AN ASSESSMENT OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AT THE MNQUMA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

by

Gladys Nokubonga Ndinisa
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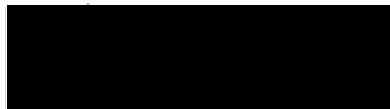**(BTech: Public Relations, ND: Public Relations)**

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Supervisor:
Ms. Nisha Ramlutchman
MA, BA (Hons.), BA

Co-supervisor:
Prof Renitha Rampersad
D.Phil

ABSTRACT

Communication is the life blood of the organisation. No business or institution develops in the absence of an effective communication system. Communication is essential to the delivery of information, creating awareness and ensuring public participation. Participatory communication, which focuses on the active involvement of the people in all stages, is crucial. When participating in local government, citizens should be knowledgeable and attempt to understand the system and its operations, and be aware of their rights and responsibilities. To be truly significant and meaningful, participation needs to be based on the application of genuine two-way communication principles and practices.

This study aimed to do exactly that; investigate, explore and analyse the various external communication channels employed by the Mnquma Local Municipality (MLM) whilst evaluating their effectiveness given the challenging circumstances and environment of a rural community and constituency. In this study a descriptive design with a quantitative research methodological approach was used. Data was collected from 400 constituents, using a questionnaire.

Most respondents admitted that the municipality does communicate with them in a language they understood and that the municipality encouraged communication participation; however they indicated a need for more face-to-face engagement, a robust community development worker (CDW) programme, and more councillor engagement. Challenges to effective communication were identified as the lack of Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and the slow infiltration of technology in the area as well as delays in message delivery and that the municipality did not keep them informed. The demographics presented another unique challenge in that the literacy levels are low and poverty is rampant.

DECLARATION

I, Gladys Nokubonga Ndinisa, do hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own work and findings, except where indicated. All sources used have been duly acknowledged and referenced.

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Ndinisa, G.N.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

- Amathole District Municipality   (ADM)
- Community Development Worker   (CDW)
- Durban University of Technology   (DUT)
- Florida State University Libraries   (FSUL)
- Government Communication and Information System   (GCIS)
- Government Communication Services   (GCS)
- Intergovernmental Relations   (IGR)
- Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin   (KMO)
- Mnquma Local municipality   (MLM)
- Multi-Purpose Community Centres   (MPCC)
- Political, Economic, Social and Technological   (PEST)
- Promotion of Access to Information Act   (PAIA)
- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences   (SPSS)
- Strength, Weaknesses; Opportunities; and Threats   (SWOT)
- Integrated Development Plan   (IDP)
- Transkei Regional Council   (TRC)

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Local municipalities have a fundamental role to play in informing and creating awareness among their constituencies. Communication is essential to the delivery of information, creating awareness and ensuring public participation. It is therefore critical that local municipalities provide for adequate communication structures to communicate proactively with all their stakeholders. The Government Communication Information Systems (2011:328) explains that the South African government has three spheres of governance: national, provincial and local with the latter including municipalities. Municipalities are at the forefront of service delivery and at the disposal of all stakeholders (internal and external) hence communication is essential in maintaining and sustaining stakeholder relationship.

The Amathole District Municipality's area of jurisdiction consists of eight local municipalities, one of which is the Mnquma Local Municipality (MLM). MLM caters to the people of the Eastern Cape in the former Transkei, comprising the main town of Butterworth and smaller towns of Ngqamakhwe and Centane as well as numerous peri-urban and rural settlements. The Strategic Management Directorate is responsible for the communications in the MLM (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2015). Statistics depict low levels of education in the MLM as 10.8% of the Mnquma population has no schooling and only 7.8% completed primary education. On the other hand, only 8.8% completed grade 12 while just above 6.2% of the population have a higher education qualification. The illiteracy rate is higher in Mnquma than the national level (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2015). This presents a unique communication challenge for the MLM as this means that many of the traditional communication tools that rely on the written word, such as press coverage, brochures, letters, posters and others, do not effectively reach this portion of the public.

1.1.1 The MLM various external stakeholders:

- community members;
- suppliers and service providers;

- tourists; sector departments;

- non- governmental organisations;

- labour organisations;

- learning and tertiary organisations;

- businesses;

- media both local, regional and national

- investors together with developers.

Some of the recent studies on government communication focused on economic development through effective communication strategies (Shambalala, 2010); transparency and government communications (Hawes, 2010); integrated development planning and community participation (Njenga, 2009; Mfenguza, 2007); and an internal communication assessment (Tumbare, 2009; Opperman, 2007).

This study looks specifically at communication with community members in the Mnquma local municipality, especially in terms of how communication is used to seek continued participation in municipal affairs and understanding of the municipality, its functions and the services it provides. Effective communication between a municipality and its external stakeholders is vital to the municipality as well as to those they serve.

The Cederberg Municipality (2010:7) states that:

> an analysis of the environment within which the municipality operates is fundamental for the development of a successful communication programme. This will define the terrain and perception in which the municipality communicates, deals with issues of public perceptions, media agenda, concern and attitudes of different sectors and other government institution as well as the potential for improving the communication environment.

Thus, the forms and channels used to communicate with external stakeholders should ideally be influenced by the background of its people.

In the case of the MLM (a largely rural locale) the channels of communication used ought to take into consideration key factors such as education levels, literacy rates and language use. In other words, the MLM should make provisions in terms of

communication channels to ensure the participation of community members in local government affairs. Das and Debasish (2009) state that when communicating with illiterate people, visual (pictures, symbols) and oral e.g. (presentations, public talks) aids are most suitable. Channels of communication such as community information forums, public meetings, open council meetings, house-to-house visits, media and public notices are examples that could be used for communication with the community members. This study aimed to investigate - the current communication channels used to engage with external stakeholders community members in Mnquma, specifically the Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe areas.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Maintaining a relationship with external stakeholders involves the existence and use of sound communication channels. The MLM's strategic director Sindile Tantsi (personal interview, 2011, 14 May) maintains that the MLM region is currently experiencing problems in communicating with its external stakeholders. There are different perceptions and assumptions about the municipal services, community outreach programmes, municipal events and municipal role with the external stakeholders. Community members are unclear about the difference in the roles and functions between government and local municipalities. Government is often perceived as an amorphous structure, and community members tend to report any complaints/issues to the media instead of to their local municipality. Tantsi (2011) further states that the MLM lacks the understanding and ability to interpret basic communication principles such as: understanding that communication must be based on an integrated communication strategy; an understanding of the communication environment is vital; and that communication campaigns work best when they are carried out in partnership with those outside of government. It is therefore evident that the existing communication channels used by the MLM are perceived to be not purposefully driven.

The relationship and the baseline between the municipality and community members is not clearly defined and understood. Hovey-Smith (1999:5) asserts that some organisations, like government, have a responsibility to communicate effectively to all members of society as messages coming from government contain information

that is important for every citizen in its jurisdiction. Tantsi (2011) has further explained that no formal evaluation of the external communication channels has been conducted, specifically focusing on the community members. An assessment of the current external communication channels will therefore help establish a stronger relationship between the MLM and their constituents.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to assess the current communication channels used to interact with community members in the MLM.
The research objectives are to:

1. assess the current external communication channels at the MLM.
2. identify the factors affecting communication with community members and meaningful participation.
3. explore alternative types of external communication channels that can be used to communicate with community members residing in a rural locale.

1.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Ingwe Municipality (2007:3) asserts that "local government has a legal obligation and a political responsibility to ensure regular and effective communication with the community. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 1996 and other statutory enactments all impose an obligation on local government communicators and require high levels of transparency, accountability, openness, participatory democracy and direct communication with the communities to improve the lives of all". In order for a municipality to foster a culture of active two-way communication it is important that key messages are communicated from the municipality to the community in a manner and channel that is understood by the recipients. This will allow the municipality to be more functional in the basic principles of communication; namely: assessing the environment, factors influencing communication, knowledge of the target audience and an understanding of the communication channels to be used for different external stakeholders. In terms of this study, it is envisaged that an assessment of the external communication channels in the MLM will help enhance

stakeholder participation in municipal affairs and lead to an improved understanding of the municipality, its functions and the services it provides.

1.5 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is confined to the MLM in the Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe areas only. The municipality has various external stakeholders such as sector-departments, community members, suppliers, visitors, media, labour unions and non-governmental organisations. This study is confined to community members only in the Mnquma Local Municipality.

1.6 THE STUDIES DELIMITATION

The results of this study cannot be generalised to the use of communication channels by other municipalities in South Africa. However, given the similarity of rural municipality in South Africa, it can be used as basis to identify common trends, problems and challenges in delivering cost effective communication and identifying the credible means to do so.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.7.1 Research Design

This research study was quantitative and descriptive in nature, assessing external communication in the MLM. The study used a survey research methodology, which "involves acquiring information about one or more groups of people – perhaps about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes – by asking questions and tabulating their responses. The ultimate goal is to learn about a large population by surveying a sample of that population" (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010:187).

1.7.2 Target Population

The target population in this study involved community members in the Mnquma Local Municipality, specifically the Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe areas. These areas were selected because the MLM has identified Butterworth as the 'economic hub' of Mnquma with other significant or surrounding towns being Ngqamakhwe and Centane (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2013). The Mnquma local municipality's population is approximately 297 663 people (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2014). The population for the abovementioned three areas is tabulated below:

Table 1.1:

Population for Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe

Area	Population
Butterworth	99 766
Centane	88 248
Ngqamakhwe	81 141
TOTAL POPULATION (3 areas)	**269 155**

1.7.3   Sample Size

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:277), the sample size should be from 380 to 384 if the given population is over 40 000. Due to the combined population of the Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe areas being 269 155, the sample size of the study is 400. The sample distribution is calculated as follows:

Table 1.2:

Sample Population

Area	Population	Percentage of Total Population (3 areas)	Sample Distribution
Butterworth	99 766	37%	148
Centane	88 248	33%	132
Ngqamakhwe	81 141	30%	120
TOTAL	**269 155**	**100%**	**400**

1.7.4   Sampling Method

Sampling methods are classified as either probability or nonprobability. Dattalo (2008:5) states that a "sample survey can be categorised into two very broad classes on the basis of how the sample was elected, namely probability and non-probability samples". Chambliss and Schutt (2014:91) maintain that a "non-probability sample is one in which the probability of selection of population elements is unknown. The researcher used a non-probability sampling method as convenience sampling was used to select the 400 community members in the Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe areas.

1.7.5   Data Collection Methods

A questionnaire (consisting of both open and closed questions) was administered where respondents were asked for their responses. The researcher employed trained field workers to assist in the administration of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was based on the literature review, focusing on the current forms of external communication, government communication principles, barriers to communication and ways to increase community participation (through a development communication approach) in local government affairs. All data collected was securely stored.

1.7.6   Analysis of Data

The research data was captured using Microsoft Excel to produce quantifiable numerical data and graphs. Data was processed and analysed using the SPSS package version 21 for Windows.

1.7.7   Reliability and Validity

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:66-67) states that the reliability of a study is concerned with the findings of the research and relates to the credibility of the findings.

The reliability of the study was ensured by using trained field workers who use the same approach to administer the questionnaire. In addition a pre-test study of the questionnaire was conducted to ensure that all questions are relevant to the research. The questionnaire was also translated from English to isiXhosa (language mainly spoken in the Mnquma region) to ensure that all questions were easily understood.

To ensure the validity of the study, the questionnaire was developed based on the relevant literature on communication. In order to test the questionnaire's face validity, a pilot questionnaire was tested on a group with characteristics similar to those in the target group. In addition, academics in the field of communication evaluated the questionnaire.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

For the purpose of this study the researcher was granted permission from the Mnquma Local Municipality to conduct the research and all participants were informed via the informed consent letter, which included an information sheet outlining the objectives of the study, guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity and also assured that participation in the study was voluntary and not compulsory.

1.9 THE STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

1.9.1 Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter two contextualises and provides a theoretical framework for the study. It provides an overview of the interrelations between external stakeholders and the municipality and explains the GCIS communication principles in relation to the MLM.

1.9.2 Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Chapter three discusses the methodology for the study. The chapter describes the research design, target population, data collection and the reliability and validity of the study in detail.

1.9.3 Chapter Four: Research Findings and Discussion

Chapter four presents the findings of the study, including a discussion and interpretation of the findings.

1.9.4 Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter five concludes with a presentation of the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has contextualised the study and provided a discussion on the research problem, objectives and includes an overview of the research design. Chapter two will present the literature review of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a background to the study, the research objectives and the overall significance of the study. This chapter provides a theoretical framework for understanding the fundamentals of effective communication, and assessing communication tools. This chapter also discusses the key theories aligned with the study of communication within the developmental communication paradigm.

2.2 IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL MUNICIPALITY COMMUNICATION

The focal point of this study is to assess the Mnquma Local Municipality's (MLM) relationship with its external stakeholders in terms of how communication is used to seek continued participation in municipal affairs and to gain an understanding of the municipality thereof, its functions and the services it provides. Vandome and McVey (2012:52), state that, "communication can support the delivery of the policy objectives or the business change by informing, reinforcing, motivating, normalising or instructing". According Sethi and Adhikari (2010:1), effective communication is essentially the key to the success of any business. To survive in the highly competitive business environment, managers need to keep themselves abreast with the latest developments in communication.

The Government Communication Services (GCS), from United Kingdom 2014 suggests that, "government could be considered as a business unit or institution which uses communication to help deliver its policy priorities, based on departmental business plans and other commitments. Communication plays an important role in helping deliver public benefit, working together with policy and operational parts of government. Moreover, it is often the most effective and efficient tool available in this

regards. Government has a responsibility to communicate with the public, and should do so in a number of ways".

Maphumulo Local Municipality's case study on communication and public participation (2010: 26) suggests that "communication is a critical component of government spheres in South Africa, especially in local government, which operates as an autonomous sphere of government and within a highly defined and indeed complex legal environment". As such, communication services at municipalities need to operate within a policy framework that is developed in accordance with the prevailing local government legislation, while at the same time considering precedents set by the prevailing norms and standards guiding the system of government communication generally.

An eThekwini Local Municipality case study (2011: 2) on communication strategy suggests that it is imperative for a municipality to improve the accountability of the elected representatives and the municipal officials to the community through external communication and other structures in order to bring about people-centred development. In the audit of this municipality it emerged that there is a poor understanding of the role of external communication and its function within government, particularly in municipalities.

Tumbare (2009: 1) states that, "to date, organisations continue to concede that communication is the lubricant required to achieve organisational effectiveness and, therefore, they dedicate considerable amounts of time in systems of communication that bring organisations closer to the achievement of desired goals and objectives".

Yet, there is evidence that, despite the existence of extensive information about communicating persuasively and effectively, many organisations fail to communicate their mission, vision and values as well as they should (Dubrin, 2007: 357). In his work, Dubrin (2007) urges a focus on the creation of high-impact communication with a view of enhancing leadership, thereby bringing organisational communication issues to the fore. This study recognises that local authorities play a leadership role in the provision of basic services, thus placing communication high on the agenda of local authorities.

Maphumulo (2010: 6) asserts that "political leadership and oversight of the communication function locally is a critical success factor in ensuring healthy communication within communities. It is only when communication functions are properly reported on, accounted for, monitored and evaluated that municipal communicators are able to effectively support the implementation of a municipality's programme of action as contained in the legislative framework and the Integrated Development Plan (IDP)". As such, municipalities must have a dedicated communication capacity which puts in place an intentional and planned communication programme.

Having a clearly defined role for communication, particularly external communication as the binding element within any organisation, is crucial in dealing with change and establishing a successful organisation. This chapter will pay particular attention to the importance of communication in local governance, as well as the management of communication to drive external stakeholder communication with the purpose of community empowerment and community participation, specifically within a rural context.

2.2.1 ABOUT MNQUMA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

According to Mnquma's Annual Report (2014:6), Mnquma Local Municipality is located in the south-eastern part of the Eastern Cape Province. The municipality is a category B4 municipality, which is a type of municipality that serves as the third, and most local, tier of local government. The municipality falls under the jurisdiction of the Amathole District Municipality (ADM) and comprises an amalgamation of the former Butterworth, Ngqamakhwe and Centane TRC (Transkei Regional Council). Mnquma Local Municipality shares borders with three other local municipalities, namely, Mbhashe, Intsika Yethu and Great Kei municipalities. The municipality also includes a number of previously administered rural areas. It is approximately 32 995 240 square kilometres and consists of 31 wards (Mnquma's Annual Report, 2015). A B4 municipality is mainly rural with communal tenure and with, at most, one or two small towns.

The municipal council is the ultimate political decision-making body of the municipality and the municipality is managed by the municipal council, according to Kai!Grib Municipality's draft IDP (2014/2015: 5).

Elundini Municipality's IDP and Budget process plan (2011/ 2012: 10) further add that, the Ward Councillors / Ward Committees assisted by Community Development Worker (CDWs) are major link between municipality and residents, link the planning process to their wards or constituencies, organise public consultation and participation, and analyse ward - based issues, determine priorities, negotiate and reach consensus.

In terms of running the municipality, the executive mayor takes overall strategic and political responsibility, while the municipal manager heads the city's administration. The heads of departments and officials of the municipality are, in turn, responsible for the physical implementation of policies. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, requires that a municipality "must structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the social and economic development of the communities (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2012).

"The MLM's administration has just over 3 000 employees divided into the Executive Mayoral Office, Municipal Manager's Office and five directorates namely; Financial Services, Community Services, Corporate Services, Planning and Economic Development and Strategic Management" (Phakade, 2012).

The South African National Census of 2011, survey results revealed, Mnquma Local Municipality has a total population of approximately 252 390 people, 99% of which are Xhosa speaking. The remaining 1% of the population includes English, Afrikaans, Zulu, and Sesotho speaking people. This female dominated municipal area comprises of 53. 4% females and 46.7% males of the total population and consists of approximately 69732 households, according to Mnquma's Annual Report (2014: 6).

Mnquma's IDP (2014 – 2015: 5) maintains that the age distribution of the "bulk of the population, approximately 39%, is children (0-19 years). About 5% falls within the

pension group (over 56 years), whilst 55% are economically active (20-64 years). This means that 45% of the total population is dependent on the 55% that is economically active". There is therefore a desperate need for the municipality to develop youth development programmes.

According to the Mnquma's IDP (2014 - 2015: 5) "Mnquma is one of the municipalities with the highest levels of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. An estimated 11% is unemployed, only 25% is employed while 64% of the municipal population is considered economically inactive. The area has limited employment opportunities and this has huge implications on the increased need for welfare and indigent support in the municipal area". The municipality therefore needs to put priority into service provision, skills and social development.

In addition, the Mnquma municipality falls short in the area of skills. Mnquma's IDP (2014 - 2015: 5) reveal low education levels in this municipal area. Mnquma's IDP (2014 - 2015: 5) shows that "7% of Mnquma's population has no schooling and the municipality has improved from 8% to 31% of its population that has completed primary school. In the 10 year period it has been discovered that the municipality has also improved from 10% to 52% that has completed grade 12 while no more than 9% of the population have a higher education".

These statistics suggest that the municipality's approach to organisation communication has to be sensitive; with this high level of illiteracy the municipality should develop communication tools that address issues of people who are illiterate and live long distances from the municipal offices. This study therefore investigates factors affecting communication and how sensitive MLM is to its constituency's educational level, literacy rate and distance.

In his speech at the Gauteng Provincial Summit on Community Development Workers (CDW) the then Minister for Communication, Roy Padayachee, highlighted that "the programme was conceived from the idea of ensuring that citizens access government services and information". Padayachee (2009) further adds that the "CDW programme is a priority which aims to strengthen the capacity of the state to enable it to improve delivery and quality public services; to build partnerships with

society for equitable development and to strengthen democratic institutions; and to promote a culture of transparent, honest and compassionate public service through communication".

Padayachee (2009) adds that the CDW programme seeks to improve the dissemination of information to the poor about the benefits and services to which all citizens are entitled; assist the poor to access and benefit from the services that could materially improve their lives; and provide an interface or bridge between municipalities and communities to enhance the existing local government structures so as to improve the level of participation between communities and the IDPs, Urban Renewal Projects and Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programmes. These programmes provide a platform on which communities may negotiate their interests and express their views in order for them to be included in these government programmes. The CDW programme promote community participation at local level even in rural areas.

In addition, the Eastern Cape MEC for Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Sicelo Gqobane (2009), while delivering his welcome address at the CDW summit, he added that government should seek to build its own capacity to communicate with the masses and to ensure the dissemination of its own views and perspectives to the people as part and parcel of its strategy for mobilising communities behind government programmes and activities.

The Constitution of Republic of South Africa *(Act No. 108 of 1996)* states that everybody has the right to information and freedom of expression. The Constitution and the functions for municipalities also identify municipal planning as one of the core functions of a local municipality. This topic is further elucidated in section 23 of the *Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000),* which states that municipal planning should be undertaken in a developmentally oriented and cooperative manner. This implies that planning undertaken by a municipality should be aligned with, and complementary to, the development plans and strategies of other state agencies. This emphasises the need for cooperative governance and integrated development.

According to Koma (2012: 128), *section 152 of the Constitution* gives effect to the developmental duties of municipalities and contributes to the progressive realisation

of the fundamental rights contained in *sections 24 to 29 of the Constitution.* Koma (2012: 128) further adds that with the objects of local government amongst others are:

> to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; to ensure the provision of basic services to communities in a sustainable manner; to promote social and economic development and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

A report on the capacity building framework for local government (2014:12) drawn up by the South African Cooperative department, explains that "developmental local government means that a local government must be committed to work with citizens and groups in the community to find ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and to improve the quality of their lives". In this regard it should target in particular those members and groups within communities that are marginalised or excluded, such as women, the disabled and the poverty stricken.

According to the Department of Provincial and Local Government (2014:1) municipalities face great challenges in promoting human rights and meeting human needs, addressing past backlogs and problems caused by apartheid planning, and planning for a sustainable future. They can only meet these challenges by working together with local citizens, communities and businesses, and to continuously engage with these stakeholders mentioned above.

In maximising social development and economic growth, municipalities have great influence over local economic development and therefore need to work in partnership with local business to improve job creation and investment. Furthermore, developmental local government ought to provide leadership for all those who have a role to play in achieving local prosperity.

In relation to the study, the researcher assesses how MLM engages with its constituencies in finding collective solutions or tackling problems together through the use of external communication, dialogues and continuous engagement.

One of the most important methods for achieving greater coordination and integration is integrated development planning (IDP). The IDP document is a legal requirement for all South African municipalities according to the *White Paper on Local Government, March (1998).*

2.3 OVERVIEW OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

Integrated development planning (IDP) is an approach to planning that involves the entire municipality and its citizens in finding the best solutions for achieving good long-term development by applying methods of engagement with external stakeholders within that municipality (Craythorne, 2006).

Craythorne (2006: 146) further states that:

> an IDP is a super plan for an area that gives an overall framework for development. It aims to coordinate the work of local and other spheres of government in a coherent plan to improve the quality of life for all the people living in an area. It takes into account the existing conditions and problems and resources available for development. The plan looks at economic and social development for the area as a whole. It sets a framework for how land should be used, what infrastructure and services are needed and how the environment should be protected.

The *Municipal Systems Act, 2000*, defines an IDP as "a single, inclusive and strategic plan for the development of the municipality". This Act is a tool that will enable the municipality to achieve its constitutional objectives to:

- provide democratic and accountable government for local authorities.
- ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner.
- promote social and economic development.
- promote a safe and healthy environment.
- encourage community participation in local government matters.

The IDP process is a central planning tool for government that embodies local government development goals and a comprehensive service delivery programme.

The Matjhabeng Local Municipality's IDP (2011:3) states that integrated planning has been developed as a consolidated municipality-wide planning process that

provides a framework for planning future development in a municipality. Integrated planning ensures horizontal and vertical coordination and integration across the spheres of government: national, provincial and local. In addition, the IDP promotes and encourages community participation and stakeholder involvement (Mnquma Local Municipality IDP 2014a: 7).

Furthermore, the IDP is seen as a management tool for the municipality's administration as well as a tool for the development of partnerships and strategic alliances on different levels, including communities (Langeberg Municipality, 2014).

Mfenguza (2008: 2) states that "services may not be delivered promptly and, as a result, community members may complain about lack of service delivery. The implementation of the IDP plays a crucial role in the development of municipalities. This is due to the fact that local economic development of a municipality is supposed to be influenced by the IDP of such a municipality". The IDP process will not be complete without the involvement of communities of that municipality.

Mfenguza (2008: 2) further adds that "communities should be involved in matters that affect them. This will enable them to know exactly what their local government is doing for them and why. This will also enable them to indicate whether or not what is done by their local government for them is what they want". Communities need that sense of belonging to claim the ownership of development programmes and this could be achieved through external communications and engagement processes. In engaging with communities, communication and engagement reinforces and revitalises the relationship the community and municipality has. In cases where the relationship might be strained, reaching out through external communication allows room for engaging in issues that need to be clarified and addressed, immediately.

Mnquma Local Municipality has already produced three full five year IDPs, that is, 2002 – 2007, 2007-2012, and 2012 – 2017. The Municipality is now reviewing the 2012-2017 IDP for the second year in accordance with *section 34 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000.*

2.3.1 ANALYSIS OF MLM IDP Clusters

The IDP comprises a number of clusters together with their main areas of responsibility. Mnquma's cluster function is to draw up a review process plan that would prompt inclusivity and transparency, encourage participation by all stakeholders and communities, solicit and determine the priorities of the municipality, and enhance service delivery and development. The following clusters have been adopted:

- Municipal Transformation, Institutional Development and Financial Viability
- Socioeconomic Development
- Infrastructure Development and Service Delivery
- Good Governance and Public Participation

The Good Governance and Public Participation Cluster (Governance Cluster for short) is one of the four clusters of the municipality that looks into the issues of governance, communication and public participation. The changes in the municipal cluster arrangement have occurred in order to bring it in line with the key performance areas set out for achievement by the local government (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2014b: 56).

A Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole Municipality study on communication policy (n.d:306) suggests that the municipality's good corporate governance underpins all the programmes and projects of the municipality. The Municipality conducts its business in an open, transparent and accountable manner. Community participation programmes form an integral part of the Municipality's planning and decision-making processes. Good governance in local authorities is that decision making and implementation is a collective with the community through the use of external communication or engagement. This study will also investigate how MLM meets the Governance Cluster's objectives, in promoting community participation and community engagement.

Central to good governance is ward-based planning processes and other outreach programmes. As part of ward-based planning processes, all 31 wards identify

together with the community their ward priorities, and these inform the current IDP and budget. And this is done as a collective with citizens. The importance of community participation is that community members develop a sense of ownership and responsibility, which helps to sustain initiatives, programmes and problems get addressed as a collective with the constituencies.

In addition, in order for external communication to happen in local municipalities its golden thread is the will to engage constantly with stakeholders on matters that affect both municipality and communities. This also enables the municipality to establish and build good relationships through continuous engagements efforts.

According to Mnquma's IDP (2014-2015: 171), a local communicator's forum has been established and is chaired by the Portfolio Head of communications and public participation. There has been an integration of the internal and external communicator's forum and content management forum to an information communications technology steering committee that encompasses all the issues relating to communications and information technology.

 "The forums should be reviewed, where issues of mutual interest and co-operative governance are discussed in line with South Africa's Constitution and Intergovernmental Framework *Act 13 of 2005* by June 2017*", Government Gazette*, Republic of South Africa (2005: 5). Opsekin (2002:1) explains that the term 'intergovernmental relations' or 'IGR' is "commonly used to refer to relations between central, regional and local governments, as well as governments between any one level, that facilitate the attainment of common goals through co-operation".

The term is "commonly used to describe the interactions between the different levels of government within the state" (Adamolekun, 2002: 60). Basically, IGR refers to the communication of orders of government in a federation; it assumes the need for interdependence among or between the orders of government.

The municipality plays a pivotal role as the major link between its constituencies and the different government departments operating in municipal jurisdiction. Therefore,

the MLM's IGR activities are crucial in providing effective, all-encompassing communication to its constituencies.

In today's world, anyone is privileged and has the right to be informed and engaged irrespective of circumstance. Communication is imperative in all organisations and should not be subjected to one's educational level or background. All messaging or information can be made fitting to anyone's level of education and knowledge. Everyone has a right to information that is effectively communicated and understood. According to Finch, Hansen and Alexander (2010:1) if communication takes place effectively you will have a more fully engaged and productive people.

2.4 WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Headbush (2010:26) contends that:

> The most suitable definition for the study of communication in organisations is that, communication is a process by which information is exchanged between or among individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour. As a process, communication is synonymous with expressing feelings, conversing and speaking, corresponding, writing and exchanging information.

Luthans (2002: 1) states that "experts have agreed on a definition for communication amongst themselves, as most definitions of communication stress the use of symbols to transfer the meaning of information". Communication is the understanding not of the visible, but, of the invisible and hidden. These hidden and symbolic elements embedded in the culture give meaning to the visible communication process. Involvement of people is another factor that is stressed. Ivancevich and Matteson (1993: 3–4) state that "communication among people does not depend on technology but rather on forces in people and their surroundings. It is a process that occurs within people".

Communication is the means by which people are linked together; how they function in order to achieve a common goal. Communication is transactional, involving two or more people interacting within a defined environment. Without effective

communication among different parties, the pattern of relationships that we call organisation will serve no one's needs. Koontz (2001: 23) defines organisational communication as the transfer of information from the sender to the receiver with the information being understood by the receiver. Guffey and Almonte (2007: 6), agrees, calling it "communication is the transmission of information and meaning from one individual group to another. The process of communication is successful only when the receiver understands an idea as the sender intended it". Hybels and Weaver (2001: 17) see communication as "any process in which people share information, ideas and feelings, and that involves not only the spoken and written word but also body language, personal mannerism and style "– anything that adds meaning to a message.

Communication should not be limited to simply transferring information, but should be effectively transferred. Luthans (2002) states that communication is a prerequisite for implementing organisational strategies as well as for managing day-to-day activities through people. Communication supports the development of positive relationships with community stakeholders and can also be utilised to influence attitudes and behaviours within the wider environment. MacDonald and Hammer (2007:1) assert that communication within industries forms part of day-to-day business for all organisations and, for communication to be effective, it must combine skill in language, knowledge of the business environment and practices and skill in human relations.

The flow of messages in the external context of the organisation is vital in facilitating the day-to-day activities of the organisation that relate to stakeholder engagement. Employees at Mnquma Local Municipality are engaged in activities that can be classified into those areas that culminate in the delivery of basic services to the citizen of Mnquma. However, in relations to the study the researcher wants to establish or assess to what extent are the external stakeholders engaged with or communicated by the municipality.

There are different levels of communication. Organisations communicate with their stakeholders in various ways, depending on factors such as the message content, type of audience and message context. The choice of communication channel and the manner of communication affects the communication process itself. According to

Kushal and Ahuja (2010: 5), there are five broad levels of communication, namely, intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, public and mass communication.

2.4.1. Intrapersonal Communication

Intrapersonal communication is a type of communication whereby a person interacts with himself/herself "the audience of one" (Beck, Bennett & Wall 2005: 5). This type of communication is intrinsic or reflective.

The introspection stage can be done at institutional level, in this case the municipality. At this stage an assessment is necessary in unpacking where the municipality stands with its communication, is it known by its audience, what service does it offer, what is the municipality's vision, communication objectives and do ordinary citizens know where they stand in all of this and more. In addition, an intricate assessment of the municipal's messaging and the tools it uses for communication and whether they are effective and efficient needs to be done, considering many factors such as the environment, language, reach and tools needed. During this stage a selection of communication tools and language is taken into account and the communication strategy is updated accordingly. After having completed the previous stage of planning and having everything documented and agreed on, the communication or engagement with stakeholders can commence.

In relation to the study the researcher assesses how MLM updates their communication plan, review their tools, language used if appropriate and understood by constituencies. It also assesses how effective and relevant are the tools used in communication and the assumed barriers to communication in the given environment.

2.4.2 Interpersonal Communication

This is a type of communication where there is one-to-one interaction or interaction among a small group. This is the most commonly used/practised form of communication (Wood 2010: 9-17). Wood (2010) further adds that participants are simultaneously sending and receiving messages and adapting to one another. This means that at any given moment of communicating you may be sending a message

(speaking or nodding your head). Because communicators affect each other (Rothwell 2004), interpersonal communication involves ethical responsibilities.

This stage is where interaction and the exchange of ideas takes place and external stakeholders share their perceived ideas with the municipality. This could be face to face, through surveys, with municipal representatives like ward councillors and officials. However, a platform should be created by the municipality to allow stakeholders to participate, for example community meetings, ward meetings, interactive websites etc. Therefore, the municipality could use these to build relationships between them and its external stakeholder.

It is very imperative to understand the current tools utilised by MLM and if they are relevant, accessible and are understood by the target audience – with the aim to exchange ideas and provide suggestion from the constituencies. Additionally, feedback is important and does it happen at MLM.

2.4.3 Intergroup Communication

This is a type of communication where interaction between different groups takes place. It facilitates liaison, contact and link_s within groups. In some municipalities this form of communication could be defined as *Imbizo*. The term *Imbizo* derives from the South African isiZulu language, meaning "gathering". As a contemporary working definition, *Imbizo* demonstrates itself as an organised event and dialogue amongst groups (Morobe, 2005). Former South African President Thabo Mbeki in his speech (2004) stated that the government's *Imbizo* programmes have given ordinary South Africans an opportunity to gauge government's performance over the last decade in an unmediated manner. Imbizo have an informal setting conducted within the community's reach. This allows people to gather for one course to discuss issue pertaining to their community and municipality.

The purpose is a group of people discussing for a common objective and it becomes a collaborative approach between the community and municipality. Relationships are established and maintained through constant engagement and collaborations facilitated by mediums such as *Imbizo*. According to Linkner (2011: 146), the key to

having a successful *Imbizo* is to let go of the outcome and simply allow the discussions to ensue. Very important is the fact that the *Imbizo* compels municipal officials to leave their offices and see for themselves some of the challenges the community is facing on a daily basis. It necessitates direct face-to-face interaction with external stakeholders in an environment that is mutually balanced, open and transparent.

Imbizo is considered a very practical and easy way of gathering as many people around as possible for various reasons; however, for MLM it would be to drive external communication. The researcher assesses if activities such as these do happen and if yes, how often and effective.

Vandome and McVey (2012: 24), further support why a gathering of this nature is good and creates a sense of ownership, by arguing that:

> being inclusive means thinking of every individual in an organisation and making sure that they are included in the communication process. This should give them a sense of ownership, and make them believe that what is being said and discussed is ultimately for their benefit. If you cannot take people along with you in the communication process, then it is doomed from the start.

2.4.4 Public Communication

Public Communication denotes communication between persons as equals. It is the sending, receipt and exchange of messages, ideas and opinions. The means of public communications have evolved over time with the development of technology and mediums of communication. Likewise, public opinions, policies and ideas have evolved as society's attitudes and opinions changed. However, the exchange or transaction of ideas remains constant; people respond and react within public groups, thereby contributing to and shaping public discourse (*Farley, 2013).* In relation to the study, the researcher investigates if the public communication activities do occur and the possible benefits during the exchange of the message (the giver and receiver) – in this study, both the municipality and the constituency. It should be noted public communication also have its disadvantages, as in some instances those in attendance would not feel comfortable or confident to speak in a

public setting, thus their opinion would not be heard or considered. This can also be barrier to communication.

2.4.5 Mass Communication

Farley (2013: 55) explains that mass communication is the broadcast of "an unanswerable voice to a large audience" and that "mass communication does not involve an exchange of ideas, but rather the delivery and receipt of a mass message or messages". Organisations like Mnquma operate in wide areas and can engage with external stakeholders with the use of mass communication media tools such as radio, social media and newspapers. Community radio and local newspapers have proven to be effective in this case as they are part of the community and have an insight into community dynamics, cultures, rituals and challenges. Kamat (2012) asserts that communication with rural people is difficult and challenging, as many of them live in inaccessible, and isolated villages. In this situation mass communication might be the other alternative for reaching them, breaking all the barriers of physical distance and illiteracy.

"Over the past four centuries mass communication has gained in importance and influence. It is an essential building block in the construction of human culture and civilisation", (Cambridge 2003:2)

Mass communication becomes very important when communicating ideas intended to change the behaviour of people – right from developing awareness to adoption of an innovation. When people are exposed to an increasing flow of information, and empowering they find themselves in a position which necessitates a change in their aspirations, attitudes and efforts (Kamat, 2012).

In many communications, the message may not be received exactly the way the sender intended. There exist many barriers to communication and these may occur at any stage in the communication process. Barriers may lead to the message becoming distorted and therefore risk wasting both time and money by causing confusion and misunderstanding. Effective communication involves being alert of those barriers, overcoming these barriers and conveying a clear and concise message.

2.5 UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Barriers to communication form a significant part of this study as they identify potential problems with the communication methods. Various authors (such as Means, 2009; Hogan & Stubbs, 2008; and Fielding, 2006) have identified barriers to communication. The barriers tend to be similar, focusing on factors such as climate, environment, trust, language, prejudice, gender and so forth. No matter how good the communication system in an organisation is, unfortunately barriers can and do often occur. These barriers interrupt the flow of communication from the sender to the receiver, thus making communication ineffective.

In overcoming the communication barrier, according to Guffey and Loewy (2013: 128), careful communicators can conquer barrier in a number of ways. Half of the time the battles in communicating successfully is recognising that the entire process is sensitive and susceptive to breakdown. Like a defensive driver, anticipating problems on the road, a good communicator anticipated problems in the encoding, transmitting and decoding.

Strategies to overcome barriers will be different in different situations depending upon the type of barriers present. There are a number of barriers to communication which can usually be summarised as being due to intrapersonal, interpersonal, technological, structural, and cross-cultural factors.

2.5.1 Intrapersonal Factors

Steinberg (2007:149), suggests that intrapersonal factors which create biases in our interpretations of ourselves, others and the event around us. Barker and Gaut (1996:123) refer to these as the intrapersonal variables that influence communication. Among others they include rumour your personality traits, past experiences, backgrounds and the defence mechanism to you use to resolve problems and anxiety.

A cultural barrier arises when two individuals in an organisation belong to different religions, background or regions. MLM is made up of 99% Xhosa speakers, while Sotho, English, Zulu and Afrikaans speakers make up 1% (Mnquma Local Municipality, 2014a). According to O'Neil (2005), the human communication process

is more complex than it initially seems. Much, if not most, of our messages in face-to-face contacts are transmitted through paralanguage. These auxiliary communication techniques are highly culture bound. Communication with people from other societies or ethnic groups is fraught with the danger of misunderstanding if their culture and paralanguage is unknown to you or ignored. In terms of this factor, MLM might not experience challenges because the majority of the population is Xhosa speaking and culturally Xhosa. This does not, however, mean that they may avoid communication challenges altogether.

2.5.2 Interpersonal Factors

Interpersonal factors involve issues such as trust between sender and receiver, noise, personality, individual perceptual errors and lying and distortion (Hellriegel and Slocum, 2007:328). Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman (2008: 163) add that the credibility of the information source, the climate (feelings that either limit or encourage the content and frequency of the message) and sender–receiver similarities can inhibit effective commination in social service organisation.

Building trust means being honest and not omitting information and not keeping secrets from your external stakeholders. Because once your audience finds out that you are keeping a secret, they won't be able to trust you anymore. Keeping secrets requires keeping track of the lies to build bigger lies to bury the previous lies. Dealing with interpersonal factors should involve sensitivity, because most government officials have a reputation of not caring about community members. Trust is also compromised if issues that were communicated and promised were never delivered and addressed effectively by those in local authority thus creates a barrier to communication.

The South African government has created the Office of the Public Protector as an entity to handle and investigate complaints from the public against government agencies or officials. According to a report (Department of the Western Cape, 2013) the Public Protector has the power to recommend corrective action and to issue reports. However, the challenge is that the Public Protector has no offices in MLM. Nevertheless, trust and relationships are built and maintained through honest dialogue. The Municipality would have to take a leading role in having those conversations, good and bad, however, those in the process assist to alleviate any

negative interpersonal perception that might exist with the external stakeholders which could be a communication barrier in the long run.

2.5.3 Technological Factors

Technological factors referrer to language and meaning, non – verbal cues, media effectiveness and information overload (Smit, Cronje, Brevis, Vrba, 2010: 417). Unison (2015:4) further adds that changes in technology, including a rise in automation in the workplace and the development of the internet, have transformed the way in which many businesses work.

During the last two decades South Africa and the rest of the world have been subject to an onslaught of electronic communication. The consequences of this technological surge have been to make employees more available and to blur organisational boundaries. The time factor has become almost non-existent, as messages can be communicated almost instantaneously (Cunningham, Bagraim, Potgieter and Viegde, 2007).

Headbush (2010:30) states that, unfortunately, this access and speed have resulted in the demise of some necessary elements of communication. E-mail, for example, does not provide the facility of non- verbal communication that face-to- face meetings do. Emotions and nuances cannot be conveyed and affiliation needs are not addressed. Video conferencing allows people to see each other, but does not provide the answer for those people with a high need for social contact.

According to Conrad (2014) whether it's a small institution or a small municipality like Mnquma, fostering effective communication is critical to success. No company can succeed long term if its stakeholders do not communicate with one another, and this lack of communication will quickly become evident in the form of missed opportunities for engagement.

The Mnquma Local Municipality has a website available for both the internal and external stakeholders. Considering the prevailing circumstances in Mnquma, of the high unemployment rate, low levels of education and poor accessibility, this study assesses if MLM's use of technology is meaningful and relevant. For example, do the constituencies know about the website and do they have the computer literacy and technology skills to assess the information? Furthermore, the technological

progress, advancement and infrastructure in rural environments is not as developed as in urban areas. Beside technological factors structural factors also contribute to communication barriers.

2.5.4 Structural Factors

Structural factors include a focus on aspects relating to the status of the sender, size of the target group, spatial constraints (physical distance between sender and receiver) and serial transmission (changes that messages undergo as they are successively communicate of from layer to layer).

Vandome and McVey (2012: 47), add that, organisational structure has an important influence on the ability of members of the organisation to communicate effectively. Things like physical distance between the sender and received may prevent the received from seeking an immediate clarification. However, due to advances in modern communication technology this barrier has been overcome to a large extent.

MLM offices are allocated in the town centre, catering for a wide variety of communities, some approximately 70 kilometres from the town centre. Distance sometimes delays communication which means that, at the time of arrival to communities the communication is most likely out-dated; therefore, this will be a barrier to MLM's effective communication.

Vandome and McVey (2012: 26) however, argue that:

> it is not all about words, one of the reason that face to face communication is so effective is that there are numerous factors that can help us interpret the message, in addition, to what is a person is saying. In fact, only a small percentage of a face to face message is conveyed by words. The rest is done by facial expression, tone of voice, gestures and body language.

Structural factors should not been seen as a hindrance to effective communication but rather, an opportunity to have more engaged and human interactions with the constituencies of Mnquma. It also allows the Municipality to innovatively think of new external communication activities that will address the different needs, frequency and approach of external communication to the municipality's different stakeholders. It calls for the Municipality to be creative, innovative and embrace technological advancement to deliver communication effectively.

2.5.5 Cross-Cultural Factors

In a country such as South Africa, the diversity of cultures imposes a range of hurdles that must be overcome in areas such as organisational communication. Culture determines the distinctive ways in which different populations, societies or smaller groups organise their lives or activities in terms of language, religious beliefs, economic beliefs, social values, physical characteristics and use of nonverbal cues. Cross-cultural communication occurs when a message sent by a member of one culture is received and understood by a member of another culture. Hellriegel and Slocum (2007: 406-407) explain that knowing and understanding cultural differences plays a large part in improving the effectiveness of communication.

Although the population of MLM consists mainly of Xhosa speakers, Xhosas can be divided into different tribes but distinct heritages. The main tribes are the Mpondo, Mpondomise, Bomvana, Xesibe, and Thembu. It consequently becomes critical for the municipality to scan the environment and be sensitive to different cultural cues.

Effective cross-cultural communication is important for the communication strategy of every institution, and it is a critical component of the community involvement plan. In establishing or identifying the different cultures through demographic research, the municipality is able to be alert to verbal and nonverbal cues that affect communication. In addition, one can observe and understand the behaviours of different cultures and, accordingly, follow their lead in interactions with them. Cultural stereotypes can also play a formidable role in barrier enforcement.

Municipalities should adopt a specific audience-centred approach so as to understand the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of its target audience through audience research methods. This requires aligning benefits and offers available from the municipality with each audience segment by taking into account its beliefs and attitudes. Grouping target audiences according to their audience segment means that their specific fears can be addressed and a formidable communication plan worded out with each segment (Maphumulo Local Municipality, 2010: 33).

Krishna (2003: 23), asserts that communication can be successful only when the receiver understands the meaning of the message, sent by the sender. There are

some communication barriers which may block the communication process and present the sender from transmitting his idea meaningfully. Other factors are perceptual and language difference, restrictive environment, distractions, deceptive tactics and communication network.

Overcoming communication barriers requires vigilant observation and contemplation of potential barriers in a particular instance of communication. Strategies to overcome barriers will differ from one context to another, depending upon the type of barriers present.

The fundamentals of external communication also suggest that barriers to communication get addressed in order to have effective communication with the targeted constituencies. Appropriate and effective external communication is about accurate, on time communication and with correct external communication tools.

2.6 WHAT IS EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION?

Gopal (2009: 8) states that external communication is communication with external agencies, both government and private. It is an essential feature of all businesses. All suppliers, customers, financial institutions, support organisations, public and other environmental organisations that are external to the company have to communicate with it for various business dealings. Effective communication with those outside a company brings in order, building goodwill, and ensures the continued existence and growth of the business or institution.

According to Walker (2011: 257), external communication occurs in at least three major forms: (1) advertising and promoting product and services, (2) creating and maintaining a desirable public image for the organisation, and (3) shaping the public opinion on issues important to the organisation.

No group or organisation can function without effective and adequate communication systems and external stakeholders also form part of the bigger picture of any organisation. Orders and policies must be transmitted, and problems and their solutions identified. External stakeholders or audience are just as important as internal stakeholders in the communication process.

Walker (2011) states that traditionally, communication concerned with image building has been the responsibility of public relations practitioners. The area has expanded to include investor relations programmes, and programmes to communicate about risk and crisis situations In addition, many organisations have expanded external communication to include a new function – identifying and tracking public issues that concern the organisation. An organisation might try to respond to public criticism or try to influence public opinion on important issues by advocating its own position in the public arena.

Messaging and effective external communication can assist in the development of a good relationship between the municipality and its environment and may also assist in influencing the wider environment by informing and changing attitudes in the various target groups (MacDonald and Hammer 2007: 3). Other important reasons for external communication include the development of trust, social responsibility, transparency and professional ethics, all of which support the overall goal of protecting local government. MacDonald and Hammer (2007) further explain that establishing trust and confidence is not a trivial concept. The regulatory administration must be proactive in its approach to stakeholder management and communication.

External communication is a critical function that is centrally involved in key aspects of an organisation's communications with the external world, presenting not only services information to external stakeholders but also perspectives on important issues to the media. As the function that represents the voice to the external world, external communication needs a clear understanding of its services, priorities and responsibilities, which include external communications group services, building bridges, working effectively in the integrated stakeholder partnership, forging accountability and clear roles among external stakeholders together with communicating the value of communications in institutions such as municipalities.

2.6.1 Analysis of various External Communication Tools

Krizan, Merrier, Logan and Williams (2010: 3) assert that:

> external communication builds goodwill, brings in order, and contributes to the continued existence and growth of the business. Day –to – day external

communications include sales calls, products advertisement, news release employment notices, bank transactions and periodic reports to government agencies. External communication that has long-range impact include new product announcements, plant expansion plans, contributes to community activities.

The external communication requires to be supported by accurate and relevant external communication tools. Tools utilised for communication internally are in most instances different from the external communication tools. There should be an amount of consideration regarding the audience, distance, messaging, and accessibility when selecting external communication tools.

Opperman (2007: 7) in a George Local Municipality case study on communication, points out that the common mechanisms used to communicate with stakeholders in municipalities are:

- formal and informal dialogue
- the activation of CDWs
- general media
- public relations consultants
- workshops
- information days
- radio/television
- surveys
- print media.

Municipalities adopt and utilise some form of external communication tools to drive messaging and information to its external stakeholders. In relation to this study the researcher investigates which tools are used by the Mnquma Local Municipality and assesses the effectiveness thereof.

2.6.2 Principles of External Communication in Municipalities

The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality's Communication Policy (n/d: 3) outlines the five principles of external communication in municipalities, that is, governance, participation, citizens, culture (the manner in which communication occurs), and public image.

The first principle is ensuring governance. In terms of the national definition of "governance", the Mnquma Local Municipality is required to govern with, rather than for, the people. Thus the Municipality is to be viewed as a facilitating body and not a governing body. For this to be achieved dialogue between the Municipality and citizens through ward committees and collective decision-making must be promoted and enabled. This requires the strengthening of the link between Council, ward committees and the community. The second principle of participation requires both the Municipality and its citizens to be actively involved in and contribute to the affairs of the Municipality. Through dialogue, the citizens and the Municipality will be able to share expertise, experience and information and contribute to the creation of an interactive local authority. In this interaction, the Municipality and the citizens are considered equal. The Municipality should endeavour to enable participation wherever possible and make itself and its personnel available to engage in discussions with citizens (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, n.d).

'Participation' is also about informing communities about opportunities to participate in public consultation and other initiatives addressing citizen engagement. Open and responsive communication is critical to the success of public consultations and community participation.

'Citizen', the third principle, allows for a broad definition of role-players and stakeholders, the external public, that is, individuals or organisations operating outside the Municipality such as ward committees, delegations, VIPs, and so forth. This communication process should enable the Municipality to interact with all role-players in an efficient and effective manner.

The fourth principle refers to the manner in which communication occurs. It is envisaged that communication, involvement and interaction become a "culture" within Council. In this context "culture" means that the necessity and importance of communication is recognised and is an integral part of Council's operations. With the acceptance of the need for involvement, the value and importance of communication is appreciated and understood by all role-players. This culture cannot be enforced; it develops and evolves within the organisation and its personnel.

A critical aspect of building a culture is also to reflect on diversity and the different cultures that might exist in the different wards of the same municipality. However, that culture would be guided by the one culture of Mnquma. Tantsi (2011) maintains that the Mnquma Local Municipality would ensure that the publications and other communication material depict the diverse nature of South Africa in a fair, representative and inclusive manner. The municipality would treat differences among and within the constituencies and wards with sensitivity. Balances in the communication plans and activities will be ensured so that the needs and interests of local and special populations are reflected and addressed.

The last principle is public image and an important factor for successful communication. Image refers to the public perception of the Municipality and may either attract or deter citizen involvement and participation; moreover, public image promotes participation. However, it must be noted that in this communication process, it is anticipated that the municipality's image might be improved through external communication (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, n/d: 3). This study investigates if and how the Mnquma Local Municipality engages with their constituencies, using the above principles as a guideline.

A Maphumulo Local Municipality case study (2010: 33) states that communication is at the centre of any campaign or human interaction. People must know who you are, what you stand for and why they should support your municipality. Furthermore, the Maphumulo Local Municipality study (2010) maintains that "a successful municipality needs to build a profile to which people can relate. An artistic and well-crafted communication implementation strategic plan will ensure that the right information reaches target audiences (other municipalities, supporters, decision-makers, opposition forces, civil movements, and the public [community]) both inside and outside the municipality. This, in essence, requires the municipality to develop the ability to put itself in its target audience's shoes and see how they will benefit from supporting its existence".

Communication within the South African government is legally constituted in terms of *section 14 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act* (PAIA). In terms of this Act, all citizens of South Africa have a right to access information which affects their lives. They have a right to know how government functions and how decisions taken by it

may affect their lives. This transparent flow of information between government and its citizens is necessary for democracy.

The South African government has made provision to support the *Act* above in giving support to the municipalities and government department, through the creation of a Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) department which is nationally based.

2.7 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GCIS)

The GCIS provides strategic communication leadership and support in government communications to all of government departments and leads government communication by submitting a National Communication Strategy to Cabinet. It is also coordinated centrally from the office of the president or by the cabinet (Horwitz 2004: 317).

GCIS (2010:3) states their vision, mission and objectives as:

> *Vision - is* helping to meet the communication and information needs of government and the public, to ensure a better life for all.
> *Mission -* is to provide leadership in government communication and to ensure that the public is informed of government's implementation of its mandate.
> S*trategic objective -* is to enhance the government communication system and its operations in ways that contribute to the process of further consolidating our democracy and taking the country onto a higher growth and development path.

In addition, GCIS Strategic plan – (2015: 9), *Section 195(g) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* forms the basis of the formation of the GCIS. It stipulates that in order to foster transparency, the public should be provided with information that is timely, accurate and importantly accessible.

The GCIS provides guidelines to municipalities with media planning and the placement of advertisements in print, electronic and outdoor media. The GCIS also supports and advises the different government departments located in municipalities with planning and managing communication strategies, programmes and campaigns

and promotes coordination and integration with a coherent government communication programme for a particular year.

According to Muir (1996: 36) "communication can be used as an empowerment tool. In other words, communication is used as a tool to facilitate the participation of people in development activities. Knowledge and information are essential for people to successfully respond to the opportunities and challenges of social, economic and technological changes". However, in order to be useful, knowledge and information must be effectively communicated to people.

Millions of people in developing countries are excluded from a wide range of information and knowledge, with the rural poor in particular remaining isolated from both traditional media and new information and communication technologies which would improve their life (Annan, 2011). In this study, an assessment is made of the way in which communication is used to seek continued participation from majority stakeholders – community members on matters affecting them. In addition, there should be mutual benefit and accessibility in spite of distance from those external stakeholders that reside many kilometres away from the municipality. Access to information should not be hindered by gender, education level or distance.

2.8 UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Democracy is best addressed when a citizen is a unit of control, facts reach the citizen in an understandable form, and the citizen's opinions translate into government action (Smither, 1997: 8). In his speech on community participation, the current South African President Jacob Zuma, (2010), stated that in a democratic society it is imperative to maintain accountability and a community of interest. When participating in local government, citizens should be knowledgeable and attempt to understand the system and its operations, and be aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Mfenguza (2008: 1) explains that "after the first free democratic elections in 1994, all South African citizens were given a democratic right to participate in issues of

governance. Public participation has been encouraged by the democratic dispensation through various policy initiatives since then, with the aim to restore the dignity of previously disadvantaged people". Local government has thus been given a key role in putting an end to the social, political and economic exclusion which was created by the apartheid system.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, brought about a new expanded role for municipalities. According to the Department of Provincial and Local Government (2014:35), "municipalities must now lead, manage and plan for development, their task together with national and provincial government is to eradicate poverty, boost local economic development, job creation, and carry forward the process of reconstruction and development". Consequently, local communities are to be involved in the decision-making processes of local government. Hence, community participation in local government is critical (Mfenguza, 2008: 2).

Chapter 7 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, states that it is the object of local government to "encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government". This requires a cooperative approach, an "effective partnership" where "local authorities provide strong leadership for their areas and their communities". Therefore, the institution of local government, as stated by the Constitution, "should enhance opportunities for participation by placing more power and resources at closer and more easily influenced level of government" (Mogale, 2005:136).

Chapter 4 of the *Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000* talks about community participation, while section 16(1) requires the municipality to develop "a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance". This Act provides the chance of participation of those who cannot write and read. This applies particularly to the communities of the MLM region where there is a huge illiteracy rate. People with disabilities, women and other disadvantaged groups are mentioned, meaning that they must not be excluded. This is study examines how the MLM communicates with a constituency that has a high illiteracy rate.

The *Promotion of Access to Information Act (No 2 of 2000)* which is aimed at promoting participation, gives people the right to have access to any information which the government has if they need it to protect their rights. Officials can only refuse to give information in certain limited situations. This study ascertains whether the community is aware of or informed about their right to participate in their development. The public has a right to access any municipal information or records unless they are strictly confidential.

Through participation ordinary people are given the opportunity to have a say in how their environment should be planned and developed in future, and are able to influence the final outcome of planned action. Most importantly, public participation contributes to overcoming a sense of hopelessness because it increases the public's sense of efficacy, meaning the belief that ordinary citizens have the ability and competence to influence municipalities. This means that participation changes dependency into independency.

Related to communication principles, is development communication, which is "the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfilment of the human potential" (Habermann and de Fontagalland, 1978:43).

Development communication emerges from an "understanding of development as empowerment and communication as shared meaning. It involves issues at all levels of consideration: the grassroots, large community, regional, national, and global levels" (Melkote and Steeves 2001:44). To be truly significant and meaningful participation needs to be based on the application of genuine two-way communication principles and practices (Mefalopulos, 2008: 7).

According to Thusong Service Centre (2000), "government has adopted an approach to dialogue with its citizens described as development communication. Development communication can be seen as a thread linking a number of national development initiatives aimed at eradicating socioeconomic drawbacks". Development

communication thus tends to be horizontal, favouring active participation and direct interaction through open dialogue.

In terms of government, the GCIS (2011: 55–56) recognises development communication where public participation exists as:

- Firstly, being *responsive* in that communication between government and the community must be responsive to the needs of the community. It does not provide "useless" information – that which people did not want to know but which central planners deem as crucial. People understand their own needs better and through this approach communication becomes a tool in the planning and development process, not a mechanism to persuade communities once unpalatable decisions have been made.

- Secondly, *relying on feedback* as a two-way communication process that involves consultation with the recipients of information and provides them with answers to their queries, giving government an opportunity to listen to the ideas and experiences of communities, especially about programmes and services aimed at improving their lives. It is also fundamentally about consultative processes being managed at community level.

- Thirdly, *creativity and innovation* in terms of how key messages can promote hope and trust among their recipients, as well as encourage them to be interested in their content and to become a part thereof. The message must not be dull and boring but show clearly how the information transmitted will make a difference in the life of the recipient – it must not instil doubt or disbelief, but trust and confidence (look for local adopters). Development communication workers should, however, balance creativity with an understanding of what communities would be prepared to accept and where consideration has been given to the norms and prevailing values of that community.

- Lastly, *continuity and sustainability*, which go beyond government dumping communication material on communities and not making sure that they understand its content. Follow-up workshops can be arranged to emphasise the importance and necessity of the information. The community must therefore use it continually and in a sustained way to enrich their lives.

Communication is vital if development efforts are to succeed. It helps spread new technologies, multiplying the impact of a project many times over. It ensures that projects take into account the knowledge and wishes of local people – the project partners and clientele. It is important for MLM to share ideas and experiences with external stakeholders and open transparent lines of communication by giving the community a 'voice'.

In any communication process, the aim is for the message to be clear and interpreted accordingly. Foulger (2004) maintains that "communication is the process by which people (Homo sapiens or other intelligent communicators) construct representations of meaning such that other people can interpret those representations".

2.9 SUMMARY

The literature reviewed indicates that one of the most important things that a municipality has to do is communicate effectively, yet it is something which many organisations struggle with. A big part of the challenge is that there are so many different people that have to be communicated with and this often has to be done in different ways. Cross-cultural factors above have alluded to these dynamics.

The literature reviewed highlights that one of the main reasons a municipality requires good external communication is that it is largely how the municipality will establish its identity, build goodwill and promote community participation. In order to deliver the right message, they ought to be sent to external stakeholders, using the correct channels at the right time.

Municipalities have their constituencies/community to report to. The message, language and media thus play a fundamental role in the effectiveness of communication. The literature also indicates that effective communication is not one-way but two-way and it takes into considerations many factors, like barriers to communication and the different types of communication that exist.

The literature highlighted the importance of development communication and with this, concepts such as participation, dialogue and engagement. The literature also

focused on the importance of access to information and the crucial role municipalities ought to adopt in ensuring all its constituencies are communicated with. This chapter provided a theoretical framework for understanding the importance of external communication within a local municipality context.

The next chapter outlines the research methodology adopted for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study. It commences with the review of the research methodology, discusses how the research was designed, provides insight into the sampling method, the type of questions asked and ethical issues that were considered.

The objective of this study was to '*assess external communication at Mnquma Local Municipality (MLM) and the municipality's relationship with its external stakeholders in terms of how communication is used to seek continued participation in municipal affairs'.*

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN EMPLOYED

According to Bailey (1982:13), "research design is a stage where the researcher must decide how to measure the two main variables in his/her hypothesis and on what group of people to test the hypothesis. This involves deciding not only how many people will be used as subjects but also what their particular characteristics should be and under what circumstances the data will be gathered".

McDaniel and Gates (2012: 28) explain that a study's research objectives are usually achieved by employing one of the three types of research design, which are exploratory, casual or descriptive. For this study the researcher used a descriptive design with a quantitative research methodological approach. Coldwell and Herbst (2004: 9) maintain that descriptive research is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. Paler-Calmorin and Calmorin (2008:70) explain that descriptive research is invaluable for firstly, providing facts on which scientific judgements may be made; secondly, providing essential knowledge about the nature of objects and persons; thirdly, for closer observation into the practices,

behaviour, methods and procedures and lastly, playing a significant role in the development of research instruments.

Descriptive research was thus best suited to this study as the researcher analysed the Mnquma Local Municipality's (MLM) communication practices, methods and procedures with its constituents. In doing so, descriptive research allowed the researcher to draw inferences and conclusions about the relationship (in terms of communication) between MLM and its constituents.

There are many types of descriptive research. Paler-Calmorin and Calmorin (2008: 70) identify nine different types of descriptive research, namely: (1) descriptive-survey, (2) descriptive-normative; (3) descriptive-status; (4) descriptive-analysis; (5) descriptive-classification; (6) descriptive-evaluative; (7) descriptive-comparative; (8) correlational-survey and (9) longitudinal survey. For the purposes of this study, a descriptive-survey approach was used because firstly the community members were not a homogenous group, but rather varied in many aspects, such as gender, occupation and educational levels. Secondly, the descriptive-survey was appropriate for this study because the researcher wanted to find out how the municipality communicated to its' constituents considering the varied conditions and personal circumstances.

The descriptive-survey research design used in this study followed a quantitative methodological approach. According to Ngubeni (2011: 36) quantitative research allows for a broader study, greater objectivity and accuracy of the results, involving a greater number of subjects, and enhancing the generalisation of the results. Additionally, with quantitative methods such as surveys and questionnaires, for example, researchers ask all participants identical questions in the same order. The response categories from which participants may choose are fixed. The advantage of this inflexibility is that it allows for meaningful comparison of responses across participants and study sites.

This study investigated how external communication is used in the Mnquma Local Municipality (MLM) to build a relationship between the municipality and its constituencies, promote access to information and promote/encourage community participation in municipal affairs. A questionnaire survey was used to collected data.

According to Du Plooy (2002:189) "a survey enables us to collect large amounts of data about variables such as people's lifestyles, attitudes, demographics and motives.

Such data collection is relatively inexpensive, may occur in realistic settings and is not necessarily limited by geographical boundaries".

The questionnaire for this study was designed to obtain information from MLM's external stakeholders (the municipality's constituencies) on their perception, attitudes and experiences with external communication community participation. The researcher utilised self-administered questionnaires to the respondents through field workers in the three towns namely; Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe.

Brace (2013:1), states that, "it is clear to anyone undertaking data collection through questionnaire survey that the questionnaire is one of the most crucial elements in its success". Questionnaires are written in different ways, to be used in many different situations and with many different data-gathering media. Mora, Gomez, Garrido and Perez (2014: 42) state that a questionnaire is a pre-formulated written set of questions to which the respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives.

According to Cargan (2007:117), the advantages of using self-administered questions is that the questionnaire can give a comprehensive view of the attitudes, beliefs and values of a larger population with a smaller sample. The questionnaire can be mailed, is likely to be inexpensive, can reach more people, and will cover a wider area.

Bearing in mind the rural locale of the Mnquma region and the lack of use of technology, the questionnaires were administered to the respondents in the three towns by trained field researchers who assisted some respondents with filling in and explaining some questions that needed clarity in the language they understood, which was isiXhosa. The questionnaire was also translated into isiXhosa as this is the language widely spoken and used in the Mnquma region.

3.3 OVERVIEW OF TARGET POPULATION

3.3.1 Population

According to Neuman (2007) a population is the concretely specified large group from which the researcher draws a sample and to which results from a sample are generalised. Du Plooy (2002:100) states that "the term population in sampling not only refers to people but can also be defined as any group or aggregate of individuals, groups, organisations, social artefacts/objects or social interactions or events". Du Plooy further states that in quantitative research a sample of the population must be drawn in such a way that it is representative of that population. Castillo (2009) defines the research population generally as a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. It is for the benefit of the population that research is done. Castillo (2009) further discusses that "a research population is also known as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics". All individuals or objects within a certain population usually have a common binding characteristic or trait. It may be finite if its members can presumably be counted or infinite if its members cannot be definitely known.

Due to the large size of a population, researchers often cannot test every individual in the population because it is too expensive and time-consuming. This is the reason why researchers rely on sampling techniques.

Sekaran and Bougie (2013:241) define a sample as a subject of the population. It comprises some members selected from it. In other words, some but not all elements of the population form the sample. A sample is thus the subgroup or subset of the population. By studying the sample, the researcher should be able to draw conclusions that are generalised to the population of interest.

3.3.2 Target Population

According to Nkatini (2005: 38) the target population is the actual population that can be studied. Nkatini (2005) further adds that the target population for a survey is the entire set of units for which the survey data are to be used to make inferences. Levy and Lemeshow (2008:11) assert that the population (or universe or target

population) is the entire set of individuals to which findings of the survey are to be extrapolated.

For this study the researcher sampled a target population of Mnquma Local Municipality namely; Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe areas. The population was selected because they are all from the Mnquma region and are constituents of the MLM. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009:277), the sample size should be from 380 to 384 if the given population is over 40 000.

3.4. OVERVIEW OF SAMPLING METHOD EMPLOYED

3.4.1 Defining Sampling

Cherry (2014) explains that "a sample is a subset of the population. The concept of sample arises from the inability of the researchers to test all the individuals in a given population. The sample must be representative of the population from which it was drawn and it must have good size to warrant statistical analysis".

According to Nkatini (2005: 38) "sampling should be understood as a technical counting or measuring device that is used to explain how specific information is selected and collected from which data will be drawn".

In this study, the sample population consisted of Four Hundred (400) external stakeholders across the three areas belonging to MLM, namely; Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe.

3.4.2 Probability Samples and Non-Probability Samples

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 1985). When dealing with people, it can be defined as a set of respondents (people) selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey.

According to Burgess (2001:4), "the population is simply all the members of the group that a researcher is interested in. A sample is a sub-set of the population that is usually chosen because to access all members of the population is prohibitive in time, money and other resources". A key issue in choosing the sample relates to

whether the members you have chosen are representative of the population. Often the sample is chosen randomly from a list that contains all the members of the population; such a list is called a sampling frame.

The population "gives" the sample, and then it "takes" conclusions from the results obtained from the sample, it is much like a give-and-take process (Explorable Psychology Experiment, 2014).

Dattalo (2008: 5) states that a "sample survey can be categorised into two very broad classes on the basis of how the sample was elected, namely probability and non-probability samples". Chambliss and Schutt (2014:91) define a probability sample as a "sampling method that relies on a random, or chance, selection method so that the probability of selection of population elements is known". Chambliss and Schutt (2014: 91) maintain that a "non-probability sample is one in which the probability of selection of population elements is unknown".

3.4.3 Convenience Sampling

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:247) convenience sampling refers to the gathering of data from members of the population who are readily or conveniently available to provide the information. Jackson (2014: 121) adds that convenience sampling involves reaching your sample group wherever you can find, and where it is most convenient.

The advantages of convenience sampling are that it is easier to obtain and the cost of obtaining the sample is relatively low. Further to this, convenience sampling is considered to be the least time consuming of the sampling techniques (Wrenn, Stevens, and Loudon, 2007:184).

Convenience sampling was used for this study because the research focuses on investigating how constituents perceive communication with the Mnquma local municipality. The respondents were selected from three regions in MLM, and apart from being a constituent of MLM; the respondents did not need to meet any particular sample criterion.

3.4.4 Size of Sample

According to Dattalo (2008:3) determining the sample size is an important and often difficult step in planning a research study. An element is a unit (e.g. person or object) of a population. A population is a theoretically specified aggregation of an element. The study of the entire population is prohibited in terms of privacy, time and money.

The sample was drawn from the Mnquma region, specifically community members in the Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe areas. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:277), the sample size should be from 380 to 384 if the given population is over 40 000. Due to the combined population of the Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe areas being 269 155, the sample size of the study will be 400. The sample distribution is calculated as follows:

Table 3.4.5

Mnquma Local Municipality

Area	Population	Percentage of total population (3 areas)	Sample Distribution
Butterworth	99 766	37%	148
Centane	88 248	33%	132
Ngqamakhwe	81 141	30%	120

The sample population that was used represented the constituencies the municipality engages with through external communication. It also covers the areas that the municipality covers in terms of administrative services.

3.5 MEASURING INSTRUMENT/S EMPLOYED

According to Korrapati (2013), measuring instrument refers to the instrument in the generic term that researchers use for a measurement device (for example, a survey, or questionnaire). For this study, a questionnaire was administered to the sample population.

3.5.1 Overview of Questionnaires

Collection of data is an important aspect of any type of research study. Inaccurate data collection can impact the results of a study and ultimately lead to invalid results. Eiselen, Uys and Potgieter (2005: 2) add that "questionnaires usually form an integral part of descriptive and opinion-related surveys. Questionnaires can either be in the form of a self-administered questionnaire i.e. where the respondent is requested to complete the questionnaire in his/her own time or in the form of a structured interview, where the interviewer (very often the researcher) writes down the answers of the respondent during a telephone or face-to-face interview". Irrespective of which method is used, the formulation of the questions and the structure of the questionnaire are critical to the success of the survey.

Allen, Titsworth and Hunt (2009: 11) assert that there are numerous advantages to using a questionnaire for a survey, such as, questionnaires can be obtained from "large random samples of people" and that the administration of these questionnaires "typically take place in naturalistic settings and can therefore have strong generalisability". This is important to keep in mind because the 400 sampled respondents for this study will be used to draw generalisations, inferences and conclusions about the larger Mnquma population.

According to Rose, Spinks and Canhoto (2014:228), questionnaires should begin by briefing the respondents about the mature of the research and the requesting their informed consent. It should confirm procedures regarding respondents' anonymity and data confidentiality and include an informed consent disclaimer.

According to Babbie (2009: 249), the options available to creating a questionnaire, include questions and statements or choosing open- ended or close ended questions. An open-ended question is an open question where the response is recorded verbatim. Open- ended questions are also known as 'unstructured' or 'free – response' question (Brace, 2013:51)

In the case of close ended questions, the respondents are asked to select an answer from a list provided by the researcher. Close ended questions are very popular in

survey research because they provide a greater uniformity of responses and are more easily processed than open-ended questions (Babbie, 2009).

Gratton and Jones (2010: 127) state that the advantages of using questionnaires are that:

> They are appropriate in a variety of context, where relatively simple, generally quantitative information is required from a large sample group. The date can then be summarised through the use of tables or charts or analysed statistically to answer research questions.

Welman *et al* (2005: 153) indicate that when compiling a questionnaire the researcher should take the eyesight and the literacy level of the intended respondents into consideration. Du Plooy (2002: 170) states that the use of a self-administered questionnaire also implies that certain individuals in the sample may not be able to answer the questions, either due to unfamiliarity with the language used in the questionnaire or illiteracy.

When designing the questionnaire, the researcher took into consideration the population of the Mnquma region namely; the literacy levels of the MLM and language predominantly used in the region. The questionnaire was therefore designed in simple language and also translated to isiXhosa to accommodate the respondents. In addition, the research field workers were drawn from the community of Mnquma that proved to be beneficial as they have an intimate understanding of their community and its dynamics.

3.5.2 Overview of Questionnaire Design

According to Machika (2013) in order to achieve the research question the questionnaire design and format should be simple and have accurate information requested. Quantitative data collection involves the use of numbers to assess information. Data collection in the field can be carried out in a structured, systematic and scientific way. It compels the researcher to take very seriously not only what they hear, but what they ask (Weller and Romney, 1988: 45).

Panneerselvam (2004: 23) states that the different methods of data collection via personal interviews, telephonic interviews and mail survey come under survey

methods. The success of survey methods depends on the strength of the questionnaire used. A questionnaire consists of a set of well-formulated questions to probe and obtain responses from respondents.

Panneerselvam (2004: 24) explains that although questionnaires may vary from one situation to another, there are generalised steps which ought to be followed. The first is the "identification of research issues"; meaning that the research objectives should be clearly defined before designing the questionnaire. The contents of the questionnaire should be related to the overall objectives of the study. Secondly, the "formation of questions and the format" is also an important step as respondents should be able to easily grasp the meaning and intention of the questions. This will help minimise any possible distortion of the research objectives and focus.

The researcher employed a self-administered questionnaire to collect data for the purposes of the study. The self-administered questionnaire had the following domains that were researched:

Section A: Biographical Data

Section B1: Identifies the communication tools used by constituents to communicate with the Mnquma Local Municipality

Section B2: Identifies the communication tools used by the Mnquma Local Municipality to communicate with its constituents

Section C: Assesses how the constituents perceive external communication at the Mnquma Local Municipality

Section D: Explore alternative types of external communication channels that can be used to communicate with community members residing in a rural locale.

The questionnaire design made use of both open and close-ended questions. Each of the sub-sections was measured on a five-point Likert scale in accordance with the rule of correspondence by assigning the scale of agreement and disagreement; strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. Open-ended questions were used to elaborate on the reasons underlying their choice of communication.

3.5.3 Questionnaire Format Used

Weisberg (2009: 122) states that the "questionnaire construction is not just about writing questions, because the order of questions in a survey can affect the answers and the willingness of respondents to complete the interview". Weisberg (2009: 122) further explains that the questionnaire layout is an important matter in self-administered questionnaires, including mail and internet surveys. Formatting affects the initial decision of people to respond to the survey. Mail surveys and other self-administered questionnaires should be formatted so as to maximise the chances that people will take the survey.

Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 149) maintain that sound questionnaire design principles should focus on three areas. The first relates to the wording of the questionnaire. The second refers to the planning of the issues with regard to how the variables will be categorised, scaled and coded after receipt of the responses. The third pertains to the general appearance of the questionnaire. All three are important issues in questionnaire design because they can minimise bias in research.

In this study, the questionnaire was divided into three broad sections, which included biographical data, close and open- ended questions. The biographical data asked questions relating to gender, age, residential, how long the person resides in the area, home language, and other language proficiencies. The close-ended questions determined how respondents communicate with the municipality and in return, how they perceived municipal communication.

Bertram (2007:1) explains that "a psychometric response scale is primarily used in questionnaires to obtain participant's preferences or degree of agreement with a statement or set of statements. Likert scales are a non-comparative scaling technique and are unidimensional (only measure a single trait) in nature". Respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement with a given statement by way of an ordinal scale.

Bertram (2007: 7) makes mention of the Likert Scale strengths as:
• simple to construct

- likely to produce a highly reliable scale
- easy to read and complete for participants

Likert (1932) himself argued that the distances of scores such as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 are equal and yield data which are approximately normally distributed. The question is if the same is true for the labels (e.g. "Strongly Agree") which are frequently used. Recent research suggests that literacy affects the ability to discriminate between categories, i.e. that the suitability of the classical Likert scale depends on the choice of the sample (Chachamovich *et al.* 2009).

The last section was an open–ended structure with the aim of getting ideas and suggestions from the respondents on external communication between MLM and community members.

In this study, in order to address the issue of illiteracy, the language used in the designing of the questionnaire was simple. In ensuring that the questions were understood, the field workers interpreted and offered clarity in the respondent's preferred language (usually isiXhosa).

3.6 THE RECRUITMENT AND DATA COLLECTION METHOD

According to Florida State University Libraries (FSUL) (2015), research data is defined as "the recorded factual material commonly accepted in the scientific community as necessary to validate research findings, but not any of the following: preliminary analyses, drafts of scientific papers, plans for future research, peer reviews, or communications with colleagues". This "recorded" material excludes physical objects (e.g. laboratory   samples). Research data is any material collected, observed or created for the purpose of analysis to generate original research results irrespective of the format of data. It may be digital, paper based in other forms (Burnham, 2012).

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 113) data can be gathered from primary or secondary sources. Primary data refers to information collected first hand by the researcher on the variables of the interest for the specific purpose of the study.

Welman *et al.* (2005: 149) concur that primary data is original data collected by the researcher for the purpose of his or her own study at hand.

Jain and Jhunjhunwala (2007:1.9) state that secondary data refers to the data which is originally collected by the persons other than who required it. The sources from which secondary data are collected are known as secondary sources publications. Its collection is relatively less costly than the collection of primary data. Data collection is an important aspect of any type of research study. Inaccurate data collection can impact the results of a study and ultimately lead to invalid results.

For the purposes of this study, the primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire which was printed for the respondents and at times was personally administered by trained field workers to the sampled population.

The field workers, with the assistance of the Community Development Worker (CDW), visited the three identified areas (Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe) in order to get respondents. Community members were informed in advance that field workers would be visible in their communities. The community members were also informed that participation in the study was voluntary, and not mandatory. Voluntary informed consent is a prerequisite for a subject's participation in research. According to Shahnazarian, Candidate and Hagemann (2003: 3), informed consent is described in ethical codes and regulations for human subject research. The goal of the informed consent process is to provide sufficient information so that a participant can make an informed decision about whether or not to enrol in a study or to continue participation. For this study, all respondents were given an informed consent form to fill in.

3.7 OVERVIEW OF DATA PREPARATION AND ANALYSIS

3.7.1 How was the Data Analysed and Interpreted?

Once the researcher has collected all data, the data would then need to be prepared for analysis. Organising the data correctly can save a lot of time and prevent mistakes. According to Du Plooy (2002: 93) data analysis is an essential component

of the research process. The analysis and interpretation of the data is also fundamental to drawing conclusions and proposing recommendations.

In terms of analysis, the findings from the questionnaire must be interpreted. Kothari (2006:344) asserts that interpretation is essential because the usefulness and utility of research findings lay in proper interpretation. Kothari (2004: 344) further adds that it is through interpretation that the researcher can well understand the abstract principle that works beneath his/her findings.

Data was collected for the study bearing in mind that the findings ought to address the objectives of the research, namely:

1. Assess the current external communication channels at the Mnquma Local Municipality,
2. Identify the factors affecting communication with community members and meaningful participation and,
3. Explore alternative types of external communication channels that can be used to communicate with community members residing in a rural locale.

3.7.2 Overview of Statistical Analysis

The quantitative data collected for this study was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21, for Windows. According to Arkkelin (2014: 11) the SPSS package enables the researcher to obtain statistics ranging from simple descriptive numbers to complex analyses of multivariate matrices. Welman *et al.* (2001: 227) explain that without being processed, analysed and interpreted, data conveys very little meaning. It is therefore imperative that data be processed and transformed into codes.

David and Sutton (2004: 257) maintain that the analysis of quantitative data is also known as social statistics and is accompanied by a range of statistical and analytical terminology. The analysis process involves the researcher gaining an understanding of the data collected and exploring causal links between different elements of the data.

Larson (2006: 1) maintains that "statistics is a broad mathematical discipline dealing with techniques for the collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of

numerical data". Larson (2006) further adds that after the collection of data, statistical analysis is usually followed by calculating descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics describe the basic elements in a quantitative study and is typically presented in the form of graphs and tables. Descriptive analysis includes the description of data in terms of, for example, mean, median, mode, standard deviation and so on. In terms of this study, descriptive statistics was used to make sense of the large amount of data collected and present the information in a comprehensible and logical format.

The study also used the chi-square testing procedure. According to Terrell (2012: 290) the chi-square test, "or the chi-square *goodness of fit*, as it is more commonly called, helps us determine if a distribution of data values we observe matches how we expect the data to be distributed". The chi-square test produces a contingency coefficient which has a range of values that determine the strength of the association between variables (McGivern 2006: 483).

Brown (2015:10), states that, since its inception over a century ago factor analysis has become one of the most widely used multivariate statistical procedures in applied research endeavours across a multitude of domains. Brown (2015: 10) further explains that the "fundamental intent of factor analysis is to determine the number and nature of latent variables or factors that account for the variation and co-variation among a set of observed measures, commonly referred to as indicators".

Two aspects of factor analysis that were used in this study are Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are measures of sampling adequacy that is recommended to check the case to variable ratio for the analysis being conducted. For this study, factor analysis was used to test the significance of the study.

3.8 OVERVIEW OF THE PRE-TESTING PROCESS

It is vitally important that the researcher pre-tests the survey before administering it to a research sample. Pre-testing is the opportunity for the researcher to see what questions work well, what questions create confusion, what questions can be eliminated and what needs to be added. The researcher can also evaluate whether

the respondents consider the questionnaire too lengthy, if they are losing interest and whether the questions are understood.

The questionnaire was initially tested amongst a sample of ten community members from the Mnquma Local Municipality. The feedback was that the initial questionnaire was too lengthy and lacked detail in terms of external communication tools. As a result, the questionnaire was readjusted to be specific and detailed to merit desired outcomes.

3.9 THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

All municipalities in South Africa are constitutionally required to communicate with their constituents. This study evaluates how the Mnquma Local Municipality (MLM) communicates with its constituents, thus focusing on external communication. The MLM region has unique qualities in terms of population, education, and socio-economic factors. The findings of this study can therefore only be representative of the analysis of the external communication tools used by the Mnquma Local Municipality and cannot be generalised to other South African local municipalities. However, these research findings can also be a basis for further studies, investigation and research within Mnquma Local Municipality as well as other local municipalities that present similar dynamics in terms of population, education and socio-economic factors within the context of external communications. Every research output and publications can act as a basis for further studies with the objective of increasing body of knowledge, expertise and technical know-how.

3.10 OVERVIEW OF VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013:199) "validity is an important key to effective research. If a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless. Validity is thus a requirement for both quantitative and qualitative research". Tavakoli (2013: 699) adds that "in quantitative data validity might be improved through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatment of the data". There are different types of validity that may be used to test the measuring instrument in quantitative research. These are discussed in the proceeding paragraphs.

Expert-judge-content validity is used when experts in the subject areas assess the validity of the instrument. This is also referred to as logical validity and definitional validity (Newman and Benz, 1998). Concurrent validity refers to how well one assessment instrument compares or relates with an established, valid assessment instrument. Predictive validity refers to an approximation of how well a research instrument predicts an impending, or future, assessment. When concurrent and predictive validity are combined in a research, it is referred to as statistical, criterion or empirical validity (Newman and Benz, 1998).

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) maintain that construct validity testifies to how well the results obtained from the use of the measure fit the theories and literature around which the test has been designed. Babbie (2010: 156) indicates that construct validity is the degree to which a measure relates to other variables as expected within a system of theoretical relationships.

Newman and Benz (1998: 38) explain that "a test or measurement instrument has what is termed face validity to the extent that it appears to the individuals being assessed to be measuring what it purports to be measuring". Stangor (2015: 97) emphasises that face validity can be explained in terms of the relationship between the measured variable and the conceptual variable. In other words, face validity is the degree to which the measured variable may appear to be an adequate measure of the conceptual variable.

In terms of this study, several steps were taken to ensure the validity of the research. Firstly, the questionnaire was drawn up after reviewing the literature related to the study. The questions were designed to meet the objectives of the study. Secondly, the questionnaire was then assessed by subject matter experts (in this case, the dissertation supervisors). Thirdly, the pilot questionnaire developed was pre-tested to ten (10) community members (who did not participate in the final study) who read through the questionnaire to identify ambiguity, gaps or any other problems.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013:199) "reliability is essentially a synonym for dependability, consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents. It is concerned with precision and accuracy". The

researcher ensured the reliability of the study by using trained field workers, who used the same approach when administering the questionnaire and pre-testing the questionnaire to ensure that appropriate and relevant questions are used. In addition, the researcher translated the questionnaire from English to isiXhosa to ensure that all questions were easily understood, as isiXhosa is widely used in the Mnquma region.

3.11 THE IMPORTANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

Confidentiality and anonymity agreements are extremely important practices in research. Any violation of these agreements become ethical issues and could also become legal issues depending on the gravity of the circumstances. Gregory (2003: 49) asserts that confidentiality is closely linked to the principle of consent. He further states that confidentiality and consent are not the same principles, as consent will often not be granted unless confidentiality is guaranteed.

Israel and Hay (2006: 77) explain that when research is conducted with people, there are often terms of agreement that are drawn up. Some participants may, for example, only agree to be a part of the study on the condition of anonymity. In other words, they would require that their personal information is kept private and that the information will only be used for the specific study.

In terms of this study, the researcher included an informed consent form that was attached to each questionnaire. A covering letter was included which ensured participants that participation in the study was voluntary and that all information collected would be used only for the purposes of the research study. The questionnaire did not collect identifying information from the participants.

3.12 THE ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher adhered to the ethical principles and considerations as outlined by the Durban University of Technology. A brief study outline was provided to all participants explaining the research purpose. Informed consent was collected from each participant, who was also guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were also assured that participation in the study was voluntary and not

compulsory. All correspondence and communication was treated with strictest confidence and agreed terms of engagements with respondents.

3.13 SUMMARY

This chapter provided an account of the methodology used in this research. It explained the research design used in the study and focused on the rationale for selecting a quantitative research design. An overview of the questionnaire was presented that explained the questionnaire design and purpose. Techniques used to ensure the validity and reliability of the study was also discussed, as well as the ethical considerations undertaken. The research methodology used was appropriate for this particular research taking into consideration the research question, the subject matter and the location or geographical focus of the research. Chapter four will present the findings of the study, by interpreting and discussing all data collected from the questionnaires.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the research methodological approach used for this study was discussed. This chapter reports on the results obtained from data collected on Mnquma Local Municipality's (MLM) relationship with its external stakeholders in terms of how communication is used to seek continued participation with its constituents. The results reported comprise tests on the scale reliability (internal consistency) of the research instrument's items, exploratory factor analysis and the association between each questionnaire item and it's respective construct. Reliability of items was undertaken based on Cronbach's alpha criterion; while factor analysis was conducted based on the Keiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) criterion. Data was processed and analysed using the SPSS package version 21 for Windows.

The questionnaire was used to collect data from 400 participants in the Mnquma Local Municipality region. Specifically, 148 questionnaires were collected from Butterworth; 132 from Centane; and 120 questionnaires from Ngqamakhwe. The total number of questionnaires collected amounted to 400. The research instrument consisted of 43 items, with a level of measurement at a nominal or an ordinal level, and the questionnaire was divided into 6 sections. Data from the questionnaires was analysed and organised into the following headings/themes:

Section A: Biographical Data

Section B1:   Identifies the communication tools used by constituents to communicate with the Mnquma Local Municipality

Section B2:   Identifies the communication tools used by the Mnquma Local Municipality to communicate with its constituents

Section C: Assesses how the constituents perceive external communication at the Mnquma Local Municipality

Section D: Explore alternative types of external communication channels that can be used to communicate with community members residing in a rural locale.

In Section A, questions (a) to (f) determined biographical information. This included gender, age, the area the respondent lived, duration lived by the respondent in that particular area, home language and language proficiency. Therefore items gathered provide information about the respondent. Information such as how long they have lived in the area, provided insight into how exposed to, or experienced with, recipients were with the municipality.

In Section B, the information which identifies the factors affecting communication with community members and meaningful participation was structured into B (1) and B (2) respectively, namely "my communication with the municipality" and how "MLM communicates with me". The focus was on how the respondent communicates with the municipality and in return how the municipality communicates with the respondent. The items were derived from the literature review.

Section C assesses the current external communication channels at the MLM with question one to ten, and tries to assess how the municipality communicates with its constituents in more depth. The questions are structured using a Likert scale, with the options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree.

Finally, in section D four open-ended probing statements were designed to obtain recommendations for improved communication with the municipality.

4.2.   ANALYSIS OF STATISTICS RELIABILITY

The results reported comprise tests on scale reliability (internal consistency) of the research instrument's items, exploratory factor analysis and the association between each questionnaire item and its respective construct. The reliability of items was undertaken based on Cronbach's alpha criterion; while factor analysis was conducted based on the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) criterion.

In order to measure the degree to which the questionnaire's chosen set of items measured a single one-dimensional latent construct regarding how the municipality communicates with stakeholders, the reliability (internal consistency) of questionnaire items was analysed using the Cronbach's alpha technique. In other words, reliability analysis was conducted to determine how well items in the data set were positively correlated to one another. The two most important aspects of precision are reliability and validity. Reliability was computed by taking several measurements on the same subjects. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered as "acceptable". The table below depicts the Cronbach's alpha score for the questionnaire items.

Table 4.1:

The Cronbach's alpha score for questionnaire items

Section	Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Section B1	My communication with the municipality	8	0.701
Section B2	How the municipality communicates with me	9	0.717
Section C	Municipality's communication with external stakeholders	10	0.827
Sections B1 - C	**Overall Scale Reliability**	**27**	**0.784**

The scale reliability of items under each of the three individual dimensions exceeded the minimum score (α = 0.7); thus indicating that the questions used to collect data were reliable. The results imply that if the same questions are to be asked from the same respondents at some point in future the responses obtained from the same participants are most likely to remain the same. Correspondingly, the overall scale reliability score of 0.784 for all the questionnaire items indicate that the data generated was statistically reliable.

4.3   THE ROLE OF FACTOR ANALYSIS

The main goal of factor analysis, a statistical technique, is data reduction. The Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy approach was used to determine the suitability and adequacy of the sampling. The matrix table reflects the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) and Bartlett's Test. The requirement is that the KMO measures greater than 0.50 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity less than 0.05. In all instances, the conditions are satisfied which allows for the factor analysis procedure. Factor analysis is done only for the Likert scale items. Certain components are divided into finer components. This is explained below in the rotated component matrix.

Table 4.2:

Structural Validity Tests of Items per Dimension

| Section | Construct | KMO | Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | | |
			Approx. Chi-Square. (< 0.05)	Degrees of freedom (Df)	Sig.
Section B1.	My communication with the municipality	0.624	1136.482	28	0.000
Section B2.	How the municipality communicates with me	0.602	1458.662	36	0.000
Section C.	Municipality's communication with external stakeholders	0.832	1861.385	45	0.000

The computed statistical values for KMO and Bartlett's tests under all the constructs indicate the presence of sampling adequacy. The Bartlett's tests of sphericity of the research items under each dimension (p < 0.001) confirm that data was adequately suitable for analysis of communication between the municipality and its constituents. Moreover, the determinants computed indicate that the scales observed are all one dimensional; thus the items are not an identity matrix. Conclusively, all the

questionnaire items used in the research survey were adequate in explaining the aspects deemed necessary in the study.

4.3.1 Overview of Chi-Square (χ^2) Tests

The Chi-Square non-parametric tests of statistical significance for bivariate analysis were applied to examine whether there is association between each construct/dimension and the respective questionnaire items. The analysis provides the degree of confidence to either accept or reject the null hypothesis of association between given variables.

Table 4.3: Chi-Square Test Results

My communication with the municipality

Construct:	Chi-Square	D.F	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
My communication with the municipality			
E-mail	125.218	1	0.000
Website	136.866	1	0.000
Telephone	72.916	1	0.000
Face-to-Face	99.849	1	0.000
Ward councillor	42.299	1	0.000
Committee Meetings	15.152	1	0.000
Newsletter	69.666	1	0.000
CDW Meetings (Community Development Worker)	105.045	1	0.000

The results indicated in Table 4.3. above show that each of the communication channels or tools used by the respondents are significantly relevant in the communication process with the municipality as reflected by the chi-square values that are all statistically significant. All of the sig. values (p-values) are less than 0.05 (the level of significance) which implies that the distributions were not similar. That is, the differences between the way respondents scored (strongly agree, agree, neutral, strongly disagree, disagree) were significant.

Table 4.4:

Chi-Square Test Results

 How the municipality communicates with me?

Construct:	Pearson's χ^2 value	d.f	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
How the municipality communicates with me?			
E-mail	150.328	1	0.000
Internet	171.712	1	0.000
Telephone	61.553	1	0.000
Face-to-Face	90.733	1	0.000
Ward councillor	44.285	1	0.000
Committee Meetings	21.822	1	0.000
Newsletter	60.980	1	0.000
Door to Door Campaigns	31.071	1	0.000
CDW Meetings (Community Development Worker)	105.891	1	0.000

The results indicated in Table 4.4. above imply that each of the communication channels or tools used by the municipality (for all questionnaire items) in communicating with respondents are significantly relevant in the communication process as reflected by the chi-square values that are all statistically significant. All of the sig. values (p-values) are less than 0.05 (the level of significance) which implies that the distributions were not similar. That is, the differences between the way respondents scored (strongly agree, agree, neutral, strongly disagree, disagree) were significant.

Table 4.5:

Chi-Square Test Results

 Municipality communication with external stakeholders

Construct:	Pearson's χ^2 value	d.f	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Municipality communication with external stakeholders			
Q1. Living far away from the municipal offices		1	0.000
		1	0.000
Q2. I understand municipal communication tools		1	0.000
		1	0.000
Q3. The municipality has face-to-face interaction		1	0.000
		1	0.000
Q4. I understand language used by municipality		1	0.000
		1	0.000
Q5. Municipality encourages participation		1	0.000
Q6. I am with the municipality's communication		1	0.000
Q7. The municipality keeps me informed			
Q8. I know the website address of MLM			
Q9. I have access to internet to access website			
Q10. I use the internet to direct queries to council			

The results in Table 4.5 above imply that the communication tools or channels used by the municipality in communicating with respondents are significantly relevant in the communication process with the respondents as reflected by the chi-square values. All of the sig. values (p-values) are less than 0.05 (the level of significance) which implies that the distributions were not similar. That is, the differences between the way respondents scored (strongly agree, agree, neutral, strongly disagree, disagree) were significant.

This section identified factors affecting meaningful participation and communication with community members and according to the above analysis it showed that there is an association between each of the communication channels used by the municipality to the community as well as the channels used by the community when communicating with the municipality. All the results produced statistically significant results.

4.4 THE DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

a) Section A: Profile of respondents

The respondents' profiles were defined in terms of age, gender as well as the number of years living in the Mnquma region.

4.4.1. The age of respondents

The respondents in this study sample followed a normal distribution with a few respondents in the youngest and oldest age groups. The majority of the respondents (62%) were in the 26 to 45 years age group while only 11% were below 26 years and 10% were over 56 years. 31% of the respondents were between 26 years and 35 years old and another 31% were between 36 years and 45 years while 17% were between 46 and 55 years.

4.4.2 The gender of respondents

There were 49% male respondents and 51% female respondents. As identified in preceding research findings above Mnquma Local Municipality has a larger female population than males. However, the gender distributions across the age groups were different with equal distribution at 18 to 25 years only. There were more male respondents for the 26 to 45 years and more female at over 45 years old. The greatest proportion of male respondents (37%) was between 26 and 35 years while the greatest proportion of women was in the 36 to 45 age group. The male respondents were generally younger compared to the female respondents as shown on the figure below with males skewed to the left while the women graph is close to a normal distribution. The figure below indicates the age and gender of the respondents.

Figure 4.1: **Age and Gender of Respondents**
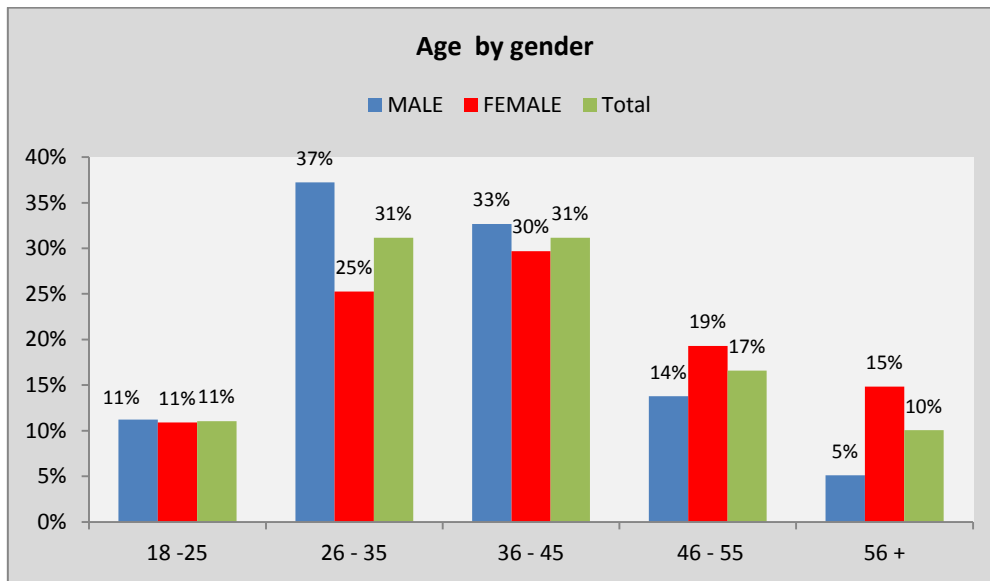
4.4.3 Their area of residence

The respondents were residents from three areas namely: Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe; 38% of the respondents reside in Butterworth, 32% in Centane and 30% in Ngqamakhwe. There was a higher proportion of female respondents (33%) than male respondents (27%) in Ngqamakhwe as opposed to Butterworth and Centane where the percentage of male respondents was higher than female respondents. The figure below indicates the distribution of the respondents from three areas namely: Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe.

Figure 4.2: Area of Residence
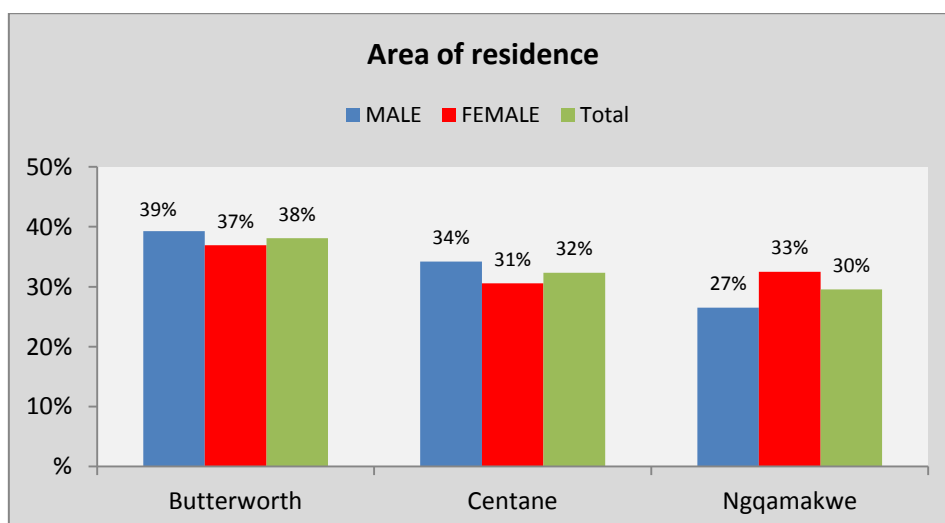
4.4.4 The Length of Stay in the sample area

The respondents in the sample had stayed for periods ranging from 0 to over 16 years. Only 5% had stayed less than 5 years in their respective area of residence. The majority (95%) had stayed at least for 5 years in the same area. 30% had stayed for 5 to 10 years, 36% had stayed between 11 and 15 years while 20% had stayed for over 15 years. The distribution is skewed to the right showing that a large number of the respondents had stayed for a longer time in the same area. However, comparing male respondents to female respondents, there was a tendency for females to stay in the same area as compared to males. At the ages of 5 to 10 years, there was a high proportion of males staying in the same area (34%) compared to females (26%) but at over 10 years, there were more females (70%) than males (61%).

The report presented by the respondents in this survey could be considered close to accurate, because most of the respondents have lived for more than 5 years in the Mnquma region. This is because the tenure of each municipal council is 5 years, therefore, their responses are what they have experienced from the council currently administering the municipality. The figure below indicates respondents' length of stay in the Mnquma region.

Figure 4.3: Length of Stay
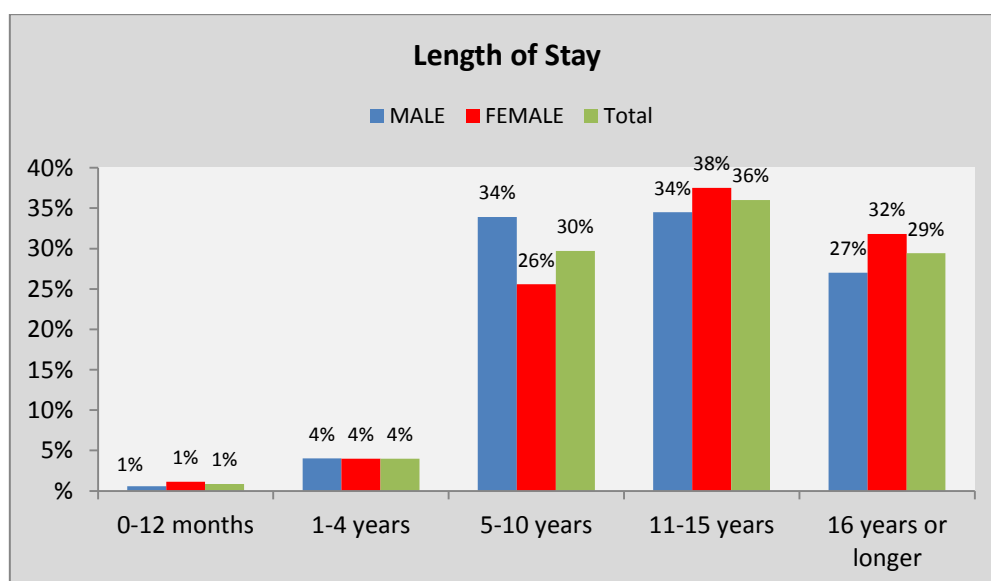
b) Section B: The Analysis of Communication Tools used by Constituents

This section analyses the communication tools used by the constituents to communicate with the Mnquma Local Municipality, and the tools used by the municipality to communicate with its constituents.

4.4.5 Communication Channels used to communicate with Municipality

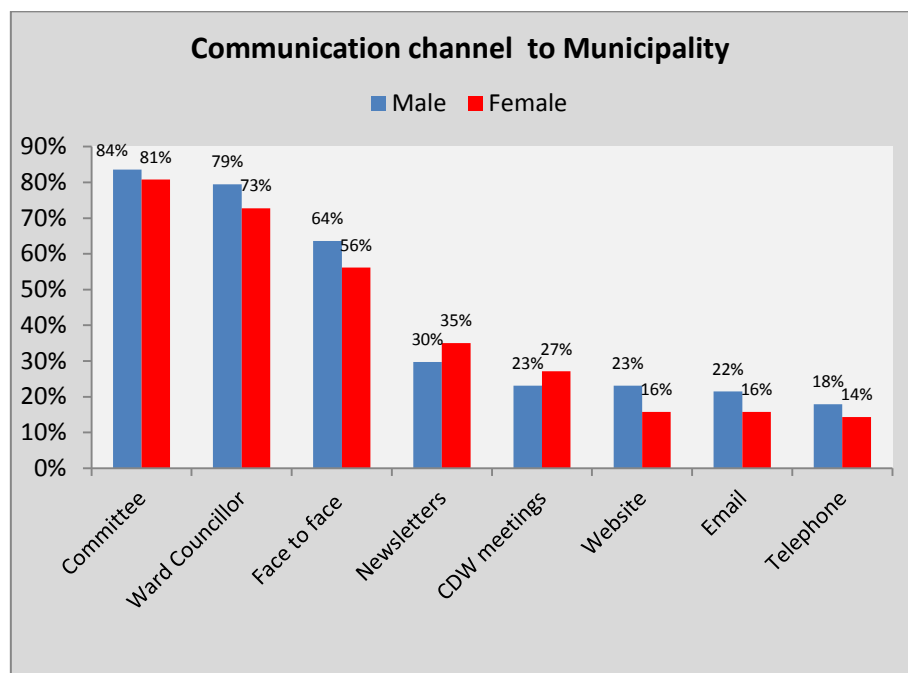**Figure 4.4: Communication Channels used to communicate with Municipality**

Figure 4.4 above indicates that the larger part of the respondents (84% male and 81% female) selected to use committee meetings as a communication channel with the municipality. The second widely used mode of communication is through the Ward Councillor. 79% of males and 73% of females chose communication through the ward councillor. This could be attributed to the fact that Ward Councillors generally come from their respective communities and surroundings, as such they understand their societal challenges, dynamics and are familiar faces they interact with regularly. If there is a problem that persists within the community, Ward Councillor is their first point of contact to come to an amicable solution for all.

On average 60% of respondents preferred face-to-face communication with the municipality. This group had slightly more males (64%) than females (56%). On average 32.5% of the respondents were in favour of newsletters, 25% preferred

CDW meetings, 19.5% chose use the of a website, 19% preferred use of emails and 16% had telephone as their ideal channel to communicate with the municipality. In general the respondents preferred a communication channel which had human interface over other channels (websites, email, newsletters and telephone).

According to McHale (2004: 23), in a study performed in groups to evaluate the impact of face-face communication, he perceived that while e-mail and telephone communication can be sufficient for logistical communication, face-to-face communication between advocates was necessary for building social networks, upon which advocacy activity is based. In all of the groups studied, face-to-face performed a valuable community-building function. The timing of universal health care advocacy events also revealed the importance of face-to-face communication for community building.

The statement above indicates the importance of face-to-face communication and it is evident with the results above that the Mnquma community prefers a face-to-face interaction more as compared to electronic or other forms of media. The other positive reason for preference of face-to-face communication is that community members can get clarity on any issues pertaining to them and whatever they want to know from municipal officials immediately. Another important factor, given the societal, technological advancement and computer literacy the community is not as advanced as other urban metropolitan centres around the Eastern Cape and South Africa. Hence participants selected face-to-face communication and interaction over electronic or other forms of media.

4.4.6 Overview Municipal Communication Channels

Figure 3.5: Municipal Communication Channels

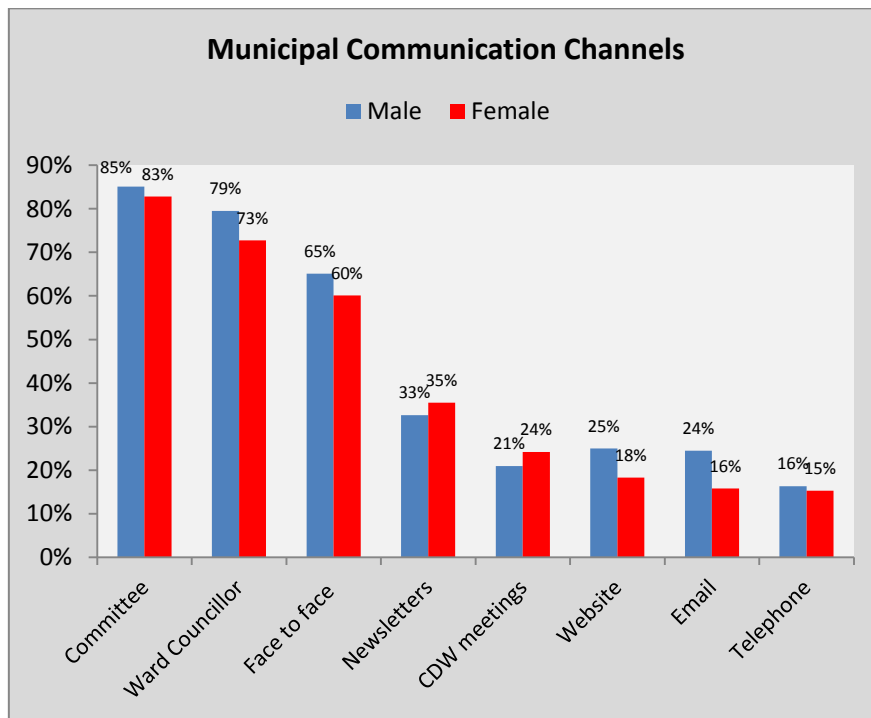

Municipal Communication Channels

Figure 4.5 above illustrates how the constituents would prefer the municipality to communicate with them. 85% males and 83% females indicated they would prefer committee meetings with respect to communication. In addition, 79% males and 73% females preferred communication through ward councillors. Today's technologies provide many alternate communication channels and it may perhaps be assumed that face-to-face communication is no longer essential or even important in business and professional transactions. These statistics, however, reveal otherwise and indicate that face-to-face communication is still preferred in some situations. Guffey and Loewy (2013: 334) argue that "we have learned that e-mail is still the preferred communication channel because it is faster, cheaper, and easier than telephone, e-mail, or fax, but face-to-face conversation has many advantages".

Face-to-face or one-on-one communication is thus vital in building relationships with the community members and constituencies. There are meaningful connections with community members through face-to-face communication and community members preferred this form of engagement. Face-to-face communication brings with it human connections and elements; people are able to judge emotive signs, perceptions and expressions and it builds trust and good will.

c) Section C: The Constituents Perceptions of Municipal Communication

This section assesses how the constituents perceive external communication at the Mnquma Local Municipality. Several statements pertaining to the municipality's use of external communication were listed in the questionnaire (Likert scale). The statements are analysed below.

Figure 4.6: Timely Communication
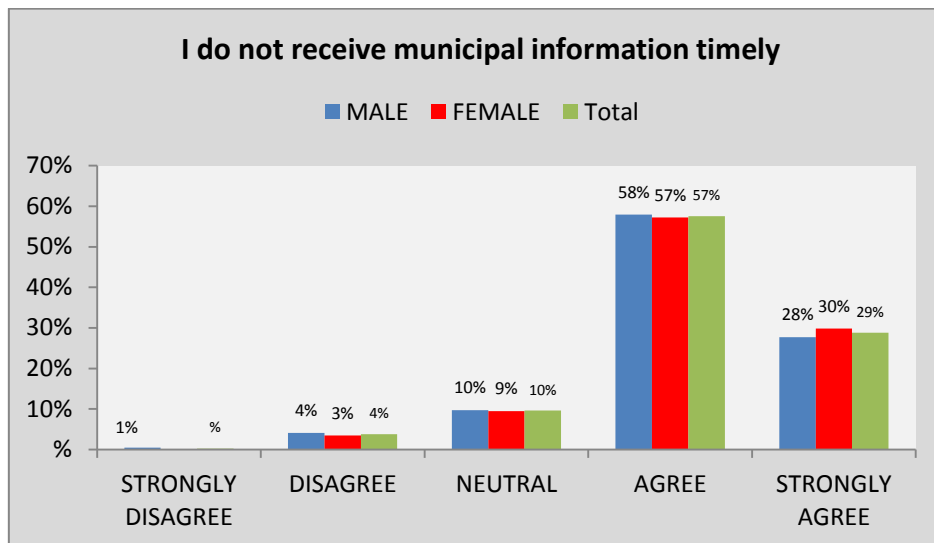
In the figure above, (Figure 4.6) the majority of the respondents (86%) indicated that they were not receiving municipality information on time. 10% of the respondents were neutral, whilst the remainder (4%) indicated they did receive information on time. In each of the categories, the percentage of male and female respondents is almost equal. Delayed communication is very dangerous as it allows space for speculation, breaks down trust and creates uncertainty. It is fundamental for the municipality to give accurate communication to members of the public in time.

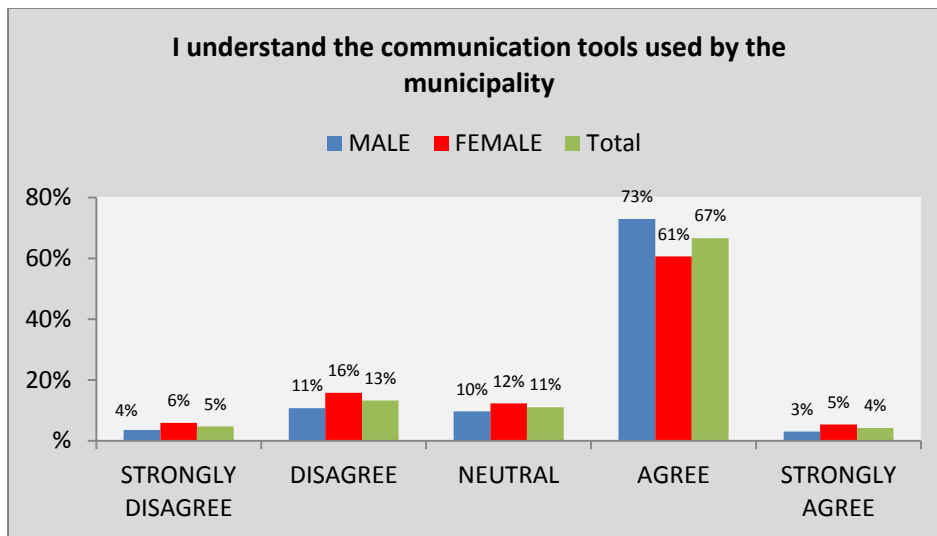**Figure 4.7: Understanding of the Communication Tools**

Figure 4.7 above shows that most of the respondents (71%) understood the communication tools used by the municipality. 18% indicated that they did not understand the tools of communication with 11% being neutral. More males (76%) than females (66%) understood the communication tools used by the municipality.

According to eThekwini Communication policy (2009: 7), the main purpose of external communication is to inform stakeholders of services and programmes of the Municipality. The success of the communication process relies on the different accurate communication tools and media used to communicate with stakeholders.

Based on the response above, the constituents understand the tools utilised by MLM, which is indicative that communicated messages are delivered with media known to the recipients of the message.

Figure 4.6 above indicated that there were an overwhelming number of respondents who felt that they do not receive information on time. Figure 4.7 (above) reveals that the majority of the respondents understand the communication tools; therefore, the municipality needs to look at the kind of tools used for different audiences and determine whether the communication is delayed by using different tools for the wrong audience. For example, if there is an urgent message that the municipality needs to send, does the municipality rely on committee meetings that are scheduled on certain times only or would they utilise local community radio because it is fast and immediate?

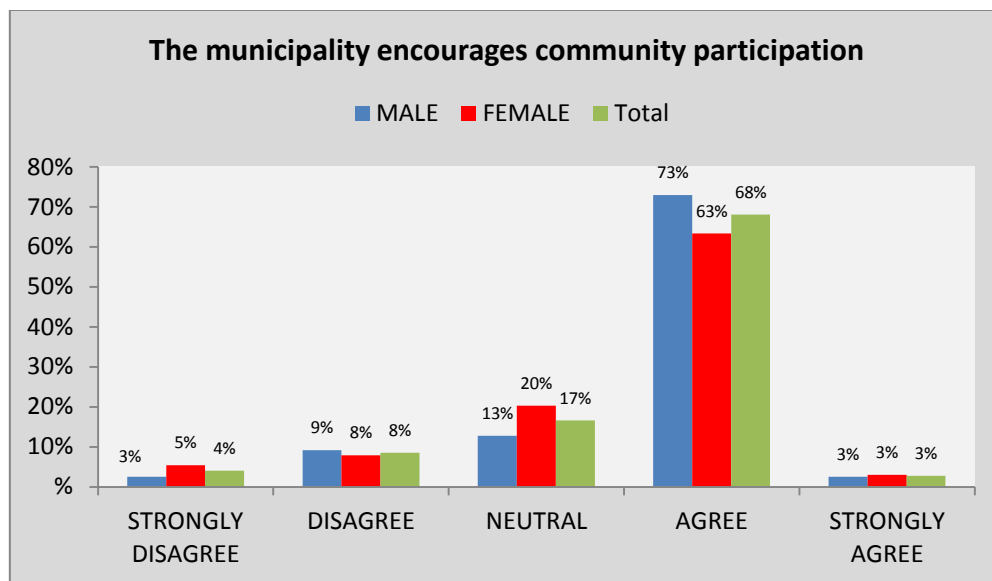**Figure 4.8: Face-to-Face Interaction with the Municipality**
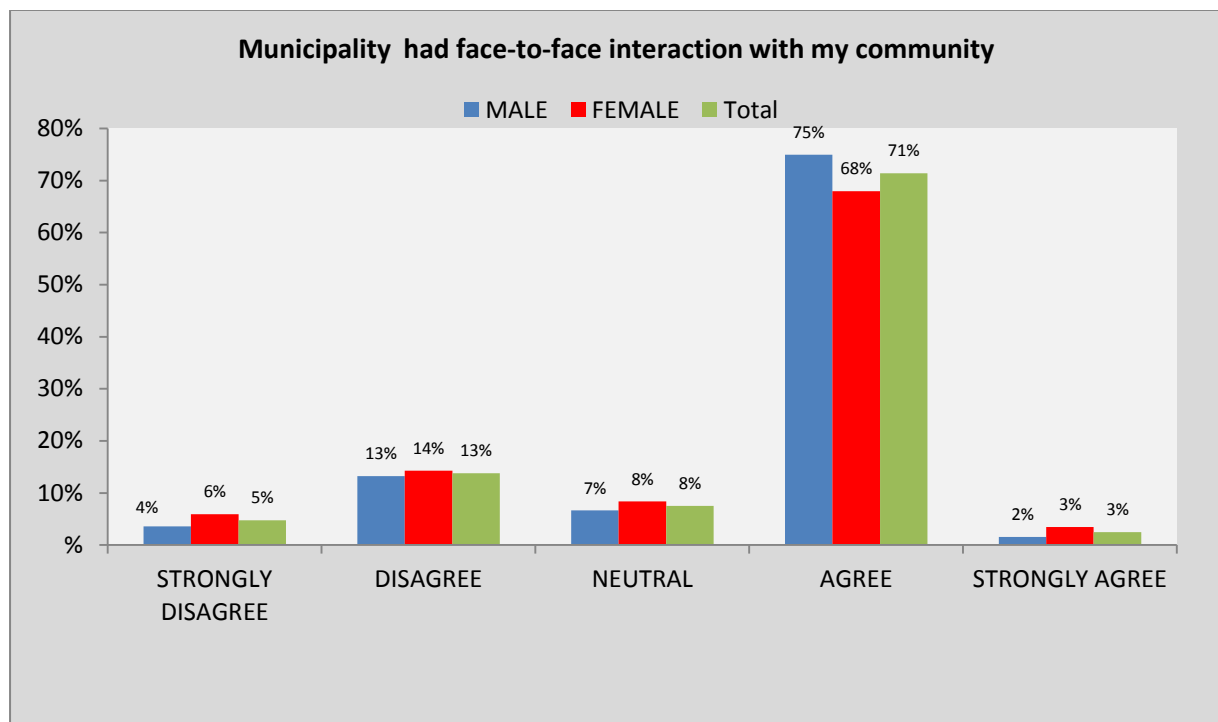
The data revealed that 74% of the participants indicated that the municipality had face-to-face interaction with the community (see Figure 4.8 above). 78% of males and 71% of females at least agreed that they had face-to-face interaction with the municipality. 18% of the respondents pointed out that they never had any interaction with the municipality, whilst 8% remained neutral. The group that disagreed had more females (20%) than males (17%). The neutral group had more or less the same number of female and male respondents. These statistics are aligned to those in Figure 4.5 (Municipal Communication Channels) as 65% of males and 60% of females indicated they would prefer face-to-face communication.

Figure 4.9: Language Use
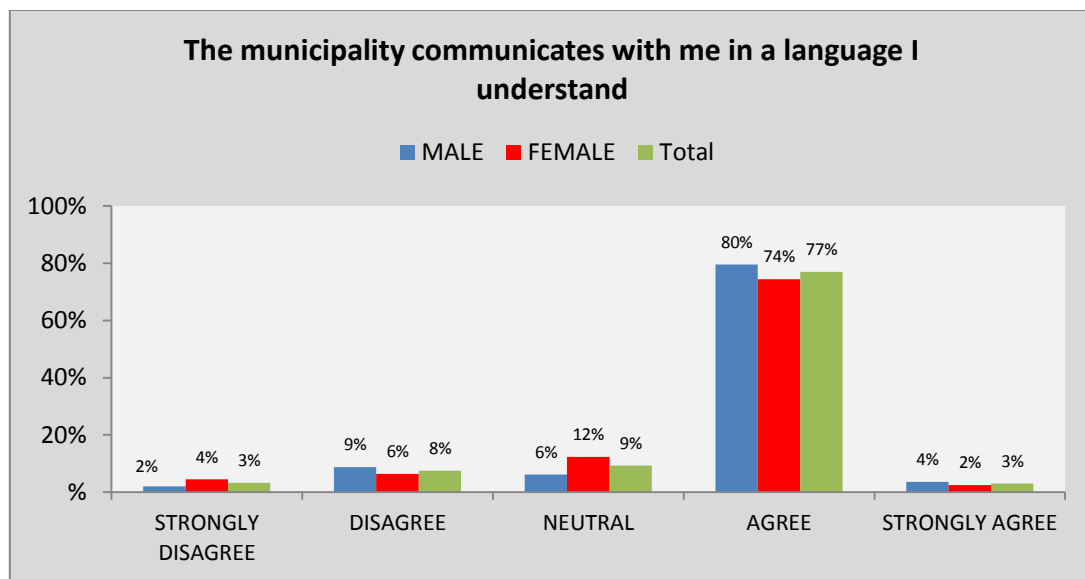
The majority of the participants (80%) in the survey acknowledged that the municipality communicated with them in a language they understood. 11% of the respondents felt that communication made was not in the language they understood, while 9% remained neutral. Batran (2005: 405) asserts that language is essentially a means of communication among the members of a society. According to the South African National Census survey, (2011), 99 % of the population within MLM constituencies, are *isiXhosa* speakers. The results do support the communication effort by the municipality in communicating in an understood and spoken language.

Figure 4.10: Community Participation

71% of the respondents agreed that the municipality encouraged community participation with 12% disagreeing and 17% being neutral. Of those who agreed, 76% were males and 66% were females. The neutral group had more females (20%) the males (13%). Those who disagreed had 13% females compared to 12% males.

The results above are similar to those derived from 4.8, where the data revealed that 74% participants indicated that the municipality had face-to -face interaction with the community. Encouraging community participation starts with face-to-face interaction which promotes an interactive communication process and an opportunity to assess impact of the message or communication process. Interactive communication thus lies at the heart of stakeholder participation in decision making for planning. Participation is usually meant to facilitate implementation and improve compliance, consensus, and political support even further. Participation also enables participants to take ownership of decisions made, encourages responsibility and collective engagement. Participation and consultation go hand in hand, as participants feel consulted, rather than decisions being made on their behalf or in their absence.

**Figure 4.11: Satisfaction with Municipal Communication**
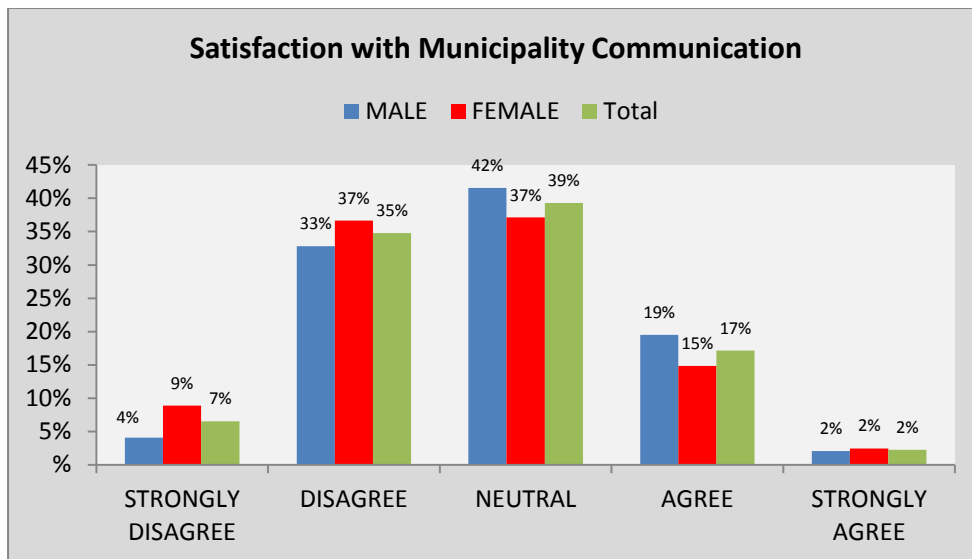
A small percentage of respondents (19%) pointed out that they were happy with the way the municipality communicated with them, while 39% were neutral. The highest percentage (42%) of participants was not happy with the way the municipality communicated with them. However, comparing male respondents to female respondents, there was a high proportion of females who were not happy with municipality communication (46%) compared to males (37%) but of the group that were happy, there were more males (21%) than females (17%).

By being open, transparent and sharing information can assist in building solid relationships with stakeholders. According Hon and Grunig (1999), there are several key strategies for relationship building, including honesty and the open sharing of information and decision-making with the community. If the community is involved in decision-making and participate in community initiatives, like a ward committee meeting, then the community becomes better informed and more invested.

The results indicate that perhaps the lack of receiving information on time could affect the satisfaction levels. For example, Figure 4.6 shows that the majority of the respondents (85%) indicated that they were not receiving the information on time. The results indicated in figure 4.12 (below) could also contribute to the low satisfaction levels as most of the respondents (60%) felt that the municipality did not keep them informed.

Figure 4.12: The Municipality keeps me Informed
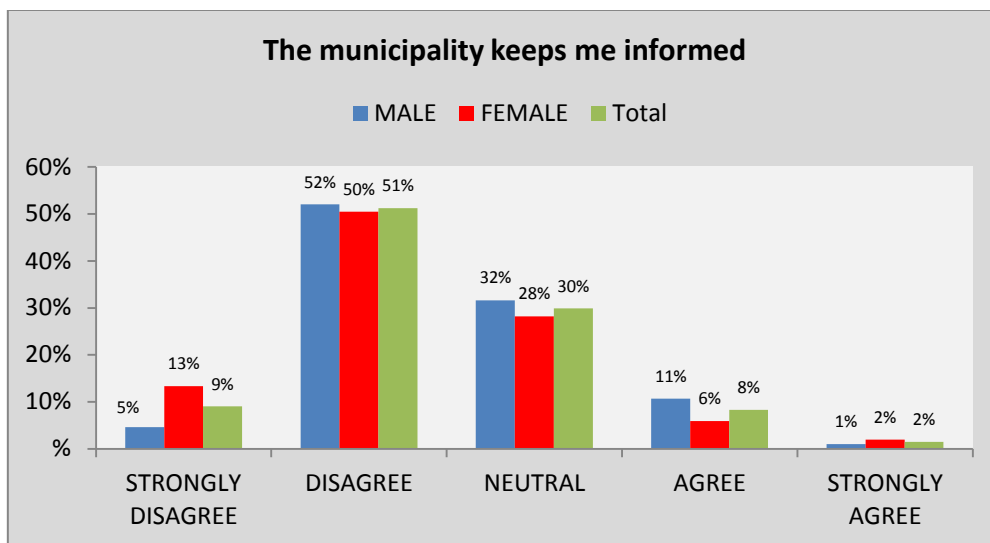
The majority of the respondents (60%) felt that the municipality did not keep them informed; with 30% of the sample being impartial. 10% indicated that the municipality kept them informed. Of the group that felt that municipality was uninformative, 63% were females and 57% male. However, 12% of males and 8% females felt the municipality did a good job in keeping them informed.

These results can be related to the statistics in Figure 4.6, where the majority of the respondents (85%) indicated that they were not receiving the information on time and thus the majority of the constituents (60%) may feel that the MLM does not keep them informed. Also, Figure 4.16 later on in this chapter discusses the kinds of information requested by constituents. This is useful in understanding where the MLM may be lagging with respect to communicating specific kinds of information.

Figure 4.13: Municipal Website
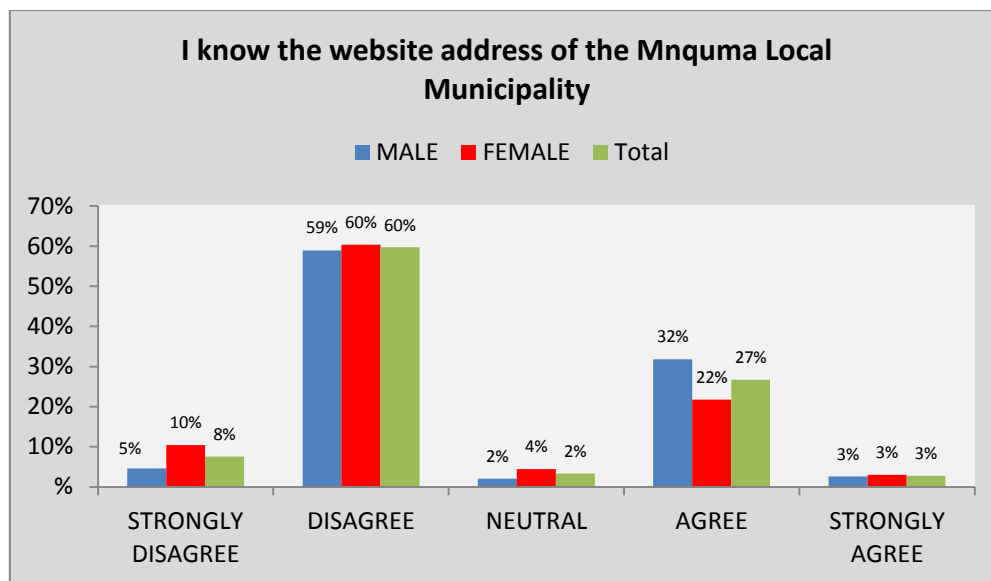
The majority of the respondents (68%) were not aware that the municipality had a website. More females (70%) did not know the municipality's website address as compared to 64% of males. Only 30% knew where to find the municipality website, whilst 2% remained neutral. These statistics are aligned to the results discussed in Figure 4.14 (below) and are also aligned to the context of the MLM locale. As discussed in the literature review chapter, the Mnquma region is a B4 municipality which is mainly rural with communal tenure and with, at most, one or two small towns. In addition, Mnquma is one of the municipalities with the highest levels of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. It is therefore not surprising that the majority of the respondents (68%) were not aware that the municipality had a website. The question however remains, was the community informed of the existence of the website or how to navigate the website as an information resource and means of communication?

Figure 4.4: Internet Access
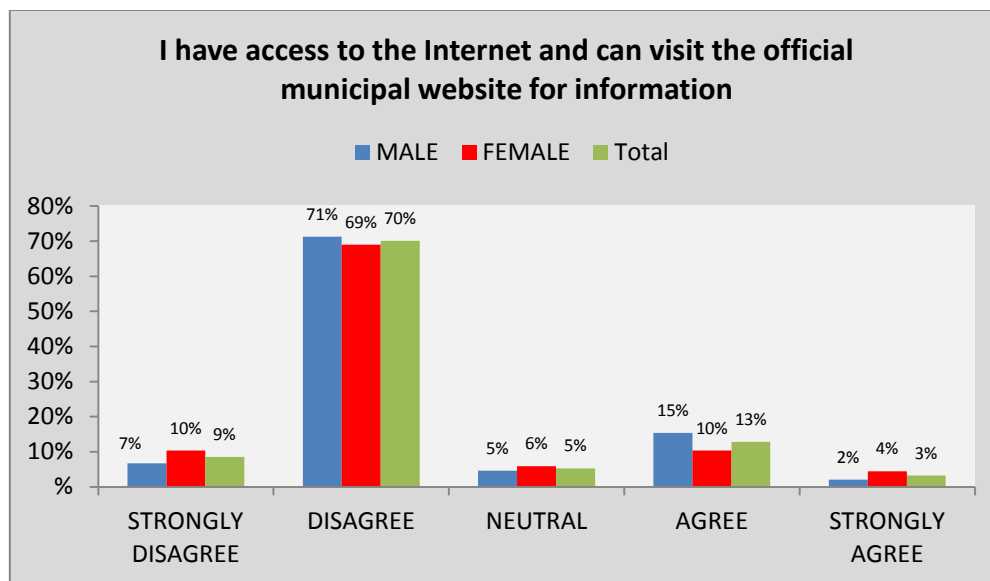
The majority of the participants in the survey (79%) did not have internet access to visit the website of the municipality. This group had more or less the same number of male and female respondents. The lack of internet access might explain the huge percentage (68%) of respondents who did not know the website of the municipality (see Figure 4.13 above). Only 16% of the sample indicated they had access to the Internet with 5% being neutral.

The response above is indicative of the levels of South Africans Internet usage especially in the rural areas. According to Statistics South Africa's 2015 General Household Survey almost half of South African households (48.7%) had at least one member who used the Internet. However, access to the Internet was highest in the Western Cape (62.1%), Gauteng (59.9%), and the Free State (48.7%). The lowest was in Limpopo (32.6%) and the Eastern Cape (37.4%). The MLM is situated in the Eastern Cape.

Figure 4.15: Website and e-Mail Use
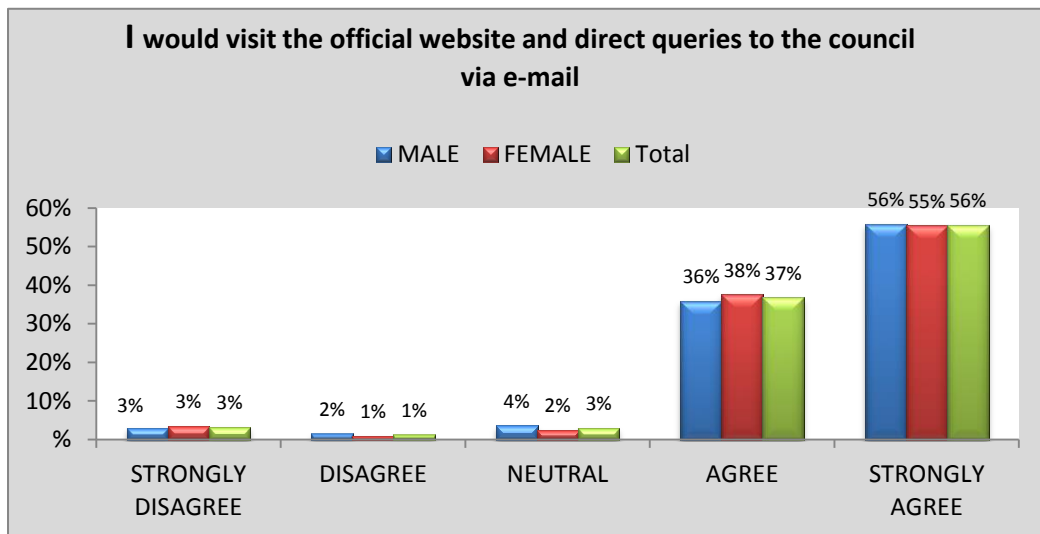
Most of the respondents (93%) in the survey indicated that they would visit the municipality's website and direct queries via email. Only 3% of the respondents were neutral, with a slightly higher percentage of 4% preferring not to visit the website to air their queries. The majority group had more or less the number of males (92%) and females (93%) respondents. Those who were neutral and those who chose not to visit the municipality's website had the same percentages of female and male respondents.

It is important to note that although the majority of MLM's constituencies have an interest in accessing the internet and be a part of the global digital village, there are challenges to access the Internet in the region. Results from the South African Social Attitudes Survey (2013) revealed that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) access is still a major challenge in rural areas and especially the Eastern Cape (where the Mnquma municipality is situated). The survey (2013) reiterates that rural areas in the country lag behind with regards to ICT access and in terms of economic development, such as literacy, computer skills and higher income. Most developed economies have very good ICT infrastructures, suggesting that ICT platforms provide a foundation for, and contribute to, development.

d)   Section D: The Analysis of Open Ended Questions

This section included four open-ended probing statements which were designed to obtain recommendations for improved communication with the municipality. This section includes a discussion on each of the four probing statements. Each statement is first depicted graphically, followed by a discussion.

Figure 4.16: "I would like information on the following subjects"
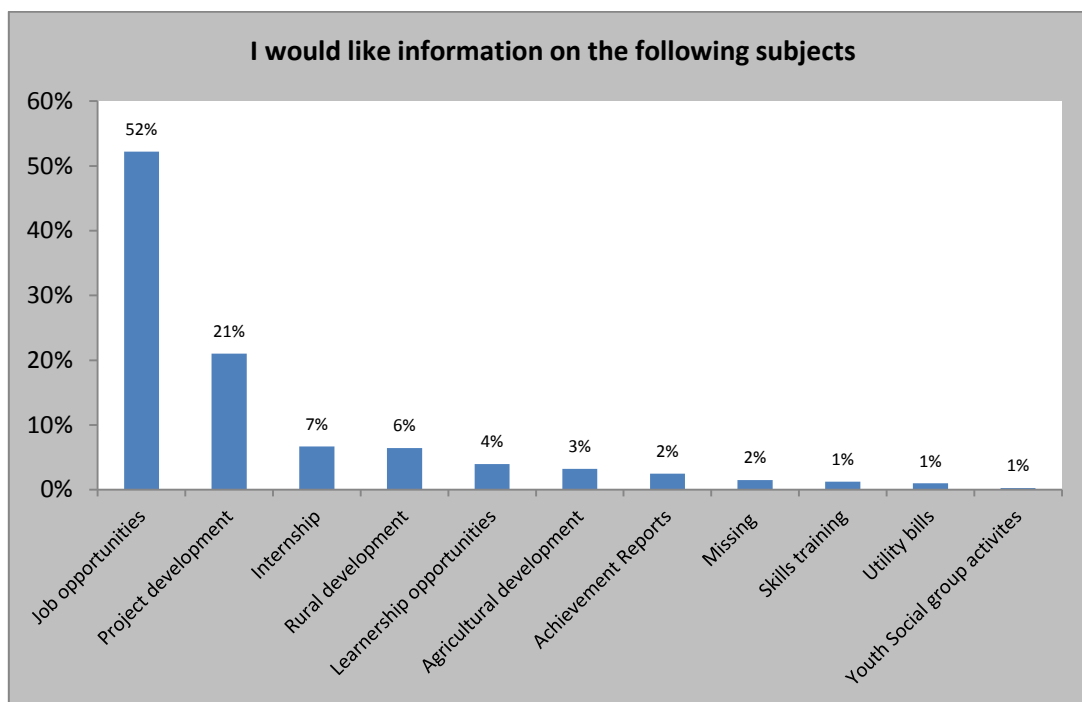
The first probing statement "I would like information on the following subjects" revealed that more than half (52%) of the participants in the survey indicated that they would like information on job opportunities. 21% wanted to receive information on project development, 7% internship, 6% on rural development, 4% on learnership opportunities, 3% on agricultural development, 2% on municipal achievements reports and 1% on utility bills, youth social activities and skills training.

Institutions that are committed to the ongoing growth of their constituencies recognise information empowerment as one of their most important strategic methods to motivate and encourage participation. In addition, an informed society is

better equipped and less dependent on the municipality for bettering their lives. Community members require information through communication and engagement.

Figure: 4.17: "I would like to receive information through the following means"
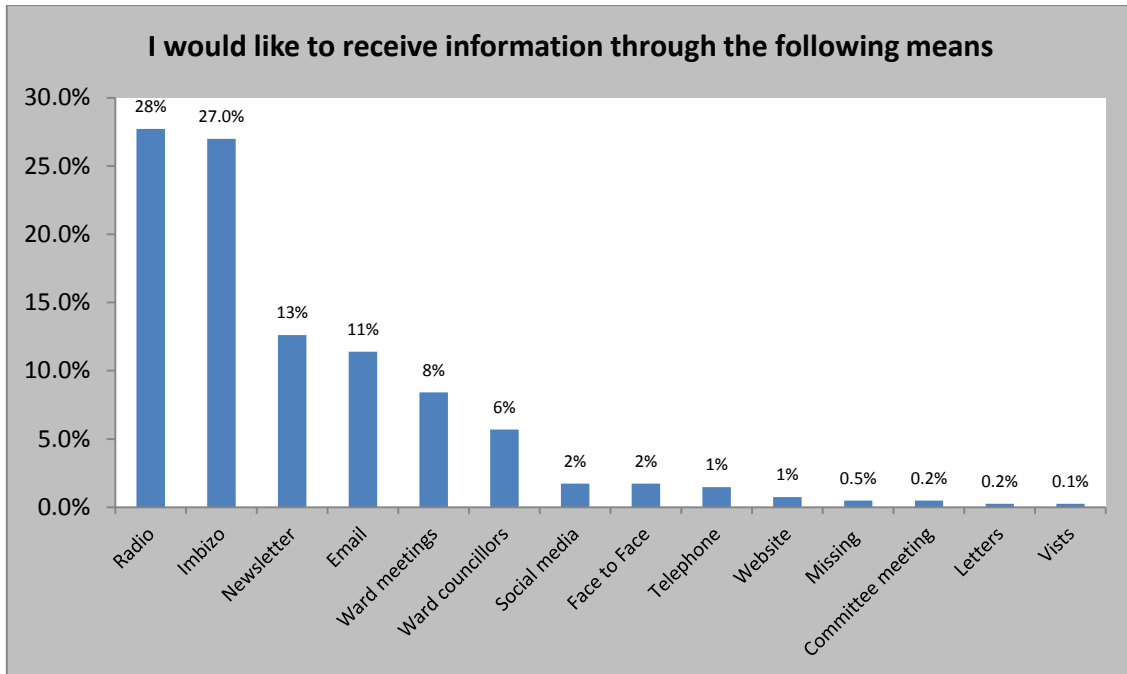
28% of the respondents preferred receiving information through the radio, with 27% in favour of an *Imbizo*. Newsletters and e-mails were the third and fourth preferred means to receive information from the municipality with 13% and 11% respectively. Ward meetings (8%), ward councillors (6%), social media (2%) and face-to-face (2%) were less preferred methods to receive information from the municipality.

The respondents on this part of the section regarding communication tools would like to receive information through radio followed by *imbizo*, newsletters, email, ward meeting, which is in contrast to the results in Figure 4.5. It is important to note that in this section respondents were given the opportunity to list their communication preferences, whereas in Figure 4.5, respondents selected from a pre-determined list.

It is not surprising that radio emerged as the preferred communication as radio is still the dominant mass medium in South Africa (Myers, 2008). 27% respondents indicated they would prefer to receive information through an *Imbizo.* Grab and Charbonnier (2014:60) explain that *imbizos* are, in a nutshell, a protected space critical for the development and nurturing of democracy, good governance. Every member of the community has a right and is expected to attend and participate in an

imbizo regardless of their political affiliation, religious orientation and ethnicity or class.

As long as a person comes from the community, they are members of an *imbizo* and can participate fully. The leaders of an *imbizo* would be an *iNkosi* (a 'king' or 'leader') and in the modern government system, an *imbizo* is convened by the local councillor, Speaker of Parliament, Premier or the President of the country. The advantages of an *imbizo* are numerous, namely, they promote a sense of identity, belonging and ownership allowing members to participate in community life. *Imbizos* build a sense of common identity and goal for members of the community and build a space for social cohesion for the community, mobilising members of the community to participate in development issues for the community.

Figure 4.18: "**I would like to receive information in this language**"
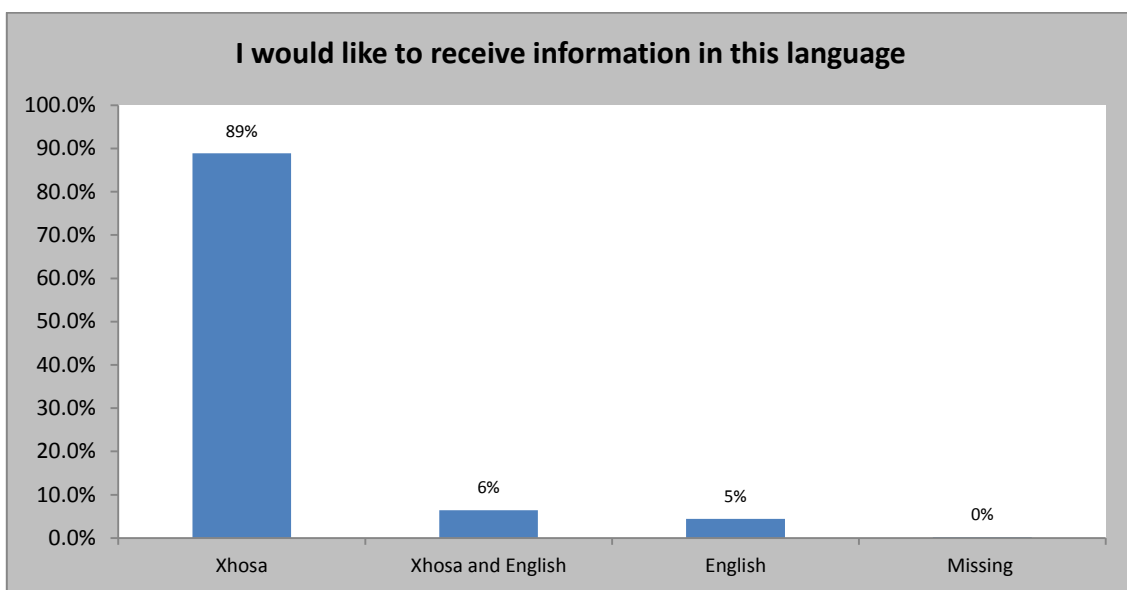
The majority (89%) of the respondents indicated that they would select or choose to receive information from the municipality in Xhosa, whilst 5% chose English. 6% chose both Xhosa and English as their ideal languages. The language preference is aligned to the spoken language widely used in the region, Xhosa. It is important that the municipality uses the language that is understood and used by the larger community. The results above demonstrate that the municipal's administration is sensitive to the language used.

Figure 4.19: "I have the following suggestions to improve the municipal communication"

I have the following suggestions to improve the municipal communication
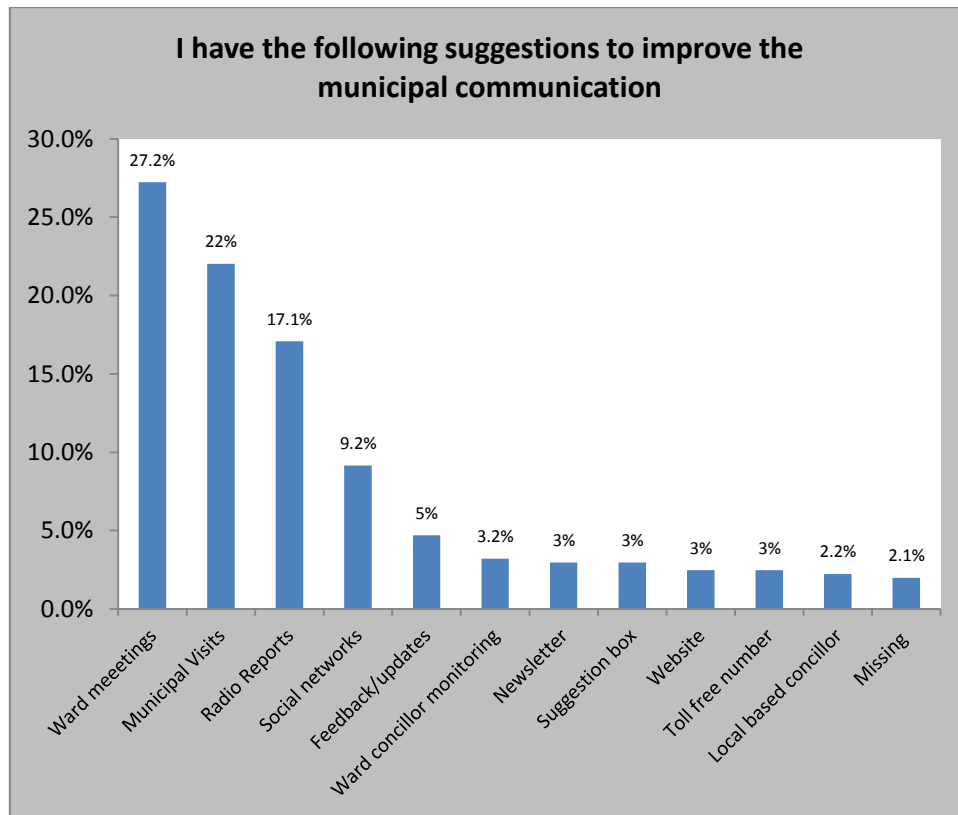
Ward meetings (27.2 %) were suggested as the preferred means to improve municipality communication. 22% of the respondents viewed municipal visits as essential to the improvement of communication between the municipality and the community. This was followed by radio reports at 17.1 % and social networks at 9.2 %. Other suggestions such as newsletters, suggestion boxes, a website, a toll free number, local based councillors and feedback all fell below 5%.

The response above suggests that ward meetings and municipal visits, which can be viewed as a more engaging participatory approach, are what constituents want and in turn highlights the importance of participatory communication in local government, particularly in the context of development communication. Chapter two of this study discussed the importance of development communication and public participation. The results in Figure 4.19 indicate that constituents would prefer their municipal communication to be built around the principles of development communication which recognises the need for providing useful information, relying on feedback, acknowledging creativity and innovation and that which looks at sustainability.

4.9   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the results from the administered questionnaire were presented and discussed. The findings discussed the communication tools used by constituents to communicate with the Mnquma Local Municipality, identified the communication tools used by the Mnquma Local Municipality to communicate with its constituents, assessed how the constituents perceived external communication at the Mnquma Local Municipality and explored alternative types of external communication channels that can be used to communicate with community members residing in a rural locale.

The majority of the respondents indicated that they preferred to use committee meetings, communication through ward councillors and general face-to-face interactions to communicate with the municipality. In the analysis of the open-ended questions, the majority of the respondents revealed that they preferred receiving information through the radio and *Imbizo*. This indicates that respondents prefer a more engaged, participatory communication approach.

In relations to the factors that may hinder external communication, the majority of the respondents felt that municipal information was not received in a timely manner and that they were not kept informed by the municipality. These results could explain why only a small percentage of respondents indicated they were happy with the way the municipality communicated with them. Irrespective of that negative feedback regarding these elements, the municipality was viewed in a positive light by the majority of the respondents in terms of using communication tools they understood in a language that is widely understood and used in the region.

The majority of the respondents expressed an interest in accessing the Internet (specifically the municipality's website and e-mail) to communicate with the MLM. It is interesting to note that while the majority of the respondents do not have access to the Internet in Mnquma, the majority of respondents indicated the desire to use the Internet for communication.

The majority of the respondents recommended that the municipality provide information in the areas of job opportunities, internships and project developments.

This is not surprising considering the high level of unemployment in the region. The majority of the respondents also indicated that ward meetings be used to improve municipality communication, along with municipal visits. This reinforces the indication for an engaged, participatory communication approach in the Mnquma region.

The next chapter focuses on the summary, recommendations and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study. This chapter concludes the study and discussed the recommendations that have emerged from the data analysis.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study were to assess external communication at Mnquma Local Municipality (MLM), identify the factors affecting communication with community members and meaningful participation and explore alternative types of external communication channels that can be used to communicate with community members residing in a rural locale.

The literature reviewed highlighted the importance of effective external communication and using relevant and meaningful communication channels. The literature discussed the importance of development communication and with this, concepts such as participation, dialogue and engagement.

Chapter three discussed the methodological approach used for this study. This study used a quantitative research paradigm, and was conducted in the Mnquma Local Municipality region in Butterworth, Centane and Ngqamakhwe area.

Chapter four presented and discussed the findings of the research. The analysis focused on how the respondents communicate with the municipality and how the municipality communicates with them. From the responses, factors affecting municipal communication were extrapolated. Respondents' recommendations on how the municipality can improve its communication were also analysed.

5.3 ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were to:
1. Assess the current external communication channels at the Mnquma Local Municipality (MLM),
2. Identify the factors affecting communication with community members and meaningful participation and
3. Explore alternative types of external communication channels that can be used to communicate with community members residing in a rural locale.

5.3.1 To assess the current external communication channels at the MLM

According to the findings presented in Chapter four, committee meetings emerged as the most common form of communication between the Mnquma local municipality and constituents. The statistics showed that meetings with ward councillors and other face-to-face communication methods were also preferred. The data also revealed that the majority of the constituents agreed that the MLM communicated with them using face-to-face communication methods. These results indicate that the municipality uses communication methods that have human interface and interaction with the community. The majority of the respondents indicated they understood the communication tools used by the municipality, that the municipality encouraged communication participation and that the municipality communicated with them in a language they understood. It could be argued then, that the external communication channels used by the Mnquma Local Municipality are effective. It was interesting to note though that in spite of these positive results, the majority of the respondents indicated they were not satisfied with the municipality communication. This is further discussed in 5.3.2 below.

5.3.2 Identify the factors affecting communication with community members and meaningful participation

The study revealed that there are certain factors which hinder effective communication between the MLM and its constituents. These factors could explain why the majority of the respondents indicated they were not satisfied with the municipality communication. The majority of the respondents felt that they were not

receiving information on time and that they were not kept informed by the municipality. The issue of Internet access and usage could also hinder effective communication as although the majority of the respondents indicated they did not have access to the Internet. The majority of the respondents also indicated a desire to use the Internet to communicate with the MLM. Providing Internet access (and thus access to the municipality's website) could perhaps assist in ensuring information is received on time and that constituents are kept informed as the information will be posted online timeously and regularly. Given the low literacy rate of rural community in MLM, the municipality must consider issues of computer literacy to educate the community on how to access information online, and means to use the website as an information resource.

5.3.3 Explore alternative types of external communication channels that can be used to communicate with community members residing in a rural locale

The majority of the respondents indicated that they would like to have access to the Internet and use electronic communication channels to communicate with the municipality. In addition, the majority of the respondents would like information on job opportunities, internships and project development. The municipality could use the Internet to deliver such information more promptly to its constituents. Respondents also indicated that they would like to receive information through radio and *imbizos.* The *imbizos* indicate that respondents prefer a more engaged and participatory form of communication. *Imbizos* are key to relationship building and fostering community engagement.

5.4 THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- The study revealed that constituents felt they did not receive their information on time. The MLM should further investigate why there is a delay in the delivery of messages. It is crucial that messages and information is delivered on time to constituents in order to ensure effective communication. The MLM should also investigate the effectiveness of current channels of

communication in delivering messages, information in timely and accurate manner.

- The results revealed that constituents felt they were not kept informed by the municipality. The MLM should ensure that constituents are kept updated about municipal affairs and that all relevant information is made available to constituents. Access to information is crucial in order to foster a good relationship between the MLM and its constituents. The MLM could also run an information sharing or awareness campaign to train and educate constituents on how to access municipal information and apply for jobs, internships and projects.

- This will also allow the municipality to train the community on other communication tools that are available, new or being introduced. The partnership with the GSIC department will prove useful in these sessions.

- The MLM should consider utilising Community Development Workers (CDW) as information and communication agents as well as to deliver much needed training in communities in areas related to external communication and exploring alternative effective means of communication.

- The MLM must make considerable effort and study the communication tools, plans and strategies employed by Urban centres like Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and review their best that are adaptable to their environment.

- The MLM must make considerable investment in professional development and training of professionals in their Communications Unit and partner with regional and local institutions of higher learning to implement this project.

- Respondents revealed that they would prefer to use the Internet (e-mail and website) to communicate with the municipality. The MLM should thus look at expanding Internet access in the Mnquma region. Thusong Centres could, for

example, be used as free Wi-Fi hotspots from where the constituents could access the Internet. The MLM should foster partnerships with other external government and public service departments or units such as public library and community centres as means to deliver effective communication.

- The results showed that radio emerged as one of the preferred communication channels. The MLM should explore maximising the use of radio when communicating with constituents. Mnquma has a community radio station, *Kanya Community Radio,* and this can be used to communicate with the people in the region. Radio is quick, effective and a relatively cheap medium of communication. The immediacy of radio could help alleviate the problem of delays in message delivery.

- Considering that the results revealed that the majority of constituents prefer a more engaged, participatory form of communication, it can be suggested that the MLM develop an external community participation programme. A separate community participation programme (which is linked to the municipality's overall communication strategy) can further enhance meaningful engagement with constituents.

5.5 POSSIBLE FUTURE RESEARCH

It is suggested that the study be expanded to include other local government municipalities in South Africa in order to investigate external communication channels. It could be useful to compare and contrast how local municipalities in South Africa communicate with their constituents and also, how these constituents perceive the municipal communication.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The municipal's external communication should be prominent in response to increasing the sharing of information by government, especially local government. Effective external communication is therefore sought after especially in line with the municipal's acts, by-laws and policies on access to information and community

participation. This conviction reiterates the context of effective communication at the heart of organisational effectiveness. This study argues in favour of effective external communication as a means of creating good relationships, providing information relating to the services the municipality offers, encouraging community participation, closing the communication gap between the municipality and its constituencies and solidifying the relationships and increasing the visibility of local authorities.

Effective communication is an important aspect of organisational life and goes as far as influencing how the organisation is viewed as a failure or success. Communication can thus be used to effectively change people's perceptions about an organisation. The study has revealed that communication is critical to foster participation, partnerships and mutually beneficial relationships. It should be noted that various communications channels or means of communications apply effectively if used accordingly given the environmental context and dynamics of a specific community. It is critical that communication practitioners have an informed understanding and knowledge of communication channels and how best to use these to reach target audiences. Lastly, this study has highlighted the importance of assessing municipal communication in order to ensure that there are open, transparent lines of communication between the municipalities and its constituents that foster participation and engagement.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure One: Permission to conduct research in the Mnquma Local Municipality

MNQUMA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

P.O. Box 36
52 King Street, Butterworth
Telephone: 047-401 2400
Fascimile: 047-491 0195

IBhokisi YePosi No. 36
52 King Stalato, eGcuwa
foni: 047-401 2400
Ifeksi: 047-491 0195

Date:
01 July 2011

Person dealing with the matter:
Mr. S Tantsi (Director Strategic Management)

To whom it may concern

Re: Permission to conduct research at Mnquma Local Municipality

On receipt of the two letters from the student (Ms N Ndinisa) and the university (Durban University of Technology) for conducting research at Mnquma Local municipality, was received with great anticipation. We are a municipality that has vast external stakeholders and we envisage a proactive two way communication (Bottom Up and Top down approach).

Having said that, this research will provide insight and direction with certain things that we as a municipality might have missed regarding external communications. Therefore the student and the university are granted permission to conduct research.

For further deliberation do not hesitate to call me.

S. TANTSI
DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Annexure two: Informed Consent Letter

Dear Respondent

This study aims to assess external communication at the Mnquma Local Municipality (MLM). The study focuses on the municipality's relationship with their external stakeholders in terms of how communication is used to seek continued participation in municipal affairs and understanding of the municipality, its functions and the services it provides.

By obtaining relevant data for the intents of assisting the municipality to assess the current external communication channels, identify the factors affecting communication with community and explore alternative types of external communication with the community. Recommendations can then be made to provide solutions that will promote external communication by the organisation with the aim of empowering external customers and heightening service delivery and service quality.

I therefore urge you to respond to the questionnaire timeously and to complete it as thoroughly as possible. All information provided in this questionnaire will be kept confidential and the anonymity of your answers is hereby guaranteed. Please complete the attached questionnaire as per the instructions provided in the document.

Your participation and cooperation in this regard is very much appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Ms Nokubonga Ndinisa

Annexure three: Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS / IMIYALELO

Please read the instructions in the questionnaire carefully before answering the questions.
Nceda funda imiyalelo kwiphepha lemibuzo ngocoselelo phambi kokuphendula imibuzo.

GENERAL DETAILS AND SUGGESTIONS / INKCUKACHA NGOKUBANZI KUNYE NAMACEBISO
Instructions: Please tick your relevant answer in the questionnaire below. **Imiyalelo:** Limpendulo onokukhetha kuzo malunga nombuzo ngamnye zinikezelwe kuluhlu kwisandla sasekunene. Nceda jikeleza into oyikhethayo ebhekisele kuwe. Ukuba izinto ezikhethwayo azinikezelwanga kwisandla sakho sasekunene, uyacelwa ukuba kufuneka uzalise impendulo efanelekileyo.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

a.	**Gender**				
	Male		Female		
b.	**Age**				
	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
c.	**Which area do you reside in?**				
	Butterworth		Centane	Ngqamakwe	Other (Please state)
d.	**How long have you lived in this area?**				
	0-12 months	1-4 years	5-10 years	11-15 years	16 years or longer
e.	**Home Language**				
	English	Sotho	isiZulu	IsiXhosa	Other(Please State)

f.	**I am proficient in the following languages: (Tick all appropriate options)**			

English	Sotho	isiZulu	IsiXhosa	Other (Please State)
o Read o Write o Speak	o Read o Write o Speak	o Read o Write o Speak	o Read o Write o Speak	

SECTION B: COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Instructions:
Several statements pertaining to the external communication by Mnquma Municipality to the community are provided in the following table. Please read the statements carefully and choose the answer most applicable to you and based on your personal experience. Indicate your choice for each statement by ticking the appropriate box. The organisational entity referred to in this questionnaire is the Mnquma Local Municipality.

Imiyalelo:
Iintetho ezahlukeneyo eziphathelele kuthungelwano lwangaphandle lukaMasipala waseMnquma kubemmi zinikezelwe kule theyibhuli ilandelayo. Nceda funda iintetho ngocoselelo kwaye ukhethe impendulo eyeyona ibhekisele kuwe kunye nesekelwe kumava akho. Bonisa ukhetho lwakho malunga nentetho nganye ngokwenza u(x) kwibhokisi efanelekileyo. Umbutho okhoyo ekubhekiswa kuwo kweli phepha lemibuzo nguMasipala waseMnquma.

No.	Statement	YES	NO
1.	**I communicate with the Mnquma Local Municipality using the following communication channels (Tick relevant option):**		
	E-mail		
	Website		
	Telephone		
	Face-to-Face		
	Ward councilor		
	Committee Meetings		
	Newsletter		
	CDW Meetings (Community Development Worker)		
	Other (please list)		
2.	**Mnquma Local Municipality communicates with me using the following communication channels (Tick relevant**	**YES**	**NO**

option):		
E-mail		
Internet		
Telephone		
Face-to-Face		
Ward councilor		
Committee Meetings		
Newsletter		
Door to Door Campaigns		
CDW Meetings (Community Development Worker)		
Other (please list)		

SECTION C: MUNICIPALITY COMMUNICATION WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Instructions:
Several statements pertaining to the external communication by Mnquma Municipality to residents are provided in the following table. Please read the statements carefully and choose the answer most applicable to you and based on your personal experience. Indicate your choice for each statement by ticking the appropriate box. The organisational entity referred to in this questionnaire is the Mnquma Local Municipality.

Imiyalelo:
Iintetho ezahlukeneyo eziphathelele kuthungelwano lwangaphandle lukaMasipala waseMnquma kubemmi zinikezelwe kule theyibhuli ilandelayo. Nceda funda iintetho ngocoselelo kwaye ukhethe impendulo eyeyona ibhekisele kuwe kunye nesekelwe kumava akho. Bonisa ukhetho lwakho malunga nentetho nganye ngokwenza u(x) kwibhokisi efanelekileyo. Umbutho okhoyo ekubhekiswa kuwo kweli phepha lemibuzo nguMasipala waseMnquma.

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Living far away (50 -100km) from the municipal offices means that I do not receive municipal information in a timely manner					
2.	I understand the communication tools used by the municipality					
3.	The municipality has face-to-face interaction with my community					
4.	The municipality communicates					

	with me in a language I understand					
5.	The municipality encourages community participation (for example, imbizo)					
6.	I am happy with the way/s in which the municipality communicates with me					
7.	The municipality keeps me informed					
8.	I know the website address of the Mnquma Local Municipality					
9.	I have access to the Internet and can visit the official municipal website for information					
10.	I would make use of the Internet to visit the official municipal website and direct queries to the council via e-mail, should access to the Internet be made available at the area offices of the Mnquma Municipality for utilisation by the general public					

SECTION D: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

1.	I would like information on the following subjects:
2.	I would like to receive information through the following means / tools (list your preference/s)
3.	I would like to receive information in this language:
4.	I have the following suggestions to improve the municipal communication: