

**A COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE ON CHANGE MANAGEMENT: A
CASE STUDY OF THE GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND
INFORMATION SYSTEM (GCIS) IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this work has not been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. I declare that the work presented in this research paper is my own. Any work done by others has been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This research emerges within the context of changes that occurred in the public sector post apartheid, which meant invariable changes within the organisation's structure and processes. More specifically, it brought with it a changing role of communication in managing change. With communication being the lifeblood and binding element within an organisation, having effective and efficient communication within the organisation can therefore assist in keeping the various parts of an organisation together, making it easier for the organisation to maintain itself during change. This study locates Senior Communication Officers within Thusong Service Centres in the GCIS and investigates the role communication plays in managing change within the organisation. The study critically examines Ludwig Von Bertalanffy's (1968) Systems Theory in understanding the interrelatedness of a system such as the GCIS and the role organisational communication channels play in maintaining the process of change. Furthermore, this study analyses the influence of the Chaos Theory within the concept of managing change and the flow of communication within an organisation.

This study suggests ways in which Senior Communication Officers can play a vital role in managing change by analysing the underlying principles and concepts of the Chaos Theory and incorporating them within the role of communication during the change process.

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“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

Charles Darwin

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa's democracy in 1994 brought changes to the socio-political and economic landscape. These changes took place within various spheres including the private and public sectors. In accordance with the Public Service Act No, 1994, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) was established to coordinate and maintain consistent communication amid executive, legislative and judiciary spheres of Government and the South African people. Of importance, this responsibility saw the GCIS take a pivotal role in the transformation and integration of the communication gaps left by post-apartheid government. The task of the GCIS was to become the communication agency of government which is leading a society undergoing reconstruction and development (Pahad, 2003:1). With the GCIS structurally located within the Presidency, their primary responsibility is aimed at maintaining two-way communication between the government and the people. Therefore, the GCIS became an integral part in the facilitation of change within government. The vision of government in providing information and services for all South Africans was provided for with the establishment of Thusong Service Centers (Thusong, 2009). The GCIS is represented by 15 Senior Communications Officers within these centres as well as district municipalities in KZN. These integrated community development centres are for the purpose of implementing development communication and information. With the apartheid government limiting access to information, services and participation by citizens, Thusong Service Centers are positioned to address the historical, social and economic factors of the apartheid government. Therefore, these changes brought with them a diverse role for communications.

With the emergence of diverse labour resources and the creation of appropriate new workplace cultures, communication has become an integral part of the management function. Whereas in the past, communication was traditionally viewed as a linear, one-way process that lacked a human element, post-apartheid organisations changed towards a

more asymmetrical world-view of communication. Verwey & du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:23) maintain that, in the past, the role of communication was more of a technical one and little attention was given to the role of it in the functioning of an organisation. Control, order and predictability were the dominant approaches to an organisation's structure and processes, and change was seen as a hindering factor that needed to be contained. However, broader socio-political and economic changes, caused by post-apartheid climate, meant invariable changes within the organisation.

Consequently, modern managers have had to modify and transform the processes in managing change in order to steer their workforce effectively to meet revised missions and visions. Puth (2002:3) states that communication is a vital component of change and is the binding element that keeps the various parts of an organisation together, making it easier for an organisation to maintain itself during change. Therefore, emphasis on both the process and content of communication, during change, positions communication on a more strategic level (Oliver, 2004:22). This strategic process, therefore, allows for the effective and efficient use of communication in view of its interrelatedness with the organisation. This study, therefore, sets out to investigate the role of communication in managing change within the GCIS in KZN.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel (1998) maintain that communication is the lifeblood and binding element in an organisation. Murphy (1996:99) further argues that the increasingly complex and dynamic nature of modern organisations cannot be understood when studied in a vacuum or focussing on a single scale of observation. In other words, managers can be misled if individual parts of the whole are studied in isolation. van Tonder (2004a:43) emphasises that organisations, as systems, cannot be plotted or predicated and are synonymous with constant movement of energy and information. This movement is synonymous with change and, therefore, identifying predictable, cause-effect patterns during the change process is inevitably problematic. This dynamic exchange and constant movement within the system, subsequently, elicits a need for strategic and well facilitated

communication. Organisations, thus, need to utilise communication as a strategic function and resource in managing change in order to maintain a successful organisation (Verwey & du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:186).

Those with decision-making roles cannot rely on traditional systems, rules and procedures, but must instead be prepared to adapt continually to an ever-changing environment. Decision-making roles involve various individuals within the organisation. Of specific importance within the organisation are communication officers, who are the custodians that link the various parts of the organisation together. This function is crucial in bridging the gaps that inhibit an organisation to adapt to change within the system. Communication officers are, thus, vital to ensuring that communication is integrated into all aspects of an organisation, especially during change processes. Failure to do so, according to Ball (2003), often results in ineffective control, inefficient coordination and inevitable management failure. This is also applicable within government structures and specifically the Thusong Service Centres managed by the GCIS. In line with the vision of democratic and developmental local government, the Thusong Service Centers are still in the change process of transition and transformation (Burger, 2008:302). The quantity of changes occurring in an organisation are far more frequent. Prosci (2010:1) states that this raises to a higher degree of importance placed on change management within an organisation. This study, therefore, sets out to investigate the role of communication to effectively manage change within the GCIS in KZN.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to investigate how communication officers within Thusong Service Centers use communication to manage change. This will be achieved through the following objectives:

- To conduct empirical research within GCIS centres in KZN to ascertain the role of communication during the change process; and
- To investigate how communication officers facilitate the change process.

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Transformation in South Africa brought about many challenges to the functioning of organisations. One of the key challenges faced during the transformational phase in organisations is the challenge of managers' ability to use communication to manage change. Dev (2005:1) confirms that, although communication is recognised as crucial, there are still few communication officers who are unable to manage communication efficiently during change. The field of communication emphasises that communication is crucial and is the binding element in the change process (Puth, 2002:3). Consequently, communication should occupy a pivotal place within an organisation to ensure that there are no gaps in the communication process informing change. Therefore, this study sets out to investigate how communication officers within the GCIS use communication to manage change.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The following are the delimitations for this study:

- This study is limited to the 15 communication officers within the broader 11 Districts within KZN.

It assumes that these organisations have changed in the past or are in the process of change.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

The study critically examines those theories concerned with the study of communication during change. The literature draws from the System Theory where the importance of the interrelatedness of a system, as well as its dynamic, ever-changing attributes, are highlighted. Furthermore, the concepts of the Chaos Theory are offered as a framework in identifying how Senior Communication Officers (SCO) communicate during change. The flow of communication during the change process is further emphasised with the study of organisational communication and the channels of communication utilised in maintaining the

lifeblood and binding the element of communication during the change process.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

Due to the empirical nature of the study, a quantitative research design will be used, with both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis.

The researcher will make use of the non-standardised, semi-structured interviews in the form of a census as 100% of the sample will be used, these methods will be further explained in chapter three. McQueen and Knussen (2002) suggest that semi-structured interviews allow for more flexibility and for better flow of the interview, allowing for a more exploratory study.

The researcher will set up an interview time table and, telephonically, or by email, confirm interview times with the respondents. The questionnaire will be personally administered by the researcher and taped for the purpose of content analysis of the open-ended questions, and the interview will be later transcribed.

1.8 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter one introduced to the research problem. In particular, it explained the rationale behind the research topic as well as the objectives and limitations of the study. This chapter also included a brief introduction to the literature and methodology of this study.

In chapter two, a detailed account of the literature within those concepts and theories surrounding communication during change are covered. More specifically, the study draws from the work of von Bertalanffy (1975), General Systems Theory as well as incorporating the Chaos Theory and organisational communication within the study.

Chapter three focuses on the methodology of this study with emphasis on the study type, data collection and data analysis. The benefits of these approaches are highlighted and the limitations of this study discussed.

Chapter four presents the results of this research. Results are presented with the use of tables and figures with a detailed discussion of each result.

Chapter five presents the conclusions and recommendations of this study as drawn from the results and literature review in chapters four and two, respectively

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has offered an introduction and background to the study, highlighting the problem statement, aims and objectives and rationale for the study. Furthermore, this chapter briefly introduced the contents of the literature review and methodology of the study.

The next chapter will go into more detail with regards to the concepts and theories related to the study of communication during change. It will then discuss the role of the Senior Communication Officer during the change process.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Post modern organisations are open systems, dependent on context, always in a state of becoming, actively integrating new information and exchanging that information with a changing environment” (Bloom, 2002:2)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A past study (Comtask, 2002:1) on the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) revealed that there is a perceived poor understanding of the role of communication and its function within government. Understanding the role of communication as the binding element within any organisation is crucial in dealing with change and establishing a successful organisation. With the objective of establishing the theoretical framework for this study, this chapter will discuss the key theories aligned with the study of communication within change management. It recognises the importance of the General Systems Theory and its origins attributed to German biologist, Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1975, and the significance thereof in relation to the study. It presents the main characteristics of an open system and its contribution in determining the current standing of the GCIS within its internal and external environment. It further examines change management and the Chaos Theory as a modern method in benchmarking the effectiveness of the Senior Communication Officer (SCO) within the structures of the GCIS. The concepts of the chaos theory and the application of these concepts will determine the effectiveness of the Communication Officer within the GCIS. Internal organisational communication, as a key concept of this study, will define and analyse the levels and channels of communication within the scope of managing change.

2.2 GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GCIS)

The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) was officially launched on

18 May 1998 to succeed the South African Communication Service. The mandate of the GCIS is primarily drawn from Section 16 of the Bill of Rights as contained in the constitution (GCIS, 2009:2). Former Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, initiated a process in 1995 that saw the appointment of a task team to investigate government communication. The appointed task team, Comtask, after one year of investigation, submitted a final report to Thabo Mbeki in December 1996. Thereafter, an Implementation Committee was set up to oversee the transformation of the South African Communication Service into the GCIS. According to a cabinet memorandum in October 1997 (GCIS, 2009:2-3), the Implementation Committee proposed the development of a professional and effective corps of government communicators who would professionalise and streamline government communication through:

- The establishment of GCIS Secretariat to plan and coordinate government communication and information in close collaboration with the Cabinet and Presidency;
- The transformation of the existing South African Communication Service to fulfil the requirement of the new constitutional framework; and
- The restructuring of the existing communication arrangement in Ministries where the Department Ministries would take direct responsibility for the communication function in their respective departments.

According to the GCIS (2009:3), the above approach has helped strengthen the GCIS's mandate to communicate on behalf of the government. The GCIS further increased its effectiveness by nationally establishing multi-purposed service centres called Thusong Service Centres.

2.3 THUSONG SERVICE CENTRES

Thusong Service Centres are one of the primary vehicles for the implementation of development and communication in line with the GCIS's vision to improve the lives of all South Africans through participation in the democracy. Formally known as Multi-Purpose

Communication Centres (Thusong, 2009:1), the establishment of these Centres was done to address historical, social and economic factors which limited access to information, services and participation by citizens in the apartheid regime (Thusong, 2009:1). Dr Essop Pahad, former Minister of the Presidency, states how Thusong Service Centres have played a leading role in strengthening the citizens' access to information and services (Thusong, 2009:1). This outcome has been a result of the Thusong Service Centres being able to offer a one-stop service centre that provides services and information in an integrated manner. According to Thusong, (2009:1-2), the six-block service of Thusong Service Centres provides many activities and services to the community, as listed below:

- Government social and administrative services for:
 - Grants;
 - Personal documents; and
 - Housing applications.
- Office services such as:
 - Phone, fax, scan, copy, print;
 - Desktop publishing; and
 - Postal service.
- Education and skills development service for:
 - Adult Basic Education and Training;
 - Further Education and Training; and
 - Specialised Training.
- Local Economic Development (LED) services for:
 - Small business advice and development.
- Business services and community opportunities for:
 - Small, medium and micro enterprises; and
 - Other private-sector services such as retail.
- Information and communication activities for:
 - Government information and on-site guidance regarding services; and
 - Community information and awareness.

The above six-block service model illustrates the wide variety of services the Thusong Service Centre offers the South African public, and, therefore, aligns the objective of

Thusong Service Centres to bring government information closer to the people while promoting access to opportunities. The above objectives and functions of the Thusong Service Centres are integrated into the roles and functions of the Communication Officer within the GCIS.

In line with the GCIS vision and mission to offer government communication that empowers and encourages citizens to participate in the democracy, as well as open and extend the channels of communication between government and the public, that need for strategic communication is essential. In its ten years of existence, the GCIS has been well established as a result of the national communication framework or structure. In identifying the role strategic communication, it is also imperative to acknowledge the strategising body of the GCIS, namely, the Executive Committee, which is illustrated below:

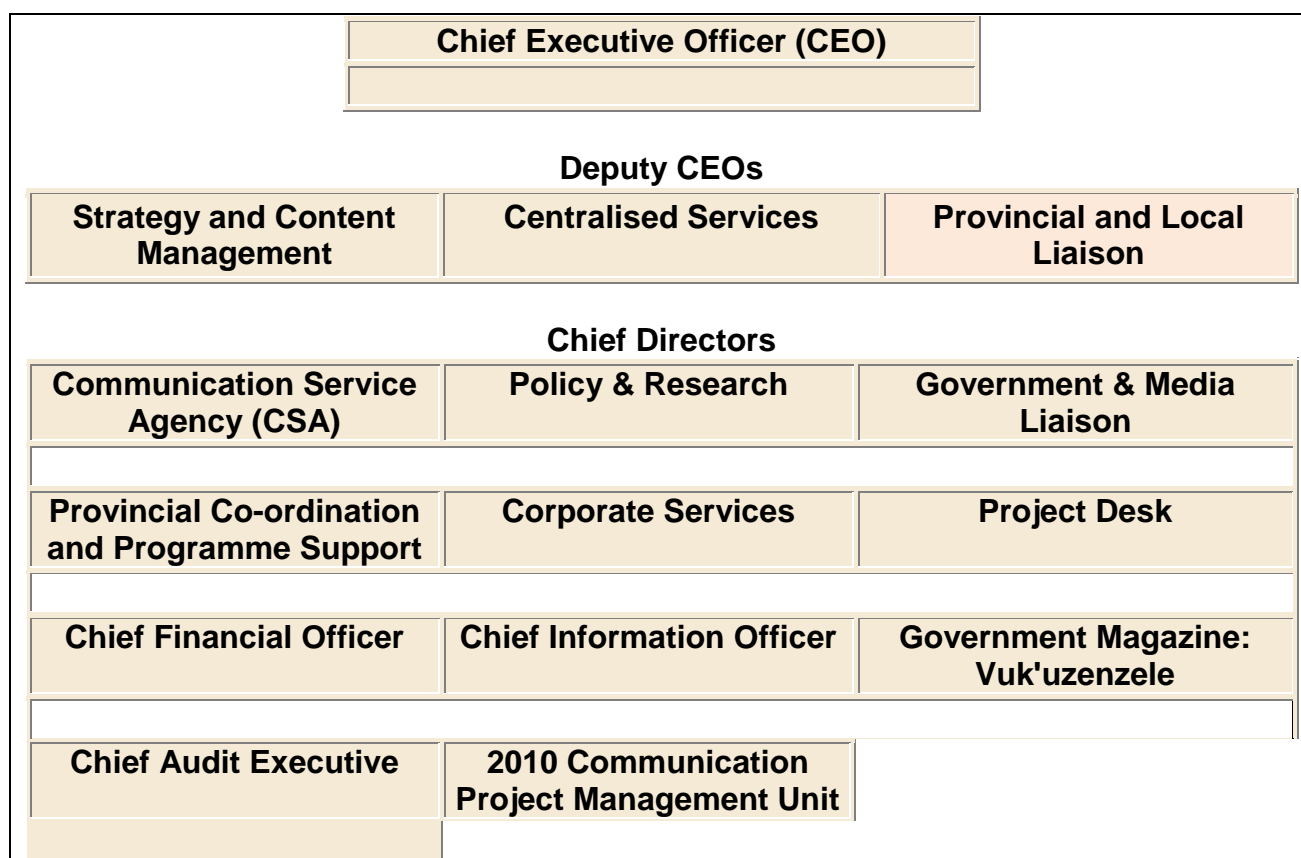


Figure 2.1 The structure of the Government Communication and Information System

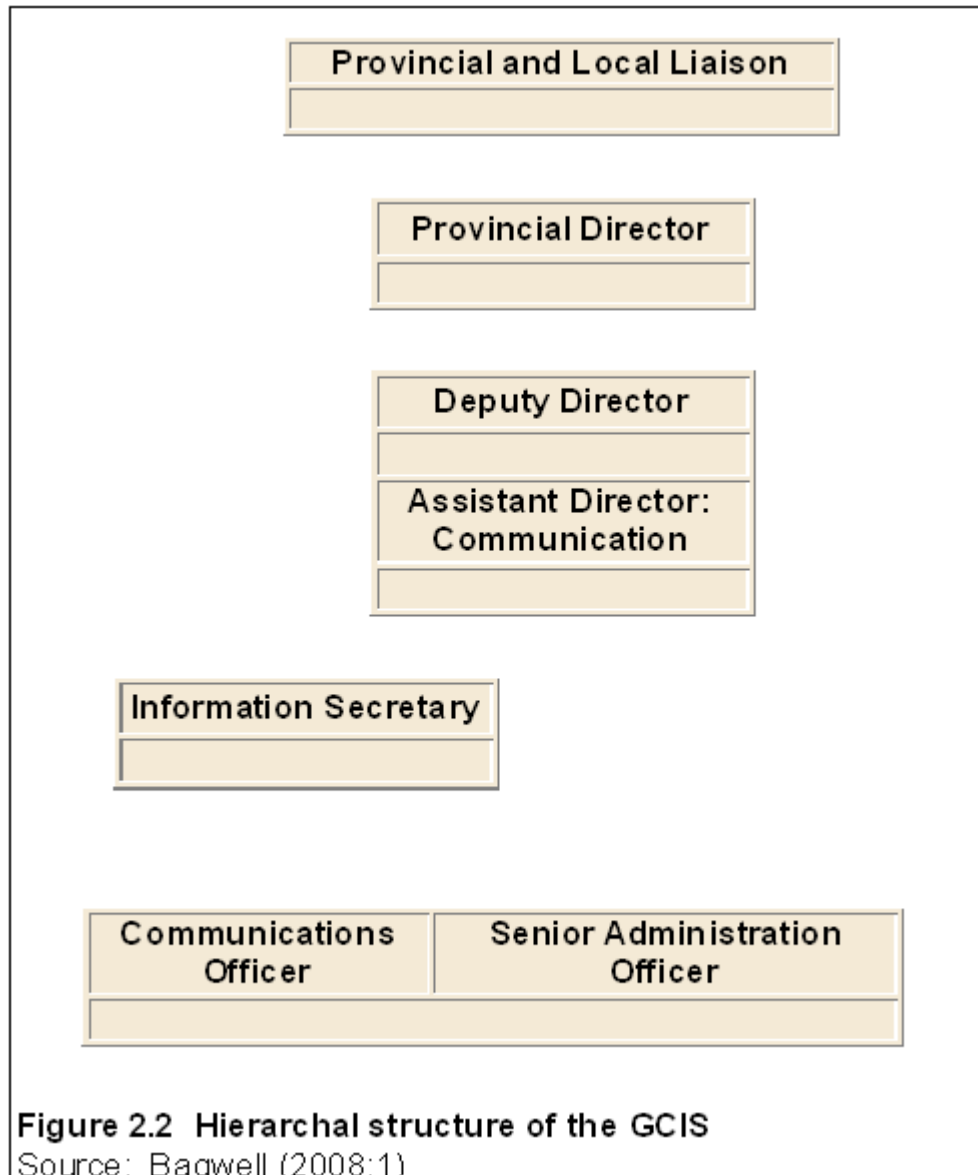
Source: As adapted from GCIS (2009:1)

The GCIS Executive Committee, as in the above figure 2.1, is a strategising body dealing with issues of government message, communication strategy and corporate image. The Executive Committee integrates; co-ordinates and rationalises the work of communication structures within government (GCIS, 2009). The Senior Communication Officer is placed within the Provincial and Local Liaison structure.

2.3.1 Senior Communications Officer

Bagwell (2009:1) describes the job purpose of the Senior Communications Officer within the GCIS is “to provided communication and interaction between the public and government in

collaborations with National, Provincial and District and Local spheres of government and other stakeholders at district and local level.” As illustrated in figure 2.1 and 2.2, the Senior Communications Officer falls under the Provincial and Local liaison and reports to the Provincial Director.



The Senior Communication Officer (SCO) is placed within these Thusong Service Centres to carry out the purpose of providing the grassroots communication and interaction between the public and government. The core functions of a Senior Communication Officer, as

outlined below, is offered by Bagwell (2009:1-2):

- Develop better alliances in the communication environment through local government support and a local communication system, local information analysis and media analysis and the promotion of development communication, local content and distribution;
- Develop a clear understanding of public information needs and government communication needs through local liaisons activities;
- Improving on information delivery to the public;
- Providing leadership in government communication; and
- Management, leadership, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the district office in Thusong Service Centres.

The above functions clearly point out that the SCO's responsibility lies within the field of communication. Within the GCIS, frequent changes occur within the organisations environment, and sees communication as the vital component in managing these changes through the various channels of communication. The importance of this study is reinforced as no previous research on the role of communication while managing change within the GCIS has been done.

The concept of the systems theory is cited as the integrative and binding element of communication within the GCIS and explains the effect changes have on the organisation's subsystems. The General Systems Theory illustrates how changes within the system can be maintained by communication due to the system's interrelatedness.

2.4 THE SYSTEMS THEORY

von Bertalanffy (1975:1), considered the father of the General Systems Theory, expressed how there appeared to be an existence of a general systems law, irrespective of the particular properties and elements involved in a system. The General Systems Theory existed due to the appearance of structural similarities that were common in the different fields of study such as in biological, behavioural and social sciences. von Bertalanffy

(1975:1) continued to offer the General Systems Theory as a useful tool in providing models that can be used in, and transformed, to different fields such as the study of communication within change. Although von Bertalanffy's view of systems thinking has been criticised by authors such as Marshall (1998:1) for being too broad, this study supports the ideas of the General Systems Theory and its appropriateness for this study. As confirmed by Covington (1998:4), it is further suggested that the General Systems Theory is an appropriate tool used when studying complex systems where there are many unpredictable variables. In studying the GCIS, like other complex, open systems, characterising and indentifying patterns within the system are done so from a holistic standpoint. Walonick (1993:1) confirms the view of analysing patterns within systems holistically and asserts how von Bertalanffy (1975) proposed that systems could not be characterised as independent or as linear but rather that systems were characterised by the interactions of components and the nonlinearity of these interactions.

As exemplified in Figure 2.2, the GCIS is a system made up of interrelating subsystems that function to form a whole. The Systems Theory allows for a better understanding of the GCIS's external and internal environments, but, more importantly, offers a wider, complex view of the system over time. Thus, in application, as according to Stacey (2007:37), the Systems Theory is considered to be the dominant perspective in current thinking about organisations and their management. The next section of the study will reinforce the concepts of the General Systems Theory with particular focus on open systems and the features and applications thereof. Consequently, the section will offer the effect of the system's features have on the GCIS and its subsystems. Furthermore, it will highlight the importance of the system features aligned with the roles of the Senior Communication Officer in identifying change within the GCIS and its subsystems and then use this information as a basis for developing a research instrument to establish the role of communication to manage change within the GCIS in KZN.

2.4.1 Open systems

van Tonder (2004a:38) defines open systems as systems that have inputs, processes,

outputs, goals, assessments and evaluation and learning that are of high importance. Due to the subsystems' interdependency, and therefore interrelatedness, changes in one subsystem are likely to affect the behaviour of another subsystem. Implicit to the above is the notion of the interrelatedness of a system. Burns and Stalker (1961) and Lawrence and Lorsch (1976) suggest that there is a link between the internal characteristics of an organisation and the external environment. In relation to this study, the notion of reciprocal influence present within subsystems is important for the Senior Communication Officer to note when understanding how the effects of change within GCIS's subsystems are interrelated. The reciprocal influence where changes in one subsystem affect another, as offered earlier, can aid the Senior Communication Officer in understanding the processes and patterns within a system, like the GCIS. These processes and patterns are directed by the intake and output of matter and regulated by feedback.

Functioning systems continuously exchange feedback with their environments, analyse feedback, adjust internal systems as needed to achieve the systems goals, and then transmit necessary information back out to the environment. This feedback loop is evident and needed in order for the GCIS to co-ordinate and facilitate the change process.

van Tonder (2004a:39) positions that from the perspective of the notion of increasing complexity and differentiation of systems, the simultaneous differentiation and integration processes are considered the main features of an open system. These are explained in more detail in the following paragraphs.

2.5.1 Differentiation and integration

Differentiation, a term used in the systems theory, refers to the continuous development of system features that result in an increase in specialisation and complexity as a consequence of this development. Simply explained, differentiation better equips the system in dealing with the complexity of its environment by allowing a higher degree of variation within the system. This, in turn, assists the system in responding to the variation within the environment. Ritzer (2007:95-96) states that differentiation allows for more

variation within the environment, and since subsystems are interrelated, the system can better respond to changes within the environment.

To reinforce the application of this suggestion, this study evaluates the work of a social systems theorist, Niklas Luhmann (1995), whose research on differentiation and its reciprocal influence on a system, frames this study. For the purpose of further establishing the importance of differentiation and its roles in the integration of the system, this study will highlight three out of the four types of differentiation. These three types of differentiation will be briefly discussed below:

2.5.1.1 Segmentary differentiation

Segmentary Differentiation occurs when a system is divided into equal and identical subsystems. The study locates this segmented differentiation within the GCIS's Thusong Service Centres. These centres are within different geographical locations but are identical and/or similar in the fulfilment of the functions and roles.

2.5.1.2 Stratifactory differentiation

Stratifactory differentiation is the vertical or hierarchal differentiation according to rank or status within a system. Stratifactory differentiation is located within the GCIS's hierarchy or levels of management. The Chief Executive Officer, Chief Directorate and various other ranks are essential in maintaining the coordination of the GCIS as a whole.

2.5.1.3 Functional differentiation

Functional differentiation is the dominant form of differentiation in modern society and follows that all functions within a system ascribe to a particular unit. For example, the GCIS has different departments such as the Provincial Co-ordination and Programme Support, Government and Media Liaison and Corporate Services, to mention a few. Each department serves different purposes within the GCIS and are thus functionally

differentiated. Ritzer (2007:98) suggests that if one functional system fails, the whole system will have great difficulty surviving. The implication of this difficulty is highlighted by Luhmann (1995:432), who insists that forms of differentiation cannot adaptively upgrade itself.

“No subsystem can take the place of another because no system can be functionally equivalent for any other. It is impossible to order all of them together from a central position of supreme authority.”

This suggestion fails to acknowledge that the forms of differentiation are not mutually exclusive. Fuchs (2009:1) reinforces this implication and suggests that forms of differentiation are inclusive and can be interrelated. Thus, in application to the study, the functionally differentiated GCIS contains segmentary differentiation in the form of Thusong Service Centres, where its functions and structure are similar, while stratifactory differentiation exists between the levels of hierarchy within the GCIS such as the differentiation between the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy CEO's, Chief Directorates and Communication Officer.

2.5.1.4 Relationship between differentiation and integration

The subsystems are different from each other but, when integrated, form a whole system. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967:1) found that there was a relationship between the extent to which the states of differentiation and integration in each organisation meet the requirements of the environment. The degree of differentiation between various subsystems was found to be related to the degree of integration obtained between subsystems. With this in mind, the next section will highlight the importance of the meeting the environmental requirements of a system.

2.4.2 External environment

In Joyce's (2000:3) study of *Strategy in the Public Sector*, a need for strategic planning is essential in effectively managing change within the GCIS:

“Strategic planning is also concerned with identifying barriers and issues that need to be overcome if the agreed-upon goals are to be met. Assessing the external and internal environments that affect an agency receives more emphasis in strategic planning and, therefore, strategic plans are more likely...to incorporate changes in the direction and to include a broader range of alternatives.”

Organisations are embedded within a larger system. This, therefore, makes the system dependent on its environment for resources, information and feedback in order for the system to survive. As mentioned in the above quote, emphasis is placed on how differentiation and subsequent integration is essential in meeting the requirements of the GCIS's external environment. This external environment includes a wide variety of needs and influences that can affect the system, but which the GCIS cannot directly control. Schein (1980:228) confirms that the environment does indeed place a great deal of demands and constraints on the system and its subsystems in different ways, such as political, economic, sociocultural, technological, environmental, and legal factors. He continues to emphasise that, in order to understand an organisation, explicit consideration of these demands and constraints need to be analysed. In the next paragraph, Figure 2.3 will illustrate the various external environmental segments that can affect the system.

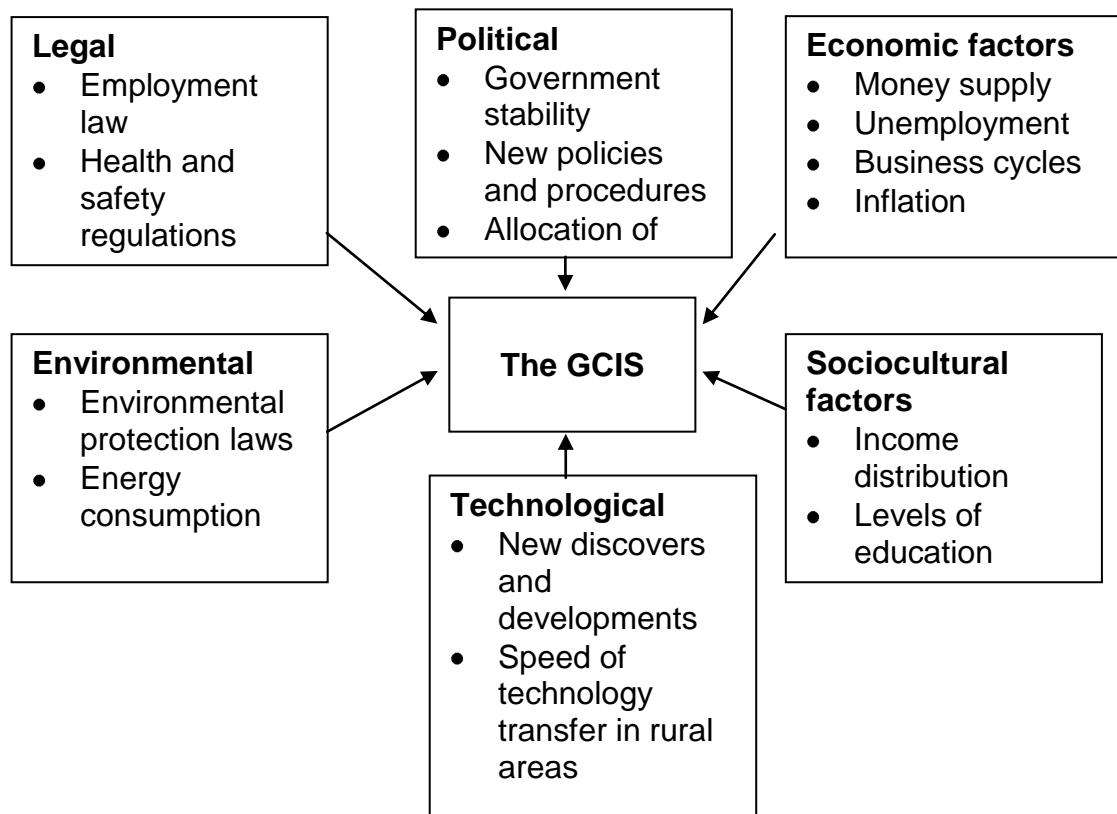


Figure 2.3 External environmental analysis of the GCIS

Source: As adapted from Stevens (2007:2)

Figure 2.3 illustrates the general environment and segments that place demands and constraints on a system, like the GCIS. The six segments, namely: demographic; economic; political/legal; socio-cultural; technological; and global, form the external environment of a system that operates outside the systems boundaries.

2.4.2.1 Political

The GCIS within the public sector is largely dependent on government stability in order to survive. According to Joyce (2000:2), the rigidity of the public sector and its low capacity to change meant that changes were more violent when it finally came. Analysing the external environment is thus crucial in maintaining the political factors that can affect the survival of the GCIS.

2.4.2.2 Economic

The current economic factors affecting South Africa have a vast effect on the GCIS as a whole. More specifically to the study, Thusong Service Centres, as information centres for the public, could possibly come under threat by the desperation of the public for service delivery. Sasfin's economist, David Shapiro, as quoted in *The Times* (26th May 2009), explains how "we already have socio-economic problems like high unemployment and poverty – a recession could lead to social unrest".

2.2.4.3 Technological factors

In a study by Pieterse (2002:i), telecommunication is one of the keys to sustainable national development in South Africa. Pieterse (2002:i) continues to emphasise that, where other kinds of public infrastructure have collapsed, mobile operators are reaching people in rural areas that are without roads, rails or stable power supply. Not only can new technological advances assist the GCIS within information delivery in the rural areas where Thusong Service Centres are based, but can offer a variety of new channels in internal organisational communication.

2.4.2.4 Sociocultural factors

The social factors affecting South Africa, as emphasised by Stevens (2007:5), are critically affecting productivity. The active workforce is dying from HIV/AIDS, and this leads to a loss of training and productivity. Stevens (2007:5) continues to explain that the quality of education is holding back South Africa's development, as 70% of the population have no potential of studying further than high school. Another concern related to level of education that directly affects the progress of the GCIS in South Africa is the 'brain drain'. 'Brain drain' or loss of skilled people to other countries, according to Ray (2001:1), was identified as one of the biggest challenges of the global society.

2.4.2.5 Environmental factors

According to Burger (2008:194), environmental laws and strategies have been developed that focus on key environmental areas such as biodiversity, air quality, protected areas, urban and rural development and waste and disaster management. Of specific importance to the study, is that the GCIS Thusong Service Centres are placed both within urban and rural areas and need to comply to environmental laws and regulations.

2.4.2.6 Legal Factors

Brown (2009) emphasises that the South African Government is put under pressure from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which has threatened strike action if wage structures and disparities are not addressed. This strike action could have a vast impact on both the private and public sector. The GCIS's part in service and information delivery, as according to Brown (2009), could affect the governments' and GCIS's ability in service delivery.

The concept of external environmental analysis is an important consideration for the Senior Communication Officer in attempting to identify those forces that have an effect on the Thusong Service Centres from which they operate and, more specifically, the GCIS as a whole.

2.4.3 External environmental analysis

The external environmental analysis discussed below is based on Hanson (2003:3).

2.4.3.1 Scanning

According to Morrison (2009:1), environmental scanning is a method of understanding the external environment and the interconnections of its various sections and to translate this understanding into the organisational planning and decision-making process. Scanning can

decrease the randomness and manage information flowing into the organisation as well as providing early warnings to changes within the external environment. Morrison (2009:1) further emphasises that scanning can assist in identifying and catching early signals of environmental changes, developments and trends. Therefore, the benefit of the Senior Communication Officer scanning the environment is that these Senior Communication Officers are at grassroots level when there a variety of external information that can be gathered, as identified in the six-block service model in section 2.3 of the Thusong Service Centre and the roles of Senior Communication Officer. According to Saxby, Parker, Nitse, & Dishman. (2002:29-30) here are two types of scanning, namely: passive and active scanning. Passive scanning is when a Senior Communication Officer reads the same type of material or resource, such as a local newspaper. However, active scanning is when focus is placed on information resources that represent different views and can offer broader ideas on what changes might happen within the external environment.

2.4.3.2 Monitoring

The function of monitoring, as highlighted by Morrison (2009:1), is to detect outcomes of ongoing environmental changes. This stage of external environmental analysis is where the Senior Communication Officer decides whether other information is needed. Monitoring allows for the Senior Communication Officer to identify any specific trends and patterns through ongoing observations of environmental changes. According to Hoskisson (2009:40), scanning and monitoring not only provide an organisation with information, but also serves as a means of importing new knowledge about the environment.

2.4.3.3 Forecasting

The purpose of forecasting is to estimate or attempt to predict future change within the environment that might affect the organisation. According to Stevens (2007:20), the characteristics of forecasting are based on the principles of a cause-effect relationship and a gradual, continuous change. van Tonder (2004a:100) emphasises that this continuous

change is a gradual adjustment of the organisation's internal functioning to be able to continuously adapt to the changing environment. Therefore, forecasting can be positive due to the characteristic of this type of change to display patterns and trends within the system. As mentioned in this section (2.2.3), the external environment cannot be controlled, but needs to be monitored as changes in the external environment can cause changes in the internal environment. Forecasting is based on past and present information which needs to be assessed in predicting specific outcomes.

2.4.3.4 Assessing

Hoskisson (2009:40) emphasises how assessing determines the timing and importance of environmental changes and trends for the organisation. Identifying the current positioning of the GCIS within its environment is a part of the assessment process and is needed in strategically managing the changes from the external environment.

If an organisation wants to pursue opportunities outside its boundaries, the process of external environmental analysis is crucial where all four activities, namely: scanning; monitoring; forecasting and assessing are carried out to identify the opportunities or threats of the external environment. In a study by Shaik (2003:38), the following are benefits that are gained when conducting an environmental analysis:

- It increases managerial awareness of environmental changes;
- A higher environmental awareness enhances strategic planning;
- Environmental analysis forces the Senior Communication Officers' attention to the primary influence of strategic change; and
- Provides time to foresee opportunities and carefully formulate responses to change.

In order for the system to identify changes in both its environment and within the system, creating a feedback loop allows for the recognition of changes within the system at large. In the next paragraph, the importance of this feedback loop will be discussed.

2.4.4 Feedback

Open systems are regulated by feedback and thus a highly effective organisation is regularly exchanging feedback with its external environment. Systems rely on information about their outputs to regulate their inputs and transformation process. Hayes (2007:263) states how creating this feedback loop allows for the recognition of changes in a system which, in turn, can affect another system. La Grange's (2007:1) study on the impact of feedback classifies feedback as a crucial stage within the change process. Feedback is a concept that is underlying in most of an open system's features and ultimately determines the effectiveness of a system. Managing change could not be possible without a constant flow of feedback, or the presence of the feedback loop. La Grange (2007:2) reinforces this suggestion and adds that information, presented as feedback, has the enormous potential as a possible tool for the improvement of an organisation and the organisational change process.

Previous studies on change management concentrated on the more technical issues surrounding change (Diefenbach, 2007:126). Focus was placed on forecasts, plans, policies and procedures. For an organisation to function effectively, every part of the organisation needs to be interrelated. A common theory that outlines this process is the Systems Theory. The Systems Theory was best codified by the German biologist, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, in 1968 (Littlejohn, 1996:43). It is the most common and influential approach applied to the understanding of communication within an organisation. Littlejohn (1996:29) postulates that a system is commonly viewed as "a set of objects or entities that interrelate with one another to form a whole". Viewing the whole, as opposed to the parts and how these parts interact within the system and environment, is the core idea of the Systems Theory. Within each system are sub-systems that function together for the effectiveness of the system. These sub-systems are part of a larger system known as a suprasystem. All systems, whether mechanical, organic and social, are essentially classified by the amount of interaction and interchange that occurs between the sub-systems as well as the systems environment. Verwey and du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:29)

emphasises that, for the whole to be bigger than the sum total of parts, the complex interaction between different interdependent sub-systems of an organisation is required. Organisations are systems that are interrelated and interacting rather than a static structure (Harris, 1993:10). Therefore, organisations are open systems that interchange information and energy with its environment, due to the permeable boundaries. This continual exchange of input and output through these permeable boundaries is what make it crucial for the system to adjust and adapt to changes to which communication serves as the binding element (Cutlip, 2000:212-213). Communication facilitates the change process and needs to be effectively managed to ensure that the system remains open. This study locates GCIS centres, whether they are Thusong Service Centres or municipalities within an open system, and examines how communication assists the various parts and sub-systems to function in relation to one another. Due to the interrelatedness of the organisation, change in one sub-system will have an effect and influence on various other sub-systems. These changes within the system and sub-systems, lead to the dynamic, ever-changing nature of modern organisations (Verwey & du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:30). Although the Systems Theory gives insight into complex, interactive systems, Verwey & du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:37) suggest that the theory dealt poorly with the turbulent and dynamic change within a complex system. Therefore, a greater urgency for effective change management is needed. A theory often used to describe change management is the Chaos Theory.

2.5 Change management and Chaos Theory

“If however, we know the total of parts contained in a system and the relations between them, the behaviour of the system may be derived from the behaviour of the parts.” (von Bertalanffy, 1975)

According to van Tonder (2004a:44), equilibrium-based change, where focus is placed on the organisation maintaining a constant equilibrium, was introduced in the 1980s. However, van Tonder (2004a:44) continues to explain that, in modern times, the concept of complex, non-linear change was introduced to the concept of chaotic systems. Emphasis has now moved away from maintaining equilibrium and prominence has been placed on maintaining

the system on the “Edge of Chaos”. The Edge of Chaos is where the system is at its maximum adaptability, where the system is between both order and disorder.

It is important to note that, in linear systems, output is proportional to input. In chaotic systems, however, there is a ‘sensitive dependence on initial conditions’ where predictions of input and output ratios are impossible to predict. In chaotic systems, change cannot be predicted, which, therefore, lead to discontinuous, sudden changes resulting in a dramatic reorganisation (Bloom, 2002:2)

Complex systems exposed to changes can often become stressed leading to the system’s instability. According to Bloom (2002:2), the further the system gets from equilibrium, the more unstable the system becomes. Senior Communication Officers, as facilitators and coordinators of change, need to maintain the systems equilibrium through the binding element of communication. If the GCIS moves too far away from equilibrium, changes can cause instability, which, in turn, can cause such changes as employee job insecurity. Senior Communication Officers need to manage and understand the different orders of changes so that the system does not become unstable.

When a system is moved away from equilibrium, the system will make first-order changes to re-establish equilibrium (Bloom, 2002:2). These first-order changes, however, are linear, predictable, gradual and moderate. van Tonder (2004a:85-86) offers three types of change as follows:

- **First order change**

Stevens (2007:38) locates first order change as adaptive, unobtrusive and as a continuous, incremental change. These changes, otherwise known as transactional changes, could occur without an entire paradigm shift in the overall structure and function of the system. According to Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson (2001:1-2), transactional change requires the dismantling of the old state and the creation of a clearly new designed state over a set period of time. These changes can be followed and measured and thus managed. Within the GCIS setting, a transactional change can take the form of employee training, such as

improving the communication skills of the Senior Communication Officers. van Tonder (2004a:85) explains further that first order changes refer to changes that reinforce the present understanding within the system.

- **Second order change**

According to van Tonder (2004a:86), second order changes or transformational changes, are radical, discontinuous and imply a conscious change to the structure of a system and, therefore, are not constrained to the boundaries of the system. Transformational change is a complete fundamental alteration of the organisation. According to van Tonder (2004b:53-54) organisational transformation is concerned with strategic change and, therefore, can be difficult to manage as it involves the entire organisation. Transformational change includes a paradigm shift. In context of the GCIS, this second order change would mean that, instead of improving and training Senior Communication Officers in communication, there would be a change in their portfolios and, for example, a decision made by the GCIS executive committee to outsource part of their tasks and responsibilities within Thusong Service Centres.

- **Third order change**

van Tonder (2004a:86) adds to Burke and Litwin's (1994) view of change and adds a third order change. This third order change relates to empowerment, where indentifying and recognising the current status of the system and capably effecting changes is at the core of the change process.

A model that best describes and exemplifies the relationship between organisational variables and their impact on the organisational change process is the Burke-Litwin Casual Model of Organisational Performance and Change (1994). A previous study by Stevens (2007:38) explains "The Burke-Litwin model of the individual and organisational performance shows how to create first-order and second-order change, the authors call it 'transactional change' and 'transformational change', which was developed by Warner Burke and George Litwin".

This model includes twelve organisational variables. However, for the purpose of the study, only the external environment, structure, and management practice variables will be briefly discussed, as these variables fall within the scope of the theoretical framework established in previous discussions.

Descriptions of the three variables in the Burke-Litwin model are provided below (Falletta, 2005:28-29):

- **External environment**

The external environment is any outside condition or situation that influences the performance of the organisation. As mentioned in section 2.2.3, the GCIS's external environment includes those factors that place needs and demands on the system to which the GCIS cannot directly control, such as: political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, environmental and legal factors. According to a study by Shaik (2003:38), there are many external factors that influence an organisation's choice of direction and action and ultimately its organisational structure and internal processes. Therefore, if a Senior Communication Officer scans, monitors, forecasts and assesses the external environment, it is likely that the GCIS can make established predications of various changes that can affect its survival, and hence can plan ahead.

- **Structure**

Structure refers to the arrangement of functions and people into specific areas of responsibility, decision-making authority, communication and relationships to implement the organisation's mission and strategy. This structure was illustrated in figure 2.1, with the anagram of the GCIS and their respective areas of responsibility and their authority thereof. For a Senior Communication Officer or organisation to perform its strategic function, structure is essential. According to Cronje *et al.* (2007:171), due to the fact that strategy provides direct input in the design of the organisations structure, structure cannot be separated from strategy.

- **Management practices**

Management practice is what managers do in the normal course of events with the human and material resources at their disposal to carry out the organisation's strategy. As in the previous paragraph, the Senior Communication Officer plays a strategic role in the coordination of these various resources in facilitating the change process. If a Senior Communications Officer effectively manages the GCIS resources, the change process is more efficient. Cronje, Du Toit, Motlatla & Marais (2007:121) reinforces this process and explains how management is necessary to combine and direct resources of different departments so that each department can achieve its goals and efficiently and productivity as possible.

The concepts of the Chaos Theory can be used as a tool by Communication Officers to identify where the changes are occurring within the system and where co-ordination and the facilitation process can be put in place to maintain the system's equilibrium.

2.5.1 Communication Officers and the Chaos Theory

Thus far, the study has interpreted the relation that the systems theory and concepts of the change process have on the GCIS. With this theoretical framework in mind, the study will now locate, with specific importance, the role the Senior Communication Officer within those concepts of the Chaos Theory. The literature, in these forthcoming sections, will highlight the pivotal role that small scale changes have on the system as a whole, and, therefore, the role the Senior Communication Officer plays within this regard to the GCIS.

A study by van Tonder (2004), on the Chaos Theory, emphasise that the Chaos Theory reflects how changes on a small scale can influence things on a large scale. Therefore, in view of the study, a Senior Communication Officer functions on the grassroots level of the GCIS. Small changes can have an effect on the GCIS as a whole. With this purpose in mind, the Senior Communication Officer can monitor small-scale changes that can, if not addressed early, possibly cause large-scale changes within the larger part of the GCIS.

Communication Officers, as the facilitators and coordinators in dynamic organisations, function as change agents. The fundamental roles of change agents, as emphasised by Spence (1994), see managers as observers, diagnosticians, strategists and stimulators in the change process. According to Millet (1998:9), “the interventions and control systems used by change agents are currently straining under the dynamic conditions”. The six principles of the Chaos Theory can be used as a framework to identify how managers use communication to manage change.

Furthermore, according to Puth (2002), communication plays an important role in the Chaos Theory as it is the binding element that keeps the various interdependent parts of the organisation together, making it easier for the system to maintain itself during change. The six principles of the Chaos Theory will be used as a benchmark to measure the role of communication during change in the GCIS and its link to organisational communication. The six principles as follows: butterfly effect and bifurcation; strange attractors; non-linearity, scale and holism; fragmentation and interdependence; self-organisation; and edge of chaos, which will be discussed below.

2.5.2 Butterfly effect and bifurcation

Within the study of the Chaos Theory, vast importance is placed on the primary condition which affects the future direction of a system. This concept is referred to as ‘sensitivity to initial condition’ or commonly known as the butterfly effect. The idea that the flapping of a butterfly’s wings in one country can cause a tornado somewhere else in the world has brought about the idea that what might be small insignificant changes within one sub-system could cause major changes in another system. When a system becomes unstable and the first-order changes cause a movement further away from equilibrium, the continued perturbation, or seemingly insignificant occurrences, will propel the system to move towards bifurcation. Verwey & du Plooy-Cilliers (2003) emphasise that chaotic systems are inclined to destabilise and give rise to sudden changes in an organisation’s direction, character and structure. This bifurcation process, or branching off, can cause a chain reaction and accelerate movement within an organisation to a point where the system can become

entirely unpredictable. The more the system bifurcates, the more complex and unpredictable the changes become. According to Murphy (1996:97) the bifurcation point can usually be predicated, but the end results cannot. This places the Senior Communication Officers in a role that ultimately determines the extent to which an organisation changes. To emphasise this point, the study of fractals can bring to the fore the importance of analysing patterns within a system that may seem to appear complex in nature when enlarged. However, when these fractals or patterns are studied closer, patterns of order start emerging. Larsen-Freeman (2007:1) emphasises that geometrical objects that are self-similar under a change of scale, for example, magnification, can indicate patterns of order. Organisations like the GCIS are structured, and although during change chaos can occur, the concept of fractals are helpful in allowing order to be perceived in apparent disorder. Therefore, when a Senior Communication Officer is managing change, greater emphasis needs to be placed on analysing underlying patterns by investigating fractals present within a system like the GCIS.

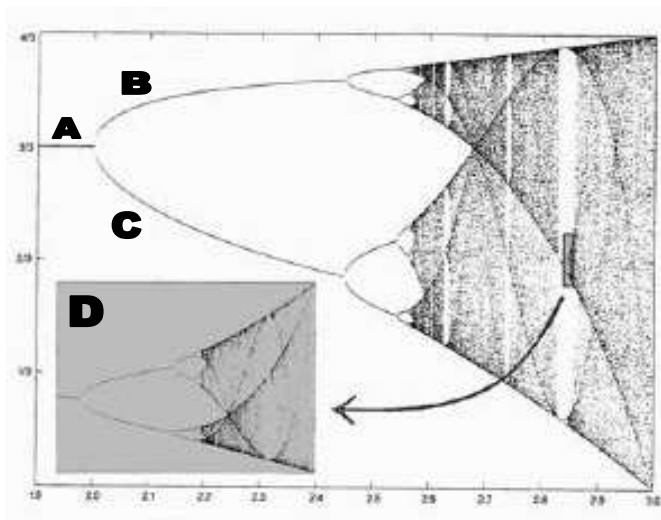


Figure 2.4 Fractal and self-similarity in identifying patterns

Source: Tiplady (2003:1)

The above figure illustrates the first bifurcating point of a course of action (A), into two different paths (B) and (C), and so it further splits into unseeingly, different paths. Illustration (D) shows that, when the fractal is analysed closer, a pattern of order emerges. Note that the Figure 2.4 has the exact same pattern as illustration (D).

The identification of the bifurcating point, where the branching off of a specific change can cause more chaotic changes, is crucial in preventing an organisation from having catastrophic changes. As explained previously, small-scale changes can lead to larger changes somewhere else in the system. To exemplify the above illustration, the study will draw from a recent riot in the Mpumalanga area against bad service delivery, as reported by the Tau (2009:1). The riot was participated by hundreds of community members, had initially started off with a few complaints to the municipality. These few complaints escalated or bifurcated to a critical point where events escalated into a full riot. With the Senior Communication Officer being placed in various municipalities, if a complaint of this matter was dealt with before escalation, or bifurcation, this event could have been prevented. If the Senior Communication Officer can identify these branching-off points, as illustrated in figure 2.4 (A, B, C and D) together with looking closely at the changes occurring with the subsystem, maintaining the organisations stability can be better managed. However chaotic a system may appear, non-linear systems have an inherent structure that constrains unstable behaviour within certain limits. These limits are known as strange attractors.

2.5.3 Strange attractors

van Tonder (2004a:135) explains how strange attractors have the inherit ability to create order within chaos. Strange attractors influence choices in specific trajectories in a chaotic system, and act as magnets that keep the system within certain ranges or boundaries. According to Bloom (2002:3), an organisation will orbit around a strange attractor but never in the same way. Tiplady (2003:3) confirms this and states how instability and disorder in a chaotic system is channelled into patterns which, while never self-repeating, represent some underlying theme. The pattern can be seen from a distance, however, from close up, the behaviour of a system is unpredictable. Strange attractors within an organisation like that of the GCIS are in the form of the organisation's values, goals as well as leadership styles. According to Verwey & du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:41), these strange attractors are related to the organisation's principles and values. These inherent conditions serve as anchors in the midst of chaos. The GCIS's strange attractors permit changes within

constrained limits and holds the organisation in recognisable order. The flow of information plays an important role in maintaining that these strange attractors or values and goals are maintained. This can be achieved through the communication efforts of the Senior Communication Officer. However, to maintain these strange attractors, the Senior Communication Officer needs to understand the processes within a chaotic system and focus on the organisation holistically.

2.5.4 Non-linearity, scale and holism

Cause-effect relationships in chaotic, non-linear systems are extremely difficult to predict. van Tonder (2004a:40) states that this is because of the interactions of multiple, constituent and intricately interdependent components that make a system non-linear and unpredictable. With reference to non-linearity, analysing the scale or level of non-linear change within the system is crucial. According to Verwey and du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:42), one cannot study and observe underlying patterns by focussing on a single scale of observation. Holism, idealistically, offers that any given system cannot be determined or explained by its parts alone, but the system, as a whole, determines how the parts will behave. Therefore, a holistic approach of the organisation needs to be studied, as the best results may come from small well-focused plans rather than large-scale efforts. As cause-effect relationships are almost impossible to predict in a chaotic system, the Senior Communication Officer needs to ensure that prompt and flexible communication is maintained in order to maintain the systems equilibrium during changes to indentify underlying patterns that appear during the change process, that might have a repercussion in other parts of the organisation's subsystems.

2.5.5 Fragmentation and interdependence

Due to the fact that systems are interdependent, changes in one system can cause an effect on another system. This interdependence of systems, within an organisation, presents the Senior Communication Officer within the role of holistically analysing the system for changes and the repercussion of these changes in other parts of the

organisation. The importance of studying the whole as apposed to the individual parts is continuously emphasised within the concept of the Chaos Theory. According to Murphy (1996:100), the organisation must be studied as a whole to find fragments that show resemblances to each other in order for a Senior Communication Officer to find a pattern within the system. When a pattern within the system is identified, the co-ordination and maintenance of that system's balance is re-established.

2.5.6 Self-organisation

Self-organisation represents the science of change and holds that new levels of form, organisation and complexity often arise out of the interchanges between systems and subsystems within their boundaries (Bloom, 2002:2). Thus, self-organisation is exclusively an internal process where communication is essential for the process to be maintained. Allowing a free, continuous flow of communication allows for the self-organisation to become present within a system.

Within the concept of self organisation, changes are made within the system that sees the re-inventing and modification of its structures in order for the system to adapt, survive, grow and, subsequently, develop. Fuchs (2009:1) states that self organisation can be defined as the spontaneous emergence of global structure out of local interactions. This means that neither internal nor external agents are in control of the self-organising process. However, as mentioned previously, communication is essential for the process to be present within a system. Therefore, the role of the Senior Communication Officer plays a vital role in ensuring that the GCIS self organises by keeping the channels of upward and downward communication free flowing. For an organisation to remain within the self-organising process, the system needs to maintain a balance between order and chaos, commonly know as the Edge of Chaos, as introduced in 2.3, which is the most effective balance point for a system.

2.5.7 Edge of Chaos

The region between order and disorder as referred to as the Edge of Chaos (EOC), is the systems point of maximum adaptability. If a system is too ordered, it will lose its competitive edge by never renewing itself and adapting to changes within the system. However, if the system is too disordered, everything would be new and there would be no sense of permanence. The best place for an organisation is to be at the EOC, where a Senior Communication Officer can explore patterns of order, but, at the same time be exposed to new emerging patterns. The EOC is a dynamic balance point. According to McGill (1992:14), constant efforts need to be made to maintain the organisation's stability. By existing at the EOC, an organisation is forced to find creative and innovative ways of competing and growing. McGill (1992:15) states that learning organisations encourage self organisation. Therefore, for an organisation to remain on the EOC, the Senior Communication Officer needs to create a learning organisation within the GCIS through various channels and methods of communication to effectively manage change.

2.5.8 Learning organisation

According to Verwey & du Plooy-Cilliers, a free flow of information and communication is what an organisation needs to maintain self organisation and, therefore, dynamic order. Information is what living systems use to transform themselves to adapt to changes within a system and its environment. As discussed in the previous section (2.3), third order changes require a Senior Communication Officer to have strong reflective capabilities and view changes from a different perspective. Creativity and diversity play a major role in creating a learning organisation that adapts to changes within the system. According to Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin (1993:293), creativity is a dramatic aspect of organisational change and provides a key to understanding the change phenomena and, ultimately, organisational effectiveness and survival.

Mittleton-Kelly (2009:2) emphasises that during the learning process, individuals will influence each other and their ideas will adapt and change. It is the responsibility of the Senior Communication Officer to co-ordinate and facilitate the communication processes

within the GCIS to encourage a learning organisation that adapts and is flexible to changes within the system. Creating a learning organisation is co-ordinated and maintained through communication efforts.

Internal organisational communication identifies the levels and channels of communication within a system and, therefore, assists in the identification of changes. Therefore, the next section will define internal organisational communication and locate its various aspects in regard to the role of the Senior Communication Officer in managing change through the communication process.

2.6 INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

In a special report, Bacal (2008:1) describes how organisations in both the private and public sector understand the importance of strategic communication and the significance of developing strategic plans to guide longer-term decision making. Bacal (2008:1) continues to suggest that few organisations address internal communication in the same way, and advocates that these strategies, if present within the organisation, are developed reactively to changes within the organisation. Change management, as discussed earlier in section 2.2, can prevent small-scale changes in a system from becoming chaotic. The process of internal organisational communication can actively identify changes through feedback, by way of the various communicational levels and channels. Through the use of these formal and informal channels of communication, the flow of information within the organisation can be facilitated and co-ordinated. Senior Communication Officers, within the Thusong Service Centres, are at the epicentre of the communication process and thus can act as change agents.

Before the study proceeds with establishing the theoretical framework surrounding internal organisational communication, this study would like to recognise the current structure within the GCIS. Presently, the Internal Communication Subdirectorate, managed by the Corporate Services Directorate, is responsible for establishing a communication-orientated culture in GCIS (GCIS, 2009). This study recognises the role that the Internal

Communication Subdirectorates play within the GCIS. However, this study will explore the role the Senior Communication Officer within the Thusong Service Centres have within internal organisational communication and change of chaotic systems.

This section defines the importance of internal organisational communication and its importance for the GCIS. This study will then locate the Senior Communication Officer's within the formal and informal channels of communication and their role in change management and subsequent strategic role.

2.6.1 Dynamics of internal organisational communication

Internal organisational communication and its integration in the organisation is increasingly being recognised as a fundamental contributor to organisational success and needs to be prioritised as a strategic priority. Both the internal and external environments of an organisation place demands and needs on the system which can result in various changes within the system. Therefore, maintaining and coordinating internal organisational communication in dealing with change can contribute to the overall success of the organisation. Maubane's (2007:41) study confirms this and further suggests that organisations, as structured systems, are created when activities and processes of organising occur, which could either enable or constrain communication in an organisational setting. In understanding the process of internal organisational communication, the importance of its functions within a system will be analysed.

These aspects, as discussed in the paragraph above, indicate that internal organisational communication has very specific functions in the overall system. Koehler, Analtol and Applbaum (1978:9) and van Rensburg (1997:108) support this view and highlight four functions of organisational communication as follows:

2.6.1.1 Informative function

The informative function of internal organisational communication is focused on providing sufficient information in order to ensure that the organisation is able to function efficiently. Information, and thus feedback is needed for a system to adapt to changes within its environment. Therefore, it is the Senior Communication Officer's responsibility to make sure that channels of communication are open so that information is free flowing and a feedback loop is maintained.

2.6.1.2 Regulatory function

The regulatory function focuses on controlling and coordinating the activities of an organisation so that it can efficiently operate. This regulatory function is found in the form of manuals, policies and set guidelines for the management of an organisation. Senior Communication Officers are only the communicators of the regulatory function as this function is carried out by senior management.

2.6.1.3 Integrative function

The integrative function focuses on achieving organisational unity and cohesion and can be attributed to creating identity and uniformity in the organisation. Coordination is highlighted in the integrative function. Senior Communication Officers have the role of coordinating communication within the different departments of the Thusong Service Centres.

2.6.1.4 Persuasive function

Information is essential for a well functioning organisation. Communication has the capacity to influence members of the organisation. Gaining voluntary compliance is the focus of this function. Senior Communication Officers can be used by the Directorate to achieve this function as they have a personal relationship with a larger number of employees.

In addition to defining internal organisational communication in terms of its functions, it is crucial to understand how these functions are applied and through what channels of communication. Kreps (1990:11) locates internal organisational communication within the channels of communication in relation to the change process and defines organisational communication as:

“A process whereby members gather pertinent information about the organisation and the changes occurring within it. Fundamentally, communication within the organisational context is a data-gathering function for members as it provides them with relevant information, which helps them understand organisational activities in order to accomplish individual and organisational change and goals.”

Therefore, if one explores the levels of communication further, it could be argued that the Senior Communication Officer, as a change agent, can use the different channels of communication to establish whether there are any changes within the system through feedback.

2.6.2 Formal communication

Kreps (1990:201), as cited in Maubane (2007:53), defines formal communication channels as the following:

“Formal communication channels are dictated by a planned structure of an organisation which includes the arrangement of organisational level, divisions and departments, as well as the specific responsibilities, job positions and job descriptions that are assigned to an organisation members.”

There are three contexts of formal communication that this study will analyse, namely: downward, upward and horizontal, which will be discussed below.

2.6.2.1 Downward communication

Downward communication is used for basic formal messages where the information flows from upper management to lower levels in the hierarchy of an organisation. Ball (2003:1) states that downward communication is the most recognised as it gives specific directives and provides information about procedures and practices. The regulatory function of communication, as discussed in 2.3.1, uses this channel to communicate to the organisation. Maubane's (2007:54) study of communication levels reveals that, although this channel is the most recognised and used communication channels in many organisations', it suffers from problems such as unclear, contradictory messages and the superiors' lack of regard for their subordinates. Guffey, Rhodes & Rogin (2003:23) further emphasise that the downward flow can be impeded by distortion in the message due to the long lines of communication. The Internal Communication Subdirectorate, as mentioned in 2.3, is responsible for establishing a communication-orientated culture in GCIS. This form of communication within the GCIS is downward as it flows from management to subordinates. According to Fielding (1995:7-8), this type of communication is usually used to inform employees about the missions and goals of the organisation, to give feedback to subordinates on their performance, communicate the procedures and policies that are to be followed and give instructions for specific tasks.

2.6.2.2 Upward communication

Gibson and Hodgetts (1991:221) state that, within the upward communication process, information flow is from subordinates to superiors about suggestions for improved procedures, organisational practices and policies and information regarding what needs to be done and how it can be done. Maubane (2007:54), reinforced by Gibson and Hodgetts (1991:221), stresses that, although this communication channel might seem an appropriate channel to inform management about what is happening on the ground, it is often an unpopular form of communication to superiors since they find these channels very time consuming. Managers also do not know how to keep the channels open, and many

subordinates are used to receiving information from the top as such they seldom use the upward communication channels. Upward communication from subordinates to management communicate information such as reports about individual problems and performances, reports on what needs to be done and how to do it, memoranda about the practical results of company policies and practices, and suggestions about specific problems.

2.6.2.3 Horizontal communication

Horizontal communication is described as peer to peer communication, that is less formal and structured than downward and upward and it occurs between employees on the same hierarchal level. Maubane (2007:55) describes that the purpose of horizontal communication is to coordinate efforts between interdependent units and departments, and facilitate problem solving. It promotes cooperate spirit across all levels of the organisation. Ball (2003:1) reinforces this and explains the importance of horizontal communication as being increasingly important in modern organisations. In fact, according to Fielding (1995:7-8), this type of channel communicates such things as reports on the activities of the departments to keep other departments informed and to inform managers on company progress so that the management can make informed decisions. Although this channel as identified by Ball (2003) as being crucial in modern organisations there are various obstacles that prevent the flow of communication. According to Guffey, Rhodes & Rogin, (2003:25) poor communication skills and prejudice can prohibit the horizontal flow.

2.6.3 Informal communication

Informal communication, otherwise known as the grapevine, is said to fill the gap left by the above formal communication channels (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 2002:329) and can be a source for creative outlet. According to Gayeski (1993:98), the grapevine serves as a vital function in maintaining social relationships amongst employees.

Kraut, Fish, Root & Chalfonte (2002:5) describe informal communication as spontaneous,

interactive and rich in information. During informal communication, participants are able to listen to other ideas, respond to those ideas, and offer ideas of their own. Therefore informal communication is integrative. Informal communication flows in all directions, according to Krizan, Merrier & Jones (2005:8) and it is easy to understand manner is what makes this channel fill in information gaps. Kraut *et al.* (2002:5) continue to explain how, through this feedback mechanism, informal communication can be more effective than formal channels. According to Shaik (2003:23), informal working relationships need to be developed to create a learning organisation.

Figure 2.5 illustrates the channels of formal and informal communication that are present within the structure of the GCIS.

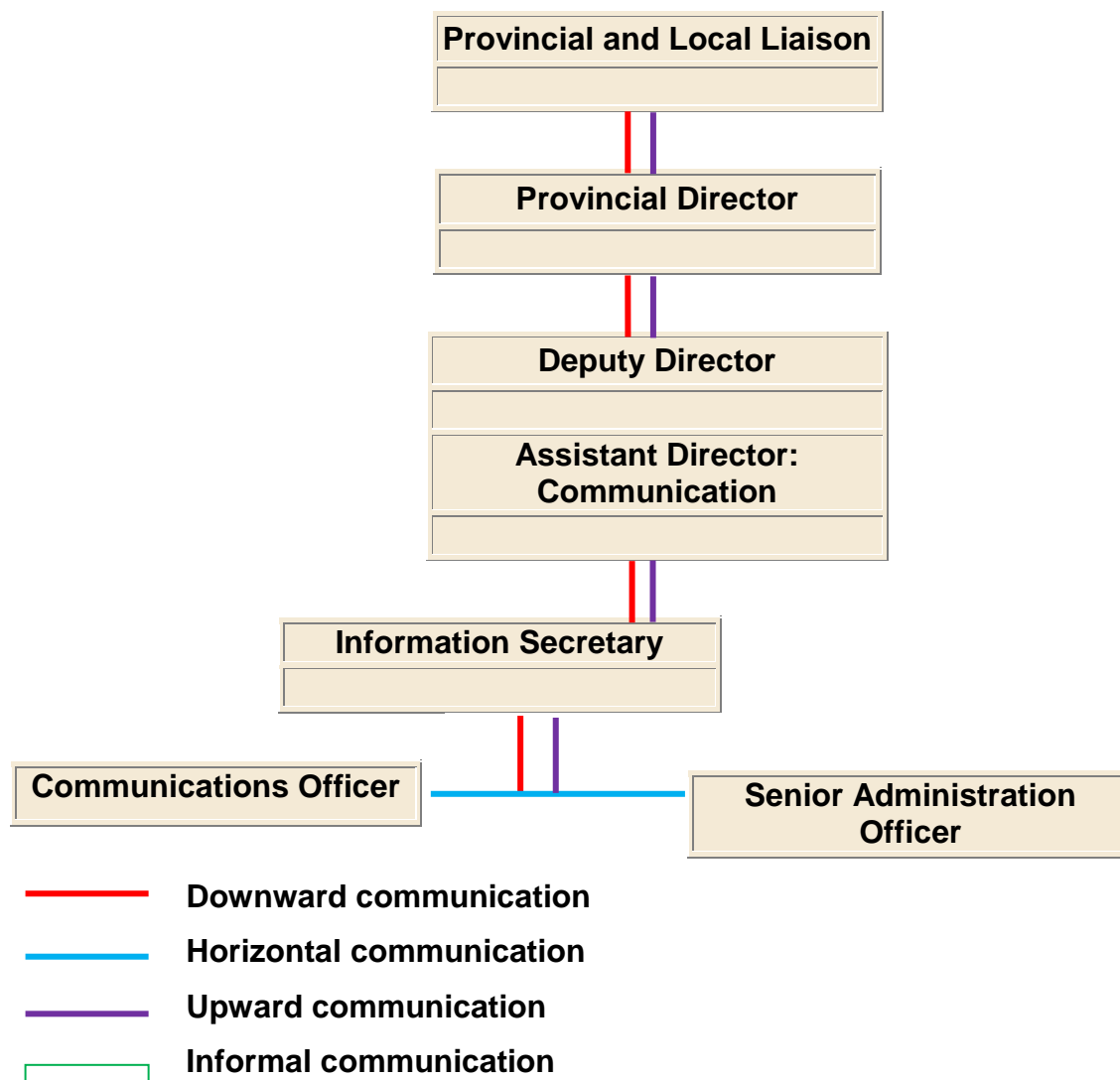


Figure 2.5 Flow of communication in the GCIS

Source: Bagwell (2009:1)

The distinction between formal and informal communication parallels is offered by Daft, Lengel & Travino (1987). According to Daft, Lengel & Travino (1987:560), information-rich communication channels are the ones that “can overcome different frames of reference or clarify ambiguous issues to change understanding in a timely manner.”

2.6.4 Channels of communication

According to Bizmove (2009:1), communication is the transferring of information. In this context, communication channels can be understood simply as a mode or pathway through which two parties communicate. The following channels of communication are discussed below.

2.6.4.1 Face-to-face communication

Guffey, Rhodes & Rogin (2003:18) state that oral communication has many advantages. These advantages include minimising misunderstandings, as communicators can immediately clarify uncertainties, and it also enables communicators to see non-verbal communication. These advantages, therefore, offer high levels of interactivity and provide opportunities in sending information which is rich in content. The GCIS makes use of the following types of face-to-face internal communication:

- **Information-sharing sessions**

These sessions are aimed at providing staff with a platform to share ideas, information and/or frustrations (GCIS, 22:2008/09). These information sharing sessions assist in managing the change process by providing information about possible changes within the GCIS that management are unaware of. If these possibly changes are not dealt with could bifurcate and cause a large change somewhere else in the organisation.

- **Coordination of social platforms**

This type of face-to-face communication celebrates national days and other social events' platforms such as monthly cake-and-tea and year-end functions. These social functions allow for both management and subordinates to communicate without the hierarchal structures of either upward or downward communication (GCIS, 21:2008/09).

- **Exit Interviews**

Interviews are done with staff that are leaving the GCIS, the information gathered from these interviews are reported and communicated to the relevant managers for action (GCIS, 21:2008/09). For example, these interviews assist in indentifying changes with the organisation that might cause higher levels of resignation.

- **Staff orientation**

New staff members of the GCIS are taken on a walk-about and introduced to fellow colleagues. Organisational policies, procedures and best practices are shared with new staff on their first day (GCIS, 21:2008/09).

2.6.4.2 Written communication

Although written communication has the disadvantage in that it is impersonal and communicators cannot see or hear each other and cannot provide feedback, Guffey, Rhodes & Rogin (2003:18) state that it does produce a written record which organisations rely on for many purposes such as litigation. Gomez-Mejia & Balkin (2002:326) reinforce this channel's importance as written communication is stored, updated and made available when needed. Within the context of the GCIS, the following channels are used:

- **Internal newsletter**

This monthly newsletter is aimed at informing and updating staff on both organisational and government programmes. This channel allows for any possible changes in the GCIS to be identified as all staff are invited to participate in the newsletter by contributing via e-mail. (GCIS, 22:2008/09).

2.6.4.3 Electronic communication

Electronic communication allows for organisations to quickly and broadly communicate to their employees. The introduction of the intranet in the 1990s set up platforms for employees to interact on larger networks (Argenti, 2007:46). The GCIS makes use of the following types of electronic communication:

- **Intranet**

The GCIS intranet is made available to all employees with the site being frequently updated to ensure that the latest information is available (GCIS, 22:2008/09). Due to the fact that electronic communication is instant, changes can be identified more efficiently.

- **Internal communication forum**

This forum contains the contact details of internal communicators in government and is updated on a monthly basis. This type of information is needed for employees to be able to communicate to the most appropriate person (GCIS, 22:2008/09).

Using the various channels of communication available to an organisation are critical factors in managing change. Youngblood (1997:1) emphasises that a completely closed system is at equilibrium, where there is complete stasis and no changes, the equivalent of death to the system. He continues to explain that a completely open system is in complete chaos, where the system cannot sustain itself – once again, the equivalent of death to the system. Systems that are either too open or too closed will perish. However, being in between these two extremes is ideal for a well functioning system. Youngblood (1997:1) states that traditional organisations function at the “edge of equilibrium”, where control is of the utmost importance. “The Edge of Chaos” is where a system is at its most flexible, where, through creativity, the system actively self-organises to higher levels of order.

The literature review benchmarks the Chaos Theory as being essential in managing change. It has further identified the various communication channels that could be used to manage these changes and argues that the concepts of the Chaos Theory can be used as a tool by Communication Officers to identify where the changes are occurring within the system and where co-ordination and the facilitation process can be put in place to maintain the systems equilibrium. Based on this theory, this study designs a research instrument to investigate the role of the Senior Communication Officers in managing change within the GCIS.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the GCIS and explained the function of the Senior Communication Officers within the Thusong Service Centres. The chapter further identified these SCO's with the concepts of change management and the Chaos Theory in managing change within the GCIS. The importance of the communication within the above concept was also highlighted.

The next chapter discusses the methodology employed for the study. The study type, sample, data collection method and data analysis and reliability and validity of the study will also be explained.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This research proposes to identify the effectiveness of Senior Communication Officers in managing change through communication within the GCIS. The previous chapter established the literature of this study. In this chapter, the methodology used to conduct the research for this study is discussed. The study type; sampling; data collection methods; data analysis; and the reliability and validity of the study are also presented.

3.2 STUDY TYPE

This is an exploratory study with the objective of establishing, assembling and integrating theory with regard to issues that are considered relevant to the field of communication and change. Due to the empirical nature of the research, a quantitative research design will be used, with both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. Therefore, open-ended and closed-ended questions have been included in a semi-structured interview. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007:147) clarify that the combining of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures assist in the better evaluation of the research findings. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007:146) further explain how this mixed method approach has an advantage in that it is useful in providing better opportunities for the researcher to answer the research question and it assists in better evaluating the extent to which one's research findings are reliable and valid.

The researcher intends to use the quantitative research in establishing a framework for the study. Patton (2002:14) suggests that the use of quantitative research, as a study type, has its advantages in measuring various perspectives and experiences of the respondents into a limited number of predetermined response categories.

The study sets out to analyse communication in change management in detail with the use of the qualitative method of analysis. Patton (2002:14) confirms this view and suggests that qualitative methods produce a wealth of detailed information by adding to the body of knowledge and increase the depth of understanding of cases and situations studied.

3.2.1 Quantitative research approach

The quantitative research was conducted via the closed questions in the semi-structured interview. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:8), quantitative research does not involve the investigation of processes but rather emphasise the measurement and analysis between the variables in the study. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:8-9) establish the clear and concise purpose of both the quantitative and qualitative methods in the mixed-method approach of the study as highlighted below:

- As a result of quantitative research in dealing with numbers, a process of analysis is established to either confirm or disprove the hypotheses. Flexibility is limited to prevent any form of bias in the presentation of results;
- Quantitative research tries to understand the facts of a research investigation from an outsider's perspective;
- Quantitative research tries to keep the research process as stable as possible and a collection of facts that won't change easily; and
- The investigation and structure of the research situation is controlled by the researcher in quantitative research. This is done in order to identify and isolate variables.

The closed-ended questions in section one (Annexure A) of the semi-structured interview are used to establish the position of the Senior Communication Officers in the structure of the GCIS in relation to the Senior Communication Officers responsibility in managing change. The closed-ended questions are additionally used to establish the facts surrounding the participation of Senior Communication Officers in the strategic process of the GCIS. According to Salkind (2009:195), closed ended questions have a clear and

apparent focus and call for explicit answers.

3.2.2 Qualitative research approach

The exploratory nature of the research coupled with the integration of the theoretical framework, established in chapter two, necessitates a qualitative research approach. According to van Maanen, Dabbs and Faulkner (1982:53), the qualitative research approach “is seen to be preferred when attempting to uncover and understand any phenomena about which little is known”.

The use of open-ended questions in section two of the semi-structured interview will be used to form the qualitative approach to the study. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:175):

“The advantage of open-ended questions is that the respondents answer is not influenced unduly by the interviewee or the questionnaire and the verbatim replies from the respondents can provide a rich source of varied material which might have been untapped by categories on a pre-coded list.”

The concept of the Chaos Theory is benchmarked in section two of the qualitative section of the semi-structured interview for the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of the Senior Communication Officers in managing change. The researcher’s use of the qualitative approach is to gain new insights into the study of communication within change management.

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:8-9), the following characteristics of qualitative research will assist in increasing the depth of understanding of the Senior Communication Officers within the context of communication and change:

- Qualitative research is based on flexibility and explanatory methods allowing for a deeper understanding of what is being investigated;
- Qualitative research is aligned with achieving an insider’s view of the subjects under

investigation; and

- The dynamic and changeable nature of qualitative research produces a wealth of detailed information by adding to the body of knowledge established in the literature.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative research will assist the researcher in assessing the effectiveness of the Senior Communication Officers in managing change within the GCIS.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

In line with the exploratory study, a non-standardised, semi-structured interview will be used as the data collection method. In understanding the meaning, the respondents ascribe to the phenomena, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007:315) explain that, in a semi-structured interview, interviewees may use words or ideas in a particular way, in which lies an opportunity for the researcher to probe the meanings to add significance and depth to the data obtained.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The data will be collected through semi-structured interviews. The strength of the semi-structured interview is that it creates a positive rapport between the interviewer and interviewee. Furthermore, complex questions and issues can be discussed and clarified as the interviewer can probe respondents' answers. The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews will be organised through descriptive techniques. According to McQueen and Knussen (2002:139), the descriptive techniques use a series of procedures whose aim is to describe data in a manner that effectively summarises, simplifies and illustrates. Descriptive statistics, in the context of SPSS 7, will be used to analyse and store the data obtained from the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. McQueen and Knussen (2002:119) emphasise that the benefit of SPSS is that the researcher's data is sorted, simplified and summarised, where the data is reduced to statistics that will impose meaning on the factor or behaviour they represent and they will be used to draw influences

and test hypotheses.

The open-ended questions in the semi-structured interview will be taped and then transcribed into an audio-recorded interview, together with field notes and interview data, to create a data file for content analysis. Neuman (2007:227) describes how content analysis uses objective and systematic counting and recording procedures to produce a quantitative description of the symbolic context in a text. The quantitative data will further be analysed in thematic units. Gibson (2006:1) describes thematic analysis as an approach to dealing with data that involves the creation and application of 'codes'. This 'coding' creates categories in relation to data. Gibson (2006:1) describes these 'codings' as the groupings of different instances of datum under an umbrella term that can enable them to be recorded as of the same type.

3.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability and validity, according to Neuman (2007), are crucial in that constructs in social theory are often ambiguous and not directly observable. Reliability is concerned with accuracy, precision and consistency. Therefore, the researcher will personally administer the research instrument and use the semi-structured nature of the questionnaire as a framework to consistently insure reliability (Cooper & Schindler, 2006:219). The study has reliability as 100% of the census will be studied and measurement will be free of random or unstable errors. According to Welman and Kruger (1999), this census study enables the researcher to estimate sampling error and increases the representativeness of the population, limited to those characteristics of the study.

Within the context of research design, content validity refers to the extent to which the research instrument provides adequate coverage of the research question (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:366). Validation in the study is in the form of triangulation. Mill and Johnson (2005:200) describe how the complementary use of quantitative and qualitative methods holds greater reliability and validity than a single methodological approach. The researcher's intent is in combining quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis to

investigate the same problem and phenomenon. Cooper & Schindler (2006:219) describe how the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis increase the quality and credibility of the research. Validation to the study is also added in the form of the semi-structured questionnaire being based on the literature review.

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:145) emphasise how reliability is concerned with the findings of the research and relates to the credibility of the findings. This study is credible in that 100% of the sample will be studied. Furthermore, the use of a semi-structured interview increases the reliability of the study as the scores assigned to individuals is consistent, irrespective of time of measurement or the person administering the semi-structured interview. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007:319) raise concerns with the reliability of using a non-standardised, qualitative research method since it reflects reality at that time it was collected. However, this type of research is imperative in exploring complex topics due to the method's flexibility. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007:320) suggest that making and retaining notes relating to the research design, together with good preparation and level of knowledge of the situational context, can assist in overcoming the concerns of a semi-structured interview and its reliability.

Validity refers to the truthfulness, accuracy and authenticity of the study. Salkind (2009:117) states that validity is concerned with the research instrument and to what extent it actually measures what the researcher needs to be measured. With the study's use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, validation is found of triangulation within the use of different data collection techniques within one study. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:143) emphasise that the use of measures to measure the same construct, the more they overlap, the higher the correlation between them. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007:319) reinforces the use of the mixed-method research and states that using this approach has an advantage in that it enables triangulation to take place.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has offered the study type, data collection method and data analysis of this study. It also highlighted and placed value on the reliability and validity of the study.

The next chapter will present the results of the study and, more specifically, present them within the two different methods of analysis, namely quantitative and qualitative results.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focussed on the research methodology used for this study. This chapter will present the results that were obtained through the semi-structured interviews (Annexure A) with the aim of reporting on the analysis, interpreting and discussing the data collected. Due to the mixed method approach that was used in the research methodology, the results will be presented under the two different approaches, namely, quantitative and qualitative. The sample is made up of the twelve Senior Communication Officers within the GCIS, KwaZulu-Natal province.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

This section of chapter four presents the quantitative results obtained during the research and presents these results under the headings below:

4.2.1 Age

Table 4.1 displays that just over half of the sample falls within the 30 – 39 age group category, with 35.7% of the sample within the 20 – 29 category and the remainder (7.1%) within the 40-49 age category.

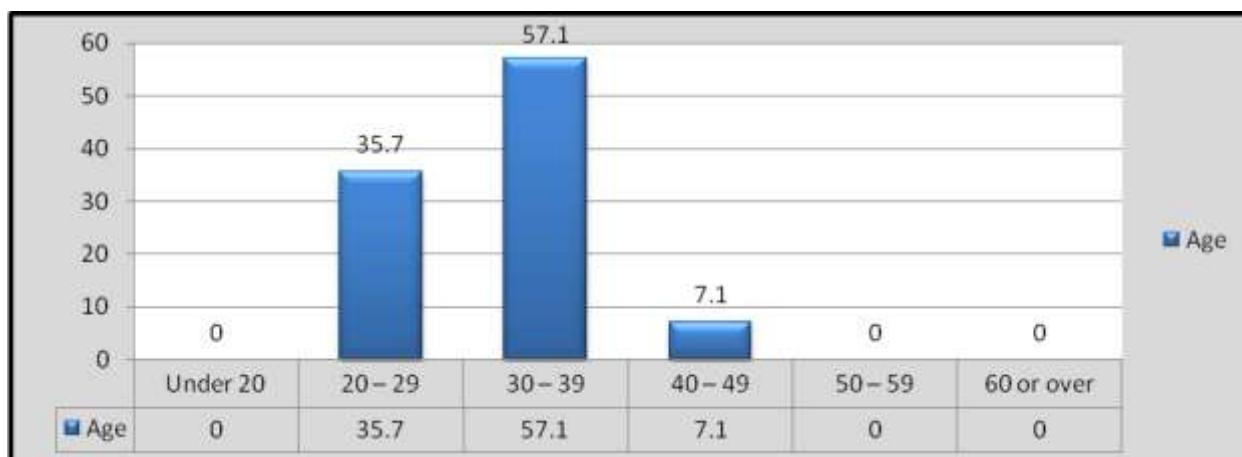


Table 4.1 Age profile of the sample

The general younger age bracket of the sample is confirmed with the fact that the Thusong Centres, where the SCO's are based, have modern resources to which the older age bracket might not be familiar with. The level of education might also be a determining factor.

4.2.2 Gender

Table 4.2 shows that more than half (64.3%) of the sample is male, with only 35.7% of the sample being female.

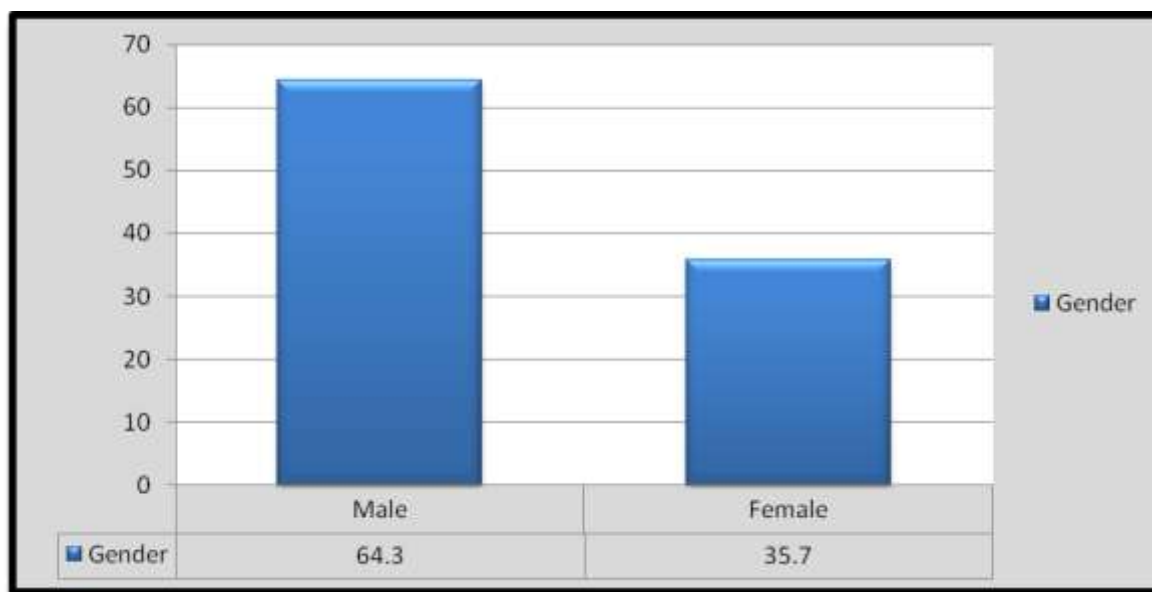


Table 4.2 Gender profile of sample

As described by Bagwell (2009:1), SCO's collaborate with the three spheres of government as well as other stakeholders at district and local levels. The grassroots communication function of SCO's can offer a reason for the majority of the SCO's being male. According to Longwe (2002:5), in a paper presented to the III World Congress for Rural Women, "a gender gap is caused by differential gender treatment. Such discriminatory treatment may be a part of social custom, or may be entrenched in government administrative rules and regulations".

4.2.3 SCO's and their position in forming part of the strategic function in the GCIS

The results illustrated below in Table 4.3 indicate that the majority (85.7%) of the sample do think that their position as SCO forms part of the strategic function within the GCIS. A minimal 14.3% indicated that they disagreed and thought that their position as SCO did not form part of the strategic function within the GCIS.

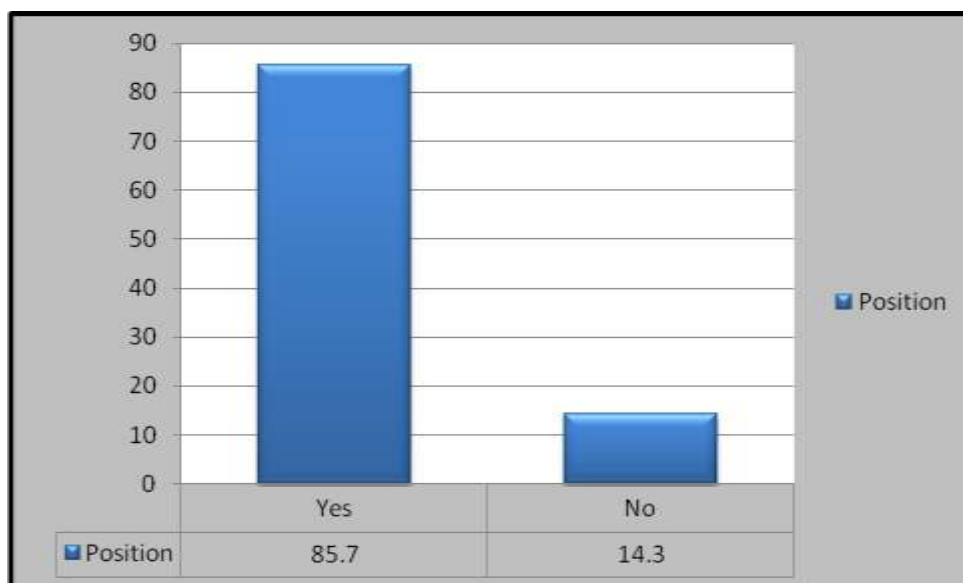


Table 4.3 Strategic function of SCO's in the GCIS

The literature confirms these results, as Bagwell (2009:1-2) states that the objective of the SCO includes management, leadership, planning, monitoring and evaluation which fall under a strategic function.

4.2.4 The participation of SCO's in the strategic decision-making process within the GCIS

Table 4.4 shows that 78.6% of the sample agrees that the Provincial Director does allow participation of the SCO's within the strategic decision-making process in the GCIS. The minority, (21.4%) disagreed and indicated on the contrary, suggesting that the SCO's do not participate within the strategic decision-making function within the GCIS. According to Hamel & Prahalad (1989:20), strategy needs to be more active and interactive where there is less "arm-chair planning" and move involvement of staff in the decision-making process.

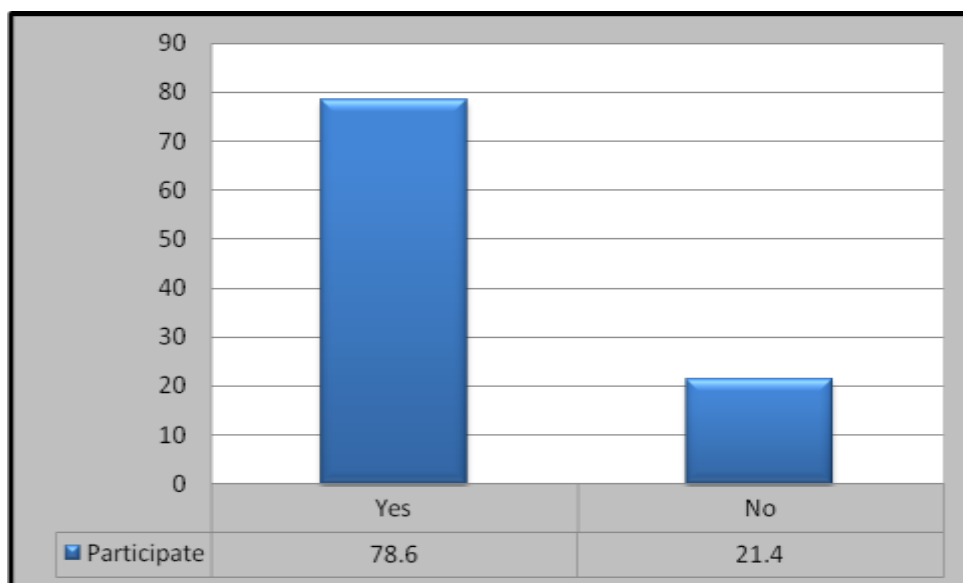


Table 4.4 Participation of SCO's in strategic decision-making process

The above results indicate that participation is a result of two way communication between the Provincial Director and the SCO's. However, GCIS (2009:1) contradicts these findings and suggests that the GCIS Executive Committee are in full control of the strategic decision-making. GCIS (2009:1) states how the GCIS Executive Committee are the strategising body within the GCIS, who integrate, coordinate and rationalise the work of communication in government, including government message, communication strategy and corporate image.

4.2.5 The frequency of communication of the Internal Communications Subdirectorato with the SCO's

The results in Table 4.5 show that the majority of the sample (85.7%) stated that the Internal Communications Subdirectorato communicate with the SCO's approximately once a week. 7.1% of the sample suggested that the Internal Communications Subdirectorato communicates with the SCO's every second week. The remainder of the sample (7.1%) stated that the Internal Communications Subdirectorato communicated approximately once a month.

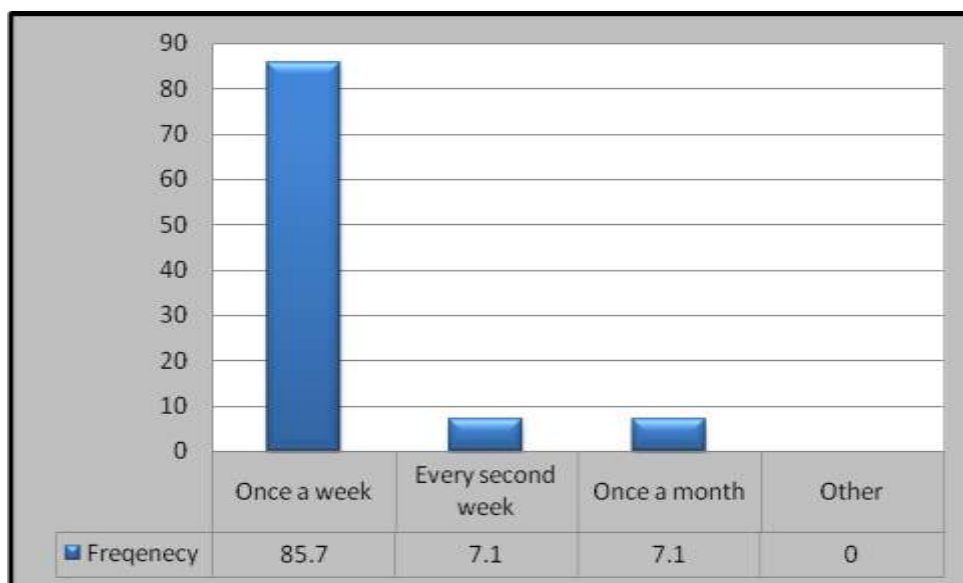


Table 4.5 Frequency of communication

In a changing environment, a constant free flow of communication is vital in managing change and contributes to the success of the organisation (Bagwell, 2009:1-2). Bagwell (2009:1-2) further confirms that the process of internal organisational communication can identify changes within an organisation.

4.2.6 The external environment that is analysed by SCO's

Table 4.6 indicates segments that the SCO's analyse when looking at the external environment of the GICS. The segment that was identified as the SCO's first choice when analysing the environment was that of the economic environment. 61.5% of the sample suggested that when analysing changes in the external environment of the GCIS that they look at the economic segment first. 30.8% of the sample indicated that the political segment was the sample's first choice, while 7.7% suggested that the sociocultural segment was their first choice.

The second choice segments that are seen to be analysed by the SCO's is the political segment (46.2%). The economic segment had 23.1% of the sample's second choice, with the sociocultural segment at 15.4% of the sample's choice.

Table 4.6 indicates the third choice of the sample, where more than half (69.2%) of the sample suggested that the sociocultural segment was their third choice when analysing the environment. The political segment had a response of 23.% of the sample, while the economic segment gained 7.7% of the sample's third choice in segments that are analysed.

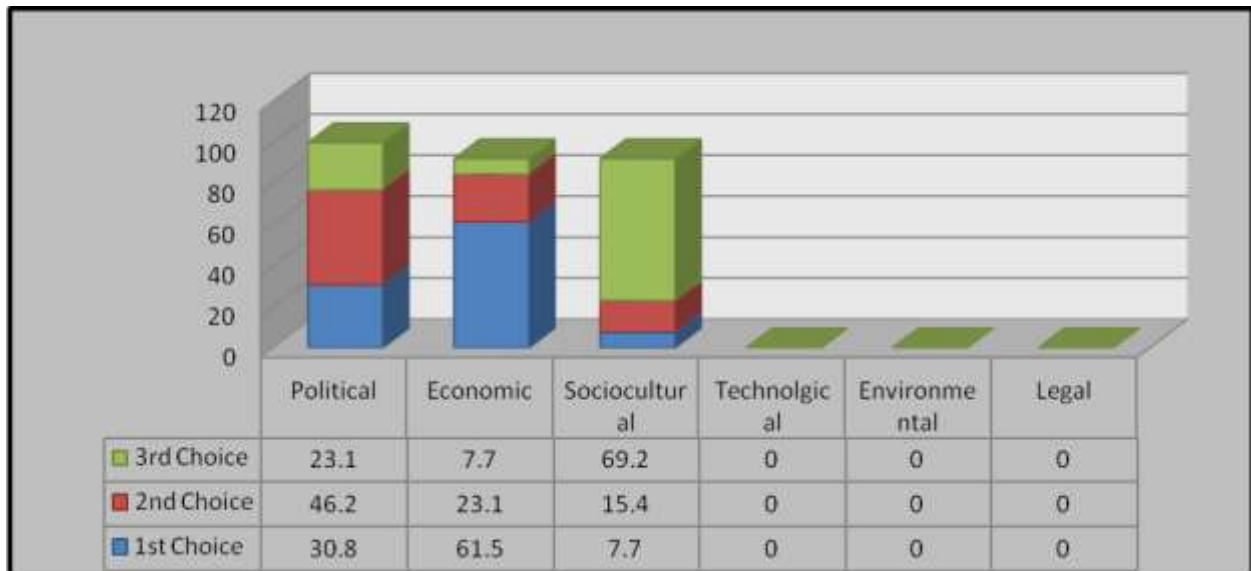


Table 4.6 The external environment as analysed by the SCO's

These results are surprising considering the fact that the SCO's work within a grassroots system, where sociocultural changes within the community could have a vast effect on the GCIS's efforts within that community. The majority agreed that the economic and political choice in segments that are analysed as first and second choice, respectively, is substantial, as both economic and political changes have a vast effect on the SCO's due to the fact that the GCIS is government run and defined on government funding for the projects undertaken by the SCO's.

What is also concerning is that there were no respondents (0%) who chose the technological, environmental or legal segments as important when analysing change. According to the literature scanning, monitoring, forecasting and assessing all the segments within the GCIS external environment is crucial in indentifying changes within the environment.

4.2.7 Resources used when scanning the external environment

The results in Table 4.7 suggests that 100% of the sample use newspapers when scanning the environment.

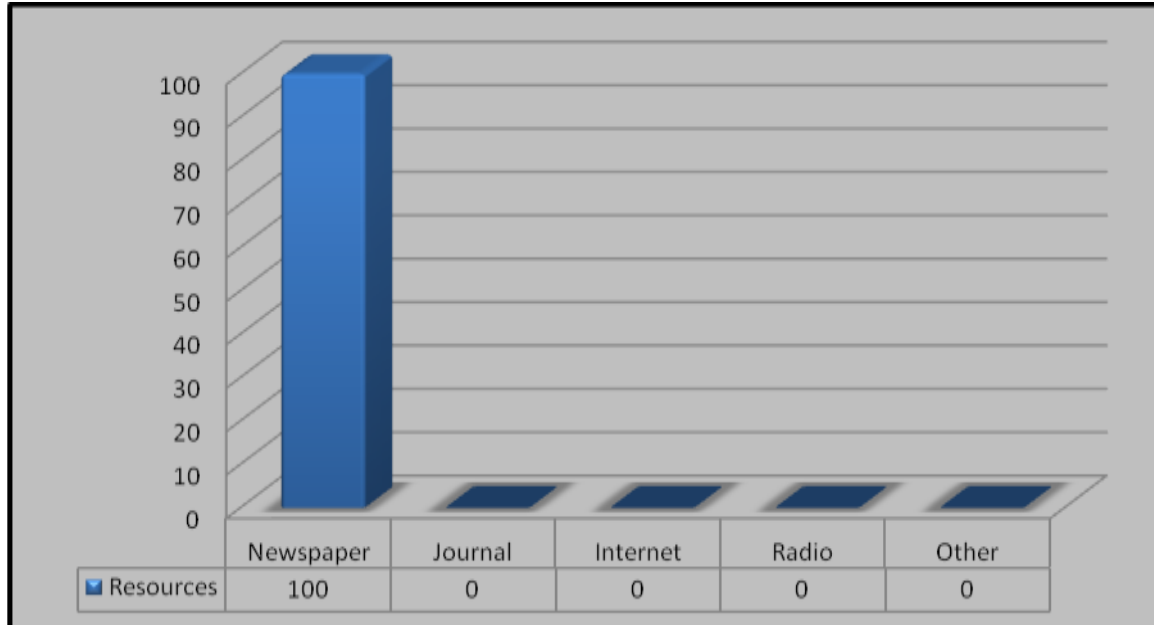


Table 4.7 Resources used in scanning the external environment

This may be a result of the Thusong Service Centres being generally within communities. The benefit of community newspapers, especially within the communities in which the SCO's operate, is that they can receive information specifically pertaining to the community in which they operate and be able to effectively identify change within that environment.

4.2.8 The identification and communication of change

According to Table 4.8, the majority of the sample (92.3%) indicated that, within their function as SCO's, they make their own observations about change. 7.7% of the sample suggested otherwise, indicating that they relied on senior management to identify the change and relay this information to them.

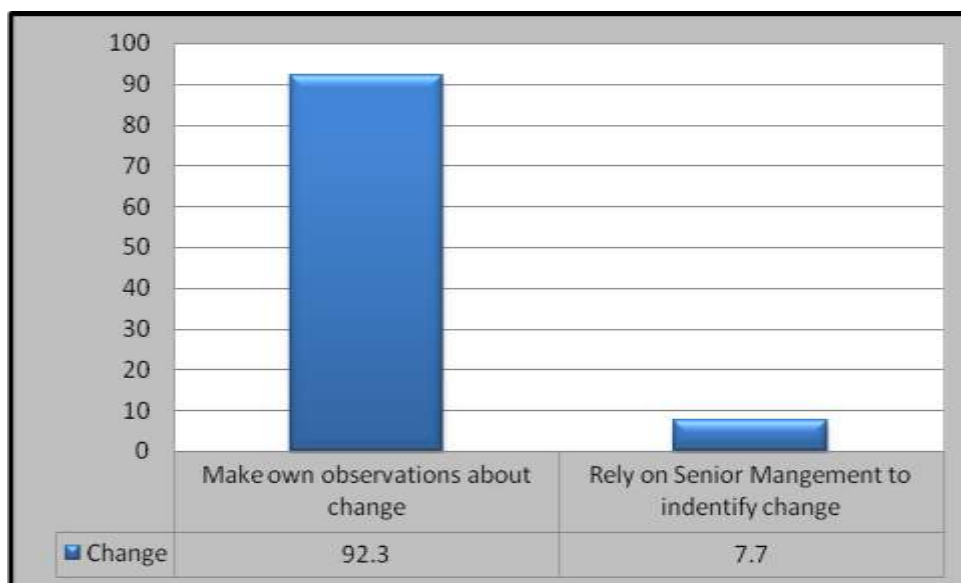


Table 4.8 Observing and indentify change

According to Morrison (2009:1), in order to observe changes within the organisation, SCO's need to analyse the external environment of the organisation. This analysis includes scanning, monitoring, forecasting and assessing the external environment of the GCIS, allowing for a quick response to any changes as they can be indentified early through external environmental analysis.

4.2.9 The process of change and the involvement of the SCO's in the change process

Within the process of change, Table 4.9 shows that just over half of the sample (61.5%) indicated that they serve as an advisory role within the change process in the GCIS. A total of 30.8% of the sample stated that they were actively involved within the change process in the GCIS while the minority (7.7%) said that they were not involved in the change process.

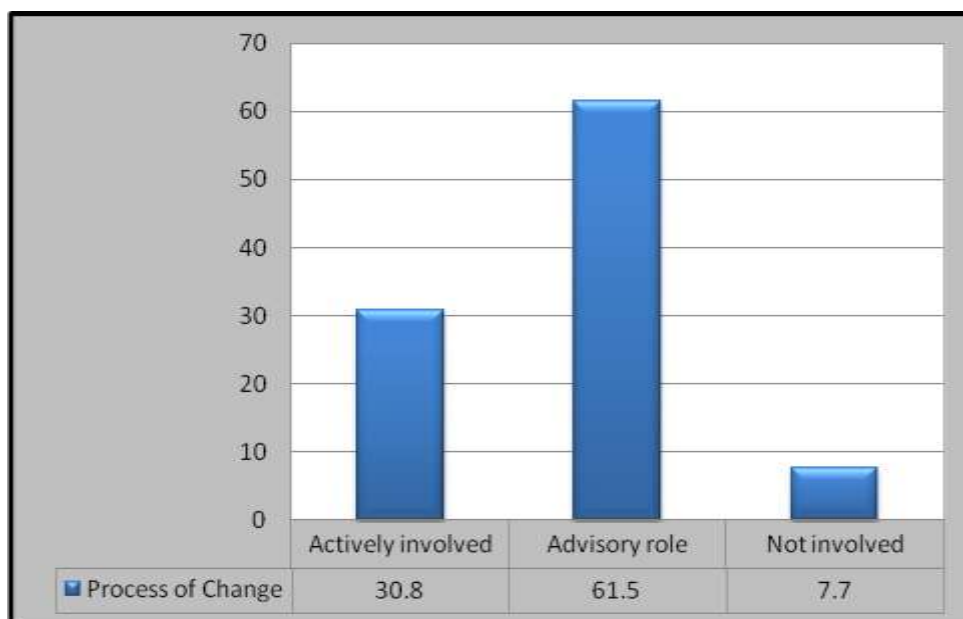


Table 4.9 Process of change

La Grange (2007:2) states that, in order to identify and manage change within an organisation, emphasis needs to be placed on the 'process' of change. SCO's serving as an advisory role within the change process are not sufficient to be able identify and manage change. Active involvement within the change process can insure that a feedback loop is maintained during the process and small changes can, therefore, be identified and communicated. Active involvement ensures that SCO's can better respond to changes.

4.2.10 The amount of concern that is put on small and large changes by the SCO's

The majority of the sample (69.2%) in Table 4.10 indicated that both small and large changes were equally as important. A total of 15.4% showed a tendency towards placing more concern on large than small changes within the GCIS. A further 7.7% indicated that they only place concern on large changes while the remaining 7.7% of the sample indicated that concern was solely placed on small changes.

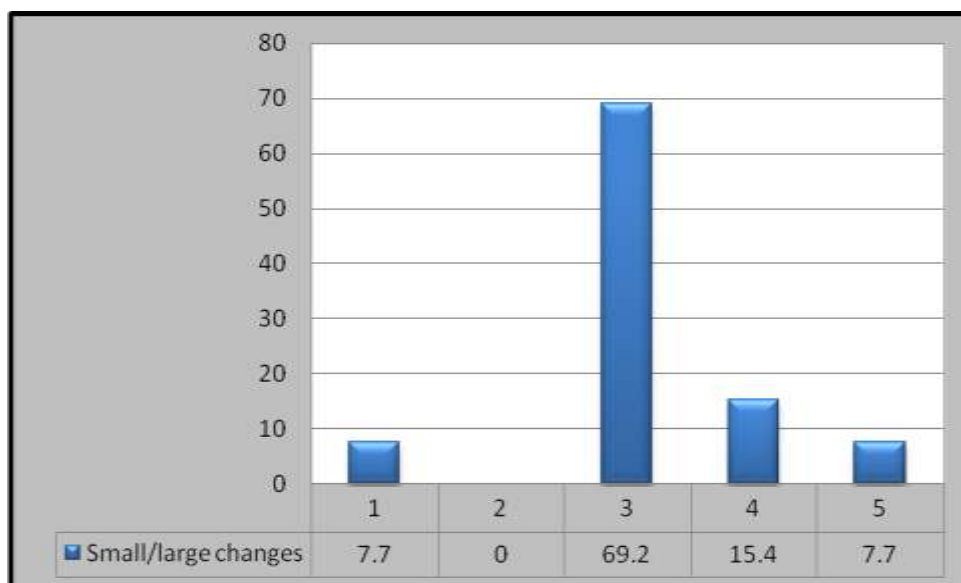


Table 4.10 Concern placed on small and large changes

Small changes, or first-order changes are equally as important as larger or second-order changes. Due to the fact that a small, first-order change can lead into a more complex and larger, second-order change. Placing concern on all types of changes is crucial in an organisation's success. Verwey & du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:42) place further emphasis on the management of small changes in the literature review, where a small change in one system could have a chaotic, unpredictable change within another system. Therefore, the "butterfly effect" of changes within an organisation like the GCIS need to be constantly monitored.

4.2.11 The channels that are preferred when communicating small and large changes

The results on Tables 4.11 and 4.12 are identical and, therefore, will be presented together.



Table 4.11 Preferred channels when communicating small changes



Table 4.12 Preferred channels when communicating large changes

What is a major concern from the above findings in Tables 4.11 and 4.12 is that a 100% of the sample's responses were identical for both questions on channels where preferred when communicating small and large changes. The results indicate that the SCO's communicate large and small changes in the same manner. Bacal (2008:1) suggests that, to meet the requirements of the function of internal organisational communication, the dynamics of these functions need to be strategised and prioritised in order to be effective. Therefore, the communication channels that are used to communicate large or small changes need to be more strategic and customised to the change at hand.

4.12 The channels used when communicating to different hierarchies within the GCIS

The bar graph in Table 4.13 indicates that the first choice communication channel that is used by SCO's when communicating to senior management is electronic communication, (92.3%) and 7.7% indicating the use of face-to-face communication. The second choice was written communication (61.5%). The remainder of the sample suggested face-to-face (30.8%) and the use of electronic (7.7%) as their second choices.

When communicating with middle management, the sample indicated the use of electronic communication as their first choice (84.6%) with the remaining respondents (15.4%) indicating the use of face-to-face communication. The sample's second choice was the use of written communication (61.5%) with the remainder of the sample indicating face-to-face communication (23.1%) and electronic communication (15.4%), respectively.

The sample indicated that the first choice when communicating to junior management was face-to-face communication (84.6%) with the remainder indicating the use of electronic communication (15.4%). The second choice of the sample was the use of electronic communication (58.8%) with the remaining channels, namely, informal (23.1%), written (15.4%) and face-to-face (7.8%) communication.

The majority of the sample (92.3%), when communicating to general employees, indicated the use of face-to-face communication as their first choice, with the minority (7.7%) indicating the use of electronic communication. The sample's second choice was the use of electronic communication (53.8%) while the remaining channels being were as follows: informal (30.8%), written (7.7%) and face-to-face (7.7%)

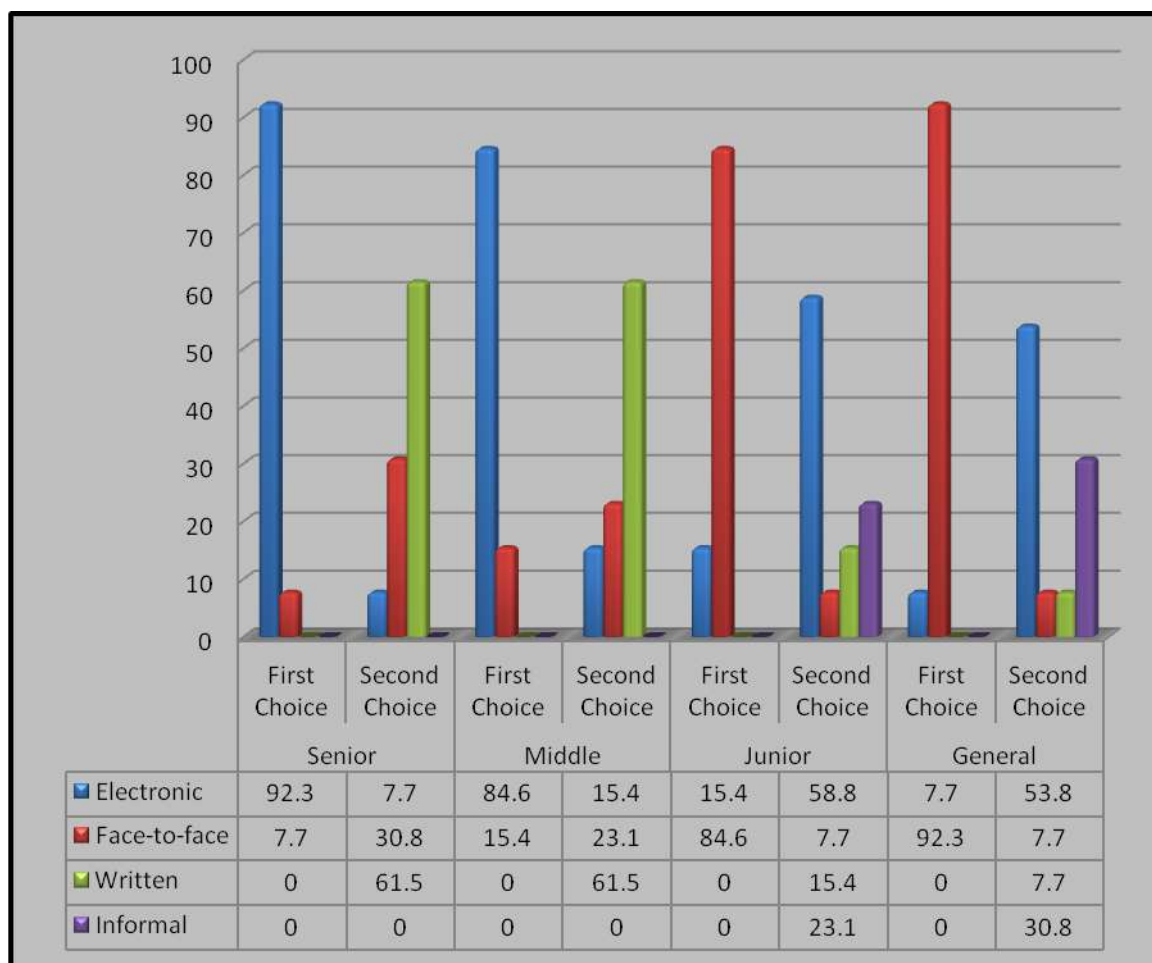


Table 4.13 Communication channels used within the GCIS's hierarchy

The geographical distribution of the GCIS's management can account for the different channels that are used when communicating to different levels within the GCIS. The senior management and middle management of the GCIS are based at provincial or district level, while the SCO's, junior management and general employees are generally at local level. The results indicate how the geographical distribution of the different hierarchies determines the channels that are used when communicating. Electronic and written communication is used by senior and middle management, while the use of face-to-face, electronic and informal communication at junior management and general employee levels is more prevalent. Although the geographical distribution of the levels within the GCIS is a key factor in determining the channels of communication used, there needs to be balance between the over usage of electronic communication as it can be impersonal and misunderstanding of messages can result. Each communication channel has its benefits

and restrictions. Therefore, a strategic approach needs to be undertaken when balancing the communication channels that are used. Daft, Lengel & Travino (1987:355) confirm the importance of information rich communication channels in overcoming ambiguity.

4.2.12 The flexibility or standardisation of communicating change

The results in Table 4.14 indicate that the vast majority of the sample (92.3%) suggested that the process of communicating change is flexible, while 7.7% of the sample suggested that, during the process of communicating change, standard procedures are to be followed.

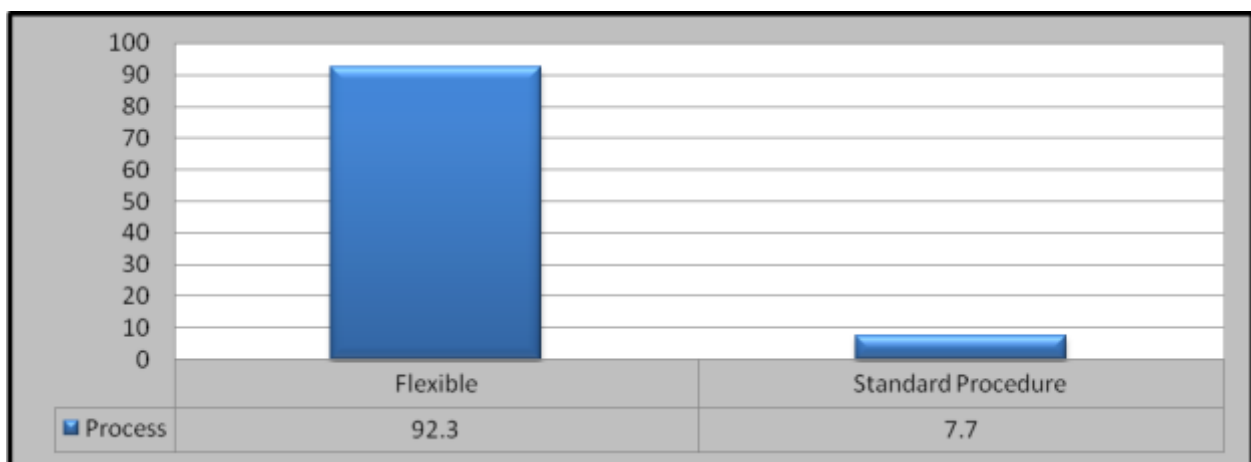


Table 4.14 Communication procedures within the GCIS

The process of communicating change needs to be flexible to allow for a free flow of communication that encourages a learning organisation and, therefore, a system that will adapt to changes.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Section three of the semi-structured interview (Annexure A) incorporates the concepts of the Chaos Theory as explained in the Literature Review in Chapter two. The qualitative questions are grouped according to the seven concepts of the Chaos Theory, but are, however, randomly structured within the semi-structured interview. The table below represents the groupings of the qualitative questions in relation to those concepts of the

Chaos Theory in managing change.

Question Number	Question	Chaos Theory Concept
17	Is there a free flow of two way communication within the GCIS?	Self organisation
21	During change, do you facilitate open dialogue?	
18	To what extent does the GCIS allow employees to participate in the change process?	Edge of Chaos and Learning Organisation
19	Are you responsible for creating a learning organisation?	
20	Is small-scale experimentation encouraged amongst employees?	
23	Do all employees, on every level, have access to information about the change during, before and after the change process?	
22	Do you deal with small changes immediately and see them as important as large changes?	Butterfly Effect and Bifurcation
24	When going through a change, are the GCIS's values and goals reinforced?	Strange Attractors
26	Do you encourage and communicate innovative thinking and participation in decision making at all levels?	
25	If there is a major change in one of the other departments, do you think that change can affect your department?	Non-linearity, Scale and Holism and Fragmentation and Interdependence

Table 4.15 Semi-structured interview and the Chaos Theory

The qualitative findings are discussed below in the form of themes that emerged from the

semi-structured interview.

4.3.1 Free flow of two-way communication

The majority of respondents agreed that a free flow of two-way communication did exist in the GCIS. In terms of the process of free flowing two-way communication, most respondents specifically made reference to the use of electronic communication as the channel that was used. The more specific channels that were mentioned by the above respondents were the: “telephone”, “SMS”, “circulars and memorandums” and “emails”. The data indicates that the majority of these respondents expressed the use of the telephone as the main form of communication that created a two-way flow between themselves and the GCIS. Argenti (2007:46) explains how electronic communication allows for the organisation to quickly and broadly communicate.

Another theme that was highlighted was the manner in which this apparent free flow of two-way communication is conducted. One respondent expressed that there is a two-way communication and explained the communication as “a very relaxed kind of environment...you can relate to people even if they are not in the same position,” while another respondent explains the manner of communication as “open.” A sub-theme that was evident was the timeliness and open-door policy of the communication. One respondent explained that “I find with me, I can communicate whenever. I can contact them [GCIS] anytime,” while another respondent stated that “they [GCIS] communicate to us all the time.”

One respondent, however, when asked if there was a free flow of two-way communication in the GCIS, responded saying, “Not at all. There are many challenges we face...things always come at the 11th hour to be addressed.” This respondent complained of feeling neglected. Bloom (2002:2) clearly states that a lack of free flowing two-way communication can prohibit the self organisation’s process and, therefore, can prohibit the management of change within the organisation. Therefore, maintaining a free flow of two-way communication is crucial in managing change.

4.3.2 The extent to which the GCIS allows employees to participate in the change process

The majority of respondents indicated that the GCIS does allow employee participation in the change process within the organisation. Many respondents indicated the strong theme that centres around the participation of the employees within the change process. One respondent stated that “they [GCIS] tell us of a change and ask for our comments.” Another respondent agreed and “we are allowed to engage in the changes and put our input in.” A theme that was clearly apparent was that none of the respondents indicated their role in the upward communication of change. One respondent stated that “normally it [the change process] starts at national level and then in our staff meetings we are allowed to engage in the changes and put our input in.” Gibson and Hodgetts (1991:221) state that upward communication from subordinates to superiors can be used to communicate important information for improving the organisations procedures and policies.

Another strong theme that was evident was the use of face-to-face communication by the GCIS as a channel used to communicate a change process. With reference to the above, many respondents made specific mention to “staff meetings” as being the channel to which changes were communicated and discussed. A few respondents stated that of electronic channels were used to communicate changes within the GCIS, such as “email” and “internet.”

One respondent suggested that, in terms of the GCIS allowing employees participation in the change process, “at the moment nothing was in place. and has not been implemented as yet”. One respondent stated that participation was present with the change process but raised concerns saying “you have to be careful what you say...because you can become a target”.

The process of employees participating in the change process allows for the creation of a learning organisation. Mitleton-Kelly (2009:2) emphasises that information is what people

need in order to adapt to change within an environment. These changes include first, second and third order changes, where communication plays a crucial role in creating a learning organisation through participation and open dialogue.

4.3.3 The creation of a learning organisation

The response of the majority of respondents indicated a strong theme of two-way communication and participation with all the respondents' stakeholders, with specific reference to the community and with their colleagues within the Thusong Service Centres. One respondent suggests that "they [the community members] know that if there is something new that we need to explore, they can come and discuss it." While another respondent says that "This is what we do: we rely on them [the community]. If we have a project or event, we take it to the community and we commute the assistance of the advisors..." One respondent states that "I spend a lot of time with the people I work with and get them to give me ideas". Another respondent stated that "there are stakeholder forums where we share ideas, in terms of what needs to be done and how we can tackle the issues". The researcher's interpretation of these responses is that there exists a two-way free flow of communication, especially between the respondents and their target market or stakeholders. This two-way free flow of communication is face-to-face and the exchange of ideas is a constant. According to Guffey, Rhodes & Rogin (2002:18), face-to-face communication minimise misunderstandings and can offer instant clarification. A theme that also emerged from the responses was that of the GCIS's provincial office role in the process of creating a learning organisation. Many respondents suggested this process is "controlled" by the Provincial office. One respondent stated that "the Provincial office is in control of what suggestions are implemented". Another respondent agreed and suggested that "the external communicators [Provincial office] have the say". This finding does cause concern as this regulatory, downward flow of communication can cause contradictory messages and the superior's lack of regard for their subordinates, as emphasised by Maubane (2007:54).

4.3.4 The encouragement of small-scale experimentation with the GCIS

A common theme that arose from the responses was that small-scale experimentation and the opportunity to put forward new ideas and experiment with these ideas was evident. However, a sub-theme that emerged from was that the Provincial office has control over what experimentation is implemented. One respondent stated that “we sometimes get a chance to try our new ideas if the Provincial office approves, but we have to approach them first before doing anything”. Another respondent agreed and emphasised that “When we come up with a suggestion, once it’s been approved, then we can implement it and see if our suggestion is beneficial. If its not approved then we don’t get a chance to try the idea”. Small-scale experimentation within an organisation allows for the organisation to exist on the Edge of Chaos where the organisation can be exposed to new emerging patterns, and therefore, adapt to change more dynamically. Furthermore, by existing on the Edge of Chaos, an organisation is forced to find new and innovative ways to compete and grow as a result of small-scale experimentation amongst employees.

An alternate theme that was brought to the fore by many respondents was the involvement of the community prior to the process of small-scale experimentation. is implemented. One respondent said that “Yes we do, but we first talk to the community to see what they want”. One respondent suggested that “Thusong Centres are based in rural areas, so we approach these community members”. According to McGill (1992:4), a learning organisation encourages self-organisation. Therefore, to remain on the Edge of Chaos, where the system is most adaptable, creating learning organisation through communication with various stakeholders, is crucial.

4.3.5 The facilitation of open dialogue with other people in the GCIS during change

The majority of respondents indicated that the process of open dialogue during change was present. A theme that was suggested was the use of staff meetings as a means to facilitate open dialogue. One respondent stated that “in our staff meetings we are allowed to vocalise what ideas we have”. Another respondent stated that “in our staff meetings we are

given opportunities to tell others our ideas and suggestions and then we discuss them in these meetings". One respondent stated that "we have open dialogue in these meetings. Everyone is allowed to share their ideas, problems and solutions to these problems.

However, a few respondents indicated the use of electronic and written forms of communication channels to facilitate open dialogue. One respondent stated that "they send us questionnaires so that we can participate in the change and what they require from us". Another respondent suggested that open dialogue occurred "sometimes" and stated that "we mainly communicate via email and telephone. I think we need to have more meetings together so we can talk more about our ideas".

Open dialogue is essential in creating a learning organisation that assists in managing change. However, the use of electronic channels can prohibit the two-way free flow of communication. Although electronic channels are popular due to their flexibility and versatility, messages do have the chance of being misunderstood.

4.3.6 The manner in which small and large changes are dealt and the importance of each change

Many respondents indicated that both small and larger changes were as important as each other. One respondent more specifically stated that "both small and big changes have different challenges that need to be dealt with. I think they are both important". Another respondent stated that small changes are as important as large changes because "the smaller changes can lead to greater ones".

However, few respondents suggested that large changes are more important than small changes and are subsequently handled differently. One respondent stated that "I sort the big problems out first then maybe look at the smaller changes if I have time". Another respondent stated that "I normally focus on the big changes that happen where I am. I don't think that little changes are too important – they can just disappear".

The concept of the butterfly effect, which stipulates that small changes can lead to larger changes somewhere else in the system, holds crucial importance for the GCIS. Small changes that are identified at the grassroots level of the SCO's, if predicted, can prevent a large-scale change somewhere else in the system. Therefore, small changes and large changes within the environment of the GCIS are both important. Another concern is that if small changes are not identified, these changes can bifurcate causing a chain reaction of chaotic changes. Murphy (1996:97) states that the bifurcation point can usually be predicted, but the end results cannot. Therefore, it is crucial that small changes are identified to prevent complex and unpredictable changes from occurring.

4.3.7 The access of all employees' information during, before and after a change has occurred

All respondents in this research indicated that they did have access to information before, during and after a change has occurred. The majority of respondents indicated the use of emails and the intranet as the channel used by the GCIS to communicate information concerning changes within the GCIS's environment. However, one respondent, although agreeing that information is indeed communicated to all employees during a change process, suggested that, due to a lack of resources, messages need to be relayed to employees who do not have access to the resources that are used in this communication process. Another respondent stated that "...even for those who don't have resources and that are not capable of receiving access to information, we still try pass it on in whatever way we can. We try, but there is a shortage of resources". When probed, one respondent agreed that the lack of resources in relaying messages created a communication gap and, subsequently, inhibited the functions of the SCO. One respondent stated that: "For example, I don't have a state car, so it restricts me. So you find there are some communities I can't reach out to".

Although the use of the informal channel of communication, or grapevine, is seen to be integrative, easy to understand and fills the gaps left by formal channels of communication, there is the concern that the message might be misinterpreted while being communicated

down and across the different levels. Once again, the two-way free flow of communication and access to information creates a learning organisation that encourages the management of change within an organisation.

4.3.8 The reinforcement of the GCIS's values and goals during a change process

A theme that emerged from this question was highlighted by many respondents. These respondents made specific reference to the use of "emails" and "intranet" as the channels that are used to communicate the GCIS's values and goals during a change process. The other respondents indicated that this reinforcement of values and goals is present within the GCIS, with few respondents suggesting that this reinforcement is even communicated at grass roots level and to the communities in which they operate.

The communication of the GCIS's values and goals to all stakeholders acts as strange attractors that keep the organisation 'anchored' in the midst of chaos. These strange attractors can be seen as a preventative method that keeps changes within the organisation's boundaries. van Tonder (2004a:135) confirms this and explains how strange attractors have the inherit ability to create order within chaos.

4.3.9 The respondents views' on whether changes in one department affect the SCO's department

The majority of respondents indicated that a change in one department could not affect their department. One respondent suggested that "I think that only my department is important. We sometimes work together with other departments but I focus on what I have to do". Another respondent stated that: "We tend to look at it in our capacity and not anyone else's". One respondent says that: "No, I don't think other changes can affect my department".

This result is concerning due to the fact that the GCIS is an open system. According to the Systems Theory, there exists a reciprocal influence amongst systems as a result of the

systems' interrelatedness. Therefore, changes in one subsystem can affect another subsystem.

However, many respondents suggested that changes in other departments in the GCIS did have an effect on their department. One respondent stated that "We look at all our departments, because we are all operating in these centres. What happens in my department is just as important as what happens in other departments, because we are all operating here together".

According to Ritzer (2007:95-96), differentiation allows for more variation within the environment, and since subsystems are interrelated, the system can better respond to changes within the environment. Therefore, placing importance and analysing changes in other departments cannot only assist in predicating changes but allow for differentiation and variation that will assist the GCIS in responding to changes within the environment.

4.3.10 Whether innovative thinking and participation in decision making is encouraged at all levels

All respondents indicated that innovative thinking and participation amongst all levels was encouraged, especially with the community members. One respondent stated that "Internally we make everyone involved in the decision making including our stakeholders". A strong theme of participation and two-way communication between the SCO's and the community was evident. The majority of the respondents indicated the use face-to-face communication through the use of stakeholder forums and meetings with the community members as the channels used where open communication is encouraged. One respondent stated that: "When you work with our stakeholders, we have this brainstorming session and have established forums where we discuss ideas". Another respondent states that "We always approach other stakeholders for suggestions and are always in contact with them and inform them on the progress of projects in the community". One respondent states that "working together is key. When you are in the operation area we encourage everyone to participate. The main purpose of these centres is to help the people that are

disadvantaged...”.

Innovating thinking during change increases the capacity of communication, allowing an organisation to be better managed during changes. Innovative thinking and participation allows for both the self-organising process and strange attractors to be present within the organisation during change.

4.4 SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

From the findings, major themes were identified in the semi-structured interview that were discussed in the above chapter. However, during the course of the semi-structured interview, responses emerged as extensions during the quantitative section of the semi-structured interview. The following themes that arose from these responses hold significance for the research and will be discussed below:

4.4.1 Structure of the GCIS

One respondent suggested that the current structure of the GCIS is “ineffective”. The respondent indicated that “it would be more important to have the supervisors close to us [SCO’s] so that strategies can be coordinated and that we can plan together and move together”. This comment was in response to the quantitative question number fifteen that discusses the different channels used when communicating to different hierarchies within the GCIS. Another respondent clarified his comment by saying that the use of electronic and written communication was ineffective and that the respondent preferred face-to-face communication with the respondent’s superiors.

Furthermore, one respondent raised concern with the “political affiliations” within the GCIS that have caused a “divide between local and district level”. According to one respondent, this has created a “loop hole where communication has become less strong and as effective.”

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the results from the semi-structured interview were presented and findings explained in accordance with the literature in chapter two. The results were compiled into two sections, namely: quantitative and qualitative results. The results were presented in such a way that the findings and conclusions of the research could be used as recommendations and guidelines in improving communication during change within the GCIS. The recommendations will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this chapter are related to the findings in the previous chapter. These results will be examined in light of the literature review and the theoretical background. In order to facilitate a logical flow of the conclusions and recommendations, three main themes have been identified and grouped in accordance with the findings from the previous chapter. The recommendations from these conclusions will be discussed under these themes. Lastly, the limitations of the study will be presented.

5.2 THE FLOW OF TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE GCIS

Based on the results presented in chapter four there exists a free flow of two-way communication within the GCIS. This flow of communication being that of downward, upward, horizontal and informal channels of communication, as highlighted in the literature in chapter two. The respondents in the research suggested that communication within the GCIS was open, free flowing and frequent. Furthermore, the manner in which the communication was implemented was relaxed with an 'open door policy' between superiors and subordinates where open dialogue was encouraged.

The channels that are used to communicate change, as indicated by the respondents, are appropriate according to the level in which they are communicating. For example, the respondents indicated the use of electronic communication when communicating to superiors, face-to-face communication was used with their colleagues and stakeholders. However, concerns were raised in the responses regarding the over usage of the electronic channels used by superiors when communicating to SCO's with a greater need for more face-to-face communication between these two parties. Although the GCIS has information-sharing sessions, coordinates social platforms, exit interviews and staff

orientations as channels in which face-to-face communication is implemented, there does exist a gap between the SCO's and their superiors. The results indicated that the GCIS does hold yearly training and workshops for the SCO's. However, it is recommended by the researcher as well as the respondents that more frequent meetings and training sessions with the provincial director be organised.

The results also indicated a free flow of communication of the GCIS's vision and objectives from Provincial level to SCO's including the flow down to community level. The researcher recommends that the SCO's should play a crucial role and act as the link between government and the community. This strong theme of the SCO's close ties with the community has been highlighted throughout the research.

The SCO's access to information during the change process was confirmed in the results and once again indicates the free flow of communication within the GCIS. However, the results did indicate a gap in communication between some of the SCO's and the provincial office as a result of a lack of resources, where the use of informal communication was used to replace the lack of formal communication. This informal communication channel although effective in filling the gaps left by formal channels, can cause confusion, misunderstandings and heavily relies on the objectivity of the communicator. It is recommend that the lack of resources in some of the Thusong Service Centres be addressed so that uniformity in communicating changes within the GCIS remains constant.

Lastly, the results did indicate a flow of upward and downward communication between the Provincial office and the SCO's, where SCO's were allowed opportunities to discuss their ideas through various electronic, written and face-to-face communication channels. However, the respondents indicated that this process is controlled by the Executive Committee. This finding concurs with the finding in the literature review.

The free flow of communication and open dialogue is crucial in creating self-organisation within the GCIS. Without the presence of self-organisation at all levels, a system cannot adapt to changes within its environment.

5.3 DYNAMICS IN DEALING WITH CHANGE

In dealing with change, the literature states that both small and large changes are important with regards to the dynamics of the interrelatedness of a system like that of the GCIS (Bloom, 2002:2). The respondents in the study did indicate a balanced concern for both small and large changes. However, the results also indicated a sense of confusion between the importance of small and large changes.

The results also indicated a lack of importance placed on the reciprocal effect of changes within various departments. Due to the non-linearity of systems, changes within an organisation need to be holistically analysed and the importance on the scale of events should be considered. The fragmentation and interdependence of a system is also a key factor of the Chaos Theory that relates to the fact that changes in one department can have an effect on another department.

The results of the research indicate that the SCO's did analyse their external environment. External environmental analysis, as highlighted in the literature, is crucial when indentifying changes within the environment. However, the results did indicate a tendency of the SCO's to not do a complete external environmental analysis since results suggested that they did not consider the technological, environmental and legal segments.

It is, therefore, recommended that training be held for SCO's to deal with the dynamics of change due to the misconceptions of these SCO's in relation to the effects of changes within their environment. Training within the concepts of the Chaos Theory can assist in bringing to light the importance of dealing with small changes and the interrelatedness thereof.

5.4 PARTICIPATION OF SCO'S IN THE STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING PROCESS OF CHANGE

Before offering any conclusions, the researcher would like to highlight the fact that the results with regard to the participation of the SCO's within the strategic decision making process of change were contradictory in the quantitative as opposed to the qualitative sections in the semi-structured interview.

The quantitative results showed that the respondents indicated that they were allowed to participate in the strategic decision-making process and that they felt that their position as SCO formed part of the strategic function within the GCIS. The quantitative results also indicated that the SCO's made their own observation about changes and did not rely on senior management to identify these changes and communicate them to the SCO's. However, when questioned about their role in the process, the respondents indicated that they play an advisory role within the strategic decision-making process.

The qualitative results did suggest that employees do participate in the change process and that there is formal communication between the GCIS and SCO's within this regard. However, respondents did indicate that this process is top-down, where the GCIS are responsible for the presentation of ideas and the SCO's are given opportunity to comment and put their ideas forward. Therefore, although SCO's are allowed to put ideas forward, the control of the implementation of these ideas is implemented by the Provincial office.

It is, therefore, recommended that the SCO's don't merely play an advisory role within the strategic decision-making process but are actively involved. The results have proven that the SCO's have open, free-flowing communication with the communities in which they operate. The communication with these communities is exclusively face-to-face and, therefore, their interactions are information rich. The operation of the SCO's at the grassroots level indicates the potential they have in communicating the exact needs of the communities to the Provincial office.

Furthermore, these SCO's work daily with the target market of the GCIS, namely, the communities, and, therefore, are specialised in the field of communication at grassroots level. The researcher suggests that these SCO's play a greater role in the strategic decision-making process at Provincial level. Their wealth of knowledge and experience with the target market could greatly increase the effectiveness of communicating change.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study are highlighted below:

5.5.1 Sample

The sample that was chosen at the onset of the research was a sample of the fourteen Senior Communications Officers in the GCIS, KwaZulu-Natal. During the research, the researcher was notified that one of the SCO positions had become vacant to which no SCO, at the time of the research had been posted. Another limitation in terms of the sample was that one of the SCO's had only recently been appointed and by the GCIS as and was still undergoing training at the Provincial office. The low level of education of some of the respondents and language barriers were further limitations.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Owing to the limitations of the study and, more specifically, the small sample of the research, it is recommended that more research on a national basis be done on this topic.

In addressing the limitations of this research, it is further recommended that the senior management should participate in the preliminary stages to enhance the true value of the research.

5.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the conclusions together with recommendations were presented. The recommendations, based on the literature in chapter two, proposed ideas in increasing the effectiveness of the SCO's in dealing with change within the GCIS. The limitations of the study were also presented in this chapter. The study ascertained the role of communication during the change process and based on the literature, explained how Senior Communications Officer's are able to facilitate this change process.

ANNEXURE A - SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This interview schedule is being administered in full fulfillment of a Masters degree in Public Relations Management. The purpose of this study is to assert the role of communication during change. The aim is to indentify this role and see how we can improve the role of Senior Communication Officers in managing change within the GCIS.

This research is confidential and no specific reference will be made to comments made by respondents.

Section 1 – Demographics

1. Name _____
2. Contact Number _____
3. Age (Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Under 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 40 – 49
<input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 29	<input type="checkbox"/> 50 – 59
<input type="checkbox"/> 30 – 39	<input type="checkbox"/> 60 or over
4. Gender (Tick) ☐ Male ☐ Female

Section 2 – Quantitative questions

5. Do you think that your position as Senior Communication Officer forms part of the strategic function of the GCIS?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Does the Provincial Director allow you to participate in the strategic decision-making process within the GCIS?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Approximately how frequently does the Internal Communications Subdirectorato communicate with you?

☐ Once a week ☐ Every second week ☐ Once a month
☐ Other

8. Within the GCIS's external environment, which of the following segments do you analyse. Choose 3 segments you see as most important.

☐ Political ☐ Technological ☐ Economic
☐ Environmental ☐ Sociocultural ☐ Legal

9. When scanning the environment, what resources do you predominately use? Tick 2 of the following:

☐ Newspapers ☐ Journals ☐ Internet
☐ Radio ☐ Other

10. As a Senior Communications Officer do you: Tick one.

☐ Make your own observations when identifying change? Or
☐ Rely on senior management to observe change and subsequently communicate the change to you?

11. In the process of change are you:

☐ Actively involved in the diagnosis and strategy process?
☐ Serving as an advisory role?
☐ Not involved in the strategy process?

12. To which of the following types of changes do you place more concern? Indicate by single circle on the scale.

Small changes

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 Large changes

13. In communicating **small** changes in the organisation, which of the following is used, in order of importance (with 1 being the most important)

- ☐ Electronic communication
- ☐ face-to-face communication
- ☐ Written communication
- ☐ Informal communication

14. In communicating **large** changes in the organisation, which of the following is used, in order of importance (with 1 being the most important)

- ☐ Electronic communication
- ☐ face-to-face communication
- ☐ Written communication
- ☐ Informal communication

15. When communicating to the following groups, which **2** channels do you predominately use? Indicate with a tick in the appropriate box

	Electronic	Face-to-face	Written	Informal (grapevine)
Senior management				
Middle Management				
Junior Management				
General employees				

16. Is the process of communicating change:

- ☐ Flexible? or
- ☐ Standard procedure?

Section 3 – Qualitative questions

17. Is there a free flow of two-way communication in the GCIS? If so, through what channels?

18. To what extent does your organisation allow employees to participate in the change process? What channels or resources are used and made available for their participation?
19. Are you responsible for creating a learning organisation? If not, who is?
20. Do you communicate to encourage small-scale experimentation amongst employees?
21. During change, do you facilitate open dialogue? In other words, do your employees have channels and opportunities in which they can share their views, ideas and opinions about change and the change process?
22. Do you deal with small changes immediately, in a similar manner to that of large changes?
23. Do all employees, on every level, have access to information about the change during, before and after the change has occurred?
24. When going through a process of change, are the organisation's values and goals reinforced? If so, how?
25. If there is a major change in **one** of the departments, do you only look at changes in that department and construct a change process? Or do you look at other departments as well?
26. Do you encourage and communicate innovative thinking and participation in decision making at **all levels**?

ANNEXURE B – ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

11 Mar. 2009 9:21

*

No. 5921 P. 2



GCIS File
**government
communications**

Department:
Government Communication and Information Systems
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X745, PRETORIA, 0001 Midtown Building, off Polokwane and Vermeulen Streets, PRETORIA
Tel: (012) 314 2911, Fax: (012) 325 0621 website: www.gcis.gov.za

10 March 2009

Durban University of Technology
P O Box 1334
Durban
4000

RE: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER MISS Y DE KOCK

To whom it may concern at the Durban University of Technology

The proposed research project "A COMMUNICATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON CHANGE MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE GCIS IN KZN" a study to be conducted by Me. Yachai de Kock Student Number 20426761, refers.

From the perspective of GCIS we have studied this proposal and are satisfied that this meets relevant ethical standards and are satisfied for Me. De Kock to interview our staff.

We would, however, appreciate that Me. De Kock present her findings to the GCIS to allow us to consider any improvements she may recommend from her study upon completion.

Kind regards

Michael Currin
Chief Director: Provincial Coordination and Programme Support

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