INFORMED EMPLOYEE VOICE: THE SYNTHESIS OF INTERNAL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION AND EMPLOYEE VOICE AND THE ASSOCIATIONS WITH ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of PhD at the University of Central Lancashire.

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DECLARATION

I declare that while registered as a candidate for the research degree, I have not been a registered candidate or enrolled student for another award of the University or other academic or professional institution.

I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award and is solely my own work.

Signature of Candidate

Type of Award   Doctor of Philosophy

School   Lancashire Business School

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to advance knowledge about internal communication and organisational engagement. It incorporates the application of a new research instrument, the Internal Communication and Organisational Engagement Questionnaire (ICOEQ) developed by Welch (2011a). The ICOEQ investigates employee interest in different topics, helpfulness of communication methods used, ratings for senior manager and line manager communication, satisfaction with employee voice and the associations with organisational engagement.

Despite the importance of internal communication, existing research methods are limited as they do not adequately distinguish between different dimensions of internal communication as established by Welch and Jackson (2007, p.184) and they fail to make an association with organisational engagement. The ICOEQ therefore provides a new research perspective for academic researchers and communication managers. The conceptual analysis builds on Welch and Jackson's (2007, p.185) internal communication matrix. It synthesises corporate communication and employee voice into a new concept, *informed employee voice*, to reflect the importance of keeping employees informed and giving them a voice that is treated seriously.

The empirical work adopts a critical realism approach. A cross-sectional research design was used. The ICOEQ was administered at five organisations followed by interviews and focus groups. Quantitative data analysis suggests that internal communication is more strongly correlated with emotional organisational engagement than with cognitive or behavioural organisational engagement. Ratings of senior manager communication and line manager communication and satisfaction with employee voice are positively associated with organisational engagement. Standard multiple regression analysis indicates that informed employee voice is a significant predictor of organisational engagement. Template analysis of qualitative data indicates that many senior managers are not visible or approachable and they do not listen to what employees have to say. New themes that emerge include more informal and small group communication with senior managers, a greater focus on the local context of internal corporate communication from line managers and more emphasis on listening and responding to employee voice. Possible explanations for the findings include a focus on shareholder value and the consequential neglect of employee value and the marginalisation of internal communication in academia and practice. Theoretical implications include the adoption of employee voice more fully into internal corporate communication theory, the addition of familiarity as an attribute of internal communication media and the identification of three explanatory factors for the exercise of internal 'power over – dominance'. Above all, the thesis establishes informed employee voice as an antecedent to organisational engagement. The implications for practice include the establishment of the ICOEQ

as a useful measurement tool and the requirement for communicative leadership that includes giving employees a voice that is treated seriously.

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1: Ruck, K. and Welch, M. 2012. Valuing Internal Communication; Management and Employee Perspectives, Public Relations Review, Vol 38 (2).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variances
BILD	British Institute for Learning and Development
BPS	British Psychological Society
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CIPR	Chartered Institute of Public Relations
CLT	Corporate Leadership Team
CMI	Chartered Management Institute
CPRE	Commission On Public Relations Education
CSQ	Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire
EIP	Employee Involvement and Participation
IABC	International Association of Business Communicators
ICA	International Communication Association
ICE	The Information And Consultation Of Employees
ICOEQ	Internal Communication And Organisational Engagement Questionnaire

IOD	Institute of Directors
IoIC	Institute of Internal Communication
NCA	National Communication Association
OCB	Organisational Citizenship Behaviour
POS	Perceived Organisational Support
SD	Standard Deviation
SET	Social Exchange Theory
WERS	Workers Employment Relations Survey

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the research funding, the aim of the thesis, the inspiration for the research, the research setting, the author's background and the relationship of the research to other work.

1.1 RESEARCH FUNDING AND AIM OF THE THESIS

This PhD project is funded by the 2009 University of Central Lancashire Arnoux part-time PhD Bursary Scheme. Arnoux PhD programmes complement, build upon and enhance the current research interests of the Arnoux award holders. In this case, the project builds on Dr Mary Welch's internal communication research (Welch and Jackson, 2007; Welch, 2008; Welch, 2011a; Welch, 2011b; Welch, 2012). Dr Welch's UK research concurs with previous international research (Kazoleas and Wright, 2001) in highlighting limitations of existing research methods for studying internal communication. In particular, existing methods (Hargie and Tourish, 2000; Tourish and Hargie, 2004; Hargie and Tourish, 2009a) including communication audit questionnaires, fail to adequately distinguish between different dimensions of internal communication. A new research instrument is required in order to overcome this and to offer new perspectives for academic researchers and communication managers. The new instrument developed by Welch (2011a) called the Internal Communication and Organisational Engagement Questionnaire (ICOEQ) enables the collection of quantitative and qualitative data from employees concerning their preferences for, and use of, internal communication methods and content. The instrument enables researchers to distinguish employee preferences for four different dimensions of internal communication (Welch and Jackson 2007, p. 185) and to study the relationship between these preferences and the goals of internal corporate communication which are: contributing to internal relationships characterised by employee commitment; promoting a positive sense of belonging in employees; developing their awareness of environmental change; and developing their understanding of the need for the organisation to evolve its aims in response to, or in anticipation of, environmental change (Welch and Jackson 2007, p. 188). Existing methods for studying internal communication also fail to make an association with employee engagement and the ICOEQ therefore includes a section on organisational engagement.

The aim of the thesis is to investigate themes in employee preferences and satisfaction with internal communication and the associations with organisational engagement in five separate organisations. The thesis also explores why stated preferences and satisfaction levels exist and it 'digs deeper' to identify systemic processes and powers which lie behind the empirical patterns established and to identify ways that internal communication practices can be changed.

1.2 INSPIRATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The inspiration for this research derives from the following three primary influences:

- The author's career in internal communication management
- Dr Welch's research that develops an employee stakeholder approach to theory and practice
- An interest in developing internal corporate communication theory in a way that incorporates employee voice and associating this with organisational engagement theory.

The author's career in public relations spans 17 years with a focus on internal communication roles from 2000 to 2008. During this period he developed and led internal communication programmes in a large UK telecommunications company and provided strategic internal communication advice to the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of a division within the company and the Managing Director of a business unit. This experience led him to appreciate the importance of internal communication within a broader public relations field. Indeed it led him to believe that it was the most important function of all public relations activities.

Welch and Jackson's (2007) development of internal corporate communication as a re-defined, stakeholder led, approach to practice has been very influential in the author's thinking and it forms a core tenet of this thesis. Welch's (2012) research into the acceptability and appropriateness of internal communication and the evolution of employee engagement has also been influential and is integrated into this thesis. Smidts et al. (2001) and L'Etang (2013, p. 62) argue that internal communication is a rather neglected discipline. There is, therefore, scope for much greater emphasis on theory building through research and this thesis addresses this point.

1.3 RESEARCH SETTING

Five organisations participated in the study. The names of all the organisations concerned have been changed to protect the confidentiality of participants. Three organisations are in the public sector; GovOffice, a shared services function within a government ministerial department, SECouncil1 and SECouncil2, two local borough councils in the south of England. One organisation is in the not for profit sector; HousingAssoc, a housing association based in England. The fifth organisation is in the private sector; BankDept, a group services department in a major UK bank. The sampling of organisations from the public, not-for-profit, and private sectors enables useful comparisons to be made. This potentially improves theory building (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 68) as outlined in more detail in chapter 4.

The framework for the thesis is internal communication practice and measurement. Definitions of internal communication are discussed in section 2.1. The thesis builds on Welch and

Jackson's (2007, p. 186) definition of internal corporate communication defined as 'communication between an organisation's strategic managers and its internal stakeholders, designed to promote commitment to the organisation, a sense of belonging to it, awareness of its changing environment and understanding of its evolving aims'. The evolution of the role of internal communication practitioners is reviewed in section 2.9 and the ethics of practice is discussed in section 2.18. A broad estimate of the number of people working in internal communication in the UK is 45,000 according to the Institute of Internal Communication (IoIC, 2015).

1.4 AUTHOR BACKGROUND

The author is currently the co-founder and director of PR Academy which is the largest provider of professional PR education in the UK. Prior to establishing PR Academy he spent most of his career in a telecommunications company where he had a number of roles, including; customer service manager, community programme manager, head of regional PR campaigns, head of communications, and strategic internal communication advisor.

1.4.1 Qualifications

After dropping out of university in 1978 the author returned to part-time study later in his life, gaining the following qualifications:

Post Graduate Certificate in Business and Management Research
University of Central Lancashire   *2011*

MBA (Distinction)   *2007*
Open University

Post Graduate Certificate of Education and Training (Post-compulsory)
Canterbury Christ Church University College   *2003*

BSc Psychology (Upper second class honours, with distinction in
social psychology module)
Open University   *2000*

1.4.2 Participation In Academic Conferences

The author has participated in the following academic conferences:

2013 International History of Public Relations Conference at Bournemouth University, UK
2012 Bledcom Conference in Bled, Slovenia

1.4.3 Research Publications

The author has published three academic papers and a book chapter. He also edits and contributes to a text book on internal communication.

Research publications:

Ruck, K. and Yaxley, H. (2013) Tracking the Rise and Rise of Internal Communication since the 1980s, Paper Presented at the International History of Public Relations Conference at Bournemouth University.

Ruck, K. and Welch, M. (2012) Valuing Internal Communication; Management and Employee Perspectives, Public Relations Review, Vol 38 (2).

Ruck, K. and Trainor, S. (2012) Communicating for Engagement, Paper Presented at Bledcom Conference in Bled.

The Ruck and Welch paper contains material from this thesis and is included as Insert 1.

Chapter in edited book:

Ruck, K. (2014) Connected Employees, in Brown, R. and Waddington, S. (Eds) Share This Too, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Edited Text book:

Ruck, K. (2015) Exploring Internal Communication, Third Edition, Farnham: Gower.

Ruck, K. (2012) Exploring Internal Communication, Second Edition, Harlow: Pearson Education.

Ruck, K. (2010) Exploring Internal Communication, Harlow: Pearson Education.

1.4.4 Current Teaching Responsibilities And Professional Memberships

The author currently has the following teaching responsibilities:

PR Academy Course Leader: Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Internal Communication Certificate.

PR Academy Course Leader: Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Internal Communication Diploma.

The author currently has the following professional memberships:

Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD)

Fellow of Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR)

Member of British Psychological Society (Graduate Basis for Registration) (BPS)

Member of the British Institute of Learning and Development (BILD)

Member of Chartered Management Institute (CMI)

Member of Institute of Internal Communication (IoIC)

Member of International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

1.5 RELATIONSHIP OF THESIS TO OTHER WORK

The thesis firstly builds on the internal communication research of Professor Owen Hargie, Professor Dennis Tourish and Dr Mary Welch (Hargie and Tourish, 2000; Hargie and Tourish, 2009a; Tourish and Hargie, 2004; Tourish and Hargie, 2009; Tourish, 2013; Welch and Jackson, 2007; Welch, 2008; Welch, 2011a; Welch, 2011b; Welch, 2012). It is informed by a critical communication perspective outlined by L'Etang (2006), Heath (2009), Holtzhausen (2002), Holtzhausen and Voto (2002) and Toth (2009) for public relations that is then related to internal communication in the thesis. It incorporates the seminal work of Professor Kahn on employee engagement (1990; 1992; 2010). It also extends Professor Saks' (2006) discussion of organisational engagement as a distinctive aspect of employee engagement that can be differentiated from work engagement. Finally it draws on the literature relating to employee involvement, participation and voice, in particular the work of Professor Stanley Deetz (Deetz, 2005; Deetz and Brown, 2004) Professor Mick Marchington and Professor Tony Dundon (Dundon and Gollan, 2007; Dundon et al., 2004).

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

2.1 DEFINING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 178) point out that a number of different terms are used for internal communication, including: internal relations, (Grunig and Hunt, 1984, p. 240) employee communication (Argenti, 1996, p. 94; Smidts et al., 2001, p. 1051) internal communications (Cornelissen, 2004, p. 189) employee relations (Grunig and Hunt, 1984, p. 240; Argenti, 1996, p. 94; Quirke, 2000, p. 198) internal public relations (Jefkins, 1988, p. 287; Wright, 1995, p. 182) and staff communication (Stone, 1995, p. 115). Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 178) also note that a number of writers have cited Frank and Brownell's (1989, pp. 5-6) definition of internal communication (Van Riel, 1995, p. 13; Smidts et al., 2001, p. 1052; Dolphin, 2005, p. 172):

> The communications transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialisation that are intended to design and redesign organisations, to implement designs, and to co-ordinate day-to-day activities.

Van Riel (1995) refers to this definition to describe internal communication as an element of organisational communication within his model of overall integrated corporate communication. However, Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 178) argue that Frank and Brownell's definition is a dated and transactional approach, not one grounded in corporate communication theory. Instead, they suggest that internal communication is best situated within what is termed 'strategic public relations' alongside media relations, public affairs, environmental communication, investor relations, labour market communications (recruitment) and corporate advertising. In a response to other definitions that simplistically consider all employees as a single group, Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 184) suggest a refined definition that identifies separate internal stakeholder groups:

> The strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders within organisations across a number of interrelated dimensions including, internal line manager communication, internal team peer communication, internal project peer communication and internal corporate communication.

However, in a more recent definition, Vercic et al. (2012, p. 225) ignore internal stakeholder groups describing internal communication as 'the aspiration (starting from the vision and proceeding to policy and mission statement and eventually to strategy) of achieving a systematic analysis and distribution of information at all strata simultaneously coordinated in the most efficient way possible'. This broad range of definitions reflects a field that is still struggling to define itself, with two contemporary definitions that are strikingly different. The position taken for

this thesis is that internal communication is a function that goes beyond efficient distribution of information and incorporates relationship building through dialogue. A new definition for internal communication is set out later in this chapter. Before coming to that, it is important to briefly review the evolution of internal communication practice and to examine definitions of employee engagement.

2.2 EVOLUTION OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The origins of formal internal communication lie within the increasingly industrialised society of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and were developed to meet the need to replace the loss in personal contact between employer and employee (Haynes, 1922, p. 81) with a written publication introduced as a means of communication between the members of the organisation. Brown (2005) observed the emergence of personnel departments in US firms after the First World War which valued employee magazines as an efficient form of communication. These publications were increasingly produced by 'the qualified editor' (Mercer, 1948) with Henry (1972, p.105) citing US data published in 1966 indicating that one in three journalists who gave up working in mass media within ten years of qualifying joined house organs or subsidised trade papers. This raises the editorial dilemma between corporate control and the independent viewpoint of editors who saw themselves as 'journalists in industry' acting for the express benefit of a community of whom we ourselves are part (Samain, 1956, p. 54). By 1957, research revealed 63 percent of public relations departments had responsibility for employee publications (Bird and Yutzy, 1957). At the beginning of the 1980s, Bland (1980) argued that internal communication has to be put into perspective as an important management tool. Parsloe (1980, p.19) reported that the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) emphasised that it was management's job to communicate to all employees and it was 'dangerous' to rely on the unions to communicate management's message. The house journal still dominated practice in the 1980s and Parsloe (1980) correctly predicted that there would be considerable attitude barriers to be overcome before new methods of employee communication would be introduced. The question of editorial freedom is raised by Bland (1980, p.60) who advises that the company newspaper 'must have a high degree of editorial freedom…management have to learn that although they're paying for the paper it's in their worst interests to exercise a journalistic droigt de seigneur on its contents'. He suggests the occasional piece of management propaganda can be included but only if it clearly states who wrote it. By the end of the 1980s the processes of internal communication were becoming more established. An Institute of Directors (IoD) survey in 1989 found that in companies with more than 1,000 employees 80 percent had some sort of planned communication system, an increase of 30 percent in five years.

In the 1990s Wright (1995, p. 181) found that practice was still dominated by technical journalistic skills such as producing slick employee newsletters instead of concentrating on developing relationships with employees. Wright suggested that the decade brought a renewed importance to the concept of discretionary effort for employee communication. He described this as a theory that concerns those things individuals expend above and beyond what is needed to do the basic job and the idea of going out of one's way to do those things you're not expected to do. Towards the end of the decade changes in practice were emerging that included a growing appreciation of the importance of involving employees. Although significant steps were taken in the 1990s to develop practice, Clutterbuck and James (1997, p. 254) claimed that in the UK it lacked benchmarks against which performance could be measured. What measurement there was tended to focus on inputs rather than outputs. Readers' surveys were carried out for many employee periodicals, but relatively few evaluated their impact on achieving specific communication objectives, such as enhancing understanding of business goals or improving people's knowledge of the organisation.

2.3 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AS A SUB-SET OF STRATEGIC PUBLIC RELATIONS

According to Downs et al. (2004, p. 57) communication is a relatively recent academic discipline and organisational communication has been an important subset of that discipline since 1950. However, as Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 178) point out, despite its importance to practice there are considerable gaps in internal communication theory and theorists have called for research on its mandates, scope and focus. In this section the treatment of internal communication in the strategic public relations literature is briefly reviewed.

In 1984, Grunig and Hunt argued that a new era of internal communication had emerged, described as 'open' reflecting their two-way symmetric model of public relations. Grunig and Grunig (2000) conducted research for an International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) project that established an excellence theory of public relations. Excellence theory is based on the association of strategic public relations with organisational effectiveness, grounded in the identification of stakeholder categories which are segmented into 'active and passive publics' whereby active or potentially active publics are most strategic for an organisation. According to Botan and Hazleton (2006, p. 4) public relations is best understood as an applied social science. They claim that most scholars would agree that symmetrical/excellence theory is, at least, potentially a paradigmatic theory. Grunig and Hunt (1984, pp. 244-5) criticised internal communication describing it as a preoccupation with technique that led to a conclusion that a great deal of money is spent on achieving a degree of journalistic slick which does little in

communicating to employees but does much to satisfy the egos of communications technicians. In contrast, a two-way approach entails making publications more employee-centred than management centred although this in itself is not dialogical, so Grunig and Hunt (1984, p. 246) go further and argue that symmetrical programmes also use many non-traditional, nonprint media and techniques that emphasise interpersonal communication and dialogue with management. In a later application of symmetric communication to an internal setting, Grunig (1992, p. 558) states that it is practice that is characterized by its emphasis on 'trust, credibility, openness, relationships, reciprocity, network symmetry, horizontal communication, feedback, adequacy of information, employee-centered style, tolerance for disagreement, and negotiation'. As part of the excellence theory research, Grunig and Grunig (2000, p. 317) report that chief executives associate a range of strategic public relations activities with other organisational excellence variables. More recently, Kim (2007, p. 169) suggests that symmetrical communication takes place through dialogue, negotiation, listening, and conflict management. Little follow-up academic research has been conducted that explores the extent that internal communication is practised as one-way or two-way communication. This thesis therefore explores both aspects of communication; it examines employee satisfaction with being kept informed as well as satisfaction with the opportunities provided to have a say about what goes on.

Grunig and Hunt's models of communication are linked to situational theory (1984, pp.143-154) with the concept of 'publics' introduced to identify groups of people who face a similar problem and recognise that the problem exists and organise to do something about it. For example, in research conducted at three organisations in US, Grunig (1975, pp. 21-2) identifies three different employee publics; a management public, an older-employee public, and younger employees (dissatisfied in one organisation and more educated in another organisation). However, these categorisations are not overtly problem based and are more a demographic segmentation. Grunig and Hunt (1984, p. 255) acknowledge potential differences for employees as a public in claiming that unlike external publics an organisation has the power to create different kinds of employee publics. This is because management has the ability to change tasks, constraints and involvement.

Waymer and Ni (2009, p. 220) explore a rhetorical and critical approach within a public relations framework and argue that employee relations is an important area of public relations but it has been limited to top down communication from management to employees. As a result, employees may find themselves battling against the dominant discourse of the organisation. This emphasis on the dominance of one-way downward communication from the top echoes Grunig and Hunt's earlier (1984) critique of practice. In the public relations literature, critical theory is focused

on persuasion, propaganda and imbalanced power and control of media (L'Etang, 2006, p. 24). As Heath, Toth and Waymer point out (2009, p. 15) critical scholars attempt to unveil the hidden powers that alienate and marginalise portions of society. Waymer and Ni (2009, p. 219) argue that employees at the overseas subsidiaries of multinational companies are an important group of such 'disempowered' publics. It may not only be employees in this particular setting who are disempowered if the predominance of communication in the organisation is one-way from the top down. As Toth (2009, p. 50) explains, the study of rhetoric concerns itself principally with how individuals, groups, and organisations make meaning through argument and counter-argument They do this to create issues, resolve uncertainty, compete to achieve a preferable position, or to build coalitions to solve problems. Current attention is moving towards how publics are more active in the construction of the meaning of their relationship with the organisation. Again, the focus is primarily on external communication in the public sphere although Waymer and Ni (2009, p. 223) do highlight the 'rhetorical wrangle in the workplace' and the 'problematic of voice'. In their analysis of the discourse of Chinese employees in multinational corporations in China, Waymer and Ni (2009, p. 229) conclude that the more the organisation needs the employees, the more power these employees have. This is, though, acknowledged as a limited 'contractual' perspective and whatever the reason for power imbalances internal communication can be the bridge to facilitate the development of mutually beneficial employee-organisation relationships.

The development of relationship management as a general theory of public relations has, according to Ledingham (2006, p. 466), been applied to a range of public relations functions, including issues management, crisis management, community relations, media relations, and public affairs. Relationship management stresses relationships over communication and outcomes based on strategic planning. This represents a paradigm shift for public relations theory as it should be based not on research relating to communication but on relationship theory. Relationship management has tended to infer that 'publics' are external. For example, in Ledingham's (2006, p. 470-1) identification of dimensions of the quality of relationship management (trust, openness, involvement, investment and commitment) the examples given are all external. Welch (2006, pp. 149-151) highlights the importance of trust and distrust in relationship management and calls for greater understanding of distrust as an indicator of relationships. The question remains as to whether or not the nature of an internal relationship is different to typical external relationships that may be more transactional and less collaborative. In their exploration of firm-employee relationships, Herington et al. (2005, p. 269) found that employees gave considerable attention to communication, attachment and empowerment as key elements of internal relationships. Kim's (2007, p. 185) study of the antecedents of employee-organisation relationships indicates that asymmetrical internal communication is associated with less commitment, trust and satisfaction and

symmetrical internal communication is associated with communal relationships. However, symmetric communication on its own is not enough for good employee relationship outcomes, as Kim argues (2007, p. 191), it must be combined with fair behaviour by management and fair organisational policies and systems otherwise it is just 'pseudo symmetrical' communication.

2.4 INTERNAL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION THEORY

Welch and Jackson's (2007) stakeholder approach to internal communication builds on Freeman's (1984, 1999) emphasis on the identification of internal stakeholders and establishes team peer, project peer and line manager relationships as stakeholder categories. This departs from Grunig and Hunt's (1984) situational theory that argues that publics (i.e. active stakeholder groups) form around specific issues. The dimensions suggest a more static stakeholder group membership defined by role and work rather than by issue or interest, highlighting the importance of thinking about internal communication from the receiver's point of view. According to Chen et al. (2006, p. 244) satisfaction with organisational communication practices has been ignored. Welch (2012, p. 247) states that internal corporate communication is a term that has been used in the public relations and corporate communications literature for some time. Welch and Jackson's (2007, p. 185) internal communication matrix (Table 2.1) sets out four dimensions based on a stakeholder perspective of practice: internal line management communication, internal team peer communication, internal project peer communication and internal corporate communication. Line management communication is defined as matters concerning employee roles. Team and project communication is defined as employee-to-employee communication about team or project tasks. The internal corporate communication dimension is defined as 'communication between an organisation's strategic managers and its internal stakeholders, designed to promote commitment to the organisation, a sense of belonging to it, awareness of its changing environment and understanding of its evolving aims' (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 186).

TABLE 2.1 Welch And Jackson (2007, p. 185) Internal Communication Matrix

Dimension	Level	Direction	Participants	Content
1. Internal line management communication	Line managers / supervisors	Predominantly two-way	Line managers-employees	Employees' roles Personal impact e.g. appraisal discussions, team briefings
2. Internal team peer communication	Team colleagues	Two-way	Employee-employee	Team information e.g. team task discussions
3. Internal project peer communication	Project group colleagues	Two-way	Employee-employee	Project information e.g. project issues
4. Internal corporate communication	Strategic managers / top management	Predominantly one-way	Strategic managers-all employees	Organisational / corporate issues e.g. goals, objectives, new developments, activities and achievements

The matrix addresses concerns raised about treating employees as a single group (L'Etang, 2006, p. 522) and posits typical content and communication flow in each stakeholder grouping. Internal corporate communication is seen to be predominately one-way communication as it is perceived to be a practical impossibility for senior managers to meet and discuss strategy with all employees (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 187). However, a symmetrical approach to practice can be maintained through line manager, team and project communication. Although the term 'employee voice' is not specifically cited, the authors highlight the importance of senior managers 'encouraging upward critical communication'. The authors (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 188) set out more detailed goals of internal corporate communication as:

- contributing to internal relationships characterised by employee commitment
- promoting a positive sense of belonging in employees
- developing their awareness of environmental change, and
- developing their understanding of the need for the organisation to evolve its aims in response to, or in anticipation of, environmental change.

These points can be considered as a combination of keeping employees informed about important organisational topics in ways that lead to organisational engagement through commitment and a sense of belonging. The next section explores how employees are kept informed in more detail.

2.5 KEEPING EMPLOYEES INFORMED

In this section, further considerations about keeping employees informed about important organisational topics are reviewed.

Peccei at al. (2010, p. 433) found an upward trend in information disclosure from managers to employees between 1990 and 1998, followed by a levelling off between 1998 and 2004. According to Peccei et al. (2010, p. 432) disclosure does seem to have a positive effect on financial performance. Nevertheless, many managers are disinclined to share information with employees. They conclude that there is, therefore, a need for management to learn about, and to come to terms with, the processes of information-sharing. As Hatal and Lutta (2009, p. 8) observe, continuous dissemination of new information to key individuals within organizations is likely to lead to improved performance as quality and timely information help top management in decision making. Forth and Millward (2002, p. 1) note that direct communication between managers and employees is growing and communication through employee representatives is declining. Between 1984 and 1998, based on evidence from Workplace Employee Relations Surveys (WERS) the proportion of workplaces where managers relied solely on direct communication increased from 11 to 30 percent (Forth and Millward, 2002, p. 1). In the same period, the use of newsletters increased from 34 to 50 percent and the use of more two-way communication in the form of 'briefing groups' was noted as a pervasive phenomenon, increasing from 36 to 65 percent (Forth and Millward, 2002, pp. 4-5). This is useful as a reflection on the way that information sharing is changing, though it does not explore the content of the communication and gives no indication as to whether employees feel that they are adequately informed to participate fully in briefing groups.

According to D'Aprix (2006, pp. 235-6) organisational-level communication is grounded in an organisation's vision and values. This is linked to corporate image and identity. However, corporate image and identity are not prioritised in the internal communication literature as they are posited as external communication. Cartwright and Holmes (2006, p. 204) suggest that corporate image can matter a great deal to an employee as it represents their assessment of what characteristics others are likely to ascribe to them because they work for a particular organisation. Holtzhausen and Fourie (2009, p. 340) argue that the non-visual elements of the corporate identity impact on employer-employee relationships and thus need special attention. Sluss et al. (2008, p. 458) suggest that, in terms of values, perceived organisational support (POS) is a key factor. This is defined as the employee's perception of the extent that their work organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being. It is especially important as many more people today are seeking a greater sense of meaning and purpose in their working lives (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006 p. 200).

Peccei et al. (2005, p. 12) claim that few studies focus explicitly on the substantive content of disclosure practice and that the impact of disclosure varies depending on the level of commitment of employees, the type of information disclosed and the performance outcome involved. Peccei et al. (2005, p. 33) go on to claim that management's systematic sharing of information on performance targets relating to various aspects of the operation of the organisation can help to enhance employee commitment. According to Truss et al. (2006, pp. 13-14) only around half of all employees say that their manager usually or always 'keeps me in touch with what is going on'. In general, 42 percent of employees say that they are not kept very well informed about what is going on in their organisation (Truss et al., 2006, p. 17) and this applies to both the public and private sectors. Daymon (1993, p. 247) suggests that the reasons why employees give up on the communication process is the failure to connect strategy to people:

> I think people didn't go . . . because the first one that [the chief executive] held was all financial. . . . It was all money, money, money, and it meant very little to a lot of people. He wasn't talking about realities. He was talking about fiscal policies. . . .

A failure to connect may also be attributable to other factors. For example, De Greene (1982, p. 53) cites several causes of communication problems, including one-sided (especially downward) communication processes; suppression of information; mistakes in the facts communicated; promulgation of rumour; and/or purposeful or accidental distortion. Marques cites Byrne and LeMay (2006, p. 149), who stress 'Quality of information refers to whether the communication is relevant, accurate, reliable and timely' and Zaremba (2006, p. 114) who lists the

following five foundational communication criteria: 'Timely, clear, accurate, pertinent, [and] credible'. Marques (2010, pp. 53-4) adds four more criteria: responsible, concise, professional, and sincere. Welch, (2012, p. 248) stresses that 'Beneficial internal communication relies on appropriate messages reaching employees in formats useful and acceptable to them'. Acceptability is an important consideration as communication can be a source of irritation. For example, Welch (2012, p. 252) found that employees were critical about perceived waste of environmental resources and the perceived financial costs of internal communication. Harshman and Harshman (1999, p. 12) argue that a number of internal communication practices can have a negative effect on employees. These include limited information being provided, stories about executives who are thousands of miles away, a journalistic bent to the communication process (who, what, when, where . . .) that means that there is little, if any, explanation of why certain decisions were made or justifications for actions, and attempts to create 'good morale' with communication that does not correlate with reality. A failure to connect with employees when using email communication can, according to De Kay (2010, p. 110) be attributable to poor design. De Kay found that email messages, especially company-wide communications originating from senior management, are most likely to be read by an intended audience if messages are designed to incorporate complex sets of visual and textual conventions. In terms of intranets, Bennett et al. (2010, p.141) claim that they are, at best, updated daily but this may not be enough in a world where work-based projects can change by the hour or even minute and control of information should be made available for everyone and should be updated every second, if necessary. Huang et al. (2012, p. 114) agree that intranets have limitations for customization and interactivity and furthermore, they can lead to the creation of 'electronic fences'. As a result, internal social media platforms are now being implemented as they provide potential for participation and interaction, increasing reach without compromising on richness.

Welch and Jackson (2007, pp. 187-8) emphasise the way that internal media can be controlled or uncontrolled and argue that internal corporate communication content and delivery is usually controlled by senior managers and internal communication managers, often using newsletters or internal briefings. Welch (2012, p. 249) identifies three attributes of internal communication media: controllability, usability and dissemination capability. An internal newsletter or briefing is an example of a controlled medium, disseminated by email (a 'push' dissemination). Usability refers to the ease of finding information, for example, on an intranet. Welch (2012, p. 248) also introduces the concept of employee-controllability to explain the way that employees may reject communication: acceptance occurs when a briefing is read and rejection when it is deleted without being opened. A more detailed review of employee preferences for internal communication methods is provided in chapter 3.

2.6 INTERNAL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION CONTENT

Internal corporate communication content is described by Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 185) as 'oganisational/corporate issues e.g. goals, objectives, new developments, activities and achievements'. However, the authors acknowledge that employee preferences for information on a variety of topics requires further study to ensure internal corporate communication meets employee needs. A more detailed review of employee preferences for internal communication content is also provided in chapter 3. Before coming to that, in the next section the attention turns to employee engagement.

2.7 DEFINING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: DISTINGUISHING IT FROM ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

2.7.1 Defining Employee Engagement

The origins of employee engagement are relatively recent. In a study that first outlined the basis for employee engagement, Kahn (1990, p. 693), defines it as, 'the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances'. This is a view that emphasises the individual in a work role, focused on psychological presence (Kahn, 1992, p. 322). Though aspects of presence, such as attentiveness, connection, integration and focus (Kahn, 1992, pp. 324-8) provide an understanding of the nature of engagement for the employee in their work role and in interaction with others the wider organisational dimension is not considered in as much depth. Furthermore, although norms are included as a mechanism for engagement with an emphasis on leaders and culture (Kahn, 1992, pp. 335-6) the role of internal communication is not considered. MacLeod and Clarke (2009, p. 9) conclude that that engagement is broader than individual job factors, it is a 'workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success'. Alfes et al. (2010, p. 5) identified a broad set of drivers; meaningfulness of work, voice - being able to feed your views upwards, senior management communication and vision, supportive work environment, person–job fit, line management style. Of these, meaningfulness and voice were highlighted as the two most important factors. Both aspects have significant implications for internal communication practice. The development of meaning is dependent upon connection of organisational aims to work and understanding of deeper levels of the purpose of the organisation; these are fundamentally communicative processes. Voice is the provision of opportunities for employees to express their views in the knowledge that they are taken seriously and this is associated with symmetrical communication (Kim, 2007, p. 172). Meaningfulness and voice are two aspects of internal communication that are explored in more detail in sections 2.14 and 2.20. Saks (2006, p. 612)

suggests that employees are engaged with their work *and* the organisation, highlighting determinants of engagement as meaningfulness, safety and availability. His work emphasises that engagement is dynamic and subject to fluctuation. This is significant for communication and engagement theory as it suggests that engagement can be impacted by internal communication. More recently, Gourlay et al. (2012, pp. 7-8) distinguish between different levels of engagement, described as transactional, based on an employee's concern to earn a living and emotional, based on an employee's desire to do more for (and receive more from) the organisation. There are parallels firstly between transaction and work-related descriptors and secondly between emotional and organisational descriptors.

2.7.2 A Summary Of Definitions Of Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment is summarised by Yousef (2000, p. 570) in terms of an employee's desire to stay at or leave an organisation. Where an employee has a strong affective commitment to the organisation he or she stays because of the desire to do so. Where an employee stays with the organisation because of the perceived costs in leaving, this is referred to as continuance commitment. Alternatively, employees with a strong normative commitment remain with the organisation because they feel they obliged to do so. Ashman and Winstanley (2006, p. 143) state that the term organisational commitment has become popularised around three themes; acceptance and belief in goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation, and a strong desire to stay at the organisation. These themes are based on the work of Porter et al. (1972), Mowday et al. (1982) and Steers (1977). This popular understanding has clear crossovers with some aspects of employee engagement with regard to understanding and belief in goals and discretionary effort. However, in a Sartrean critique of a managed approach to organisational commitment, Ashman and Winstanley (2006, p. 150) go on to argue that:

> Commitment, then, requires collaboration in ensuring the freedom of others. What this means is that reciprocated commitment must be chosen and given freely. Commitment would, therefore, be reciprocated in the organizational setting, not as a result of a sense of obligation, but as a choice founded in a particular sense of values.

The distinction between commitment as a sense of obligation and commitment as a choice *founded on values* is a point of departure from a choice founded on a *willingness to stay* at the organisation. The differences between commitment and engagement are discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.7.3 Distinguishing Engagement And Commitment

As highlighted in sections 2.8.1 and 2.8.2 there are potential crossovers between the definitions of organisational commitment and employee engagement. As Saks (2006, p. 601) notes, employee engagement has been defined in many different ways and the definitions sound like other constructs such as organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Robinson et al. (2004, p. 8) accept that engagement contains many of the elements of both commitment and OCB, but argue that it is 'By no means a perfect match with either. Neither commitment nor OCB reflect sufficiently two aspects of engagement – its two-way nature, and the extent to which engaged employees are expected to have an element of business awareness'. Saks (2006, p. 602) also argues that engagement is different as it involves the active use of emotions and behaviours in addition to cognitions. Saks (2006, p. 603) proposes social exchange theory as an alternative theoretical rationale for explaining engagement, in contrast to Kahn's (1990, p. 693) psychological conditions. The suggestion is that employees repay the organisation with their engagement when they receive economic resources and socioemotional support. Saks (2006, p. 603) argues that this is consistent with Robinson et al.'s (2004, p. 2) description of engagement as a two-way relationship between the employer and employee. Saks (2006, p. 605) also highlights perceived organisational support (POS) as an important antecedent of engagement, arguing that 'when employees believe that their organization is concerned about them and cares about their well-being, they are likely to respond by attempting to fulfil their obligations to the organization by becoming more engaged'. The implications for practice are that organisations that address employees' concerns and demonstrate caring attitudes towards employees create a culture whereby this is reciprocated through higher levels of engagement. As Leiter and Bakker (2010, p. 2) acknowledge, employees' responses to organisational policies, practices and structures affect their potential to experience engagement. In this thesis it is argued that it is the input to and response to organisational strategy and practices that determines organisational engagement. The next section explores the evolution of employee engagement in more depth and reviews the differences between work and organisational engagement.

2.8 THE EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Welch (2011b, pp. 2-3) describes three waves of evolution of the term employee engagement. Wave one begins in the 1990s with academic work on personal engagement. The decade is characterised by the beginnings of practitioner interest and the term employee engagement first came into use, widely credited as being coined by consultancy firm Gallup in 1999. In wave two (2000-2005) a key scientific development was the emergence of the positive psychology movement which switched focus from negative consequences of attitudes to work such as job burnout, to positive drivers such as engagement. Robinson et al. (2004, p. 2) defined the concept as a positive employee

attitude towards the organisation and its values, involving awareness of business context, and work to improve job and organisational effectiveness. They stress the two-way nature of employee engagement and emphasise that the organisation must work to develop and nurture engagement. Building on Kahn's psychological perspective of engagement, Luthans and Peterson (2002, p. 379) argue that manager self-efficacy is a significant component of engagement and that a manager's self-efficacy may be related to employee engagement because as the manager's employees become more engaged (cognitively and/or emotionally) in their work, the manager acquires confidence and belief in her/his abilities to create and build and engaged team or group successfully. In wave 3 (2006-2010) Saks (2006, p. 612) extended the employee engagement concept to encompass both job engagement and organisation engagement. Saks' work is significant because it tackles the question of the status of the concept and he addresses fears that the concept is more of a buzz word than a serious construct. In the following two sections the differences between work and organisational engagement are explored in more depth.

2.9 WORK ENGAGEMENT

Kahn's (1990) original work on employee engagement is focused on an employee and their work role. In a later review of the field Kahn (2010, pp. 20-1) highlights the difference between engagement and motivation, where motivation is seen as something that an employee either switches on or off. Kahn argues that employees are more complicated than that. He sees engagement as the degree to which an employee brings his or herself – their real self – to their work. Engaged people are focused on their tasks, they stay with them, they care about them. This is the essence of work engagement. It is what Shimazu et al. (2010, p. 364) describe as a 'work related state of mind' which leads to a sense of energetic and effective connection with work activities. This echoes Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 74) who perceive engagement to be a 'work related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption'. Other work-related engagement perspectives include person-job fit (Fleck and Inceoglu, 2010, p. 31), job attitudes (Newman et al., 2010, pp. 45-6), job involvement (Schohat and Vigoda-Gadot, 2010, p. 101), flow (Moneta, 2010, pp. 273-4), work teams (Richardson and West , 2010, p. 325) and a job demands-resources model of engagement (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008, p. 223; Bakker, 2010, p. 240) that emphasises work pressures, autonomy and personal traits such as optimism.

2.10 ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

According to Saks (2006, p. 604) the two most dominant roles for most organisational members are their work role and their role as a member of an organisation. Sluss et al. (2008, p. 457) agree, arguing that although a myriad of potential exchange relationships exist within and between organisations, all employees have two seemingly preeminent relationships at work; one with the

immediate supervisor and one with the organisation. However, as Gatenby et al. (2009, p. 5) and Masson et al. (2008, p. 57) report, the most common approach in the literature is to focus on the immediate job. This thesis addresses this imbalance in the literature as the thesis is focused on organisational engagement.

The distinction between work and organisational engagement is a relatively recent development in the field. However, Meyer et al. (2010, p. 63) argue that the engagement concept has been extended beyond a mere work related state. Kahn (2010, pp. 27-30) points out that employees also engage with leaders and aspects of the organisation itself. He highlights that:

> Leaders needed to learn to dismantle the obstacles to engagement – structures, processes, and, for some, themselves- and create new patterns of interaction with and among employees. They had to create learning forums that were safe enough for employees to tell them the truth of their experiences. They had to create forums for themselves, in which they worked through – with some help from outside – the implications of what they heard, and they had to figure out what to do about it. In the settings in which this occurred, employee engagement proved remarkably resilient. It blossomed, like a malnourished child suddenly fed and loved.

Millward and Postmes (2010, p. 335) report that the fact that identification with the superordinate grouping of 'the organisation' was particularly relevant to performance is important for theoretical, empirical and pragmatic reasons. Indeed, the importance of organisational engagement may have, to date, been underestimated as Saks (2006, p. 612) found that organisation engagement was a much stronger predictor of outcomes than job engagement. Engagement may also be multi-dimensional. Shuck and Reio (2014, pp. 46-7) summarise *cognitive engagement* as the way that employees appraise their workplace climate. *Emotional engagement* stems from cognitive engagement and is about pride and trust. *Behavioural engagement* is the most overt form and is about what an employee does. Engagement is described as 'a series of psychological states (cognitive, emotional and behavioural) ultimately representing an intention to act…' Fleck and Inceoglu (2010, p. 38) outline two separate dimensions for organisational engagement:

1. Identification - a sense of belonging, and
2. Alignment - the congruence between employees' beliefs about where the organization should be heading, what the goals and aspirations of the organization should be, and the actual direction of the organization.

They argue that identification is affective and alignment is cognitive.

Truss et al. (2006, p. 45) found that the three most important factors for engagement are:

1. Having opportunities to feed your views upwards
2. Feeling well informed about what is happening in the organisation, and
3. Thinking that your manager is committed to your organisation.

However, if employees are not well informed then it is difficult for them to express meaningful views about the organisation. Factor one is therefore, in some respects, dependent on factor two. The combination of feeling informed and having opportunities to feed views upwards is a central point of investigation in this thesis. In the next section the importance of employee voice for engagement is reviewed in more depth.

2.11 EMPLOYEE VOICE

2.11.1 Background To Employee Voice

According to Wilkinson et al. (2004, p. 4) the word 'voice' was popularised by Freeman and Medoff (1984) who argued that it made good sense for both company and workforce to have a 'voice' mechanism. Spencer (1986) developed this theme and concluded that giving employees opportunities to voice their dissatisfaction increased the likelihood that they would stay with the organisation. However, Spencer (1986, p. 500) also noted that on the organisational level of analysis, future research should consider not only formal voice mechanisms and their quality, but also informal organisational cultures that create and sustain those mechanisms. This has led to wider thinking about employee voice and according to Van Dyne et al. (2003, p. 1369) the management literature contains two major conceptualizations. The first approach describes speaking up behaviour such as when employees proactively make suggestions for change. The second uses the term to describe procedures that enhance justice judgments and facilitate employee participation in decision making.

2.11.2 ProSocial Voice, Defensive Voice And Acquiescent Voice

Van Dyne et al. (2003, p. 1370) outline three ways that voice is expressed; prosocial voice, defensive voice, and acquiescent voice (Figure 2.1). This is based on three specific employee motives within the management literature on silence and voice: disengaged behaviour based on resignation, self-protective behaviour based on fear, and other oriented behaviour based on cooperation. This section of the thesis is focused on prosocial voice, on what is expressed, or what employees say about their opportunities to contribute ideas and suggestions about what goes on at the organisation and the associations with organisational engagement.

FIGURE 2.1 ProSocial Voice, Defensive Voice And Acquiescent, Voice Van Dyne et al., (2003, p. 1370)

PROSOCIAL VOICE	DEFENSIVE VOICE	ACQUIESCENT VOICE
Examples: • Expressing solutions to problems based on cooperation • Suggesting constructive ideas for change to benefit the organization	Examples: • Expressing ideas that shift attention elsewhere based on fear • Proposing ideas that focus on others to protect the self	Examples: • Expressing supportive ideas based on resignation • Agreeing with the group due to low self efficacy to make a difference

2.11.3 A Multi-Dimensional Approach To Voice

Dundon et al. (2004, p.1152) suggest four uses of employee voice; individual dissatisfaction, collective organisation (as a counter to the power of management), management decision-making, and mutuality (a partnership for long term sustainability). This extends the scope of voice to include employees working in partnership with managers for the benefit of the organisation. Wilkinson et al. (2004, pp. 6-7) take a broader, multi-dimensional approach to employee voice, suggesting that is based upon five factors:

1. Communication/exchange of views, an opportunity for employees and managers to exchange views about issues
2. Upward problem-solving, an opportunity for employees to provide feedback on specific topics
3. Collective representation, an opportunity for employee representatives to communicate the views of the workforce to managers
4. Engagement, a feeling on the part of staff that they are able to express their views to managers in an open environment, and
5. A say about issues, the opportunity not just to have a 'voice' on issues but an expectation that these views will be taken into account and may lead to changes in how decisions are made.

MacLeod and Clarke (2009, p. 75) reflect that of the people consulted for their report to the UK government, most highlighted four broad engagement enablers; leadership, engaging managers, integrity and voice. Voice is described as 'employees' views are sought out; they are listened to and see that their opinions count and make a difference. They speak out and challenge when appropriate'. These analyses of employee voice represent different perspectives. Van Dyne et al. describe how employees may express their voice in different ways. Dundon et al. outline the uses of employee voice. Wilkinson et al. place more emphasis on engagement, the organisational environment, and an ongoing exchange of views that are taken into account. Wilkinson et al. (2004,

p. 7) conclude that simply defining voice as *communication* was by far the most common and immediate response to the question asking managers to explain their understanding of the term.

2.11.4 Employee Silence

A less explored aspect of employee voice is employee silence. This is defined at an individual level as 'An employee's motivation to withhold or express ideas, information and opinions about work-related improvements' and at a broader level as 'A collective phenomenon where employees withhold their opinions and concerns about potential organizational problems' (Van Dyne et al., 2003, pp. 1361-4). According to Donaghey et al. (2011, pp. 52-3) research on employee silence has focused on it as something that employees choose and this overlooks the constraints imposed by managers. Morrison (2014, p. 177) identifies two themes that dominate the literature on employee silence. The first is that employees do not necessarily share their ideas and concerns and that the tendency toward silence often dominates the inclination to voice. The second assumption is that voice is important for organizations and, by implication, that silence is harmful. A range of possible explanations for employee silence are discussed in the literature. Morrison (2011, pp. 383-4; 2014, p. 180) highlights two dominant issues; safety (or risk) and efficacy (or futility). Safety is related to an employee's perception of how raising an issue or voicing a suggestion may lead to them being labelled a troublemaker. This fear is not without foundation. As Tourish and Robson (2006, p. 716) observe, when managers receive critical upward communication they may respond with less than enthusiastic or punitive behaviour. Efficacy is the employee's perception about whether engaging in voice will be effective in bringing about the desired result. Morrison (2011, p. 383) defines this as 'the sense that speaking up will not accomplish anything (e.g., "why bother?" "no one will listen," "nothing will change")'. Donaghey et al. (2011, p. 58) argue that 'Management behaviour then lies at the heart of the debate on the management of voice structures'. However, as Morrison (2014, p. 182) observes, 'Leaders may not be seen as very open or interested in input from employees, which may serve to stifle voice' and suggests that more research is required on what makes leaders more or less receptive to voice.

2.11.5 Voice And Communication Leadership

An absence of opportunities for voice may be symptomatic of a view emanating from the strategic management literature that only senior managers are critical resources (Royer et al., 2008, p. 240). Effective employee voice, where what employees say is treated seriously, may therefore potentially address the critiques of transformational leadership made by Tourish (2013, p. 28) and Ashman and Lawler (2008, p. 265) where transformational leadership is understood primarily as gaining support for pre-determined corporate strategy and objectives. Dundon and Gollan (2007, p. 1188) argue that

a lack of voice or a perception among employees that their voice is not treated seriously could be interpreted as a sign that management is untrustworthy. Rees et al. (2013, p. 5-6) argue that as voice engenders the belief that employee contributions are valued, this creates a level of respect towards the leaders of an organisation. Where employers deliver on commitments, this in turn generates a sense of fairness, leading to relational trust, fostering reciprocity and an emotional bond. Liu et al. (2010, p. 191) highlight the importance of 'transformational leadership' that incorporates an approach whereby employees are allowed more leeway in communicating and challenging the status quo. In their research in China, they found that strong personal identification with the leader might encourage followers to speak up (e.g. share critical thinking with the leader) rather than keep silent. This is important, as Tourish and Hargie (2004, p. 194) suggest that the danger is that top managers can become like rock stars surrounded by a sycophantic entourage. In the next section dialogue, a process that combines keeping employees informed and giving them a voice that is treated seriously, is reviewed in more depth.

2.11.6 Genuine Dialogic Communication

De Bussy and Suprawan (2012, p. 109) refer to Buber (2002) in differentiating dialogue in three ways. Firstly, dialogue as genuine dialogue involves each participant really having the others in mind and turning to them with the intention of establishing a living, mutual relation. Technical dialogue is prompted solely by the need for objective understanding. Ashman and Lawler (2008, p. 265) argue that instances of communication of the vision of an organisation, 'using the transmission and clarification of information rather than constituting an interpersonal exchange' are examples of technical dialogue. Finally, there is what Buber described as monologue disguised as dialogue. This can occur in a variety of situations including debates where thoughts are expressed, not as they existed in the mind, but only in order to score points and without those being addressed regarded as in any way present as persons. Francis et al. (2013, pp. 2715-6) argue that employee engagement is predominantly rooted in a discourse of compliance which leads to an anti-dialogical reality - communication around engagement is primarily monovocal, reflective of management interests. Francis et al. (2013, p. 2717) set out a model of deliberative democracy, based around an ideal speech situation where sources of domination and power asymmetries are absent. This may sound idealistic. However, in two empirical studies of medium to large Australian companies undertaken by De Bussy and Suprawan (2012, p. 112) employee orientation through genuine dialogic communication was found to make a strong contribution to corporate financial performance. The impact was greater than that of orientation towards any other individual primary stakeholder group, including shareholders, customers, suppliers, the community and the natural environment.

As Rees et al. (2013, p. 4) observe, employee voice was originally equated with trade union membership and collective bargaining, but it is now more frequently seen as a range of ways in which employees have a say about what goes on in their organisation. This is summarised as employees' actual behaviour in 'speaking up' with constructive ideas that aim to improve or change the status quo. Employee voice is thus a communicative process about the organisation that is defined as follows for the purposes of this thesis:

> A process of continuous dialogue between employees and managers, whereby employees are given regular opportunities to express views, concerns, ideas and practical suggestions about the organisation to all levels of management in an environment where such communication is genuinely welcomed, taken seriously, considered and honest responses provided.

2.12 A REVISED DEFINITION OF INTERNAL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

In summary, our understanding of employee engagement is evolving and maturing and it can now be separated into two dimensions; work engagement and organisational engagement. This distinction is important for internal communication theory and practice which is more likely to be associated with organisational engagement. Furthermore, two core processes emerge from the literature; keeping employees informed and employee voice.

As can be inferred from the previous sections, internal communication and employee engagement have separate academic and professional heritages. Internal communication is conceptualised as part of strategic public relations (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 179). Employee engagement is conceptualised as part of human resources management and organisational psychology. This split may contribute to a silo mind-set. For example, although internal communication is cited as vital for employee engagement (Truss et al., 2006; Alfes et al., 2010; Gourlay et al., 2012) it is given relatively limited importance in the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development's (CIPD) profession map (section 8.7). Conversely, employee engagement is not adequately covered in the corporate communication literature (Welch, 2011, p. 1). This thesis integrates theory from both traditions and builds on a new definition of internal corporate communication that incorporates the role of internal communication in underpinning organisational engagement. Internal corporate communication is defined in this thesis as:

> Timely corporate information provided to employees and the concurrent facilitation of employee voice that is treated seriously by line managers and senior managers.

This new definition synthesises the combined significance of corporate level information (Welch and Jackson, 2007), meaningfulness of communication (Alfes et al., 2010), two-way

communication (Kim, 2007) and employee voice (Alfes et al., 2010). It also acknowledges that, according to Mazzei (2010, p. 231) internal communication is no longer merely a message-targeting function. In the next section, this new definition is reviewed in the context of broader critical communication theory.

2.13 CRITICAL COMMUNICATION THEORY

A number of scholars (L'Etang, 2006; Heath, 2009; Holtzhausen, 2002) have argued for an alternative, critical, approach to public relations theory. The dominant, modernist, excellence theory, outlined in section 2.3 privileges management discourse and takes organisational goals for granted (Holtzhausen and Voto, 2002, p. 60) whereas critical theory is focused more on the disruption of beliefs about organisations and publics (Toth, 2009, p. 53). Excellence theory has led to a focus on the strategic management of communication often grounded in information transfer, for example, senior manager-employee communication. Critical theory is less interested in effective communication and more motivated by asking questions about whose interests are being served through communication. As Lee and Cheng (2011, p. 47) observe, although there is much discussion about the ethics of public relations, largely due to the association of public relations with manipulation, propaganda and spin, there is little systematic empirical or theoretical research on ethical leadership in public relations. Despite the growing development of postmodern (Holtzhausen and Voto, 2002), rhetorical and critical (Toth, 2009) perspectives for public relations, academics in these fields tend to focus their analysis on external communication rather than internal communication. This ignores the evidence for the increasing importance of internal communication (Moreno et al., 2010, p. 101). It also sidesteps the challenging contention that internal communication is the last refuge for the propagandist (Morris and Goldsworthy, 2008, p. 130). The implicit assumption is that generic critical theory about public relations applies in exactly the same way to internal communication as it does to external communication. This thesis challenges that notion. It argues for another level of application of the theory as the relationship between managers and employees is different from that of the organisation with other stakeholder groups.

The key introduction of critical theory to public relations, according to Toth (2009, p. 52), can be dated back to Dozier and Lauzen (2000, p. 3) in a move away from the social scientific principles that underpin Grunig's (2001) excellence theory. Toth (2009, p. 54) claims that critical theorists marshal their evidence, expose faulty arguments, and/or provoke us with uncomfortably new ideas. Critical theory therefore contrasts with key tenets of the dominant paradigm, excellence theory, that focus on how public relations contributes to organisational effectiveness. Grunig (1992) explains that excellence theory is a theory based on the approach of interpretive social science, although it shares common elements with rhetorical and critical theories and asserts that

communication with the CEO and others in top management seems to be an integral component of the symmetrical communication system that is a key attribute of an excellent organisation. Symmetry is a fundamental component of excellence theory, a process that Grunig (2001, p. 28) describes as collaborative advocacy and cooperative antagonism. Symmetry has been criticised as idealistic and too linked to organisational interests (McKie and Munshi, 2007, p. 36). However, as Botan and Taylor (2004, p. 652) highlight, critical theorists, rhetorical theorists and excellence theorists are all interested in the communication between groups and organisations and how this is negotiated during change.

New critical and postmodern schools of thought within public relations have challenged the dominant paradigm, excellence theory, in the last decade. These focus on the power of the organisation over its relationship with stakeholder groups and look at communication more from a stakeholder perspective than an organisational perspective. However, critical public relations theory is almost exclusively applied to the field of external communication and internal communication has largely been ignored. As a result, there is a significant gap in the literature that applies critical theory to internal communication. This is revealing on two levels; one, it suggests that internal communication is still the 'poor cousin' to external communication in public relations academic research, and two, despite the public relations literature pointing to the overriding importance of employees as a stakeholder group, communication with them is deemed to be less worthy of analysis than for other stakeholder groups.

2.14 DISTORTED COMMUNICATION

2.14.1 Dimensions Of Distorted Communication

Deetz (2005, pp. 85-6) points out that organisations have often been guilty of economic exploitation of workers and emphasises the importance of challenging 'distorted communication'. He sets out the case for an exploration of alternative, critical, communication practices that allow greater democracy and more creative and productive cooperation among stakeholders. This requires a personal courage to identify and challenge assumptions behind ordinary ways of perceiving, combined with 'an activist dimension' (2005, p. 91). Deetz (2005, p. 94) explains that a critique of domination and the ways that people subjugated often participate in their subjugation is central to critical theory. Demonstrating how forms of distorted communication obscure reality and the use of forums where conflicts can be discussed and resolved is put forward as the alternative approach to communication. In terms of internal communication, it is often one-way with minimal opportunity for feedback (Williams and Adam-Smith, 2010, p. 301). The possible domination of employees through overly-managed, asymmetric, communication appears to largely go unchallenged by public

relations academics and practitioners alike. It is as if subtle communication power imbalances that exist between managers and employees in organisations are more acceptable and legitimate than those that maybe exerted by organisations over external stakeholder groups. Deetz (1992, pp. 190-8) argues that the normal discourse of organisations is domination. This consists of four dimensions that add up to systemically distorted communication:

Naturalisation – employees assume that goals are set by management and are accepted by all
Neutralisation – employees believe that corporate information is neutral
Legitimation – the privileging of one management voice over all others
Socialisation – training so that employees adopt the given values of the organisation.

Internal corporate communication dominated by 'legitimation' is open to the critique of being 'distorted communication'. One-way downward internal communication without systemised employee voice is a form of propaganda that serves to reinforce a management dominance over employees. As Waymer and Ni (2009, p. 222) argue, organisations are symbolic communicative constructions and that employees may find themselves battling against the dominant discourse of the organisation.

2.14.2 Organisations As Discursive Constructions
From a social constructivist perspective, communication is not simply a variable or the transmission of information (Putnam et al., 2009, p. 6), instead it created and recreated the social structures that formed the crux of organizing through the use of language, symbols, and constructed meanings. Fairhurst and Putnam (2004, p. 10) outline three dimensions for organisations as discursive constructions:

Organisations as objects – bureaucracies and products of social interactions (present and past)
Organisations as perpetual states – communication as a dynamic process that creates, sustains and transforms organisations
Organisations as grounded in action – discursive forms and practices continuously, but the organisation mediates communication practices.

Deetz and Brown (2004, pp. 184-5) suggest that, at a constitutive level, a communication focused perspective of organising draws attention to a politics of perception and person formation. However, to develop communication as a collaborative process is not without significant challenges. As Deetz and Brown acknowledge, few companies appear to use collaboration

processes as part of their participation process because it requires a different attitude going into meetings and a different form of interaction in meetings. This is where a critical approach to internal communication practice can play an important role in challenging what Deetz and Brown (2004, p. 187) call native, common-sense assumptions about communication and participation that privilege the self at the expense of the other.

2.14.3 Communication Power: Internal Communication Practitioners As Change Agents

Power is the defining concept for critical theorists and this is linked to control and domination (Miller, 2009, p. 101). Littlejohn and Foss (2008, p. 265) suggest that control takes many forms and these can be summarised as follows:

Simple control – direct power
Technical control – devices and technology
Bureaucratic control – procedures and rules
Concertive control – relationships and teamwork based on shared reality and values.

Tourish (2013, p. 8) states that 'Power is generally defined in terms of our ability to influence other people and derives in part from our ability to control such things as resources, rewards and punishments'. Internal communication is often employed to communicate information about rules and processes, especially when they are changed. It is also used to communicate values, purpose, strategy and goals. It can be viewed as a form of communication control if employees have little meaningful input or opportunities for feedback. Grunig (1992, p. 564) argues that an asymmetrical use of power is typified by managers who seek to increase the dependence of followers on them. In contrast, symmetrical use of power is illustrated through 'collaborating to increase the power of everyone in the organization, for the benefit of everyone in the organization'. Berger (2005, p. 6) suggests that there are three dimensions to power:

Power over – dominance model, decision making characterised by control and self interest
Power with – empowerment model, decision making through dialogue, inclusion, and negotiation
Power to – forms of resistance used by public relations practitioners to try to counter a dominance model.

Internal corporate communication that is predominantly one-way with little two-way communication at line manager and senior manager levels is indicative of a 'power over - dominance' model. Dundon et al. (2005, p. 312) argue that, on the whole, managers decide whether

or not workers have a voice and it is managers rather than employees who decide what mechanisms to utilise. Critical communication theorists emphasise participation in decision making and also advocate forms of communication activism. They argue that this is required as organisational discourse produces and reproduces power relationships. As Miller (2009, p. 105) puts it, organisational reality is socially constructed through communicative interaction. Kanihan et al. (2013, p. 142) report that researchers make a distinction between formal and informal communication practitioner power. Formal power is represented in hierarchical reporting relationships and informal power is associated with being valued for communication expertise and being a trusted advisor. Berger (2005) found that communication managers were likely to be included in the shifting decision-making coalitions when their expertise was relevant to a decision. However, the role of internal communication practitioners can go beyond the provision of expertise. Holtzhausen and Voto (2002, p. 60) argue that practitioners should be change agents, serve as the conscience of the organisation, and give voice to those without power in their relationship with the organization. Holtzhausen and Voto (2002, p. 64) define the role of a public relations practitioner as someone who will:

> Preference employees' and external publics' discourse over that of management, will make the most humane decision in a particular situation, and will promote new ways of thinking and problem solving through dissensus and conflict. These actions will contribute to a culture of emancipation and liberation in the organization.

According to (Holtzhausen and Voto, 2002, p. 61) practitioners should use sources of power themselves, such as personal characteristics, expertise, and opportunity to obtain power in the organisation. They state that this should only be employed as a positive force for change. However, it is not clear how a positive force is determined. According to Kanihan et al. (2013, p. 142) public relations and communication managers are seldom in the top decision-making group. This suggests that new approaches to internal communication practice may be difficult to implement.

2.15 EMPLOYEES AS A HIGHER ORDER STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Public relations theory refers to stakeholders to describe groups of people that are important for an organisation. According to Rawlins (2006, p. 3) there has been little effort to identify stakeholders according to the relationship with the organisation. As highlighted in section 2.3 relationship management approaches stress the importance of relationships with outcomes based on strategic planning. Grunig and Hunt (1984) distinguish categories of stakeholder linkages to organisations as:

Enabling - stockholders, directors, legislators

Normative - professional associations

Diffused - media, community, activists

Functional - employees and suppliers.

However, this categorisation does not extend to an analysis of the qualitative differences in the nature of communication with different stakeholder groups. Rawlins (2006, p.8) suggests that functional input linkages, such as employees, have a legitimate claim on the organisation and high levels of involvement. They are economically dependent on the organisation, and as such, the power resides primarily with the organisation. Therefore, the organisation has a moral and legal responsibility to those stakeholders that increases their priority. Wilson (2005) suggests that stakeholders should be considered from a communication based perspective. Key publics are those whose participation and cooperation are required to accomplish organisational goals. Wilson argues that priority publics can be profiled by their demographics, lifestyles and values, media preferences, cooperative networks and self-interests. This external focus reflects a tendency again in the public relations literature to identify employees as a key, or *the* key, generic stakeholder group then to group them with a range of other external stakeholder groups. This approach does not explore the fundamentally different communication requirements for employees. As a stakeholder group, employees have different relationship requirements than other stakeholder groups. For example, an employee's personal identity is more closely linked to the organisation, an employee is often more financially dependent on the organisation and an employee's emotional commitment to an organisation is likely to be stronger than that of a customer or supplier. In general, an employee is likely to have a longer term relationship with an organisation than any other stakeholder group. This focus on employees as the primary stakeholder group is developed by Nayar (2010, p.12) who argues for an employee first, customers second thinking. This entails turning the organisation on its head so that managers are accountable to those who create value not the other way round. The next section explores the involvement of employees in decision making in more depth.

2.16 EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION: WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY

Management theorists and human resource academics explore employee involvement and participation (EIP) and the potential linkages to job satisfaction (Miller, 2009, p. 148). There is evidence to suggest that EIP operates on both affective and cognitive levels; affective participation satisfying higher order needs (such as self-actualisation) and cognitive participation satisfying knowledge flow needs that lead to more informed decisions (Miller, 2009, p. 148-9). EIP has been

extended by some critical theorists (Cheney, 1995) to a general concept of workplace democracy, based on humanistic principles about how people should be treated in society, including in organisations. Cheney (1995, p.167) argues that 'surely one of the great ironies of the modern world is that democracy, imperfect as it is in the political realm, seldom extends to the workplace'. Deetz (2005, pp. 85-6) argues that organisations have often been guilty of economic exploitation of workers and emphasises the importance of challenging 'distorted communication'. He sets out the case for an exploration of alternative, critical, communication practices that allow greater democracy and more creative and productive cooperation among stakeholders. It is unclear how far such communication practices currently exist, although Dundon et al. (2005, p. 316) found one example in a housing association, where the personnel manager regarded employee voice as a form of democracy that exists in the organisation.

Workplace democracy, according to Collins (1997, p. 499) is a more ethically superior approach than authoritarian management. However, organisational cultural barriers to EIP and workplace democracy can be significant (Huang et al., 2012). A simple definition of EIP separates it into two dimensions: direct, the participation of each individual in team briefings or problem-solving groups and indirect participation, through workplace committees (Cox et al., 2006, p. 251). A focus on more participation is justified as, according to Tourish and Hargie (2004, p. 190), managers suppress information, cover up negative financial data, deny failure, and run propaganda campaigns that deny the existence of crises. In their analysis of UK Workplace Employee Relations Survey (WERS) data from 1998, Cox et al., (2006, p. 260) noted that embedded EIP practices have a stronger association with organisational commitment than with job satisfaction. It is the combination of breadth and depth of EIP that they note is important, rather than specific practices themselves. Others suggest that the expansion of the breadth of EIP might be misleading. Danford et al. (2009, p. 44) found that there is a significant gap between the rhetoric and reality of information disclosure and consultation. Their research indicated that the organisations studied all had an extensive breadth of participatory practices in place. Despite this, workers tended to provide low evaluations of consultation and related levels of influence, both direct and indirect (Danford et al., 2009, p. 346) and as one employee put it, 'I've viewed consultation as something like: senior management have 95 percent or so of the plan worked out and they consult us on minor details to give us a sense of "ownership"'. This approach is, according to Danford et al. (2009, p. 348), due to an excessively hierarchical structure, work overload, and the increase in reliance on electronic channels for communication. Analysis of the depth of EIP needs to go beyond 'scope' and 'top down/two-way' descriptors to encompass the credibility of the process and to assess actions taken by senior management as a result of dialogue. Without credibility, 'quasi' EIP might actually lead

to greater employee cynicism than no involvement at all. The next section explores how critical communication theory can be associated with a new code of ethics for internal communication practice.

2.17 COMMUNICATION ETHICS: THE CASE FOR A NEW CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PRACTITIONERS

Although ethics in public relations is widely explored (Beckett, 2003; Fawkes, 2007; Gregory, 2008; L'Etang, 2006; L'Etang, 2011) discussions of internal communication specific ethics within the literature are limited. For example, Fawkes (2007, p. 322) suggests that 'Many of the most important communication issues facing this century, from global warming to religious fundamentalism, raise questions concerning the relative power of those seeking to establish dialogue'. The selection of the issues cited is understandable. However, issues around the way that organisations are managed and the importance of employee voice are ignored. Indeed it can be argued that if different approaches to communication leadership had existed in the financial services sector, including employee voice, then the 2008 banking crisis may have been averted (Tourish, 2013, pp. 5-7). Clampitt (2013, p. 50) is a rare exception in providing an analysis of the ethical communication considerations that managers face at work, arguing that behaving ethically is one of the continual human struggles, one that organisations cannot ignore. Clampitt (2013, pp. 55-6) highlights the issue of employee dissent and suggests that ethical managers and organisations face two different questions:

1.   Can we find healthy ways for employees to express their concerns to organisational leaders?
2.   How should we respond to those concerns?

This focus on the expression of concerns and the responses made reinforces the emphasis on symmetrical internal communication and employee voice reviewed in sections 2.4 and 2.12. Clampitt (2013, pp.70-72) summarises his review of ethics by suggesting that there are five tests for communication that help engender what he calls 'a spirit of honourable communication'. They are:

Discretion – having a respect for fellow human beings

Relevancy – all pertinent facts are brought to bear on a decision

Accuracy – a healthy respect for the truth

Fairness – speaking up to correct an inaccuracy, defending someone's reputation, or dealing with an impropriety

Timeliness – properly timed communication demonstrates respect for the individual.

These principles can be extended by a consideration of the duty of the individual communication practitioner. Gregory (2009, pp. 280-2) highlights Seib and Fitzpatrick's (1992) four duties; self, client or organisation, profession, and society. For the internal communicator these could be related to self, employees, profession and organisational involvement. Codes of ethical conduct do exist for communication practitioners. For example, the UK's Institute of Internal Communication's (IoIC) code of practice is:

> Members shall observe the highest ethical standards in the practice of internal communications. They shall seek to serve the best interests of their employers, clients, employees, colleagues and others with whom they deal in their role as internal communicators.

The UK Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR)'s code is more wide-ranging with detailed principles of good practice in four categories: integrity, competence, transparency and avoiding conflicts of interest, and confidentiality. The CIPR also has a professional practices committee that considers breaches of the code. The CIPR code does make some specific references to employees, though it is, in general, written from an external communication perspective. According to Seeger (2004, p. 232) in the US the National Communication Association (NCA) has a code of practice that covers a broad set of ethical traditions such as honesty, truthfulness, free speech, condemnation of hate speech, the ethic of care, privacy, respect, social justice, responsibility and responsiveness. The CIPR and NCA codes of ethical communication conduct are both more generally related to external communication than internal communication and therefore do not necessarily incorporate the different requirements that employees have as a stakeholder group compared to external stakeholder groups. The Stockholm Accords, a new set of guidelines for public relations practice developed by the World Public Relations Forum in 2010, acknowledges the importance of collaboration in internal communication. It states that practitioners should seek constant feedback for a mutual understanding of how – and how well – organisational leaders collaborate and communicate with stakeholders. However, codes of conduct have not been updated to reflect this.

In summary, the ethics of internal communication are rarely discussed in the literature and existing codes of ethical practice specific to internal communication are limited. This is an aspect of practice that could be developed in more detail and this thesis informs ethical practice as it explores what internal communication employees expect from organisations. As an initial basis for a new code of ethical internal communication practice the following principles are proposed. An ethical internal communicator:

- Ensures that employees receive important organisational information at the right time for them
- Ensures that employees have a say about what goes on in the organisation and that what is said is treated seriously
- Ensures that senior managers communicate regularly with employees, providing them with important organisational information, listening to their opinions and suggestions and responding to them
- Challenges senior managers when important information is not forthcoming
- Challenges senior managers when employee voice is not in place across the organisation

These principles reflect the importance of keeping employees informed and upward feedback, discussed in previous sections. However, despite the importance of codes of conduct they cannot ever be a panacea for resolving a lack of workplace involvement and participation. As Seeger (2004, p. 232) highlights, Enron had an extensive ethical code which included explicit provisions about ethical communication. Indeed, Holtzhausen and Voto (2002, p. 64) argue that general codes of conduct based on normative standards of right and wrong should be replaced with individual, ethically responsible decision making. This is because normative standards are often unjust and simply privilege those already in power. A focus on more situational factors and individual ethics is attractive in that it enables practitioners to use appropriate judgment for particular circumstances. However, unless it is based on agreed, general internal communication principles, it leaves practice open to a variety of approaches that practitioners could justify through an idiosyncratic belief system. In the next section the communication role of senior managers emphasised in the suggested code is reviewed in more detail.

2.18 SENIOR MANAGER COMMUNICATION

2.18.1 The Role Of Senior Managers In Developing A Strategic Narrative

Internal corporate communication can be considered as developing a narrative about an organisations' plans and progress. MacLeod and Clarke (2009, p. 75) define narrative in this context as 'a clearly expressed story about what the purpose of an organisation is, why it has the broad vision it has, and how an individual contributes to that purpose'. However, as Christensen and Cornelissen (2011, p.395) point out, when managers too strictly try to manage and control communication it may undermine employee wellbeing and morale. Gill (2014, p. 5) found that storytelling is used by managers for developing and maintaining good working relationships with staff and it can generate open communication. Internal corporate communication also needs to be relevant and meaningful. As O'Neill (1999) observed, people distrust euphemism and jargon and

leaders must try to link individual success with corporate success. Galunic and Hermreck (2012a, p. 26) found that top management has a profound impact on how well employees grasp and support strategy and they note that this has implications for a reliance on a 'cascade' communication where senior leaders communicate with their direct reports and depend on them to disseminate it to frontline workers. Their research indicates that a belief in cascades may be misplaced. Galunic and Hermreck summarise their findings as follows:

> It may be too easy and convenient for senior leaders to rely upon a strategy cascade to embed essential ideas about company position and competitive dynamics in the minds of employees, counting on middle managers and their work on local job conditions to ensure that strategy becomes understood and accepted. Although local job conditions matter, senior management has a unique voice and understanding of strategy, and this may help explain they substantial influence they have on strategic embeddedness when they engage with employees.

De Beer (2014, pp. 139-40) argues that a narrow understanding of corporate communication in terms of media relations will have to make way for a broader view of a function that comprises both internal and external communication. This calls for senior managers to treat internal corporate communication seriously both as a function and as a personal responsibility to communicate with employees. However, it often seen as 'dead time' by managers (Tourish and Hargie, 2009, p. 14). When senior managers do communicate with employees about strategy, there is, as Daymon (1993, p. 247) reports a need to ensure that the content addresses realities. If this is not done it can lead to misinterpretation and resistance (p. 249).

2.18.2 Principles Of Communicative Leadership

Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) argue that all great leadership starts with listening with an open mind, heart and will. Illes and Mathews (2015, p. 10) explain that effective listening shows that the leader is benevolent and has their employees' interests at heart. According to Johanssen et al. (2014, p. 148) the concept of 'communicative leadership', categorised by Eriksen (1997, p. 164) as 'openness and dialogue with the employees', can be questioned as leading without communicating seems virtually impossible. However, they go on to point out that leaders who are 'communicative' are not just communicating, but that they are 'good communicators'. Indeed, as Ashman and Lawler (2008, p. 253) point out, it can be argued that argued that 'leadership…when all is said and done, is communication'. However, they go on to observe that 'Taking account of the intimate connection between leadership and communication it is remarkable that the concept of communication is taken so much for granted in the literature on leadership' (p. 254). This thesis therefore explores how satisfied employees are with senior manager communication and how they would like senior managers to communicate with them.

Johanssen et al. (2014, p. 154) identify a number of principles of communicative leadership, including 'communicative leaders are willing to listen, receive questions or complaints, and share appropriate information in a truthful and adequate manner'. This interest in employees can also be associated with employee engagement; MacLeod and Clarke (2009, p. 60) report that a Towers Perrin 2008 Global Workforce Study of employee views found that a driver of engagement was senior management demonstrating a sincere interest in employee well-being. Illes and Mathews (2015, p. 12) state that employees want to see their leaders in person and in action. Visibility and accessibility are emphasised by Clavelle (2012, p. 346) as an approach to transformational leadership in a US based hospital, where 'to achieve face-to-face visibility' she 'rounds with nurse leaders on a weekly basis and attends staff meetings to present content and facilitate roundtable discussions'. This emphasis on 'transformational' leadership reflects a distinction made by Burns (1978) between transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is based around formal exchanges between groups and leaders all pursuing their individual objectives. Transformational leadership is focused on changing the goals of individuals or groups for the 'common good' of the organisation. Men (2014a, p. 259) states that, 'transformational leaders convey a strong sense of purpose and collective mission and motivate employees by communicating inspirational vision and high performance expectations'. However, this approach is critiqued by Tourish (2013, p. 21) as it cannot be assumed that goals proposed by leaders are necessarily of mutual benefit to employees. Furthermore, Tourish (2013, p. 28) argues that the transformational leadership model 'tends to preclude the possibility of corrective feedback from followers to leaders'. Ashman and Lawler (2008, p. 265) also critique a transformational leadership model. Adopting an existentialist approach, they argue 'there is an inherent danger in much of the leadership literature that leadership relations are viewed in more or less entirely instrumental ways: the leader interacts so that certain organizational aims can be achieved'. Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012, p. 1043) argue for a relational view of leadership where it is seen not as a trait or behaviour, but as a phenomenon generated in the interactions among people acting in context. At the core of this view is the assumption that leadership is co-constructed in social interaction processes and therefore Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012, p. 1043) conclude that communication is a key element of relationally-oriented leadership. This has parallels with a 'discursive leadership' approach (Carroll and Gillen, 1987, p.41) focused on unplanned, informal and brief conversations. Walker and Aritz (2014, p. 13) suggest that this approach to leadership means that communication becomes 'the primary concern rather than a secondary or tertiary consideration'. However, there appears to be a gap between this aspiration and practice as Nilsson (2010, p. 141) found that senior managers expected messages to be transferred from sender to receiver, not co-created. Furthermore, according to a report by PR Academy (2015, p. 10) public relations practitioners do not rate

senior managers very highly for listening or engagement. In the next section the communication role of line managers is reviewed in more detail.

2.19 LINE MANAGER COMMUNICATION

2.19.1 The Importance Of The Line Manager Relationship With Employees

MacLeod and Clarke (2009, p.80) report that the most important relationship at work is between an employee and their line manager. This reflects a view established by Larkin and Larkin (1996) that 'Employees would rather receive information from their immediate supervisors than from senior managers' with a corresponding conclusion that 80% of communication time, money and effort should be spent on supervisors. Larkin and Larkin (1996) summarise their position on line manager communication as, 'Communication between frontline supervisors and employees counts the most toward changed behavior where it matters the most: at the front line'. However, the emphasis on line manager communication may be dependent upon the content. As highlighted in the previous section, when it comes to discussions about corporate strategy, Galunic and Hermreck (2012a, p. 26) found that employees need to hear directly from senior managers. Indeed, MacLeod and Clarke (2009, pp. 52-3) also state that communication is a key differentiating element for employee engagement, 'especially senior management having a clear vision of the organisation and this being expressed to staff, enabling them to understand how their role fitted in to the bigger picture'. Mackenzie (2010, p. 530) argues that the line manager relationship with employees is now changing with more virtual team working and this makes communication more complicated. This point is explored in the next section which examines the focus of line manager communication with employees.

2.19.2 The Focus Of Line Manager Communication

According to Robinson and Hayday (2009, p. xiv) the top two behaviours cited by team members for an engaging line manager are firstly making it clear what is expected from the team and secondly listening to team members. Having a 'clear strategic vision' is also cited by team members, but not as much as other behaviours such as 'supportive', 'target focused' and 'shows empathy'. This suggests that team members do not value internal corporate communication from line managers as highly as more specific team based communication. Indeed, line managers may not be the best people to communicate about strategy as senior managers believe that they have problems with 'complexity' and 'strategic stuff' (Robinson and Hayday, 2009, p. 28). Baumruk (2006, p. 25) suggests that line managers should focus on involvement of employees in decision making, execution and day-to-day change initiatives. Managers should listen to employees and their ability to respond and explain reasons is very important to engagement (Baumruk, 2006, p. 27). According to de Vries et al. (2009, p. 377) supportiveness, tested through questions such as 'my

manager gives me a compliment', seems to be the most important communication style variable. Men and Stacks (2013, p. 183) found that a transformational approach adopted by managers, including articulation of the organisation's vision and fostering acceptance of group goals, positively influences employee perception of the reputation of the organisation. They conclude that where power is shared with employees through engagement in the decision making process, this makes employees feel more valued. Men (2014a, p. 272) found that an internal symmetrical communication environment is typified by managers who listen to employees, value different opinions, care about employee interests and who align individual goals with organisational goals. MacLeod and Clarke (2009, p. 81) focus on line managers providing clarity for what is expected from employees and treating them as individuals, with respect and with a concern for well-being. In doing this, Purcell and Hutchinson (2007, p.16) argue that line managers are important in helping to create, or transmit, impressions of the organisation as a whole. In terms of the preferred method of communication with line managers Mackenzie (2010, p. 532) found that although 89.7 percent of employees prefer face to face communication, email is becoming increasingly used by managers, partly as a consequence of more virtual working. Mackenzie (2010, p. 535) also reports that trust is developed in the line manager-employee relationship when communication is consistent, job related, honest, respectful, friendly, fair, caring and direct. Gatenby et al (2009, p. 31) conclude that it is important for most managers to focus on doing the 'simple' things well, including communicating clear work objectives that employees can understand.

Despite finding that both internal organisation communication and internal supervisor communication are positively associated with employee engagement, Karanges et al. (2015, p. 130) suggest that it is the supervisor–employee relationship that is responsible for the development of the organisation–employee relationship, based on the greater frequency of contact that employees have with a supervisor. This thesis explores the associations between different levels of management (line manager and senior manager) and organisational engagement that enable closer examination of this notion.

2.20 SUMMARY OF CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR A NEW CONCEPT: INFORMED EMPLOYEE VOICE

Concepts from a range of corporate communication traditions including excellence theory, rhetorical theory, relationship theory and critical theory have been reviewed in this chapter. Concepts relating to employee engagement have also been explored. These inform the following intellectual position for this thesis and the rationale for a new concept: informed employee voice.

Internal communication is more than the effective distribution of information that is described in Vercic et al.'s (2012, p. 225) definition, reviewed in section 2.1. Although it has a heritage that is grounded in news dissemination it has, for some time, been conceptualised as a broader, more two-way, communication process within excellence theory. This is exemplified by Grunig's (1992, p. 558) emphasis on an employee-centred style, adequacy of information, feedback, relationships, reciprocity, tolerance for disagreement and negotiation. These themes are central to this thesis. They are also reflected in Welch and Jackson's (2007, p. 188) goals of internal corporate communication which include a focus on relationships and a positive sense of belonging in employees - which can be linked to organisational engagement. However, excellence theory does not address specific issues concerning what communication employees expect and why practice does not always reflect the exemplars set out. The intellectual position adopted for this thesis is therefore more informed by critical communication theory than excellence theory. This incorporates a deeper consideration of questions about systematic distortion of internal corporate communication and the moral obligation that organisations have to keep employees informed and give them a voice that is treated seriously. It explores internal corporate communication and organisational engagement from a critical communication perspective focused on evidence, exposure of faulty arguments, and/or provocation with uncomfortably new ideas. It takes the core elements of organisational engagement; meaningfulness and safety and considers how they can be incorporated into internal corporate communication theory so that employees can become more activist through productive co-operation. It also challenges the dominance of work engagement over organisational engagement in the literature. A focus on organisational engagement forces more attention on the communication role of senior managers and the responsibility that they have to go beyond 'transformational leadership' which, as Tourish (2013, p. 28) observes, may not include employee voice. Instead, as Johanssen et al. (2014, p. 154) suggests, senior managers have to listen, receive questions or complaints, and share appropriate information in a truthful and adequate manner.

A critical communication perspective leads to the rationale for a new concept for internal communication, informed employee voice, which is outlined in more detail here. This thesis posits that a combination of one-way internal corporate communication with employee voice is required to offset an overload of one-way communication (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 185). In this thesis the argument is therefore made that employee voice is not effective unless employees are well enough informed to comment on what is going on in their organisation. As Dundon and Gollan highlight (2007, p. 1186) effective employee voice is about affording employees the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills so that they can contribute to decisions normally reserved for

management. The concept of informed employee voice therefore emphasises the dual importance of information sharing that meets employee needs and opportunities to express work and organisation related ideas, suggestions, and views. It forms the bases for the hypotheses and research questions that explore interest in topics of information, satisfaction with employee voice, ratings for line manager and senior manager communication and the associations with organisational engagement which can be treated separately from work engagement (Saks, 2006, p. 604).

A conceptual model for informed employee voice is shown in figure 2.2. This illustrates the four primary components of internal communication explored in this thesis; keeping employees informed, employee voice, senior manager communication and line manager communication. It shows how these are associated with different aspects of organisational engagement. As highlighted in section 2.11 Fleck and Inceoglu (2010, p. 38) outline two separate dimensions for organisational engagement; 1) identification, a sense of belonging, and 2) alignment, the congruence between employees' beliefs about where the organization should be heading, what the goals and aspirations of the organization should be, and the actual direction of the organization. They argue that identification is affective (the term 'emotional organisational engagement' is used in this thesis) and alignment is cognitive organisational engagement. In this thesis a third dimension, behavioural organisational engagement, is added to indicate action taken by employees to support the organisation and to work hard to help it achieve its objectives. In addition to associations between communication and the three different dimensions of organisational engagement described above, the model also illustrates how cognitive and emotional organisational engagement are associated with behavioural organisational engagement, which can be posited as an outcome of communication and also separately as an outcome of cognitive and emotional organisational engagement.

FIGURE 2.2 Informed Employee Voice Conceptual Model
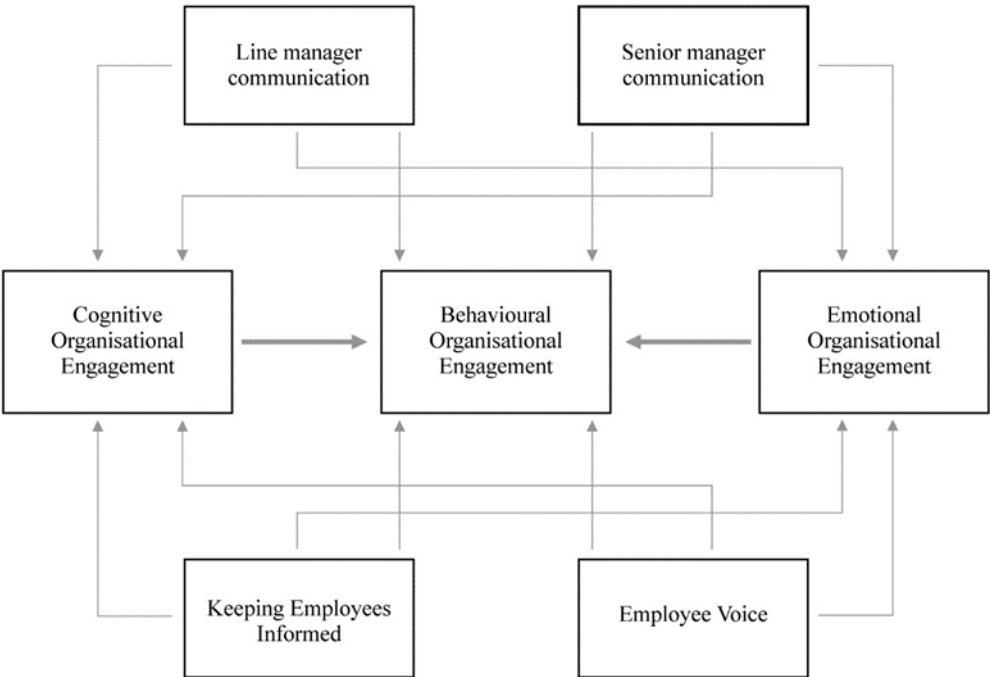
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCHING AND MEASURING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Some of the material in this section of the thesis has been published (Ruck and Welch, 2012).

3.1 RESEARCHING, VALUING AND MEASURING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

In this chapter, mechanisms for researching, valuing and measuring internal communication are explored. Many tools have been established for internal communication research in the past 30 years. Indeed, Downs et al. (2004, p.58) observe that in 1985 more than 500 instruments had been cited in communication dissertations and journals. However, many of these incorporated micro level analysis such as competence and interpersonal communication. Downs et al. (2004, p. 60) argue that since the 1970s instrument development has focused on facets of organisational communication rather than on a comprehensive view of organisational communication. In the following sub-section medium theory is explored as a context for the research and measurement of internal communication as channels and information feature prominently as a facet of organisational communication research. In further sub-sections, two of the most established instruments are reviewed in detail and a review of recent assessments is discussed to identify common themes in approaches to research and measurement. Trends in internal communication practice that emerge from these studies are also identified.

3.2 MEDIUM THEORY

3.2.1   Media And Message Dissemination

Communication can be considered from a number of perspectives, summarised by Qvortrup (2006, p. 349) as dissemination, understanding and effect. As Qvortrup highlights in a broad context medium theory is often deployed to better understand the unique properties of specific communication media, for example, the Internet compared to face to face communication. Medium theory has been developed by a number of researchers including Innis (1951), McLuhan (1962, 1964), Meyrowitz (1994) and Ong (1988). It asks questions about message dissemination, about how the medium enables long term messages to be established, and the ability to respond either individually or with everyone involved (Humphreys et al., 2013, p. 293). Information richness is defined by Daft and Lengel (1986, p. 560) as the ability of information to change understanding within a time interval. In this context, media vary in the capacity to process rich information, where richness differences are related to the capacity for immediate feedback, the number of cues and channels used, personalization and language variety (Daft and Wiginton, 1979). As Suh (1999, p. 296) observes, rich media enable people to interpret and reach agreement about unanalysable,

difficult, and complex issues, while lean media are appropriate for communicating about routine activities. Welch (2012, pp. 247-8) observes that there is a surprising dearth of work on internal communication media and argues that medium theory offers a useful conceptual framework to enable the consideration of internal media. Welch suggests that 'consideration of medium theory in the context of internal communication can encourage fresh perspectives such as a focus on the interplay between internal communication message content and its mediating format'.

3.2.2 Complexity, Channel Expansion Theory And The Appropriateness And Acceptability Of Messages

Some scholars have challenged medium and richness theories and focus instead on complexity, channel expansion theory and the appropriateness and acceptability of messages. For example, Qvortrup (2006, pp. 350-1) argues that the basic function of media is to manage social complexity. The proposition is that a modern, functionally differentiated society could not be managed through oral or print media, but only through the Internet. D'Urso and Rains (2008, p. 487) state that relatively few studies have evaluated factors shaping organisational members' perceptions of communication media. They build on Carlson and Zmud's (1999) work on channel expansion theory, which was developed to reconcile inconsistent findings in research on media richness theory. Channel expansion theory focuses on how individuals develop perceptions of a medium's richness or capacity to facilitate shared meaning. It is argued that perceptions are fluid and contingent on one's relevant experiences, such as using the channel, with the communication topic, and with one's communication partner. As experience increases, so should perceptions of a medium's richness (D'Urso and Rains, 2008, p.487). Dennis et al. (2008, p. 576) argue that media richness theory is not convincing for computer-mediated communication and it does not consider how managers choose media. Instead, they propose a theory of media synchronicity, based on fit of media capabilities to the communication needs of the task that influence the use of media, which in turn influences communication performance. Welch (2012, p. 248) proposes a further dimension of medium theory, the psychological affects of a particular medium on employees. This raises questions of appropriateness and acceptability of the message and the medium used.

3.2.3 Flow, Dissemination, Decoding, Accessibility, Ability To Respond And Synchronicity

Questions posed by medium theorists include the direction of flow, the speed of dissemination, difficulty in decoding the medium, number of people who can access the message at the same time, accessibility, ability to respond and the way that messages received are simultaneously with other people or synchronously (Humphreys et al., 2013, p. 293; Meyrowitz, 1994, p. 50). An additional

dimension, power, is highlighted by Bordewijk and van Kaam (2003). This is related to the locus of control in interactions in a variety of media systems such as one-to-many with central control (for example, television broadcasts), a system where information from consumers or clients is mined, and one-to-one conversational systems. Humphreys et al. (2013, p. 295) note that Internet based many-to-many modes of mass conversation and 'intercreativity', where participants create content in a collaborative partnership, provide new opportunities for health communication which has traditionally controlled content very tightly. According to Yzer and Southwell (2008, p. 10) the defining attribute that new technologies share is the ability to exchange information between individuals and groups, as opposed to broadcast appliances. However, as Korda and Itani (2013, p. 15) note, social media interventions 'require careful application and may not always achieve their desired outcomes'.

3.2.4 Symbolism, Personal Focus And Information Overload

The richness of a communication channel is determined by its ability to offer rapid feedback, multiple cues, natural language, and personal focus (Fernandez et al., 2013, p. 33). According to Otondo et al. (2008, p. 22) media richness refers to the variety of cues that convey both information and help a receiver resolve ambiguity and uncertainty by providing a social, emotional, or task-related context. They highlight three factors; symbolism, personal focus, and information overload. Symbolism reflects the intangible organisational norms and values that are conveyed within different media. Personal focus is the degree of relevance and involvement with the communication. Information overload reflects processing difficulties when information is unfamiliar, complex, or is presented more rapidly than the receiver can process. Fernandez et al. (2013, p. 32) contend that medium theories can be positioned on a continuum with rational decision making at one extreme and those emphasizing social aspects at the other. Rational decision making approaches concentrate on the characteristics of the media (for example, its bandwidth) in order to determine its capacity to transmit meaning and intention to those receiving the messages. Theories that emphasise social aspects concentrate on how the surroundings (for example, organisational culture) affect the choice and use of the media. As Vishwanath (2006, p. 324) suggests, 'the symbolic meaning of technology is jointly produced through the individual's interaction with the technology and the larger social structure within which the individual is embedded'.

3.2.5 Social Aspects Of Medium Theory

An emphasis on social aspects of medium theory is based on the premise that media richness perceptions are dependent on experiences with communication partners, the message topic, and the communication media utilised. Yzer and Southwell (2008, p. 16) argue that there is a focus on the

'technology' in new communication technologies and not enough attention to the human element. They suggest that 'a more fruitful stance could be to look at how these technologies can sometimes change the contexts for human interaction and then to ask when and how contexts arise'. The context of the communication is central to channel expansion theory. This approach emphasises the knowledge-building process that modifies the way an individual assesses media richness. Four processes are highlighted: experience with the channel, experience with the subject, experience with the communication partner and experience with the organisational context (Carlson and Zmud, 1999). Empirical evidence for channel expansion theory is provided in four studies which indicate that perceptions of a medium's richness are positively related to knowledge-building experiences with the medium, the communication partner, topic, and social influences (Carlson and Zmud, 1999; Timmerman and Madhavapeddi, 2008; D'Urso and Rains, 2008; Fernandez et al., 2013). Fernandez et al. (2013, p. 38) conclude that 'the richness of a communication media is constructed socially and is related mainly to experience with the media and with the communication partner'. However, Qvortrup (2006, p. 351) rejects the more deterministic elements of medium and richness theories, arguing that the Internet requires a different perspective, one based more around complexity theory. From this perspective, communication cannot be considered as a transfer process, but as a phenomenon with low probability. Furthermore, communication is not 'natural', it is highly improbable and the effect of communication media is to limit the improbability of communication success. In the following sub-sections two of the best known internal communication measurement instruments are reviewed.

3.3 THE ICA MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT

According to Zwijze-Koning and De Jong (2007, p. 429) Odiorne (1954) was the first researcher to use the term, 'communication audit' in the academic literature. He developed and used an audit to measure the accuracy and completeness of information transmitted between a company's management and its engineering staff. What he found was that the engineers felt surprisingly uninformed. Since then, Hargie et al. (2002, pp. 415-6) note that the International Communication Association (ICA) 'devoted considerable attention to the issue of communication audits on the 1970s' and 'although several studies were reported in the 1980s, relatively few were published in the 1990s'. Despite this, it is a prominent instrument that informs current approaches and is therefore briefly reviewed in this section. Since the 1990s Hargie and Tourish's Handbook of Communication Audits for Organisations (2000) and Auditing Organisational Communication: A Handbook of Research Theory and Practice (2009a) include examples of the application of the ICA measurement instrument (Hargie and Tourish, 2009b, pp.248-9; Quinn et al., 2009, pp. 350-1), together with a comprehensive review of other approaches.

As Zwijze-Koning and De Jong (2007, p. 432) point out, 'organisational communication itself consists of many facets, which are all worth examining'. They argue that an audit may examine various outcome variables, such as communication satisfaction, identification and commitment, the effectiveness (or perceived effectiveness) of the communication. It can address the various determinants of communication, such as an organization's mission, communication structure, and communication culture. It may also focus on message characteristics, the communication skills of employees, the media or channels available, and the symbolism used (for instance, the corporate visual identity). The ICA assessment package includes a standardised survey questionnaire, interview guides, observations, network analysis, critical incidents and a communication diary (Rubin et al., 2009, p. 193). The questionnaire is a made up of eight main sections, focused primarily around the amount information desired and information received. According to Hargie et al., (2002, p. 421) using the audit produces a wealth of quantitative data that acts as benchmarks against which to measure future performance. They explain that in most sections of the questionnaire there are two columns, along which staff rate, firstly, the present or 'actual' level communication, and secondly, how much communication they feel there should ideally be. The difference between these two scores then enables comparisons to be made between actual and ideal communication levels. Lower difference scores are usually more positive and a score of '0' represents a position where communication is at optimum level.

In a rare example of a follow-up study, using an adapted application the ICA, Hargie et al. (2002, p. 430) found that 'The net effect of increased information provision was to improve satisfaction with the overall communication climate' implying that employees may not receive enough information and when they do receive more this is associated with higher levels of overall communication satisfaction. In this study, the mean for 'satisfaction with information received on important matters' was 2.11 in the first audit and 2.50 in the second audit (measured on a 1-5 Likert scale for satisfaction). The mean for satisfaction with 'information sent on important issues' was 1.88 in the first audit and 1.92 in the second audit. The mean for 'satisfaction with 'action taken on information sent' was 2.93 in the first audit and 3.09 in the second audit. Satisfaction with information received and sent were the two lowest aspects of communication satisfaction in both audits, although improvements were recorded in each aspect in the second audit. The greatest difference between actual information and desired information was recorded for 'information received on important issues' in both audits, although the difference reduced in the second audit. Similarly, Hogard et al. (2005, pp. 121-2) using a customised version of the ICA in a nursing

student college also found that 'information received on important issues' was where the greatest overall deficit was found (mean= -2.1, N=74).

In an adapted version of the ICA set out by Hargie and Tourish (2009a, pp. 420-437) one of the sections explores content and another channels, four are more generally about processes and volumes of information sent and received and two can be tailored to specific organisational issues. The range of content topics is mainly job related; pay, performance, promotion, development, with only one question in the set related to wider organisational goals. Respondents use a five point Likert scale to rate the topics according to the how much information is provided. Hargie and Tourish (2009b, p. 252) report that the mean satisfaction with information received on important issues was 2.1 in an initial audit and then 2.4 in a subsequent audit (measured on a 1-5 Likert scale for satisfaction). The mean for satisfaction with information sent on important issues was 1.8 in the initial and the follow-up audit. The mean satisfaction with action taken on information sent was 2.9 in the initial audit and 3.1 in the follow-up audit. These results are all similar to the results found in Hargie et al.'s (2002) study highlighted above. Hargie and Tourish also report (2009b, p. 257) the mean satisfaction with immediate managers was 3.7, compared to a mean satisfaction of 3.0 for senior managers.

However, it should be noted that the balance of work related questions and organisational related questions in the application of the ICA is skewed towards work and this therefore underplays the role of organisational engagement. In the full ICA survey, sections on organisational communication relationships and organisational outcomes are available. These are dominated by questions related to supervisors and other topics, such as job security and employee voice, are omitted. The Hargie and Tourish (2009a, p. 427) version of the audit provides a list of channels and asks the question, 'how much information are you receiving through these channels?' This provides a useful snapshot of channel use in a given organisation. It does not explore whether content provided is relevant or appropriate from an employee perspective. The overriding focus on the volume of information within the ICA suggests that internal communication can be reduced to a transmission process. It emphasises timeliness of information. However, it is less focused on how well the information was provided, including the tone, clarity and appropriateness of the medium used. It does not address questions of credibility of the information provided and how far it led to two-way dialogue. Rubin et al. (2009, p. 197) summarise the ICA as an audit that is one of the best sources of information about organisational relationships and the kind of information that moves through an organization that has a practical use. Their critique of the ICA is directed at the length and ambiguity of questions used.

3.4 THE CSQ MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT

Downs and Hazen (1977) developed the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) to explore the relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. Development of the CSQ changed the perspective of organisational communication from being a unidimensional construct to a multidimensional construct (Clampitt and Downs, 1993) whereby employees are not either satisfied or dissatisfied with communication, they may be satisfied with one aspect of communication and dissatisfied with another aspect (DeConinck et al., 2008, p. 145).The CSQ takes a different approach to the ICA and concentrates on eight primary dimensions of communication satisfaction that include: a general organisational perspective, organisational integration, personal feedback, relation with supervisor, horizontal-informal communication, relation with subordinates, media quality, and communication climate (Downs and Hazen, 1977). The CSQ is a 40-item instrument with a reported reliability of .94 and uses a 7 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 7 (very satisfied) (Gray and Laidlaw, 2004, p. 433). It is based predominantly on information specific to an individual and his or her work, linked to productivity, with some wider organisational aspects included such as clarity of communication and openness to ideas (Pincus, 1986, p. 399). It is grounded in general satisfaction rather than volume of information. Gray and Laidlaw (2004, p. 428) argue that the CSQ is one of the most comprehensive instruments available because it assesses the direction of information flow, the formal and informal channels of communication flow, relationships with various members of the organization, and the forms of communication. It is also noted by Gray and Laidlaw as being relatively easy to administer.

Findings of CSQ indicate that the areas of greatest employee satisfaction are supervisory communication and subordinate communication. The area of least satisfaction is personal feedback (Clampitt and Downs, 1993). For example, Gray and Laidlaw (2004, p. 438) concur with this general finding, reporting a mean for supervisory communication of 4.17 (N= 127) and a mean for personal feedback of 3.54. Gray and Laidlaw also report means of 3.89 for media quality and 4.19 for informational communication. Akkirman and Harris (2005, p. 401) report means of 4.02 for relationship with supervisor and 3.38 for personal feedback (N=46) for virtual workers. Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2007, p. 269) report means of 5.57 (N=165) for relationship with subordinates and 4.35 for personal feedback. They also report means of 4.21 for media quality and 3.89 for top management communication, a topic they added to the questionnaire. Clampitt and Berk (2009, p. 288) report a mean satisfaction of 5.6 for information on major changes (measured on a 1-10 scale where 0 represents no satisfaction, 5 represents average satisfaction and 10 represents high satisfaction). They also report a mean satisfaction of 5.6 for 'communication with top management',

6.0 for satisfaction with 'effectiveness of employee newsletter', 6.0 for 'supervisor open to new ideas' and 6.5 for satisfaction with 'information on policies and goals'. Downs and Adrian (2004, pp. 148-9) highlight the availability of a database of results for the CSQ, based on 1400 individuals in 18 companies. The results reported indicate that supervisor communication is most highly rated with a mean of 34.18 (measured on a 0-50 scale, with 50 designating the maximum satisfaction). Corporate information and personal feedback are the two least highly rated for satisfaction, with means of 26.35 and 23.99 respectively.

The CSQ has been found to have correlations with job satisfaction (Rubin et al., 2009) and to be a strong predictor of organisational commitment (Downs, 1991). However, as Rubin et al. (2009, p. 116) highlight, a global measure of job satisfaction is controversial as it is multidimensional. Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2007, p. 279) report that the highest five correlations of CSQ scales with 'overall communication satisfaction' are communication climate (r=0.63), media quality (r=0.60), interdepartmental communication (r=0.58), organisational perspective (r=0.55) and top management communication (r=0.49). Although supervisory and subordinate communication are often reported as the highest level of satisfaction they do not, in this study, correlate as highly with overall communication satisfaction as other aspects of internal communication.

A weakness of the CSQ is that it does not include questions directly related to commitment, nor to employee engagement. This makes analysis of correlations somewhat limited as they tend to be reported as correlations solely of CSQ communication scales which, unsurprisingly, are strong (Gray and Laidlaw, 2004, p. 438; Zwijze-Koning and de Jong, 2007, p. 269; Akkirman and Harris, 2005, p. 400).The CSQ has further shortcomings, such as the omission of senior management communication and decision-making (Clampitt, 2009 p. 58) and of new communication media (Zwijze-Koning and de Jong, 2007, p. 274). It also only addresses upward feedback and employee voice through communication with a supervisor, not with senior managers, nor as an organisation wide process.

Both the ICA and the CSQ audits have credible heritages with strong developmental processes, high reliability and validity and enable benchmarking. They are adaptable for different organisations, although the large scale of the ICA survey instrument makes it impractical to use. However, the CSQ in particular relies heavily on a questionnaire and Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2007, p. 280) argue that a survey such as this should be complemented with other qualitative audit

instruments. In the next section, a broad range of further studies that assess satisfaction with internal communication are reviewed.

3.5 REVIEW OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT STUDIES[1]

In this section a review of 15 recent (2004-2013) academic and consultancy studies of the assessment of internal communication is provided. A summary of each study is shown in table 3.1. What emerges from this analysis is a predominance of the assessment of processes, channels, and volume of communication, rather than employee needs for content. Despite the existence of well-established tools, these are not always used. Consultants and academics use different question sets and approach the topic from different perspectives. There is a reliance on questionnaires and in these examples a quantitative approach is rarely complemented with qualitative research. There is a tendency towards concepts that are focused on messaging rather than dialogue, relationships and organisational engagement. Some clear themes do emerge, such as the reliance on newsletters and email and the decrease in print channels. Where content is assessed, there is a focus on job related topics and wider organisational dimensions are marginalised.

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[1] An earlier version of this material was published in Ruck and Welch, 2012.

TABLE 3.1 Overview Of Studies Of The Assessment Of Internal Communication

Study	Content (Findings)	Channels (Findings)
Gifford, J. (2013) Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) survey of 2109 employees in UK.	**Senior manager communication –** 9% agree that internal social media is used by leaders to understand employee views. **Employee voice** – 12% agree that internal social media is used to give employees a voice. **Share knowledge** – 16% agree that internal social media is used to share knowledge or ideas.	**Internal social media platform** - 26% employees said their organisation has a platform.
Welch, M. (2012) Qualitative survey with 64 respondents in UK.	**Usability attributes** were valued including: the ability to easily save, store, and retrieve information; and, the ability to find information on intranet pages.	**Electronic formats** were most preferred by 47% of the respondents.
Towers Watson Capitalizing on Effective Communication. 2009/2010 Communication ROI Study Report. (2010) 328 employers in 22 different industries in various regions around the world (43% in US).	**Understanding the business** 60% effectiveness **Organisational performance and financial objectives** 56% effectiveness **Rewards** (health care, bonus, pension, pay) 45% effectiveness **Actions affecting customer** 45% effectiveness **Job security** 24% provide no information on this topic	**Social media** – less than half of respondents are using this channel **Electronic communication** – substantial increase in use **Face to face communication** – significant increase in use **Print** – increase in use in some areas but significant decline in other areas

Melcrum Social Media Survey (2010) More than 2,600 internal communication professional respondents; 1,800 from organisations with more than 500 employees.	Not assessed.	**Newsletters and emails** 68.8% of leaders use online newsletters and companywide emails to get messages out to their staff. **Online video** was rated as the most popular 'social media' tool (52.6%). Others highlighted were: blogs (51.9%) instant messaging (47%) and social networks, including Twitter, Facebook and Yammer (37.6%).
White et al. (2010) Purposive sample drawn from all employment classifications resulting in 147 interviews conducted in a large, multicampus, university in US.	**Information wanted** Administrative decisions, budgets, personnel decisions, pending changes, goals, and future directions.	**Preferred channel** High value was placed on face-to-face communication, even though many employees noted that meetings are time-consuming.
Marques, J. (2010) A qualitative study involving 20 subjects in US; all members of the workforce with at least five years of work experience in lower and middle management positions.	**Criteria for successful communication** Timely, clear, accurate, credible, pertinent, responsible, concise, professional, and sincere.	**Right channel for content** Communication should be delivered in a responsible format given its content. Not every message lends itself for email, but not every message requires face-to-face settings either.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Employee attitudes and the recession (2009) A representative sample of more than 3,000 employees in the UK.	**Performance related communication and upward feedback** Employees are most likely to say their managers rarely/never coach them on the job (44%), rarely/never discuss their training and development needs (35%) nor provide them with feedback on their performance (26%). More than one in five (26%) are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the opportunities that exist within their organisation to feed their views upwards.	Not assessed.
Al-Ghamdi et al. (2007) 187 responses from employees in one company based in Riyadh and Jeddah.	Not specifically assessed.	**Preferred channel about strategy (top five in order of preference)** (1) Plant Manager meetings (2) Group meetings conducted by employee's immediate supervisor (3) Employees' immediate supervisor (4) Information placed on bulletin boards, posters, and signs in the plant (5) E-mail

Truss et al. (2006) Stratified sample of 2000 employees in the UK.	**Training and development -** 32% rarely/never discussed **Performance -** 30% rarely/never discussed **Vision -** 48% say senior managers have a clear vision **Well informed about organisation -** 42% say they are not well informed **Voice -** 37% satisfied with opportunities for upward feedback	Not assessed.
Byrne and LeMay (2006) 598 fulltime employees from the US based offices of a high technology oriented organisation, using an adaptation of the International Communication Association (ICA) Communication Audit Survey	**Information** Satisfaction with company wide information 3.2 Satisfaction with business unit information 3.05 Satisfaction with job information 3.37 Response scale of (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree	**Lean/Rich media** Satisfaction with lean media 3.43 Satisfaction with rich media 3.76 Response scale of (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree

Akkirman and Harris (2005) Survey in a Turkish subsidiary of an international company based in Germany. Virtual office workers returned 46 surveys (a response rate of 70.7 percent) and traditional office workers returned 22 surveys (a response rate of 62.8 percent).	**Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ)** Communication satisfaction 3.66/3.24 Personal feedback 3.38/2.92 Organisational integration 3.57/3.12 Relationship with supervisor 4.02/3.73 Communication climate 3.69/3.26 Horizontal communication 3.66/3.17 Results are shown for virtual workers/traditional workers	Not assessed.
Lings and Greenley (2005) Survey of UK retail managers with 766 usable responses (a response rate of 22%).	**Internal Marketing Orientation (IMO) Questionnaire** Regression analysis indicated that IMO has a significant impact on; (1) customer satisfaction, (2) relative competitive position, (3) compliant behavior, (4) staff retention, and (5) staff attitudes.	Not assessed.

Clampitt and Downs (2004) Around 1300 employees from organisations in different countries, using the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ)	**Supervisor communication** – 34.18 **Subordinate communication** – 33.43 **Horizontal communication** – 31.81 **Organisational integration** – 29.62 **Media quality** – 29.17 **Communication climate** – 26.56 **Corporate information** – 26.35 **Personal feedback** – 23.99 Scale of 0-50, (50 is max satisfaction)	Not assessed.
Quinn and Hargie (2004) Interviews, questionnaires and critical incident analysis in a police force in Northern Ireland with 131 respondents to the International Communication Association (ICA) survey.	**ICA questionnaire** Respondents thought they were receiving between 'little' and 'some' information. The greatest shortfalls related to: how decisions that affect my job are dealt with; self development opportunities; major management decisions; development and changes in policing; things that go wrong in the organisation.	**ICA questionnaire** Respondents did not wish to receive any more information through the grapevine and did not want to receive very much more via the media.

3.6 SUMMARY OF REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT STUDIES

A general summary of the data from table 3.1 is shown in table 3.2. The analysis suggests that satisfaction with organisational information ranges from 53 percent to 64 percent. As a basic employee requirement, this indicates there is still much to be done for employees to feel that they are well informed. In terms of understanding the business strategy, values and goals, 60 percent of employees understand where the organisation is heading, though this is undermined by senior manager clarity (48 percent) and minimal senior management involvement in telling the story (54 percent). There is a relatively low (30 percent) level of consistency in behaviour to match values. At an individual level, 30 percent of employees do not have any discussion about performance at all, job information satisfaction is around 67 percent, and personal feedback satisfaction ranges from 48 percent to 58 percent. Satisfaction with opportunities for upward feedback varies, nevertheless it is clear that at best there is still a large number of employees who are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. It is clear that electronic communication is replacing print, though use of social media is still at an embryonic stage with only 26 percent of employees stating that their organisation has an internal social media platform. Finally, questions about satisfaction with content are rarely asked and employees do, naturally, expect channels to be used appropriately.

TABLE 3.2 Summary Of Review Of Assessment Studies

Satisfaction/Channel use	Findings
Information	74% values published (IABC)
	42% not well informed (Truss et al.)
	Satisfaction of company wide information is 3.2 out of 5 (Byrne and LeMay)
	Communication satisfaction 3.66/3.24, communication climate 3.69/3.26 (out of 5, virtual worker/traditional worker, Akkirman)
	Media quality 29.17, communication climate 26.56, corporate information 26.35 (out of 50, Clampitt and Downs)
	Employees want information about administrative decisions, budgets, personnel decisions, pending changes, goals, and future directions, etc. (White et al.)
Understanding and living the business strategy, values, goals	60% understanding (TowersWatson)
	54% senior manager involvement in communication, 30% consistency in behaviour (IABC)
	48% senior managers have a clear vision (Truss et al.)
Satisfaction with upward feedback	26% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (CIPD)
	37% satisfied (Truss et al.)
Satisfaction with feedback on performance	30% performance not discussed (Truss et al.)
	44% of managers rarely/never coach employees (CIPD)
	Satisfaction of job information 3.37 (out of 5, Byrne and LeMay)
	Personal feedback 3.38/2.92 (out of 5, virtual worker/traditional worker) (Akkirman)
	Personal feedback 23.99 (out of 50, Clampitt and Downs)
Content	Timely, clear, accurate, credible, pertinent, responsible, concise, professional, and sincere, but communication should be delivered in a responsible format given its content (Marques) Main shortfalls are: self-development opportunities; major management decisions; development and changes in policing; things that go wrong in the organisation (Quinn and Hargie).

Channels, new and social media	Lean media; 3.43 out of 5, rich media; 3.76 (out of 5, Quinn and Hargie)
	Email 83%, intranet 75%, social media 12% (IABC)
	Email/online news 68.8%, online video most popular social media tool (Melcrum)
	General increase in use of and preference for electronic channels, though only 26% of employees say that their organisation has an internal social media platform.

3.7 MEDIUM PREFERENCES, MESSAGE FRAMING AND ACCEPTABILITY

Despite the growing availability of internal and external social media that employees can access studies suggest that email remains the preferred medium of most employees for internal communication together with face to face communication (Weber Shandwick, 2014, p. 21; Ruck and Welch, 2012, p.299; Welch, 2012, p. 351; Hewitt, 2006, p. 83). Welch (2012, p. 351) found that the reasons for a preference for email as a medium were the ability to easily save, store and retrieve information and the ability to find information on the intranet. In terms of information overload, Weber Shandwick (2014) found that employees receive, on average, 4.4 different types of communications from their employers. As Welch (2012, p. 252) observes, 'Communicators craft their strategies with a view to achieving positive effects. Paradoxically, internal communication can be a source of irritation to employees'. Welch (p. 252) found that some internal media generated negative emotional responses in employees, in particular print newsletters because of the perceived waste of resources.

The analysis of studies in tables 3.1 and 3.2 indicates a focus on process rather than content. Hargie and Tourish (2004, pp. 235-6) argue that recurring themes in the communication literature include; adequate information flow concerning key change issues, supervisory communication as a preferred communication source, communication as a foundation of teamwork and positive employee attitudes, face-to-face communication as a primary method of information transmission, and the benefits obtained from conceptualising dissent as a source of useful feedback. Hargie and Tourish conclude (2004, p. 236) that there is a '…disabling gap between theory and practice'. This is reinforced by the analysis of data in table 3.2. Change issues are not specified in any of the assessments reviewed and the omission of assessment of useful feedback is very apparent. However, the themes stated do not, in themselves, form a complete theory of internal communication. They do not link internal communication to organisational engagement and concepts related to organisational engagement are not evident in the assessments analysed. So, there are gaps at both theoretical and practice levels. If an audit or assessment is conducted to obtain an accurate, objective, picture of the state of internal communication, then it is important to understand what an ideal state is. Downs and Adrian confirm (2004, p. 245) that communication theories are still

incomplete, and as there are many of them, 'theory needs to be used judiciously'. Furthermore, Downs and Adrian suggest that:

> The state of our art is such that no umbrella theory of communication exists. Therefore, each problem in the organisation may require auditors to use different kinds of theories, always watching for their contradictions and inconsistencies.

If auditors need to call upon a range of theory, then wider public relations theories such as critical theory, the excellence theory of public relations and rhetorical theory, reviewed in chapter 2, could be incorporated much more into internal communication theory. These approaches are under-explored and could be a rich vein of research. Many of these theories point to a new direction in assessment based more on *bridging* than *buffering,* where bridging is about relationships with stakeholders, rather than a set of messaging activities designed to buffer the organisation from them (Grunig, 2009, p. 9). As the assessments reviewed in table 3.1 indicate the focus remains on the circulation of information; type of information, timing, and load, flow; downward, upward and horizontal and use of channels. These are all indicative of a focus on buffering.

Much of the current research and assessment of internal communication includes the use and preferences of channels. As highlighted in section 3.2, rich media are personal and involve face-to-face contact between managers, while media of lower richness are impersonal and rely on rules, forms, procedures, or databases. Downs and Adrian (2004, p. 57) argue that communicators need to match communication that is high in ambiguity with rich media and communication that is low in ambiguity with lean media. Littlejohn and Foss (2008, p. 292) conceptualise a first, broadcast, media age as a social interaction approach*,* based on transmission of information and the second media age as a social integration approach which is more interactive and personalized. In the second age there is less emphasis on the media and information *per se* and more on the way that it creates communities. Bennett et al. (2010, p. 61) claim that social networking sites provide opportunities for both formal and informal interaction and collaboration with fellow employees and clients/customers which aids knowledge transfer and communication. This, in turn, leads to a shift in culture from 'information gathering' to 'information participation', a process that can be associated with informed employee voice as outlined in section 2.21.

3.8 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this section the research hypotheses and associated sub-research questions developed from the conceptual analysis in chapter two and the review of medium theory in this chapter are outlined. The first hypothesis and associated sub-research question are linked to medium theory and internal communication methods. The second hypothesis and associated sub-research

questions are linked to keeping employees informed and how this is associated with organisational engagement. The third hypothesis and associated sub-research questions are linked to employee voice and how this is associated with organisational engagement. The fourth hypothesis and associated sub-research questions are linked to senior manager communication and how this is associated with organisational engagement. The fifth hypothesis and associated sub-research questions are linked to line manager communication and how this is associated with organisational engagement. The sixth hypothesis is linked to the new concept, informed employee voice, discussed in section 2.20.

3.8.1 Hypothesis 1 And Sub-Research Question 1 (Email And Team Meetings)

Hypothesis 1 (H1) Email and team meetings are the two of the top three most helpful internal communication methods in all five organisations.

Sub-research question 1 (R1): Why do employees find specific methods helpful or unhelpful?

This hypothesis and sub-research question relate to the conceptual analysis in sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7.

3.8.2 Hypothesis 2 And Sub-Research Questions 2-7 (Organisational Information And Organisational Engagement)

Hypothesis 2 (H2) Employee interest in organisational information is positively associated with organisational engagement.

Sub-research question 2 (R2): how far is interest in specific organisational information topics consistent between organisations?

Sub-research question 3 (R3): to what extent is interest in organisational information correlated with cognitive organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question 4 (R4): to what extent is interest in organisational information correlated with emotional organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question 5 (R5): to what extent is interest in organisational information correlated with behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question 6 (R6): how far are correlations of interest in organisational information with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?

Sub-research question 7 (R7): why are employees interested in different aspects of organisational information?

This hypothesis and the associated sub-research questions relate to the conceptual analysis in sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, and 3.7.

3.8.3 Hypothesis 3 And Sub-Research Questions 8-13 (Employee Voice)

Hypothesis 3 (H3) Employee voice is positively associated with organisational engagement.

Sub-research question 8 (R8): how far is satisfaction with employee voice consistent between organisations?

Sub-research question 9 (R9): to what extent is satisfaction with employee voice correlated with cognitive organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question 10 (R10): to what extent is satisfaction with employee voice correlated with emotional organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question 11 (R11): to what extent is satisfaction with employee voice correlated with behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub research question 12 (R12): how far are correlations of employee voice with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?

Sub research question 13 (R13): why is satisfaction with employee voice not rated more highly?

This hypothesis and the associated sub-research questions relate to the conceptual analysis in sections 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15 and 2.16.

3.8.4 Hypothesis 4 And Sub-Research Questions 14-20 (Senior Manager Communication)

Hypothesis 4 (H4) Senior manager communication about the organisation is positively associated with organisational engagement.

Sub-research question 14 (R14): how far are ratings of with senior manager communication consistent between organisations?

Sub-research question 15 (R15): to what extent are ratings of senior manager communication correlated with cognitive organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question 16 (R16): to what extent are ratings of senior manager communication correlated with emotional organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question 17 (R17): to what extent are ratings of senior manager communication correlated with behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub research question 18 (R18): how far are correlations of senior manager communication with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?

Sub research question 19 (R19): why do employees want senior managers to communicate about the organisation?

Sub research question 20 (R20): why do employees not rate senior manager communication more highly?

This hypothesis and the associated sub-research questions relate to the conceptual analysis in sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.10, 2.11 and 2.18.

3.8.5 Hypothesis 5 And Sub-Research Questions 21-27 (Line Manager Communication)

Hypothesis 5 (H5) Line manager communication is less strongly associated with organisational engagement than senior manager communication

Sub-research question 21 (R21): how far are ratings of line manager communication consistent between organisations?
Sub-research question 22 (R22): to what extent are ratings of line manager communication correlated with cognitive organisational engagement at each organisation?
Sub-research question 23 (R23): to what extent are ratings of line manager communication correlated with emotional organisational engagement at each organisation?
Sub-research question 24 (R24): to what extent are ratings of line manager communication correlated with behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?
Sub research question 25 (R25): how far are correlations of line manager communication with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?
Sub research question 26 (R26): what topics do employees want line managers to communicate about?
Sub research question 27(R27): why do employees not rate line manager communication more highly?

This hypothesis and the associated sub-research questions relate to the conceptual analysis in sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11 and 2.19.

3.8.6 Hypothesis 6 (H6) – Keeping employees informed and employee voice are positive and statistically significant predictors of organisational engagement.
This hypothesis relates to the conceptual analysis in sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15, 2.16, 2.18, 2.19 and 2.20.

The next chapter outlines the research methodology adopted for the hypotheses and sub-research questions.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted for the thesis. The first section explores the epistemological position of positivism and how it provides a dominant framework for internal communication research. Alternative approaches to management research are briefly explored, including interpretivism, neo-empiricism, affirmative postmodernism, critical theory and critical realism. Typical methodologies used for communication research are then examined in the context of the range of approaches adopted for management research. This culminates with a justification for adopting critical realism as the approach for the thesis to provide a new perspective for internal communication. In further sections, the rationale for a cross-sectional comparative design is outlined. The research was conducted in five organisations and incorporated mixed methods. This entailed a quantitative first, qualitative second approach, where the qualitative data builds on the results of the quantitative data. The subsequent sections review the design of Welch's (2011a) Internal Communication and Organisational Engagement Questionnaire (ICOEQ) used for the survey and the design of the interviews and focus groups that were also conducted at each organisation. In the final section ethical considerations for the research are discussed.

4.2 APPROACHES TO MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

4.2.1 Positivism

Epistemology is described by Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 16) as a concern for the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline. Crotty (1998, p. 4) argues that epistemology drives research; it is the starting point that leads on to the theoretical perspective, which leads to the methodology and then the methods used. Research methods are consequently characteristic of an epistemological position (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 62). This is most evident in the assertion that there is a fundamental difference between the subject matter of the natural sciences and the social sciences and that an epistemology is required that will reflect and capitalise upon that difference (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 20).

A positivist position is associated with natural science based upon discovery, hypotheses, experiments, measurement, verification/falsification and causality (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 63). It treats the organisation as an existing object produced for instrumental ends, usually money making (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, p. 32). Because it is used in a number of ways by authors, Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 16) argue that positivism is extremely difficult to pin down and therefore to outline in a precise manner. However, some common themes are cited. For example, Johnson et al. (2006, p. 137) summarise positivism through its emphasis on objective data collection, testing hypotheses by having built in means for protecting against

personal biases. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 58) echo the emphasis of 'value free' science in positivism that is objective and also highlight the value placed on knowledge arrived at through the gathering of facts that provide the basis for laws. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 57) summarise the key idea of positivism being that the social world exists externally and its properties should be measured through objective methods. Johnson and Duberley (2000, p. 39) summarise the aims of positivism in management research as the identification of causal explanations and fundamental laws that explain regularities in human behaviour. Positivist research methods therefore incorporate preoccupations with internal validity, external validity, and reliability. These concepts are explored in more depth later in this chapter in the section on research strategies.

In general, positivism incorporates an epistemological assumption that knowledge is only of significance if it is based on observations of an external reality. This approach sees managers as rational technicians, dealing with technical issues which are resolvable through the application of superior knowledge (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, p. 56). This thesis incorporates the application the ICOEQ developed by Welch (2011a) and, at first sight, it might appear to assume many tenets of a positivist approach to research. However as Audi highlights (2003, pp. 22-3) there is reason to doubt that simple perceiving must produce any belief at all. Clearly some 'seeing' can and does inform belief. However, other instances of seeing may not. As Audi points out not everything we see demands or even evokes a cognitive response; one entailing belief formation. This principle of knowledge generation has important consequences for positivism when applied to management research as a social science. Objectivity and laws in a world of human meaning that is the world of work may be illusionary. There is also a more fundamental challenge to positivism, in that natural scientific laws themselves are not permanently fixed. They can take time to become accepted, usually through academic and political debate (Latour and Woolgar, 1979). This highlights a focus on science as a sequence of conjectures and refutations, revised conjectures and additional refutations which deductively proceed from the universal to the particular through the elaboration of predictive hypotheses (Johnson and Duberley (2000, p. 29). In the next section an alternative epistemology, interpretivism, which can be directly contrasted with positivism is briefly explored.

4.2.2 Interpretivism

According to Bryman and Bell (2007, pp. 17-21) some academics believe that the study of people and workplaces requires an entirely different approach to the study of natural sciences and are therefore critical of positivism. An alternative epistemology, interpretivism, believes that no assumption can be made for any pre-existing reality and a priority is given to the use of language and the creation of meaning. Positivism focuses on explanation, interpretivism focuses on understanding, where the latter is concerned with empathetic understanding of human action rather than the forces that act on it. Interpretivism is based upon concepts of phenomenology

and symbolic interactionism. Phenomenology is concerned with the question of how individuals make sense of their world. Phenomenologists therefore attempt to see things from the person's point of view. Symbolic interactionists argue that individuals are continually interpreting the symbolic meaning of their environment and this includes the actions of others. This sense-making is also linked to social constructionism, where 'reality' is not objective and exterior, but is socially constructed and given meaning by people. This leads to a focus on what people, individually and collectively, are thinking and feeling, where attention should be paid to the way that they communicate with each other (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, pp. 58-9) and this is particularly relevant to this thesis which is concerned with how people communicate inside organisations. Interpretivism therefore treats the organisation as a social site, a special type of community which shares important characteristics with other types of communities – the emphasis is on a social rather than an economic view of organisational activities (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, p. 33). In the next section three further approaches to management research are briefly outlined.

4.2.3 Neo-empiricism, Affirmative Postmodernism And Critical Theory

Johnson et al. (2006, pp.138-45) outline three alternative approaches to management research as a further contrast to the dominant positivist approach. Firstly, neo-empiricism - like positivism - believes that there is a world out there to be discovered and explored in an objective manner. However, the notion of independence that is core to positivism is challenged through the suggestion that a researcher does not necessarily have to be separate from the research – extending the range of research methods from purely quantitative to qualitative. For example, if audit trails are provided in a self-critical way, then others can make judgments as to the rigour of qualitative research conducted. However, it acknowledges that some social and intellectual distance is required and there is a need to avoid 'over rapport' and 'going native'. Some neo-empiricists are at ease in combining different methods in research and argue that using different methods does not reflect a fundamental philosophical conflict. Indeed, they argue that combining methods significantly improves management research. However, not all neo-empiricists accept there are no philosophical differences. A key limitation to neo-empiricism is the restricted claims that can be made about generalisations of research that usually involves only small samples. Furthermore, social constructionists contest the ability of the researcher to be a neutral conduit in the research process.

Affirmative post-modernism, in contrast to social constructionism and neo-empiricism, is sceptical about the representational capacity of language. This approach posits that there is no single discoverable meaning, there are only numerous different interpretations. Affirmative post-modernists deny that any linguistic construction, including their own, can ever be settled or stable. This reflects a concern in helping people to think about their own and others' thinking so as to question the familiar. A key endeavour is to understand the way that discourses are

sustained and undermined and this is an important consideration for internal communication research that is addressed in this thesis.

Critical theory, like affirmative post-modernism, is concerned with discourse. It also rejects positivist philosophical assumptions and instead is focused on generating a consensus theory of truth linked to participatory approaches to management research where the aim is emancipation (Johnson et al., 2006). This is different from affirmative post-modernism which is focused more on showing the partiality of reality and hidden points of resistance and complexity (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, p. 36). Critical theory is founded upon Habermas's emancipatory interest which aims to liberate people from asymmetrical power relations, dependencies and constraints. Critical theorists aim to de-reify extant organisational practices and place an emphasis on the participation of all in democratic discourse (Johnson et al., 2006, pp. 141-2). This final point is particularly relevant to this thesis with regard to how internal communication is measured in ways that balances managerial and non-managerial perspectives, giving more of an emphasis on employee communication needs. As Alvesson and Deetz (2000, pp. 15-20) outline, critical theory hopes to overcome distorted communication. They focus on the importance of changing unnecessarily dominant controls and constraints which distort organisational decisions and lead to less satisfactory fulfilment of the full variety of human needs and desires. Three tasks for research are suggested; insight, critique and transformative redefinitions. Insight is generated through the investigation of local forms of phenomena and organization-specific, micro-level aspects are an important dimension of study. Critique is about counteracting the dominance of taken-for-granted goals, ideas, ideologies and discourses. It is focused at macro-cultural conventions and structures of social order and for this reason, research on one particular organisation is seen as parochial. Transformative redefinition is the development of managerially relevant knowledge and practical understandings that enable change. This is an approach that is grounded in the principle that the investigation of different organisations and types of management practices may well lead to critical insights that may encourage more progressive and mutually satisfying forms of management. This core principle of investigation at a number of different organisations is applied in this thesis. Critical theory therefore sees organisations as social historical creations, born in conditions of struggle, power and domination that have led to skewed decisions that foster social harm, waste and inefficiency (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, pp. 34-5).

4.2.4 Critical Realism

The origins of critical realism are associated with British philosopher Roy Bhaskar who criticised a view that research was based only on what could be observed. Critical realism takes a middle ground between positivism and post-modernism; 'it does not reduce the world to unknowable chaos or a positivistic universal order, nor does it place objective truth value on the perspectives of human beings or remove the influence and importance of human perspectives'

(Clark et al., 2008, p. 67). Critical realism therefore 'views physical and social entities as having an independent existence irrespective of human knowledge or understanding' (Clark et al., 2008, p. 68). As Johnson and Duberley (2000, p. 165) point out, 'So while human behaviour in, for instance, organizations may often lie in and be caused by the inner interpretive reasoning of actors: for the critical realist there may be causes that are not recognized by, nor accessible to, those actors'. Critical realism is therefore an approach that represents a two-fold critique against other, more established, positions. Firstly, in stark contrast to positivism, it posits that things exist apart from our experience and knowledge of those things. Secondly, it argues for a structured account of reality which is divided or stratified into three domains: the *actual* (events and actions that are more likely to be observed), the *real* (underlying powers, tendencies, and structures whether exercised or not that cause events in the actual domain), and the *empirical* (fallible human perceptions and experiences, including science) (Clark et al., 2008, p. 68). This therefore requires an analysis that 'should include both the unobservable structures and subjectively experienced social phenomena' (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, p. 165). In summary, Sayer (1992, p. 5) sets out eight assumptions of critical realism, summarised as follows:

- The world exists independently of our knowledge of it
- Our knowledge of the world is fallible and theory-laden
- Knowledge develops neither wholly continuously, as the steady accumulation of facts within a stable conceptual framework, nor discontinuously, through simultaneous and universal changes in concepts
- There is necessity in the world; objects—whether natural or social— necessarily have particular powers or ways of acting and particular susceptibilities
- The world is differentiated and stratified, consisting not only of events, but objects, including structures, which have powers and liabilities capable of generating events
- Social phenomena such as actions, texts and institutions are concept dependent. We not only have to explain their production and material effects but to understand, read or interpret what they mean
- Science or the production of any kind of knowledge is a social practice
- Social science must be critical of its object. In order to be able to explain and understand social phenomena we have to evaluate them critically.

Knowledge is therefore formed through the *interaction* of social constructivism and an independent reality. Furthermore, critical realism incorporates an active role of human agency within an independent external reality which can constrain or facilitate human action. Critical realists consider that the observable behaviour of people is not explicable unless it is located in the causal context of non-empirical structures, or intrinsic natures and their interactions. Critical realists therefore seek to understand *why* regularities occur (Bhaskar, 1989; Johnson and

Duberley, 2000, pp. 150-6). This is essentially an interest in 'digging deeper' to identify causal powers which lie behind empirical patterns. This is important as existing approaches to internal communication research as reviewed in sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 report levels of satisfaction with communication, not the reasons *why* those levels exist. The author concurs with Clark et al. (2008, p. 73) who observe that research 'has used an overly simplified and closed-systems view of reality that simultaneously relies heavily on quantification and avoids addressing the views of causation and reality that underpin inquiry'. Although this is based on research in health settings, the same critique can be made of research in internal communication and this issue is addressed in this thesis by adopting a critical realism approach.

Digging deeper to understand why internal communication practices exist as they do entails an exploration of underlying mechanisms that produce events, a process termed 'retroduction' (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, pp. 150-6). Easton (2010, p. 123) summarises the research process associated with retroduction as asking the question 'what must be true in order to make this event possible?' which involves moving from a conception of a phenomenon of interest to a conception of a different kind of thing (power, mechanism) that could have generated the given phenomenon (Lawson, 1997, p. 236). Retroduction is a therefore a 'metaprocess the outcome of which is the identification of mechanisms that explain what caused particular events to occur' (Easton, 2010, p. 124). As Tsoukas (1989, p. 553) argues, the managerial causal powers of control and co-operation cannot be explained by reducing them to the powers of specific superiors, but by the latter's incorporation into a wider structure of relations of production.

In seeking change, critical realism incorporates elements of critical theory that aim to disrupt ongoing social reality for the sake of providing impulses to the liberation from or resistance to what dominates and leads to constraints in human decision making (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, p. 1). Critical realism can also be linked to Forrester's (1993) analysis of organisations that can be understood as structures of systematically distorted communication and where a crucial research question is 'what makes possible or impedes a workers' finding out information at the workplace, challenging rules or norms, feelings, his or her identity, way of being?' (Forrester, 1993, p. 131). Asking this sort of question within a critical realism framework goes far beyond reporting data. Adopting a critical realism approach, this thesis therefore firstly seeks to identify common communication preferences and states of practice and then goes further to explore wider, underlying, management norms and/or structures that produce them. It does this through quantitative and qualitative research in five organisations to establish an 'empirical' analysis of internal communication and organisational engagement. It then uses the process of retroduction to identify the reality of the 'underlying structures' which have led to the 'actual' events that result from this. Retroduction in this thesis is applied as an iterative process of reflection that produces a 'good' or 'acceptable' identification of the

structures that lead to the regularities observed (Easton, 2010, p. 124) that can be further tested in public discussion.

4.2.5 Adopting a Critical Realism Approach: A Response to Over Metatheorising And Functionalism

Tourish and Hargie (2009c, pp. 409-12) perceive some organisational research as being too removed from practice. They concur with Corman (2006, p. 325) who has argued strongly against the trend within organisational communication scholarship towards abstract metatheorising, divorced from organisational context and urged more studies of actual communication behaviour. On the other hand, Yeomans (2008, p. 272) argues that the public relations literature has tended to take a functionalist approach and that this has led to transmission models that fail to adequately encompass the socially-situated contexts of organisational members. Adopting a critical realist approach for this thesis addresses these points. Internal communication can be analysed at an empirical level between employees and their managers. At the same time, analysis can usefully be extended to underlying structures and mechanisms that cannot necessarily be seen.

4.2.6 Summary Of Different Perspectives

The differences between positivism, critical theory, post modernism and critical realism are summarised in figure 4.1, incorporating two axes; objectivist/subjectivist assumptions related to ontology and epistemology (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, p. 180). Bryman (2008, p. 4) summarises an ontological issue as 'to do with whether the social world is regarded as something external to social actors or as something that people are in the process of fashioning' Johnson and Duberley (2000, p. 180) describe ontology as 'philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality'. Epistemology is summarised by Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 60) as a 'general set of assumptions about the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world'. Bryman (2008, p. 4) describes an epistemological issue as one that is to do with 'what is regarded as appropriate knowledge about the social world'.

An objectivist ontology assumes that social and natural realities have an independent existence prior to human cognition. A subjectivist ontology assumes that what we take as reality is an output of human cognition. An objectivist view of epistemology believes in the ability to access the external world objectively, a subjectivist view of epistemology denies this.

FIGURE 4.1 Reflexivity And Management Research (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, p. 180)
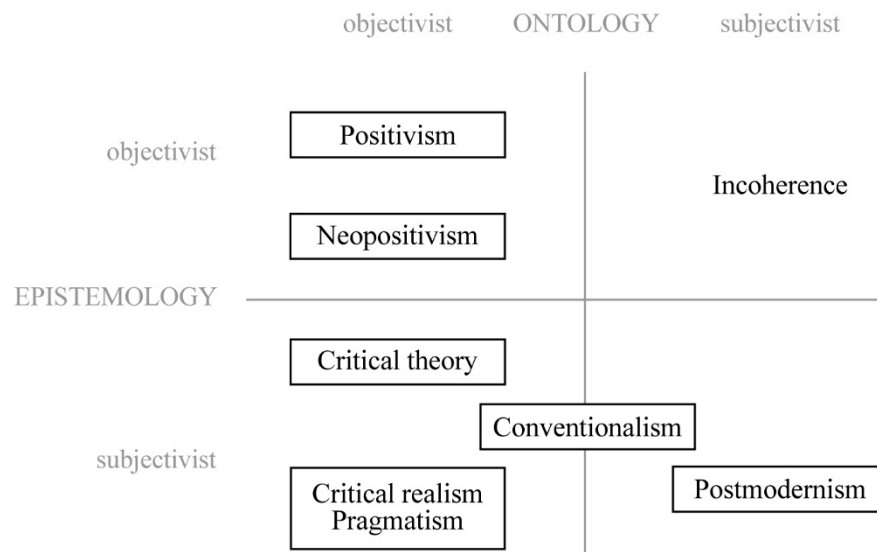
The position adopted for this thesis is one more informed by critical realism than critical theory. However, critical realism challenges 'ontological determinism' by postulating a stratified social ontology in which the concept of 'emergence' plays a central role (Reed, 2009, p. 58). As Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 62) observe, 'Critical realism makes a conscious compromise between the extreme positions: it recognizes social conditions (such as class or wealth) as having real consequences whether or not they are labelled by social scientists'. Figure 4.1 does not include an additional 'emergent' layer of ontological thinking. Indeed, a critical realist's concern with the interconnection of complex processes and relations that cannot be reduced or collapsed into each other means that such a dualistic figure cannot fully depict the complexity of way that an organisation emerges from the interplay between 'experience' ('the empirical'), 'events' ('the actual'), and 'structures and powers of objects' ('the real') (Reed, 2009, p. 59).

4.3 QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Kemmis and McTaggart, (2003, p. 358) suggest that approaches to research can be summarised in a matrix based on individual/social and objective/subjective axes (Figure 4.2). This suggests that an objective (positivist) perspective is intrinsically linked to quantitative not qualitative research. At the social level, observation techniques are associated with qualitative research. A subjective (interpretivist) perspective is intrinsically linked to qualitative research, with research techniques differing at the individual and social levels. In practice, the distinction between a positivist and interpretivist philosophy often breaks down when a research design is established (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This leads some academics to highlight the potential of mixed methods (Creswell, 2009) as set out in figure 4.2 and described by Kemmis and McTaggart,

(2003, p. 358) as 'Reflexive-dialectical view of individual-social relations and connections' where practice is 'socially and historically constituted and as reconstituted by human agency and social action'. However, mixed methods can lead to challenges in analysis when different kinds of data say contradictory things about the same phenomena (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 71). The critical realism approach adopted for this thesis combines micro-level, objective, social research (a questionnaire) and subjective, social research (interviews and focus groups) that is then analysed and considered against macro-level social orders to determine why internal communication practices operate as they do and how they can be challenged and changed.

FIGURE 4.2 Methods And Techniques Characteristic Of Different Approaches To The Study Of Practice, (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2003, p 358).

FOCUS PERSPECTIVE	The individual	The social	Both Reflexive-dialectical view of individual-social relations and connections
Objective	Practice as individual behaviour: Quantitative, correlational-experimental methods. Psychometric and observational techniques, tests, interaction schedules.	Practice as social and systems behaviour: Quantitative, correlational-experimental methods. Observation techniques, sociometrics, systems analysis, social ecology.	
Subjective	Practice as intentional action: Qualitative, interpretive methods. Clinical analysis, interview, questionnaire, diaries, journals, self-report, introspection.	Practice as socially structured, shaped by discourses and tradition: Qualitative, interpretive, historical methods. Discourse analysis, document analysis.	
Both Reflexive-dialectical view of subjective-objective relations and connections			Practice as socially and historically constituted, and as reconstituted by human agency and social action: Critical methods. Dialectical analysis (multiple methods)

4.4 TYPICAL METHODOLOGIES USED FOR COMMUNICATION AUDITS AND RESEARCH

4.4.1 Enchantment With Questionnaires

As Clampitt (2009, p. 55) observes, most organisations are enchanted with questionnaires. Downs and Adrian (2004, p. 15) claim that in 1983, 45 percent of Fortune 500 companies had conducted some form of communication audit with the rationale that an audit offered a benchmark for the progress and future of corporate programmes. Downs and Adrian also (2004, p. 106) claim that the mainstay of most comprehensive communication audits of larger organisations is some type of questionnaire. In addition to questionnaires, other methods used for internal communication audits include diary analysis and analysis of video recordings of interactions (Skipper et al., 2009, p. 260), content analysis of frequently used channels (Clampitt and Berk, 2009, p. 279), interviews (Skipper et al., 2009, p. 260; Tourish et al., 2009, p. 292; Quinn et al., 2009, p. 348; Mills, 2009, p. 377), focus groups (Dickson, 2009), the critical incident method (Downs and Adrian, 2004, p. 158; Hargie and Tourish, 2009c, pp. 169-175) and ethnography (McAleese et al., 2009, p.325).

4.4.2 The Difference Between An Audit And Research

Tourish and Hargie (2009c, pp. 409-414) make a distinction between a communication audit and communication research, where an audit is focused on a question such as 'Is communication in this organisation at an acceptable level of competence?' Zwijze-Koning and De Jong (2007, p. 432) state that an audit may examine various outcome variables, such as communication satisfaction, identification and commitment, the effectiveness (or perceived effectiveness) of the communication. It can also address the various determinants of communication, such as an organization's mission, communication structure, communication culture and it also may focus on message characteristics, the communication skills of employees, the media or channels available, and the symbolism used (for instance, the corporate visual identity). Research is generally concerned with developing and testing hypotheses; generalising from one or more studies, exploring new ideas, constructing grand narratives and contributing to the development and refinement of theories about wider social systems. In their overview of quantitative measures used in communication research, Downs et al. (2004, p. 57-9) observe that there is a surprisingly large number of well-developed organisational communication instruments in use. Greenbaum and Gardner (1985) identified more than 500 instruments that had been cited in communication dissertations and journals. However, as Downs et al. (2004, p.58) highlight, there are a number of organisational communication practices that inhibit the identification of a complete list. These include the use of instruments by practitioners in other disciplines such as psychology, the mix of micro and macro level measures used, the incorporation of other facets of communication in some measures (for example, interpersonal communication), the way that measures are often used in proprietary

consulting practice (which makes it difficult to assess) and the use of measures in countries that are not part of wider communication associations. Downs et al. (2004, p. 60) focus on six instruments that examine communication throughout the entire organization; The International Communication Association Audit, the Organisational Communication Scale, the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire, the Organisational Communication Development Audit, the Organisational Culture Survey and the comprehensive survey of organisations by Likert (1967). Two of these instruments, the International Communication Audit and the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire, were reviewed earlier. Despite the evidence that questionnaires have featured so heavily in internal communication audits and research, Miller et al. (2011, pp. 6-7) argue that interpretive, critical and cultural approaches have dominated recent organisational research. However, they suggest that new approaches to quantitative research are appearing. These include the systematic study of phenomena across multiple levels of analysis and the study of relationships between people, units and organisations.

Although explicit ontological and epistemological positions are rarely stated in academic articles, it is clear that internal communication research has a strong positivist heritage. Research from a postmodern perspective has been conducted in public relations (Holtzhausen and Voto, 2002) and a critical theory perspective has been used for organisational communication (Deetz, 2005). However, it is clear that what is missing in past internal communication research is explanation and depth. There is little evidence of an exploration of the underlying structures and mechanisms that results from questionnaires or the observable experiences of employees. Adopting a critical realism approach that incorporates methodological eclecticism addresses this issue. Indeed, Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 628) argue that there is increasing interest in critical realism within business and management and it has become popular in marketing research. However, there is no evidence that it has ever been adopted for internal communication research.

4.5 THEORY TESTING AND GENERATION

4.5.1 The Lack Of Theoretical Research In The Field

Grunig et al. (1992) and Argenti (1996) point to the lack of theoretical understanding and research in the field of internal communication. Similarly, Smidts et al. (2001) and L'Etang (2013, p. 62) highlight that internal communication is a rather neglected discipline. There is, therefore, scope for much greater emphasis on theory building through research. The thesis is essentially deductive in nature (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p.11) in developing hypotheses based on what is known in the field, testing theory as defined by Creswell (2009, pp. 51-2) as an interrelated set of constructs formed into propositions, or hypotheses, that specify the relationship among variables. However, as Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 14) observe a deductive stance also entails an element of induction, whereby reflection on the confirmation of hypotheses and/or research objectives is confirmed or rejected, leading to revisions of theory.

This can be associated with the process of 'retroduction' that is a key element of a critical realist approach, highlighted earlier. As Tsoukas puts it (1989, p. 557), theoretical redescriptions increasingly capture new layers of reality. The application of the ICOEQ therefore goes beyond solely being an exercise in testing pre-formulated ideas to being a tool that can be used to generate data that can be analysed in a number of ways that might suggest new departures and theoretical contributions (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 632).

4.6 RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Creswell (2009, p. 11) outlines strategies of inquiry that are types of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods designs that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design (Figure 4.3).

FIGURE 4.3 Creswell's (2009, p. 12) Strategies Of Inquiry

QUANTITATIVE	QUALITATIVE	MIXED METHODS
• Experimental designs • Non-experimental designs, such as surveys	• Narrative research • Phenomenology • Ethnographies • Grounded theory studies • Case study	• Sequential • Concurrent • Transformative

Creswell (2009, p. 16) summarises a research design as quantitative, qualitative, or mixed – arrived at from contributions from worldviews, strategies and methods, where 'worldviews' is a term used for beliefs that guide action such as those associated with ontology and epistemology as outlined previously. However, Creswell's classification of a survey as quantitative is perhaps a little simplistic as a survey can also incorporate open questions for narrative research. In contrast, in defining the design, Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 40) use the term differently and outline five primary designs; experimental, cross-sectional, longitudinal, case study, and comparative. The strategy used for this thesis is mixed methods; a questionnaire (the ICOEQ), interviews and focus groups. This approach is discussed in more detail in a later section of this chapter.

A central question for research strategies and designs is how to evaluate the approach taken. Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 40) argue that three of the most prominent criteria for evaluation are reliability, replication, and validity. Reliability relates to the extent to which a study is repeatable and the measures used are consistent. This is most commonly connected to quantitative research. Replication is the ability for other researchers to repeat the study, so procedures have to be clear. Validity is the extent to which the measure used really reflects the concept being tested (measurement validity). It is also the extent to which causal relationships can definitely be attributed to independent variable (internal validity) and the extent that results

be generalised (external validity). Finally, validity is also linked to applicability to everyday settings (ecological validity). However, as Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 43) point out these criteria are more suited to quantitative research than qualitative. Other aspects such as trustworthiness, incorporating credibility, transferability, dependability and objectivity, and relevance, incorporating importance of topic and contribution to literature are more appropriate for qualitative designs. Creswell (2009, pp. 190-3) states that qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures. Validity strategies are described as triangulation of different data sources, using member checking to determine the accuracy of findings, using rich, thick description to convey findings, clarifying the bias the researcher brings to the study, presenting negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes, spending prolonged time in the field, using peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account, and using an external auditor to review the entire project. Specific questions of evaluation are explored in depth in later sections of this chapter that refer directly to the design of the ICOEQ, interviews and focus groups.

In the following section the rationale for the research methodology adopted is provided. This is informed by the critical realist position outlined earlier. As Clark and Lassel (2008, p. 76) suggest, either quantitative or qualitative approaches can be used within a critical realist approach 'As long as the intention is to examine clues regarding complex causation. However, relying solely on qualitative accounts runs the risk of ascribing primacy to subjective accounts. Conversely, relying on quantification may lead to important non quantifiable or unexpected mechanisms to be missed'.

4.7 THE CROSS-SECTIONAL METHODOLOGY ADOPTED FOR THE THESIS

The methodology adopted for this thesis involves a questionnaire that was administered at five organisations followed by interviews and focus groups. It could, therefore, be considered as both a multiple case study and a cross-sectional design. Bryman and Bell (2007, pp. 64-5) state that:

> It might be asked what the difference is between a multiple-case study involving several cases and a cross-sectional design. After all, if an investigation involved say, eight cases, it could be viewed as either a multiple-case study involving several cases or as a cross sectional design. A simple rule of thumb is to ask: what is the focus? If the focus is on the cases and their unique contexts, it is a multiple-case study and as such is an extension of the case study approach: if the emphasis is on producing general findings, with little regard for the unique contexts of each of the eight cases it is better viewed as a cross-sectional design.

In this thesis the focus is more on the production of general findings, so it is framed as a cross-sectional design. This includes analysis of results at more than one organisation to add confidence to findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 29). As Alvesson and Deetz (2000, pp. 18-20) argue, to focus solely on one organisation may lead to parochialism. The investigation of

different organisations and types of principles, practices and processes may well lead to critical insights that may encourage more progressive and mutually satisfying forms of management. In addition to the Internal Communication and Organisational Engagement Questionnaire (ICOEQ) semi-structured interviews and focus groups were also conducted, with minor adaptions for organisational requirements. This approach provided richer data than the ICOEQ alone could provide.

Five organisations participated in the study. Three organisations are in the public sector; GovOffice, a shared services function within a UK government ministerial department and SECouncil1 and SECouncil2 which are two local borough councils in the south of England. One organisation is in the not for profit sector; HousingAssoc, a housing association based in England. The fifth organisation is in the private sector; BankDept, a group services department in a major UK bank. The sampling of organisations from the public, not-for-profit, and private sectors enables useful comparisons to be made. This potentially improves theory building (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 68).

4.7.1 A Comparative Design

The design adopted for this thesis is comparative, defined by Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 68) as 'two or more cross-sectional studies carried out more or less the same point in time'. The primary level of analysis is organisations. According to Halinen and Tornroos, (2005, p. 1288) a comparative design may also suggest concepts that are relevant to emerging theory. By comparing results for each organisation it is possible to establish the range of generality of a finding or explanation and, at the same time, pin down the conditions under which that finding will occur. There is more potential for both greater explanatory power and greater generalisability than a single-case study can deliver. On the other hand, the demands of comparison force the researcher to develop an explicit focus at the outset whereas a more open ended approach may be more advantageous in some instances (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 68). Halinen and Tornroos, (2005, p. 1292) highlight a concern about multiple studies in that there is an obvious risk of ignoring the value of rich holistic description. To address these issues, the design was open to modification as it evolved, although as Yin (2009, p. 62) suggests care was taken to ensure that flexibility did not lessen the rigor with which procedures were followed.

4.7.2 Mixed Methods: A Sequential Explanatory Strategy

A mixed method strategy was adopted at each organisation. Creswell (2009, pp. 207-10) suggests that there are four factors that influence a mixed methods design; timing, weighting, mixing, and theorising. In this thesis, data was collected sequentially, with weight given to quantitative research. The aim is to collect quantitative data and then use qualitative data as supportive information. This is termed 'embedding' in Creswell's (2009, p. 207) guidance on aspects to consider in a mixed methods design. Creswell (2009, pp. 206-17) also outlines six different types of mixed method strategy; sequential explanatory strategy, sequential

exploratory strategy, sequential transformative strategy, concurrent triangulation strategy, concurrent embedded strategy, and concurrent transformative strategy. This thesis adopts a sequential explanatory strategy - a design that Creswell (2009, p. 211) describes as one that 'is typically used to explain and interpret quantitative results by collecting and analysing follow-up qualitative data'. The advantages are that it is straightforward and easy to implement. The main weakness is the length of time required to collect the data. According to Yin (2009, p. 63) mixed methods permit investigators to address more complicated research questions and collect a richer and stronger array of evidence. The advantages of the strategy are that it is easy to implement and straightforward to report describe and report. A criticism of case studies is the lack of rigour of natural scientific designs (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 97). Giving weighting to the quantitative-qualitative order counters this criticism. The primary weakness is the time required in data collection (Creswell, 2009, p. 212).

The quantitative approach is based on the ICOEQ developed by Welch (2011a) with modifications as required for each organisation. The qualitative approach is based on a deeper exploration of the reasons for satisfaction with internal communication. Although communication is not a highly sensitive topic, it may incorporate some sensitivities as the questionnaire required employees to make comments about their team leader and senior management team. As Jen and Jonsen (2010, p. 315) identify, mixed methods are relevant when employees respond to sensitive surveys with non-committal answers. The importance of anonymity for employees involved in the research was also an important ethical consideration that is explored in more depth later in this chapter in section 4.13.

4.8 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH: QUESTIONNAIRES; USEFULNESS AND CRITICISMS

4.8.1 Advantages Of Quantitative Measurement

Measuring interest in topics of information, satisfaction with communication and organisational engagement is useful for three reasons, according to Bryman and Bell (2007, pp. 158-9). Firstly, quantitative measurement enables fine distinctions to be made. Secondly, it provides a consistent way to gauge differences. Finally, it provides the basis for more precise estimates of the degree of relationship between concepts, for example, in this thesis between internal communication and organisational engagement and an inference is proposed that organisational engagement is an outcome of internal communication. However, as Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 169) point out, there is always the risk that the inference will be wrong.

4.8.2 Correlational Survey And Conceptual Framework For Multiple Linear Regression

In this thesis, the ICOEQ is an example of a 'correlational survey' (Punch, 2009, p. 223) or what Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, pp. 90-1) term an 'inferential survey' where an emphasis is given to studying the relationships between variables. In this thesis 'predictor' variables are

keeping employees informed, employee voice, line manager communication and senior manager communication. The dependent variable is organisational engagement. Correlation analysis forms the primary basis for the quantitative discussion and comparison of results at each organisation. The questionnaire is also designed to conduct regression analysis (Punch, 2009, p. 226) where the analysis can be focused on a dependent variable (organisational engagement) and a number of independent variables (keeping employees informed, employee voice, line manager communication and senior manager communication). This is so that analysis can be conducted to see how the independent variables, separately or in combination, contribute to the variance in the dependent variable. The conceptual framework for the multiple linear regression is shown in figure 4.4.

FIGURE 4.4 Conceptual Framework For Multiple Linear Regression

Independent variables   Dependent variable

Keeping employees informed

Employeee voice

Line manager communication   Organisational engagement

Senior manager communication
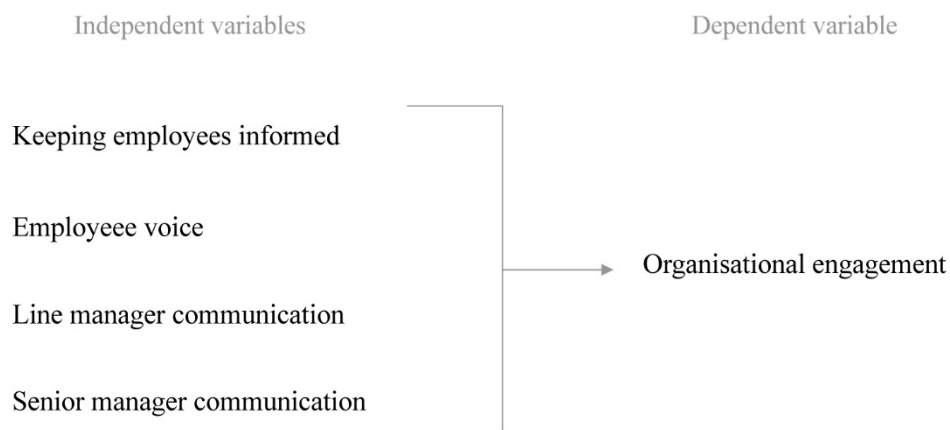
Reinard (2006, p. 38) states that cross-validation studies typically require large samples that should be in the 'hundreds'. The study generated more than 150 questionnaire responses at each organisation and in one case, BankDept, there were 1259 responses.

4.8.3 Criticisms Of Quantitative Research

Bryman and Bell (2007, pp. 174-5) outline four criticisms of quantitative research; the failure to distinguish people and social institutions from the 'the world of nature', the measurement process possesses an artificial and spurious sense of precision and accuracy, the reliance on instruments and procedures hinders the connection between research and everyday life, and the analysis of relationships between variables creates a static view of social life that is independent of peoples' lives. These all relate to the tenets of a positivist epistemological position as reviewed in section 4.2.1. As Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 71) point out, methods associated with a positivist position tend be inflexible and not very effective at understanding processes or

the significance that people attach to actions. Mixed methods are therefore applied in this thesis as they provide more perspectives on internal communication.

4.9 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

4.9.1 Strengths Of Qualitative Research

Daymon and Holloway (2002, p. 9) state that mainstream research on managed communication is essentially realist in its tenor, appropriating primarily quantitative methods of investigation. However, they also acknowledge that qualitative studies appear to be gaining a foothold in the communication, marketing and management literature. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 5) 'Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or, to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them'. Qualitative research therefore incorporates a range of characteristics, such as a natural setting, emergent design, the researcher as a key instrument, multiple sources of data, participants' meanings, interpretive and the development of an holistic account (Creswell, 2009, pp. 175-6). According to Miles and Huberman (1994) the strengths of qualitative data are local groundedness in a specific case, and richness and holism providing 'thick' descriptions. Qualitative data are well suited for identifying meanings that people place on the events, processes and structures of their lives. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 72) stress the potential for qualitative data to understand meanings, gathering data that is seen as natural rather than artificial. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10) also claim that qualitative data are useful for validating, explaining, illuminating, or reinterpreting quantitative data gathered from the same setting. Creswell (2009, p. 203) argues that mixed methods on social and human sciences are gaining popularity and there is more insight to be gained from the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research than either form by itself. This is the rationale for semi-structured interviews and focus groups conducted for this thesis.

4.9.2 Criticisms Of Qualitative Research

Criticisms of qualitative research include difficulties in interpretation and the low credibility sometimes given to 'subjective' opinion (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, pp. 72-3). Bryman and Bell (2007, pp. 423-4) identify four primary criticisms of qualitative research; it is too subjective, it is difficult to replicate, interviews with a small number of people are not generalisable, and a lack of transparency between what the research did and the conclusions reached. A counter to the problem of generalisability highlighted here is to conduct research in more than one organisation, the approach taken for this thesis. As Miles and Huberman (1994, pp. 172-3) state, one aim of studying multiple cases is to increase generalisability, reassuring yourself that the events and processes in one well described setting are not wholly idiosyncratic.

4.10 THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (ICOEQ)

4.10.1 ICOEQ Design

This section discusses the design of the Internal Communication and Organisational Engagement Questionnaire (ICOEQ) that was used for the survey (the adapted version used for GovDept is at Appendix A). It 'reverse engineers' the rationale for topics and the questions included. The questionnaire was designed by Welch (2011a) and piloted in 2011 in an industrial services organisation. It was administered for this study as an online only questionnaire using Bristol Online Surveys, a system used by 130 universities. It incorporates 123 closed questions using a 5 point Likert scale and four open questions. As Bryman and Bell highlight (2007, pp. 260-1), closed questions are easy to process and enhance comparability of answers, making it easier to show the relationship between variables. Potential weaknesses in questionnaire design such as avoidance of ambiguous terms, long questions, double-barrelled question, general questions, leading questions and questions that include negatives or technical terms (Bryman and Bell, 2007, pp. 267-271, Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, pp. 227-8) were all addressed.

The questionnaire is structured using the following scales:

1. Information interests (plans and aims, progress, external environment, and work related information)
2. Helpfulness of communication methods (current and alternative)
3. General satisfaction with communication
4. Senior manager communication (providing information and employee voice)
5. Line manager level communication (providing information and employee voice)
6. Peer group level communication
7. Organisational engagement (cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and a proxy question).

Scales 1 to 6 reflect Welch and Jackson's (2007, p. 184) definition of internal communication:

> The strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders within organisations across a number of inter-related dimensions including, internal line manager communication, internal team peer communication, internal project peer communication and internal corporate communication.

Scales 1 to 4 relate to internal corporate communication, where the content is described by Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 185) as 'Organisational/corporate issues, e.g. goals, objectives, new developments, activities and achievements'. They therefore measure internal communication at the corporate level. Scale 1 is designed to assess interest in the content, scale 2 assesses the channels used, scale 3 assesses general levels of satisfaction with communication and scale 4 assesses the communication performance of senior managers. Scales 5 and 6 relate to the other dimensions of internal communication included in Welch and Jackson's definition;

line manager communication and peer group communication. Scale 7 assesses levels of organisational engagement so that correlations can be made between internal communication and engagement. Communication related enablers of organisational engagement are yet to be firmly established in the literature. However, as Welch (2011b, p. 339) observes 'Internal corporate communication involves communication elements important for employee engagement…' and these can be applied at the emotional and cognitive levels of organisational engagement (Saks, 2006, p. 602).

4.10.2 Scale 1 Information Interests

Items in this first scale are broken down as follows:

- Plans and aims
- External environment
- Work related information
- Progress

This scale is focused on content, something that is sometimes missing from traditional tools such as the International Communication Association (ICA) survey that focus on the amount of communication required rather than the quality or type of communication required as highlighted in section 3.7. Three sub-sections are related to corporate level information and one is work related information. Questions asked at the corporate level reflect Welch and Jackson's (2007, p. 185) description of internal corporate communication Including 'goals, activities, new developments, and achievements' as reviewed in sections 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7. These different sub-sections enable comparisons of correlations between different types of content and engagement, something that is under reported in the literature. There are 14 different items of employee related information and some may not apply to all organisations (for example, quizzes).

4.10.3 Scale 2 Communication Methods

Organisations use a number of different channels and publications to communicate with employees and this scale reflects the review of medium theory in sections 2.6 and 2.7 and in chapter three. Items in the ICOEQ reflect the nature of the pilot organisation and these were therefore adapted for each organisation in this study.

4.10.4 Scale 3 General Satisfaction With Communication

This scale includes six items. Three are three general items, the others relate to aspects of employee voice; opportunities to feed views upwards, ways to pass on criticisms, and ways to communicate ideas to senior managers. The scale reflects the concepts reviewed in sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.12, and 2.19.

4.10.5 Scale 4 Senior Manager Communication

This scale has 12 questions about how well senior managers communicate with employees. Some of the items are drawn from 2004 Workers Employment Relations Survey (WERS) to enable benchmarking (Kersley et al., 2006) and others adapted from the CSQ as reviewed by Clampitt and Downs (2004, pp. 139-157). They reflect a balance of keeping employees informed and giving them a voice, as in scale 3. However, the focus here is specifically at senior manager level, rather than at a general organisational level. This addresses concerns raised that other instruments such as the CSQ do not directly address top management communication (Zwijze-Koning and de Jong 2007). The scale also includes items that relate specifically to change (3 items) and employee voice (5 items). Senior manager communication was reviewed in section 2.19.

4.10.6 Scale 5 Line Manager Communication

Items in this section replicate those in scale 4. Line manager communication was reviewed in section 2.20.

4.10.7 Scale 6 Peer Group Communication

There are three items in this scale. These relate to peer level communication in Welch and Jackson's (2007, p. 184) definition of internal communication reviewed in section 2.1.

4.10.8 Scale 7 Organisational Engagement

Employee engagement is a contested concept, so the selection of questions for this section requires careful consideration. Saks (2006, p. 605) places an emphasis on organisational engagement that is separate from work engagement. Work engagement is aligned to job involvement, described by Fleck and Inceoghu (2010, p. 37) as an employees' psychological identification with his/her job. Organisational engagement is reviewed in section 2.11 and is the focus of the ICOEQ. It should therefore be noted that that correlations between internal communication and work engagement (as reviewed in section 2.10) cannot be made in this thesis. However, correlations can be differentiated between organisational and work content and organisational engagement by creating sub-scales with scale 1. There are 14 items in the scale, based on Saks (2006, pp. 608-9) survey that builds on Kahn's (1990, p. 692) conceptualisation of engagement that identifies three components; cognitive, emotional and behavioural. The scale thus incorporates three sub-scales for these components and a proxy organisational engagement question, 'This is a good organisation to work for'. Three of the questions, 14t, 14u, and 14v are reported in the 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Study and so enable wider analysis to be made. A breakdown of the items relating to the three sub-scales and the proxy question is shown in table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1 Employee Engagement Scale Identifying Behavioural, Cognitive And Emotional Sub-Scales And Proxy Item

5=Very strong agreement, 1=Very strong disagreement. Mark one box in each row.	*Cognitive (C), Emotional (E), Behavioural (B)*
14a I get involved with things happening in Org	B
14b I put extra effort in to help Org succeed	B
14c I go the extra mile to help Org succeed	B
14d I put extra energy into helping achieve Org's aims	B
14e I work hard to ensure Org provides a good service	B
14f I make suggestions to improve the way we do things at Org	B
14g I don't give my opinion on issues affecting Org	B
14h Using my own initiative I carry out tasks that are not required as part of my job	B
14i I'm interested in what happens at Org	C
14j I'm interested in the future of Org	C
14k I am not into the goings on in Org	C
14l I come up with ideas to improve the way Org works	C
14m I think about improvements to help Org operate more effectively	C
14n I think about Org issues after work	C
14o I try to come up with solutions to Org problems	C
14p I care about the future of Org	E
14q I'm not bothered about Org's future	E
14r I feel positive about working for Org	E
14s It feels good to be part of Org	E

14t I feel loyal to Org   E

14u I feel proud to tell people who I work for   E

14v I share many of the values of Org   E

14w I believe Org provides an important service   C and E

Although question 14w could be interpreted as cognitive and emotional, it was considered to be emotional in the scales created for analysis. A further question, 14 x 'This is a good organisation to work for' was also included in the questionnaire as a proxy question for organisational engagement.

4.10.9 Demographics

A small set of demographic questions was included at the end of the questionnaire. As Clampitt (2009, p. 63) suggests, breakdowns need to be specific enough to isolate areas of concern but not so specific that respondents feel that their anonymity is compromised. Questions included in the ICOEQ include gender, age, employment status (part time or full time), length of service, department and supervision of employees. In some cases, not all of these were used as the organisation raised concerns that employees might be concerned about being identified.

4.10.10 Scale Reliability

Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 163) point out a potential weakness in questionnaire design is that when multiple item measures are used to create an overall score there is a possibility that the items used do not always relate to the same thing. Internal reliability for the sub-scales created in this thesis was therefore tested using Cronbach's alpha which calculates the interitem covariance among item responses (Helms et al., 2006).Cronbach's alpha reports how far items used in the scale relate to the same thing. As Tavakol and Dennick (2011, pp. 53-55) observe, reliability here is understood to mean a concern 'with the ability of an instrument to measure consistently'. Reinard (2006, pp. 129-33) summarises the use of Cronbach's alpha as, 'A highly regarded and efficient way to measure reliability, most appropriately used when the items are equivalent and have been combined into an index of many items and most popularly used when researchers have measures that do not have "right or wrong" answers to items on a measure'. It was therefore an appropriate check on reliability for the scales developed in this thesis.

Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the scales used in this thesis through the standard application in the IBM SPSS Statistics software package. In terms of a 'rule of thumb' guide for acceptable alpha values, Pallant (2013, p.105) suggests that values above 0.7 are considered acceptable, although values above 0.8 are said to be preferable. Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 164) state that 'the figure of 0.8 is said to be typically used as a rule of thumb to denote an acceptable

level of internal reliability, though many writers are said to accept a slightly lower figure'. However, such 'rule of thumb' values do not, according to Lance et al. (2006, p. 202), account for 'any limitations of the application of values being dependent on the number of items in the scale'. As Field observes (2009, pp. 675-677) as the number of items on the scale increases, Cronbach's alpha will increase. The alphas reported for the scales in this thesis that follow in tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 should therefore be considered against the number of items used in each scale. Future research could incorporate more finely tuned scales with a fewer number of items than used in this thesis. Alternative approaches to testing scale reliability could also be considered. However, as Lance et al. (2006, p. 213) point out, what constitutes adequate reliability will always be a judgment call and depends very much on the measurement situation.

The Cronbach's alpha results for the organisational engagement scale are shown in table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2 Organisational Engagement Scale And Sub-Scale Reliability

Cronbach's alpha	GovOffice	SECouncil1	SECouncil2	HousingAssoc	BankDept
Organisational engagement	.944	.914	.930	.924	.941
Behavioural organisational engagement	.881	.844	.876	.845	.887
Cognitive organisational engagement	.863	.824	.844	.830	.862
Emotional organisational engagement	.938	.882	.908	.904	.911

A principal enabler of engagement highlighted in the literature review is employee voice (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009; Truss et al., 2006) and this was reviewed in sections 2.12. The following questions about employee voice are included in various sections of the questionnaire, including within the contexts of senior manager and line manager communication, and were grouped to form a dedicated scale for analysis:

- Opportunities to feed my views upwards
- Ways for me to pass on criticisms
- Ways for me to communicate ideas to top management
- Extent to which top management listen to me
- Extent to which top management are open to my ideas
- Seeking the views of employees or employee representatives
- Responding to suggestions from employees or employee representatives
- Allowing employees or employee representatives to influence final decisions
- Extent to which my supervisor listens to me

- Extent to which my supervisor is open to my ideas
- Extent to which other employees at my level listen to me
- Extent to which other employees at my level are open to my ideas
- I make suggestions to improve the way we do things at Org.

Internal reliability for the employee voice scale was tested using Cronbach's alpha. Results are all over 0.9 (Table 4.3).

TABLE 4.3 Employee Voice Scale Reliability

Cronbach's alpha	GovOffice	SECouncil1	SECouncil2	HousingAssoc	BankDept
Employee voice	.926	.921	.948	.932	.914

A further enabler of engagement highlighted in the literature review is keeping employees informed (Truss et al., 2006) as reviewed in sections 2.5, 2.6, 2.7 and 2.21.Specific questions relating to keeping employees informed on a range of topics are included in two sections of the questionnaire; senior manager and line manager communication and they can be grouped to form a dedicated scale for analysis. The following 5 questions all contain aspects of keeping employees informed:

- Keeping you informed about changes to the way the organisation is being run
- Keeping employees informed about changes in staffing
- Keeping you informed about changes in the way you do your job
- Keeping you informed about financial matters, including budgets or profits
- Keeping employees informed about contract negotiations and changes.

Internal reliability for a keeping employees informed scale was tested using Cronbach's alpha. Results are all over 0.9 (table 4.4).

TABLE 4.4 Keeping Employees Informed Scale Reliability

Cronbach's alpha	GovOffice	SECouncil1	SECouncil2	HousingAssoc	BankDept
Keeping employees informed	.925	.927	.956	.913	.955

4.10.11 Adaptions To The ICOEQ

Some minor adaptions were made to each questionnaire in scale 2 to reflect the methods in use at the organisation. A more fundamental adaption was made for SECouncil1 and SECouncil2 in scale 4; the questions used for leadership communication were repeated in a new scale for middle managers. This enabled more granular analysis of satisfaction with different layers of management at the organisations. The questionnaire was also adapted for BankDept. The items specified in scale 1 were repeated in scale 3 and this enabled direct analysis of both 'interest in' and 'satisfaction with' communication on specific items.

4.10.12 Access To Organisations

As Johl and Renganathan (2010, p. 42) point out, 'One of greatest pitfalls in conducting research successfully is the inability to obtain access to the research field'. This can be a serious issue, although, as Okumus et al. (2007, pp. 7-8) note, the literature does not cover it in much depth and the hurdles related to gaining access are often neglected or seen as merely a tactical issue. In this thesis, the author used his personal contacts with a large number of internal communication practitioners to promote the study. Around 25 people expressed an interest in their organisation becoming involved. However, Human Resources managers raised concerns about the nature and/or the timing of the study in many cases. Following lengthy negotiations and discussions with executives at potential organisations, five organisations finally agreed to conduct the research. In all cases, the benefit of conducting free research that would have an impact on internal communication practice potentially leading to higher levels of organisational engagement was a key factor in securing access. This is an example of 'reciprocity' that Shenton and Hayter (2004, p. 225) highlight as one way to gain access for research. A condition of the research conducted was that the questionnaire would be followed by interviews and at least one focus group. In some organisations further discussions were required to ensure that interviews and focus groups were held.

4.10.13 Size Of Organisations

SECouncil1, SECouncil2 and HousingAssoc are medium sized organisations, employing between 800 and 1000 people. In SECouncil1, agreement could not be secured for everyone in the council to be invited to participate, so two departments were chosen within the organisation.

GovOffice and BankDept are two very large organisations and specific departments within each organisation were chosen for the research. In all cases everyone in the chosen department or organisation was invited to participate in the survey.

4.10.14 Survey Response Rates

The total combined number of respondents for all five surveys was 2066 and the response rate varied from 16 to 52 percent in each organisation (Table 4.5).

TABLE 4.5 Number Of ICOEQ Respondents

Organisation	Date of survey	Population (approximate)	Number of respondents	Response rate (approximate)
GovOffice	23 Apr 12 to 1 June12	1200	276	23 percent
SECouncil1	12 Oct to 12 Nov 12	420	167	39 percent
SECouncil2	10 Feb 13 to 8 Mar13	900	159	16 percent
HousingAssoc	14 Feb 13 to 15 Mar13	800	205	26 percent
BankDept	27 Feb to 20 Mar13	2400	1259	52 percent

The response rate is an approximated figure based on the best estimate of the number of employees who received an email invitation to participate. In the case of SECouncil1 the invitation was sent only to two specific council departments, Resources Management and Childrens' Services. The response rate shown in table 4.5 is for the Resources Management department only. In the case of BankDept, the invitation was also sent only to employees in a specific department, Global Services. This included employees located outside the UK. In all other surveys, respondents are UK based. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 214) suggest several steps to increase response rates, including making the questionnaire easy and short, explaining the purpose, assuring confidentiality and sending out reminders. The survey took around 15-20 minutes to complete. The purpose was clearly explained, confidentiality was assured and reminders were sent. Easterby-Smith at al. (2008, p. 214) also list giving incentives to take part as a step and this was incorporated in the HousingAssoc survey only. In order to maintain confidentiality of individual responses, respondents who wanted to be eligible for the incentive were asked to enter their name and email address in a separate field at the end of the questionnaire. Out of 205 respondents, 167 opted to do this.

4.11 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS: UNIVARIATE, BIVARIATE CORRELATION AND MULTIPLE REGRESSION TECHNIQUES

Univariate, bivariate correlation and standard multiple regression techniques were used to analyse data generated from the ICOEQ (Bryman and Bell, 2007, pp. 357-364; Pallant, 2013, p. 155). Univariate analysis incorporated arithmetic means, standard deviations, analysis of

variance (ANOVA) and frequencies for individual variables and scales. Bivariate analysis incorporated the level of associations between scales, using Pearson's *r*. This includes the reporting of statistical significance of coefficients. The interpretation of the strengths of correlations is dependent upon what is typical (Jaeger, 1990, p. 60). As Reinard (2006, pp. 93-4) observes, in a study of the persuasive effects of evidence, a correlation of .40 would be considered quite high, but a correlation of .50 between two measures of communicator competence would be considered quite low. Thus, above all else, the researcher should consider the research situation when interpreting correlation coefficient sizes. There is no evidence that the communication scales in the ICOEQ have been used before in correlations with organisational engagement. Furthermore, no similar studies in public relations or internal communication were identified that report correlations against a suggested set of strength guidelines for the field. Indeed, correlation coefficients in communication and management research are often simply reported as 'positive' or 'negative' without any consideration of the degree of strength relevant to the study concerned (Moon, 2013, p. 1706; White and Imre, 2013, p. 396; Nikolic et al., 2013, p. 564). For the purposes of this thesis, the criteria adopted for interpreting the strength of correlations is shown in table 4.6.

TABLE 4.6 Guide To Description Of Correlation Strength Established For The Thesis

Pearson's *r*	Descriptor
< .19	Very weak
.20 - .29	Weak
.30 - .39	Moderate
.40 - .59	Strong
.60 - .79	Very strong

This reflects the differences in the constructs of internal communication and organisational engagement; they are clearly different from Reinard's example (above) of two aspects of communicator competence and are more in line with the persuasive effects of evidence example. However, it is acknowledged that this guide is tentative and further studies are required for a more fully developed guide for the field. In terms of the impact of sample size on correlations, as Field points out (2009, p. 192) correlation coefficients are effect sizes, so no further calculations are required. However, as Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 371) and Bryman (2008, p. 335) observe, whether a correlation is statistically significant or not is affected by the sample size, so emphasis is given to interpretation of correlations that are statistically significant. Tests for the statistical significance of the difference between correlations are discussed by Pallant (2013, pp. 145-7), Field (2009, pp. 191-2) and Zou (2007). However, the statistical significance of the differences between correlations was not used in the comparison of correlations between the five organisations in this thesis as broad trends based on the strengths

outline in table 4.6 were considered to be sufficient. Pallant (2013, pp. 155-6) outlines three possible approaches for multiple regression analysis; standard or simultaneous, hierarchical or sequential, and stepwise. Standard multiple regression was used for analysis in this thesis as it was considered the most appropriate in assessing how much explanation a set of internal communication variables has on the variance of organisational engagement.

4.12 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

4.12.1 Semi-Structured Interviews And Focus Groups

The main research methods used with qualitative research are ethnography/participant observation, qualitative interviewing, focus groups, language based approaches such as discourse analysis, and the collection and analysis of documents (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 404). Interviews and focus groups were used in this study as they allow the researcher some control over the line of questioning (Creswell, 2009, p. 179) and enable more cross-case comparability (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 17). Yin (2009, p. 108) claims that interviews are an essential source of evidence when studies are about human affairs or behavioural events. Describing the essential elements of qualitative interviews, Creswell (2009, p. 181) states that interviews are conducted face-to-face or by telephone and involve unstructured or generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants. For this thesis, a semi-structured approach was used, incorporating an interview and focus group guide, where all questions are asked and a similar wording is used from interviewee to interviewee and from focus group to focus group. It is therefore an example of what Alvesson and Ashcraft (2012, pp. 240-4) describe as a 'neo-positivist' approach to interviews where they are seen as 'a modified oral survey instrument through which "softer" forms of objective and generalizable knowledge can be discovered'.

4.12.2 Advantages And Disadvantages Of Interviews

Millar and Tracey (2009, p. 79) argue that the interview method offers four advantages over other information gathering strategies: it is more likely to elicit unanticipated information, meeting with individuals may enable you to get a better sense of the way in which practices are perceived, it serves a need to have a social aspect to the discovery of information, and it's flexibility is beneficial when the topic requires exploration. Weaknesses of the interview method include the fleeting nature of the contact, the lack of the ability of an interviewee to recollect how decisions evolve as part of a social process and daily rituals that employees may be reluctant to discuss in an interview context alone (Bryman and Bel, 2007, p. 503). As Alvesson and Ashcraft (2012, p. 245) point out, interview accounts may be seen as political representations of the favourable 'truth' one wants to communicate.

4.12.3 Sample Size For Interviews

Remenyi (2011, p. 192-3) notes that most texts on qualitative research are silent on sample size. The nature of qualitative research means that sample size is dependent on the type of study conducted and data saturation is a more important factor that the actual number of interviews conducted. Bryman (2008, p. 461) observes, the criteria for recognising or establishing when or whether data saturation has been achieved are rarely articulated in detail. However, Green and Thorogood (2009, p. 120) state that the experience of most qualitative researchers is that in interview studies little that is 'new' comes out of transcripts after you have interviewed 20 or so people. Remenyi (2011, p. 195) cites a range of studies where data saturation is stated to have been reached at between 12 and 25 interviews (Guest et al., 2006; Bruggemann, 2010). In a review of 563 PhDs, Mason (2010) found that between 1 and 95 interviews were carried out, with a median of 33 interviews. So, based on this broad range of potential data saturation levels, the target number of interviews at each organisation for this thesis was 6, with an overall target of a total of 30 interviews. Each interview was planned to be between 30 and 60 minutes long, reflecting an average interview of time for communication audits of one hour (Millar and Tracey, 2009, p. 84).

4.12.4 Semi-structured Interview Guide

The questions developed for the interviews were based on an exploration of why employee preferences are apparent and reasons for correlations between aspects of internal communication and employee engagement. An interview guide (Table 4.7) was used for the semi-structured interviews showing the associated sub-research objectives outlined in section 3.8. It is based on the kinds of questions suggested by Kvale (1996). The first question addresses the critique of the literature in chapter 2 that suggested that organisational topics of interest are often ignored and it explores the topics that employees are most interested in and why some topics may be of more interest than others. It also examines Peccei et al.'s (2005, p. 33) claim that management's systematic sharing of various aspects of the operation of the organisation can help to enhance employee commitment. The second question explores the importance of line manager and senior manager communication. The way that leaders and managers communicate with employees is identified by many scholars as an important aspect of employee engagement (Gatenby et al., 2009; MacLeod and Clarke, 2009; Men and Stacks, 2013; Robinson and Hayday, 2009). The third question is focused on employee voice and aims to inquire more deeply into the association established in the literature between employee voice and engagement (Purcell et al., 2003; Robinson et al., 2004; Truss et al., 2006).

TABLE 4.7 Interview Guide For Semi-Structured Interviews

	Question	Sub-research Question
Introducing question	What is your general perception of the way that your oganisation communicates with employees? Probe: why do you think that communication is important?	R1, R7, R13
First question	What information do you value most - information that relates to your own work, you personally, or information about your organisation more generally?	R7
Follow up questions	Why is work, personal, or organisational information more important?	
Probing questions	Follow up what is said with direct questioning.	
Indirect questions	What information do most people here want? How does providing the right information affect your engagement with your organisation?	
Structuring question	I would now like to move to a different topic.	
Second question	How well do you think that managers communicate at your organisation?	R19, R20, R27
Follow up questions	How good are line managers at keeping employees informed about plans, progress and change? Why is it important that line managers communicate with employees? How good are senior managers at keeping employees informed about plans, progress and change? Why is it important that senior managers communicate with employees?	

	Why does line or senior manager communication affect your engagement?	
Probing questions	Follow up what is said with direct questioning.	
Indirect questions	What do most people here think about the way that managers communicate with employees?	
Structuring question	I would now like to move to a different topic.	
Third question	How important is it for you to have a say about what goes on?	R13, R20, R27
Follow up questions	Why is this important? Why does having affect your engagement?	
Probing questions	Follow up what is said with direct questioning.	
Indirect questions	What do most people here think about the say that they are given in what goes on?	
"Catch all" question	Thanks for your time, is there anything else you'd like to say about communication at your organisation?	

4.12.5 Semi-structured Interview Participants

A total of 27 interviews were completed. In practice, the interview guide provided more of a general framework for the interview than a precise script to follow. Some interviews were conducted face to face in a quiet meeting room at the organisation's premises and some were conducted on the telephone. People selected for interview at SECouncil1 and GovOffice represented a range of backgrounds and levels of management. At BankDept, people were selected for interview on the basis of location outside the UK, as it was not possible to run focus groups overseas. People selected for interview at HousingAssoc were senior managers. People selected for interviews at SECouncil2 were first line or middle managers. The interview schedule is shown in table 4.8.

TABLE 4.8 Interview Numbers And Schedule

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	SECouncil2	HousingAssoc	BankDept
Interviews	4	6	5	4	8
Dates	22 Aug 2013	11 Feb - 8 Mar 2013	16 July 2013	5 July 2013	15 May – 20 May 2013

As an interviewer, care was taken to follow the criteria for successful interviews suggested by Kvale (1996). The purpose of the interview was clearly stated at the outset with context provided through a quick summary of the findings from the questionnaire. In practice, the actual wording in the interview guide varied slightly from interview to interview as it was important to attempt to gain a rapport with the interviewee and to avoid the appearance of reading from a prescribed script. One limitation of using interviews as a qualitative research method is potential bias from the researcher's presence and the issue that not all people are equally articulate and perceptive (Creswell, 2009, p. 179). Time was therefore given to allow interviewees to think. Empathetic comments were made to put the interviewee at ease and some interpretation was provided when necessary, without imposing meaning. As Millar and Tracey suggest (2009, pp. 95-6), confidentiality was assured and all interviews were recorded and transcribed in full. This aids the listening process and enables detailed coding of the data. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 147) stress six important issues in conducting interviews; obtaining trust, being aware of social interaction, using appropriate language, getting access, choosing the location for interviews and recording interviews. In the cases of interviewees whose first language is not English care was taken to ensure that questions were fully understood and clarification provided in some instances. Gaining trust is, according to Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 146), often dependent on non-verbal cues, such as eye contact or facial expressions. As some interviews were conducted by telephone this may have impacted the ability to gain trust in some cases. Alvesson and Deetz (2000, pp. 71-2) point to more fundamental questions about interviews, such as the influence of cultural scripts about how one should normally express oneself. As a consequence they argue that interviews should be seen more as a scene for a conversation than a tool for collection of 'data'.

4.12.6 Advantages And Disadvantages Of Focus Groups

Focus groups can be thought of as a type of group interview (Dickson, 2009, p. 103). They are a technique for bringing together individuals who, through an open but focused dialogue, can assist in clarifying issues for the researcher (Remenyi, 2011, p. 45). They enable the researcher to understand why people feel as they do and to study ways that individuals collectively make sense of a phenomenon (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 512), providing the potential for people to build on other peoples' reasons for holding views. As Kandola (2012, p. 260) argues, focus

groups can help to determine the mood or climate regarding a particular topic. In this sense they may provide more depth and shared meaning than that generated from a question and answer approach used in individual interviews and they can be used effectively to validate responses made in a questionnaire (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 152). Downs and Adrian (2004, p. 213) argue that focus groups have special advantages over other data gathering techniques, especially efficiency in collecting information as in just 1-2 hours a great deal of information can be obtained. Remenyi (2011, p. 44) suggests that an important aspect of a focus group is that it incorporates multiple voices that provide a richer understanding than even the most knowledgeable single voice. Disadvantages of focus groups include challenges in controlling the discussion, ensuring everyone participates, and problems associated with group effects that may mean that legitimate perspectives are suppressed (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 525). As Easterby-Smith at al. (2008, p. 151) point out the complexities of focus group moderation mean that the skill of the facilitator is of vital importance.

4.12.7 Focus Group Guide And Participants

The focus groups incorporated a degree of structure through a topic guide (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008. p. 151). As focus groups are a lens for directing attention to a narrow topic or issue, care was taken to ensure that the discussion did not overspill the topic boundaries set (Dickson, 2009, p. 105). A probability sampling approach was used to target employees at non-senior managerial grades with an emphasis on gathering participants from across the organisation rather than from the same division to counter potential contamination of focus group discussion (Remenyi, 2011, p. 60; Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 526). Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 515) state that the number of focus groups varies from study to study. Recommendations for typical group size vary from six to eight members (Remenyi, 2011, p. 53), to six to ten members (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 517) or six to twelve members (Dickson, 2009, p. 117). Only a small number of general questions were used (see topic agenda in table 4.9, showing links to associated sub-research questions as outlined in section 3.8) to enable a reasonably high degree of latitude for the discussion (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 518). The questions are very similar to those used for the semi-structured interview guide (Table 4.8) with the exception that there was more of a focus on senior manager communication than line manager communication. The questions and are therefore grounded in the same literature as discussed for the semi-structured interview questions.

As moderator, care was taken to ensure that all members had an opportunity to express a view or make a comment. Dickson's (2009, p. 118) advice for a moderator to concentrate on keeping participants discussing among themselves in a general atmosphere of relaxed informality was followed. All focus groups were conducted on 'home ground' in a meeting room at the organisations premises (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 151).

TABLE 4.9 Topic Agenda For Focus Groups

	Topic	**Sub-research Question**
Introduction – Background to research (5 minutes).	Summary of findings from questionnaire, aim of focus group, format, confidentiality.	
Topic 1 – Content (20 minutes).	How important is it for employees at X organisation to get the information that they want about the plans and achievements compared to getting information about their pay, benefits and work? Why is this important for engagement?	R1, R7
Topic 2 – Voice (15 minutes).	How important is it for employees at X organisation to have a say about what goes on? Why is this important? How does employee voice lead to stronger engagement?	R13, R27
Topic 3 – Senior manager communication (15 minutes).	What are the most important topics that senior managers should focus on in their communication with X organisation employees? Why does good senior manager communication lead to stronger engagement?	R19, R20
Summing up (5 minutes).	Thanks for participation and next steps.	

A total of nine focus groups were conducted involving 77 people. At SECouncil1, there was some sensitivity about recording the first focus group, so two assistants from the internal communication team were present to take notes. All subsequent focus groups were recorded and

fully transcribed. This enabled the moderator to focus on facilitating the discussion rather than taking notes and transcripts enabled detailed coding to be carried out afterwards for analysis. At BankDept, a member of the internal communication team was present at each focus group to take notes and all focus groups were also recorded. Confidentiality was assured and all focus groups took place in meeting rooms at the organisations premises. However, one challenge for a focus group is that a sense of individual confidentiality is lost and some people may be inhibited from sharing information (Downs and Adrian, 2004, p. 215) so this may have impacted what was said. The focus group schedule is shown in table 4.10.

TABLE 4.10 Focus Group Numbers And Schedule

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	SECouncil2	HousingAssoc	BankDept
Focus groups	2	2	1	1	3
Attendees	17	9	9	9	33
Dates	19 July 2013	11 Feb and 20 Feb 2013	16 July 2013	5 July 2013	30 April, 3 May, and 6 May 2013

4.12.8 Qualitative Data Analysis: Template Analysis

Template Analysis is the approach adopted for the analysis of interviews and focus groups for this thesis. As King (2012, p. 427) explains, template analysis is a technique that can be used within a range of epistemological positions. In this thesis it was employed to investigate and 'discover' underlying causes of human action, maintaining a degree of researcher objectivity that enables coding reliability. Template Analysis has typically been used in management and health research. However, no evidence could be found for any prior application of template analysis in public relations research.

Themes and coding are central to template analysis. Brooks and King (2014, p. 4) explain that 'Themes are recurrent features of participants' accounts characterising particular perceptions and/or experiences that the researcher sees as relevant to their research question. Coding is the process of identifying themes in accounts and attaching labels (codes) to index them'. Template Analysis fits the aim of the thesis; to investigate themes in employee preferences and satisfaction with internal communication and the associations with organisational engagement. Brooks and King (2014, p. 5) explain that some qualitative approaches (such as discourse and narrative analysis) are strongly focused on the role of language in talk and social interaction whereas other approaches are more concerned with the content of research participants talk and these include thematic approaches to analysis such as

Template Analysis. The focus in this thesis is the content of interviews and focus groups rather than discourse or narrative analysis.

The following *a priori* themes formed the starting point for template analysis: preferred methods of internal communication, internal corporate communication content, line manager communication, senior manager communication, employee voice and organisational engagement. An initial coding of the data was conducted by hand using two focus group transcripts and one interview transcript. A booklet was printed for the transcripts and open comments from the ICOEQ that had wide margins where notes were added and prominent comments were highlighted with a marker pen. An Excel spreadsheet was used to note page numbers from the booklet for codes. An initial template was then developed before further analysis of all the transcripts was conducted. An audit trail of changes to the template was then kept throughout the analysis. It is this ongoing refinement of the coding process that is a distinguishing facet of Template Analysis.

As King (2012, p. 431) highlights, Template Analysis features the hierarchical organisation of codes that enables analysis at varying levels of specificity. Rather than coding by type, for example, descriptive codes, interpretive codes and pattern codes (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 57) the analysis is focused more on the themes that link the richest data back to the research questions (King, 2012, p. 429). As immersion in the data is a fundamental element of Template Analysis it was carried out manually. As Waring and Wainright (2008, p. 92) argue technology can act as a barrier to immersion.

4.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS: PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO THE RESEARCH

The approach to ethics adopted for the study was approved by the University of Central Lancashire ethics committee and is based broadly on the principles of ethical research practice set out by Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 132) as:

- whether there is harm to *participants*
- Whether there is a lack of *informed consent*
- Whether there is an *invasion of privacy*
- Whether *deception* is involved.

Tourish and Hargie (2009b, p. 38) suggest that for communication audits, there are four principles; do not harm others, act professionally at all times, treat others justly, and be open and honest. However, as Wiles (2013, p. 17) observes, guidelines are necessarily very general and they do not provide answers to how researchers should manage the specific situations that they might encounter in their research. Furthermore, Easterby-Smith et al (2008, p. 134) argue that hard-and-fast ethical principles are difficult to establish for management research and good practice requires considerable judgment from the researcher. As an over-riding principle, the

researcher followed Creswell's (2009, p. 87) general advice that researchers need to protect their research participants, bearing in mind that individual ethical challenges might have to be tackled as they arise.

The research problem itself aims to benefit the individuals who participated. It sets out to establish how well organisations communicate with employees and the associations with cognitive, emotional and behavioural engagement with the organisation. In each case, a report was provided to the organisation describing the communication environment with broad recommendations for internal communication strategies that might result in higher levels of organisational engagement. Improved internal communication and higher levels of organisational engagement benefit both the organisation, in terms of higher levels of organisational performance, and employees, in terms of healthier well-being (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009; Rayton et al., 2012).

The primary ethical risk identified is the anonymity of participants and confidentiality of the data collected. The ICOEQ has been designed to minimise the potential for employees to be identified by reducing the collection of demographic data to a minimal level and making the input of demographic information optional for respondents. The rationale for the questionnaire was explained and other information provided, including the provision of the researcher's name, the research institute name, the purpose of the research, the assurance of confidentiality of respondents, the time required to complete the survey and the provision of contact names for queries (Creswell, 2009, p. 89). As Wiles (2013, p. 25) outlines, informed consent is a central concept in ethical research practice and participation in the survey, interviews and focus groups was voluntary. In the case of interviews and focus groups, questions to be asked were provided in advance to participants to minimise any potential for participants feeling deceived about the reasons for the research (Wiles, 2013, p. 58). Prospective participants were also told how long the interview was expected to last. Consent for recording was requested at the start of the interview. Participants were assured that the purpose of recording was purely for transcription so that data could be analysed and that no names would appear in any reports generated so as to maintain anonymity. In conducting interviews and focus groups, the researcher was aware that some questions required factual answers and others required deeper levels of self-disclosure about the way that people communicated within the organisation. As Millar and Tracey highlight (2009, p. 95) this may leave the participant feeling vulnerable or exposed, so care was taken at the start of each interview to develop trust with the participant. In closing each interview, re-assurance was given that the information provided would be kept confidential. According to Wiles (2013, pp. 42-7), confidentiality is taken to mean that identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research will not be disclosed. This includes not deliberately or accidentally disclosing what has been said in ways that might identify an individual. Confidentiality can be breached by the inclusion of contextual

information, such as a location, so naming of the organisation by using pseudonyms in the thesis and in all other reports and publications has been carefully considered to minimise the potential of accidental identifications. Furthermore, all quotations attributed to participants have been reviewed to ensure that they do not include overtly idiosyncratic language that could easily lead to the identification of a participant.

CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 RESPONDENTS AND TIMEFRAME

The discussion of quantitative data in this chapter is based on descriptive statistics, correlations and multiple regression analysis. As highlighted in chapter 4, the Internal Communication and Organisational Engagement Questionnaire (ICOEQ) developed by Welch (2011a) was administered in five separate organisations. A total of 2066 respondents completed the questionnaire. However, there were considerably more respondents at one organisation, BankDept (n=1259) than in the other four organisations. The respondent numbers for BankDept includes 811 employees based outside the UK (n=592 in India). All the respondents in the other four organisations were based in the UK with respondent numbers ranging from 159 to 276. Analysis of average statistics for the combined data set are therefore subject to national cultural differences that are potentially represented in the BankDept results. For example, respondents in India may have different expectations of the way the line mangers and senior managers communicate with employees than respondents in the UK.

In order to gain acceptance for the administration of the questionnaire, minor adaptations to the questions had to be made in some sections. This is so that the data could be used by each organisation as part of its internal communication planning processes. Ideally, a common set of questions would have been established so as to make comparisons more precise. However, as highlighted by a number of scholars (Johl and Renganathan, 2010, p.42; Okumus et al., 2007, pp. 7-8; Shenton and Hayter, 2004, p. 225), access to organisations is known to be difficult in academic research so a compromise was made in order to obtain the necessary data. The compilation of the scales created for comparisons in this chapter therefore incorporate subtle differences in wording. However, the questions used for the three organisational engagement scales (cognitive, emotional and behavioural) are all exactly the same for each organisation.

The response rates were lower than anticipated, ranging from 16 percent to 52 percent. This may reflect 'survey apathy' or a reluctance of employees to complete a questionnaire for fear of being identified even though the survey was anonymous and this was stressed in the communication that was provided to potential respondents. One measure used to provide assurances about the anonymity of the survey was a minimal requirement for demographic questions. It was anticipated that this would lead to high response rates. However, as already indicated, this was not realised in all five organisations. The consequence of this is that it is not possible to compare demographic data (for example age or gender) for the organisations as different demographic questions were included in each questionnaire. The relatively low response rates in some of the organisations may also represent a broader level of dissatisfaction

with communication in itself. This may apply in particular to SECouncil1 where the lowest response rate (16 percent) was recorded. The questionnaire was also administered at different times between April 2012 and February 2013. The results could, potentially, have been affected by different general external operating conditions, for example, a sudden worsening or improvement of the economic climate. However, external conditions remained static during the timeframe of all the surveys so this can be excluded as a potential factor impacting the results.

In the first sub-section, employee preferences for channels are reviewed. In the next sub-section an overview of descriptive statistics is reviewed for internal communication scales. Correlations of internal communication with the 'proxy' question, 'good organisation to work for' are also reviewed. The following sub-sections review descriptive statistics and correlations for the specific research hypotheses relating to employee interest in organisational information, employee voice, senior manager communication, line manager communication, and informed employee voice.

5.2 PREFERRED INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

5.2.1 Hypothesis 1: Email and team meetings are the two of the top three most helpful internal communication channels in all five organisations

Respondents rated email and team meetings as the top, second or third most helpful methods of internal communication in all five organisations in this study (Table 5.1). This reinforces findings in other studies (Welch, 2012; Melcrum, 2010; Towers Watson, 2010; White et al., 2010; Hargie and Tourish, 2009; Al-Ghamdi et al., 2007; Hewitt, 2006) that report high levels of preference for email and face to face communication. It underlines a general employee preference for a combination of rich and lean media where, as Suh (1999, p. 296) explains, rich media enable people to interpret and reach agreement about unanalysable, difficult, and complex issues, and lean media are appropriate for communicating about routine activities. However, whether or not email and face to face communication channels are used in this way is a point taken up in more detail in the analysis of interviews and focus groups in chapter 6. Preferences for email and team meetings are noteworthy against a backdrop of a recent rise in the availability of other media, such as video, instant messaging and internal social media platforms. Welch (2012, p. 351) found that the reasons for a preference for email as a medium were the ability to easily save, store, and retrieve information; and the ability to find information on intranet pages. The reasons why employees in this study rate email and team meetings as useful are explored in more depth in chapter 6.

TABLE 5.1 Descriptive Statistics Of The Five 'Most Helpful' Methods Of Internal Communication In Each Organisation

Top five methods	GovOffice n=276	Mean	SD	SECouncil1 n=167	Mean	SD	BankDept n=1259	Mean	SD	HousingAssoc n=205	Mean	SD	SECouncil2 n=159	Mean	SD
1	Team meetings	4.29	0.83	Team meetings	4.29	0.82	Team meetings	4.29	0.82	Email	4.38	0.70	Email	4.14	0.86
2	Weekly bulletin	3.94	0.89	Email	4.19	0.82	Email	4.22	0.78	Team meetings	4.29	0.79	Team meetings	4.02	0.99
3	Email	3.88	0.89	Newsletter	3.91	0.82	Town hall meetings	4.14	0.85	News page on intranet	4.12	0.68	News bulletin	3.95	1.03
4	Senior manager briefings	3.81	0.97	Intranet	3.87	0.99	Huddle/notice boards	4.11	0.91	Employee magazine	3.89	0.83	Intranet	3.92	1.01
5	Monthly update	3.78	0.86	Service level meetings	3.60	0.88	Intranet	4.10	0.78	Executive briefing	3.83	0.70	Service level meetings	3.65	1.01

Note: How helpful do you find current communication methods?: 1, very unhelpful, 5 very helpful.

The mean helpfulness for email as a method is high in all five organisations, ranging from 3.88 (SD=0.89) to 4.38 (SD=0.70) and the mean for team meetings is also high in all five organisations, ranging from 4.02 (SD=0.99) to 4.29 (SD=0.83), measured on a 1-5 Likert scale, where 1 is very unhelpful and 5 is very helpful. Other, leaner media such as news bulletins or news pages on an intranet also feature as helpful in four of the organisations. Blogs and video, although arguably richer media than email, are rated much lower for helpfulness. This suggests that more 'traditional' methods remain firmly established as the most helpful communication methods for employees. It should be noted that none of the organisations in this study are in the IT sector where new internal media may be more likely to be embraced by employees. Although, as highlighted by Gifford (2013, p. 11), access to internal social media platforms in the UK is currently 26 percent so most employees do not have the option of using this medium. It is possible that as internal social media platforms become more common they may replace email as a preferred channel. However, the usage of internal social media is, according to Huang et al., (2012, p. 121) more linked to the organisation's culture than to the availability of the technology. Furthermore, preferences for 'new' channels are not necessarily related to age; according to Friedl and Vercic (2011, p. 85) digital native employees prefer more traditional channels, such as e-mail newsletters, intranet news, and employee meetings. Silverman (2012) highlights significant barriers for organisations to embrace internal social media, including; knowledge and understanding – about how to mobilise communities, leadership – a lack of skills and awareness and loss of control, fear – of failure, change, and unwillingness (or inability) to commit sufficient and sustained resources to internal communication. Obstacles to the use of internal social media raised in interviews and focus groups conducted for this thesis are discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

Interest in newer channels was tested in the questionnaire, although the specific channels named varied from organisation to organisation in view of perceived potential, as determined by the internal communication manager at each organisation. Interest in a new senior manager blog was rated at 3.20 (SD=1.26) at SECouncil2 and 3.37 at SECouncil1 (SD=1.00). Interest in text messaging was less strong; 2.78 (SD=1.26) at HousingAssoc and 2.39 (SD=1.35) at SECouncil2. Reasonably strong interest in a new innovation and ideas forum, where employees share ideas with peers, was found in all four of the organisations where this question was asked. Interest ranged from 3.32 (SD=1.20) at SECouncil2 to 3.50 (SD=0.97) at Housing Assoc. This suggests that new technologies for communicating with employees need to be introduced carefully. Although it may be technically possible to send text messages to employees, the medium may have a unique and more personal significance that needs to be considered. As Yzer and Southwell (2008, p. 16) suggest, there is a focus on the 'technology' in new communication technologies and not enough attention to the human element. The results for this thesis indicate that employees find familiar channels more useful than newer media for internal communication. This may reflect what Fernandez et al. (2013, p. 38) concludes 'the

richness of a communication media is constructed socially and is related mainly to experience with the media and with the communication partner'.

The results reported in table 5.1 also highlight the apparent demise of the employee newspaper or magazine as helpful channel of communication. As Ruck and Yaxley (2013) observe, the employee publication has a long history in practice, dating back to 1840 at the New England Lowell Cotton Mills. In the 1990s Wright (1995) found that practice was still dominated by technical journalistic skills such as producing slick employee newsletters instead of concentrating on developing relationships with employees. The evidence in this study and in other research highlighted above suggests that the internal newspaper has now been replaced by email as a helpful medium for employees. The implications of ratings of helpfulness of internal communication media from the research conducted for thesis are clear; email and team meetings are the primary media that employees currently find most helpful. This result supports Hypothesis 1 (H1); email and team meetings are the two of the three top most helpful internal communication channels in all five organisations. The following sub-sections in this chapter focus on the topics that employees are interested in, keeping employees informed and ratings for line manager and senior manager communication.

5.3 SATISFACTION WITH INTERNAL COMMUNICATION, LEVELS OF ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND AN ANALYSIS OF VARIANCES (ANOVA)

In this section a brief overview of satisfaction with internal communication is provided and levels of organisational engagement are analysed. Table 5.2 shows the descriptive statistics for internal communication and organisational engagement scales.

5.3.1 Topics Of Interest

Employees in all five organisations in this study are very interested in a range of topics; mean levels of interest in information about plans and aims, progress, employee related information and the external environment range from 3.99 to 4.37 (on a 1-5 Likert scale where 4 is 'interested and 5 is 'very interested'). This indicates that employees have a strong interest in what their organisation does and it reinforces the importance of keeping employees informed on both organisational and employee related topics. It supports White et al.'s (2010, p. 76) research that found that employees wanted information about administrative decisions, pending changes, goals, and future directions. Although other studies do not always explore what topics employees are interested in, satisfaction with information provided is reported. For example, Byrne and LeMay (2006, p. 163) found that satisfaction with company wide information was rated at 3.20 and satisfaction with job information was rated at 3.37 (measured on a 1-5 Likert scale where 4 is 'agree' and 5 is 'strongly agree'). Clampitt and Downs (2004, p. 149) found that satisfaction with corporate information was 26.35 (measured on a scale of 0-50, where 50 is

maximum satisfaction). In one organisation in this thesis, BankDept, questions were added about the extent to which employees were kept informed about a range of topics. This enables a direct comparison between interest in a topic and the corresponding satisfaction with information provided on that topic. For example, interest in plans and aims at BankDept was 4.29 (SD=0.60) whereas satisfaction with the extent that employees were being kept informed about plans for the future was 3.64 (SD=0.86). This indicates that the high levels of interest in a range of topics may not be complemented with the information provided by organisations. It supports the findings reported by Truss et al. (2006, p. 17) that 42 percent employees were not well informed about the organisation.

5.3.2 Ratings For Senior Manager And Line Manager Communication

Ratings for senior manager communication are poor (below 3) in two of the organisations in this study. Mean ratings range from 2.60 (SD=0.80) at SECouncil2 to 3.25 (SD=0.70) at HousingAssoc measured on a 1-5 Likert scale where 4 is 'good' and 5 is 'very good'. The result of 3.66 (SD=0.76) at BankDept is notably higher than the other four organisations. Ratings for senior manager communication are lower than satisfaction with employee voice in four of the organisations. There is a relatively large range in means of 1.06 for this scale, suggesting that senior manager communication is possibly dependent upon the commitment and communication skills of the senior managers concerned. Line managers are rated better at communicating than senior managers in all five organisations; mean ratings range from 3.32 (SD=1.08) to 3.83 (SD=0.79), measured on a 1-5 Likert scale where 4 is 'good' and 5 is 'very good'. The overall mean ratings for line and senior manager communication for the combined data for all five organisations are 3.69 (SD=0.87) and 3.40 (SD=0.83) respectively. This is very similar to the results that Hargie and Tourish (2009b, p. 257) reported where the mean satisfaction with immediate managers was 3.7. However the results in this thesis are higher than the mean satisfaction of 3.0 for senior managers that Hargie and Tourish reported. As the results in this study reflect five separate organisations they may be more robust than data in single organisation studies, which may as Alvesson and Deetz (2000, pp. 18-20) argue, be parochial. The differences in ratings for line manager and senior manager communication may simply reflect the closer day to day working relationship between employees and line managers compared to that with senior managers. However, line manager communication mean ratings are all below 4, indicating that the general picture is good, but not very good.

5.3.3 Keeping Employees Informed And Employee Voice

Respondents in some organisations do not rate them very highly for keeping them informed or giving them a voice. Mean levels of satisfaction for being kept informed range from 2.90 (SD=0.88) to 3.68 (SD=0.65) and mean levels for employee voice range from 2.81(SD=0.80) to 3.63 (SD=0.72) measured on a 1-5 Likert scale where 4 is 'good' and 5 is 'very good'. Further,

more detailed, analysis of these two core aspects of internal communication follows in dedicated sections of this chapter.

5.3.4 Levels Of Organisational Engagement

Respondents in all five organisations in this study were engaged with their organisation. Organisational engagement is measured on three levels; cognitive, emotional and behavioural. These are based on Kahn's (1990) original descriptors for employee engagement and Shuck and Reio's (2014, p. 47) analysis of engagement as 'a series of psychological states (cognitive, emotional and behavioural) ultimately representing an intention to act…'. Mean engagement levels were measured on a 1-5 Likert scale where 4 is 'agree' and 5 is 'strongly agree' with statements about working at the organisation. Mean ratings for cognitive organisational engagement ranged from 3.71 (SD= 0.67) to 4.00 (SD=0.55). Mean ratings for emotional organisational engagement ranged from 3.60 (SD=0.78) to 4.19 (SD=0.55). Mean ratings for behavioural organisational engagement ranged from 3.90 (SD=0.62) to 4.05 (SD=0.53). These good levels of organisational engagement are much higher than consultancy based studies that report levels of around 27 percent engagement in the UK (Rayton et al., 2013, p. 4).However, this highlights difficulties in comparing data with other studies that use different definitions of employee engagement. For example, other studies may include a stronger focus on work engagement than organisational engagement. As Keenoy (2014, p. 207) points out, consultancy based employee engagement reports may be impacted by practice that 'group or collapse scale category responses to create more visible and comprehensible images of the object under scrutiny'.

Saks (2006, p. 610) found that participants in research conducted in Canada reported higher job engagement (3.06, SD=0.82) than organisational engagement (2.88, SD=0.85). Job engagement was measured using questions such as, 'I really "throw" myself into my job', 'this job is all consuming; I am totally into it', and 'I am highly engaged in this job'.The questions used by Saks for organisational engagement are different than those used for this thesis. They include questions such as, 'being a member of this organization is very captivating', 'being a member of this organization make me come "alive"', and 'being a member of this organization is exhilarating for me'. These are 'stronger' statements that the questions used for organisational engagement in the Internal Communication and Organisational Engagement Questionnaire (ICOEQ). As Welch (2011a) points out 'Saks's language is suited to his Canadian culture but sounds rather out of place and "over the top" for a British industrial services company setting'. It should be noted that this thesis does not report levels of work engagement and it would be useful to conduct further research to establish how far results differ for work and organisational engagement.

TABLE 5.2 Descriptive Statistics Of Internal Communication Scales, Organisational Engagement Scales And The Proxy Variable 'Good Organisation To Work For'

Variable	GovOffice n=276	SD	SECouncil1 n=167	SD	BankDept n=1259	SD	HousingAssoc n=205	SD	SECouncil2 n=159	SD	Range
Plans and Aims	4.33	0.64	4.14	0.54	4.29	0.60	4.22	0.55	4.04	0.87	0.29
External Environment	4.20	0.64	4.00	0.65	4.15	0.67	4.18	0.52	4.12	0.71	0.20
Employee Information	4.00	0.62	4.22	0.46	4.34	0.66	4.17	0.46	4.37	0.58	0.37
Progress and Organisational Information	4.05	0.65	4.19	0.55	4.23	0.66	3.99	0.51	4.13	0.69	0.24
Communication Methods	3.42	0.72	3.20	0.71	3.88	0.72	3.55	0.63	3.45	0.86	0.68
Senior Manager Communication	3.06	0.77	2.88	0.60	3.66	0.76	3.25	0.70	2.60	0.80	1.06
Line Manager Communication	3.33	0.88	3.76	0.73	3.79	0.83	3.83	0.79	3.32	1.08	0.51
Fellow Employee Communication	3.96	0.73	4.13	0.73	n/a	n/a	4.13	0.60	3.98	0.72	0.17
Keeping Employees Informed	3.08	0.77	3.20	0.64	3.68	0.65	3.49	0.71	2.90	0.88	0.78
Employee Voice	3.15	0.78	3.28	0.55	3.63	0.72	3.50	0.69	2.81	0.80	0.82
Cognitive Organisational Engagement	3.82	0.66	3.81	0.55	4.00	0.55	3.97	0.53	3.71	0.67	0.29
Emotional Organisational Engagement	3.80	0.76	3.76	0.63	3.97	0.68	4.19	0.55	3.60	0.78	0.59
Behavioural Organisational Engagement	3.96	0.60	3.93	0.56	4.05	0.53	4.02	0.50	3.90	0.62	0.15
Good Organisation to Work For	3.77	0.92	3.51	0.86	4.01	0.81	4.28	0.65	3.29	1.05	0.72

5.3.5 Analysis Of Variances Between Organisations (ANOVA)

An analysis of variance of the means for all scales between the five organisations involved in this study was conducted. Differences in mean levels between organisations were found to be significant (p<0.01) for all but one of the scales (Table 5.3). Differences between results for the five organisations are therefore greater than would be expected by chance. The *F* values shown in table 5.3 indicate that the two greatest differences for means between organisations are for senior manager communication and keeping employees informed. The two lowest differences for means between organisations are for behavioural organisational engagement and fellow employee communication. As there are no known studies that include similar data for more than one organisation, it is not possible to compare the significance in differences between organisations found in this thesis with other research. The research conducted for this study highlights the benefits of a multi-case study design as it indicates that internal communication practice is inconsistent between organisations.

It can be postulated that the differences reflect varying levels of resource allocated to internal communication, varying levels of commitment of managers to communication and the communication skills of managers. These points are explored in more depth in the analysis of interviews and focus groups in chapter 6 and in the conclusions in chapter 7. The differences between means for behavioural organisational engagement are lower than for other aspects of engagement and for all the internal communication scales, apart from fellow employee communication. Employees in this study reported marginally higher levels of behavioural organisational engagement than cognitive or emotional organisational engagement (Behavioural Engagement: 4.01, SD=0.55; Cognitive Engagement: 3.94, SD=0.58; Emotional Engagement: 3.92, SD=0.70).The behavioural engagement scale comprises seven statements, including putting extra effort in to help the organisation succeed, working hard to ensure the organisation provides a good service, and going the extra mile. The less significant differences of behavioural organisational engagement between organisations suggests that it may incorporate more intrinsically held beliefs or that when asked how hard they work for an organisation, employees may be more predisposed to provide responses that reflect well on themselves. The potential for self-report bias, where participants want to respond in a way that makes them look as good as possible (Donaldson and Grant-Vallone, 2002, p. 247) cannot be ruled out for this variable.

TABLE 5.3 Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) Between Organisations For Means For Internal Communication And Organisational Engagement Scales

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Senior manager communication	271.391	4	67.848	121.687	.000**
Keeping employees informed	161.236	4	40.309	84.190	.000**
Employee voice	138.424	4	34.606	66.795	.000**
Informed employee voice	105.140	4	26.285	57.709	.000**
Methods	117.962	4	29.490	56.139	.000**
Good Organisation to Work For	136.282	4	34.071	48.802	.000**
Line manager communication	73.839	4	18.460	25.575	.000**
Employee information	35.780	4	8.945	23.591	.000**
Emotional organisational engagement	43.256	4	10.814	22.970	.000**
Cognitive Organisational Engagement	19.960	4	4.990	14.982	.000**
Information about progress	15.878	4	3.970	9.683	.000**
Information about plans and aims	13.053	4	3.263	8.481	.000**
Behavioural organisational engagement	5.435	4	1.359	4.516	.001**
Fellow employee communication	5.369	3	1.790	3.704	.011*

Results are ordered by F value, largest to smallest
**$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$

5.4 BIVARIATE ANALYSIS: INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND THE PROXY VARIABLE 'GOOD ORGANISATION TO WORK FOR'

Positive correlations of internal communication scales with the proxy variable 'this is a good organisation to work for' are all statistically significant ($p<0.01$). Strengths for correlations are evaluated using the following descriptors as outlined in the Research Methodology and Design Chapter:

Below r= .19 very weak

r= .20 to r= .29 weak

r= .30 to r= .39 moderate

r= .40 to r= .49 strong

r= .50 to r= .70 very strong

The strength of the correlation ranges across the five organisations from moderate to very strong for line manager communication (r= .39 to r= .65), moderate to very strong for keeping employees informed (r= .39 to r= .65), strong to very strong for senior manager communication (r= .40 to r= .62) and strong to very strong for employee voice (r= .47 to r= .61). The strong levels of association reported in this study indicate that internal communication is an important sub-set of a strategic public relations function. The results support Welch and Jackson's (2007, p. 188) view that that internal corporate communication can promote a sense of belonging and contribute to organisational commitment.

Correlations are shown in table 5.4 for each organisation and for the combined dataset (shown as 'Average'). It should be noted that the combined dataset analysis is impacted by the high number of respondents at BankDept (1259) compared to the number of respondents at the four other organisations involved in this study. The results show that line manager communication, senior manager communication, keeping employees informed and employee voice are all strongly associated with employees agreeing that the organisation is good to work for. All correlations for these four aspects of internal communication are statistically significant ($p<0.01$). In particular, correlations for employee voice, keeping employees informed, and senior manager communication are all greater than r= .5. However, mean ratings for senior manager communication (3.40, SD=0.83), keeping employees informed (3.48, SD=0.74), and employee voice (3.46, SD=0.76) are not very high. These aspects of internal communication could therefore be prioritised more in practice as they are strongly associated with the outcome that an organisation is good to work for in all five organisations in this study.

The level of communication with fellow employees is very weakly associated with the proxy variable that the organisation is good to work for (r= .18, $p<0.01$). Means for ratings of

fellow employee communication are good, ranging from 3.96 (SD=0.73) to 4.13 (SD=0.73 and 0.60). A potential explanation for the high mean ratings for fellow employee communication is that respondents are intrinsically less likely to be disposed to be critical of their peers than of line managers and senior managers and this may be an example of self-report bias.

TABLE 5.4 Subgroup Correlation Comparison Table Of Internal Communication And Proxy Question 'Good Organisation To Work For' By Organisation

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2	Average
	r	r	r	r	r	r
Plans and Aims	.46**	.06	.38**	.30**	.34**	.36**
External Environment	.34**	.03	.25**	.21**	.12	.26**
Employee Information	.31**	.20*	.29**	.13	.06	.24**
Progress and Organisational Information	.46**	.08	.31**	.13	.26**	.28**
Communication Methods	.51**	.22**	.29**	.24**	.26**	.34**
Senior Manager Communication	.55**	.42**	.50**	.40**	.62**	.54*
Middle Manager Communication	n/a	.36**	n/a	n/a	.58**	n/a
Line Manager Communication	.50**	.36**	.38**	.47**	.49**	.43**
Fellow Employee Communication	.24**	.17*	n/a	.20**	.06	.18**
Keeping Employees Informed	.53**	.39**	.50**	.46**	.65**	.54**
Employee Voice	.58**	.47**	.49**	.50**	.61**	.55**
n	276	167	1259	205	159	2066

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) *Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)
The average is the combined data set for all five organisations

5.5 INTEREST IN TOPICS AND THE ASSOCIATIONS WITH ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

5.5.1 Hypothesis 2 And Sub-research Questions 2-6

The analysis in this section is related to hypothesis 2 (H2): Employee interest in organisational information is positively associated with organisational engagement. It also explores the questions posed in Sub-Research Questions 2 to 6:

Sub-research question (R2): how far is interest in specific organisational information topics consistent between organisations?

Sub-research question (R3): to what extent is interest in organisational information correlated with cognitive organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question (R4): to what extent is interest in organisational information correlated with emotional organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question (R5): to what extent is interest in organisational information correlated with behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question (R6): how far are correlations of interest in organisational information with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?

5.5.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis Of Interest In Topics

Respondents report a high level of interest in a wide range of topics, indicating that employees are very interested in knowing what the organisation's plans are, how it is progressing, and what the external operating environment is like. They are also, not surprisingly, very interested in information that is more related to them personally, such as information about pay and recognition of achievements (Table 5.5). However, there are differences between mean results for interest in different topics for all five organisations (Table 5.3) and these differences are significant ($p<0.01$). This may be because the organisations are from different sectors, although two are local borough councils so this could be ruled out as a factor. Another possible explanation could be that levels of interest in different topics are dependent upon the state of the organisation at the time, for example, the amount of change it is undergoing.

The highest interest was reported for 'plans for the future' (ranging from 94 percent at BankDept to 97 percent at HousingAssoc) measured on a 1-5 Likert scale where 4 for 'interested' and 5 for 'very interested' results are combined. Other topics that respondents reported very high levels of interest in are: 'how my job fits into the organisation' (ranging from 84 percent at GovOffice to 93 percent at SECouncil1 and BankDept),'achievements of the organisation' (ranging from 65 percent at GovOffice to 93 percent at HousingAssoc) and 'recognition of my efforts (ranging from 71 percent at BankDept to 93 percent at GovOffice and SECouncil1). This suggests that employee needs for information are high for many topics and internal communication practice needs to meet a wide range of information requirements, at an organisational level, especially plans for the future and achievements and more personally, especially recognition of efforts and how work fits into the overall organisational objectives. This implies that effective practice should combine corporate internal communication about plans, progress and the external environment with more localised team, project and peer based communication about how work fits into those plans, as outlined by Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 185).

TABLE 5.5 Descriptive Statistics Of Organisational Information Variables

Organisation	Variable	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
GovOffice	Plans &Aims	276	4.33	0.64
	External Environment		4.20	0.64
	Progress		4.05	0.65
	Employee information		4.00	0.62
SECouncil1	Plans &Aims	167	4.14	0.54
	External Environment		4.00	0.65
	Progress		4.19	0.55
	Employee information		4.22	0.46
BankDept	Plans &Aims	1259	4.29	0.60
	External Environment		4.15	0.67
	Progress		4.23	0.66
	Employee information		4.34	0.66
HousingAssoc	Plans &Aims	205	4.22	0.55
	External Environment		4.18	0.52
	Progress		3.99	0.51
	Employee information		4.17	0.46
SECouncil2	Plans &Aims	159	4.04	0.87
	External Environment		4.12	0.71
	Progress		4.13	0.69
	Employee information		4.37	0.58

Although questions about interest in specific topics are rarely asked in other studies, research is conducted about satisfaction with information sent, using the International Communication Association audit (ICA) that was reviewed in chapter 3. Hargie and Tourish (2009b, p. 252) report that the mean satisfaction with information received on important issues was 2.1 in an initial audit and then 2.4 in a subsequent audit (measured on a 1-5 Likert scale for satisfaction). Clampitt and Berk (2009, p. 281) report that a norm derived from research in 26 companies for satisfaction with information on policies and goals was 5.73, based on a 1-10 scale where 0 represents no satisfaction and 10 represents high satisfaction). Other studies report that information received on important issues is where the greatest overall deficit is found (Hogard et al., 2005, pp. 121-2). This thesis provides evidence that employees are interested in a very wide range of topics and research that assesses satisfaction with information received should reflect this and extend the range more widely from job-related topics to broader organisational topics. This thesis also provides granularity about interest in organisational topics that can inform practice. In summary, in addressing sub-research question 2 (R2): how far is interest in specific organisational information topics consistent between organisations, the

analysis of variances indicates that there are differences between organisations for the majority of the communication and engagement scales and the differences are significant ($p<0.01$).

5.5.3 Bivariate Analysis: Interest In Topics And Organisational Engagement

Correlations of interest in information with organisational engagement are separated into three distinct aspects of engagement; cognitive, emotional and behavioural as outlined earlier in this chapter. Correlation tables for each aspect of organisational engagement are shown in tables 5.6 (cognitive), 5.7 (emotional) and 5.8 (behavioural) respectively. This provides greater granularity of analysis for overall organisational engagement. As behavioural organisational engagement reflects what employees say they do for the organisation, it can be treated as an action-oriented outcome scale.

TABLE 5.6 Subgroup Correlation Comparison Table Of Organisational Information And Cognitive Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2	Average
	r	r	r	r	r	r
Plans &Aims	.61**	.39**	.49**	.46**	.52**	.51**
External Environment	.48**	.20**	.37**	.30**	.34**	.34**
Progress	.56**	.39**	.43**	.40**	.46**	.45**
Employee Information	.27**	.27**	.27**	.23**	.00	.25**
n	276	167	1259	205	159	2066

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). The average is the combined data set for all five organisations

TABLE 5.7 Subgroup Correlation Comparison Table Of Organisational Information And Emotional Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2	Average
	r	r	r	r	r	r
Plans &Aims	.56**	.34**	.46**	.45**	.59**	.48**
External Environment	.44**	.22**	.32**	.32**	.27**	.34**
Progress	.54**	.33**	.40**	.27**	.50**	.40**
Employee information	.36**	.28**	.34**	.26**	.13	.31**
n	276	167	1259	205	159	2066

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) .The average is the combined data set for all five organisations

TABLE 5.8 Subgroup Correlation Comparison Table Of Organisational Information And Behavioural Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2	Average
	r	r	r	r	r	r
Plans &Aims	.45**	.36**	.45**	.48**	.42**	.44**
External Environment	.38**	.31**	.32**	.26**	.36**	.31**
Progress	.47**	.33**	.38**	.38**	.47**	.40**
Employee information	.25**	.28**	.26**	.24**	-.02	.24**
n	276	167	1259	205	159	2066

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). The average is the combined data set for all five organisations.

The average combined dataset results indicate that interest in all four scales of information (Plans and Aims, External Environment, Progress and Employee Information) are positively associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement and the associations are all statistically significant ($p<0.01$). However, interest in 'Plans and Aims' and 'Progress' is strongly correlated in all three aspects of organisational engagement, whereas correlations for interest in 'External Environment' and 'Employee Information' are either weak or moderate. This implies that satisfying employee interest in a wide range of different topics for organisational engagement can be managed by prioritising the topics that have the strongest association with organisational engagement - those related to the Plans and Aims and Progress scales. At the same time, the Employee Information scale and Information about the External Environment should not be ignored and these corporate internal communication topics can be supplemented at a local level with team, project and peer communication about employee related topics, as highlighted by Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 185). Employee preferences for who communicates about what are explored in more depth in the analysis of interviews and focus groups in chapter 6. The correlations reported in this thesis extend theory about the 'psychological workplace climate' which is understood to represent 'the lens employees use to understand and interpret their work environment relative to the social and physical structures of environmental cues in relation to preserving their own sense of well-being' (Shuck and Reio, 2014, p. 45).The findings reported here indicate that information provided about the organisation is an important part of the 'light' that goes into the lens that is associated with how employees think, feel and behave at work.

The strengths of correlation are broadly similar for all five organisations, with the exception of SECouncil2, which has a very high level of interest in employee information (4.4, SD = 0.6) and notably very weak levels of correlation for employee information (Cognitive Engagement: .00; Emotional Engagement: .13; Behavioural Engagement: -.02). These specific results for SECouncil2 are not statistically significant. This could be explained by an atmosphere of great uncertainty and a recent change in the chief executive, coupled with challenging budgetary constraints facing all local borough councils in England. As a result, employees at SECouncil2 may be interested in employee related information for purely personal reasons (for example, their own job security) rather than for reasons associated with the organisation itself. This final point notwithstanding, hypothesis 2 (H2), employee interest in organisational information is positively associated with organisational engagement, is supported.

In summary, in addressing sub-research questions 3, 4, 5 and 6, interest in organisational information is positively and significantly associated with cognitive organisational engagement (R3), emotional organisational engagement (R4) and behavioural organisational engagement (R5). There are differences between the strengths of cognitive,

emotional and behavioural correlations with interest in different topics at each organisation. However, in broad terms the strength of correlations reported are consistent (sub-research question 6). As highlighted above; interest in 'Plans and Aims' and 'Progress' is strongly correlated in all three aspects of organisational engagement, whereas correlations for interest in 'External Environment' and 'Employee Information' are either weak or moderate. The implications are that the strength of associations between interest in Plans and Aims, External Environment, Progress, and Employee Information and Organisational Engagement are not necessarily dependent on the organisation itself.

5.6 EMPLOYEE VOICE AND THE ASSOCIATIONS WITH ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

5.6.1 Hypothesis 3 And Sub-research Questions 8-12

The analysis in this section is related to hypothesis 3 (H3): Employee voice is positively associated with organisational engagement. It also addresses the questions posed in Sub-Research Questions 8 to 12:

Sub-research question (R8): how far is satisfaction with employee voice consistent between organisations?

Sub-research question (R9): to what extent is satisfaction with employee voice correlated with cognitive organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question (R10): to what extent is satisfaction with employee voice correlated with emotional organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question (R11): to what extent is satisfaction with employee voice correlated with behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub research question (R12): how far are correlations of employee voice with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?

5.6.2 Analysis of Descriptive Statistics for Employee Voice

Respondents were not very satisfied with employee voice in some of the organisations in this study (Table 5.9). Mean levels of satisfaction range from 2.8 at SECouncil2 to 3.6 at BankDept. Respondents reported different degrees of satisfaction with employee voice and the variances between organisations are significant (p<0.01). Variances in satisfaction suggest that employee voice is not a consistently established process in organisations and satisfaction may be dependent upon local management understanding of employee voice, the recognition of the role of unions and the approach to employee voice taken by individual managers.

TABLE 5.9 Descriptive Statistics Of Employee Voice Scale And Satisfaction With 'Opportunities To Feed My Views Upwards'

Organisation	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	Satisfaction with opportunities to feed my views upwards (1-5) (%)
GovOffice	276	3.15	0.78	35
SECouncil1	167	3.28	0.55	39
BankDept	1259	3.63	0.72	59
HousingAssoc	205	3.50	0.69	59
SECouncil2	159	2.81	0.80	28

Note: Opportunities to feed my views upwards: 1, very dissatisfied, 5 very satisfied. Percentages are 4 and 5 scores combined.

The average satisfaction level reported for 'opportunities to feed my views upwards' was 45 percent (measured on a 1-5 Likert scale where 4 is 'satisfied' and 5 is 'very satisfied' and where 4 and 5 results are combined). This is higher than a level of 37 percent reported by Truss at al. (2006, p. 18). The mean levels of satisfaction with employee voice reported in this study are also generally higher than a result of 2.3 for 'involvement' reported by Quinn et al. (2009, p. 353) measured on a 1-5 scale where 1 represents very little extent and 5 represents a very great extent. The results in this thesis may therefore reflect a general improvement in employee voice since these two studies were conducted. Indeed, Rees et al. (2013, p. 2790) found that satisfaction with employee voice in two UK based companies was rated at 3.57 (SD=0.63) which is more in line with some of the results reported here. Possible progression in satisfaction with employee voice is further supported through evidence in the WERS 2011 report (Van Wenrooy et al., 2011) a major study of work and employment relations in the UK. It found an increase from 48 percent to 52 percent between 2004 and 2011 for ratings of seeking views of employees and representatives (measured on a 1-5 scale where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good).

The lowest level of satisfaction for 'opportunities to feed my views upwards' was at SECouncil2, a public sector organisation, where it was 28 percent and the highest level of satisfaction was at BankDept, a private sector organisation, where it was 64 percent. Satisfaction with 'ways to pass on criticisms' and with 'ways for me to communicate ideas to senior management' was slightly lower than with 'opportunities to feed my views upwards' in four of the five organisations (Table 5.10). This suggests that leaders are marginally more comfortable with giving employees opportunities to feed views upwards than with the explicit expression of criticisms and ideas. This may be symptomatic of a culture of coercive persuasion, where conformists are rewarded and dissent is punished (Tourish, 2013, p. 43) especially in

GovOffice, SECouncil1 and SECouncil2 where mean levels of satisfaction for 'ways to pass on criticisms' and 'ways for me to communicate ideas to senior managers' are below 3.00. It may also reflect the way employee voice has been neglected as it can be 'challenging for managers and questions their prerogatives for unilateral decision making' (Purcell, 2014, p. 236).

TABLE 5.10 Descriptive Statistics For Upward Feedback, Passing On Criticisms And Communicating Ideas To Senior Managers

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2
	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD
Opportunities to feed my views upwards	3.02 0.95	3.09 0.91	3.61 0.79	3.52 0.90	2.75 1.04
Ways for me to pass on criticisms	2.92 0.96	2.98 0.87	3.49 0.85	3.40 0.90	2.68 1.00
Ways for me to communicate ideas to senior managers	2.99 0.99	2.94 0.82	3.62 0.84	3.47 0.92	2.58 0.98
n	276	167	1259	205	159

Note: 1, very dissatisfied, 5 very satisfied.

There is a notable difference in satisfaction with 'seeking views' by senior managers compared to line managers as shown in table 5.11, which also compares data with WERS 2011 findings. Differences between satisfaction with senior managers 'seeking views' is particular noticeable at SECoumcil1 where satisfaction with line managers is 70 percent and satisfaction with senior managers in 25 percent. Satisfaction with senior managers 'responding to suggestions' is noticeably low at SECouncil1 and SECouncil 2 (15 percent and 10 percent respectively). This contrasts with 63 percent satisfaction with senior managers 'responding to suggestions' at BankDept, the highest level recorded in this study. In line with WERS 2011 data, satisfaction with 'allowing employees and representatives to influence decisions' was lower than with 'seeking views' and 'responding to suggestions'. Low levels of satisfaction with senior managers seeking views, responding to suggestions allowing employees to influence decisions reinforces what Tourish (2013, p. 28) describes as a flaw in transformational leadership which precludes the possibility of corrective feedback from followers to leaders. This thesis provides greater granularity to the understanding of satisfaction with managers 'seeking views' and suggests that questions asked in WERS are too general and may mask notable levels of poor ratings for senior managers in some organisations. The reasons for the low levels might be attributable to a number of factors, including fear of feedback, problems of ingratiation and

self-efficacy biases (Tourish, 2013, pp. 80-82). Leaders may also exaggerate the frequency of critical feedback. According to Tourish (2013, p. 85) 'On the relatively rare occasions when leaders, particularly those in senior positions, do receive critical upward feedback, they experience it as a striking and, hence, memorable event. They are likely to pay it special attention – it remains vividly in their memory and so convinces them it is more typical an event than it actually is'. Low levels of employee voice with senior managers is also symptomatic of an approach to employee engagement that is predominantly rooted in a discourse of compliance where communication is primarily monovocal and reflective of management interests (Francis et al., 2013, pp. 2715-6). The two local authorities involved in this thesis, SECouncil1 and SECouncil2 both report notably poor senior manager ratings for employee voice. This may be due to tough challenges faced by local borough councils that is acting as an obstacle to employee voice. However, all the organisations involved in this research were operating in challenging environments so it may reflect a wider senior manager approach to employee voice in local borough councils. Further research is required to verify this as a potential trend.

In addressing sub-research question (R8) satisfaction with employee voice varies from organisation to organisation and the differences are significant ($p < 0.01$). Although there is some evidence for general improvements in satisfaction with employee voice during the last ten years, the data in this thesis suggests that practice is not consistently established. This is best illustrated by the difference between satisfaction with senior managers 'seeking views' at SECouncil2 (20 percent) and at BankDept (64 percent).

TABLE 5.11 Descriptive Statistics For Employee Voice By Organisation And In Comparison With WERS 2011

	WERS 2011 (%) (1-5)	GO[SM] (%) (1-5)	GO[LM] (%) (1-5)	SE1[SM] (%) (1-5)	SE1[LM] (%) (1-5)	BD[SM] (%) (1-5)	BD[LM] (%) (1-5)	HA[SM] (%) (1-5)	HA[LM] (%) (1-5)	SE2[SM] (%) (1-5)	SE2[LM] (%) (1-5)
Seeking views of employees and representatives	52	47	54	25	70	64	77	38	70	20	53
Responding to suggestions from employees and representatives	46	37	50	15	67	63	74	38	66	10	52
Allowing employees and representatives to influence decisions	34	28	45	7	58	56	68	29	56	6	39
n	21,981	276	276	167	167	1259	1259	205	205	159	159

Notes: 1, very dissatisfied, 5 very satisfied; % is combined 4 and 5 results, WERS 2011,Workplace Employment Relations Study; GO, GovOffice; SE1, SECouncil1; BD, BankDept; HA, HousingAssoc; SE2, SECouncil2; SM, Senior Manager; LM, Line Manager.

5.6.3 Bivariate Analysis: Employee Voice And Organisational Engagement

The bivariate analysis in this study addresses Rees et al.'s (2013) assertion that no research has been identified that has directly analysed how employee perceptions of voice are related to engagement. The results in this study indicate that employee voice is positively and statistically significantly ($p<0.01$) associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement (Table 5.12). This reinforces results in other studies that suggest that involvement and participation is linked to engagement (Purcell et al., 2003; Robinson et al., 2004; Truss et al., 2006). It extends the findings reported by Rees et al. (2013, p. 2790) that employee voice is correlated with work engagement ($r = .55$, $p<0.01$). This thesis establishes a positive association with organisational engagement, not work engagement. This is a dimension of engagement that is not specifically separated in most other studies. The results support the original distinction made by Saks (2006, p. 604) between work and organisational engagement, indicating that employee voice is associated with both dimensions of engagement. It therefore underlines Purcell's (2014, p. 238) argument that it is 'more helpful to delineate between job and organizational engagement' than between 'state' and 'behavioural engagement'.

TABLE 5.12 Subgroup Correlation Comparison Table Of Employee Voice And Cognitive, Emotional And Behavioural Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2	Average
	r	r	r	r	r	r
Cognitive Engagement	.24**	.21**	.39**	.24**	.21**	.35**
Emotional Engagement	.56**	.44**	.52**	.48**	.50**	.53**
Behavioural Engagement	.30**	.27**	.40**	.37**	.26**	.37**
n	276	167	1259	205	159	2066

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). The average is the combined data set for all five organisations

Employee voice is strongly associated with emotional organisational engagement ($r = .53$) and moderately associated with cognitive organisational engagement ($r = .35$) and behavioural organisational engagement ($r = .37$).This implies that giving employees opportunities to express their views, seeking views and ideas, providing ways to pass on criticisms and listening to employees is most strongly associated with positive feelings towards the organisation. This may be because employee voice leads employees to feel more valued as individuals providing a deeper, more mature, 'adult to adult' level of communication within the

organisation. It therefore forms the basis of a more of social exchange based relationship (Saks, 2006, p. 603), one that generates a sense of fairness leading to relational trust, fostering reciprocity and an emotional bond (Rees et al., 2013, p. 2785).

Although the average, combined dataset, correlations between employee voice and organisational engagement are moderate or strong, the strengths of correlation in some individual organisations are weak. In particular, correlations with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement at both SECouncil1 and SECouncil2 are weak. Indeed the strength of correlation with cognitive organisational engagement is weak in four organisations. In contrast, the strength of the association with emotional organisational engagement is strong in all five organisations in this study. Considered together with the low ratings for employee voice with senior managers, the associations with organisational engagement suggest that senior managers who do not engage in a more two-way conversation with employees may be limiting potential improvements in organisational engagement. Furthermore, as Tourish points out (2013, p. 80) 'People cannot be viewed as passive recipients for information. They are active and questioning agents in the process of decision making. To ignore this, as a display of leader power, is to violate one of the most fundamental traits of our being.'

Low levels of satisfaction with employee voice and a strong association with emotional organisational engagement suggest that this is an aspect of internal communication that should be prioritised to potentially raise levels of engagement, although a correlation cannot be treated as causal and other factors may be associated with organisational engagement. In summary, hypothesis 3 (H3), giving employees a voice is associated with higher levels of organisational engagement, is supported. In addressing sub-research questions 9, 10, 11 and 12, employee voice is positively and significantly associated with cognitive organisational engagement (R9), emotional organisational engagement (R10) and behavioural organisational engagement (R11).There are differences between the strengths of cognitive, emotional and behavioural correlations with employee voice at each organisation. However, in broad terms the strength of correlations reported are all above r= .21, and they are strongly associated with emotional organisational engagement at each organisation (R 12).

5.7 SENIOR MANAGER COMMUNICATION AND THE ASSOCIATIONS WITH ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

5.7.1 Hypothesis 4 And Sub-Research Questions 14-18

In the previous section, low levels of satisfaction with employee voice with senior managers were analysed. In this section other aspects of senior manager communication are examined in more detail. The analysis is related to hypothesis 4 (H4): Senior manager communication about the organisation is positively associated with higher levels of organisational engagement. It also addresses the questions posed in Sub-Research Questions 14 to 18:

Sub-research question 14 (R14): how far is satisfaction with senior manager communication consistent between organisations?

Sub-research question 15 (R15): to what extent is satisfaction with senior manager communication correlated with cognitive organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question 16 (R16): to what extent is satisfaction with senior manager communication correlated with emotional organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question 17 (R17): to what extent is satisfaction with senior manager communication correlated with behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub research question 18 (R18): how far are correlations of senior manager communication with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?

5.7.2 Analysis Of Descriptive Statistics For Senior Manager Communication

Ratings for senior manager communication are poor in two of organisations (below 3) and weak in two organisations (3.06 and 3.25) (Table 5.13). The scale created for senior manager communication includes a combination of questions about keeping employees informed about changes, seeking views and responding to suggestions. Mean ratings varied from 2.60 (SD = 0.80) at SECouncil2 to 3.66 (SD = 0.76) at BankDept; the greatest range of means for all the communication scales reported. Differences between organisations are significant ($p<0.01$) and are the largest differences reported for all the scales in the study (see table 5.3). This indicates that senior manager communication is highly variable and performance may be dependent upon individual senior manager attitudes towards internal communication in different organisations. The average rating for senior manager 'communicating to employees' is 51 percent (measured on a 1-5 Likert scale where 4 is 'good' and 5 is 'very good' and where 4 and 5 results are combined). These results are higher (in four of the organisations) than a mean satisfaction of 5.6 for 'communication with top management' reported by Clampitt and Berk (2009, p. 288) using a 1-10 scale. They are also higher in some organisations than the mean of 3.0 for satisfaction with senior manager communication reported by Hargie and Tourish (2009, p. 257). However,

they are lower than the mean of 3.89 for top management communication reported by Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2007, p. 269).

Senior manager communication to employees was included as a specific question in the questionnaire administered at all five organisations. It was rated highest at BankDept, at 77 percent and lowest at both SECouncil1 and SECouncil2, at 37 percent. This emphasises the differences between organisations and it suggests that senior manager communication in local borough councils may be poorer than in other organisations, although further research is required to verify this as a potential trend. In addressing sub-research question 14 (R14) satisfaction with senior manager communication varies between organisations and the differences are significant ($p < 0.01$).

TABLE 5.13 Descriptive Statistics For Senior Manager Communication Scale

Organisation	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Senior managers communicating to employees (%) (1-5)
GovOffice	276	3.06	0.77	50
SECouncil1	167	2.88	0.60	37
BankDept	1259	3.66	0.76	77
HousingAssoc	205	3.25	0.70	56
SECouncil2	159	2.60	0.80	37

Note: 1, very poor, 5, very good. Percentages are 4 and 5 scores combined.

The mean ratings for the specific question 'communicating to employees' are slightly higher than for the senior manager communication scale that incorporates a number of questions, ranging from 2.92 (SD = 1.10) at SECouncil2 to 3.84 (SD = 0.79) at BankDept. Analysis of two scales created for senior manager communication, one for informing employees about changes and one for employee voice indicates that senior managers are rated slightly better at informing employees than employee voice in four of the five organisations in the study (Table 5.14). This reflects an approach that 'positions the employee in a more passive role where their voice is barely heard as they are enjoined to "buy into" corporate vision and goals as opposed to being pro-active co-shapers of engagement policies and practices'(Francis et al., p. 2716). It can be related to Tourish's (2013, p. 54) argument that coercive persuasion is 'rooted in the imbalance of power relations between leaders and non-leaders' where it is 'facilitated by the compelling and "positive" visions of leaders trying to attract the enthusiastic support of employees'. However, the data in this study indicates that senior managers are rated poorly for informing employees *and* seeking their views in some organisations; the mean rating for informing employees about changes was less than 3.0 in three of the five organisations in the study. This

may explain why, as Francis et al. (2013, p. 2715) report, there are 'perceptions of a growing "trust deficit" between employee and senior management'.

TABLE 5.14 Descriptive Statistics For Senior Managers Keeping Employees Informed Compared To Senior Manager Employee Voice

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2
	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD
Informing employees about changes	2.97 0.82	2.92 0.69	3.68 0.78	3.31 0.75	2.72 0.88
Employee voice	3.11 0.85	2.84 0.66	3.57 0.87	3.19 0.79	2.45 0.83
n	276	167	1259	205	159

Note: 1, very poor, 5 very good.

5.7.3 Bivariate Analysis: Senior Manager Communication And Organisational Engagement

This thesis examines the associations of senior manager communication with organisational engagement, not work engagement, as discussed in previous sections of this chapter. Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2007, p. 279) report that top management communication was correlated with 'overall communication satisfaction' (r=0.49). In this thesis similar findings are reported in four of the organisations where a satisfaction question with 'communication generally' was asked (Table 5.15). Significant, strong positive associations were found for all four organisations and all the associations were strong for both informing employees about changes and employee voice. This suggests that senior manager communication is an important element of internal corporate communication.

TABLE 5.15 Correlations Of Senior Managers Informing Employees About Changes And Senior Manager Employee Voice With Communication Generally

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2
	r	r	r	r
Informing employees about changes	.58**	.50**	.57**	.59**
Employee voice	.55**	.51**	.51**	.52**
n	276	167	205	159

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

The following bivariate analysis of senior manager communication with organisational engagement is separated into two dimensions of communication; informing employees about changes and employee voice. The results reveal a contrast between cognitive and emotional organisational engagement and informing employees about changes (Table 5.16). The associations for cognitive organisational engagement are positive, but very weak in four of the five organisations and not significant in the two local authorities. However, the associations for emotional organisational engagement are positive, moderate to strong, and significant in all five organisations. The associations for the outcome variable, behavioural organisational engagement, are positive and range from very weak to moderate and are significant for four of the organisations. This suggests that when senior managers inform employees about changes it is associated more strongly with emotional than cognitive organisational engagement and there is also an association with what employees do for the organisation.

There is also a contrast between cognitive and emotional organisational engagement and senior manager employee voice (Table 5.17). For cognitive organisational engagement, in one organisation, SECouncil1, a very weak negative association is reported although it is not significant. In two organisations a very weak positive and significant association is reported, in one organisation a weak positive and significant association is reported and in one other organisation a moderate positive and significant association is reported. The associations between senior manager employee voice and emotional organisational engagement are stronger than for cognitive organisational engagement; they are moderate to strong and all significant. The associations for the outcome variable, behavioural organisational engagement, are positive, and range from very weak to moderate and are significant for four of the organisations. As for the associations with senior managers informing employees about changes, when senior managers seek views and respond to them, it is associated more strongly with emotional than cognitive organisational engagement and there is also an association with what employees do for the organisation.

The analysis of senior manager communication suggests that informing employees about changes and seeking views and responding to suggestions is positively associated with emotional and behavioural organisational engagement. However, the associations for cognitive organisational engagement are weaker and in some cases not significant. The associations with emotional organisational engagement echo those found for employee voice discussed in the previous section. This highlights the potential impact that senior managers may have in developing the basis for a more of social exchange based relationship (Saks, 2006, p. 603). When senior managers keep employees informed about changes and seek their views it may indicate that they care about employees. If so, this extends de Vries at al.'s (2009, p. 377) findings that a leader's supportiveness (a friendly and caring approach) 'seems to be the most important communication style variable, having positive relations with all the leadership styles and outcomes, even after controlling for other communication style variables'. It lends weight to a relational perspective of leadership that 'recognizes leadership not as a trait or behaviour of an individual leader, but as a phenomenon generated in the interactions between people acting in context' (Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien, 2012, p. 1043). It also reinforces a new 'positive leadership' model that emphasises 'behaviours that are enacted by leaders and result in increasing followers' experience of positive emotions (Kelloway et al., 2013, p. 108). The reasons why senior manager communication is more strongly associated with emotional organisational engagement than with cognitive organisational engagement are explored in more depth in the analysis of interviews and focus groups in chapter 6.

Poor and weak ratings for senior manager communication and a strong association with emotional organisational engagement suggest that this is an aspect of internal communication that should be prioritised to potentially raise levels of organisational engagement, although a correlation cannot be treated as causal and other factors may be associated with organisational engagement. Hypothesis 4 (H4), senior manager communication about the organisation is associated with higher levels of organisational engagement, is only partially supported as associations with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement are not significant in all organisations.

TABLE 5.16 Subgroup Correlation Comparison Table Of Senior Manager Informing Employees About Changes And Cognitive, Emotional And Behavioural Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2
	r	r	r	r	r
Cognitive Engagement	.17**	.05	.35**	.15*	.12
Emotional Engagement	.46**	.33**	.49**	.36**	.51**
Behavioural Engagement	.27**	.15	.39**	.23**	.20*
N	276	167	1259	205	159

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) *Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

TABLE 5.17 Subgroup Correlation Comparison Table Of Senior Manager Employee Voice And Cognitive, Emotional And Behavioural Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2
	r	r	r	r	r
Cognitive Engagement	.23**	-.01	.32**	.17*	.16*
Emotional Engagement	.55**	.37**	.51**	.37**	.49**
Behavioural Engagement	.30**	.14	.33**	.26**	.17*
N	276	167	1259	205	159

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) *Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

In addressing sub-research questions 15 to 18, senior manager communication is positively and significantly associated with cognitive organisational engagement at three of the five organisations (R15). Senior manager communication is positively and significantly associated at moderate to strong levels with emotional organisational engagement at all five organisations (R16). Senior manager communication is positively and significantly associated with behavioural organisational engagement at weak to moderate levels at four of the organisations (R17). There are differences between the strengths of cognitive, emotional and behavioural correlations with senior manager communication at each organisation. Differences

in strengths of correlations are most marked between the two local borough councils and the other three organisations in the study for cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement (R18).

5.8 LINE MANAGER COMMUNICATION AND THE ASSOCIATIONS WITH ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

5.8.1 Hypothesis 5 And Sub-Research Questions 21-25

The analysis in this section is related to hypothesis 5 (H5): Line manager communication is less strongly associated with organisational engagement than senior manager communication. It also clarifies the questions posed in Sub-Research Questions 21 to 25:

Sub-research question 21 (R21): how far is satisfaction with line manager communication consistent between organisations?

Sub-research question 22 (R22): to what extent is satisfaction with line manager communication correlated with cognitive organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question 23 (R23): to what extent is satisfaction with line manager communication correlated with emotional organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub-research question 24 (R24): to what extent is satisfaction with line manager communication correlated with behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?

Sub research question 25 (R25): how far are correlations of satisfaction with line manager communication with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?

5.8.2 Analysis Of Descriptive Statistics For Line Manager Communication

Respondents reported reasonably good levels of line manager communication (Table 5.18). Mean ratings range from 3.31 (SD=1.08) at SECouncil2 to 3.83 (SD=0.79) at HousingAssoc. This is consistent with other studies that generally show relatively good ratings for supervisory communication (Clampitt and Downs, 1993; Gray and Laidlaw, 2004; Downs and Adrian, 2004; Akkirman and Harris, 2005; Clampitt and Berk, 2009; Quinn et al., 2009).The results in this thesis are in line with Downs and Adrian's (2004, pp. 148-9) summary of results from the CSQ, based on 1400 individuals in 18 companies, that indicate that supervisor communication is rated with a mean of 34.18 (measured on a 0-50 scale, with 50 designating the maximum satisfaction). Quinn et al. (2009, p. 351) report a mean of 3.8 for working relationship with supervisor (using a 1-5 Likert scale where 1 is very little and 5 is very great). Quinn et al. (2009, p. 353) also a report a 'supervisor' mean of 3.3, comprising eight questions that include communicating and listening. However, the results in this thesis are lower than those reported by Gray and Laidlaw (2004, p. 438) who report a mean for supervisory communication of 4.17

and Akkirman and Harris (2005, p. 401) who report means of 4.02 for the relationship with a supervisor.

The differences in line manager communication ratings between organisations are significant (p<0.01). As for senior manager communication, line manager communication may be dependent upon individual line manager attitudes towards internal communication in different organisations. The average rating for 'communicating to employees' is 69 percent (measured on a 1-5 Likert scale where 4 is 'good' and 5 is 'very good' and where 4 and 5 results are combined). This is 18 percent higher than the rating for senior manager communication. This is also consistent with other studies that report higher ratings for line manager communication than for senior manager communication. For example, Hargie and Tourish (2009b, p. 257) report a communication satisfaction of 3.7 for immediate managers compared to 3.0 for senior managers. Quinn et al. (2009, p. 351) report a mean of 3.8 for working relationship with supervisor compared to 2.8 for working relationship with management. Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2007, p. 269) report a mean of 5.21 for relationship to superiors compared to a mean of 3.89 for top management communication (using a 1-7 Likert scale where 1 is very dissatisfied and 7 is very satisfied). As Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2007, p. 270) observe 'Supervisors thus seemed very satisfied with the communication with employees for whom they were responsible, and vice versa.'

Line manager communication to employees was rated highest at BankDept, at 80 percent, and lowest at GovOffice at 52 percent. Ratings for 'keeping you informed about changes to the way the organisation is being run' also varied; the average is 61 percent. One possible explanation for the higher level of ratings for line manager communication compared to senior manager communication is the greater visibility and more regular contact that employees have with a line manager. However, Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2007, p. 280) point out that 'supervisory communication activities coincide with the extent to which rules and agreements are met and the extent to which rules are applied equally to all employees.' This is a dimension of line manager communication and organisational culture that was not specifically addressed in the questionnaire and could be included in future versions. In addressing sub-research question 21 (R21) satisfaction with line manager communication varies between organisations and the differences are significant (p<0.01).

TABLE 5.18 Descriptive Statistics For Line Manager Communication Scale

Organisation	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	Line managers communicating generally to employees (%) (1-5)
GovOffice	276	3.33	0.88	52
SECouncil1	167	3.76	0.73	79
BankDept	1259	3.79	0.83	80
HousingAssoc	205	3.83	0.79	78
SECouncil2	159	3.31	1.08	59

Note: 1, very poor, 5, very good. Percentages are 4 and 5 scores combined.

Although the ratings for line manager communication are relatively strong at the organisations in this thesis, Robinson and Hayday (2009, p. 38) report that 'better communication' is widely raised by employees about line managers. In particular, Robinson and Hayday note an unmet need to be given more information about the organisation and to understand more about other teams. Analysis of the ratings for keeping employees informed and employee voice indicates that, in contrast to the findings for senior managers, line managers are marginally higher rated for employee voice than for keeping employees informed (Table 5.19). Ratings for line managers keeping employees informed range from 3.10 (SD=0.88) at GovOffice to 3.77 (SD=0.87) at BankDept. Ratings for line manager employee voice range from 3.38 (SD=1.12) at SECouncil2 to 3.89 (SD=0.75) at SECouncil1. Of the five organisations involved in the study it was only at BankDept where line managers keeping employees informed was rated marginally higher than line manager employee voice. The findings in this thesis reinforce a 54 percent result for employees believing that their manager is always or usually open and honest (Truss et al., 2006, p. 15). The finding in this thesis for employee voice reflects what Robinson and Hayday (2009, p. 46) report, that the most valued features of managers were that they were supportive, encouraging and helpful and that they listened to and involved their teams. This finding also emphasises the localised nature of line manager communication performance, as illustrated by the significant differences in all five organisations and most notably the difference between the two local borough councils, SECouncil1 and SECouncil2. However, the relatively large standard deviations for SECouncil2 suggest that line manager communication performance varies considerably in the organisation.

TABLE 5.19 Descriptive Statistics For Line Managers Keeping Employees Informed Compared To Line Manager Employee Voice

	GovOffice		SECouncil1		BankDept		HousingAssoc		SECouncil2	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Keeping employees informed	3.10	0.88	3.59	0.80	3.77	0.87	3.58	0.85	3.14	1.10
Employee voice	3.41	0.75	3.89	0.75	3.76	0.91	3.87	0.82	3.38	1.12
n	276		167		1259		205		159	

Note: 1, very poor, 5 very good.

5.8.3 Bivariate Analysis: Line Manager Communication And Organisational Engagement

Line manager communication is positively and statistically significantly ($p<0.01$) associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement in all five organisations (Table 5.20). Analysis of correlations of line manager communication and organisational engagement indicates that an average, combined dataset, association with emotional organisational engagement is strong and higher than an association with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement. As highlighted earlier, some caution should be given to the combined dataset analysis as the number of respondents at BankDept is far greater than for any of the other four organisations involved in the study. A strong association with emotional organisational engagement is similar to that shown for employee voice and senior manager communication highlighted in previous sections. This indicates a potential trend in these three primary aspects of internal communication practice.

TABLE 5.20 Subgroup Correlation Comparison Table Of Line Manager Communication And Cognitive, Emotional And Behavioural Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2	Average
	r	r	r	r	r	r
Cognitive Engagement	.20**	.25**	.36**	.17*	.18*	.31**
Emotional Engagement	.44**	.35**	.36**	.43**	.37**	.40**
Behavioural Engagement	.23**	.20**	.38**	.33**	.23**	.33**
n	276	167	1259	205	159	2066

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed). The average is the combined data set for all five organisations.

It should be noted that unlike for employee voice and senior manager communication, the association of line manager communication and emotional organisational engagement is not strong in each organisation. Indeed, the association with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement is weak in most cases. This might be because the line manager role is seen as more relevant to work engagement than organisational engagement. Further research is required to test a potential trend of the strong emotional associations revealed in this thesis in a wider range of organisations. As with senior manager communication, it is possible that when line managers take the time to communicate with employees it is associated with employees feeling more valued as individuals. As Luthans and Peterson (2002, p. 385) observe, employees who feel that their opinions count, and who believe their manager has an interest in their development, are more likely to positively respond to their managers. The association between line manager communication and emotional organisational engagement reinforces Men's (2014, p. 278) argument that line managers who listen, respond, care and empower leads to 'employees feeling a balance of power, being cared for rather than controlled or manipulated'.

A strong association with emotional organisational engagement suggests that this is an aspect of internal communication that should be prioritised to potentially raise overall levels of engagement, although a correlation cannot be treated as causal and other factors may be associated with organisational engagement. A more granular analysis of correlations that separates line managers keeping employees informed and line manager employee voice is shown in tables 5.21 and 5.22. Positive associations are reported in all five organisations for line managers keeping employees informed and employee voice with all three dimensions of organisational engagement (cognitive, emotional and behavioural). The associations are statistically significant with one just one exception; line managers keeping employees informed and cognitive organisational engagement at SECouncil2. The strengths of associations vary for

both line managers keeping employees informed and line manager employee voice. However, the higher strengths of correlations are generally found for emotional organisational engagement. This reinforces findings discussed in earlier sections that indicate that internal communication is more strongly associated with emotional organisational engagement than cognitive or behavioural organisational engagement.

TABLE 5.21 Subgroup Correlation Comparison Table Of Line Manager Keeping Employees Informed And Cognitive, Emotional And Behavioural Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2
	r	r	r	r	r
Cognitive Engagement	.20**	.22**	.36**	.17**	.15
Emotional Engagement	.43**	.36**	.34**	.40**	.39**
Behavioural Engagement	.21**	.20**	.38**	.31**	.21**
N	276	167	1259	205	159

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) *Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

TABLE 5.22 Subgroup Correlation Comparison Table Of Line Manager Employee Voice And Cognitive, Emotional And Behavioural Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2
	r	r	r	r	r
Cognitive Engagement	.19**	.27**	.33**	.18**	.19*
Emotional Engagement	.43**	.29**	.35**	.43**	.34**
Behavioural Engagement	.23**	.18**	.34**	.32**	.23**
N	276	167	1259	205	159

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) *Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results highlighted in tables 5.21 and 5.22 can be contrasted with a study conducted by Men and Stacks (2013, p. 179). This reported how the transformational leadership of line managers (articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, individualized support, and intellectual

stimulation) correlated with perceived organisational reputation (an overall evaluation of the company on aspects of emotional appeal, products and services, financial performance, vision and leadership, work environment, and social responsibility). The correlation between transformational leadership and perceived organisational reputation was .50 (p>0.01, two-tailed). Although the study is based on different questions, it is interesting to note that the strength of the correlation between line management and a broader 'organisational reputation' variable is stronger than the correlation between line manager communication and organisational engagement reported in this thesis.

In addressing sub-research questions 22 to 25, line manager communication is positively and significantly associated with cognitive organisational engagement at very weak to moderate levels at all five organisations (R22). Line manager communication is positively and significantly associated at moderate to strong levels with emotional organisational engagement at all five organisations (R23). Line manager communication is positively and significantly associated with behavioural organisational engagement at weak to moderate levels at all five organisations (R24). There are clear differences between the strengths of cognitive, emotional and behavioural correlations with line manager communication at each organisation (R25).

5.9 SUMMARY OF SENIOR MANAGER AND LINE MANAGER COMMUNICATION

In previous sections of this chapter differences in ratings for senior manager and line manager communication were highlighted. In this section, bivariate analysis is used to compare the associations of senior manager and line manager communication with organisational engagement (Table 5.23). Senior manager and line manager communication is moderately and statistically significantly (p<0.01) associated with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement. Senior manager and line manager communication is strongly and statistically significantly (p<0.01) associated with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement. It is interesting to note that as indicated in earlier sections, senior manager communication is widely accepted to be less satisfactory than line manager communication. However, bivariate analysis for this thesis indicates that senior manager is more strongly associated with emotional organisational engagement than line manager communication (r=.40 for line manager communication and r=.52 for senior manager communication). This suggests that a focus on improving senior manager communication in practice could impact levels of organisational engagement. In general, senior manager communication is more strongly associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement. Hypothesis 5, line manager communication is less strongly associated with organisational engagement than senior manager communication, is therefore supported. However, the differences for correlations for cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement are very similar, so it is only the correlation for emotional organisational engagement that stands out as being different (r=.40 and r=0.52).

TABLE 5.23 Combined Dataset Analysis Of Correlations Of Line Manager And Senior Manager Communication With Cognitive, Emotional And Behavioural Organisational Engagement

	Line Manager Communication	Senior Manager Communication
	r	r
Cognitive Engagement	.31**	.32**
Emotional Engagement	.40**	.52**
Behavioural Engagement	.33**	.35**
n	2066	2066

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

An analysis of the correlations for the combined dataset for all five organisations (table 5.24) reveals strong positive associations for senior manager communication, keeping employees informed, employee voice and emotional organisational engagement (r= .52, r= .51, and r= .53 respectively). This analysis also reveals that an interest in information about aims, plans and progress is strongly associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement. For chief executives and internal communication practitioners, the implications are clear. Effective corporate internal communication that is associated with organisational engagement requires a combination of senior managers keeping employees informed about aims, plans and progress and at the same time giving them a voice that is treated seriously.

TABLE 5.24 Combined Dataset Correlations For Keeping Employees Informed, Employee Voice, Line And Senior Manager Communication And Organisational Information

	Cognitive Organisational Engagement	Emotional Organisational Engagement	Behavioural Organisational Engagement
	r	r	r
Keeping employees informed	.34**	.51**	.37**
Employee voice	.35**	.53**	.37**
Senior manager communication	.32**	.52**	.35**
Line manager communication	.31**	.40**	.33**
Plans &Aims	.51**	.48**	.44**
Progress	.45**	.40**	.40**
Employee Information	.25**	.31**	.24**

N=2066 **Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

5.10 INFORMED EMPLOYEE VOICE

5.10.1 Hypothesis 6

The analysis in this section is related to hypothesis 6 (H6) – keeping employees informed and employee voice are positive and statistically significant predictors of organisational engagement.

5.10.2 Analysis Of Descriptive Statistics For Informed Employee Voice

Within each organisation, respondents report similar levels of satisfaction with being kept informed and with employee voice. These are two core principles for 'informed employee voice' that is associated with employee engagement (Truss et al., 2006, p. 45).This suggests that organisations pay similar attention to both keeping employees informed *and* employee voice. However, a range of means for the five cases is reported, from 2.90/2.81 (keeping employees informed and employee voice respectively) for SECouncil1 to 3.68/3.63 for BankDept, measured on a 1-5 Likert scale, where 1 is very poor or very dissatisfied and 5 is very good or very satisfied (Table 5.25). These differences between organisations are significant (p<0.01). It is worth noting that it is a private sector organisation that has the highest ratings and a local borough council that has the lowest ratings. Further research is required to verify if this is a general trend of difference between private and public sector organisations. The analysis of frequencies shown in table 5.25 is based on two specific questions: 'senior manager - keeping you informed about changes to the way the organisation is being run' and 'opportunities to feed

my views upwards'. In three of the five organisations involved in this thesis, senior managers keeping employees informed was rated more highly than opportunities to feed views upwards. This suggests that senior managers keeping employees informed might be a marginally more established internal communication process than employee voice.

TABLE 5.25 Descriptive Statistics For Keeping Employees Informed Scale And Employee Voice Scales

Organisation	Variable	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency for senior manager – 'keeping you informed about changes to the way the organisation is being run' and frequency for 'opportunities to feed my views upwards' (%) (1-5)
GovOffice	Keeping employees informed	276	3.09	0.77	47
	Employee voice		3.15	0.78	35
SECouncil1	Keeping employees informed	167	3.20	0.64	37
	Employee voice		3.28	0.55	39
BankDept	Keeping employees informed	1259	3.68	0.65	73
	Employee voice		3.63	0.72	64
HousingAssoc	Keeping employees informed	205	3.49	0.72	55
	Employee voice		3.51	0.69	59
SECouncil2	Keeping employees informed	159	2.90	0.88	33
	Employee voice		2.81	0.80	28

Notes: 'keeping employees informed: 1, poor, 5, good. 'opportunities to feed my views upwards': 1, very dissatisfied, 5, very satisfied. Percentages are 4 and 5 scores combined.

5.10.3 Bivariate Analysis: Informed Employee Voice

Correlation analysis (Table 5.26) indicates that informed employee voice is strongly associated with emotional organisational engagement in all five organisations with one single exception for keeping employees informed at SECouncil1 where the correlation is moderate at .38. Informed employee voice is also weakly, moderately, and statistically significantly ($p<0.05$) associated with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement. This indicates that two core principles of internal communication; keeping employees informed and employee voice can be considered as primary aspects of practice for organisational engagement.

TABLE 5.26 Subgroup Correlation Comparison Table Of Keeping Employees Informed Scale And Employee Voice Scale And Cognitive, Emotional And Behavioural Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	GO INF	GO VOI	SE1 INF	SE1 VOI	BD INF	BD VOI	HA INF	HA VOI	SE2 INF	SE2 VOI
	r	r	r	r	r	r	r	r	r	r
Cognitive Engagement	.20**	.24**	.17*	.21**	.41**	.39**	.18**	.24**	.15*	.21**
Emotional Engagement	.49**	.56**	.38**	.44**	.53**	.52**	.43**	.48**	.51**	.50**
Behavioural Engagement	.27**	.30**	.24**	.27**	.44**	.40**	.31**	.37**	.24**	.26**
n	276	276	167	167	1259	1259	205	205	159	159

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) *Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Key GO: GovOffice, SE1: SECouncil1, BD: BankDept, HA: HousingAssoc, SE2: SECouncil2, INF: keeping employees informed, VOI: employee voice

5.10.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Standard multiple regression was used to assess the ability of keeping employees informed and employee voice as unique contributors towards organisational engagement when other communication variables are controlled for. Pallant (2013, p. 156) advises that sample size for standard multiple regression should be $n > 50 + 8m$, where m is the number of independent variables. For this thesis, six independent variables are used in the analysis and therefore the sample size exceeds this threshold. In order to avoid potential multicollinearity that arises when independent variables are highly correlated, r=.9 and above according to Pallant (2013, p. 157), the scale used for employee voice varies from that used for earlier correlation analysis. It is based on the same three questions that were included in the questionnaire at each organisation; satisfaction with opportunities to feed views upwards, ways to pass on criticisms and ways to communicate ideas to the senior management team. Correlations between the independent variables used for standard multiple regression analysis are less than .9 in all cases for all organisations, with one exception; the correlation between line manager employee voice and line managers keeping employees informed at SECouncil2 was .9. Tolerance levels for multicollinearity were also checked and were all above the threshold of .10 suggested by Pallant (2013, p. 164).

Tables 5.27, 5.28, and 5.29 show the results of the standard multiple regression analysis for cognitive organisational engagement, emotional organisational engagement and behavioural

organisational engagement respectively. The standardised coefficient (beta) values are shown by organisation in order to compare the strongest internal communication contributors in each organisation. Beta values are used rather than unstandardised coefficient B values as they are directly comparable.

5.10.5 Multiple Regression Analysis For Cognitive Organisational Engagement

Standard multiple regression analysis for this thesis indicates that the strongest communication contributor to organisational engagement varies from organisation to organisation. No general trend can be established. This suggests that organisational situational factors may affect the contribution of internal communication to organisational engagement at any specific time. For example, statistically significant, positive communication contributors for cognitive organisational engagement are senior manager employee voice at GovOffice ($\beta=0.21$, $p<.05$), employee voice ($\beta=0.12$, $p<.01$) and line managers keeping employees informed ($\beta=0.11$, $p<.05$) at BankDept, and employee voice ($\beta=0.25$, $p<.05$) at HousingAssoc (see table 5.27).The standard deviation for senior manager employee voice at GovOffice is 0.85 and the standard deviation for cognitive organisational engagement is 0.66. Therefore, if senior manager employee voice at GovOffice was increased by 0.85 the increase in cognitive organisational engagement would be 0.14. This is calculated by multiplying the beta value by the standard deviation for cognitive organisational engagement (Pallant, 2013, p. 168). At BankDept, line managers keeping employees informed is a marginally stronger predictor of cognitive organisational engagement than senior managers keeping employees informed. If line managers keeping employees informed at BankDept was increased by the standard deviation value (SD=0.87), cognitive organisational engagement would increase by 0.08. At HousingAssoc, employee voice is a strong predictor of cognitive organisational engagement ($\beta=0.25$, $p<.05$). If employee voice was increased by the standard deviation value (SD=0.67), cognitive organisational engagement would increase by 0.14. The R square values for the informed employee voice model indicate that it explains marginal (5 percent to 8 percent) contributions to the variance in cognitive organisational engagement at four of the five organisations. However, at BankDept, it explains 17 percent of the variance. As highlighted throughout this chapter, one potential explanation for the difference in the results for BankDept is the high number of overseas employees included in the sample.

TABLE 5.27 Standard Multiple Regression Analyses Predictors For Keeping Employees Informed, Employee Voice, Line Manager Communication And Senior Manager Communication With Cognitive Organisational Engagement By Organisation

Engagement	Dependent Variable: Cognitive Organisational				
	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2
Independent variable	β	β	β	β	β
Employee voice	0.05	0.00	0.12**	0.25*	0.01
Line Manager: informing employees	0.14	0.06	0.14**	0-.03	-0.14
Senior Managers: informing employees	-.010	-0.03	0.11	-0.08	-0.14
Line Manager: employee voice	-0.03	0.26	0.08	0.03	0.27
Senior Manager: employee voice	0.21*	-0.08	0.04	0.11	0.22
R²	0.07	0.08	0.17	0.07	0.05
N	276	167	1259	205	159

**p<.01, *p<.05

+standardised beta values shown

5.10.6 Multiple Regression Analysis For Emotional Organisational Engagement

Statistically significant, positive communication contributors for emotional organisational engagement also vary by organisation (Table 5.28). However, each of the following statistically significant communication variables appears in two organisations; employee voice, senior managers informing employees and senior manager employee voice. There are more positive, statistically significant, predictors for emotional organisational engagement (seven) than for cognitive (four) or behavioural (three) organisational engagement in the analysis conducted for this thesis. Furthermore, the strongest level of unique contribution to organisational engagement is found for senior manager employee voice and emotional organisational engagement (β=0.34, p<.01) at GovOffice. The beta value for senior manager employee voice at GovOffice is more than three times the beta value of line manager employee voice. If senior manager employee voice at GovOffice was increased by the standard deviation value (SD=0.85) emotional organisational engagement would increase by 0.26. At BankDept the beta values for senior managers keeping employees informed and senior manager employee voice employee voice and emotional organisational engagement are considerably higher than line managers keeping

employees informed and line manager employee voice (although the beta values for line manager communication at BankDept are not statistically significant). In contrast, at SECouncil2 the strongest beta value is for senior managers informing employees (β=0.26, p<.05). If this aspect of communication was increased by the standard deviation (SD=0.88) emotional organisational engagement would increase by 0.20. In contrast again, at HousingAssoc the strongest beta value is for line manager employee voice (β=0.28, p<.05). If this aspect of communication was increased by the standard deviation (SD=0.82) emotional organisational engagement would increase by 0.15. The R square values for the informed employee voice model indicate that it explains notable contributions to the variance in emotional organisational engagement in all five organisations, ranging from 20 percent to 34 percent.

TABLE 5.28 Standard Multiple Regression Analyses Predictors For Keeping Employees Informed, Employee Voice, Line Manager Communication And Senior Manager Communication With Emotional Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	Dependent Variable: Emotional Organisational Engagement				
	GovOffice	**SECouncil1**	**BankDept**	**HousingAssoc**	**SECouncil2**
Independent variable	β	β	β	β	β
Employee voice	0.14*	0.17	0.20**	0.11	0.09
Line Manager: informing employees	0.05	0.18	-0.04	-0.01	0.24
Senior Managers: informing employees	0.04	0.03	0.16**	0.02	0.26*
Line Manager: employee voice	0.10	0.02	0.07	0.28*	-0.17
Senior Manager: employee voice	0.34**	0.14	0.23**	0.17	0.18
R²	0.34	0.20	0.30	0.23	0.30
N	276	167	1259	205	159

**p<.01, *p<.05
+standardised beta values shown

5.10.7 Multiple Regression Analysis For Behavioural Organisational Engagement

Three positive, statistically significant, coefficients for behavioural organisational engagement were found (Table 5.29) all at BankDept. These are for employee voice (β=0.15, p<.01) and line managers keeping employees informed (β=0.16, p<.01) and senior managers keeping employees informed (β=0.22, p<.01). There were no positive, statistically significant, predictors in any of the four other organisations. This suggests that there are other factors than internal communication that may be stronger predictors for behavioural organisational engagement. However, the R square values for the model do indicate that it explains some of the variance in behavioural organisational engagement, ranging from 5 percent at SECouncil1 to 20 percent at BankDept.

TABLE 5.29 Standard Multiple Regression Analyses Predictors For Keeping Employees Informed, Employee Voice, Line Manager Communication And Senior Manager Communication With Behavioural Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	Dependent Variable: Behavioural Organisational Engagement				
	GovOffice	**SECouncil1**	**BankDept**	**HousingAssoc**	**SECouncil2**
Independent variable	β	β	β	β	β
Employee voice	0.05	0.02	0.15**	0.18	0.07
Line Manager: informing employees	-0.05	0.11	0.16**	0.02	-0.03
Senior Managers: informing employees	0.08	-0.01	0.22**	-0.08	0.02
Line Manager: employee voice	0.09	0.05	0.05	0.15	0.17
Senior Manager: employee voice	0.18	0.11	-0.05	0.14	0.08
R²	0.10	0.05	0.20	0.14	0.07
N	276	167	1259	205	159

**p<.01, *p<.05
+standardised beta values shown

The multiple regression results for this thesis support those found by Rees et al. (2013, p. 2790) that employee voice is significantly related to engagement (β=0.511, p<0.01).They also report a positive significant association between the line manager relationship and engagement (β=0.332, p<0.01). However, their findings are based on different interpretations of voice and engagement from those used in this thesis, where voice is focused within a group setting and

where engagement is more work or job oriented. This thesis therefore extends the literature to show that employee voice is not only associated with work engagement, it is also associated with organisational engagement.

Kelloway et al. (2013, p. 111) report a positive, statistically significant, beta value of 0.33 (p<.01) between transformational leadership and positive affective organisational commitment. In their study transformational leadership is based on Carless et el.'s (2000, p. 393) short measure of transformational leadership incorporating the following seven behaviours: (1) Communicates a clear and positive vision of the future, (2) treats staff as individuals, supports and encourages their development, (3) gives encouragement and recognition to staff, (4) fosters trust, involvement and co-operation among team members, (5) encourages thinking about problems in new ways and questions assumptions, (6) is clear about his/her values and practises what he/she preaches, and (7) instils pride and respect in others and inspires me by being highly competent. Some of these behaviours are linked to line and senior manager communication and employee voice as defined in this thesis. The term 'affective organisational commitment' is similar to the 'emotional organisational engagement' used in this thesis. The finding is therefore in line with some of the positive, statistically significant, beta values for emotional organisational engagement reported in this thesis.

Men and Stacks (2013, p. 182) report a beta value of 0.37 (p<.001) for transformational leadership described as 'managers articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, and individualized support' and employees 'feeling of control'. This in turn has an effect on employees evaluation of organisational reputation, assessed using questions such as 'the company is a good place to work' (similar to the approach taken for organisational engagement in this thesis) where a beta value of 0.31 (p<.001) is reported. An employee's feeling of control, described by Men and Stacks (2013, p. 178) as 'My manager trusts me to make the appropriate decisions in my job,' and 'I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job' therefore also appears to be a predictor of organisational engagement and one that is not covered by the ICOEQ.

The multiple regression results in this thesis also support hierarchical regression results for what Men (2014b, p. 272) calls 'the symmetrical communication system' and employee satisfaction with the organisation ($\beta=0.46$, p<.001). Symmetrical communication in the study was tested using questions such as 'most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be considered two-way communication' and satisfaction with the organisation was tested using questions such as 'I enjoy dealing with the company'. Symmetrical communication can be considered as the combination of keeping employees in formed and employee voice, as outlined in this thesis. Although the questions used by Men for satisfaction with the organisation are different from those used for organisational engagement in this thesis, enjoyment in dealing with the company can be considered as an aspect of

organisational engagement and the result therefore supports the beta values found in this thesis for organisational engagement as a separate construct from work or job engagement.

However, the multiple regression results in this thesis are in contrast to those found by Gatenby et al. (2009) where no statistically significant positive relationship was found for perceptions of senior managers and employee engagement. This may be attributable to the definition used for engagement in the study which is work or job oriented. The results in this thesis therefore provide evidence for the role of senior manager communication being more relevant to organisational engagement than work engagement. Hypothesis 6 (H6) – keeping employees informed and employee voice are positive and statistically significant predictors of organisational engagement is partially supported. What emerges from the multiple regression analysis is a mixed picture of the strongest predictors of organisational engagement in each organisation. This suggests that different aspects of internal communication may make a more unique contribution to organisational engagement at a particular time and this may be attributable to the situation, or degree of change, that exists. This is a point that is explored more fully in the next chapter on qualitative data analysis.

5.11 BEHAVIOURAL ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AS A KEY OUTCOME VARIABLE

In assessing the potential impact of internal communication, behavioural organisational engagement can be considered as a key outcome variable that is most closely linked to action and what employees do to help their organisation achieve its objectives. This aspect of engagement is therefore one that managers and internal communication practitioners will probably focus on most as it is related to organisational performance. Respondents report weak and moderate positive associations between internal communication scales and behavioural organisational engagement. Multiple regression analysis also indicates few positive, statistically significant, internal communication contributions to behavioural organisational engagement. So it could be argued that the evidence in this thesis is that internal communication does not have a strong, direct, association with action to achieve organisational objectives. Further correlation analysis was therefore conducted to investigate the associations between cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement (Table 5.30).

TABLE 5.30 Sub-Group Correlations Of Cognitive And Emotional Organisational Engagement With Behavioural Organisational Engagement By Organisation

	GovOffice	SECouncil1	BankDept	HousingAssoc	SECouncil2
	r	r	r	r	r
Cognitive organisational engagement	.75**	.67**	.77**	.67**	.69**
Emotional organisational engagement	.53**	.52**	.54**	.56**	.57**
n	276	167	1259	205	159

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

This highlights strong, statistically significant (p<0.01), associations between emotional organisational engagement and behavioural organisational engagement in all five organisations. The analysis also indicates very strong, statistically significant (p<0.01), associations between cognitive organisational engagement and behavioural organisational engagement in all five organisations. This implies that there may be a two-step process for informed internal communication and action to achieve organisational objectives; it is strongly associated with emotional organisational engagement and this is strongly associated with behavioural organisational engagement.

5.12 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As highlighted in the chapter 4, this thesis firstly identifies common communication preferences and states of practice and considers how they are associated with organisational engagement. It then links the findings to wider, underlying, management norms and/or structures that produce them. It does this through quantitative research at a number of different organisations to establish an 'independent reality' of internal communication. It then seeks to identify why 'regularities' occur through qualitative research. Finally it considers what can be changed so that employees are given the information they require and at the same time they are also given an opportunity to have a say about what goes on that is treated seriously.

The 'independent reality' that emerges from the quantitative data analysis is captured in a conceptual model for informed employee voice (Figure 5.1).

FIGURE 5.1 Conceptual Model For Informed Employee Voice Showing Combined Dataset Correlations
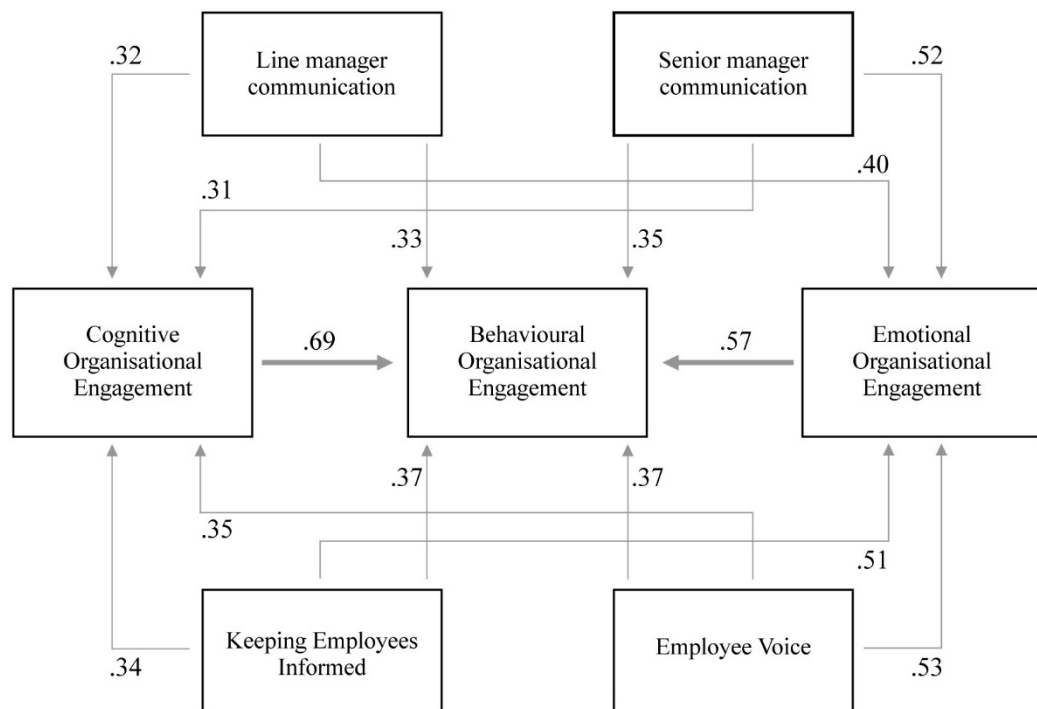
The model highlights the stronger level of correlation between internal communication and emotional organisational engagement than for cognitive or behavioural organisational engagement that has been outlined throughout this chapter.

Key findings from the quantitative data analysis are summarised as follows:

Respondents rated email and team meetings as the top, second or third most helpful methods of internal communication in all five organisations in this study.

Preferences for email and team meetings are noteworthy against a backdrop of a recent rise in the availability of other media, such as video, instant messaging and internal social media platforms.

Respondents report a high level of interest in a wide range of topics, indicating that employees are very interested in knowing what the organisation's plans are, how it is progressing, and what the external operating environment is like.

The average combined dataset results indicate that interest in all four scales of information (Plans and Aims, External Environment, Progress, and Employee Information) are positively associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement and the associations are all statistically significant ($p<0.01$).

Interest in 'Plans and Aims' and 'Progress' is strongly correlated in all three aspects of organisational engagement, whereas correlations for interest in 'External Environment' and 'Employee Information' are either weak or moderate.

Respondents were not very satisfied with employee voice in some of the organisations in this study. Mean levels of satisfaction range from 2.8 at SECouncil2 to 3.6 at BankDept.

Respondents reported different degrees of satisfaction with employee voice and the variances between organisations are significant ($p<0.01$).

The results in this study indicate that employee voice is positively and statistically significantly ($p<0.01$) associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement. This reinforces results in other studies that suggest that involvement and participation is linked to engagement.

Employee voice is strongly associated with emotional organisational engagement ($r = .53$) and moderately associated with cognitive organisational engagement ($r = .35$) and behavioural organisational engagement ($r = .37$).

The results support the original distinction made by Saks (2006, p. 604) between work and organisational engagement, indicating that employee voice is associated with both dimensions of engagement.

Respondents rated senior manager communication as poor or weak in four of the five organisations in this study.

The scale created for senior manager communication includes a combination of questions about keeping employees informed about changes, seeking views and responding to suggestions. Mean ratings varied from 2.60 (SD = 0.80) at SECouncil2 to 3.66 (SD = 0.76) at BankDept; the greatest range of means for all the communication scales reported. Differences between organisations are significant ($p<0.01$) and are the largest differences reported for all the scales in the study.

Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2007, p. 279) report that top management communication was correlated with 'overall communication satisfaction' ($r=0.49$). In this thesis similar findings are reported in four of the organisations where a satisfaction question with 'communication generally' was asked.

Significant, strong positive associations between senior manager communication and organisational engagement were reported in this study and all the associations were strong for both informing employees about changes and employee voice.

Respondents rated line manager communication more highly than senior manager communication. Mean ratings range from 3.31 (SD=1.08) at SECouncil2 to 3.83 (SD=0.79)at HousingAssoc.

Line manager communication is positively and statistically significantly (p<0.01) associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement in all five organisations. However, it should be noted that unlike for employee voice and senior manager communication, the association of line manager communication and emotional organisational engagement is not strong in each organisation. Indeed, the association with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement is weak in most cases. This might be because the line manager role is seen as more relevant to work engagement than organisational engagement.

Senior manager and line manager communication is moderately and statistically significantly (p<0.01) associated with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement. Senior manager and line manager communication is strongly and statistically significantly (p<0.01) associated with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement.

Within each organisation, respondents report similar levels of satisfaction with being kept informed and with employee voice. However, a range of means for the five cases is reported, from 2.90/2.81 (keeping employees informed and employee voice respectively) for SECouncil1 to 3.68/3.63 for BankDept..

Informed employee voice is strongly associated with emotional organisational engagement in all five organisations with one single exception for keeping employees informed at SECouncil1 where the correlation is moderate at .38.

Informed employee voice is also weakly, moderately, and statistically significantly (p<0.05) associated with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement.

Standard multiple regression analysis for this thesis indicates that the strongest communication contributor to organisational engagement varies from organisation to organisation. No general trend can be established. This suggests that organisational situational factors may affect the contribution of internal communication to organisational engagement at any specific time.

There are more positive, statistically significant, predictors for emotional organisational engagement than for cognitive or behavioural organisational engagement in the analysis conducted for this thesis.

Multiple regression analysis reveals a mixed picture of the strongest predictors of organisational engagement in each organisation. This suggests that different aspects of internal communication may make a more unique contribution to organisational engagement at a particular time and this may be attributable to the situation, or degree of change, that exists.

There are strong, statistically significant (p<0.01), associations between emotional organisational engagement and behavioural organisational engagement in all five organisations.

The analysis of data for this study also indicates very strong, statistically significant (p<0.01), associations between cognitive organisational engagement and behavioural organisational engagement in all five organisations.

CHAPTER 6 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The analysis of interview and focus group transcripts in this chapter addresses the following sub-research questions:

Sub-research question 1 (R1): Why do employees find specific channels helpful or unhelpful?

Sub-research question 7 (R7): why are employees interested in different aspects of organisational information?

Sub research question 13 (R13): why is satisfaction with employee voice not rated more highly?

Sub research question 19 (R19): why do employees want senior managers to communicate about the organisation?

Sub research question 20 (R20): why do employees not rate senior manager communication more highly?

Sub research question 26 (R26): what topics do employees want line managers to communicate about?

Sub research question 27 (R27): why do employees not rate line manager communication more highly?

6.2 PARTICIPANTS

The discussion of qualitative data in this chapter is based on the analysis of interview and focus group transcripts and open comments collected in the ICOEQ. As highlighted in chapter 4 a total of 27 interviews were conducted in five organisations. Some interviews took place face to face in a quiet meeting room at the organisation's premises and some were conducted on the telephone. People selected for interview at SECouncil1 and GovOffice represented a range of backgrounds and levels of management. At BankDept, people were selected for interview on the basis of location outside the UK, as it was not possible to run focus groups overseas. People selected for interview at HousingAssoc were senior managers. People selected for interviews at SECouncil2 were first line or middle managers. A total of nine focus groups were conducted involving 77 people in five organisations. At SECouncil1, there was a sensitivity about recording the first focus group, so two assistants from the internal communication team were present to take notes. All subsequent focus groups were recorded and fully transcribed. This enabled a focus on facilitating the discussion rather than taking notes. At BankDept a member of the internal communication team was present at each focus group to take notes and all focus groups were also recorded. All focus groups took place in meeting rooms at the organisation's premises.

6.3 TEMPLATE ANALYSIS

The approach adopted for the analysis of transcripts is template analysis, described by Brooks and King (2014, p. 4) as a 'method of thematically organising and analysing qualitative data' that incorporates the 'development of a coding template, which summarises themes identified by the researcher as important in a data set, and organises them in a meaningful and useful manner.' Template analysis was used for open comments collected in the ICOEQ amounting to 23,991 words and for 21 interviews and six focus groups that amounted to a total of 176, 759 words of transcripts. At this point data saturation was considered to have been reached. Template analysis has typically been used in management and health research. However, no evidence could be found for any prior application of template analysis in public relations research.

In the next section the process of developing and refining the template is reviewed. In following sub-sections the themes are discussed in more detail. The approach taken in this chapter is one that is structured around the main themes identified, drawing illustrative examples from transcripts. King (2014) recommends the use of direct quotes from participants which should generally include some shorter quotes to clarify particular points and longer quotes that give the reader a flavour of the original accounts. Care was taken to draw on a wide range of illustrations so that quotes from one organisation do not dominate.

6.3.1 A Priori Themes

According to Brooks and King (2014, p. 6) it is common to use some themes which have been identified in advance of coding. These are known as *a priori* themes that are identified because there is an assumption that certain aspects of the research question being investigated should be focused on. In this thesis there are six *a priori* themes that are linked to the research hypotheses outlined in section 3.12. They are: preferred methods of internal communication, internal corporate communication content, line manager communication, senior manager communication, employee voice and organisational engagement. These themes can also be considered as deductive themes that emerge from the conceptual analysis in chapters 2 and 3. An initial coding of the data was conducted by hand using two focus group transcripts and one interview transcript. A booklet was printed for the transcripts and open comments from the ICOEQ that had wide margins where notes were added and prominent comments were highlighted with a marker pen. An Excel spreadsheet was used to note page numbers from the booklet for codes. Although this manual approach is laborious and time consuming it led to deep immersion in the data. This enabled the development of an initial template. *A priori* themes were endorsed in some cases, for example: senior manager communication, employee voice, internal corporate communication and methods of communication. In the three transcripts that were initially coded line manager communication was not a prominent theme. However, team meetings were discussed so 'team meetings' was coded to a new theme called 'Being

informed about what is happening'. Another new theme, 'Personal Connectivity', was also established to reflect the way that managers made a conscious effort to communicate, or not, or simply to say 'hello' when they were passing. A total of 47 themes were identified extending to four levels. The initial template developed is detailed in Appendix B.

6.3.2 Further Development Of The Template

The initial template was used for coding of a further two focus group transcripts and 14 interview transcripts. As a result of this inductive process a number of additional themes emerged in vivo from the data. In particular, 'changes' stood out as a more distinct theme separate from 'plans' where comments about changes were originally coded. Other strong, distinct, themes that emerged at this stage of the analysis include 'town halls' (large gatherings of employees where senior managers provide an update on strategic plans), a preference for more informal communication, 'openness to listen' and the importance of 'face to face' communication. Further points were also made about using audio, video, and instant messaging methods of communication, hearing about success and the topics senior managers should discuss compared to topics that line managers should discuss with employees. Senior manager interest in employees was added and other comments were made about how valued employees felt. The new themes that were identified are listed in below and the second iteration of the template is detailed in Appendix C.

- Senior Managers - success stories, informality, vision, town halls, interest
- Internal Corporate Communication – change
- Employee Voice - openness to listen, feel valued
- Methods of communication - instant messaging, audio and video, technical issues, variety of channels

Analysis of open comments in the ICOEQ about aspects of internal communication that could be improved and the best aspects of internal communication was also conducted. After further coding a review of the comments that were being coded most often was conducted using the Excel spreadsheet record of codes and page numbers for associated comments in the booklet of transcripts. This indicated that senior manager visibility, plans, changes, fear of speaking out, listening and responding to employees, the relevance and personal impact of information provided and transparency were prominent themes about communication. Email briefings and the intranet were the two most discussed methods of communication.

6.3.3 Finalising The Template

Reflecting on the analysis, the role of senior managers and line managers emerged as strong themes. Comments about visibility, approachability, honesty, informality and interest in employees stood out about senior managers. This reinforces Illes and Mathews' (2015, p. 12) point that employees want to see their leaders in person and the importance of visibility and accessibility emphasised by Clavelle (2012, p. 346) for transformational leadership. Comments about line managers were more focused on the relevance, local context and personal impact of communication. This supports Robinson and Hayday's (2009, p. xiv) finding that a top behaviour cited by team members for an engaging line manager is making it clear what is expected from the team. A new primary theme, 'Internal Corporate Communication' was introduced to include plans, progress, change and priorities. A new sub-theme, 'Cross-department Communication', was added at this stage of the analysis. 'Employee Voice' and 'Organisational Engagement' were confirmed as *a priori* themes, to take account of the desire expressed by employees for managers to listen to what employees say. Level two sub-themes for employee voice were established as listening, responding and safety. These sub-themes endorse Wilkinson et al.'s (2004, pp. 6-7) approach to employee voice that emphasises an expectation that views expressed will be taken into account. Level two sub-themes for organisational engagement were established as identification and alignment, reinforcing Fleck and Inceoglu's (2010, p. 38) definition of identification as a sense of belonging and alignment as the congruence between employees' beliefs about where the organisation should be heading, what the goals the organisation should be, and the actual direction of the organisation. 'Methods of Communication' was retained as an *a priori* theme with four level two sub-themes; email briefings, intranet and internal social media, face to face meetings and audio/video methods. The final template comprises 62 themes with three levels and is shown in table 6.1. Deductive themes emerging from the template analysis conducted for this thesis are underlined to distinguish them from *a priori* themes. In the following sections, themes are reviewed in more detail.

TABLE 6.1 Final Template Of Themes From Qualitative Data Analysis

1. Internal Corporate Communication Content: plans, progress, priorities and change	1. Quality	1. Timeliness
		2. Transparency
		3. Consistency
		4. Relevance to department
		5. Plain English: clear and concise
		6. Inform employees before the media
	2. Cross-department communication	1. Knowledge sharing
2. Methods of Internal Corporate Communication	1. Email briefings	1. Usability: short, interesting, accurate, friendly tone, with links for further information preferred
		2. Receiver controllability: employees choose when to read
		3. Quantity: too many - overkill
	2. Intranet and internal social media	1. Usability: ease of access to information
		2. Quality: up to date information

		3. Richness: blogs are a richer medium than email briefings
	3. Face to face meetings	1. Richness: dialogue - informal communication style preferred 2. Informality
	4. Audio/video	1. Accessibility: not all employees have the technology to play videos 2. Usability: short pieces, friendly tone
3. Senior manager communication	**1. Visibility**	1. Interest/disinterest in people 2. Approachability
	2. Providing information about plans, progress, change and priorities	1. Quality: transparency, openness, honesty, plain English, clarity, conciseness
	3. Town halls	1. Informal communication style and tone 2. Small groups preferred for updates *and* discussion
4. Line manager communication	**1. Providing a local context for plans, progress, change and priorities**	1. Quality: relevance, consistent messages with internal corporate communication, openness and honesty

	2. Team meetings	1. Frequency
		2. Mutual respect
	3. Blockages in information flow from middle managers	
5. Employee Voice	**1. Listening**	1. Managers listen to what employees say
		2. Managers do not listen to what employees say
		3. Opinions are not welcomed
	2. Responding	1. Managers consider what is said and give a response
		2. Managers do not consider what is said
		3. Action is taken when managers listen to what employees say
		4. No action is taken when managers listen to what employees say, which leads to disengagement
	3. Safety	1. Fear of speaking up
		2. Employees are scared of managers

6. Organisational Engagement	1. Identification	1. Feeling valued – organisation cares about employees
		2. Sense of belonging – being part of something
	2. Alignment	1. Understanding and belief in the direction of where the organisation is heading
		2. Contribution

6.4 INTERNAL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION CONTENT

Internal corporate communication content reflects employee interest in being informed about plans, progress, priorities and change. The theme has two second level themes; quality and cross-department communication. Quality of internal corporate communication content relates specifically to: timeliness, transparency, consistency, relevance to my department, plain English (clear and concise) and informing employees before the media. Timeliness, transparency and relevance reflect three of Clampitt's (2013, pp. 70-72) five tests for communication that help engender what he calls 'a spirit of honourable communication', specified as relevancy – all pertinent facts are brought to bear on a decision, accuracy – a healthy respect for the truth, and timeliness – properly timed communication demonstrates respect for the individual. This underpins these points as sound principles for ethical internal communication practice. Cross-department communication reflects an employee interest in knowledge sharing between departments. The analysis in this section addresses sub-research question 7 (R7) why are employees interested in different aspects of organisational information?

6.4.1 Plans, Progress And Priorities

Participants expressed a strong interest in understanding how their organisation is progressing (see illustration 6.1). This reinforces the high levels of interest in plans for the future reported in the quantitative data analysis in section 5.3.1 of chapter 5 and supports Welch and Jackson's (2007, p. 185) description of internal corporate communication content as 'Organisational / corporate issues e.g. goals, objectives, new developments, activities and achievements'. Participants said that employees turn to senior managers more than line managers for this information, reinforcing Galunic and Hermreck's (2012a, p. 26) argument that employees want to hear about strategy directly from senior managers. One reason for the interest in plans and progress is that employees are acutely aware that their job security is dependent on the progress of the organisation. As one BankDept employee stated, 'You want to feel like you're working for a bank that's getting back to where it used to be. Some of the other stuff about pay you're not as interested in. It's more important to know that the bank's getting itself back to a good place, because that gives me my job security'.

ILLUSTRATION 6.1 Internal Corporate Communication – example quote from BankDept focus group participant

-The leadership team and I don't always have a good interaction, so it's good to see them coming down and just getting involved in chat and things.

-KR. What sort of things were people asking?

-I'm just trying to think, what kind of questions were being asked? So people were asking them about plans to expand the business, people were asking what's on the people agenda going forward? What does success look like? What would they like to achieve by the end of the year?

BankDept Focus group participant

The interest in Internal Corporate Communication Content is qualified. There is an expectation that it is made as relevant as possible to an employee's own department within the organisation. General overviews of the situation may be too general to be of any interest (see illustration 6.2). Employees expressed a preference in seeing the 'golden thread' so that they can make the connection to their work. This reinforces MacLeod and Clarke's (2009, pp. 52-3) argument that employees expect to have a clear vision of the organisation, enabling them to understand how their role fits in to the bigger picture. The language used to explain plans and progress was highlighted by many participants as an important aspect of the communication. Employees want communication to be in plain English, described as 'punchy', using 'layman's language' and for it not to be too 'technical'. When plans were explained with examples that 'put flesh on the bones' this was appreciated. These points can be associated with three of the characteristics of effective corporate storytelling highlighted by Gill (2014, p. 5) as; an inclusive approach, emotional content and relevance.

ILLUSTRATION 6.2 Internal Corporate Communication – example quote from GovDept Focus Group participant

Sometimes you can be sat there and you do, like your mind wanders off a little bit because they give such a sweeping overview of stuff that sometimes a lot of it doesn't apply to you, so if it doesn't grab your attention, and it's not short and sweet, because they can drag on for a while, then you find yourself reading on or something like that because sometimes the text on the slide shows can be quite small because they want to put everything on there.

GovDept Focus Group participant

6.4.2 Change Management Communication

All five organisations that were included in the research were undergoing some degree of organisational change. However, in one organisation in particular, SECouncil2, change communication emerged as a dominant theme. As a SECouncil2 interviewee expressed it, 'change has a big impact on subconsciously how people are feeling'. The significant expected changes hanging over SECouncil2 may account for the particularly low levels of satisfaction with employee voice reported in the quantitative data analysis in section 5.3.3 of chapter 5. It may also explain the low level of satisfaction with senior managers keeping employees informed highlighted at SECouncil2 in the quantitative data analysis. Furthermore, it underpins the strong association between keeping employees informed about change and satisfaction with communication generally shown in table 5.15 in chapter 5.

Openness and honesty were highlighted as important facets of all communication. As one interviewee put it, 'If somebody doesn't know the answer, say "I don't know the answer", rather than try and blag an answer'. However, two themes were prominent for change communication: transparency ('warts and all') and informing employees before the media. Transparency was stressed in times of change. Employees stated that most of the time they would like to hear more about the truth even though it may hurt – they said that they would like to know the reality of the situation. Employees expressed disillusionment with the way that sometimes important information is published in the media before employees are told (see illustration 6.3). These themes differ from those established in a study in the US that focused more on insufficient communication, distrust, poor interpersonal communication skills and conflict avoidance (Salem, 2008, p. 344). However, change was not presented as a focal point of discussion in this thesis, it emerged through the discussion of other topics. It is therefore possible that deeper discussion specifically about change communication could have led to a wider range of themes.

ILLUSTRATION 6.3 Inform employees before the media – example BankDept interviewee quote

I had a person walk up to me and tell me, 'oh you work for BankDept, I heard that BankDept was closing down', so I was like 'ok' here is a person who would not have that information. I was literally shocked, so this is one incident I would want to highlight that this news is out in the market before the news comes to us. Employees want whatever is happening in the bank to come to us before it goes out.

BankDept interviewee in India

The way that information about change is provided has an impact on how employees respond, 'in some cases it is going to satisfy them and in other cases is going to cause bigger question marks'. This is highlighted in illustration 6.4, which is an example of the feelings expressed by participants when a major organisational change is announced with no prior discussion, warning or consultation. This reinforces the point made by Salem (2008, p. 338) that complaints about inadequate information are complaints about the lack of opportunities to make sense together. Consultation is discussed in more depth in a later section on 'Employee Voice'. This illustration is also an example of how some themes can be cross-related in the template.

ILLUSTRATION 6.4 Change communication - example quotes from SECouncil2 Focus Group participants

-I came down here when I was 4, I've lived here a long time. I've come into the public sector as I was protected, I would have a job for life. Low and behold we've been told that our whole unit is going to be outsourced to a private company. So from nowhere we walked in to hear about plan A which is that we're going to be taken over by a private company. This is completely out of the blue. Plan B is that we will merge with two council's IT. 60 people are going to go. Did we leave excited about communication, about planning?

-No.

-No.

-Everybody left thinking 60 people!

-60 people yep, and I hope it's not me.

SECouncil2 Focus Group participants

6.4.3 Cross-department Communication

A further theme, Cross-department Communication, was identified from the analysis of the open comments in the ICOEQ. This highlights the interest that employees have in being informed about what is happening in other departments. Examples of comments made about cross-department communication include 'Ensure there is a story from each service area in every communication', 'More information on the activities and priorities of other teams so we can understand how we can help them and how others can help us achieve objectives', and 'Greater communication on what each department/team does. Every team seems to work in isolation and therefore cannot see the effect their work has on others'. According to Bartels et al. (2010, p. 220) horizontal communication is related to professional identification not organisational identification. These comments challenge that notion. This is a potential area of further research as it is not within the scope of this thesis. However, it is worth noting that

fellow employee communication was rated more highly by respondents than line and senior manager communication (see table 5.2).

6.5 METHODS OF INTERNAL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

This topic was the opening point in the interviews and focus groups as it was a non-threatening introduction to the process. It generated a lot of discussion and four level two themes are identified in the final template: email briefings, intranet and social media, face to face meetings, and audio/video. Level three themes established are: usability, receiver controllability, quantity and richness. The analysis in this section addresses sub research question1 (R1) why do employees find specific channels helpful or unhelpful?

6.5.1 Email Briefings

Email briefings were confirmed as a useful communication method by interviewees and focus group participants. This reinforces the findings in the quantitative data analysis highlighted in section 5.2 of chapter 5 that email briefings are the top, second or third most helpful method of internal communication in all five organisations in this study (see table 5.1). Interviewees and focus group participants stated that the reason why they are considered a helpful method of communication is that employees have some control over the email briefing. It can be read as and when employees have time. Information is also sent direct to employees, so they do not have to make the effort to find it on the intranet. This supports Welch's (2012, p. 351) research that found that the reasons for a preference for email as a medium were the ability to easily save, store, and retrieve information. Email briefings that have short summaries with links to further information on the intranet, described as 'blended dissemination' by Welch (2012, p. 249), were commented on as easy to read. Email briefings that are too long or too detailed are not generally read. Participants expressed a strong preference for conciseness. For example, a summary, half a page of A4 information or ten sentences at the most with bullet points. This supports the point made by Illes and Mathews (2015, p. 14) who suggest that when it comes to formal written communication such as emails, less is more. Employees get tired of lengthy announcements full of 'nice words'. Conciseness is also one of the criteria for effective internal communication identified by Marques (2010, p. 53). This supports Harshman and Harshman's (1999, p. 12) argument that a journalistic bent to communication that does not explain why certain decisions were made or provide justifications for actions can be detrimental. It also underlines Welch's (2012, p. 248) emphasis on receiver acceptability or rejection of the media used.

Email briefings were also highlighted as a useful basis for team meeting discussions and they were viewed as a 'fast' method of communication. This was a positive point for communicating quickly to a lot of people in a timely manner, but a negative point in that email briefings can also be 'forgot about relatively fast as well'. As Suh (1999, p. 296) observes, lean media such as email briefings are appropriate for communicating about routine activities.

However, this is not always carried through into internal communication practice according to interviewees and focus group participants who reported occasional overly long and detailed briefings on strategic updates. Finally, participants and survey respondents commented on the quantity of email briefings received and how when too many are produced it leads to 'overkill'.

6.5.2 Intranet And Social Media

Three level three themes emerged from the analysis of the discussions about the intranet and internal social media; usability, quality and richness. Social media in this context refers to platforms dedicated to internal communication only, not employee access to external social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter. There was a sense that the intranet is used for formal information and internal social media is for informal communication. However, the dominant level three theme is the ease or difficulty in finding information, particularly on the intranet. This reflects Bennett et al.'s (2010, p. 141) point that it is challenging to keep intranets up to date as they should be 'at best, updated daily but this may not be enough in a world where work-based projects can change by the hour or even minute'. This difficulty in finding information may explain why intranets are seen as less helpful than email briefings and face to face communication in the quantitative data analysis in section 5.2 of chapter 5 (see table 5.1). It also reinforces the preference for email briefings that include intranet links for further information as this negates the need for employees to have to search for information. The ability to select information about your own division was highlighted as a positive way of finding relevant information as long as it is up to date with no broken links. Participants particularly liked 'latest news' stories on the intranet. A good layout was also raised as an important point for an intranet. However, some participants said it was easier to find information through personal networks on an internal social media platform than on the intranet (see illustration 6.5). This supports Huang et al.'s (2012, p. 114) argument that intranets have limitations for customisation and interactivity.

ILLUSTRATION 6.5 Finding Information – example quotes from BankDept Focus group participants

-I find it easier to search for things on [name of internal social media platform] whereas if you search on the intranet, I find it brings up a whole load of nonsense and I think "I don't want that at all".

-And it's out of date.

-It's out of date, it's terrible isn't it!

BankDept Focus group participants

Only one of the organisations involved in this thesis has a dedicated internal social media platform. However, where blogs are used participants commented on how engaging they can become through the informal interchange of comments or 'banter' that leads to a better understanding of the matter being discussed. When senior managers do not respond to comments employees talk of 'losing faith really quickly' in them. This may explain why respondents in the ICOEQ survey rated blogs as less helpful than email briefings. It reinforces Yzer and Southwell's (2008, p. 16) point that there is a focus on the 'technology' in new communication technologies and not enough attention to the human element. It also reflects Silverman's (2012) observation about the need to overcome obstacles for internal social media use, such as mobilising communities and leadership. Not all participants felt comfortable about using internal social media. As one interviewee explained, 'maybe it's not my kind of thing because I'm not an out there Facebooky kind of person'.

6.5.3 Face To Face Meetings

Team meetings and town hall events are perceived as useful face to face communication methods. This reinforces the findings in the quantitative data analysis highlighted in section 5.2 of chapter 5 that team meetings are the top, second or third most helpful method of internal communication in all five organisations in this study (see table 5.1). There is an emphasis on the benefits of the richness or as it was described, 'human factor', of face to face communication with less room for misinterpretation in contrast to email briefings and the intranet. However, an informal communication style is appreciated by employees. In general, participants said that smaller group settings, around 10-15 people, help employees to feel more 'comfortable' and lead to more dialogue. Town hall meetings are often based around senior manager presentations which employees do find valuable. However, there is a sense that more time could be given to discussion and not to leave open questions to the end of the session when as one focus group participant said 'Everyone wants to get out'. This supports Johanssen et al.'s (2014, p. 154) argument that a principle of communicative leadership is that 'leaders are willing to listen, receive questions or complaints, and share appropriate information in a truthful and adequate manner'. In general, informality of meetings with senior managers is preferred to overly detailed, corporate or long formal presentations (see illustration 6.6).

ILLUSTRATION 6.6 Face to face meetings – informality and regularity, example quotes from GovDept Focus Group participants

-I don't mean the whole senior management team (SMT) for the whole coffee morning because I think that would probably send everyone into a panic.

-Some characters can pull it off better than others.

-Quite informal.

-You do get more comfortable with regularity don't you? Because I know when I first became a team leader, you spoke to a Service Manager and you were all "ooooh", but now you're more used to it and you're more natural.

GovDept Focus Group participants

Participants suggested that the more that informal gatherings take place the more that employees are likely to feel comfortable to contribute. This reinforces Kahn's (2010, pp. 27-30) point that leaders need to create 'learning forums that were safe enough for employees to tell them the truth of their experiences'. It also extends the understanding of face to face communication as a 'rich medium' (Suh, 1999) in that it may only be appropriate for the interpretation and agreement about unanalysable, difficult, and complex issues if it is more informal in style and delivered in small groups.

Team meetings were seen as a valuable communication method for employees. However, one line manager interviewee highlighted an issue whereby if you have to go through a fixed 'corporate' agenda for team meetings such as 'health and safety' it can be a 'challenge' to make this interesting and engaging. More research is required to see if this is an issue that other line managers face. However, it potentially underlines the claim made by Gatenby et al. (2009, p. 31) that it is important for most managers to focus on doing the 'simple' things well, such as communicating clear work objectives that employees can understand. Employees highlighted that not all line managers conduct regular team meetings and that where team meetings are held perceived usefulness depends on the individual line manager running the meeting. Team meetings are seen as more personal and operationally focused than town hall meetings and there is an expectation that the communication style will reflect this.

6.5.4 Audio/video

The use of audio and or video as a communication method was highlighted as effective where these methods are in place. Two level three themes emerged: accessibility and usability Although audio and video technology is not new there are basic technical challenges to overcome for it to become a more widespread method of internal communication - primarily the

lack of sound cards installed on computers and bandwidth restrictions on intranets. Short videos are perceived by employees as a, 'novel',' personal' and different, more informal, way to convey more complex information. There is a sense that employees absorb more information from a video than from an email briefing reinforcing video as a 'rich medium'. The view that video is a helpful method contrasts with the findings reported in the quantitative data analysis in section 5.2 of chapter 5, where it was rated as less helpful than email briefings. However, the data generated in the ICOEQ survey may simply reflect some of the technical challenges that were highlighted by interview and focus group participants.

6.6 SENIOR MANAGER COMMUNICATION

The analysis in this section addresses sub-research question 19 (R19) why do employees want senior managers to communicate about the organisation? and sub-research question 20 (R20) why do employees not rate senior manager communication more highly?

6.6.1 Senior Manager Communication: Visibility

The overall impression from open comments, interviews and focus groups is that senior managers are not very visible and they rarely communicate with employees face to face. It was one of the most frequently raised points cited in open comments and transcripts. This supports Illes and Mathews' (2015, p. 12) view that employees want to see their leaders in person and in action. Illustration 6.7 is an example of what employees said, although this particular participant uses stronger language than others to express the point. The illustration supports Suh's (1999, p. 296) argument that rich media enable people to interpret and reach agreement about difficult and complex issues and lean media, such as email briefings, are appropriate for communicating about routine activities. However, it seems that this is not always carried through into internal communication practice. The perceived aloofness of senior managers highlighted by interviewees and focus group participants reinforces the low level of satisfaction reported for senior manager communication in the quantitative data analysis in section 5.2 of chapter 5 (see table 5.1).

ILLUSTRATION 6.7 Senior manager visibility – example quote from SECouncil2 interviewee

-Why aren't they getting out and sitting down and chatting with people? So many people would respect that rather than these edicts that come out on email. I mean they could be interpreted as coming down from upon high and all those old terms, why can't they just say 'hi'?

-So I would make the point that they are removed, remote, aloof, mega distant, disengaged, or unengaged potentially.

SECouncil2 interviewee

Participants from SECouncil1 and SECouncil2 were more critical of senior manager communication than participants from BankDept. This supports the differences in satisfaction reported between these organisations in the quantitative data analysis in table 5.13 in chapter 5. The lack of visibility and the perception that senior managers do not take the time to communicate left employees feeling that they were disinterested in them. This potentially supports Francis et al.'s (2013, p. 2715) argument that there is a trust deficit between employee and senior management - it is difficult to trust senior managers if they are not seen. Feeling that senior managers have no interest in people may explain the stronger association between senior manager communication and emotional organisational engagement than for cognitive or behavioural organisational engagement as reported in table 5.16 in chapter 5.

Senior managers are seen as being distant, or as one participant put it, 'The acronym ET [Executive Team] could quite easily be used in another context in relation some people have with regards to the Executive Team because they're as rare as the other ET in some people's lives, Extra Terrestrial…' However, employees do appreciate that senior managers are busy and they are not necessarily unapproachable as people. They just do not have, or make, the time to communicate more often. This point was reinforced by senior managers interviewed. They raised the practical difficulties of communication with front line employees as the following quote illustrates: 'a lot of the time I will give the feedback to the [number] managers that answer to me and leave those [number] managers to take the feedback to their individual teams'. This reinforces Nilsson's (2010, p. 141) finding that senior managers expected messages to be transferred from sender to receiver, not co-created. This approach to communication leadership contrasts with Galunic and Hermreck's (2012b) research that indicates that a belief in cascades may be misplaced as they found that 'Employees need to hear from senior managers themselves—through straight talk, and ideally in reciprocal exchanges, so that workers feel their own views are heard'. It also represents a technical approach to dialogue, prompted solely by the need for objective understanding rather than interpersonal exchange (De Bussy and Suprawan, 2012; Buber, 2002; Ashman and Lawler, 2008, p. 265). However, some senior manager interviewees believe that employees are not interested in hearing from them at all and they do not see the point of communicating with front line employees. This represents a transactional leadership approach which is a complete disconnection between what some senior managers think employees are interested in and what employees actually are interested in, as reported in the quantitative data analysis in section 5.2 of chapter 5. It echoes what Tourish and Hargie (2009a, p. 14) report as senior managers seeing communicating with employees as 'dead time'. It also highlights a lack of understanding of the potential positive impact that senior manager visibility and communication has on what employees feel about the organisation.

6.6.2 Senior Manager Communication: Plans, Progress, Change And Priorities

In addition to visibility, approachability and interest/disinterest in employees, participants stated that they wanted senior managers to inform them about plans, progress, change and priorities, as illustrated by the following quote: 'to me communicating things is the core task of management teams - and it's their job to make the content of the communication understandable'. This contradicts Larkin and Larkin's (1996) view that 'Employees would rather receive information from their immediate supervisors than from senior managers'. Participants highlighted the informal nature of communication, openness, honesty and plain English. They said that they relate better with senior managers when communication is in a relaxed environment. They were complimentary about senior managers when the communication was more of a conversation with an open question and answer format and less of a formal presentation with slides (see illustration 6.8). This can generate what was described as 'banter back and forward between the senior team and some of the staff that worked really well'. This supports de Vries at al.'s (2009, p. 377) findings that a friendly and caring approach 'seems to be the most important communication style variable'. Furthermore, employees are very sensitive to the honesty of the information being provided especially when it does not address what employees want to know and when it appears to be 'a bit like news speak'. They want to hear the 'real' news 'be it good or bad'. The information that employees expect to receive from senior managers is where the organisation is going, the strategy, progress and what the future looks like, using the 'language of the people'. This supports Galunic and Hermreck's (2012a, p. 26) research that found that only top leaders can give strategic communication the appropriate weight. It also reinforces Daymon's (1999, pp. 247-9) argument that senior manager communication needs addresses realities. If this is not done it can lead to misinterpretation and resistance. In contrast to the information expected from senior managers participants said that the information that employees expect to receive from line managers is the business as usual for the team and division that they work in, also using the vocabulary that employees understand. Galunic and Hermreck also found that supervisors do not play a direct role in communication about strategy.

ILLUSTRATION 6.8 Informal senior manager communication – example quote from GovDept focus group participants

-If they could make it a more relaxed format, you'd have a much better environment.

-Yes.

-To make it more interactive.

-KR – How could it be more relaxed?

-Well, as you say [name of senior manager] did quite a good one and I know it was all his managers in there but you certainly felt more relaxed about asking questions of him.

-KR – so what made it more relaxed?

-We'll, there was no Power Point, it was almost like a conversation with the people in the room.

-Yeah.

Participants at GovDept focus group

6.7 LINE MANAGER COMUNICATION

The analysis in this section addresses sub-research question 26 (R26) what topics do employees want line managers to communicate about? and sub-research question 27 (R27) why do employees not rate line manager communication more highly?

6.7.1 Line Manager Communication: Interactivity And Engagement

Participants generally spoke positively about team meetings with line managers. Open comments in the surveys were also generally positive. For example the comment 'Communication in my team is great when it's through my Team Leader and Service Manager' was recorded in the GovOffice survey. Positive comments about line managers reinforce the reasonably good levels of satisfaction found for line managers in the quantitative data analysis in section 5.2 of chapter 5.They also endorses other studies that have found good levels of satisfaction for line manager communication (Clampitt and Downs, 1993; Gray and Laidlaw, 2004; Downs and Adrian, 2004; Akkirman and Harris, 2005; Clampitt and Berk, 2009; Quinn et al., 2009). Interviewees and focus group participants said that they like the interactivity and the opportunity to discuss operational issues with line managers. This supports the point about a focus on operational issues not strategy as the topic that employees prefer line managers to discuss as highlighted in the previous section. Participants stated that the 'human factor' of face to face communication provides a richer experience than email briefings for employees. Because employees have frequent meetings with line managers than communication with senior

managers they generally feel more engaged with their manager although they said this depends on the individual line manager and the level of mutual respect that exists. The frequency of interaction may therefore account for the higher level of satisfaction with line manager communication than for senior manager communication reported in the quantitative data analysis in section 5.2 of chapter 5. However, although the frequency of contact with line managers might be an important factor for organisational engagement the findings for this thesis challenge Karanges et al.'s (2015, p. 130) notion that it is the supervisor–employee relationship that is responsible for the development of the organisation–employee relationship. Employees clearly also value a relationship with senior managers.

6.7.2 Line Manager Communication: Providing A Local Context For Internal Corporate Communication

Giving internal corporate communication a local context in team meetings is a very important issue for employees. Participants said that they see the role of line managers as 'translating' corporate strategy into language that has a local context (see illustration 6.9). This reinforces Zaremba's (2006) point that communication must be pertinent. It should be seen as important by the receiver otherwise it might be perceived as wasting precious time. Participants also highlighted the importance of communication that is consistent with internal messages provided by senior managers and through other methods. The line managers interviewed appreciate this and confirmed that at line manager meetings employees are interested in information that affects their work today or this week. This supports Baumruk's (2006, p. 25) suggestion that that line managers should focus on execution and day-to-day change initiatives. Line managers do also aim to explain what corporate news means for employees. However, sometimes corporate information gets in the way of line manager communication at team meetings. Line managers said it can be a 'turn-off' for employees. As Galunic and Hermreck (2012a, p. 26) argue, simply sending a 'cascade' team briefing to line managers may not be sufficient. This presents a challenge for internal communication practice that requires line managers to fully understand strategy to be able to translate it into meaningful information that is relevant to their team. It may also lend some support to the argument that line managers may not be the best people to communicate about strategy as senior managers believe that they have problems with 'complexity' and 'strategic stuff' (Robinson and Hayday, 2009, p. 28) although participants did not say this quite in these terms.

ILLUSTRATION 6.9 Line manager communication and local context – example quotes from GovDept focus group participants

KR – What's the difference do you think about the information that senior managers provide and the information that you need to provide to your teams?

I try to put it into context for them.

Yeah, that's the key.

Try to make it real for them because if we give a bland update over everything, I know my team wouldn't listen. So, right, what does this mean for us? What are the challenges for us as a result of this? Just try to make it so that they will listen to what we're…

Make it meaningful.

Yeah you just try to filter it through the way that we work so that it does mean something to them.

GovDept focus group participants

6.7.3 Line Manager Communication: Team Meetings

As with senior manager communication participants highlighted openness and honesty in line manager communication. Although participants did not talk about 'trust' *per se* this lends some supports to Mackenzie's (2010, p. 535) finding that trust is developed in the line manager-employee relationship when communication is honest.

6.7.4 Middle Managers: Blockages In Information Flow

The third theme that emerged from the analysis is a breakdown in the information flow from senior managers to line managers. Corporate information is not always easy for line managers to find, highlighting the issue with intranets discussed in section 6.5.2. Furthermore, line managers said that middle managers do not always forward information on, or they forward information without providing any context as the following quote illustrates: 'I just think sometimes we get stuff that's just sent on to us but it's not been fully explained to us why we're getting it'. Stanton et al. (2010, p. 575) report that middle managers believe that managers are overwhelmed with the distribution of too many policies and procedures so that may explain why information is not always forwarded on. The role of middle management in internal communication and organisational engagement is not within the scope of this thesis. However, it is an area of potential further research - as Stanton et al. also note (p. 567) there is a dearth of literature on the interaction of the various levels of management and how it can achieve organisational goals through clear, consistent and relevant messages.

6.8 EMPLOYEE VOICE

Three level two themes emerged from the analysis for employee voice: listening, responding and safety. The emphasis on employee voice is listening and responding rather than the opportunities provided for employee voice, which are almost taken for granted by participants. Safety to speak out is also an important theme that emerges from the analysis of transcripts. The interview and focus group transcript analysis in this section addresses sub-research question 13 (R13) why is satisfaction with employee voice not rated more highly?

6.8.1 Listening To What Employees Say

It was with irony that one local authority interviewee noted that 'I have seen things change significantly following a public consultation but not an internal one'. This extends the discussion of involving employees in change highlighted earlier in this chapter. More generally employees noted how managers seemed to listen, or not, to what employees have to say when the opportunity to express their ideas or concerns is provided. A mixed picture emerges from the analysis. Some open comments from respondents in the ICOEQ suggest that their views were not welcomed, as the following quote from a SECouncil2 survey illustrates: 'Managers should consult frontline staff when changing things and take on board the suggestions'. Some interview and focus group participants felt that managers did listen to what they had to say. However, others did not. This reinforces the broad range of satisfaction with employee voice reported in the quantitative data analysis in section 5.2 of chapter 5. There is a sense that employees feel that managers should listen to what they have to say and this is a sign of a progressive organisation. This underlines the strong correlation found between employee voice and organisational engagement reported in section 5.6.3 of chapter 5 (see table 5.12). The emphasis on listening that emerges in this analysis supports the argument made in the quantitative data analysis chapter that questions in the WERS survey are too general as they do not specifically address listening. It is not so much opportunities for voice that employees are interested in, it is whether or not managers are listening to what is said. This reinforces Wilkinson et al.'s (2004, pp. 6-7) first and fifth aspects of employee voice, established as 1) Communication/exchange of views, an opportunity for employees and managers to exchange views about issues, and 5) a say about issues, the opportunity not just to have a 'voice' on issues but an expectation that these views will be taken into account. However, it is worth noting that participants did not talk about employee voice in terms of collective representation or upward problem solving, two other aspects of voice cited by Wilkinson et al. The other aspect highlighted by Wilkinson et al. regarding the ability to express views in an open environment is discussed in a later section.

When managers do not listen it can have a profound impact, as the following quote illustrates: 'You know, he was not interested in listening to me. So after thinking of an idea, I did not give any input, I actually stopped my input'. This gives a greater insight into employee

silence as outlined in section 2.11.4. It also reinforces results in other studies that suggest that involvement is linked to engagement (Purcell et al., 2003; Robinson et al., 2004; Truss et al., 2006). A lack of interest in listening to what employees say is symptomatic of a culture where communication is primarily monovocal and reflective of management interests (Francis et al., 2013, pp. 2715-6). Even when some employees stated that their managers do listen they felt that it was not always possible to influence organisational plans as this was something that only senior managers could do. This is symptomatic of transactional leadership or transformational leadership where managers are only interested in securing understanding and buy-in to a pre-determined strategy (Ashman and Lawler, 2008, p. 265). It also supports Purcell's (2014, p. 236) argument that employee voice can be challenging for managers as it 'questions their prerogatives for unilateral decision making' (Purcell, 2014, p. 236).

6.8.2 Responding To What Employees Say

When managers do listen and give 'a decent answer that they could understand' this is noted by employees and it can generate a greater level of understanding about the organisation's plans. However, responding goes beyond an answer to a specific point for some employees. It extends to a deeper level of consideration and ultimately seeing demonstrable results from what has been said (see illustration 6.10).

ILLUSTRATION 6.10 Responding – example quote from SECouncil2 interviewee

We had 'Planning for Future', you know over these last few years we've had meetings about the budget cuts and forums where the Corporate Management Team spent time coming round to different services having a chat, talking about people's ideas. I think for me and the people that I'm working with, lots of ideas were generated. I think it's about feeding back to make sure that yes my voice has been heard.

SECouncil2 interviewee

There is a sense that emerges from the analysis of this theme that it takes time for employee voice to become established. This may explain the small improvement of satisfaction with responding to suggestions from employees and representatives of just 3 percentage points reported in the WERS 2011 research (Van Wenrooy et al., 2011) between 2004 and 2011.When it is established employees are more open about expressing their views 'knowing that they'll be listened to and if they can justify what they say and there is a sound reason for it, then it will be acted upon.' Online forums were highlighted at BankDept as an example of how views are considered seriously now whereas this was not always the case in the past as illustrated in the flowing quote: 'You actually see senior managers go off and do something about it'. Where responses are made it led to participants in interviews and focus groups feeling more valued as

individuals. This reinforces the suggestion that employee voice creates a social exchange based relationship with the organisation (Saks, 2006, p. 605) that can generate a sense of fairness that fosters reciprocity and an emotional bond (Rees et al., 2013).

Employees understand that not every comment may get an individual response as illustrated in the following quote: 'just an acknowledgment is sometimes enough'. There is also an appreciation that sometimes it is a case of employees simply 'letting off some hot air'. However, if they can see that, in general, feedback is being taken on board employees said this would be engaging. This reinforces the associations between employee voice and organisational engagement reported in chapter 5. Employees sense when there is a feeling that what is said is not going to go anywhere described as 'smiling but not with your eyes'. This is an example of what Buber (2002) described as monologue disguised as dialogue where thoughts are expressed, not as they existed in the mind, but only in order to score points and without those being addressed regarded as in any way present as persons. When suggestions are dismissed outright as highlighted in illustration 6.11 it leaves employees feeling disengaged. And when a good idea is acted upon employees expect to be recognised for it and not for the suggestion to be 'badged as Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) decision'.

ILLUSTRATION 6.11 Responding – example quote from HousingAssoc Focus Group participant

I tried to raise the issue of a [suggestion] with the directors…I've been into employers where they employ a lot less staff and they have [the suggestion] and they're not for profit as well. I could barely get the point out before there was laughter…to get laughter within a few seconds of announcing it and providing examples of how and where it works, well that's something else altogether.

HousingAssoc Focus Group participant

6.8.3 Safety To Speak Up

A sense of fear of speaking out emerges from the analysis of interviews and focus groups. Although the strength of this feeling is variable there is no doubt that some employees in this study remain in awe of senior managers as illustrated by the following quote: 'staff are almost scared of senior managers'. Some employees in this study also highlighted how they feel intimidated by senior managers where saying something might lead to 'an unhappy ending'. This is clear evidence of a 'power over – dominance model' characterised by control and self-interest where managers are, through creating an atmosphere where voice is not welcomed, deciding whether or not workers have a voice (Dundon et al., 2005, p. 312). As Tourish (2014, p. 92) observes the reluctance of employees to be openly critical of leader action is often a

display of perceived self-interest. The fear of speaking out found in this study also accounts for the low levels of satisfaction with employee voice reported in section 5.6.2 of chapter 5 (see table 5.9). It reinforces Kahn's (1990) finding that safety is one of three psychological conditions associated with engagement (in addition to meaningfulness and availability). As Kahn (1992, p. 343) states, psychological safety involves a sense of being able to show and employ the self without negative consequences. The evidence in this thesis is that psychological safety is not common in organisations. A fear about speaking out also supports May et al.'s (2004, p. 23) finding that safety is related to engagement.

Fear of speaking out in this study can also be related to the lack of visibility of senior managers. When senior managers are not visible, employees do not feel that they could just say 'oh, by the way'. Fear of speaking out was highlighted as a particular concern for employees in a large forum such as a town hall event. In the case of HousingAssoc a senior manager's perception about employee willingness to speak out was in contrast to what employees reported. The impression that the door to the Chief executive is always open 'You don't need an appointment to go and chat to the Chief Exec about something', is contrasted by the perception highlighted in illustration 6.12 that no matter how pleasant a senior manager may be employees are still scared to ask questions.

> ILLUSTRATION 6.12 Fear of speaking out – example quote from HousingAssoc Focus Group participant
>
> I think you will find a lot of people won't come forward and ask the burning questions that are keeping them awake at night because they're scared of the response, no matter how pleasant the senior person.
>
> HousingAssoc Focus Group participant

It is worth highlighting that the fear of speaking out can, potentially, be alleviated by more informal communication as illustrated by the following quote: 'It's about removing barriers, isn't it?' However, this requires a new approach to leadership, one that according to Tourish (2014, p. 92) 'can be best understood as a temporally bounded communicative process of becoming and unbecoming, enacted in transient human interactions, during which differences between actors can be explored but will never be fully resolved'.

6.9 ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Two level two themes for Organisational Engagement emerged from the analysis: identification and alignment. These reflect how valued employees feel, their sense of belonging at the organisation, how far they understand and believe in the direction the organisation is taking and their sense of their contribution towards organisational progress.

6.9.1 Identification

Participants in this study discussed how 'important' or 'unimportant' they felt as a result of communication and this was related to them feeling valued or not. This was most notably related to senior manager communication (see illustration 6.13) and employee voice. The sense of 'feeling part of something' reinforces Fleck and Inceoglu's (2010, p. 38) description of identification as a dimension of organisational engagement as a 'sense of belonging'. However, participants were less certain about how this affected the way that they worked. The feeling of 'being valued' reinforces Fleck and Inceoglu's (p. 38) suggestion that identification is affective (see illustration 6.14) and it endorses the stronger emotional than behavioral correlations with organisational engagement reported for senior manager communication and employee voice highlighted in section 5.7.3 of chapter 5 (see table 5.15).

ILLUSTRATION 6.13 Feeling valued – example quote from BankDept interviewee

It might make you feel a little more valued if someone actually made an effort. My previous experience with a director is that he didn't know who I was, but never the less if he was walking past the desk he would smile at you. That's the difference. It's just courteous if you're walking past staff that you acknowledge them. Because these people are supposed to be working for you and they're contributing to the success of the bank so that should be recognised more often than it is.

BankDept interviewee

ILLUSTRATION 6.14 Emotional Organisational Engagement – example quote from HousingAssoc interviewee

KR – We talked at the start of this interview about different levels of employee engagement, cognitive, behavioural and emotional. I'm just wondering if you wouldn't mind sharing your thoughts on which aspect of engagement senior level communication might have the most impact?

- Well I think it's emotional. It depends on the personality of the manager as well, because obviously some people are people people and some people aren't. But I've seen the effect of someone who can talk to the most low graded staff as an equal. The effect that that has on that person is huge, they don't particularly have to be communicating anything in general, I think it's just communication, it's just saying "I'm there with you, you know I'm doing a different job, but we're in it together", so it's emotional engagement I think.

HousingAssoc interviewee

Identification was related to pride and how far the organisation cares for employees in this study and is illustrated in the following quote about how employees 'definitely feel proud and they definitely feel that the organisation takes care of them'. This is consistent with Saks' (2006, p. 613) findings that perceived organisational support (POS) defined as 'a general belief that one's organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being' (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002) is associated with greater levels of organisational (and job) engagement. It also provides further support for Saks' (2006, p. 603) argument that social exchange theory (SET), whereby individuals receive economic and socioemotional resources from their organization and feel obliged to respond in kind, may be a stronger theoretical rationale for explaining employee engagement than Kahn's (1990) psychological conditions. This point is demonstrated in illustration 6.15. This provides further supporting evidence for Fleck and Inceoglu's (2010, p. 38) claim that identification is affective. Pride in the organisation was also related to internal corporate communication by participants who highlighted the value in being informed about progress and how this made them 'feel good' about the organisation.

ILLUSTRATION 6.15 Caring about the organisation – example quote from BankDept interviewee

Probably it will be a hard words but it's true, employees don't care about the organisation until the organisation cares about the employee. So if employees don't see any engagement from the organisation, probably they won't care about the organisation yeah. So it should be a compromise, you give something and you should receive something.

BankDept interviewee

6.9.2 Alignment

Alignment is defined by Fleck and Inceoglu (2010, p. 38) as the congruence between employees' beliefs about where the organisation should be heading, what the goals and aspirations of the organisation should be, and the actual direction of the organisation. The analysis of transcripts and open survey comments for this thesis indicates that employees are interested in understanding the future plans of the organisation. Employees in this study would also like their views and suggestions to be listened to and responses provided so that their views are considered. However, participants expressed more of a concern to understand how their work is aligned to organisational goals than how those goals are aligned to their own beliefs about the organisation. The alignment theme established in this thesis is therefore different to that defined by Fleck and Inceoglu. Organisational engagement is related to understanding how an employee's job fits into broader organisational goals (see illustration 6.16).

ILLUSTRATION 6.16 Alignment of job to organisational goals – example quote from GovDept interviewee

So you may even be having information passed from up high, but it's more intimate and it's put into context as to how it affects you in your job. So this is now how Finance would do this, or how HR would do this, or Communications or whatever, so it's put into context isn't it?

GovDept interviewee

Congruence is dependent upon understanding what the goals and aspirations are so that they can then be assessed to see if they are consistent with individual beliefs. As highlighted in previous sections of this chapter, in terms of understanding, employees require internal corporate communication to be relevant. This enables them to connect their personal contribution to organisational goals and aspirations, as illustrated in the following quote: 'we

want to see what we've contributed to'. They also want to know what impact plans and changes will have on their work. As highlighted above, there is no sense from the analysis conducted for this thesis that employees actively reflect on the congruence of their beliefs and what the goals and aspirations of the organisation should be, instead they merely emphasised the importance of managers listening to what they have to say and responding to it. This is not to suggest that employees do not consider how the direction and values of the organisation fits with their own beliefs. It may be that not articulating this in the interviews and focus groups is simply reflective of asymmetric approaches to communication that result in employees not feeling that their beliefs are valued.

6.10 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This thesis firstly identifies common communication preferences and states of practice and to consider how they are associated with organisational engagement. It then links the findings to wider, underlying, management norms and/or structures that produce them. It does this through quantitative research at a number of different organisations to establish an 'independent reality' of internal communication and organisational engagement. It then seeks to identify why 'regularities' occur through qualitative research. Finally it considers what can be changed so that employees are given the information they require and at the same time be given an opportunity to have a say about what goes on that is treated seriously.

The understanding of why regularities established in the quantitative data analysis in chapter 5 occur has been the focus of this chapter. What emerges is that senior managers in this study are not visible enough, they do not communicate frequently and when they do communicate it is often too formal with little opportunity provided for dialogue. This explains the low levels of satisfaction for senior manager communication reported in chapter 5. The communication gap between senior managers and employees impacts how valued employees feel and this partially explains the strong associations between senior manager communication and emotional organisational engagement. On the other hand, line managers in this study communicate more often with employees and this may explain the higher level of satisfaction for line manager communication. However, this is patchy and dependent on the line manager concerned. Employees in this study stated a clear preference for senior managers to communicate about strategy and for line managers to communicate about operational team matters. Line managers in this study stated that talking about corporate topics can be a turn-off for employees if it is not relevant or put into a local context. This is challenging for some line managers and it may explain why levels of satisfaction are not higher than they are for line manager communication, given the frequency of meetings conducted. The expectation that line managers should communicate more about operational team matters than the big organisation picture explains the lower levels of association between line manager communication and

organisational engagement – communication at this level is not always seen as appropriate for wider organisational topics.

Communication about plans, progress and change is important to employees in this study - they want to know how the organisation is performing and they want managers to be transparent about changes. The reason they want to know about this is that it inevitably affects their own job security and this explains the association between internal corporate communication and organisational engagement. Some senior managers appreciate this but they say that it is practically difficult to find the time to communicate. Others expect their middle managers to pass on information. If this is done (and it is not always the case that information is passed on) line managers state that it is given little context for them. Some senior managers believe that employees are not interested in corporate strategy and so make no effort to communicate. This explains why satisfaction with being kept informed is not very high.

Employees in this study expect managers to listen to their opinions, views and suggestions and acknowledge these and take action in appropriate circumstances. It is less the opportunities to have a say that employees are concerned about. This seems to be established to varying degrees in all five organisations involved in the research. It is the way that managers genuinely listen and a fear of speaking out that employees highlighted as their main concerns. There is a sense that where employees are given opportunities to have a say, what they say is not always treated seriously and feedback is rarely provided or no actions result from what is said. This explains the low levels of satisfaction for employee voice, as reported in chapter 5. When managers do not listen seriously or do not respond this leaves employees feeling that they are not valued. This explains the association between employee voice and emotional organisational engagement. Furthermore, a fear of speaking out seems to exist, to varying degrees, in all five organisations involved in this thesis. This also explains the low levels of satisfaction with employee voice and it is connected with the low level of visibility of senior managers and the feeling that they are not really interested in communicating with employees.

Employees in this study said that email briefings are an effective communication method and this supports the findings reported in chapter 5. The reason why they find email briefings useful is the control that they have over when to read them and the way that information is easily retrievable. However, email briefings should be timely and concise, with links to more information on the intranet otherwise they may not be read. Employees in this study found face to face communication effective because there is more scope for discussion and interpretation of what is being said. This supports the findings reported in chapter 5. Employees in this study prefer an informal communication style and where town hall meetings are held they would like them to be with smaller groups of employees with more time provided for discussion. Intranets and internal social media platforms are also effective methods of communication. However, information must be easy to find and be up to date. Employees in

this study said that senior manager blogs are often, by their nature, more informal and the exchanges can help to generate a better understanding of the topic being discussed. However, senior managers must respond quickly to posts otherwise employees will lose interest. Finally, audio and video are also novel and effective communication methods provided that employees have the technical capability of playing them on their computer.

The themes that emerge from the qualitative data analysis are captured in a flowchart (Figure 6.1). The flowchart highlights the six primary themes established: Internal Corporate Communication, Methods of Communication, Senior Managers, Line Managers, Employee Voice and Organisational Engagement. It highlights the key points that also emerged as level three themes. Additionally, the themes are conceptualised as a flowchart to provide a general representation of how internal corporate communication operates, or should operate, based on employee requirements that are associated with organisational engagement.

FIGURE 6.1 Flowchart Tracing Internal Corporate Communication, Methods, Managers, Employee Voice And Organisational Engagement

Corporate topics of interest to employees and requirements for communication

Internal Corporate Communication
Plans
Progress
Priorities
Change

Quality
Timeliness
Transparency
Consistency
Relevance
Inform employees before the media

Receiver Controllability

Usability
Plain English
Easy to read
Friendly tone
Interesting
Short summaries with links to more information

Helpful methods of communication for employees

Methods
Email briefings
Intranet
Internal social media
Audio/video

Organisational Engagement

Identification
Feeling valued, sense of belonging

Alignment
Understanding and belief in the direction of where the organisation is heading

Employee communication expectations from senior managers and line managers

Visibility
Interest in employees, approachability, transparency, openness, honesty, informality, Plain English

Employee Voice
Listening, responding and taking action

Senior Managers Town Halls
Informal communication style and tone, small groups for updates *and* discussion

Local Context
Relevance, consistent messages, openness, honesty

Employee Voice
Listening, responding and taking action

Line Managers Team Meetings
Frequency and mutual respect

Organisational Disengagement

Content and Medium
Information hard to read or find, too much information

Employee Voice
Opinion not welcomed, not treated seriously, fear of speaking out, employees scared of managers

Key findings from the qualitative data analysis are summarised as follows:

Internal Corporate Communication

Participants expressed a strong interest in understanding the big picture of where their organisation is headed. The reason for the interest in plans and progress is that employees are acutely aware that their own job security is dependent on the success of the organisation.

Employees in this study expressed a preference in seeing the 'golden thread' so that they can make the connection to their work.

Employees in this study want communication to be 'punchy, using 'layman's language' and for it not to be too 'technical'.

Transparency was stressed in times of change, employees stated that most of the time they would like to hear more about the truth, even though it may hurt – they said that they would like to know the reality of the situation.

Employees in this study expressed disillusionment with the way that sometimes important information is published in the media before employees are told.

Methods of Communication

Team meetings are seen as more personal and operationally focused than town hall meetings and there is an expectation that the communication style will reflect this.

Difficulty in finding information on intranets may explain why they are seen as less helpful than email briefings and face to face communication.

Where blogs are used, participants commented on how engaging they can become through the informal interchange of comments or 'banter' that leads to a better understanding of the matter being discussed.

Although audio and video technology is not new, there are basic technical challenges to overcome for it to become a more widespread method of internal communication, primarily the lack of sound cards installed on computers and bandwidth restrictions on intranets.

Short videos are perceived by employees as 'novel' and 'personal' and a different, more informal, simpler, and engaging way to convey more complex information. There is a sense that employees absorb more information from a video than from an email briefing, reinforcing video as a 'rich medium'.

Senior Managers

In this study, senior managers are not very visible and they rarely communicate with employees face to face.

In this study, senior managers are seen as being distant; they just do not have, or make, the time to communicate.

The lack of visibility and the perception that senior managers do not take the time to communicate left employees feeling that they were not 'valued' by the organisation.

In this study, some senior manager interviewees believe that employees are not interested in hearing from them at all and they do not see the point of communicating with front line employees.

Participants said that they relate better with senior managers when communication is in a relaxed environment.

Participants were complimentary about senior managers when the communication was more of a conversation with an open question and answer format and less of a formal presentation with slides.

In this study, employees were very sensitive to the honesty of the information being provided, especially when it does not address what employees want to know and when it appears to be 'a bit like news speak'.

In this study, the information that employees expected to receive from senior managers is where the organisation is going, the strategy, progress and what the future looks like, using the 'language of the people'.

Line Managers

In this study, the information that employees expected to receive from line managers is the business as usual for the team and division that they work in, also using the vocabulary that employees understand.

Participants generally spoke positively about meetings with line managers.

In this study, because employees had meetings more often with line managers than communication with senior managers they generally feel more engaged with their manager, although they said this depends on the individual line manager.

In this study, line managers said that they do aim to explain what corporate news means for employees. However, sometimes corporate information gets in the way of line manager communication at team meetings; line managers say it can be a 'turn-off' for employees.

There can be breakdowns in the information flow from senior managers to line managers. Middle managers in this study did not always forward information on, or they forward information without providing any context.

Employee Voice

There is a sense that employees feel that managers should listen to what they have to say and this is a sign of a progressive, organisation.

When managers do not listen, it can have a profound impact. As one interviewee explained, 'You know, he was not interested in listening to me. So after thinking of an idea, I did not give any input, I actually stopped my input'.

In this study, when managers did listen and give 'a decent answer that they could understand' this was noted by employees and it generated a greater level of understanding about the organisation's plans.

Employees in this study understood that not every comment may get an individual response, as one interviewee said, 'just an acknowledgment is sometimes enough'.

In this study, where responses to employee voice were made, it led to participants in interviews and focus groups feeling more valued as individuals.

When suggestions are dismissed outright it leaves employees feeling disengaged.

There is no doubt that some employees remain in awe of senior managers or as one interviewee put it, 'staff are almost scared of senior managers'.

Some employees in this study highlighted how they feel intimidated by senior managers, where saying something might lead to 'an unhappy ending'.

Fear of speaking out was highlighted in this study as a particular concern for employees in a large forum such as a town hall event.

The fear of speaking out can be alleviated by informal communication. As one interviewee explains 'It's about removing barriers, isn't it?'

Interviewees and focus group participants stated that the reason why email briefings are considered a helpful method of communication is that employees have some control over them.

Email briefings that have short summaries with links to further information on the intranet were commented on as easy to read in this study. Email briefings that are too long or too detailed are not generally read.

In general, participants said that smaller group settings for face to face communication, around 10-15 people, help employees to feel more 'comfortable' and lead to more dialogue.

The more that informal gatherings take place the more that employees are likely to feel comfortable to contribute.

Organisational Engagement

Participants discussed how 'important' or 'unimportant' they felt as a result of communication and this was related to them feeling valued or not. This was most notably related to senior manager communication and employee voice.

Participants were not certain about how feeling valued affected the way that they worked.

Identification with the organisation is an affective state that can be linked with emotional organisational engagement.

Employees in this study require internal corporate communication to be relevant. This enables them to connect their personal contribution to organisational goals and aspirations.

Participants expressed more of a concern to understand how their work is aligned to organisational goals than how those goals are aligned to their own beliefs about the organisation.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 SUMMARY OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This chapter summarises the findings from the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The thesis incorporates six hypotheses and 27 sub-research questions. The summaries are grouped by hypotheses, covering the following central points; helpfulness of methods used, interest in organisational information, employee voice, senior manager communication, line manager communication, and informed employee voice. The chapter concludes with a conceptual map and consideration of possible explanations for observed patterns.

7.1.1 Hypothesis 1 And Sub-Research Question 1: Methods Used For Communication

Chapter 5, section 5.2 and chapter 6, section 6.5 analysed and discussed hypothesis 1: email and team meetings are the two of the top three most helpful internal communication channels in all five organisations and sub-research question 1: why do employees find specific channels helpful or unhelpful? Survey respondents rated email and team meetings as the top, second or third most helpful methods of internal communication in all five organisations in this study (table 5.1) thus supporting hypothesis 1. The mean helpfulness for email as a method is high in all five organisations, ranging from 3.88 (SD=0.89) to 4.38 (SD=0.70) and the mean for team meetings is also high in all five organisations, ranging from 4.02 (SD=0.99) to 4.29 (SD=0.83), measured on a 1-5 Likert scale, where 1 is very unhelpful and 5 is very helpful. This suggests that more traditional methods of communication are firmly established as the most helpful communication methods for employees. The level of helpfulness reported for intranets and senior manager briefings varied more according to the organisation. New methods of communication, such as blogs, generated mixed comments. As one interviewee stated, 'maybe it's not my kind of thing because I'm not an out there Facebooky kind of person'. However, it should be noted that only employees in one organisation in this thesis had access to an Enterprise Social Network (ESN) so it is possible that new methods may be seen as helpful in other organisations.

The reason why email briefings are considered a helpful method of communication is that employees have some control over the communication. It can be read as and when employees have time. Information is also sent direct to employees, so they do not have to make the effort to find it on the intranet. Participants highlighted the more 'human factor' of face to face communication. They like the informality in that can be achieved in team meetings whereby conversations can help to alleviate potential misunderstandings or misinterpretations of written communication.

7.1.2 Hypothesis 2 And Sub-Research Questions 2-7: Organisational Information And Organisational Engagement

Chapter 5, sections 5.3.1 and 5.5 analysed and discussed hypothesis 2. Chapters 5 and 6, section 6.4, also explore the questions posed in sub-research questions 2 to 7. The highest employee interest in information was reported for 'plans for the future' (ranging from 94 percent at BankDept to 97 percent at HousingAssoc). The average combined dataset results indicate that interest in all four scales of information (Plans and Aims, External Environment, Progress, and Employee Information) are positively associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement and the associations are all statistically significant ($p<0.01$). Hypothesis 2, 'employee interest in organisational information is positively associated with organisational engagement' is therefore supported. In terms of sub-research question 2, 'how far is interest in specific organisational information topics consistent between organisations?', levels of interest in organisational information topics were found to vary between organisations and the variances are statistically significant. In terms of sub-research questions 3-5, 'to what extent is interest in organisational information correlated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?', there are differences between the strengths of cognitive, emotional and behavioural correlations with interest in different topics at each organisation. However, to answer sub-research question 6, 'how far are correlations of interest in organisational information with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?', in broad terms the strength of correlations reported are consistent across all five organisations. Interest in plans and aims and progress is strongly correlated in all three aspects of organisational engagement (cognitive, emotional and behavioural), whereas correlations for interest in external environment and employee information are either weak or moderate. In terms of sub-research question 7, 'why are employees interested in different aspects of organisational information?', the reason for the interest in plans and progress is that employees understand only too well that their job security is dependent on the progress of the organisation. As one BankDept employee stated, 'You want to feel like you're working for a bank that's getting back to where it used to be. Some of the other stuff about pay you're not as interested in. It's more important to know that the bank's getting itself back to a good place, because that gives me my job security'. Openness and honesty were highlighted as important facets of all communication. As one interviewee put it, 'If somebody doesn't know the answer, say "I don't know the answer", rather than try and blag an answer'. Although it was not specifically included in the questionnaire, information about what other departments in the organisation are doing emerged as a theme in the qualitative data analysis, as highlighted in section 6.4.3.

7.1.3 Hypothesis 3 And Sub-Research Questions 8-13: Employee Voice

Chapter 5, section 5.6 analysed and discussed hypothesis 3. Chapters 5 and 6, section 6.8 explore the questions posed in sub-research questions 8 to 13. In terms of sub-research question 8, 'how far is satisfaction with employee voice consistent between organisation?', mean levels of satisfaction with employee voice range from 2.8 at SECouncil2 to 3.6 at BankDept and the variances between organisations are significant ($p<0.01$). This suggests that employee voice is not a consistently established process in organisations. The lowest level of satisfaction for 'opportunities to feed my views upwards' was at SECouncil2, a public sector organisation, where it was 28 percent and the highest level of satisfaction was at BankDept, a private sector organisation, where it was 64 percent (where scores of 4, 'satisfied', and 5, 'very satisfied' are combined). Satisfaction with 'ways to pass on criticisms' and with 'ways for me to communicate ideas to senior management' was slightly lower than with 'opportunities to feed my views upwards' in four of the five organisations. Satisfaction with employee voice is stronger at line manager than senior manager level. The average combined dataset results indicate that employee voice is strongly associated with emotional organisational engagement ($r = .53$) and moderately associated with cognitive organisational engagement ($r = .35$) and behavioural organisational engagement ($r = .37$). Hypothesis 3, 'employee voice is positively associated with organisational engagement' is therefore supported. In terms of sub-research questions 9-11, 'to what extent is satisfaction with employee voice correlated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?' the average, combined dataset, correlations between employee voice and organisational engagement are moderate or strong. However, the strengths of correlation in some individual organisations are weak. To answer sub-research question 12 'how far are correlations of employee voice with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?' correlations with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement at both SECouncil1 and SECouncil2 are weak. In contrast, emotional organisational engagement is strong in all five organisations. In terms of sub research question 13 'why is satisfaction with employee voice not rated more highly?' one key reason is that managers do not always actively listen to what is voiced. As one interviewee explained, 'You know, he was not interested in listening to me. So after thinking of an idea, I did not give any input, I actually stopped my input'. In conjunction with active listening, employees expect a response and this is not always forthcoming. Employees sense when there is a feeling that what is said is not going to go anywhere, described by a focus group participant as 'smiling but not with your eyes'. A further reason for low levels of satisfaction with employee voice is that some employees simply do not feel it is safe to speak up, as one interviewee put it, 'staff are almost scared of senior managers'.

7.1.4 Hypothesis 4 And Sub-Research Questions 14-20: Senior Manager Communication

Chapter 5, section 5.7 analysed and discussed hypothesis 4. Chapters 5 and 6, section 6.6 explore the questions posed in sub-research questions 14 to 20:

The general scale created for senior manager communication includes a combination of questions about keeping employees informed about changes, seeking views and responding to suggestions. In terms of sub-research question 14 'how far are ratings of senior manager communication consistent between organisations?' mean ratings varied from 2.60 (SD = 0.80) at SECouncil2 to 3.66 (SD = 0.76) at BankDept. Differences between organisations are significant (p<0.01) and are the largest differences reported for all the scales in the study. This indicates that senior manager communication is inconsistent and performance may be dependent upon approaches adopted towards internal communication in different organisations. Senior managers are rated slightly more highly for informing employees than for employee voice in four of the five organisations in the study. To answer sub research questions 15-17, 'to what extent are ratings of senior manager communication correlated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?' the associations between senior managers informing employees about changes and cognitive organisational engagement are positive, but very weak in four of the five organisations and not significant in the two local authorities. However, the associations for emotional organisational engagement are positive, moderate to strong, and significant in all five organisations. The associations for the outcome variable, behavioural organisational engagement, are positive and range from very weak to moderate and are significant for four of the organisations. Hypothesis 4, 'senior manager communication about the organisation is positively associated with higher levels of organisational engagement' is therefore partially supported; associations with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement are not significant in all five organisations. In terms of sub research question 18 'how far are correlations of senior manager communication with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?' differences in the levels of correlation were reported across the organisations in this study. To answer sub research question 19 'why do employees want senior managers to communicate about the organisation?' and sub research question 20 'why do employees not rate senior manager communication more highly?' analysis of the qualitative data indicates that employees do want senior managers to inform them about plans, progress, change and priorities. They see this as their primary responsibility. As one interviewee put it, 'to me communicating things is the core task of management teams - and it's their job to make the content of the communication understandable'. The reason why satisfaction with senior manager communication is not higher is that they are not visible or approachable and when they do communicate it is too formal. Some senior managers do not fully appreciate the communication role that they are expected by

employees to perform. As one senior manager interviewee explained, 'a lot of the time I will give the feedback to the [number] managers that answer to me and leave those [number] managers to take the feedback to their individual teams'.

7.1.5 Hypothesis 5 And Sub-Research Questions 21-27: Line Manager Communication

Chapter 5, section 5.8 analysed and discussed hypothesis 5. Chapters 5 and 6, section 6.7 explore the questions posed in sub-research questions 21 to 27. In terms of sub-research question 21 'how far are ratings of line manager communication consistent between organisations?' ratings for line managers keeping employees informed range from 3.10 (SD=0.88) at GovOffice to 3.77 (SD=0.87) at BankDept. Ratings for line manager employee voice range from 3.38 (SD=1.12) at SECouncil2 to 3.89 (SD=0.75) at SECouncil1. The differences in line manager communication ratings between organisations are significant (p<0.01). The average rating for 'communicating to employees' is 69 percent (measured on a 1-5 Likert scale where 4 is 'good' and 5 is 'very good' and where 4 and 5 results are combined) which is 18 percent higher than the rating for senior manager communication. This is consistent with other studies that report higher ratings for line manager communication than for senior manager communication. To answer sub research questions 22-24 'to what extent are ratings of line manager communication correlated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement at each organisation?' and sub research question 25 'how far are correlations of line manager communication with cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement consistent between organisations?' line manager communication is positively and statistically significantly (p<0.01) associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement in all five organisations. However, the strengths of associations vary between organisations for both line managers keeping employees informed and line manager employee voice. Analysis of the quantitative data indicates that an average, combined dataset, association with emotional organisational engagement is strong and higher than an association with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement. In general, senior manager communication is more strongly associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement than line manager communication. Hypothesis 5, 'line manager communication is less strongly associated with organisational engagement than senior manager communication' is therefore supported. However, the correlations for cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement are very similar; it is only the correlation for emotional organisational engagement that stands out as different between line mangers and senior managers (r=.40 and r=0.52 respectively). To answer sub research questions 26 'what topics do employees want line managers to communicate about?' giving internal corporate communication a local context in team meetings is very important for employees. Interview and focus group participants said that they see the role of line managers as translating corporate strategy into language that has local meaning. Line managers interviewed confirmed that at their

team meetings employees are interested in information that affects their work today or this week. They stated that sometimes corporate information gets in the way at meetings - it can be a 'turn-off' for employees. In terms of sub-research question 27 'why do employees not rate line manager communication more highly?' the level of mutual respect between an employee and their line manager emerged as an important factor. An issue that was highlighted in the qualitative data analysis is that there can be an information blockage from middle managers, or a tendency for middle managers to simply forward information on without providing any context.

7.1.6 Hypothesis 6: Informed Employee Voice

Chapter 5, section 5.10 analysed and discussed hypothesis 6: keeping employees informed and employee voice are positive and statistically significant predictors of organisational engagement. Two core aspects of internal corporate communication, keeping employees informed and employee voice are combined in this thesis to form a new concept: informed employee voice. Bivariate analysis (Table 5.26) shows that informed employee voice is strongly associated with emotional organisational engagement in all five organisations with one single exception for keeping employees informed at SECouncil1 where the correlation is moderate ($r=0.38$). Informed employee voice is also weakly, moderately, and statistically significantly ($p<0.05$) associated with cognitive and behavioural organisational engagement. Standard multiple regression was used to assess keeping employees informed and employee voice as unique contributors towards organisational engagement when other communication variables are controlled for. The R square values for the informed employee voice model indicate that it explains marginal (5 percent to 8 percent) contributions to the variance in cognitive organisational engagement at four of the five organisations. The R square values for the informed employee voice model indicate that it explains notable contributions to the variance in emotional organisational engagement in all five organisations, ranging from 20 percent to 34 percent. Three positive, statistically significant, coefficients for behavioural organisational engagement were found - all at BankDept. There were no positive, statistically significant, predictors in any of the four other organisations. This suggests that there are other factors than internal communication that may be stronger predictors for behavioural organisational engagement. However, the R square values for the model do indicate that it explains some of the variance in behavioural organisational engagement, ranging from 5 percent at SECouncil1 to 20 percent at BankDept. Hypothesis 6 is therefore partially supported. What emerges from the multiple regression analysis is a mixed picture of the strongest informed employee voice predictors of organisational engagement in each organisation.

7.1.7 Summary Of Empirical Findings And Conceptual Map

What emerges from the analysis of empirical findings is a clear indication that the primary methods of internal communication that employees find most helpful are email briefings and team meetings. Newer methods of communication, such as blogs, are seen as less helpful in this study. Receiver controllability and the human factor of communication are attributes of methods that were highlighted by interviewees and focus group participants. Employees are, perhaps not unsurprisingly, very interested in plans for the future of their organisation because they know that they could affect their own job security. Satisfaction with employee voice is not very high. The reasons for this are a lack of active listening and responding by managers and also a fear that employees have about speaking out. Ratings for senior manager communication are poor or weak in four of the organisation. The reasons for this are that senior managers are not visible or approachable and when they do communicate it is often too formal. Interviewees and focus group participants stressed the desire for more informality in senior manager communication. Ratings for line manager communication are better than for senior managers, in line with other studies. Even higher ratings could result from better information flows from middle managers and the ability to translate internal corporate communication into a local context.

The findings for helpfulness of methods, interest in organisational information, satisfaction with employee voice and ratings for senior manager and line manager communication vary across the five organisations involved in this thesis. The differences are all statistically significant (see table 5.3). The greatest three variances are, in order: senior manager communication, keeping employees informed, and employee voice. These differences could reflect varying levels of resource allocated to internal communication, varying levels of commitment of managers to communication and the communication skills of managers. These are points that are explored in more depth in the following sections.

A key finding that emerges from the analysis of the empirical data is the stronger level of association of internal corporate communication with emotional organisational engagement than with cognitive or behavioural organisational engagement. This suggests that internal corporate communication is more associated with what employees feel about the organisation more than with what they think about it or what they do for it. Interviewees and focus group participants stressed how internal communication impacts how valued they feel, reinforcing the emotional connection. This is particularly the case for employee voice which is strongly correlated with emotional organisational engagement at all five organisations involved in the research. The finding with regard to associations with emotional organisational engagement is reinforced in the multiple regression analysis which found that the R square values for the informed employee voice model indicate that it explains notable contributions to the variance in emotional organisational engagement in all five organisations, ranging from 20 percent to 34 percent.

In general, senior manager communication is more strongly associated with organisational engagement than line manager communication. This highlights the different communication roles that senior and line managers have. Senior manager communication responsibility should be focused on corporate communication and line manager communication should be focused on the local context of corporate communication and local team matters. A map illustrating linkages concepts with hypotheses and sub-research questions is shown in Figure 7.1. Further consideration of the reasons for the observed patterns reported is provided in the following section.

7.1.8 Retroduction: Possible Explanations For Observed Patterns

In this section, possible explanations for the observed patterns highlighted in chapters 5 and 6 and in the previous sections of chapter 7 are explored. As outlined in section 4.2.4 this thesis adopts a critical realism approach. Critical realists consider that the observable behaviour of people is not explicable unless it is located in the causal context of non-empirical structures, or intrinsic natures and their interactions. Critical realists therefore seek to understand why regularities occur from the relational combinations between mechanisms operating at three levels: 'experience' ('the empirical'), 'events' ('the actual') and 'structures and powers of objects' ('the real') (Bhaskar, 1989; Johnson and Duberley, 2000, pp. 150-6; Reed, 2009, p. 59). This involves a 'movement of thought from "surface" appearances to a knowledge of "deep" structures' referred to as retroduction whereby critical realists 'identify causation by also exploring the mechanisms of cause and effect which underlie regular events' (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, pp. 154-5).

FIGURE 7.1 Informed Employee Voice Conceptual Map With Hypotheses And Sub-research Questions

Informed Employee Voice – Conceptual Map With Hypotheses And Sub-research Questions
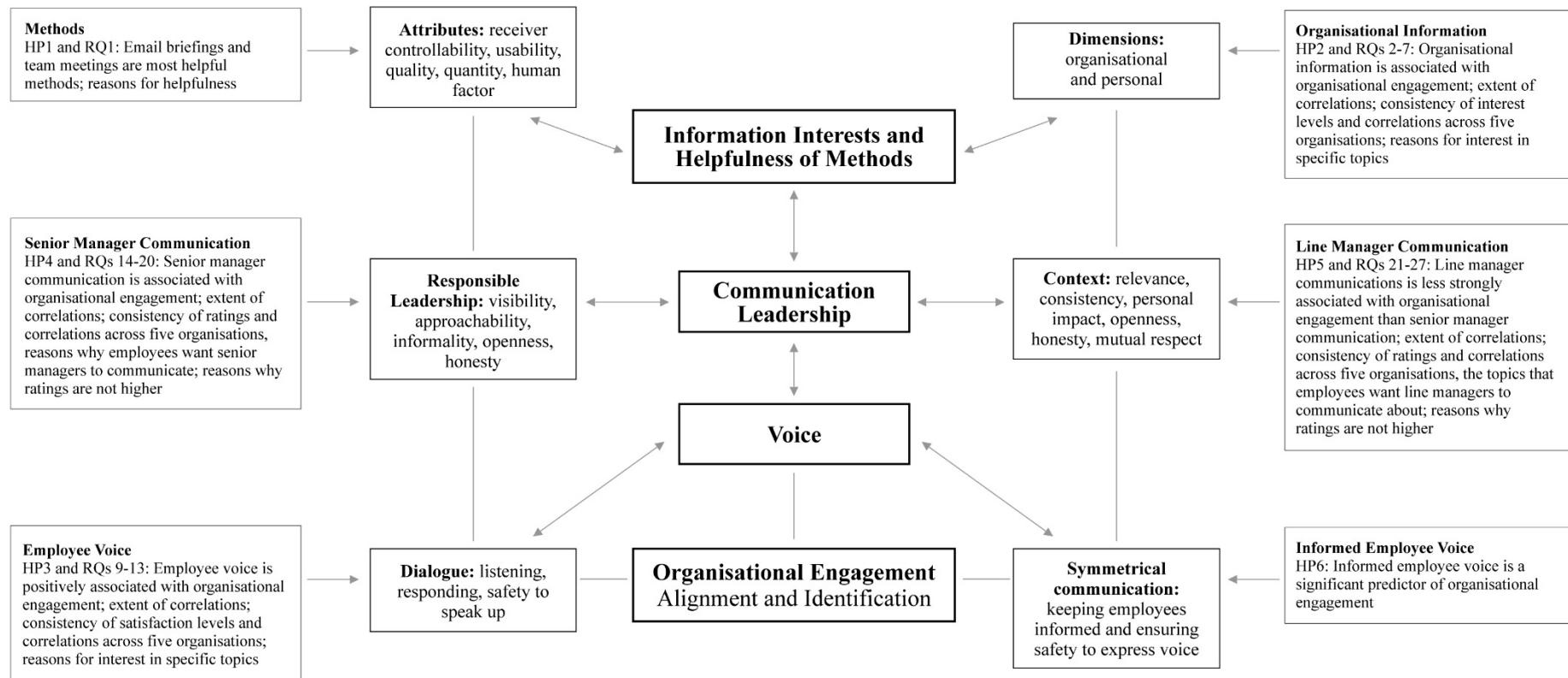
This section therefore considers what structures and powers might be preventing higher ratings for and satisfaction with internal communication. Two specific possibilities are explored:

1. An emphasis on shareholder value rather than employee value which has led to internal communication being perceived as unimportant or unnecessary
2. The professional status of internal communication practice as a marginalised and weakly represented function.

The emphasis on shareholder value was not a point that was foreshadowed in the analysis in chapter 2 as it is a broad macro level perspective. It should be considered in its broadest sense, in terms of a focus on financial performance which also applies to the public sector. The second explanation is an aspect of theory testing specific to internal communication that was highlighted in section 4.5.1.

7.1.8.1 Shareholder Value And The Consequential Neglect Of Employee Value

This section briefly explores the impact of the dominance of shareholder value on the way that organisations value employees that has consequences for internal communication.

Hutton (2015, p. 3) argues that 'Britain's business culture…is overwhelmingly about extracting value rather than creating it' and sets out a prospectus for the reform of British capitalism which includes committed ownership and the employee's voice (p.12). Tourish (2013, p. 6) observes 'the banking crisis in 2008 sent economic shockwaves round the globe' and as a result 'Many now question the validity of capitalism as the best system for generating long term prosperity'. Jones (2015, pp. 301-3) argues for a democratic revolution in Britain which incorporates 'extending democracy to every sphere of life: not just politics…but also to the wider economy and the workplace'. He suggests that 'democracy in the workplace would also shift the balance of power away from bosses' and argues for elected employee representatives on company boards, as is the case in Germany. These positions are a recent reaction to the domination of shareholder value and profit that has led to business scandals such as Enron and Worldcom (Parboteeah et al., 2010, p. 599) and economic crisis. Along the way this has also effectively limited and downplayed the role of employee voice and the understanding that organisational success and innovation is dependent on employees. Understanding and valuing the contribution that employees make first received attention in the 1960s. However, it is a marker of how far attention on shareholder value has overshadowed employee value that the interest in valuing human resources quickly faded in the 1970s (Verma and Dewe, 2008, p. 104). Hutton (2015, p. 40) traces the diminution of the interests of employees in organisations in the UK back to the 1980s when legitimate moves to rebalance the power relationships between over-powerful unions and management were initiated. An example

of how this shift to shareholder value to the detriment of employee representation or voice is illustrated by McCabe (2007, p. 224) who notes in a case study of change in a UK bank that misleading information was passed to trade unions. Some attempts have been made to redress the balance of shareholder and employee focus. The Information and Consultation of Employees (ICE) Regulations 2004 established a general statutory framework giving employees the right to be informed and consulted by their employers on a range of business, employment and restructuring issues. However, Hall et al. (2010, pp. 1-2) report that the impact on practice is low. In their study, in no organization did employees even begin to gather the 10 percent of signatures necessary to trigger negotiations for an agreement. Verma and Dewe (2008, p. 105) report that the British government issued a statutory regulation in 2005 to require quoted companies to prepare an operating and financial review which should include reporting on employee matters. However, the government subsequently decided not to implement the regulations.

As Mintzberg (2009, pp. 1-2) points out, individualism is a fine idea, but human beings are social animals who cannot function effectively without a social system that is larger than ourselves. Mintzberg suggests that there is a greater crisis than the economic crisis which is the 'depreciation in companies of community—people's sense of belonging to and caring for something larger than themselves'. It is worth noting that a 'sense of belonging' is one of Welch and Jackson's (2007, p. 186) stated goals of internal corporate communication. Although chief executives have been known to say that their employees are their greatest asset, the profit motive dominates management practice and there are only very rare exceptions where organisations explicitly put employees first (Nayar, 2010). As Verma and Dewe (2008, p. 118) argue, 'if the rhetoric that "people are our most valuable assets" is to be replaced by the reality, then all those in the organization need to work together so that any expression of human potential reflects the reality of the working lives of those we study'. The domination of shareholder value and a focus on short-term management has, according to Mintzberg (2009, p. 1-2), 'inflated the importance of CEOs and reduced others in the corporation to fungible commodities—human resources to be "downsized" at the drop of a share price'. In this environment where employees are not seen as human beings or valuable contributors to organisational success, it is not surprising that the levels of satisfaction for senior manager communication and employee voice reported in this thesis are not very high.

7.1.8.2 Internal Communication Practice Is Marginalised In Academia and Practice And Is Very Weakly Represented By Professional Bodies

As highlighted in section 1.7 internal communication practice has its modern roots in the production of in-house newspapers and magazines written and edited by former newspaper journalists. This approach was prevalent in the 1990s according to Wright (1995) who states that practice was dominated by technical journalistic skills instead of concentrating on

developing relationships with employees. The empirical findings in this thesis indicate that internal communication today continues to be practiced primarily through the production of information that is disseminated in email briefings and stories published on the intranet. As a result of a journalistic heritage and subsequent development as part of a broader, planned, approach to corporate communication, internal communication as a function is conceptualised as a sub-set of public relations. However, as a sub-set, it is evident that internal corporate communication is seen as less important than external corporate communication as highlighted in section 2.3. For example, relationship management has tended to infer that 'publics' are external. In Ledingham's (2006, pp. 470-1) identification of dimensions of the quality of relationship the examples given are all external. Internal communication is effectively marginalised in academia and in practice. This has consequences for internal communication practitioners who have to secure the resources for practice in competition with resources provided for more established external communication practice. It has consequences for the attention given to internal communication by senior managers. For example, public relations practitioners rate senior managers much more highly for external communication than for internal communication (PR Academy, 2015). And it has consequences for the way that the function is represented by professional bodies. There is a single dedicated body for internal communication in the UK, the Institute of Internal Communication (IoIC), with around 1,000 members. The larger Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) has 9,500 members and a dedicated internal communication group within it comprising around 1,500 members. A broad estimate of the number of people working in internal communication in the UK is 45,000 according to IoIC (2015). The representation of the value of internal communication for organisations through institutes is therefore very weak indeed: the IoIC has an extremely low membership of just 2 percent of practitioners and membership of the CIPR is dominated by external communication practitioners. This can be contrasted with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) which has a membership of around 138,000. Marginalisation and weak representation of internal communication may lead to it not being treated seriously and this can impact the resources provided which may, in turn, explain why there are low levels of satisfaction with employee voice and senior manager communication in this thesis. This also has consequences for levels of employee engagement which are associated with organisational effectiveness and employee well-being (Rayton et al., 2012). Marginalisation which serves to make internal communication seem less important than external communication and weak representation of the value of internal communication is therefore contributing towards low levels of employee engagement that has a direct impact on productivity. It is worth noting that at the beginning of the 1980s, Bland (1980) argued that internal communication has to be put into perspective as an important management tool. Perhaps the association with journalism and public relations has, unfortunately, held practice back. As Yaxley and Ruck (2015, p. 12) discovered, authorities in the field do feel that a focus

on communication tools continues to impact the reputation of practice. The empirical findings of this thesis provide data that can help practitioners develop a sound business case for investment in internal corporate communication as there is a demonstrable association with organisational engagement.

A further consequence of weak professional institute representation for internal communication is the late development of internal communication education. There were no internal communication qualifications available from professional institutes in the UK until 2008-09. Furthermore, when internal communication is seen as a sub-set of public relations academic education remains generalist rather than specific. As Welch (2013, p. 615) observes, a 2012 Commission on Public Relations Education report on master's level education (CPRE, 2012) surprisingly did not include any components or categories related to employees or internal communication. Welch (2013, pp. 616-7) argues that specialist education is a fundamental requirement of every profession since it equips professionals with a distinctive knowledge and skill set. Welch suggests ten components for education, based on research with practitioners, that could be considered specific internal communication knowledge components: employee engagement; leadership communication; employee internal communication needs; organisational context; internal communication theory; the concept of internal communication; internal communication effects; interaction with human resources; trust and informal communication in organisations. The empirical findings in this thesis suggest reinforce these components. The findings also suggest that employee voice should be added to the list. However, specialist internal communication education is likely to continue to have a minimal impact on practice when the institutes awarding qualifications have relatively few members.

In the next section a summary of how the thesis aims have been met is provided.

7.1.9 Summary Of How The Thesis Aims Have Been Met

As outlined in section 1.1 this thesis is funded by the 2009 University of Central Lancashire Arnoux part-time PhD Bursary Scheme and builds on Dr Mary Welch's internal communication research (Welch and Jackson, 2007; Welch, 2008; Welch, 2011a; Welch, 2011b; Welch 2012). Dr Welch's UK research concurs with previous international research (Kazoleas and Wright, 2001) in highlighting limitations of existing research methods for studying internal communication. A new instrument developed by Welch (2011a), the ICOEQ, that addresses limitations of existing instruments was tested in this thesis in five organisations. The methodological implications of using the ICOEQ and its application in further research are discussed in sections 7.5.1 and 7.5.2. A discussion of rethinking internal communication measurement follows in section 7.6.1 and the potential development of the instrument is outlined in section 7.6.2.

The aim of the thesis was to investigate themes in employee preferences and satisfaction with internal communication and the associations with organisational engagement in five separate organisations. The summaries of the empirical findings in the preceding sections of this chapter outline the results and provide an indication of general empirical patterns. These formed the basis for further analysis of possible causal powers reviewed in sections 7.1.8.1 and 7.1.8.2 and the identification of how practice can be changed that is outlined in section 7.6. The implications of the thesis for internal corporate communication theory are discussed in the next section.

7.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THESIS FOR INTERNAL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION THEORY

The evolution of internal communication, definitions, theoretical positioning and the focus of practice were reviewed in chapter 2. Also in chapter 2 the focus of the thesis is directed towards two separate levels of internal communication; senior manager and line manager. In addition, chapter 2 incorporates a review of employee voice and argues for a combination of keeping employees informed with employee voice. It posits a new concept, informed employee voice, which forms a theoretical basis for ethical practice. In chapter 3 medium theory and associated approaches for researching and measuring internal communication were reviewed. The implications of the thesis for internal corporate communication theory are outlined in the following three sub-sections. The implications of the thesis for organisational engagement theory are outlined in section 7.3.

7.2.1 Dimensions Of Internal Corporate Communication And Associations With Organisational Engagement

As highlighted in section 2.4, Welch and Jackson's (2007, p. 185) internal communication matrix (Table 2.1) sets out four dimensions based on a stakeholder perspective of practice: internal line management communication, internal team peer communication, internal project peer communication and internal corporate communication. This thesis provides further empirical evidence for Welch and Jackson's internal communication matrix. In particular, it reinforces the content expectations in team meetings as 'Team information, e.g. team task discussions'. The implications from this thesis are that the content for team meetings can also be extended to include strategic information, with the proviso that it is given local meaning and context. The broader internal corporate communication dimension in the matrix can be associated with senior manager communication. The findings in this thesis are consistent with the content description in the matrix: 'Organisational / corporate issues e.g. goals, objectives, new developments, activities and achievements'. Further topics that can now be added to the description from the findings in this thesis are: plans, priorities, and changes. Other adaptations to the matrix can also be incorporated to reflect the empirical findings in this thesis. Firstly, employee voice, implicit in the 'two-way' direction of communication flow in the matrix can be

made more explicit to reflect the expectations that employees have about expressing their views and their voice being taken seriously. Secondly, the two line manager dimensions can be merged for simplification and a new middle manager dimension can be added. Finally, a new dimension, cross-departmental communication, can also be added. An adapted matrix is shown in table 7.1.

In addition to updating Welch and Jackson's internal communication matrix, the thesis also addresses Chen et al.'s (2006, p. 244) observation that satisfaction with organisational communication practices has been ignored. The empirical findings indicate that there are multiple-level (cognitive, emotional and behavioural) positive and statistically significant associations between line manager and senior manager communication and organisational engagement. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the associations between internal corporate communication and organisational engagement should not be considered solely in terms of information delivery. Employee voice is also positively and statistically significantly associated with organisational engagement and therefore needs to be incorporated more fully into internal corporate communication theory. A new conceptual model of internal corporate communication and organisational engagement, adapted from Welch's (2012, p. 340) model, illustrating the inter-linkages of line manager communication, senior manager communication, employee voice and organisational engagement is shown in figure 7.2. This conceptual model differs from Welch's model in a number of ways. Firstly, it differentiates between senior manager and line manager communication as the empirical evidence in this thesis indicates that both levels of managers have internal corporate communication roles. Secondly, it adds employee voice as an internal corporate communication antecedent to organisational engagement. The model outlines the different management level approaches to internal corporate communication that are associated with different dimensions of organisational engagement; senior manager communication with identification and line manager communication with alignment. Cognitive and emotional organisational engagement are considered to be outcomes of internal corporate communication. Action taken by employees to help the organisation to achieve its objectives is shown as an outcome of cognitive and emotional organisational engagement. The model uses alignment and identification descriptors of engagement rather than dedication, absorption and vigour as the empirical findings in this thesis indicate that alignment and identification more closely reflect the outcomes that employees reported. The model does not show an association of behavioural organisational engagement with organisational effectiveness or productivity as this was not tested in the thesis. However, this would be a potential avenue of further research.

TABLE 7.1 Internal Communication Matrix (Adapted From Welch And Jackson, 2007)

Dimension	Level	Participants	Content	Employee Voice
1. Line manager communication	Line managers / supervisors	Line managers-employees	Team briefings e.g. organisational topics given local team context and meaning, how the team is affected by change, alignment of team and individual work to organisational plans, immediate team tasks	Views and suggestions about individual roles and team tasks
2. Team/project communication	Team/project colleagues	Employee-employee	Team information e.g. team task discussions Project information, e.g. project issues	Views and suggestions about team/project tasks
3. Middle manager communication	Middle managers	Middle managers-line managers	Team briefings e.g. organisational topics given departmental context and meaning	Views and suggestions about organisational plans, priorities, goals, objectives, new developments, and changes
4. Cross-departmental communication	Colleagues in other departments	Employee-employee	Departmental plans and progress	Views and suggestions about departmental plans, priorities, goals, objectives, new developments, and changes
4. Senior manager communication	Top management: CEO, MDs, Directors and Heads of Department	Senior managers-all employees	Organisational topics e.g. plans, priorities, goals, objectives, new developments, changes, activities and achievements	Views and suggestions about organisational plans, priorities, goals, objectives, new developments, and changes

FIGURE 7.2 Internal Corporate Communication And Organisational Engagement: A Conceptual Model
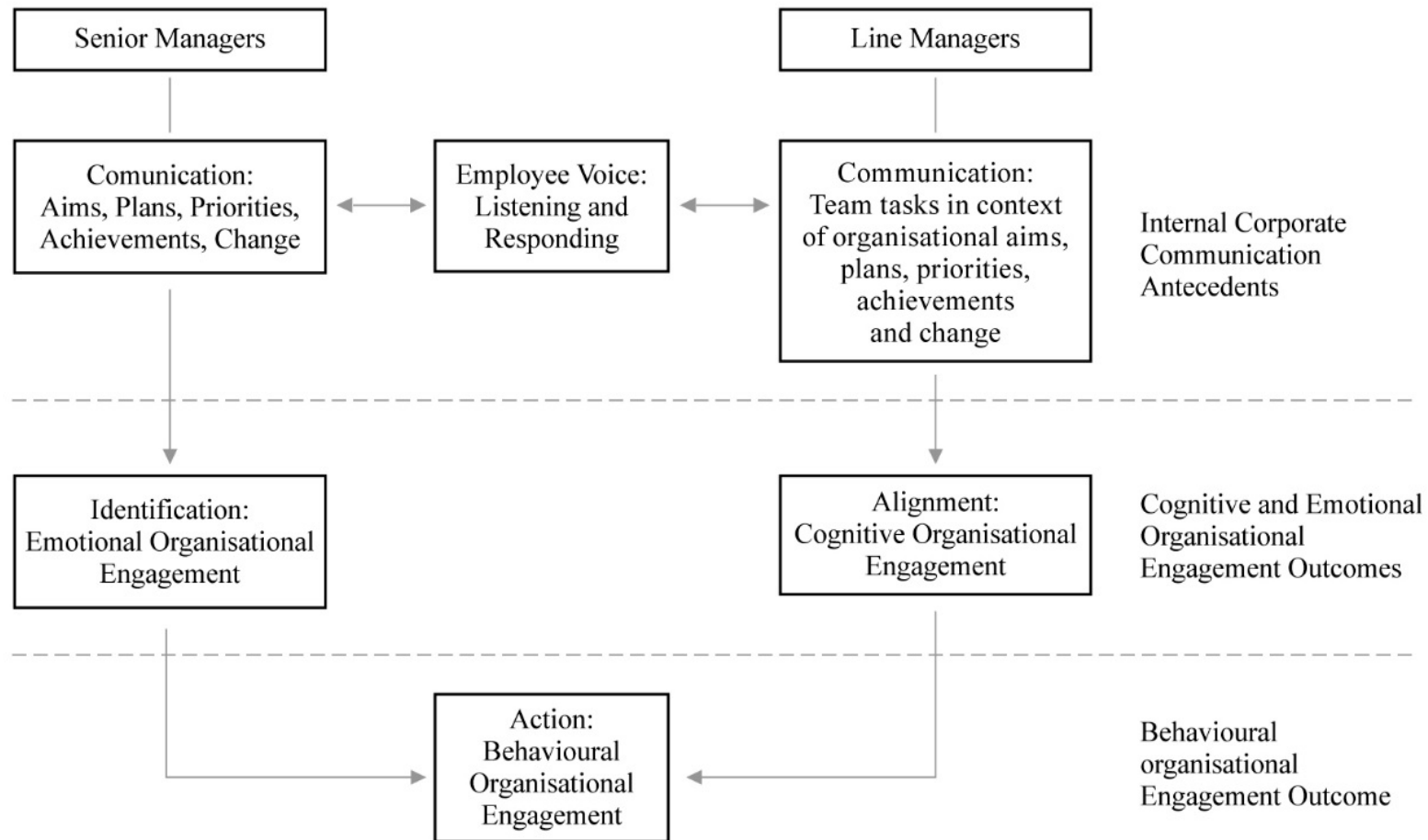
7.2.2 Internal Corporate Communication Medium Theory

Medium theory was reviewed in sections 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6. Welch (2012, pp. 247-8) states that there is a surprising dearth of work on internal communication media and suggests that 'consideration of medium theory in the context of internal communication can encourage fresh perspectives such as a focus on the interplay between internal communication message content and its mediating format'. This thesis therefore addresses the lack of research on medium theory and internal communication. Welch (2012, p. 248) identifies three attributes of internal communication media: controllability, usability and dissemination capability. Welch (2012, p. 253) found that there was a preference hierarchy starting with electronic methods, followed by blended methods (electronic and print), and lastly print. This includes the concept of employee-controllability to explain the way that employees may reject communication, adding a new psychological affect as a further dimension of medium theory. These three aspects of medium theory; attributes, a preference hierarchy, and employee-controllability are re-considered to reflect the empirical findings in this thesis.

The empirical findings in this thesis support the three attributes of internal communication media identified by Welch (2012, p. 248). In particular, the qualitative data analysis indicates that 'Usability' is especially pertinent for employees. Short summaries of topics in email briefings, described as 'blended dissemination' emerged as a strong preference and the difficulties in finding information on an intranet were also highlighted. Videos were reported to be a useful method of internal communication by interviewees and focus group participants although this is dependent upon having access to the intranet and the sound cards required in computers to listen to videos. An additional attribute of internal communication media, familiarity, can be added to Welch's list. This is shown in figure 7.3, which also adapts Welch's (2012, p. 248) attributes to reflect the empirical findings in this thesis. Familiarity is associated with Yzer and Southwell's (2008) model that includes 'experience with channel' as an attribute. Familiarity with the method of communication emerges from the empirical findings in this thesis as an important consideration for employees.

Email briefings and team meetings are regular and familiar methods of communication that employees are comfortable with. Senior manager town hall meetings are less regular and employees reported a degree of discomfort in the format. Enterprise social networks that incorporate blogs and discussion forums were not in place in all the organisations involved in the research. However, there was a mixed level of familiarity with using social media methods inside organisations and some employees clearly expressed feelings of strong discomfort with the method.

FIGURE 7.3 Some Attributes Of Internal Communication Media (Adapted From Welch, 2012, p. 249)

Controllability

Controlled ———————————————————— Uncontrolled

Email briefing   Team meeting with   Enterprise social network:
       core briefing   blogs and discussions forums

Distribution: Dissemination strategy

Blended dissemination

Push dissemination ———————————————————— Pull dissemination

Full briefing sent   Email briefing with link to   Full briefing on intranet
in an email   more details on the intranet   only

Usability

High ease of use ———————————————————— Low ease of use

Short summaries of   Videos (dependent   Intranets where information
topics in email briefing   on accessibility)   is hard to find

Familiarity

High familiarity ———————————————————— Low familiarity

Email briefing,   Senior manager town   Enterprise social network:blogs
team meeting   hall event   and discussions forums

The empirical findings in this thesis indicate that employees find email briefings and team meetings the most helpful methods of communication. This is consistent with Welch's (2012, p. 253) finding of a preference for electronic and blended methods. A hierarchy of helpfulness of internal communication methods is shown at figure 7.4. Two of the four attributes shown in figure 7.3, familiarity and ease of use, have been applied to the hierarchy to explain why some methods are more helpful than others. Employees find rich and lean media helpful if they include a combination of good ease of use and a high level of familiarity. The empirical findings in this thesis therefore provide underpinning evidence for ease of use and familiarity as two core attributes of internal communication media.

FIGURE 7.4 Hierarchy Of helpfulness Of Internal Communication Methods
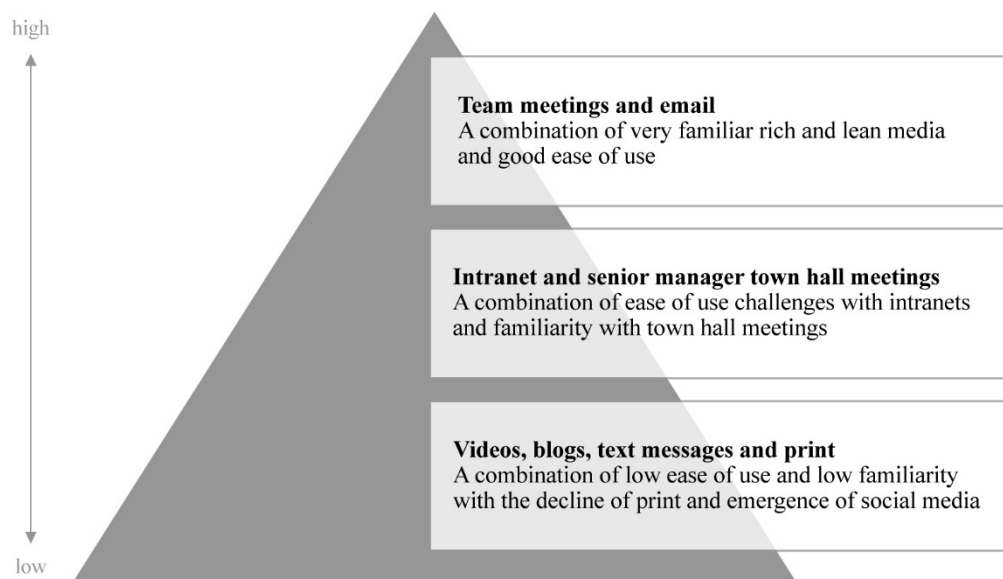
Finally, Welch (2012, p. 253) observes that some media formats such as print may annoy or irritate employees and these negative feelings may be transferred to the reading of the message. The empirical findings in this thesis did not find a similar irritation with print as a format, largely because print was rarely used in the organisations involved in the research. No other specific format was found to generate irritation or annoyance as a medium in itself. Instead, it is the way that the medium and the content work together, or not, which led to irritation. In this respect, a medium such as email can be perceived as both helpful and irritating. For example, as highlighted in section 6.5.1 employees like the control that they have over email briefings but they get tired of lengthy announcements full of 'nice words' and are irritated by briefings that are overly long and detailed. Similarly employees like the option to read more detailed stories on the intranet but get irritated when it is difficult to find the information they want from the intranet. Employees also like the opportunity to talk with senior managers but

withdraw if they feel that they are 'smiling but not with their eyes'. This highlights the richness of the medium which, according to Otondo et al. (2008, p. 22), refers to the variety of cues that convey both information and help a receiver resolve ambiguity and uncertainty by providing a social, emotional, or task-related context. In particular, the empirical findings from this thesis are consistent with an Otondo et al's emphasis on personal focus; the degree of relevance and involvement with the communication, and information overload; processing difficulties when information is unfamiliar or complex. The findings also support Yzer and Southwell's (2008, p. 16) argument that there is a focus on the 'technology' in new communication technologies and not enough attention to the human element.

### 7.2.3 A Critical Theory Perspective Of Internal Corporate Communication

A critical theory perspective of internal communication was reviewed in section 2.4. This indicated that critical public relations theory is almost exclusively applied to the field of external communication. The empirical findings in this thesis therefore address a gap in the literature that applies critical theory to internal corporate communication. As highlighted in section 2.20, the intellectual position for this thesis is based more on critical theory than excellence theory as excellence theory does not address specific issues concerning what communication employees expect and why practice does not always reflect the exemplars set out by Grunig (1992, p. 558). A critical theory perspective of internal corporate communication incorporates a deeper consideration of questions about systematic distortion of internal corporate communication and the moral obligation that organisations have to keep employees informed and give them a voice that is treated seriously. The evidence marshalled in this thesis focuses attention on three aspects of critical theory; distorted communication, power, and workplace democracy. These are reviewed in more detail in this section which culminates with consideration of faulty arguments that the thesis exposes and the uncomfortable ideas that flow from these.

Deetz (1992) argues that the normal discourse of organisations is domination. The empirical findings in this thesis provide partial support for Deetz's claim. Senior managers were rated poorly for communication in this study and they were not considered to be visible or approachable. Employees in this study are not satisfied with employee voice and they often feel that managers do not listen to what they have to say. In terms of the four dimensions of systemically distorted communication identified by Deetz (1992, pp. 190-8): naturalisation, neutralisation, legitimation and socialisation, the findings of this thesis are consistent with the processes of naturalisation and legitimation. Employees in this study assumed that goals were set by management and one management voice was often seen to be privileged over all others. This thesis provides a new insight into the consequences when the normal discourse of organisations is domination as it demonstrates that domination adversely impacts levels of organisational engagement. As outlined in section 5.10.4, the multiple regression analysis for informed employee voice shows that it contributes to organisational engagement, especially

emotional organisational engagement. The clear implication for critical internal corporate communication theory is that systematically distorted communication is associated with low levels of organisational engagement. And, as Rayton et al. (2012, pp. 24-6) argue, in addition to organisational success, engagement is also associated with employee well-being. This adds a new dimension to critical internal corporate communication theory as it suggests that employee well-being is adversely impacted by systematically distorted internal communication.

Processes of naturalisation and legitimation can be linked to what Berger (2005, p. 6) describes as a 'power over – dominance model' where decision making is characterised by control and self-interest. According to Berger (2005, p. 16) public relations supports such power relationships through the production of persuasive texts and strategic attempts to influence discourse. The empirical findings in this thesis provide a greater insight into how communication 'power over - dominance' is exercised by senior managers inside organisations. Low levels of satisfaction with employee voice in this study can at least be partially attributable to a fear of speaking out and the way that employees feel that they are not being listened to. Poor ratings for senior manager communication can be explained by weak visibility and approachability. The findings can be used to generate three levels of internal 'power over – dominance' as illustrated in figure 7.5.

FIGURE 7.5 Three levels of internal 'power over-dominance'
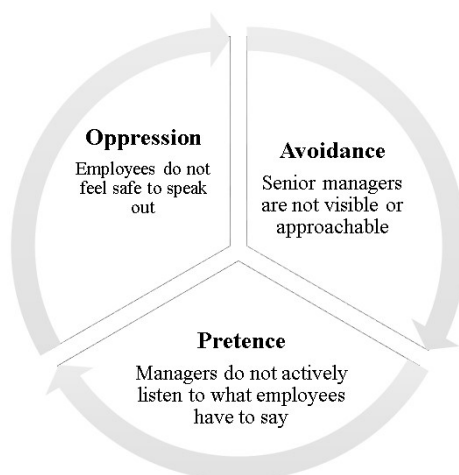
The three levels of 'communication power over-dominance' identified in this thesis as oppression, avoidance and pretence extend Berger's (2005, p. 6) description to an internal communication setting and respond to his call for a fuller description of public relations power. The findings in this thesis therefore provide depth for a critical theory of internal corporate communication that can be associated with emancipatory action. The counterbalance to

systematically distorted communication is a systematic process of keeping employees informed and giving them a voice that is treated seriously.

Cheney (1995, p. 167) argues that democracy seldom extends to the workplace. Deetz (2005, pp. 85-6) states that organisations have often been guilty of economic exploitation of workers and he sets out the case for alternative communication practices that lead to greater democracy and more creative and productive cooperation among stakeholders. The empirical findings in this thesis reveal that there is minimal involvement of employees in decision making. The findings also add weight to Deetz's argument (above) about the productive potential of cooperation as they indicate that employee voice is associated with organisational engagement. Where opportunities for employee voice are provided they are often undermined by employee perceptions that managers do not actively listen to what is said. Inadequate and sometimes inappropriate responses are made and little or no action follows when views are expressed. This leads to what Van Dyne et al. (2003, pp. 1361-4) describe as 'A collective phenomenon where employees withhold their opinions and concerns about potential organizational problems'. It also underlines what Morrison (2011, p. 383) highlights as the perceived futility of employee voice from the employee perspective. The behaviour of managers in not listening to what employees say is effectively constraining workplace democracy.

The empirical evidence marshalled in this thesis also exposes some faulty arguments which are briefly explored here. Firstly, employees are very interested in knowing about corporate aims, plans and progress. Indeed they are more interested in these topics than other more employee related topics. However, communicating with employees is not a cascade process and it cannot be left to line managers to try to explain corporate information. Employees expect senior managers to be visible and to inform them personally about where the organisation is headed and how it is doing. This may be uncomfortable for senior managers as it requires making the time to talk to employees in more informal settings. Secondly, simply providing employees with the opportunity to have a say is not enough. Managers have to listen and respond. As Morrison (2014, p. 182) observes 'leaders may not be seen as very open or interested in input from employees, which may serve to stifle voice'. The empirical evidence in this thesis indicates that employees know very well when managers are listening or not. It may be uncomfortable reading for some senior managers, but a route to higher levels of organisational engagement lies in their own hands in the form of their attitude towards listening to what employees have to say.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THESIS FOR ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT THEORY

Organisational engagement as a construct was reviewed in section 1.16. According to Malinen et al. (2013, p. 96) employee engagement research has mainly focused on job engagement and the construct of organisational engagement has been largely neglected. This thesis therefore addresses a gap in the literature by establishing some of the antecedents to organisational engagement.

Although research into organisational engagement has, to date, been limited some antecedents have been established. For example, Saks (2006, p. 605) highlights perceived organisational support (POS) as an antecedent and Malinen et al. (2013, p. 102) highlight the importance of procedural justice, open communication, trust in senior management and employee voice. However, although Malinen et al. report open communication and employee voice as antecedents they were not specifically tested in the research methodology used. This thesis therefore provides further, more detailed, specific evidence for communication antecedents to organisational engagement. Additionally, the organisational engagement construct in this thesis is separated into three dimensions: cognitive, emotional and behavioural. This enables a deeper understanding of organisational engagement and how different aspects of communication are associated with it. The implications of the thesis for organisational engagement theory considered in this section focus on internal corporate communication, line manager communication and employee voice as core communication antecedents of organisational engagement. These are then considered alongside broader, procedural, antecedents established in other research to form a new conceptual diagram of organisational engagement based on a social exchange theory framework.

The empirical findings in this thesis provide evidence that internal corporate communication is an antecedent to organisational engagement. Employee interest in 'plans and aims' and 'progress' is strongly correlated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural organisational engagement. Senior manager communication is positively and significantly associated at moderate to strong levels with emotional organisational engagement at all five organisations in this study. Internal corporate communication involving senior management communication can therefore be considered as a core antecedent to organisational engagement. The empirical findings in this thesis also establish line manager communication as an antecedent to organisational engagement. Although the role of line management is more often associated with job engagement (Shimazu et al., 2010, p. 364; Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74; Fleck and Inceoglu, 2010, p. 31; Newman et al., 2010; Schohat and Vigoda-Gadot, 2010, p. 101; Bakker and Demerouti, 2008, p. 223; Bakker, 2010, p. 240) the implication is that line manager communication does also have an impact on organisational engagement. The multiple regression results reported in this thesis support those found by Rees et al. (2013, p. 2790) that

employee voice is significantly related to engagement. However, their findings are based on different interpretations of voice and engagement from those used in this thesis where engagement is considered to be more work or job oriented. The empirical findings in this thesis therefore extend the literature to show that employee voice is associated with work *and* organisational engagement.

In this thesis a strong association between internal communication and emotional organisational engagement is established at three separate levels: senior manager communication, line manager communication and employee voice. When managers communicate clearly with employees and listen to what they have to say, interviewees and focus group participants report that this makes them 'feel valued'. This can be linked to identification with the organisation which Fleck and Inceoglu (2010, p. 38) describe as a 'sense of belonging' which is 'affective'. Malinen et al. (2013, pp. 102-3) argue that organisational engagement can be understood within a framework of social exchange theory (SET) where the relationship between employees and an organisation is reciprocal. According to Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005, p. 874) social exchange theory involves a series of interactions that generate obligations, where interactions are seen as interdependent and contingent on the actions of another person. The empirical findings in this thesis support this approach. A sense of 'feeling valued' results when employees are informed and have a say about what goes on that is treated seriously and this is reciprocated by employees caring for the organisation. This can be considered as a socioemotional outcome rather than an economic outcome, although emotional organisational engagement is also strongly associated with behavioural organisational engagement in this study. This extends our understanding of reciprocity beyond perceived organisational support reported in other research (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005, pp. 877-8) as it suggests that communication, in and of itself, leads to a reciprocal relationship where emotional engagement is enhanced. It confirms information as one of Foa and Foa's (1974, 1980) six types of resources in exchange. It also supports a focus on social exchange relationships within SET which are said to evolve when employers take care of employees which leads to beneficial consequences (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005, p. 882). Research that establishes procedural justice and perceived organisational support as antecedents to organisational engagement did not segment engagement into separate cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions. However, it can be posited that that these antecedents are also likely to be more highly associated with emotional organisational engagement than cognitive or behavioural engagement. A diagram that incorporates communication and procedural antecedents of organisational engagement is shown in figure 7.6. A crossover between employee voice and procedural justice is incorporated into the diagram to reflect some similarities between the two antecedents.

FIGURE 7.6 Communication And Procedural Antecedents Of Organisational Engagement
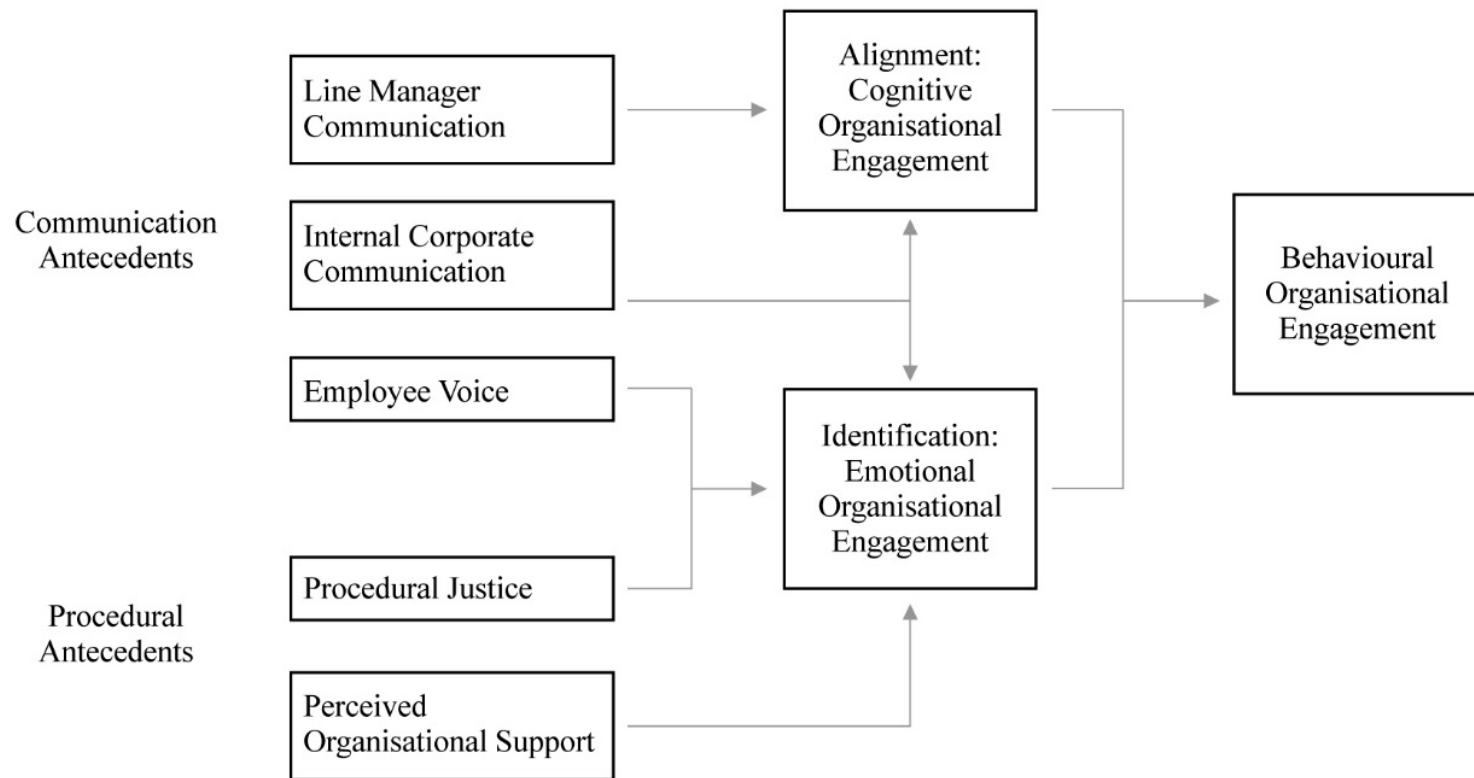
7.4 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The findings from the research for this thesis are based on the ICOEQ, interviews and focus groups conducted in five organisations located in England and Wales. SECouncil1, SECouncil2 and HousingAssoc are medium sized organisations, employing between 800 and 1000 people. GovOffice and BankDept are two very large organisations and specific departments within each organisation were chosen for the research. Although the organisations selected represent a range of different types they all have relatively well established systems and processes that include more traditional approaches to management. Organisations from other sectors with flatter management structures may have yielded different results. Although conducting field research in five organisations may be more robust than research in single organisation studies caution should be given to the generalisability of the results reported. For example, the response rate for the ICOEQ was notably low in one organisation, SECouncil2 at 16 percent, and responses from BankDept included employees based outside the UK so these factors may have influenced the results. It is also possible that common method bias with using numerous self-report scales influenced the results. This point applies to all the questions in the ICOEQ but it may have notable influence in the descriptive data for behavioural organisational engagement (see section. 5.3.5). Other general criticisms of surveys highlighted in section 4.8.3 also apply, such as the failure to distinguish people from the 'the world of nature', the measurement process possesses an artificial sense of precision, the reliance on instruments hinders the connection between research and everyday life, and the analysis of relationships between variables creates a static view of social life (Bryman and Bell, 2007, pp. 174-5). A limitation of using interviews as a qualitative research method is potential bias from the researcher's presence. Measures were therefore taken to ensure that interviewees were able to think about responses and empathetic comments were made to put the interviewee at ease. The participants selected for interviews and focus groups included front line employees, line managers, middle managers and senior managers. However, the majority of participants were front line employees and line managers. A middle manager and senior manager perspective may therefore be under-reported in the qualitative data analysis.

7.5 METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

7.5.1 Methodological Implications

As highlighted in section 4.4.1, according to Miller et al. (2011, pp. 6-7) interpretive, critical and cultural approaches have dominated recent organisational research. However, they suggest that new approaches to quantitative research are appearing. These include the systematic study of phenomena across multiple levels of analysis and the study of relationships between people, units and organisations. The ICOEQ is an example of such an approach. It incorporates a correlational design that is missing from other communication research instruments that enables descriptive, bivariate and multiple regression levels of analysis. It also incorporates ratings for

senior managers that are missing from other communication instruments and this emphasises the relationship between senior managers and employees. The correlational design of the ICOEQ enables the analysis of associations between different aspects of communication and organisational engagement and these have formed a central element of the quantitative data analysis in this thesis. This has led to a range of new insights into internal corporate communication theory and organisational engagement theory as set out in sections 7.2 and 7.3. It has also added to the literature on medium theory applied to internal communication as highlighted in section 7.2.2. In this thesis the application of the ICOEQ was combined with qualitative research using template analysis. The combination of the ICOEQ and interview and focus group data reviewed using template analysis has provided a deeper level of exploration into internal communication and organisational engagement that the ICOEQ alone could not have provided.

The ICOEQ has also been incorporated into a broader critical realism research approach in this thesis. Critical realism is, according to Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 628), popular in marketing research. However, no evidence could be found for the approach being used in public relations research. The ICOEQ provides the basis for deeper consideration of the underlying communication power systems that exist in organisations that were outlined in section 7.1.9. This has generated new thinking for a critical theory perspective of Internal Corporate Communication as outlined in section 7.2.3.

In summary, the application of the ICOEQ as a new, multi-dimensional, research instrument that provides fresh perspectives on internal communication that can be associated with organisational engagement has been demonstrated in this thesis. It also incorporates the collection of qualitative data in the form of open questions and it can therefore be used independently of other qualitative approaches. In the next section avenues of further research that flow from this study are discussed.

7.5.2 Seven Questions For Further Research

There are seven primary areas of further research that flow from the empirical findings of this thesis. Firstly, the new construct that has emerged, informed employee voice, could be explored more widely through the repeated application of the ICOEQ and qualitative research to ascertain if the results reported here are replicated. This extended research should ideally involve organisations from different sectors to those involved in this thesis. Secondly, as highlighted in section 7.3, two dimensions of antecedents of organisational engagement have been established; communication and procedural. Further research is required to determine which dimension is the stronger predictor of organisational engagement and to explore the relationship between the two dimensions. Thirdly, the ICOEQ is focused on internal communication and organisational engagement, not work engagement. It may seem logical to associate internal corporate communication with organisational engagement and to posit that the associations with work

engagement are likely to be far less strong. However, the associations between informed employee voice and work engagement have not been examined in the literature and questions about work engagement could therefore be added to the ICOEQ. Fourthly, cross-department communication emerged as a dimension of internal corporate communication in the qualitative data analysis (see section 6.4.3). The association between cross-department communication and organisational engagement could therefore be explored by extending the ICOEQ to include questions on this dimension of internal corporate communication. Fifthly, the role of middle management in internal communication and organisational engagement is not within the scope of this thesis. However, it is an area of potential further research. As Stanton et al. (2010, p. 567) note there is a dearth of literature on the interaction of the various levels of management. Sixthly, the empirical findings of this thesis have highlighted the importance of senior manager communication and employee voice. The qualitative data analysis highlights low senior manager visibility, poor listening and a fear of speaking out. Further research could be undertaken with senior managers to understand why an approach to leadership is predominantly a power over-dominance exercise of communication control. And finally, as highlighted in section 7.2.1 the potential associations between organisational engagement and organisational effectiveness is a useful avenue of further research. The following new research questions (NRQs) summarise potential areas for further research:

NRQ1 How far is informed employee voice associated with organisational engagement in a wide range of organisations from different sectors?

NRQ2 Is informed employee voice a stronger predictor of organisational engagement than perceived organisational support and procedural justice?

NRQ3 Is informed employee voice positively associated with work engagement?

NRQ4 How far is cross-department communication associated with organisational engagement?

NRQ5 What is the role of middle managers in internal corporate communication and organisational engagement?

NRQ6 Why are senior managers not more visible and approachable and why are they not prepared to share more communication power with employees?

NRQ7 How far is organisational engagement associated with organisational effectiveness?

7.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THESIS FOR PRACTICE

The empirical evidence in this thesis suggests that, in some respects, practice has not evolved significantly since the 1990s when it was described by Wright (1995) as being dominated by technical journalistic skills instead of concentrating on developing relationships with employees (see section 1.7). Towards the end of the 1990s Clutterbuck and James (1997) also argued that practice lacked benchmarks and there was little evaluation of the impact of communication. As

highlighted in chapter 3 existing measurement tools have a range of shortcomings. The development of the ICOEQ by Welch (2011a) and the application of it in this thesis addresses both of these points. Sections 7.6.1 and 7.6.2 examine the practical implications of measuring internal communication and potential revisions of the ICOEQ. However, there are two further, more deeply rooted processes, which need to be tackled by practitioners. Firstly, practitioners need to consider how to challenge systemically distorted communication inside organisations. Secondly, there are implications for senior manager communication and the development of responsible communication leadership. These practical implications are explored in more detail in sections 7.6.3, 7.6.4, and 7.6.5. Before coming to these points the development of internal communication measurement is considered in more depth in sections 7.6.1 and 7.6.2.

7.6.1 Rethinking Internal Communication Measurement

The original Arnoux bursary award for this thesis included the testing, evaluation and further development of the ICOEQ. The development of the ICOEQ by Welch (2011a) and the application of it in this thesis addresses the points made in chapter 3 regarding shortcomings in existing measurement tools. As highlighted in section 3.7 the ICA emphasises the volume and timeliness of information. It does not include questions about the quality of the information provided or employee voice. Weaknesses of the ICA and the CSQ (see section 3.8) include the omission of senior manager communication and associations of communication with organisational engagement. The inclusion of scales about line manager and senior manager communication provides an emphasis on relationship management. The lack of development of a standard measurement tool leads to difficulties in establishing benchmarks of practice. Although the summary of assessment studies in section 3.10 provides a general picture of practice, until a standard measurement tool such as the ICOEQ is adopted by organisations it is not possible to establish precise levels of satisfaction, nor to make meaningful comparisons between organisations or sectors. As highlighted in section 4.10.12, in order to secure the agreement of five organisations to participate in the study, the benefit of conducting free research that would have an impact on internal communication practice potentially leading to higher levels of organisational engagement was a key factor in securing access. A full report with the findings of the research with recommended actions was provided to each organisation. The high level of analysis that could be connected to action was commented on by the internal communication managers involved as a step forward in professional practice. The ICOEQ is therefore a tool that practitioners find useful and this is important as measurement has been highlighted as a weakness in practice (Harkness, 2000, p. 67; Watson, 2012, p. 393).

7.6.2 Development Of The ICOEQ

This section addresses the development of the instrument from a practical perspective. As highlighted in section 4.10.11 a number of small adaptations were made to the ICOEQ to meet the specific needs of each organisation involved in the research. In particular, it was necessary

to adapt the questions used for scale 1, information interests, and scale 2, communication methods. Some terms may not be appropriate for information interests in some organisations and the communication methods used by each organisation vary. The precise questions used in these two scales will always therefore be flexible. In two organisations the instrument was developed by the addition of a scale for middle manager communication as this was requested by the internal communication managers concerned. The role of middle managers in internal corporate communication has emerged in this thesis as a potential area of further research and this was discussed in section 7.5. An additional scale for middle manager communication adopting the same questions used for line managers and senior managers therefore offers an opportunity to analyse communication ratings for middle managers in more detail. In one organisation a further set of questions was added to complement the questions used in scale 1 about information interests so that satisfaction with communication for each topic of interest could also be assessed. This generated data that illustrated where interest in a topic was high and satisfaction with that topic was low that was useful for corrective internal communication practice.

Further development of the ICOEQ can be informed by the analysis of qualitative data in chapter 6 as summarised in figure 6.1. Questions could be added about the quality of information provided, in particular; timeliness, transparency, consistency, relevance and accuracy. Questions about the usability of communication could also be added, in particular; ease of reading, interest, and friendly tone used. More granular questions can also be added in the line manager and senior manager scales used that addresses the different communication roles highlighted in this thesis. For example, questions can be added about senior manager visibility and the way that line managers provide a local context for corporate information. However, the addition of further questions and scales suggested here has to be balanced by the need not to make the instrument too long otherwise it may be seen to be too cumbersome by practitioners.

7.6.3 The Importance Of Relationship Management

As highlighted in section 2.3, Herington et al. (2005, p. 269) found that communication, attachment and empowerment are key elements of internal relationships. Kim (2007) also argues that symmetrical internal communication is associated with communal relationships. The empirical findings in this thesis indicate that employees value information provided in email briefings and on the intranet. They also value the relationship with their line manager and senior managers where employee voice is treated seriously. The empirical findings in this thesis show that line manager and senior manager communication are both associated with organisational engagement. Relationship management at line and senior manager levels are therefore important aspects of practice that can be illuminated by using the ICOEQ as a research and planning tool.

As the analysis of qualitative data in section 6.6 highlights, senior managers in this study were not perceived to be very visible or approachable. When senior managers do communicate face to face with employees they report that the communication style is too formal. The implications for practice are clear. Senior managers should allocate more personal time for communication rather than expect communication to be cascaded through levels of management. As Illes and Mathews' (2015, p. 12) argue, employees want to see their leaders in person and in action. Face to face communication events should be with small groups of employees, around fifteen to twenty people rather than in larger style 'town hall' events with eighty people. This is because employees feel intimidated in larger meetings. Employees expect senior managers to update them on where the organisation is going, the strategy, progress and what the future looks like, using the 'language of the people', not corporate PowerPoint presentations. And employees expect managers to listen to what they have to say as they report that this is a sign of a progressive organisation. The analysis of line manager communication in section 6.7.1 reveals that employees like the interactivity and the opportunity to discuss operational issues with line managers in team meetings. The emphasis in these meetings should therefore be operational issues. If broader corporate topics are discussed they should be put into a local context and made meaningful for employees. As with senior manager communication, employees expect line managers to listen to what they have to say. The responsibility of the internal corporate communication manager is to coach and guide senior managers to adopt a different approach to communication with employees, one that is more personal, informal, and more regular. The implications for broader practice are that cascade team briefing systems that are based on line managers communicating about corporate strategy are misplaced. They should be replaced with the emphasis on line managers, with the support of middle managers, translating corporate strategy into a local context.

7.6.4 Challenging Systematically Distorted Internal Corporate Communication

As suggested in section 2.4, the possible domination of employees through overly-managed, asymmetric, communication appears to largely go unchallenged by public relations academics and practitioners alike. The empirical findings in this thesis indicate that keeping employees informed has only a partial impact on organisational engagement. Employees also expect to have a say about what goes on that is treated seriously and this is associated with organisational engagement. The implication for practice is that it has to include employee voice for a higher level of organisational engagement to be secured. Including employee voice as a fundamental component of internal communication practice also incorporates an ethical dimension that requires the challenge of systematically distorted internal corporate communication. The focus on employee voice as an ethical dimension of practice is emphasised by Clampitt (2013, pp. 55-6) who argues that that ethical managers and organisations face two different questions: firstly, can we find healthy ways for employees to express their concerns to organisational leaders and secondly, how should we respond to those concerns? The analysis of qualitative data with

regard to employee voice in section 6.8.2 indicates that when managers do listen to what employees have to say this is noted by employees and it can generate a greater level of understanding about the organisation's plans. Interviewees and focus group participants said that if they can see that feedback is being taken on board it would be engaging. The implications for practice are that simply providing opportunities for upward feedback is not enough. Practice has to go further to ensure that what is said is treated seriously. As Illes and Mathews (2015, p. 10) suggest, effective listening shows that the leader has employees' interests at heart. Systematically distorted communication has to be countered with systematic listening and feedback. However, challenging systematically distorted communication gives practitioners a difficult ethical dilemma - how far can internal communication activism be taken before it jeopardises security of employment? The implications for practice therefore centre on the establishment of a code of practice for internal communication, as outlined in section 2.4.6, that should be endorsed by leading institutes such as the Institute of Internal Communication (IoIC) and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) with the support of other institutes that represent senior managers, such as the Institute of Directors (IoD).

7.6.5 Establishing Responsible Communication Leadership

As highlighted in section 2.2.2, Johanssen et al. (2014, p. 154) argue that 'communicative leaders are willing to listen, receive questions or complaints, and share appropriate information in a truthful and adequate manner' and they suggest that this is a core principle of communicative leadership. The combination of keeping employees informed and giving them a voice forms the basis of a new concept, informed employee voice, which is established in this thesis. Senior manager communication, emphasised in section 7.6.2 above, is the level of practice shown in table 7.1 and figure 7.1 that is most strongly associated with organisational engagement. It therefore follows that a central implication for practice is the proactive communication role that senior managers must fulfil if organisational engagement is to improve. The implication for internal communication practitioners is that they have a responsibility to coach and guide senior managers to ensure that they understand their communication role and allocate the time required for it. Practice must go beyond 'transformational' communication leadership and address concerns raised by Tourish (2013, p. 21) and Ashman and Lawler (2008, p. 265) that it precludes feedback and tends to be based on instrumental forms of relationship management. A new approach to practice can be associated with the emerging concept of *responsible leadership* which Waldman and Balven (2014, p. 224) describe as 'a concept that exists at the intersection of two existing fields of study: social responsibility and leadership' and 'which cannot be thoroughly considered without a focus on individuals'. The emphasis in responsible leadership is actions taken for the benefit of stakeholder groups. However the focus in the literature is primarily external groups and society in general. Employees as a higher order stakeholder group are not considered in great detail. The role of communication in responsible leadership has also, to date, been under-explored. The empirical evidence in this thesis suggests

that responsible leadership can be extended to include internal communication. Indeed, to do so may lead to a 'butterfly effect' that has a positive impact on other stakeholder groups (Waldman and Balven, 2014, p. 229).

CHAPTER 8 LIST OF REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND ORGANISATIONAL ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (ICOEQ) USED AT GOVDEPT

Your information needs

What information do you want about GovDept? Indicate your interest in the following types of communication content:

Q1 Information about plans and aims

5 =Very interested, 1=Not interested. Mark one box in each row.   5   4   3   2   1

1a GovDept ' goals

1b Changes in GovDept

1c GovDept plans for the future

Q2 Information about operating conditions

5 =Very interested, 1=Not interested. Mark one box in each row.   5   4   3   2   1

2a Central Government action affecting GovDept

2b How we're doing compared to the other UK Government Departments

2c How external events affect my job

Q3 Employee information

5 =Very interested, 1=Not interested. Mark one box in each row.   5   4   3   2   1

3a Employee benefits

3b Employee pay

3c Recognition of my efforts

3d Recognition of my team's efforts

3e Recognition of employee achievements

3f HR policies

3g How my job fits into GovDept

3h Staff changes

3i Staff promotions

3j Human interest stories about other employees

3k Employee news (birthdays, anniversaries and so on)

3l Employee photographs so that I can put faces to names

3m Features describing employees' work

Q4 Information about progress

5 =Very interested, 1=Not interested. Mark one box in each row.   5   4   3   2   1

4a GovDept performance

1

4b Achievements of GovDept

4c Things that haven't gone so well at GovDept

4d Job opportunities

4e Productivity improvements

4f Advertising and promotional plans

4g Client feedback (for example, compliments or complaints)

Q5 Please list any additional communication content or information you would find interesting.

Communication methods

Q6 How helpful do you find current communication methods?

5=Very helpful, 1=Very unhelpful, N/A=No access. Mark one box in each row.   5   4   3   2   1   N/A

6a Team Notice Boards

6b Communications Notice Boards

6c Service Improvement Notice Boards

6d Facilities Notice Boards

6e Monthly Business Update

6f Weekly Bulletin

6g Team meetings

6h SMT all staff briefings

6i Email briefings

6j GovDept Intranet

6k Intranet Community

6l Blogs on Civil Pages

6m Employee recognition scheme updates

Q7 Please state how often team meetings are held:

Weekly	Twice a month	Monthly	Quarterly	Twice a year	Not at all

Q8 How interested would you be in the following alternative communication methods?

5=Very interested, 1=Not interested. Mark one box in each row.   5   4   3   2   1

8a An innovation forum (occasional meetings with employees at my level from sites across GovDept to share ideas and best practice)

8b Video presentations from senior managers

8c Phone conference calls

2

8d Web meetings

Q9 Please list any other communication methods you would find helpful

10 How do you prefer to receive the GovDept Monthly Business Update

5=Most preferred, 1=Least preferred. Mark one box in each row.   5   4   3   2   1

10a A shared printed copy (for example, on a notice board)

10b An electronic copy sent via email

10c An electronic copy to download from the intranet

10d At team meetings where impact on team is discussed

Your view of GovDept communications

Q11 Indicate your satisfaction with the following aspects of communication at GovDept :

5=Very satisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied. Mark one box in each row.   5   4   3   2   1

11a Extent to which GovDept communications are interesting

11b Extent to which GovDept communications are helpful

11c Communications in GovDept generally

11d Opportunities to feed my views upwards

11e Ways for me to pass on criticisms

11f Ways for me to communicate ideas to senior management

Overall internal communication

Q12 Overall, how good would you say the SMT at GovDept is at:

5=Very good, 1= Very poor. Mark one box in each row.   5   4   3   2   1

12a Communicating to employees

12b Seeking the views of employees or employee representatives
(focus groups, working groups, unions).

12c Responding to suggestions from employees or employee
representatives (focus groups, working groups, unions).

12d Allowing employees or employee representatives to influence
final decisions (focus groups, working groups, unions).

12e Keeping you informed about changes to the way GovDept is
being run

12f Keeping employees informed about changes in staffing

12g Keeping you informed about changes in the way you do your job

12h Keeping you informed about financial matters, including budgets

Q13 Overall, how good would you say *team leaders and service managers* are at:

5=Very good, 1= Very poor. Mark one box in each row.   5   4   3   2   1

13a Communicating to employees

13b Seeking the views of employees or employee representatives (focus groups, working groups, unions).

13c Responding to suggestions from employees or employee representatives (focus groups, working groups, unions).

13d Allowing employees or employee representatives to influence final decisions (focus groups, working groups, unions).

13e Keeping you informed about changes to the way GovDept is being run

13f Keeping employees informed about changes in staffing

13g Keeping you informed about changes in the way you do your job

13h Keeping you informed about financial matters, including budgets

13i Keeping employees informed about potential new clients

13j Communication directly with me

13k Listening to what I have to say

13l Responding to my ideas

Q14 Overall, how good would you say communication is with *fellow employees* outside my own team:

5=Very good, 1= Very poor. Mark one box in each row.   5   4   3   2   1

14a Communication between myself and other employees at my level

14b Extent to which other employees at my level listen to me

14c Extent to which other employees at my level are open to my ideas

Working at GovDept

Q15 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about working here?

5=Very strong agreement, 1=Very strong disagreement. Mark one box   5   4   3   2   1
                                               in each row.

15a I get involved with things happening in GovDept

15b I put extra effort in to help GovDept succeed

15c I go the extra mile to help GovDept succeed

15d I put extra energy into helping achieve GovDept ' aims

15e I work hard to ensure GovDept provides a good service

15f I make suggestions to improve the way we do things at GovDept

15g I don't give my opinion on issues affecting GovDept

15h Using my own initiative I carry out tasks that are not required as part of my job

15i I'm interested in what happens at GovDept

15j I'm interested in the future of GovDept

15k I am not into the goings on in GovDept

15l I come up with ideas to improve the way GovDept works

15m I think about improvements to help GovDept operate more effectively

15n I think about GovDept issues after work

15o I try to come up with solutions to GovDept problems

15p I care about the future of GovDept

15q I'm not bothered about GovDept ' future

15r I feel positive about working for GovDept

15s It feels good to be part of GovDept

15t I feel loyal to GovDept

15u I feel proud to tell people who I work for

15v I share many of the values of GovDept

15w I believe GovDept provides an important service

15x This is a good organisation to work for

Communication strengths and weaknesses

Q16 List below what for you are the **three best things** about communication in GovDept :

1.

2.

3.

Q17 List below what for you are the **three main things that could be done better** about communication in GovDept :

1.

2.

3.

Background information

This section collects background information to help understand the findings in more detail.

Please circle the relevant answer to each question.

Q18 What is your age?

1. Under 20

2. 20-29

3. 30-39

4. 40-49

5. 50-59

6. 60-64

7. 65 and above

Q19 Which department are you in?

APPENDIX B

INITIAL TEMPLATE FOR QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

1   Personal connectivity

1.1   Feeling valued

1.1.1   Conscious effort taken to communicate

1.1.2   Say 'hello'

1.2   Being authentic

1.2.1   Honesty

1.2.2   Tell employees before the media

1.2.3   Share bad news as well as good news

1.3   Senior manager visibility

1.3.1   People that you recognise

2   Being informed about what is happening

2.1   Plans

2.1.1   Transparency – warts and all

2.1.2   Hearsay

2.1.3   Plain English

2.1.4   Local context

2.1.4.1 Personal impact

2.1.4.2 Blockages – information does not always come down as it should

2.1.5   Consistency

2.2   Email briefings

2.2.1   Well written

2.2.1.1 Weekly summaries

2.2.2   Timely

2.2.3   Overkill

2.2.3.1 Too many

2.2.3.2 Too much detail

2.2.3.3 Propaganda – always good news

2.2.4   Accessibility (mobile devices)

2.3   Intranet and internal social media

2.3.1   Information hard to find on intranet

APPENDIX C

SECOND ITERATION OF TEMPLATE FOR QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

1	**Personal connectivity**
1.1	**Senior manager visibility**
1.1.1	Conscious effort taken to communicate
1.1.1.1	People that you recognise
1.1.1.2	People who say 'hello'
1.1.2	Disinterest
1.2	**Authenticity**
1.2.1	Honesty
1.2.1.1	Transparency – warts and all
1.2.1.1.1	Tell employees before the media
1.2.2	Informality
2	**Being informed about what is happening**
2.1	**Plans and progress**
2.1.1	Line manager or senior manager communication?
2.1.1.1	Blockages – information does not always come down as it should
2.1.2	Relevance to my department
2.2	**Changes**
2.2.1.1	Personal impact
2.2.1.2	Local context
2.2.1.2.1	Line manager or senior manager communication?
2.3	**Consistency**
2.3.1	Plain English
3	**Methods**
3.1	**Email briefings**
3.1.1	Well written
3.1.1.1	Weekly summaries
3.1.1.1.1	Timely
3.1.2	Too many, overkill
3.1.2.1	Propaganda – always good news
3.1.2.2	Too much detail