bickman, 2000).

### **3.10 Data collection**

#### **3.10.1 Primary data**

Primary data was supportive in supplementing secondary sources. Fielding (2017) describes primary data as information obtained first hand for the specific purpose of the research which can be both oral and/or written testimonies. It can be done through interviews, focus groups or observation. For this study, data were obtained through a structured survey questionnaire.

#### **3.10.2 Secondary data**

Secondary data refers to desktop research or any readily available knowledge that other scientists, organisations or academics have gathered. It is more economical than primary data and, in order to be effective, it requires the researcher to search for specific topics and requirements. The researcher compared the opinions and findings of other authors related to the study. Information was acquired from all relevant publications such as journals, textbooks, past dissertations as well as conference posters (Easterby-Smith, 2011).

### **3.11 Data analysis**

Data analysis means the transformation of data into meaningful information that is useful and easy to understand or interpret. Data were analysed by using a suitable computer software programme that resulted in credible study findings (Vogt, 2011).

Data were analysed through the classification of frequencies on a scale-based questionnaire (Bearden & Netemeyer, 2012).

These steps were followed in analysing the evidence:

- Examining the data retrieved.
- Categorizing the data.
- Tabulating the feedback.



- Creating a data display.
- Testing the data against the questions asked.
- Using the quantitative evidence to address initial propositions.

A good analysis should have the following attributes: (Fielding, 2017)

- Attend to all the evidence.
- Address all rival interpretations.
- Address the most important part of the study.

### **3.12 Limitations of the study**

The study was limited to the Faculty of Health Sciences and its findings cannot be applied to other faculties or entities at the NWU. However, the findings can be used with cautiousness. As the study is exploratory in nature, its findings may not necessarily be seen as an authoritative framework for management. As an alternative, this study can be viewed as a stepping stone to articulate into further studies in the area of internal marketing communication.

Another limitation was the exclusion of demographics within the scaled questions. The Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences of the university restricted the researcher to include any demographics in the study.

### **3.13 Ethical considerations**

The NWU has an obligation to protect the researcher, participants in the study, the research team as well as the environment. The NWU has a Research Ethics Committee (REC) that manages the process of ethical clearance. Ethical issues related to the permission to conduct research, the participation of respondents, the community and public as well as the process used to analyse the data (Bickman, 2000).

There is a specific process that needs to be followed when a researcher would like to obtain permission to include staff members as participants in the research study and if the researcher would like to obtain access to the University's data for research purposes. The Registrar is the driver and guiding the Research Data Gatekeeper Committee (RDGC) to which all applications must be addressed (Nwu.ac.za, 2015).

### **3.14 Conclusion**

The chapter explained in detail and justified the research methodology that was used in the data collection for this study and explained each phase and stage of the data collection. The researcher made use of a quantitative, survey design with structures scale-based questions that were distributed as a survey to pre-selected employees within the faculty. The sample characteristics included permanent employees of the university, that are located within the Faculty of Health Sciences. Permission was granted by the Executive Dean of the faculty as well as the Campus Director SALA, to conduct the study as the findings will be used to improve the internal marketing communication within the division. In the following chapter, the reliability and validity of the study will be discussed as well as the results obtained through the statistical analyses of the completed questionnaires received from the respondents.

## CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

Data analysis is a specialised area of research that requires the involvement of a qualified statistician who will use statistical techniques and applicable software to process the data in a suitable manner that fits the research project (Rogala *et al.*, 2013).

In this chapter, graphs, tables and frequencies were used to illustrate and interpret the data for the researcher to address the research questions that were asked in chapter 3.

Kindly note that no demographics were included as introduction to the structured scaled questions due to restrictions placed on this study by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the NWU.

### 4.2 Descriptive statistics

The scale-based questions were tabled and frequency analysis was performed to establish the occurrences of data.

The following points of discussion will look at the frequencies and significances, of each statement. With each statement, a dissection was made that are tabled at each point of discussion.

#### 4.2.1 Interpretation of question 1

##### I am familiar with the abbreviation SALA

44% of the respondents are familiar with the abbreviation SALA, and 20% strongly agreed to the statement. Therefore 64% knows what the abbreviation stands for. A total of 11 out of 25 respondents knows what the abbreviation SALA stands for. A total of 7 respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement made. Table 4.1 illustrates the dissection of the data.

**Table 4-1: Dissection of data in question 1**

Question 1					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	5	20,0	20,0	20,0

	2.00	11	44,0	44,0	64,0
	3.00	2	8,0	8,0	72,0
	4.00	6	24,0	24,0	96,0
	5.00	1	4,0	4,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.2 Interpretation of question 2

##### I know exactly what tasks SALA is performing within the faculty

48% doesn't know what tasks SALA is performing within the Faculty, and 4% strongly disagreed with the statement made. 28% neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The highest frequency was 12 out of 25 respondents who disagreed with the statement made. Therefore, one could assume that the respondents who answered neither agree nor disagree, are unsure about the statement made. It is safe to say that 80% of respondents have no idea what the service delivery of SALA entails. If a respondent was certain about the statement, the answer would have been "agree or strongly agree". In addition to indifference and uncertainty, Baka *et al.*, (2012) identified two more justifications for using the midpoint, respondents were disputing aspects of the question or they were indicating that they had no information on the issue. Table 4.2 represents the dissection of data in question 2.

**Table 4-2: Dissection of data in question 2**

Question 2					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	4,0	4,0	4,0
	2.00	4	16,0	16,0	20,0
	3.00	7	28,0	28,0	48,0
	4.00	12	48,0	48,0	96,0
	5.00	1	4,0	4,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.3 Interpretation of question 3

##### SALA is regarded as a good division with a good reputation

72% of respondents did not agree with the statement that SALA is a good division with a good reputation. Again, as per Baker *et al.*, (2012), if only the response of agree and totally agree is taken into consideration, then 21 out of 25 respondents did not indicate that they agreed with the statement made. This response is very important and proves that the reputation of the division is poor. Table 4.3 shows the dissection of data in question 3.

**Table 4-3: Dissection of data in question 3**

Question 3					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	2	8,0	8,0	8,0
	2.00	5	20,0	20,0	28,0
	3.00	14	56,0	56,0	84,0
	4.00	3	12,0	12,0	96,0
	5.00	1	4,0	4,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.4 Interpretation of question 4

##### **SALA delivers an excellent service within the faculty**

68% of respondents couldn't agree that SALA is rendering an excellent service within the Faculty. This is evident that service excellence, which is also one of the main objectives of SALA, is not accomplished.

**Table 4-4: Dissection of data in question 4**

Question 4					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	2	8,0	8,0	8,0
	2.00	6	24,0	24,0	32,0
	3.00	14	56,0	56,0	88,0
	4.00	3	12,0	12,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.5 Interpretation of question 5

##### **In general, my experience with SALA staff members is pleasant**

52% of respondents that had encounters with SALA perceived it as pleasant, which were 13 out of the 25 respondents. Through the dissection of data in table 4.5, it became evident that 48% of respondents did not agree with the statement made.

**Table 4-5: Dissection of data in question 5**

Question 5					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	4	16,0	16,0	16,0
	2.00	9	36,0	36,0	52,0
	3.00	11	44,0	44,0	96,0
	5.00	1	4,0	4,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.6 Interpretation of question 6

##### **I can consider it advantageous to have such a division within a faculty**

64% of respondents deem it advantageous to have such a division within a faculty. 28% neither agree nor disagree with this statement, which is consistent with the previous findings that they also are unsure of what this division entails. The dissection of data is seen in table 4.6.

**Table 4-6: Dissection of data in question 6**

Question 6					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	3	12,0	12,0	12,0
	2.00	13	52,0	52,0	64,0
	3.00	7	28,0	28,0	92,0
	4.00	2	8,0	8,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.7 Interpretation of question 7

##### **A good relationship with SALA can be beneficial in attaining the objectives of the faculty**

80% of respondents agreed that a good relationship with SALA can be beneficial towards the Faculty to achieve objectives. 20% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 0% disagreed with the statement. These findings make it even more vital for SALA management to implement an internal marketing communication plan to address staff within the Faculty.

**Table 4-7: Dissection of data in question 7**

Question 7					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	7	28,0	28,0	28,0
	2.00	13	52,0	52,0	80,0
	3.00	5	20,0	20,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.8 Interpretation of question 8

##### **I would recommend the assistance of the SALA division to my colleagues**

44% of respondents would recommend the assistance of SALA staff to fellow colleagues. 48% indicated that they neither agree nor disagree with this statement. The latter is a clear indication of uncertainty as per Baka *et al.*, (2012). The dissection is visible in table 4.8.

**Table 4-8: Dissection of data in question 8**

Question 8					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	3	12,0	12,0	12,0
	2.00	8	32,0	32,0	44,0
	3.00	12	48,0	48,0	92,0
	4.00	2	8,0	8,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.9 Interpretation of question 9

##### I can contact SALA personnel frequently for assistance regarding faculty matters

40% of respondents indicate that they do not call SALA staff members frequently regarding faculty matters. 16% neither agree nor disagree, which may attest that they do not know the SALA staff within the Faculty. 44% responded that they do call SALA staff frequently regarding faculty matters. And in relation to question 5, a total of 52% reported that they had a pleasant experience with SALA staff. So the assumption can be made that 8% of respondents had an unpleasant encounter with the staff, as evident in question 6 and 8. Table 4.9 shows the dissection of data for question 9.

**Table 4-9: Dissection of data in question 9**

Question 9					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	5	20,0	20,0	20,0
	2.00	6	24,0	24,0	44,0
	3.00	4	16,0	16,0	60,0
	4.00	6	24,0	24,0	84,0
	5.00	4	16,0	16,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.10 Interpretation of question 10

##### I know who the SALA staff members are in my faculty

76% of respondents are unsure who the SALA staff members are within the Faculty. 24% knows the SALA staff members. The staff of the Faculty can therefore not make use of the services rendered by SALA due to the fact that they don't know who the staff members are. This, in turn, has a direct influence on service delivery that will not be able to take place.

**Table 4-10: Dissection of data in question 10**

Question 10					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	3	12,0	12,0	12,0



	2.00	3	12,0	12,0	24,0
	3.00	11	44,0	44,0	68,0
	4.00	4	16,0	16,0	84,0
	5.00	4	16,0	16,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.11 Interpretation of question 11

##### I am satisfied with the assistance I get from SALA staff members

56% of respondents are not satisfied with the assistance they receive from SALA staff. It would be enlightening to establish the reasons why the respondents chose this answer, the possibility exists that their reasons are because they don't know the staff, as 76% indicated that they don't know who the staff members are. 44% are satisfied with the assistance they received.

**Table 4-11: Dissection of data in question 11**

Question 11					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	3	12,0	12,0	12,0
	2.00	8	32,0	32,0	44,0
	3.00	12	48,0	48,0	92,0
	4.00	1	4,0	4,0	96,0
	5.00	1	4,0	4,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.12 Interpretation of question 12

##### The division's current activities reflect a strong focus on the client, which is the student as well as personnel

60% of respondents indicated that they disagree with the statement that the divisions' activities reflect a strong focus on the client, which is the student as well as personnel. 40% indicated that they agree with this statement. In relation to the answer in question 11, 44% were satisfied with the assistance they get, so only 4% had an unpleasant experience. Table 4.12 reflects the dissection of data in question 12.

**Table 4-12: Dissection of data in question 12**

Question 12					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	2	8,0	8,0	8,0
	2.00	8	32,0	32,0	40,0
	3.00	11	44,0	44,0	84,0
	4.00	3	12,0	12,0	96,0
	5.00	1	4,0	4,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

**4.2.13 Interpretation of question 13****SALA is similar to good service delivery**

68% falls within the category of neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree with the statement that SALA is similar with good service delivery. The latter is an objective of the division and urgent attention is needed to rectify the perception that the respondents are having. Table 4.13 shows the dissection of data in question 13.

**Table 4-13: Dissection of data in question 13**

Question 13					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	2	8,0	8,0	8,0
	2.00	6	24,0	24,0	32,0
	3.00	15	60,0	60,0	92,0
	4.00	1	4,0	4,0	96,0
	5.00	1	4,0	4,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.2.14 Interpretation of question 14

##### **SALA management communicates frequently with me**

88% of respondents clearly doesn't relate to the statement that SALA management communicates frequently with them. Only 12% of respondents indicated that they receive communication from management. This is evident in addressing the research objective that internal marketing communication is not taking place from the SALA division towards the Faculty.

**Table 4-14: Dissection of data in question 14**

<b>Question 14</b>					
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	1.00	2	8,0	8,0	8,0
	2.00	1	4,0	4,0	12,0
	3.00	13	52,0	52,0	64,0
	4.00	6	24,0	24,0	88,0
	5.00	3	12,0	12,0	100,0
	Total	25	100,0	100,0	

#### 4.3 Summary of the frequencies of data

Table 4.15 illustrates the statements made, the number of respondents who indicated their response to the statement, as well as the total percentage of responses.

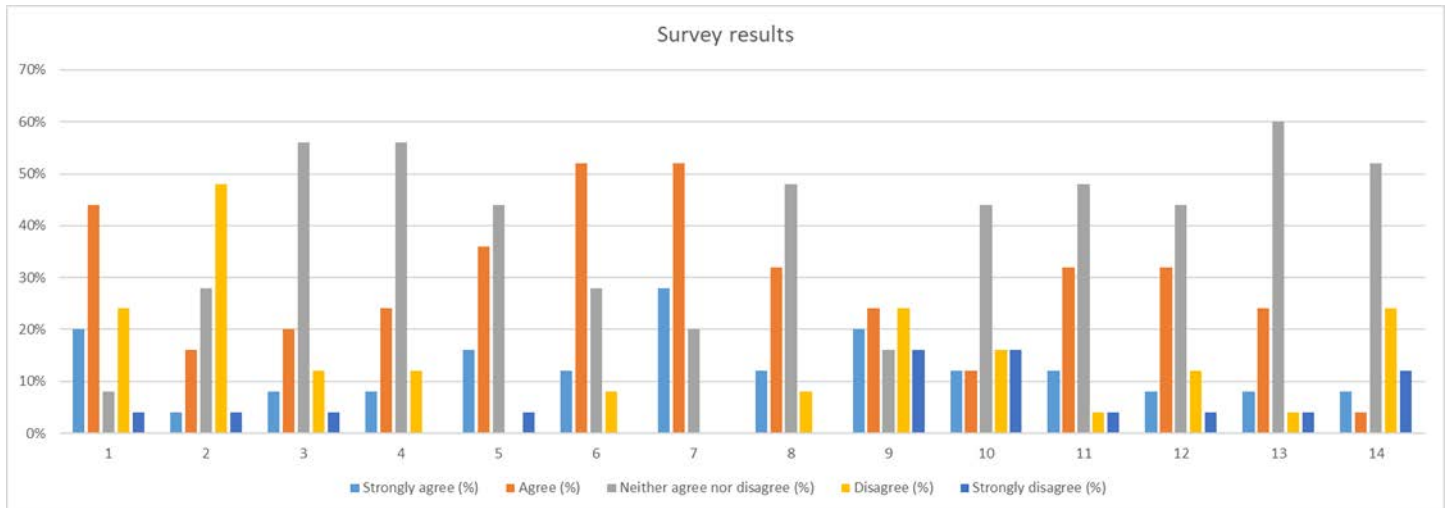
The statements were colour coded according to the three factors that were identified during the analysis. The factors are: internal marketing communication, service delivery and perception. These factors will be discussed later in this chapter.

**Table 4-15: Frequencies of data**

Questions	Question	Total	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total
Question 1	I am familiar with the abbreviation SALA	25	20%	44%	8%	24%	4%	100%
Question 2	I know exactly what tasks SALA is performing within the faculty	25	4%	16%	28%	48%	4%	100%
Question 3	SALA is regarded as a good division with a good reputation	25	8%	20%	56%	12%	4%	100%
Question 4	SALA delivers an excellent service within the faculty	25	8%	24%	56%	12%	0%	100%
Question 5	In general, my experience with SALA staff members is pleasant	25	16%	36%	44%	0%	4%	100%
Question 6	I can consider it advantageous to have such a division within a faculty	25	12%	52%	28%	8%	0%	100%
Question 7	A good relationship with SALA can be beneficial in attaining the objectives of the faculty	25	28%	52%	20%	0%	0%	100%
Question 8	I would recommend the assistance of the SALA division to my colleagues	25	12%	32%	48%	8%	0%	100%
Question 9	I contact SALA personnel frequently for assistance regarding faculty matters	25	20%	24%	16%	24%	16%	100%
Question 10	I know who the SALA staff members are in my faculty	25	12%	12%	44%	16%	16%	100%
Question 11	I am satisfied with the assistance I get from SALA staff members	25	12%	32%	48%	4%	4%	100%
Question 12	The division's current activities reflect a strong focus on the client, which is the student as well as personnel	25	8%	32%	44%	12%	4%	100%
Question 13	SALA is similar to good service delivery	25	8%	24%	60%	4%	4%	100%
Question 14	SALA management communicates frequently with me	25	8%	4%	52%	24%	12%	100%

#### 4.4 Survey results

Figure 4.1 is a graphical representation of the scale-based answers to visualize the comparison between the different views of the respondents. The outliers as discussed in the previous section is now clearly visible.



**Figure 4-1: Graph of scaled answers**

#### 4.5 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in this study and provide a summary of the measures and sample. This forms the basis of the quantitative analysis of the data.

In table 4.16, the statements from 1 to 14 are listed, the total number of respondents, then the minimum and maximum response as per scales on the questionnaire, the mean and the standard deviation.

The mean or average is the most common measure of tendency and refers to the average value of a group of numbers. The mean was calculated for each response.

Distribution refers to the way values are spread around the central tendency, that is, how closely or how widely the values are clustered around the mean. A common measure of distribution is the standard deviation, which was calculated in the last column. Standard deviation corrects outliers by using a formula that takes into account how close or how far each value is from the distribution mean. Thus, the standard deviation can be described as a number that is used to indicate how measurements for a group are spread out from the mean, or expected value. A low standard deviation indicates that most of the numbers are close to the mean or average. A high standard deviation indicates that the numbers are more spread out.

The lowest standard deviation was on question 7, where 80% of respondents agreed that a good relationship with SALA can be beneficial towards the faculty to achieve objectives.

The highest standard deviation was on question 9, where 40% of respondents indicate that they do not call SALA staff members frequently regarding faculty matters. 16% neither agree nor disagree, which may attest that they do not know the SALA staff within the Faculty. 44% respond that they do call SALA staff frequently regarding faculty matters.

The highest mean is in question 2 namely: I know exactly what tasks SALA is performing within the Faculty. This is evident that the respondents do not have the knowledge with regards to the daily operations of SALA.

The lowest mean is on question 7 namely: A good relationship with SALA can be beneficial in attaining the objective of the Faculty. This is indeed positive feedback to hear that colleagues feel that way, despite the unknown division, they admit that such a division can be beneficial to the Faculty.

**Table 4-16: Descriptives**

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>					
	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Question 1	25	1,00	5,00	2,4800	1,19443
Question 2	25	1,00	5,00	3,3200	0,94516
Question 3	25	1,00	5,00	2,8400	0,89815
Question 4	25	1,00	4,00	2,7200	0,79162
Question 5	25	1,00	5,00	2,4000	0,91287
Question 6	25	1,00	4,00	2,3200	0,80208
Question 7	25	1,00	3,00	1,9200	0,70238
Question 8	25	1,00	4,00	2,5200	0,82260
Question 9	25	1,00	5,00	2,9200	1,41185
Question 10	25	1,00	5,00	3,1200	1,20139
Question 11	25	1,00	5,00	2,5600	0,91652
Question 12	25	1,00	5,00	2,7200	0,93630
Question 13	25	1,00	5,00	2,7200	0,84261
Question 14	25	1,00	5,00	3,2800	1,02144
Valid N (listwise)	25				

## 4.6 Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha indicates reliability or internal consistency.

The guideline value is above 0.7, although, above 0.5 can also be used but interpretation should be done with caution.

Table 4.17 is an extraction of data processed on SPSS and is indicative that there were no exclusions made.

**Table 4-17: Reliability of the study**

Scale: ALL VARIABLES			
Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	25	100,0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	0,0
	Total	25	100,0

**Table 4-18: Cronbach Alpha**

Table 4.18 indicates that the Cronbach Alpha is 0.829 which is indicative that the data is reliable.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0,829	0,836	5

## 4.7 Exploratory factor analysis

Table 4.19 illustrates the factor descriptives sorted according to the three factors identified and colour coded in the following sections in this chapter.

The 3 factors that emerged out of the scaled questions were:

- Internal marketing communication
- Service delivery
- Perception

The mean and standard deviation were also summarised per factor in table 4.19.

**Table 4-19: Comparison of factor descriptives**

Factor name	Questions	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Internal marketing communication	1, 2, 9, 10, 14	25	1,00	4,40	3,0240	0,899	0.829
Service delivery	5, 11, 12, 13	25	1,00	5,00	2,6000	0,810	0.919
Perception	3, 4, 6, 7, 8	25	1,00	3,80	2,4640	0,695	0.913

The lowest standard deviation and mean appear on the factor of perception, with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.913 which attested that the data is reliable. The highest standard deviation and mean appeared on the factor of internal marketing communication.

## 4.8 Correlation Matrix

The factor analysis is based on the correlation matrix of the variables involved. A correlation matrix was completed per factor.

### 4.8.1 Correlation matrix for internal marketing communication

**Table 4-20: Correlation Matrix on factor 1 – Internal marketing communication**

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix					
	Question 1	Question 2	Question 9	Question 10	Question 14
Question 1	1,000	0,707	0,419	0,452	0,398
Question 2	0,707	1,000	0,332	0,405	0,767
Question 9	0,419	0,332	1,000	0,915	0,247
Question 10	0,452	0,405	0,915	1,000	0,413
Question 14	0,398	0,767	0,247	0,413	1,000

Note the diagonal of 1's in table 4.20. There are perfect correlations between variables as well as themselves. Therefore, this matrix is symmetrical on both sides of the diagonal. This means all correlations are given twice.

Average inter-item correlation is a way of analysing internal consistency reliability. It is a measure to establish if the individual questions on a questionnaire give consistent, appropriate results.



Different items that are meant to measure the same general construct are tested to see if they give similar scores.

**Table 4-21: Summary item statistics – internal marketing communication**

Summary Item Statistics							
	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Inter-Item Correlations	0,505	0,247	0,915	0,667	3,699	0,044	5

**Table 4-22: Item total statistics – internal marketing communication**

The following table 4.22 represents the values of the Cronbach alpha if a particular question is deleted from the scale. There is no significant change in any of the questions, although the lowest coefficient is 0.758 for question 10. This also does not imply that this question must be removed from the data set.

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Question 1	12,6400	13,490	0,601	0,602	0,802
Question 2	11,8000	14,417	0,680	0,793	0,787
Question 9	12,2000	12,083	0,623	0,865	0,803
Question 10	12,0000	12,417	0,748	0,881	0,758
Question 14	11,8400	14,973	0,528	0,712	0,821

#### 4.8.2 Correlation matrix for service delivery

**Table 4-23: Correlation Matrix on factor 2 – Service delivery**

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix				
	Question 5	Question 11	Question 12	Question 13
Question 5	1,000	0,767	0,624	0,693
Question 11	0,767	1,000	0,773	0,805
Question 12	0,624	0,773	1,000	0,794
Question 13	0,693	0,805	0,794	1,000

Note the diagonal of 1's in table 4.23. These are perfect correlations between variables as well as themselves. Therefore, this matrix is symmetrical on both sides of the diagonal. This means all correlations are given twice.

Table 4.24 summarises inter-item correlations on service delivery, including the mean and variance.

**Table 4-24: Summary item statistics – service delivery**

Summary Item Statistics							
	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Inter-Item Correlations	0,743	0,624	0,805	0,181	1,290	0,004	4

The following table 4.25 represents the values of the Cronbach alpha if a particular question is deleted from the scale. There is no significant change in any of the questions, although the lowest coefficient is 0.875 for question 11. This also does not imply that this question must be removed from the data set.

**Table 4-25: Item total statistics – service delivery**

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Question 5	8,0000	6,250	0,749	0,605	0,918
Question 11	7,8400	5,807	0,872	0,762	0,875
Question 12	7,6800	5,977	0,797	0,682	0,902
Question 13	7,6800	6,227	0,847	0,731	0,886

### 4.8.3 Correlation matrix on perception

**Table 4-26: Correlation Matrix on factor 3 – Perception**

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix					
	Question 3	Question 4	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8
Question 3	1,000	0,872	0,768	0,375	0,568
Question 4	0,872	1,000	0,738	0,483	0,681
Question 6	0,768	0,738	1,000	0,713	0,811
Question 7	0,375	0,483	0,713	1,000	0,796
Question 8	0,568	0,681	0,811	0,796	1,000

Note the diagonal of 1's in table 4.26. These are perfect correlations between variables as well as themselves. Therefore, this matrix is symmetrical on both sides of the diagonal. This means all correlations are given twice.

Table 4.27 summarises the inter-item correlations on perception including the mean and variance.

**Table 4-27: Summary item statistics – perception**

Summary Item Statistics							
	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Inter-Item Correlations	0,680	0,375	0,872	0,497	2,324	0,024	5

The following table 4.28 represents the values of the Cronbach alpha if a particular question is deleted from the scale. There is no significant change in any of the questions, although the lowest coefficient is 0.871 for question 6. This also does not imply that this question must be removed from the data set.

**Table 4-28: Item total statistics – perception**

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted

Question 3	9,4800	7,593	0,739	0,845	0,905
Question 4	9,6000	7,833	0,812	0,817	0,887
Question 6	10,0000	7,500	0,892	0,832	0,871
Question 7	10,4000	8,833	0,655	0,695	0,918
Question 8	9,8000	7,667	0,816	0,789	0,886

## 4.9 Correlations

Correlation coefficient: Indicates the practical significance of relationship or effect sizes.

Guideline values:

- ~0.1, small, no practical significant relationship.
- ~0.3, medium, practical visible relationship.
- ~0.5, large, practical significant relationship.

Sig. (2-tailed): Indicates whether or not there is a statistically significant relationship. Guideline values:  $p < 0.05$ , indicated a statistically significant relationship.

**Table 4-29: Correlations summarised per factor**

Correlations					
			Internal marketing communication	Service delivery	Perception
Spearman's rho	Internal marketing communication	Correlation Coefficient	1	0,658	0,567
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000	0,003
		N	25	25	25
	Service delivery	Correlation Coefficient	0,658	1	0,741
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000		0,000
		N	25	25	25
	Perception	Correlation Coefficient	0,567	0,741	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0,003	0,000	
		N	25	25	25

The diagonal of 1's indicates a perfect correlation between variables. The matrix is symmetrical on either side of the diagonal which means all correlations are given twice. The correlation coefficient for internal marketing communication and service delivery is 0.658. The p-value for this correlation coefficient is 0.000.

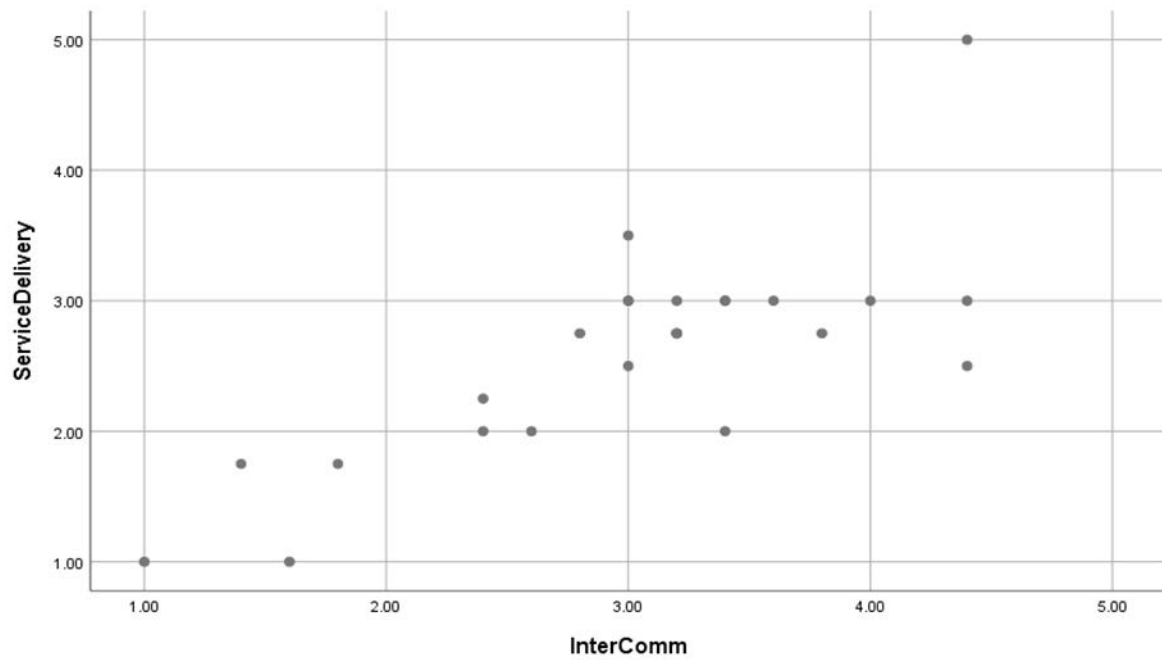
As a result, table 4.23 indicates that there is statistically a significant relationship between internal marketing communication and service delivery, as well as a relationship between perception and internal marketing communication.

The 2-tailed significance value is respectively 0.000 and 0.003. The standard alpha value is .05, which means that the statistical results for this study are highly significant. Therefore, increases and decreases in one variable do significantly relate to increases and decreases in the other variable.

#### **4.10 Scatterplot graphs**

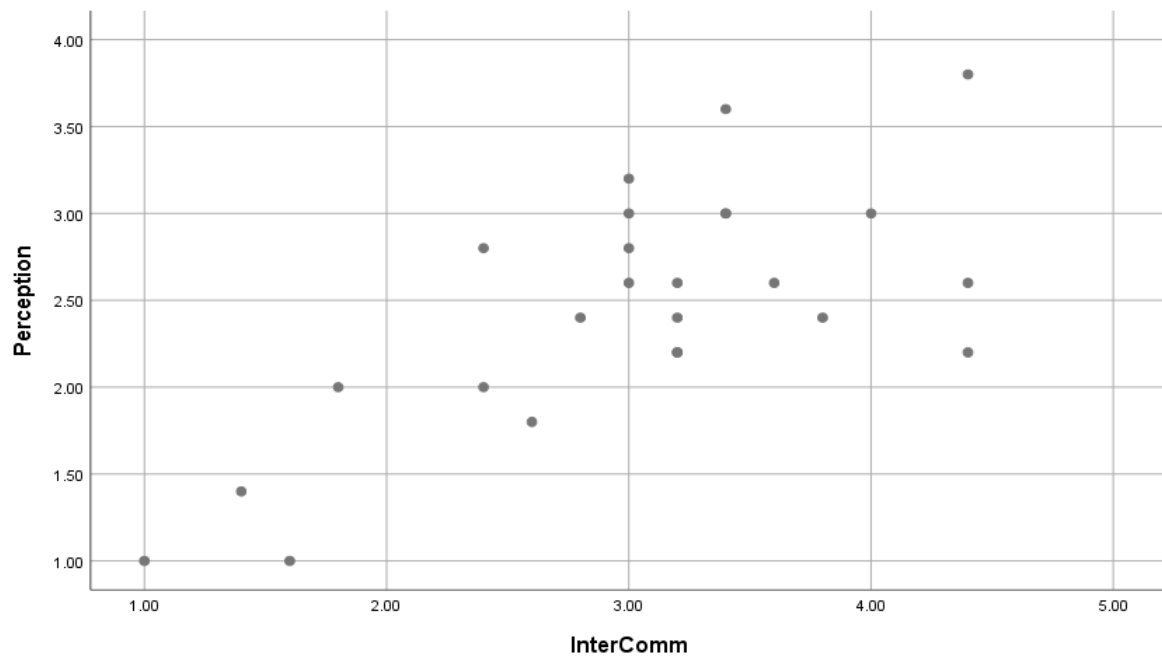
Scatterplots are used to observe relationships between variables. A scatterplot uses dots to represent the values of two separate numerical variables. The location of each dot on the horizontal and vertical axis shows values for an individual data point. If the data points make a straight line going from the origin out to high x- and y-values, then the variables are said to have a positive correlation. A positive correlation is a relationship between two variables in which both variables move in the same direction. A positive correlation exists when one variable decreases as the other variable decreases or one variable increases while the other increases.

In figure 4.2, service delivery (y-axis) increase when internal communication (x-axis) increase.



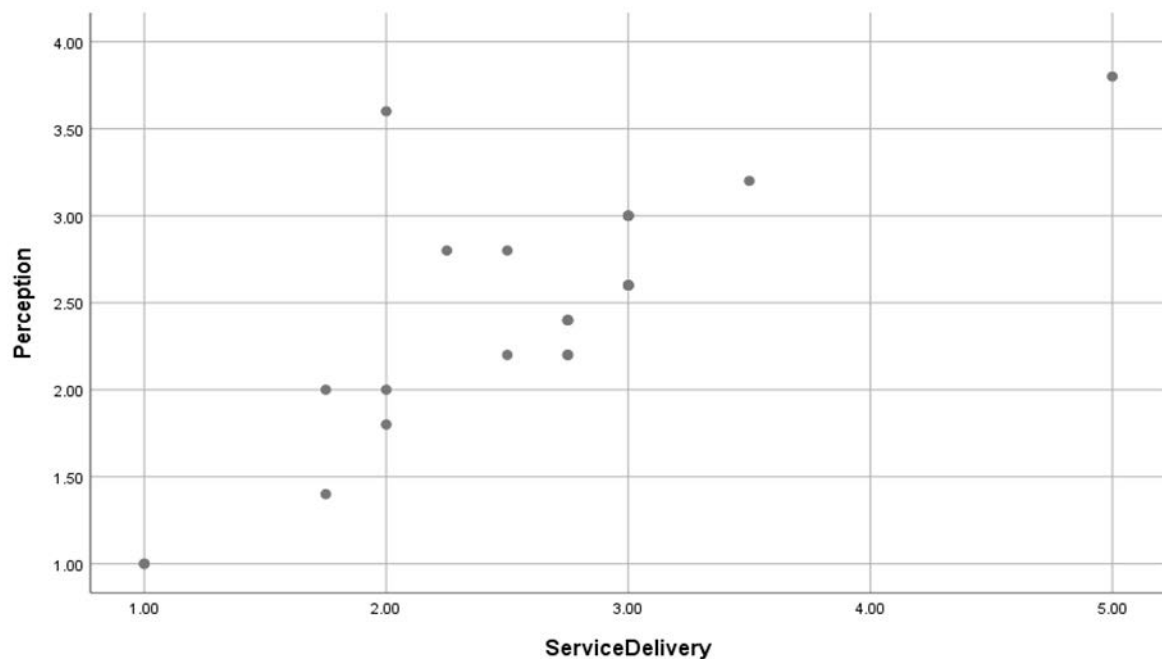
**Figure 4-2: Graph on service delivery and internal marketing communication**

In figure 4.3, the perception (y-axis) increase with internal communication (x-axis).



**Figure 4-3: Graph on perception and internal marketing communication**

In figure 4.4, the graph represents a positive correlation between perception (y-axis) and service delivery (x-axis).



**Figure 4-4: Graph on perception and service delivery**

#### 4.11 Addressing the research objectives

The perception that the respondents have towards the SALA division is clear after the statistical analysis that was done. The perception was tested in factor 3 of the data and the Cronbach Alpha is above 0.7 and therefore reliable and consistent. A smaller standard deviation is an indication that more of the data is clustered about the mean. It is therefore evident that the majority of respondents were neutral in their opinion on question 3, 4 and 8, but supports the statement in question 6 and 7. As evident in table 4.30 below.

**Table 4-30: Factor 3 on perception**

Question 3	SALA is regarded as a good division with a good reputation
Question 4	SALA delivers an excellent service within the faculty
Question 6	I can consider it advantageous to have such a division within a faculty
Question 7	A good relationship with SALA can be beneficial in attaining the objectives of the faculty
Question 8	I would recommend the assistance of the SALA division to my colleagues

Factor 2 addressed service delivery, the data proved to be reliable and the mean showed that the majority of respondents indicated the same answers. Question 13 had the highest rating of 60% of the respondents who indicated that their answer is neutral and neither agree nor disagree.

**Table 4-31: Factor 2 on service delivery**

Question 5	In general, my experience with SALA staff members is pleasant
Question 11	I am satisfied with the assistance I get from SALA staff members
Question 12	The division's current activities reflect a strong focus on the client, which is the student as well as personnel
Question 13	SALA is similar to good service delivery

Factor 1 addressed internal marketing communication, and the latter is also enclosed in the title of this study. The Cronbach Alpha here indicated that the data is reliable and the mean also shows that the majority of respondents are of the same opinion.

**Table 4-32: Factor 1 on internal marketing communication**

Question 1	I am familiar with the abbreviation SALA
Question 2	I know exactly what tasks SALA is performing within the faculty
Question 9	I contact SALA personnel frequently for assistance regarding faculty matters
Question 10	I know who the SALA staff members are in my faculty
Question 14	SALA management communicates frequently with me

#### **4.12 Addressing the research question**

The study attested that internal marketing communication has an effect on the corporate reputation of the SALA division and that a relationship exists between reputation and internal marketing communication.



## **4.13 Conclusion**

### **4.13.1 Reflecting on the aim, method and results of the research**

The study aimed to investigate the effect of internal marketing communication on the reputation of the SALA division at the NWU. Based on the research done, it is evident that internal marketing communication influences the reputation of the SALA division. The method that was applied to the study was appropriate and resulted in the collection of reliable data. The latter was proven in the statistical analysis that was done. Through the statistical analysis, the results attested that internal marketing communication has an effect on the reputation of the SALA division. It was proven that the division is perceived as a hindrance rather than a key driver of sustainability. Through the factors that were identified in the questionnaire, it became evident that a relationship exists between the factors. The reliability also proved to be consistent and trustworthy.

The limitations that were placed on the study by the Ethics committee of the NWU restricted the researcher to include demographic questions. In the next chapter, strategies for improvement of the division will be discussed. This study delivered an effectual contribution to the SALA division and will also contribute towards the establishment of sustainable development and implementation of future strategies.

## **CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Evaluating the competitive advantage of divisions will allow management to gain insight into strategic plans on campus and financial decisions. In this chapter, the way forward for the SALA division is depicted.

### **5.2 General recommendations**

The division will build brand awareness by conducting quarterly conferences to notify the target market of new trends, policies and procedures and to updated staff on current business standings. Relationship development and maintenance is strengthened by a strong market demarcation, evaluation and selection agenda for the division. The latter must consider the impact of their marketing decisions and whether these decisions are viable.

To support the core business, this division is best integrated into its category of information and communication technologies. It operates and manages with an active operating model, in a sustainable and transformed manner.

SALA contributes greatly to the financial sustainability of the University. It promotes, communicates and develops core business skills for increasing brand equity, leadership efficiency and solidarity with the community, focuses on staff development, retention and creation of a fair staff and student profile.

One of the divisions' objectives although a major challenge, is the alignment of all processes across the campuses, concerning both the contact and distance modes of delivery and for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as creating the same student experience on all the campuses. Marketing Communication objectives must help to achieve the strategic objectives of the development strategies of this environment.

SALA has an organized and strategic attempt at differentiating and influencing the perception of the target audience. The division can concentrate on how it competes in the market and take account of its strengths and weaknesses and the needs of its target audience. Strategically, staff are positioned across all three campuses within certain departments to improve their efficiency and contribute to sustainable development.

The subdivisions of SALA include all administrative phases of a students' lifecycle at the university. It covers the cycle from applications, admissions, registrations, curriculum control,

assessments, all timetables, study guides, study material, graduation ceremonies and certification.

There will be frequent information sessions and training on all campuses in terms of administration, policies and procedures. SALA can bring expertise and services to the door of the market. Service excellence will maintain customer satisfaction and build loyalty and trust in this unknown brand.

Through dissecting a market, the division will identify better opportunities for growth and attend more specifically to the customers' needs. In the next point, market segmentation is identified.

### **5.3 Identifying market segmentation**

The strength of this division is gained through diversification of the divisions covered by SALA. The target market for segmentation is the Schools within the faculties, School Directors, and Deputy Directors. With the integration and reporting lines which were set up by the NWU management, SALA workforce is being strategically positioned throughout the NWU from operational level to entities within Schools.

The market or segments that should be targeted for marketing activities are those departments and entities that have an interest in the roles and responsibilities of the division. It will help reflect on what the consumer wants and why to obtain brand identity and open up opportunities for the difference. Segmentation provides a viewpoint on what makes a company special to the market. SALA needs a well- defined product offering to segment effectively.

In each division where SALA staff is placed, there will be non-SALA management, directors and staff. These are segments that should be addressed through the marketing plan. The NWU serves a wide spectrum of constituencies that ranges over cultures, generations and demographics.

In defining market segments and selecting the target to serve, offerings must be transparent and unambiguous. Identifying, understanding and reaching the right segments in the university market requires the most meaningful and useful ways of dividing and organizing the different groups that make up the market. It is necessary to identify and define consumer subsets with common denominators, goals and needs that can be utilized to form marketing strategies for the specific segment.

The overall perception of service delivery can be obtained by conducting surveys. In this environment, the student is also a customer, the next point will look at student satisfaction surveys.

## **5.4 Student satisfaction surveys**

Due to the nature of the administrative work undertaken by the division, any failure to operate will be perceived by the student as the client. Surveys of student satisfaction are a way of tracking the performance of the various departments. Various aspects may be evaluated, input gathered and analysed, leading to a detailed report to enhance the quality of the service.

## **5.5 The SALA structure**

In a fixed structure, there is a simple chain of command. Senior management pursues a clear path of delegating authority which excels in specific features. With no overlapping of responsibilities, a good level of trust is established. SALA's vision can be fulfilled with this centralized management structure. Clear lines of communication with senior management that guides the division to achieve its goals are crucial to establish a sustainable division. Alignment between campuses and faculties are a concern, as job levels differ between campuses and faculties. This issue was not addressed through the restructuring that took place in June 2017. This practice divides staff and creates negativity amongst staff members as some staff carries a higher level of responsibility with a lower job level than others with less responsibility and a higher job level.

The staff and student ratios are also not taken into consideration when positions are created and advertised. Some faculties have more students with fewer staff members than others. The SALA divisions management team are not consulted during budget discussions, the budgetary framework for the division is inefficient and does not support the operations of the division.

## **5.6 Implementation, evaluation and control**

The SALA division is appropriately structured to implement the marketing communication plan. The more visible the division can be, the more it becomes indispensable.

Several areas need improvement within the division. Marketing communication is an area that needs to be enhanced to ensure the sustainability of this division.

Performance standards of SALA are:

- Accountability
- Ethical behaviour

- Effective problem solving
- Excellence in service
- Professionalism
- Teamwork

The success of the operational strategy is influenced by divisional constraints. The constraint theory and approach of organizational change based on process improvement, as opposed to each company having to face at least one constraint or weak link in the process chain. Constraints will influence product, price, place or promotion.

Dr Eli Goldratt developed the theory of constraints as a method to help operations managers enhance their performance. In this theory, it is argued that a single constraint in the process determines the throughput of any system (Goldratt, 1992).

To increase the overall process flow, the division must identify and improve constraints. Goldratt argues that companies face very few true constraints. Since companies need only concentrate on the restrictions, not on the overall process, they can improve substantially without the need to tie up valuable resources (Moscoso, 2011).

Sufficient funding and a shortage of dedicated staff can have a huge impact on the success of this marketing communication plan. Staff shortages due to budgetary constraints will also affect the division's efficiency.

The backbone of any university is a fully functional and effective software support system. In the next point, this will be addressed.

## **5.7 Software support system**

Technology can be both a threat and an opportunity in any company. Failure in systems can have a major impact on the operations of SALA. Contingency plans are in place to manage operations in the event of system failures. Outdated technology, can restrict innovation and design and prevent the division from developing differentiated services. New technology is a major investment and will focus on improving quality, although this will require substantial new investment in capital. The university system is obsolete and cannot support the diverse needs of the administrative student environment. A logical way forward is to benchmark with other tertiary institutions and investigate the adoption of their software support systems. The assumption is that technology or systems are easy to understand, but this may not happen. Your marketing strategy needs to understand your audience's relationship to technology.

## **5.8 Poor brand image**

Bad services can lead to poor product images, weak marketing campaigns, inadequate advertising budgets or poorly thought out promotional policies. You need to boost your service quality to strengthen your brand. Poor brand image can set a company up for failure. Management can work on efficient marketing investment strategies to understand market expectations and promote brand messages concerning quality, service and accessibility with a stronger offering (VanAuken, 2015).

## **5.9 Traditional marketing and communication**

The division should not lose sight of its target market and customers during effective communication and marketing. To satisfy the individual demands of the audition, the market must be personalized.

## **5.10 Possible service weakness**

Low productivity can be improved through employee motivation and process simplification. Shortages of skilled employees can also contribute to failure, especially in the SALA division where knowledge of regulations and policies are extremely important as well as the implementation thereof. Personnel who are not motivated need a change in culture, incentives and management motivation.

Thus, this study aimed to investigate the effect of internal marketing communication on the reputational perception of the division. Based on the findings, the objectives of the study have been successfully reached.

## **5.11 Implementation without goals**

The goals of the project must be allocated adequate resources. Unless an active planning process is developed, there is little hope that the divisions' strategy will be successfully implemented. Goals must be specific, manageable, realistic, clear and achievable.

### **5.12 Recommendation for future research**

It will be enlightening to test the perceptions of the participants of the survey after internal marketing communication has taken place in the SALA division. Although prior to conducting post-surveys, thorough marketing communication should have taken place. Implementation of a strategic marketing plan and roadshow with clear marketing objectives and a set target audience will test the success of the implementation of an internal marketing communication plan. A roadshow is similar to a sales pitch and is known as a well-organized marketing event that brings customers and prospects together to do product demonstration and to promote a business.

### **5.13 Conclusion**

Through analysing the SALA divisions' operational efficiency with regards to internal marketing communication, it is evident that effective marketing communication strategies are not present. The concept of SALA is an excellent approach to minimize risks for the university and compares to other tertiary institutions abroad. Although one major threat to SALA is the university's personnel. Resistance to change will have a major impact on the success of this division. But with a detailed strategic internal marketing communication plan, this division can take the NWU to new heights.

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