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MODULE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

(RESM8411p)

BA COMMUNICATION (HONOURS)

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6 August 2020

[Word count: 10,495 words from Abstract to Conclusion]

**Perceived effectiveness of email versus face-to-face
communication for internal briefings amongst Blue Moon teams**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE/S
ABSTRACT	6
1. INTRODUCTION	7-8
1.1 Background and contextualisation	7-8
2. RATIONALE	9
3. PROBLEM STATEMENT	9-10
4. RESEARCH GOAL AND RESEARCH QUESTION	10-11
5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	11
6. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION	11-15
6.1 The New Medium Theory	12-13
6.2 Media Richness Theory	14-15
7. CONCEPTUALISATION	16-17
7.1 Email communication	16
7.2 Face-to-face communication	16
7.3 Effective communication	16-17
7.4 Small group communication	17
7.5 Team briefing (internal briefings)	17
8. LITERATURE REVIEW	17-24
8.1 Email communication	18-19
8.2 Face-to-face communication	20-21
8.3 Effective communication	21-22
8.4 Small group communication	22-23
8.5 Communication medium effectiveness required for internal briefings at BM	23-24
9. RESEARCH PARADIGM	24-26
9.1 The epistemological position of interpretivism	25-26
9.2 The ontological position of interpretivism	26
10. RESEARCH DESIGN	26-27
11. POPULATION	27-28

12. SAMPLING	28
13. DATA COLLECTION METHOD	28-32
14. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD	33-35
15. TRUSTWORTHINESS	36
16. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	36-42
17. INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS	42-51
17.1 Effective communication	42-44
17.2 Face-to-face communication	44-46
17.3 Email communication	46-48
17.4 Small group communication	48-50
17.5 Team/internal briefings	50-51
18. RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED	51-53
19. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND HEURISTIC VALUE	53-55
19.1 Ethical considerations	53-54
19.2 Limitations	54-55
19.3 Heuristic value	55
20. CONCLUSION	55-56
REFERENCE LIST	57-60

TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1: Media richness	15
Table 1: Data collection instrument	30-32
Table 2: Respondent BMEAR01 findings	37
Table 3: Respondent BMEAR02 findings	38
Table 4: Respondent BMEAR03 findings	40
Table 5: Respondent BMEAR01-BMEAR03 overall findings	41

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Updated concept document	61
APPENDIX B – Interview schedule	62-64
APPENDIX C – Honours ethical clearance letter	65
APPENDIX C – Ethics checklist	66
APPENDIX D – Gatekeepers letter: Letter of introduction	67-68
APPENDIX D – Gatekeepers letter of approval	69
APPENDIX E – Consent form: Participant interviews	70-72
APPENDIX E – Consent form: Participant interviews audio or video recordings	73-75

ABSTRACT

The researcher's aim for this study was to determine employee perceptions on the effectiveness of email communication versus face-to-face communication when having to internally brief their team members at Blue Moon Corporate Communications (BM).

The researcher completed a qualitative study conducting semi-structured interviews with employees in the Employee Alignment Division at BM. The goal was to interpret and understand employee perceptions of effective communication and to gain an understanding of whether employees perceived one medium of communication more sufficient than the other to achieve effective communication.

Qualitative data analysis was conducted and the findings indicated that BM employees place a high worth on effective communication that is concrete, concise and complete when internally briefing their team members. This theme and sub-theme were mentioned the most. The results challenged the majority of the current literature which argue in favour of electronic communication as a more effective means of communication than face-to-face communication, of which BM employees perceive face-to-face communication to be a time-saving activity due to the richness the medium provides. Email communication was perceived as time-consuming because of its written form. This result was not expected and creates heuristic value for future studies.

Keywords: Email communication, Face-to-face communication, Effective communication, Small group communication, Team/internal briefings, Media richness, Employee perceptions, Blue Moon Corporate Communications.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research was conducted with Blue Moon Corporate Communications, who offer professional services in strategic and corporate communication, employee alignment, and events. The team members are required to internally brief each other on their client requests to deliver their specialist services at the highest possible standard.

The researcher's objective was to explore and understand why BM employees choose a specific medium to communicate with when internally briefing team members. The research problem is that many employees do not combine and use communication media for message effectiveness, but rather only use the medium they perceive to be effective.

The report below will outline the background and context for this study. The rationale, problem statement, research goal and research question are discussed, and the objectives highlighted. This is followed by a motivation of the theoretical foundation, definitions of the key concepts, and supported by previous studies in the literature review. The report proceeds with the relevant research paradigm and design, population, sampling, data collection and data analysis method. The report describes the trustworthiness of the study, followed by the presentation and interpretation of the findings. The researcher determines if the research question and objectives are addressed, and concludes with the ethical considerations, the study's limitations and its heuristic value.

1.1 Background and contextualisation

In the early 90s, email communication became a gateway for organisations and employees to communicate seamlessly (Gibbs, 2016). Its main advantage at the time was it did not have the same barriers of communication linked to traditional media like telephones and mail, such as the time-distance limitation (Time Management Success, 2020). However, as the technology of email communication evolves, its disadvantages are coming to the fore. It is a communication medium

that is often associated with ambiguous messaging, misinterpretation and lacking richness, which can lead to ineffective communication. This significant barrier has organisations reconsidering the way they communicate, with a revival of face-to-face being an effective communication medium (Time Management Success, 2020).

The research problem is worth investigating because face-to-face is the optimal medium of communication since it offers an enriched experience (both verbal and non-verbal cues) for the sender and receiver (Brawn, 2019). However, in the organisational context, it is time-consuming and is considered a barrier for employees who mistake efficiency for effectiveness (Delp, 2017).

Goman (2018) surmises that employees who use email are inevitably losing the ability to communicate effectively because parts of the message get lost through the medium. The medium itself becomes a barrier because of its one-dimensional nature (Brawn, 2019).

Harvard Business Review (2017) states that '[a] face-to-face request is 34 times more successful than an email.' However, email is an indispensable tool as a communication medium because of its instancy and ease to avoid the time and complexity required for face-to-face interactions.

The study of this topic is vital in corporate communication and the media environment because many employees only communicate using email. According to Brawn (2019), employees seldomly use other media, like face-to-face, in conjunction with email to improve message effectiveness and understanding. This study hopes to provide to the body of evidence that using more than one communication medium in the workplace can improve message effectiveness and success in interpretation.

2. RATIONALE

Conducting this research may benefit BM and its employees because many prefer using one medium to communicate internal briefs for task completion. When employees use only one medium to communicate with their team members, the risk of communication barriers and breakdown are higher, since not everyone interprets messages the same way. This contributes to the purpose of this study, because the findings will possibly inform a process change in the way people communicate at Blue Moon to warrant effective communication.

The outcomes of this study also aims to contribute to the minimal body of knowledge available, demonstrating that the use of multiple media channels for small group communication and internal briefings contribute to message effectiveness and the success of interpretation in the organisational context.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Delp (2017), employees choose email communication over face-to-face because it requires less effort than the time it takes to talk to a person. However, as mentioned above, face-to-face communication is considered to be 34 times more successful, therefore implying it is more effective than email.

According to Sharma and Sharma (2015), effective communication is when a mix of media is used between people to deliver, receive, and interpret a message successfully. Therefore, choosing to use only one medium to communicate effectively can pose problems due to all media being susceptible to some form of barriers. For example, email communication is open to semantic barriers, ambiguity, and misinterpretation (Girardin, 2018). Face-to-face communication can also be ineffective because there is no accountability of agreed actions, which is an advantage for email because of its written form (The Business Communication, 2020).

According to Brawn (2019), employees have a high dependency on email communication, which disrupts working time and increases information overload. On the other hand, Goman (2018) states that lessened face-to-face communication is a link to the negative factors of email use, while Leonard (2019) argues that good communicators use different media to aim for clarity in messaging, therefore increasing the effectiveness of the communication.

This problem affects BM because team members misinterpret internal briefs, which lead to task duplication and delays. BM operates on a time-based model, and therefore its ability to deliver high-quality work in the shortest amount of time increased productivity and profitability. When there is a breakdown in communication due to message ineffectiveness, both productivity and profitability are affected.

The researcher wanted to find out employee perceptions of email and face-to-face communication media effectiveness when having to internally brief team members. She also sought to understand if employees felt that one medium was sufficient to communicate with or if they felt that effective communication was achievable by using multiple media for successful message interpretation.

4. RESEARCH GOAL AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Many employees at BM prefer to communicate with team members using only one communication medium for internal briefings. In most instances, this leads to misinterpretation of the brief causing task duplication and sometimes delays in the delivery of work.

The main goal of this study was to understand why BM employees choose email or face-to-face as a medium to communicate internal briefings. The researcher wanted to understand if the choice made by employees is due to their perception of the

effectiveness of a medium. The findings from this study may contribute to streamlining some of BM's internal processes and possibly demonstrate to employees that by using multiple media it can lead to effective communication, which in turn improves productivity and profitability for the company. The researcher also aimed to explore and understand if communication effectiveness is achievable through a mix of media that complement each other.

Research question:

How do Blue Moon employees perceive the effectiveness of email compared to face-to-face as a medium of communication when internally briefing team members?

5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The researcher's objectives were:

- To determine if BM employees choose a medium of communication they perceive to be effective when internally briefing team members
- To determine if BM employees choose email or face-to-face communication for its effectiveness as a communication medium when internally briefing team members
- To establish if BM employees perceive email communication to be more effective than face-to-face communication (or vice versa) when internally briefing team members
- To ascertain if BM employees perceive that the use of both media complement each other to improve message effectiveness when internally briefing team members

6. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The theories that related to the research problem and were relevant to this study are New Medium theory and Media Richness Theory (MRT).

6.1 New Medium theory

The New Medium Theory is an extension of Marshall McLuhan's medium theory, which was further developed by Mark Poster in the 1980s (Littlejohn, Foss & Oetzel, 2017). It distinguishes the first and second media ages, and Littlejohn *et al.* (2017) outline the first age of new media as centrally produced, one-way communication, usually state-controlled, reproducing social stratification and inequality, with divided mass audiences.

The second media age describes new media as many-to-many, decentralised content owners, permitting two-way communication, out of state control, democratising, and promoting individual awareness and orientation (Littlejohn *et al.*, 2017).

Littlejohn *et al.* (2017) state that New Medium Theory has two approaches, social interaction and social integration. Social interaction focuses on a medium's proximity to face-to-face communication (Littlejohn *et al.*, 2017). Littlejohn *et al.* (2017) assert that this viewpoint sees broadcast/first age media as informational, which mediates reality for the audience and allows for no feedback. Conversely, this approach acknowledges new/second age media as interactive, allowing for a form of personal contact (Littlejohn *et al.*, 2017). New media promotes knowledge sharing and is empowering for its users, which draws people to choose it over face-to-face. However, despite its semblance to face-to-face, it is still mediated because it is transmitted through a device (Littlejohn *et al.*, 2017).

Social integration characterises media use as a ritual to how people create communities (Littlejohn *et al.*, 2017). When people use new media, they have a sense of belonging, despite the interaction not requiring others to participate in these rituals. According to Littlejohn *et al.* (2017), face-to-face communication is no longer a priority, nor can it compete, because people interact with new media independently. It also constructs and shapes conversations in ways that would

typically not occur in face-to-face interactions, for example, when people cyberbully on social media (Littlejohn *et al.*, 2017).

This theory was relevant to this study because it addresses the research problem of which medium BM employees perceive to be effective in communication when internally briefing team members. The social interaction and integration approach address answerability, feasibility, and scope of the research problem.

The research problem is that employees choose either email or face-to-face communication because they perceive the one medium sufficient for message effectiveness (Sharma & Sharma, 2015). The preferred communication medium used contributes to whether a message has sufficient cues to convey the intended meaning (Littlejohn *et al.*, 2017).

This theory is appropriate because email communication is open to semantic barriers, ambiguity, and misinterpretation (Girardin, 2018). This theory links to the problem statement because social interaction relates to a medium's closeness to face-to-face communication, the benchmark for communication media (Littlejohn *et al.*, 2017).

This theory makes the research feasible because it allows for trustworthiness for the researcher to observe and understand why BM employees perceive their choice of communication medium is more effective. The simplicity of this theory makes the study feasible and achievable in addressing the problem statement (Littlejohn *et al.*, 2017). The two approaches from the theory provide sufficient scope to address the problem because it is not too broad nor too narrow. This theory is also general enough to apply to other studies.

6.2 Media Richness theory

According to Ishii, Lyons and Carr (2019), MRT was proposed by Richard Daft and Robert Lengel in 1986 and is the most influential theory for new media. This theory argued that managers could match a medium's richness with a task's features to improve organisational and employee performance (Ishii *et al.*, 2019).

MRT states there are four factors which influence media richness, i.e. 'the ability of the medium to transmit multiple cues (e.g., vocal inflection, gestures), the immediacy of feedback, language variety, and the personal focus of the medium (the ability to personalise the message to the receiver)' (Ishii *et al.*, 2019).

Face-to-face communication is a richer medium because it allows people to communicate instantly and is better to understand ambiguous messages when compared to a less rich medium (Ishii *et al.*, 2019). According to MRT, using richer media leads to better performance on complicated tasks, which may have multiple understandings for people who need a shared meaning of the task. For simpler, less complicated tasks, leaner media leads to better performance on those types of tasks, because it requires fewer cues to interpret the meaning (Ishii *et al.*, 2019).

Ishii *et al.* (2019) state that MRT was developed as a theory of media use instead of media choice, that is which medium would be most effective for a task rather than which medium managers choose when issuing a task. However, in subsequent years, this theory was used to predict media choice instead of what it was intended for (Ishii *et al.*, 2019).

This theory is seldomly used for its main proposition; however, it has a high value of validity because there is an intuitive belief from managers that richer media should be used for non-routine/complicated task allocation and that this does influence the media choice (Ishii *et al.*, 2019).



Figure 1: Media richness (Zhang, 2019)

As represented in Figure 1, the degree of richness increases as the communication moves from an image to face-to-face. This theory relates to the research problem, and the application of the theory will edify the study being conducted. MRT indicates to the sender the medium best suited when having to communicate tasks that are complex/requires a high amount of effort.

This theory was feasible for the study because the researcher's role was to interpret and understand which medium BM employees perceived to be effective when they internally brief team members. MRT is also applicable in scope because it is neither too general nor too broad. Its concepts are parsimonious, making it easy to apply from an interpretivist perspective, using a qualitative method to collect data from BM employees.

Both theories discussed are sufficiently rooted in academic foundation and have heuristic value because they are used across many fields, from information communication technology to sociology, psychology, and communication.

7. CONCEPTUALISATION

The key concepts identified for this study were email communication, face-to-face communication, effective communication, small group communication and team briefings (internal briefings). The discussion below defines each concept and how they pertain to BM.

7.1 Email communication

Pietruszewska (2020) defines email communication as the exchange of short informational messages between people over a computer network. The messages may contain text, images, and document attachments (Pietruszewska, 2020). The medium is interactive because the sender has the choice to include moving images, video, and audio files to enhance the message for the receiver to engage, interact, and respond. Like face-to-face, it allows for two-way communication (Pietruszewska, 2020). However, based on MRT, it is a low richness medium because it lacks non-verbal cues, and there is no guarantee of an immediate response from the receiver which exists in face-to-face communication (Ishii *et al.*, 2019).

7.2 Face-to-face communication

Face-to-face communication is the synchronous, social interaction between people who are present in the same physical environment and use a combination of verbal and non-verbal cues when sending, receiving, and interpreting messages. Like email, it is a two-way medium; however, in contrast, responses are immediate (The Business Communication, 2020). According to Ishii *et al.* (2019), due to its 'rich' nature, it is a high richness medium. The Washington Post (2018) states that face-to-face is the 'gold standard' of human communication which other forms of mediated interaction aim to achieve.

7.3 Effective communication

According to Sharma and Sharma (2015), effective communication is when a mix of media is used between people with the intention of delivering, receiving and

interpreting a message successfully. To communicate effectively, the message needs to contain the 7Cs of communication (Sharma & Sharma, 2015). Effectiveness is achieved through concrete, coherent, clear, committed, concise, complete, and courteous messages. Communication effectiveness can be enhanced further through the use of technology, like email. It enables people to communicate effectively with the ability to use more than one communication medium to supplement the shortcomings and barriers of the other medium, thereby further decreasing the gap of misunderstanding (Sharma & Sharma, 2015).

7.4 Small group communication

Small group communication is a transactional process with members who continually and simultaneously send and receive messages to create shared meaning (University of Minnesota, 2016). They are an interdependent group who influence each other over a period of time because they have a common goal, each with specialised roles. They maintain a sense of belonging through group norms and standards, and symbolic behaviour to engage in interactive communication (University of Minnesota, 2016).

7.5 Team briefing (internal briefings)

A team briefing is defined as when managers bring together their teams to meet face-to-face to deliver work-related information, allow for questions to be asked and provide feedback (University of Exeter, 2016). Team briefings enable communication upwards, downwards and sideways in an organisation. Team briefings combine face-to-face and small group communication and improve message effectiveness (University of Exeter, 2016).

8. LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem the researcher explored and tried to understand was which medium employees choose for effectiveness when communicating with team members for internal briefings. According to Delp (2017), email communication requires less

effort than the time it takes to talk to someone, in which employees are willing to sacrifice message effectiveness over medium efficiency.

All communication media are open to barriers for interpretation and response (Toppr.com, 2020). This could be due to limitations of the medium itself, or because people are influenced by factors like emotions, levels of understanding, cultural background, etc. (Littlejohn *et al.*, 2017). The researcher will interpret the perceptions of BM employees and the medium they perceive effective to communicate with team members, as well as the possible reason/s as to why they avoid the other medium or not use them, in tandem to communicate effectively.

The review below addresses the researcher's objectives by outlining a theoretical framework based on other research studies conducted within the boundaries of the topic and the problem.

8.1 Email communication

Time Management Success (2020) states that email has both advantages and disadvantages. Some advantages include affordability; simplicity to reference sent and received messages, ease of use and functionality, and the speed in getting messages to people within an organisation or across the globe. When used correctly, it is an efficient and effective medium for communication (Time Management Success, 2020).

Disadvantages include the misinterpretation of messages because of people's diverse perceptions and frames of references to certain words or phrases (Time Management Success, 2020). It can also lead to information overload because people use the medium to send information to managers or team members to validate productivity. Email communication deprives users of the personal touch, i.e., the difference a hand-written note makes or the non-verbal cues from face-to-

face interactions that contribute to meaningful and personalised messages (Time Management Success, 2020).

According to a study by Czerwinski, Johns, and Iqbal (2016), email communication is useful for coordinating and assigning tasks amongst team members. It is also the most used communication medium in organisations. The goal of their study was to understand how email usage is related to workplace productivity and stress (Czerwinski *et al.*, 2016). Their research states that the intended use of email is as a tool to benefit communication; however, they did link its use to lowered productivity and stress because they found that employees perceived to be less productive due to having to attend to emails. Contrastingly, in their research, they also cite that email communication, when coupled with face-to-face, positively impacts productivity and communication effectiveness among team members (Czerwinski *et al.*, 2016).

The research by Czerwinski *et al.* (2016) was relevant to this study because it equipped the researcher with recent references on medium effectiveness in organisations. The links made to employees' lowered productivity and higher stress levels due to the high volume and complexity of email communication can create psychological barriers like information overload, to the medium that may contribute to its ineffectiveness (Czerwinski, Johns, & Iqbal, 2016).

Their findings were significant to this research study because it addressed three objectives of this study (Czerwinski, Johns, & Iqbal, 2016). The two were BM employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of email and face-to-face communication when they send out internal briefs to their team members, and third, was the feelings of the team members who receive these internal briefs on email or face-to-face (Czerwinski, Johns, & Iqbal, 2016).

8.2 Face-to-face communication

Face-to-face communication is advantageous because it demands immediate responses between individuals; it also facilitates the expression of feelings, usually lost in email communication, portrayed through non-verbal cues like facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice. It promotes collaboration because, in most instances, a conversation involves the negotiation of goals (The Business Communication, 2020).

Despite face-to-face being considered the richest medium (Ishii *et al.*, 2019) or the 'gold standard' (The Washington Post, 2018), it does have its disadvantages. Face-to-face is difficult in large organisations, where departments are spread out or situated in different locations (The Business Communication, 2020). It also has a low impact on large gatherings because of the lack of personal touch and limited feedback. Face-to-face is also ineffective if the listener is not attentive or has poor retention. There is also no accountability of agreed actions, which is an advantage of email (The Business Communication, 2020).

According to Bohns (2017), face-to-face communication is '34 times more successful than an email'. Roghanizad and Bohns' (2016) research study 'Ask in person: You're less persuasive than you think over email' was published in 2016 in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology in which they hypothesised that people would overestimate the effectiveness of email communication and underestimate face-to-face when having to persuade other people with a request (Roghanizad & Bohns, 2016).

Roghanizad and Bohns' (2016) study was also relevant to this research because it provided an understanding for the researcher on how BM employees perceive the effectiveness of both email and face-to-face communication. The purpose that their research serves this study is that it links to the theories discussed above. Both theories propose face-to-face communication as the ideal; however, they also

allude to no one medium being known, nor proven to be full-proof in ensuring effective communication.

8.3 Effective communication

Positive human interaction is underpinned by effective communication which considers the emotional impact of a message together with the actual information and factual content (Leonard, 2019). Good communicators are aware of the barriers for different media and aim for clarity in messaging, so it is not complicated nor misinterpreted. Despite the efforts of the communicator, there will still be pros and cons, even when the message is delivered in an effective and clear manner (Leonard, 2019).

According to Leonard (2019), effective communication is advantageous when it promotes understanding, and the receiver does not question the message's meaning. Non-verbal cues from face-to-face interactions contribute to message understanding when attention is paid in reading them. When communication is effective, it builds and maintains group relationships by reducing conflict and strengthening bonds (Leonard, 2019).

Some of the disadvantages that affect well-thought-out and planned messaging are circumstances beyond control, low audience engagement and the timing that can influence the effectiveness and create negative acknowledgement (Leonard, 2019).

Both articles from Sharma and Sharma (2015), and Leonard (2019) address what effective communication is and how it is also open to barriers and have disadvantages. They all state that the skill of the communicator is important in ensuring that messages are created and delivered in a way where maximum efficacy is attained. They agree that effective communication cannot take place within a single medium and that the communicator's role is to know which media work best together to ensure the message is received as intended.

These articles were relevant because the researcher was able to establish why employees choose one medium over the other to communicate with their team members when they could use both email and face-to-face to complement each medium's shortfall to achieve their communication goal/s. Both journal sources were published in the last five years, with Sharma and Sharma (2015) being published in an Indian journal and Leonard (2019) on an American business website. The articles are also relevant in the South African context, because effective communication in organisations is a global phenomenon that the researcher now understands in the context of BM and its employees.

8.4 Small group communication

Le Cren (2016) states that effective communication is more than just face-to-face interactions and that people who work in small groups may require different types of communication. Technology plays a significant role in the communication mix and, when used effectively, saves time, and helps team members work efficiently (Le Cren, 2016). A combination of different media works well with teams and is key when having to communicate effectively across them (Le Cren, 2016).

Two-way feedback allows team members to solve problems and work together. However, even communicating feedback is a communication skill, which all team members need to have to ensure cohesion (Le Cren, 2016). In organisations, most instances of providing feedback entails requesting work to be redone or changed, and this is best done face-to-face then backed up with a written record, like email. The email message reinforces the face-to-face and is the agreement made by the group (Le Cren, 2016).

Le Cren's (2016) article contributes to this research because it outlines how communication can be effective in small groups. BM employees issue internal briefs to team members to ensure a project or a portion of the project is completed and

delivered on time. This article reinforces what Sharma and Sharma (2015), and Leonard (2019) highlight above about communication media and effectiveness, that no one medium can serve the sole purpose in ensuring effective communication within teams at BM. Employees/team members should send internal briefs with at least two types of media to ensure effectiveness.

Zhang (2019) challenges the authors above and the principles of MRT. Face-to-face communication should no longer be considered the richest medium for human communication because technology has advanced to such a degree that face-to-face is no longer the most efficient way to convey messages (Zhang, 2019). She further argues that face-to-face is losing ground as an effective medium because technology provides ways of overcoming this; for example, by using virtual face-to-face applications to communicate with people (Zhang, 2019).

According to Zhang (2019), technology has changed the dynamics of communication with the way people use it to communicate for work, at home, meeting new people, and making and maintaining friendships. Digital media aids in breaking down personal/individual barriers because people are more willing to say and do things with their 'virtual' community that they would not normally do in face-to-face interactions. She claims that there are no good or bad communication styles, and conveying messages is about satisfying the communicator's intention (Zhang, 2019).

8.5 Communication medium effectiveness required for internal briefings at BM

Internal briefings at BM are an important work-related function amongst the small groups/team members. It is the operational link between their clients' requests and the ability to deliver a service of a high standard, within a specific time frame under strict budgetary constraints.

For BM employees to perform this essential function in their process; effective communication is required amongst the group. The BM internal briefing process is the exchange of information between team members. Each team member performs a different set of skills, such as creative direction and writing, art direction and designing, account and project management, in order to deliver on the product or render the service. The internal briefing provides each team member with a specific amount of information to complete their portion of the task before delivering it to the client.

As mentioned in section 7.3 above, Sharma and Sharma (2015) state that for communication to be effective, the 7Cs need to be applied. However, a single medium cannot fulfil this, and therefore a mix of communication media should be used to achieve all seven characteristics (Sharma & Sharma, 2015). With smaller work teams, like at BM, face-to-face communication is the best medium to communicate work-related tasks (Anttoney, 2018). However, effective face-to-face communication is only coherent, clear, committed, and courteous. As a medium, it lacks concreteness, conciseness and completeness, which email communication fills this gap (The Business Communication, 2020).

In the context of BM and their internal briefings, both media are essential for team members to interpret the message correctly to perform tasks efficiently, accurately and timeously.

9. RESEARCH PARADIGM

The paradigm appropriate for this study is interpretivism. Interpretivism is the subjective way of interpreting data and posits that people cannot be viewed or interpreted as objects (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). According to Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014), over time, humans change because of influences in their environment, which is described as meaningful action.

Hermeneutics, phenomenology, and symbolic interactionism influence the principles of interpretivism. Hermeneutics interprets human action; phenomenology is the way people understand the world around them, which advocates that human action is meaningful and that people attribute meaning to theirs and others' actions (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). Symbolic interactionism views reality as constructed and symbolic because humans have shared meaning systems, and therefore can interpret meaning into each other's actions. Researchers who pursue interpretivist studies want to gain an in-depth understanding as to what is relevant and meaningful in the world through the eyes of their participants (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014).

Interpretivism is relevant because the researcher aimed to gain an in-depth understanding by interpreting the responses from BM employees based on their perceptions of the effectiveness of email or face-to-face communication used as a medium to brief their team members internally.

Phenomenology was achieved through the researcher's understanding of how employees attribute meaning to their perceived effective medium. Conversely, the perceptions of their team members', and their assigned meaning to the medium they receive the internal brief, is also part of the research. Internal briefings are a part of BM's workflow process, which has a shared meaning amongst its employees. This was explored to understand the symbolic interactions of each respondent and their interpretation of meaning that is created by others' actions.

9.1 The epistemological position of interpretivism

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014), positivism disregards common sense as a form of knowledge while interpretivism supports it. The researcher will explain the common-sense views of her respondents to understand human behaviour better. At the same time, the knowledge derived from this is dependent on the context and the interpretation of the respondents' feedback (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*,

2014). The results obtained are not generalised and is only applicable in the context to which the research is conducted (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014).

9.2 The ontological position of interpretivism

Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014), states that reality is a social construction dependent on the meanings that people assign to their own experiences and interactions with other people. The social world is what people perceive it to be and is an internally experienced sense of reality, which differs for every person in that reality (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014).

The meanings that employees assign at BM will surface as the ontological position because it will be a construction of their own experiences and interactions. As mentioned above, the social world is a construction of what people perceive it to be, which differs from person to person. So, when an employee chooses the medium they perceive to be effective to communicate with, it may not be the same perception as that of the recipient.

10. RESEARCH DESIGN

The appropriate research design type for this study was qualitative research because it was conducted from an interpretivist perspective. The researcher interpreted BM employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of email and face-to-face communication media from a subjective point of view (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014).

The design sub-type is exploratory because the study's main purpose was to understand employee perceptions of the research problem (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). This was to explore and understand which medium of communication BM employees use for internal briefs and whether their choice is based on the medium's effectiveness. This sub-type is also applicable because the researcher collected data through semi-structured interviews. It was further relevant because its flexibility

enabled the researcher to understand an unknown area of research (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014).

Budgetary and time constraints, plus the South African Government restrictions applied due to the COVID-19 pandemic, allowed only for a cross-sectional study. The data collected, and the results analysed represent the prevailing characteristics of BM employees at a certain point in time. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised to a larger population and will only provide information on the current population (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014).

11. POPULATION

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014), a population is 'the total group of people from whom information is required'. The target population at BM is the total number of people employed, which is 25. A subset of this population who meet the parameters is the accessible population and which make up a total of 11 people. From the accessible population, three people were selected and interviewed as the sample population.

Lim (2019) states that a population parameter is a value of data that describes the entire population, whilst the units of analysis are the data that describes the accessible population. The parameter for the total population is that the people are all employed by BM. The units of analysis for the accessible/sample population were:

- BM employees who work in the Employee Alignment division,
- BM employees who are from the Creative, Design and Account Management departments,
- A respondent had to either be a Creative Director, a Graphic Designer or an Account Manager in order to represent each department,
- They are team members working on a specific account/project because they share group objectives and team goals.

These common characteristics require them to internally brief each other using the communication media available to complete a task/project. The second unit of analysis was the interview transcripts recorded during the interviews.

12. SAMPLING

For this qualitative study, the category used was non-probability sampling because generalisation to a larger population was not the aim (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). The researcher did not randomly select participants but rather used her judgement based on the parameters outlined above, which meant there was no equal opportunity for people to form part of the sample. Three participants made up the sample population.

The sampling method used was quota sampling because the researcher drew the sample to match the characteristics specified in the parameters. This attribute was based on the department that each participant works in, so that they were proportionately represented in the final sample. The researcher selected one respondent from the Creative, Design and Account Management departments to make provision for the differences in opinion due to each person contributing a different skill, i.e. Creative Director, Graphic Designer and Account Manager. Each respondent's differing skillset offers varying responses and perceptions on communication media, based on their contribution of the work required to complete the job/project.

13. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The first step taken was to request permission from Michelle Caldeira, the Managing Director of BM, to conduct the study with the employees. Once permission was granted, the researcher emailed the employees advising them of her study and that the employees selected will voluntarily participate in the research. She also advised employees that should they be selected they would require to give consent in a signed letter.

The employees who agreed to participate in the research were a Senior Creative Director; a Graphic Designer; and an Account Manager. The data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with an interview schedule. These interviews provided the researcher with varying responses, therefore increasing the body of knowledge to better understand perceptions of communication medium effectiveness in the company.

Due to the lockdown restrictions mandated by Government as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted virtually and recorded via Microsoft (MS) Teams. The recordings were automatically saved to the researcher's MS Stream account, which is password protected and backed up on the cloud.

Whilst waiting for ethical clearance to proceed with her research, she emailed the participants and tentatively booked their separate interview slots via a meeting request. Upon receiving ethical clearance, each interview slot was confirmed at 30 minutes duration in the first week of July 2020. All three interviews were recorded and transcribed for the data analysis phase.

Table 1: Data collection instrument

RQ	NO	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	MAIN THEMES	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
How do Blue Moon employees perceive the effectiveness of email compared to face-to-face as a medium of communication when internally briefing team members?	1.	To determine if Blue Moon employees choose a medium of communication they perceive to be effective when internally briefing team members →	Small group communication - Transactional process → Team/internal briefings - Open communication - Two-way → Small group communication - Transactional process - Interdependence - Common goals Email communication → - Written - No guarantee of immediate feedback Face-to-face communication → - Verbal - Immediate feedback Email communication → - Written Face-to-face communication →	Which medium of communication do you prefer using at work amongst your team members? (Follow-up question needed) When you need to internally brief your team members, which medium of communication do you prefer to use? (Follow-up question needed) <i>* If the medium is different in Q1 and Q2:</i> Why do you choose MEDIUM A in Q1 and MEDIUM B in Q2?
			- Verbal Effective communication → - Coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face communication) - Concrete, concise, complete (email communication) Effective communication → - Time-saving Face-to-face - Time-consuming	OR <i>* If the medium is the same in Q1 and Q2:</i> Do you perceive (email or face-to-face) to be an effective communication medium to internally brief your team members? (Follow-up question needed) Do you use this medium to communicate because it saves you time to send out your message? (Follow-up question needed)
	2.	To determine if Blue Moon employees choose email or face-to-face communication for its effectiveness as a communication medium when internally briefing team members →	Effective communication → - Coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face communication) - Concrete, concise, complete (email communication) Effective communication → - Media mix	Do you think the medium you perceive to be effective for internal briefs, fulfils at least 3-4 of the 7Cs of communication? (Follow-up question needed) Do you think your message could be more effective if you used an additional medium to communicate

				with? (Follow-up question needed)
	3.	To establish if Blue Moon employees perceive email communication to be more effective than face-to-face communication (or vice versa) when internally briefing team members →	Email communication → - Low richness medium OR Face-to-face communication → - High richness medium Effective communication → - Coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face communication) - Concrete, concise, complete (email communication) Small group communication → - Transactional process - Interdependence Team/internal briefings - Open communication - Two-way Small group communication → - Transactional process - Interdependence	Would you consider your communication medium of choice rich in nature? (Follow-up question needed) How do you perceive the effectiveness of (email or face-to-face) communication based on the richness of this medium? (Follow-up question needed) How do you feel when you receive internal briefs via only one medium of communication? (Follow-up question needed)
			- Common goals Effective communication → - Coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face communication) - Concrete, concise, complete (email communication)	
	4.	To ascertain if Blue Moon employees perceive that the use of both media complement each other to improve message effectiveness when internally briefing team members →	Email communication → - Written - No guarantee of feedback - Time saving - Low richness medium Face-to-face communication → - Verbal - Immediate feedback - Time-consuming - High richness medium Effective communication → - Media mix Small group communication → - Transactional process - Interdependence	Which other medium would you choose to mix with your (email or face-to-face) communication so that you can achieve the 7Cs to communicate effectively? (Follow-up question needed) Do you think your media mix complement each other to ensure message effectiveness? (Follow-up question needed)

			- Common goals Email Communication → - Written - Time-saving - No guarantee of immediate feedback - Low richness medium OR Face-to-face communication → - Verbal - Time-consuming - Immediate feedback - High richness medium Effective Communication → - Media mix Team/internal briefings - Open communication - Two-way → Effective Communication → - Coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face communication) - Concrete, concise, complete (email communication)	Do you think that it would be more effective to use both media for internal briefs with team members? <i>(Follow-up question needed)</i> Would you prefer to receive internal briefs via both email and face-to-face communication media? <i>(Follow-up question needed)</i>
			communication) - Media mix Small group communication - Transactional process → - Interdependence - Common goals Team/internal briefings - Open communication - Two-way → -	

Table 1 above refers as part of the data collection method that the researcher used which contributed to developing her instrument to ensure trustworthiness. It also encompassed the salient points required to ensure alignment across the study. It outlined the objectives which were linked to the research question (RQ). The main themes and sub-themes indicated above also tied in with the RQ, the objectives, the key concepts and the purpose of the study. The themes were input into the QDA Miner Lite software for the data analysis process. The questions that were asked of the participants addressed these themes and sub-themes, and also answered the RQ. All these contributing factors added to the trustworthiness of the study.

14. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

The data analysis method that was applicable for this interpretivist study was textual analysis. According to Fürsich (2018), it is a method used in qualitative research to examine and interpret texts focusing on the ideological and cultural assumptions of that text. The goal of textual analysis is to explain the variety of possible meanings that come from each respondent. When the researcher completed the interviews and saved the recordings, she followed an eight-step process, from preparing the data to reporting on the findings.

For the preparation of the data, each interview was transcribed word-for-word and saved as a password protected MS Word file labelled BMEAR01, BMEAR02 and BMEAR03, with a date convention the interview took place, e.g., 20200701. The respondents are only identifiable as an alphanumeric code based on the order they accepted to participate in this study. The respondents were be coded as, BMEAR01, BMEAR02, and BMEAR03. The respondent code is broken down as follows:

- BM = Blue Moon
- EA = Employee Alignment (department name)
- R = Respondent
- Numeric = the order they accepted to participate

The coding units that were analysed were the themes and sub-themes, as outlined in Table 1. Each main theme and its sub-themes are listed below.

- Theme 1: Email communication
 - Written
 - Time-saving
 - No guarantee of immediate feedback
 - Low richness medium
- Theme 2: Face-to-face communication
 - Verbal
 - Time-consuming

- Immediate feedback
- High richness medium (non-verbal cues)
- Theme 3: Effective communication
 - Concrete, concise, complete (email communication)
 - Coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face communication)
 - Media mix
- Theme 4: Small group communication
 - Transactional process (continually and simultaneously send and receive messages)
 - Interdependence (influence each other)
 - Common goals (each with their specialised roles)
- Theme 5 – Team/internal briefings
 - Open communication
 - Two-way

The transcriptions of each interview were uploaded, processed and analysed through the qualitative data analysis software QDA Miner Lite (Provalis Research, 2016). The coding schemes and the categories the researcher input into the programme were the codes allocated for the respondents, and the themes and sub-themes as stated above.

The researcher used a portion of her literature review to run a test of the coding scheme through QDA Miner Lite to assess whether it pulled the data through with the assigned themes and sub-themes identified in the sample document. This also allowed her to familiarise herself with the software to ensure effective use during the analysis process.

The researcher colour coded each sub-theme and went through the transcripts line-by-line, highlighting the text using the colour codes allocated to each theme. When the results were drawn from the programme, the themes/sub-themes were

represented in the form of a table for each respondent and a fourth table containing the overall results.

Once each transcript was coded, she rechecked the documents to assess the coding consistency to ensure that no portion had been left uncoded. This was an important step in the process because any uncoded sections could contribute to different results altogether. This would affect the researcher's interpretation of the results and her presentation of findings. The software has the ability to identify the uncoded portions of the text, which enabled the researcher to go through the sections and complete coding them against the identified themes and sub-themes.

In this step, the researcher interpreted the results generated by the software to draw her conclusions for the study (indicated in section 16 below). She ran the programme to mine the data and calculate the results. The results are depicted in tables with the themes and sub-themes that were mentioned the most to the least. The researcher exported the results from QDA Miner and saved the files with password protection so that they can be referred to in the next step and at a later stage.

The final step for the researcher was to report on the findings, as discussed in section 17 below. Direct quotes from the respondents are included in the report to back-up or refute points raised in the theoretical foundation and the literature review. Similarities and differences are also be highlighted, interpreted and discussed in detail. The findings determine which medium BM employees perceive to be effective and whether more than one medium should be used for internal briefs. The outcome of this study cannot be generalised because it is only applicable in the context of Blue Moon, its employees, and its internal briefing process.

15. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness in qualitative studies is the researcher being able to establish that the findings in her study are credible, transferable and dependable (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). Credibility was gained through the accuracy in which the researcher interpreted the data. For this study, the researcher has long-term working relationships with the participants, and therefore the information they provided comes from the trust that exists between them. The use of QDA Miner Lite for the data analysis also increases the credibility of the study.

Transferability is the ability of the researcher to demonstrate how the findings from this study are applicable to other contexts (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). Transferability was achieved because the themes/sub-themes in this study, and the interview questions aligning with the research objectives and RQ, as demonstrated in Table 1.

Dependability is the extent to which a study can be replicated by other researchers, and the findings are consistent (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). This occurred when the researcher integrated the data collected, analysed it, and then created the theory objectively through the use of the data collection instrument (Table 1) and QDA Miner Lite minimising the possibility of human error.

16. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The tables and the discussion below present the individual findings from each of the respondents' semi-structured interviews, including the combined findings of all three respondents.

Table 2: Respondent BMEAR01 findings

MAIN THEMES	SUB-THEMES	SUB-THEMES MENTIONED MOST-TO-LEAST BY BMEAR01
Face-to-face communication	High richness medium (non-verbal cues)	27
Face-to-face communication	Verbal	14
Face-to-face communication	Immediate feedback	12
Face-to-face communication	Time consuming	2
		55
Effective communication	Concrete, concise, complete (email)	22
Effective communication	Media mix	17
Effective communication	Coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face)	14
		53
Email communication	Written	23
Email communication	Time-saving	9
Email communication	No guarantee of immediate feedback	9
Email communication	Low richness medium	9
		50
Small group communication	Transactional process	14
Small group communication	Interdependent (influence each other)	12
Small group communication	Common goals (with specialised roles)	5
		31
Team/internal briefings	Open communication	10
Team/internal briefings	Two-way	9
		19

The main themes in Table 2 mentioned by respondent BMEAR01, from most-to-least was **face-to-face communication**, **effective communication**, **email communication**, **small group communication** and **team/internal briefings**, respectively.

The sub-theme **high richness medium (non-verbal cues)** was mentioned the most and **time consuming** the least under the theme of **face-to-face communication**. For **effective communication**, the sub-theme **concreate, concise, complete (email)** was mentioned the most, with **coherent, clear,**

committed, courteous (face-to-face) mentioned the least. **Written** was mentioned the most, with **time-saving, no guarantee of feedback** and **low richness medium** mentioned the same number of times under the theme email communication. For **small group communication**, the sub-themes mentioned most-to-least were **transactional process, interdependent (influence each other)** and **common goals (with specialised roles)**. The least mentioned theme, **team/internal briefings** had the sub-themes **open communication** and **two-way** mentioned most-to-least.

Table 3: Respondent BMEAR02 findings

MAIN THEMES	SUB-THEMES	SUB-THEMES MENTIONED MOST-TO-LEAST BY BMEAR01
Face-to-face communication	Immediate feedback	34
Face-to-face communication	Verbal	25
Face-to-face communication	High richness medium (non-verbal cues)	20
Face-to-face communication	Time consuming	3
		82
Effective communication	Concrete, concise, complete (email)	38
Effective communication	Coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face)	21
Effective communication	Media mix	21
		80
Email communication	No guarantee of immediate feedback	22
Email communication	Written	21
Email communication	Low richness medium	15
Email communication	Time-saving	10
		68
Small group communication	Transactional process	25
Small group communication	Common goals (with specialised roles)	20
Small group communication	Interdependent (influence each other)	13
		58
Team/internal briefings	Two-way	13
Team/internal briefings	Open communication	10
		23

In Table 3, the main themes that came up most-to-least by respondent BMEAR02 were also **face-to-face communication**, **effective communication**, **email communication**, **small group communication** and **team/internal briefings**.

The sub-themes under **face-to-face communication** mentioned most-to-least were **immediate feedback**, **verbal**, **high richness medium (non-verbal cues)** and **time consuming**.

Concrete, concise, complete (email); **coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face)**, and **media mix** were the sub-themes from most-to-least that were mentioned under the main theme **effective communication**. For **email communication**, from most-to-least, the sub-themes were **no guarantee of feedback**, **written**, **low richness medium** and **time-saving**. As with respondent BMEAR01, **transactional process** was stated the most under the main theme **small group communication**; however **common goals (with specialised roles)** was lesser for respondent BMEAR02 and **interdependent (influence each other)** the least. **Two-way** was followed by **open communication** for the **team/internal briefings** main theme.

Table 4: Respondent BMEAR03 findings

MAIN THEMES	SUB-THEMES	SUB-THEMES MENTIONED MOST-TO-LEAST BY BMEAR01
Effective communication	Concrete, concise, complete (email)	23
Effective communication	Coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face)	11
Effective communication	Media mix	10
		44
Email communication	Written	11
Email communication	No guarantee of immediate feedback	2
Email communication	Low richness medium	2
Email communication	Time-saving	1
		16
Face-to-face communication	High richness medium (non-verbal cues)	10
Face-to-face communication	Immediate feedback	8
Face-to-face communication	Verbal	7
Face-to-face communication	Time consuming	1
		26
Small group communication	Transactional process	12
Small group communication	Common goals (with specialised roles)	4
Small group communication	Interdependent (influence each other)	0
		16
Team/internal briefings	Two-way	3
Team/internal briefings	Open communication	1
		4

The findings for respondent BMEAR03 was noticeably different when compared to the other two respondents. The main themes depicted in Table 4 from most-to-least were **effective communication**, **email communication**, **face-to-face communication**, **small group communication** and **team/internal briefings**.

The most mentioned main theme, **effective communication**, had **concrete, concise, complete (email)**; **coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face)**, and **media mix** ranked from most-to-least. The lesser mentioned email communication's sub-themes from most-to-least were, **written**, **no guarantee of feedback**, **low richness medium** and **time-saving**. Thereafter, from most-to-least

is **high richness medium (non-verbal)**, **immediate feedback**, **verbal** and **time consuming** for the main theme **face-to-face communication**. **Small group communication** followed with **transactional process**, **common goals (with specialised roles)**, and **interdependent (influence each other)** from most-to-least. The least mentioned main theme, **team/internal briefings** had **two-way** and **open communication** as it's sub-themes from most-to-least.

Table 5: Respondent BMEAR01 – BMEAR03 overall findings

MAIN THEMES	SUB-THEMES	SUB-THEMES MENTIONED MOST-TO-LEAST BY BMEAR01 - BMEAR03
Effective communication	Concrete, concise, complete (email)	83
Effective communication	Media mix	48
Effective communication	Coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face)	46
		177
Face-to-face communication	High richness medium (non-verbal cues)	57
Face-to-face communication	Immediate feedback	54
Face-to-face communication	Verbal	46
Face-to-face communication	Time consuming	6
		163
Email communication	Written	55
Email communication	No guarantee of immediate feedback	33
Email communication	Low richness medium	26
Email communication	Time-saving	20
		134
Small group communication	Transactional process	51
Small group communication	Common goals (with specialised roles)	29
Small group communication	Interdependent (influence each other)	25
		105
Team/internal briefings	Two-way	25
Team/internal briefings	Open communication	21
		46

Table 5 above represents the overall findings for the three respondents BMEAR01, BMEAR02 and BMEAR03. From most-to-least, the overall main themes were

effective communication, face-to-face communication, email communication, small group communication and team/internal briefings.

Under **effective communication**, the sub-themes **concrete, concise, complete (email), media mix and coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face)**, is the total outcome from most-to-least. The main theme **face-to-face communication** came in second with the sub-theme **high richness medium (non-verbal)** as the most mentioned, and **time-consuming** as the least mentioned. From most-to-least the sub-theme **written** dominated, followed by **no guarantee of feedback, low richness medium and time saving** for the main theme **email communication**. **Small group communication's** sub-themes **transactional process, common goals (with specialised roles), and interdependent (influence each other)** were mentioned most-to-least from the three respondents. The least mentioned main theme, **team/internal briefings**, had **two-way** mentioned the most and **open communication** the least for the overall finding.

17. INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

As mentioned in section 9 above, the overall results were interpreted by the researcher from a subjective point of view (interpretivism). The main themes from most-to-least mentioned were effective communication, face-to-face communication, email communication, small group communication and team briefings (internal briefings). The discussion below is the researcher's interpretation of the findings.

17.1 Effective communication

The researcher aimed to determine if BM employees understood what effective communication is and why they use the media they choose. The research findings also provide an explanation of how individual language and personal interpretation can affect effective communication, and why it is better to use more than one medium when trying to ensure interpretation is as intended.

As indicated in Table 5 (section 16), the most mentioned theme was *effective communication*. The sub-theme *concreate, concise, complete (email)* outweighed *coherent, clear, committed, courteous (face-to-face)* which had the least number of mentions by the respondents. The following direct responses from the respondents reflect this finding.

BMEAR02: *Definitely. Um, if I use email and a phone call, I think it would make things 10 times better 'cause I've written in the email, we've discussed it and if you're not sure about anything you can always refer back to the email.*

BMEAR03: *Oh sorry, sorry um. So between the two of them, you know it's like you know it's like the perfect (...) thing. Uhm, like things can drop it off on email. You don't understand an email, but then also if you don't understand from like the uh, face-to-face brief, you can always go back to email as well. So the two of them together is quite powerful.*

For communication to be effective, it needs to contain the 7Cs of communication and to achieve this, a mix of media needs to be used (Sharma & Sharma, 2015). All three respondents concur with this claim because their perception of effective communication is the use of both face-to-face and email communication media. However, they all leaned towards communication being most effective by having characteristics of concreteness, conciseness and completeness, which is more attainable through email because of its written nature and it is a form of record between their team members. The following response reflects this finding.

BMEAR03: *Then that also could be a problem, cause then you don't have any, uh, like any kind of written brief, where you can go back and reference.*

Both Sharma and Sharma (2015), and Leonard (2019) state that it is important for the communicator to have the skill to ensure that messages are created and delivered to attain maximum efficacy. The respondents all perceive face-to-face communication to be somewhat effective, but not substantial enough to achieve all seven characteristics of effectiveness due to its lack of proof. The respondents' overall consensus was that using more than one medium of communication for internal briefings is vital for effective communication.

17.2 Face-to-face communication

Face-to-face communication is a commonly used medium at BM in the form of brainstorming and internal briefings. However, despite the richness of this medium, barriers or breakdowns still occur. The researcher's intention was to understand the reasons for these barriers and possibly determine how to resolve the problems employees experience when using this medium to internally brief team members.

The second-ranking theme was *face-to-face communication*, with the most value placed on the *sub-theme high-richness medium* and the least value on it being *time-consuming*. This is reflected in the following responses.

BMEAR01: *If I am sitting with them, I like to go and sit with them face-to-face. If I'm not in the same room or location as them, I think something where I can see their body language, where I can see them reacting like like a Teams uhm, uh a meeting*

BMEAR02: *Uh, face-to, face. Uhm, I think with, you know with emails you can sometimes misinterpret what a person is saying as much as you think that you're quite clear in your email, somebody else might read it in a very different way, and I think with face-to-face, you're more able to get more in. I mean, I could ask you a question, you could answer it immediately and it become more than just a directive email to do something, but more of a collaborative thing where more information gets pulled out in a better, you know product is then designed at the end of the day. So, I do prefer face-to-face more than anything because you can also read a person's body language, you know, if a person doesn't seem to understand something, you can always see it in their face.*

BMEAR03: *Uh, (...) because you can kind of gauge people's reactions and see if they understand things. Uh, cause you ask questions as well. And you can also like (unintelligible segment) share there physically whether you (unintelligible segment) or face-to-face you can bring something up and show it to them. Yeah, I just need to move this there, this is what it will look like.*

Business Communication (2020) explains that the advantage of face-to-face communication is immediate feedback and that it permits non-verbal cues like expressions through body language, the face and tone of voice. Media richness, based on MRT, is determined by a medium's ability to transmit multiple cues, allow for immediate feedback between senders/receivers and provide personalisation (Ishii et al., 2019).

All three respondents acknowledged the importance of non-verbal cues when communicating with their team member during internal briefings. The respondents heavily rely on non-verbal cues which offers them immediate feedback, even if their colleagues are unknowingly giving it. The following was mentioned.

BMEAR03: *Oh, I wonder, I think that's quite a good point. It does, it does save time, but it's also the connection, the connection between the people is quite important I think as well.*

The definition of face-to-face communication is a social interaction between people, which is synchronous and requires presence in the same physical environment (The Business Communication, 2020). To coordinate a face-to-face engagement requires much effort from the people involved; and therefore, is considered time-consuming and disadvantageous to the medium (Delp, 2017). Interestingly, the respondents perceive face-to-face to be a time-saving activity and are more willing to conduct face-to-face interactions with their team members in an effort to save on the total amount of time of having to go back and forth over email to ensure message clarity and understanding.

17.3 Email communication

In the context of BM, the researcher aimed to understand employee perceptions of email as a communication medium and whether it is effective for internal briefings. She also found out how employees felt about sending and receiving briefs using only this medium to communicate with team members.

Email communication came in third, with *written* and *time-saving* as the most and least mentioned sub-themes, respectively. The responses below reflect this finding.

BMEAR01: *I, I think easily because the only thing that was missing was completeness, for my face-to-face, uh, and you can, you can actually a a a communicate a lot of information that you can't completely a a a communicate in the face-to-face with with with an email with text or (unintelligible segment).*

BMEAR02: *I'd use an email and in my email I would either attach a document that pertains to the brief. I would attach an image that, uh, either we've done something similar, or the client is looking for something like that. If needs be, I will attach my meeting recording, you know, link. Uhm if if if, if, if my one of my colleagues hasn't been able to to attend the meeting or for them to get more clarity and, I think I'd follow up with a phone call if they really, really need for it to happen.*

Czerwinski *et al.* (2016) assert that email is the most used communication medium in organisations to coordinate and assign tasks amongst teams. Its intended use is to benefit communication rather than overwhelm and reduce productivity. The respondents agree with this assertion and perceive it to be an ideal medium to supplement the shortcomings of face-to-face. The following were mentioned.

BMEAR01: *It is, it is a time saver. As I said, it takes quite a bit of writing to clarify, uh uh um, an issue, especially if the issue is, is complicated so uhm, if I just describe something there, it's, it's weird how body language actually transfers into into understanding. When you say we come up with like this, rather than that and the problem was, you know, so using all your things because verbal communication is just part of it, and typing is also just part of it, and sometimes tone is is is lost in an email because you can send an email and then then the person takes the prompt because they're assuming a tone in your communication whereas you can't mistake a tone here.*

BMEAR03: *Then that also could be a problem, cause then you don't have any, uh, like any kind of written brief, where you can go back and reference.*

Time Management Success (2020) indicates that a significant advantage of email communication is its speed in sending/receiving messages within an organisation and across the globe. It is often described as an efficient and effective medium of

communication when used correctly. Here too, all three respondents contrasted the literature, and perceive writing and sending an email a time-consuming function. Email communication is used by them mostly to send complex information like print specifications and detailed content like copy decks for their work projects. They also perceive the medium as an effective platform to record information between each other, giving them the ability to refer back to it long after the face-to-face conversation.

17.4 Small group communication

Most project teams at BM consist of three to four members who work closely with each other to deliver a high standard of service to their clients. In order to achieve project and team goals, team members need to communicate effectively by reducing barriers associated with the different media. The researcher determined whether team members are aware of the barriers that each medium is susceptible to, and what additional measures they take to ensure these barriers are overcome.

The second least mentioned theme was *small group communication* with *transactional process* articulated most and *interdependent (influence each other)* the least. The following responses indicate this finding.

BMEAR01: *I think I think the the the brief, would ja that it would be first prize just to get if if I was to not just receive the brief but give the brief, I would want assurance that the person understands it. Following up the email with a a face-to-face would be the best.*

BMEAR02: *So, I either respond to the email with a set of questions, you know. So if, uh, if the brief has not come with the due date, or if a brief has not come with you know poster specs or whatever, I ask the right, I I I read the brief properly and if I'm still not clear on certain things I'll then ask those questions, you know, be it is in an A3 or an A4...*

Small group communication is defined as a transactional process that occurs with team members who frequently and concurrently send/receive messages to ensure cohesion and task completion (University of Minnesota, 2016). The Blue Moon respondents accept these sentiments and are willing to repeat the transaction until their team members are able to interpret their messages and deliver on the task, as indicated in the responses below.

BMEAR01: *I think yes. I think it it it would. There would be a timing difference there. You would assume that your team members are diligent enough to actually start with with an email and that they read and get the context of it. And then you would follow up with a face-to-face and refer back to key points that people might have questions on.*

BMEAR03: *So, I mean the same type of thing, you a have sense of what's the person thinking in a face-to-face conversation. Update your uhm, ideas, then it can be put down in an email and finalised.*

The University of Minnesota (2016) state that small group communication is an interdependent group of people who impact each other because they have common goals to achieve. It creates a sense of belonging and requires constant interaction to achieve their work goals. Each respondent accepted that they are dependent on their team members to complete the task or project because each of them brings their own set of skills to the group. Without the ability to co-exist and align, they

would not be able to do their jobs without effective communication amongst each other.

17.5 Team briefing (internal briefings)

At BM, internal briefings is a key aspect to the workflow process for team members to gain a better understanding of a project's deliverables. Teams meet as often as they need to, to ensure they are all updated when project parameters change. When team members become busy with delivering their portion of the project, they forgo meetings and, in most instances, request an email of the meeting notes to be sent in an effort to save time. However, this creates room for miscommunication and misinterpretation, which requires additional time to redo tasks, puts pressure on other team members and often results in delays which impact profitability.

The least mentioned theme by the respondents was team briefing (internal briefings). The sub-theme two-way was mentioned slightly more than open communication. The following response reflects this finding.

BMEAR02: *I think like I said, emails could get lost in translation. I would rather have somebody ask me a question immediately than them sit and worry about it, and then when you know the due date has come, they haven't really answered everything or they're not sure and stuff. So, I think me sitting with you and me having a video call with your allows me to make sure that you understand that you understand rather and that you've asked me all questions you need to.*

The University of Exeter (2016) note that team briefings take place face-to-face to discuss work tasks, ask questions and provide feedback amongst team members. It is a combination of small group and face-to-face communication, which contributes to message effectiveness and in turn, effective communication. The respondents acknowledge this is a crucial function in the Blue Moon work process,

and no service or product would be rendered to their clients if this step was skipped or non-existent. One respondent indicated the following.

BMEAR03: *Uh, well, you can pick up on, you know, vocal inflection and gestures. Uh, you can, also, you know, get feedback immediately. Someone doesn't understand, you can reiterate it as a different way. Ja (...)*

As stated above under the sub-theme two-way, the ability for team members to ask questions and provide/give feedback indicates that there is open communication in the group. The three respondents accede that communication is open at Blue Moon and that they would not be able to demonstrate the creativity and produce the work they do for their clients.

18. RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

The researcher's objectives outlined at the onset of this document are recapped below with a discussion on the extent of them either being addressed or not, through the study.

Objective 1: To determine if BM employees choose a medium of communication, they perceive to be effective when internally briefing team members.

All three respondents perceive their medium of choice to be effective when having to brief their team members internally. These perceptions are further reflected in section 17 and below in the other objectives that are addressed.

Objective 2: To determine if BM employees choose email or face-to-face communication for its effectiveness as a communication medium when internally briefing team members.

One respondent indicated that they choose both email and face-to-face and use them concurrently to brief their team members internally. This respondent maintained that in order for an internal briefing to be successful, using both media ensure the receivers fully interpret and correctly understand the messages sent, to deliver on the work tasks at Blue Moon.

Two of the respondents chose face-to-face as their preferred medium to internally brief their team members because they perceive it to be more effective than email. The aspect of being able to receive immediate feedback through non-verbal cues and the medium's high-rich nature dominated their reasons for choosing this medium to communicate.

Objective 3: To establish if BM employees perceive email communication to be more effective than face-to-face communication (or vice versa) when internally briefing team members.

None of the respondents perceive email communication to be more effective than face-to-face communication, as indicated in Table 5, section 16, in which email communication was the theme ordered third by the number of mentions.

The results depicted under section 16 in Table 5 shows that face-to-face communication was the second ranked theme by the respondents. All the respondents agree that face-to-face communication is more effective than email,

because of the ability of the medium to transmit non-verbal cues to both senders/receivers and allow for immediate feedback amongst their team members.

Objective 4: To ascertain if BM employees perceive that the use of both media complement each other to improve message effectiveness when internally briefing team members.

All three respondents agree in using both media because they complement each other, and they accommodate for the other's shortfalls. They agree that for communication to be effective for internal briefings at Blue Moon, it is essential to use both media to optimise communication effectiveness.

The research question posed by the researcher: *How do Blue Moon employees perceive the effectiveness of email compared to face-to-face as a medium of communication when internally briefing team members?*

The discussion above indicates that the objectives the researcher set out in the study were achieved, and the research question answered. Blue Moon employees perceive face-to-face communication to be more effective when compared to email communication when internally briefing their members.

19. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND HEURISTIC VALUE

19.1 Ethical considerations

The researcher was bound by the ethical process required by the Independent Institute of Education and Varsity College and only commenced with the research once ethical clearance was provided in writing. She remained professional during the research process and did not allow her personal bias to surface with the participants. She ensured their trust in her and operated from the place of integrity, objectivity, and professionalism when collecting, capturing and analysing the data.

The data collection instrument used was based on the trustworthiness of the respondents and on the assumption that they answered freely and honestly, without favour or coercion. The semi-structured nature of the interviews backed the credibility of the researcher, therefore, allowing for transferability and dependability through a high standard of data integration and theory generation.

The researcher understood that the respondents participated voluntarily in the study, and their interviews are only permissible after granting written consent to participate. She commits to keeping the respondents anonymous and will further safeguard them by keeping their responses anonymous. She will not compromise the reputation of the respondents, or of other employees of the company and of BM itself, despite the limitations experienced. The questions used in the interviews were non-sensitive, and therefore the respondents were open and willing to respond during the interview process.

19.2 Limitations

The most significant limitation for this study was due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown regulations mandated by the Government. The researcher was not able to communicate face-to-face with her colleagues (in the same physical environment) to provide them with the necessary assurance they needed as participants for the study. She leveraged their trust and confidence in her through various MS Teams calls, emails and text messages to assure them that the process will remain uncompromised, despite the current circumstances.

The second limitation was having to conduct her interviews using MS Teams. This created an additional limitation for the researcher. Conducting interviews through virtual channels is difficult because it is dependent on various factors like bandwidth and the respondent's personal environment, making it difficult for people to be online for long periods of time. The researcher was able to resolve this by keeping

the interviews to a maximum duration of 30 minutes, to avoid issues related to bandwidth and to accommodate the personal environment of the participant. The current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic has added an extra dimension to the future of face-to-face communication through technology and therefore stimulates further research creating heuristic value.

19.3 Heuristic value

This study will be of value to BM and its employees by contributing to the knowledge of employee perceptions of the communication media available to brief their team members internally. It also demonstrates the importance of effective communication and how it contributes to team productivity. When teams are productive, this leads to less conflict and creates room for innovation and profitability.

This study will also contribute to the academic body of knowledge and possibly be a gateway for further research on employee perceptions of communication media. It could lead to significant development in the sphere of organisational and small group communication, especially now with the world having to adapt under the pandemic conditions using alternative media to replicate face-to-face communication mediated through computers.

20. CONCLUSION

The discussion above provided the background and context for the research study, which was also motivated by the rationale, an outline of the problem statement, an identified goal and RQ together with a list of the research objectives for the study.

The theoretical foundation underpinned the study, together with the key concepts that were defined and backed by further research in the literature review. The research paradigm and design that was applicable to the study was highlighted, the population described, including how the sample was selected. The researcher then discussed the methods she used for data collection and data analysis.

She then explained how trustworthiness was achieved so that the participants felt comfortable to volunteer to participate in the study. Once the research was conducted, a presentation and interpretation of the findings were rationalised and justified, and how the findings addressed the objectives and answered the research question. The research report concludes with the ethical considerations made by the researcher, the limitations endured together with her resolutions, and the heuristic value this study will have for BM and academia.

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Appendix A: Final Research Report Summary Document

PROVISIONAL TITLE: *Perceived effectiveness of email versus face-to-face communication for internal briefings amongst Blue Moon teams*

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Anticipated Findings	References
To understand why BM employees choose email or face-to-face as a medium to communicate internal briefings.. Explore and understand if communication effectiveness is achievable through a mix of media that complement each other.	How do employees perceive the effectiveness of email compared to face-to-face as a medium of communication?	Face-to-face communication is considered the optimal medium, however, in the organisational context, it is time-consuming and becomes a barrier for employees who mistake effectiveness with efficiency. Employees who use email are losing the ability to communicate effectively because. The medium itself becomes a barrier because it is one-dimensional in nature).	Littlejohn, S., Foss, K., Oetzel, J. 2017. <i>Theories of human communication</i>. Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc.	Theme 1: Email communication - Written - Time saving - Time-consuming - No guarantee of feedback - Low richness medium Theme 2: Face-to-face communication - Verbal - Time-consuming - Immediate feedback - High richness medium Theme 3: Effective communication - Concrete, concise, complete - Coherent, clear, committed, courteous - Media mix	Interpretivism Epistemology: Establish that technology does not replace message effectiveness, but rather enhances traditional communication methods. Ontology: Reality is a combination social construction and that which is governed by laws.	Qualitative	Semi-structured interviews	1 – Respondents not answering honestly. 2 - Fear of being identified. 3 - Gaining trust of the respondents to obtain honest answers. 4 – Question further with unplanned interview questions. 5 – Keeping respondent identities confidential. 6 – Respondents' consent. 7 – Company reputation.	Email and face-to-face communication are not effective when used as the sole medium to internally brief team members. Using both media as a mix increases effectiveness.	Brawn, A. 2019. When it comes to business communications, we're hiding behind a digital wall, 17 September 2019. Delp, A. 2017. 4 ways to simplify office mechanics and improve productivity, 12 April 2017. Girardin, L. 2018. The 7 barriers to digital communication, 8 August 2018. Goman, C. 2018. Has technology killed face-to-face communication, 14 November 2018. Harvard Business Review. 2017. A face-to-face request is 34 times more successful than an email, 11 April 2017. Leonard, K. 2019. Advantages & Disadvantages of Effective Communication. Littlejohn, S., Foss, K., Oetzel, J. 2017. <i>Theories of human communication</i>. Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc.
						Population				
						The target population: 25 BM employees. Accessible population: 11 BM employees.				
Research Problem	Secondary Questions / Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories	Theme 4: Small group communication - Transactional process - Interdependence - Common goals Theme 5: Team/internal briefings - Open communication - Two-way		Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Anticipated Contribution	
Organisational employees choose email or face-to-face communication for its effectiveness, however no medium is solely effective unless used with a mix of media.	How do Blue Moon employees perceive the effectiveness of email compared to face-to-face as a medium of communication when internally briefing team members?	• Email communication • Face-to-face communication • Effective communication • Small group communication • Team briefing (internal briefings)	New Medium Theory Media Richness Theory			Sample: 3 BM employees Category: Non-probability sampling Method: Quota sampling	Unit of Analysis: BM employees, textual analysis Data Analysis Method(s): Qualitative data analysis	Employees not willing to participate in the study after granting permission. No way of knowing if respondents are answering honestly. COVID-19 pandemic	The value to BM and its employees on effective communication for internal briefs. Academic contributions to the body of knowledge.	

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Perceived effectiveness of email versus face-to-face communication for internal briefings amongst Blue Moon teams

1. Which medium of communication do you prefer using at work amongst your team members?

Follow-up question

2. When you need to internally brief your team members, which medium of communication do you prefer to use?

Follow-up question

** If the medium is different in Q1 and Q2:*

- Why do you choose MEDIUM A in Q1 and MEDIUM B in Q2?
- Which of these two media do you perceive to be more effective?

Follow-up question

OR

** If the medium is the same in Q1 and Q2:*

3. Do you perceive (**email** or **face-to-face**) to be an effective communication medium to internally brief your team members?

Follow-up question

4. Do you use this medium to communicate because it saves you time to send out your message?

Follow-up question

PowerPoint slide on screen for interviewee

** According to Sharma and Sharma (2015), in order to communicate effectively, the message you send out needs to contain the 7Cs of communication. This means that your message needs to be*

- 1. Concrete*
- 2. Coherent*
- 3. Clear*
- 4. Committed*
- 5. Concise*
- 6. Complete*
- 7. Courteous*

5. Do you think the medium you perceive to be effective for internal briefs, fulfils at least 3-4 of the 7Cs of communication?

Follow-up question

6. Do you think your message could be more effective if you used an additional medium to communicate with?

Follow-up question

PowerPoint slide on screen for interviewee

** Media richness theory states there are four factors which influence media richness, i.e. 'the ability of the medium to transmit multiple cues (e.g., vocal inflection, gestures), the immediacy of feedback, language variety, and the personal focus of the medium (the ability to personalise the message to the receiver)' (Ishii et al., 2019).*

7. Would you consider your communication medium of choice rich in nature?

Follow-up question

8. How do you perceive the effectiveness of (**email** or **face-to-face**) communication based on the richness of this medium?

Follow-up question

9. How do you feel when you receive internal briefs via only one medium of communication?

Follow-up question

PowerPoint slide on screen for interviewee

** Sharma and Sharma (2015) further postulate that for communication to be effective, a mix of media should be use to achieve all seven characteristics of effective communication.*

10. Which other medium would you choose to mix with your (**email or face-to-face**) communication so that you can achieve the 7Cs to communicate effectively?

Follow-up question

11. Do you think your media mix (the two media you selected in the previous question) complement each other to ensure message effectiveness?

Follow-up question

12. Do you think that it would be more effective to use both media for internal briefs with team members?

Follow-up question

13. Would you prefer to receive internal briefs via both email and face-to-face communication media?

Follow-up question

APPENDIX C: HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



Date: 3 July 2020

Student name: Aleeshia Naidoo
Student number: 19329721
Campus: Varsity College, Waterfall



Re: Approval of RESM8419p (BA Honours) Proposal and Ethics Clearance



Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.



Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and we hereby provide you with ethical clearance to proceed with your data collection.

There may be some aspects that you still need to address in your proposal. If this is the case, feedback will be provided to you in writing. You will need to address these aspects in consultation with your supervisor.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure that all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued in such instances.

We wish you all the best with your research!

Yours sincerely,

Dr. EA van der Walt
Supervisor
Campus Postgraduate Coordinator

Xandie Thompson
Programme Manager
School of Psychology and
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Directors: RJ Douglas (UK), JDR Oersch (Non-Executive), MD Aitken (Non-Executive) **Company Secretary:** DM Dickson

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**APPENDIX C:
ETHICS CHECKLIST**

Student name: Aleeshia Naidoo

Title of the research: Perceived effectiveness of email versus face-to-face communication for internal briefings amongst Blue Moon teams

	Yes	No	Comment: supervisor/ navigator/lecturer
Are you using human subjects in your research?	X		
I intend to use human subjects - I understand that I will not conduct research with human subjects under the age of 18 and other vulnerable groups. - I understand I can only proceed once I receive an ethical clearance letter.			
Interviews/Focus groups An example of the <i>written consent form</i> I intend to use is attached.	X		
I will record the interview/focus groups and the sample of the letter where I ask for permission to do so is attached.	X		
I plan to use an interview schedule: The example of my research instrument is attached.	X		
I plan to use a questionnaire: The example of my research instrument is attached.	X		
I plan to use a gatekeeper's letter: The example of my letter is attached.	X		
I plan to do research on an IIE site/with IIE students/staff/artefacts and I filled in the application for permission to do so. The application is attached. I understand I can only proceed once I receive IIE Approval for this.		X	

Signed: 

APPENDIX D: GATEKEEPERS LETTER: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



Gatekeepers letter/ Request to conduct research

2 June 2020

Dear Michelle

I am writing to request your permission to conduct research at Blue Moon Corporate Communications (Pty) Ltd.

I, Aleeshia Naidoo, am currently a registered student for a BA Honours in Communication at Varsity College Waterfall, a brand of the Independent Institute of Education (IIE). The research I wish to conduct for my final Honours report is titled: **Perceived effectiveness of email versus face-to-face communication for internal briefings amongst Blue Moon teams.**

This study aims to explore and understand why Blue Moon employees choose a specific medium to communicate with when internally briefing team members. The project consists of a detailed research report that will outline the findings based on the above title.

The nature of Blue Moon's participation will be to grant permission for three employees from the Employee Alignment Department to be interviewed. The interviews will be conducted via MS Teams or Zoom Meetings in early July 2020, due to the physical distancing required during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each interview will not exceed 30 minutes per participant, and all data gathered from the interview process will be transcribed and form part of the research analysis for inclusion in my final research report in August 2020.

As the researcher, I will:

- Interview only the employees who have agreed to participate in this research project.
- Ensure the confidentiality of each employee/respondent who participated in the research.
- Ensure the participation of all employees is voluntary, and they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time.
- Ensure there will be no repercussions should employees choose to withdraw from the research.
- Understand that employees may choose not to answer any of the questions asked during the research interview.
- Quote employees directly when the research is published, but ensuring their identities are protected.

- Ensure that the reputation of the company, its brand, and employees bear no adverse effects due to the research conducted.

Yours sincerely
Aleeshia Naidoo

[REDACTED]

Supervisor: **Dr EA van der Walt**

[REDACTED]

My contact details are as follows:
Aleeshia Naidoo

[REDACTED]

The contact details of my Supervisor/Lecturer are as follows:
Dr. EA van der Walt

[REDACTED]

Acknowledgment of request:

[REDACTED]

.....
LM CALDEIRA

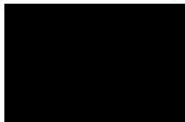
11 JUNE 2020

.....
DATE

APPENDIX D: GATEKEEPERS LETTER

	98 Oxford Rd, Houghton Estate, Johannesburg PO Box 413739, Craighall 2024, South Africa Tel +2711 721 4700 Fax +2711 721 4739	www.bluemoon.co.za 
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Gatekeepers Approval

Consent form to conduct research at my company	
I, Louise Michelle Caldeira	
Representative of Blue Moon Corporate Communications (Pty) Ltd.	
My capacity: Managing Director	
Give my permission that Aleeshia Naidoo may conduct research at my company.	
This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I reserve the right to withdraw this permission at any time. I also understand that research reports are available in the library and IIE Repository unless I indicate below that I would not,	
Select below:	
• I request that my company's identity be kept confidential. • My company can be identified in the study • The study may never be available on the repository. • The study may be made available on the repository. • The study may be made available on the repository after months.	
Signature	Date
	11 June 2020

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS



APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

PARTICIPANTS	
I, [REDACTED], agree to participate in the research conducted by ALEESHIA NAIDOO about understanding employee perceptions of effective communication media amongst team members in the organisational context. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • I agree to be interviewed for this research. • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research. • I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview. • I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.	
	07/07/2020
Signature	Date

**APPENDIX G:
CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS**

PARTICIPANTS	
I, [REDACTED], agree to participate in the research conducted by ALEESHIA NAIDOO about understanding employee perceptions of effective communication media amongst team members in the organisational context. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • I agree to be interviewed for this research. • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research. • I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview. • I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.	
	07/06/20
Signature	Date

**APPENDIX G:
CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS**

PARTICIPANTS	
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 10 July 2020	
Signature	Date

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO / VIDEO RECORDINGS



APPENDIX H: CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

PARTICIPANTS	
I, [REDACTED], agree to allow ALEESHIA NAIDOO to audio record my interview as part of the research about understanding employee perceptions of effective communication media amongst team members in the organisational context. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. • Only the researcher and the researcher's supervisor will have access to these recordings.	
[REDACTED]	07/07/2020
Signature	Date

APPENDIX H:
CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

PARTICIPANTS	
I, [REDACTED], agree to allow ALEESHIA NAIDOO to audio record my interview as part of the research about understanding employee perceptions of effective communication media amongst team members in the organisational context. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: - My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. - The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. - Only the researcher and the researcher's supervisor will have access to these recordings.	
	07/08/20
Signature	Date

APPENDIX H:
CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

PARTICIPANTS	
I, [REDACTED] agree to allow ALEESHIA NAIDOO to audio record my interview as part of the research about understanding employee perceptions of effective communication media amongst team members in the organisational context. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: - My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. - The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. - Only the researcher and the researcher's supervisor will have access to these recordings.	
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