

**EXPLORING THE USE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS IN THE SOUTH
AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) – INANDA POLICE STATION POST-COVID-19**

by

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SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) – INANDA POLICE STATION POST-
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I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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SW Msomi

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the use of internal communication channels within the South African Police Services (SAPS) at Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19, to highlight the potential for successful use and identify the particular fault lines within these channels, specifically the use of excessive number of internal communication channels that are unproductive resulting in wasteful expenditure, insufficient information sharing, inadequate feedback mechanisms and communication barriers between different levels of authority, which can result in clutter, delays, unproductivity, and unsuccessful service delivery. A paucity of studies exist focusing on internal communication channels in government institutions, including SAPS – Inanda Police Station. Thus, the overall aim of the study was to investigate the use of internal communication channels by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station to facilitate internal communication within the context of the government institutions.

The study was conducted at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station, M25 Curnick Ndlovu Highway, Amatikwe, Inanda 4309. The study population comprised the management and subordinate employees. Quantitative methodology was used for the study, with a survey questionnaire as the method of data collection, administered to 197 respondents. In this regard, a random stratified probability sampling was used. Of the 197 administered survey questionnaires, only 141 (72%) were returned, of which five (3%) usable responses were discarded, which resulted in 136 (69%) valid questionnaires that were analysed. A 69% response satisfies the recommendations of several scholars, despite the fact that there is no mutual consensus regarding the minimum response rate. The study deployed quantitative analysis. The collected data were entered into an SPSS data matrix to be quantified. After data were completely quantified and entered into an SPSS program, data analysis commenced in the form of univariate analysis. Frequency distributions (tables and graphs) were used to summarise and make sense of the data.

The findings of the study provided a better understanding of the use of internal communication channels in the context of the government institutions and contributed to the identification and development of the most successful ways of using internal communication channels to enhance internal communication. Among the main findings emanating from the

study were that the SAPS – Inanda Police Station were using several internal communication channels, 10 in total that were not productive, only to realise that employees preferred five channels: face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp, and noticeboards. Despite the majority of employees showing a positive response regarding the functions of internal communication channels at the organisation some varied perceptions were also identified. The findings also indicated that there were different perceptions regarding the flow of information in the organisation. At some level, the overall findings support the notion held by many scholars that government institutions are lagging behind with respect to investing resources in internal communication.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
GCIS	Government Communication and Information System
IABC	International Association of Business Communicators
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
N	Number
SAPS	South African Police Service
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19. Government’s institutions such as the SAPS – Inanda Police Station have many internal communication channels, but their use has only been sparsely investigated in a scholarly inquiry (Montsho, 2013; Sasse, 2016:05; Kealey, 2019). These internal communication channels include, but are not limited to, face-to-face meetings, emails, instant messaging, the intranet, social networks, newsletters, the telephone, video conferencing, typed memos, and noticeboards. Montsho (2013:iii) warns against using many internal communication channels to avoid clutter and argues that it is regrettable to discover at a later stage that only a few are preferred and understood by employees.

After 1995, the Communication Task Group was established to investigate and make recommendations about the government’s communication strategies and plans (Government Communicators’ Handbook, 2001). The Communication Task Group report published in 1996 recommended communication principles, which included freedom of and access to information (Communication Policy 2018:12). Subsequently, on 18 May 1998, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) was established to facilitate the government’s communication by keeping the public abreast of all government activities. To achieve that, the government realised that its employees were its ambassadors. Therefore, they needed to be well informed about government priorities and objectives and that led to an internal communication focus.

Among the few studies conducted within the internal communication field in the context of the South African government institutions, Montsho (2013) and Mbhele (2017), entitled “Exploring Internal Communication with the GCIS” and “Internal Communication in Achieving Employee Engagement within a South African Government Department”, respectively, adversarial findings were produced with regard to their internal communication. The findings demonstrated that there was a fragile understanding of the

function of internal communication, internal communication channels, and communication flow within the government institutions (at GCIS) (Montsho, 2013:125). Similarly, Mbhele (2017:199) found a lack of responsive internal communication at the Department of Health. Future research was recommended to understand the contributing factors to this misunderstanding and the implications of internal communication within the government institutions (Montsho, 2013:125; Mbhele, 2017:199). Building on the findings of Montsho (2013) and Mbhele (2017), this study investigated the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19 to highlight the potential for successful use and the fault lines within these channels.

Vergheze (2016) postulates that the internal communication channels that are used by an organisation must be examined frequently to uncover gaps, advance value, and enhance productivity. This study examined the internal communication at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station, with a concentration on bridging gaps in communication that have resulted in disengagement and reduced moral among workers. Productivity is a significant component of police work, and productive internal communication is vital for safeguarding that officers and staff have sufficient information and resources they require to provide excellent service delivery to the entire community. The values, such as transparency, accountability, trust and collaboration are fundamental to the SAPS's mission and vision, and are important for constructing an enthusiastic work environment and cultivating employee engagement (SAPS, 2020).

Nevertheless, the current internal communication channels used by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station may not be sufficiently stimulating these values, resulting in gaps and barrier between management and subordinate employees. Thus, this study examined the use of internal communication channels in the SAPS – Inanda Police Station, identified the gaps and inefficiencies in the current use and offered recommendations for enhancing internal communication to be in line with employees needs and preferences. In doing so, this study envisioned to contribute to the enhancement of the aforementioned values that encourage effective service delivery and improve the reputation of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. Cleary (2022) indicates that an organisation must also have first-hand information about what channels employees find valuable and what they do not consider useful.

There are also several reasons why organisations are required to study the productivity of their internal communication channels. First, the organisation may be rocked by the environmental changes that force it to adapt to them (Verghese, 2016). This is relevant practically to the focus of the study, as it aimed at investigating the internal communication channels of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19. According to Celano (2020), and the Owl Labs State of Remote Work report (2020), COVID-19 has changed the manner in which organisations communicate with their employees (Celano, 2020). Also, dynamic forces have changed the landscape of communication, in the aftermath of COVID-19. In other words, the way organisations used to communicate pre-COVID-19 may not be the same as post-COVID-19.

Second, constant changes at the workplace regarding the evolving expectations of workers may make them feel disengaged and require more open communication with the management, which may necessitate a change in the internal communication channels used by an organisation (Verghese, 2016). Last, and importantly, it may be possible that technology has evolved significantly, which calls for an organisation to monitor closely how employees interact with the internal communication channels (Verghese, 2016). These views are among the reasons that the study was conducted in the government institutions, in addition to the fact that there is a dearth of studies focusing on internal communication channels of the government institutions, both in this country and abroad (Montsho, 2013; Mbhele, 2017; Kealey, 2019).

1.2 THE CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

It is widely acknowledged that communication channels are the cornerstone of communication and, without a proper selection in this regard, communication ceases to exist (Williams & Seidel, 2019). Berezan, Yoo and Christodoulidou (2016:3) found that the selection of an internal communication channel makes a major contribution to the quality of information in an organisation. Gillis (2011:200) adds that not all employees read emails, newsletters, bulletin boards, etc. Williams and Seidel (2019) warn that thorough attention must be given to the selection of proper communication channels that could be used by the

organisation because using inappropriate channels for certain tasks or interactions may lead to negative consequences.

The most recent studies of internal communication channels by Montsho (2013), and by Safarova and Holmin (2015), found that management and employees have different preferences for communication channels and that their understanding of the types of messages that should be transmitted through each channel is also blurred. Byrne and LeMay (2006) indicate that information comprehension within an organisation depends on the communication channel used. Welch (2012) points out that each channel has a unique attribute and, if internal communication is not managed properly, it could lead to counter-productiveness and poor performance in the workplace, which may also result in an undesirable outcome for an organisation.

Montsho (2013:121) recommends that, to achieve good internal communication, the function and purpose of internal communication channels should be relevant and comprehensible to all organisational members. As mentioned above, studies focusing on investigating the internal communication channels of the government's institutions like the SAPS have only been conducted sparsely. This study was conducted at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station to address this paucity. The Inanda Police Station is classified as an urban-or rural-mix station and serves four larger townships, including Inanda Newtown and Inanda Glebe (Van Zyl-Gous, 2022:06).

The Inanda Police Station is one of the biggest police stations in KwaZulu-Natal and accounts for 412 fixed personnel, of whom 388 are stationed at its premises (Van Zyl-Gous, 2022:06). The Inanda Police Station has been known famously nationwide as a high -crime station and is on the top 30 list of several crime categories (Van Zyl-Gous, 2022:06). This entails internal communication channels being in demand in this police station, since it serves large townships and has a large number of personnel working in a busy, and considerably risky environment. Therefore, Inanda Police Station was the most appropriate site to address this paucity of studies, focusing on internal communication channels within the context of the government institutions, particularly the South African Police Services.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis has changed workplace communication (Celano, 2020). That may also have affected channels that were previously considered productive, such as face-to-face meetings, since employees were increasingly instructed to work remotely to minimise the spread of the virus. The Owl Labs State of Remote Work (2020) report identified that since modern workers have experienced remote, virtual-heavy workplace communication, and they are not keen to revert to workplace communication standards. According to Owl Labs State of Remote Work (2020), there has been a drastic increase in the use of digital communication channels, such as video conferencing, which saw a 50% increase in the meetings held on this channel compared to pre-COVID-19. That may also be the case even post-COVID-19, since the pandemic has left a huge mark on the manner in which organisations communicate. As indicated above, dynamic forces may have changed the landscape of communication in the aftermath of COVID-19. This means that the way organisations used to communicate pre-COVID-19 may not be the same post-COVID-19.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The SAPS – Inanda Police Station is undergoing a disconnection with regard to the internal communication channels that are currently in use, and the needs and preferences of workforce, aggravated by the change emanating from the impact of COVID-19 on workplace communication. Despite having several internal communication channels (10), workers only considered five of them invaluable, resulting in futile communication, confusion, and disengagement. Furthermore, employees have varying perceptions regarding the information flow within these channels and different understandings of their functions, exacerbating the problem. The dearth of clear instructions, protocols, and training of the proper use of each internal communication channel has led to challenges, such as communication overload, unproductivity and lack of transparency. The disparity between the number of used internal communication channels and employee preferences, in conjunction with different perceptions of information flow and channels functions, hampers the organisations ability to communicate sufficiently, ultimately affecting employee moral, productivity, and job satisfaction.

In addition, the paucity of research conducted specifically on internal communication channels

at the government institutions like the SAPS – Inanda Police Station substantiate the need for investigation (Montsho, 2013; Kealey, 2019; Sasse, 2016:05). The staff of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station may feel disengaged because of deficient open communication with management, worsened by evolving workplace expectations as well as technology (Verghese, 2016). This disengagement may consequently result in declined productivity and job satisfaction, signifying the necessity for effective internal communication channels that directly address the needs of employees and their preferences.

This study explored the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post – COVID – 19, to highlight the potential for successful use and fault lines within these channels, and offer recommendations for enhancing internal communication to be compatible with the needs of all employees and their preferences, thereby improving employee engagement, productivity, and job satisfaction. The internal communication channels investigated in this regard were unclassified channels accessible to all employees of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station, namely internal monthly publications, organisational emails, telephone, SAPS intranet, social media (WhatsApp), internally focused events, face-to-face meetings, noticeboards; Pol-TV/Servamus/Bulletin, and video conferencing (SAPS Annual Report, 2020/2021:45).

As briefly discussed above, the research problem statement for this study was to explore and describe the use of internal communication channels through a quantitative cross-sectional survey at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19, to highlight the potential for successful use and the fault lines within these channels.

1.4 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study examined the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19 to highlight the potential for successful use and the fault lines within these channels. The objectives of the study were to:

- explore the internal communication channels that are mostly used by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station;

- describe the understanding of the management and employees with regard to the function of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station;
- describe the perception of management and employees with regard to the flow of information within internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station;
- explore the internal communication channels that are preferred as most appropriate by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station’s management and employees; and
- describe the reasons why the preferred internal communication channels are regarded as valuable among staff members.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A research question can be described as the question that a study intends to answer (Bouchrika, 2023). The main research question of the envisaged study was: How are internal communication channels used at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?

1.5.1 Sub-questions

- Which internal communication channels are mostly used by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station to facilitate its internal communication?
- What is the understanding of the management and employees about the function of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?
- How do management and employees perceive the flow of information within the internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?
- Which internal communication channels are preferred by management and employees as most appropriate for facilitating internal communication at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?
- Why are the preferred internal communication channels regarded as valuable among staff members?

The perception and understanding of employees about the function of internal communication channels and information flow were quantitatively measured through using a Likert scale. Clear questions were crafted and using a five-point Likert scale response

format (ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”), respondents indicated their level of agreement and disagreement allowing for the calculation of mean scores and standard deviations.

1.6 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Assumptions in a study are considered as tentative statements which are predetermined and considered as fact without proof (Du Plooy, 2002:75).

The main research question of the study was: How are internal communication channels used at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?

The assumptions of the study were that:

- there are several types of internal communication channels that are mostly used at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station that are not of benefit, and they may end up causing clutter;
- there is a disparity or poor understanding of the function of internal communication channels between the management and employees at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station;
- the management and employees’ perceptions with regard to the flow of information is poor. Lower level employees, in particular, are not satisfied with the flow of information;
- of several channels used at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station, a few are preferred and considered useful by the management and employees; and
- the reasons of staff members for their preferred internal communication channels are related to the accessibility and user-friendliness of the selected internal communication channels.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides an overview of a theoretical framework relevant for the study, namely general systems theory and stakeholder theory as the approach of the study, and previous studies that have been conducted on the internal communication within organisations,

especially in the government institutions. The discussion in this section comprises general systems and stakeholder theories, internal communication in government institutions, and internal communication channels. This section is discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

1.7.1 General systems theory

The study employed the general systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968) as its theoretical framework. Therefore, the SAPS – Inanda Police Station as an organisation is considered to be a system comprising several elements. Greenwald (2008:06) describes an organisation as a body of individuals working together under a clearly defined system of regulations and relationships structured to accomplish common objectives. This indicates that the SAPS – Inanda Police Station employees work together under clearly explained rules to achieve its objectives. Therefore, internal communication channels are at the core of building employee relationships so they can work together to achieve the goals of the organisation.

Systems theory has been used widely in studying the nature of organisations because of its “potential usefulness” in comprehending the complexities of organisations as systems (Lai & Lin, 2017:09). Communication is seen as an aspect that binds the organisation’s subsystems together for the stability of the whole, where the whole is regarded as the organisation (Lai & Lin, 2017:09). Phillips (1971:29) traces the philosophical origin of systems theory from the German philosopher Hegel in the 1770s and explains that it was only applied in scientific fields. In the 1970s, systems theory gained momentum in the field of organisational communication (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2013:68). Systems theory holds a holistic approach which argues that “the whole is more than the sum of its parts” (Von Bertalanffy, 1968:407).

General systems theory was chosen for this study, based on the fact that employees are the most important internal stakeholders, who subsequently make up the complete system; therefore, they need to be well informed about the SAPS – Inanda Police Station through the internal communication channels they consider valuable to be more productive in their day-to-day duties.

1.7.2 Stakeholder theory

The stakeholder theory was identified as the study's approach because of the internal communication definition, which views it as the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders of the organisation at all levels (Welch & Jackson, 2007). The study investigated the use of internal communication channels based on the stakeholders' (employees) perspective. Thus, this approach assisted in understanding internal communication and establishing useful internal communication channels from the perspective of all employees, rather than of the management only, to enhance internal communication. Freeman (1984) describes stakeholders within an organisational setting as any individuals who impact or are impacted by the accomplishment of the objectives of the organisation and, without whose support, an organisation may cease to exist.

1.7.3 Internal communication and the government institutions

The manner in which the government institutions run their internal communication differs from that of the private sector. According to Kealey (2019), the internal communication of the private sector is resourced adequately with both finance and staff, compared to the government institutions. In essence, the government institutions have been found lagging in investing and promoting workplace communication. Kealey (2019) argues that, in the government institutions, internal communication remains a poor cousin of external communication. According to Sasse (2016:05), the focus of government's internal communication lies at the hands of the few elected officials and external communication, rather than with employees. Just as the private sector's companies strive to distinguish themselves by identifying their unique brand identities, so too do the government's departments (Sasse, 2016:06). Another phenomenon that has contributed to the lack of internal communication of the government institutions is politics. According to Fitch (2004), politics in government has tampered with the creativity and development of internal and external communication. The importance of internal communication in the South African government institutions was only recognised in 2006 when the Cabinet established that internal communication in government should be intensified to mobilise and keep the public

servants informed about the government's mission of delivering services to the whole public.

Furthermore, there is a paucity of literature related to the internal communication of government in the country and abroad. Mbhele (2016:202), supported by Sasse (2016), indicates that this is caused by the fact that many studies have concentrated on profit-oriented organisations and external communication. Therefore, the study aimed to address that paucity as one of its major reasons. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic as one of the major factors mentioned in Section 1.3, may have changed workplace communication. Hence, the study fills a gap in the available research within the internal communication field which lacked to address the abovementioned aspects.

Mbhele (2016), and Montsho (2013), are among the few researchers who have conducted research on the internal communication of the government institutions. One of the most critical findings that Montsho (2013:125) produced is that there is a fragile comprehension of the communication channels and communication flow at the GCIS. In the same vein, Mbhele (2016:198) also found a lack of internal communication at the National Department of Health. Therefore, this supports the claim made by Sasse (2016), and by Kealey (2019) that government institutions are lagging in investing in internal communication.

1.7.4 Internal communication channels

Communication channels refer to the means that enable people to communicate (Sharma 2015:43). Mamuli, Mutsotso, and Namasaka (2013) define communication channels as the means used to disseminate the message from the sender to the receiver, and messages can be transmitted via many channels. Larsson (1997), and Erikson (1992) in Zheng (2009:18) distinguish three forms of internal communication channel that are mainly used by organisations: Written communication channels (which comprise tools such as memos, notice boards, and newsletters which are durable media and can avoid misinterpretation if well-written), oral channels (usually handled via meetings and conversations) and electronic channels (such as email).

According to Barker and Gaut (2012:178), an organisation's messages in communication channels can also be classified as formal and informal. Formal communication channels are characterised by information related to the organisation's rules, regulations, tasks and procedures and include emails and meetings, while informal communication channels occur wherever and whenever employees meet (Barker & Gaut, 2012:179). Furthermore, Barker and Gaut (2012:180), Gillis (2011:196), Cornelissen (2008:197), and Egan (2015:312) indicate that internal communication flows in a downward, horizontal and upward direction. Therefore, the study focused on the aforementioned channels (including oral, written, electronic, formal and informal channels). The exact internal communication channels investigated in the study are listed in Section 1.3.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section focuses on the research methodology. It consists of the research paradigm, research design, methods, data collection, sampling and analysis. This section is discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

1.8.1 Positivist paradigm

Positivism as the research paradigm employed in the study is based on scientific methods that test and confirm the social reality and examines general laws that are expected to be applied universally (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006:36; Babbie, 2013:116). The positivist paradigm was selected for the study because it provides researchers with a high degree of both reliability and validity (Pham, 2018). In addition, its findings can be generalised to a larger population, such as the population of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station (Pham, 2018).

1.8.2 Research design

According to Babbie (2013:116) and Terre Blanche et al. (2006:36), research design aims to plan and structure the research project in a manner that will improve the validity of research findings. The quantitative research design employed in the study is aligned with the positivist paradigm and is also informed by the magnitude of the sample which is relatively large and geographically dispersed, and population size. Quantitative research

strives to test and confirm social reality through empirical evidence (Du Plooy, 2002; Perone & Tucker, 2003; Bernard, 2006; Vosloo, 2014).

1.8.3 Research methods

The study employs a cross-sectional survey which comprises a structured questionnaire, where data were collected over a month. A survey method that employs a structured questionnaire is a cheaper and faster method asking specific questions systematically, which are expected to be answered by respondents, and then records and analyses their responses (Terre Blanche et al., 2006; Neuman, 2012; Babbie, 2013; Treadwell, 2014).

1.8.4 Data collection techniques

The study used a structured questionnaire method which also consisted of a five-point Likert scale and, in terms of this technique, the researcher, assisted by the communication officer, administered the questionnaires directly. Terre Blanche et al. (2006:85) indicate that a structured questionnaire includes information about measurement instruments, their names, references and their appropriateness for the study. The five-point Likert scale improves the quality of the measurement (in terms of validity and reliability) and uses standardised options and categories (ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”) to identify distinct items (Du Plooy, 2002). The Likert scale was useful for the study because the researcher wanted to measure the perceptions of management and employees about the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. In addition, the SAPS – Inanda Police Station website was used as a secondary source to collect employees information.

1.8.5 Sampling methods

The sampling method is the procedure that is followed in selecting sample members. The study applied the stratified probability sampling method. According to Babbie (2013:150), the stratified sampling method groups units according to their homogeneity. Wimmer and Dominick (2006:481) proclaim that it is applied when the population has been divided into identical groups or strata. In addition, it enhances the representativeness of a sample

(Babbie, 2013:150). The unit of analysis for the study was divided into two subgroups, namely management and employees.

1.8.6 Target population

Population in research refers to a group of people or objects that a researcher is targeting to study (Babbie, 2004:190). The target population for the study was the SAPS – Inanda Police Station management and employees. The managers and employees available during the distribution of questionnaires were an accessible population.

1.8.7 Unit of analysis

Unit of analysis refers to a type of empirical case that a researcher wants to explore, measure and analyse in a study (Neuman, 2012:402). Units of analysis for the study were the individual managers and departmental subordinate employees.

1.8.8 Population parameters

Lavrakas (2011) indicates that the parameter is a numerical quantity or characteristic of a population that is approximated by using information gathered from the population. Employment levels are the parameter of the study, therefore the SAPS – Inanda Police Station management and subordinate employees served as the study's parameter. As guided by Fivelsdal (2019), the sample size for the study was 197. According to Fivelsdal (2019), for a finite population of 400, a sample size of 197 is required to estimate a proportion with 95% confidence and a margin error of 0.05. In terms of the functional list SAPS – Inanda Police Station, the population for the study consisted of 412 personnel, of whom 388 were stationed on its premises. Hence, the sample size of 197 was sufficient for the study.

1.8.9 Sampling frame

The sample frame is the list from which the members of the population to partake in the study are selected. Babbie (2013:161) defines it as the resource used to select a sample. In this regard, the sample frame for the study was drawn from the functional list of the SAPS –

Inanda Police Station; therefore, the sampling frame focused on management and employees who use internal communication channels.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Previous studies conducted in the field suggest that insight into employee preferences for mediated internal communication is a necessity (Welch & Jackson, 2007; Welch, 2012; Montsho, 2013). Therefore, researcher undertook the research to study and gain first-hand insight into the use of internal communication channels in the government institutions, specifically at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19, and to identify potential gaps in the use of these channels to contribute to the identification and development of the most successful ways of using internal communication channels to enhance internal communication.

The COVID-19 pandemic, among the other main factors discussed above, may have changed workplace communication. In addition, it was also indicated that there is a scarcity of studies conducted in the government institutions that focus primarily on internal communication channels, post-COVID-19. Therefore, the findings of the study will contribute significantly to generating knowledge that will provide a better understanding of the use of internal communication channels in the government institutions, particularly, SAPS – Inanda Police Station. Based on these findings, the researcher made recommendations for practice and further research.

1.10 STUDY LIMITATIONS

One of the limitations of the study was that it was conducted at a single government institution which is the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. Therefore, the findings of the study may not be used as a pure generalisation of other government entities; instead, they can only be used as a pilot study. This indicates that the findings of the study are purely applicable to the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. In addition, the study used quantitative methodology. This means that it lacked descriptive and conceptual findings that may be produced by the use of qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews. The study limitations are discussed further in Chapter Five.

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations in research are described as a set of principles used to guide the research designs and practices (Bhandari, 2022). Researchers are obliged always to observe a particular code of conduct when gathering data from people (Bhandari, 2022). The objectives of human research are to comprehend real-life phenomena, study effective treatments, investigate behaviours, and improve lives (Bhandari, 2022). Terre Blanche et al. (2006:61) emphasise the importance of ethics in research and state that ethics serve to protect the welfare of research respondents. Furthermore, the way in which the researcher conducts the study includes important ethical considerations. These considerations are in place to protect the rights of research participants, improve the validity of research, and preserve scientific or academic integrity (Du Plooy, 2002; Terre Blanche et al., 2006; Bhandari, 2022).

The researcher read and understood the University of South Africa's ethical policy and, as such, complied with the required ethical considerations. What follows are the ethical considerations to which the researcher adhered, as suggested by Lavrakas (2011).

- **Informed consent**

It is of the utmost importance to obtain informed consent from the respondents before they participate in the study. The consent clarified or explained the following: the purpose of the study, the duration of the survey, and the type of required data. This was presented clearly, and the participants were given withdrawal options from the study when they needed to, and they could do so at any time. Before they commenced with the survey, they were required to sign the consent form.

- **Privacy**

The privacy of respondents was protected, and they were also addressed about how their personal information (such as demographic information) would be utilised. The researcher would store the collected data safely in a locked cupboard at home for later usage, for a five-year period, and will shred it once this period has elapsed. Furthermore, the data were only shared with the supervisor, the statistician, and the editor.

- **Confidentiality**

The researcher treated the responses of the respondents confidentially. The questionnaire made sure that the respondents' identities were not linked to their responses. This was done through the use of codes for respondents and kept separately from the collected data. In addition, the researcher, assisted by the Communication Officer, directly administered and collected questionnaires from the offices at 13:00 (lunchtime) and 16:00 (when employees had finished working) using a document file. As indicated above, data were only shared with the supervisor, the statistician, and the editor.

- **Anonymity**

The researcher made sure that respondents remained anonymous. This is to say, the survey did not gather the identifying information that would link respondents to their responses. For instance, information that was more personal was avoided.

- **Data protection**

The researcher complied with data protection legislation and regulations by ensuring that the survey followed the aforementioned points. As mentioned above, data were securely stored, and necessary measures were put in place to avoid breaches of data as well as unauthorised access.

1.12 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The defined concepts below were used in line with the purposes of the study:

- **Internal communication**

Internal communication facilitates the sharing of information within an organisation.

- **Internal corporate communication**

Internal corporate communication is defined as communication between strategic managers and employees which is designed to increase commitment and a sense of belonging in the organisation (Welch & Jackson, 2007).

- **Internal communication channels**

Communication channels refer to the means that enable members of an organisation to communicate (Sharma, 2015:43).

- **Flow of information**

Information flow within an organisation refers to the communication amongst the departments, employees, as well as the systems needed for a business to function efficiently.

- **Internal communication in symmetry**

Internal communication in symmetry is regarded as the worldview which encourages openness, responsiveness, mutual understanding, interdependency, and a balance of power within an organisation (Kang & Sung, 2017).

1.13 STUDY DEMARCATION

Table 1.1: Study demarcation

CHAPTER	DISCUSSION
Chapter 1	This chapter addressed the research orientation and its underlying background.
Chapter 2	This chapter broadly discusses the research theoretical framework which is known as a literature review.
Chapter 3	This chapter outlines the research design and methodology. In addition, it discusses the techniques that were deployed to collect data.

CHAPTER	DISCUSSION
Chapter 4	This chapter deals with data presentation and analysis. To elucidate, it focuses on the research findings.
Chapter 5	This is the last chapter and it focuses on the conclusion as well as the study recommendations.

1.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overall introduction to the study. The context of the study was discussed to contextualise the study. The problem statement was explained and substantiated, demonstrating the importance of conducting the study. The research questions, research objectives, and research hypotheses were formulated to guide and focus the study. In addition, the literature review was discussed briefly to gain a better understanding of the available research work and debates related to the internal communication channels as the focus area of the study. Furthermore, research methods were explained to highlight how the study was conducted. The significance of the study, study limitations, and ethical considerations were also described. Last, the clarification of concepts for the study and the study demarcation were also provided.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The study examined the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19 to highlight the potential for successful use and the fault lines within these channels. This chapter discusses the literature review for the study in connection with its objectives on the concept of internal communication channels. It covers the theoretical framework relevant to the study, namely general systems theory and stakeholder theory, communication, organisational communication, the internal communication concept, internal communication in the government institutions, internal government communication in South Africa, the flow of information within an organisation, and the preferences for internal communication channels.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As the study investigated the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19, general systems theory was its theoretical framework. Even though studies in internal communication have not yet identified their grand theory, according to Mbhele (2017:24), there are some theories within the communication science field that can describe communication within an organisation precisely. As such, general systems theory was considered the most suitable theory for the study, enabling a better understanding of communication within an organisation.

Furthermore, general systems theory was selected based on the fact that employees are key internal stakeholders, consequently making up the entire system; hence, they need to be well informed about the SAPS – Inanda Police Station to become productive in their daily activities.

2.2.1 General systems theory

Phillips (1971:29) traces the philosophical origin of general systems theory to the German philosopher Hegel in the 1770s and explains that it was only applied in scientific fields. In the 1970s, general systems theory gained momentum in the field of organisational communication (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2013:68). General systems theory holds a holistic approach which argues that “the whole is more than the sum of its parts” (Von Bertalanffy, 1968:407). In addition, Von Bertalanffy et al.(1969:33) argue that the system’s transcendence to its parts is not a matter of philosophical speculation; instead, it is the truth of observation found whenever an organisation is examined.

Angelopulo and Barker (2013:132) further state that general systems theory refers to the totality because its definition requires interrelationships between various parts to form a whole (or the organisation). Neher (1997:105), cited in Mbhele (2017:35), points out that general systems theory has two crucial components, respectively: interrelatedness and interaction. This means that, for the SAPS – Inanda Police Station staff to co-exist, they must interact to become interrelated. Checkland (1995:45), and Shockley-Zalabak (1991:108), add that general systems theory argues that the operations of the entire system produces better outcomes compared to the individual components of the system.

General systems theory is a pivotal theoretical paradigm for comprehending the convoluted nature of organisations, like the SAPS – Inanda Police Station (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1970). Greenwald (2008:06) describes an organisation as a body of individuals working together under a clearly defined system of regulations and relationships structured to accomplish common objectives. Therefore, the SAPS – Inanda Police Station (as an organisation) was considered to be a system comprising several employees working in different branches.

General systems theory has been used widely in studying the nature of organisations because of its “potential usefulness” in comprehending the complexities of organisations (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1970:449; Lai & Lin, 2017:09). Internal communication channels are then viewed as a prominent aspect which binds the organisation’s subsystems together for the stability of the whole system, where the whole system is regarded as the organisation (Lai & Lin, 2017:09). This means that, in order for the SAPS – Inanda Police Station as a

system to achieve its objectives, internal communication channels should be clear and consistent across all its units and subsystems.

Therefore, the study advocated internal communication channels that would enable interaction in order for the SAPS – Inanda Police Station to operate as a single system with several parts. This theory was selected because of its relevance to organisational and communication phenomena, such as internal communication channels. The stakeholder theory is discussed below.

2.3 THE STAKEHOLDER THEORY

The stakeholder theory was identified as the study's approach because of the internal communication definition, which views it as the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders of the organisation at all levels (Welch & Jackson, 2007). The study investigated the use of internal communication channels based on the stakeholders' (employees) perspective. This approach therefore assisted in understanding internal communication and in establishing useful internal communication channels from the perspective of all employees rather than that of the management only, to enhance internal communication. Stakeholder theory into internal communication is discussed below.

2.3.1 Stakeholder theory into internal communication

The stakeholder concept has recently been a dominant force within the fields of management, business and society (De Bussy et al., 2003:148). Within an organisational setting, this concept refers to any individuals who impact or are impacted by the accomplishment of the objectives of the organisation and who, without their support, an organisation may cease to exist (Freeman, 1984). These individuals may include shareholders, employees, customers, and society, to name a few. This concept aimed to counter the view that shareholders are the only prominent group that management needs to be responsive to (Freeman, 1984).

Freeman (1984), and Safarova and Holmin (2015:9) refer to stakeholder concept as both internal and external. However, the focus of the study was on the internal stakeholders, which refers to the internal group of the organisation, such as managers and employees at

all levels. The adoption of a stakeholder approach to internal communication leads to a more detailed division of internal stakeholder groups into additional subgroups in the organisation where different stakeholders have their unique communication needs (Welch & Jackson, 2007).

Thus, the study did not treat all staff members as a single item because employees are composed of groups in which features such as communication needs differ. Anticipating an identical communication preference is not rational, since such an approach within an organisation would be unsuitable (Cameron & McCollum, 1993; White, Vanc & Stafford, 2010; Welch, 2012). Similar to Safarova and Holmin (2015:10), in grouping employees based on their labour categories, the study adopted the design of Kok, Mobach and Omta (2015) (Figure 1.1), which clearly shows employee categorisation.

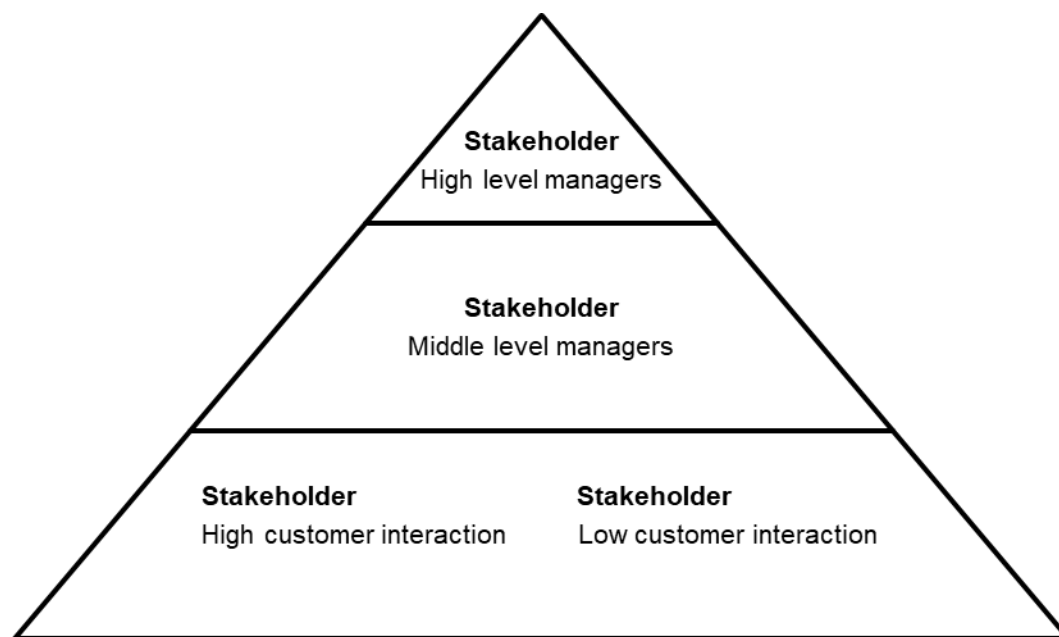


Figure 2.1: The stakeholder categorisation

Source: (Kok et al., 2015)

The high level is regarded as the strategic level; the middle level is a tactical level, whereas the low level is an operational level. It is apparent from Figure 1.1 that an organisation's division of labour is created for each division to make it more productive in a specific department (Fischer & Fischer, 2013). This means that someone working at the operational

level cannot simply move up to the managerial level. Each category of stakeholder group has its own specific work, with a unique kind of information. Furthermore, it is more likely that they will not have a broader understanding of the other groups. Therefore, examining the internal communication channels between these groups was appropriate as functionality between them is significant for the everyday activities and growth of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station (Safarova & Holmin, 2015:10). What follows is a discussion on communication.

2.4 COMMUNICATION

The importance of the concept of communication is often disregarded, and as a field, it has developed into diverse spheres. There are several definitions and conceptions of communication that have derived from different scholars. The earliest scholars who emerged as pioneers of communication and who subsequently contributed immensely to the development of this discipline are Shannon and Weaver (1949), who defined communication as a linear process, focusing on the transmission of the message and treating it as the cornerstone of productive communication. According to Shannon and Weaver (1949), communication was well served when the sender's message was disseminated successfully to the intended receiver. Nevertheless, this approach lacked the fundamental elements of communication, such as the creation of meaning and the interaction between the sender and the receiver. Baker and Gaut (2001:13) and Nordquist (2024) affirm that, within the communication process, every communicator is a "speaker/listener".

Moreover, communication has been studied from a variety of perspectives, with each perspective focusing on a different dimension and providing a significant contribution to the development of communication as a field. For instance, the psychological perspective views communication as a specific kind of behaviour that is influenced by psychological processes (Gordon, 2024; Baker & Gaut, 2002:03; Littlejohn & Foss, 2008:4). The sociological perspective is based on society and perceives communication as one of many important social factors in society (Baker & Gaut, 2002:03; Littlejohn & Foss, 2008:04). On the other hand, the anthropological perspective focuses on culture, and considers communication to

be a factor that plays an integral part in developing, maintaining and changing culture (Baker & Gaut, 2002:03; Littlejohn & Foss, 2008:4).

The proponents of communication discovered multiple factors that interact together to form the communication behaviour and human nature of people (Baker & Gaut, 2002:07). To elucidate, communication scholars found that social, biological, cultural and physical factors have a significant influence on people's daily communication practice. That is what Baker and Gaut (2002:07) named an integrated approach, which is achieved through the systems perspective. A system is defined as an entity that is composed of different elements which interact with one another to achieve a particular objective (Emmert & Donaghy, 1981). According to Monge (1977), all systems are purposive, which means that communication is also purposive: people basically communicate to achieve a certain goal.

There are three standard models within the communication system. According to Baker and Gaut (2002:10) and Kapur (2020), these models help us in understanding the dynamics of communication. The first model is a linear model. Baker and Gaut (2002:11) and Mulder (2022) proclaim that linear is the oldest model which puts emphasis exclusively in one-way communication. This means that the linear model is based on the sender's use of messages to persuade others and is related to the oldest model of Shannon and Weaver (1949) and Lasswell (1948). The second model is the interaction model, Baker and Gaut (2002:12) indicate that interaction model emphasises both the sender and the receiver's feedback. This indicates that the interaction model is two-way communication. The third model is the transactional model. Baker and Gaut (2001:13) and Mulder (2022) define the transactional model as a simultaneous interaction of multifaceted components of the communication process. In the transactional model, every communicator is a "speaker/listener" (Baker & Gaut, 2001:13). Considering this notion, communication may be defined as a multifaceted, continuing and interactive process in which people use verbal and non-verbal symbols to influence and change one another's behaviour, to accomplish their respective goals.

Mamon (2020:03) simply views communication as the process of exchanging information whereby information flow is considered crucial for the success of an organisation. This

indicates that the productivity of communication between all levels of management and labour force is significant for all actions taken by an organisation. Sharkiya (2023) and Pononian (2023) further add that effective communication is fundamental within an organisation because it ensures that all workers are well informed about the organisation and working towards the same goals. Therefore, effective communication is an essential aspect of any organisation, and the SAPS – Inanda Police Station is no exception. This is because the SAPS – Inanda Police Station depends on productive communication to safeguard public safety, crime prevention and solving cases. Thus, internal communication channels play an integral part in expediting the exchange of information among officers, branches as well as levels of command. By ensuring clarity, consistency, accessibility and timeously feedback, the SAPS – Inanda Police Station can certainly improve its overall performance and service delivery.

2.5 ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Organisational communication evolution is associated with the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). According to Gillis (2011: xi), who traced the emergence of this phenomenon, it developed prior to the 1970s as a profession with the contribution of “bold visionaries”, who derived from the IABC. These visionaries sought to develop and shape the profession of the future and to assist their members to enter the business world and to demonstrate the real value of communication (Gillis, 2011: xi).

Mumby (2013:27) reaffirms that organisational communication is the most difficult concept to define, simply because it consists of two different phenomena, namely organisation and communication. To bring about its definition, it is of particular importance to understand the interconnected nature of organisation and communication. This discussion adopts the notion produced by Mumby (2013:27), which holds that communication is the cornerstone of the organisation. In other words, Mumby (2013:27) states that, without communication, organisations cease to “exist as meaningful human collectives”. Organisational communication may be defined as the sharing of messages between individuals within a particular setting with a desire to accomplish individual and common objectives.

2.6 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

For the past 30 years, internal communication has emerged as a critical aspect of an organisation, with various definitions provided by scholars (Saáry, 2014:250). Cornelissen (2008:197), and Egan (2015:312) define this conception in accordance with employee entertainment, the distribution of linear communication by organisations to their staff, persuasion of employees, and the organisation's use of open communication. Internal communication refers to employee relations, statements of mission, and organisational development (Chaney & Christensen, 2001:231). Scholes (1997:xviii) defines internal communication as the skilled management of interactions among all stakeholders in a specific organisation.

According to Welch (2012:247) and Nair (2023), internal communication is a key component of communication practice, and its value is constantly increasing within organisations. Cornelissen (2004:189) maintains that internal communication includes all tools used by organisations to communicate with their employees, such as internal newsletters, intranets, and email, to name but a few. Bovée and Thill (2003:11) add that this phenomenon includes the sharing of data and ideas within an organisation. Internal communication is a practice used inside organisations to produce a sense of community among employees (Jo & Shim, 2005; Ruck & Welch, 2012). Furthermore, internal communication is a vital and autonomous function in public relations and corporate communication (Cameron & McCollum, 1993; Ruck & Welch, 2012; Verčič, Verčič & Sriramesh, 2012; Welch, 2012). Internal communication can also be seen as a valuable tool that creates a comprehensible and clear organisational image in the internal process of the organisation.

According to Argenti (2009:184), good internal communication builds on the cooperative culture and is not merely achieved through the publication of the daily communication between organisation staff. Instead, it is accomplished through the constant solidification of relationships with workers, and that is considered the principal component of crafting well-integrated internal communication (Argenti, 2009:184). The supremacy of internal communication in building organisational culture has been supported by empirical studies

and justified by a constructivist communication standpoint (Sriramesh, Grunig & Dozier 1996; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014).

Welch (2012:246) adds that internal communication strengthens organisational productivity since it contributes massively to positive internal relationships by facilitating communication between management and employees. Internal communication, on the other hand, can wreak havoc on organisational relationships because poor communication is counter-productive (Welch, 2012:246). The beneficial contribution of internal communication depends on suitable messages reaching staff in channels that are valuable and preferable to them (Welch, 2012:246). Previous studies conducted in the field suggest that insight into employee preferences for mediated internal communication is a necessity, and an employee internal communication channels preference is discussed in subsection 2.7.2 (Welch & Jackson, 2007; Welch, 2012; Montsho, 2013).

A well-organised internal communication system includes motivating, disciplining, and educating employees of a specific organisation so that they understand precisely the basics of the organisation and are prepared to deliberate on issues arising from everyday communication (Kalla, 2006:26). Furthermore, fruitful internal communication enhances employee awareness of opportunities and threats, and advances their understanding of their organisation's changing priorities (Welch, 2012:246). Internal communication flows in four directions (Welch & Jackson, 2007:185). These are called internal communication dimensions, namely internal line management communication, internal corporate communication, internal team peer communication, and internal project peer communication. Internal communication dimensions are briefly described below.

2.6.1 Internal communication flow

White and Mazur (1995:172), and Strauss and Hoffmann (2000:145), cited in Welch and Jackson (2007:184) posit that internal communication flow among organisational members has received much recognition in previous studies, dominated by one-way or asymmetrical, vertical or downward communication media, to the detriment of excellent – two-way symmetrical, lateral or horizontal, and upward communication media (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:22; White & Mazur, 1995:172; Clampitt & Berk, 2000:51; Strauss & Hoffmann,

2000:145, cited in Welch and Jackson, 2007:184). The main emphasis in this regard was the content of the message, which refers to what is communicated (Welch & Jackson, 2007).

The content of the message was considered a crucial dimension (Smidts, Pruyn & van Riel, 2001:1052). The content of internal communication is described as information about workers' roles, organisational issues, and personal contributions (Smidts et al, 2001). This approach results in differences in who communicates with whom, how they communicate, what content they communicate, and for what purpose (Welch & Jackson, 2007). These four internal communication dimensions are briefly highlighted below.

2.6.1.1 Line management

Senior managers report to the Chief Executive Officer as line managers. This means that the line management dimension exists at all levels of organisations. Communication within line management addresses issues such as employee roles and the effect of their personal communication (Welch & Jackson, 2007). This kind of internal communication includes target-setting discussions and evaluation meetings. It is linked to regular management activities such as resource management, financial management, and human resources management (Van Riel, 1995:14, cited in Welch & Jackson, 2007). According to Grunig (1992), this type of internal communication has been widely researched by several researchers.

2.6.1.2 Team-level internal communication

This dimension is a team situation, which may include managers and employees in a single team, and is thus considered to be peer-to-peer communication within a group setting (Welch & Jackson, 2007). Therefore, communication content in this dimension involves team task discussions.

2.6.1.3 Project-level internal communication

This dimension includes co-workers working on a specific project, and its model of communication is primarily two-way. In this regard, members of the project are employees

and managers, and therefore this dimension includes employee-to-employee communication (Welch & Jackson, 2007). The purpose of project-level internal communication is based on conveying messages related to the specified project as well as to team goals (Grunig et al., 1992:540).

2.6.2 Internal corporate communication

Internal corporate communication is defined as communication between strategic managers and employees that is designed to increase commitment and a sense of belonging in the organisation (Welch & Jackson, 2007). It contributes further to the development of awareness of the organisational changing environment, including the comprehension of its developing aims.

Saks (2006), cited in Welch (2012:248), Bindl and Parker (2010), and Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter (2011) contend that management communication and open, productive communication techniques are viewed as key to the improvement of positive employee engagement. They also allow organisations to innovate and compete (Welch, 2012; Khan, 1990). To make a contribution to engagement, knowledge was needed of employee viewpoints on the preferences of internal communication channels, and that was the main objective of this study.

Furthermore, the viewpoint of the study on internal corporate communication advocated a symmetrical internal communication system. Symmetrical internal communication is about openness, reciprocity, negotiation, and tolerance for different ideas between workers and organisations (Kang & Sung, 2017). Organisations implementing a symmetrical internal communication model involve employees in the decision-making to accomplish a mutually agreed upon resolution. This model is further conceptualised below.

2.6.2.1 *Symmetrical internal communication*

Symmetrical internal communication is the worldview that many organisations implement in communicating with their workers. The emphasis of this worldview includes but is not limited to openness, responsiveness, mutual understanding, interdependency, and a balance of power (Kang & Sung, 2017). The primary reasons for using a symmetrical model

are to negotiate, adjust, and improve views and behaviours that are expected to be adopted and respected by all parties within the organisation (Kang & Sung, 2017). That is the opposite of manipulative, linear communication and the top-down asymmetrical model (Kang & Sung, 2017). Therefore, symmetrical internal communication is viewed as the most productive communication system (Grunig, 2006).

Symmetrical internal communication leads to positive worker outcomes (Grunig, 1992). It indicates that this perspective is central to employees and is made up of trust, credibility, and negotiation, to mention a few. That is to say, a symmetrical internal communication model stimulates the voice of employees and strives for responsive communication (feedback). Hence, in such an atmosphere, employees may automatically feel encouraged to participate in any decision-making of an organisation (Kang & Sung, 2017). When it comes to its core function, it deals primarily with circulating formal organisational communication from management to staff. This is communicated through a variety of channels, such as email, social media, intranet, and so on. These internal communication channels are discussed in subsection 2.7.3 and were the core area of the study, since it investigated their use at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. Internal communication within the government institutions is appraised below.

2.6.3 Internal communication in the government institutions

The way the government institutions run their internal communication differs from that of the private sector. According to Kealey (2019), the internal communication of the private sector is adequately resourced with both finance and staff compared to the government institutions. The government institutions have been found to be lagging in investing in and promoting workplace communication (Kealey, 2019). According to Sasse (2016:05), the focus of the government's internal communication lies in the hands of the few elected officials rather than of the employees. Just as the private sector's companies strive to distinguish themselves by identifying their unique brand identities, so too do the government institutions (Sasse, 2016:06). Another phenomenon that has contributed to the lack of internal communication in the government institutions is politics. Politics in government

tampers with the creativity and development of internal and external communication (Fitch, 2004).

Kealey and Nesallah (2022) argue that another aspect which hinders the productivity of internal communication within public organisations is alignment. In the private sector, there is a normal alignment about following the money because its fundamental focus on profit accumulation provides a vivid sense of internal priority; hence, its tactical alignment is relatively forthright (Kealey & Nesallah, 2022). In public organisations such natural alignment is sporadic since they are not profit oriented. These organisations are usually pulled in different directions because of the changes in priorities made in the political spectrum, and this produces a lack of clarity, focus, and strategic direction (Kealey & Nesallah, 2022). The condition of internal communication within the context of the South African government is outlined below.

2.6.3.1 Internal government communication in South Africa

Within the context of the South African government institutions, the importance of internal communication was only recognised in 2006 when the Cabinet established that internal communication in government should be intensified to mobilise and keep public servants informed about the government's mission of delivering services to the public (Communication Policy, 2018:12). Subsequently, on May 18, 1998, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) was established to facilitate government communication by keeping the public abreast of all governmental activities (Communication Policy, 2018:12). To achieve that, the government realised that its employees were its ambassadors. Therefore, they needed to be well informed about government priorities and objectives, which led to an internal communication focus.

The government contemplated a definition of internal communication, which was outlined in its Communication Policy (2018:12). According to the Communication Policy (2018:52), internal communication is defined as the operative sharing of communication and information, vertically and horizontally, among the members of the organisation. In the context of government, this refers to the exchange of information between public servants at national, provincial, and local levels across a number of internal communication channels

(Communication Policy, 2018:52). Internal communication is considered to be functional by the government when transformational messages, service-delivery information, and work-related instructions are established and understandable, and when they are made available to all members of the public in general (Communication Policy, 2018:52).

According to Nyoka (2016:05), the primary goal of internal communication is to expedite and manage the flow of information within government institutions to cultivate knowledgeable public servants. Internal communication includes information related to human resources and other valuable information considered vital by the government workforce (Nyoka, 2016:05). An organisation with an effective internal communication strategy is most likely to have a professional, committed, and productive workforce, which subsequently becomes its main ambassadors and messengers (Communication Policy, 2018:52). The roles and functions of internal communication proposed by GCIS in the government institutions are to:

- provide direction with the necessary authority and strategic leadership to government internal communications forums;
- lead and manage the internal communication campaigns of the government's internal communication across the largest range of communication platforms; and
- gather information materials from internal communicators to ensure their delivery throughout the government institutions (Communication Policy, 2018:52).

2.7 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS (MEDIA)

In the study, the terms "channel" and "medium" were used interchangeably. Hallahan (2010) asserts that public relations scholars have paid less attention to internal communication channels, especially in the government institutions. The medium theory is one of the few theories that provides a valuable conceptual framework for communication channels in general (Welch, 2012:247). Innis (1951), cited in Welch (2012:247), as one of the proponents of medium theory, indicates that a medium has a perfect influence on the circulation of knowledge over space and time. Furthermore, medium theory reveals the convoluted relationship between the design of communication and its content; it

concentrates on the social and cultural influences and outcomes of communication media (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008).

On the other hand, McLuhan (1964b), in his classic book, argues that the medium is the message. In this work, McLuhan (1964a) highlights the importance of media by indicating that the medium of communication is equivalent to the message it disseminates. This asserts that the medium and the message hold equal informational value. In a nutshell, the channel that carries the content plays an integral part in the manner in which it is perceived (Gross, 2011). This study only focused on the internal communication channel aspect. Sinclair (2021) argues that, with regard to internal communication, the important part is not what is said but how it is said. How productively a message is communicated matches the message itself.

Considering the vast availability of internal communication channels nowadays, the need for robust employee communication channels is a pressing issue (Sinclair, 2021). According to Sinclair (2021), the cornerstone of efficient internal communication is selecting the right channel from the beginning. That is to say, the SAPS – Inanda Police Station should choose channels that are relevant to both its objective and its target audience. Therefore, when an organisation needs to enhance its internal communication significantly, appraising the channels in use should be a prerequisite (Sinclair, 2021).

In terms of the definitions of internal communication channels, Sharma (2015:43) describes them as the means that enable people to communicate. Mamuli et al. (2013) define communication channels as the means used to disseminate the message from the sender to the receiver, and messages can be transmitted via many channels. Larsson (1997), and Erikson (1992) in Zheng (2009:18), distinguish three forms of internal communication channels mainly used by organisations: written communication channels (which comprise tools such as noticeboards, and newsletters, which are durable media that can avoid misinterpretation if well-written), oral channels (usually handled via meetings and conversations), and electronic channels (such as email).

According to Barker and Gaut (2012:178), an organisation's messages in communication channels can also be classified as formal and informal. Formal communication channels are

characterised by information related to an organisation's rules, regulations, tasks, and procedures and include emails and meetings, while informal communication channels occur wherever and whenever employees meet (Barker & Gaut, 2012:179). The study focused on the aforementioned channels (including oral, written, electronic, formal, and informal channels). Furthermore, Cornelissen (2008:197), Gillis (2011:196), Barker and Gaut (2012:180), Egan (2015:312), and Bruton and Lumen Learning (2017) indicate that internal communication flows in downward, horizontal, diagonal and upward directions.

- **Downward flow**

Downward flow occurs when managers share information with subordinate employees (Bruton & Lumen Learning, 2017). In this instance, managers as senders do not normally anticipate receiving any response from employees (Bruton & Lumen Learning, 2017). The forms of downward flow include, but are not limited to, speeches, blogs and podcasts (Cornelissen, 2008:197; Gillis, 2011:196; Barker & Gaut, 2012:180; Egan, 2015:312; Bruton & Lumen Learning, 2017). The very usual kinds of downward communication are day-to-day directives from managers to their subordinate employees. Furthermore, downward flow assists in keeping employees abreast of important organisational changes, and the latest goals or strategies, further providing feedback at the level of the organisation.

- **Upward flow**

This happens when information moves from subordinate employees to employees in high positions (Cornelissen, 2008:197; Gillis, 2011:196; Barker & Gaut, 2012:180; Egan, 2015:312; Bruton & Lumen Learning, 2017). For example, this occurs when employees report to their supervisors. Items disseminated may include reports about progress, project proposals, grievances as well as complaints, to mention but a few. The goal of several managers of nowadays is to stimulate voluntary upward communication from workers without having to ask them first (Bruton & Lumen Learning, 2017). Other companies may go as far as to arrange competitions and rewards for employees with the most innovative and creative solutions and suggestions (Bruton & Lumen Learning, 2017). Nevertheless, employees require the

reassurance from management that their suggestions will be taken seriously and will consequently contribute to the decision-making of the organisation before they participate fully.

- **Horizontal flow**

This dimension comprises the sharing of information across branches at a similar level within an organisation and peer-to-peer communication is a case in point (Cornelissen, 2008:197; Gillis, 2011:196; Barker & Gaut, 2012:180; Egan, 2015:312; Bruton & Lumen Learning, 2017). In most cases, horizontal flow is utilised to request support and coordinate activities (Bruton & Lumen Learning, 2017). For instance, employees working at a similar level can be organised to work together on issues in an informal setting (Bruton & Lumen Learning, 2017). A perfect example in this regard can be the manager from the production department working together with the procurement manager to fast-track or delay the materials shipment.

- **Diagonal flow**

Diagonal flow refers to a cross-functional communication that occurs between employees working at different levels of the organisation (Cornelissen, 2008:197; Gillis, 2011:196; Barker & Gaut, 2012:180; Egan, 2015:312; Bruton & Lumen Learning, 2017). For instance, it could be a supervisor (as sales representative) working in the sales department emailing a manufacturing vice president enquiring about when a certain product will be available for shipping. It is indicated that, whenever communication is made through diagonal flow, the sender's manager must be made part of the circle (Bruton & Lumen Learning, 2017). This is because leaving the manager behind can place the manager in a humiliating position and make him appear incompetent as he will not be aware of what is going on in the department.

Cleary (2022) posits that, despite the size of the organisation and its capacity to use many internal communication channels to keep employees on top of their game, using more channels does not always result in beneficial use, and to prevent overwhelming employees with communications, it is necessary to coordinate how to employ various channels (Cleary,

2022). In addition, to comprehend how internal communication succeeds, it is crucial to classify internal communication channels within their functions and to learn how they benefit an organisation and boost employee engagement (Cleary, 2022).

In the same vein, Montsho's (2013:120) study, conducted at the GCIS, even though it was not predominantly focused on the internal communication channels, nevertheless identified that, among the eight internal communication channels used at the GCIS, only three were beneficial and preferred by the management and employees. The study further noted that it is of the utmost importance to ensure that management and employees are not overwhelmed by several internal communication channels that are not benefitting the organisation. Montsho (2013:121) affirms that, in order for organisations to accomplish productive internal communication, the role and purpose of internal communication channels should be clear and understood by all the members of the organisation.

2.7.1 Structure of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station

The SAPS – Inanda Police Station has a hierarchical structure, as demonstrated in Figure 2.1 below.

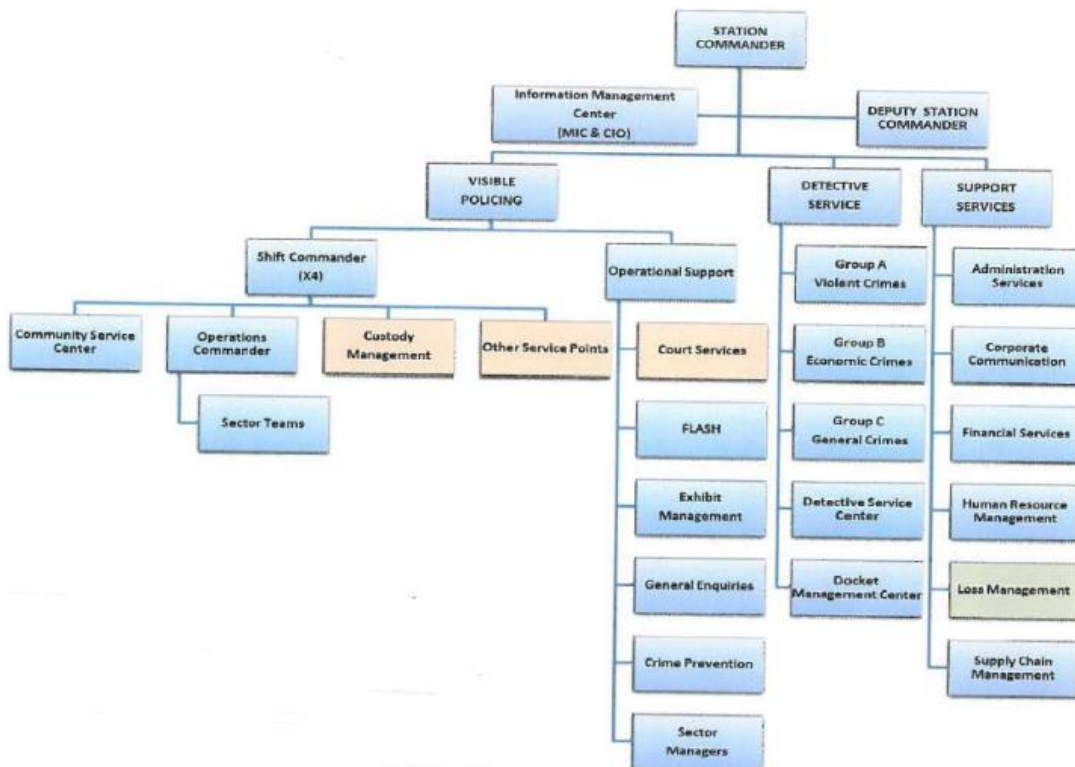


Figure 2.2: The Inanda – Police Station Structure

Source: (SAPS Annual Report, 2018/2019)

At the upper level of the hierarchical structure of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station is the Station Commander who oversees the entire police station and its functioning. Deputy Commissioner and the Information Management Centre are the second in command. In the third level of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station hierarchical structure are three branches, namely Visible Police, Detective Service and Support Services and consist of several sub-branches. This is the lower level of employees, also named frontline employees or operational staff. These employees deal with daily operations, such as receiving and attending complaints from the community, arresting suspects, taking statements from crime victims, testifying in court, to mention but a few. Hence, internal communication channels to them are vital because they facilitate information sharing and updates related to cases, investigations and the overall operation of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

Therefore, clear communication within these levels is fundamental for its efficient functioning. The SAPS – Inanda Police Station utilises both formal and informal internal communication channels (see Subsection 1.3). It has been indicated in subsection 2.2.1 that internal communication channels are a significant aspect which glues the branches and sub-branches of the organisation. This indicates that, for the SAPS – Inanda Police Station to accomplish its goals and objectives, internal communication channels should be clear and consistent across all its levels (Lai & Lin, 2017:09). By comprehending the hierarchal structure and leveraging suitable internal communication channels, the SAPS – Inanda Police Station can enhance its overall performance and provide better service for the community. An audit of internal communication channels is discussed below.

2.7.2 An audit of internal communication channels

An internal communications channel audit includes an evaluation of the performance of the channels. This entails precisely how a variety of channels within the organisation perform (Cleary, 2022). Verghese (2016) postulates that the internal communication channels that are used by an organisation must be audited frequently to uncover gaps, advance value,

and enhance productivity. Cleary (2022) points out that, for the channels to perform to their best ability, an organisation must have a buy-in strategy from its employees. An organisation must also have first-hand information about what channels employees find valuable and what they do not consider useful (Cleary, 2022). That may also have an impact on the preferences of management and employees for useful internal communication channels. Quirke (2008) puts it plainly, that today it is an overwhelming task to choose from among the multiple channels that have emerged through the development of technology.

For organisations to select appropriate internal communication channels, it has been suggested that selecting the optimum internal communication channels depends on the employee preferences (Welch, 2012; Montsho, 2013). This means that internal communication should be facilitated through a variety of communication channels central to the viewpoint of the receiver (employees). To reach and engage an audience sufficiently, their communication channel preference is fundamental. White et al. (2010:08) reiterate that choosing a useful internal communication method is more dependent on employee expectations and beliefs than on the potential efficacy of message delivery.

Similarly, Welch (2012:248) further notes that good internal communication relies heavily on proper messages reaching workers in channels suitable and acceptable to them. Employees' perceptions of insufficient communication processes can hamper internal relationships. According to Cameron and McCollum (1993) and White et al (2010) in Welch (2012:248), workers have massive anticipations of communication channels, which subsequently influence their assessment of the overall internal communication.

Previous studies conducted in the field suggest that insight into employee preferences for mediated internal communication is a necessity (Welch, 2012; Montsho, 2013; Welch & Jackson, 2007). The study by Montsho (2013:125) conducted at the GCIS discovered that there was a fragile understanding with regards to the function of internal communication, internal communication channels, and communication flow at GCIS. It further identified that employees preferred the use of three internal communication channels out of the eight that were used at GCIS (Montsho, 2013). Similarly, Mbhele (2017:199) also found a lack of

responsive internal communication at the Department of Health. Future research was then recommended to understand the contributing factors of this misunderstanding and lack thereof, and the implications of internal communication within the government institutions (Montsho, 2013:125; Mbhele, 2017:199).

There are several reasons why the channel audit is required. First, the organisation may be rocked by the environmental changes that force it to adapt to them (Verghese, 2016). This is practically relevant with the change brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, constant changes at the workplace regarding the evolving expectations of workers may make them feel disengaged and requiring more open communication with the management, which may necessitate a change in the internal communication channels used by an organisation (Verghese, 2016). Last, and importantly, it may be possible that technology has evolved significantly, which calls for an organisation to closely monitor how employees interact with the channels (Verghese, 2016).

As it has been discussed above, the study advocated a stakeholder-centric perspective. Basically, it shifted focus away from the senders to the receivers. This means that the usefulness of internal communication channels was assessed according to employees' preferences. Internal communication channel preference is discussed further below.

2.7.3 Preference of internal communication channels

As it has been indicated earlier on, COVID-19 exacerbated the already existing burden for organisations like the SAPS – Inanda Police Station in selecting the most appropriate internal communication channels. Therefore, it is more than necessary nowadays for organisations to evaluate whether their channels are still relevant. To add on this intricate scenario, this period may have provided prominence to the use of digital communication channels rather than traditional channels since employees are increasingly working remotely. In their study, Berezan et al (2016:03) indicate that the selection of communication channels goes as far as having an impact on the quality of information in the organisation.

Gillis (2011:200) argues that the organisation selecting the internal communication channels should not use an umbrella approach because not all employees read emails, newsletters, bulletin boards, etcetera, and the reasons have been discussed above under subsection 2.3.1. This means that employees have their individual preferences with regard to the useful internal communication channels. This is also echoed by Clerkl (2020), who states that employees have discrete delivery preferences and consume their content in different ways. Organisations should invest enough time in the selection of useful internal communication channels because utilising inappropriate channels for certain tasks may result in undesirable outcomes, such as the use of excessive number of internal communication channels that are unproductive resulting in wasteful expenditure, insufficient information sharing, inadequate feedback mechanisms and communication barriers between different levels of authority, which can result in clutter, delays, unproductivity, and unsuccessful service delivery (Williams & Seidel, 2019).

2.7.4 Channels used at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station and their functions

Internal communication is facilitated through several types of internal communication channels that are central to employee preferences. These channels carry their individual weight with regard to their usefulness. They can be classified by their formats and attributes as follows: written communication channels (comprising tools such as memos, notice boards, and newsletters, which are durable media and can avoid misinterpretation if well-written), oral channels (usually handled via meetings and conversations), and electronic channels (such as email).

What follows is a discussion of the internal communication channels used at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station, listed in the SAPS Annual Report (2020/2021:45).

2.7.3.1 *Written communication channels*

- Noticeboards – these are printed and placed on noticeboards and in all restrooms to promote events and raise awareness about particular issues, such as gender-based violence, and other historical holidays.

- Internal monthly publication – *Police Magazine*, are used to share the institution's monthly achievements, such as organisational events, and other activities, to motivate employees to provide effective service to the community.

2.7.3.2 Oral communication channels

- Face-to-face meetings are convened on a monthly or weekly basis at management and cluster levels to share the SAPS-Inanda Police Station's information, performances as well as management decisions.
- Internal focused events - internally communicate focused events.

2.7.3.3 Electronic channels

- Email – a central email system used to circulate administrative and urgent messages to all employees. In addition, it is used to announce the SAPS – Inanda Police Station's upcoming events and important decisions.
- Intranet – mainly used to share documents such as policies, templates, forms, and contact numbers of officials and statutory bodies.
- Telephone – primarily used to interact with different branches within the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.
- Social media (WhatsApp) – used by employees to share work-related messages and by managers to keep track of employees who are not physically present.
- Digital signage/digital display – used to inform employees about upcoming events and other important information.
- Pol-TV, Servamus and bulletin – used to promote internal communication and keep workers abreast of things.

2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an all-encompassing literature review regarding to the use of internal communication channels from ordinary organisations to government institutions, grounded in the theoretical frameworks of General Systems Theory and Stakeholder Theory. The literature review has demonstrated the importance of internal communication channels in improving internal communication and the overall functioning of the government

institutions like the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. The literature has also shown that internal communication channels are crucial for accomplishing the goals of the organisation, constructing trust and credibility, and nurturing collaboration and coordination. The General Systems Theory has offered insights into the interdependence of organisational elements, reiterating the significance of internal communication in incorporating different branches and units (Bertalanffy, 1968). Parallely, Stakeholder Theory has revealed the necessity for organisations to constantly engage with their relevant stakeholders, particularly employees, to make sure that their needs and expectations are addressed (Freeman, 1984).

The literature review has further validated that choosing suitable internal communication channels can fundamentally enhance internal communication as well as organisational performance. Furthermore, this chapter has dealt with the objective of exploring the literature specifically on internal communication channels on government institutions in South Africa and has set foundation for the following chapter. The next chapter deals with research design and methodology for this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The study examined the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19 to highlight the potential for successful use and fault lines within these channels. This chapter describes the methodological design adopted for the study. The positivist research paradigm adopted for the study is discussed, and the quantitative approach selected for the study and its suitability are deliberated on. The research methodology, consisting of data collection techniques and approaches, is dealt with. Last, the data analysis and interpretation is outlined.

3.2 POSITIVIST PARADIGM

The quantitative research design for the study was guided by the positivist research paradigm. Babbie (2013:28) describes the research paradigms as essential models for both organising observations and reasoning. The paradigms in research are distinguished by their ontological and epistemological perspectives (Harrington, 2005:45). Harrington (2005) indicates that ontology is described as social reality and, according to Crotty (1998:10), it deals with the nature of being. Ontology actually studies the nature of reality. On the other hand, epistemology focuses on how knowledge is generated and on the different types of knowledge (Crotty, 1998:08).

Positivism (as the research paradigm employed in the study) is based on scientific methods that test and confirm social reality and examine general laws that are expected to be applied universally. Within the positivist paradigm, reality is objective and is measured by observations. Data collection within the positivist paradigm is restricted to observable behaviour. Researchers adopting the positivist paradigm must separate themselves from the study so as to affirm the objectivity of the study (Kroeze, 2012:48). Terre Blanche et al. (2006:06) clearly describe the positivist paradigm process based on the perspectives of ontology and epistemology. When it comes to ontology, the positivist paradigm involves in a

stable external reality that is guided by law, whereas on epistemology, researchers are objective and detach themselves from the study (Terre Blanche et al., 2013:06).

By the same token, Kroeze (2012:48) states that positivism considers social reality as concrete and objective. Bailey (1994:09), Neuman (1997:63), Du Plooy (2002:21), Bernard (2006:13), and Vosloo (2014:301), echoed that positivism is based on scientific methods, which constitute general laws that are expected to be practised universally. This paradigm was selected for the study because its key methodologies such as survey research, and the application of suitable methods of sampling, instrumentation as well as statistical treatments of data are capable of providing quantitative findings that can answer any given research questions intensively (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:179). Pham (2018) indicates that a positivist paradigm provides researchers with a high quality degree of both reliability and validity. Furthermore, its findings can be generalised to a large population, such as the population of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

3.3 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

First, it is important to describe the research design adopted in the study. A research design is defined as an architecture that specifies how to conduct research. According to Babbie (2014:116), and Terre Blanche et al. (2006:36), a research design aims to plan and structure the research project in a manner that improves the validity of the research findings. Furthermore, a research design involves the whole process of research, commencing from conceptualising a problem to writing questions, data collection, analysis and interpretation, and report writing (Creswell, 2013:05). Yin (2009:26) simply states that a research design links the empirical data to the research questions of the study and to its ultimate conclusions. It can be deduced that a research design assists by guiding the researcher to guarantee that the collected data addresses the exact research questions.

The quantitative research method was chosen for the study because it was a suitable design capable of answering research questions (Babbie, 2014). A quantitative research design is defined as a numerical approach that seeks systematically to substantiate, test and confirm social reality (Perone & Tucker, 2003; Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Du Plooy (2002:82) adds that a quantitative research design is significant, particularly when the

researcher wants to calculate and measure variables. Furthermore, a quantitative research design deploys inductive and deductive methods of reasoning. Inductive reasoning begins with a literature review to develop a theory, while deductive reasoning focuses on testing that particular theory (Neuman, 1997:132; Du Plooy, 2002:82).

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection encompasses information about how data is collected in a study. Terre Blanche et al. (2006:85) indicate that the process of data collection provides a clear picture of how data is collected. Terre Blanche et al. (2006:85) further add that it includes information about measurement instruments, their names, references, and their appropriateness for the study. Thus, this section deals with the data collection methods for the study.

3.4.1 Survey questionnaire

Data for the study were collected through a survey questionnaire. According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006:484), a questionnaire is defined as a group of questions used to collect data from respondents and is the most commonly used tool in social sciences. The survey questionnaire for the study was based on structured or closed questions. The structured or closed questioning technique enables respondents to select one or more choices from a list of fixed answers (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:487). This technique was suitable for the study because of its advantage of eliciting a standardised set of responses from all participants, which then enables easier comparative data analysis (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:487). The survey questionnaire in the study was in the form of multiple-choice questions to collect demographic and other data, and a five-point Likert scale to assign values to a number of aspects by placing them in a specific order.

De Vos et al. (2002:180) contend that it is appropriate to use multiple-choice questions from the beginning of the survey questionnaire. Multiple-choice questions are often used to gather information that is rationally divided into difficult and fast categories (Montsho, 2013:82). On the other hand, the five-point Likert scale improves the quality of the measurement (in terms of validity and reliability) and uses standardised options and

categories (ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”) to identify distinct items (Du Plooy, 2002). The Likert scale was useful for the study because the researcher intended to measure the perceptions of management and employees about the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. The SAPS – Inanda Police Station website was used as a secondary source to collect employees information.

3.4.2 Pilot study

Babbie and Mouton (2001:224), and Terre Blanche et al. (2006:490) affirm that it is crucial to conduct the pilot study before the questionnaire is administered to the final sample. This pilot study is conducted to identify possible problems with proposed research and is conducted on a small sample representative of the proposed sample (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:490). Furthermore, in pilot studies, a questionnaire is administered, and collected data is analysed for inconsistencies, gaps, repetitions, and flaws within the data collection instrument (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:490). The sample size for the pilot study was 12 respondents and is discussed precisely in subsection 3.8.

3.5 STUDY POPULATION

Population in research refers to a group of people or objects that a researcher is intending to study (Babbie, 2004:190). The population for the study was the SAPS – Inanda Police Station management and lower-category employees from three branches of this police station, namely Support Services, Detective Services, and Visible Policing. The study population was drawn from the functional list of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station available on the intranet.

3.6 SAMPLING APPROACH

Normally, in a survey method, it is not practical or economically viable to involve the entire population in a study; therefore, sampling becomes valuable. Neuman (2012:146) reaffirms the importance of sampling by arguing that it is impossible to include all members of a particular population in a single study. Sampling is the process that the researcher uses to select some cases to investigate in detail, and then the collected data is used to comprehend the larger population (Neuman, 2012:146). Nachmias and Nachmias

(1987:182) postulate that this process is conducted to produce information about the specific characteristics of a finite population. According to Neuman (2012:146), the significant purpose of sampling is to create a representative sample that closely replicates the features of a larger population. The stratified sampling method, target population, unit of analysis, sampling frame, and sample method are discussed below.

3.6.1 Stratified sampling method

The study used probability sampling because it provides all units an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study (Treadwell, 2014:134). The method used within probability sampling for the study was the stratified method. According to Babbie (2013:150), the stratified method groups units according to their homogeneity. In the study, employees were divided into two strata, namely management and subordinate employees. A random sample was drawn from each subpopulation to get an adequate representation of all SAPS – Inanda Police Station branches. A stratified sample was selected for the study because it guarantees the complete representation of the population, notwithstanding the sample size (Neuman, 1997:212).

In addition, two sampling frames were created to stratify the employees on the management and lower-category employee (subordinate employee) lists within their respective positions. This was done to obtain the perspectives of individual subgroups about the use of internal communication channels, as it was mentioned in Chapter One that management and subordinate employees have different views concerning the use of internal communication channels, and their preferences for internal communication channels are also distinct.

3.6.2 Target population

The target population refers to the aggregation of objects from which a sample is actually chosen (Babbie, 2013:513). The target population for the study was all 412 SAPS – Inanda Police Station employees (management and subordinate employees). According to the Site Profiles KZN Police Stations (2022), all of these employees were classified as not belonging to any private company; therefore, this suggested that they all belong to the SAPS – Inanda

Police Station (government institutions). The collected findings was generalised to this population. The accessible population is regarded as a subgroup of the target population which is accessible during the study and from which the samples are drawn (Babbie, 2005:190). The employees who were available during the distribution of a questionnaire were an accessible population for the study.

3.6.3 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis refers to a type of empirical case that a researcher wants to explore, measure, and analyse in a study (Neuman, 2012:402). The units of analysis for the study were the employees of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. In addition, this unit of analysis was then divided into two groups, namely 25 employees in the management and 172 employees in the subordinate subgroups.

3.6.4 Population parameters

Lavrakas (2011) indicates that the parameter is a numerical quantity or characteristic of a population that is approximated by using information gathered from the population. Employment levels were the parameter of the study. Therefore, the SAPS – Inanda Police Station's management and subordinate employees served as the parameters of the study. As guided by Fivelsdal (2019), the sample size for the study was 197. According to Fivelsdal (2019), for a finite population of 400, a sample size of 197 is required to estimate a proportion with 95% confidence and a margin error of 0.05. The SAPS – Inanda Police Station's functional list revealed that the population for the study consisted of 412 personnel, of whom 388 were stationed on its premises. Therefore, a sample size of 197 was considered sufficient for the study since its population was between 388 and 412. This was done within the proportion of 95% confidence and a margin error of 0.05 to reduce errors in sampling. The description of the management and subordinate employees and the selection criteria for the study is presented below.

3.6.4.1 Management

Management for the study referred to all managers from junior, middle, and senior levels. The SAPS – Inanda Police Station functional list revealed that there were 25 managers

across all three branches in this police station, namely Support Services, Detective Services, and Visible Policing. All 25 managers across all branches were targeted for sampling in the study because there were only a few. Therefore, the desired outcome was to include all of them in the study.

3.6.4.2 Subordinate employees

On the other hand, subordinate employees referred to all employees who occupied a lower rank or position. Owing to the fact that subordinate employees were in the majority (387), 172 subordinate employees were targeted for sampling in the study. These subordinate employees came from all three branches, namely Support Services, Detective Services, and Visible Policing. The number of employees for each branch was not clearly identified. Nevertheless, each branch was adequately represented.

The exclusion and inclusion criteria applied to the study are listed below:

Exclusion criteria:

- not willing to participate in the study
- not willing to give informed consent
- absent from work during data collection
- just started (less than three months) working at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station
- unable to complete the questionnaire

Inclusion criteria:

- willing to participate in the study
- willing to provide informed consent
- present at work during data collection
- have at least three months working at Inanda Police Station
- able to complete the questionnaire

3.6.5 Sampling frame

The sample frame is the list from which the members of the population are selected to participate in the study. Babbie (2013:161) defines it as the source used to select a sample. In this regard, the sample frame for the study was drawn from the functional list of different branches within the SAPS – Inanda Police Station available on the intranet.

3.7 A PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION

As noted, the study used a structured questionnaire method that also consisted of multiple-choice questions and a five-point Likert scale. The multiple-choice questions were placed at the beginning of the questionnaire to collect demographic information, and in Sections, B, E and F of the questionnaire. Then the five-point Likert scale was used to assign values to a number of aspects and was in a form of standardised options and categories (ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”) to identify distinct items (Du Plooy, 2002). The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The researcher, assisted by the Communication Officer, directly administered and collected questionnaires from all three branches of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. This was done to ensure that all branches were sufficiently represented in the study. This means that the questionnaires were handed out physically in a printed version.

The main reason for using a printed version for the study was to enable employees who worked offsite (such as police officers) with no access to computers to participate in the study. Data collection ran for a period of one month and data were collected twice a day at 13:00 (lunchtime), and 16:00 (when employees have finished working) in order not to clash with the daily duties of employees. To address ethical issues that may have arisen as a result of using this method (such as confidentiality), the researcher collected questionnaires directly using a document file, stored them safely in a locked cupboard at home for later usage, will keep them for a period of five years, and will shred them once they are no longer valuable.

3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY

The researcher made sure that validity and reliability were not threatened in the study. Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument used in a study measures accurately

what it is intended to measure (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012:81; Babbie, 2013:154; Terre Blanche et al., 2006:147). The researcher ensured that content validity was not affected by aligning the questions of the questionnaire with the research objectives, and the literature review functioned as a support for the data analysis. In addition, to ensure scale validity for the study, the researcher took into consideration the context and characteristics of the target population and the possible sources of bias that might affect the validity of findings. Furthermore, the researcher employed procedures for data cleaning and quality control to make sure that the gathered data were accurate, complete, and constant.

On the other hand, reliability refers to the extent to which an instrument used to measure a construct yields similar results on repeated trials (Wagner et al., 2012:80; Babbie, 2013:152; Terre Blanche et al., 2006:152). This implies that a reliable survey is one that consistently yields similar results every time it is administered to an identical population at different times. To ensure reliability in the study, the researcher made sure that the survey questions were clear, unambiguous, and free from biases that would affect the consistency of the findings. Furthermore, the survey questions were also tested in a quantitative pilot study using a small sample of respondents to find and address any possible concerns or discrepancies prior to being administered to the full sample (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:490).

Lewis et al. (2021) propose that there is no rule of thumb suggesting the sample size for a pilot study and recommend that at least 10 to 12 respondents are acceptable. Therefore, the sample size for the pilot study in the study was 12 and was as follows, respectively:

- **Management**

Three managers represented the management group (in which a single manager represented each branch out of three). The reason for selecting a few managers was that there were only 25 managers at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

- **Subordinate employees**

These employees also came from all three branches (three employees per branch) and were nine in total. The reason for selecting more subordinate employees than managers was that they were in the majority.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis is the process of reducing and managing the proportion of useful data from an amount of collected data (Mbhele, 2017:120). The study used quantitative analysis, which was adopted because it permits the researcher systematically to classify, sum up, and demonstrate observations (Creswell, 2007; Ali, 2021). In addition, it enables the researcher to understand and make conclusions about an investigated phenomenon in a recognised, narrow group (Creswell, 2007; Ali, 2021). Gorman and Johnson (2013:216), and Babbie (2013:396) state that quantitative analysis is a statistical approach, which uses numbers to represent and operate the researcher's observation and to describe precisely the phenomenon that is reflected in the researcher's observation. In the study, the researcher was assisted by an experienced statistician. According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006:189), preparing data for analysis includes three steps: coding, entering and cleaning. The study adopted Terre Blanche et al. (2006:189) steps of a quantitative data analysis and are respectively discussed below:

- **Coding**

This is a straightforward step, which includes the application of rules to data transformation of the information provided on the questionnaire from wording to a meaningful numerical format (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:190). Data were coded on a questionnaire in the study. This was because pre-coded questionnaire allowed for quicker and easier data entry and the cost of the statistician was inexpensive since the questionnaire was pre-coded. Furthermore, a pre-coded questionnaire is quick to complete, allows testing for existing hypotheses, enables comparisons, is reliable and can be repeated. Coding was applied because the computer did not understand words (Terre Blanche et al, 2006:190). Therefore, the collected data on the questionnaire for the study was transformed from words into a meaningful numerical format.

- **Entering data**

According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006:191), in this stage, data is entered so that each row represents a distinct case and each column represents a unique variable. In terms of the study, the numerical codes on the questionnaires were entered into an SPSS data matrix. SPSS was chosen because it is a versatile package enabling different kinds of analyses, data transformations, and forms of output (Arkkelin, 2014:03). Therefore, it definitely served the purpose of the study. It also allows for reliable and faster answers (Arkkelin, 2014:03). In addition, SPSS has useful tables and graphs, facilitates effective data management, and is user friendly (Arkkelin, 2014:03). According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006:193), SPSS is specifically designed for the use of social scientists. Furthermore, SPSS has easy-to-use pull-down menus, which make data analysis easier (Babbie, 2013). It is important to note that, in this process of entering data, each questionnaire was labelled with sequential numbers that were similar to the numbers in the subject column, to enable the statistician to revert to the original questionnaire later when necessary.

- **Cleaning data**

Owing to the fact that coding and entering data are daunting tasks, errors are bound to happen (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006:192). Therefore, data were cleaned prior to employing them for statistical analysis. This was done because if a data set has many errors, the findings for the study would be considered invalid. Terre Blanche et al. (2006:192) indicate that cleaning data is the process of scrutinising the data set for errors, and rectifying them thereafter. For the study, a few cases were checked manually to ensure that the computer provided correct instructions.

- **Statistical analysis**

After it was ensured that the electronic database was clean, data were analysed statistically. In this regard, two types of analysis were conducted, namely descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis was done to describe the distribution of scores of every single variable, and through determining whether the scores on varied variables were interrelated with each other (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:193). Descriptive analysis was done

to get a first impression of the collected data (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:193). In this instance, frequency distribution representation (in a form of tables and graphs) was used to plot the values of a variable against their frequency of occurrence (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). This format is viewed as the most basic format for presenting univariate data (Babbie, 2013:442). In the study, among the other questions: which internal communication channels are most used at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station? and, which internal communication channels are preferred by management and employees? were answered by utilising a single-variable data. Therefore, they qualified to be treated as a single variable. Furthermore, all the questions for the study were intended to describe and did not consider causes and relationships.

Frequency distributions for categorical data are easier to produce because the numbers represented categories. Then the researcher only calculated the number of people or respondents in each category and represented this graphically (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). According to Punch (2005:110), simple frequency distributions are a convenient means for summarising and comprehending data. In addition, simple frequency distributions provide a straightforward method of calculation (Punch, 2005:110).

Inferential analysis followed. The inferential analysis enabled the researcher to draw conclusions about the study's population from the data collected on the sample. According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006:208), the proficient manner of doing this is to select a representative sample from the population and, after that, to use the information about the sample to draw conclusions about the population.

3.10 CHALLENGES FACED IN THE STUDY

Among the challenges encountered during the study was obtaining permission to conduct research at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. The Station Commanders extended leave during the permission request process hindered progress. The researcher consulted with the supervisor to find way forward and was advised to postpone data collection by at least a month, allowing the Station Commander to return from leave. The study also had limited resources, making it a challenge to access other research tools, and resources. The research used economical research tools and resources, and asked for help from friends

and peers when required. It was also difficult to gain access to police officials and employees because of their busy schedules and scepticism about participating in the research. The researcher was assisted by the Communication Officer to gain access and trust. The study had a tight deadline that the researcher had to meet, making it difficult to collect data and analyse data within that specific timeframe. The researcher with the supervisor prioritised tasks and handled time effectively.

3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the methodological design adopted by the researcher for the study to collect and produce accurate findings that were used to generalise the investigated population. It described the positivist paradigm adopted for the study. The quantitative approach chosen for the study and its appropriateness were also deliberated upon. In addition, the research methodology, consisting of data collection techniques and approaches, was dealt with. Last, the data analysis and interpretation were outlined.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study examines the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19 to highlight the potential for successful use and the fault lines within these channels. This chapter deals with data analysis and interpretation, and findings on the use of internal communication channels within the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19. De Vos et al. (2002:218) posit that the main purpose of data interpretation is to study the population extensively based on where the sample is drawn. This chapter comprises statistical calculations and analysis by means of diagrams/graphs, and tables accompanied by descriptions. The demographic data and data collected from the principal research questions are analysed in this chapter. The main research question answered for the study was: How are internal communication channels used at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?

The sub-questions for the study were:

4.1.1 Sub-questions

- Which internal communication channels are mostly used by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station to facilitate its internal communication?
- What is the understanding of the management and employees about the function of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?
- How do management and employees perceive the flow of information within the internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?
- Which internal communication channels are preferred by management and employees as most appropriate for facilitating internal communication at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?
- Why are the preferred internal communication channels regarded as valuable among staff members?

The survey questionnaire comprised six sections, as follows:

- Section A: Demographic questions
- Section B: Internal communication channels used at SAPS – Inanda Police Station
- Section C: Function of communication channels of SAPS – Inanda Police Station
- Section D: Information flow
- Section E: Communication channels preferences
- Section F: Motives for channels preferences

The survey questionnaire was reviewed by the supervisor, Scientific Review Committee, and statistician, and amendments, where necessary, were made in accordance with their comments. In addition, the pilot study was also conducted but its findings were not included in the study. The statistician used the SPSS program (Version 25.0) for data analysis and interpretation. The population for the study was the SAPS – Inanda Police Station's management and subordinate employees (see Chapter 3). Respondents were informed that participation in the study was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time if they deemed it necessary. The population for the study consisted of 412 personnel, of whom 388 were stationed at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station premises (see Chapter 3). Therefore, a random stratified sample size of 197 was considered sufficient (also see Chapter 3). The survey questionnaires were physically administered to all 197 respondents, of which 141 were returned and five were discarded, consequently resulting in 69% (136) valid questionnaires which were analysed. In the study, (N) represented the frequency or number of respondents. The response rate is discussed below.

4.2 RESPONSE RATE

Rubin and Babbie (2009:117) indicate that response rate refers to the number of people who participated in a survey, divided by the number of people who were asked to respond, conveyed as a percentage. Mitchell (1989:5) postulates that response rate is the overall number of returned questionnaires which is divided by the overall sample who received and filled out the survey at the beginning of the study.

Table 4.1 demonstrates the response rate for the study.

Table 4.1 Response rate

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Administered questionnaires	197	100
Returned questionnaires	141	72
Not returned questionnaires	56	28
Usable responses discarded	5	3
Valid questionnaires retained	136	69

Table 4.1 demonstrates the overall number of questionnaires that were distributed, returned, discarded, and retained in the survey and data-capturing course. An overall number of 197 questionnaires were dispersed to the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. Of the distributed questionnaires, 141 were returned, of which five questionnaires were discarded since they were not appropriately completed as some had vague responses (for instance, not marked or double ticked). This consequently resulted in a total of 69% (n=136) of questionnaires that were returned after considering that they were valid and usable. Hence, this translated to 136 usable questionnaires available for analysis in the study.

It should be noted that there is no general agreement with regard to the minimum response rate since scholars propose varied values (Rubin & Babbie, 2009:388). A survey literature review divulges a dearth of constancy and or a yardstick set in reference to the minimum and highest response rates. Carley-Baxter, Roe and Twiddy (2009:1), among other scholars, affirm that there is nothing such as outright threshold for a minimum response rate regarding sampling elements since no rate is considered to be indicative of greater or lesser value. On the other hand, Dillman (2000:22) and Babbie (2010:118) are of the view that at least a 50% response rate is normally seen as sufficient for analysis and reporting. Babbie (2005:22), and Finchman (2008:43), assert that desirable and satisfactory minimum

response rate is 60%, whereas Krosnick, Lavrakas and Kim (2014), and Erikson et al. (2023), propose that a response rate of 70% is satisfactory.

Nevertheless, Rubin and Babbie (2009:388) affirm that the thresholds proposed above for response rates may be considered to be the rough guidelines with no statistical foundation. With that being said, the 69% response rate accomplished in the study gratified the varied recommendations cited.

4.3 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

This section deals with the representation of the results obtained from the descriptive statistics of the demographic data. The discussion in this section is for the data gathered in Section A of the questionnaire, and which strove to identify the demographic information of respondents. The descriptive analysis sought to determine the sub-branch where respondents were stationed, their occupational level, years of employment, and educational level.

4.3.1 Demographic profile

The anticipated response rate of 100% for the study was not achieved, as the actual response rate was lower, particularly in respect of being representative of the population. Nevertheless, the received response rate still makes the analysis of the study valid, owing to the fact that the number of response still largely representative of the organisation. In addition, the respondents represented their different sub-branches. The occupational level item enabled the researcher to identify the representation of managerial and lower-ranking employees and it was found that the returned questionnaires were representative of all occupational levels of the organisation.

Furthermore, the years of employment item demonstrated that the majority of respondents had served more than three years in the organisation, and this indicates that they had adequate experience about the use of internal communication channels within the organisation. Thus, 69% of analysed questionnaires satisfied the recommendations by several scholars despite the fact that there is no mutual consensus about the minimum response rate. Therefore, the researcher felt that the findings of the study provided

sufficient answers to the research objectives. The demographic information of the respondents were analysed through descriptive statistics focusing on sets such as the sub-branch where respondents were stationed, occupational level, years of employment and educational level. Tables follow, accompanied by graphic representations, and explanations describing the statistics depicted.

4.3.1.1 Visible policing

4.3.1.1.1 Shift commander

Table 4.2: Shift commander

	Frequency	Percentage
Community service centre	10	7,4
Operational commander	3	2,2
Custody management	4	2,9
Other service points	10	7,4
Not indicated	109	80,1
Total	136	100,00

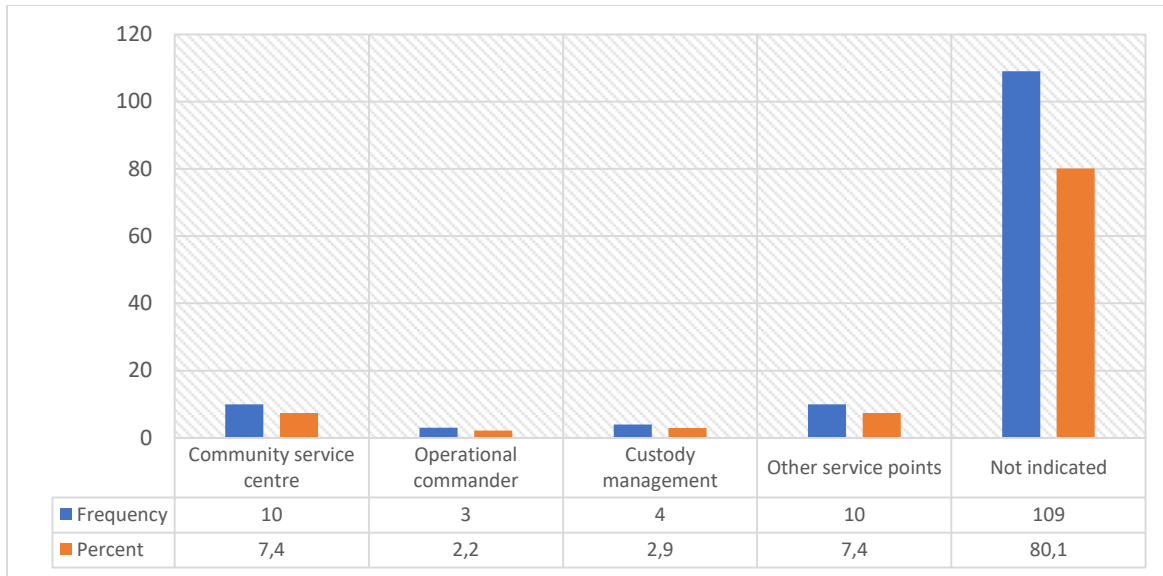


Figure 4.1: Shift commander

The Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 illustrate the Shift commander sub-branch of the Visible Policing branch. These illustrations demonstrate that the number of respondents working in a Community service centre and other service points are even, while Operational Commander and Custody management had only small numbers of respondents. For instance, Community service centre and other service points registered an aggregate of 7.4% (n=10), respectively. On the other hand, Operational Commander and Custody management registered a total of 2.2% (n=3) and 2.9% (n=4), respectively. These percentages revealed that both Community service centre and Other service points had the greater number of respondents compared to Operational Commander and Custody management. The total number of respondents from this category is 19.9% (n=27).

4.3.1.1.2 Operational support

Table 4.3: Operational support

	Frequency	Percentage
Court services	1	0.7

Flash	5	3.7
Exhibit management	5	3.7
General enquires	5	3.7
Crime prevention	9	6.6
Sector managers	2	1.5
Other service points	3	2.2
Not indicated	106	77.9
Total	136	100,00

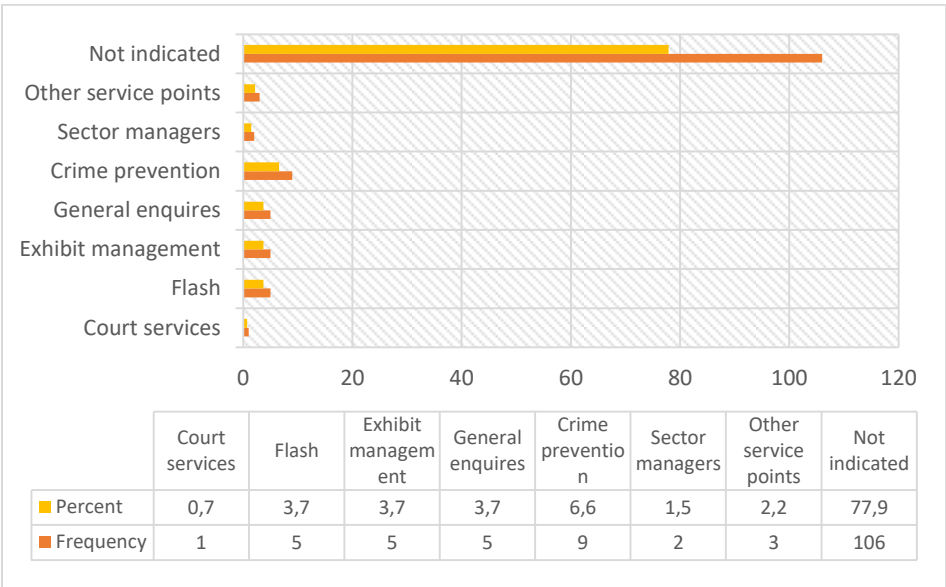


Figure 4.2: Operational support

With regard to the Operational support sub-branch, the results reveals that a greater percentage of respondents derived from the Crime Prevention sub-branch with 6.6% (n=9). The following sub-branches, namely Exhibition Management, General Enquires and Flash registered 3.7% (n=5), respectively. Other service points registered 2.2% (n=3), Sector Managers registered 1.5% (n=2) and Court Services 0.7% (n=1). The total number of respondents for this category is 22.1% (n=30).

In this regard, 41.9% (n=57) of 136 respondents derived from the Visible Policing branch.

4.3.1.2 Detective services

Table 4.4: Detective services

	Frequency	Percentage
Group A violent crimes	6	4,4
Group B economic crimes	6	4,4
Group C general crimes	10	7,4
Detective services centre	11	8,1
Docket management centre	7	5,1
Other and specify	1	0,7
Not indicated	95	69,9
Total	136	100,00

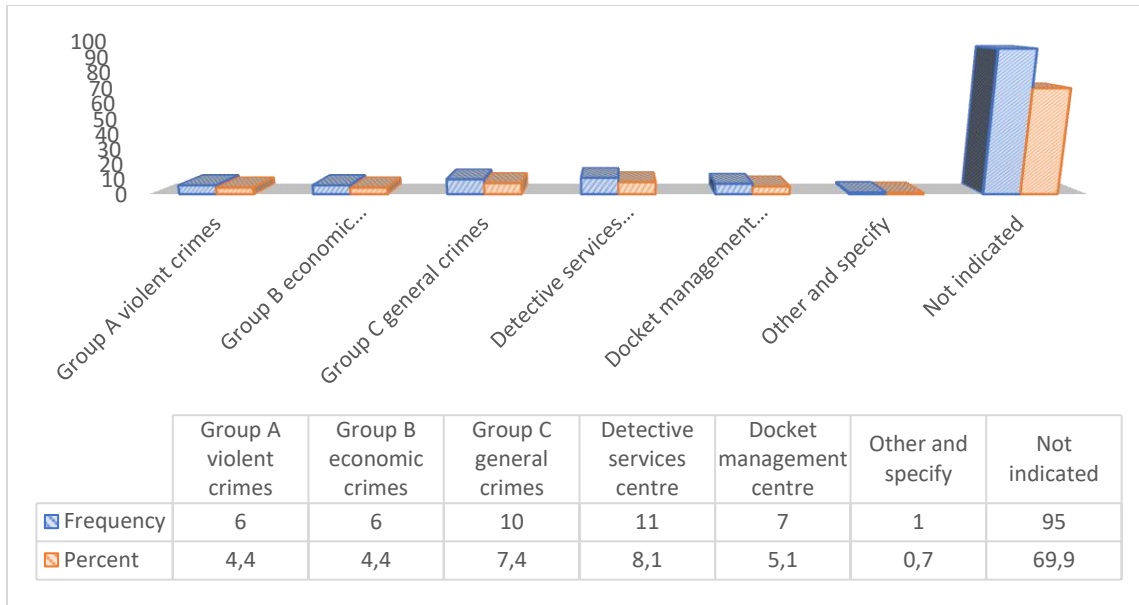


Figure 4.3: Detective services

The surveyed respondents results presented in both Table 4.4 and Figure 4.3 indicate that Detective Services Centre had a large number of respondents – 8% (n=11), followed closely by Group C General Crimes with 7.4% (n=10). Respondents from the Docket Management Centre had 5.1% (n=7), whereas Group A Violent Crimes and Group B Economic Crimes both had 4.4% (n=6) of respondents, respectively. Other Specify had 0.7% (n=1) of respondents. Therefore, the overall number of respondents from the Detective Services branch was 30.1% (n=41) of 136 returned questionnaires.

4.3.1.3 Support services

Table 4.5: Support services

	Frequency	Percentage
Administration services	9	6,6
Cooperate communication	14	10,3
Financial services	5	3,7

	Frequency	Percentage
Human resource management	5	3,7
Loss management	1	0,7
Supply chain management	4	2,9
Not indicated	98	72,1
Total	136	100,00

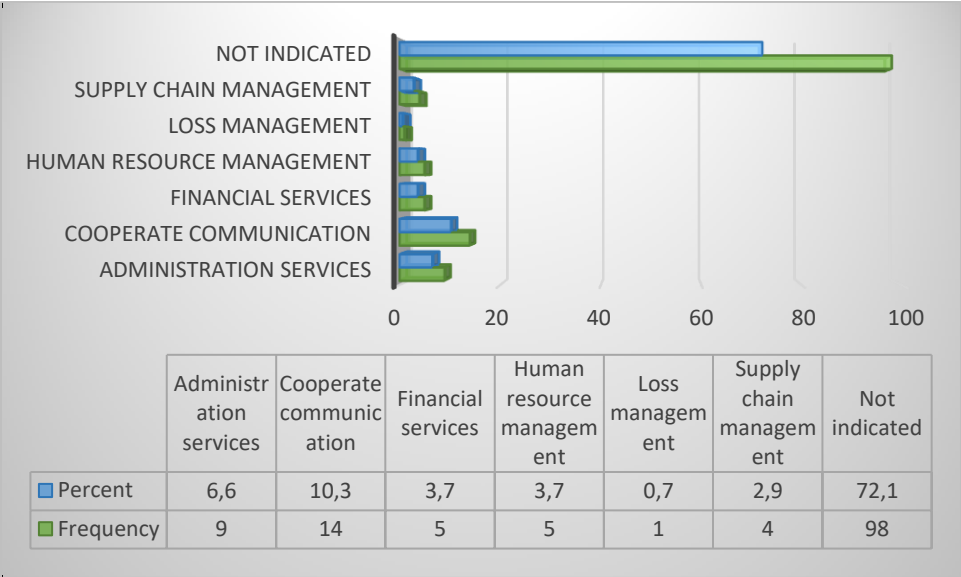


Figure 4.4: Support services

The results of the surveyed respondents presented in Table 4.5 and Figure 4.4 demonstrate that the majority of respondents derived from the Cooperate Communication sub-branch, with 10.3% (n=14) of respondents. Administration Services followed closely with 6.6% (n=9) of respondents. Both Financial Services and Human Resources had 3.7% (n=5) of

respondents, respectively. Supply Chain had 2.9% (n=4) of respondents and Loss Management had only 0.7% (n=1) of respondents.

The overall number of respondents from the Support Services was 27.9% (n=38) of 136 returned questionnaires.

4.3.1.4 Occupational level

Table 4.6 shows the frequencies and percentages of the types of occupational levels held by respondents in their respective departments, while Figure 4.5 depicts the relationship between the number of respondents and their occupational level as a visual format of information contained in Table 4.6, with the results of the descriptive analysis discussed below.

Table 4.6: Occupational level

	Frequency	Percentage
Senior management level	6	4,4
Middle-management level	19	14
Supervisor level	9	6,6
Clerk administrator level	30	22,1
Other	72	52,9
Total	136	100,00

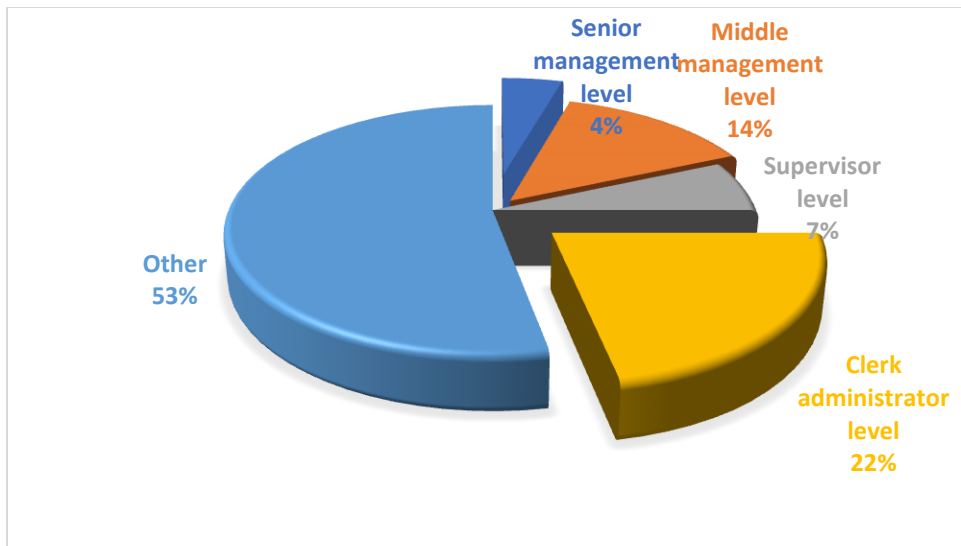


Figure 4.5: Occupational level

The results presented in Table 4.6 and Figure 4.5 about the occupational level of respondents show that other (which refers to subordinate employees level) had the majority of 53% (n=72) of respondents. The clerk administration level had 22% (n=30) of respondents, followed by the middle-management level with 14% (n=19) of respondents, while the supervisor level registered 7% (n=9) respondents and senior management level had 4% (n=6).

This indicates that respondents from the management level constituted an overall number of 18.3% (n=25) of 136 returned questionnaires. On the other hand, the total number of respondents from the subordinate employees was 81.6% (n=111). Therefore, the majority of responses came from the subordinate employees.

4.3.1.5 Employment status

Table 4.7 demonstrates the frequencies and percentages of the years of employment held by respondents at the organisation. Figure 4.6 depicts the relationship between the number of respondents and their years of employment at SAPS – Inanda Police Station, with the results of the descriptive analysis discussed below, as a visual format of the information contained in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Employment status

	Frequency	Percentage
3–6 years	16	11,8
More than 6 years	120	88,2
Total	136	100,00

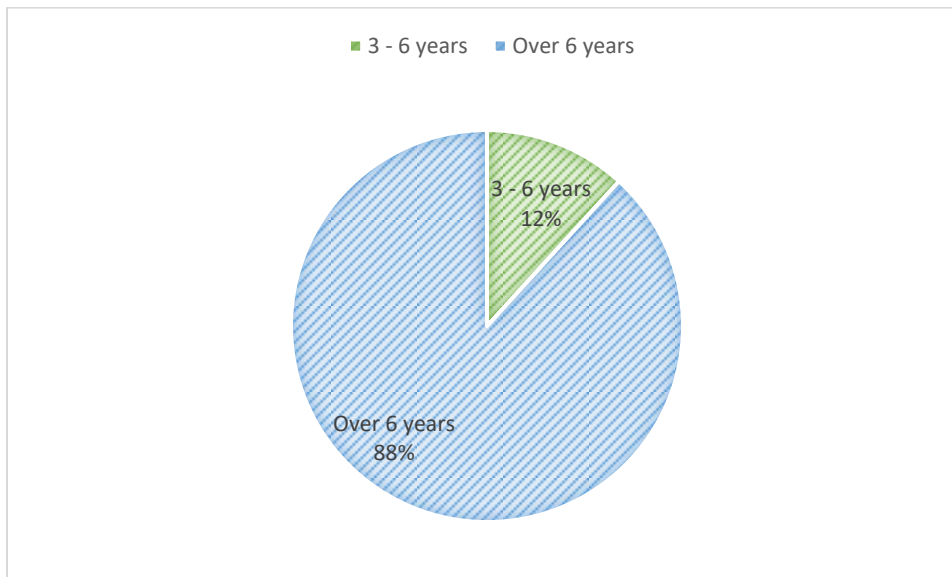


Figure 4.6: Employment status

The findings presented in Table 4.7 and Figure 4.6 indicate that 88% (n=120) of the surveyed respondents had been working in the SAPS – Inanda Police Station for more than six years. It is further depicted that 12% (n=16) of surveyed respondents had 3–6 years of employment there.

4.3.1.6 Educational level

Table 4.8 shows the frequencies and percentages of the educational level held by respondents. Figure 4.7 depicts the relationship between the number of respondents and

their educational level as a visual format from information contained in Table 4.8, with the results of the descriptive analysis discussed below.

Table 4.8: Educational level

	Frequency	Percentage
Matric	32	23,5
Higher certificate	66	48,5
Diploma	30	22,1
Degree or advanced diploma	8	5,9
Total	136	100

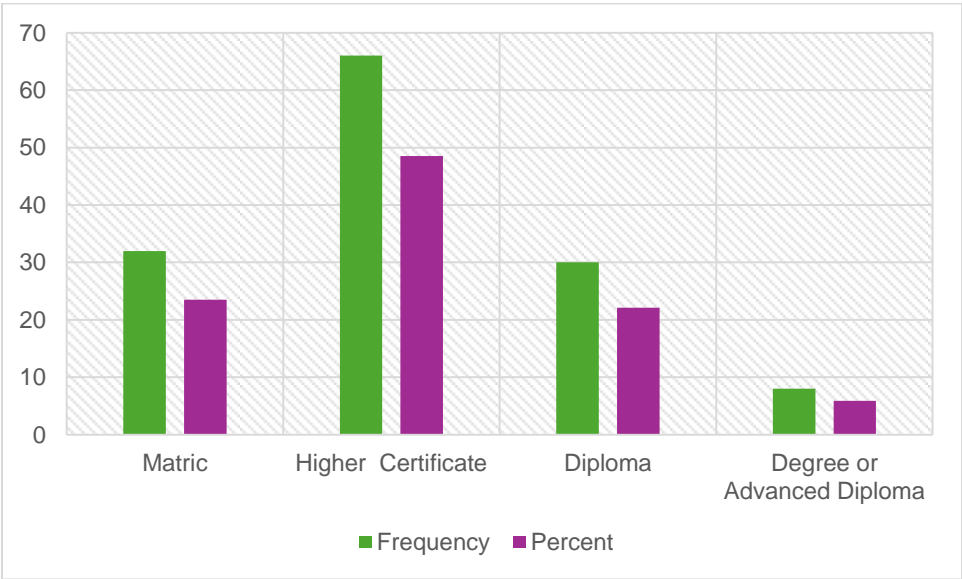


Figure 4.7: Educational level

Table 4.8 and Figure 4.7 demonstrate that 48.5% (n=66) of surveyed respondents had a Higher certificate qualification. Respondents with a Matric certificate comprised 23.5% (n=32). The surveyed respondents with a Diploma were 22.1% (n=30). Last, about 5.9% (n=8) of surveyed respondents had a Degree or Advanced Diploma qualification.

4.4 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS USED AT SAPS – INANDA POLICE STATION

Table 4.9 shows the frequencies and percentages of the types of internal communication channels perceived by respondents as most used by SAPS – Inanda Police Station. The respondents were required to select only five internal communication channels. Figure 4.8 depicts the relationship between the number of respondents and their selected internal communication channels as a visual format from information contained in Table 4.9, with the results of the descriptive analysis discussed below.

4.4.1 Internal communication channels

Table 4.9: Types of internal communication channels used at SAPS – Inanda Police Station

	Frequency	Percentage
1,2,3,4,5	10	7,4
1,2,3,4,7	17	12,5
1,2,3,4,8	3	2,2
1,2,3,4,9	2	1,5
1,2,3,5,7	1	0,7
1,2,3,5,8	3	2,2
1,2,3,5,9	2	1,5

	Frequency	Percentage
1,2,4,5,10	3	2,2
1,2,4,5,6	3	2,2
1,2,4,5,7	75	55,1
1,2,4,5,8	4	2,9
1,2,4,5,9	2	1,5
1,2,4,7,9	1	0,7
1,2,5,6,7	2	1,5
1,3,4,5,8	4	2,9
1,3,4,5,9	2	1,5
1,3,4,7,9	1	0,7
1,4,5,7,9	1	0,7
Total	136	100,00

Where

1= Face-to-face meetings; 2= organisational email; 3= SAPS intranet; 4= telephone; 5= social media (WhatsApp); 6= Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin; 7= Noticeboards; 8= internal monthly publication; 9= internal focused events & 10= video conferencing.

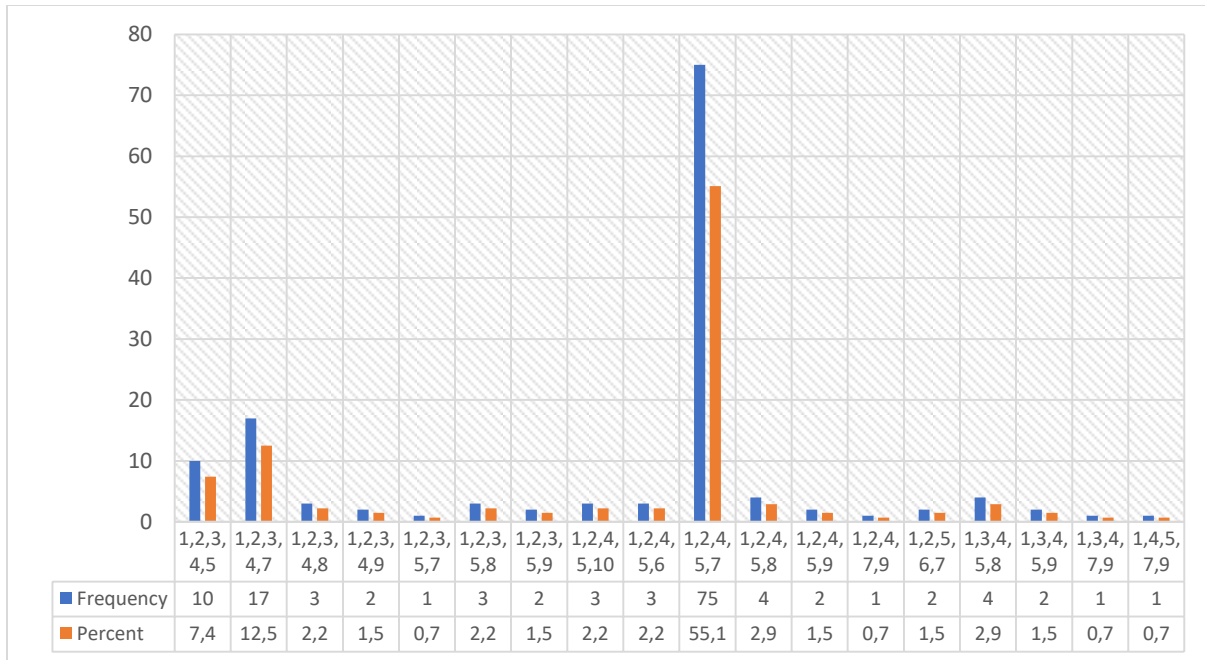


Figure 4.8: Internal communication channels

From Table 4.9 and Figure 4.8, it can be seen that the majority of 55.1% (n=75) of surveyed respondents chose 1,2,4,5,7 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and noticeboards) as the internal communication channels that were mostly used by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. The following most-used channels obtained 12.5% (n=17) and were 1,2,3,4,7 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, telephone and noticeboards). It is also shown that 1,2,3,4,5 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, telephone and social media – WhatsApp) registered 7.4% (n=10) and were seen by some respondents as most-used channels. 1,2,4,5,8 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and internal monthly publication), and 1,3,4,5,8 (face-to-face meetings, SAPS intranet, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and internal monthly publication) registered 2.9 % (n=4), respectively. This indicates that face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and noticeboards were the channels most used by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

In addition, 1,2,3,4,8 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, telephone and internal monthly publication); 1,2,3,5,8 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email,

SAPS intranet, social media – WhatsApp and internal monthly publication); 1,2,4,5,10 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and video conferencing) and 1,2,4,5,6 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin) registered 2.2 % (n=3), respectively.

Furthermore, 1,2,3,4,9 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, telephone and internal focused events); 1,2,3,5,9 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, social media – WhatsApp and internal focused events); 1,2,4,5,9 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and internal focused events); 1,2,5,6,7 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, social media – WhatsApp and Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin); and 1,3,4,5,9 (face-to-face meetings, SAPS intranet, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and internal focused events) all registered 1.5% (n=2), respectively.

Last, 1,2,3,5,7 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, social media – WhatsApp and noticeboards); 1,2,4,7,9 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, noticeboards and Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin); 1,3,4,7,9 (face-to-face meetings, SAPS intranet, telephone, noticeboards and internal focused events) and 1,4,5,7,9 (face-to-face meetings, telephone, social media – WhatsApp, noticeboards and internal focused events) all registered 0.7% (n=1), respectively.

4.5 FUNCTION OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS OF SAPS – INANDA POLICE STATION

Table 4.10 demonstrates the frequencies and percentages of the perceptions held by respondents regarding the function of the internal communication channels of SAPS – Inanda Police Station, based on the five-point Likert scale to assign values to a number of aspects. This was in the form of standardised options and categories, namely strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Figure 4.10 depicts the relationship between the number of respondents and their perceptions as a visual format from information contained in Table 4.10, with the results of the descriptive analysis discussed below.

Table 4.10: Function of internal communication channels

Item. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
C8	Internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station facilitate the sharing of information.	35%	39%	21%	5%	0%	100%
C9	Internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station convey information quickly and effectively.	37%	12%	42%	10%	0%	100%
C10	Internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station convey information sufficiently about day-to-day tasks.	33%	20%	37%	10%	0%	100%
C11	Internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station enable the sharing of new ideas.	23%	51%	24%	1%	0%	100%
C12	Internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station facilitate feedback.	22%	48%	29%	1%	0%	100%
C13	Internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station provide two-way communication.	24%	31%	45%	0%	0%	100%

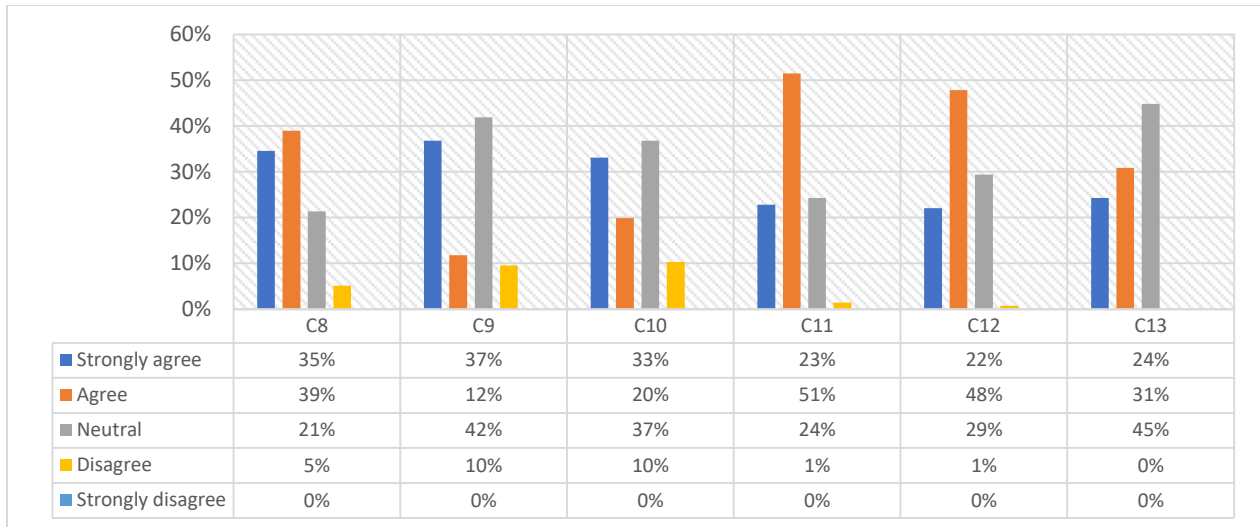


Figure 4.9: Function of internal communication channels

From Table 4.10 and Figure 4.9, Item C8, the majority of 39% of surveyed respondents agree that internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station facilitate the sharing of information. This is closely followed by 35% of the respondents who strongly agreed, while 21% of respondents were neutral and only 5% of respondents disagreed. Therefore, this shows that there were positive and neutral perceptions about whether the internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station do facilitate the sharing of information.

From the Item C9, 42% (the majority) of respondents were neutral with regard to whether the internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station convey information quickly and effectively; 37% strongly agreed, while 12% agreed and only 10% disagreed. This also shows that there was confusion with whether the internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station convey information quickly and effectively, since most respondents were not clear about this.

In terms of Item C10, 37% of respondents were neutral about whether the internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station sufficiently convey information about day-to-day tasks; 33% strongly agreed; 20% agreed, and 10% disagreed. This demonstrates that, while the majority of respondents agreed that the internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station sufficiently convey information about day-to-day tasks; many were neutral.

Regarding Item C11, 51% of respondents agreed that internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station enable the sharing of new ideas; 24% were neutral; 23% strongly agreed, whereas only 1% disagreed. This demonstrates that the internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station do enable the sharing of new ideas to some degree, while there were also neutral responses.

In terms of Item C12, the majority (48%) of respondents agree that internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station facilitate feedback; 29% of respondents were neutral, while 22% strongly agreed, and only 1% disagreed. Corresponding with these findings, this reveals that feedback does exist to some degree within the internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station, while there were also a score of respondents who were neutral.

Regarding Item C13, 45% of respondents were neutral with regard to whether the internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station provide two-way communication, whereas 31% agreed and 24% strongly agreed. This demonstrates that, while a large proportion of respondents were unsure whether the internal communication channels of Inanda Police Station provide two-way communication, the majority were positive.

4.6 INFORMATION FLOW

This section deals with the respondents' perception with regard to the information flow of Inanda Police Station, based on the following dimensions: downward flow, upward flow, horizontal flow and diagonal flow. The five-point Likert scale was also used to assign values to a number of aspects in the form of standardised options and categories, namely strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

4.6.1 Downward flow

Table 4.11 demonstrates the percentages of the perceptions held by respondents regarding the downward flow of information of Inanda Police Station based on the five-point Likert scale to assign values to a number of aspects in the form of standardised options and categories, namely, strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Figure 4.10 depicts the relationship between the number of respondents and their perception as a

visual format from information contained in Table 4.11, with the results of the descriptive analysis discussed below.

Table 4.11: Downward flow

Item. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
D1.14	I am informed about the department's mission, vision and policies.	44%	33%	23%	0%	0%	100%
D1.15	I get enough information when I need it.	29%	10%	51%	10%	0%	100%
D1.16	I am informed about my work's impact in meeting the goals of the department.	26%	33%	39%	1%	0%	100%
D1.17	My direct manager informs me about my progress in my job.	35%	40%	24%	0%	0%	100%
D1.18	My manager assists me to understand the structure of my job.	40%	46%	15%	0%	0%	100%
D1.19	My manager provides enough instructions and information required for my job.	18%	71%	11%	1%	0%	100%

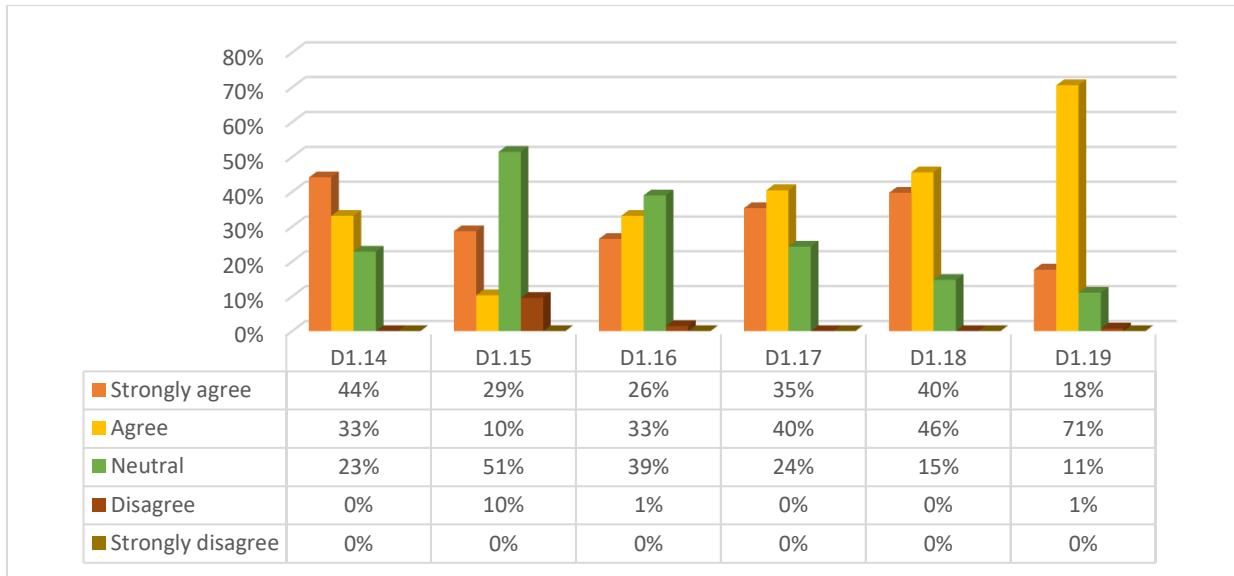


Figure 4.10: Downward flow

In terms of Table 4.11 and Figure 4.10, in reference to Item D1.14, which sought to identify whether respondents were informed about the department’s (organisation) mission, vision and policies, it appeared that the organisation did inform respondents, since the majority of 44% strongly agreed, and 33% agreed, whereas 23% held a neutral perception. In Item D1.15, with regard to whether respondents get enough information when they need it within the organisation, the situation was more complicated since the majority (51%) of respondents indicated that they were neutral and 10% disagreed, while 29% were clear as they strongly agreed, and 10 % agreed.

With regard to Item D1.16, which aimed to identify whether respondents were informed about their work’s impact in meeting the goals of the department (organisation), in this instance, it was also unclear since the majority of 39% held a neutral perception, while 33% agreed, 26% strongly agreed and only 1% disagreed. In Item D1.17, regarding whether direct managers inform respondents about their progress in their respective jobs, it appeared that managers do inform respondents since the majority of 40% agreed, 35% strongly agreed, while 24% held a neutral perception.

Regarding Item D1.18 indicating whether managers assist respondents to understand the structure of their jobs, the response was positive as the majority of 46% agreed, 40%

strongly agreed, only 15 % showed a neutral response. Based on Item D1.19 with regard to respondents managers providing enough instructions and information required for their respective jobs, the response was very positive as a staggering 71% of respondents agreed, 18% strongly agreed, 11% held a neutral perception and 1% disagreed.

4.6.2 Upward flow

Table 4.12 demonstrates the percentages of the perception held by respondents regarding the upward flow of information of Inanda Police Station based on the five-point Likert scale to assign values to a number of aspects in the form of standardised options and categories, namely, strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Furthermore, Figure 4.11 depicts the relationship between the number of respondents and their perception as a visual format from information contained in Table 4.12, with the results of the descriptive analysis discussed below.

Table 4.12: Upward flow

Item. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
D2.20	I freely communicate how I feel about my job, with co-workers, and the department in general.	38%	28%	30%	4%	0%	100%
D2.21	I am allowed to make suggestions about what tasks are required and how they can be achieved.	38%	30%	27%	4%	0%	100%
D2.22	My manager accepts my feedback regarding my job from time to time.	24%	71%	5%	0%	0%	100%
D2.23	When I escalate my grievances,	16%	63%	21%	1%	0%	100%

Item. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
	my manager sympathetically listens to them.						
D2.24	I am allowed to communicate my creative ideas that have an impact in the decision-making processes.	33%	24%	37%	6%	0%	100%
D2.25	I am allowed to express myself about organisational policies and practices.	29%	32%	26%	13%	0%	100%

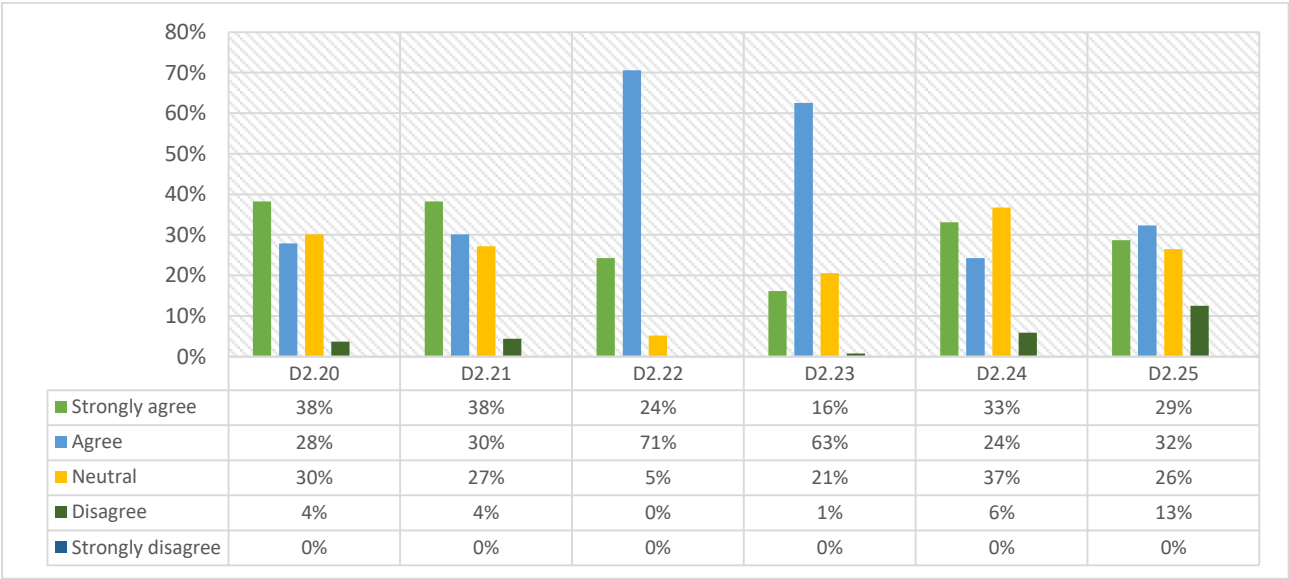


Figure 4.11: Upward flow

In respect of Item D2.20 which strove to identify whether respondents freely communicate how they feel about their respective jobs, with co-workers, and the organisation in general, the response ranged from positive and neutral, to a few negative responses, since the

majority of 38% indicated that they strongly agreed, and 28% agreed, while 30% held a neutral perception, and only 4% disagreed. In terms of Item D2.21, which sought to discover whether respondents were allowed to make suggestions about what tasks are required and how they can be achieved, responses demonstrated mixed feelings as the majority of 38% strongly agreed, and 30% agreed, whereas 27% were neutral and 4% disagreed.

In relation to D2.22, regarding whether respondent's managers accept their feedback regarding their respective jobs from time to time, the response was largely positive as a significant 71% of respondents agreed, 24% strongly agreed and only 5% were neutral. In reference to Item D2.23, which sought to identify whether, when respondents escalate their grievances, their respective managers listen to them sympathetically, the response was also largely positive as the majority of 63% of respondents agreed, 21% held a neutral stance, while 16% strongly agreed, and 1% disagreed.

In terms of Item D2.24, which aimed to discover whether respondents were allowed to communicate their creative ideas that have an impact on the decision-making processes in the organisation, the response was mostly positive and only partially negative because the majority of 37% of respondents held a neutral perception, while 33% strongly agreed, 24% agreed and only 6% disagreed. In terms of Item D2.25 which strove to find out whether respondents are allowed to express themselves about organisational policies and practices, there are mixed perceptions in this instance as the majority of 32% agreed, 29% strongly agreed, while 26% held a neutral perception and 13% disagreed.

4.6.3 Horizontal flow

Table 4.13 reveals the percentages of the perceptions held by respondents regarding the horizontal flow of information of Inanda Police Station based on the five-point Likert scale to assign values to a number of aspects in the form of standardised options and categories, namely, strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Furthermore, Figure 4.12 depicts the relationship between the number of respondents and their perceptions as a visual format from information contained in Table 4.13, with the results of the descriptive analysis discussed below.

Table 4.13: Horizontal flow

Item. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
D3.26	I communicate timeously with my colleagues who work in my branch and who are at the same rank as me.	54%	44%	1%	0%	0%	100%
D3.27	I communicate timeously with my colleagues who work in other branches.	40%	59%	1%	0%	0%	100%
D3.28	I am allowed to communicate my ideas when working as a team with my colleagues who are at the same level as me.	40%	58%	1%	0%	0%	100%
D3.29	The department encourages the engagement of all employees throughout interactions.	39%	60%	1%	0%	0%	100%
D3.30	In a team meeting to coordinate tasks, I am allowed to raise my suggestions and concerns.	51%	45%	4%	0%	0%	100%
D3.31	In a meeting, we normally follow up with previous meetings and prior issues.	46%	50%	4%	0%	0%	100%

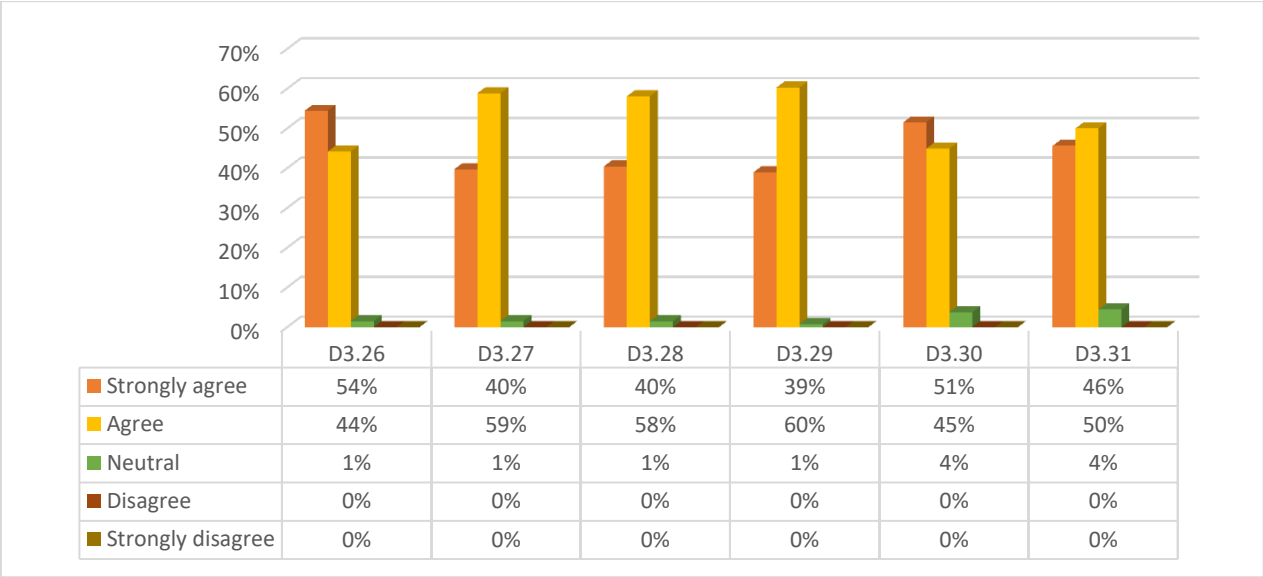


Figure 4.12: Horizontal flow

Regarding Item D3.26, meant to identify whether respondents communicate timeously with colleagues who work in their respective branches and who are at the same rank as them, the response was largely positive as the majority of 54% indicated that they strongly agreed, 44% agreed, while only 1% held a neutral perception. In respect of Item D3.27, which aimed to identify whether respondents communicate timeously with their colleagues who work in other branches, the findings also demonstrate positive response because a majority of 59% indicated that they agreed, 40% strongly agreed, while only 1% registered a neutral response.

With regard to Item D3.28, based on whether respondents were allowed to communicate their ideas when working as a team with their colleagues who are at the same level as them, the response was also largely positive as the majority of 58% agreed, 40% strongly agreed, and only 1% held a neutral perception. Regarding Item D3.29, based on whether the department (organisation) encourages the engagement of all employees throughout interactions, the response was also largely positive as a significant sum of 60% agreed, 39% strongly agreed, while only 1% registered neutral.

With reference to Item D3.30, which sought to identify whether in a team meeting to coordinate tasks, respondents were allowed to raise their suggestions and concerns, the findings were also positive as the majority of 51% strongly agreed, followed by 45% who agreed, and only 4% with a neutral perception. Based on D3.31, which sought to find out whether, in a meeting, the organisation normally follows up with previous meetings and prior issues indicated, similar to the above cases, the response was largely positive, since the majority of 50% agreed, 46% strongly agreed and only 4% registered a neutral response.

4.6.4 Diagonal flow

Table 4.14 shows the percentages of the perceptions held by respondents regarding the diagonal flow of information of Inanda Police Station based on the five-point Likert scale to assign values to a number of aspects in the form of standardised options and categories, namely, strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Furthermore, Figure 4.13 depicts the relationship between the number of respondents and their perception as a visual format from information contained in Table 4.14, with the results of the descriptive analysis discussed below.

Table 4.14: Diagonal flow

Item. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
D4.32	I am allowed to directly ask the management questions.	17%	51%	31%	1%	0%	100%
D4.33	I have a good relationship with the senior management across the department.	18%	54%	20%	8%	0%	100%
D4.34	Informal information flow is encouraged.	18%	45%	31%	6%	0%	100%

Item. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
D4.35	I quickly receive information from different levels of the department.	24%	27%	35%	13%	0%	100%
D4.36	I am allowed to raise my concerns in a meeting convened by management.	42%	17%	37%	4%	0%	100%

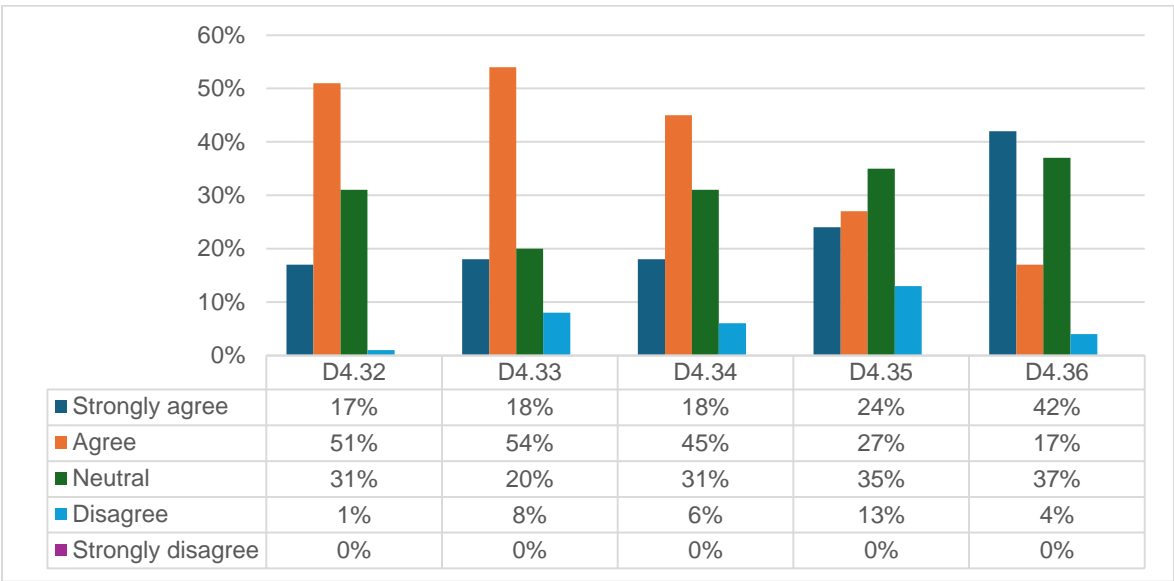


Figure 4.13: Diagonal flow

In reference to Item D4.32, which sought to identify whether respondents were allowed to ask the management questions directly, although the majority of 51% agreed, the overall results were positive and only minimally negative, since 31% of respondents had a neutral perception, while 17% strongly agreed and only 1% disagreed. In relation to Item D4.33, which aimed to discover whether respondents had a good relationship with the senior management across the department (organisation), responses vary similarly, meaning that

responses were positive and only partly negative, since the majority of 54% of respondents agreed, while 20% were neutral, 18% strongly agreed, and 8% disagreed.

With regard to Item D4.34, which aimed to find out whether informal information flow is encouraged within the organisation, the responses were both positive and only partially negative, since 45% agreed, while 31% registered a neutral response, 18% strongly agreed, and 6% disagreed. In respect of Item D4.35, which attempted to identify whether respondents receive information quickly from different levels of the department (organisation), responses were both positive and only fairly negative since 35% held a neutral perception, while 27% agreed, 24% strongly agreed and 13% disagreed.

Finally, in relation to Item D4.36, which is concerned with whether respondents were allowed to raise their concerns in a meeting convened by management, responses were positive and only partly negative, since the majority of 42% strongly agreed, while 37% were neutral, 17% agreed, whereas only 4% disagreed.

4.7 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS PREFERENCES

Table 4.15 shows the frequencies and percentages of the internal communication channels preferences held by respondents who were requested to make only five preferences. The descriptive analysis discussed below contains information from Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Types of internal communication channels used at SAPS – Inanda Police Station preferred by employees.

	Frequency	Percentage
1,2,3,4,5	9	6,6
1,2,3,4,6	2	1,5
1,2,3,4,7	16	11,8
1,2,3,5,6	1	0,7

	Frequency	Percentage
1,2,3,5,7	7	5,1
1,2,3,6,7	3	2,2
1,2,3,6,9	2	1,5
1,2,3,7,8	1	0,7
1,2,3,7,9	3	2,2
1,2,3,8,9	1	0,7
1,2,4,5,10	1	0,7
1,2,4,5,6	2	1,5
1,2,4,5,7	71	52,2
1,2,4,5,8	2	1,5
1,2,4,5,7	1	0,7
1,2,4,6,10	1	0,7
1,2,4,6,7	2	1,5
1,2,4,7,8	1	0,7
1,2,5,7,10	2	1,5

	Frequency	Percentage
1,2,5,7,8	2	1,5
1,2,6,8,9	1	0,7
1,3,4,6,8	2	1,5
2,3,4,6,7	1	0,7
2,3,4,6,8	1	0,7
2,3,5,7,9	1	0,7
Total	136	100,00

Where

1= Face-to-face meetings; 2= organisational email; 3= SAPS intranet; 4= telephone; 5= social media (WhatsApp); 6= Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin; 7= noticeboards; 8= internal monthly publication; 9= internal focused events; 10= video conferencing.

Table 4.15 reveals that the majority of 52.2% (n=71) of respondents preferred 1,2,4,5,7 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and noticeboards) as their appropriate internal communication channels. Others, with 11.8% (n=16), indicated that they preferred 1,2,3,4,7 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, telephone and noticeboards) as their suitable internal communication channels. Some registered 6.6% for (n=9) 1,2,3,4,5 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, telephone and social media – WhatsApp), whereas 1,2,3,5,7 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, social media – WhatsApp and noticeboards) registered 5.1% (n=7) and 1,2,3,6,7 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin and noticeboards) and 1,2,3,7,9 (face-to-

face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, noticeboards and internal focused events) registered 2.2% (n=3), respectively.

In addition, other respondents with 1.5% (n=2) preferred 1,2,3,4,6 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, telephone and TV/Servamus/bulletin); 1,2,3,6,9 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, TV/Servamus/bulletin and internal focused events); 1,2,4,5,6 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and TV/Servamus/bulletin); 1,2,4,5,8 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and internal monthly publication); 1,2,4,6,7 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, Social media – WhatsApp, TV/Servamus/bulletin and noticeboards); 1,2,5,7,10 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, social media – WhatsApp, telephone and video conferencing) and 1,2,5,7,8 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, social media – WhatsApp, noticeboards and internal monthly publication) as their appropriate internal communication channels.

Furthermore, 1,2,3,5,6 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, social media – WhatsApp and TV/Servamus/bulletin); 1,2,3,7,8 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, noticeboards and internal monthly publication); 1,2,3,8,9 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, SAPS intranet, internal monthly publication and internal focused events); 1,2,4,5,10 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and video conferencing); 1,2,4,5,7 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and noticeboards); 1,2,4,6,10 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin and video conferencing); 1,2,4,7,8 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, internal monthly publication and internal focused events); 1,2,6,8,9 (face-to-face meetings, organisational email, Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin, internal monthly publication and internal focused events); 2,3,4,6,7 (organisational email, SAPS intranet, telephone, Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin and noticeboards); 2,3,4,6,8 (organisational email, SAPS intranet, telephone, Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin and internal monthly publication); and 2,3,5,7,9 (organisational email, SAPS intranet, social media – WhatsApp, noticeboards and internal focused events) registered 0,7% (n=1), respectively.

4.8 MOTIVES FOR PREFERRING THESE CHANNELS

Table 4.16 shows the frequencies and percentages of the motives held by respondents for preferring these channels, and who were asked to pick only three motives. The descriptive analysis discussed below contains information from Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: The employees' reasons for preferring these internal communication channels

	Frequency	Percentage
1,2,3	83	61
1,2,4	15	11
1,2,5	5	3,7
1,2,9	1	0,7
1,3,4	6	4,4
1,3,5	3	2,2
1,3,6	1	0,7
1,4,5	3	2,2
1,5,8	1	0,7
1,6,8	4	2,9
1,6,9	1	0,7
1,7,9	1	0,7

	Frequency	Percentage
2,3,4	1	0,7
2,3,6	1	0,7
2,3,7	1	0,7
2,4,5	1	0,7
2,4,6	2	1,5
2,4,7	1	0,7
2,5,9	2	1,5
2,6,8	2	1,5
3,4,5	1	0,7
Total	136	100,00

Where

1= I find these channels more user friendly; 2= These channels convey messages clearly; 3= I personally use these channels more frequently; 4= I have full access to these channels; 5= I feel actively engaged in these channels; 6= I feel that these channels provide reliable information; 7= The message delivered in these channels is tailored; 8= These channels enable two-way communication; 9= I often encounter these channels whenever I am at work & 10= Other and specify.

Table 4.16 demonstrates that the majority of surveyed respondents, 61% (n=83), chose the following motives as the principal reasons for their preferred internal communication

channels, namely, 1,2,3 (I find these channels more user friendly; These channels convey messages clearly; and I personally use these channels more frequently). Other respondents with 11% (n=15) selected 1,2,4 (I find these channels more user friendly; These channels convey messages clearly; and I have full access to these channels) as their motives for preferring those internal communication channels.

Some of respondents with 4.4% (n=6) selected 1,3,4 (I find these channels more user friendly; I personally use these channels more frequently; and I have full access to these channels) as their motives for the preferred internal communication channels, while 3.7% (n=5) of the respondents chose 1,2,5 (I have full access to these channels; These channels convey messages clearly; and I find these channels more user friendly) as their motives. About 2.9% (n=4) of surveyed respondents selected 1,6,8 (I find these channels more user friendly; I feel that these channels provide reliable information; and These channels enable two-way communication) as their motives for the preferred internal communication channels.

Then, 2.2% (n=3) of respondents indicated 1,3,5 (I find these channels more user friendly; I personally use these channels more frequently; and I feel actively engaged in these channels) and 1,4,5 (I find these channels more user friendly; I have full access to these channels; and I feel actively engaged in these channels), respectively, as their motives. On the other hand, 1.5% of respondents selected 2,4,6 (These channels convey messages clearly; I have full access to these channels; and I feel that these channels provide reliable information); 2,5,9 (These channels convey messages clearly; I feel actively engaged in these channels; and I often encounter these channels whenever I am at work); and 2,6,8 (These channels convey messages clearly; I feel that these channels provide reliable information; and These channels enable two-way communication) respectively, as their motives.

The rest, with 0.7% (n=1) selected 1,2,9 (I find these channels more user friendly; These channels convey messages clearly; and I often encounter these channels whenever I am at work); 1,3,6 (I find these channels more user friendly, I personally use these channels more frequently; and I feel that these channels provide reliable information); 1,5,8 (I find these

channels more user friendly, I feel actively engaged in these channels; and These channels enable two-way communication); 1,6,9 (I find these channels more user friendly, I feel that these channels provide reliable information; and I often encounter these channels whenever I am at work); 1,7,9 (I find these channels more user friendly, The message delivered in these channels is tailored; and I often encounter these channels whenever I am at work); 2,3,4 (I have full access to these channels, I personally use these channels more frequently; and These channels convey messages clearly); 2,3,6 (These channels convey messages clearly; I personally use these channels more frequently; and I feel that these channels provide reliable information); 2,3,7 (The message delivered in these channels is tailored, I personally use these channels more frequently; and These channels convey messages clearly); 2,4,5 (These channels convey messages clearly; I feel actively engaged in these channels; and I have full access to these channels); 2,4,7 (The message delivered in these channels is tailored; I have full access to these channels; and These channels convey messages clearly); and 3,4,5 (I personally use these channels more frequently; I have full access to these channels; and I feel actively engaged in these channels), respectively.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, data analysis and interpretation was extensively dealt with, including the findings with regard to the use of internal communication channels within the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19. It was composed of statistical calculations and analysis reflected in the use of diagrams/graphs, and tables, along with thorough descriptions. It commenced with demographic data, followed by the data collected from the main research questions. The following chapter discusses conclusions and offers recommendations from the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The principal goal of the study was to investigate the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19, to highlight the potential for successful use and the fault lines within these channels. It was noted in subsection 1.3 in Chapter One that there was a paucity of studies focusing primarily on examining the use of internal communication channels within the government institutions (Montsho, 2013; Mbhele, 2017; Kealey, 2019). Therefore, among the motives for conducting the study was to address that dearth, and the SAPS – Inanda Police Station was identified as the appropriate site for addressing that scarcity (see Chapter One).

It was also discussed in Chapter One that it was mandatory for organisations to study the proficiency of their internal communication channels continuously for the following reasons:

- First, the organisation may be confronted by environmental changes that compel its adaptation, and then COVID-19 was recognised and discussed as the major example in this regard (Verghese, 2016).
- Second, constant changes at the workplace regarding the evolving expectations of workers may make them feel disengaged and require more open communication with the management, which may necessitate a change in the internal communication channels used by an organisation.
- Last, it was discussed that, as technology continues to advance, it is of the utmost importance for organisations to monitor their employees' interactions with internal communication channels meticulously (Verghese, 2016). Hence, the study concluded that the internal communication channels used by organisations should be selected based on employee preferences to achieve their successful use.

To accomplish the goal of the study, the research objectives and questions in line with these reasons and the comprehension of the use of internal communication channels at the

SAPS – Inanda Police Station as a government institution were answered through the combination of the literature review in Chapter Two as well as the perceptions of the respondents gathered in the study. The study used quantitative research methods to permit the researcher to identify the aforementioned data. This chapter discusses what the study investigated and further aims to answer whether the research objectives and questions were answered by the findings of the study. It was proposed that, for the successful use of internal communication channels by a government institution, all employees, irrespective of their positions within the organisation, should be involved in the selection of appropriate internal communication channels to avoid clutter and the use of ineffective internal communication channels. A summary of each chapter is presented below.

5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one addressed the research orientation and its underlying background. This chapter introduced the research topic, extensively discussing the research problem and research objectives. The research problem stressed the unproductive use of internal communication channels impeding the SAPS – Inanda Police Stations efficacy and service delivery. The objective of the study was to examine the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19 to highlight the potential for successful use and the fault lines within these channels.

Chapter two broadly discussed the research theoretical framework which is known as a literature review. This chapter discussed the literature review on the use of internal communication channels within ordinary organisations and went on to discuss the theoretical framework for the study, namely, general systems theory and stakeholder theory, channels of the government institutions in a South African context. In addition, it reviewed influence of the channels in improving internal communication within an organisation, if selected appropriately.

Chapter three outlined the research design and methodology. This chapter discussed the methodological design adopted by the researcher for the study to collect and produce accurate findings that were used to generalise the investigated population. It described the positivist paradigm adopted for the study. The quantitative approach chosen for the study

and its appropriateness were also deliberated upon. In addition, the research methodology, consisting of data collection techniques and approaches, was dealt with. Last, the data analysis and interpretation were outlined.

Chapter four dealt with data presentation and analysis. In this chapter, data analysis and interpretation was extensively dealt with, including the findings with regard to the use of internal communication channels within the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19. It was composed of statistical calculations and analysis reflected in the use of diagrams/graphs, and tables, along with thorough descriptions. It commenced with demographic data, followed by the data collected from the main research questions.

This final chapter (five) presents the culmination of the research journey, synthesising the findings and insights gathered in response to the research objectives and questions. It summarises the key takeaways, highlights the implications of the discoveries, and provides recommendations for future action, while also acknowledging the study's limitations and suggesting avenues for further research. It also confirms how the findings align with the research objectives, providing a cohesive and meaningful conclusion to the study.

5.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This section lists the research objectives and research questions for this study.

5.3.1 The objectives of the study

The study examined the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19 to highlight the potential for successful use and the fault lines within these channels. The objectives of the study were to:

- explore the internal communication channels that are mostly used by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station;
- describe the understanding of the management and employees with regard to the function of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station;

- describe the perception of management and employees with regard to the flow of information within internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station;
- explore the internal communication channels that are preferred as most appropriate by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station’s management and employees; and
- describe the reasons why the preferred internal communication channels are regarded as valuable among staff members.

5.3.2 Research questions

The main research question answered for the study was: How are internal communication channels used at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?

The sub-questions for the study were:

- Which internal communication channels are mostly used by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station to facilitate its internal communication?
- What is the understanding of the management and employees about the function of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?
- How do management and employees perceive the flow of information within the internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?
- Which internal communication channels are preferred by management and employees as most appropriate for facilitating internal communication at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?
- Why are the preferred internal communication channels regarded as valuable among staff members?

These research objectives and questions are discussed in the five subsections below. Subsection 5.5.1 discusses the first research objective and question; subsection 5.5.2 discusses the second research objective and question; subsection 5.5.3 discusses the third research objective and question; subsection 5.5.4 discusses the fourth research objective and question; and the fifth research objective and question are discussed in subsection 5.5.5. First, demographic profile of respondents is discussed below.

5.4 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Demographic findings are articulated according to the following aspects: respondents' sub-branches, occupational level, years of employment and educational level. Demographic data were of the utmost importance in the study, since the aim was to ensure that respondents were an accurate representation of the entire population of the study. The survey gathered data from different sub-branches of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station, under three branches, namely Support Services, Detective Services, and Visible Policing. The majority of respondents represented the Visible Policing branch with 41.9% (n=57). The second-highest number of respondents were from the Detective Services branch, with 30.1% (n=41). The least represented branch was Support Services with 27.9% (n=38). The gap among the represented branches was not massive, and this indicates that each of them was represented sufficiently in the study. In addition, the occupational level ensured the representation of managerial and lower-ranking employees, where the group most highly represented was lower-ranking employees with 81.6% (n=111), whereas management was represented by 18.4% (n=25). Subordinate employees' representation was higher because they were in the majority at the organisation, while the managers were fewer. The desired representation was therefore achieved.

The majority of respondents, 88% (n=120), had more than six years of work experience at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. The second-highest number of respondents, at 12% (n=16), had three to six years of experience, at the organisation. This was the desired representation of the years of employment since the study targeted employees with enough experience because they understood their organisation well, so they provided the required responses. The majority of respondents, 48.5% (n=66), had a Higher certificate; the second highest group, 23.5% (n=32), had a Matric certificate, while 22.1% (n=30) had a Diploma and 5.9% (n=8) had a Degree or Advanced Diploma. This was a good representation, since all respondents had an educational background, so they clearly understood the questions in the questionnaire.

5.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS WITH DATA

This section discusses research objectives and questions with the data. The study examined the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-COVID-19 to highlight the potential for successful use and the fault lines within these channels. The main research question was: How are internal communication channels used at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?

5.5.1 Objective one: To explore the internal communication channels that are mostly used by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

Research question one: Which internal communication channels are mostly used by the SAPS solely – Inanda Police Station to facilitate its internal communication?

The first research question intended to answer which internal communication channels were most used by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station to facilitate its internal communication. This question was answered by gathering all internal communication channels used by the organisation and requesting respondents only to select the five channels they considered to be most used by the organisation of the 10 that were identified. The list was as follows: 1= face-to-face meetings; 2= organisational email; 3= SAPS intranet; 4= telephone; 5= social media (WhatsApp); 6= Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin; 7= noticeboards; 8= internal monthly publication; 9= internal focused events; 10= video conferencing. The findings demonstrated that the most used internal communication channels within the organisation, as shown in Table 4.9 and illustrated in Figure 4.8, were face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp, and noticeboards, as indicated by the majority of 55.1% of respondents (n=75).

The findings demonstrated that the organisation was using several internal communication channels that were not visible or seen by the employees. Therefore, it is proposed that the organisation should be required to use the internal communication channels that are accessible and visible to all employees for their successful use, and to avoid wasting both organisational resources and time owing to utilising internal communication channels that were not beneficial. This is supported by Montsho (2013: iii), who warns against using many channels that are not productive to avoid clutter, and who further argues that, to discover at a later stage that only a few are preferred and understood by employees is regrettable. This

indicates that, all this time, the organisation was focusing on many internal communication channels that employees did not recognise or were not interested in, which consequently contributed to inefficiency, clutter, and unnecessary waste of time and resources. Cleary (2022) posits that, despite the size of an organisation and its capacity to use many internal communication channels to keep employees on top of their game, using more channels does not necessarily result in beneficial use, and to prevent overwhelming employees with more communication channels, it is necessary to coordinate how to employ the various channels (Cleary, 2022).

Similarly, Quirke (2008) affirms that it is currently a mammoth task to select from among the multiple channels that have emerged through the development of technology. The significant role that the SAPS – Inanda Police Station was anticipated to play for the successful deployment of productive internal communication channels was to invest more time in consulting employees timeously with the purpose of identifying the internal communication channels they relate to or rather consider most appropriate. According to the stakeholder theory as the approach of the study, employees are the most valuable internal stakeholders, and that an organisation cannot exist without them (Freeman, 1984). Therefore, their viewpoints on matters affecting the organisation should be prioritised.

It is further articulated in subsection 5.3.4, where employees were required to select their preferred internal communication channels, as this subsection was mainly based on identifying internal communication channels that they perceived were most used by the organisation.

5.5.2 Objective two: To describe the understanding of the management and employees with regard to the function of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

Research question two: What is the understanding of the management and employees about the function of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?

The second research question aimed to answer what the management and employees understood about the function of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. This research question was answered by placing six functions of internal communication channels on a five-point Likert scale in the form of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Respondents were requested to select a single option to express their perceptions regarding their understanding of the function of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. The findings, as presented in Table 4.10 and illustrated in Figure 4.9, indicated that there were different perceptions with regard to the comprehension among employees about the function of internal communication channels in the organisation. Even though Item C8 showed that the majority of 39% of respondents agreed and 35% strongly agreed that the internal communication channels of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station facilitate the sharing of information, a sum of 21% of respondents had neither a positive nor a negative response in this respect, as they indicated that they were neutral, and 5% disagreed. This suggests that the majority of respondents had a mutual understanding regarding Item C8 of the function of internal communication, since the majority strongly agreed and agreed with this item. Although some of respondents were in between since they held a neutral position, a very small portion simply disagreed with Item C8.

Item C9 also demonstrated that varied perceptions existed in the organisation, as the majority of 42% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this item, choosing to remain neutral regarding whether the internal communication channels of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station convey information quickly and effectively, and 10% of respondents disagreed with Item C9. While some respondents, who account for 37% and 12%, strongly agreed and agreed, respectively with Item C9. To conclude, the findings of Item C9 demonstrated clearly the existence of mixed perceptions among respondents with regard to the function of internal communication channels at the organisation. This indicates that an organisation should categorise its internal communication channels explicitly, according to their functions, and to educate all employees about these functions, so that they can have a mutual understand of their functions. Cleary (2022) reaffirms that it is imperative for an organisation to classify internal communication channels according to their functions and to

study how they contribute to its overall internal communication success, in order to boost employee engagement.

Item C10 also reflected mixed perceptions, since the majority (37%) of respondents were neutral about whether the internal communication channels of SAPS – Inanda Police Station conveyed information sufficiently about day-to-day tasks, while 10% disagreed, whereas 33% strongly agreed, and 20% agreed. This highlighted the existence of different perceptions among employees about the function of internal communication channels at the organisation.

Item C11 also had varied findings, since the majority (51%) of respondents agreed that the internal communication channels of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station enabled the sharing of new ideas, while 24% had neutral perceptions in this regard, 23% strongly agreed, and 1% disagreed. In Item C12, the majority (48%) of respondents agreed that the internal communication channels of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station facilitate feedback. But 22% strongly agreed, 29% of respondents were neutral, and only 1% disagreed. Varied responses were also demonstrated in Item C13, with the majority (45%) of respondents remaining neutral with regard to whether the internal communication channels of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station provided two-way communication, whereas 31% agreed and 24% strongly agreed.

To conclude, the findings above signified that employees held different perceptions regarding the functions of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station, since some held a neutral position, while others agreed and a small percentage disagreed with the items of this section. The contributing factors in this regard might relate to the lack of full engagement of the organisation in educating its employees about the functions of its internal communication channels. This may be resolved by means of the following: providing an unambiguous description of the function of each internal communication channel, a complete engagement with employees at all levels of the organisation, and educating them about these functions.

5.5.3 Objective three: To describe the perception of management and employees with regard to the flow of information within internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

Research question three: How do management and employees perceive the flow of information within the internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?

The third research question, intended to answer how management and employees perceive the flow of information at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. This research question was answered based on four dimensions, namely downward flow, upward flow, horizontal flow and diagonal flow, with each dimension having its own independent items. Nevertheless, it must be noted that statistics did not produce findings that would indicate clearly the separate perceptions of managers and subordinate employees. Thus, the findings were grouped together without signifying what managers and subordinate employees indicated independently. The five-point Likert scale was used to assign values to a number of aspects in the form of standardised options and categories, namely strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

The overall findings demonstrated a degree of satisfaction since more respondents strongly agreed and agreed with most of items in this section, although there were some respondents who did not agree or disagree with some of the items, as they held a neutral position and a smaller percentage of disagreement was also reflected. The answers are discussed below in accordance with each dimension.

5.5.3.1 Downward flow

The findings from the downward flow of information, as presented in Table 4.11 and illustrated in Figure 4.10, demonstrated that there were positive responses and neutral responses regarding the respondents' perceptions of the downward flow of information at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. This states that there was an aggregate of respondents who were quite satisfied with the downward flow of information, whereas others remained neutral. When asked whether they were informed about the department's mission, vision,

and policies in Item D1.14, 44% of respondents strongly agreed, together with 33% who agreed. Conversely, 23% of respondents were neutral in terms of Item D1.14. This indicates that, as much as the majority of respondents expressed their gratification with this instance, there were also those who held a neutral position.

In Item D1.15, when respondents were asked whether they got enough information when they needed it within the organisation, as in the above item, the majority of 51% of respondents remained neutral and 10% disagreed, while there were 29% and 10% of respondents who strongly agreed and agreed, respectively. This signifies that the majority of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the Item D1.15.

Furthermore, in Item D1.16, when respondents were questioned about the impact of their work on meeting the goals of the department (organisation), similar to Item D1.15, 39% neither agree nor disagree with the item since they held a neutral perception and 1% disagreed. In contrast, there were also those who showed satisfaction, as 33% agreed and 26% strongly agreed with Item D1.16. In Item D1.17, based on whether direct managers inform respondents about their progress in their respective jobs, it was evident that managers do inform respondents, since the majority of 40% agreed, and 35% strongly agreed, even though 24% held a neutral perception. This points out that information flow with immediate personnel was good in this organisation.

Item D1.18 also demonstrated different responses, positive and neutral responses. It should be indicated that respondents who were positive when asked to indicate whether their managers assisted them to understand the structure of their jobs outweighed those with neutral perceptions, since 46% and 40% indicated that they agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, while 15% remained neutral. The same case happened in Item D1.19 with regard to whether respondents' managers provided enough instructions and information required for their respective jobs. The findings also cited both contentment, and neutral perceptions. The majority of 71% of respondents agreed, and 18% strongly agreed. This means that they were gratified with their managers when it comes to providing enough information regarding instructions and information for their respective jobs. However, 11% held a neutral perception, and only 1% of respondents disagreed.

5.5.3.2 Upward flow

Demonstrated in Table 4.12 and illustrated in Figure 4.11 is a similar scenario discovered and described in subsection 5.2.3.2, where there were a majority of respondents who were content with some of the items of the upward flow of information. On the other hand, there were also those who were neutral and a small percentage of those who showed dissatisfaction with the upward flow of information in the organisation. The management in charge of internal communication might need to provide solutions to counter that small percentage of respondents with negative perceptions regarding the upward flow of information. Their dissatisfaction was mostly demonstrated when they needed to state whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements relating to expressing their innovative ideas freely in the organisation.

The findings demonstrated the following: in Item D2.20, about 38% of respondents were satisfied when asked whether they communicated freely how they felt about their respective jobs, with co-workers, and with the organisation in general, since they strongly agreed, together with 28% who also agreed, while about 30% of respondents held a neutral position, and 4% disagreed.

Also, Item D2.21 showed a majority of positive responses, some neutral and a small percentage of negative responses about the upward flow of information in the organisation. That was depicted by 38% of respondents who strongly agreed, in conjunction with 30% who agreed in terms of commenting about whether they were allowed to make suggestions about what tasks are required and how they can be achieved, while an aggregate of 27% were neutral, and 4% disagreed. The same can be said for Item D2.22, regarding whether respondents' managers accept their feedback regarding their respective jobs from time to time. The response was largely positive, as a decided 71% of respondents agreed and 24% strongly agreed, while there was a score of 5% of respondents who held a neutral position.

Item D2.23 also demonstrated what has been discussed above. Respondents were asked to indicate whether, when they escalated their grievances, their respective managers listened to them sympathetically. The response was largely positive, as the majority of 63% of respondents agreed, together with 16% who strongly agreed. Notwithstanding that, an

aggregate of 21% indicated that they were neutral, and only 1% disagreed with this assertion. Moreover, in Item D2.24, which aimed to discover whether respondents were allowed to communicate creative ideas that have an impact on the decision-making processes in the organisation 37% of respondents held neutral perceptions, while 33% strongly agreed, 24% agreed and 6% disagreed. Finally, in Item D2.25, which strove to find out whether respondents were allowed to express themselves about organisational policies and practices, there were also positive, neutral and partially negative perceptions in this instance, as the majority of 32% agreed, and 29% strongly agreed, while 26% held neutral perceptions, and 13% disagreed.

The overall findings demonstrated that employees were mainly satisfied with the upward flow of information when dealing with individuals, such as their co-workers and their immediate managers. Nonetheless, some neutral perceptions emerged when they had to comment about the upward flow of information disseminating their views, in particular, when they had to raise their voices about issues that involved the organisation and that could lead to decision-making. There was also a small percentage of respondents who were dissatisfied with some of the items of the upward flow of information.

All employees need to be completely engaged and involved in the decision-making of the organisation so that they can associate and become more productive in their day-to-day work. When all employees feel engaged and associate with the organisation, it will benefit innovative ideas from employees that can solve a number of its challenges. For internal communication channels to function productively, they must be open and accessible so that they can enable all members of the organisation to engage and contribute to the overall success of the organisation, regardless of their occupational levels (Welch, 2012).

5.5.3.3 Horizontal flow

The horizontal flow of information dimension was the only dimension where respondents had similar perceptions of the information flow to all the items shown in Table 4.13 and Figure 4.12. This meant that the organisation did exceptionally well when it came to this dimension. It also demonstrated that employees were able to get along in the organisation as the level of co-worker communication was very high when compared to the dimensions

of information flow discussed above. This also reflected that the relationships of the subordinate employees were healthy and at a satisfactory level in the organisation. In all items as presented in Table 4.13 and Figure 4.12, there was only 1% of respondents who appeared in Items, D3.26, D3.27, D3.28 and D3.29 who held a neutral perception regarding the horizontal flow of information, and 4% who appeared in two items, namely D3.30 and D3.3; not a poor record for an organisation of this magnitude.

To recap briefly on the findings, Item D3.26 envisioned identifying whether respondents communicated timeously with their colleagues who work in their respective branches and who were at the same rank as them. The majority of 54% indicated that they strongly agreed, and 44% agreed with this statement, while only 1% indicated that they were neutral. In Item D3.27, which aimed to identify whether respondents communicated timeously with their colleagues who worked in other branches, the findings also demonstrated a positive response because a majority of 59% indicated that they agreed, 40% strongly agreed, and only 1% registered a neutral response. This reflected a perception that respondents were generally satisfied.

In terms of Item D3.28, regarding whether respondents were allowed to communicate their ideas with their colleagues who were at the same level as them when working as a team, the response was also largely positive, as a large number (58%) agreed, 40% strongly agreed, and only 1% held a neutral perception. Item D3.29, regarding whether the department (organisation) encouraged the engagement of all employees throughout interactions, had a largely positive response, with a significant sum of 60% agreeing, 39% strongly agreeing, and only 1% registering a neutral response. Again, this reflected satisfaction.

In reference to Item D3.30, which sought to identify whether, in a team meeting to coordinate tasks, respondents were allowed to raise their suggestions and concerns, the findings were also positive, as the majority of 51% strongly agreed, followed by 45% who agreed, while only 4% had a neutral perception. Finally, in D3.31, which sought to find out whether, in a meeting, the organisation normally follows up with previous meetings and

prior issues indicated, similar to the above cases, the response was massively positive, as the majority of 50% agreed, 46% strongly agreed and neutral only registered 4%.

In closing, this depicted that the communication of employees working at the same level in this organisation was in good shape.

5.5.3.4 Diagonal flow

Similar to the information flow discussed above, the diagonal flow of information had largely positive, some neutral, and a small percentage of negative responses. This means that there were employees who were satisfied with the way the organisation practises the diagonal flow of information and those who neither agree nor disagree and those who disagreed with some of the items of this section. In this dimension, it appeared that respondents were mostly neutral on issues related to whether they received information quickly from different levels of the department (organisation). On the other hand, the overwhelmingly positive responses were predominantly in relation to items related to their relationships with individuals, such as management, instead of the overall flow of information within the organisation.

Recapping the findings, as demonstrated in Table 4.14 and Figure 4.13, in Item D4.32, which sought to identify whether respondents were allowed to ask the management questions directly, the majority of 51% agreed, and 17% strongly agreed, meaning they were satisfied, while 31% of respondents had a neutral perception, and only 1% disagreed. In relation to Item D4.33, which aimed to discover whether respondents had a good relationship with senior management across the department (organisation), responses vary similarly, meaning that they were positive, neutral and partially negative, as the majority of 54% of respondents agreed, in conjunction with 18% who strongly agreed, indicating that they were satisfied, while 20% of respondents were neutral, and only 8% disagreed, reflecting some dissatisfaction.

With regard to Item D4.34, which aimed to find out whether informal information flow was encouraged within the organisation, identically to the previous item, the responses were positive, neutral and partly negative, with a volume of 45% agreeing and 18% strongly

agreeing, reflecting a sense of gratification. While neutral responses registered 31%, 6% disagreed. With regard to Item D4.35, which attempted to identify whether respondents received information quickly from different levels of the department (organisation), contrary to the above, the majority of respondents were neutral with 35%, and only 6% disagreed, indicating dissatisfaction. Of the respondents, 27% agreed, and 24% strongly agreed, reflecting satisfaction. Item D4.36 also demonstrated varied responses when respondents were asked to indicate whether they were allowed to raise their concerns in a meeting convened by management. Responses were positive, neutral and some negative: the majority of 42% strongly agreed, and 17% agreed, showing a sense of satisfaction. While 37% were neutral, only 4% disagreed, reflecting dissatisfaction.

To conclude, the results demonstrated a majority of positive perceptions regarding the information flow within the internal communication channels of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. This indicates that different branches of the organisation are functional as they are able to interact with one another for common organisational objectives. Katz and Kahn (1978) posit that the organisation, as a system, requires internal communication channels that enable the interaction among the employees who work in different branches to create a single organisation with a common goal. Systems theory in organisational communication argues that the interaction of employees create what is known as organisations (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Bavelas & Segal, 1982). From the perspective of systems theory, it is through the interaction of people that organisations are formed.

It should be noted also that there were some employees who remained neutral to some of the items of information flow and a small percentage who showed negative perceptions as they disagreed with some of the items.

5.5.4 Objective four: To explore the internal communication channels that are preferred as most appropriate by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station’s management and employees.

Research question four: Which communication channels are preferred by management and employees as most appropriate for facilitating internal communication at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station?

The fourth research question sought to answer which internal communication channels were preferred by management and employees as most appropriate for facilitating internal communication at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. This question was answered by listing all 10 internal communication channels used at the organisation, namely 1= face-to-face meetings; 2= organisational email; 3= SAPS intranet; 4= telephone; 5= social media (WhatsApp); 6= Pol-TV/Servamus/bulletin; 7= noticeboards; 8= internal monthly publication; 9= internal focused events; 10= video conferencing. Then, respondents were requested to select only five internal communication channels they preferred as the most appropriate to facilitate internal communication from the list of 10 channels. Table 4.15 demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of 52.2% (n=71) of respondents preferred face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media - WhatsApp and noticeboards.

Thus, the findings reflected that the organisation has been using internal communication channels that are not compatible with the employees. The combination of the above preferred channels would have saved the organisation from the undesirable effects of using several internal communication channels that were not valuable to its success. This demonstrated a lack of consultation and engagement with its employees with the purpose of determining their perspectives regarding the channels they considered important because these channels were meant to be used by them primarily. That is the predominant reason for their point of view in this regard.

Welch (2012), Montsho (2013), and White et al. (2010:08) indicate the significance of allowing employees to have their views on the internal communication channels they consider suitable to facilitate internal communication. This notion is in line with the stakeholder theory, as the approach adopted for the study, which treats the internal stakeholders, namely employees, as the most important stakeholders of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station, who impact or are impacted by the achievements of the objectives of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station and without whose support, the organisation may cease to exist (Freeman, 1984). Therefore, their views in respect of choosing appropriate internal communication channels need to be considered in order for the organisation to function productively. Welch (2012), Montsho (2013), and White et al. (2010:08) affirm that it should be mandatory for organisations to select internal communication channels based on

employee preferences because selecting the optimum internal communication channels depends solely on their preferences.

For the SAPS – Inanda Police Station to function as a single system, employees need to be allowed to select the channels they prefer as most appropriate, which will subsequently enable the interaction of different sub-branches for the benefit of the entire organisation as a single system. General systems theory argues that the operations of the entire system, which refers to the operations of the entire SAPS – Inanda Police Station, produce better results compared to the individual components of the system, where individual components refer to individual employees within their respective sub-branches. This indicates that, without the proper use and selection of internal communication channels, employees may not be able to interact and share information that will make the entire organisation thrive. Neher (1997:105), cited in Mbhele (2017:35) points out that general systems theory has two crucial components: interrelatedness and interaction. Therefore, for the SAPS – Inanda Police Station staff to co-exist, they must interact to become interrelated for the benefit of the organisation.

5.5.5 Objective five: To describe the reasons why the preferred internal communication channels are regarded as valuable among staff members.

Research question five: Why are the preferred internal communication channels regarded as valuable among staff members?

The fifth research question strove to answer why the preferred internal communication channels are regarded as valuable among staff members at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. This question was answered by listing 10 items that may be the motives of employees, and then employees were requested to select only three items from among the following list: 1= I find these channels more user friendly; 2= These channels convey messages clearly; 3= I personally use these channels more frequently; 4= I have full access to these channels; 5= I feel actively engaged in these channels; 6= I feel that these channels provide reliable information; 7= The message delivered in these channels is tailored; 8= These channels enable two-way communication; 9= I often encounter these channels whenever I am at work; 10= Other and specify.

Table 4.16 depicts that the overwhelming majority of 61% (n=83) chose the following motives: I find these channels more user-friendly; These channels convey messages clearly; and I personally use these channels more frequently. This demonstrates that employees selected their preferred internal communication channels based on their familiarity or simplicity, accessibility, and the belief that they provided clear messages because they are familiar with them since they use them for personal purposes.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study indicate that the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station was satisfactory, but there were also respondents who were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and a small percentage who were dissatisfied. The main findings of the study revealed that the organisation deployed several types of internal communication channels, to discover that only a few were considered productive by the employees. This is associated with the inability of the organisation to consult employees vigorously in the selection process of appropriate internal communication channels. That, consequently, contributed largely to its use of many internal communication channels that were considered unproductive. The literature suggests that organisations should select channels in accordance with the employees' preferences, since their success depends on these. It was discovered that only five out of 10 internal communication channels used at the organisation were considered productive by the employees namely, face-to-face meetings, organisational e-mail, telephone, social media – WhatsApp and noticeboards.

Montsho (2013:121) aptly points out that it is of the utmost importance to ensure that management and employees are not overwhelmed by several internal communication channels that are not benefitting the organisation. At some level, the findings support the notion held by many scholars, such as Kealey (2019), Montsho (2013), Sasse (2016:05), and Mbhele (2017), that government institutions are lagging behind with respect to investing resources in internal communication.

The positive aspect extracted from the findings was that employees were mainly satisfied with co-worker communication. Considering the issues discussed, the following recommendations are based on the findings of the study:

Objective one: To explore the internal communication channels that are mostly used by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

- Since the findings demonstrated that the organisation was using several internal communication channels (10) that were not useful, it is therefore recommended that the number of these channels be reduced at least to five. The concentration on five internal communication channels that are compatible with employees would surely enhance internal communication within the organisation. As the study conducted by Montsho (2013:iii) at the GCIS found that, of eight (8) internal communication channels, only three were considered useful, and the same was revealed in the current study. Then, Montsho (2013:iii) warns against using many internal communication channels by indicating that they may cause undesirable ramifications, such as clutter and unnecessary waste of resources, like time and finances. It is of the utmost importance to ensure that management and employees are not overwhelmed by several internal communication channels that are not benefitting the organisation (Montsho, 2013:iii).

Objective two: To describe the understanding of the management and employees with regard to the function of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

- The findings also revealed the existence of varied perceptions among employees regarding the functions of internal communication channels at the organisation, despite the majority of employees showing a positive response with the function of internal communication. This supports the notion held by Mbhele (2017:199), and Montsho (2013:125), who found different perceptions regarding the understanding of the function of internal communication channels within the government institutions such as the Department of Health and GCIS, respectively. Furthermore, Welch (2012) points out that each channel has a unique attribute or function and, if internal communication is not managed properly, it could lead to counter-productiveness and poor performance in the workplace, which may also result in an undesirable outcome for an organisation. Thus, it is recommended that the organisation engages fully and

educates all employees, irrespective of their positions, about the internal communication channels and their respective functions. As highlighted above, the organisation should provide an unambiguous description of the function of each internal communication channel, and engage and educate all employees continuously about these functions, so that they feel encouraged to use them productively for the overall success of internal communication within the organisation.

Objective three: To describe the perception of management and employees with regard to the flow of information within internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

- The findings indicated that the organisation had different perceptions regarding the flow of information. Although the majority of employees were satisfied, there were respondents who were neutral and a small percentage who disagreed with some of items of information flow. It was revealed that the employees with negative responses were concerned with the flow of information related to expressing their views, specifically those related to the organisation itself. These employees felt that their views which had the possibility of contributing to the decision-making of the organisation were not taken into consideration. This may have been caused by restricted internal communication channels disseminating upwards information, which have the sole purpose of providing a linear communication dimension. This partly echoes the study conducted by Mbhele (2017:199), which found a lack of responsive internal communication at the Department of Health, specifically as a government institutions, even though the case in this study is different since the majority of employees were happy with the information flow. It is recommended that, the organisation should practice symmetrical internal communication with all employees. As one of the theories adopted for the study, symmetrical internal communication is the worldview that several organisations implement in communicating with their workers.

The emphasis of this worldview includes, but is not limited to, openness, responsiveness, mutual understanding, interdependency, and a balance of power (Kang & Park, 2017). The principal reasons for using a symmetrical model are to negotiate, adjust, and improve views and behaviours that are expected to be adopted and respected by all parties within the organisation (Kang & Park, 2017). That is the opposite of manipulative, linear communication and the top-down asymmetrical model (Kang & Park, 2017). Symmetrical internal communication is considered to be the most productive communication system and leads to the productivity of employees (Grunig, 2006). Hence, the SAPS – Inanda Police Station should equally select internal communication channels that complement symmetrical communication to enhance its internal communication. In closing, a symmetrical internal communication model stimulates the voice of employees and strives for responsive communication (feedback), which was seen to be lacking from the perspectives of a small percentage of employees who were not happy. According to Kang and Park (2017), in an organisation with symmetrical internal communication, employees automatically feel encouraged to participate in any decision-making within an organisation (Kang & Park, 2017).

Objective four: To explore the internal communication channels that are preferred as most appropriate by the SAPS – Inanda Police Station’s management and employees.

Berezan et al. (2016:03) discovered that the selection of internal communication channels contributes significantly to the quality of information in the organisation. Williams and Seidel (2019) argue that thorough attention must be given to the selection of proper internal communication channels that could be used by the organisation because using inappropriate channels for certain tasks or interactions may lead to negative consequences. It has been indicated that selecting internal communication channels is a mammoth task (Williams & Seidel, 2019). The government institutions have been found to be lagging in investing in and promoting workplace communication (Kealey, 2019). Sasse (2016:05) suggests that this is because the focus of the government’s internal communication lies in the hands of a few elected officials rather than in its employees. It is recommended that the SAPS –

Inanda Police Station should invest enough resources and time in selecting internal communication channels. This should be done in accordance with employee preferences.

For organisations to select appropriate internal communication channels, scholars have concurred that selecting the optimum internal communication channels depends on the employees' preferences (Welch, 2012; Montsho, 2013). White et al. (2010:08) reiterate that choosing a useful internal communication method is more dependent on employee expectations and beliefs than on the potential efficacy of message delivery. Clerkl (2020) echoes that employees have discrete delivery preferences and consume their content in different ways. Therefore, organisations should invest enough time in the selection of useful internal communication channels because utilising inappropriate channels for certain tasks may result in undesirable outcomes (Williams & Seidel, 2019). The study found five channels among the 10 used at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station that were considered valuable by the employees, namely face-to-face meetings, organisational email, telephone, social media – WhatsApp, and noticeboards. It is recommended that the organisation should concentrate on these channels for the success of internal communication.

Objective five: To describe the reasons why the preferred internal communication channels are regarded as valuable among staff members.

- The findings demonstrated that employees selected their preferred internal communication channels based on their familiarity or simplicity, accessibility, and the belief that they provided clear messages because they are familiar with them since they use them for personal purposes. As situations and needs change, employees may reassess their communication preferences. Therefore, it is recommended that the organisation should conduct sporadic internal communication channel audits to assess the performance of channels. The internal communication channels that are used by an organisation must be audited frequently to uncover gaps, advance value, and enhance productivity (Verghese, 2016). As mentioned in Chapter One, the other factors that necessitate an internal communication channel audit are environmental

changes associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid advancement of technology, employee maturity, and their demands for more attention. It was noted above that these factors have changed workplace communication and may also change employees' reasons for preferring particular internal communication channels over time.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in a single government institution, namely, SAPS – Inanda Police Station; therefore, the findings emanating from the study may not be used as a complete generalisation of other government institutions. Nevertheless, they can be used as a pilot study. These findings are specifically for the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. Another limitation is the use of a single approach, namely, the quantitative method. This indicates that the study lacks in-depth data that may be collected by deploying a mixed-methods approach, particularly qualitative data. In addition, a 100% response rate was not achieved in the study; however, 69% was considered sufficient to collect data that represented the perceptions of the entire population. It should also be noted that data analysis did not separate managers' responses from those of subordinate employees, as it proved impossible to do so considering the constraints of time and available resources.

5.8 FURTHER RESEARCH

As the study only deployed quantitative methodology, it is therefore suggested that future research be conducted using a mixed-methods approach to gather information that was missed owing to the use of quantitative methodology. In this regard, it is believed that the qualitative approach can assist more fully in collecting perceptions that were missed by the quantitative approach. In addition, future research can go as far as separating management and employee data to identify their individual perceptions regarding the use of internal communication channels within the government institutions.

5.9 CONCLUSIONS

This study has addressed the research problem by investigating the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station post-Covid-19. It also

addressed the dearth of research focusing on internal communication channels within the government institutions like the SAPS – Inanda Police Station. The findings and recommendations align with research objectives, furnishing insights into the effective use of internal communication channels, discovering challenges, and providing recommendations for improvement.

5.10 ALIGNMENT WITH RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- This study has examined the use of internal communication channels, confirming the problem statement notions that the use of inappropriate internal communication channels hampers the SAPS – Inanda Police Station productivity and service delivery.
- The study has found challenges and gaps in respect of the current use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station, aligning with the research objectives.
- The suggested recommendations offered address the research objectives, provided practical solutions to enhance the overall internal communication by using appropriate internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

5.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This final chapter presented the study's conclusions and recommendations, addressing each of the five research objectives and questions. It provided a comprehensive summary of the findings, including a review of demographic profile of respondents, a detailed analysis of the data, and recommendations for future action. The chapter also acknowledged the study's limitations, suggested avenues for further research, and confirmed how findings aligned with the research objectives, providing a cohesive and meaningful conclusion to the study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICS RESEARCH COMMITTEE APPROVAL CERTIFICATE



COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

11 August 2023

Dear Mr Siyabonga Welcome Msomi

NHREC Registration # :

Rec-240816-052

CREC Reference # :

50476211_CREC_CHS_2023

Decision:

Ethics Approval from 11 August 2023
to 11 August 2024

Researcher(s): Name: Mr. S. Msomi
Contact details: 50476211@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Supervisor(s): Name: Dr M. R. Moila
Contact details: mollamr@unisa.ac.za

**Title: EXPLORING THE USE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITHIN
THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) – INANDA POLICE STATION
POST-COVID-19**

Degree Purpose: Masters

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for one year.

The *low risk application* was reviewed by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.



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Pretter Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
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4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (**11 August 2024**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number 50476211_CREC_CHS_2023 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Signature: 

Prof. KB Khan
CHS Research Ethics Committee Chairperson
Email: khankb@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 8210

Signature: PP 

Prof ZZ Nkosi
Exécutive Dean: CHS
E-mail: nkosizz@unisa.ac.za
Tel: 012 429 6758



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APPENDIX B: LETTER OF REQUESTING APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

PERMISSION LETTER

Research title:

EXPLORING THE USE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) – INANDA POLICE STATION POST- COVID-19

Researcher:

(Mr Siyabonga Welcome Msomi)

Request for permission to conduct research at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station

EXPLORING THE USE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) – INANDA POLICE STATION POST-COVID-19

Dear Manager,

I, Siyabonga Welcome Msomi am doing research with Dr Moila, a senior lecturer in the Department of Communication Sciences towards a Master’s Degree, at the University of South Africa. I have funding from Director Student Funding (DSF) for intuition and research activities. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **EXPLORING THE USE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) – INANDA POLICE STATION POST- COVID-19.**

The study investigates the use of internal communication channels within the South African Police Services (SAPS) at the Inanda Police Station Post-COVID-19 in order to highlight the potential for successful use and fault lines within these channels.

Your institution has been selected because is appropriate for the study as its focus is on understanding the use of internal communication channels within the public sector.

The study will entail structured survey questionnaire that consists of multiple-choice questions (containing demographic questions) and a five-point Likert scale (ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”). The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The findings of the study will provide a better understanding of the use of internal communication channels in the context of the public sector and contribute to the identification and development of the most successful ways of using internal communication channels to enhance internal communication.

There are no implications expected for your organisation in participating in this study. The only foreseeable risk is your employees inconvenience and using their private time. Therefore, this study will not pose a risk beyond the everyday norm.

Kindly provide feedback in a form of an official letter as proof that permission was acquired. I am looking forward to conduct this study in your esteemed institution. You can reach me on 0796147233 or 50476211@mylife.unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely

SW Msomi

Siyabonga Welcome Msomi

Researcher

**APPENDIX C: LETTER OF APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM THE SAPS –
INANDA POLICE STATION**

SAPS – Inanda Police Station
M25 Curnick Ndlovu Highway
Amatikwe, Inanda 4309

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
P.O Box 392
Unisa 003, South Africa

12 February 2024

RESEARCH PROJECT

The SAPS - Inanda Police Station permits Mr Siyabonga W. Msomi to conduct his study entitled, EXPLORING THE USE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) – INANDA POLICE STATION POST-COVID-19 at this Police Station.

Thank you



Captain (Communication Officer), G.S. Simelane



APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

Research title: EXPLORING THE USE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) – INANDA POLICE STATION

POST- COVID-19

Researcher: (Mr Siyabonga Welcome Msomi)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the survey questionnaire method.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname.....(please print)

Participant Signature.....Date.....

Researcher’s Name & Surname.....(please print)

Researcher’s signature.....Date.....

APPENDIX E: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY: EXPLORING THE USE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) – INANDA POLICE STATION POST- COVID-19

Dear Respondent

My name is Siyabonga Welcome Msomi and I am doing research with Dr MR Moila, a senior lecturer, in the Department of Communication Sciences towards an MA in Communication Sciences, at the University of South Africa. I have funding from the Director Student Funding (DSF) for tuition and research activities.

We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **EXPLORING THE USE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) – INANDA POLICE STATION POST-COVID-19.**

I am conducting this research to explore the use of internal communication channels within the SAPS - Inanda Police Station post - COVID-19 in order to highlight the potential for successful use and fault lines within these channels. Furthermore, the findings of this study will significantly contribute to generating knowledge that will provide a better understanding of the use of internal communication channels in the public sector (particularly SAPS – Inanda Police Station), and also contribute to the identification and development of the most successful ways of using internal communication channels to enhance internal communication.

You are invited to participate in this study because as an employee of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station, you have the required knowledge and experience to assist the researcher understand the topic better from the perspective of the SAPS – Inanda Police Station’s employee.

Your responses will be kept anonymous and all data collected will be treated as confidential. Participating in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw from it at any given time. You are not obliged to answer any statement that you find inappropriate. Kindly be informed that there are no right or wrong answers and only your opinion is needed. Your personal response will be highly acknowledged for quality assurance. Therefore, you are kindly encouraged not to share your

response with any of your colleagues. The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact me on 079 614 7233 or 50476211@mylife.unisa.za.

INSTRUCTIONS:

This questionnaire consists of six (6) sections. The focus of the sections is based on investigating the use of internal communication channels at the SAPS – Inanda Police Station.

Section A: Demographic questions

Section B: Internal communication channels used at SAPS - Inanda Police Station

Section C: Function of communication channels of Inanda police station

Section D: Information flow

Section E: Communication channels preferences

Section F: Motives for channels preferences

Please answer this survey through multiple-choice questions for demographic questions and 5-point Likert scale, namely, **strongly agree (SA)**, **agree (A)**, **neutral (N)**, **disagree (D)** and **strongly disagree (SD)**.

A. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

- **Please tick the sub-branch you work at amongst the categories below:**

1. VISIBLE POLICING

Shift commander		Operational support	
Community service centre		Court services	

Operational commander		Flash	
Custody management		Exhibit management	
Other service points		General enquires	
		Crime prevention	
		Sector managers	
		Other service points	

2. DETECTIVE SERVICES

Group A violent crimes	
Group B economic crimes	
Group C general crimes	
Detective services centre	
Docket management centre	
Other and specify	

3. SUPPORT SERVICES

Administration services	
Cooperate communication	

Financial services	
Human resource management	
Loss management	
Supply chain management	
Other and specify	

4. Occupational

- Please tick your occupational level

Senior management level	
Middle-management level	
Supervisor level	
Clerk administrator level	
Other and specify	

5. Employment

- Please tick years of employment

0–3 years	3–6 years	Over 6 years

6. Educational level

- Please tick your educational level

High school education	Matric	Higher Certificate	Diploma	Degree or Advanced Diploma	Honours	Masters	PhD

B. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS USED AT INANDA POLICE STATION

7. Internal communication channels used often

- Please tick five (5) internal communication channels that are mostly used by Inanda Police Station

Face-to-face meetings	
Organisational email	
SAPS intranet	
Telephone	
Social media (WhatsApp)	
Pol-TV/Servamus/Bulletin	
Noticeboards	
Internal monthly publication	

Internal focused events	
Video conferencing	

C. FUNCTION OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS OF INANDA POLICE STATION

- Please tick one option per item below (Communication channels)

Items	SA	A	N	DA	SA
8. Internal communication channels of Inanda police station facilitate the sharing of information					
9. Internal communication channels of Inanda police station convey information quickly and effectively					
10. Internal communication channels of Inanda police station sufficiently convey information about day-to-day tasks					
11. Internal communication channels of Inanda police station enable the sharing of new ideas					
12. Internal communication channels of Inanda police					

station facilitate feedback					
13. Internal communication channels of Inanda police station provide two-way communication					

D. INFORMATION FLOW

D.1 Downward flow

- Please tick one option per item below

Items	SA	A	N	DA	SD
14. I am informed about the departments mission, vision and policies					
15. I get enough information when I need it					
16. I am informed about my work's impact in meeting the goals of the department					
17. My direct manager informs me about my progress in my job					
18. My manager assists me to understand the structure of my job					

19. My manager provides enough instructions and information required for my job					
---	--	--	--	--	--

D.2 Upward flow

Items	SA	A	N	DA	SD
20. I freely communicate how I feel about my job, with co-workers, and the department in general					
21. I am allowed to make suggestions about what tasks are required and how they can be achieved					
22. My manager accepts my feedback regarding my job from time to time					
23. When I escalate my grievances, my manager sympathetically listens to them					
24. I am allowed to communicate my creative ideas that have an impact in the decision-making processes					

25. I am allowed to express myself about organisational policies and practices					
--	--	--	--	--	--

D.3 Horizontal flow

Items	SA	A	N	DA	SD
26. I communicate timeously with my colleagues who work in my branch and who are at the same rank as me					
27. I communicate timeously with my colleagues who work in other branches					
28. I am allowed to communicate my ideas when working as a team with my colleagues who are at the same level as me					
29. The department encourages the engagement of all employees throughout interactions					
30. In a team meeting to coordinate tasks, I am					

allowed to raise my suggestions and concerns					
31. In a meeting, we normally follow up with previous meetings and issues indicated prior					

D.4 Diagonal flow

Items	SA	A	N	DA	SD
32. I am allowed to directly ask the management questions					
33. I have a good relationship with the senior management across the department					
34. Informal information flow is encouraged					
35. I quickly receive information from different levels of the department					
36. I am allowed to raise my concerns in a meeting convened by management					

E. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS PREFERENCES

- Please tick your five (5) most preferred internal communication channels

37. Face-to-face meetings	
38. Organisational email	
39. SAPS intranet	
40. Telephone	
41. Social media (WhatsApp)	
42. Pol-TV/Servamus/Bulletin	
43. Noticeboards	
44. Internal monthly publication	
45. Internal focused events	
46. Video conferencing	

F. MOTIVES FOR PREFERRING THESE CHANNELS

- Please tick three (3) main reasons for selecting the above channels

ITEMS	
47. I find these channels more user friendly	
48. These channels convey messages clearly	

49. I personally use these channels more frequently	
50. I have full access to these channels	
51. I feel actively engaged in these channels	
52. I feel that these channels provide reliable information	
53. The message delivered in these channels is tailored	
54. These channels enable two-way communication	
55. I often encounter these channels whenever I am at work	
56. Other and specify	

THANK YOU SINCERELY FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY!

APPENDIX F: EDITING CERTIFICATE

Ricky Woods Academic Editing Services

Editing Certificate

Ricky Woods Academic Editing Services
Cell: +27 (0)83 3126310
Email: rickywoods604@gmail.com

To Whom It May Concern
University of South Africa

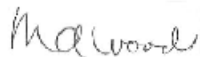
Editing of a Master's Dissertation

I, Marietjie Alfreda Woods, hereby certify that I have completed the editing and correction of the master's dissertation: **Exploring the use of Internal Communication Channels in the South African Police Service (SAPS) – Inanda Police Station post-Covid-19** by **Siyabonga Welcome Msomi**, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree **Master of Arts in Communication Science** in. I believe that the dissertation meets with the grammatical and linguistic requirements for a document of this nature.

Name of Editor: Marietjie Alfreda Woods

Qualifications: BA (Hons) (Wits); Copy-editing and Proofreading (UCT); Editing Principles and Practice (UP); Accredited Text Editor (English) (PEG)

MA (Ricky) Woods



11 February 2024