



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AS A CATALYST FOR EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE
WITHIN SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES AT KWAZULU – NATAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis titled “Effective Communication as a Catalyst for Employee Performance in selected Municipalities in KZN, SA” is my own work, all sources cited herein are indicated and acknowledged by means comprehensive list of references list.

I certify that the work contained in this thesis has not previously been submitted either in its entire or in parts for a degree in this or any other University. Where this work used information or writing that belonged to other people such as data, pictures and graphs, the source through which the information was acquired and acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Communication is the adhesive that binds people irrespective of their backgrounds. It is the skill of passing information from one person to another. However, effective communication deals with understating emotions and intentions behind the information. Therefore, managers in leadership positions need to understand the manner in which the best effort can be obtained from the workforce, following which communication systems management should be reviewed to ensure it is effective.

The aim of the study is to establish whether communicating effectively with employees could improve employee performance in a municipality. In this regard, the study ascertained the extent to which the sharing of ideas creates openness among municipal employees, in addition to whether regular feedback contributes to improved municipal employee performance. Furthermore, the study also investigated whether open channels of communication mitigate misunderstandings and whether the recognition of employee opinions increases employee performance. To establish the stated objectives, the study used a mixed method research approach, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data were collected from the uBuhlebezwe Municipality, where a sample size of 80 respondents was obtained by using a simple random sampling technique. For the qualitative research, 10 employees were gathered by means of convenience sampling, through a focus group at the Ray Nkonyeni Municipality. The results from both methods showed that effective communication was the best tool to change employee performance in municipalities, acting as a catalyst. However, this is largely dependent on the effectiveness and availability of channels of communication. The main recommendations to municipal managers and heads of departments are that they should use effective communication as a strategic tool and appreciate all employee opinions, regardless of their positions in an organisation. Managers in a municipal setting should also involve employees in decision-making, most importantly during policy formulation. It is further important that municipal employees are provided with sufficient resources to be able to perform their day-to-day duties, as inadequate resources lead to poor performance and lack of communication. The provision of regular and honest feedback to employees with regard to their strengths and weakness could additionally improve employee performance and increase productivity. Conversely, lack of communication could lead to misunderstandings and incorrect interpretation of information messages by employees.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
GCIS	Government Communication and Information System
HoC	Head of Communication
HoD	Head of department
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
I-IC	Inter-Item Correlation
MM	Municipal Manager
MPAT	Management Performance Assessment Tool
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NCSF	National Communication Strategy Framework
NGCF	National Government Communicators' Forum
NDP	National Development Plan
PMS	Performance Management System
TD	Training and Development

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The general view of communication is that it is the giving, receiving or exchanging of information, opinions or ideas so that the message is completely understood by everybody involved. This exchange can be achieved by means of one or more of the five types of communication, which are verbal, non-verbal, written, and listening, as well as visual (Willkomm 2018).

While there have been many studies that examine communication between municipalities and the communities they serve, these seem to be focused on policy communication to citizens, with yet other research focused on employees and enhanced job satisfaction or service delivery. Recent South African research done in this regard include Jarvis (2016), who investigated whether service delivery could be improved at a local municipality through enhancing policy communication. Furthermore, communication was determined a major factor in a municipal case study by Khoza (2019), who investigated factors that influence job satisfaction. Another example is Worku (2020), with a critical examination of municipal service quality, where communication was found to be key in clearly described job descriptions that were significantly associated with employee performance. However, this study investigates whether effective communication acts as a catalyst for employee performance within selected municipalities.

In both the business and municipal sectors, communication is viewed as an important tool responsible for the success of many facets in the running of the organisation. It is a mechanism that binds employees together, while it is also a system that facilitates collaboration between managers and employees (Kreitner & Kinicki 2013: 410). According to the Government Communications Policy Document (SA Government 2018: 7): “Communication is a key strategic service – to ensure that information is widely accessible within the public space, to engage citizens in conversation around critical issues and to empower citizens to participate in not only shaping government policies but also in taking up opportunities that affect their lives.”

Furthermore, the contribution of effective communication is outlined by the Government Communications Policy Document (SA Government 2018: 7) as:

Effective communication can also contribute positively to government endeavours – leading to good governance, improved internal staff and external citizen/stakeholder morale, and contributing towards meeting government’s aims and objectives. It further builds public trust and confidence in the integrity of government and can be used to challenge any negative perceptions that might exist in the public space.

This Communication Policy was drafted by “the custodian of government communications”, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), “to strengthen government communications so as to deliver on its mandate. This is in line with a developmental communication approach adopted by government” (SA Government 2018: 7). Development communication refers to the use of communication to facilitate social and economic change.

Nevertheless, *Hamilton* (2013: 47) posited that communication is deemed effective only when the receiver understands the exact message or the information the sender intended to transmit and when miscommunication is minimal and the wrong interpretation of messages is curtailed. As Kim and Feamster (2013: 114) stated, “effective communication in the workplace is the pre-eminent management tool that links all departments together and accelerates organisational achievement.”

Fielding (2014: 9) added that effective communication, in general, plays a significant part in enabling people to work together in harmony to achieve a common goal; with particular regard to the sharing of knowledge and exchange of information in a formal dialogue. As Conrad (2014: 105) observed, this promotes team spirit, a sense of belonging and effective participation in operational activities.

Makki, Salleh, Memon and Harun (2015: 1010) pointed out that managers are aware that effective communication is the best strategy to change employee performance, which is the key to the success or failure of organisational performance. This holds true whether the organisation is municipal or corporate, making it crucial for management at municipalities to find ways to increase employee performance levels by communicating effectively in persuading employees to work together to complete tasks, meet organisational objectives and successfully utilise resources.

1.2 Brief literature review

There are several communication policies encapsulated in the SA Government Communication Policy document (SA Government 2018), as part of the 2030 National Development Plan (NDP), set out by the GCIS. This document is focused solely on government organisations and institutions.

Early definitions of organisations have focused on groups of individuals working together in a coordinated way in the pursuit of production-related goals (Morgan 1997). Organisations do not exist independently of their members but are created and re-created in the acts of communication between members (Iedema & Wodak 1997: 7). Communication then becomes the central means by which individual activity is coordinated to devise, disseminate and pursue organisational goals (Gardner *et al.* 2001: 5610). For an organisation to perceive itself as effective, it must have a detailed understanding and information of its communication system (Muller, Bezuidenhout & Jooste 2006: 299). Therefore, communication is an essential component in the success of all organisations, whether corporate or governmental, with specific reference to selected KZN municipalities.

The view of Husain (2013: 41), is that effective communication is a transaction that involves two or more people sharing ideas, working as a team, listening to one another and learning to develop mutual expectations to achieve a common goal. This is no different in municipalities. Due consideration must also be taken of activities in the business potentially receiving poor information from meaningless communication, subsequently leading to ineffective decision-making by the individual employee, manager or business owner. Parties involved should thus ensure that the meaning created is the same, with all participants understanding the importance of clear messages, while feedback has to match the entire idea of the message to avoid misunderstanding. This study therefore also examines the possible challenges that can be a barrier to effective communication.

Barrett (2014: 31) indicated that effective communication firstly requires commitment from top management and then, across the entire organisation. That commitment and buy-in increases productivity and is catalytic to employee performance. The author endorses that managers in leadership positions need to know how to get the best out of the workforce, through a combination of awareness and communication skills. At the same time, employers must provide adequate resources to develop skills of employees to facilitate effective communication.

Moreover, Wanga (2014: 76) stressed the notion of understanding the ideas transmitted and appropriate responses in the business environment, where managers need to convey clear job information to employees. Whether corporate or municipal, management needs to create a good picture of the exact and intended meaning, as well as clear clarification of messages to avoid misunderstanding.

1.3 Background of the study

The importance for an organisation to improve employee skills and abilities is highlighted by Obiageli, Uzochukwu and Ngozi (2015: 66), because it can potentially change employee performance and contribute to organisational productivity. However, organisational objectives can only be accomplished when employees and managers practice effective communication, as it provides a sense of direction to managers and employees on action to be implemented (Lewis & Reicher 2016: 1603).

Therefore, managers have the responsibility of conveying accurate information and designing proper job descriptions for all employees, in addition to creating a clear set of instructions that leaves no room for distortion. This also holds true for government organisations and institutions, with the Government Communications Policy Document (SA Government 2018: 7) outlining this in detail.

This study is premised on the basic communication methods that enable management, corporate and municipal, to effectively communicate with their subordinates, in order that they may perform at their full potential. It examines how effective communication is in selected municipalities in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa (SA) and whether employee performance is improved as a result thereof.

Flaherty *et al.* (2012: 127) stated that in today's unpredictable and changing economy, worldwide management in the business sector has been forced to rethink strategies that can sustain their organisations. Nonetheless, Odine (2015: 67) asserted that in order for the communication process to be completed successfully, the information exchanged between both parties must be understood, otherwise the process is not effective.

Transmission of the message to employees might look uncomplicated, yet it is a procedure constantly filled with communication mistakes. Failure of smooth communication can be found

where communication is supposed to be a pillar of performance and as a result, organisations may not do well in achieving objectives. This matter seems to be a major problem behind conveying perfect messages and correct information to employees by managers, with regard to the performance of day-to-day duties. In order for a response and result to be achieved once communication is undertaken, the information transmitted between managers and employees must be clearly understood.

1.4 Rationale for the study

This study was triggered by an observation made by Yin *et al.* (2008: 1113-1117) who posited that in the business environment, public or private managers have a habit of neglecting the importance of clear information when conveying messages to employees on their day-to-day duties. Most importantly, communication is not only the art of conveying and understanding information but also the art of allowing employees to understand management decisions that propel employees to meet organisational objectives. Any lack of communication could, therefore, create a misunderstanding of instructions; however, employees may also incorrectly interpret information during task implementation. The result can be a reduction of performance standards.

The impact managerial communication has on employee performance is key to organisational success, as lack of communication can reduce productivity throughout the organisation (Bisel, Smith & Kelley 2012). Emanoil, Todericiu and Fraticiu (2013) indicated that managers tend to focus on obtaining immediate profit rather than on the aspects of a successful organisation, such as the influence of communication on employee performance.

1.5 Significance of the study

In concurrence with the government communications policy document (SA Government 2018: 9), which states part of its aim as advocating “for communication as a strategic function that is allocated the required resources to be able to fulfil its aims and objectives,” the intention of the study is to gauge whether this positive effect can cascade to enhance municipal employee performance and, as a consequence, improve service delivery.

Nonetheless, unless municipalities implement turnaround strategies, wherein managers ensure their communication strategies are effective, employee performance will be negatively impacted, filtering down to poor service delivery. Conrad (2014: 105) advised on the

importance for organisations to introduce effective communication, irrespective of their size. With the bottom line being the achievement of organisational goals, Chendrika (2015: 1) highlighted that, “Where instructions are not clearly given, good service cannot be delivered to customers.” The responsibility then reverts to managers, who require effective communication skills to direct, lead, organise and control employees.

This becomes more significant for SA municipalities in general, and the selected municipalities in specific, which have been plagued by protests due to poor service delivery. It is thus important to establish the manner in which communication impacts on employee performance at municipalities, or not.

This study hopes to contribute to the field of study by presenting confirmed findings of effective communication as catalyst of enhanced employee performance, thus creating awareness as to why it should be employed as a strategic management tool within municipalities. Furthermore, the manner in which this tool could be used to directly affect employee performance positively, while indirectly enhancing service delivery, will be outlined. In addition, the study results could potentially be used at the specific municipalities to practice more effective communication, enhance employee performance, with subsequent improved service delivery. A positive outcome would then act as a potential example to other similar municipalities in the province and nationally.

1.6 Problem statement

Extant literature has shown that communication is the mainstream and a critical enabling factor in organisational success. Any organisational decision, whether strategic or operational, cannot be made without communication of the necessary information. Most importantly, as Sadia, Salleh, Kadir and Sanif (2016: 1) observed a relationship between organisational communication and employee productivity.

Despite this well-known fact, globally and nationally, weak communication processes have been blamed for a number of productivity and employee performance shortcomings and failures. At a global level, Lovari and Valentini (2019: ch.4.4, p. 2) also added social media to the communication mix in their study of how public organisations’ services and processes have been modified with technological advances and electronic media. The authors highlighted that this ‘trending’ communications method “is also changing relationships between PSOs, citizens,

and mass media. The impact is evident in administrative procedures, data storage and management, delivery of public services, and communication with strategic publics”. Social media as communications tool is, however, not under study and will not be pursued.

Various reports with regard to serious communication breakdown consequences can be found in the USA manufacturing (Fall Magazine 2006) and motor industries (New York Times; Bloomberg Business Week and various broadcasting stations 2012). Moreover, problems encountered were mainly attributed to a lack of effective communication between managers and employees. However, locally, organisations other than government institutions have made the news, for example factory problems in the SA motor industry resulting in product recalls and customer unhappiness (Hirsh, Jeerry & Bensinger 2013: 25).

Nevertheless, in analysing all these problems, Vlastic, Bill, Apuzzo and Matt (2014: 19) observed that all of these major problems in these big conglomerates were attributed to a lack of effective communication. In addition, performance of employees was impaired in a big way. Mayounga and Andre (2018: 23) also questioned what this does to the image of these major manufacturing organisations and the likely erosion of customer relationships.

South Africa’s municipal sector has, and does, regularly feature in the news with service delivery strikes, financial mismanagement, corruption scandals and the like. As recent as April 2021, Bisseker wrote about *SA’s municipal death spiral*, in reference to years of weak corporate governance and financial mismanagement, heightened and intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year. The article shows that these factors have led to most municipalities in SA “no longer being financially sustainable”. In addition, this position in which the municipalities find themselves in “now poses a major threat to the country’s economic growth prospects” (Bisseker 2021).

Whether in a municipal or corporate organisational setting, continuous and clear communication is a pre-requisite to a successful outcome. In this regard, Levenson (2017) and De Kadt and Lieberman (2017) determined that although service delivery protests at the level of local municipalities are due to the inability to maintain service quality standards and expectations, communication plays a major role in both prevention and maintenance. Worku (2020) agrees with the suggestion by these authors that “service quality standards and service

level agreements must be ensured at regular intervals in order to mitigate the likelihood of dissatisfaction with the quality of services provided by employees of municipalities”.

South African Municipalities have a mandate to achieve specific goals, as with any other organisation, in addition to Government objectives. To attain these, as scholars have observed, they should use effective communication as a strategic tool. Judging by the general outcry of the country’s citizens against the lack of or poor municipal service delivery, there seems to be a problem with employee performance, which ignited a desire to investigate the situation in the selected municipalities.

1.7 Aim of the study

Tricoles (2012: 3) and Lockwood (2015: 18) noted that effective communication is a huge challenge because managers and employees do not pursue appropriate channels of communication, which lead to disagreements, delays in the performance of duties and performance standards being dropped. In light of the above problem, the aim of this study was to establish whether municipal communication was effective as facilitator in the enhancement of employee performance in two municipalities in the province of KZN, SA.

1.8 The Research Question

The overarching research question that this study sought to answer was whether effective communication in the selected KZN Municipalities acted as a catalyst for improved employee performance.

1.9 Research objectives

To answer the above research question, the study objectives pursued are:

- i To establish the extent to which the sharing of ideas creates openness among municipal employees within the identified municipalities in KZN.
- ii To examine whether regular feedback contributes to improved employee performance in selected KZN municipalities.
- iii To determine whether open channels of communication mitigate misunderstandings between municipal management and employees at selected municipalities in KZN.
- iv To determine whether the recognition of employee opinions increases municipal employee performance at selected municipalities in KZN.

1.10

Summary of Research Methodology

The research methodology in this study entails various methods, techniques or procedures used in applying the research design, with a mixed methods approach utilised (Ormrod 2016). Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world. This research method is used “to describe variables; examine relationships among variables; and to determine cause-and-effect interactions between variables” (Jarvis 2016: 9).

In this study the independent variable was effective communication, with employee performance at selected KZN municipalities as the dependent variable, while a triangulation method of data collection was employed to gather data for the purposes of this research. Triangulation, according to Olsen (2004: 3 as cited in Muthwa 2016: 9), can be defined as “the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic”. Therefore, two types of triangulation exist, namely data and methodological triangulation, with the latter adopting both quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

Muthwa (2016: 9) explained that, “The strength of methodological triangulation lies in its ability to produce results that cannot be generated when only either a qualitative or quantitative method is applied.....by synthesizing the strengths of both qualitative and qualitative research methods.”

The questionnaire comprised five sections that were made up as follows:

1. Section A - respondent’s biographic information.
2. Section B - whether the sharing of ideas creates openness among employees.
3. Section C - whether regular feedback contributes to improved performance.
4. Section D - whether open channels of communication mitigate misunderstandings.
5. Section E - whether recognition of employee opinions increases employee performance.

The research instrument for qualitative research was a questionnaire with open-ended questions, in line with the research objectives, with sections following those used in the quantitative strategy.

Data were collected from a total of 80 employees at two different KZN municipalities, namely uBuhlebezwe and Ray Nkonyeni municipalities. At the uBuhlebezwe municipality, data was collected from a sample of 80 respondents through a structured questionnaire and analysed quantitatively. The 10 responses obtained from the Ray Nkonyeni municipality by means of a focus group were analysed qualitatively. The research methodology is discussed in more detail in chapter three of this dissertation, with a summary thereof as follows:

Research Approach: To sufficiently meet the objectives as stipulated in the previous section, a mixed methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methods (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 106), was used in conducting the investigation of the effect communication has on employee performance at selected municipalities in the province of KZN, SA. This was conducted quantitatively using a structured, Likert-scaled questionnaire, and closed-ended questions, with the aim to obtain information on effective communication as catalyst of improved municipal employee performance at the uBuhlebezwe Municipality.

Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world. This research method is used “to describe variables; examine relationships among variables; and to determine cause-and-effect interactions between variables” (Jarvis 2016: 9).

In this study the independent variable was effective communication, with employee performance at selected KZN municipalities as the dependent variable. In addition, a pilot study was done with 10 respondents from the uBuhlebezwe Municipality who did not participate in the main study, in order to check readability and clarity of the questionnaire and avoid bias.

A qualitative method was employed to collect data from employees at the Ray Nkonyeni Municipality, by means of interviews with a focus group. This form of research was considered appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to gather current perceptions of employees at the municipality in a structured approach, such as a focus group.

Sampling Population: The target population comprised 250 employees under the Municipal Manager (MM) of uBuhlebezwe Municipality. As explained by Sekaran and Bougie (2010: 296), a proper sample size falls between 30-500 respondents. This study thus considered 250 participants to be an adequate number to explore the topic under study, with non-probability

sampling techniques applied through convenience sampling. For the qualitative strategy, employees at the Ray Nkonyeni Municipality were sampled for convenience, which ensured 10 people were able to gather in a specified boardroom to participate in a focus group.

Data Collection: The measurement instrument for the quantitative part of the study comprised a questionnaire, structured with closed-ended questions, and Likert-scaled, based on the review of literature and the study aim and objectives. The questionnaire that was developed was adopted as data collection instrument, with open-ended questions, for the focus group interviews in the qualitative part of the study. While 250 questionnaires were distributed, only 80 were completed and returned, with all 10 interview questionnaires completed and collected.

The response rate provides valuable insight into the accuracy of collected data. In other words, the response rate refers to the number of people who completed and returned the questionnaire. In this study, with 80 completed and returned questionnaires from the 250 sent, provides for a response rate of 30 percent. Apart from statistical inaccuracy, low response rate is an indicator that potential respondents are simply not interested in participating. While the average survey response rate, according to Lindemann (2019), is at 33 percent, the study's response rate was deemed adequate as there is no agreed-on minimum response rate

Data Analysis: The quantitative data was captured and analysed on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 to yield statistics; both descriptive and inferential. The statistics are presented in the methodology chapter. Qualitative data gathered at the focus group were analysed by means of a content analysis method, identifying any themes or categories, which will be discussed in the research findings.

1.11 Structure of Thesis

This thesis has been organised as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter offered an overview of the study by providing a background and stating the problem to be solved. The research aim and objectives to be established were also provided herein, along with a summary of the methodology employed and how the thesis is structured.

Chapter 2: Literature review. This chapter will review scholarly work on the assimilation of communication into employee performance in South African Municipalities.

Chapter 3: Research methodology. This chapter aims to discuss the research approach for this research study, which includes the research design, philosophy and strategy, as well as the target population, sampling, research instrument, and questionnaire construction. The pilot study, administration and collection of the questionnaire, as well as the data analysis, validity and reliability testing, in addition to the study limitations and delimitation will also be presented. Further to this, the ethical considerations made are stated in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Research Findings: The findings of this study will be presented and discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations. This chapter will conclude the study and provide recommendations to practitioners, where applicable, with possible further research expanded on.

1.12 Concluding Summary

This chapter introduced the background to the study, as well as the rationale and significance for undertaking such a study. In addition, the problem to be solved by this study, along with the objectives and the research methodology used to achieve these, were outlined.

The next chapter reviews literature on effective communication and employee performance.

CHAPTER TWO

ASSIMILATION OF COMMUNICATION INTO EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE WITHIN SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPALITIES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews scholarly work on effective communication and employee performance and argues that effective communication acts as a catalyst in enhancing employee performance and organisational success. Effective communication, in general, plays a significant role in harmonising people working together to achieve a common goal, particularly in sharing knowledge and exchanging information in formal dialogue. In an organisational context, people may use different styles or approaches to communicate but the result is to convey ideas; the effect of which creates a strong connection between employer and employee.

The approach to the different means of communication and the models adopted by this study are discussed and justified, with the linear and the convergence models employed for the study. These two models of communication are considered applicable because they assist researchers to perceive and change steps in the communication process to improve and understand our communication and the communiqué of others because it is a multifaceted, challenging process. Furthermore, managers should use the correct steps to convey messages from manager to employee in an organisation. When delegating day-to-day duties, these models would assist managers to eradicate any barriers to effective communication. Following this, communication is then defined in general, to establish the components thereof, after which effective communication is unpacked; this being the dependent variable of this enquiry.

Pursuant to this, the Government Communication Policy document (SA Government 2018) for municipalities is examined, with regard to the government's developmental communication plan used in promoting effective communication within municipalities. Later, in conceptualising employee performance, the definitions of employee performance and factors that enhance performance such as training and development (TD), task performance, employee attitudes and ethical behaviour of employees are discussed. In addition, monitoring of employee performance, methods to evaluate employee performance and applicable theories are discussed. The final part of the review looks at the manner in which scholars have linked effective communication and employee performance, specifically within a municipal setting.

2.2 Communication theories

Communication has been the subject of scholarly enquiry for some time, with many principles, methods and components that can affect a message, which are all explained by communication theory. This theory studies the scientific process of sending and receiving information. However, communication is also seen as an integral part of classical theories of management. One notable proponent of such theories was Henry Fayol (1949), aptly described by Koontz and O'Donnell (1976) as “the father of modern operational management theory”. The elements of Fayol's theory are planning, organising, command, coordination and control. Whilst the author does not have communication as an element of management, scholars who analysed his work have noted that all these elements need communication between managers and employees. Thus, communication can be seen as an implicit part of Fayol's elements of management.

Quite a number of communication models have been developed by theorists where, for example, Weaver (1949) developed what is known as the Shannon-Weaver model, which is a linear or one-way model. The key features hereof are the sender; the encoder; decoder; and receiver. Berlo (1960) developed a model quite similar to that of Weaver but included different aspects that can affect each of the model's components. Communication in organisational settings generally employ the Linear Model, dealt with below.

Bormann (1972) also created a communication model, known as the Convergence Model, used in organisational settings as well. This model describes communication not as an event but a process. The sender and receiver engage in interpretation and response toward the goal of mutual understanding. The importance of this understanding cannot be overemphasised in organisational environments, which is why this has also been highlighted in this study.

Not too long after Weaver, Lasswell (1949) generated a communication model that analysed the effect a message can have on a large group of people and determined the manner in which each part of the model can make a difference. This was basically for mass communication such as media outlets. This model is not pursued any further, as it is meant for a different audience, which is not the subject of this enquiry.

2.2.1 The Linear model of communication

Weaver (1949) argued that scholars who have dealt with communication, particularly in organisational settings, have based their main conception on the linear model of communication. Weaver explains that this model is a mathematical theory of communication, which involves integrated as well as dependent sets of elements working together for a specific purpose. The linear model comprises sender, message, channel, noise and receiver as elements that reduce miscommunication and misunderstandings and is referred as a one-way process of communication. This model involves integrated as well as dependent sets of elements working together for a specific purpose. Linear model views by the author as the one identifies the main elements of communication. It comprises elements, which reduce miscommunication and misunderstandings (Barrett *et al.* 2010). This model is depicted in the diagram below.

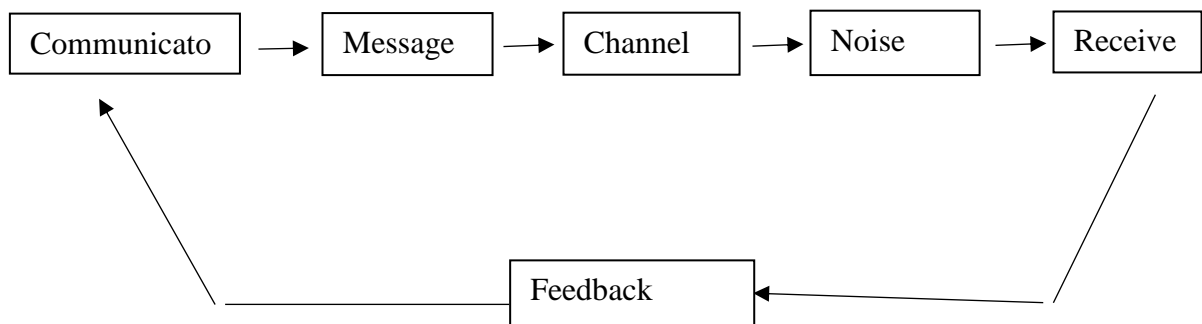


Figure 2.1: The Linear Model of Communication

Source: Weaver (1949)

In an organisational context, the manager is the communicator of the message and should send a message that is clear, accurate and properly clarified to employees. Channels of communication are the ways of sending information to employees as the receivers of job information that they need to accomplish. Employees should understand the meaning of each word of the message to respond clearly to the message.

Feedback is the outcome of the message between the manager and the employee. This takes place when the message is returned to the sender by the receiver, to establish whether the message was correctly understood. Nevertheless, the message could be interrupted by a variety of ‘noise’ factors before the employee receives the original message. In the end, the

understanding of the message should match the original idea the communicator intended to convey (Bowler & Goliath 2009).

Urmila (2010: 54) emphasised that the linear model of communication is a one-way process of communication, whereby the sender encodes the message and channels it to the receiver in the presence of noise and the noise interrupts the message. There is then no feedback to allow the continued interpretation of the information. However, the receiver needs to understand the meaning of every word in the message to respond clearly to the message.

Barrett *et al.* (2010: 2) stated that a linear model of communication is a straight-line form of communication with a distinctive starting point and an end. The sender encodes the message to the receiver through a channel and the receiver decodes the message. As noise disrupts the communication process in the channel, the receiver needs to ensure that the message is clearly understood, which emphasises a one-way process of communication between manager and employee in the workplace. Most managers use this model of communication to delegate tasks to employees with regard to the accomplishment of day-to-day duties in the workplace.

2.2.2 The Convergence model

The Convergence model of communication is the brainchild of Bormann (1972: 396). It describes communication as a two-way process in which participants substitute positions as sender and receiver of communication, thus producing the same meaning when sending and receiving feedback. In the convergence model, the sender repeats the message to the receiver and the receiver responds appropriately to the sender.

This model of communication specifies that communication is a transaction in which the meaning is created by both the sender and the receiver working together. It accentuates the issue of the sender and receiver repeatedly exchanging the messages until they reach an understanding. In this model, the sender and the receiver are both encoders and decoders of the message. There are no misunderstandings because the sender of the message selects the best suited channel of communication to send a message and the receiver understands the meaning of the message so as to respond appropriately. As mentioned, the convergence model emphasises that the sender and receiver must constantly exchange messages until they reach an understanding.

Greenberg and Baron (2010: 323) further explained this model and stated that language is a system made from codes, signs and symbols used to convey a message. These codes or systems are used to transform ideas and thoughts into a message that can be understood by other participants. The sender must select from different bodies or symbols to send a message to the receiver clearly. This might be a message in the form of spoken and written messages that embody the information the sender wants to convey. As the sender of the message, the manager may use various types of communication methods to send or write a message, including face-to-face communication, cell phones and emails.

Fielding (2014: 4) subscribes to the notion that the model is very relevant in organisational settings. The manager must send an information message to the employee that is clear and accurate through a proper channel of communication. Noise can interrupt the message before the employee receives the original message. The receiver sends the feedback back to the communicator to establish whether the employee understood the message correctly. During this process of communication, the employee must ensure that the results match the original idea of the message.

Barrett (2014: 292) concurred with the above views, stating that the convergence model of communication is a two-way process in which participants substitute positions as sender and receiver of communication by producing the same meaning when sending and receiving the message. The sender in the convergence model of communication is the one who is regularly the creator of the communication and is responsible for encoding the message. The receiver decodes the message according to his or her understanding of the matter with a clear understanding of the content and meaning of the message to untangle the message appropriately. In this, model the sender of the message and the receiver of the message are both the encoder and decoder of information.

The diagram below depicts Fielding's convergence model of communication, illustrating exactly how the information between manager and employee in an organisation is communicated to reach an understanding of the information by both parties.

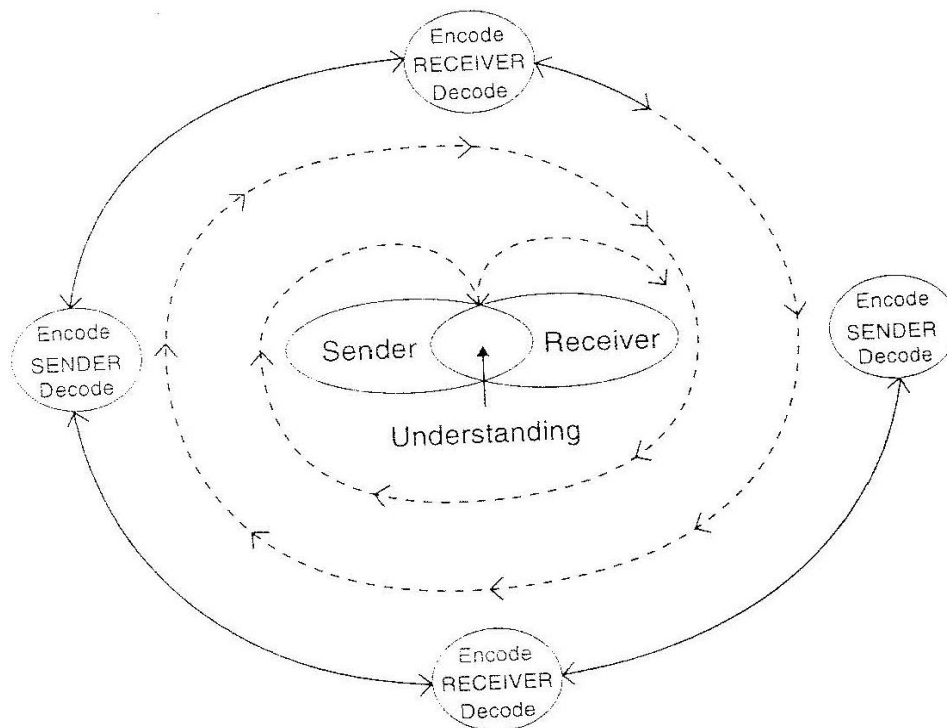


Figure 2.2: The convergence model of communication

Source: Fielding (2014)

The Convergence model of communication is applicable to this study because it stresses communication as a transaction, in which the sender and the receiver work together to design the meaning. There are times when people need to share the same meaning of words in order to communicate effectively. It emphasizes two-way communication in an organisation to guarantee effective communication. The message communicator, being the manager in this case, needs to send an accurate message and repeat the message to the receiver until the message receiver, the employee, understands the message correctly. In return, the message receiver needs to understand the message in order to respond effectively, so that the outcomes match the original idea of the message sender. Subsequently, what needs to be done in the organisation has been well-communicated and can thus be successfully implemented.

Subscribing to the convergence model, Hellriegel *et al.* (2012: 313) explained communication as a mechanism that binds employees together to convey their values and opinions, facilitating the exchange of information from one person to another. This is achieved through the use of meaningful symbols, such as communication codes and signs, to respond to the message. The authors further argued that communication can only take place when the communicator conveys

his or her thoughts and ideas in such a way that the receiver can understand easily and respond appropriately and effectively (Hellriegel *et al.* 2012: 313).

Smith and Blundel (2014: 53) confirmed that communication is the transfer of information, facts and advice from person to person, but most importantly, it is about the understanding of the idea transmitted to a person. In an organisational context, the manager needs to convey job information with clarity to avoid any misunderstanding. Clarity is the most important objective, as lack thereof might cause disharmony, while its presence ensures harmonised action, mobilises the potential of the employees and reassures trust and determination.

2.2.3 Effective communication

Prior to dealing with the topic of effective communication, it is important to first discuss communication in general and then establish how scholars have described effective communication.

According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2013: 440), communication is a human activity that binds people together, irrespective of their backgrounds. It is a method of transferring information from sender to receiver, such that the information is understood by the receiver so as to produce feedback to the sender and act according to the received message. Through communication, people are able to interact with culturally diverse people and communicate in different languages. Therefore, it is a cooperative activity among two or more people exchanging thoughts, ideas, facts, emotions and opinions, in which all participants in the shared task construct the meaning.

As to its role within government institutions and organisations, the Government Communication Policy Document (SA Government 2018: 7) states that, “communication remains key to effective and efficient government even today (for implementation of policy, programmes, services and projects).” Eisenstein (2019: 2) echoes this sentiment in an article about the importance of strong communication in local government, wherein she reminds local governments that “communication is a two-way street”, which requires listening and creating channels for feedback.

In an organisation, Frandsen and Johansen (2011: 347) view communication as a transactional process whereby managers and employees exchange messages to perform their tasks efficiently

and facilitate healthy work relationships in the establishment. In this sense, a transactional process involves the interchange of thoughts, opinions or information and ideas between managers and employees for task-oriented purposes. Communication is, therefore, an essential requirement for a productive workforce because managers in organisations use communication to convey job information to employees. The approach of transmitting information can take the form of the spoken method, non-verbal technique, written form, and visualisation.

Communication is basic to the functioning of an organisation, a phenomenon that activates and coordinates all functions of the organisation. It is a requirement that entails facts, ideas, concepts, and opinions, as well as beliefs, attitudes, instructions and even emotions that managers practice in passing on job information to the workforce within the business environment. The prime aim of communication is to ensure messages do not mislead the purpose of communication amidst the parties involved at any stage during the communication process (Butler & Rose 2011: 183).

Femi (2014: 78) concluded that communication is a collaborative process that involves the transfer of ideas, emotions, and opinions of the decoder to obtain feedback. It is a concept that requires both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, which include speaking, listening, observing, questioning, processing, analysing and evaluation to conduct a message from the sender to the recipient. This model of communication promotes cooperation in an organisation between the employer and the employee.

This discussion shows that communication is the most important tool that connects and unites people, irrespective of their backgrounds. People are able to communicate through reading, writing and sharing information from one person to another. In an organisational context, it is the mechanism used by managers to bind employees together and facilitate organisational activities. Communication plays a huge role in helping employees collaborate with each other; a glue that binds all people within the departments, irrespective of their backgrounds, where they openly share ideas, exchange information, opinions and beliefs and share different cultural customs (Kim & Feamster 2013: 114).

When the message communicated has achieved the desired results, communication is understood to be effective. Furthermore, achieving a proper understanding of each other by those involved, enabling team work; being able to listen to one another, create the same

meaning and learn to develop mutual expectations in order to achieve a common goal, is all proof that communication has been effective (Husain 2013: 41). Bourne (2016: 431) emphasised the need for openness in sharing ideas, feelings, facts, and advice, as well as news within the business system, using proper channels of communication. It is a means of representing people's attitudes and opinions, while fostering positive behaviour towards a common goal. The primary goal in any organisation is to generate profits and the drivers of this are its employees. Thus, there should be no misunderstandings in the value chain.

The main elements of effective communication that emanate from the above discussion are: sharing of ideas; regular feedback; open channels of communication and recognition of employee opinions. Both the Linear and the Convergence models are founded on these.

i. To share ideas and information

Brown (2013: 17) stated that the process of sharing ideas and information in the workplace takes place between two people or in a team, working together to accomplish a common goal. It is the most important tool that managers use to involve employees in decision-making. However, managers need to involve employees at the beginning of projects when sharing information about projects, as sharing information with individuals and between teams on the one hand unites them, forms a dialogue, and encourages collaboration. It is done through meetings and brainstorming sessions where employees exchange information and offer their perspectives and expertise to solve common problems. On the other hand, the sharing of ideas and information assists new employees with knowledge and helps them understand how the organisation operates at a high level. This requires proper channels of communication in the workplace to be in place to ensure communication is effective.

Cacciattolo (2015: 80) described proper listening as a process that requires concentration and good listening skills, so that employees correctly and accurately capture messages and on-the-job information that their managers communicate to them. Managers need to listen to employees to facilitate a bi-directional flow of information, as managers with poor listening skills are more likely to threaten their working relationship with employees. Uncertainty builds aversion that may result in demotivated employees and high employee turnover. When managers listen to employees and respond positively to their inputs as part of an open-door policy, employees are more inclined to believe and trust their managers. Furthermore, trust between managers and employees increases performance. Moreover, listening helps employees

accomplish their duties effectively, while clarity assists employees to maintain concentration when performing tasks (Soeker *et al.* 2016: 569).

In summary, the convergence model of communication allows employees to share information and ideas with experts from different departments of the organisation. Employees share their knowledge on how to accomplish their performance tasks during brainstorming sessions. Proper listening engages the convergence model of communication because both parties are the encoders and decoders of the message. The sender needs to send a clear message to the receiver and the receiver is required to listen to the message properly to interpret the message correctly, in order that the feedback will match the original idea of the message sender.

ii. To provide regular feedback to employees

Greenberg (2011: 323) affirmed that feedback is a two-way communication because the sender sends a message and the receiver responds to the message. In an organisational context, managers provide feedback in a form of two-way communication to their employees. With two-way communication, everyone is in the position of giving and receiving feedback, but in one-way communication, feedback on performance is delayed; employees become defensive and bored. Feedback is one of the key factors that affects employee performance, not only because of the motivational aspect embedded therein but because it increases job performance and job satisfaction. Receiving feedback is essential in an organisation for the improvement and completion of tasks. It is an appropriate method for managers to provide regular and honest feedback to employees. Furthermore, Greenberg (2011: 340) is of the view that feedback is effective when employees feel their contribution is valued by the management in an organisation.

Wuim-Pam (2014: 49) mentioned that providing employees with regular feedback has two positive effects, with it firstly being a way of improving performance and possibly adjusting problems emanating in an organisation as well as, secondly, to release a tense atmosphere. For this reason, managers needed to provide feedback in a manner that will assist employees to improve their performance, since different employees respond differently to different approaches. Managers should thus provide information in the form of feedback either formally or informally, for each task accomplished.

According to Barton, Schofield, Mc Hleer and Ajjawi (2016: 67), feedback is the primary source of communication that managers use to encourage or shape employee performance and behaviour to produce organisational success. It is an influential tool central to many functions at the workplace as it guides, motivates and rewards employee behaviour by making employees alert to what they are doing and how best to reach their goals. This method stresses the requirement of the two-way communication system in the communication process.

However, one-way feedback communication is often characterised by a lack of communication, whether in the form of instructions, interjections, through memos and letters. The impact of feedback in an organisation is instrumental in facilitating employee performance, particularly in finalising decisions among the parties involved to either correct any problems or encourage the employee to comprehend giving their best at all time (Brian 2016: 2).

Ajjawi, Molloy, Bearman and Rees (2017: 132) contended that provision of proper feedback to employees about their performance changes employees' negative attitudes and behaviours. Management should compensate employees that perform over and above their duties. This will inspire them to perform their duties exceptionally and boost their confidence in their performance.

Ajjawi *et al.* (2017) stressed that provision of feedback to employees by the manager is very important as it assists them to correct small mistakes before they escalate and prevents tension between manager and employee. Over and above that, after the provision of feedback to employees, managers ought to identify those lacking skills and provide them with skills training related to their jobs to enhance their skills and knowledge. Management and employees need to work together as a team, be honest with one another, trust each other and create a good working relationship to achieve effective communication and successful employee performance.

The impact of feedback in an organisation is thus instrumental in facilitating employee performance, particularly in finalising decision-making among the parties involved. Feedback in communication is a two-way process of communication characterised by a sender and a receiver of the message. In an organisation, the manager provides feedback in the form of two-way communication to employees. This is done due to two-way communication allowing every

employee to give and receive feedback, rather than one-way communication that delays feedback and once it is due, employees become defensive and bored.

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014: 175), feedback is the main tool to achieve effective communication in an organisation because it implements more goal-setting theories, which clearly indicates the significance of managers providing regular feedback to employees. It places emphasis on clear specific goals that should be accomplished by employees effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, provision of feedback to employees increases participation in organisational objectives. Goal-setting evidently improves employee performance when clearly defined. The more employees are involved and committed to goal setting, the more their attitudes improve towards their managers and trust in each other.

iii. To establish channels of communication

Agarwal (2010: 32) stated that a channel of communication is a systemic approach through which people in the organisation communicate. In an organisation, the assumption of conveying a message or system of interaction from one person to another must be clearly defined, particularly where job descriptions, task performance and other operational activities are concerned.

The dimension of a channel of communication may take the form of personal communication that involves the physical presence or a direct one-on-one encounter between the speaker and the recipient. The best channel details the degree or extent of comprehension of an idea or message, as parties involved can evaluate whether the information possesses ambiguity or a clear understanding. Managers and employees use policies, letters, memoranda, and manuals, as well as notices and announcements, as written means of communication. Agarwal and Scheers suggest that irrespective of the approach of disseminating information, the thoughts must be conveyed in a proper manner without losing meaning (Scheers 2011: 5048).

According to Hellriegel *et al.* (2012: 224), communication flows in different directions in an organisation, such as an upward channel of communication, downward channel, sideways, and horizontal. All these channels form the structure of the organisation and their communication is linked to one another. The different styles use diverse contexts when communicating within their organisations, depending on the situation and on the issues at the time or moment, such as meetings in boardrooms and staffrooms. The results depend on the message the sender sends to

the receiver, whether he or she interprets or understands the message correctly, so that the outcomes and the decoding of the original message is the same as the original message.

Urban and Naidoo (2012: 148) referred to the channel of communication as “the approach through which information is effectively conveyed within an organisation.” It is undeniable that effective communication plays a vibrant role as the lifeblood of employees. However, transmitting effective communication can be viewed under two major systems of classification, internal and external business systems. On the one hand, the internal channel within the business system adopts the use of memoranda, internal emails, newsletters, and face-to-face gatherings to pass information amongst the managers, employees, and communication amidst peers. On the other hand, external channels centre on the approach of interacting with people outside the confines of business, such as attending to potential clients. The approach of relating to people in this regard includes broadcast media, public enlightenment, articles and books. When information is incomplete, business activities will suffer a setback.

Marini, Folger, Garcia and Rizzi (2012: 234) referred to channels of communication as the manner of flowing information or messages within an organisational system. In an organisation, the process through which information flows is synonymous with the attitude and the perceptions through which the sender applies in passing the message to the receiver.

Regardless of the system adopted in passing messages, Marini *et al.* (2012) determined that managers must be resourceful, be active listeners, be able to read, speak and write, in order to get their thinking across to other people within the business environment. The flow of information from the top-down and bottom-up in the organisation’s hierarchical structure creates a communication channel within the structures of the organisation. This system of communication forms a critical arrangement, usually determined by the management of the organisation. Therefore, the sustainability of an organisation depends on the systematic flow of messages through communication channels that ensure effective and efficient ways of delivering a message.

Channels of communication can be downward, which Hellriegel *et al.* (2012: 450) explain as a system of directing information and activities of the organisation from a higher to a lower level. Managers use this type of communication to instruct employees, to inform them about the mission and the goals of the organisation. It also encourages management to accept and change

attitudes and ideas; it allows management to evaluate employee performance. Common types of downward communication include employee handbooks, work procedures, protocol letters, and memoranda, along with employee interviews, committee meetings, and new orientation programmes.

Fielding (2014: 48) argued that this system of communication provides a connection between the manager and the employee. Managers use this type of communication to assign goals, to demonstrate job instructions and to inform employees with regard to organisational policies and procedures. To run their organisations smoothly and achieve their goals, managers depend on the linear theory in downward communication as it assists managers to coordinate departmental activities. In downward communication, supervisors tend to change messages before it reaches the employer or the employee. Sometimes, employees are unable to untangle long and complicated messages from managers in respect of the accomplishment of tasks (Conrad 2014: 105).

Downward communication can be problematic, as Lo *et al.* (2017: 576) observed. For example, downward communication has limited channels of communication; when employees want to express their concern to top management they have to go through their supervisors and line managers to reach top management. In this process, they face the risk of having their message changed to suit the supervisor/manager presenting the message. Furthermore, employees at lower levels have different educational backgrounds that create problems when the manager provides feedback and the employee misinterprets the message.

Lo *et al.* (2017: 576) opined that as a result, employees will be discouraged from sending messages via supervisors and managers. In this approach, managers must avoid long messages and try to simplify information for employees to understand it correctly. In some cases, they do not guarantee that the message (information) sent to employees is received as intended because the message passes through many channels prior to reaching subordinates during the process. It may be exaggerated or misunderstood; for that reason, they need to escape long channels of communication to minimise misunderstandings and incorrect information flow of the message. It is more of a linear model of communication because within this model of communication there is a middle person between management and the employee.

There can also be upward channels of communication, where information flows from the lower levels of the organisation to top management. In this type of communication channel, managers need to establish a good upward communication channel and ensure communication is vibrant for the success of the organisation (Flaherty *et al.* 2012: 30), It provides an open-door policy to allow employees to go directly to the higher levels of the hierarchy without reporting to supervisors or line managers. In addition, certain kinds of communication tools are provided with upward communication. These include letters, employee opinions, suggestion boxes, and open-door mentorship, as well as counselling, and participative problems-solving groups.

Upward communication assesses individual performance and is used to evaluate whether a team is in line with organisational standards. To ensure the effective flow of information through the various channels of communication in an organisation, it is important that a manager is able to convey his or her ideas and then listens, absorbs, gleans and further communicates with employees to ensure effective communication. The main objective of upward communication is to allow the higher structures to be aware of what is happening at ground level. Every employee within the organisation is involved and upward communication additionally ensures that the decision-making process is collective (Corbett, Cornelissen, Delios and Harley 2014: 6).

Open channels of communication in an organisation thus allow employees to communicate with their managers regarding work issues that affect their performance. Managers use downward communication to pass messages to employees and upward communication permits employees to voice their needs to managers directly, without first communicating with their supervisors.

Channels of communication keep employees informed in relation to organisational standards and policies of the organisation. They promote a good relationship between the manager and the employee, increase productivity, changing employee perceptions and attitudes. Open channels of communication influence communication effectiveness in two ways; formal and informal communication.

vi. To recognise employee opinions

According to Salie and Schlechter (2012: 3), recognition of employee opinions refers to a system of acknowledging employee opinions as an individual employee or that of a team on formal and informal participation in decision-making, performance, and accomplishment of

tasks that support the organisational goals, values and its objectives. Employee opinions are recognised by managers, particularly on suggestions made by employees with regard to job satisfaction and job performance. Salie and Schlechter (2012) suggested that recognition of employee opinions is a way of motivating workers to put in their absolute best.

Tessema, Ready and Embaye (2013: 3) agreed that recognition of employee opinions implies a commendation accorded to an individual on behaviour, particularly on a personal measure that makes him or her worthy of appreciation. This is a positive accomplishment, which serves as an inspiration for good performance. For recognition to meet the expected outcome, the organisation needs to afford it the required consideration and time.

Carter, Armenakis, Field and Mossholder (2013: 943) specified that most managers only recognise employee opinions that indicate collaboration among employees, show decency and reliability. This process takes place during the implementation process, when managers are conveying job information to their employees. Managers also have an opportunity to recognise employee opinions when providing regular feedback, as well as when addressing personal problems employees might be facing. In this way, employees feel their opinions are recognised and valued by their managers.

Ndungu (2017: 49) argued that recognition of employee opinions plays a significant role in organisational success. In addition, conceding to employee satisfaction, as well as motivating workers - specifically those who are competent, is a major way of increasing organisational productivity. Recognising employee opinions is a way of fostering good communication, better cooperation, increased level of confidence, and inspired loyalty and commitment levels towards reaching strategic goals. A manager must connect with their employees at all times for the purpose of determining their worth and maintain the possible means to perform progressively (Ndungu 2017: 66). This relates well to the convergence model.

2.2.4 The Importance of Effective Communication in an organisation

Effective communication firstly requires commitment from top management and across the entire organisation, which increases productivity and is catalytic to employee performance (Fussell & Kreuz 2014: 6).

According to Hellriegel (2012: 9) and Femi (2014: 75), introducing effective communication strategies is likely to enable managers to implement their managerial functions successfully and resourcefully. The authors stress that effective communication is a dynamic and continuous process that runs throughout the organisational success, a pillar that leads to good performance by employees.

Through effective communication, managers are able to formulate suitable policies and implement strategies that improve communication skills. Managers design new strategies of communicating with their subordinates. Therefore, managers should ensure that effective communication is a two-way process between the manager and the employee. It is a vital instrument that helps to build the relationship between the manager and an employee in the workplace. Without effective communication, managers are unable to implement their managerial duties such as planning, organising, leading and controlling (Kim & Feamster 2013: 6; Chandeka 2015: 15).

Lisita and Prinsloo (2015a: 28) argued that effective communication is said to be effective when the sender of information transmits ideas to the recipient and such a person is able to decode, understand and exhibit action or meaningful behaviour as a response or feedback. From the business point of view, Cacciattolo (2015: 79) supports that effective communication is the combination of both personal traits and organisational aspects to ensure an effective management system. In this regard, managers should create an accurate picture of tasks to be performed with clarity so that the message is not affected. Additionally, where communication is inaccurate, cooperation may be lacking among employees (Johnson 2016: 3).

Part of forming an organisation is harmonising people of like minds to come together to work as a team towards achieving collective progression, although they may be different in terms of ethnicity, education, religion, and gender, along with marital status, skills, ability, and income levels. The duty of a manager is to combine people of similar minds who are resourceful and effective to form a team that works towards realising organisational objectives. Teams that are unified easily strategise effective means of communication to reduce conflict with the domain of the business (Bourne 2016: 433).

Teams that are born from effective communication also result in added advantages such as creativity, ingenuity and resourceful productivity (Bourne 2016: 433). A good working

environment is created (Manzoor, Ullah, Hussain & Ahmed 2011: 110) and even the most complex tasks are accomplished (Leasure *et al.* 2013: 88). In teams, employees can share, transfer or acquire knowledge, skills, experience and abilities in the interest of organisational goals. In addition, they can accept joint responsibility for goal-oriented purposes (Tan & Lau 2012: 57).

Scholarly work reviewed reveals that organisations use effective communication as their new turn-around strategic tool to change employee performance as it creates clear goals. Furthermore, effective communication facilitates collaboration between employees and departments, ensuring that managers perform their duties effectively. In addition, it ensures meaningful behaviour in employees and enhances teamwork. Managers should guarantee that an effective communication process is energetic when performing their managerial duties to ensure the success and sustainability of the organisation. These functions are planning processes that include major organisational objectives, with recommendations on ways to reach targeted objectives; such as to establish the overall future direction for the organisation. Effective communication categorises organisational resources in order to achieve its goals and the organised task must be completed to achieve goals.

Teamwork also builds cohesiveness, which, according to Van Zoonen, van der Meer and Verhoeven (2014: 850) is a relational attitude between team members or employees in an organisation and an idea that reveals the degree to which employees aspire to work, in achieving business excellence. Nevertheless, the success of the business hinges on the connection and understanding between employees to trust one another in expressing opinions and respect for one another within the business circle. Therefore, managers must be observant to establish whether employees are unified, especially in a team discussion or role-play within a subgroup in a cohesive unit (Müceldili & Erdil 2015: 513).

Harmonious brainstorming that takes place at team level means employees contribute a personal approach, which improves the manner of realising personal goals in an organisation. Managers, in the spirit of harmony, thus have a greater responsibility to put together views, thoughts and opinions of people from the team thinking or deliberation. The main purpose of brainstorming in an organisation is to exert key points on which decision-making is displayed totally to the organisational action plan (Moulin, Kaeri, Sugawara & Abel 2016: 217). Through effective communication in an organisation, employees acquire knowledge, skills and experience during

brainstorming sessions from different experts of other departments in order to accelerate their experiences.

It is thus confirmed that for effective communication to be successful within the business system there must be a cordial relationship between the team, where employees have freedom of speech to relate issues, express themselves and reason with one another. It is required that they work together on task performance as well as responding to each other in the form of feedback, while avoiding the elements that can cause ambiguity in message transmission. One of the approaches of creating an organisational bond between employees and management is working together as a team. This is to boost employee morale within the business environment to engage in active participation. To ensure the effectiveness of teamwork everyone in the organisation engages in the function of team-building and performance.

The above discussion has shown that organisations, whether corporate or governmental, can be run successfully only when effective organisational communication takes place. Organisational employees are the ones who drive this success; this means they must operate at their full potential. It is thus necessary to look at both what government communication policy encompasses, in reference to the municipal sphere, as well as what employee performance is.

2.3 Government Communication Policy in reference to municipalities

There are several communication policies encapsulated in the Government Communication Policy document (SA Government 2018), with all focused solely on government organisations and institutions. The policy document was set out by GCIS, as part of the 2030 NDP, with GCIS “responsible for the annual monitoring of national/provincial and local government communication performance; and for a five-year review of impact and effectiveness of the Communication Policy” (SA Government 2018: 10).

According to the communications policy document provided by GCIS:

Effective communication can also contribute positively to government endeavours – leading to good governance, improved internal staff and external citizen/stakeholder morale, and contributing towards meeting government’s aims and objectives. It further builds public trust and confidence in the integrity of government and can be used to challenge any negative perceptions that might exist in the public space.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) provides the framework for communication within the South African environment and regards freedom of expression and the public's right to information as fundamental rights. Nonetheless, democratic principles of openness and participation are drivers of government communication, which is guided by the basic principles of transparency, accountability and consultation. The aim being to improve coordination of communication activities among the three government spheres.

Nonetheless, each municipality is mandated to draft its own communication strategy and submit this to the District/Provincial for approval, in order to make use of available facilities, financial allocations and existing infrastructure. "Costed communication plans must be signed off by the appropriate authorities within a government institution" (SA Government 2018: 15).

It needs to be understood that government policies are, in effect, structured guidelines because the constitution of each municipality is unique, comprising various communication methods particular to their environment and location. In this regard, the policy document specifies that "adequate resources must be allocated to the communication function, based on the communication's strategic plan and the size of the institution." The term 'adequate' is specified as one to five percent of the institutional budget, with instruction that the communication budget "must be ring-fenced. In addition to other standard items, the communication's budget should include funding for adequate staff to fulfil the strategic communications function, training and the internal communication function" (SA Government 2018: 10).

2.3.1 Policy and strategy

Distinction needs to be made between policy and strategy. Policy is explained by the communication document as: "...a set of rules that guide decision-making in any organisation and provide the blueprint for how an organisation will operate. A policy is developed to ensure that processes, procedures and deliverables are consistent across an organisation" (SA Government 2018: 8).

The policy document further states that strategy determines "the path and/or the actions that must be taken for the organisation to be able to reach its goals" (SA Government 2018: 8). Nonetheless, numerous diverse strategies can be used to accomplish organisational goals. While the Communication Policy gives particulars of the "rules, processes and procedures on how communication will operate within government departments and across the three spheres –

national, provincial and local,” when developing a communication strategy for government, it also serves as the framework. The strategy is updated once a year and drafted every five years.

2.3.2 Development Communication

According to the policy document (SA Government 2018: 19): “GCIS is the custodian of government’s communication and must ensure that all spheres, agencies and entities adhere to the principles, policies and standards established for an effective communication system.” The GCIS, drafted the Communication Policy to “strengthen government communications so as to deliver on its mandate. This is in line with a developmental communication approach adopted by government” (SA Government 2018: 7).

The policy document describes development communication as

Founded on the principle that citizens/the community should participate actively in communication activities that directly impact their lives. The approach is educational not instructional – in this instance it is government that must interact and provide the public with socioeconomic and developmental information so that they are able to make sound judgements about their lives/livelihoods. In these interactions, government must listen to citizens, answer their queries and give feedback about progress so as to encourage positive change within communities (SA Government 2018: 8)

In addition, a study by Molale (2019: 72) in reference to “Participatory communication in South African municipal government” has also shown that “participation, dialogue and empowerment are part and parcel of participatory communication and cannot be viewed in isolation, or detached from, the said paradigm of development communication.”

The aim of the government communication policy is to safeguard that, at all levels of government, communication is not only well-integrated, but also rational, aligned and consistent. In addition, communication has to be uniform, transformative, and principled and open, while encouraging participation. It must, furthermore, be professional, plausible, managed effectively, and impactful, while also meeting all citizens’ needs.

2.3.3 Medium-Term Strategic Framework

The Communication Policy provides specifics for all spheres of government when developing a communication strategy, which is updated once a year and drafted every five years and also serves as the framework, with reference to the “rules, processes and procedures on how communications will operate...” (SA Government 2018). For each municipal communications strategy and its accompanying budgetary requirements to be authorised and implemented, the municipality has to submit its strategy document for approval.

Submissions are made under the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), which contains a comprehensive plan for a 5-year period and is Cabinet approved. This framework focuses on and sets targets for government priorities, with due consideration for deadline dates and budgets (MTSF 2014-2019).

The MTSF, as the principal guide for resource planning and allocation across all spheres of government, has 14 priority outcomes that cover those focus areas as presented in the NDP, which are:

1. Quality basic education;
2. Improving health outcomes;
3. Reducing crime;
4. Creating jobs;
5. Developing the skills needed by the economy;
6. Development of infrastructure required by the economy;
7. Rural development;
8. Sustainable human settlements;
9. Effective and efficient local government;
10. Public service that is effective and efficient;
11. The environment;
12. International relations;
13. Social development; and
14. Social cohesion and nation-building.

The SA Government Communications Policy document (SA Government 2018: 15) states that, “...all national and provincial departments as well as municipalities have to, by law, produce

5-year strategic and annual performance plans and report against these.” All five-year strategic and annual performance plans of the three spheres of government are aligned to the NDP through the MSTF.

2.3.4 National Communication Strategy Framework

The National Communication Strategy Framework (NCSF) outlines a communications vision and approach for government, which is informed by both the MTSF and the NDP (SA Government 2018: 13). In addition, the NCSF provides communication tactics that take the role of the GCIS into consideration, along with the manner in which intergovernmental communication, as well as communication at provincial and local level can be strengthened, together with the building of partnerships.

The communication policy document states that the plan advanced to support these tactics requires that communications planning is integrated at management level into strategic departmental planning. In other words, institutions are to ensure that communicators must be included in planning meetings because “Communication is a professional function and should not be subject to the volatility that is a feature of the political environment. Instead, communication (and the communicator’s role) should be seen as permanent, consistent and stable” (SA Government 2018: 9).

In order for this to work, the policy document further states that “Communication units must be established at national and provincial government, as well as at district and metro councils, with communicators responsible for the media relations and community liaison functions....At least one communicator must be employed to manage the communication function at local municipal level.” The function of communicators is outlined in the policy document (SA Government 2018: 10) to include participation in “all strategic decision-making bodies at the political/administrative interface and in those communication structures that have been set up internally to realise the communication objectives of government.” Furthermore, this includes “those structures that integrate and coordinate government communication activities across the three spheres in support of government’s service delivery objectives.”

Other matters outlined in the Government Communication Policy document (SA Government 2018) include rules, regulations, roles and responsibilities regarding media engagement, online

communication platforms, crisis communication and marketing and campaign management, as well as internal communication and research.

Internal communication platforms feature both formal and informal means of communication. On the one hand, formal communication is described as taking place through established channels in an organisation, which could be through meetings called by recognised authorities and/or through written communication. On the other hand, informal communication is normally built around social relationships and is usually oral.

The policy document details that the internal communication strategic plan “must indicate the channels/platforms the entity will use in order to communicate specific campaigns and/or information. Platforms can include but must not be limited to notice/bulletin boards, newsletters/magazines, letters/ Circulars and videos/in-house TV, along with audio recordings. This also incorporates emails and intranet, presentations, team-building and, as well as focus groups and employee-attitude surveys. Additional platforms comprise group meetings, face-to-face meeting with managers and general staff meetings, along with social events and social media (SA Government 2018: 52).

While the policy document provides guidelines and outlines compliance means and measures, the only manner in which effective implementation can be judged successful is to measure its impact on employee performance. Moreover, the CGIS is mandated by government to set up a performance management system (PMS) that will be used across government to measure the performance of the Head of Communication (HoC), senior management and communicators. It also has to provide departments/provinces/municipalities with a set of communication indicators that can be used to measure performance (SA Government 2018: 19).

The next section examines employee performance, as well as monitoring and evaluation thereof, whilst also setting out barriers encountered within organisations.

2.4 Conceptualising employee performance

Employee performance is guided by many theories such as the classical theories and human relations. These theories guide organisations on how to minimise misunderstandings between managers and employees. One such theory is the goal setting theory by Edwin Locke (1960). Goal setting, according to this theorist, is the motivational key to an individual’s task

performance in the workplace. Furthermore, performance is higher when individuals are set with specific, open, and measurable goals in line with organisational goals. Moreover, clear goal clarification leads to greater output and better performance. Nevertheless, goals must be truthful, inspiring and generate a feeling of pride and willingness by employees towards achievement.

Self-esteem, according to Armstrong and Taylor (2014: 175), increases confidence and potential to task performance. During this process, employees will further be motivated by receiving regular feedback. Most importantly, employees must participate in goal setting, where they have the opportunity to share ideas as that gives them a sense of ownership of the set goals, making them more committed.

This is why scholars such as Eisenberger and Stinglhamber (2011: 256) posit that employee performance is the degree to which an employee contributes towards the achievement of organisational goals (Hilman 2015: 385) or the extent to which an employee participates in the attainment of organisational goals. Saleem and Amin (2013: 194) added that employee performance in an organisational context is referred to as the duties and tasks performed by employees in an efficient and effective manner to achieve organisational goals.

Thomas (2015: 8) contributed to the discourse stating that employee performance refers to responsibilities or roles, which entails that employees have a willing attitude, the skills and the required knowledge to perform the necessary duties. In addition, Waiyaki (2017: 17) stated that employee performance is a continuous process for improving the performance of individuals by aligning the actual performance with the desired strategic organisational goals through a variety of means such as standard-setting, appraisal and evaluation.

As a continuous process of improving knowledge and skills, it means TD and mentoring must take place. There should also be intervals where performance is measured (Fayad and Lam 2013: 14). Where necessary, interventions to enhance performance must be taken.

As the custodian of government's communication, the GCIS must ensure that "all spheres, agencies and entities adhere to the principles, policies and standards established for an effective communication system" (SA Government 2018: 19). Furthermore, the role of the GCIS includes, amongst others, setting up a PMS, used across government to measure the

performance of the HoC, senior management and communicators. However, it must also provide departments, provinces and municipalities with a set of communication indicators that can be used to measure performance.

As explained by Nzimakwe and Ntshakala (2016: 114) performance management in local government considers the following key aspects as part of a broader PMS, namely monitoring, evaluation, rating, rewarding and reporting.

2.4.1 Monitoring of employee performance

Activities and projects in an effective organisation are monitored continually. To achieve this requires consistent measurement of performance and the provision of on-going feedback to employees and work groups on their progress toward reaching their goals. Nzimakwe and Ntshakala (2016: 114) added that “the regulatory requirements for monitoring performance include conducting progress reviews with employees where their performance is compared against their elements and set standards.”

Monitoring is, therefore, a continuous process by which managers obtain regular feedback on the improvement made towards the accomplishment of organisational objectives. Employee performance monitoring is the most important function of human resource management (HRM) because it contributes to the operative decision-making of individuals and of the team in order to attain organisational goals. Monitoring serves as a primary aspect and measure of organisational growth and development (Ramukumba 2014: 20).

Rafer and Kolech (2015: 29) observed that during this process, managers are expected to execute the main task of monitoring the performance of their employees in order to uplift organisational progress. Therefore, management needs to involve employees during the planning and implementation processes, while also providing employees with clear instructions and adequate resources, in addition to planning employee duties on time. Performance should, in addition, be regularly overseen, with monthly or annual progress reviews and positive suggestions provided to improve performance (Putnam, Fairhurst & Banghart 2016: 67).

Roth, Bobko, Van Iddekinge and Thatcher (2016: 269) stated that managers ought to provide employees with daily feedback that will help them accomplish their task efficiently. The authors added that, in order to remind employees about the importance of achieving those goals,

management should provide TD that focuses on improving employee skills. Managers should, furthermore, show appreciation in a manner that will change employee behaviour, attitudes and perceptions. In addition, managers ought to also check employee performance at all times, in order to identify any problems before they escalate. Lastly, managers should reward employees that perform above and beyond their duties in order to make them feel appreciated and valued, which uplifts their level of performance (Donegan, Ganon & Johnson 2017: 169).

Ko (2015: 66) pointed out that employee performance can be measured on a quarterly or annual basis to ensure employees are in line with organisational objectives and are constantly improving their performance. After the quarterly performance, review processes take place and managers are able to provide proper feedback on areas that need improvement and identify a number of factors that affect employee performance, such as organisational support for career development, supervisor support, monetary benefits and training programmes. Current managers are aware of the details that employee performance is the most important factor behind any organisational success (Makki *et al.* 2015: 1008).

Performance is described by Shipley and Kovacs (2008: 217 cited in Nzimakwe and Ntshakala (2016: 113) as “one of the principles or characteristics of governance and it refers to the ability of the responsible agency to undertake required functions and the capacity to undertake a regular and comprehensive review of progress towards goals, and to respond to findings.”

Where local government is concerned, the platform on which communication opportunities are identified, allowing government communicators to plan across all spheres and sectors of government, is the National Government Communicators’ Forum (NGCF). This is achieved “through substantive discussions and joint planning to fulfil the government’s commitment to accelerating service delivery to ensure a better life for all. It forms part of the formal cycle of the system that determines the strategic approach and messaging for government communications” (SA Government 2018: 20).

The NGCF is a strategic meeting of government communicators from national government departments and the provincial core teams. In shaping and delivering the NGCF programme and content areas, the policy document (SA Government 2018: 20) states that, “The meetings of GCF should discuss the communication strategy and provide

a framework for monitoring compliance and implementation by all government departments.”2.4.2 Evaluating and enhancing employee performance.

The purpose of this study is to establish effective communication as catalyst for employee performance in selected municipalities in the KZN province. However, literature reviewed shows there are other factors worth mentioning that are applicable at the other end of employee performance. These are factors such as task performance, where the employee is evaluated on the planned daily activities linked to the job description, which can be easily achieved when the employee is provided with adequate resources (Rashid, Rahman & Khalid 2014: 499). This evaluation leads to an establishment of how an individual’s performance can be improved and the kind of intervention needed. The main aim of evaluation is to measure progress in order to regulate the strengths and weaknesses of employees. The evaluation process includes assessment of attitudes, moral and ethical behaviour, as well as task performance.

In reference to local governance, Nzimakwe and Ntshakala (2016: 114) described evaluation as “an in-depth process of investigation which assesses whether or not the stated objectives have been reached, and the nature of the process undertaken. It is the comparison of actual project impacts against the agreed strategic plans, considering what was planned, what was achieved and how it was achieved.”

Performance evaluation is defined by Nzimakwe and Ntshakala (2016: 114) as a “cyclical process”, starting with strategic planning and moving through programme implementation and monitoring to performance evaluation, with planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting alignment a critical element of good resource management. The authors assert that performance evaluation shows whether the organisation or its departments is managing to achieve their strategic plan objectives or outcomes.

Employee attitudes do come into play in the process of performing duties. These include employee opinions, beliefs, and feelings towards different aspects of the work environment (Farzeena, Ahmad & Anwar 2015: 85). Attitudes in the workplace are the most important part in the achievement of organisational goals and can be articulated from different perspectives in the workplace, such as from the manager to the employee or the other way around. Employees with a positive attitude in the workplace will generally think of a better way to accomplish tasks more easily and tend to produce a better quality of work, thus increasing productivity. An

attitude that does not conform to acceptable standards may manifest as a symptom of poor performance.

Ethical behaviour of employees plays a big part in performance as it deals with values that control individual behaviour in the workplace by managing their conduct in all levels and aspects of the workplace, irrespective of their position within an organisation. This behaviour is guided by the principles of honesty, fairness, equality, dignity and respect (Donegan *et al.* 2017: 170) and should be monitored and evaluated so as to apply corrective measures.

There are several methods used in evaluating performance, such as 360-degree evaluation, through which performance feedback is obtained from different parties in the organisation. The parties are the employee's subordinates, colleagues and supervisors. In addition, the employee has to also self-evaluate.

In the municipal setting, compliance with policy implementation of the approved communications strategy is "subject to both an internal and external audit; managed internally through a self-assessment tool and standard performance management systems of each government entity" (SA Government 2018: 10). GCIS will, moreover, be responsible for the monitoring of communication performance by national, provincial and local government, as well as a five-year review of the Communication Policy's impact and effectiveness.

Phillips and Goldman (2014: 8) had previously highlighted the lack of monitoring and evaluation units still encountered within certain municipalities, even with the DPMA having been created in 2010 and the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) adopted by Cabinet at the end of 2011. Furthermore, the authors noted that "Interest in evaluation is growing with more departments involved, more provinces, and more types of evaluation." Results from the MPAT for 2011-2012 in fact showed a six percent increase in departments using or planning evaluations, from 13 percent in 2011, to 19 percent in 2012.

To ensure independence and so the credibility of the findings, Phillips and Goldman (2014: 7) explained that,

...evaluations are implemented as a partnership between the department(s) concerned and DPME. A Steering Committee makes decisions on the evaluation and external

service providers undertake the evaluation. Therefore, in order to ensure quality, 13 guidelines and templates have been developed to provide minimum standards and there are peer reviewers (normally two) per evaluation...

In addition, evaluation standards were developed, along with an evaluation for procurement of service providers to conduct the evaluations.

The development of a guideline for planning implementation programmes and for departments to do design evaluation, according to Phillips and Goldman (2014: 8), would have a major impact, while work with Parliament was described as also significant, with committees starting to request departments to present evaluation results. However, several challenges have been encountered, including some departments being sensitive about the results and others detailed below. This study agrees with the authors that, “The next stage is to see how departments implement the recommendations of the evaluations” (Phillips and Goldman 2014: 8).

The policy document (SA Government 2018) further detailed that the GCIS would develop communication performance standards in tandem with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). In addition, the DPME was mandated to also carry out “an evaluation of the impact of evaluations,” to determine whether evaluations impact programme performance and the effects thereof (Phillips and Goldman 2014: 8). The performance standards will form part of the self-assessment Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) which, as outlined in the government’s communication policy document, GCIS will also moderate.

2.5 Barriers to employee performance

The main barriers to performance identified in the literature are: access to equipment and resources (Sadikoglu & Olcay 2014: 4); ambiguous policies and poor channels of communication (Pfeiffer, Zorbach & Carley 2014: 117); overloading employees with information (Landy & Conte 2016: 81) and unfair treatment (Neucleers, Mulder and Hindrinks 2017: 112).

Additional barriers identified by Phillips and Goldman (2014: 6) include that problems are not treated as opportunities for learning and improvement, and M&E is regarded as the job of the M&E unit rather than all managers. Further to this, “M&E is seen as policing and controlling

with M&E units perceived as having little if any influence. These all point to the challenge in using M&E as a strategic function to inform policy and decision-making”.

Jarvis (2016: 27) highlighted a further barrier, finding that the municipality studied seemed to have “more administrative policies than service delivery policies which in itself is already a problem, as emphasis on administrative process means that these activities occupy the municipal officials...” The present study concurs with Jarvis (2016: 27) that this problem is nevertheless “encountered throughout the country” and will, inevitably, intensify as the elections approach. This is when political interference and manoeuvring become additional barriers to effective communication, affecting service delivery even more, as it becomes a repeated ‘political promise’ in processes and campaigns of political canvassing. Nonetheless, where the environment is widely dispersed and rural, executing any activities in support of effective communication could be problematic and frustrating, making it difficult for a municipality to then follow the outlined steps

2.6 Concluding summary

The above discussion on effective communication and employee performance, shows consensus in literature that effective communication and employee performance are interconnected in an organisation (Fayad & Lam 2013: 14). Effective communication is essential for successful organisations as it affects the ability of strategic management to engage employees and achieve objectives (Welch & Jackson 2007: 177). Communication is naturally used to identify and communicate the strategy and goals of organisational processes and those of the management. As a result, everyone has a common goal in the organisation, which at its best ensures good internal communication benefit (Sadia *et al.* 2016: 1).

As van Ruler and De Lange (2003: 145) asserted, no organisation can develop or even exist without communication; it is what describes what organisations are and do. When the critical time comes, those organisations where careful attention is paid to communication by management have proved to perform more successfully on a range of principles than those where such communication is poor (Tourish & Hargie 1998; Sliburyte 2004; Gagnon, Jansen & Michael 2008). Effective communication is important to ensure that employees understand their contributing roles towards executing plans and thereby helping to achieve organisational goals.

Jagongo and Kunyua (2013: 76) observed that effective communication is a key point of success for any working organisation and an important tool for effective and better achievement of organisational goals. It requires employers to communicate effectively with employees. Managers should thus ensure that responsibilities are clear to all employees, as confusion and ambiguity create negative feelings and a tense atmosphere. Effective communication assists employees to collaborate for improved employee performance. Added to this, managers are also able to provide accurate feedback to employees about their performance through effective communication. It thus follows that organisations that do not pay close attention to effective communication, whether top-down or bottom-top, often risk losing their best employees to competitors or have employees who are demotivated.

The view of Conrad (2014: 105) is that it is imperative for organisations to implement effective communication to ensure managers perform their function of communicating effectively with employees in order to enhance employee performance. Effective communication prevents the idea of being isolated and reduces the perception by management of being threatened by employee suggestions and decision-making.

According to Matuku and Malhooko (2014: 87), organisations that have strong and effective communication channels can guarantee openness, communication structures, employee feedback, and adjustment to change, which all contribute positively to employee performance. Effective communication is an important factor for all organisational functions and success.

At municipal level, Jarvis (2016) highlighted that several steps can be taken in an attempt to improve policy communication, mitigate policy communication effectiveness and enhance and improve service delivery. This can be achieved by means of, for example, Imbizos, public participation, regulatory reform, and budget and integrated development plan (IDP) roadshows. Measures adopted will be diverse, ranging from village to ward, and be resource dependent, while also relevant to the degree of exposure to a crisis. Where rural areas and their municipalities are concerned, executing activities in support of effective communication and an attempt to improve employee performance and service delivery could be problematic and frustrating, making it difficult for a municipality to then follow the outlined steps.

On the one hand, organisations cannot succeed without proper channels of communication, with effective channels of communication able to ensure employees respond to any information

provided by managers. Employee attitudes towards managers can, on the other hand, be changed through effective communication. In addition, organisations use effective communication as a strategic tool to introduce diversification in policies and competitiveness as it creates clear goals and facilitates collaboration between employees and between departments (Zabihullah & Atoullah 2019: 36).

The next chapter details the research methodology followed in establishing the objectives set out in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the first chapter, the purpose of the study was given and the problem to be solved specified. In chapter two, literature on the constructs under study was reviewed to establish how other scholars have approached these concepts. This chapter details the research methodology followed in order to establish the set objectives, providing reasons for the chosen research design. This study employed a mixed methods research approach, thus both quantitative and qualitative research strategies are employed and outlined in more detail in this chapter. Further to this, triangulation by method was possible as the study used a mixed methods approach, with the research instruments used to gather data justified in this chapter and the population and sampling strategy also dealt with.

3.2 Research design

Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 106) stated that a research design is a complete plan of how the research will take place in answering the statements, guided by the study research objectives. It is a strategy used by the researcher to address the research problem through the integration of several aspects in a consistent way. Research design enunciates the techniques used to collect data, answer the statements, and address objectives that direct the study. In research, there are different types of research designs such as descriptive, exploratory, correlation, and survey, as well as explanatory designs.

This study aimed to establish relationships between effective communication and employee performance in an accurate manner. Thus, taking the advice of Bryman (2016: 332) and Leedy and Ormrod (2016: 136), a descriptive research design was deemed the most suitable for this study as it identifies the characteristics of variables and provides facts on what has been revealed in reference to the event or the organisation. The aim of descriptive design is to answer the questions of what, how and why on the events of occurrence, information that can be vital prior to considering corrective steps or changing practices. This is the case with the municipal organisations under study.

3.3 Research philosophy

The research philosophy relates to the way to approach and understand the world by researchers (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009: 107). It is associated with the construction of knowledge and the nature of this knowledge with regard to the research. A research philosophy therefore guides the researcher by defining the study dimensions (Saunders *et al.* 2009: 119). A research philosophy is at times referred to as a research paradigm. According to Jonker and Pennink (2010: 29), a research paradigm constitutes philosophical assumptions and beliefs that direct research execution. It defines the world, highlighting an individual's place in it and the relationships in that world.

Epistemology and ontology are the two sets of philosophical assumptions that distinguish research paradigms, where epistemology mainly deals with how the researcher views or considers as valid the perceived knowledge in the boundary of the research. It concerns itself with reality and the basics of knowledge (Bryman and Bell 2011: 15). It is a belief system that informs the generation of what constitutes acceptable and valid knowledge in a study (Wahyuni 2012: 69). Epistemological research has two categories namely positivism and interpretivism.

Positivism alludes to social phenomena studied with natural science rules. Objective analysis forms the base for researchers to take this position, where they collect, analyse and process data in a value-free environment. The research subjects do not influence the researcher as per Saunders *et al.* (2009: 113). Consistent with this view, Bryman and Bell (2011: 15) indicate that with positivism, only phenomena confirmed by the senses can be regarded as knowledge, and knowledge is generated through testing hypotheses and gathering facts. Positivism has an ingrained element of objectivity. In addition, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) highlight that positivism views the social world as external and is therefore measured through objective methods. The nature of reality is taken to be independent of the human mind and is interpreted through objective analysis of human objects.

Interpretivism, on the one side, emphasises understanding and explaining human actions and behaviour. Interpretivism pays attention to people rather than objects. Analysis of data is mostly subjective (Bryman & Bell 2007: 17). Confirming the prominence of human actions in interpretivism, Saunders *et al.* (2009: 115) postulate that humans are social factors who play an active part in the construction of reality. Thus, interpretivism considers the differences in humans with regard to their roles as social actors.

The other research paradigm, which is ontology, describes the researcher's perceptions of what comprises knowledge and reality. It basically answers the question as to whether reality is external to social actors or is created by the social actors and this is explained in two dimensions, which are objectivism and constructivism (Saunders *et al.* 2009: 119).

Objectivism, according to Bryman and Bell (2007: 22), refers to social phenomenon and its meanings exist independently, with no influence of social actors on it. The social phenomenon observed is developed by the interaction of human beings, the social actors. From an ontological perspective, the constructionism approach subscribes to the viewpoint that social actors construct social phenomena and its meanings. Individuals are taken here to shape the form of reality (Bryman & Bell 2007: 22).

This study takes a positivist position or epistemological stance and an objectivist position for social occurrences. This is because the phenomena under study, communication and employee performance can be observed. Appropriate theories were selected, followed by the subsequent generation of an overarching research question. A survey on municipal employees was then conducted. Data generated from the survey was analysed with the purpose of proving existing knowledge or revising it.

3.4 Research strategy

There are numerous strategies employed in research. These include experiments, surveys, ethnography, case studies, action research, grounded theory and archival research (Saunders *et al.* 2007: 135). The strategies are categorised under positivism, interpretivism and combined strategies below.

The strategies that stem from the positivist philosophical stance intend to use natural science techniques to collect research data. They include surveys and experiments, where survey research, according to Creswell (2009: 12), provides a numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a chosen population by studying a sample of that population. A frequency pattern of phenomena occurrence can be determined by using survey strategy. Surveys have many variations, including mail surveys, door-to-door interviews, telephone interviews and computer-assisted interviews. The questionnaire is the most used research instrument in almost all survey methods (McDaniel & Gates 2010: 129). Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012: 39) added that the survey technique is associated with positivism as they both assess patterns and

causal relations that cannot be accessible directly for a number of multiple factors making simultaneous impact.

Experimental research aims to determine whether an applied treatment determines an outcome. The impact is determined by providing the treatment to one group and comparing the outcome with that of a control group for which treatment was not given. Experiments include true experiments, with the random exposure of subjects to treatment conditions and quasi experiments that use non-randomized designs (Creswell 2009: 12).

3.4.1 Interpretivist and combined research strategy

Within the interpretivist research strategy, one finds case studies, experimental research, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research. A case study denotes research on a system bounded in space and time and embedded in a particular physical and socio-cultural context. Research is conducted using diverse methodologies, methods, and data sources, such as participant observation, interviews, and audio-visual materials (Silverman 2011: 16). In a similar vein, Bryman and Bell (2011: 59) explained that a case study implies that data are collected on one case, such as a single organisation/location/event or a person. The general objective is to fully understand the case as much as possible.

Creswell (2009: 12) postulated that experimental research seeks to determine whether a specific treatment influences an outcome. The impact, as Creswell points out, is assessed by providing a specific treatment to one group and withholding it from another group and then determining how both groups fared on an outcome.

On the one hand, Koshy (2005: 24) explained that action research involves observing and describing individual action to provide understanding of how they behave. Denscombe (2010: 6) advised that, on the other hand, the drive of action research is to solve a particular problem and to produce guidelines for best practice.

Grounded theory is an approach of qualitative inquiry in which researchers develop an inductive theoretical analysis from their collected data and subsequently gather further data to check these analyses. Grounded theory focuses on theory construction, rather than description or application of existing theories (Silverman 2011: 292).

Ethnography concerns itself with perceptions, social interactions and behaviours that occur within organisations, communities, groups and teams. The object of ethnography is to get an understanding of a population's actions and views, as well as the nature of the location they inhabit, by way of interviews and observations (Reeves, Kuper & Hodges 2008: 337).

McBurney and White (2009: 228) assert that archival research involves the usage of data which research has not contributed in collecting. These records would have been amassed over a long period by an institution.

There are times when there is need to use a number of methods to neutralise the bias of each method (Creswell 2009: 14). This is where mixed methods strategies are used, which are sequential, concurrent and transformative mixed methods. The sequential mixed method uses one method first and then adopts another for the same research. This is meant to elaborate or expand on the results of one method with another. The concurrent mixed method is where the qualitative and quantitative data are merged to provide to enable detailed analysis of the problem under investigation. Data are collected concurrently and then combined into the interpretation of results. Lastly, the transformational mixed method uses an overarching theory within a research design that has both qualitative and quantitative data. The theory provides a framework for topics of interest, methods of collecting data and outcomes.

3.4.2 The research strategy used for the study

Overall, the study took a positivist survey strategy which met the study requirements, namely to establish the extent to which effective communication acts as catalyst for employee performance in selected municipalities. Two forms of the survey method were used. First, a structured questionnaire with closed ended questions was used on one municipality. This enabled gathering of large data, which was analysed quantitatively. Quantitative research was appropriate for this study because it quantifies the problem, gathers numerical information and is a process that uses systematic measurements and statistical analysis to examine a social phenomenon (Burns & Grove 2005: 23). It uses measurable information to articulate data and disclose underlying patterns in research (Babin & Zikmund 2015: 49).

Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world. This research method is used to describe variables;

examine relationships among variables; and to determine cause-and-effect interactions between variables (Jarvis 2016: 9).

The second method used was qualitative and achieved through a focus group. Qualitative research consists of a number of differently developed methods that are best suited to address questions of particular interest. There are, however, some general themes of qualitative research design that apply across all approaches and methodologies. Qualitative research is therefore an umbrella term that covers a variety of styles of social research, drawing on a variety of disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology.

The choice of a focus group was due to it providing an understanding of the issues, while assisting to improve ideas for potential quantitative research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2015: 33). According to Dilshad and Latif (2013: 2), focus groups are described as a small crowd of participants selected by the researcher to participate in the research study to express their opinions and feelings on a specific set of open questions guided by the statements using in-depth interviews. It is a restricted number of six to ten respondents with confidence and identical experiences to share similar skills and knowledge that relate to the topic (Hennink 2014: 2).

The main purpose of the focus group in this study was to collect high-quality data in a group setting, which assists the researcher to understand a problem from the viewpoint of the participant. The focus group was thus helpful in supplementing the quantitative data. The researcher was able to salvage the data and gain richness of information from participant responses regarding employee feelings, attitudes, beliefs, opinions and hidden reasons concerning effective communication. Important information, ideas from different people that contribute more on unpredicted table issues on the topic became evident from this engagement.

This study thus used a sequential mixed methods strategy, yielding the benefits that have been alluded to above, as well as the triangulation of data collected. Olsen (2004: 3 as cited in Muthwa 2016: 9) explained that triangulation can be defined as “the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic”. There are two types of triangulation: data and methodological triangulation; both quantitative and qualitative research approaches are adopted by the latter method. This study used concurrent triangulation method to analyse data. The many aim of triangulation in this study was to obtain different but complimentary data on the same topic in order to understand the research problem and to bring

together the different strengths and no overlapping weaknesses of quantitative methods. As well as to link and construct quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings. Lastly, triangulation helped to validate quantitative results with qualitative data.

3.5 Target areas

The first municipality identified for study was the uBuhlebezwe Municipality, one of four local municipalities located within the Harry Gwala District Municipality (previously the Sisonke District Municipality), with the main administrative centre of the municipality situated in Ixopo, as described on the municipalities.co.za website. The municipality's name is isiZulu, meaning "The beauty of the land", and is situated roughly 85km south-east of Pietermaritzburg, capital of the KZN province.

The uBuhlebezwe Municipality is strategically located at the intersection of major routes leading to Pietermaritzburg, namely the Drakensberg, Eastern Cape and the South Coast of KZN (Figure 3.1). Previously this municipality had also achieved first place in the Greenest Municipality competition on two occasions. Covering a total of 1 604 km², the population for 2011 is reflected at 101 691 by Statistics SA (Stats SA 2011), with 91.6 percent of the population being Zulu-speaking and 97.5 percent racially reflected as Black African. The election of 2016 saw the ANC governing party win a majority of 20 of 27 seats on the council.

This municipality was the first to respond to the request to undertake research in the field of effective communication as catalyst for employee performance within a municipality, with a survey questionnaire completed by municipal employees.



Figure 3.1: Location of uBuhlebezwe Municipality

The second municipality examined as to whether effective communication can be a catalyst for employee performance, is the Ray Nkonyeni Municipality, located on the south coast of the KZN province and established after the 2016 elections, merging the Hibiscus Coast and Ezingoleni local municipalities (Figure 3.2). As this municipality only agreed to research being undertaken late in the project, employees from this municipality were interviewed in a focus group.

The administrative seat is located in Port Shepstone, described as the most concentrated economic hub within the district on the municipalities.co.za website, dotted by many small towns that serve as seasonal recreational hubs. The coastline features beaches of world-class quality along the entire seaboard, with several full Blue Flag beaches. The largest of four municipalities in the district, making up a third of its geographical area, the Ray Nkonyeni municipality falls within the Ugu district, comprises 1 487 km², a population of 308 675 and isiZulu is the main language of 95 percent of the 99 percent Black African population (Stats SA 2011). The ANC won a majority of 47 of the 71 seats on the council at the 2016 elections.



Figure 3.2: Location of Ray Nkonyeni municipality

3.6 Target population

A target population, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2013: 240) is the aggregate number of elements such as a group of people or objects the researcher is interested in the study. All 250 employees under the MM of uBuhlebezwe Municipality formed the target population. Even though this municipality was very far from the researcher's residence, it was targeted because it was initially the only one that gave permission to do the study. The limitations this posed are discussed further on.

After the results of the quantitative study had been computed, Ray Nkonyeni Municipality did grant permission to do the study. To mitigate cost, 10 respondents were invited to a focus group session at their Boardroom. To select the respondents, convenience sampling was used.

This move was also taken on the advice of Creswell (2009: 14) who stated that one method can be used to neutralise the bias of another.

3.7 Sampling procedure

Kumar and Pansari (2015: 207) described sampling procedure as a system of selecting suitable individuals as representative of the entire population, known as the sample. The following procedure was followed to select the sample for this study. There are two broad sampling methods used in research, which are probability and non-probability methods.

Probability sampling, according to Uprichard (2011: 4), refers to when all elements in the population involved have an equal chance of being selected as the sample of the study. Under the principle of randomisation, probability sampling can take different forms such as simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, and cluster sampling.

Wadsworth (2016: 19) views non-probability sampling as a qualitative technique that gives no opportunity for an equal chance of the subjects of the population being selected. It is a sampling method that prevents the principle of randomisation in the course of amassing data needed for the study. Elements of the study are selected on the judgment of the researcher, thus non-random and subjective. The fact that it is narrative in nature and does not involve the analysis of data makes it easier to conduct at little or relatively no cost. Techniques used under this method are convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive/judgment sampling, and snowballing sampling.

3.7.1 Sampling method for this study

For the quantitative strategy of this study at uBuhlebezwe Municipality, simple random sampling method was used. An electronic list of all employees was obtained from the Human Resources (HR) Department. Every 10th person on this list was selected. This gave a total number of 250 employees. Questionnaires were printed and put into envelopes to be hand-delivered to the selected employees.

For the qualitative strategy, members of the design section of Ray Nkonyeni Municipality section were approached and convenience sampling was performed, identifying 10 people who were able to gather in the specified boardroom for a focus group interview, ending in all 10 respondents completing the open-ended interview schedule/questionnaire, adapted from the developed survey questionnaire.

3.8 Research instrument

There was one set of questions for both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of data collection. The difference was only in the layout, where the quantitative was done through a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions in a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree, agree, neutral, and disagree to strongly disagree. The reason for choosing this scale was that it would be easy for respondents to understand. Furthermore, it is the universal method of survey, which makes the response easy to quantify, and subject to computations of mathematical analysis.

The structured questionnaire was chosen because of its advantages of being cheaper and quick to administer with a faster response time. It allows the researcher to collect information from a large group, offers not only convenience to the respondents but also affords them anonymity (Creswell 2014: 11).

The questionnaire was divided into five sections, where

Section A sought to establish the respondent's biographic information.

Section B sought to establish whether the sharing of ideas creates openness among employees.

Section C tested whether regular feedback contributes to improved performance

Section D sought to establish whether open channels of communication mitigate misunderstandings.

Section E aimed to establish whether recognition of employee opinions increases employee performance.

The research instrument for qualitative research was an interview guide with open-ended questions, which was in line with the research objectives, with sections following those used in the quantitative strategy. To select participants for this strategy, a convenience-sampling method was applied. Focus group interviews were conducted in one of the boardrooms at Ray Nkonyeni Municipality. The interview questionnaire was personally handed over by the researcher to the 10 participants. The respondents decided to answer the questionnaire by writing down their own answers to express their opinions and feelings on a specific set of open-ended questions, guided by the interview guide. On completion of the interview questionnaire by respondents, the researcher collected all the questionnaires. The questionnaire used for the

focus group was constructed in line with the structured questionnaire used for the quantitative study (Appendix 5).

3.9 Pilot study

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012: 212) stated that the key purpose of a pilot test is to establish the strength, weakness and quality of questions in the questionnaire in order to avoid ambiguity and bias of the instrument.

A pilot test was conducted at the uBuhlebezwe Municipality prior to the main research. Ten participants were selected randomly in terms of availability during their lunch-break and met in the MM's Boardroom. Respondents completed the questionnaire within an hour and no concerns were raised.

3.10 Questionnaire administration

The structured questionnaire was personally hand-delivered by the researcher and distributed to the selected respondents. A letter of information was attached to the questionnaire, which explained that respondents could withdraw at any time from participating should they feel uncomfortable in completing the questionnaire, for whatever reason.

3.11 Data analysis

The quantitative data was captured and analysed on IBM SPSS version 25 and yielded descriptive and inferential statistics. A detailed explanation of the statistics is provided in the quantitative results chapter.

Qualitative data gathered from the focus the group were analysed qualitatively by means of a content analysis method. Content analysis allows the researcher to organise information collected into categories or themes. Results are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

3.12 Testing for validity

Validity is the degree to which the measuring instrument achieves the purpose for which it was constructed and able to display the level of accuracy to measure what it was meant to measure. It is the degree to which a concept is correctly measured (Heal & Twycross 2015: 67). There are several ways of testing validity and these are face validity, content validity, and criterion validity.

According to Subotić (2012: 37), face validity allows the researcher to participate fully in guiding the groups of experiential objects for the aim of the combined index to ensure the valuation of the variables under study. It discloses the potential appearance of being capable of measuring what is supposed to measure. Newman, Lim and Pineda (2013: 244) state that content validity exposes the extent to which selected samples provide a decent representation of the population that is evaluated. It guarantees that the instrument used ties well with what is being measured and measures what it is supposed to measure is exactitude.

Content validity, on the other hand, reveals the magnitude at which selected samples that make a good representation of the population are assessed. The vitality of content validity depends on the techniques employed to formulate the instrument needed for the study (Tojib & Sugianto 2006: 449).

Concurrent validity examines the performance of results obtained from other previous measures aligned with the current results under study in order to interpret the results effectively (Silverman 2015: 203). Criterion validity, on the other hand the evaluation of performance measures that it is in line with the expected outcomes. It also observes the real relationship between the variables of the study, provides the tangible value of the sample used and the constructs must be reliable and free from bias (Burke & Soffa 2018: 141).

In the study, numerous steps were taken to guarantee the validity of the research. Firstly, the questionnaire was designed to meet the objectives of study. The developed questionnaire was pre-tested on 10 employees of uBuhlebezwe Municipality who read the questionnaire to identify uncertainty or any complication within the questionnaire. The pilot test was done to avoid ambiguity and bias of the instrument.

3.13 Testing for reliability

Burns and Bush (2010: 76) highlighted that reliability in a research study is a concept that addresses the issue whether the instrument used for assessment in a previous study can still produce the same result of the measure in the same manner, provided that the same set of procedures or approaches used to generate results from the previous study are adopted for the current work (Patel 2008: 13).

Test-Retest Reliability is a process that provides an opportunity for the examination on the set of the same group of individuals for a period that does not exclude two consecutive times. The findings of the results obtained on the different groups can, therefore, be unified based over time (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine & Walker 2018: 86).

According to McHugh (2012: 276), inter-rater reliability is the type of construction that allows different viewers to achieve their measurements independently. It is defined as the degree to which the results measured more than one of the same objects which $\frac{\Delta y}{\Delta x}$ provide the same outcomes on the different subjects using the instrument of the same population and findings should be the same. It ensures that data collected in the study is correct and it represents variables measured assign the same scores to the same variable and is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{The total agreement scores}}{\text{Total agreement} + \text{Total Disagreement}}$$

Then the inter-rater is greater when raters produce comparable results. Chanen *et al.* (2015: 5) state that the parallel form of reliability permits the practice of unrelated methods to measure the structures of two elements under study, which might be skills or values and the important aim of it is to compare the findings of the studies in order to measure the reliability as it can surrogate one another.

To test for reliability of the measurement instrument in this study, Cronbach's alpha was calculated and was within the acceptable limit.

3.14 Limitations

A major limitation of this study was the inability to access local municipalities and organisations to conduct research. Numerous organisations and municipalities were initially approached but refused to give the researcher permission to conduct the study. It took much effort to finally obtain permission from the uBuhlebezwe Municipality in Ixopo, which is approximately 150 kilometres from the researcher's residence and workplace. This created serious financial and time constraints. A cross-sectional design is also adopted in the study to analyse data of variables collected at one given point in time across samples of population.

3.15 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations can be identified as the most significant measures of research because participants should not be endangered in any way at all and a complete agreement must be obtained from the participants prior to the study (Scott 2013: 87). Thus, in conducting this study, the following ethical issues were observed:

i. Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation means that a participant must exercise a free-will in deciding whether to contribute to the study (Harris & Atkinson 2016: 1122). In this regard, a letter of information, which ensured participants that participation in this study was voluntary and that the data collected would be used only for the purpose of the research study was attached to the questionnaire as well as a consent letter.

ii. Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality are both crucial to ethical research practice because they equally guarantee the participants that the information provided cannot be traced back to them (Smith 2014: 13).

Anonymity refers to gathering information without obtaining any individual recognising the information (Akaranga & Makau 2016: 6). Anonymity in this study was ensured by not requesting the respondent's names on the questionnaire.

Confidentiality means the unravelling or varying of any private findings provided by the participants from the data and that it is not made available to colleagues or superiors. (Baruch, May & Yu 2016: 24). The letter of information attached to the questionnaire assured the participants of confidentiality.

iii. Ethical issues on focus groups

Ethical considerations on focus groups are peculiar in that there can be no confidentiality. The researcher must ensure that discussions are held privately in order to ensure confidentiality. It is very important not to identify groups by names and that their voice remains anonymous in the group's findings. The researcher must provide full information to the participants about the purpose of conducting the meeting and must honestly tell the members what is expected of them. They must not be under any kind of pressure.

3.16

Concluding summary

This chapter documented the methodology used in the study. It explained why it became necessary to gather data by using both the quantitative and qualitative techniques. The guiding philosophy of this study together with the relevant research design were explained here.

The next chapter presents and discusses the study findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Following from the previous chapter, wherein the methodology was discussed, this chapter presents and discusses the results of this study. Data were collected from 90 employees in two different Municipalities, namely uBuhlebezwe and Ray Nkonyeni Municipalities. As indicated in the previous chapter, for the former Municipality, data was collected from a population of 250 participants, with 80 respondents returning the structured questionnaire that was analysed quantitatively. The 10 responses obtained from the latter Municipality via focus group interviews were analysed qualitatively.

Data were triangulated as the study employed a mixed methods approach, making use of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Olsen 2004: 3 as cited in Muthwa 2016: 9).

The research objectives that the study sought to establish were:

- i. Establish the extent to which sharing of ideas creates openness among employees at selected KZN municipalities in SA.
- ii. Examine whether regular feedback contributes to improved performance of employees at selected South African, KZN municipalities.
- iii. Determine whether open channels of communication mitigate misunderstandings between management and employees at selected municipalities in the province of KZN, SA.
- iv. Determine whether recognition of employee opinions increases employee performance at selected KZN municipalities in SA.

4.2 Quantitative results

The results are presented in line with the sections of the questionnaire.

Section A: This section obtained respondents' biographic information.

Section B: This section aimed to establish whether the sharing of ideas created openness among employees.

Section C: This section tested whether regular feedback contributed to improved performance.

Section D: This section sought to establish whether open channels of communication mitigated misunderstanding.

Section E: This section sought to establish whether recognition of employee opinions increased employee performance.

4.2.1 Biographical Information

This section illustrates the gender, age, race and educational qualification\ of respondents, as well as their work experience.

i. Gender

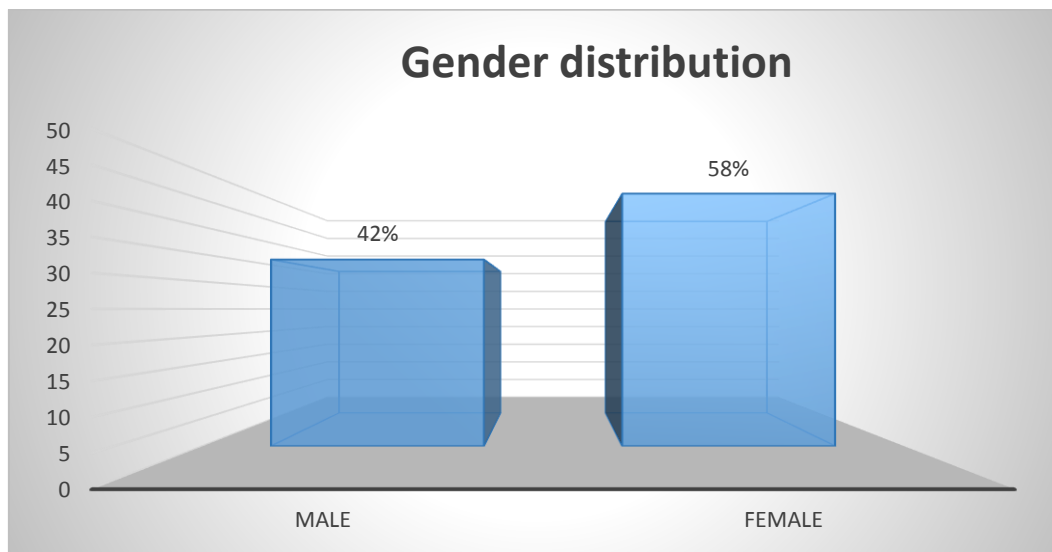


Figure 4.1: Gender distribution

Whilst it was not the aim of this study to establish gender parity in this Municipality, it is heartening to see that as much as 58 percent of the respondents were female, thus 46 of the 80 respondents, with the balance (42 percent: 34) being male.

ii. Age

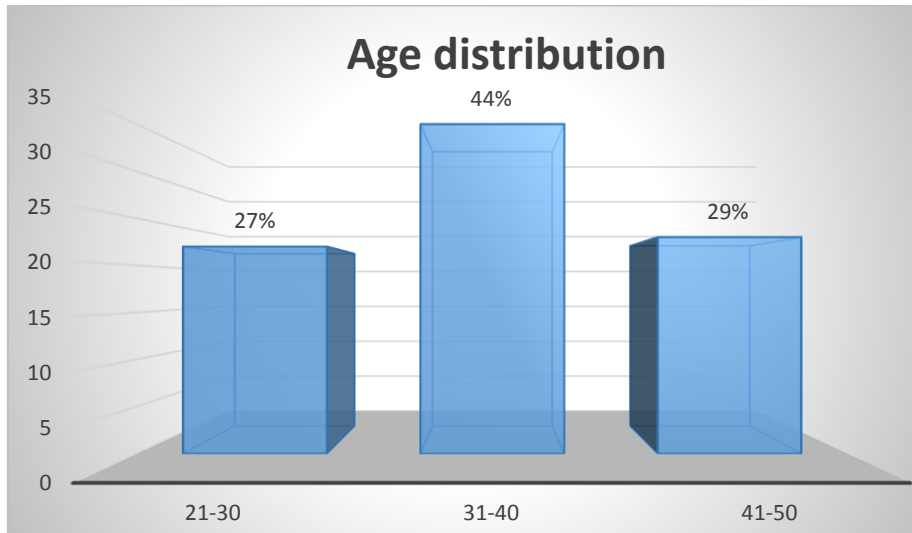


Figure 4.2: Age distribution

This result shows (Figure 4.2) that the views of the sample were mainly collected from young people, the future of the organisation. The majority (44 percent) of the respondents were in the 31-40year age group, with only a two percent difference between those in the 21-30year (27 percent) and 41-50year (29 percent) age groups.

iii. Race

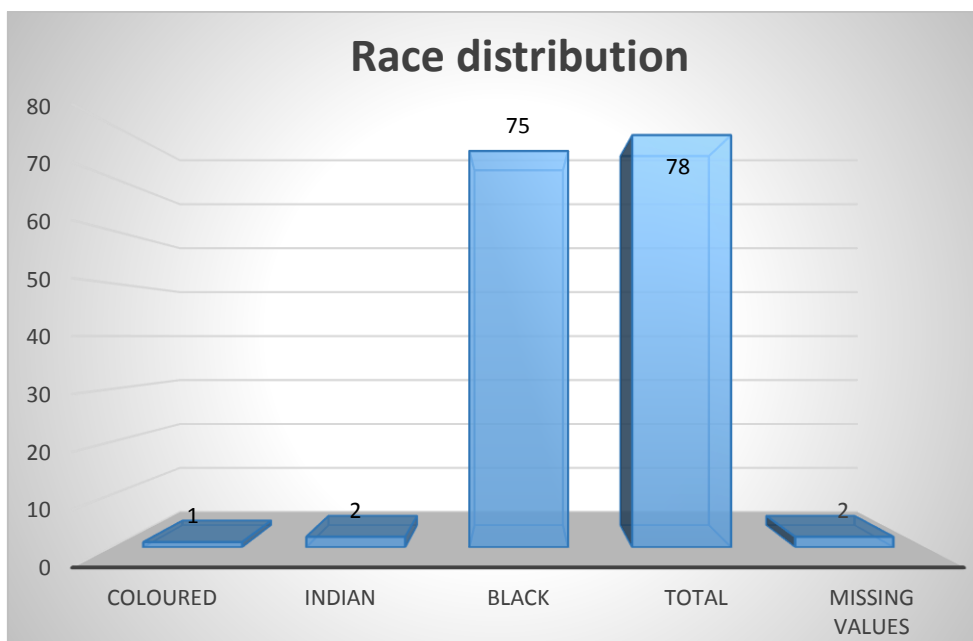


Figure 4.3: Race distribution

The high number (75) of Black respondents shows that the municipality is driving employment equity. One of the respondents identified as Coloured, with another two indicating their race as Indian. For this study, this means the information received was from a representative racial spread.

iv. Educational qualifications

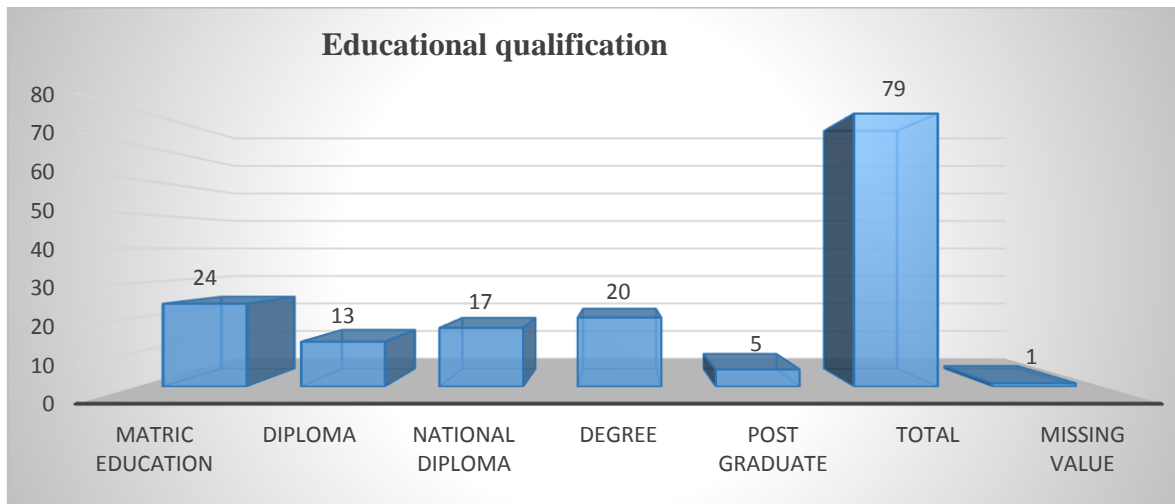


Figure 4.4: Educational qualification

A total of 55 respondents achieved post-Matric qualifications, with 24 respondents indicating they had matriculated. This means they were in a position to comprehend the questions and give well thought-out answers.

v. Work experience

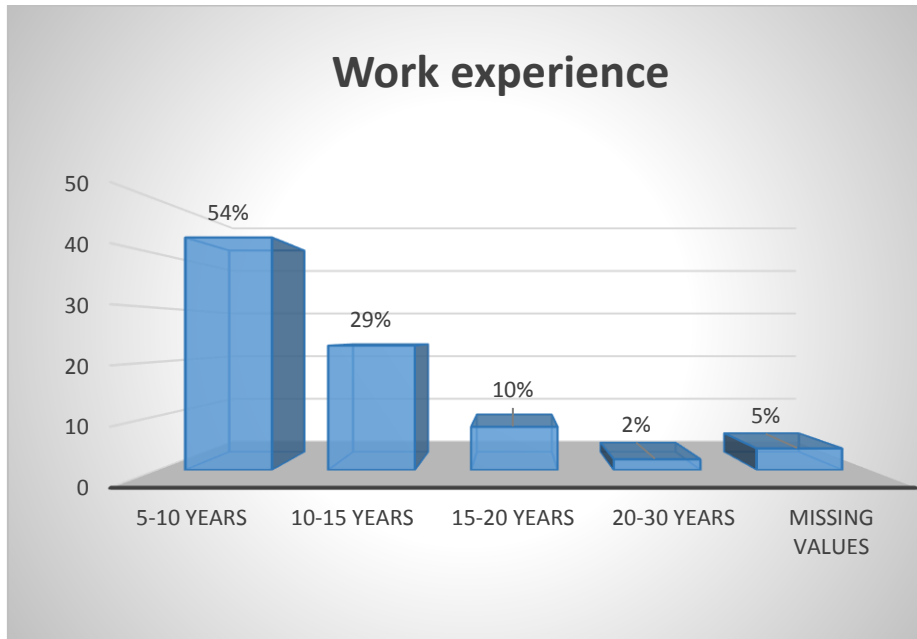


Figure 4.5: Work experience

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents (54 percent) had 5-10years experience, with 29 percent of the respondents indicating 10-15years experience. The balance of the respondents had 15-20years experience (10 percent) and 20-30years experience (two percent) respectively. There are as many as 43 fairly new employees compared to 33 long serving ones. This, however, does not mean the new employees are not conversant with communication processes of the organisation. If anything, they would be the ones who are still keen on listening and improving their performance.

4.2.2 Sharing of ideas and openness

The following results pertain to responses to the first research objective.

Table. 4.1: Statements on sharing of ideas and openness

STATEMENTS	Valid percent
I am involved in sharing ideas during policy formulation	84%
Openness creates a good relationship among employees	83%
Openness of management about tasks creates new ideas about the accomplishment of tasks	83%
My manager must discuss work issues openly with subordinates	79%
My involvement in decision- making gives me an opportunity to open up	76%

These results (Table 4.1) indicate consensus among the respondents that sharing of ideas and openness are good for accelerating the level of sharing information between managers and employees. Agreement was indicated by 84 percent of respondents that they were involved in sharing ideas during policy formulation, with 83 percent in agreement that openness of management about tasks creates new ideas with regard to the accomplishment of tasks. A further 76 percent of respondents agreed that their involvement in decision-making affords them an opportunity to open up,

This is in line with Brown (2013: 17), who explained that sharing of ideas and openness in an organisation is the best way. Managers should involve employees in decision-making and in policy formulation to ensure organisational goals are attained effectively in the workplace. Through sharing of ideas and information in the workplace, employees are able to discuss performance matters with their managers.

4.2.3 Relationship between feedback provision and performance

The following results relate to how provision of feedback by managers can improve employee performance.

Table 4.2: Statements on provision of feedback and performance

STATEMENTS	Valid percent
When managers excel in providing feedback to employers about their jobs that satisfies employees	80%
Managers should organise adequate training programs to change employee performance	80%
Skilled employees are able to achieve employee performance effectively	79%
Providing feedback helps towards the attainment of organisational goals	77%
When employees are satisfied their level of commitment increases	72%
Feedback improves job performance	71%

As illustrated (Table 4.2), regular feedback on how employees have performed resulted in an increased level of commitment (72 percent), improved employee performance (79 percent) and the accomplishment of organisational goals (77 percent).

This is what Brian (2016: 2) also alludes to in stating that feedback is a powerful tool in the workplace that guides employees on what they are doing to reach their goals. It is a key source of communication managers use to encourage employees; a tool that shapes employees on job performance and to achieve organisational success. Provision of feedback to employees by managers is imperative as it assists them to correct small mistakes before they escalate. Feedback prevents tension between managers and employees (Ajjawi *et al.* 2017: 136).

4.2.4 Open Channels of Communication and Employee Performance

The following results pertain to the third research objective the study aimed to establish.

Table 4.3: Statements on open channels of communication and performance

STATEMENTS	Valid percent
Clear channels of communication on information from managers about tasks can reduce misunderstanding	84%
The good relationship I have with my manager eliminates misunderstanding	74%
I can approach my supervisor on any issues that concerns me	72%
Open channels of communication change employee attitude towards managers	72%
Open channels of communication increase job performance	66%
Open channels of communication improve commitment	65%

The results (Table 4.3) show agreement among the respondents that open channels of communication reduce misunderstandings (84 percent), improve job performance (66 percent agreement) and commitment (65 percent) and change employee attitudes towards managers (72 percent).

This echoes findings by Agarwal (2010: 32), who posited that open channels of communication is a systemic method through which people in an organisation use to communicate. They are a

technique of conveying messages from one person to another; a system of interaction that clearly defines task performance, other operational activities and information. Channels of communication channel the information either downwards, upwards, horizontally and sideways to reduce incorrect interpretation and misunderstandings between the managers and the employees.

4.2.5 Recognition of employee opinions

The results below pertain to the fourth research objective of this study.

Table 4.4: Statements on recognition of employee opinions

STATEMENTS	Valid percent
My opinion is valued by my manager	84%
Recognition of employees can change perceptions	81%
The recognition of employees by managers promotes job involvement commitment	79%
Good and creative opinions can create new job designs for employees	79%
Being recognised by managers improves my commitment to the organisation	78%
When an employee's opinions are recognised by the managers, their level of trust and honest increases	78%
Employees good opinions can play an important role in decision-making in an organisation	78%

The results (Table 4.4) indicate that the respondents were overwhelmingly unanimous (78 percent) that recognition of employee opinions by managers in an organisation plays a crucial role during decision-making. Recognition of employee opinions promotes trust and honesty (78 percent), builds employee self-esteem and instils confidence towards their duties (79 percent).

Salie and Schlechter (2012: 3) confirmed that recognition of employee opinions is a system of acknowledging employee opinions, whether as individual employees or in teams. This is done through formal or informal ways to inspire employees to participate in decision-making. Managers in the municipality were found to recognise and value employee opinions (84

percent), especially on suggestions made on job satisfaction, job performance and other work-related matters within an organisation.

4.3 Testing the Reliability of the Scales

The test for reliability was conducted on IBM SPSS version 25, with the aim of ascertaining the possible limitation in the structure of the constructs. To ensure the considerable scale for reliability that guarantees consistency in measurement, the Cronbach's Alpha should be above 0.7, according to Pallant (2010: 97).

Table 4.5: Reliability

Constructs	Cronbach's Alphas
Sharing of ideas and openness	0,848
Recognition of employee opinions	0,839
Provision of regular feedback and performance	0,829
Open channels of communication	0,766

All the constructs measured have a Cronbach's alpha above 0.7, which means the reliability of the measurement instrument is high – the questionnaire and the focus group interview question schedule.

Table 4.6: Testing validity of the scale on Sharing of Ideas and Openness

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I am involved in sharing ideas during policy formulation	15,901	7,815	0,455	0,840
Openness creates a good relationship among employees	15,151	9,648	0,507	0,823
Openness of management about tasks creates new ideas about the accomplishment of tasks	15,376	9,401	0,438	0,816
Manager must discuss work issues openly with subordinates	15,200	8,744	0,592	0,791
My involvement in the decision making gives me an opportunity to open up	15,376	7,833	0,701	0,760

The above result revealed that not all the items used to measure 'sharing of ideas' have a good convergent validity. Only items 2, 4 and 5 have the acceptable coefficient of, 5. Items 1 and 3 are below the acceptable threshold. Another point of interest is *Cronbach's Alpha if the item is deleted*. This column provides a suggestion on how a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient could be improved when a certain item would be deleted. The test showed that for these constructs, there is no need to delete any item as the current Cronbach's Alpha coefficient already meets the required threshold.

Table. 4.7: Frequency results of scale on Sharing of Ideas and Openness

Sharing of ideas and openness	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	3,85	0,72	-0,88	0,81

Table 4.7 indicates that the normality of the variable “sharing of ideas and openness” is supported because both the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are between -2 and +2 (George and Mallery 2010). Given that all the statements (items) used in this scale were positively related to each other and positively related to sharing of ideas and openness, the Five-Point Likert scale can be aggregated and interpreted as follows; any score below 2.5 indicates a poor level of sharing of ideas and openness. Scores between [2.5-3.5] indicate an average level of sharing of ideas and openness and finally, any score equal or above 3.5 indicates a good level of sharing of ideas and openness. Based on this principle, the respondents thus believe there is a good level of sharing of ideas and openness in their organisations as the mean score (3.85) is above 3.5.

Table 4.8: Testing validity of the scale on Regular Feedback and Performance

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
When managers excel in providing feedback to employers about their jobs that satisfies employees	21,878	5,226	0,512	0,443	0,808
Managers need to organise adequate training programs to change employee performance	21,549	5,584	0,516	0,344	0,801
When employees are satisfied their level of commitment increases	21,549	5,598	0,562	0,383	0,790
Providing feedback helps towards in the attainment of organisational goals	21,672	5,819	0,649	0,484	0,779
Skilled employees are able to achieve employee performance effectively	21,710	4,975	0,645	0,522	0,772
Feedback improves job performance	21,603	5,611	0,676	0,547	0,771

The first three items have not met the acceptable coefficient of, 5 and have just failed the validity test. Only items 4 and 5 are valid. The second column of interest is *Cronbach's Alpha if the item deleted*. This column provides a suggestion on how a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

could be improved if a certain item is deleted. For this construct, there is no need to delete any item as the current Cronbach's Alpha coefficient already meets the required threshold.

Table 4.9: Frequency results of scale on regular feedback and performance

Regular feedback	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	4,33	0,46	-0,31	-0,10

Table 4.9 specifies that the normality of regular feedback and performance be supported because both the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are between -2 and +2 (George & Mallery 2010). Given that all the statements (items) used in this scale were assuming that regular feedback contributes to improved performance. The Five-Point Likert scale can be aggregated and interpreted as follows; any score below 2.5 shows low feedback. Scores between [2.5-3.5] indicates an average level of feedback and finally, any score equal or above 3.7 indicates a regular feedback. Based on this principle, Table 4.9 indicates that respondents believe that the level of feedback in their organisations is very high as the mean score is (4.33) is above 3.5.

Table 4.10: Testing validity of the scale on Channels of Communication

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The good relationship that I have with my manager eliminates misunderstanding	20,721	6,157	0,167	0,748
I can approach my supervisor on any issues that concerns me	20,898	5,647	0,270	0,728
Open channels of communication changes employee attitude towards managers	20,735	6,081	0,290	0,724
Clear channels of communication on information from the managers about tasks can reduce misunderstandings	20,617	6,160	0,485	0,674
Open channels of communication increase job performance	20,557	6,027	0,512	0,662
Open channels of communication improve commitment	20,710	5,586	0,461	0,659

Five of the six items measured have not met the acceptable validity threshold. Of interest is *Cronbach's Alpha if the item deleted*. This column indicates how a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient could be improved if a certain item is deleted. For this construct, there is no need to delete any item as the current Cronbach's Alpha coefficient already meets the required threshold.

Table 4.11: Frequency results on Open Channels of Communication

Channels of Communication	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	4,14	0,48	-0,25	0,86

Table 4.11 indicates that the normality of Open Channels of Communication is supported because both the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are between -2 and +2 (George and Mallery 2010). Given that all the statements (items) used in this scale were positively related to each other and positively related to Open Channels of Communication. The Five-Point Likert scale can be aggregated and interpreted as follows; any score below 2.5 indicates that open channels of communication do not mitigate misunderstandings. Scores between [2.5-3.5] indicate that open channels of communication mitigate misunderstandings to an average extent and finally, any score equal to or above 3.5 indicates that open channels of communication reduce misunderstandings to a great extent. Based on this principle, Table 4.11 indicates that respondents believe that open channels of communication reduce misunderstandings to a great extent as the mean score (4.14) is above 3.5.

Table 4.12: Testing validity of the scale on Recognition of Employee Opinions

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
My opinion is valued by my manager	24,962	9,681	0,380	0,395	0,846
Recognition of employees can change perceptions	24,425	10,654	0,440	0,462	0,818
Good and creative opinions can create new job designs for employees	24,688	9,331	0,622	0,454	0,789
When an employee's opinions are recognised by the managers their level of trust and honest increases	24,425	9,591	0,629	0,642	0,788
Recognition of employees by managers promotes job involvement commitment	24,400	10,067	0,657	0,563	0,788
Being recognised by managers improves my commitment to the organisation	24,512	9,925	0,688	0,565	0,783
Employee's good opinions can play an important role in decision making in an organisation	24,562	9,516	0,684	0,514	0,780

The majority of the items measure are valid and there is no need to delete any item as the current Cronbach's Alpha coefficient already meets the required threshold.

Table 4.13: Frequency results on Recognition of Employee Opinions

Recognition of Opinions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	4,09	0,51	-0,96	3,56

Table 4.13 indicates that the normality of the variable Recognition of employee opinions is supported because both the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are between -2 and +2 (George and Mallery 2010). Given that all the statements (items) used in this scale were assuming that recognition of employee opinions increases employee performance, the 5-point Likert scale was aggregated and interpreted as follows; any score below 2.5 indicates that recognition of employee opinions does not increase employee performance. Scores between [2.5-3.5] indicates that recognition of employee opinions increases employee performance to an average extent and finally, any score equal or above 3.5 indicates that recognition of employee opinions increases employee performance. Based on this principle, Table 4.13 indicates that respondents believe that recognition of employee opinions increases employee performance as the mean score (4.09) is above 3.5.

4.5 Testing Convergent Validity

Convergent validity refers to the extent to which a measure relates to other measure of the same phenomenon (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson 2019). The construct should not only correlate with related variables, it should not correlate with unrelated and dissimilar variables. Convergent validity is usually accomplished by demonstrating a correlation between two measures, even though no two measures are rarely perfectly convergent.

Table 4.14: Item total statistics - Sharing of ideas and openness

Sharing of ideas and openness	Corrected item – total correlation
My involvement in the decision making gives me an opportunity to open	0.800
Manager to discuss work issues openly with subordinates	0.707
Openness of management about tasks creates new ideas about the accomplishment of tasks	0.612
Openness creates a good relationship among employees	0.584
I am involved in sharing ideas during policy formulation	0.582

The outcomes (Table 4.14) show that the tools used to measure the construct sharing of ideas and openness have a good convergent validity as their corrected item–total correlation are above 0.5. This means the tools used to measure ‘sharing of ideas and openness’ were appropriate.

Table 4.15: Item total statistics - On regular feedback and performance

Regular feedback and performance	Corrected item – total correlation
Feedback improves job performance	0.676
Providing feedback helps towards the attainment of organizational goals	0.649
When employees are satisfied their level of commitment increases	0.645
Skilled employees are able to achieve employee performance effectively	0.562
Managers need to organise adequate training programs to change employee performance	0.516
When managers excel in providing feedback to employers about their jobs that satisfies employees	0.512

The outcome reveals (Table 4.15) that all the items used to measure regular feedback have a good convergent validity as their corrected item-total correlation are above 0.5. This means that the instrument used to measure these items was deemed suitable to measure the construct.

Table 4.16: Item total statistics - Open channels of Communication

Open channels of communication	Corrected item– total correlation
Open channels of communication increase job performance	0.659
Open channels of communication improve commitment	0.612
Clear channels of communication on information from the managers about tasks can reduces misunderstandings	0.611
I can approach my supervisor on any issues that concerns me	0.404
Open channels of communication changes employee's attitude towards managers	0.390
The good relationship that I have with my manager eliminates misunderstanding	0.322

The results (Table 4.16) indicate that only three items measured open channels of communication successfully, with scores above .5. The other three items did not measure the construct effectively as their score are below 5.

Table 4.17: Total-statistics - Recognition of employee opinions

Recognition of employee opinions	Corrected item– total correction
Being recognised by managers improves my commitment to the organisation	0.688
Employee’s good opinions can play an important role in decision making in and organisation	0.684
The recognition of employees by managers promotes job involvement commitment	0.657
When an employee's opinions are recognised by the managers their level of trust and honest increases	0.629
Good and creative opinions can create new job designs for employees	0.622
My opinion is valued by my manager	0.440
Recognition of employees can change perceptions	0.380

Recognition of employee opinions has good convergent validity, with the result indicating (Table 4.17) five of the seven statements above the threshold of .5 and only two statements below the required threshold.

Table 4.18: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix - Sharing of Ideas and Openness

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix					
	My involvement in the decision making gives me an opportunity to open up	Manager to discuss work issues openly with subordinates	Openness creates a good relationship among employees	I am involved in sharing ideas during policy formulation	Openness of management about tasks creates new ideas about the accomplishment of tasks
My involvement in the decision making gives me an opportunity to open up	1,000				
Manager to discuss work issues openly with subordinates	0,717	1,000			
Openness creates a good relationship among employees	0,683	0,491	1,000		
I am involved in sharing ideas during policy formulation	0,531	0,596	0,280	1,000	
Openness of management about tasks creates new ideas about the accomplishment of tasks	0,588	0,398	0,511	0,488	1,000

The Inter-Item Correlation (I-IC) Matrix (Table 4.18) provides information on how each item relates to other items. A positive sign in the correlation matrix means indicates the same direction while the negative sign shows different directions. As illustrated, all items have positive signs, meaning they all contribute positively to the formation of the construct ‘sharing of ideas and openness’.

Table 4.19: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix on Regular Feedback

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix						
	When managers excel in providing feedback to employers about their jobs that satisfies employees	When employees are satisfied their level of commitment increases	Providing feedback helps towards the attainment of organizational goals	Feedback improves job performance	Managers need to organise adequate training programs to change employee performance	Skilled employees are able to achieve employee performance effectively
When managers excel in providing feedback to employers about their jobs that satisfies employees	1,000					
When employees are satisfied their level of commitment increases	0,656	1,000				
Providing feedback helps towards the attainment of organizational goals	0,376	0,456	1,000			
feedback improves job performance	0,335	0,492	0,638	1,000		
Managers need to organise adequate training programs to change employee performance	0,230	0,343	0,507	0,497	1,000	
Skilled employees are able to achieve employee performance effectively	0,299	0,374	0,456	0,575	0,461	1,000

The I-IC Matrix of ‘regular feedback’ (Table 4.19) shows how each item relates to other items. All the items have positive signs, meaning they all contribute positively to the formation of the construct.

Table 4.20: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix on ‘Channels of Communication’

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix						
	The good relationship that I have with my manager eliminates misunderstanding	I can approach my supervisor on any issues that concerns me	Clear channels of communication on information from the managers about tasks can reduce misunderstanding	Open channels of communication increase job performance	Open channels of communication improve commitment	Communication changes employee's attitude towards managers
The good relationship that I have with my manager eliminates misunderstanding	1,000					
I can approach my supervisor on any issues that concerns me	0,149	1,000				
Clear channels of communication on information from the managers about tasks can reduce misunderstanding	0,380	0,481	1,000			
Open channels of communication increase job performance	0,338	0,340	0,601	1,000		
Open channels of communication improve commitment	0,211	0,376	0,424	0,575	1,000	
Open channels of communication changes employee's	0,160	0,159	0,195	0,400	0,511	1,000

attitude towards managers							
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The second column of interest is Cronbach’s alpha, should the item be deleted. This column provides suggestion on how a Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient could be improved when a certain item is deleted. For the construct of ‘Channels of Communication’ (Table 4.20), there is no need to delete any item as the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient already meets the required threshold.

Table 4.21: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix on ‘Recognition of Employee Opinions’

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix							
	My opinion is valued by my manager	Being recognised by managers improves my commitment to the organisation	The recognition of opinions employees by managers promotes job involvement commitment	Employee’s good opinions can play an important role in decision making in and organisation	Good and creative opinions can create new job designs for employees	When an employee's opinions are recognised by the managers their level of trust and honest increases	Recognition of employees can change perceptions
My opinion is valued by my manager	1,000						
Being recognised by managers improves my commitment to the organisation	0,532	1,000					
The recognition of employees by managers promotes job involvement commitment	0,216	0,598	1,000				

Employee's good opinions can play an important role in decision making in and organisation	0,390	0,575	0,585	1,000			
Good and creative opinions can create new job designs for employees	0,411	0,420	0,457	0,570	1,000		
When an employee's opinions are recognised by the managers their level of trust and honest increases	0,117	0,423	0,622	0,493	0,509	1,000	
Recognition of employees can change perceptions	0,052	0,345	0,408	0,302	0,276	0,666	1,000

The second column of interest here is where the *Cronbach Alpha if the item deleted*. This column shows how a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient could be improved when a certain item is deleted. For the construct of 'Recognition of Employee Opinions' (Table 4.21), there is no need to delete any item as the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient already meets the required threshold.

4.6 Qualitative results

Social Scientists examine patterns in communication by means of content analysis, in a replicable and systematic manner (Bryman 2016). The author added that a key advantage of using content analysis for social phenomena is its non-invasive nature, as opposed to social experiences that are simulated or the collection of surveys.

Although practices of content analysis vary between disciplines academically, Bryman (2016) explained that all involve observation of texts that are assigned labels/codes that point toward the presence of meaningful content items. Patterns of content can thus be analysed qualitatively through systematically labelling the content of a set of texts, in order to analyse the meaning of content within text.

4.6.1 Sharing of ideas and openness

The first objective that the study aimed to establish was whether sharing of ideas creates openness among employees and the questions posed in this regard are detailed below together with respondents' answers:

Question 1: Why is it important for employees to be involved in decision-making in organisational activities?

Respondents' answers:

- a. It is important because it creates a good working environment and increases the opportunity to share their knowledge and voice their opinions.
- b. It improves employee performance and encourages strong teamwork among employees.
- c. Employees express the reality on issues to be observed in an organisation and make them feel valued by their managers, which make them own the work they do.
- d. It promotes organisational harmony on activities and motivates employees on their performance.
- e. To ensure the unity within the organisation and trust.
- f. To make them comfortable and feel like part of the organisation and this enhances participation.
- g. It gives employees the opportunity to voice their opinions.
- h. It is very crucial to involve employees because the decisions made affect organisational effectiveness.

- i. I believe that an organisational success and its effectiveness highly depend on one integrated relationship between the employer and the employee. If there is a good interpersonal relationship between both parties, it allows both to be involved in making decisions, which reduces possibilities of conflict and misunderstandings in an organisation.
- j. It creates a sense of belonging.

Question 2: Do you think it is important for a manager to discuss work issues openly with subordinates? If so, why?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Yes, it is part of the information sharing with employees.
- b. It creates an understanding between management and employees.
- c. Yes, it is very important because they are at the grass-roots level of production so they can also give their suggestions and opinions.
- d. They are the ones who are expected to perform at their best.
- e. Yes, it is important that employees express their views on how things should be done.
- f. Yes, so that employees can understand the decisions made in the organisation.
- g. To promote open dialogue on communication between the manager and the employee. For a better relationship.
- h. Yes, because whatever decisions managers will make subordinates have to implement them.
- i. When employees are involved, they raise reality issues, which will promote continual improvement in all work issues discussed that involve employees at all times.
- j. It is important for management to ensure that each employee is being supervised.

Question 3: How does openness create a good relationship among employees?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Openness promotes good communication among employees.
- b. It allows employees to iron out misunderstandings if there are any a helps the employee to voice out their ideas without fear.
- c. It is easy for an employee to carry out orders with understanding without conflict as a result of a poor relationship.
- d. Openness builds trust and trust builds teamwork and improve performance among employees.

- e. Openness establishes few key strategies to improve communication at work; it also builds an atmosphere of trust.
- f. Yes, it stimulates one's working relationships among employees and creates a good working environment.
- g. It is instrumental in ensuring that the employees work is exceptional, which results in high productivity but also depends on a good relationship among employees and employer.
- h. It promotes a healthy work relationship where employees can share information that will make them work better.
- i. Employees acknowledge each other on what they are good at and used it to develop themselves and by sharing information.
- j. It enables them to discuss some sensitive issues, which might become an obstacle from moving forward.

Question 4: Would you say good relationships among employees enhance teamwork?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Yes, indeed, it enhances teamwork; it reduces absenteeism and makes them look forward to coming to work and interacting with one another very well.
- b. Yes, it does enhance teamwork and increases productivity and quality.
- c. Yes, because employees can easily interact with others and share issues, which will make them work better and creates the openness of employees on issues at hand.
- d. This would assist the organisation in the reduction of conflict and increase performance.
- e. It also creates eagerness and employees are able to go extra mile because if employees feel valued, they usually raise their level of effort to achieve success.
- f. Yes, it allows everyone to be involved, help each other, which leads to a good relationship results and good teamwork.
- g. The more you help each other the stronger you bond well but if the relationship is not good, the teamwork will not work out and productivity is reduced.
- h. Yes, working together can develop each other, come up with solutions based on your collective insight, wisdom and creativity
- i. A good relationship encourages co-operation and eliminates unnecessary work conflict.
- j. Yes, it does, if workers have a great relationship; it is easy to work with one another to achieve organisational goals.

Question 5: Is it important for management to be open about creating new ideas about the accomplishment of tasks? Explain your views.

Respondents' answers:

- a. Yes, because out of those new ideas the organisation will benefit if they are coming from the employees because they have to implement them at the end.
- b. Those ideas will be realistic and ideally, which would be effective and better when they are implemented.
- c. Those new ideas would address real issues to be attended to and add value to the organisation.
- d. It makes employees or subordinates to understand the purpose and objective of the organisation.
- e. It also makes them feel that they are important stakeholders in the organisation.
- f. Yes, employees should be encouraged to come with new ideas.
- g. Yes, when there is openness, the manager can easily bring new ideas to subordinates and they can easily address their ideas and concerns when the problems arise, it will be easy to solve them.
- h. It is important because it shapes the employee's ideas and learn about other opinions and ideas.

4.6.2 Key themes from the first research objective

The following are the key points according to the focus group:

- Knowledge sharing.
- Creation of strong teams.
- Ability to iron out misunderstandings.
- Increases commitment and creates harmony and trust.
- Encourages employees to work better and go that extra mile.
- Creates a better working environment.

As can be seen, respondents not only supported the views from the quantitative aspect of the study, but have also added other positive attributes that result from 'sharing of ideas and openness', such as creation of a good and harmonious working environment where trust prevails.

4.6.3 Regular feedback and performance

The second research objective was dealt with as follows:

Question 1: Do you feel that managers must provide feedback to employees about how they are performing their tasks?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Yes, employees need to know how they performed their task and where they need to improve.
- b. It is important because feedback can lead to outstanding performance.
- c. Employees have to know what they are doing well, not well, so that as an employee you will be aware of your performance, and know what to improve if you have to.
- d. It is important for a manager to provide feedback in order for employees to improve their skills where necessary and access training where there is a shortfall.
- e. That is important because the employees can be motivated and improve their performances.
- f. Yes, this will motivate those who perform well and ensure the development of those who still need more knowledge to achieve organisational goals.
- g. Yes, because it would assist to correct errors on time, which would minimise poor performance.
- h. It helps to discuss issues that affect performance and continuously strive to attain organisational goals by all members.
- i. Very important so that they will know where they need to improve their work and help them to gain more self-esteem.
- j. It is good to know the results in anything that you are doing whether you have done well or bad so that you can improve. Definitely, managers should go back to the employees so that they will be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Question 2: Would giving feedback help employees to attain organisational goals?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Yes, feedback enhances performance and help the employees to grow and feedback elevates engagement and increases motivation so that targets are met within scheduled time plan.
- b. The employee gains a full understanding of individual strengths and weaknesses.
- c. It helps them to develop. Yes, when an employee knows what is expected of them to do and the organisational goals they need to achieve.
- d. Employees will understand their roles in the attainment of organisational goals.
- e. Yes, employees will be aware of the goals they need to work on and achieve.
- f. Yes, as employees will get a clear idea about expectations and work responsibly if they feel valuable in an organisation.
- g. Yes, because every member clearly understands what is expected of him?
- h. Individually and as a collection and finally benefit the organisation.
- i. Every employee will work to attain those goals if they know that his or her performance is valuable to the organisational goal setting.
- j. Yes, they will strive to ensure that they do not put down the image and the reputation of the organisation and they will assist each other, make, and lift up the stand and performance of the organisation.

Question 3: Would you say providing feedback to employees improves job performance?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Yes, it assists in promoting and improving employee engagement and employee satisfaction.
- b. Yes, feedback is the tool for career development and the ability to communicate.
- c. Employees will understand their roles better and job performance improves.
- d. Yes, especially, if it is positive feedback, it motivates the employees to do over and more to ensure that the organisation achieve the desired goals.
- e. The feedback either positive or negative affect an individual's job performance in a very effective way.
- f. Yes, if employees are well motivated especially if good, performance is knowledge with compensation.

- g. Yes, the feedback they receive would address areas where the poor performance was identified and how to address it and discuss the causes of poor performance with the manager for them to improve their performance.
- h. Yes, if it is a good feedback, they become more motivated more productive, gain self-esteem and confidence looking forward to doing more than what they have done.

Question 4: What factors can help in increasing the level of commitment of employees?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Ensuring a friendly working environment is the most important factor, as it will allow the employees to feel free and open with each other.
- b. Clear organisational goals. Provision of feedback, information sharing, clear goals and instructions from managers and fair staff treatment.
- c. Compensation and acknowledgement of good performance.
- d. The openness of managers to employees, addressing issues openly, implementation of proposed issues and suggestions made by the employees.
- e. Employers' reliability and the involvement of employees in discussions and of issues and implementation of agreed suggestions.
- f. Good management skills and communicating with staff as well as working together.
- g. Rewards good recommendations, promotions, leave good benefits allowances, and good conducive working environment with all the relevant required equipment.
- h. Treating employees with respect gives more productiveness and they work with a focus on quality to increase customer satisfaction and the profitability of the organisation.

4.6.4 Key themes from the second research objective

The following are the key views that were put forth by the focus group:

- Results in improved performance and skills where necessary.
- Gives an opportunity to know one's strength and weaknesses.
- Timeous correction of errors.
- Expectations are confirmed.
- It is motivational and results in self-esteem.
- Promotes a good working environment.

Additional to the results of the quantitative results, which endorsed that feedback augers well for performance, this group once more emphasised that effective communication is a vehicle to creating a good working environment.

4.6.5 Recognition of employee opinions

The third research objective for this study was to ascertain whether recognition of employee opinions increases employee performance, with responses as follows.

Question 1: Does your manager value your opinion?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Yes, but not all the time.
- b. Sometimes, my manager is a doubting manager.
- c. He just carries down instructions up from his senior manager and makes them as instructions to us.
- d. It is even hard to give opinions to him because he does not listen to us.
- e. Yes, because I am also senior at my workplace with lots of experience.
- f. Yes, as I am the one who is directly involved in the production and providing services to clients and staff members at the lower level of the organisation.
- g. Yes, he makes it a priority all the time as to how much he values me and respects me as an employee.
- h. No, my manager does not value my opinion.

Question 2: How do you know that the manager does value your opinion?

Respondents' answers

- a. By appreciation of outcomes.
- b. Yes, because the manager takes my opinions and used them to develop new strategies.
- c. My manager always wants to know my opinions on almost everything and always trusts my judgement.
- d. By creating the space to voice out my opinion through his or her responses. Sometimes the manager appreciates other colleague's opinions more than mine.
- e. When a manager is creating a culture of worth and belonging, where everyone is welcome by being present, connected with transparency, dignity and respect.

- f. Yes, because the manager allows me to continue with what I am doing and always asks me if I have any new ideas that can improve my level of performance.
- g. Simply because the manager pays attention to my opinions and take them into consideration when implementing some tasks and used some of my opinions when dealing with issues in the office.
- h. Sometimes he asked us our opinions when addressing issues.
- i. He listens to us but no effort of implementing them.
- j. This is discovered from the problems that we encounter arising from the opinions of the matter discussed before and he runs away.

Question 3: When the manager did appreciate your opinion, did you feel a sense of self-worth?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Yes, because my opinions are based on experiences of issues discussed with members or other problems encountered with.
- b. Yes, I did feel a sense of worth when the manager acknowledged my contribution.
- c. Yes, because my opinions were respected and valued.
- d. It is nice to be acknowledged in the workplace.
- e. Oh yes, indeed it runs in my veins to boost my performance, it gives me the sense of self-worth by my manager and gains a lot of self-esteem that is a huge motivation.
- f. Yes, you can feel valued, respected and important to the organisation, so it is a very good experience.
- g. I will personally advise all managers to appreciate the employee's opinions.

Question 4: When the manager did appreciate your opinion, did you feel a sense of equality in you?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Yes, sometimes.
- b. If the manager appreciates my opinions and considers them, that means the manager instils a sense of equality to me as an individual in the organisation besides the fact that he or she has a higher position than me.
- c. Yes, I did sometimes because I am not the employee who always do mistakes and I am always punctual at work all the time and loyal when doing work.
- d. Yes, it makes me feel valued. Yes, because it shows that the manager recognises that I can make a meaningful contribution to the organisation.

- e. It can play a vital role to come up with no decisive opinions that can make the organisation become effective and more productive.
- f. Yes, because it makes me feel I am adding value to the organisation and feel openness is the best tool that can apply to my team.
- g. Views and opinions are welcome.

4.6.6 Key themes that emanated from the third research objective

- Transparency is created.
- One feels a sense of dignity and respect.
- Gives a feeling of self-worth and equality.
- Motivates one to perform even better.

An additional view raised by this group is that effective communication creates a sense of self-worth and equality, which in turn induces the employee to improve performance.

4.6.7 Open Channels of communication

The fourth research objective that this study established was to determine whether channels of communication mitigate misunderstandings. The questions asked and responses are as follows:

Question1: What channels of communication would you say help in eliminating misunderstandings between managers and employees?

Respondents' answers:

- a. One-on-one communication.
- b. Good communication. Verbal communication.
- c. The open-door policy where workers are free to communicate with their managers.
- d. Electronic communication.
- e. I believe that there are the good channels of communication that reduces misunderstanding between the manager and the employee, such as emails.
- f. Open sessions, feedback sessions and employees writing their opinions and put them in open boxes anonymously.
- g. Firstly, there has to be respect between both parties

- h. Not all channels of communication are instrumental in helping and there must be an understanding between the manager and the employee.
- i. There must be a downward communication from the management to the employees and upward communication from the employees to management whereby all issues must be communicated directly to all levels. This can be done by sending emails that need to be brought to attention of all levels of the organisation.

Question 2: If channels of communication could be opened, do you think that would positively impact on job performance?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Yes, it will improve my job performance because there will be information sharing and provision of feedback.
- b. Yes, because employees could be able to perform good work in the organisation and communication will remain strong between the manager and the employee.
- c. Yes, every employee will feel free if they are sure about tasks.
- d. Electronic communication, yes. Imagine being able to talk to your manager about anything at any time especially when it makes you unhappy about something that would create a very good working environment, which would result in effective job performance.

Question 3: If channels of communication could be opened, do you think that would positively impact on employee integrity?

Respondents' answers:

- a. If communication channels are opened to all employees, it will encourage employee participation within an organisation.
- b. Yes, it will build confidence and integrity in employees.
- c. Yes, because you can communicate directly with the concerned employee without others becoming aware that the employee is being disciplined as it used to be before when the employee was called to the office in front of everyone.
- d. Yes, because employees have a sense of trust.
- e. Yes, every employee would clearly understand his or her responsibilities about where he or she stands as an employee and also his or her limitations and boundaries.
- f. Yes, trust between the employer and the employee.

Question 4: If channels of communication could be opened, do you think employees would have a sense of equality?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Communication brings about self-worth and the feeling of being important in every level of employment is essential to the employees.
- b. Yes, this helps to improve accountability, which in return increases the productivity.
- c. Yes, free channels of communication enhance a sense of equality if they are free.
- d. Yes, as they will feel important and highly recognised by their line managers; they will feel that the manager respects their reputation and integrity.
- e. Yes, it would automatically create a work environment where every employee's opinions are valued and respected by every individual and would have some sense of equality inside the organisation.

Question 5: If channels of communication could be opened, do you think that would improve employee attitudes towards their work?

Respondents' answers:

- a. Yes, because even if an employee is not sure what to do, he or she can easily consult with the supervisor, the manager, or a colleague.
- b. Yes, empowerment and transparency will improve employees' attitudes towards their work.
- c. Employees will feel that there is no conflict between them and the managers. Positive employee attitudes and willingness to participate in work activities will be cultivated.
- d. Always, employees will be confident in performing their work and that will enhance their self-esteem due to feelings of being supported by their managers.
- e. Yes, because they realize that positive attitudes are a way or manager to do things as the employer expects them or the manager to give positive attitudes towards them.

Question 6: If channels of communication could be opened, do you think it would build employee self-esteem?

Respondents' answers:

- a. The feeling of self-worth and self-esteem will bring employees best performance. Treat them with deep respect. Be specific about what's right.
- b. Help them properly. Encourage them through mistakes.
- c. Yes, knowing that there is trust so communicating with others is open.
- d. Yes, self-esteem is one of the fundamental senses that makes your teamwork become more productive if your communication is of the highest, so definitely your employee's self-esteem will be increased multiple times.
- e. Proper channels of communication are very significant in the working environment towards your employees.
- f. Yes, obviously if someone values and respects you by allowing you to speak or have an observation with you, that manager will boost your level of confidence and make you feel good about yourself and appreciated your work.
- g. Yes, encourages self-confidence.

4.6.8 Key themes from this research objective

- One-on-one verbal communication is the best.
- Feedback sessions are necessary.
- Use of both top down and upward communication.
- Information sharing is promoted.
- Employee participation creates a sense of self-worth.
- It boosts confidence.
- Improves productivity.

This group certainly endorsed the catalytic attribute of effective communication to employee performance. They also illuminated psychological aspects such as motivation, confidence boosting, self-worth, esteem and trust.

The above findings from this study have proven that effective communication is indeed a catalyst for employee performance. In particular, sharing of ideas and openness provide employees with opportunities and a platform to share their knowledge and skills, permitting them to voice their opinions to management. Providing feedback to employees helps them to identify areas of poor performance to improve on, perform better and accelerate the level of accountability. It transpired that some managers were said to be inclined to selectively acknowledge employee opinions. Open channels of communication can encourage employees to participate more in organisational activities, which boosts morale, confidence, trust, and self-worth, in addition to providing a sense of equality. All these elements result in enhanced employee performance.

The next chapter concludes this study and offers recommendations that could assist Municipalities and Heads of Departments (HoDs) to better communicate and in so doing, enhance employee performance within a municipal setting.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study, the aim of which was to establish whether effective communication can be a catalyst to improve municipal employee performance. In the business sector, managers have a habit of neglecting the importance of clearly conveying messages to employees with regard to their day-to-day duties. This lack of communication leads to misunderstandings and the wrong interpretation of messages by employees during the implementation of tasks, resulting in low performance standards, which also holds true for municipal settings.

This study is concluded by addressing the research objectives that guided the study. These research objectives were tested both quantitatively and qualitatively on a total of 80 respondents, with data triangulated by method (Olsen 2004: 3 as cited in Muthwa 2016: 9). Where applicable, recommendations are then made to managers and future research is proposed.

5.2 Addressing the first research objective

The first objective for this study was to establish the extent to which sharing of ideas creates openness among employees.

i. Primary findings

Sharing of ideas creates an open platform for employees to share knowledge and experiences. In turn, this encourages employees to own their work and fosters harmony and trust. They are then able to produce quality outputs and perform beyond the call of duty.

ii. Secondary findings

According to Brown (2013: 17), knowledge sharing in an organisation fosters working relationships. This is because employees share different experiences for different jobs, enabling new employees to grow in knowledge, especially during brainstorming sessions. Subsequently, the pressure of completing work and meeting deadlines or delivery times are reduced, as engaging with knowledgeable workers in the communication process saves time.

5.3 Second research objective

The second objective this study aimed to achieve was to examine whether regular feedback contributes to improved performance.

i. Primary findings

Employees value feedback, be it formal or informal, because it creates awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Improving on weaknesses helps them improve their performance.

ii. Secondary findings

These findings are in line with Král and Králová (2016: 169), who postulated that constructive feedback is of vital importance to employees as it provides progress and performance analyses in detail, allowing employees to learn from their mistakes and build self-confidence. Furthermore, the ability of a manager to relate well with employees promotes friendliness, giving employees the courage to be open with their manager especially, when they lacking full comprehension of how to tackle a difficult task. Hence, the manager should ensure a two-way flow of information all the time to avoid any doubt or tentativeness (Krylova, Jolly & Philips 2017: 196).

5.4 Third research objective

The third objective was to determine whether open channels of communication mitigate misunderstandings.

i. Primary findings

Channels of communication create an environment where misunderstandings can be mitigated and errors timeously corrected. In the process, performance expectations are clarified and employees come to terms with their strengths and weaknesses.

ii. Secondary findings

It is the view of Yukl, Mahsud, Hassan and Prussia (2013: 39) that organisations adopt different styles to maintain information flow to the various organs that form work systems. The style of the communication network must be the type that is completely understandable by the entire workforce and public members, in order for work productivity to yield corporate goals (Zheng, Shen and Wang 2014: 198). A plain and transparent change management or communication strategy is needed amongst workers to function with honesty and strength (Tregidga, Milne and

Kearins 2018: 293). However, poor channels of communication affect the implementation of organisational goals and the attainment of task efficiency (Walumbwa, Hartnell and Misati 2017: 16).

5.5 Fourth research objective

The fourth objective was to determine whether recognition of employee opinion increases employee performance.

i. Primary findings

Recognition of employee opinions provides feelings of acceptance; equality; respect and a sense of belonging. This degree of comfort results in devotion to tasks given and the desire to go the extra mile.

ii. Secondary findings

Islam (2013: 235) believes an approach to applaud workers in an organisation is through recognition or appreciation of the effort they contribute towards the predetermined plan of goal achievement. This action aims to inspire employees to be more committed to their work by exerting their talent, skills, knowledge and experience, especially where transformation requires restructuring the monumental shift in the area of administration. Therefore, organisations should accept as true that recognising employee opinions has positive effects on their work engagement. The study concurs with findings by Tessema *et al.* (2013: 3) that recognition and reward encourage staff to be loyal and hardworking, and to either work towards achieving a collective or an individual goal.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to managers of organisations, specifically Municipal Managers.

5.6.1 Sharing of ideas and openness

Managers should involve employees in decision-making, regardless of their positions in an organisation. They should also consider and appreciate employee opinions during the policy formulation process. Therefore, management should consider all employee opinions, irrespective of the position held in an organisation.

5.6.2 Provision of feedback

Managers should provide formal and informal feedback to employees regarding the attainment of organisational goals. This will motivate employees to improve their performance, advance their strengths and reduce their weaknesses.

Management ought to also provide employees with sufficient resources to be able to perform their duties daily as inadequate resources lead to poor performance.

5.7 Proposed future research

This study has shown that effective communication is not only a catalyst for employee performance; it touches many more aspects of employee functioning. Most importantly, it transpires that effective communication builds confidence; brings respect; provides dignity, integrity and a sense of belonging. It is therefore advisable that future research tests the strength of the impact on all these attributes.

Future research could also examine more models of communication, with specific reference to the effectiveness of the development model employed by the government.

On a theoretical level, the study also revealed how certain concepts, such as idea-sharing, openness and feedback are not always linked to communication discourse as such, instead, from a public administration perspective, in some instances they seem to merely be buzzwords used by municipal managers and employees in report-writing. Therefore, practical examples of effective development communication by government at municipal level should be examined and the findings published; as example for all municipalities in SA to follow, with the potential positive impact hopefully filtering down into improved and effective service delivery.

5.8 Summary of findings study for the study

Overall, the results from the quantitative approach and qualitative approach results indicate that different instruments used to measure the construct they measure all construct perfectly to prove that effective communication can change employee performance. The majority of respondents from both techniques believed that if managers communicate effectively employee performance can change rapidly. Findings also revealed that municipalities can provide good services to communities if all employees are treated fairly, respect each other honestly to one other.

Municipalities should introduce open door policy where all employees are able to voice out their problems. But on top of everything it is very important for managers to equip themselves with new technologies in boost productivity and be able address issues around employee performance. Managers should recognised employee opinions regardless of their positions. Lastly clear channels of communication and provision of proper feedback to employees is main key for the success of any municipality.

5.9 Conclusion

South African municipalities have attracted much attention from researchers as a result of numerous problems that besiege them. Consequently, they are under immense scrutiny from the public in general. This study was undertaken as a result of that scrutiny, with the intent to determine how municipalities are faring in terms of communication, which has always been seen to contribute to the success of all organisations, whether corporate or municipal. It was, therefore, important for this study to ascertain how effective communication could be a catalyst for municipal employee performance, by testing the views of those employees expected to perform the required tasks.

The effects of communication to fit and efficacy perceptions recap the role of interactions between managers and employees because sense of trend, motivation and competence are important to them. When communication does not function in teams and between supervisors and subordinates, it reflects negatively on the entire organisation. Therefore, it becomes evident that management needs to understand the complexities of organisational life and examine whether communication between managers and employees is effective so as to bring a positive picture. An effective communication image leads to management support for confidence in its goals and objectives as Sadia *et al.* (2016: 34) have observed. Communication describes what organisations are and do.

This study has unequivocally confirmed the importance of communication in governmental organisations. The fact that it was conducted in municipalities strengthens this fact while also illuminating additional factors to the importance of effective communication, for example, creating an enabling working environment. Numerous psychological attributes were in addition identified, through which better employee performance can be achieved.

These attributes mainly came from the qualitative aspect of this study, that the sequential method was essential and useful in navigating this enquiry. These are the respondents who raised issues such as how motivating it was to share ideas with other employees and managers; how receiving feedback on how one has performed from superiors gave them a sense of self-worth, equality and how it built trust. Employees need to have their voice. The qualitative aspect of the research showed that the use of focus groups was beneficial in that respondents were able to discuss issues and come to a common understanding. The method is able to extract employee feelings, attitudes and beliefs that underlie certain behaviours.

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Appendix 1: Letter of Information



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study: TOPIC: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AS A CATALYST of EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE WITHIN SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES AT KWAZULU-NATAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: (Ntombizandile Victoria Sineke M-TECH)

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: (Dr Nobubele PHD)

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: The aim of the study is to establish how employee performance can be improved by communicating effectively with the employees.

Outline of the procedures: To access the information from them, hand delivery of questionnaire to the participants, a pilot survey will be used, to meet them at their place of work, Likert scale will be used, 15minutes will be enough and randomization will be conceded.

Risks or discomforts to the participant: (No risk or discomfit to the participants)

Benefits: the participant will gain the knowledge and to the researcher/s e.g. publications and journals for her study.

Reason/s why the participant may be withdrawn from the study: (Non-compliance, illness, adverse reactions, etc. Need to state that there will be no adverse consequences for the participant should they choose to withdraw)

Remuneration: N/A.

Costs of the Study: no

Confidentiality: strictly confidentiality will be conceded

Research-related Injury: no injuries.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries: Dr. Nobubele Potwana. Please contact the researcher (0838784962.), my supervisor (tel. 0828607187) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

Appendix 2: Ethical Clearance



MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (FREC)

19 May 2017
Student No: 19850321
FREC No: 49/16FREC

Dear Ms NV Sineke

MASTER OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

TITLE: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AS A CATALYST OF EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE.

Please be advised that the Faculty Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your proposal and the following decision was made: Ethics Level 2

Approval has been granted for a period of two years, after which you are required to apply for safety monitoring and annual recertification. Please use the form located at the Faculty. This form must be submitted to the FREC at least 3 months before the ethics approval for the study expires.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the FREC according to the FREC SOP's. Please note that ANY amendments in the approved proposal require the approval of the FREC as outlined in the FREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely

Prof. JP Govender
Chairperson: FREC

Appendix 3: Letter from uBuhlebezwe Municipal Manager

29 Margaret Street
Ixopo
3276
Tel: 039 8347700



Po Box 132
Ixopo
Fax: 039 8341168
www.ubuhlebezwe.org.za

UBUHLEBEZWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
Office of the Municipal Manager

22 August 2018

DUT Durban
University of Technology
Berea
4001

ATT: Ms. Sineke

Dear Madam

RE: MASTERS RESEARCH ON UBUHLEBEZWE MUNICIPALITY

As per your request to conduct research at our institution, it is of great pleasure to inform you that, Ubuhebezwe Municipality has agreed to your proposal in conducting your research. Trusting that we will be of assistance to your academic achievement.

Yours Faithfully


GM SINEKE
MUNICIPAL MANAGER

Appendix 4: Letter from Ray Nkonyeni Municipal Manager



Good day Ntombizandile Victoria Sineke

Kindly Please Note that the office of the Municipal Manager received and acknowledge your email, you are further given a permission to conduct your research, and you will be working with HoD Zulu.

For further questions, seeking clarities HoD Zulu will assist.

I hope the above you will find all in good order.

Thank you!

Kind Regards

Snethemba Nzimakwe (Mr.)

Office of the Municipal Manager

Ray Nkonyeni Municipality

PO Box 5, 10 Connor Street, Port Shepstone, 4240

Snethemba.Nzimakwe@rnm.gov.za

039 - 688 2021

086 - 600 9895

www.rnm.gov.za

Appendix 5: Instrument for Qualitative Research

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUPS

SECTION A: RESPONDENT PROFILE

1. Gender

MALE	4	FEMALE	6
------	---	--------	---

2. Highest Educational Qualification

MATRIC	2
3 YR POST MATRIC	4
JUNIOR DEGREE	3
POST GRADUATE	1

3. Current Job Level

JUNIOR OFFICER	5
OFFICERS	4
MANAGER	1

4. Number of years in this organisation

LESS THAN 5 YEARS	3
05 TO 10 YEARS	4
ABOVE 10 YEARS	3

SECTION B: SHARING OF IDEAS

5. Why is it important for employees to be involved in decision-making in organisational activities?

6. Do you think it is important for manager to discuss work issues openly with subordinates?
If so why?

7. How does openness create a good relationship among employees?

8. Would you say the good relationships among employees enhances team work?

9. Is it important for management to be open about creating new ideas about the accomplishment of tasks? Explain your views.

SECTION C: REGULAR FEEDBACK

10. Do you feel that managers must provide feedback to employees about how they are performing their task?

11. Would giving feedback help employees to attain organisational goals?

12. Would you say providing feedback to employees improves job performance?

13. What factors can help in increasing the level of commitment of employees?

SECTION D: RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEES

14. Does your manager value your opinion?

15. How do you know that he does value your opinion?

16. When the manager did appreciate your opinion, did you feel a sense of self-worth?

17. When the manager did appreciate your opinion, did he instill a sense of equality in you?

SECTION E: CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

18. What channels of communication would you say help in eliminating misunderstandings between managers and employees?

19. If channels of communication could be opened, do you think that would positively impact on job performance?

20. If channels of communication could be opened, do you think that would positively affect employee integrity?

21. If channels of communication could be opened, do you think employees would have a sense of equality?

22. If channels of communication could be opened, do you think that would improve employee attitudes towards their work?

23. If channels of communication could be opened, do you think it would build employee self-esteem?

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR VALUABLE TIME AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS ENQUIRY.

Appendix 6: Instrument for Quantitative Research

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick as appropriate

Section A: Biographic Information

1. Gender

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

2. Age

Less than 20	21-30	31-40	41-50	61 and above
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3. Race

Coloured	Indian	White	Black
----------	--------	-------	-------

4. Education

Matric certificate	Diploma	National diploma	Degree	Post-graduate
--------------------	---------	------------------	--------	---------------

5. Work Experience

5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	25-30 years	40 years and above
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Section B: Sharing of ideas

6. My involvement in decision making gives me an opportunity to open up.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

7. Manager to discuss work issues openly with subordinates.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

8. Openness creates a good relationship among employees.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

9. I am involved in sharing of ideas during policy formulation

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

10. The openness of management about tasks creates new ideas about the accomplishment of tasks

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

Section C: Regular Feed Back

11. When managers excel in providing feedback to employers about their jobs that satisfies employees

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

12. When employees are satisfied their level of commitment increases

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

13. Providing feedback helps towards the attainment of organisational goals

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

14. Does feedback improve job performance?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

15. Managers need to organise an adequate training program to change employees' performance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

16. Skilled employees are able to achieve employee performance effectively

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

Section D: Channels of Communication

17. The good relationship that I have with my manager eliminates misunderstanding

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

18. I can approach my supervisor on issues that concerns me

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

19. Clear information from the managers about tasks reduces misunderstanding

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

20. Open channels of communication increase job performance

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

21. Open channels of communication improve commitment

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

22. Open channels of communication change employee's attitude toward managers

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

Section E: Recognition of Opinions

23. My opinion is valued by my manager

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

24. Being recognised by managers improves my commitment to the organisation.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

25. The recognition of employees by managers promotes job involvement and commitment.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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26. Employees good opinion can play an important role in decision making in an organisation.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

27. Good creative opinions can create new job designs for employees.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

28. When employee's opinion is recognised by the managers their level of trust and honest increases.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

29. Recognition of employees can change perceptions

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!!

Appendix 7: Turnitin Report

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AS A CATALYST FOR EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE WITHIN SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES AT KWAZULU-NATAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

ORIGINALITY REPORT

15% SIMILARITY INDEX	12% INTERNET SOURCES	2% PUBLICATIONS	9% STUDENT PAPERS
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PRIMARY SOURCES

1	ir.dut.ac.za Internet Source	2%
2	www.gcis.gov.za Internet Source	1%
3	Submitted to University of South Africa Student Paper	1%
4	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	1%
5	Submitted to East Chapel Hill High School Student Paper	1%
6	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	<1%
7	Submitted to Mancosa Student Paper	<1%
8	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
	uir.unisa.ac.za	

SIGNED: _____

DATE: 13TH NOVEMBER 2021

SUPERVISOR