An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

by

MOHAU ARMATTO RAMODIBE

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DECLARATION

I declare that **"An Evaluation of the success of the South Africa government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens"** is my own work and that all the sources that I used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

_____

Signature   Date

Mr M A RAMODIBE

07 November 2014

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[I]

DEDICATION

I wish to firstly dedicate this dissertation to God the Almighty, who continues to guide me through the journey of my life, and without whose guidance I would have not completed this work. Everything I achieve is as a result of His mercy. Thank you Lord for your eternal blessings! You have lifted me up once again!

I further wish to dedicate it to my beloved mother, Mpho Maria Kgosieng (nee Ramodibe), the phenomenal women I regard as my lifetime 'shero' – for her selfless sacrifices. You walked in the rain; in the sweltering heat; in icy cold weather; in the dark on an empty stomach, with God by her side, just to make sure that I get a better education. Mama, you are one in a million. No amount of words can express my outmost gratitude for your sacrifices. Thanks a million – You continue to be my beacon of hope – hope for a better tomorrow.

Not forgetting my uncle, Moremi Amos 'Peter' Ramodibe, for having planted the first financial seed towards my tertiary education. *Mremaiza*, as I jokingly call you, I will forever cherish your selfless contribution. When you gave me the money to pay for my tuition fees back in 1991, you urged me never to forget you when I make it in life. Here is my promise to you – I will never forget you nor forget the indelible contribution you made in my life. Thank you very much *Koena ea madiba a ha Sechele*!

Lastly, I also dedicate it to my exquisite wife, my lover for life, Mmakabelo Precia 'Poppy' Ramodibe (nee Seemise), and our beloved handsome boys, Resego Orefile and Otlotleng Olereko Ramodibe, for their consideration, understanding and utmost support during the two (2) year period of the study. You continue to be my inspiration, for I have faith that a better tomorrow is surely guaranteed. Love you too bits guys!

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[II]

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- Messrs Comfort Ngobe; Silence Mhlaba and Sibusiso Mgwenya, who assisted me with the administration of questionnaires at Thusong Service Centres with passion.

My gratitude further goes to Mr Tiisetso Ramotse and Ms Topsy Musi of the *GCIS* for facilitating permission to conduct the study at the Thusong Service Centres in Mpumalanga.

Finally, this study would have never been completed without the treasured contribution of the Heads of Communication in the Mpumalanga Provincial Departments, Public Entities and municipalities, and the people of the '*Place of the Rising Sun'*, Mpumalanga, for willingly participating in the study by expressing their views. Your views will shape and improve our government's communication machinery.

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[III]

SUMMARY

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa has mandated government to keep in touch with the citizens, by regularly updating them on the services available for the improvement of their lives, and further to constantly report back on progress made in implementing government policies. In recent years, the country has been experiencing sporadic service delivery protests especially at the local sphere of government (municipal level).

The aim of the study was therefore to examine the success of the communication and information system of the South African government in disseminating information to citizens. The area of the study was the Province of Mpumalanga which is one (1) of the nine (9) provinces constituting the Republic of South Africa.

For the study, quantitative research method in the form of a survey was adopted, the hypothesis tested and the findings generalised. In creating a sample frame for the study, both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were adopted. The type of data collection instrument adopted was a structured questionnaire. Single-stage cluster sampling was adopted for heads of government communication whereas judgemental or purposive sampling technique was adopted for citizens. Data was analysed utilising data tabulation, descriptives, and data disaggregation quantitative data analysis procedures.

The key findings of the study, amongst others, are:
(a)   That the current communication and information system being utilised by the South African government has an impact (it has improved communication with citizens);

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[IV]

(b) That the citizens prefer government to communicate with them in their own indigenous languages (communicating in all eleven (11) official languages);

(c) That the citizens prefer face-to-face communication;

(d) That citizens would like to receive government messages via social media (given its immediacy and interactivity); and

(e) That the low status of the communication function at the local government level denies communicators access to information to be communicated.

Amongst others, the study recommends that (1) communication should be recognised as a strategic management function in all spheres of government; (2) the use of radio as the primary channel of information should be strengthened; (3) face-to-face communication with citizens should be strengthened; (4) information dissemination should be done in all eleven (11) official languages, including in Braille and sign-language; (5) social media and SMS notification should be included in the government communication policy as one of its official information dissemination channels.

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KEY TERMS:

Communication; communication and information system; impact; evaluation; barriers; encoding; decoding; government; strategic communication; mediated communication; unmediated communication; development communication; feedback platform; face-to-face communication; channels; mass media; tailor-made messages; culture; new media; tele-communication infrastructure; special languages; empowerment-oriented messages.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[V]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[VI]

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[VII]

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

SECTION B: THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM IN AN ORGANISATION

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[VIII]

SECTION C: MESSAGING – UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS BEING COMMUNICATED

SECTION D: BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

SECTION E: STRATEGIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED TO IMPROVE THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[IX]

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[X]

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[XI]

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[XII]

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[XIII]

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[XIV]

LIST OF FIGURES

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[XV]

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[XVI]

LIST OF TABLES

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[XVII]

LIST OF ANNEXURES

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[XVIII]

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DM	District Municipality
GCIS	Government Communication and Information System
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MPG	Mpumalanga Provincial Government
SACS	South African Communication Service
SMS	Short Message Service
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
Statistics SA	Statistics South Africa
TSC	Thusong Service Centre

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[XIX]

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction to the study

The word 'communication' is derived from the Latin word "*communis*," meaning "to share," and includes verbal, non-verbal and electronic means of human interaction (Communication studies, 2013). According to various scholars, communication is a two-way process between the sender and the receiver, during which a message is transmitted from one to another (Koontz & Weihrich, 2007; Drenth, Thierry & De Wolff, 1998). Cleary (2003: 2) explains it as "the process of creating meaning between two or more people through the expression and interpretation of messages." In business, it is highly considered a key function of management – an organisation cannot operate without communication between levels, departments and employees (Business Dictionary). However for communication to be effective, the message should reach the intended recipient and should be understood (Koontz & Weihrich, 2007; Drenth, Thierry & De Wolff, 1998; Cleary, 2003).

One could therefore agree and conclude that it is a two-way process of conveying information from one party to another, either in mediated or unmediated form, and should be understood the same way by both parties, for it to be considered to have been effective. Based on the explanation above, the study was undertaken in order to assess the success of the South African government's communication and information system which was introduced in 1998, to communicate with its citizens. According to the South Africa's constitution, the "public administration must be accountable;" and that "transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information" (The Constitution of RSA, 1996: 111).

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[1]

This constitutional mandate is supported by Netshitomboni (2007), who argues that governments must constantly interact with citizens through information dissemination in order to keep them abreast of developments regarding the implementation of its policies. One could thus argue that it is any government's mandate to ensure access to information by its citizens which they could use to improve their social-economic well-being (The Constitution of RSA, 1996). The establishment of a task group to review government communications by the then Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Thabo Mbeki in 1996, was therefore premised on the citizen's 'right to know'. The decision by Mr Mbeki to investigate best communication practices, according to the task group, was based on the fact that the new South African society was hungry for government information, given that the National Party's apartheid rule was characterised by "a culture of secrecy, disinformation, and restrictions on press freedom" (*Communications 2000*, 1996: 13).

As a result, the South African Communication Service (SACS), which was the communication machinery of the apartheid government, was not trusted given that there was no clear policy in relation to government information and communication in the country (*Communications 2000*, 1996). Horwitz (2004: 282) argues that the SACS was seen by many "as irredeemable, its mission regarded as an anathema in a new democratic polity". His argument was that SACS was therefore not trusted by citizens, given that it was viewed by many as "the apartheid government's public relations mouthpiece" (Horwitz, 2004: 282). He nonetheless also argues that the institution was regarded by others as a vehicle which the new democratic government could use to disseminate its policy, but had to be transformed hence it was dismantled and replaced by the GCIS – the new communication system which was recommended by the task group.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[2]

The GCIS was therefore necessary to communicate the policy of the new democratic government to the masses who were previously disenfranchised (Horwitz, 2004).

This chapter will therefore discuss and motivate the rationale for the study, including the problem statement; the research hypothesis; explain the intended findings of the study (aim and objectives); the significance of the study; and how the study will be presented (structural presentation).

1.2. Background of the study

Following the first democratic general elections in South Africa in 1994, the then Deputy President of the Republic, Mr Thabo Mbeki established a ten (10) member task group on government communications to:

(a)   Examine government communications systems at local, provincial and international level with special emphasis on information dissemination; and

(b)   Make recommendations on new policies, structures and budgets (Communications 2000, 1996:11).

In its final report, the task group on government communications made 83 recommendations which amongst others included the formation of the new government communication machinery – the GCIS to replace the SACS (Communications 2000, 1996). The task group further argued that "the new government communication and information system needed to be better coordinated and more focussed in its messages (Communications 2000, 1996). This meant that the GCIS needed to strengthen the capacity of government to communicate its policies to the people; and be streamlined, credible, cost-effective and highly professional.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[3]

To do this the GCIS needed to engage better with civil society by establishing channels of interaction between government and the citizens (Communications 2000, 1996). However despite the implementation of the new communication and information system on 18 May 1998, South Africa continued to experience sporadic community protests at municipal level against poor or slow service delivery. According to respondents (government communicators), political principals have attributed the service delivery protests to their supposed inefficiency to communicate the work of government. On the contrary, Atkinson (2007: 53) attributes the community protests to poor service delivery and inefficiencies at municipal levels to corruption, greed and inefficient inter-governmental system.

The study was conducted in the Province of Mpumalanga, which is one (1) of the nine (9) provinces constituting the Republic of South Africa (The Constitution of RSA, 1996). It is divided into three (3) district municipalities, with each district municipality further sub-divided into local municipalities, and collectively they account for 18 local municipalities (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2013). The Province has an estimated total population of 4, 039, 939 people (Statistics SA, 2013; Mpumalanga website, 2014). Mpumalanga is governed by a provincial government, with its own Executive Council led by a premier (Constitution of RSA, 1996). It is constituted by twelve (12) departments and three (3) public entities (MPG website, 2013).

1.3. Rationale for the study

The rationale for the study was based on the argument that no impact assessment of the communication and information system of the South African government was ever done, since it was implemented in May 1998.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[4]

This was against the government communicators' experience to the effect that political principals continue to attribute sporadic community service delivery protests, to their failure to communicate the work of government. The researcher's motivation for the study is supported by Sanders and Canel (2012:92), who have recommended that research on government communication should be done in future in order to "evaluat[e] citizens' perceptions of government actions". Sanders and Canel (2013) have conducted research in government communication in 15 sovereign countries including Southern African countries. The research focused on structures and challenges facing government communications in those countries.

The other study on government communication was conducted by the George Washington University's Elliott School for International Affairs in 2009, through a one-day roundtable. The roundtable amongst others, discussed (1) the communication function of government; (2) success and failure in government communication from around the world. The researcher thus argues that study was relevant to the discipline of communication given that:

(a) It sought to evaluate the success of the communication and information system of the South African government in disseminating information to citizens;

(b) It has assessed whether government information and messages reach citizens and are understood (in order to ensure accountability and empowering citizens in terms of developmental information needs).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[5]

1.4. Research problem

According to Boudah (2011), a research problem could be described as the challenge which the researcher has experienced or have knowledge of, and is interested in finding out its root causes and possible solutions. As a government communicator, the researcher is of the view that there are challenges facing the government communication system or machinery. This is against the backdrop that political principals continue to attribute community service delivery protests to government communicators' supposed inefficiency to communicate the work of government. The researcher therefore believes that the root cause of the problem needs to be identified and resolved, given that communication and information system of the South African government was never evaluated since it was launched in 1998. The argument is that if this is not done, government may never know whether its messages are reaching the intended recipients or not.

1.4.1. Contextualisation of the identified problem

Since 2004, most parts of South Africa have experienced sporadic community protests at municipal levels against what residents say is the slow or non-delivery of services by government. This happens despite the implementation of the new government communication and information system since 18 May 1998 by the South African government, which was meant to be the link between the government and citizens. To this end, political principals continue to attribute the protests to government communicators' supposed inefficiency to communicate the work of government (according to the experience of the researcher as a government communicator since 2000).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[6]

On the contrary, the researcher argues that the inefficiency of the communication and information system of the South African government may be the cause, given that since it was launched on 18 May 1998, there has never been research done to review its efficiency. The study was therefore intended to find out whether the communication and information system of the South African government that was implemented in 1998 has been successful in disseminating information to citizens. The study will also be beneficial to the government of South Africa, given that it would have evaluated the success of its communication and information system since its implementation. This will assist government to know whether it is communicating successfully with the citizens or not. Recommendations on what needs to be done in order to improve government's communication machinery will also be provided. In so doing, this will thus deepen transparency and accountability as mandated and enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

1.4.2. Research problem statement

Evaluate the success of the communication and information system being utilised by the South African government in fulfilling its constitutional mandate of being accountable and transparent to the citizens, in the wake of service delivery protests which are blamed on inadequate or lack of information dissemination.

The sub-problem

In responding to the research problem, the study sought to answer the following sub research questions:

(a) Are government messages reaching the intended recipients and understood?

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[7]

(b)　What are the most appropriate and accessible channels of communication which government could utilise to disseminate information to citizens?

(c)　Is government adequately funding its communication activities?

(d)　What could be done to improve the communication and information system of the South African government?

1.5. Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to examine the success of the communication and information system of the South African government, focusing specifically on the Province of Mpumalanga. This is based on government's constitutional mandate to be (a) accountable and (b) transparent (by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information (The Constitution of RSA, 1996). Horwitz (2001: 318) also argues that "the Comtask Report conceptualised the communication task of government as providing information quickly, transparently and with accountability to the people and the media, and enacting policies to spur the growth of communications structures so as to enable people to function as active citizens in a democratic environment."

1.6 Objectives of the study

To achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives were addressed:

- To evaluate the impact of the current communication and information system of the government of South Africa;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[8]

- To find out whether government communication messages are understood by the intended recipients (citizens);

- To identify challenges that may impede on the effectiveness of the communication and information system of the South African government (with specific reference to the Mpumalanga provincial government); and

- To recommend strategies that can be implemented in order to improve the communication and information system of the government of South Africa.

1.7   Significance of the study

The study is significant to the discipline of communication given its location within development communication. According to Quebral (1975; 2001), the term "Development Communication" refers to "the art and science of human communication linked to a society's planned transformation from a state of poverty to one of dynamic socio-economic growth that makes for greater equity and the larger unfolding of individual potential" . Furthermore, according to the Thusong service centre (2013), development communication refers to the process of disseminating information to citizens or communities in order to empower them to improve their socio-economic well-being.

Kumar (2011) simply puts development communication as having the ultimate goal of bettering the lives of the people. As a result, the study will benefit government departments and municipalities to assess their rate of success in fulfilling their constitutional mandate of "providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information" about its work aimed at improving the lives of the citizens (The Constitution of RSA, 1996: 111).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[9]

This will provide an insight to government to understand whether it is communicating adequately; and whether it is utilising appropriate communication channels. The results of the study will also form the basis for future replication and for validation purposes by other researchers.

1.8 Research hypothesis

Creswell (2003) explains a hypothesis as predictions the researcher makes about the expected relationships among variables. He argues that when testing a hypothesis, the researcher should use statistics to make inferences about the population from a study sample. Kerlinger (1964) also asserts that quantitative research is the most relevant one if the researcher wants to test the hypothesis. In a nutshell, the hypothesis is the prediction of the results of the study. Given that the researcher was mainly interested in generalising the results of the study to the entire population, quantitative research method was used (Bryman, 2012). The following hypothesis was thus tested:

The current communication and information system of the government of South Africa has not improved communication with citizens.

1.9 Definition of terms

Citizen:

The word citizen refers to an inhabitant of an area or place by birth, who has the rights and constitutionally protected by the laws governing the area (Merriam-Webster online, 2013; Macmillan dictionary online, 2013; Oxford Dictionary, 2013). For the purpose of the study, citizens refer to the inhabitants of the Province of Mpumalanga.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[10]

Communication:

It is a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information, news, ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning (Koontz & Weihrich, 2007; Drenth, Thierry & De Wolff, 1998). In business, it is a key function of management – an organisation cannot operate without communication between levels, departments and employees (Business Dictionary). It is a two-way process between the sender and the receiver, and involves feedback to check whether the message was understood the way it was intended (Koontz & Weihrich, 2007; Drenth et al, 1998; Weihrich, Cannice & Koontz, 2010).

Communication and information system:

The term refers to the communication machinery of the South African government which was implemented in 1998 following a recommendation by the task group on government communication which was established to review government communications. The new government communication and information system was established to improve public access to government communication and information (*Communications 2000*, 1996).

Evaluation:

The word evaluation refers to the process of making a judgment about the value, importance, or quality of something after considering it carefully (McMillan Dictionary, 2013; Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013).

Political principal:

Political principal refers to public office bearer who has been elected to represent the interest of citizens at the National Assembly, National Council of Provinces, government, provincial legislatures and municipal councillors.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[11]

They range from the President, Ministers, Premiers, Members of the Executive Council (MECs), Executive Mayors and Councillors (The Constitution of RSA, 1996; Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act, 1998).

Success:

Success refers to an achievement of an intended outcome (Collins New English Dictionary, 1999; Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013).

System:

The word system refers to interconnected things working together in striving to achieve a pre-determined objective or purpose (McMillan Dictionary, 2013; Oxford Dictionary, 2013). It is also referred to as the same manner in which things are done in order to produce the same intended results (Collins New English Dictionary, 1999).

1.10 Dissemination of results

The results of the study will be disseminated to government departments, including municipalities, through articles to be written for internal and external publications such as newsletters; through articles in academic journals, newspapers and online channels of communication (websites).

1.11 Structural presentation of the dissertation

The study will be presented in the following order:

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 has introduced and explained the rationale for the study; presented the problem statement; and the research hypothesis.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[12]

It has also presented the aim, objectives and the significance of the study; and also provided the structural presentation of the study.

Chapter 2

The chapter focuses on the review of the literature regarding what other scholars have written on be subject matter which was researched. This included the review of books, websites, journals, newspapers to mention but a few. It also discusses the theoretical framework adopted for the study.

Chapter 3

The research methodology used in the study is discussed in detail in chapter 3. This includes the area where the study was conducted; explaining how the population was accessed; the unit of analysis utilised; how sampling was done; how the sample size was chosen; and which data collection instrument was utilised and also providing reasons for choosing it.

Chapter 4

The presentation of the results of the study, including how the data collected was analysed is discussed in chapter 4.

Chapter 5

An analysis and discussion of the results or findings of the study are presented in chapter 5.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[13]

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 of the dissertation makes appropriate recommendations and provide a conclusion to the study.

1.12 Summary

This chapter has introduced the study by providing background and rationale; presented the research problem; discussed the aim (what) and objectives (how) of the study; provided the motivation why the study is significant to the discipline of communication; presented the research hypothesis; defined the terms used in the study; outlined how the results of the study are going to be disseminated; and further outlined the structural presentation of the dissertation. The next chapter (Chapter 2) presents literature review and the theoretical framework which was adopted for the study.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[14]

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

This chapter presents literature taken from books, journals, articles, websites and other documents. According to Fink (2005:3), literature review is "a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners". Fink (2005) argues that literature review is essential and a prerequisite of any study, as it also assists the researcher to base his or her conclusions on what other researchers and scholars had concluded on. In addition, Kirby, Greaves and Reid (2006) argue that literature review is essential to research because it provides the researcher an opportunity to review the work that has already been done in the intended area of study, in order to avoid researching on what others have done already.

Their motivation is that literature review "is used to set up the research design and data gathering steps based upon what other researchers have reported" (Kirby *et al*, 2006:109). To this end, Sanders and Canel (2012) have recommended that research be done in future on government communication, to evaluate the perceptions of citizens on the work of government. They have recommended five (5) areas to be researched in future, including the evaluation of government communication and information system. This study will therefore differ from the studies already conducted, given that it will focus on one of the areas suggested for future research by Sanders and Canel (2012), that is, to evaluate government communication and information system. For this purpose, literature review was thus essential for the study as it provided general background on what has been done on the subject area, and further contextualised the study.

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[15]

In reviewing literature, the researcher was able to research on the subject and understood what was previously done on the subject that was researched. This provided the researcher with the proper foundation for the study. Theoretical framework which was adopted as the basis of the study is also discussed in this chapter.

2.2   Theoretical framework

According to Creswell (1994), a theory is essential in providing a framework for the entire study, since it can assist the researcher in determining what should be measured and further provides statistical relationships. Miller (2005) further argues that theories provide an insight to researchers,   as to why people behave the way they do. In other words, theories are essential because they predict how individuals are likely to behave when they experience a certain information environment (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). After analysing the objectives of the study, it was evident that the most appropriate theory would be the one that deals with influence or impact since the study was in the main, intended to evaluate the impact of the communication and information system being utilised of the government of South Africa to disseminate information to citizens (foster transparency and accountability).

To this end, the cultural analysis theory was adopted for the study because it focuses on the impact that "television viewing makes to viewer conceptions of social reality" (Gerbner, 1998: 180). Cultivation analysis theory is based on the argument that mass media such as television influence and shapes the viewer's believe and understanding thus making them to think that all they see is reality (Miller, 1959; Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner, 1998; Dominick, 1990; Livingstone, 1990).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[16]

This theory was therefore relevant to the study given that government messages are primarily transmitted using mass media such as radio and television which are mediated forms of communication. Mass media like television, has got an influence in making people to believe what they see or hear given that it ends up becoming 'a role model' for the spectators (Durham & Kellner, 2006). To this end, the mass media (most notably television) continues to show incidents of sporadic community service delivery protests across South Africa which may influence other citizens who might find themselves in the same situation. Without verifying the claims of the protestors, most citizens are influenced to believe that the protests are genuine in nature and justified, that is, citizens were correct to protest because government is not delivering on its mandate with regards to delivery of services to the people. However the reality is that such unjustified believe may be untrue, but influential, because it was never proven or verified.

As a result, the influence brought about television in shaping people's thinking end up being part of their culture, which once entrenched, becomes difficult, if not impossible to change. Clifford Geertz defines culture as "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life" (1973: 89). Simply put, culture is the way of life which a group of people have accepted as their own, and can be expressed through their attitudes, their values, and what they belief in. This view is supported by Durham and Kellner (2006) who argue that culture makes people to adhere to established ways of thinking and behaving, hence it is usually difficult to convince them to behave otherwise.

The cultivation analysis theory therefore lays the foundation towards answering the four (4) research questions, namely:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[17]

(a)   Are government messages reaching the intended recipients and understood?

(b)   What are the most appropriate and accessible channels of communication which government could utilise to disseminate information to citizens?

(c)   Is government adequately funding its communication activities?

(d)   What could be done to improve the communication and information system of the South African government?

Based on the theoretical framework, the following four (4) objectives of the study (as indicated in chapter 1) are now discussed. In terms of the Linear Model of Communication developed by Shannon and Weaver (1949), any communication activity is aimed at conveying meaning of information via messages to recipients. However this model has shortcomings given that it does not take into consideration that communication is, in fact, a two-ways process (as discussed in chapter 1), and should not be a one-way process of sending the message. Barnlund (2008) and Chandler (1994) argue that such a model has not taken into consideration possible interference during the transmission of messages, which could lead to distortion of the intended messages.

As a result, Barnlund introduced what he termed, the Transactional Model of Communication in the 1970s, in order to complete the two-way communication process by recognising the need for feedback from the receiver (Chandler, 1994; Barnlund, 2008). Unlike the linear model, transactional model takes into consideration that communication is a two-way process involving the sender and the receiver.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[18]

It recognises that messages can be distorted due to environmental interference during the transmission process (Chandler, 1994; Barnlund, 2008). It further recognises that the type of communication channel being utilised has the potential to distort the meaning of the intended message (Chandler, 1994; Barnlund, 2008).

2.3 Communication – A stepping stone towards success or not?

The subject of communication has been discussed for centuries in order to understand its impact on the relationship between two parties, that is, the sender and the receiver (Drenth *et al*, 1998; Cleary, 2003; Koontz & Weihrich, 2007). The literature on the subject is reviewed below:

2.3.1 The impact of the communication and information system in an organisation

Various scholars have argued that effective communication is crucial for the success of an organisation hence it has the potential to propel an organisation to achieve its goals (Eisenberg & Goodall, 1997; Pandey & Garnett, 2006; Shockley-Zalabak, 2006; Garnett, Marlowe, & Pandey, 2008). They assert that communication is essential in the administration of an organisation given the significance of information flow from one person to another or from one level to another. This is because instructions can only be properly implemented if the recipients of the messages being communicated clearly understand the meaning of the messages (Eisenberg & Goodall, 1997; Pandey & Garnett, 2006; Shockley-Zalabak, 2006; Garnett, Marlowe, & Pandey, 2008). In discussing the impact of the communication and information system in an organisation, the phrase 'communication and information system' will firstly be explained.

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[19]

Words like 'information' and 'system' will be separately explained and will culminate into understanding what communication and or information system is. Firstly, the word 'communication' (as already discussed above), refers to a two-way information dissemination process between the sender and the receiver, which could be mediated (use of information distribution channels) or unmediated (face-to-face), and providing a platform for feedback (Shannon and Weaver, 1949; Chandler, 1994; Drenth, Thierry & De Wolff, 1998; Cleary, 2003; Koontz & Weihrich, 2007; Barnlund, 2008). It could be verbal, non-verbal and electronic means of human interaction (Communication studies, 2013). Mohr and Nevin (1990) argue that without communication flow, channel of information dissemination would be irrelevant.

Secondly, various scholars have attempted to define the word 'information,' but did not reach consensus on how to define it (Case, 2012). This is because 'information' means different things to them due to differing experiences. Case (2012) argues that information is anything significant that makes human beings aware of their surroundings. Vickery (2009b:245) defines information as "Knowledge needed to carry out an action of any kind (practical or intellectual)". Information can also be referred to as meaningful, purposeful and accurate data which is outcome-based given that can influence people to behave in a certain way (BusinessDictionary.com, 2014). One could thus argue that information could be any useful and acquired knowledge which recipients can utilise to improve their social well-being.

Thirdly, the word 'system' is explained as the same manner of doing things in order to produce the same intended results or pre-determined objectives (McMillan Dictionary, 2013; Oxford Dictionary, 2013; Collins New English Dictionary, 1999). When the two words are combined (that is, 'information system'), they are explained in a different context.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[20]

According to BusinessDictionary.com (2014), information system can refer to "a combination of hardware, software, infrastructure and trained personnel organi[s]ed to facilitate planning, control, coordination, and decision making in an organi[s]ation". Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014) defines an information system as "an integrated set of components for collecting, storing, and processing data and for delivering information, knowledge, and digital products". Mohr and Nevin (1990) assert that a well-co-ordinated system of data collection results in effective and efficient flow of information, thus improving the performance of an organisation.

Fourthly, the term 'organisation' can be described as a group of people with the same aim, purpose and objectives – they are 'organised' because they are striving to achieve the same objectives (DeLone & McLean, 1992; Bouwman, Van den Hooff, Van de Wijngaert, & Van Dijk, 2005; Oxford Dictionaries, 2014). A number of organisation theories have been discussed by various scholars however there are two (2) notable ones which are relevant to the study. They are: (1) Principal-agent problem theory; and (2) Weber's Bureaucracy theory (which will be discussed later as some of the barriers towards effective communication) (Rees, 1985; Stiglitz, 1987; Sappington, 1991). Based on the above explanations, one can thus conclude that a communication and or information system can simply be referred to an integrated similar manner of collecting, synthesising and distributing information to intended recipients through channels by an organisation.

Palmius (2005) asserts that one of the characteristics of an information system is its ability to provide feedback, that is, recipients of information should react to it by doing something. By implication, he is arguing that an effective information system should elicit a response from recipients.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[21]

Fisher and Kenny (2000) and Gupta (2013) also argue that information systems are critical in propelling and steering an organisation towards achieving its goals, hence no organisation can succeed without such a system. In their study to investigate the impact of an information system of a company, Olugbode, Elbeltagi, Simmons and Biss (2008); Mohr and Nevin (1990) have concluded that an information system is crucial in improving the efficiency of an organisation. They argue that such a system assist an organisation to properly plan its information management and dissemination, and thus view it as being strategic to the success of an organisation (Mohr and Nevin, 1990; Olugbode, *et al*, 2008; Gupta, 2013).

Davis' *technology acceptance model* has identified six pre-requisites of a successful information system. He argues that the system itself must be of quality; disseminate quality information; which is usable; to the satisfaction of the user; must have an impact on an individual (the user); and should further impact on the objectives of an organisation (1989). Furthermore, Chaffey and Wood (2005), assert that the re-evaluation of the organisation's communication and or information system can assist in recommending an improvement of the said system. This is true if it becomes clear that it is no longer satisfying the information requirements of an organisation. What is also clear from the arguments as discussed above is that, it is essential for an organisation to constantly re-evaluate its information system in order to check its efficiency and effectiveness, if it is to become successful in achieving its goals (Chaffey & Wood 2005).

One can thus conclude that the success or failure of an organisation can be linked to its communication and information system (Mohr and Nevin, 1990; DeLone & McLean, 1992; Olugbode, *et al*, 2008). Consequently, an information system is thus the backbone or prerequisite for success, hence its efficiency should be measured at all times in order to gauge whether it is still relevant.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[22]

The implication is that if it is discovered that an information system being utilised by an organisation is no longer serving the purpose it was designed for, it should either be changed or improved (Chaffey & Wood 2005; Gupta, 2013).

2.3.2   Understanding the meaning of the message being communicated

The word 'meaning' can be explained as an intention – what a word or symbol seeks to put across without ambiguity (Horwich, 1998; Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet, 2000). Gibbs (1999) takes the explanation further by asserting that the meaning implied by messages can be best explained through four (4) theories, namely, (a) *the encoding/decoding;* (b) *the intentionalist;* (c) *the perspective-taking;* and (d) *the dialogue.* "The encoding/decoding paradigm describes meaning as an inherent property of messages; *the intentionalist paradigm* views meaning as tied to the speaker's intentions; *the perspective-taking paradigm* sees meaning as determined from the addressee's point of view; *the dialogic paradigm* characterizes meaning as an emergent property of participant's joint activity" (Gibbs, 1999:44). Hall (1980) and Louw (2001) concur with Gibbs (1999) that understanding messages is complex given they need to be decoded and this creates a challenge of comprehending the intended meaning of the message sent by the encoder.

According to Louw (2001), understanding the meaning of messages is a process that involves the sender and the receiver since they must both have a mutual understanding of what is intended through the message. However the challenge is that "the meaning intended by the encoder may never actually be realized because the message may be interpreted, ignored, mis-read, deliberately reconstructed or even resisted" (Louw, 2001:206).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[23]

Hall (1980) further argues that the receiver's interpretation of the intended meaning of a message may also be subjective, that is, the receiver may interpret the message the way he or she wants to because it suits his or her situation. In a nutshell, understanding the meaning of messages depends on:

(a) What is being said by the sender and what is being understood by the receiver, independently of each other (encoding/decoding paradigm);

(b) What is intended by the sender and the inference of the receiver, independently of each other (the intentionalist paradigm);

(c) The sole understanding of the receiver (perspective-taking paradigm); and

(d) The mutual or shared understanding of both parties (sender and receiver) – what the sender's communication implies and the receiver's interpretation of what is being communicated (dialogic paradigm).

Therefore, (as explained above), the encoding/decoding, *the intentionalist*, and the perspective-taking paradigms involve independent actions and reactions, whereas the dialogue paradigm involves dependent action and reaction. Fielding (2006) concurs with this assertion by indicating that the purpose of communicating is for the recipient to comprehend what is being transmitted. He argues that effective communication is influenced by what is being said (content) and how it is said to the receiver. Fielding (2006) has proposed the following as prerequisites for effective messaging:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[24]

- Credible, clear and accurate;

- Selection of appropriate dissemination channel for each message;

- Tailor-make messages for different recipients (the needs of citizens are not the same);

- Provision of a feedback mechanism;

- Regular testing of the information flow mechanisms.

Gibbs (1999:49) thus asserts that it is difficult for receivers of messages to understand what is being said given that "certain sentences may have more than one literal meaning, such as ambiguous sentences". This is because certain assumptions have to be made in order to decode what a message is communicating (Gibbs, 1999). One could therefore conclude that effective messages are purpose-oriented and very clear (Fielding, 2006). Krile (2006) asserts that for effective communication to take place, the meaning of messages should be mutually shared by the parties involved, in this case, the sender and the receiver. He argues that meaning is shared when the intention of the sender is replicated as the thinking of the receiver. Krile (2006) has identified three (3) barriers towards creating shared meaning, namely:

(1) The assumption (that by merely sending a message implies that the meaning has been shared);

(2) The thinking (that words have the same meaning to different people); and

(3) The impression (that communication is about the encoding process rather than the decoding process).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[25]

One could thus conclude that in attempting to understand whether the meaning of messages has been shared, the sender of a message should:

(a)   Never assume that the meaning is understood by the receiver, and should thus follow-up to confirm mutual understanding;

(b)   Always remember that the meaning is embedded on the sender not the words being communicated; and

(c)   Always remember that effective communication relies on the successful decoding process.

2.3.3   Barriers towards effective communication

According to various scholars, effective communication occurs when a desired effect (the aim of information dissemination) is achieved and without distortion. The purpose of such communication could have been to enlighten in order to elicit change or a reaction (Berlo, 1960; Mehrabian & Morton, 1967; Pearson, 1983; Barnlund, 2008). For effective communication to take place, the message of the sender (the encoder), should be interpreted by the receiver (the decoder) exactly the way it was intended, that is, there should be mutual understanding(Berlo, 1960; Mehrabian & Morton, 1967; Pearson, 1983; Barnlund, 2008). The success of an organisation thus depends on effective communication. However, communication could be rendered ineffective due to some challenges or barriers (Fielding, 2006). Fielding argues that "messages can be distorted because of ambiguity or lack of understanding of the meaning" (2006:47). He mentions some of the major challenges/barriers towards effective communication as being due to:

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[26]

(a) Bureaucracy or 'red tape';

(b) Inability to encode and decode messages;

(c) Over-supply of information at a given time (what he termed "overloading of information") (2006: 47); and

(d) Under-supply of information at a given time (what he termed "under-loading of information") (2006: 47);

(e) Conflicting messages;

(f) Use of inappropriate channel of communication;

(g) Language;

(h) Cultural practices.

Furthermore, Sanders and Canel (2013), in supporting the assertion by Fielding (2006), have conducted research in government communication in 15 sovereign countries including Southern African countries, and focused on structures and challenges facing government communications in those countries. They utilised case-study methodology to highlight differences and similarities in those countries' government communication systems, and even suggested possible strategies to improve governance capacity in them. The same was done by the George Washington University's Elliott School for International Affairs (2009) through a one-day roundtable, which amongst others discussed (1) the communication function of government; and (2) the success and failure in government communication from around the world.

The first challenge, according to the experience of the researcher as a government communicator and spokesperson, is the expectation for the government communicator to 'spin-doctor' the truth. Partington (2003:214) refers to spin-doctoring as the "tailoring of news and information on its release to the public to cast a favourable light on the institutions of authority" or "persuading people to accept your version of events, of the truth – in competition with other versions".

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[27]

According to Safire (1996), 'spin-doctoring' is associated with hiding the truth in an attempt to protect the integrity of an organisation or individual, which is at risk. He argues that this tactic is often used by politicians in order to manipulate public opinion in their favour. Various writers have collectively identified seven (7) tactics of spin-doctoring, namely, (1) cherry picking; (2) non-denial denial; (3) non-apology apology; (4) 'mistakes were made'; (5) assuming unproven truths or avoiding the question; (6) burying bad news; and (7) misdirection and diversion (Stockwell, 2007; Fisher, 2014). For example, like in the harvesting of cherries in which the harvester picks only the best, in 'cherry picking' tactic, the person deliberately opt to only present facts or information that supports his or her position in order to preserve their integrity (Collins English Dictionary, 2014).

Based on the explanation above, the researcher argues that a government communicator would be expected to paint a glossy picture about government's delivery as being exceptionally well, despite the reality on the ground being the opposite (Safire, 1996; Partington, 2003). The contention of the researcher is that no amount of communication or public relations efforts would convince communities that government is delivering services efficiently and faster, if in reality, it is the opposite.

The second challenge is limited resources being experienced in government communication. According to the *Communications 2000*, 1996:18, "the development of a more effective government communication system will have to be financed in part from savings and reduction of waste and duplication." Given the financial status of government, government communication system will continue to be the last on their funding priority. Communication units in government departments are usually under-funded because they are seen as not being strategic and critical towards fulfilling the mandate of the institution.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[28]

The third challenge is the low status of government communication, which disadvantages government communicators from understanding how decisions were arrived at by the top management in government departments. According to the *Communications 2000* (1996:16) "there is poor recognition of the need for a professional government communication and information service in South Africa. Rather, there are disparate communication and information officials with widely varying backgrounds, seniority and training." Chimutengwende (1988) also argues that government communicators are not recognised as professionals, hence their roles are in most cases deemed to be inferior in grading or levels. Mefalopulos and Grenna (2004) further argue that communication is still regarded as a secondary function in an organisation hence decision-makers remain unconvinced of its importance in the life of an organisation. This is despite the fact that government communicators are supposed to be the link of government with the media and citizens (The Public Service Act, 1994).

However given that some of them do not sit in decision-making or strategic structures due to their low status, they are not privy to such decisions and cannot therefore disseminate the necessary information to the media and the citizens (*Communications 2000*, 1996; Chimutengwende, 1988; Mefalopulos and Grenna, 2004). This is against the backdrop that the media possess a platform or channel to be used or exploited for the benefit of government, by communicating its programmes. Contrary, Kitchen (1993) argues that the function of communication is one of the most essential and strategic in an organisation. This argument is supported by Dolphin and Fan (2000), and Winner (1993) who have concluded that corporate communications is a strategic function in organisations. It is strategic because it is concerned about how people (the recipients) will receive and react to the message being disseminated (Cabanero-Verzosa & Garcia, 2009).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[29]

Lauzen (1995) quoted from Dolphin and Fan (2000) further argues that the exclusion of communication practitioners from strategic decision-making structures reduces the corporate communications function to a low category support function in organisations. Steyn, Green and Grobler (2001) and the task group on government communications also argue that government institutions can benefit from having senior practitioners functioning in the strategic management roles of the corporate communication function. These arguments thus support the researcher's view that the low status of the function of communication in some government departments contributes to towards the ineffectiveness of the communication and information system of the South African government.

The fourth challenge is coherence – the inability of government to speak in one voice (*Communications 2000*, 1996). According to Grossman and Hart (1983); Toye (2006) and Klitgaard (1989), this is as a result of having two communication centres of power. The task group on government communications and the researcher has identified that in most government departments, there is a communicator appointed to speak on behalf of the ministry whereas on the other side (administration), there is another person appointed to speak on behalf of the Department (*Communications 2000*, 1996). The result is that incoherent messages are usually sent out, that is, speaking in different voices. This kind of configuration (two communication centres of power) ultimately culminates into what is best described as the "principal-agent" syndrome (Grossman & Hart, 1983; Toye, 2006 and Klitgaard, 1989). The ministerial spokesperson, who would classify him/herself as the principal, will then give instructions to the departmental spokesperson - the agent in this case, who in turn becomes the principal given this position on the departmental side.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[30]

When the supposed agent (departmental spokesperson) becomes the principal as well, the message intended by the initial supposed principal (ministerial spokesperson) becomes distorted when it reaches its intended receiver (Grossman & Hart, 1983; Toye, 2006 and Klitgaard, 1989). This happens because the agent-turned principal would adapt the message to suit his or her situation. The "principal-agent' syndrome thus encourages silo-operations and brews unnecessary egos. The official in the ministry would then want to instruct the official in the department, in most cases falsely using the name of the minister (name-dropping) as the source of the instruction. As a government communicator, the researcher argues that more often than it is true, the instruction would not be coming from the minister (political principal), but from the official who is just abusing the status of his or her office.

The view of Olsson (2005) on the matter (incoherency) is that people tend not to trust the sources of non-coherent messages – hence government communication would continue to be non-effective or continue to communicate without coherence. This challenge is critical, given that if it is not addressed, government departments would continue to fail to adhere to the basic values and principles governing the public administration, as enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The constitution states that a public administration department should be transparent by providing "timely, accessible and accurate information" to the public (Constitution of RSA, 1996: 107).

The fifth challenge is that of co-ordination and integration, which is brought about by programmatic, logistical and managerial or 'turf' barriers (Pindus, Koralek, Martinson & Trutko, 2000). They argue that any organisation will face the challenge of co-ordination due to the fact that responsible people have a fear of losing their decision-making autonomy, and possibly even run jeopardising their jobs, if co-ordination succeeds.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[31]

This is also exacerbated by the fact that each sphere of government has its own mandates, and therefore prioritises differently. It should however be recognised that though interdependent, the three (3) spheres of government are equal and should be treated as such (*Communications 2000,* 1996). As a result, the researcher argues that it has proven quite difficult for government to speak in one voice - there is lack of co-ordination of messages in government departments because campaigns are done impromptu (*Communications 2000,* 1996). It is therefore absolutely challenging to co-ordinate various communication structures of various organisations (O'Toole, 1997; Jun, 1997).

In the researcher's experience as a government communicator, this observation is true because sectional managers, who in this case are internal clients, do not plan well in advance for their campaigns and events or choose to protect their turf by not divulging information for communication purposes. One can therefore conclude that co-ordination and integration will forever pose a challenge to government communication, for as long as officials believe their turf will be encroached or that they will lose their grip to some power they have (Grossman & Hart, 1983; Toye, 2006; Klitgaard, 1989; Olsson, 2005; Pindus, Koralek, Martinson and Trutko, 2000; O'Toole, 1997; Jun, 1997).

The sixth challenge relates to hierarchy, which refers to the levels of authority in an organisation or bureaucracy. According to Toye (2006) and Johnston (1993), hierarchy is a characteristic of bureaucracy or 'red tape' as it is commonly referred to. The term 'red tape' could be explained as a set procedure to be followed in order to granted approval or permission to perform a function (BusinessDictionary.com, 2014; Oxford Dictionaries, 2014; DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Jae Moon & Bretschneiber, 2002).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[32]

Bozeman (2000:12) defines red tape as "rules, regulations, and procedures that remain in force and entail a compliance burden but do not advance the legitimate purposes the rules were intended to serve". Brewer and Walker (2010b) also argue that the red tape challenge is experienced in government because of the need to control and follow certain procedures in the implementation plans. In this regard, clients, in this case the people of South Africa, view bureaucracy as being somewhat inflexible and unresponsive to their needs and a barrier towards the improvement of their well-being (Toye, 2006; Johnston, 1993; Scott & Pandey, 2000). Johnston (1993:14) also argues that in a formal hierarchical structure, each level in an organisation controls the level below, and itself is controlled by the level above. It is evident therefore that hierarchical systems are rule based and promises control and consistency.

According to Brownfeld (1977), inefficiency is a characteristic of bureaucracy. He argues that bureaucracy is embedded in the public service and thus it is not possible to avoid it. One could thus argue that bureaucracy poses a serious challenge to government being transparent as mandated by South Africa's constitution (Reeds, 2009). This is even worse for heads of communication in government departments at lower levels given that their low levels exclude them from decision making structures of government departments (*Communications 2000*, 1996). As discussed earlier, government communicators thus face the challenge of understanding how certain decisions were reached. For example, when government communicators are approached by the media with inquiries, they often have to consult and be briefed by their superiors, and often the relayed message end up being distorted due to the "principal-agent" syndrome alluded to earlier (Grossman & Hart, 1983; Toye, 2006 and Klitgaard, 1989). Hierarchical structures in government would thus continue to impede on effective communication by government departments.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[33]

In the researcher's experience, bureaucracy often disadvantages a department from receiving free media publicity. A typical example is of a media statement which needs approval of a principal, in this case, the Head of Department or MEC (Member of the Executive Council), before it could be released to the media. Given the bureaucracy that needs to be followed in government, if by luck the approval is granted for a media statement to be released, it is often too late, and in most cases, the damage would have already been done. Unfortunately when that happens, it would be the responsibility of the same communicator to clean up the mess caused by bureaucracy. In some instances, one would even be blamed for 'incompetence,' for a situation he or she had no control over.

The seventh challenge relates to relations with the media versus the imbalance in access to the means of receiving and imparting information. According to the task group on government communication, "an uneasy relationship exists between press and government. On the other hand, government complains that its messages, its perspectives and its concrete decisions and actions do not receive adequate media coverage. Reports are often superficial, incomplete and distorted. Important government communication is often selectively ignored" (*Communications 2000,* 1996:17). However on the same breadth, the media accuses government as being responsible for the failure of its communication and information machinery due to the fact "government's communication efforts are too often incomplete, opaque, and superficial, and that the way in which government releases its news is unprofessional" (*Communications 2000,* 1996:17). As discussed above, the researcher argued that bureaucracy is the root cause owing to the time it takes to get an approval of a media statement. Often there are unwarranted delays and even unwillingness to approve statements and this pushes the media to conclude that government communication and information machinery is ineffective or "unprofessional" (*Communications 2000,* 1996:17).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[34]

The media also complained that media statements are in most cases thin on background information regarding government decisions and policy (*Communications 2000,* 1996). Perloff (1998:8) further argues that "the media have come to play an important role in the process by which leaders attempt to influence public attitudes and shape public policy." He asserts that mass media has a potential to influence the thinking of citizens. At the same time, this convenient and effective mode of communication (mass media) according to Perfloff (1998), disadvantages the less privileged community members who do not have, and cannot even afford to buy the means to receive government messages. It is therefore a challenge to reach people (citizens), majority being the poor in rural areas, who are the ones who really need government development through information due to inadequate communications infrastructure (*Communications 2000*, 1996). Over reliance of government on the media (which is mostly in private hands) to disseminate information on its behalf, will continue to make the government 'a beggar,' as it does not own the means or channels to communicate (*Communications 2000*, 1996).

However, Weaver in Hadland (2005) argues that the perceived not so good relations between the media and government are influenced by profit-making objectives, given that the media is a business. He argues that the media will always chase bad news because 'good news' is seldom news. Bad news is always [good] news," and will always sell (Hadland, 2005: 29). This view is supported by Akin (2005) who argues that the news media thrive on conflict, adding that extreme crime or disaster are always lead stories in the media. The assertion is that conflict always attracts large numbers of audiences, and this is imperative to the continuing existence of media houses. On the contrary, one could argue that the media also have a responsibility to inform citizens about the good work that government is doing.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[35]

It should be borne in mind that the media is not the mouth piece of government – they are what Norris (2008) refer to as the fourth estate. He asserts that the role of the media is to be a watch-dog of government – it exists to strengthen the responsiveness and accountability of governments to all citizens. Hyden, Leslie and Ogundimu (2002) support this view by arguing that the media has a role to probe government policies and its behaviour in order to foster and harness democracy. On the other hand, the not so good relations between government and the media, is also exacerbated by the lack of 'professionalism' on the part of government communicators (*Communications 2000*, 1996).

The eighth challenge relates to multilingualism (*Communications 2000*, 1996). According to Franceschini in Aronin and Hufeisen (2009: 33), the concept multilingualism can be referred to as "the capacity of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage on a regular basis in space and time with more than one language in everyday life". South Africa is one such country or society, with eleven (11) official languages which enjoy equal legal status (Constitution of RSA, 1996; Kamwangamalu, 2000). The implication thereof is that government communication messages should be done in all eleven (11) official languages. However, despite the majority of the population being black people (79.2% out of a total population of 51 770 560), government communication continues to be conducted mainly in English (Statistics South Africa, 2012; *Communications 2000*, 1996).

As a result, the majority of South Africans, who are pre-dominantly black and live in the rural areas, lack access to information about national developments, given that they are illiterate and cannot read or understand English (Statistics South Africa, 2012; *Communications 2000*, 1996).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[36]

This argument is supported by Prah (2007) who argue that the use of English, and even to some extend Afrikaans, continue to dominate in the media at the expense of other South African languages, even though the overwhelming majority of the population do not speak English. This is against the background that over 90% of the print and electronic media is in English and Afrikaans – and English takes precedence (Prah, 2007). One could thus assert that the predominant use of English in the media disadvantages the majority of the population hence it does not cater for the multicultural South African society (Prah, 2007). To this end, the task group on government communication has recommended that government should use indigenous languages in communicating with the citizenry; and that the language used should be simple (*Communications 2000*, 1996).

On the contrary, Kamwangamalu (2000:50) argues that it will never be possible to treat South Africa's all eleven (11) official languages equally owing to the fact that they are "unofficially ranked hierarchically and constitute a three-tier, triglossic, system, one in which English is at the top, Afrikaans is in the middle, and the African languages are at the bottom". In addition, the use of braille and sign-language – what the researcher refers to as the 'twelfth unofficial language' of South Africa – should also be strengthened in order to cater for the blind and the deaf community (*Communications 2000*, 1996). Thomas and Woods (2003) assert that communication with the blind and deaf people is extremely difficult, given a dire shortage of communication material such as braille documentation, including understanding of sign-language by sighted people. However the researcher has identified a sub-challenge in this regard. This relates to the argument that there are few government communicators, if any, who are multilingual (being able to speak, write and read in all the eleven (11) official languages) (Franceschini in Aronin and Hufeisen, 2009). The same argument is advanced for the 'twelfth unofficial languages' – that is, braille and sign-language.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[37]

This is further worsened by the limited resources being provided to government communication machinery, considering that braille printing is extremely expensive (*Communications 2000*, 1996; Thomas & Woods, 2003).

The ninth challenge relates to cultural diversity. Culture could be defined as certain beliefs adopted by a group of people, as guiding principles in their daily lives, and can be passed from one generation to another (Schein, 2004; Fielding, 2006). Novinger (2001:23) asserts that "an individual's negative reactions and evaluations of a foreign culture may create inter-cultural communication barriers". He also argues that all cultures should be treated equally and respected, and this is also enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Various scholars also argue that cultural barriers impede on effective communication (Adler, 1991; Novinger, 2001; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Rampur, 2011). According to Adler (1991:2), "Cross-cultural communication occurs when a person from one culture sends a message to a person from another culture, [and] cross-cultural miscommunication occurs when the person from the second culture does not receive the sender's intended message".

Cultural barriers which have been identified are language; behaviour; stereotypes; and ethnocentrism (Adler, 1991; Novinger, 2001; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Rampur, 2011). The assertion is that even speakers of the same language experience communication barriers due to their different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Adler, 1991; Novinger, 2001; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Rampur, 2011). An example of such is mispronunciation of a word or different pronunciation which could lead to misunderstanding and lost meaning of the intended message. Furthermore, one's behaviour as a result of cultural differences in body language can cause misunderstanding.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[38]

According to the Education Portal (2014), appropriate body language is a prerequisite to effective cross-cultural communication. For example, in the Western Culture, it is imperative to make an eye contact when speaking to someone otherwise they make think you are less interested in them or not to be trusted. However the opposite applies in the African culture – eye contact may be seen as a sign or disrespect (Education Portal, 2014). The researcher agrees that culture will thus always impede on effective government communication with its citizenry given that it is sometimes difficult to convince people to change their way of life (Adler, 1991; Novinger, 2001; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Schein, 2004; Fielding, 2006; Rampur, 2011).

The tenth challenge relates to universal mandate or 'one-size-fits-all' approach. The term 'one-size-fits-all' refers to a non-tailored standardised approach which does not take individual needs into consideration (McMillan Dictionary, 2013; Oxford Dictionary, 2013; Collins New English Dictionary, 1999; Surbone, Zwitter, Rajer & Stiefel, 2013). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) mandates public administration (government) to treat all people equal in disseminating information to them. Surbone *et al* (2013) argue that the 'one-size-fits-all' approach may not always be appropriate given that the characteristics of the recipients of the intended message or treatment may differ. Consideration should be made to treat each patient differently (tailor-made treatment), and the same goes with messaging (Surbone *et al*, 2013).

The researcher thus argues that the 'one-size-fits-all' approach in communicating with the citizens, without considering their socio-economic status, including their level of education or understanding, poses a serious challenge to effective communication. A typical example of such a universal message is the South African Treasury's mass media campaign to urge citizens to save money through investment.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[39]

In this regard, the researcher's argument is that it may be a daunting task to convince a hungry or poor person to save – thus rendering such a message ineffective.

The eleventh challenge relates to internal communication. Kalla (2005) in Ragusa (2010) describes internal communication as formal and informal communication taking place internally at all levels within an organisation. The discussion around internal communication is that well-informed employees tend to adopt the vision of an organisation as their own, hence they would want the organisation to achieve its goal (Smith and Mounter, 2008; Gall, 2009; Verghese, 2012). Employees of an organisation need to understand and share its vision, thus allowing them to fit themselves within the shared dream. Smith and Mounter (2008) and Verghese (2012) argue that successful organisations start by engaging their employees on what they want to achieve before communicating with the outside world. They are supported by Nordin, Halib and Ghazali (2011) and Witherspoon (1997) also argue that sound internal communication is the prerequisite or a foundation for organisational effectiveness.

It is therefore clear that there is correlation between organisational efficiency and effectiveness, and internal communication (Clampitt & Downs, 1993; Hargie & Dickson, 2007). In addition, a study conducted by Quinn and Hargie (2004) on the Northern Ireland's internal communication structures, confirmed that there is generally dissatisfaction among the staff members, strengthening the argument that internal communication within organisations remains a challenge. Based on these assertions, it is evident that like in any government department or institution, internal communication would pose a serious challenge towards the organisation fulfilling its mandate (Clampitt & Downs, 1993; Hargie & Dickson, 2007; Smith & Mounter, 2008; Verghese, 2012).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[40]

This is also worsened by the fact that internal communication is partly the responsibility of human resources and strategic planning divisions within an organisation, given that they are the custodians of personnel related information such as birthdays, training programmes, and strategic documents (Pindus, *et al.*, 2000). As discussed earlier, when more than one section becomes a stakeholder in internal communication, co-ordination becomes a serious challenge due to the fear of losing one's territorial 'independence' herein referred to as 'turf' barriers (Pindus, *et al.*, 2000). This is happens because responsible people have a fear of losing their decision-making autonomy, and possibly even run jeopardising their jobs, if co-ordination succeeds. O'Toole (1997) and Jun (1997) also argue that it is very difficult to co-ordinate multiple units of inter-organisational structures, and this makes communicating in such scenarios very challenging. One could therefore argue that well-informed government communicators and other civil servants are critical to ensure that government fulfils its constitutional mandates on delivering services to the people, including information dissemination (The Constitution of RSA, 1996).

The twelfth challenge relates to unmediated communication, which Axford and Huggins (2001) refers to as face-to-face communication. Axford and Huggins (2001) argue that unmediated communication is reliable and believable. Its advantages are intimacy and immediacy – face-to-face interaction and immediate feedback. The South African government communicators' handbook (2010) mentions *izimbizo,* isiZulu for community gatherings, or public participation programmes as a form of unmediated communication. This form of communication is direct, face-to-face, and personal, and provides immediate feedback and interaction between government and the people (Axford & Huggins, 2001).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[41]

This view is supported by Hartslief (2005) and Matshedisho (2008) who argue that *izimbizo* provides South African citizens with a platform to ask government representatives (political and administrative leadership) questions on policy delivery, enabling immediate feedback. However Hartslief (2005) argues that this form of face-to-face communication has challenges, given that it goes beyond communication since it is also an evaluation tool, and could potentially lead to policy change. Although it is time-consuming and expensive, implementing the strategy of face-to-face communication demonstrates that government cares about its people. As Toye (2006); Johnston (1993); and Reeds (2009) argue, this form of communication (unmediated) is never affected by the challenge of hierarchy, which according to the citizens make government inefficient and encroaches on transparency.

However, the researcher argues it is not possible for government, herein represented by the Executive (elected public office bearers), to interact with the people on a daily basis given the limited financial resources and other commitments of running the government (as discussed earlier on). Furthermore, even if government representatives and adequate funding were available, it would still be a challenge to lure community members to such gatherings given the apathy. In the researcher's experience in this area of work, to attract large numbers of community members, government needs to entice them with something, such as free food, branded government t-shirts and even music festivals. However this would also be affected by the challenge of limited financial resources.

2.3.4   Strategies to be implemented to improve the communication and information system of the government of South Africa

In its final report, the task group made 83 recommendations geared towards improving government communication.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[42]

Recommendations 1-26 focused on the communication structures; 27-53 on communication functions; 54-58 on personnel and training; 59-63 on improving South Africa's image in the world; 64-67 on information development; 68-76 on access to information; and 77-83 on the media environment (Communications 2000, 1996). However, not all of the recommendations have been implemented to-date. In relation to communication structures, the government has implemented recommendations 1-26 which amongst others, included the establishment of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) which is now functional, to replace the South African Communication Services). Government must therefore implement the recommendation by housing the function of communication under one central unit – either in the ministry or the department (Communications 2000, 1996).

In addition, one person should be appointed as Head of Communication and spokesperson to service both the political principal (Minister/MEC or Mayor) and handle all communication matters relating to the department and the ministry (Communications 2000, 1996). This will resolve the challenge of coherence thus ensuring that government speaks in one voice, and abolish the two communication centres of power (Communications 2000, 1996; Grossman & Hart, 1983); Toye, 2006; Klitgaard, 1989). The challenge of co-ordination and integration which is brought about by 'turf' barriers will also be addressed by implementing the recommendations on communication structures (Pindus, Koralek, Martinson & Trutko, 2000). The main impediment towards successful government communication is the challenge of limited resources (Communications 2000, 1996). Government should thus provide more funding for communication activities, which includes funding of communication infrastructure backlog in rural areas.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[43]

It should continue to construct the Thusong Service Centres (TSCs) which are viewed as providing access to government information especially to people in rural areas (Communications 2000, 1996). Integrated communication channels should be used given its advantage of communicating the same message to the intended recipients utilising various integrated channels (Osborn, 1999). According to Osborn (1999), integrated communication relates to the strategy of simultaneously disseminating messages from various channels, with the aim of fostering consistency. It is beneficial since it ensures communication in one voice (one clear common message), without the intended message being distorted. In relation to personnel and training of government communicators (recommendations 54-58), government continues to appoint unskilled (in the field of communication) and unqualified officials to communications positions despite the recommendation to the contrary (Communications 2000, 1996).

This, according to the experience of the research, happens mostly when officials who are appointed in political offices are no longer in good terms with the political principal. Government should thus desist from relegating unqualified officials to communication positions, and start employing only qualified communication practitioners. It should further develop "a standardised training course [for government communicators] as a qualifying criterion" and establish the national training programme for communication professionals (Communications 2000, 1996:8). Access to information (recommendations 68-76) should be strengthened by utilising simple and indigenous languages in government documentation, in all eleven (11) official languages. This should include producing information material in braille and sign-language which the researcher has termed, 'the twelve (12) unofficial languages' of South Africa – that is (Communications 2000, 1996).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[44]

In addition government communicators should be enrolled to learn sign-language and other official languages over and over the languages they are proficient in. This will thus resolve the challenge of multilingualism given that people will receive information in the language they understand better (Communications 2000, 1996). There is also a need to improve and strengthen relations with the media, given that "effective media relations is always associated with a recipe of co-ordinated government messaging, led by professional communication officials with status, who work directly with and have free access to ministers and officials' (Communications 2000, 1996: 6). This also means that government needs to appoint qualified communication practitioners, who must be appointed at higher level, and have access to decisions and decision makers such as political principals (Communications 2000, 1996). In so doing, the challenge of low status of government communication, which disadvantages government communicators from understanding how decisions were arrived at, will also be addressed (Communications 2000, 1996; Chimutengwende, 1988; Mefalopulos & Grenna, 2004).

The motivation for raising the status is communication is based on the argument that the function of communication is one of the most essential and strategic in an organisation given its ability to be the link between an organisation and its clients (receivers of information and services) (Kitchen, 1993; Dolphin & Fan, 2000; Winner, 1993; Cabanero-Verzosa & Garcia, 2009; Steyn, Green & Grobler, 2001). Furthermore, in order to strengthen media relations and increase coverage of government information, media statements should be issued on time and enquiries responded to almost immediately or within a reasonable time-frame (Communications 2000, 1996). The media statements should be "in-depth and [provide] background in information on government decisions and policy" (Communications 2000, 1996:17).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[45]

This will address the supposed "unprofessional" tendencies of government communicators; the challenge of expecting government communicators to 'spin-doctor' the truth; and the challenge of hierarchy or bureaucracy (Communications 2000, 1996:17). Bureaucracy affects media relations in a case whereby government fails to respond to enquiries within a reasonable time-frame (Brownfeld, 1977; Toye, 2006) and Johnston, 1993). The researcher argues that it sometimes takes long for a communicator to receive approval to release a media statement, if by luck, due to bureaucratic structure or 'red tape' requirements. The result is that bureaucracy often disadvantages government from receiving free media publicity. The researcher further argues that breaking the 'red tape' may assist in avoiding the blame of 'incompetence' on the part of government communicators. Internal communication will need to be strengthened as well within government departments and municipalities.

Various scholars argue that well informed employees tend to adopt the vision of an organisation as their own, hence they would want the organisation to achieve its goal (Smith and Mounter, 2008; Gall, 2009; Verghese, 2012). They assert that the success of an organisation is dependent on well-informed employees because they share the dream and associate themselves with success. South Africa's cultural diversity should be respected and treated equally as enshrined in the country's constitution in order to deal with the challenge of cultural diversity (The Constitution of the RSA, 1996). This is because culture has the potential to hinder effective communication if the person who follows it feels it is not respected and encroached upon (Novinger, 2001). To this end, the researcher argues that if one's culture is not protected and respected, it would be difficult to convince the person to accept any other form of communication, which they would review as foreign and invading to their daily life (Schein, 2004; Novinger, 2001).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[46]

In order to resolve the challenge of universal mandate, government should tailor-make it messages to suit different sectors of the population. The approach of utilising the 'one-size-fits-all' approach in communicating with the citizens has proven not to be effective (Jackson, 2011). According to Jackson (2011), the characteristics and profiles of the intended recipients will never be the same given their different cultural backgrounds and languages. She argues that messages should be tailor-made to fit each group or segment of people. It is also recommended that government should strengthen the strategy of utilising face-to-face (unmediated) communication which is reliable and believable since it is intimate, provides immediate feedback and signals that government is caring (Axford & Huggins, 2001; Nardi & Whittaker, 2002).

Nardi and Whittaker (2002:84) asserts that "face to face communication is the most information-rich medium" because of intimacy and immediacy and further provides a platform for immediate feedback and clarifications. The advantage of this strategy is that it is never affected by the challenge of hierarchy or 'red tape' given that feedback is provided intimately and immediately (Toye, 2006; Johnston, 1993; Reeds, 2009). This strategy will however be affected by the challenge of limited financial resources.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has discussed and presented the literature review, based on the objectives of the study as indicated in chapter one. It further discussed the theoretical framework which was adopted for the study, including the relevance of the chosen theory to the study, which is the cultivation analysis theory. The next chapter (chapter 3) presents the methodology that was adopted to conduct the study; the research design; the area of study; the accessible population; unit of analysis; the sampling technique adopted; the sample size; the method utilised to collect data.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[47]

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology that was adopted to conduct this study. It outlines the research design, population, sampling technique utilised, and data collection instrument.

According to Kothari (2004:8), research methodology is "a way to systematically solve the research problem". It is systematic because it is geared at organising and analysing the data collected in order to make unquestionable and reliable inferences on the outcome of the study (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001). Kothari (2004) further explains that there is a difference between 'research methodology' and 'research method', hence the argument that a researcher should be able to differentiate them. Kothari (2004) differentiates the methodology as a set procedure to be followed in order to solve a problem whereas the research method refers to "research operations" (2004:8). From the assertions discussed above, it can be concluded that research methods are an integral part of the research methodology, which in addition, provides for the rationale of selecting one method over others. To this end, one could thus summarise that a research methodology, amongst others, provides answers:

(a) For the rationale and significance of the study;

(b) On how to define the research problem;

(c) On motivating for the hypothesis;

(d) On the type of data collected;

(e) On why a particular research method was adopted;

(f) On why a particular data analysis method was adopted (Kothari, 2004).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[48]

Kothari (2004) further argues that there are eight (8) types of basic research which can be summarised into two (2), namely, (1) quantitative approach and (2) qualitative approach. In quantitative research, as the name suggest, the researcher is concerned about the quantity or numbers, that is, how many people agree or disagree with a certain phenomenon or a hypothesis whereas in qualitative research, the concern is on understanding why certain things happens the way they do under certain conditions (Kothari, 2004). In determining the most appropriate methodology for research, it is important for the researcher to keep in mind the purpose of the research (Cohen, Marion & Morrison, 2000).

3.2   Research method

The term 'research method', as explained above, refers to the method used to gather data in order to solve the identified problem (Kothari, 2004). Therefore, for this study, quantitative research method was adopted because the study was intended to test the hypothesis by collecting statistical data and thereafter generalise the findings to the population (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 1998; Newman & Benz, 1988; Collis & Hussey; 2003; Punch, 2003; Rea & Parker, 2005; Sapsford, 2007; Given, 2008; Fowler, 2009). This view is supported by Kerlinger (1964) who also refers to quantitative approach as a type of research aimed at testing the hypothesis. Bryman (2012) argues that researchers who employ the quantitative research method are mainly interested in generalising the results of their studies to the entire population. Furthermore, in sociological terms, quantitative research approach refers to a technic which is aimed at investigating any social phenomenon utilising statistics (Given, 2008). This assertion is further supported by Blaxter *et al* (1998), Collis and Hussey (2003), Newman and Benz (1988), Given (2003), and Creswell (2003) who also argue that in adopting the quantitative research approach or method, the researcher is actually interested in collecting and analysing numerical

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[49]

data in order to use the findings to make inferences, which was the case with the study. Furthermore, the researcher has adopted quantitative research design because it is "specific, well structured, have been tested for their validity and reliability, and can be explicitly defined and recognised" (Kumar, 2011: 103). Kumar (2011) further asserts that such a design provides enough detail which can be used for replication and verification purposes. Kothari (2004) further argues that the quantitative approach can either be inferential, experimental or simulation. In the inferential approach to research, the intention is to study and determine the characteristics of a sample population and thereafter generalise the findings to the population (Kothari, 2004).

3.3   Research design

According to Polit and Hungler (1999: 155) and Burns and Grove (2001), a research design is a blueprint or outline for conducting the study in such a way that maximum control will be exercised over factors that could interfere with the validity of the research results. In simple terms, a research design is a detailed plan of how the study will be conducted, and thus elaborates how data will be collected, what and how the instrument/s will be utilised, and how data will be analysed (Polit & Hungler, 1999; Burns & Grove, 2001; Kothari, 2004). For the study, the survey research design was adopted. According to Check and Schutt (2011), a survey research is a study whereby participants are asked questions administered through questionnaires or interviews. They argue that surveys are essential when the researcher's intention is to generalise the findings of the study to the larger population. To this end, "survey research is often the only means available for developing a representative picture of the attitudes and characteristics of a large population" (Check & Schutt, 2011: 160).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[50]

This assertion is supported by Shaughnessy, Zechmeister and Jeanne (2011) who argue that survey research is appropriate if the researcher is interested in determining the thinking or opinions of respondents.

3.4   Area of the study

The study was conducted in the Province of Mpumalanga, formerly the Eastern Transvaal, which is one (1) of the nine (9) provinces constituting the Republic of South Africa (The Constitution of RSA, 1996). It lies in the north-eastern part of South Africa, shares international borders with Swaziland and Mozambique in the east, local borders with KwaZulu-Natal and Free State in the south, Gauteng in the west, and Limpopo in the north (see Figure 3.1 below) (Statistics South Africa, 2013).

Figure 3.1: Map of the Republic of South Africa (depicting where the Province of Mpumalanga is situated)

Map of the Republic of South Africa
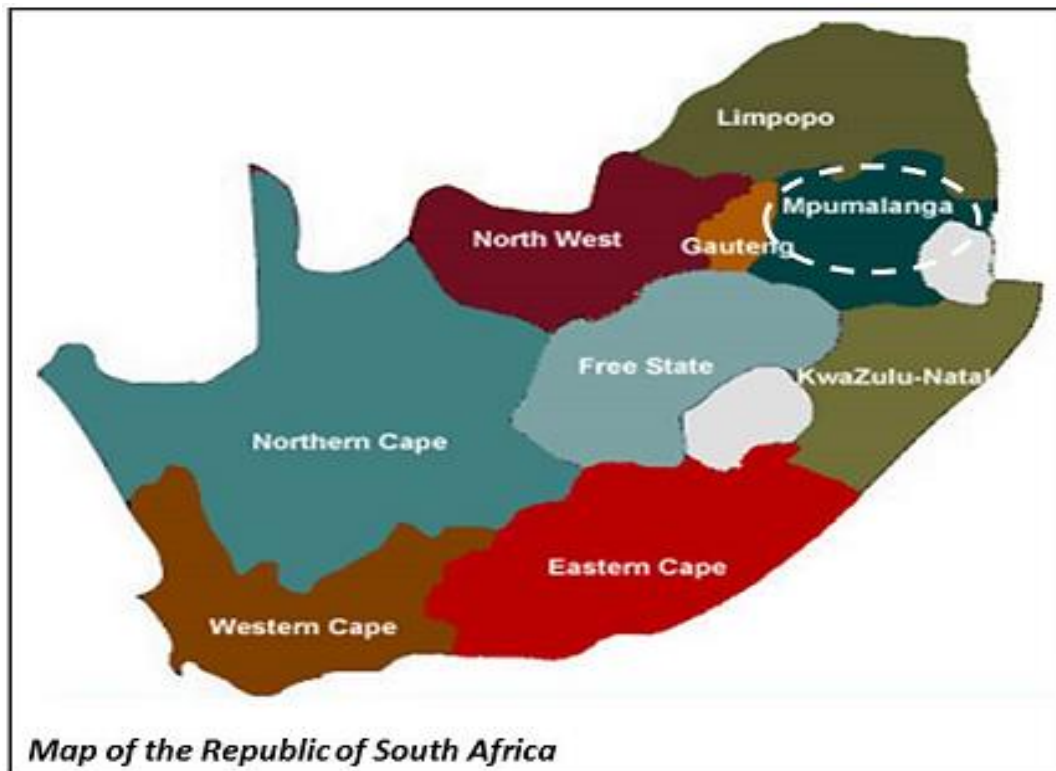
Adopted from: www.gcis.gov.za (2014)

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[51]

The rationale for choosing Mpumalanga is because population of the province is accessible to the researcher due to the fact that he is working and residing in it, and that makes it easier to have access to government communicators and the general citizens. Mpumalanga covers 6, 3% of South Africa's surface or 76 495 square kilometres, and is the second smallest province after Gauteng (Mpumalanga website, 2014; Statistics SA, 2013). It is divided into three (3) district municipalities, namely, Ehlanzeni, Nkangala and Gert Sibande (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2013). Each district municipality is further sub-divided into local municipalities.

Figure 3.2: Map indicating the location of the 18 local municipalities constituting the Province of Mpumalanga

Adapted from: bgis.sanbi.org (2014)

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[52]

The Ehlanzeni District is made up of five (5) local municipalities, the Nkangala District six (6) local municipalities, while the Gert Sibande District is made up of seven (7) local municipalities, and collectively they account for 18 local municipalities. In total, Mpumalanga has 21 municipalities, including the three (3) district municipalities (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2013).

3.4.1   Administration of the Province

Mpumalanga is governed by a provincial government, with its own Executive Council led by a premier (Constitution of RSA, 1996). The current Mpumalanga Provincial Government is constituted by twelve (12) departments and three (3) public entities whereas the local sphere of government consists of 21 district and local municipalities (MPG website, 2013). Each department, public entity and municipalities have appointed (or are supposed to appoint) communicators to implement communication activities (Public Service Act, 1994; Public Service Amendment Act, 2007).

3.4.2   The Thusong Service Centres available in Mpumalanga

The Thusong Service Centres (*TSC*s) were initiated by the South African government in 1999 as one-stop, integrated community development centres in order to address historical challenges of limited access to information, services and participation by citizens, as they had to travel long distances to access these services (Thusong, 2013). The word 'thusong' is Setswana for 'a place of help'. Formerly known as the Multi-Purpose Community Centres, the *TSC*s were established as part of the government strategy to provide development communication to citizens, especially rural communities.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[53]

Development communication can be defined as the process of disseminating information to citizens or communities in order to empower them to improve their socio-economic well-being (Quebral, 1975; Quebral, 2001; Thusong*,* 2013). Kumar (2011b) refers to development communication as "communication with a social conscience". He argues that it is primarily biased towards uplifting the lives of people in rural areas by enabling access to information, thereby ushering in sustainable social change. Based on this explanation, it is evident that the *TSC*s were established with the aim of empowering especially the disadvantaged rural poor through access to information, services and resources offered by government.

According to *Thusong* (2013), a total of 171 *TSC*s were operational in South Africa by the end of March 2012. Typical services found in these centres include those from the departments of Home Affairs, Labour, South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), Social Development, GCIS, and the department of Health as well as tele-centres, the Post Office, libraries, agricultural extension offices, municipal services, to mention by a few (*Thusong*, 2013). When the study was conducted, 20 *TSC*s were operational in Mpumalanga, and they were distributed as follows per district municipality: Gert Sibande (9); Ehlanzeni (5); and Nkangala (6) (*Thusong*, 2013).

3.4.3   Demographics

The province has a total population of 4, 039, 939 people, which accounts to approximately 7.8% of the population of South Africa (Statistics SA, 2013; Mpumalanga website, 2014). The youth (up to the age of 34) accounted for 69.4 percent or just over 2, 8 million (2, 803, 717 to be exact) of the population of the province, whereas those aged 60 years and older accounted for only 7 percent (Statistics SA, 2013; Provincial

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[54]

Economic Review & Outlook, 2014). The population groups found in the province are black African, white, coloured, Indian or Asian (Statistics SA, 2013). Black African accounts for 90, 7% of the population, white (7, 5%), coloured (0, 9%), Indian or Asian (0, 7%) and other (0, 2%) (Statistics SA, 2013). About 30% of the people speak siSwati, 26% isiZulu, 10, 3% isiNdebele, 10,2% Sepedi and 11, 6% xiTsonga (Statistics SA, 2013; Statistics SA, 2013.

3.4.4   Service delivery (access to basic services)

According to Census 2011 results, only 10.9 percent of households in Mpumalanga were living in informal houses in 2011 when compared to 13.6 percent nationally (Statistics SA, 2013; Provincial Economic Review & Outlook, 2014). Only 7.2 percent of households without formal toilets and using bucket system had improved from 14.7 percent in 2001 to 7.2 percent in 2011. During the same period, 87.4 percent of households had access to all types of piped water. Households with electricity increased from 69.7 percent in 2001 to 86.4 percent in 2011, whereas only 42.4 percent were accessing municipal refuse removal service (Statistics SA, 2013; Provincial Economic Review & Outlook, 2014). A comparison of some basic services provided in Mpumalanga as against that of South Africa is made in table below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[55]

Table 3.1: Selected basic service indicators in Mpumalanga and South Africa (2011)

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS	MPUMALANGA	*Ranking amongst provinces* *Best (1) – Worst (9)*	SA
In informal dwellings	10.9%	6	13.6%
With no toilets or bucket system	7.2%	6	7.3%
With access to piped water in dwelling, on-site or off-site	87.4%	6	91.2%
With electricity connections to mains	86.4%	5	84.7%
With municipal refuse removal	42.4%	7	62.1%

Adapted from: Statistics South Africa (Census 2011)

3.4.5   Poverty rate

The poverty rate of Mpumalanga has improved from 43.8 percent in 1996 to 36.9 percent in 2012, thus placing the province at number five (5) of the nine (9) provinces (Statistics SA, 2013; Provincial Economic Review & Outlook, 2014). It was estimated that just over 1.5 million citizens of the province were living in households with an income less than the poverty income in 2012 (Statistics SA, 2013; Provincial Economic Review & Outlook, 2014).

3.5   Target population

According to Polit and Hungler (1999:37), the population is an aggregate or total of all objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. Castillo (2009) refers to a research population as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[56]

In simple terms, a research population can be referred to as a group of individuals with the same characteristics, and given the similarity of their characteristics, the results of the study could be generalised on the entire population (Castillo, 2009). Based on the explanation of the word 'population', the target population thus refers to the sub-set of the population with similar characteristics which the researcher is interested in studying, and from which inferences will be made to the entire population (Polit and Hungler, 1999). Burns and Grove (1997:236) refer to the target population as "the entire aggregation of respondents that meet the designated set of criteria". The target population for the study constituted government communicators at local and provincial level, including public entities (belonging to the provincial government of Mpumalanga), and citizens who were readily available on a daily basis at the 20 Thusong Service Centres (TSCs) in the Province of Mpumalanga which was the study area.

3.5.1 Accessible population

As the name suggests, the accessible population is the population which is accessible or at the disposal of the researcher, from which the researcher can select samples, and can apply conclusions of the study (Castillo, 2009; Hayes, 2011). Polit and Hungler (1999) refer to the accessible population as those conforming to a certain criteria set out by the researcher, and are accessible as a collective for the purpose of the study. The accessible population for the study were heads of government communication at local and provincial level, including public entities (belonging to the provincial government of Mpumalanga), and the citizens who were readily available on a daily basis at the six (6) sampled Thusong Service Centres (TSCs).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[57]

Justification for selecting head of government communication is because they are implementers of government communication policies and strategies, and are colleagues of the researcher (common characteristic). On the other hand, justification for citizens is because they are readily accessible at the TSCs as they queue on a daily basis in pursuit of government services (common characteristic). They are also the intended recipients of government communication messages (another common characteristic).

3.5.2   Sampling

Levy and Lemeshow (2008) describe the sampling technique as the methodology used for selecting the sample from the population. On the other hand, Polit and Hungler (1999) describe a sample as a subset of a population selected to participate in a study. Burgess (1984:78) refers to sampling as "a process of identifying and determining the units of analysis". Kothari (2004) refers to sampling as the process of selecting respondents for the study, and asserts that such a sample should be representative of the total population. Kothari (2004) further argues that there are two (2) designs of sampling, namely, non-probability and probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is "that sampling procedure which does not afford any basis for estimating the probability that each item in the population has of being included in the sample" (Kothari, 2004:59). He argues that in utilising non-probability sampling, there is high possibility of biasness. On the contrary, probability sampling offers every subject an equal opportunity of being included in the sample (Kothari, 2004). In addition, Check and Schutt (2011) argue that probability sampling affords researchers, in advance, an opportunity to know the likelihood that any element of a population will be selected. In this study, both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were adopted in order to create a sampling frame.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[58]

In probability sampling, one or single stage cluster sampling was adopted for heads of government communication. Kothari (2004) and Crossman (2012) describe one or single stage sampling as a process in which all the subjects from a chosen cluster are included into the final sample. This was done in a form of a census considering that the cluster of heads of government communication was small enough and manageable (Kothari, 2004; Daniel, 2011; Crossman, 2012). A census can thus be described as the method of attempting to collect data from every member of the population under study (Kothari, 2004). In non-probability sampling, judgemental or purposive sampling technique was adopted for citizens who were readily available on a daily basis at the TSCs. Kothari (2004) and Daniel (2011) refer to judgemental or purposive sampling as a sampling procedure where the researcher purposely selects a sample based on his or her own judgement of believing that it is appropriate for the study.

3.5.3 Sample size

A sample size can be referred to as the number of respondents possessing all characteristics or traits of the population selected for a study, and from whom data will be gathered, analysed and findings generalised (Last, 1995; Cornish, 2006). Likewise, Chow, Shao and Wang (2003) and Thabane (2004) assert that sample size is crucial in research studies because it ensures validity, accuracy, reliability, scientific and ethical integrity of a study being undertaken. Furthermore, there are two (2) approaches to sample size calculations in the designs of quantitative studies, namely, (a) Precision of Estimation (Precision Analysis); and (b) Hypothesis Testing of effects/relationships (Power Analysis) (Thabane, 2004). Thabane (2004:3) argues that in Precision Analysis, calculating the size of the sample is "important to ensure that estimates are obtained with precision/ accuracy or level of confidence".

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[59]

The argument is that if the margin of error in the estimation is smaller, then the estimate will be more precise (Thabane, 2004). In Power Analysis or hypothesis testing, the bigger sample will guarantee the significance of statistics. According to Thabane (2004:4), this is because "If the sample is too small, then even if large differences are observed, it will be impossible to show that these are due to anything more than sampling variation." On the other side, Holton and Burnett (1997:71) argue that "one of the real advantages of quantitative method [which was used in the study] is their ability to use smaller groups of people to make inferences about larger groups that would be prohibitively expensive to study". The sample size for the study was therefore calculated as follows:

(a)   Heads of government communication (census)

As indicated earlier, the current Mpumalanga Provincial Government is constituted by twelve (12) departments and three (3) public entities, namely:

(1)   Office of the Premier;
(2)   Department of Economic Development and Tourism;
(3)   Department of Finance;
(4)   Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison;
(5)   Department of Education;
(6)   Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation;
(7)   Department of Human Settlements;
(8)   Department of Corporative Governance and Traditional Affairs;
(9)   Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport;
(10) Department of Health;
(11) Department of Social Development;
(12) Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[60]

(13) Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (provincial public entity);

(14) Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (provincial public entity);

(15) Mpumalanga Gambling Board (provincial public entity)
(MPG website, 2013).

The local sphere of government consists of 21 district and local municipalities, namely:

(1) Ehlanzeni District Municipality
   1.1. Mbombela Local Municipality
   1.2. Bushbuckridge Local Municipality
   1.3. Nkomazi Local Municipality
   1.4. Thaba Chweu Local Municipality
   1.5. Umjindi Local Municipality

(2) Nkangala District Municipality
   2.1 Emalahleni Local Municipality
   2.2 Emakhazeni Local Municipality
   2.3 Thembisile Hani Local Municipality
   2.4 Dr J.S Moroka Local Municipality
   2.5 Steve Tshwete Local Municipality
   2.6 Victor Khanye Local Municipality

(3) Gert Sibande District Municipality
   3.1 Albert Luthuli Local Municipality
   3.2 Dipaleseng Local Municipality
   3.3 Govan Mbeki Local Municipality
   3.4 Lekwa Local Municipality
   3.5 Mkhondo Local Municipality

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[61]

3.6 Msukaligwa Local Municipality

3.7 Pixley ka Isaka-Seme Local Municipality

(MPG website, 2013).

Each department, public entity and municipalities have appointed (or are supposed to appoint) communicators to implement communication activities (Public Service Act, 1994; Public Service Amendment Act, 2007). To this end, the census was conducted by administering questionnaires to 36 heads of government communication.

(b) Citizens at Thusong Service Centres (TSCs)

At the time of the study, a total of twenty (20) *TSC*s were available in the Province of Mpumalanga and are distributed as follows per district municipality: Gert Sibande (9); Ehlanzeni (5); and Nkangala (6) (*Thusong* website, 2013; GCIS, 2013). From the information received from the Centre managers, these centres operate five (5) times per week, though some services are rendered once a week owing to the mobility of such service rendered. For example, the Department of Home Affairs has a mobile unit which would visit centres without a permanent (home affairs) office once a week. Given that TSCs provide similar services, and owing to time and financial constraints, the researcher had opted to sample two (2) TSCs per district municipality.

In calculating the population size, information received from TSCs managers was utilised which indicated that an average of 19 citizens visits these centres on a daily basis in pursuit of government information and services. Based on this figure, the population size for the twenty (20) TSCs (per week) was calculated as 1615. This is because the study was conducted over a period of five (5) days.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[62]

The sample size adopted in this regard was 310 respondents which was calculated utilising the *Creative Research Systems Survey Software's Sample Size Calculator* (Creative Research Systems, 1982). The determination of the sample size is supported by Gay (1996) who argues that if the population size is 1500, then only 20% should be sampled. The calculation was based on the confidence interval of five (5) and the confidence level of 95% (Creative Research Systems, 1982). Simon and Goes (2012) and Scott (2013) define the confidence interval (or the margin of error as it is also known), as a range of values that is likely to contain the true value of the population by determining how much higher or lower than the population mean the researcher is willing to let the sample mean fall.

They argue that the most common confidence intervals are 90% confident, 95% confident and 99% confident. As a result, any sample size calculated at the confidence interval of 5 and confidence level of 95% is adequate and representative to enable the researcher to generalize the findings of the study to the population from which the sample was selected (Simon & Goes, 2012; Scott, 2013). Leedy and Ormond (2001) also argue that if the population is homogeneous, then a smaller sample is adequate, as was the case in determining the sample size for citizens at the 20 TSCs. Questionnaires were administered at the following six (6) TSCs:

    (a)   Casteel Thusong Service Centre (Ehlanzeni district)
    (b)   Matsamo Thusong Service Centre (Ehlanzeni district)
    (c)   Marapyane Thusong Service Centre (Nkangala district)
    (d)   Verena Thusong Service Centre (Nkangala district)
    (e)   Driefontein Thusong Service Centre (Gert Sibande district)
    (f)   Siyathemba Thusong Service Centre (Gert Sibande district)

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[63]

3.6 Data collection instruments

Various scholars argue that the selection of data collection instrument depends on the purpose and type of study being undertaken hence the researcher should select the appropriate instrument (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). To this end, a number of instruments have been identified, such as interviews and questionnaires (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). For the study, data was collected using questionnaires as discussed below.

3.6.1 Quantitative data

The instrument that was used for collecting quantitative data was a questionnaire. Foddy (1994); Oppenheim (2000) and Gillham (2008) describe a questionnaire as a research instrument consisting of a number of questions and response options, used to collect data from respondents, for statistical analysis purposes. Two sets of structured questionnaires were designed for data collection. A structured questionnaire presents standardised and pre-determined questions and its advantage is that respondents are asked the same questions (Foddy, 1994; Oppenheim, 2000; Gillham, 2008). The first questionnaire was administered amongst heads of government communication, whereas the other one was administered to citizens at the Thusong Service Centres (TSCs). A total of 36 questionnaires were administered to heads of government communication, and 312 were administered at the six (6) TSCs over a three (3) day period, that is, 52 per TSC. The questions asked were both closed-ended and open-ended. Foddy (1994), Oppenheim (2000) and Gillham (2008) describe closed-ended questions as the ones prompting the respondent to tick responses from the pre-determined answers, whereas open-ended ones afford the respondent to formulate their own responses. The Likert Scale was used for closed-ended questions.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[64]

According to Frey, Botan and Kreps (2000), the questions based on the Likert Scale asks respondents to what degree do they agree or disagree with a pre-determined statement or opinion on a 5-point scale, ranging from 'not sure', 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. For heads of government communication, the questionnaires were e-mailed to them for self-completion given that the researcher had their contact details, and it was easy to retrieve them. For citizens, the researcher travelled to the sampled TSCs and self-administered the questionnaire.

3.7   Pilot study

Leedy (1997) argues that a pilot study is significant in determining the validity and reliability of a research instrument. According to Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001), a pilot study is aimed at determining how feasible a study is. It is thus a "small scale version or trial-run done in preparation for the major study" (Hungler, 2001: 467). The purpose of a pilot study is to test the research instruments for validity and accuracy or reliability (Leedy, 1997: 32). Polit and Beck (2008) explain validity as the extent of accuracy of an instrument to measure the construct it is supposed to measure in the context of the concepts/variables being studied. On the other hand, Norland (1990) in Radhakrishna (2007) refers to validity as the amount of systematic or built-in error in measurement.

Moskal and Leydens (2002); Joppe (2000) and Golafshani (2003) simplify validity as the extent to which it measures what it was intended to measure. In addition, Radhakrishna (2007) believes that a valid and reliable questionnaire is essential to reduce measurement error. The measurement error is the "discrepancy between respondents' attributes and their survey responses" (Groves, 1987: 162).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[65]

Reliability and validity of research results are therefore significant in order for the results to be credible (Carmines and Zeller, 1979; Kirk and Miller, 1986; Radhakrishna, 2007; Leedy, 1997). In a nutshell, the assertion is that a study will become valid if it measures what it intended to measure, whilst it becomes reliable if it produces the same results upon repetition. As a result, Baker (1994) argues that it is significant to conduct a pilot study given that this may pre-warn the researcher about where the main research project could fail or whether the proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated.

Therefore, since the study's approach would be quantitative, the researcher has adhered to (1) protocol for questionnaire design; (2) protocol while administering a questionnaire; (3) measures to ensure data integrity; and (4) measures to ensure validity and reliability. The research instrument was thus pre-tested for validity and accuracy (reliability) at the Wonderfontein Thusong Service Centre at the eMakhazeni local municipality in the Mpumalanga Province, given that this municipality was not part of the main study. A total of 35 people (5 government communicators and 30 citizens) participated in the pilot study, and the results of the study indicated that the questionnaire for citizens was too long given that they could not concentrate and co-operative for a longer time. The researcher had to cut some of the questions as a result.

The researcher also found that the respondents (citizens) preferred to use their mother tongue to respond to questions hence the researcher opted to self-administer the questionnaire in the actual study. For government communicators, the questions were accepted and responded to accordingly. The validity and reliability of the data collection instruments were thus ensured because the results of the pilot study indicated that it measured what it was intended to measure (Leedy, 1997; Polit and Beck, 2008; Moskal and Leydens, 2002; Joppe, 2000; Golafshani, 2003).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[66]

The validity and reliability of the data collection instruments thus make the results of the study to be credible (Carmines and Zeller, 1979; Kirk and Miller, 1986; Radhakrishna, 2007; Leedy, 1997). The pilot study was therefore significant in ensuring that the data collection instrument used is appropriate and not complicated (Baker, 1994).

3.8 Data analysis

According to Polit and Hungler (1999:699), data analysis is the systematic organisation and synthesis of research data, and the testing of a research hypothesis using those data. For the study, three (3) levels of measurements were employed, namely, (a) nominal (for classification purposes though not in logical order such as male or female), (b) ordinary (such as management levels), and (c) interval (such as in the Likert scale satisfaction ranking). Thereafter data was analysed utilising three (3) quantitative data analysis procedures, namely, (a) data tabulation, (b) descriptives, and (c) data disaggregation. These procedures were adopted because they make it easier for the results to be understood (Bryman & Cramer, 1999). Data tabulation was done in the form of frequency and percent distributions and enabled the researcher to establish whether all completed questionnaires were captured. Descriptives assisted in calculating the data set by way of a mean and mode whereas data disaggregation assisted in analyzing data through various variables.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethics are defined as "conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group" (Babbie & Mouton 2010: 520). In this study, the research ethics were considered when data was collected from human subjects through the administration of standardised structured questionnaires.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[67]

The researcher has sought permission from the GCIS national office in Pretoria (which manages the TSCs) before collecting data from respondents at the six (6) TSCs.

A letter describing the purpose of the study and also seeking permission to participate was written to the heads of government communication and attached to the questionnaire which was administered. The subjects of the study at the TSCs were informed about the nature of the study being conducted and their verbal permission to participate or not to participate were sought.

Participants were also afforded an opportunity to use pseudo names instead of their real names to protect their confidentiality, should they wish to do so. The participants were further informed of their right to withdraw from the study, should they wish to do so.

The researcher administered the questionnaire for participants at TSCs personally those who wished to complete the forms themselves, were given an opportunity to do so.

The participants were guaranteed by the researcher that their responses will remain confidential and anonymous, and that they will be used solely for the purpose of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The name and numbers of the researcher were made known to participants and commits to provide a complete research project to the government representatives.

The researcher has read and understood the ethics policy of the university (University of South Africa, 2009), and has endeavoured to abide by all the ethical requirements of the university to ensure the study does not cause any harm to the respondents and all those related to the study in any way.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[68]

The researcher further committed to maintain the confidentiality of all data collected from or about research participants, and has maintained security procedures for the protection of privacy.

The researcher has read and understood Unisa's *Research Ethics Policy and the Guidelines for Research Ethics Review.*

3.10 Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology that was adopted for the study, including the research design, target and accessible population, area of the study, sampling technique utilised, pilot study which was undertaken (to determine the validity and reliability of a research instrument), data collection instrument and ethical considerations. Motivation was also provided for the research method adopted and the area selected for the study. The next chapter (chapter 4) deals with the presentation of the data collected and analysis of it.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[69]

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analysis of the data collected during the study. The aim of the study was to examine the success of the communication and information system of the South African government, focusing specifically on the Province of Mpumalanga. The presentation of the data is based on the objectives of the study as presented in chapter one, namely:

- To evaluate the impact of the current communication and information system of the government of South Africa;

- To find out whether government communication messages are understood by the intended recipients (citizens);

- To identify challenges that may impede on the effectiveness of the communication and information system of the South African government (with specific reference to the Mpumalanga provincial government); and

- To recommend strategies that can be implemented in order to improve the communication and information system of the government of South Africa.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. Two sets of structured questionnaires were used to collect data. One was administered amongst heads of government communication, and the other one was administered to citizens at the Thusong Service Centres (TSCs).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[70]

Both questionnaires had five (5) sections and an introductory letter of the research which included the purpose and objectives of the study, amongst others. The sections on the questionnaires were:

(a)   Section A: Personal information (characteristics of respondents)

(b)   Section B: The impact of the communication and information system in an organisation

(c)   Section C: Messaging – Understanding what is being communicated

(d)   Section D: Barriers to effective communication

(e)   Section E: Strategies to be implemented to improve the communication and information system of the government of South Africa.

A total of thirty-six (36) questionnaires were administered to heads of government communication and thirty-one (31; 86.1%) were completed and returned. For citizens, the researcher administered three-hundred and twelve (312) questionnaires (annexure B) at six (6) TSCs. Some were self-administered in the language of the respondent because some of the respondents did not understand English. The response rate in this regard was 293 questionnaires. Figure 4.1 below indicates the geographic location of the TSCs where the study was conducted:

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[71]

Figure 4.1: Map indicating the location of TSCs (per municipality)

Adapted from: bgis.sanbi.org (2014)

The map above depicts the boundaries of the three (3) districts municipalities of the Province of Mpumalanga, namely, (1) eHlanzeni, (2) Nkangala, and (3) Gert Sibande. These district municipalities are further segregated to the level of local municipalities. The eHlanzeni district municipality consist of five (5), Nkangala – six (6), and Gert Sibande – seven (7) local municipalities totalling eighteen (18). It further depicts the location of each of the six (6) Thusong Service Centres (TSCs) in the said municipalities where questionnaire for citizens were administered. The table below depicts the geographic spread of respondents, per TSC and per district municipality:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[72]

Table 4.1: Geographic spread of respondents by TSC and District (N= 293)

THUSONG SERVICE CENTRE (TSC)	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1. Verena TSC (Nkangala District)	56	19.1
2. Marapyane TSC (Nkangala District)	53	18.0
Sub-total (Nkangala District)	*110*	*37.1*
3. Matsamo TSC (eHlanzeni District)	51	17.4
4. Casteel TSC (eHlanzeni District)	47	16.0
Sub-total (eHlanzeni District)	*98*	*33.4*
5. Driefontein TSC (Gert Sibande District)	47	16.0
6. Siyathemba TSC (Gert Sibande District)	39	13.3
Sub-total (Gert Sibande District)	*86*	*29.3*
TOTAL	293	100.0

The table above shows that the high number of the respondents (110; 37.1%) were from the Nkangala district municipality, followed by Ehlanzeni district municipality (98; 33.4%) and Gert Sibande district municipality (86; 29.3%). The Nkangala district municipality had a high response rate compared to the other two district municipalities because there was a high turn-out of respondents on the days the questionnaires were administered.

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

4.2   Demographic profile of respondents (communicators)

Respondents were asked to indicate their personal information, namely, the sphere of government they are employed in; level of management they occupy; and the number of years they have been occupying the management level.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[73]

These structured questions were asked to determine the relationship between the demographic characteristics of respondents and their level of influence in their organisations.

4.2.1   Spheres of government

It was important for the study to establish the respondents' government's sphere of employment. The reason behind this question was to check whether the function of communication is recognised as a strategic function in all the spheres of government. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

Figure 4.2: Distribution of respondents by sphere of government (N=31)
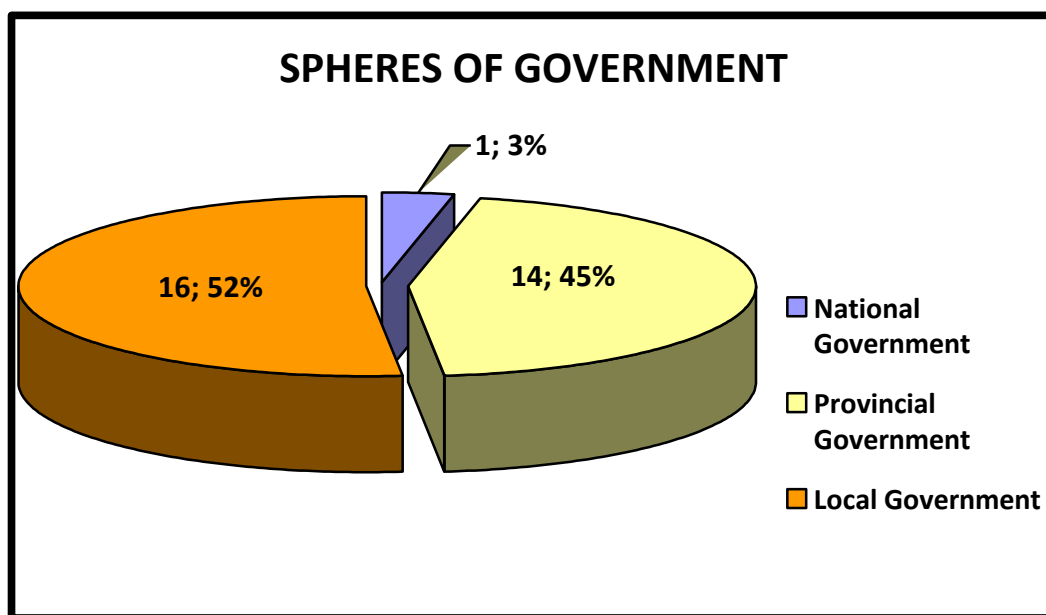
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (16; 51.6%) were employed in the local sphere of government (district and local municipalities), followed by those employed by the provincial government (14; 45.1%) and national government (represented in the province) (1; 3.2%).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[74]

4.2.2   Level of management occupation

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of management they were occupying. The reason behind this question was to establish whether government communicators sit in decision-making structures which would make them privy to information for dissemination purposes (if necessary). The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

Table 4.2: Distribution of respondents by level of management occupation   (N= 31)

OCCUPATION LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Top/strategic management	14	45.1
Middle/tactical management	11	35.4
Lower/operational management	6	19.3
TOTAL	**31**	**100.0**

The table above shows that a significant number of the respondents (14; 45.1%) were part of the top/strategic management which is where decisions are made. This is followed by those sitting in middle/tactical management (11; 35.4%) and lower/operational management level (6; 19.3%), and (8; 25.8%).

4.2.3   Years of experience (by occupation level)

Respondents were asked to indicate their years of experience in the occupation level. The reason behind these questions was to establish whether work experience had any influence on job competency of communicators. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[75]

Figure 4.3: Distribution of respondents by occupation management level (N=31)
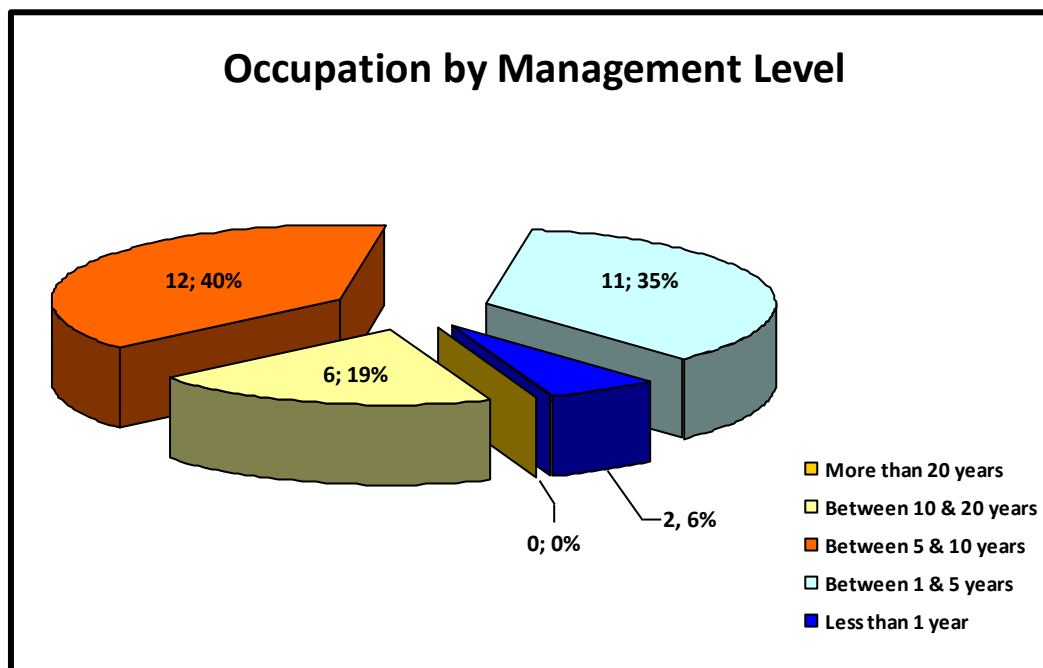
The figure above shows that a higher number of respondents (12; 38.7%) have work experience of between 5 and 10 years in government experience, followed by those with work experience of between 1 and 5 years (11; 35.4%) and between 10 to 20 years (6; 19.3%).

4.3   Demographic profile of respondents (citizens)

Respondents were asked to indicate their personal information, namely, gender, age group, type of area they reside in, employment status, and the type of equipment or tele-communication infrastructure they own or have access to. These structured questions were asked to determine the relationship between the demographic characteristics of respondents and their level of understanding to be able to decode communication messages.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[76]

4.3.1 Gender of respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender. The reason behind this question was to establish whether both males and females were equally reliant on government information. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

Figure 4.4: Distribution of respondents by gender (N= 293)
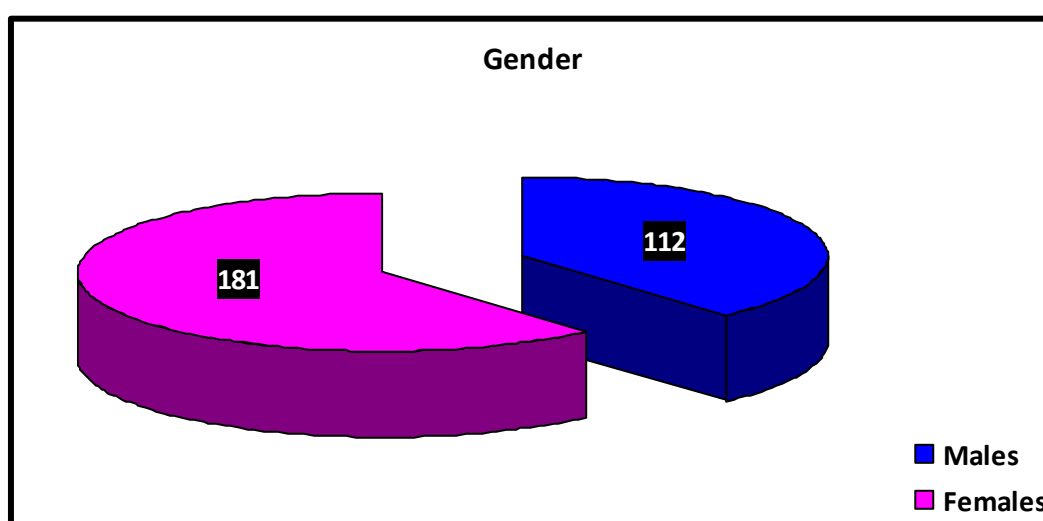
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (181; 61.7%) were females, followed by males (112; 38.2%). The results suggest that more females rely on the TSCs for government services and information as compared to males.

4.3.2 Age group of respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate their age group. The reason behind this question was two-fold, firstly to establish the distribution of respondents by age, and secondly, to establish whether there was any correlation between age and the need for government information and messages. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[77]

Figure 4.5: Distribution of respondents by age group (N= 293)
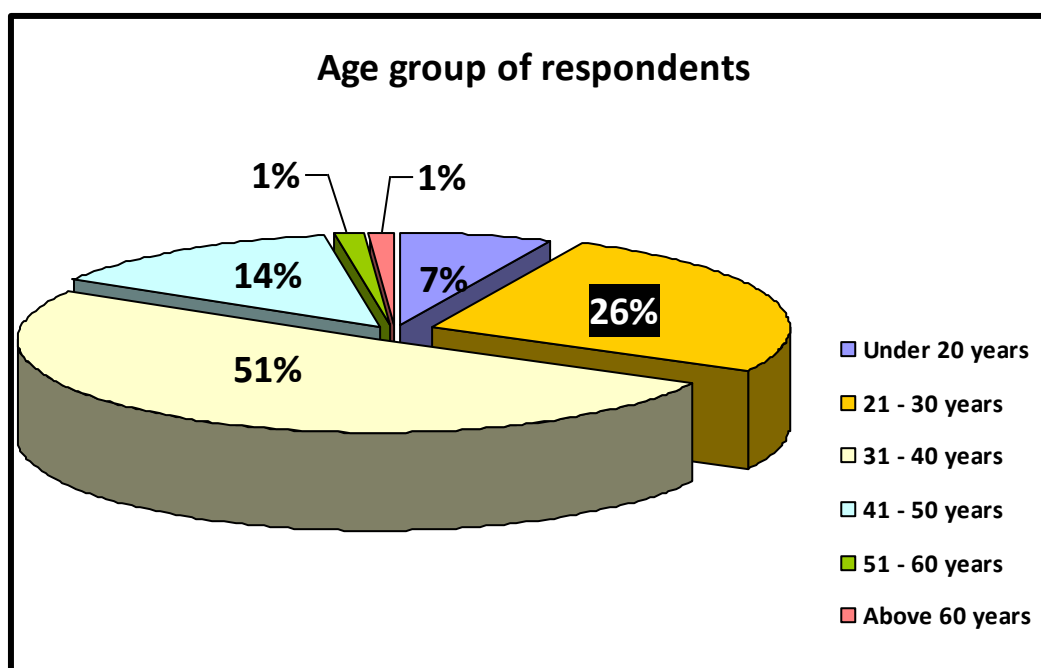
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (149; 50.8%) were between the age group of 31 and 40 years, followed by the age groups of 21 and 30 years (76; 25.9%), 41 and 50 years (41; 13.9%), below 20 years (20; 6.8%), 51 and 60 years (4; 1.3%) and over 60 years lastly (3; 1.0%). To this end, the results indicate that almost 51% of the youth (between the ages of 31 and 40 years) are in need of government information and messages more than any other age group.

4.3.3   Type of residence area

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of residence area they reside in. The reason behind this question was to establish whether both urban and rural areas have equal access to government information and messages. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[78]

Figure 4.6: Distribution of respondents by type of area of residence (N= 293)
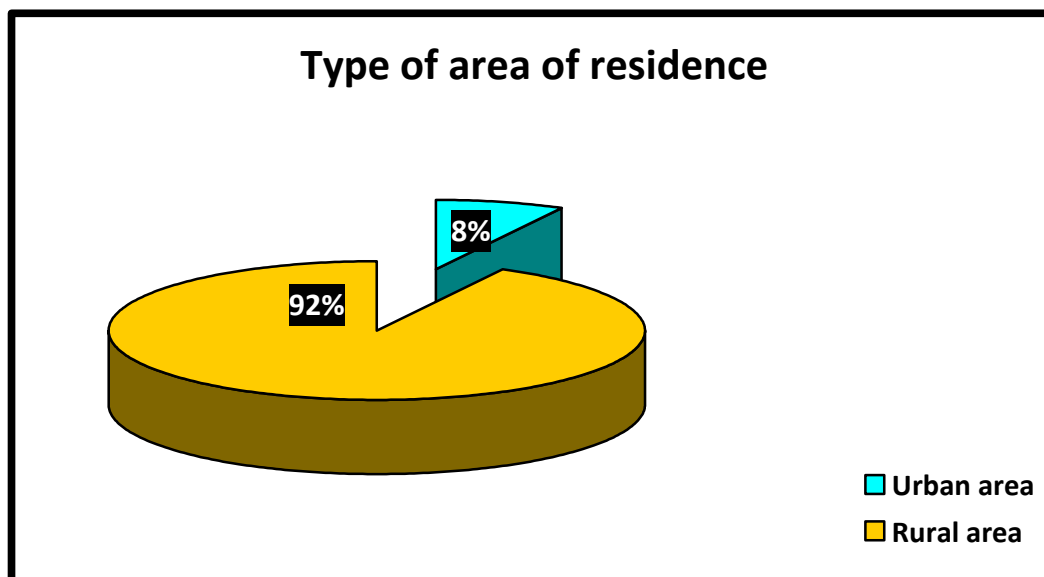
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (270; 92.1%) were residing in rural areas, followed by those residing in urban areas (23; 7.8%). The results show that government information and messages are not equally accessible to people residing in urban and rural areas.

4.3.4   Employment status

Respondents were asked to indicate their employment status. The reason behind this question was to establish whether the requirement for government information and messages is equal between employed and unemployed people. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[79]

Figure 4.7: Distribution of respondents by employment status (N= 293)
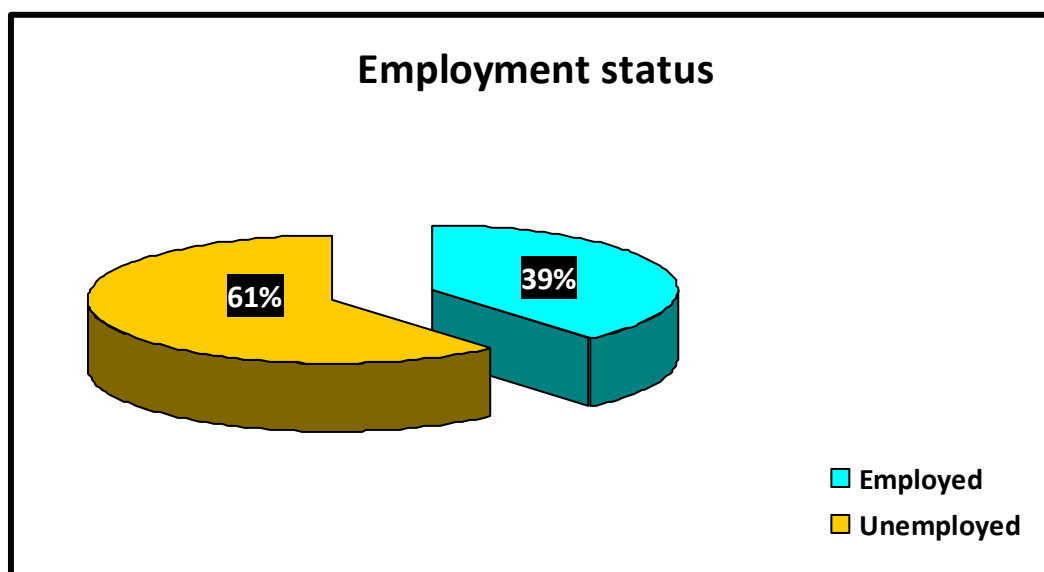
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (179; 61.0%) were unemployed, followed by those employed (114; 38.9%). The results thus suggest that unemployed people require government information and messages more than those employed.

4.3.5 Access to equipment or tele-communication infrastructure

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of equipment or tele-communication infrastructure they own or have access to. The reason behind this question was to establish whether ownership or accessibility to equipment or tele-communication infrastructure had anything to do with the accessibility of government information. Respondents were asked to provide more than one equipment of tele-communication infrastructure as long as it was applicable to their situations hence the table below represents multiple responses. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[80]

Figure 4.8: Access to equipment or tele-communication infrastructure (N= 293)
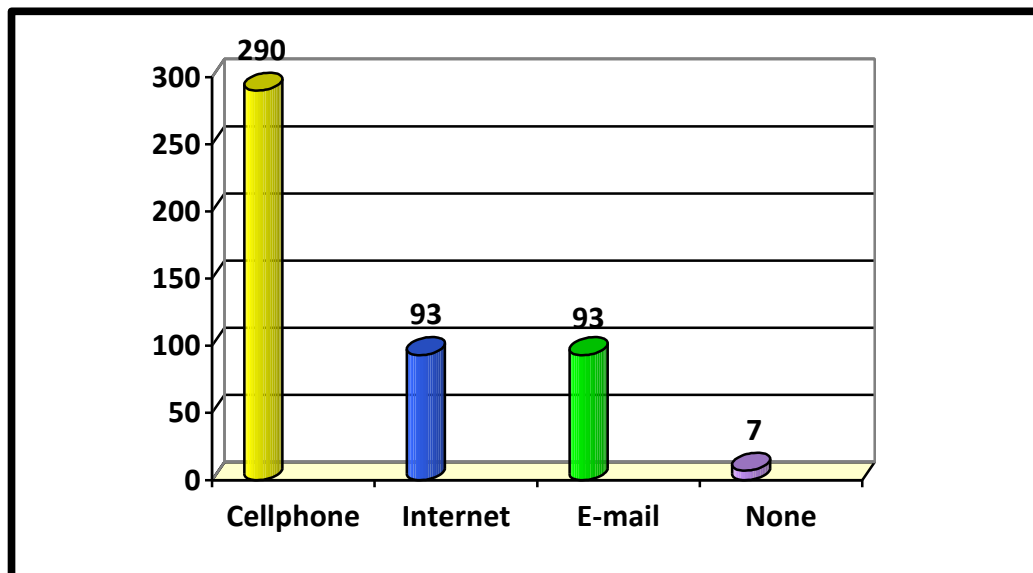
* The figures above represent multiple responses

The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (290; 98.9%) had access to cell-phones, followed by those who had access to the internet and e-mail (93; 31.7%) each, and lastly those without any (7; 2.3%).

SECTION B: THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM IN AN ORGANISATION

4.4   Communication as a two (2) way process

The respondents (communicators) were asked using a *Likert Scale* to indicate whether they believe the current communication and information system being utilised by government provides an opportunity for feedback. The reason behind the question was to check whether the system concludes the communication process between the sender and the receiver, given that communication is a two (2) way process. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

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[81]

Figure 4.9: Communication as a two (2) way process (N= 31)
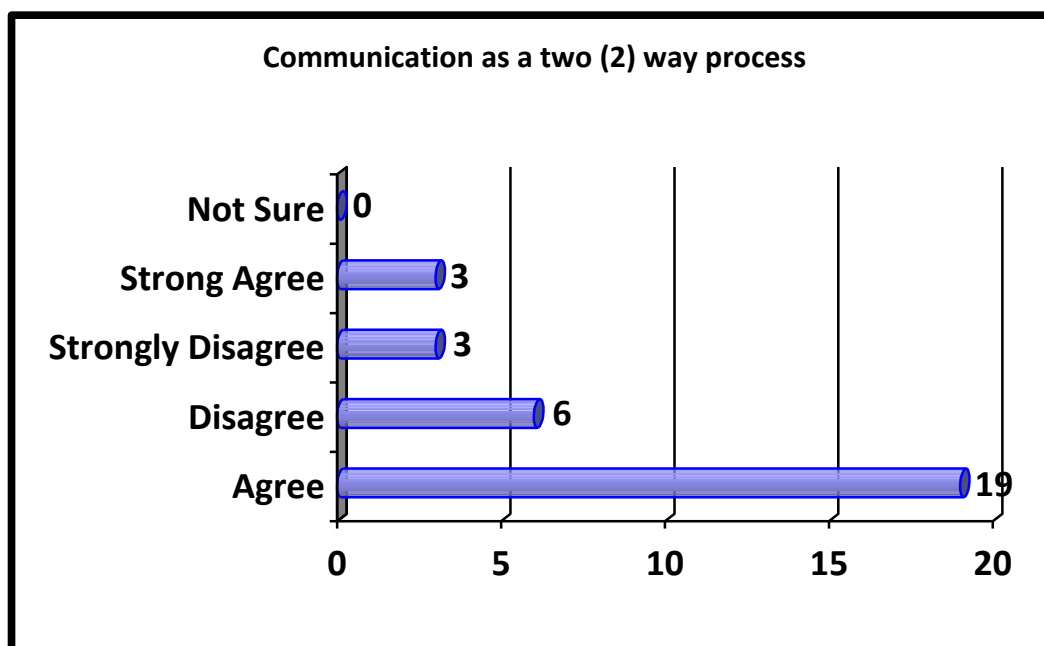
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (19; 61.2%) agree that the current communication and information system being utilised by government provides an opportunity for feedback. This is followed by those who disagree (6; 19.3%), and those who strongly disagree and strongly agree (3; 9.6%) each. After the respondents answered the question on whether they believe the communication machinery provides a platform for feedback, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The rationale for asking the question was to determine the type of feedback platforms they utilise. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents:

- Municipalities conduct public participation meetings on a regular basis;

- Citizens participate in radio talk-shows and even write letters to newspaper editors either criticising or supporting government programmes;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[82]

- Departmental newsletters provides a channel of feedback from citizens;
- Some departments have put suggestion boxes and toll-free (customer care) lines in place wherein citizens can drop off their concerns, compliments or suggestions/recommendations;
- Management hold regular meetings to interact with staff members;
- There are no proper systems for feedback;
- It is treated as a one-way process;
- The function of communication is not taken seriously;
- There is no customer care line.

The results above show various reasons from respondents and most notably, those from municipalities who do not agree that government communication machinery provides a platform for feedback.

4.5 Channels of information dissemination

The respondents (communicators) were asked to indicate the channels they were using to disseminate information. The reason behind this question was to determine the appropriateness and accessibility of the channels to citizens. Respondents were asked to provide more than one channel as long as it was applicable hence the table represents multiple responses. The results are presented in the table below:

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[83]

Figure 4.10: Channels of information/messages dissemination (N= 31)
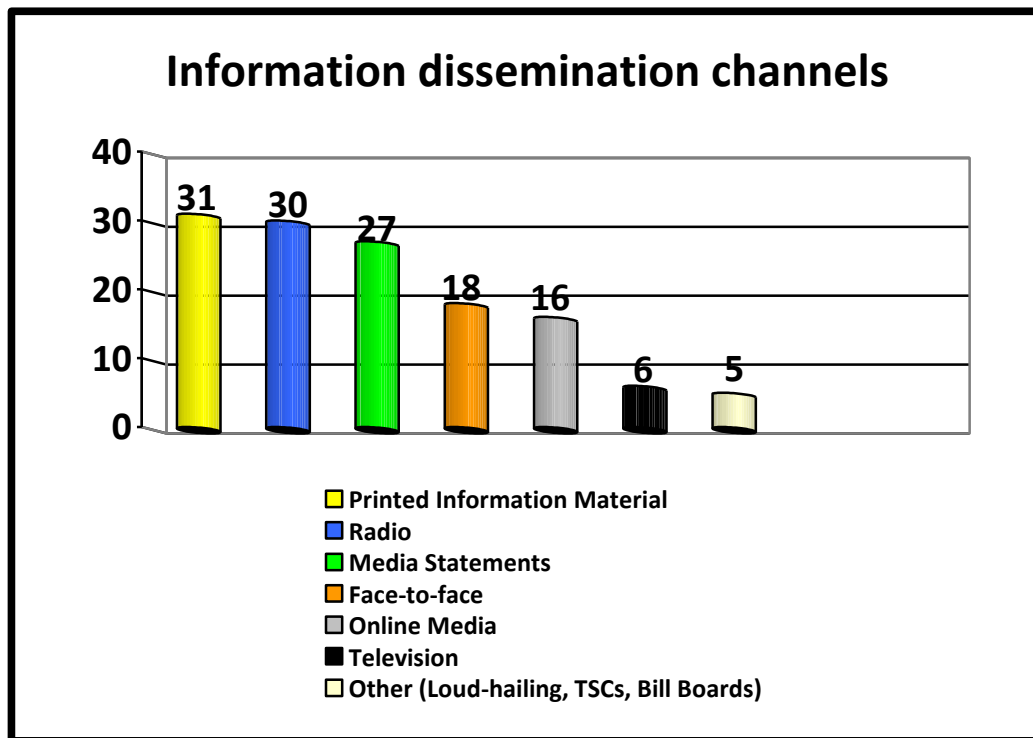
The figure above represents multiple responses. It shows that the majority of respondents (31; 100.0%) were utilising printed information material (brochures, pamphlets, leaflets, newsletters) for disseminating information to citizens. This is followed by radio (30; 96.7%), media statements (27; 67.7%), face-to-face communication (18; 58.0%), online media platforms (16; 51.6%), and other (loud-hailing, TSCs, outreach programmes and bill boards) (5; 16.1%). The results suggest that government messages are mainly transmitted through printed information material (pamphlets, brochures, leaflets, newsletters) and radio.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[84]

4.6 The appropriateness of the channels of information dissemination

The respondents (communicators) were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate how appropriate do they think the channels they are utilising to disseminate information. The reason behind the question was to determine whether the channels were utilised for convenience. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

Figure 4.11: Adopted channels of information dissemination (N= 31)
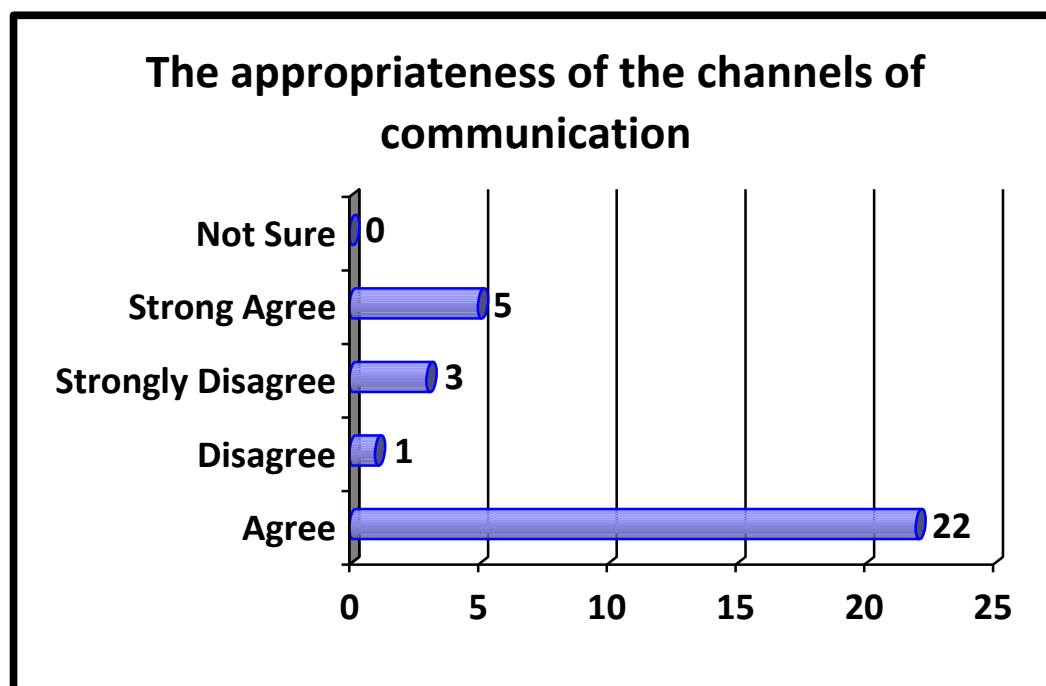
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (22; 70.9%) agree that the channels they are utilising for information dissemination are appropriate, followed by those who strong agree (5; 16.1%), as opposed to those who strong disagree (3; 9.6%) and disagree (1; 3.2%).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[85]

After the respondents answered the question on the appropriateness of the channels of information dissemination, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The rationale for asking the question was to determine whether they have been successful in utilising the channels to disseminate information. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents:

- Community responses to government events in big numbers confirms that government messages are reaching the people;
- Positive response of people who want to be part of government's efforts to improve education (emanating from the message of 'education is everyone's business');
- We receive constant feedback from communities;
- The majority of community members own a radio and to some extend a television which collectively reach a large audience;
- Government is not exploiting the opportunity being afforded by the advent of social media which is utilised by the majority of the youth;
- Language barrier and inadequate telecommunication infrastructure still poses a challenge;
- Research conducted is inadequate given the inherent gaps;
- Research is necessary to determine the most appropriate channels owing to technological advancement;
- High illiteracy rate.

The results above show various reasons from respondents, and most notably, those who argue that language barrier and inadequate telecommunication infrastructure still pose a challenge to effective communication.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[86]

4.7   Channels of information dissemination

Respondents (citizens) were asked to indicate the channels they normally receive government communication from. The reason behind this question was to determine the appropriateness and accessibility of the channels by citizens. Respondents were asked to provide more than one channel as long as it was applicable hence the table represents multiple responses. The results are presented in the table below:

Table 4.3: Channels of receiving information/messages (N= 293)

N=293	FREQUENCY (MULTIPLE RESPONSES)		
CHANNELS	COUNT	PERCENTAGE (COUNT) 100*Count/932	PERCENTAGE (CASES) 100*count/293
Radio	291	31.2	99.3
Television	278	29.8	94.8
Printed information material	176	18.8	60.0
Face-to-face communication	91	9.7	31.0
Online media platforms	64	6.8	21.8
SMS	32	3.4	10.9
Other: None	0	0.0	0.0

* The figures above represent multiple responses

The table above represents multiple responses. It shows that the majority of respondents (291; 99.3%) were utilising radio as their channel of receiving government information, followed by television (278; 94.8%), printed information material (176; 60.0%), face-to-face communication (91; 31.0%), online media platforms (64; 21.8%), and lastly SMS (32; 10.9%).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[87]

4.8   Communication as a two-way

The respondents (citizens) were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether they believe the current communication and information system being utilised by government provides an opportunity for feedback. The reason behind the question was to check whether the system concludes the communication process between the sender and the receiver, given that communication is a two (2) way process. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

Figure 4.12: Communication as a two-way process (N= 293)
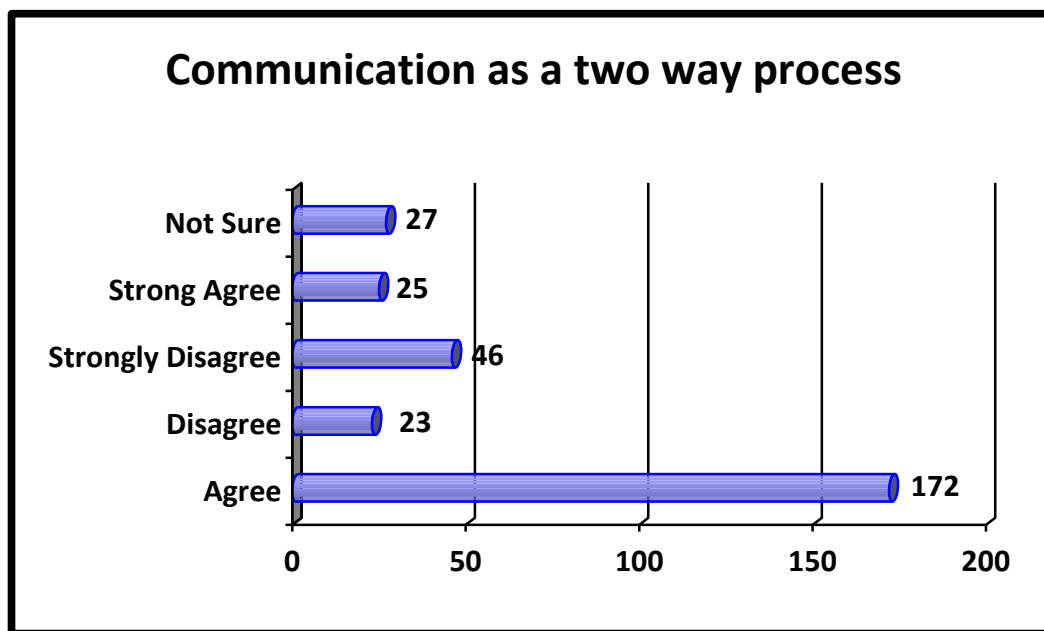
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (172; 58.7%) agree that the current communication and information system being utilised by government provides an opportunity for feedback, followed by those who strongly disagree (46; 15.6%), those who are not sure (27; 9.2%), those who strongly agree (25; 8.5%) and lastly those who disagree (23; 7.8%).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[88]

The results suggest that the radio is the most appropriate and accessible channel of communication. After the respondents answered the question on whether they believe the communication machinery provides a platform for feedback, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The rationale for asking the question was to determine the type of feedback platforms they utilise. The list below provides responses emanating from the respondents:

- Radio talk-shows provide me with an opportunity to call and ask questions to government representatives being interviewed;
- Government communication is a one-way process as it does not provide an opportunity to respond;
- Only face-to-face interaction provides an opportunity for feedback;
- These channels do not provide an opportunity for feedback all the time;
- They don't offer an opportunity because I cannot respond to a radio or television. Face-to-face is the perfect one;
- Government provides toll-free lines which one can call;
- Usually receive sms messages to update me on my application for government services such as when applying for an identity document;
- One can send an e-mail to seek clarity on issues.

The results above show various reasons from respondents, and most notably, the majority of respondents believe radio talk-shows offer them an opportunity for feedback whereas others believe face-to-face interactions would be the best solution.

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[89]

4.9 Communicating adequately with citizens

The respondents (citizens) were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether they believe government is communicating adequately with them. The reason behind the question was to determine if there is any link between service delivery protests and the supposed laziness of communicators to disseminate government messages. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

Figure 4.13: Communicating adequately with citizens (N= 293)
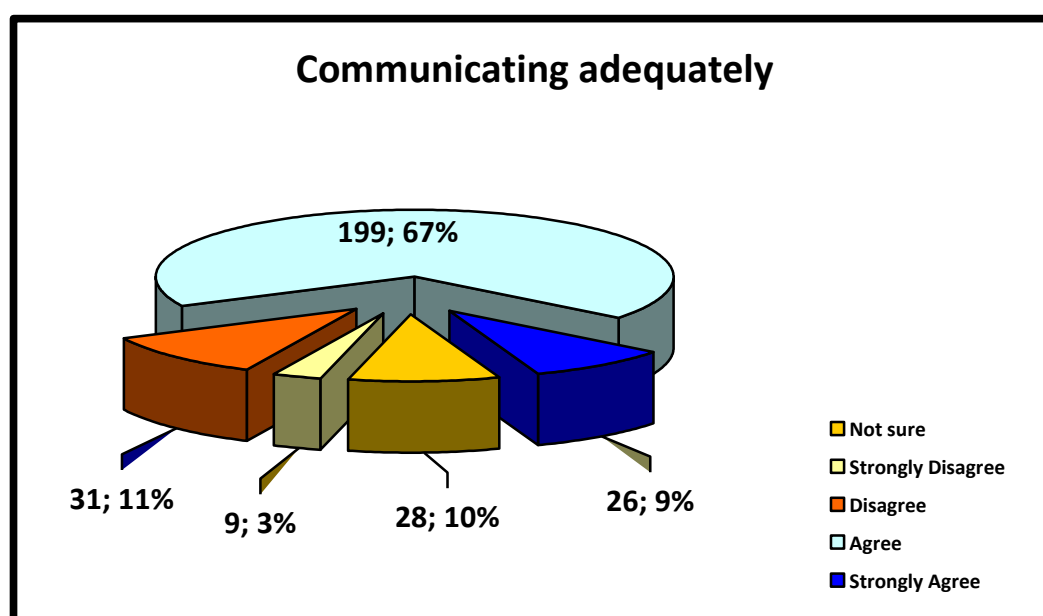
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (199; 67%) agree that government is communicating adequately with citizens, followed by those who disagree (31; 11%), those not sure (28; 10%), those who strongly agree (26; 9%) and lastly those who strongly disagree (9; 3.0%). After the respondents answered the question on whether they believe government is communicating adequately with citizens, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[90]

- They utilise radio adequately to inform us about services and events;

- I receive all information I require on social grants timeously;

- I am currently employed by government after I saw jobs advertisement in newspapers;

- Government only communicates with us closer to election time;

- There is less face-to-face communication which is the only method which provides adequate feedback and dialogue;

- Government is distributing pamphlets, brochures, newsletters through exhibitions during government events;

- Government puts adverts on newspapers, radio and television;

- They are not doing enough maybe because of less funding;

- Not sure because I cannot measure performance of government communication;

- For example, the turn-out of people in large numbers during elections is a sign that our government is communicating adequately;

- Not all our complains are resolved because of the lack of communication infrastructure in rural areas;

- We get information on government services from Thusong Service Centres;

- Government is not consulting us the people who put it into office enough.

The results above show various reasons from respondents, and most notably, those who agree that government is communicating adequately, especially through the medium of radio. However some still argue that face-to-face interaction is the most appropriate medium of communication and thus should be strengthened.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[91]

4.10 The appropriateness of the channels of information dissemination

The respondents (citizens) were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether the channels being used by government to communicate with citizens are appropriate or not. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

Table 4.4: The appropriateness of the channels of information dissemination (N= 293)

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	200	68.2
Strongly agree	39	13.3
Disagree	36	12.2
Strongly disagree	9	3.0
Not sure	9	3.0
TOTAL	**293**	**100.0**

The table above shows that the majority of respondents (200; 68.2%) agree that the channels being utilised by government are appropriate for their information requirements, followed by those who strongly agree (39; 13.3%), disagree (36; 12.2%), and strongly disagree and not sure (9; 3.0%) each. After the respondents answered the question on whether they believe the channels being utilised by government are appropriate for citizens' information requirements, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents:

- They are appropriate though I cannot afford some of them such as newspapers and internet;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[92]

- Radio is the most appropriate because it reaches almost every citizen;

- Radio gives us information in our own language;

- Almost everyone has got access to a radio and television set;

- The channels are appropriate though some do not afford an opportunity to respond;

- They are not really appropriate because I believe community meetings are the most appropriate and the best;

- They are appropriate because they are easily accessible;

- Some of them such as internet are not appropriate because of lack of infrastructure in rural areas.

The results above show that the majority of respondents believe that radio is the most effective and thus appropriate channel of communication, given that almost everyone has access to it. They further prefer radio because it communicates in their own languages. However some still believe that face-to-face communication should be strengthened as it provides for immediate feedback.

SECTION C: MESSAGING – UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS BEING COMMUNICATED

4.11 Decoding the messages

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether they believe government messages are clear and understood by the intended recipients. The reason behind the question is to assess whether the message being transmitted is understood the way it was intended by government, that is, is there a mutual understanding of the message being communicated. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

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[93]

Figure 4.14: Decoding the messages by communicators (N= 31)
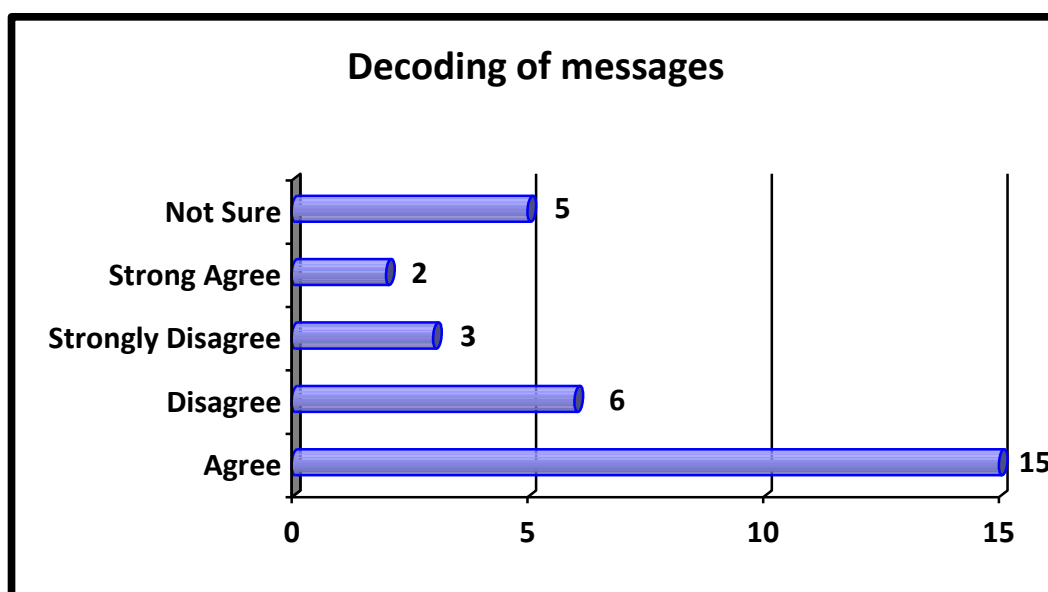
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (17; 54.7%) agree/strongly agree that government messages are clear and understood by the citizens, as opposed to those who disagree/strongly disagree (9; 28.9%), followed by those who are not sure (5; 16.1%).

Table 4.5: Decoding the messages by citizens (N= 293)

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	191	65.1
Strongly agree	39	13.3
Not sure	35	11.9
Disagree	23	7.8
Strongly disagree	5	1.7
TOTAL	**293**	**100.0**

The table above shows that the majority of respondents (191; 65.1%) agree that government messages are clear and understood by the citizens, followed by those who strongly agree (39; 13.3%), not sure (35; 11.9%), disagree (23; 7.8%), and strongly disagree (5; 1.7%).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[94]

After the respondents answered the question on whether government messages are clear and understandable, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents:

- Yes, because they communicate in the language I understand, that is my mother tongue, especially on radio;
- No because they are telling us lies;
- They are not understandable because they communicate mostly in English and some of us are illiterate and do not understand the language;
- Adverts communicating messages that 'TB can be cured' are very clear and understandable;
- I disagree because not all messages are clear and understandable. Sometimes one has got to call in during talk-shows to seek clarity;
- I am not sure because sometimes they are confusing, they says one thing but behave differently.

The results above show that the majority respondents prefer the medium of radio given that it communicates in their own local languages and this makes government messages to be clear and understandable.

4.12 Empowerment through messages

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether they believe government messages are empowering the intended recipients. The reason behind the question is to assess whether government messages contributes towards the socio-economic upliftment of the recipients. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

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[95]

Figure 4.15: Empowerment through messages by communicators (N= 31)
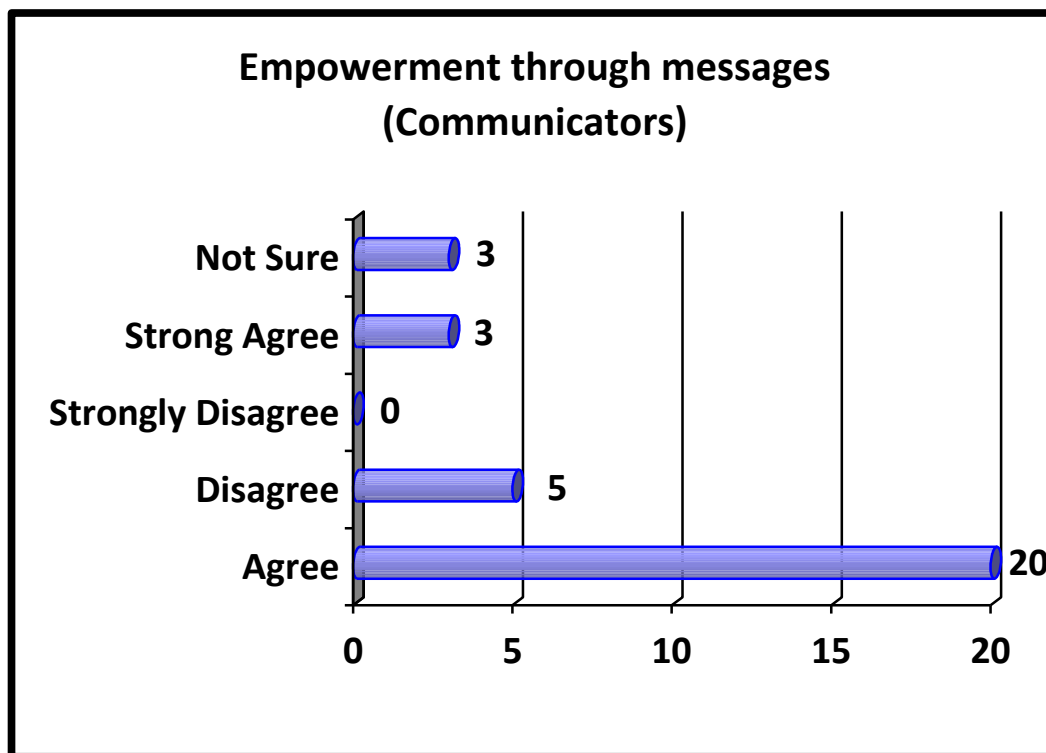
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (20; 64.5%) agree that government messages are empowering communities – the intended recipients, followed by those who disagree (5; 16.1%), and those who strongly agree and those not sure (3; 9.6%) each. The citizens were also asked, using *Likert Scale,* to indicate whether they believe government messages are empowering the intended recipients. The reason behind the question is to assess whether government messages contributes towards their socio-economic upliftment. The results in this regard are presented in the figure below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[96]

Figure 4.16: Empowerment through messages by citizens (N= 293)
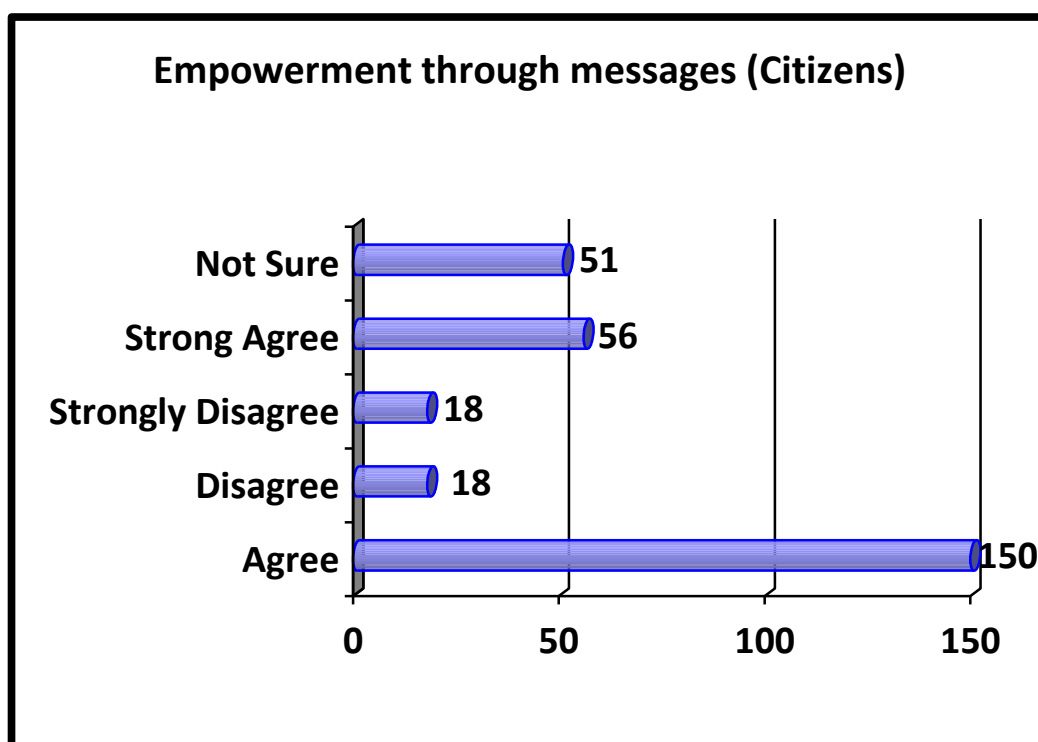
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (150; 51.1%) agree that government messages are empowering communities – the intended recipients, followed by those who strongly agree (56; 19.1%), not sure (51; 17.4%), and disagree and strongly disagree (18; 6.1%) each. After the respondents answered the question on whether government messages are empowerment-oriented, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents (citizens):

- Messages communicates government services which we require to better our lives;
- Messages are empowering because they give us information on how to start a business; how to apply for identity documents and even social grants;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[97]

- Messages are educational and assist our children to learn more;

- No they are not empowering because they only communicate what services are available but not deliver the actual services to the people;

- The messages are not empowering because people do not act on the information they receive. For example, HIV Awareness campaigns are being communicated but people continue to take part in unprotected sex;

- They are empowering because they are communicated in my language;

- They messages are not empowering because government always talks about implementation but we do not see progress on the ground;

- Messages are only empowering them because they only communicate with us when they want our votes.

The results above show that the majority of respondents believe that government messages are empowering them in order to uplift their socio-economic well-being. The use of local languages seems to be a huge contributing factor in this regard.

4.13 Tailor-made versus universal messages

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether they believe government messages are tailor-made for each segment of the community and are thus not universal. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[98]

Figure 4.17: Tailor-made versus universal messages by communicators (N= 31)
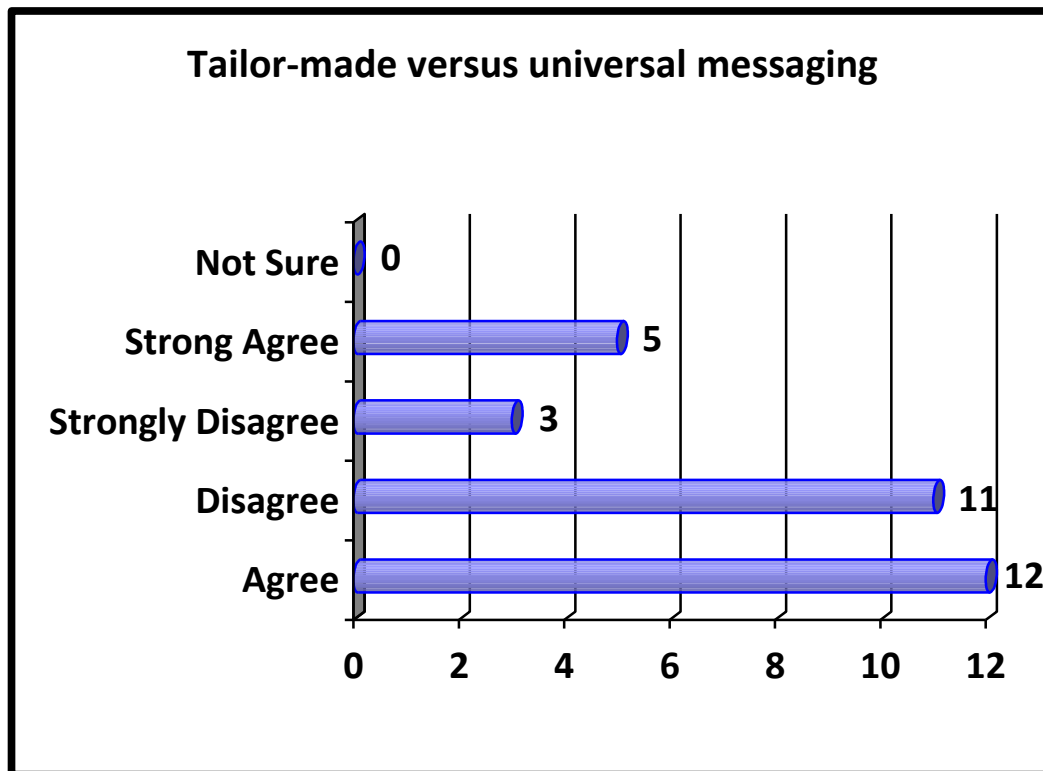
The above figure shows that a high number of respondents (12; 38.7%) agree that government messages are tailor-made. This is followed by those who disagree (11; 35.4%), then those who strongly agree (5; 16.1%) and lastly those who strongly disagree (3; 9.6%).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[99]

Table 4.6: Tailor-made versus universal messages by citizens (N= 293)

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	138	47.0
Not sure	61	20.8
Disagree	37	12.6
Strongly disagree	37	12.6
Strongly agree	20	6.8
TOTAL	**293**	**100.0**

The table above shows that a significant number of respondents (138; 47.0%) agree that government messages are tailor-made, followed by those who are not sure (61; 20.8%), disagree and strongly disagree (37; 12.6%) each, and strongly agree (20; 6.8%). After the respondents (communicators) answered the question on whether government messages are tailor-made (address individual information requirements), they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The rationale for asking the question was to establish whether there is a relationship between tailor-made messages and the ability to decode messages by citizens. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents:

- I receive information on social grants and other services I require and this addresses my information needs;
- It does not address my information needs because government only communicates adequately closer to election time;
- It does not because information dissemination in rural areas is not enough;
- Government does not consider our individual information needs they use a blanket approach.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[100]

The results above show that a significant number of respondents agree that government messages are tailor-made and address their information needs such as for specific service requirements.

SECTION D: BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

4.14   English as the language of communication

The respondents (communicators and citizens) were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether government should continue to communicate predominantly in English. The reason behind the question is to assess whether language plays a significant role in the process of decoding the intended message. The results in this regard are presented in figures below:

Figure 4.18: Response by communicators regarding English as the language of communication (N= 31)

English as the language of communication

Category	Value
Not Sure	0
Strong Agree	0
Strongly Disagree	10
Disagree	15
Agree	6

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[101]
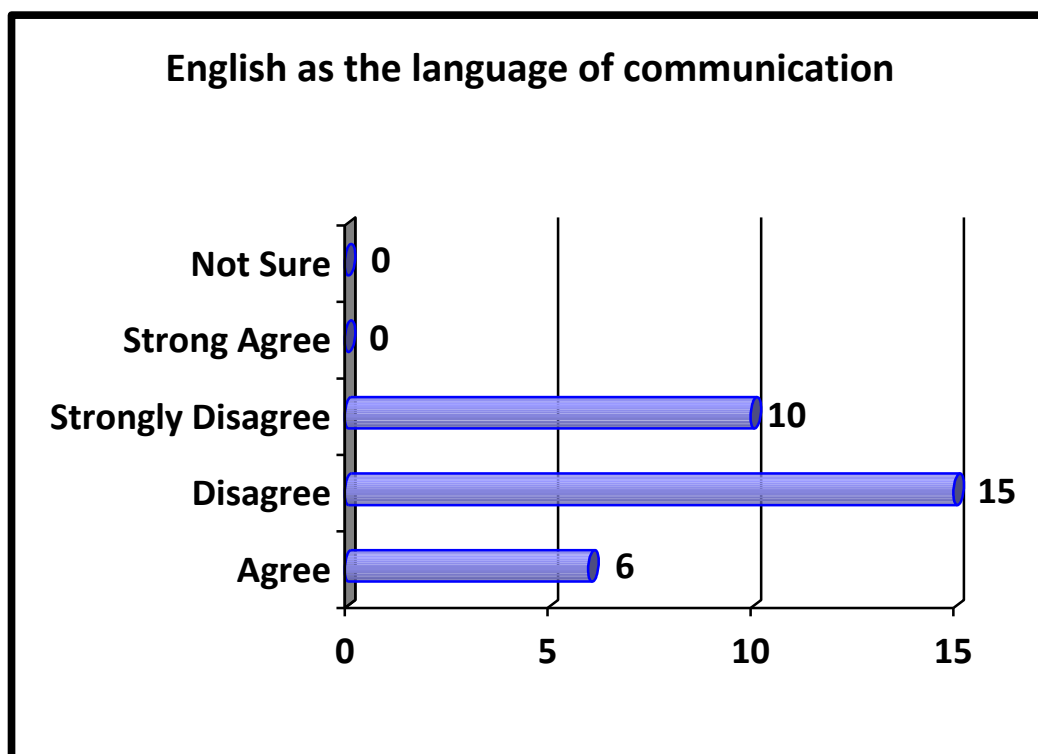
The figure above shows that a significant number of respondents (15; 48.3%) disagree that government should continue to communicate predominantly in English, followed by those who strongly disagree (10; 32.2%), and lastly those who agree (6; 19.3%).

Figure 4.19: Response by citizens regarding English as the language of communication (N= 293)
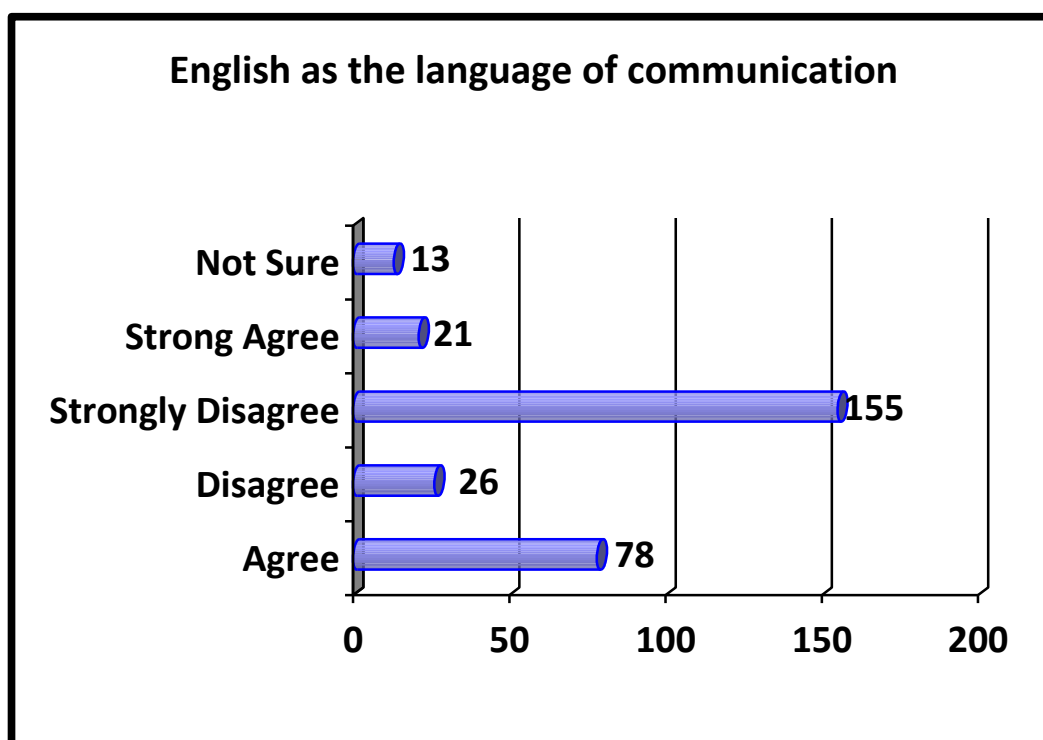
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (155; 52.9%) strongly disagree that government should continue to communicate predominantly in English, followed by those who agree (78; 26.6%), disagree (26; 8.8%), strongly agree (21; 7.1%), and lastly those who are not sure (13; 4.4%). After the respondents (communicators) answered the question on whether government should continue to communicate with them predominantly in English, they were then asked to motivate for their responses.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[102]

The rationale for asking the question was to establish whether other official languages should be afforded the same opportunity, given that they are spoken by the majority of the citizens. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents:

- The other 10 official languages should be treated equally and not English alone. It is not all of us who speak and understand English;
- Most people, especially in rural areas, are illiterate and thus cannot speak, read nor understand English;
- Government messages are intended to empower communities and such empowerment should be done in the language I understand better – my mother tongue;
- English is the business language and most people can speak and understand it;
- Most people prefer to speak in English;
- Status quo must remain given that most government messages and adverts are communicated in English already;
- The use of English must continue because it is the language that connects those who speak differing languages;
- Those who do not understand nor speak English also have the right to access government information and thus should not be discriminated based on the language of preference;
- It is unconstitutional if government communication continues to be in English only.

The above results show that the majority of respondents prefer government to communicate with them in their own language. They argue that not all people understand English given the level of illiteracy especially in rural areas, and further that South African has eleven (11) official languages which should be treated equally.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[103]

4.15   The cost of communicating in all indigenous languages

The respondents (both communicators and citizens) were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether they agree that it is not necessary for government communicate in indigenous languages given the high cost associated with it. The reason behind the question is to assess whether it is significant for government to provide more funding to cater for the printing of information material in all other indigenous languages, including braille and sign-language interpretation – what the researcher has termed the "twelfth unofficial languages". The results in this regard are presented in the figures below:

Figure 4.20: Response by communicators on the cost of communicating in all indigenous languages (N= 31)

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[104]
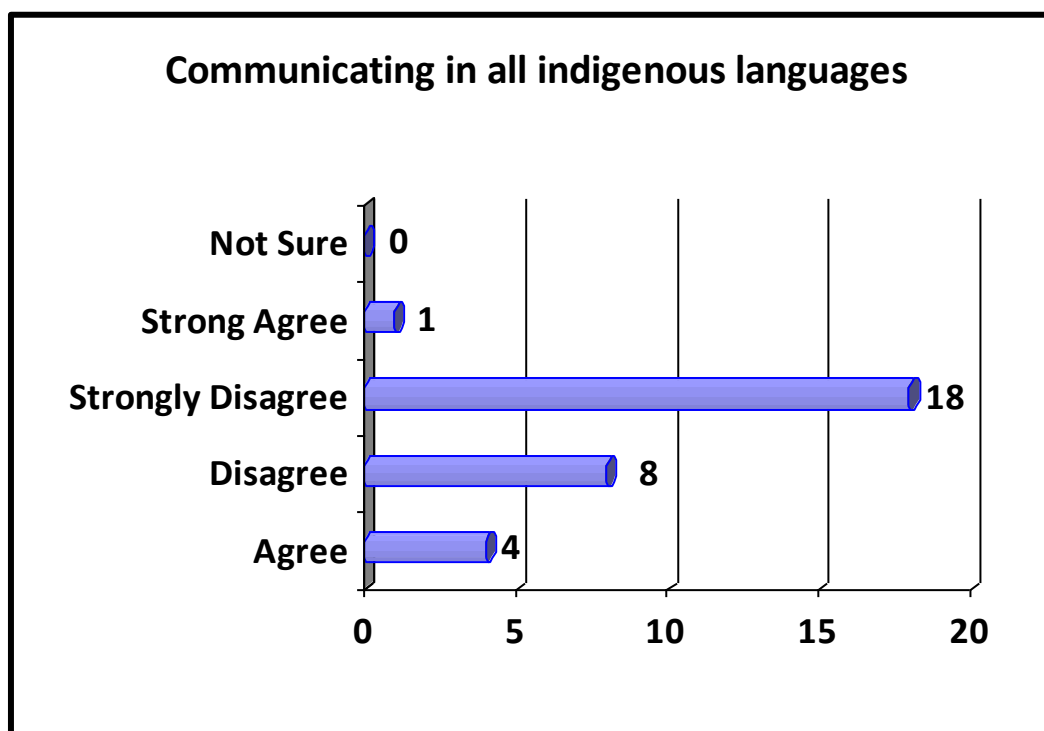
The above figure shows that the majority of respondents (18; 58.0%) strongly disagree that it not necessary for government to communicate in indigenous languages considering the cost associated with it, followed by those who disagree (8; 25.8%), those who agree (4; 12.9%), and lastly those who strongly agree (1; 3.2%).

Figure 4.21: Response by citizens on the cost of communicating in all indigenous languages (N= 293)
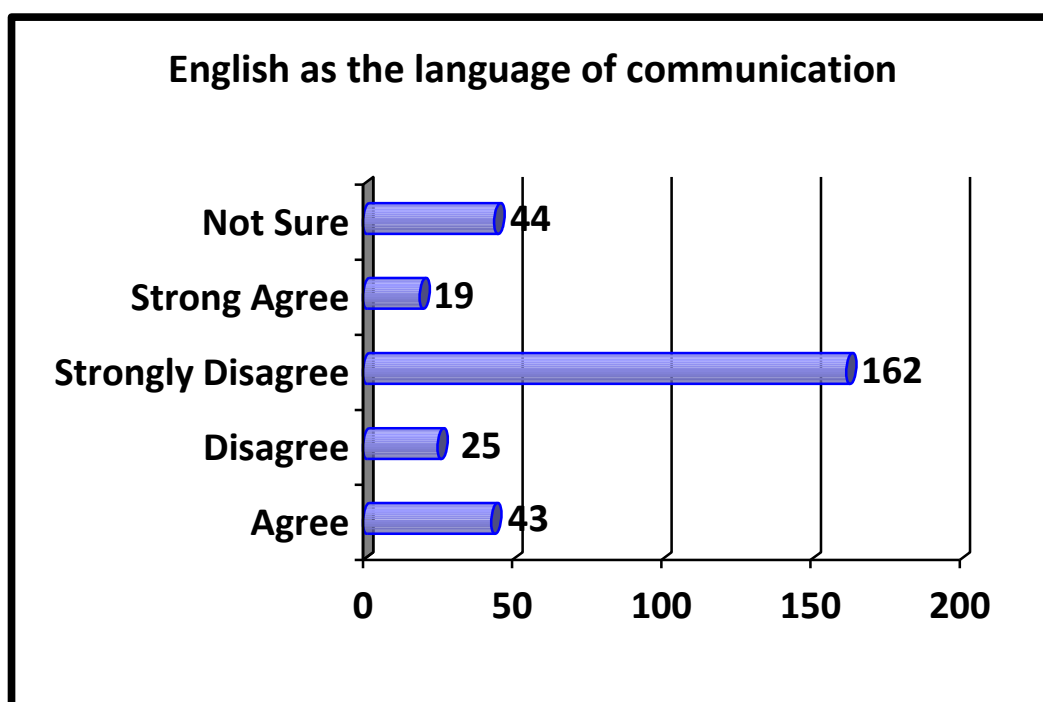
The above figures shows that the majority of respondents (162; 55.2%) strongly disagree that it is not necessary for government to communicate in indigenous languages considering the cost associated with it, followed by those who are not sure (44; 15.0%), those who agree (43; 14.6%), disagree (25; 8.5%) and strongly agree (19; 6.4%). After the respondents (citizens) answered the question on whether government should continue to communicate with them predominantly in English given the high cost of communicating in indigenous languages, they were then asked to motivate for their responses.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[105]

The rationale for asking the question was to establish whether respondents would like funding for communication activities to be increased. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents:

- I am not sure about the cost of communicating in all official languages;
- The cost should not be the issue because it is a constitutional mandate. Government must just provide enough funding for its communication activities;
- Why is not too costly to communicate in English? Does it mean it is only English which is important, and when it comes to our language it will be costly? I do not agree;
- The fact is that we are a multilingual country and the cost should not be the issue;
- We all vote for government so why should the cost be an issue when they are supposed to communicate with the black language speakers;
- We are all citizens of South Africa, so we must be treated equally and fairly by all costs;
- We pay tax and the cost should not be the issue considering the recognition of all the eleven (11) official languages in our country.

The results above show that the majority of respondents want government to communicate in all eleven (11) official languages despite the high cost associated with it. They want government to provide more funding in this regard.

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[106]

4.16 Funding for communication activities

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether they agree that funding for government communication machinery is adequate. The reason behind the question is to assess whether it is significant for government to provide more funding for communication activities. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

Table 4.7: Funding for communication activities (N= 31)

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Strongly disagree	14	45.1
Disagree	13	41.9
Strongly agree	3	9.6
Agree	1	3.2
Not sure	0	0.0
TOTAL	**31**	**100.0**

The table above shows that the majority of respondents (14; 45.1%) strongly disagree that funding for government communication machinery is adequate, followed by those who disagree (13; 41.9%), then those who strongly agree (3; 9.6%), and lastly those who agree (1: 3.2%). After the respondents answered the question on whether they agree that funding for government communication machinery is adequate, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The list below provides responses emanating from the respondents (communicators):

• Government messages do not reach people mostly in rural areas given the imbalance and inadequate communication infrastructure in those areas;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[107]

- Government communication should be done in all 11 official languages which are recognised to be equal in the South African constitution;

- Indigenous languages should be promoted given that they are mostly spoken in rural areas;

- Funding allocated for the function of communication continues to shrink despite the ever increasing demand to communicate more;

- The media is not always publishing the good work of government thus the need for paid space to promote the work of government;

- There is generally an element of laziness to read, especially amongst the youth, hence the language of communication is not the issue;

- It is sometimes difficult to access information from line functions and this hampers effective communication;

- Not all communication media/ channels are utilised owing to inadequate funding;

- Effective communication is costly, and thus government should provide more funding for communication activities in order to reach all citizens;

- Inadequate communication human resource in municipalities is as a result of inadequate funding.

4.17 Accessing information to be communicated

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether they never experience challenges in accessing information to be communicated to stakeholders. The reason behind the question is to assess whether this influence effective information dissemination to citizens. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[108]

Figure 4.22: Accessing information to be communicated (N= 31)
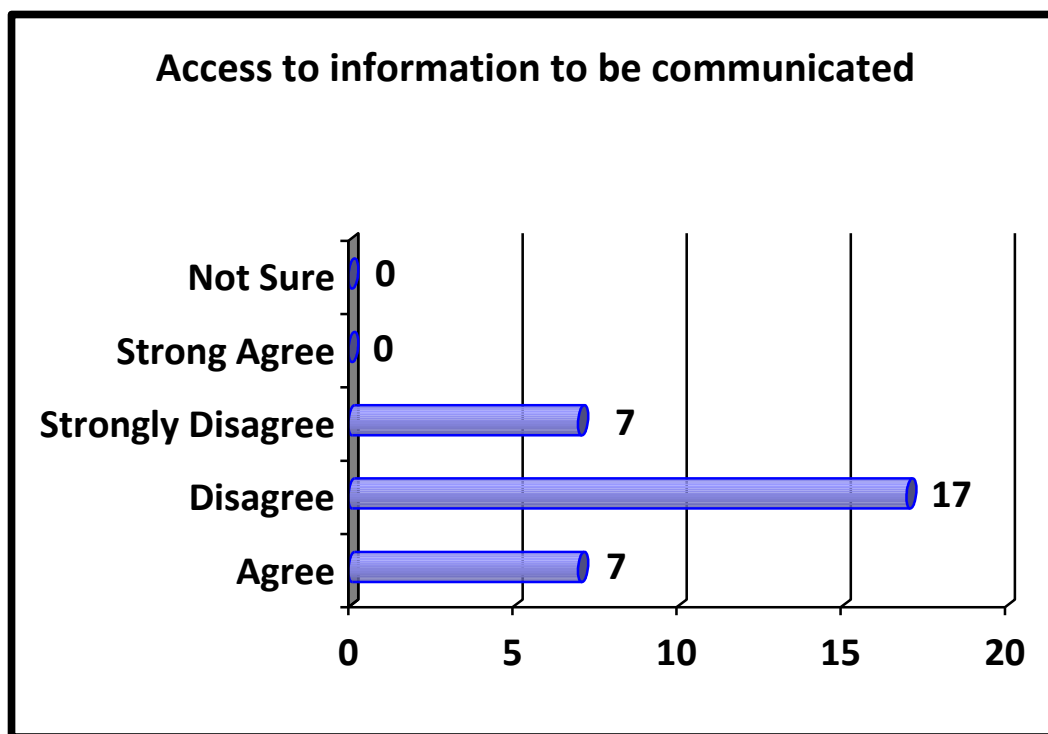
The above figure shows that the majority of respondents (24; 77.4%) strongly disagree/disagree that they never experience challenges in accessing information to be communicated from line functions within their organisations, followed by those who agree (7; 22.5%).

4.18 Cultural diversity in messaging

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether cultural diversity of the Province should be considered when developing messages to be communicated. The reason behind the question was to assess whether culture has an influence in people understanding the meaning of messages being communicated. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[109]

Figure 4.23: Cultural diversity in messaging (N= 293)
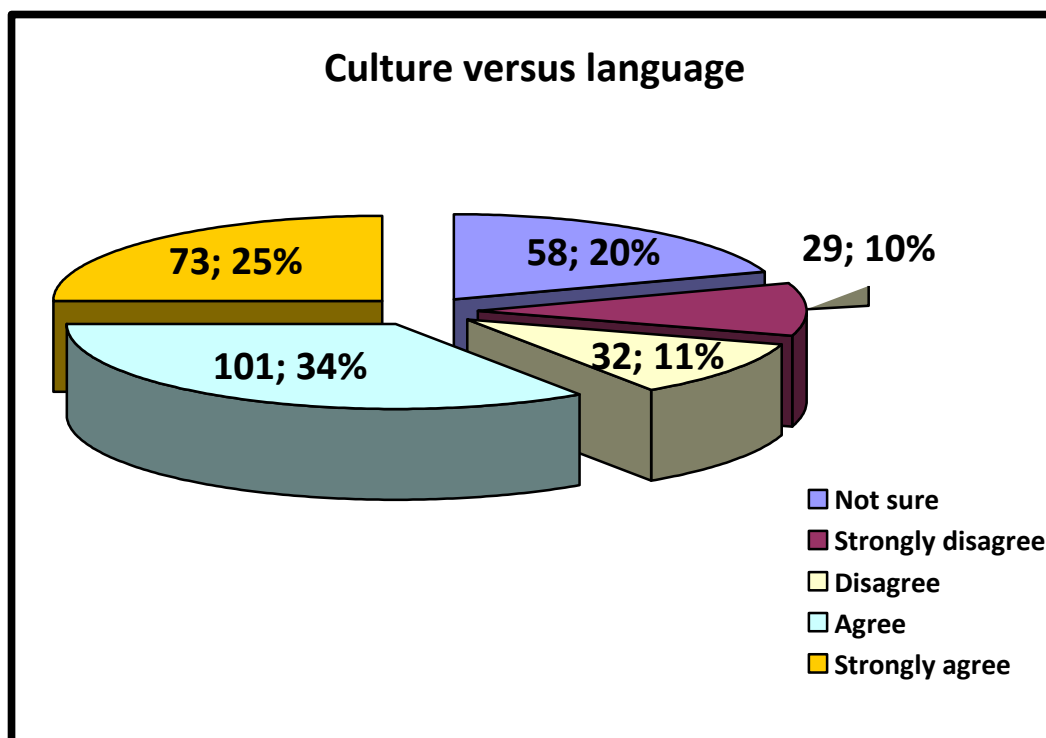
The figure above shows that the majority of respondents (101; 34%) agree that the cultural diversity of the Province should be considered when developing messages to be communicated, followed by those who strongly agree (73; 25%), not sure (58; 20%), disagree (32; 11%) and strongly disagree (29; 10%) each. After the respondents (citizens) answered the question on whether cultural diversity of the Province should be considered when developing messages to be communicated, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The rationale for asking the question was to determine whether cultural beliefs affect effective communication. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents (citizens):

- It is not necessary since government messages are meant for all citizens;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[110]

- Culture should be considered to ensure that government messages do not impinge in one's cultural practices and beliefs;

- Because South Africa is a multi-cultural society and our diverse culture should be respected;

- Government messages will be understood better and accepted if they do not go against one's cultural practices and beliefs;

- I do not agree because people should differentiate between culture and communication;

- Culture plays a significant role in communication.

The results above show various reasons from respondents, and most notably, those who agree that South Africa's cultural diversity should be taken into consideration in communication initiatives.

4.19 Improving feedback to communities

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether government representatives should conduct more face-to-face interactions with communities to ensure direct feedback platform. The reason behind the question was to assess whether respondents believe face-to-face communication would be improve accountability and direct feedback. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[111]

Figure 4.24: Improving feedback to communities (N= 293)
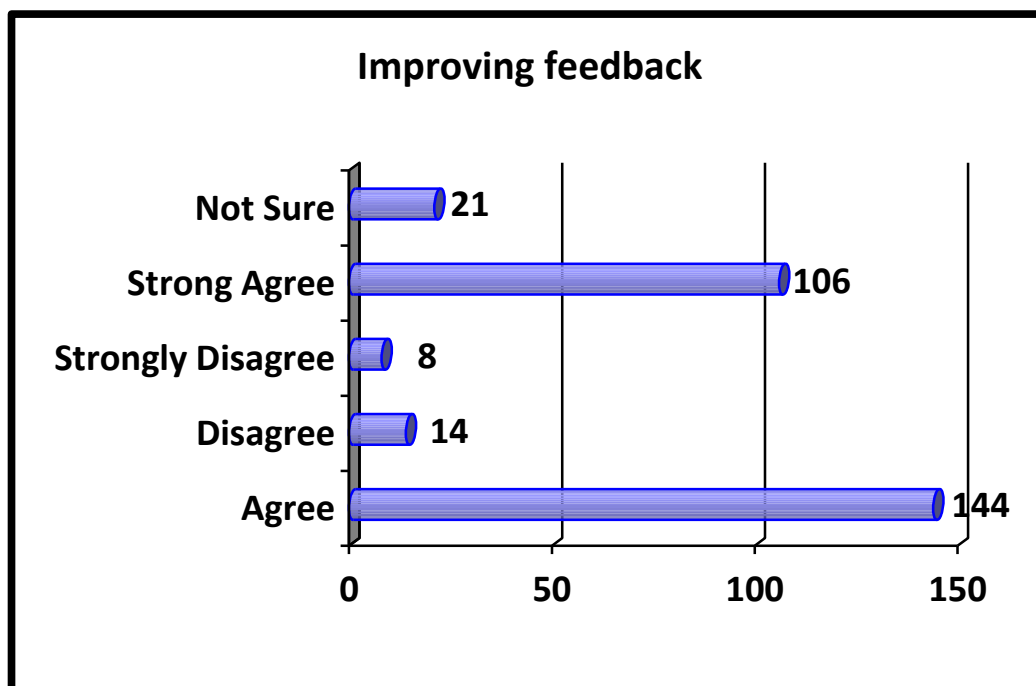
The above figure above shows that a significant number of respondents (144; 49.1%) agree that government representatives should conduct more face-to-face interactions with communities to ensure direct feedback platform, followed by those who strongly agree (106; 36.1%), not sure (21; 7.1%), disagree (14; 4.7%) and strongly disagree (8; 2.7%). After the respondents (citizens) answered the question on whether government representatives should conduct more face-to-face interactions with communities to ensure direct feedback platform, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The rationale for asking the question was to determine strategies that could be implemented in order to improve government communication. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents:

- I strongly agree because face-to-face communication is intimate and provides immediate answers and clarity (feedback);

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[112]

- Face-to-face communication enables better understanding of messages;

- It will restore public confidence in government;

- iZimbizo makes government to be accountable and to deliver services like houses and bringing services closer to the people;

- We are tired of government just talking and not delivering on their promises, so through izimbizo, they will account to us on the spot;

- iZimbizo will enable government to plan better and deliver on the promised services, maybe this will stop the service delivery protests;

- This will strengthen community interaction with their government representatives and make them accountable;

- iZimbizo are important especially in rural areas where there is no adequate communication infrastructure;

- IZimbizo will not make an impact on service delivery. As long as services are not delivered, face-to-face will not assist or stop service delivery protests;

- Face-to-face communication is influential because when a person smiles at you, he or she makes you to believe that they share your plight;

- It will remove government officials from their air-conditioned offices and experience the plight of the people on the ground. Maybe this will make government to respond quicker in delivering services and stop service delivery protests;

- This will provide enough time for questions and responses and eventually improve communication and understanding of both parties concerned;

- It shows empathy – that the government cares;

- Government should conduct iZimbizo possible every two (2) months.

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[113]

The results above show various reasons from respondents, and most notably, those who argue that face-to-face interaction will strengthen government communication as it provides immediate clarity to questions (feedback) and will restore public confidence given that citizens will believe that their elected government is directly accountable to them. In addition, they argue that it will show that government shares their plight and is prepared to do something to alleviate the problem, and thus stopping the service delivery protests.

SECTION E: STRATEGIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED TO IMPROVE THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

4.20 Communication as a strategic function in an organisation

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether communication is recognised as a strategic management hence they sit in their organisation's decision-making structures. The reason behind the question is to assess whether heads of government communication are privy to first-hand information. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

Table 4.8: Communication as a strategic function in an organisation (N= 31)

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	12	38.7
Strongly agree	10	32.2
Strongly disagree	9	29.0
Disagree	0	0.0
Not sure	0	0.0
TOTAL	**31**	**100.0**

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[114]

The table above shows that a significant number of respondents (12; 38.7%) agree that communication is recognised as a strategic management hence they are part of decision-making structures, followed by those who strongly agree (10; 32.2%) and lastly those who strongly disagree (9; 29.0%).

4.21 Significance of the function of internal communication

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether they believe the function of internal communication is significant in assisting an organisation to achieve its goals. The reason behind the question is to assess whether respondents believe that informed staff members are beneficial to an organisation. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

Figure 4.25: Significance of the function of internal communication (N=31)

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[115]
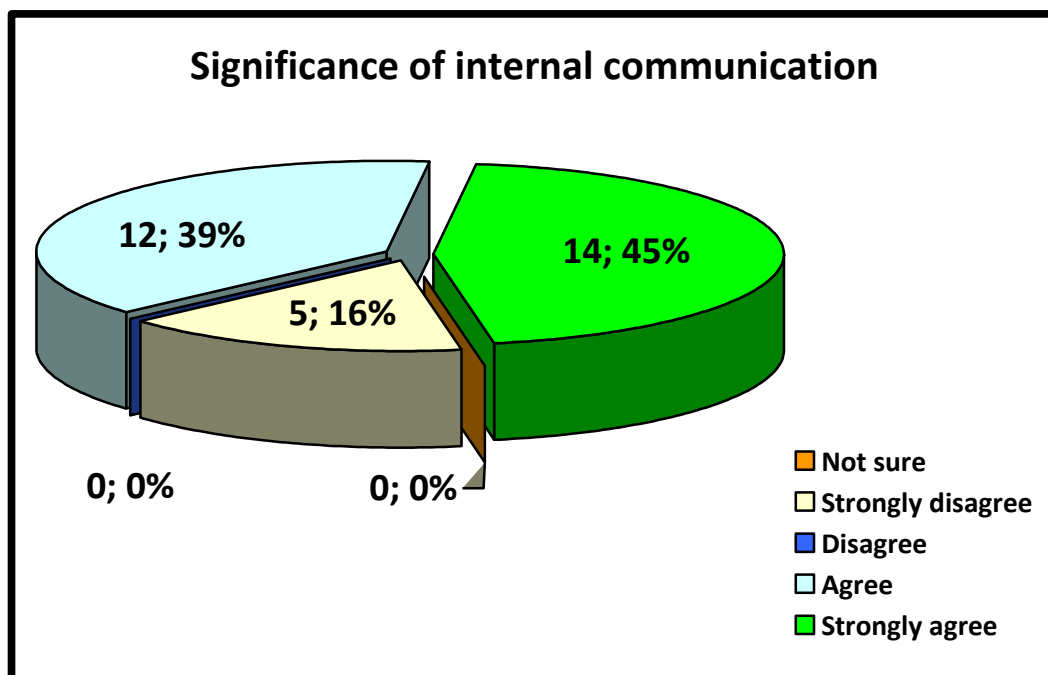
The above figure shows that a significant number of respondents (14; 45%) strongly agree that the function of internal communication is significant in assisting their institutions to achieve its goals, followed by those who agree (12; 38%), and lastly those who strongly disagree (5; 16%).

After the respondents (communicators) answered the question on whether they agree that the function of internal communication is significant in assisting an organisation to achieve its goals, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The rationale for asking the question was to determine whether there is link between internal communication and successful information dissemination. The list below provides paraphrased responses from the respondents:

- Informed employees associates themselves with the goals of an organisation (creates a sense of ownership);
- Internal communication could boost staff morale;
- Internal stakeholders will assist to strengthen the credibility of communication messages;
- Most government communication activities are aimed at external stakeholders thus forgetting staff members who must be ambassadors of the programmes of government;
- Informed staff members usually become ambassadors of an organisation.

The results above show various reasons from respondents, and most notably, those who argue that informed employees produce better results as they associate themselves with the vision of an organisation. In this regard, internal stakeholders will assist to strengthen the credibility of communication messages.

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[116]

4.22 Communicating through SMS-es, social media and e-mails

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether government should start communication via SMS-es, social media and e-mails. The reason behind the question was to assess whether citizens would accept information via such platforms or channels. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

Figure 4.26: Communicating through new media (SMS-es, social media and e-mails) (N= 293)
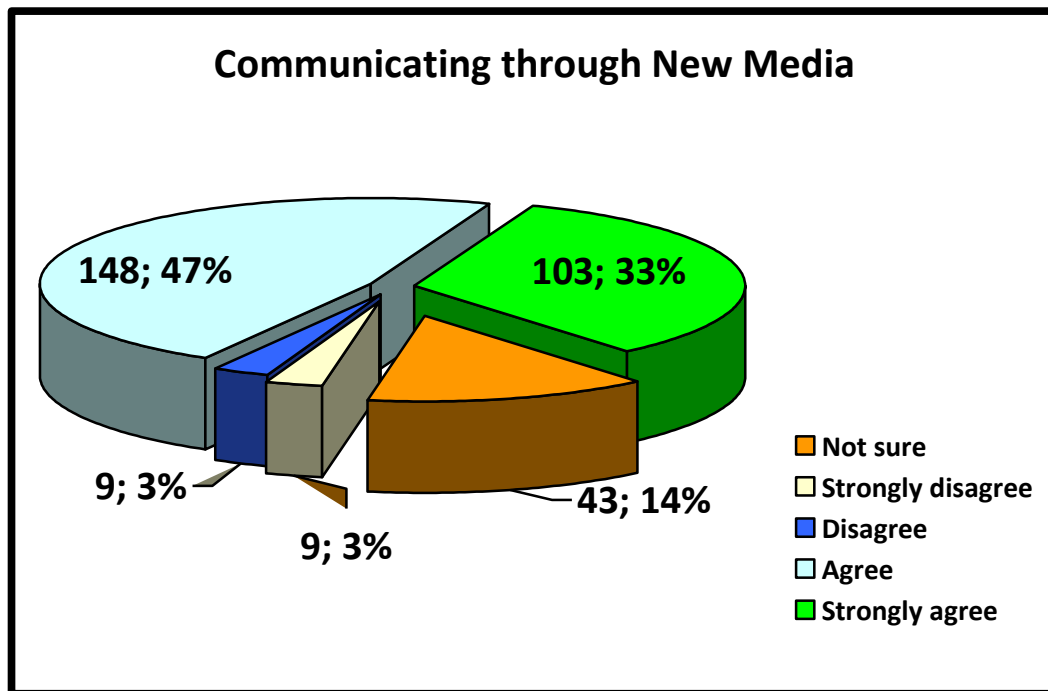
The above figure shows that the majority of respondents (251; 85.6%) agree/strongly agree (combined) that government should start communicating via SMS-es, social media and e-mails, followed by those who are not sure (43; 13.7%), and those disagree and strongly disagree (9; 2.8%) each. After the respondents (citizens) answered the question on whether government should start communication via SMS-es, social media and e-mails, they were then asked to motivate for their responses.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[117]

The rationale for asking the question was to determine whether citizens would accept information via such platforms or channels. The list below provides paraphrased responses from the respondents:

- They are used by almost 96% of South Africans and thus would be appropriate channels of communicating with citizens;
- The youth interact on social media more than on any other communication channel;
- Almost every South African has got a cell-phone, including those in the rural areas, and utilising this form of communication will reach almost all citizens;
- Social media is not important to older persons;
- SMS is the way to go given that almost every person in South Africa has got a cell-phone;
- This will spread the work of government very fast;
- It is the latest technology that government should adopt given that almost every person is utilising them.

The results above show various reasons from respondents and most notably, the majority, who advocates for the adoption of SMS-es, social media and e-mails for communicating the work of government. They argue that most South Africans have access to cell-phones and interact on social media (new media), especially the youth who are in the majority.

4.23 Investing in tele-communication infrastructure in rural areas

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether government should invest more in tele-communication infrastructure in rural areas where accessibility is inadequate. The reason behind the question was to assess the need. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[118]

Table 4.9: Investing in tele-communication infrastructure in rural areas (N= 293)

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	153	52.2
Strongly agree	102	34.8
Not sure	24	8.1
Strongly disagree	8	2.7
Disagree	6	2.0
TOTAL	**293**	**100.0**

The table above shows that the majority of respondents (153; 52.2%) agree that government should invest more in tele-communication infrastructure in rural areas where accessibility is inadequate, followed by those who strongly agree (102; 34.8%), those who are not sure (24; 8.1%), those strongly disagree (8; 2.7%), and those who disagree (6; 2.0%). After the respondents (citizens) answered the question on whether government should invest more in tele-communication infrastructure in rural areas, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The rationale for asking the question was to determine whether there is a link between infrastructure and successful information dissemination. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents:

- I agree because there has always been inadequate tele-communication infrastructure in rural areas, and further that the country is migrating into digital communication;
- It will strengthen and improve communication with rural communities given the current inadequacy;
- People in rural areas are hungry for government messages;
- This will ensure that government reaches quite a lot of people;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[119]

- I agree but in addition government must increase face-to-face interaction with communities, especially in rural areas;
- I do not agree because I believe face-to-face communication is the best model that should be adopted intensely by government;
- Only if it will create jobs for us;
- People in rural areas are always left out when it comes to new technology;
- Because people in rural areas also need access to internet services;
- It will reduce expenditure on transport fares by people from rural areas who travel to urban areas for government information.

The results above show various reasons from respondents, and most notably, those who agree that more tele-communication infrastructure investment should be done in rural areas in order to improve communication with people in those localities. However some respondents strongly believe that unmediated communication (face-to-face interactions) should be strengthened as opposed to mediated communication.

4.24 Communicating in indigenous or black languages, including in braille and sign-language

The respondents were asked using *Likert Scale* to indicate whether government should start ccommunicating in indigenous or black languages, including in braille and sign-language to cater for the blind and deaf. The reason behind the question was to determine the need for such implementation. The results in this regard are presented in the table below:

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[120]

Figure 4.27: Communicating in indigenous or black languages, including in braille and sign-language (N= 293)
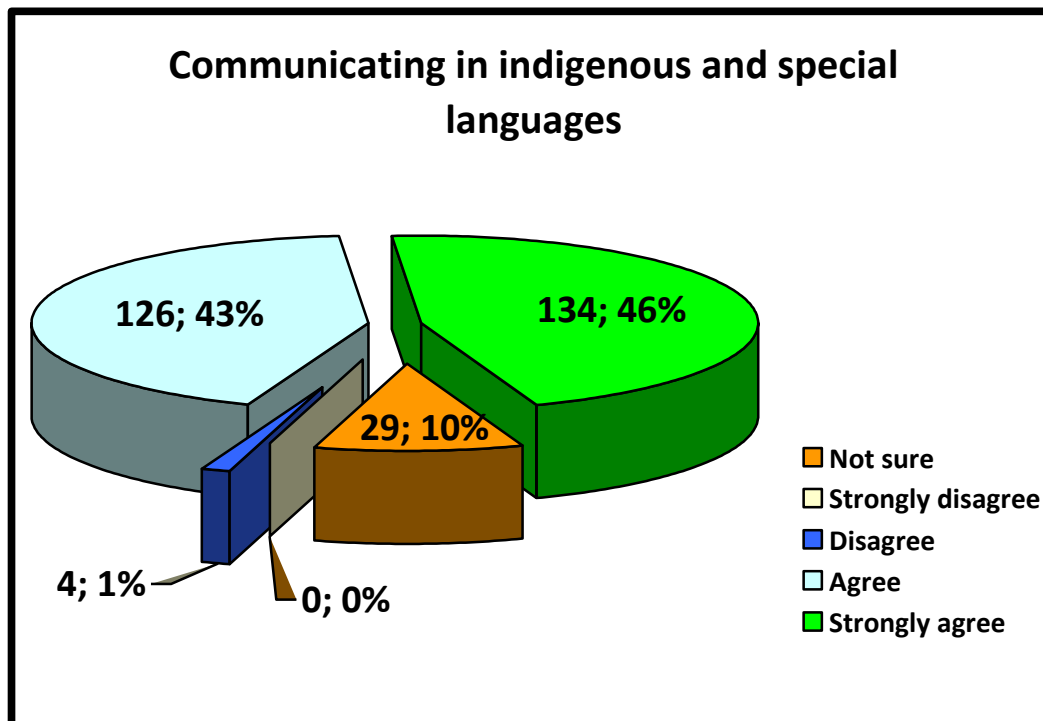
The above figure above shows that the majority of respondents (260; 88.7%) strongly agree/agree that government should start ccommunicating in indigenous or black languages, including in braille and sign-language to cater for the blind and deaf, followed by those who are not sure (29; 9.8%), and disagree (4; 1.3%). After the respondents (citizens) answered the question on whether government should start ccommunicating in indigenous or black languages, including in braille and sign-language to cater for the blind and deaf, they were then asked to motivate for their responses. The list below provides paraphrased responses emanating from the respondents:

- Because all languages are equal before the eyes of the law. The majority of people in South Africa are black people;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[121]

- People with disabilities like the deaf and blind continues to be neglected as far as their information needs are concerned;

- People who are blind and deaf are also citizens of South Africa and should be treated equally. Government should therefore invest more in communication in order to cater for them adequately;

- Every citizen of South Africa has got the right to government information especially in his or her own language;

- We pay tax which should fund information dissemination in all South African official languages, including in braille and sign-language;

- So that everyone can feel proudly South African;

- Everybody votes including the people who are deaf and blind and should thus be afforded the same privilege as other citizens;

- As for the deaf and blind people, the status quo should remain because the ratio is too small – zero (0) in ten (10) people, however all indigenous languages should be used because we are in the majority;

- Public servants must be trained on sign-language because they interact with deaf people;

- Sign-language should be added as the twelfth official language.

The results above show various reasons from respondents, and most notably, those who argue that government communication should be done in all eleven (11) official languages of South Africa as it is a constitutional right to be addressed in the language of your choice. There are also strong sentiments that sign-language should be made the twelfth official language, including training government officials in sign-language interpretation given that they interact with deaf people as well.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[122]

4.25 Improving government communication machinery

The respondents (both communicators and citizens) were asked to suggest possible interventions in order improve the communication and information system of the South African government. The reason behind this is to address the objectives of the study. The list below provides recommendations from the respondents:

- Management in municipalities should respect and regard the function of communication as a strategic management function;

- Appoint heads of communication at executive or senior level in government, preferably at chief director level;

- Communicators must ensure that media statements are newsworthy at all times;

- Expose political principals and heads of departments to operations in newsrooms in order for them to adhere to deadlines in responding to media enquiries/queries;

- Government departments must co-ordinate their communication activities in order to avoid competing for coverage from the limited media houses in the Province;

- Communication activities should be adequately resourced, both financially and in skilled and appropriate human resource;

- Communication should be centralised for better co-ordination (for example in the office of the premier, but communicators assigned to departments);

- Make the function of communication a key performance area in the performance agreements of heads of departments;

- Decision makers should be trained on communication;

- Improve and strengthen media relations;

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[123]

- Public representatives or public office bearers should commit to be available to engage with communities at all times;

- Invest in technology that supports communication activities;

- Simplify messages;

- Provide one-stop information booklet on government services;

- Communicate the work of government and its services and not promote an individual like a public representatives;

- Exploit the advent of the social media and mobile technology such as the SMS;

- Standardise communication structures in all spheres of government;

- Implement all recommendations made in the Communication Task Team Report of 1996;

- Government must introduce more state-owned radio stations;

- Government should increase funding to community radio stations;

- Increase face-to-face interactions (community meetings);

- Produce information material in all eleven (11) official languages;

- Increase and provide free access to internet service;

- Install television sets in all community halls;

- Send messages via SMS-es and social media;

- Introduce and fund government programmes in community radio stations;

- Introduce community newspapers which are written in indigenous languages;

- Provide more funding in order to communicate government programmes;

- Reduce the tariffs of cell-phones;

- Improve communication with the blind and deaf by investing in braille printing and sign-language interpretation;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[124]

- Increase the number of government exhibitions for information dissemination purposes;
- Scrap television license fee being charged by the SABC.

The results above show various reasons from respondents, and most notably, recommendations that government communication should be done in all eleven (11) official languages of South Africa; that face-to-face interactions (community meetings) should be increased; that funding for communication activities should be increased; and that investment in tele-communication infrastructure in rural areas should be increased.

4.26   Summary

This chapter has presented analysis of the data collected during the study. The presentation of the data was based on the objectives of the study as presented in chapter one. It analysis was based on the two (2) structured questionnaires which were administered to government communicators and citizens at sampled TSCs across the Province of Mpumalanga. A total of 31 out of 36 questionnaires were retrieved from communicators whereas a total of 293 out of 312 were retrieved from citizens at the sampled six (6) TSCs. The next chapter, chapter five, presents discussions of the results of the study as presented in this chapter.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[125]

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study as presented in chapter four (4). It serves to provide an insight into the findings against the aim of the study, which was to examine the success of the communication and information system of the South African government, focusing specifically on the Province of Mpumalanga. This was based on government's constitutional mandate to be (a) accountable and (b) transparent by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information (The Constitution of RSA, 1996).

The results which are discussed underneath were obtained by administering two (2) separate standardised questionnaires. The first questionnaire was administered to government heads of communication in the Province of Mpumalanga, including at local level (municipalities). The second one was administered to citizens at selected Thusong Services Centres in the Province of Mpumalanga who gather there on a daily basis in search of government information and services. The discussion thus attempts to establish the relationship between the results and the objectives of the study.

5.2 Scope of discussions

The issues discussed in this chapter emanate from the findings of the study which were presented in chapter four (4), and relates to answering the four (4) sub-research questions.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[126]

They are, (a) establishing whether government messages are reaching the intended recipients and understood; (b) establishing the most appropriate and accessible channels of communication which government could utilise to disseminate information to citizens; (c) establishing whether government communication activities are adequately funded; and (d) recommending strategies to improve the communication and information system of the South African government.

5.2.1   Demographic profile of respondents

The respondents ranged from government communicators (at the level of heads of communication) and citizens at Thusong Service Centres (TSCs). With regards to government communicators, the majority (16; 51.6%) were employed in the local sphere of government (district and local municipalities) which is   mostly affected by service delivery protests, followed by those employed by the provincial government (11; 35.5%). A substantial number of these respondents (14; 45.1%) occupied top/strategic management position where decisions are made. This means that less than half of government communicators are part of the top management or decision-making structures. Furthermore, out of the 14, eleven (11) were from the provincial government and the remaining three (3) from the local government.

What this simply means is that communication is recognised as a strategic management function at the provincial level as opposed to the local government. This is because status of heads of communication at the provincial government is relatively higher than at local government level where it remains to be low. Communicators at local government level are therefore disadvantaged from understanding how decisions were arrived at by the top management, despite the local government level being the most critical and significant service delivery arm of government.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[127]

Ironically, it is the same sphere of government which experiences service delivery protests. This concurs with the finding of the task group on government communications which had indicated that "there is poor recognition of the need for a professional government communication and information service in South Africa. Rather, there are disparate communication and information officials with widely varying backgrounds, seniority and training" (Communications 2000, 1996:16). Government communication at the local sphere is thus still regarded as insignificant, and one could infer that the service delivery protests experienced at this sphere of government could be associated with the lack of information dissemination given that communicators are not privy to decisions (information). Earlier studies had confirmed this by indicating that communication is still not recognised as being strategic in government (Chimutengwende, 1988; Winner, 1993; Dolphin & Fan, 2000; Mefalopulos & Grenna, 2004).

In addition, the majority (12; 38.7%) of them have communication work experience of between 5 and 10 years. Out of the 12 (38.7%) only one (3.2%) from the local government sphere has communication work experience of between 5 and 10 years, with the provincial government being presented by the remaining 11 (35.4%). It is evident that a huge number of communicators at local government do not have extensive communication work experience, thus supporting the view of the task group on government communication. For as long as communication is still not recognised at a strategic management function at local government, and communicators not being privy to decisions, service delivery protests are likely to continue to be experienced because of the dearth of information to keep citizens informed about developments or progress made in delivery services to them (Kitchen, 1993; Steyn, Green & Grobler, 2001; Cabanero-Verzosa & Garcia, 2009).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[128]

It is thus imperative that there should be a mind shift towards recognising the strategic significance of the function of communication in assisting the local government sphere to fulfil its information dissemination constitutional mandate. This will harness communication with citizens and hopefully address the issue of service delivery protests (Kitchen, 1993; Winner, 1993; Dolphin & Fan, 2000; Steyn, Green & Grobler, 2001; Cabanero-Verzosa & Garcia, 2009). One can argue that if people are keep informed (even about challenges), they are likely to understand and likely to be patient because they know that something is being done to improve their lives.

With regards to citizens, the majority (181; 61.7%) were females, followed by males (112; 38.2%). The findings suggest that more females require government services and information as compared to males. This could be attributed to the fact that women seem not to be eager to take advantage of information at their disposal as provided even via information communication technology platforms (Hafkin & Odame, 2002; Ngenge, 2003). Shaw and Gant (2002) further argue that this could be as a result of differing attitudes towards technology by men and women, suggesting that women could be lacking behind in terms of information consumption because of their unwillingness to adapt to change much faster, hence they are the majority respondents. The large number of respondents (149; 50.8%) were between the age group of 31 and 40, followed by the age group of 21 and 30 years (25.9%), thirdly was the age group of 41 and 50 years (13.9%), fourthly, the age group of below 20 years (6.8%), fifthly, the age group of 51 and 60 years (1.3%), lastly the over 60 years age group (1.0%). The results suggest that half of the respondents were primarily the youth.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[129]

According to Statistics SA (2013) and the Provincial Economic Review and Outlook (2014), the youth (up to the age of 34) accounted for 69.4 percent or just over 2, 8 million (2, 803, 717 to be exact) of the population of the Province of Mpumalanga. It was therefore vital for the study to determine age proportionality of respondents, given that the main instigators of service delivery protests are primarily the youth. The findings thus indicate that there is large number of the youth who are interested in receiving government information and messages. Most of the respondents (92.1%) were residing in rural areas, and as such one could infer that there is inadequate dissemination of government information and messages in rural areas. This supports the assertion of the task group on government communication there is inadequate public infrastructure for communication purposes in rural areas (Communications 2000, 1996).

Perfloff (1998) supports the finding that people residing in rural areas are the most disadvantaged, when it comes to receiving government information or messages due to inadequate communication infrastructure. As indicated in chapter four (4), a large proportion of respondents (61.0%) were unemployed as compared to those employed (38.9%). One could infer that the unemployed people require government information more than the employed, hence they are in the majority, in order to be informed about possible job vacancies, social grants (for subsistence), and creation of cooperatives, amongst others. This is what is known as 'development communication' which refers to a process of disseminating information to citizens or communities in order to empower them to improve their socio-economic well-being (Quebral, 1975; Quebral, 2001; Kumar (2011b); *Thusong,* 2013).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[130]

5.2.2   Access to equipment or tele-communication infrastructure

Government has the responsibility to reach all citizens through the dissemination of information, and thus should ensure the availability of the tele-communication infrastructure (Constitution of RSA, 1996; Communication 2000, 1996). Thus it was important to establish the type of tele-communication equipment or infrastructure which respondents have access to, which could become channels for information dissemination. To this end, the findings have indicated that almost all respondents (98.9%) had access to a mobile phone. The findings concur with studies by Mutula and Mostert (2008) and Mbatha (2011) who argue that the government of South Africa has facilitated much investment in the provision of ICT infrastructure.

What this means is that mobile phones are a channel of communication which government could exploit in order to put its messages across, and this will result in almost all citizens receiving it messages. Furthermore, the study established that internet and e-mails are accessible to residents though only at 31.7%. This is confirmed in the SA Yearbook (2010) which indicated that the usage of the Internet in Africa has tripled to more than 12 million since 2000, with South Africa being the dominant internet hub since a quarter of these users are found in the country. Mbatha (2011) also argues that the advent of the Internet service has revolutionised information sharing and dissemination in South Africa, citing some of its benefits as cost and time saving, and an integrated information dissemination system. It was thus important to establish whether the respondents had access to the Internet given the associated benefits.

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[131]

5.2.3   The impact of the communication and information system

The flow or dissemination of information from the sender to the receiver should be guided through a defined process in order to ensure uniform application and the ability to measure its impact. According to Palmius (2005), one of the characteristics of an information system is its ability to facilitate feedback, that is, affording the recipients of information a platform to react to the message. Feedback is thus significant because it provides a measurement as to whether the message was interpreted and understood the way it was intended, that is, whether there was successful decoding of the transmitted message. Underneath is a discussion on this objective:

5.2.3.1 The two-way communication process between the sender and the receiver: Ensuring feedback

As indicated above, an effective communication system provides a platform for feedback in order to assess whether the transmitted message was interpreted the way it was intended, hence it is strategic to effective messaging (Mohr & Nevin, 1990; Olugbode, *et al*, 2008; Gupta, 2013). To this end, the majority of respondents (70.8% of communicators and 67.2% of citizens) indicated that the current communication and information system being utilised by government provides an opportunity for feedback. Their motivation amongst others is that public participation meetings (face-to-face communication), phone-in radio talk-shows, and toll-free lines provide a platform for feedback from citizens. This is in line with the assertion that face-to-face communication is interactive and provides intimate and immediate (Axford & Huggins, 2001; Hartslief, 2005; Matshedisho, 2008). Thus, given that the system provides an opportunity for feedback (according to respondents), one can conclude that there is effective communication.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[132]

This suggests that government is doing well as far as its constitutional mandate of communicating with citizens is concerned. These results are in line with a study conducted by the Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (*CommGAP*) (2011:8) which has also established that "effective two-way communication between the government and the public strengthens legitimate public authority; and that, in turn, increases the likelihood of attaining good governance outcomes". Glenn (2014) also argues that communication is effective when it propels people to do something or react to the message they have received. The conclusion that one can make in this regard, is that good turn-out of citizens at government events or izimbizo is evidence of effective communication, as the recipients were able to successfully decode the transmitted message by reacting positively to it. It is also during such events where citizens get an opportunity to provide feedback to government (face-to-face communication), for example.

5.2.3.2 Information dissemination channels utilised by government

All government communicators (100%) indicated that they were utilising printed information material (brochures, pamphlets, leaflets, newsletters) as their primary channel of information dissemination to citizens. On the contrary, the citizens indicated that they prefer radio (99.3%) as their primary channel of receiving government information. Secondly, government communicators (96.7%) indicated that radio is their second preferred channel of information dissemination as opposed to television which is preferred by citizens (94.8%). The third and fourth preferences for government communicators are media statements (67.7%) and face-to-face communication (58.0%) respectively. In respect of for citizens, it is printed information material (60.0%) and face-to-face communication (31.0%) respectively.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[133]

Online media platforms (51.6%) and other (loud-hailing, TSCs, outreach programmes and bill boards) (16.1%) came fifth and sixth respectively under communicators whereas online media platforms (21.8%) and SMS (10.9%) came fifth and sixth under citizens. After radio, citizens prefer television, followed by printed information material, face-to-face communication, online media platforms and SMS. The results thus confirm what the theory informing this study postulates (the cultivation analysis theory), that is, most people rely much on mediated form of communication (mass media) as their source of information, and they tend to believe what is communicated through these channels, given their ability to shape people's sense of reality (Miller, 1959; Livingstone, 1990; Dominick, 1990; Gerbner, 1998).

The results imply that the use of printed information material by government communicators as the primary source of information is not the appropriate channel for the recipients (citizens) who prefer radio as their primary source. Thus the implication is that if government continues to use this inappropriate channel, it might end up losing touch with its audience (citizens) who prefer radio rather than printed information material. The consequence would be communication failure as the transmitted message would be misdirected and delivered unsuccessfully.

5.2.3.3 The appropriateness of communication channels

The majority of citizens (81.5%) have indicated that the channels being utilised by government are appropriate for their information requirements. The results suggest that the majority of citizens believe that government is utilising appropriate channels to communicate or disseminate information to them. This is supported by the majority of communicators (87.0%) who argue that the huge turn-out of citizens at government events, for example, is a confirmation that government messages in this regard.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[134]

This means that government messages are reaching the citizens, and that the South African government is fulfilling its constitutional mandate of constantly dissemination information to citizens. These results are in line with studies conducted by Fielding (2006) and Glenn (2014) who also established that the use of appropriate channels of communication is a prerequisite for effective communication.

5.2.3.4 Communicating adequately with citizens

The majority of citizens (76.7%) indicated that government is communicating adequately with them. Their motivation is that government utilises the medium of radio and printed information material, including the TSCs, to communicate with them. This suggests that government is fulfilling its constitutional mandate on information dissemination. These results are in line with a study conducted by *CommGAP* (2011:8), which has also established that adequate and constant communication with citizens increases the changes of effective communication and "the likelihood of attaining good governance outcomes". As such, given the indication by the citizens that government is communicating adequately with them, the researcher argues that service delivery protests at the local government sphere should not therefore be attributed or blamed on communicators' supposed failure to disseminate information (decisions) to citizens.

5.2.4   Messaging – Understanding what is being communication

The language being used in communicating messages plays a significant role in ensuring that the recipients are able to decode the message successfully and thus understand it the way it was intended (Glenn, 2014). Glenn (2014) further advocates for the use of clear and simple language in order to realise effective communication.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[135]

The ability of citizens to decode the messages successfully is thus crucial in them understanding the messages.

5.2.4.1 Government messages are clear and understandable?

The messages communicated by government are clear, easy to understand and without ambiguity given that the majority of respondents (54.7% of communicators and 78.4% of citizens) have indicated that the recipients were able to decode them. Their motivation is that it is because they are being communicated in their mother tongue and especially through the medium of radio. An example which was given was the radio *'TB can be cured'* campaign. The results suggest that effective communication is taking place given the understanding of messages. This supports the view of Glenn (2014) who has also established that the use of the language of the intended recipients and unambiguous in messaging makes it easier for such messages to be understandable and confirms successful communication.

5.2.4.2 Empowerment-oriented messages

The messages being disseminated by government empowering communities with information which assist them to improve their wellbeing as indicated by the majority of respondents (74.1% of communicators and 70.2% of citizens). Citizens continue to attribute this to the use of indigenous languages in messages being communicated especially through the medium of radio. This suggests that government messages are development-oriented as they empower citizens with knowledge that propels them to take action in order to improve their lives.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[136]

The results are therefore in line with the assertions by Quebral (1975; 2001) and Kumar (2011b) that development communication is empowerment-oriented in order to improve the socio-economic well-being of the people.

5.2.4.3 Tailor-made messages - Addressing individual information requirements

Glenn (2014) argues that in developing messages, it is crucial to determine who the consumer of the message is, and his or her information needs. This will ensure that the relevant message is transmitted to the relevant person, thus addressing specific individual information needs (tailor-made messaging). To this end, the majority of respondents (54.8% of communicators and 53.8% of citizens) have indicated that government messages are tailor-made to address individual information requirements. The motivation is that citizens continuously receive information on social grants and other services which affect their livelihood. The results suggest that government messages are tailor-made to address individual information needs, implying that there is no universal or general approach towards messaging.

What this means is that communication will only be successful if the message affects the individual directly. This concurs with the study by Glenn (2014) who established that people become interested in messages only if they affect them directly. One can conclude that a product can only sell if it will address the needs of the consumer, that is, messaging that addresses individual information requirements.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[137]

5.2.5 Barriers to effective communication

Various scholars have indicated that accomplishing effective communication would remain elusive due to a number of barriers they have identified (Grossman & Hart, 1983; Rees, 1985; Stiglitz, 1987; Klitgaard, 1989; Sappington, 1991; Adler, 1991; Communications 2000, 1996; Novinger, 2001; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Krile, 2006; Toye, 2006; Fielding, 2006; Rampur, 2011; Glenn, 2014). Amongst them, is the language used in the dissemination of information considering that South Africa predominantly uses English despite more than 90% of the population being non-English speakers. It is thus evident that unless such barriers are removed successfully, effective communication would continue to be elusive.

5.2.5.1 English as the only language of government communication

It is evident that the majority of respondents (80.5% of communicators and 61.7% of citizens) are not in favour of English being the only language of communication hence they want all other official languages to be used given the equal status as enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The results suggest that more people want messaging to be done in their own languages in other to enhance understanding as most people, especially in rural areas, are illiterate and thus cannot speak, read nor understand English, and further because government messages are intended for them as well. The results are in line with the study by Glenn (2014), who has established that people understand messages better if they are communicated in their own languages. This suggests that government should consider increasing funding for communication activities in order to communicate in all official languages.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[138]

5.2.5.2 The cost of communicating in all official languages

It is evident from the results of the study that nothing should be spared, not even the cost, in the interest of attaining effective communication, which is a constitutional mandate. This is supported by the fact that the majority of respondents (83.8% of communicators and 63.7% of citizens) have indicated that the cost factor should not considered in the process of communication, given that all the eleven (11) official languages are equal before the law, and should be treated as such. To this end, they argue that it is the responsibility of government to provide adequate funding in order to ensure that messages are disseminated in all eleven (11) languages, and further given South Africa's multilingualism.

This concurs with the assertion of House and Rehbein (2004: 25) that multilingual communication should be promoted, and that "English needs to be taken out of the equation because it is now different to other languages". They argue that multilingual communication will make different language speakers to understand and learn languages of each other, thus further unifying diverse cultures. This suggests that government should consider increasing funding for communication activities in order to communicate in all official languages.

5.2.5.3 Funding for government communication machinery

The results of the study have indicated that the citizens want government to communicate in all official languages, including strengthening communication with them by increasing the number of information channels. What this means is that the government communication is not adequately funded, given the requirements of the majority of communicators.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[139]

They have indicated that communication should be done in all official languages, given that most of the people, especially in rural areas, cannot be reached owing to the imbalance and inadequate communication infrastructure in those areas. They argue that more funding will enable government to provide additional tele-communication infrastructure in rural areas. Furthermore, their argument is that there is a need for more paid for media space given that the media is not always publishing the good work of government. This suggests that government should consider increasing funding for communication activities, as most citizens prefer radio as their channel of information. The results confirm what the theory informing this study postulates (the cultivation analysis theory), that is, most people rely much on mediated form of communication (mass media) as their source of information, and they tend to believe what is communicated through these channels, given their ability to shape people's sense of reality (Miller, 1959; Livingstone, 1990; Dominick, 1990; Gerbner, 1998).

5.2.5.4 Accessing information to be communicated

It is surprising why communicators should be blamed for not communicating the work of government adequately, though they experience challenges in accessing information to be communicated to external stakeholders. The majority (77.3%) of them have expressed their frustrations in this regard, and blame bureaucracy and their low status which does not afford them an opportunity to be part of decision-making structures, especially at the local government sphere. This concurs with the assertion by Shoba (2013: 11) that government communicators are to be blamed for "failing to convey the local government's achievements ahead of next year's general elections". Tampere (2010) links the failure to communicate effectively to government's decision-making processes.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[140]

The researcher thus asserts that it is highly impossible for one to communicate what he or she does not know. Furthermore, Pindus *et al* (2000) assert that the challenge of accessing information for communication purposes is brought about by the programmatic, logistical and managerial or 'turf' barriers due to the fact that responsible people have a fear of losing their decision-making autonomy, and possibly even run jeopardising their jobs, if co-ordination succeeds. The implication is that it could be difficult for communicators to communicate the successes of government, if they are not privy to such success stories. This could lead to government being unable to fulfil its constitutional mandate regarding information dissemination to citizens (Pindus *et al,* 2000; Tampere, 2010).

5.2.5.5 Culture, language and communication

Language is a critical part of cultural practices, and has the potential to hinder effective communication, if the recipient of a message feels his or her culture is not respected and encroached upon (Novinger, 2001). Communicating in the language of the recipient is thus a sign of recognising and respecting the culture of the intended recipient. This is line with the assertion by Brown (1994: 165), that "a language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture". Jiang (2000: 328) also supports this view by indicating that "language is the mirror of culture, in the sense that people can see a culture through its language". The researcher thus argues that if one's culture is not protected and respected, it would be difficult to convince the person to accept any other form of communication, which they would review as foreign and invading in their daily life (Schein, 2004; Novinger, 2001).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[141]

To this end, the majority of respondents (59.3% of citizens) indicated that the cultural diversity of the Province should be considered when developing messages to be communicated. Their argument is that messages will be understood better and accepted if they do not impinge on one's cultural practices and beliefs, and thus South Africa's diverse cultures should be considered and respected in this regard. This concurs with the assertion by Brown (1994) and Jiang (2000) that language is part of one's culture. It is evident that effective communication will only take place if citizen's cultural beliefs and practices are considered in messaging. Since language is part of culture, the implication is that government messaging should be done the languages spoken by all citizens, as this will signify the recognition of their culture through their language.

5.2.5.6 Strengthening face-to-face communication.

Face-to-face communication provides immediate feedback, and instils public confidence and signals affection from the sender of the message hence the majority of respondents (85.2% of citizens) have indicated that it is their preferred channel of communication. To this end, citizens have requested that government should conduct *izimbizo* (face-to-face interactions) possibly every two (2) months in order to satisfy their information requirements. This is in line with the study conducted by Axford and Huggins (2001) who have established that this form of communication is direct, face-to-face, personal, and provides immediate feedback and interaction between government and the people. This view is also supported by Hartslief (2005) and Matshedisho (2008) who argue that *izimbizo* provides South African citizens with a platform to ask government representatives (political and administrative leadership) questions on policy delivery, enabling immediate feedback.

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[142]

This suggests that government should consider increasing funding for communication activities in order to strengthen face-to-face communication activities in the form of *izimbizo*.

5.2.6 Strategies to improve the communication and information system of the government of South Africa

The results of the study have established that there are a number of barriers towards effective communication which should be removed in order to facilitate successful messaging. In addition, both the communicators and citizens have suggested strategies to be implemented in this regard.

5.2.6.1 Recognition of communication as a strategic management function.

The majority of communicators (70.9%) have indicated that communication is recognised as a strategic management function. However what is most concerning is that only 29% of those who strongly disagree came from local government (municipalities), thus implying that the function of communication is still not recognised as a strategic management function at that sphere of government. This concurs with the finding of the task group on government communications which indicated that "the status of communications and its practitioners is also an inhibiting factor. There is poor recognition of the need for a professional government communication and information service in South Africa. Rather, there are disparate communication and information officials with widely varying backgrounds, seniority and training" (*Communications 2000,* 1996: 16).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[143]

The assertion by the task group is supported by Chimutengwende (1988) and Mefalopulos and Grenna (2004) who argue that government communicators are not recognised as professionals, hence their roles are in most cases deemed to be inferior in grading or levels. This suggests that the low status of government communications, especially at the local government level, disadvantages communicators from understanding how decisions are arrived at by the top management (Chimutengwende, 1988; *Communications 2000*, 1996; Mefalopulos & Grenna, 2004). The implication is that communicators would not be able to communicate decisions given that they are not privy to them, and as such, government would continue to be seen not to be communicating its decisions as mandated by South Africa's constitution.

5.2.6.2 Significance of the function of internal communication

The function of internal communication is a critical one in government, as the majority of respondents (83.8% of communicators) have indicated that it informed employees associates themselves with the goals of an organisation, in this case, government. It creates a sense of ownership hence informed staff members can assist to strengthen the credibility of communication messages. This concurs with the assertion by Clampitt and Downs (1993), Witherspoon (1997), Nordin, Halib and Ghazali (2011), Hargie and Dickson (2007) that sound internal communication is the prerequisite for organisational effectiveness. Their view is supported by Smith and Mounter (2005:2) who assert that "an informed and engaged workforce produces better results". They emphasise the view that employees will strive to assist the organisation to reach its goals if they feel they are a critical part of it.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[144]

Furthermore, a study conducted by Quinn and Hargie (2004) on the Northern Ireland's internal communication structures, confirmed that there is generally dissatisfaction among staff members, strengthening the argument that internal communication within organisations remains a challenge. Based on these assertions, it is evident that like in any government department or institution, internal communication would pose a serious challenge towards the organisation or department fulfilling its mandate. This is also worsened by the fact that internal communication is partly the responsibility of human resources and strategic planning divisions within an organisation, given that they are the custodians of personnel related information such as birthdays, training programmes, and strategic documents. As discussed in chapter one, when more than one section becomes a stakeholder in internal communication, co-ordination becomes a serious challenge due to the fear of losing one's territorial 'independence' herein referred to as 'turf' barriers (Pindus, *et al.*, 2000).

This is because responsible people have a fear of losing their decision-making autonomy, and possibly even run jeopardising their jobs, if co-ordination succeeds. O'Toole (1997) and Jun (1997) also argue that it is very difficult to co-ordinate multiple units of inter-organisational structures, and this makes communicating in such scenarios very challenging. To this end, government communicators indicated that most government communication activities are aimed at external stakeholders thus forgetting staff members who must be ambassadors of the programmes of government. This concurs with the assertion by Quinn and Hargie (2004) that there is generally dissatisfaction from staff members because of complains that they are often kept in the dark by management of their organisations. As a result, the implication is that organisations, in this case government, which do not recognise internal communication as a critical function are less likely to achieve their goal of effective communication with external stakeholders (citizens in this case).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[145]

5.2.6.3 Communication via new media

It is quite evident that the advent of the new media such as social media provides an opportunity to strengthen its communication machinery, as the majority of respondents (80.4% of citizens) have indicated that government should start communication with them via SMS-es, social media and e-mails. This is in line with the study by Maggiani (2014) who established that the advent of social media has revolutionised communication given that it provides an instant two-way conversation, with the ability to involve every person interested in the discussion. This view is supported by Wendling, Radisch and Jacobzone (2013) who argue that social media can be effective channel of communication during crisis situations, given its acceptability and popularity amongst all people. Studies have established that almost 96% of South Africans, including those in rural areas, own mobile phones and have access to social media platforms on their phones which are modern tele-communication technology innovations.

The use of social media has penetrated on the youth, who are in the majority, more than in any other age group, and this gives government an opportunity to communicate with them via the channel of their preference. This concurs with the findings by Mbatha (2011) that South Africa's mobile telephone industry has grown that a high rate since its introduction some 20 years ago, making mobile phones one of the most utilised communication tools by citizens. Mbatha (2011) argues that it has been proven that access to telephone services has a direct effect in increasing government service delivery, as was discovered in Columbia's Tumaco in 1994. His assertion is supported by Nonyongo, Mabusela, and Monene (2005) who argue that the short message service (SMS) is utilised extensively around the world due to the fact that it is quick, efficient and affordable and affords immediate feedback platform.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[146]

Their finding is that the majority of respondent (91.1%) confirmed always having received SMS communication which they find convenient and useful. Power and Power (2004) further indicates that the SMS medium even affords deaf people a platform and an opportunity to communicate and receive messages, adding that the deaf people have even adopted the service. This suggests that the use of SMS, social media and e-mails should be highly considered as appropriate and effectives channels of communication by the South African government.

5.2.6.4 Investing in tele-communication infrastructure in rural areas

Technology continues to improve with time, and as such it is significant that government should keep up with the times by investing in infrastructure investment and enhancement. The study has confirmed there is insufficient tele-communications infrastructure in rural areas, as the majority of citizens (87.0%) indicated that government should invest more in tele-communication infrastructure in those areas. This is in line the recommendation of the task group on government communications that government should invest a lot of money to address the communication infrastructure backlog in rural areas (Communication 2000, 1996). However respondents still emphasised the need for government to increase face-to-face interaction with communities, especially in rural areas, arguing that it is the "best model of communication" that should be adopted intensely by government. Various scholars also assert that is channel of communication is effective as it provides immediate feedback (Axford & Huggins, 2001; Hartslief, 2005; Matshedisho, 2008. This suggests that citizens value unmediated form of communication (face-to-face interaction) more than mediated form of communication (mass media).

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[147]

Toye (2006), Johnston (1993) and Reeds (2009) argue that unmediated form of communication is never affected by the challenge of hierarchy, which according to the citizens make government inefficient and encroaches on transparency. This suggests that government should in fact strengthen this form of communication in order to increase confidence of citizens on it.

5.2.6.5 Communicating in indigenous and special languages

The results have indicated the preference of citizens (88.7%) for the use of their indigenous languages in communication processes, including special languages (braille and sign-language) in order to cater for the blind and deaf. As indicated earlier, their rationale is that all languages are equal before the supreme law of South Africa, and that the majority of the people in South Africa speak other languages other than English. The argument for the use of special languages is that people with disabilities, like the deaf and blind, continue to be neglected as far as their information needs are concerned, despite them paying tax like the rest of the citizens. To this end, citizens have indicated that public servants must be trained on sign-language because they interact with deaf people, and that sign-language should be added as the twelfth official language.

This concurs with the recommendation of the task group on government communications that government should use indigenous languages in communicating with the citizenry, and that braille and sign-language should be incorporated into government communication plans to cater for the blind and deaf citizenry (*Comtask*, 1996). Rozaimie (2014: 41) argue that "Braille and sign-language help disabled people to be part of the community, to interact, communicate and create relationships".

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[148]

This suggests that government should consider increasing funding for communication activities in order to cater for the printing of information material in braille, train frontline staff members to communicate in sign-language, and even recognise sign-language as the twelfth official language. To this end, the South African Minister of Basic Education has announced that the sign-language will be introduced in the schools' curriculum from 2015, and further that Department of Social Development has started consultations aimed at recognising and declaring sign-language as the twelfth official language of South Africa (Molopyane, 2014; Department of Social Development, 2014).

5.2.6.6 Improving the communication and information system

The results of the study indicated some challenges and or barriers which should be removed in order to improve government communication with the citizens of South Africa. Both communicators and citizens have suggested the following paraphrased improvements:

5.2.6.6.1 Government communicators

(a) Communication should be recognised as a strategic management function at local government level as well;

(b) Communication activities should be adequately resourced, both financially and in skilled and appropriate human resource;

(c) Political principals and heads of departments should be exposed to operations in newsrooms in order for them to adhere to deadlines in responding to media enquiries/queries;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[149]

(d)   The function of communication should be included as a key performance area in the performance agreements of heads of departments as this may push them to take the function seriously;The work of government and its services should be communicated instead of promoting an individual like a public representatives;

(e)   The use social media and mobile technology such as the SMS should be exploited (given their popularity and accessibility);Communication activities and events should be co-ordinated in order to avoid competing for coverage from the limited media houses in the Province;

(f)   Communication structures should be standardised in all spheres of government;

(g)   Media relations should be strengthened and that communicators must ensure that media statements are newsworthy at all times.

5.2.6.6.2 Citizens

(a)   Face-to-face interactions (izimbizo or community participation meetings) should be increased;

(b)   Information material should be printed in all eleven (11) official languages;

(c)   Information dissemination should be done via SMS-es and social media;

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[150]

(d)   Government must introduce more state-owned radio stations;

(e)   Funding for community radio stations should be increased;

(f)   Mobile phone tariffs should be reduced drastically to enable wider accessibility;

(g)   Free access to internet service should be provided;

(h)   More funding should be provided for the production of information material in Braille and training of government frontline official in sign-language;

(i)   The SABC television license fee should be scrapped;

(j)   The number of government exhibitions for information dissemination purposes should be increased.

Most of the suggestions concur with assertions by various scholars and the recommendations made by the task group on government communications (Winner, 1993; Communication 2000, 1996; O'Toole, 1997; Jun, 1997; Johnston, 1993; Dolphin & Fan, 2000; Axford & Huggins, 2001; Mefalopulos & Grenna, 2004; Hartslief, 2005; Toye, 2006; Matshedisho, 2008; Reeds, 2009). It is thus recommended that government should implement the strategies as suggested in order to improve its communication and information system.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[151]

5.3 Summary

This chapter presented discussions on the findings of the study as presented in chapter four (4). It provided an insight into the findings against the aim of the study, which was to examine the success of the communication and information system of the South African government, focusing specifically on the Province of Mpumalanga. The next chapter (six) presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the results of the study.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[152]

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the outcomes based on the results of the study, concludes, make recommendations on how government can improve communication with citizens, and suggests areas of further study. It is based on the objectives of the study, as indicated in chapter one (1), namely:

- To evaluate the impact of the current communication and information system of the government of South Africa;

- To find out whether government communication messages are understood by the intended recipients (citizens);

- To identify challenges that may impede on the effectiveness of the communication and information system of the South African government (with specific reference to the Mpumalanga provincial government); and

- To recommend strategies that can be implemented in order to improve the communication and information system of the government of South Africa.

6.2 SUMMARY

The summary will be based under the following headings based on the objectives of the study:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[153]

6.2.1 The impact of the communication and information system

This objective was aimed at assessing the impact of the communication and information system of the South African government towards realising the constitutional mandate of dissemination information to citizens, and is summarised as follows:

6.2.1.1 Concluding the two (2) way communication process by affording the feedback platform

The process of communication as a two (2) way process between the sender (encoder) and the receiver (decoder) becomes complete once there is feedback from the recipient, that is, where the message was received the way it was intended. To this end, the communication and information system of the South African government provides platforms for feedback through public participation meetings (izimbizo) – face-to-face communication, phone-in radio talk-shows and toll-free services lines, and this concludes the two (2) way communication process.

6.2.1.2 Information dissemination channels utilised by government

There are a number of communication channels or sources of information utilised to disseminate information to citizens. They include radio, television, the internet, printed information material, and face-to-face interactions, amongst others. In this regard, the citizens have indicated that radio is their preferred primary source of information because it communicates in local or indigenous languages, and provides a feedback platform such as phone-in programmes. This is contrary to printed information material which is the primary source of information utilised by government communicators.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[154]

The second preferred source of information by citizens is television. This is followed by printed information material, face-to-face communication, online media platforms and SMS. Radio was the second preferred channel of information by communicators, followed by media statements, face-to-face communication, online media platforms, loud-hailing, TSCs and bill boards.

6.2.1.3 The appropriateness of the communication channels

It is critical to establish whether the communication channels being utilised for information dissemination are accessible to the intended recipients of the messages. This is to avoid utilising channels which are not within easy reach or expensive as this may lead to the message not reaching its intended recipients. To this end, the channels of communication utilised by government to disseminate information are appropriate given, and this is explained by the high turn-out of citizens at government events, for example. This suggests that government messages are reaching the citizens (intended recipients).

6.2.1.4 Provision of constant and adequate information

Government has got a constitutional mandate to regularly keep in touch with citizens, and as such, the citizens have indicated that they are satisfied with the amount of information they receive from government. They credit government's use of of radio, printed information material, TSCs, amongst others, in this regard.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[155]

6.2.2   Messaging – Understanding what is being communicated

This objective was aimed at finding out whether citizens were able to comprehend or decode the messages as they were intended, that is, to find out whether there is mutual understanding of the intended meaning.

6.2.2.1 Clear and understandable messages

For effective communication to take place, messages must be clear and understood with ambiguity. The citizens had indicated that they were able to decode the messages they received from government successfully, thus suggesting that they were clear and understandable. They have attributed this to the usage of their mother tongue, especially through the medium of radio, indicating that communication in one's mother tongue eliminates any possibility of misunderstanding.

6.2.2.2 Empowerment-oriented messages

The purpose of disseminating or sharing information is to empower the recipient with knowledge which he or she could use to improve their wellbeing, and this is what is called development communication (Quebral, 1970; Kumar, 2011). The respondents (citizens) had indicated that government provide them information which assists them to improve their socio-economic status, thus suggesting that the messages are empowerment-oriented as they provide communities with information. An example thereof is information about available health (medical care) and social development services (social grants).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[156]

6.2.2.3 Tailor-made messages to address individual information requirements

Each individual has got different information needs given their differing characteristics, and as such a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to information dissemination cannot serve the purpose (Constitution of RSA, 1996; Surbone, Zwitter, Rajer & Stiefel, 2013). Thus tailor-made messages should be crafted to cater for different LSMs (Living Standard Measures) in order to ensure effective communication. In this regard, respondents had indicated that their individual information needs were satisfied, thus suggesting that the messages were tailor-made and not universal. However, the use of radio as the preferred channel of communication and the use of the recipient's language were credited as making it easier to decode the intended message.

6.2.3   Barriers to effective communication

This objective was aimed at finding out whether are there barriers towards government communicating effectively with South African citizens, and it is summarised below:

6.2.3.1 Communicating only in English - maintaining the status quo

The use of English as the only language of government communication was discouraged by respondents, and as such, they have suggested that all other official languages should be incorporated in the government communication machinery. The reasoning of the respondents was based on constitutional status of all the eleven (11) official languages, and that most people, especially those residing in rural areas, are illiterate and do not understand English.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[157]

Respondents thus prefer the use of their own languages other than English, as this enable better understanding and decoding of the intended message.

6.2.3.2 The cost of communicating in all   official languages and funding for government communication machinery

The respondents have stressed that the cost should not be a barrier towards effective communication, and thus should not be sparred to benefit one language group, suggesting that funding for government communication machinery should be increased to cater for all languages. This would also beneficiate rural areas for the augmentation of tele-communication infrastructure, and enables the printing of information material in all eleven (11) official languages.

6.2.3.3 Access to information to be communicated

Communicators, especially at the local government sphere, were experiencing challenges in accessing information to be communicated, and as such, affecting information dissemination to citizens. This means that there is inadequate information dissemination, and this is blamed on government communicators who unfortunately struggle to gain access to the information to be communicated to citizens (Pindus *et al*, 2000; Tampere, 2010; Shoba, 2013). The implication for government is that citizens are less informed and this could be the reason behind the service delivery protests at the local sphere of government.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[158]

6.2.3.4 Cultural diversity and messaging

Language is an integral part of one's culture, and as such cultural beliefs and practices can become a barrier to effective communication if they are not taken into consideration during the communication process (Brown, 1994; Jiang, 2000; Jiang, 2000). Messages will be better understood and accepted if they do not impinge on one's cultural practices and beliefs. To this end, respondents have indicated that cultural beliefs and practices should be considered when developing communication messages.

6.2.3.5 Strengthening face-to-face communication

The respondents prefer the unmediated form of communication (face-to-face communication) as one of their preferred source of information and messages, as it offers direct and immediate feedback platform. It further enables better understanding of messages; restores public confidence in government; it is influential (as it is intimate and signalling concern). The respondents had indicated that government should strengthen this form of communication by conducting *izimbizo* possibly every two (2) months.

6.2.4 Strategies to be implemented to improve the communication and information system of the government of South Africa

This objective was aimed at soliciting suggestions as to what should be done in order to improve the communication and information system being implemented by the South African government to disseminate information to citizens, and they are summarised below:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[159]

6.2.4.1 Communication as a strategic management function

Communication is recognised as a strategic management function is most government departments, more especially at the provincial level. However despite local government being the first line of service delivery, communication is not recognised as a strategic management function at this sphere of government as the majority of communicators are at a low status. Communicators at the local government sphere have indicated that in most cases, they are not privy to decisions made by strategic management. The implication is that they are disadvantaged from understanding how decisions were arrived at by the top management, hence their inability to communicate decisions to citizens (Chimutengwende, 1988; *Communications 2000*, 1996; Mefalopulos & Grenna, 2004).

6.2.4.2 Significance of Internal communication

There is an assumption that informed staff members will produce better results, and this is associated with their fear to fail given that they consider the goals of their organisations as theirs. Thus internal communication has proved to be significant within organisation, in this case, in government. In this regards, communicators indicated that well informed employees are likely to associate themselves with the goals of government, thus creating a sense of ownership, and strengthening the credibility of communication messages.

6.2.4.3 Communicating via new media

The advent of new media such SMS, social media and e-mail has provided additional channels of communication which could be exploited in order to strengthen government communication.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[160]

To this end, almost all respondents had access to tele-communication infrastructure such as mobile or cell-phones, and have indicated that government should start communication with them via these platforms. This has seen a large number of the youth interacting on social media more than on any other communication channel, thus making new media a viable option.

6.2.4.4 Investing more in rural tele-communication infrastructure

The majority of respondents who visited the TSCs in pursuit of government information and services were from the rural areas, suggesting over-reliance on them as a result of the inadequate public infrastructure for communication purposes. The implication is that there is inadequate dissemination of government information and messages in rural areas, and as such, respondents have suggested an increase in tele-communication infrastructure investment.

6.2.4.5 Strengthening communication in indigenous languages and catering for the deaf and the blind

South Africa is a multilingual country with eleven (11) languages recognised by its constitution as official and enjoying equal legal status. Government communication machinery thus needs to reflect that given that no language in more important than the other. The preference of respondents (citizens) is this regard is the strengthening of communication in their indigenous languages, including catering for the deaf through sign-language and the blind through braille.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[161]

6.3   CONCLUSION

This study has assessed the impact of the communication and information system of the South African government in relation to government's constitutional mandate of "providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information" (The Constitution of RSA, 1996: 111). It further identified a number of barriers impeding effective communication, and suggested the necessary interventions in order to remove the said barriers. Amongst others, for effective communication to take place, some measures needs to be implements such as, amending the government communication policy to include the use of the new media (for example social media); substantially increasing funding for communication activities; and strengthening communication in South Africa's other official languages and special languages (braille and sign-language to cater for the blind and the deaf population).

The study has established that information plays a significant role towards uplifting the lives of the citizens, given that it makes them to react to such information by taking appropriate steps, if relevant to their situations, as advised the messages being communicated. It has further confirmed that the successful decoding of a message is necessary for effective communication to take place. The conclusion is based under the following headings based on the objectives of the study:

6.3.1   The impact of the communication and information system

Notwithstanding the barriers that were identified, the study has established that the current communication and information system being utilised by the government of South Africa had an impact given that government messages were reaching and understood by the citizens.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[162]

This implies that government is fulfilling its constitutional mandate on information dissemination. Government should, however, not be complacent, but should by all means strive to remove all the identified barriers to further strengthen its communication machinery. This conclusion was based on the following:

6.3.1.1 Concluding the two (2) way communication process by affording the feedback platform

In order to effective communication to take place, there should be an assessment of the impact of the message that was transmitted to establish whether the message was interpreted the way it was intended to. For this to be established there should be a platform for feedback. This assumption has proved to be correct as the majority of respondents (both communicators and citizens) had agreed that the feedback platform exists, and this is confirmed by the public participation meetings (izimbizo) – face-to-face communication, phone-in radio talk-shows and toll-free services lines. The available feedback platforms thus conclude the two (2) way communication process between the sender and the receiver, thereby ensuring effective communication (successful interpretation of the intended message).

6.3.1.2 Information dissemination channels utilised by government

There are various channels of information dissemination at the disposal of government communicators. They range from unmediated to mediated form of communication, and the study has indicated that government communicators prefer to utilise both. To this end, the study has established that the citizens prefers radio over printed information material (pamphlets, leaflets, brochures, newsletters), as their primary source of information.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[163]

The latter is preferred primary channel of information dissemination by communicators. The secondary source of information for citizens is television whereas for communicators it is radio. The implication is that citizens prefer mass media (mediated communication) as their predominant source of information. This is in line with the theory informing this study postulates (the cultivation analysis theory), that is, most people rely much on the mass media as their source of information.

6.3.1.3 The appropriateness of the communication channels

Messages are being transmitted via numerous channels ranging from unmediated and mediated ones. Unmediated channels such as izimbizo (face-to-face communication) do not experience the challenge of distortion or unsuccessful delivery of messages (messages being delivered to unintended recipients). In the contrary, this is experienced through the use of mediated channels of communication (such as mass media platforms). Thus, the successful delivery of messages is reliant upon the relevance or appropriateness of the channels of communication being utilised. To this end, government for example, prefers to utilise printed information material (pamphlets, leaflets, brochures, newsletters) as its primary source of information in contrast to radio, which is preferred by the citizens.

Radio is the second preferred channel of information dissemination for government communicators. Therefore though there are indications of successful communication, printed information material is not the appropriate primary source of information given that the citizens – the intended beneficiaries of the information/message, prefers radio over all other channels. If government continues to utilise printed information as the primary source of information, this could lead to the unsuccessful delivery of messages because they would have not reached the intended recipients, thus leading to communication failure.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[164]

6.3.1.4 Provision of constant and adequate information

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa mandates government, herein represented by the public service, to constantly inform and update the citizens on its work, including disseminating information on the services it provides. The implication is that government should provide adequate information to citizens to assist them to improve their socio-economic well-being. The assumption is that constant and adequate information dissemination will keep citizens always informed about progress being made in implementing government programmes, and thus reduce any possibility of service delivery protests experienced at the local government sphere. The assumption proved to be correct as the majority of citizens have indicated that they were receiving constant and adequate information from government. As such, service delivery protests experienced at the local government sphere cannot be blamed on the communicators' supposed failure to disseminate information (decisions) to the citizens. These protests could thus be attributed to other issues and not communication-related matters.

6.3.2 Messaging – Understanding what is being communicated

Messages are intended to empower and invoke reaction of recipients. They basically appeal to recipients to take action after receiving them. However, the underlying meaning of a message is significant towards invoking the correct and appropriate action. This means that for effective communication to take place, the recipients of messages should be able to decode and comprehend them correctly. The ability to decode or interpret the meaning of messages is critical thus towards effective communication. Studies have also established that language, as part of culture, also plays a significant role in this regard, given that the majority of the citizens who participated in the study are culturists.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[165]

It can thus be assumed that the ability to decode messages successfully is depended on a number of factors as indicated below:

6.3.2.1 Clear and understandable messages

The use of indigenous languages in communicating government messages has proved to be a significant factor in making sure that the messages are understood. Though government communicates predominantly in English, the use of radio stations for information dissemination has proved to have been of assistance in ensuring that the messages are clear and understood. The majority of citizens have indicated that they prefer radio because it speaks their language, thus making it easier for them to understand the messages being communicated. For a message to be effective there should be mutual understanding of the meaning as intended.

For example, recipients should be able to decode the government message that "speed kills" to mean that in case of a vehicle accident, the person driving at high speed is highly likely to be seriously wounded and die as a result of the resulting impact. They should be able to understand that the word 'speed' on its own does not literally kill. Clear and understandable messages communicated in the preferred language of the intended recipient, thus confirm that communication would be successful, as the citizens were able to decode and interpret the intended messages.

6.3.2.2 Empowerment-oriented messages

Government has a mandate to empower the citizens with information that will assist them to improve their socio-economic well-being, and this is what is called development communication.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[166]

The majority of citizens have confirmed that government communication messages are empowerment-oriented, as they have provided them with information which assists them to uplift their lives. An example thereof is the information on social grants and health services. They however continue to attribute the understanding of the information to the use of their mother tongue, especially through the channel of radio. This has proved the assertion by Quebral (1975) and Kumar (2011b) who indicated that the premise of development communication is the upliftment the individual's life and well-being.

6.3.2.3 Tailor-made messages to address individual information requirements

The majority of citizens have indicated that they require information which addresses their individual information requirements, confirming that government is do so. The implication is that government messages are tailor-made to address individual information needs, and this has elicited interest from the citizens, thus contributing towards successful communication. One can conclude that a product, in this case information, can only 'sell' (capture attention) if it addresses the needs of the consumer (the citizen). Given that the citizens had indicated that the messages are tailor-made for their needs, the conclusion is that there has been successful communication and dissemination of information. Such confirmation is evidenced by the messages tailor-made for social grants beneficiaries only.

6.3.3 Barriers to effective communication

External conditions which in some cases, are beyond the control of government communicators, often impact negatively on the communication process thus leading to ineffectiveness.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[167]

These are factors such as inadequate financial resources, unskilled personnel, language being used to disseminate information, bureaucracy (red tape), cultural beliefs, attitudes and egos, to mention but a few. Although it is not entirely possible to address all barriers such as dealing with attitudes and egos, attempts should be made by government to resolve easier ones such as funding and the communication language.

6.3.3.1 Communicating only in English - maintaining the status quo

It is unfortunate that, 18 years later, after the task group on government communications had presented 83 recommendations to the South African government on how to improve government communications, not all of them have been implemented. Some of them are meant to deal with the barriers or challenges that impede on effective communication. Amongst them, is the recommendation to communicate in indigenous languages which are legislated official languages of South Africa. The rationale is that people tend to understand better when they are spoken to in their mother tongue, and further that most people, especially in the rural areas, are illiterate and cannot thus understand English, which is the predominant medium of communication in South Africa.

This has been confirmed by the majority of both communicators and citizens who indicated that government communication should be done in other official languages. The challenge for government, however, is providing adequate funding in this regard. Nonetheless, government has a constitutional mandate to promote and communicate in all official languages, and thus should not stick to English, as their convenient language of communication.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[168]

6.3.3.2 The cost of communicating in all official languages and funding for government communication machinery

Adequate funding for communication activities is critical in assisting government to communicate with all its citizens, as mandated by the country's constitution. This will ensure that communication is done in all official languages, including increasing the number of information dissemination channels utilised for this purpose. There is thus a need for government to review funding for its communication machinery as supported by the majority of both communicators and citizens who indicated that no cost should be spared in this regard. What is evident is that rigorous marketing efforts usually pay-off by increasing sales.

For example, despite Coca Cola being one of the most recognisable and preferred brand worldwide, the company continues to inject huge sums of money in marketing the soft drink in order to maintain brand awareness and loyalty. This has made it to maintain or increase its market share thus increasing profits. To this end, it is clear that marketing is costly but essential for effective communication. It is upon government to seize this 'marketing' opportunity in order to increase 'sales', in this case, the number of citizens reached.

6.3.3.3 Access to information to be communicated

The low status of government communication, especially at the local government sphere, has proved to contribute towards communication inefficiency. As a result of the low status of the function of communication in most municipalities, communicators are not part of decision-making structures, and thus are not privy to decisions made. It is thus impossible for them to communicate what they do not know.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[169]

It appears that they have been relegated to become beggars of information (decisions), and in most cases, they are not being trusted as the powers that be are afraid that they may leak information to the media. Such unwarranted suspicions and the red tape it takes to approve information to be disseminated will forever hinder effective communication. The majority of communicators, especially at the local government sphere, have indicated that they face this challenge owing to their low status and bureaucracy. It is therefore surprising why communicators should be blamed for not communicating the work of government, though they have a challenge in accessing information (decisions) to be disseminated to citizens. However it should be noted that even if the status of communication can be elevated and give communicators access to decisions, this does not guarantee that service delivery protests will stop. This is because no amount of communication efforts or public relations would spin the truth, in cases of non-service delivery.

6.3.3.4 Cultural diversity and messaging

Language and culture are intertwined, thus cannot be separated, and thus it would be difficult for an external message to convince a culturist, if the messaging does not take his or her culture (language in this case) into consideration. The majority of respondents are agreeing with this assertion, indicating that they understand messages better because they are in their language (part of culture). Cultural practices and beliefs are therefore critical towards successful and effective communication.

6.3.3.5 Strengthening face-to-face communication

Unmediated form of communication is increasingly becoming popular to citizens, as it interactive, provides immediate feedback, instils public confidence in government, and is a sign that government cares.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[170]

The majority of citizens have indicated that they would like face-to-face communication in the form of izimbizo to be increased, thus giving government an opportunity to strengthen communication with citizens. Despite the high cost associated with this form of communication, it is incumbent on government to seize this opportunity which will even assist in strengthening public confidence. This is the form of communication which is not affected by distortions as the message is transmitted directly (face-to-face) to the recipient who has an opportunity to immediately seek clarity, in case the message is not clear. There is however acknowledgement that there are budget constraints on the government budgeting side, but this confidence-eliciting opportunity cannot be left to pass unexploited.

6.3.4   Strategies to be implemented to improve the communication and information system of the government of South Africa

This objective was aimed at soliciting suggestions as to what could be done in order to improve the communication and information system of the South African government.

6.3.4.1 Communication as a strategic management function

The function of communication is strategic in nature, given that it provides a link between an organisation, in this case, government and its customers (the citizens). The link is in the form of information dissemination (services offered by government) and keeping customers informed (updated) about decisions and progress made in implementing government policies and programmes. However there is evidence of non-recognition of this function especially at the local government sphere, as communicators are not recognised as professionals given their low status (Communications 2000, 1996; Chimutengwende, 1988; Mefalopulos and Grenna, 2004).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[171]

The results indicated that the majority of communicators at the local government sphere are still at a low level. On the contrary, there is much recognition of the significance of this function at the provincial sphere of government, as indicated by the majority of communicators. What this means is that the low status disadvantages communicators at the local government sphere from understanding how, and being privy to decisions made at the strategic management level. It is thus surprising why they should be blamed for the lack or failure to communicate the work of government (in the wake of service delivery protests) considering that they are not privy to decisions.

6.3.4.2 Significance of Internal communication

There are assumptions that informed staff members are likely to produce good results, given that they have an opportunity to internalise the vision of their organisations thus associating themselves with its success. This propels them to work with zoom and zeal because they would want to be associated with failure. For government communication activities to become successful, internal communication will need to be strengthened as indicated by the majority of communicators that informed employees would be willing to become brand ambassadors of government. It is clear that the function of internal communication is significant towards realising the success of government communication, hence the need to harness and nurture it.

6.3.4.3 Communicating via new media

The emergence of the new media, such as social media, has presented government with an opportunity to strengthen its communication machinery, as this has revolutionised information sharing.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[172]

It is quite clear that government cannot continue to disseminate information in the traditional way only, following the emergence of the new media. The majority of citizens have indicated that they own tele-communication equipment such as mobile phones which enables them to send SMS-es and even access the Internet. The benefits of mobile phones are instant communication via SMS and internet surfing (accessing information at the press of a button). To this end the citizens indicated that they would like to receive government messaging via SMS. Indications are that the youth communicates via social media more than on any other channel of communication. The implication is that mobile phones are a channel of communication which government could exploit in order to put its messages across and further strengthen its communication machinery.

What is clear is that citizens are now determining government communication policy (in relation to the appropriate channels of communication). This is because government has to follow the trend if it wants its communication machinery to be effective, that is, messages delivered to the majority of citizens. Effective communication can thus be measured through the number of people the message is able to reach. The tele-communication revolution will from now on determine the future of government's communication and information dissemination.

6.3.4.4 Investing in tele-communication infrastructure in rural areas

The government of South Africa has facilitated much investment in the provision of ICT and tele-communication infrastructure. This includes access to mobile phones and internet services. However the high number of citizens who gather at TSCs on a daily basis in pursuit of government information is confirmation that there is shortage of tele-communication infrastructure in rural areas as indicated by the majority of citizens.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[173]

The provision of additional infrastructure would advantage government since the study has proved that the majority of citizens in rural areas possess or have access to mobile phones. This would enable government to exploit this emerging channel of communication for information dissemination.

6.3.4.5 Strengthening communication in indigenous languages and catering for the deaf and the blind

Constitutional standing of all official languages of South Africa is a motivating factor for government communication to be conducted in indigenous languages as well. There is also realisation that the communication needs of the deaf and blind community are not being addressed adequately. The truth is that there is a dearth of sign-language interpreters, for example, and as a result government is unable to communicate with the majority of these citizens. This was confirmed by the majority of respondents who indicated that they would like government to communicate in all the eleven (11) official languages. They argued that this will strengthen the government communication machinery and improve interaction with citizens.

Furthermore, the citizens have further suggested the inclusion of special languages (braille and sign-language) in order to strengthen communication with the blind and deaf community. Special languages can therefore be classified as unofficial languages of South Africa, and that there is a need to strengthen communication with the affected group of citizens in this regard. What remains a challenge for the South African government is to create a pool of government officials who can communicate in sign-language or can read braille in order to confirm the correctness of the material printed in this regard.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[174]

The results of the study have established that the current communication and information system of the government of South Africa has improved communication with citizens, thus proving the hypothesis to be incorrect.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations to improve the communication and information system of South Africa, and based on the objectives of the study are provided below. It is hoped that these recommendations will stimulate discussions and agreement on possible government communication policy and strategy amendments.

6.4.1 The impact of the communication and information system

The success of the communication process can only be confirmed through feedback from the recipients of messages, and this will indicate the impact of the communication and information system being utilised. The results of the study have confirmed that the system had an impact as it provided feedback platforms to access the success of decoding of messages by the recipients (citizens).

6.4.1.1 Concluding the two (2) way communication process by affording the feedback platform

It was quite clear that effective communication can only be realised if there is evidence that the messages were understood as intended. This is made possible by a feedback platform which enables the recipients of messages to respond directly. Feedback is significant to confirm that the intended message was not distorted along the communication line (from the sender to the receiver), especially when it transmitted via a mediated channel of communication.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[175]

Therefore in order to strengthen government communication, the feedback platforms should be increased to ascertain that the messages are reaching and interpreted (understood) by citizens the way they were intended.

6.4.1.2 Information dissemination channels utilised by government

Government has adopted various channels for information dissemination which includes both mediated and unmediated forms of communication. However the emergence of the new media has proved to be popular amongst citizens, including those in rural areas. It provides an opportunity which government should exploit as it has proved to be effective. Government should thus amend its communication policy in order to include social media and SMS notification to be part of its official information dissemination channels, as citizens have shown an interest in receiving information via these channels.

6.4.1.3 The appropriateness of the communication channels

Appropriate channels for the dissemination of information are like a delivery address. If the address is not correct or the intended recipient having relocated, the mail will be undelivered. The implication thereof is that the delivery was not successful. The same applies to messages. If the message is delivered to an incorrect address, it will be undelivered thus signalling ineffective communication. Though the citizens had indicated that the channels being utilised are appropriate, they had indicated that radio is their preferred primary source of information other than printed information material (which is the preferred primary channel of communication for communicators). This implies that government should strengthen the use of radio as the primary channel of information, instead of printed information material.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[176]

6.4.1.4 Provision of constant and adequate information

Given that government has the constitutional mandate to provide the citizens of the Republic of South Africa with adequate developmental information constantly, it is recommended that this responsibility should be strengthened. The study has established that citizens prefer regular face-to-face interactions with government representatives, and this is the communication channel that government should strengthen in order ensure the provision of constant and adequate information. The recommendation is in line with recommendations 64-67 (information development) of the task group on government communications.

6.4.2   Messaging – Understanding what is being communicated

Understanding messages being communicated relies on the mutual comprehension by the sender and the receiver, and when this happens, a conclusion can be made that effective communication has taken place.

6.4.2.1 Clear and understandable messages

Effective communication is dependent on the successful decoding of messages which has been linked to communication in the language of the recipient. The conceptualisation of messages by government communicators should be done in such a way that they convey unambiguous meaning, for effective communication to take place. Government should also ensure that people, who are employed as its communicators are skilled with relevant expertise and knowledge of the area of work. In addition, government communicators must ensure that information on their media statements is accurate and newsworthy, if they want to be taken serious.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[177]

6.4.2.2 Empowerment-oriented messages

Government has the responsibility to provide citizens with empowering messages which will assist them to improve their lives. Notwithstanding the fact that the citizens have confirmed that they have received empowering messages, government should strengthen this area by ensuring that skilled people are employed to assist in crafting empowerment-oriented messages. This is in with recommendations 64-67 (information development) of the task group on government communications.

6.4.2.3 Tailor-made messages to address individual information requirements

The results of the study have proved that a one-size-fits-all approach to government messaging would render government communication ineffective. This is because people's needs are never the same hence tailor-made messages are significant as they address individual information needs. To this end, government messaging should continue to be tailor-made as this will ensure the realisation of effective communication.

6.4.3 Barriers to effective communication

Numerous barriers that hinder effective communication have been identified in the study. Notwithstanding barriers beyond human control (such as attitudes and egos), it would be a daunting mission to realise effective communication for as long as the identified barriers are not addressed. As a result, the citizens, various scholars and the task group on government communications have made some recommendations in this regard.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[178]

6.4.3.1 Communicating only in English - maintaining the status quo

Citizens have indicated that government communication should not be done predominantly in English, and as such communication should be done in all other official languages. However owing to financial constraints, it is recommended that messaging should be done in predominant official languages in each province. In doing so, care should be taken not to alienate and disadvantage speakers of minority languages, given that their languages are also recognised as being equal to others by South Africa's constitution. This is in line with recommendation 74 of the task group on government communications regarding the status of the languages of South Africa.

6.4.3.2 The cost of communicating in all official languages and funding for government communication machinery

The Bill of Rights in South Africa's constitution guarantees equal status of all the eleven (11) official languages. To this end, the results of the study indicate that the majority of citizens would like to receive government messages and information in their own mother tongue. In addition, recommendation 74 of the task group on government communications states that "special languages, such as braille and signing, should – in line with the Bill of Rights Equality Clause – be incorporated for all practical purposes in the design of government communications" (Communications 2000, 1996: 88). Government should thus increase funding for communication to enable the printing of information material in all the official languages, including in the special languages (that is, braille and sign-language). It also imperative that government should invest in training its frontline officials in sign-language and braille, as they are the first point of contact with citizens who includes the deaf and the blind community.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[179]

6.4.3.3 Access to information to be communicated

The challenge of communicators being privy to decisions made by top management, especially at the local government sphere, has proven to be an inhibiting factor due to their low status. In order to resolve this, the level of communication should be elevated to be strategic in nature, in line with recommendation 57 of the task group on government communications that "the rank of the head of communications shall be of a sufficiently senior status to reflect the key nature of the communications function" (Communications 2000, 1996:79). This will enable communicators to be part of decision-making structures, and thus have access to information (decisions) to be communicated to citizens.

6.4.3.4 Cultural diversity and messaging

Language is part of culture and as such, for effective communication to take place cultural believes and practices should be considered in messaging (Brown, 1994; Jiang, 2000). It is thus recommended that government communication should be done in the language of the targeted recipient of the message, as this will ensure that the messages are decoded successfully. This strengthens the need to communicate in indigenous languages which are also recognised as official languages in South Africa's constitution.

6.4.3.5 Strengthening face-to-face communication

Government should reduce over reliance on mass media (mediated channel of communication) as its channels of communication, given the chances of distortion or the inability of the recipients to decode the messages correctly.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[180]

Although face-to-face communication is time consuming and costly, it offers the benefit of being interpersonal and providing immediate feedback. Government should thus consider communicating more with citizens through this channel as it, (a) fosters better understanding of messages; (b) restores public confidence in government; and (c) is influential (it is intimate and signals care and concern).

6.4.4 Strategies to be implemented to improve the communication and information system of the government of South Africa

Radack (2008) argues that there is a need to assess the performance of an information system at a certain point in its operation time in order to determine its effectiveness level. If it is established that it has some shortcomings, it would require some improvements to strengthen it, and as such it will be harnessed, performance better and produce improved results. To this end, the study has established some shortcomings and suggestions were made by respondents with the aim to improve the communication and information system of the South African government.

6.4.4.1 Communication as a strategic management function

The low status of government communication, especially at the local government sphere, has been proven to be denying communicators access to information (decisions) for communication purposes. This happens 18 years after the task group on government communications had recommended that the status of government communication at all spheres should be elevated and recognised as a strategic management function. Recommendation 57 of the task group which indicates that "the rank of the head of communications shall be of a sufficiently senior status to reflect the key nature of the communications function" should thus be implemented (Communications 2000, 1996: 79).

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[181]

Furthermore, the function of communication should be included as a key performance area in the performance agreements of senior bureaucrats, as this is likely to propel them to take the function serious by recognising it as a strategic management function. The tendency of 'dumping' officials who are unwanted in other sections and appointing unskilled people to run and implement communication activities should be stopped. Only people skilled and qualified in the communication discipline should be appointed in this regard (recommendation 54 and 55 of the task group on government communications).

6.4.4.2 Significance of Internal communication

Kitchen and Daly (2002) and Montsho (2013) have attributed the success of an organisation to its effective internal communication function. Informed employees are likely to produce better results, as there is sense of organisational ownership, and this is associated with the fear to fail given that they consider the goals of the organisation as theirs. The South African government should thus also consider strengthening its internal communication function, as the involvement of all employees will strength the credibility of their communication messages. Decisions should be shared with all employees given that they are likely to become ambassadors of government by assisting to disseminate the information to citizens.

6.4.4.3 Communicating via new media

The advent of new media such as mobile phones and social media has increased access to information sources in South Africa. This has seen a large number of the youth interacting on social media more than on any other communication channel.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[182]

The short message service (SMS) also provides convenience of quickness, efficiency, affordability and immediacy in terms of feedback. The majority of citizens have also indicated that they are interested in receiving government messages via SMS and social media platforms. Government should thus take advantage of the current high penetration of mobile phones in South Africa by amending its communication policy in order to include the use of SMS and social media as part of its communication channels for information dissemination and feedback platforms. Furthermore, it should consider reducing mobile communication tariffs and provide free internet access to strengthen communication penetration.

6.4.4.4 Investing more in rural tele-communication infrastructure

The inadequacy of the tele-communication and information technology infrastructure was confirmed by the high number of citizens were dependent on the TSCs for government information and services. This suggest that government should increase funding for telecommunication and information technology infrastructure to ensure that rural communities are treated equally like those in urban areas as indicated by the majority of respondents. As indicated earlier, the majority of the citizens were from rural areas and had access to mobile phones, for example, thus providing an opportunity for the use of the said infrastructure to communicate with them through the channel they prefer. This is in line with recommendation 67 of the task group on government communications, that government should roll-out tele-communication and information technology infrastructure in rural areas in order to address the information dissemination imbalance in those areas. The citizens have further that government should increase funding for community media such as community radio stations as it offer them a communication and feedback platform to discuss issues that affect communities directly.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[183]

This will also assist in augmenting the channels of information dissemination at the disposal of government.

6.4.4.5 Strengthening communication in indigenous languages and catering for the deaf and the blind

It is evident from the results that the citizens want communication to be done in their own languages. Government should thus strengthen communication in other official languages, including incorporating special languages (braille and sign-language) as part of its language policy. This is in line with recommendations 72 and 74 of the task group on government communications. For effective communication to take place with the deaf citizens, frontline employees of government should be trained in sign-language. In addition, it should recognise the special languages as the twelfth official language of South Africa. To this end, the South African Minister of Basic Education has announced that the sign-language will be introduced in the schools' curriculum from 2015, and further that Department of Social Development has started consultations aimed at recognising and declaring sign-language as the twelfth official language of South Africa (Molopyane, 2014; Department of Social Development, 2014).

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study evaluated the success of the communication and information system being implemented by the South African government in fulfilling its constitutional mandate of constantly being in touch with citizens, by disseminating information to them. However the focus of the study was only in one (1) province of South Africa, that is, Mpumalanga. It is thus recommended that further research be conducted:

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[184]

6.5.1   To replicate the study in other provinces;

6.5.2   To assess the impact of government information and messages in changing the lives of the citizens;

6.5.3   To assess whether there is causal relationship between service delivery protests and the lack of information dissemination;

6.5.4   To assess whether social media language simplifies the interpretation (decoding) of messages;

6.5.5   To assess the influence of politics on government communications;

6.5.6   To assess the impact of government communication on good governance and accountability.

6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was aimed at examining the success of the communication and information system of the South African government in fulfilling its constitutional mandate of "providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information" (The Constitution of RSA, 1996: 111). To this end, South Africa is made up of nine (9) provinces which collectively accounts for 278 municipalities (8 metropolitan, 44 districts, and 226 local municipalities). However only one province (Mpumalanga), constituted by three (3) district municipalities and 18 local municipalities, was targeted.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[185]

This was because it would have not been feasible for the researcher to target the entire country, as it was going to be expensive and time consuming to travel the whole country considering that the researcher is employed full-time. Secondly, the study was conducted at the time when other citizens were at work, and thus it excluded those who are employed from participating. The researcher would have liked to get the views of both the employed and the unemployed given that the former are citizens as well. The third limitation is that the study was biased towards rural areas given that the Thusong Service Centres (where questionnaires for citizens were administered) are situated predominantly in rural areas. It would be interesting to hear the views of people in urban areas as well. As such, the assumption is that people in urban areas are always and better informed about the work of government.

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[186]

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MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[218]

Dear Respondent

My name is **Mohau Ramodibe**, an MA student registered with the University of South Africa in the Department of Communication Science. I am carrying out a study on the success of the of the South African Government's Communication and Information System in disseminating information to citizens.

The purpose of the study is:

- To evaluate the impact of the current communication and information system of the government of South Africa;
- To find out whether government communication messages are understood by the intended recipients (citizens);
- To identify challenges that may impede on the effectiveness of the communication and information system of the South African government (with specific reference to the Mpumalanga provincial government); and
- To recommend strategies that can be implemented in order to improve the system.

The outcome of this study is intended to benefit the South African government at all three (3) spheres, particularly in the Province of Mpumalanga. This is a part of the requirement to be awarded the degree of Masters of Arts in Communication. Your assistance is therefore highly appreciated.

Most questions require you to tick the answers. Only a few require short answers to be filled. No names should be provided. You are assured of your rights, including right of consent, protection from disclosure of information and respect for your privacy. Anonymity and confidentiality are promised and maintained.

Thank you.

Mohau Ramodibe, **P.O Box 1328, Nelspruit, 1200**
Mobile: 082 771 9950 | Tel. 013 766 4148 | Fax. 013 766 9422
E.mail: mohauram@mpg.gov.za/ mohau.ram@gmail.com

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[219]

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1.   Please indicate the sphere of government you are employed in.

National government…..…………………………………....…| | (1)

Provincial government…………………………………..… | | (2)

Local government………………………………………..…| | (3)

Other, specify……………………………………………….

2.   Please indicate your level of management.

Top/strategic management………………………………….| | (1)

Middle/tactical Management………………………………..| | (2)

Lower/operational Management……………...…………...... | | (3)

None of the above…………………..............……………… | | (4)

3.   Please indicate the number of years you have been occupying the level as indicated in question 2 above.

More than 20 years…………………………………………….| | (1)

Between 10 and 20 years………………………………….... | | (2)

Between 5 and 10 years…………………………………….| | (3)

Between 1 and 5 years……………………….....…………... | | (4)

Less than 1 year………………………………………….....| | (5)

SECTION B: THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM IN AN ORGANISATION

4.   Communication is a two (2) way process between the sender and the receiver. Do you think the current communication and information system being utilised in your organisation provides for feedback (that is, it concludes the communication process)?

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[220]

5.   Please provide reasons for your answer in question 4 above.

_____

_____

_____

6.   As a communicator, you utilise various communication channels to disseminate government messages. Which channels from the list underneath do you mostly utilise?

Radio	
Television	
Printed information material (e.g brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, newspapers)	
Online media platforms (websites and social media)	
Face-to-face-communication	
Media statements	
Other, please specify:	

7.   Do you think the communication channels you are utilising are appropriate for your intended recipients?

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

8.   Please provide reasons for your answer in question 7 above.

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION C: MESSAGING: UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS BEING COMMUNICATED

9.   Government messages are clear and understood by the intended recipients.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

10.   Government messages are empowerment-oriented (communicate government services at the disposal of the recipient)

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[221]

11. Government messages are tailor-made for each segment of the community and are thus not universal or general.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

SECTION D: BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

12. Government messages are predominantly communicated in English and the status quo must remain.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

13. It will be too costly and thus not necessary for government to communicate in all the other official languages of South Africa.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

14. Funding for government communication machinery is adequate.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

15. Please motivate your answer in question 14 above.

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. As a government head of communication, one of your roles is to provide communication support to programmes of your institution in order to communicate successes. You never experience challenges in accessing information to be communicated to external stakeholders?

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[222]

SECTION E: STRATEGIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED TO IMPROVE THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

17. The function of communication is recognised as a strategic management function hence you sit in your organisation's decision-making structures.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

18. The function of internal communication is significant in assisting your organisation to achieve its goals.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

19. Please motivate your answer in question 18 above.

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_____

20. Please recommend what do you think should be done in order to improve the communication and information system of the South African government.

_____

_____

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#END#

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[223]

Dear Respondent

My name is **Mohau Ramodibe**, an MA student registered with the University of South Africa in the Department of Communication Science. I am carrying out a study on the success of the of the South African Government's Communication and Information System in disseminating information to citizens.

The purpose of the study is:

- To evaluate the impact of the current communication and information system of the government of South Africa;
- To find out whether government communication messages are understood by the intended recipients (citizens);
- To identify challenges that may impede on the effectiveness of the communication and information system of the South African government (with specific reference to the Mpumalanga provincial government); and
- To recommend strategies that can be implemented in order to improve the system.

The outcome of this study is intended to benefit the South African government at all three (3) spheres, particularly in the Province of Mpumalanga. This is a part of the requirement to be awarded the degree of Masters of Arts in Communication. Your assistance is therefore highly appreciated.

Most questions require you to tick the answers. Only a few require short answers to be filled. No names should be provided. You are assured of your rights, including right of consent, protection from disclosure of information and respect for your privacy. Anonymity and confidentiality are promised and maintained.

Thank you.

Mohau Ramodibe, **P.O Box 1328, Nelspruit, 1200**
Mobile: 082 771 9950 | Tel. 013 766 4148 | Fax. 013 766 9422
E.mail: mohauram@mpg.gov.za/ mohau.ram@gmail.com

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[224]

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1.   Please indicate your gender.

Male………………………………………………..…………☐   (1)

Female……………………………………………………….☐   (2)

2.   Please indicate your age group.

Under 20 years old……………………………………………☐   (1)

Between 21 and 30 years old…………………………….......☐   (2)

Between 31 and 40 years old……………………..…….......☐   (3)

Between 41 and 50 years old…………………….................☐   (4)

Between 51 and 60 years old………………………………....☐   (5)

Above 60 years old……………………………………………☐   (6)

3.   Please indicate the type of area you reside in.

Urban area…………………………………………….…☐   (1)

Rural area………………………………………………….☐   (2)

4.   Are you employed?

Yes…………………………………………………………….☐   (1)

No………………………………………………………………☐   (2)

5.   Which type of equipment or tele-communication infrastructure do you own or have access to?

Cellphone……………………………………………………….☐   (1)

Internet……………………………………………………….☐   (2)

E-mail……………………………………………………….☐   (3)

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[225]

SECTION B: THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM IN AN ORGANISATION

6. From which channels of communication do you normally receive government messages?

(NB: You may tick more than one answer if applicable to you)

Radio	
Television	
Printed information material (e.g. brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, newspapers)	
Online media platforms (websites and social media)	
Face-to-face-communication	
SMS	
Other, please specify:	

7. Do you think the channels you have selected in question 6 above provide you with a feedback opportunity (that is, are you able to respond to the message being communicated)?

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

8. Please support your answer above

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Do you think government is communicating adequately with you as a citizen?

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

10. Please support your answer above

_____

_____

_____

_____

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[226]

11. Do you think the communication channels being utilised by government are appropriate for your information requirements?

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

12. Please support your answer above

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION C: MESSAGING: UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS BEING COMMUNICATED

13. Government messages are clear and understandable?

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

14. Please support your answer above

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. Government messages are empowerment-oriented (they communicate the work of government and services available to you)

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

16. Please support your answer above

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_____

17. Government messages address your individual information requirements.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[227]

18.   P
    lease support your answer above

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION D: BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

19.   Government messages are predominantly communicated in English and the status
      quo must remain.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

20.   Please support your answer above

_____

_____

_____

_____

21.   It will be too costly and thus not necessary for government to communicate in all
other official languages of South Africa.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

22.   Please support your answer above

_____

_____

_____

_____

23.   Government should take cultural diversity of the Province into consideration when
      developing messages to be communicated.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

24.   Please support your answer above

_____

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_____

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[228]

25. Government representatives should conduct more face-to-face interactions (izimbizo) with communities to ensure direct feedback platform.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

26. Please support your answer above

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION E: STRATEGIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED TO IMPROVE THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

27. Government should start communicating via sms-es, social media and e-mails.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

28. Please support your answer above

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_____

_____

29. Government should invest more in tele-communication infrastructure, especially in rural areas where accessibility is inadequate.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

30. Please support your answer above

_____

_____

_____

_____

31. Government should start communicating in indigenous or black languages, including in braille and sign-language (to cater for the blind and deaf).

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[229]

32. Please support your answer above

_____

_____

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33. In addition, please recommend what you think should be done in order to improve how government communicates with you.

_____

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_____

_____

#END#

MA Ramodibe | *An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens*

[230]

MOHAU RAMODIBE

P.O Box 1328 | Mbombela | 1200
Mobile: 082 771 9950 | Tel. (W) 013 766 4148 | Fax. 013 766 9422
e-mail: mohauram@mpg.gov.za/ mohau.ram@gmail.com

13 August 2014

Mr. Michael Currin
Programme Manager
Thusong Service Centres
PRETORIA
0001

Dear Mr. Currin

CC: Mr Sfiso Nxumalo
   Mpumalanga Provincial Intersectoral Steering Committee Chairperson (PISSC)

REQUEST TO ADMINISTER QUESTIONNAIRES AT THUSONG SERVICE CENTRES IN MPUMALANGA IN RESPECT OF A QUALIFICATION IN COMMUNICATION SCIENCE (AN EVALUATION OF THE SUCCESS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM IN DISSEMINATING INFORMATION TO CITIZENS

The above subject matter refers.

I am the Head of Communication at the Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development and Tourism, and currently registered for an MA degree with the University of South Africa in the Department of Communication Science. I am carrying out a research study on the success of the of the South African Government's Communication and Information System in disseminating information to citizens.

The purpose of the study is:
1. To evaluate the impact of the current communication and information system of the government of South Africa;
2. To find out whether government communication messages are understood by the intended recipients (citizens);
3. To identify challenges that may impede on the effectiveness of the communication and information system of the South African government (with specific reference to the Mpumalanga provincial government); and
4. To recommend strategies that can be implemented in order to improve the system.

The outcome of this study is intended to benefit the South African government at all three (3) spheres.

I therefore seek your permission to administer questionnaires to citizens who are visiting the *Thusong Service Centres* in Mpumalanga on a daily basis. I further request to have a one on one session with the Centre Managers to discuss the Centre's operation model, and to acquire statistics regarding the number of visitors at those centres which will assist me in concluding the sample size for the study.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration and speedy response.

MOHAU RAMODIBE

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[231]

government communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: (012) 473 0096   Email: geraldinet@gcis.gov.za

25 August 2014

Mr Mohau Ramodibe
P.O. Box 1328
MBOMBELA
1200

Cc: Mr Sfiso Nxumalo – Mpumalanga Thusong PISSC Chair
      Mr Tiisetso Ramotse – Mpumalanga GCIS Provincial Director

Dear Mr Ramodibe

REQUEST TO ADMINISTER QUESTIONNAIRES AT THUSONG SERVICE CENTRES IN MPUMALANGA IN RESPECT OF A QUALIFICATION IN COMMUNICATION SCIENCE (AN EVALUATION OF THE SUCCESS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM IN DISSEMINATION INFORMATION TO CITIZENS

With reference to the above, I am pleased to inform you that the Thusong Programme coordinators would be in a position to assist you to fulfil your academic research by communicating with the relevant officials to offer their assistance at the identified Thusong Service Centres in Mpumalanga Province.

Should you need any further assistance kindly contact Mr Sfiso Nxumalo who is the Provincial Intersectoral Steering Committee Chairperson, from COGTA on this number (013) 754 4705 or at senxumalo@mpg.gov.za or Mr Tiisetso Ramotse, GCIS Provincial Director on (013) 753 2397 or at tiisetso@gcis.gov.za .

On behalf of all the Thusong Service Centre coordinators, I would like to wish you well with your academic studies and do hope that the findings of this research will also assist the Programme to improve where necessary and to thrive to even greater heights.

Kind regards,

Ms Geraldine Thopps
Acting Chief Director: Provincial & Local Liaison
26/8/2014   1

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

[232]

Pictures taken at the Matsamo TSC during the administration of questionnaires

Pictures taken at the Verena TSC during the administration of questionnaires

MA Ramodibe | An evaluation of the success of the South African government's communication and information system in disseminating information to citizens

Lowvelder: 3 June 2014

Tuesday June 3, 2014   NEWS

Protesters scatter when police throw smoke bombs to keep them from barricading the road.

Another protest for a school

" The community is unhappy because children have to walk through the bush to the nearest school and have demanded that a secondary school be built "

Rina Nel

TEKWANE NORTH - Motorists had to once again take a detour to get to the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport or anywhere else on the Karino/Plaston Road on Friday morning.

At the entrance to the township, community members had barricaded the road with burning tyres, only a week after their previous protest because of the sexual assault of two schoolgirls on their way home.

The SAPS were standing by on the scene in case demonstrators became violent but had to break up the gathering when they started barricading the road with more debris. Smoke and gas canisters were fired and protesters scattered into Tekwane, leaving only SAPS officers among the burning tyres. The community is unhappy because children have to walk five kilometres through the bush to the nearest school and have demanded that a secondary school be built.

The provincial Department of Education had deemed the situation as very serious and started providing transport for primary and secondary schoolchildren from last Monday. It had also committed itself to building a school for the community. According to departmental spokesman Mr Jasper Zwane, the community was, however, not happy with how long the process was taking.

Mr Mfana Lushaba, the Ehlanzeni district manager of the department, was present at the protest and stressed that the process would be a lengthy one as there had to be a geological survey of the area, plans had to be drawn up for the school and the tender process for a construction company had to be followed before any bricks could be laid.

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[234]

The New Age: 12 August 2014

Mbombela municipality worried over protest

THE Mbombela municipality has expressed concern after residents of Pienaar, Msogwaba and Dantjie barricaded roads in protest yesterday. This was apparently done in protest against the lack of water and poor services, municipal spokesperson Joseph Ngala said. Ngala said the municipality was worried because residents took to the streets before complaining to their ward councillors. He said water tankers would be dispatched to the affected areas. – France Nyaka

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[235]

City Press || 29 September 2013

Hot & Not

HOT: Service-delivery protests are linked to the performance of municipalities. And in Mpumalanga, such protests have been a common feature because of unsatisfactory service people received. All 21 municipal managers have agreed, with Premier David Mabuza, to improve their municipalities' performances or get axed on the spot for disclaimer audits. Residents deserve accountability.

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[236]

THE NEW AGE | **THURSDAY JUNE 12, 2014**

Water protesters hijack three trucks

FRANCE NYAKA

RESIDENTS of Nkanini Village in Marite near Bushbuckridge say they will continue to blockade roads until their complaint about the poor water supply has been resolved by authorities at the Bushbuckridge local municipality.

They vented their anger yesterday morning by obstructing traffic on the R40 with rocks and other objects, including three trucks which were hijacked on the same road.

The drivers of the trucks were apparently instructed to stop in the middle of the road and get out. Their keys were taken by the protesters without any violence.

The angry protesters said they were forced to drink dirty water from the river because their taps had been dry for several weeks and there were insufficient water tankers from the authorities to supply clean water for them.

"Enough is enough about poor water provision. We are tired of sharing water with animals in the river," one of the protesters, Joyce Mashaba, said.

"We will continue with violence until our demands have been respected by the municipality," Thokozani Mashele said.

Bushbuckridge local municipality spokesperson Zondi Mkhabela said. "The water supply issue was caused by a technical problem but it is receiving our attention."

Late yesterday morning, provincial police communications head Brig Selvy Mohlala said they were still negotiating with the protesters to return the ignition keys to the drivers and the road was still closed.

"There is a possibility of opening charges of hijacking against them unless they give the keys back to the drivers because this is a serious crime and cannot be tolerated," Mohlala said.

francen@thenewage.co.za

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[237]

Citizen: 24 October 2013

Thursday *
24 October 2013

News 3

Bullets, petrol bombs as Bekkersdal erupts

PROTESTS: RESIDENTS VOW TO MAKE TOWN 'UNGOVERNABLE'

Steven Tau

Smoke shrouded Bekkersdal's streets yesterday as two separate shooting incidents marked escalating violence in the West Rand town.

Tuesday's talks between Gauteng local government and housing MEC Ntombi Mekgwe and community leaders, which failed to yield positive results, fuelled yesterday's protests with disgruntled residents accusing the provincial government of being arrogant and not wanting to heed their demands.

Schooling and taxi operations in the violence-stricken area of Bekkersdal were brought to a complete standstill yesterday amid service delivery-related protests by increasingly angry community members.

As the violence flared again, a local councillor fired warning shots at angry residents who had tried to petrol bomb his home.

Thabani Mngomezulu, councillor for Ward 10, said he had fired two warning shots "into the ground" during an attempted petrol bombing. One petrol bomb landed in Mngomezulu's yard, but caused no damage.

Residents had claimed the local municipality was guilty of maladministration and nepotism by senior officials, including mayor Nonkoliso Tudzi.

As the unrest continued yesterday, a shop owner was arrested for firing at a mob, shooting a protester in his left leg. "We were moving past the tuckshop and the guy started shooting randomly," 14-year old Sipho Modise told *The Citizen* while lying in the Bekkersdal West Clinic.

Outside the tuckshop, angry residents were shouting at police, calling on them to let them deal with the suspect – a foreign national – who was later removed by nine police officers. Police confirmed that an arrest had been made after a firearm and ammunition was recovered in the tuck shop, but no charge had been laid over the alleged shooting.

Protesters also vowed not to rest until all foreign nationals were taken out of their area. Ethiopian Abdul Abdela, who has lived in Bekkersdal for 14 years, said he fears for his life. "I have never experienced what I am seeing here today, but I support the local residents. They have a right to basic services," he said.

Most of the streets in the area were barricaded with burning tyres and rocks by protesters, most of them schoolchildren.

One of the community leaders, Thabang Wesi, said they have intensified their protests, which he described as "Waya Waya". "We will continue protesting until Westonaria Local Municipality is placed under administration. We will not be led by corrupt officials who are only thinking about themselves and couldn't care less about the masses," Wesi said.

Wesi said they will make sure that matriculants do not sit for the impending year-end final exams. "We are going to make this area ungovernable to the extent that businesses can't operate until we get what we are demanding."

Police officers were forced to fire rubber bullets at the protesters who damaged local municpal buildings.

Talks will continue tomorrow.

UPPING THE ANTE ON UNREST. The community of Bekkersdal continued to protest yesterday about lack of services in the township. Residents took to the streets after failed negotiations with local officials. Pictures Refilwe

Map

Randfontein · Roodepoort · JHB · R28 · R559 · Soweto · JHB South · Bekkersdal · N12 · Lenasia

SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS   GRAPHIC STEPHANIE PRETORIUS

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Sunday Times | September 29 2013

NEWS | 11

Premier's man says it's time to spin good news

SIBONGAKONKE SHOBA

GAUTENG premier Nomvula Mokonyane's newly appointed special adviser, Zizi Kodwa, has cracked the whip on government communicators for failing to convey the local government's achievements ahead of next year's general elections.

Insiders said Kodwa, a member of the ANC's national executive committee, summoned heads of government communications to the premier's office to complain about the "ongoing absence of the Gauteng government in the media space".

A communicator who attended the meeting said Kodwa had told them that the lack of "proactive communication" was a concern because the government was supposed to tell "good stories".

"Zizi said he had also met with key people from the SABC who didn't have any information on what our MECs will be doing between now and December," said a senior ANC source.

Kodwa, a former spokesman for President Jacob Zuma, was appointed as Mokonyane's special adviser two months ago.

What he said at the meeting is in line with the ANC's plans to highlight its achievements since taking over the government in 1994.

Even the new provincial government slogan that he suggested be used for the rest of the year is the same as the ANC's provincial campaign slogan: "Gauteng a better place to live in".

The communicators were told to release at least one statement a day and improve their interactions with journalists.

They were also expected to identify projects that would give their MECs maximum publicity.

Kodwa declined to comment on the meeting, saying it was "just gossip".

But Gauteng's head of government communications, Matlakala Motloung, confirmed the

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