UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
RESTRUCTURED FOR RELEVANCE

The King Cetshwayo District Municipality's Reputational Communication Management within its amalgamated municipalities

BY

Nwabisa Luthuli

Masters in Communication Science

2020

The King Cetshwayo District Municipality's Reputational Communication Management within its amalgamated municipalities

By

Nwabisa Luthuli

Student No: 200812895

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

Masters in Communication Science

University of Zululand

Academic year 2020

Supervisor:

Prof. H Rugbeer

Co-Supervisor:

Dr G.M. Naidoo

Department of Communication Science

ETHICAL STATEMENT BY RESEARCHER

With the signature below I, **Nwabisa Luthuli**, hereby declare that the work that I present in this thesis is based on my own research and that I have not submitted this thesis to any other institution of higher education to obtain an academic qualification.

_____	25-06-2020
N Luthuli	Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WRITING CONVENTIONS

The following conventions are used in this study:

- The abbreviated Harvard style of referencing in this study, for example, Welman et al. (2005), meaning Welman, Kruger & Mitchel 2005 page 64.
- Illustrative tables and figures are all given as Figures 1-56 and Tables 1-17 in their chronological sequence of appearance.
- Information pertaining to how the King Cetshwayo district municipality manages its reputation through the use of communication within the amalgamated municipalities is retrieved through websites. For example, http://smallbusiness.chron.com/postmerger-hr-cultural-issues-1440.html. The information gathered from these websites aid in critically accessing all aspects associated with post-merger.
- The World Wide Web (www) is transient and ever-changing, therefore one should expect that websites from which information is gathered will be offline or may alter the contents of the website over a period electronic document has been downloaded from a website, the author is mentioned, followed by the year as in Gleeson (2019).
- This thesis adopts the South African English writing style.

ANC: African National Congress

SA: South Africa

MDB: Municipal Demarcation Board

CoGTA: Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs

ICC: Integrated Crisis Communication

WBCSD: World Business Council for Sustainable Development

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

SIC: Strategic Integrated Communication

IMC: Integrated Marketing Communication

NPS: Net Promoter Score

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of tables

List of figures

ABSTRACT

University of Zululand

Abstract

The King Cetshwayo District Municipality's Reputational Communication Management within its amalgamated municipalities

by Nwabisa Luthuli

The study examines how the King Cetshwayo district municipality managed its reputation after the 2016 local provincial elections where many municipalities were incorporated into one municipality. The purpose of the study is to analyse how new communication technologies aid municipalities in maintaining their reputation. Modern technologies are emerging and evolving rapidly; therefore, the study focuses on how these swift changes impact on society's perspectives of municipal trends. Further, the study examines forces of change within the King Cetshwayo District Municipality as well as communication strategies which the merged municipality has in place to satisfy customer needs. The study also evaluates brand reputational management techniques used by the new municipality. The research strategy employed a triangulation of methodologies which included qualitative and quantitative research methods. Data was gathered using survey questionnaires and structured interviews, where the researcher personally interacted with the respondents. There has been a strong indication that communication in rural areas is still problematic. Respondents preferred the municipality to use innovative ways of communication which are associated with new communication technology. Respondents also indicated that municipalities should communicate effectively with the media and that they ought to incorporate integrated communication strategies to ensure that internal and external communication with key stakeholders is maintained. Recommendations included major improvement to communications which included the application of up to date communication technologies. Analysis of findings also stressed the need for improving transparency within the organisation.

Chapter 1

ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research conducted. It outlines the various communication strategies employed when dealing with brand reputation. Brand reputation ought to be an important aspect of an organisation's culture since organisations need to maintain a positive reputation in order to sustain and ensure their survival in the current vicious economic climate where increasingly businesses are competing and failing on a daily basis. Karakose (2008:1), defines a "reputation as the overall identity of an organisation and image being the organisation's total perceptions, whether positive and negative thoughts of both internal and external stakeholder's impact on an organisation's status". Therefore, this shows that image and reputation are linked to the corporate brand. The image refers to the perception that stakeholders (customers, community) have towards the brand itself. The reputation of a brand is being driven by the internal stakeholders who drive and have the effect as to how people perceive a certain brand. These include amongst others marketing, advertising and public relations.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Many municipalities in South Africa face various difficulties which range from challenges relating to services to the community, poor procedures in place when appointing new staff members, irregularities and deficiencies with tender procedures, infrastructural problems and distrust from the business community.

Many organisations have, at some time or another came under the scrutiny of the mass media. Quite often, the mass media has a tendency to focus and prey on the negative incidents of an organisation. Organisations which have proactive public relations practitioners often manage to quell fires which are ignited by the media. How a municipality responds to a crisis reveals its commitment to ensuring service delivery and a safe environment is maintained. According to Holborn and Moloi (2012), South Africa is made up of a dualistic local government system. The first comprises of small

local municipalities. The second comprises of metropolitan municipalities and larger district municipalities, which normally has four local municipalities each. The creation of district municipalities was established to make stronger fragile municipalities, especially in rural areas.

MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

South Africa is a developing country and is struggling to keep abreast with innovative communication technologies which are continuously emerging around the globe. New models of communication are being made available daily which tends to facilitate easier and faster ways of retrieving information. Odden (2013), mentions that certain public relations agencies have not only become successfully involved in online communication but are instrumental in facilitating the role of public relations in various online channels such as social networking blogs and search engines. This gives them an advantageous edge since they become constantly aware of the media surroundings. However, the Human Sciences Research Council (2015) indicates that although an Internet connection is beginning to diffuse into the formal rural areas, connection to the Internet is virtually non-existent within rural households across ex-homeland localities. This challenge has been the motivating factor to examine how the new conglomerate would assist sustainable development in rural areas.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to analyse how new communication technologies aid municipalities in maintaining their reputation. According to Argenti and Drunkenmiller (2004), "organisations increasingly recognise the importance of corporate reputation to evaluate business goals and stay competitive". Modern technologies are emerging and evolving extremely fast and the study focused on how it impacts on society's perspectives towards certain municipal trends. With modern technologies and communication systems evolving at a heightened pace, it has become increasingly difficult to calculate which would be the most feasible technology to adopt in order to cope with the demands of a burgeoning public. It becomes increasingly difficult for those organisations that have remained complacent about entering the digital age of communication sooner to make reliable decisions about choosing appropriate

2

communication technology to enter the reputational race. Unfortunately, many rural municipalities have not yet migrated into the virtual space and are finding it extremely difficult to meet clients' needs.

This study examines the amalgamation of municipalities within King Cetshwayo District Municipality and the strategies which have been adopted in order to manage brand reputation, especially in terms of keeping abreast with current information communication technology. The study is aimed at determining whether the impact of reputational management strategies at the municipal level, invokes negative or positive reputational attitudes from the public, employees, stakeholders, councillors, mayors, members of the board and also the speakers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The uThungulu District Municipality has undergone several changes which include renaming the district. The district municipality is named after the late King Cetshwayo which prompted the erection of a statue in honour of the king outside the municipal building. Khoza (2016), affirms that "the King Cetshwayo District Municipality has been renamed and will now be known as the King Cetshwayo District Municipality". King Cetshwayo District Municipality is situated in the KwaZulu Natal province and consists of six municipalities.

South Africa had been preparing for changes in municipal structures. The previous local government elections (3 August 2016) acted as a catalyst for implementing proposed changes. The demarcation board implemented 37 changes to the municipal boundaries. These changes affect the King Cetshwayo District Municipality. Four of its local municipalities were amalgamated. These include Ntambanana, Mthonjaneni, uMfolozi and uMhlathuze. The Ntambanana Municipality situated on the north coast was disbanded because they have become unsustainable. They were absorbed by the uMhlathuze, uMfolozi and Mthonjaneni municipalities (Naidoo[1] 2017).

---

[1] Public Relations Manager: King Cetshwayo District municipality. Ms Naidoo is also a postgraduate student at the University of Zululand. She has been available to provide first-hand information to the researcher as and when required. She is regarded as a primary source of information.

The demarcation board in KwaZulu-Natal dissolved some municipalities and merged them with better-performing ones. The Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) handled advising on the change which took place. Brand management and its sustainability for public consumption at this stage become questionable especially in a conglomeration which was unable to generate consumer satisfaction in smaller portions.

According to Ramsay (2014), the demarcation board announced that the Zululand municipality would be incorporated into uMhlathuze, Mthonjaneni and Mfolozi municipalities after the 2016 local government elections. King Cetshwayo municipalities consist of rural, semi-rural and urban areas. Of greater concern, Naidoo[1] (2014) affirms that 90% of the areas under the district are rural. Effective communication, in rural communities, is normally difficult due to lack of new technology infrastructure in such areas.

Research objectives

- To determine what factors motivated change within the King Cetshwayo District Municipality.
- To identify communication strategies which the merging municipalities have in place to satisfy customer needs.
- To detect problems which the society encounters after the merger of the municipalities.
- To evaluate the brand reputational management techniques of the new merger.
- To identify the public's choices for communication by the municipality.

Research methodology

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are used in this study. Data was gathered using survey questionnaires and structured interviews, where the researcher interacted with the respondent based on the questions that the researcher was collecting. The quantitative research method was used in the form of administering questionnaires to four local communities affected by a change such as Ntambanana,

uMhlathuze, uMfolozi and Mthonjaneni municipalities. Questionnaires were administered to the unit of analysis and a maximum of 500 questionnaires was distributed. The data gathered from questionnaires and interviews were collected, prepared and organised so that it could be coded. The data collected was consistent and arranged systematically in order to analyse uniformity and accuracy. Data which was collected included raw material from primary sources. The acquired data were grouped into sections which respondents adhered to. The grouping of the information consisted of categories that are similar, for example, age, citizenship and gender groups. The data was collected and coded using MoonStats software. Data obtained from the responses are presented using a variety of methods namely; bar charts, pie charts, histograms, diagrams and graphs.

Demarcation and limitations of the study

Communication technologies are broad, and this study focuses on communication technologies applied to manage brand reputation. The scope of the study is limited to King Cetshwayo District Municipality which is situated within the KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. The 2011 census figures identify the district as being rapidly changing. The study analyses the use of communication technologies within the municipality and as to whether it hinders or enhances the reputation of the brand. The study explores the relationship between brand reputation and new technologies. Organisations' ability to facilitate integrated communication strategies to improve communication and the perception of customers towards the brand was evaluated. The study also examines whether stakeholders and corporates also receive assistance from the municipality.

In conducting this research there are constraints which cause variation in the outcomes of the results. These constraints are as follows:

- Financial constraints limit the study in terms of time and coverage. Due to limited finance, the researcher sampled only one municipality referred to as the King Cetshwayo District Municipality, which is situated in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The researcher anticipated collecting a sample of 390 questionnaires from the entire population. In access to 450 questionnaires were distributed to ensure that at least 380-390 questionnaires were analysed.

- Responses were limited to the respondents that were available and willing to partake in the research. Stratified random sampling was used to distribute questions.

- Time constraints: the university time table limited survey collection time. This research was spread across more than two years for empirical investigation and theoretical research. Thus, time became a constraint in broadening the content and scope of the research.

- Errors: King Cetshwayo District Municipality is a heterogeneous area. Heterogeneity and economic inequality in this research caused measurement errors. The error that is untraceable and beyond the control of the researcher can also be taken as an error; for instance, the bias that is related to the background of the respondents, the mood of the respondents at the time of responding and other environmental biases. However, the researcher has applied extensive effort to limit this gap.

Chapter outlines

- Chapter Two unpacks the literature review which focuses on brand reputation in municipalities. In this chapter, the researcher delves into all the factors that contribute to reputation within an organisation. This section is in line with the research objectives of the study.

- Chapter Three: This chapter forms part of the research methodology of the study. It also explains how the data was gathered and analysed. This section clarifies the scientific methods which are used to solve the research problem.

- Chapter Four: This part of the study consists of the conceptual framework, where it associates theories to this study.

- Chapter Five: This chapter consists of the data which was gathered and analysed from the questionnaires as well as structured interviews which were conducted. This section also consists of the interpretation of results.

- Chapter Six: This part contains the recommendations, deductions of the research and classifies areas for further research.

Ethical and safety issues

The research involved human subjects; however, the researcher respects the rights of the respondents involved in the study. The researcher ensured the participants of the study were not harmed in any way. The right to privacy of the respondent and the organisations which were involved in the study has been respected. The researcher sought permission from the participating organisation by formally writing to them. Confidentiality was maintained and their personal details were not revealed. In the study, the respondents were informed of the nature of the research and they signed a consent form. They were also issued with an information sheet relating to the research. This means that the respondents were aware of the nature of the study. The information that had been gathered from the organisations and respondents is readily available. The accessibility of the information will be recorded and stored at the University of Zululand.

Conclusion

This chapter provides a general outline of this study. It explains the sequential procedures which motivated the researcher to conduct the study. Further, in the following chapters, the researcher provides substantial information to support the study. The subsequent chapter consists of the literature review.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The previous chapter, the focus was on aligning the processes facilitated by the researcher towards reaching a conclusion. The reputation of a company is crucial, as it strengths the entire company. Companies need to monitor, manage and sustain their reputation since their reputation influences employee and stakeholder behaviour and attitudes within the company and towards the company. This chapter scrutinises literature which is relevant to each of the objectives which are outlined in Chapter one.

Further, it elucidates reputation management and detects components associated with enhancing the reputation of a firm. Communication strategies are discussed in-depth in scrutinizing as to how the King Cetshwayo District Municipality executes procedures during and after the amalgamation of municipalities.

Factors which cause changes in government organisations

This section deals with factors which lead to changes within government organisations and is directly related to objective one. Change within an organisation refers to the total altercation of the work environment. Factors of change in organisations involve two aspects which consist of internal and external factors which lead to change. Change within organisations might produce positive or negative results. It is up to the government to ensure that the change process initiated is properly executed in order to meet the aims, goals and objectives of the organisation. Burke (2018), notes that in order for the organisations to last, particularly for the long term its essential that they change and adapt to their environment. Organisations ought to implement necessary strategies that will help in shaping and structuring an organisation.

In so doing, it maximises chances of the organisation being able to sustain itself in future. There are various factors that might shape an organisation to change. These factors include customers, service delivery, history of the organisation, finance and the

economic environment. Gleeson (2019), notes that it is cliché among management professionals and business personnel that ongoing transformation in a business organisation is compulsory not only for the business to prosper but also to survive. Several prodigious firms that once had been trendsetters and frontrunners in their market later failed because, at some point, they suffered from change fatigue. It is imperative that society is informed and communicated with regarding changes that affect government entities. Transparency and clear communication permit society to accept change when they know it is necessary and shall except the explanation provided concerning change.

In the King Cetshwayo district municipality the substantial factors which seem to be the main precipitating factors leading to change include the external environment. The Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) strategically planned that government ought to restructure certain wards in municipalities. It resulted in certain wards to be exterminated due to being financially unsustainable. According to section 21 of the Municipal Demarcation Act, it states that the board must determine or re-determine municipal boundaries in South Africa. The purpose of demolishing the local municipality was to ensure that municipalities were effective and sustainable.

COGTA initiated the amalgamation of non-viable municipalities where these municipalities were disestablished and integrated with adjacent municipalities. The King Cetshwayo district municipality facilitated change regarding the process which took place. The COGTA established Municipal Technical change management committee within municipalities. The committee members were municipal managers alongside with their heads of departments to process and manage the plan.

King Cetshwayo district municipality

King Cetshwayo district municipality is situated on the east coast of the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The King Cetshwayo district comprises six integral municipalities. District municipalities are considered to be the main or broader-based municipalities which are able to sustain the local municipalities under their spectrum. The six local municipalities include; Mbonambi, UMhlathuze, Ntambanana, UMlalazi, Mthonjaneni and Nkandla municipalities.

The King Cetshwayo district municipality and some other district municipalities in the KwaZulu-Natal had to be independent financially as the Traditional Affairs Department could not afford to fund all municipalities. The Traditional Affairs Department had proposed to merge some municipalities while separating others. Under the district one of the municipalities, namely Ntambanana, was dissolved and the remaining wards were merged with better performing municipalities which included Mthonjaneni and UMhlathuze. However, half of the wards that were managed by UMhlathuze were transferred to Mfolozi municipality.

In 2016, the South African government implemented change towards municipalities. Provincial elections in South Africa were held in 2016, whereby new councillors were reappointed by the community. The study analyses the reputational brand techniques that were facilitated by the municipality. This study evaluates the municipality's performance regarding the merger. The study also correlates the image and brand reputation of local municipalities. It is imperative that citizens were kept informed pertaining to the amalgamation with on-going communication.

Municipalities normally deal with high volumes of internal and external communication. Effective communication strategies are an important aspect of any organised group, and this does not exclude municipalities. Essentially, all organisations (including municipalities) need to have very proficient communication strategies so that core functions are optimally performed. Communication is a compulsory interface which is used to transform good practices (and ideas) into action. The best plans, ideas and practices are doomed to fail without proficient communication as a binding interface. Therefore, a municipality must ensure that its communication is clear and effective and should use viable channels to broadcast its motives or intentions explicitly. When problems occur, it is important for a municipality to respond transparently and effectively communicate messages to clients (residents). Delays and evasive behaviour could cause their confidence index to drop. Municipalities have a responsibility to the public and as such must ensure that their communication methods are not compromised by out-dated communication information technology. Their external and internal communication processes must be acutely refined. Communication methodology and communication technology must not be excuses for poor service delivery.

Communication which is not effectively monitored and managed could negatively affect the reputation of an organisation; society views are influenced by how an organisation portrays itself and how it is able to maintain the confidence of its clients. Managing reputational communication is a discipline of Public Relations. Reputation management is the practice of trying to improve the public perception of an individual or an organisation by displaying positive attributes about that object. Effective communication and adequate information released internally or externally may assist the organisation's ability to react promptly to competitive pressure. Khoza (2008), states that organisations ought to apply their intranet sites more effectively and use it to gather relevant business information where they can store and distribute the required information for business needs. Therefore, reputation is kept initially by the internal thrust of an organisation, for example, a public relations officer should ensure that a positive image is presented to the external public in order to encourage mutually beneficial relationships which will enhance the success of the enterprise.

Forces of change in King Cetshwayo district municipality

Change within an organisation may involve the employee's jobs, the organisational strategy, brands or services rendered, and the entire organisation or structure may be affected. Change is a process that involves planning and implementing the procedures that will be enforced. Change that is planned incorporates procedures and guidelines that have to be followed such as activities that are goal-focused. Planning change within the district includes distributing accounts, the distribution and transfer of assets, rights, liabilities, obligations and staff from the dissolved municipalities to the unified municipality. Therefore, change is when the processes within the organisation differ as to how they were before adopting something different. This may be of benefit to the organisation in transforming its image and enhancing its reputation.

The force of change within the district was initiated by the MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (2014), as she implemented the restructuring of municipalities affected by the re-determination of boundaries in terms of section 21 of the local government: municipal demarcation Act 1998 (Act No. 27 of 1998). When interviewed on 2 April 2015, Naidoo indicated that the act serves to facilitate the incorporation of the disestablished municipalities into an existing municipality. The

local municipality that was disestablished refers to Ntambanana local municipality and was incorporated to uMhlathuze and Mthonjaneni municipalities. However, the change resulting from the eradicated municipality had affected the existing municipalities either negatively or positively based on the outcome of the 2016 provincial elections.

Change in developing areas

Change is usually difficult and an exhaustive process which could be accompanied by struggles to adjust towards the changing environment. A changing environment may cause apprehension within the associated parties. The municipality needs to communicate with the public in gathering essential information pertaining to society's concerns regarding the merger, as Ntambanana municipality was demolished. All processes and procedures were undertaken by uMhlathuze municipality and Mfolozi municipality. The public will inevitably be concerned about the change of proceedings within the new municipality, for example, payment of rates. King Cetshwayo District municipality is comprised of rural, semi-rural and urban areas. These areas need to be accustomed to a variety of communication channels such as micro-blogging. Micro-blogging is a form of social networking. Applications under micro-blogging include the use of Twitter, Skype, and Instagram. It is imperative to understand society's perspective regarding the advantages of the use of technology.

Organisational change fatigue

Change fatigue is associated with organisations which are not being able to process the required change effectively. Change fatigue involves internal stakeholders battling with the change process implemented, resulting in the staff not coping. For example, staff may be overwhelmed by the amounts of workload from the merged municipalities. It is important that management observe employees who display signs of change fatigue. According to Norton (2018), change fatigue manifests in an attitude of indifference toward organisational transformation and workers are incapable of dealing with changes or multiple new practices. Employees display resistance to new ways of doing things. They partake in passive resistance and begin to indulge in internal political debates. Lack of serious planning will produce change but will fail to sustain it. Change fatigue is linked to the organisational communication strategy

whereby the organisation effectively communicates the change objectives and success measures before the implementation of the programme is established.

Co-operative governance and traditional affairs (COGTA)

Co-operative governance and traditional affairs (CoGTA) is a national department that is implemented by the constitutional law in developing policies and legislation with regard to provinces and local government. The cooperative governance and traditional affairs work alongside the demarcation board and ensure that the Act is implemented towards local government. The cooperative governance and traditional affairs (CoGTA) MEC in KwaZulu-Natal is Nomusa Dube-Ngcube. According to the MEC (2014), eThekwini municipality and certain district municipalities will have to manage their finances independently because KwaZulu-Natal's co-operative government cannot afford to fund all municipalities. However, certain municipalities were amalgamated or merged to reduce costs because they were unable to financially sustain themselves. The department had a plan to merge some municipalities while splitting others, in return sizing down municipal numbers from 61 to 54.

Municipal demarcation board

The Municipal Demarcation Board is governed by the Municipal Demarcation Act 1998 (Act No. 27 of 1998), which states the reformation of municipalities affected by the redetermination of boundaries in terms of section 21 of the local government. The Municipal Demarcation Board circular was facilitated on 7 September 2013 which was issued to inform the various stakeholders on the outcome of the section 21 process on the redetermination of municipal boundaries, specifically with regard to all cases the board has resolved to predetermine in terms of section 21 of the local government Municipal Demarcation Act 1998. It also contained a list of maps individually identified by codes (named DEM numbers), depicting the areas where changes to the municipal boundaries were proposed for the whole country. The codes for the affected local municipalities are as follows; Mfolozi Municipality: DEM2436, Ntambanana Municipality and Mthonjaneni Municipality: DEM4154 whereby wards from Ntambanana local Municipality (KZN 283) were integrated into Mthonjaneni local

Municipality (KZN 285). Ntambanana Municipality (KZN 283) and UMhlathuze Municipality (KZN 282) were also integrating wards: DEM4176 (Naidoo).

The process was effective and started after the 2016 local government elections. Naidoo affirms that "the official delineation process was formally launched at Izotsha Creek Estate in Port Shepstone, Ugu District on the 9th of December 2014". The procedures that took place were confirmed by the National minister of cooperative governance and traditional affairs in terms of section 20 of the local government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998.

Amalgamation

The following principles were implemented with regard to split municipalities

- The split wards which were merged with the new municipalities were incorporated into the structure of the receiving municipality and as such formed part of that municipality.

- The distribution and transfer of assets, rights, liabilities, obligations and staff from split municipalities to receiving municipalities took place in accordance with guidelines as contained in the department policy framework.

- The final distribution account was completed within 90 days of the effective date and thereafter was reviewed by CoGTA prior to submission to the MEC for approval.

- In the event of the distribution accounts not being finalised within the prescribed period, CoGTA were to appoint professional consultants to complete the distribution account, the related costs were borne by the affected municipalities.

- Any conflict of a dispute arising from the application or interpretation of the policy framework was to be reviewed by professional consultants appointed by CoGTA who would recommend to the MEC a resolution to such a conflict or dispute.

The following principles were implemented with regard to amalgamated municipalities

Private law:

- The local municipalities that had been merged shall be able to sue or could be sued. The assets that were assigned to the eradicated municipality were entrusted towards the merged municipalities.

Public powers and functions:

- The public powers and functionalities of the eradicated municipality were conveyed to the receiving municipalities.

Regulations:

- All the regulations that had been executed by the Ntambanana municipality were then incorporated towards the receiving municipalities. Hence, it was these municipalities that we are able to amend or change their regulations based on whether it was fit for the municipality.

Administrative-law:

- All records, books of account and administrative instruments of the demolished municipality fell under the control of the amalgamated municipality.

Management strategies for change

The King Cetshwayo district municipality has positioned the management committee's responsible for managing the amalgamation process. The entrusted professional committee's plan and report feedback to the co-operative governance and traditional affairs (CoGTA). Such management strategies towards change occurred from one organisation to another driven by a specific goal to attain the required outcome. Management has to be involved with the modification of the organisations, their external environment, and their employees in order to improve the municipality pertaining to its reputation, image and its ability to succeed. Management strategies involve planned change which originates from making a calculated effort to effectively advance their system.

Technical boundaries/ ward changes

Local municipality	Number of wards 2011	Number of wards 2016
KZ 281 (Mfolozi)	15	17
KZ 282 (uMhlathuze)	30	34
KZ 284 (uMlalazi)	25	27
KZ 285 (Mthonjaneni)	6	13

Communication strategies which have relevance to customer satisfaction

This section deals with factors which lead to communication strategies which are relevant to customer satisfaction in an organisation. This section is directly related to objective two of the study. The communication role in an organisation is mostly executed by top management, whereby they strategically collect information from internal and external stakeholders in enabling the formulation of strategies. Organisational communication is a process that entails an entity to make decisions strategically. In most instances, a communication strategy refers to planning organisations' programmes.

It is important in the communication strategy to effectively communicate with stakeholders to be able to solve issues that arise. Steyn (2002), states that corporate communication strategy is based mainly on the corporate community approach to strategic management where the organisation is viewed as a socio-economic system and where stakeholders are recognized as partners who create value through collaborative problem solving. Communicating with strategic stakeholders enables organisational goals to be strategically formulated, planned and developed. Communication strategy entails managing all strategic issues of an organisation's name; ethical or social, to name a few. A communication strategy is developed internally and it involves the organisation's vision, mission and policies. These are assessed via the external environment.

Effective communication with customers is vital in order for the organisation to be prosperous. Communication strategies aim to meet the goals of an entity. In satisfying

customers, it is imperative to plan and execute strategic tactics that will benefit both parties. In order for the organisation to be sustainable, it should have consistency in accumulating sales and profit. For the organisation to maximise on sales the internal stakeholders ought to know and are able to draw its targeted audiences. Acquiring knowledge base in customers is essential in aggregating the sales margin.

An organisation should practice a type of communication strategy which consists of the organisation offering discounts, promotions and sale. These attributes facilitate in meeting book sale targets which are set for the entity to achieve and be profitable. Through establishing a platform for communication technologies, it aids in customers reaching out to the organisation. This strategy supports the entity to gain insight and understanding of the customer needs. Hence, having customer perspectives enables middle management to connect and capitalize on customer-centricity.

Internal stakeholders should have a calm approach to customers. This form of strategy implies that the employee should communicate in simple terms. Stakeholders ought to be presentable in their dress code. This reflects on the image of the company. The image of an organisation is formulated by its employees, services rendered, products and communication strategies formulated to reach the masses. It is important for employees to be professional, confident and have a warm welcome (smile).

Net Promoter Score (NPS) in an organisation provides feedback towards the organisation. This kind of communication strategy deals with the customer rating the organisation's services. According to Reichheld and Markey (2011), the Net Promoter System is a way of doing business. It requires every level of the organisation be rigorously, consistently focused on the quality of customer and employee relationships first. Instantly the Net Promoter System requires a strategic commitment by company leadership because it defines cultural values and core economics that affect every part of the business system. This technique works in a form whereby the customer receives an SMS asking him or her to rate the experience they encountered. The customer may rate from a scale of 0 to 10, 0-6 being extremely poor, 7-8 serves as being moderate but needs to be improved and 9-10 being extremely happy. These ratings are divided into three segments namely; detractor, passive and promoter. A detractor is an angry customer, a passive is a customer which seeks to witness an improvement in services rendered and a promoter is a customer that is satisfied with their experience. Middle

management monitors NPS and makes recommendations for the business. Management implements call-backs to customers where they listen, understand and effectively communicate with the customer in ensuring that the customer's opinion is valued and resolves the issue. The following diagram illustrates the ratings of the NPS:
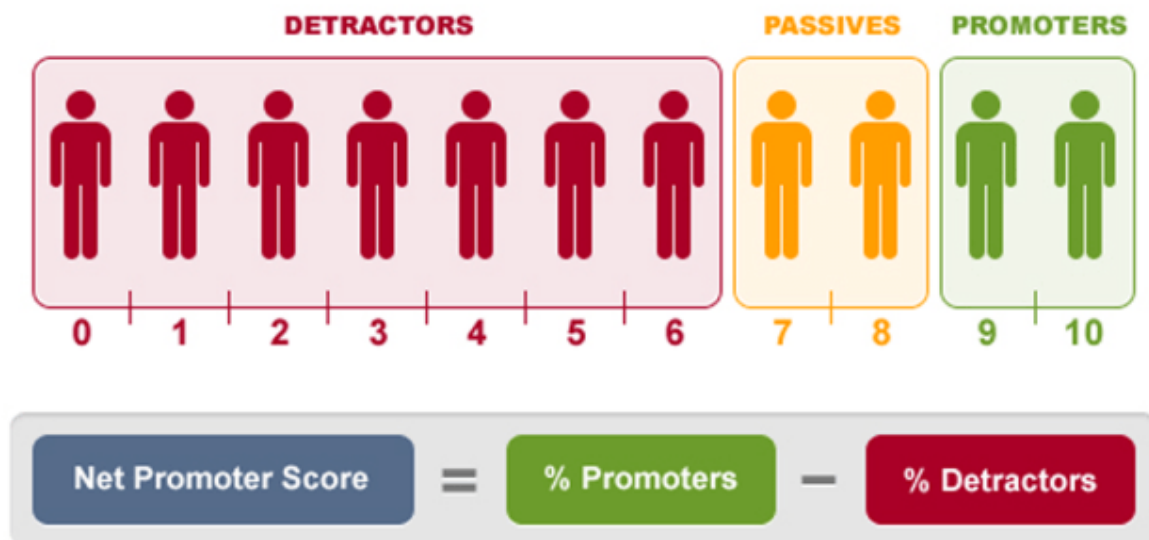
 Source: Reichheld and Markey (2011)

Organisations are prompt to marketing themselves towards potential stakeholders. Marketing and advertising is the essence of ensuring that the business is recognised and it acquires a customer base. Social media is a concept which forms under the major communication mediums accessed to strategically communicate specified messages which drive the organisation towards its aims and objectives. Strokes (2011), states that social media can be used to resolve problems in organisations, marketing and solve communication encounters. Social media is a tool where the public can express their views and it facilitates two-way communication. For example, a customer who is not satisfied with his/her online order may write a grievance on Facebook. It serves the organisation to respond to the complaint and ensure that it is resolved. Furthermore, a detractor may be strategically turned into a promoter. This increases customer-centricity.

Integrated marketing communication

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is concerned with the organisation implementing effective communication using mass media in advertising its brand towards its target audiences. IMC uses a variety of communication tools to transmit the required information based on direct marketing. Bruhn (2008), defines IMC as a process of analysis, planning, organisation, implementation and monitoring that is oriented toward creating units from diverse sources of internal and external communication with target groups to convey a consistent impression of the company or the company's reference object. It is a strategic process of maintaining the brand's identity and image towards the organisation's stakeholders and shareholders.

Efforts to market the brand's products or services places it at a competitive advantage and helps the customers or consumers to differentiate the brand from the rest. Integrated communication involves the use of social media whereby, organisations strategically manage their communication and branding through new media technology. It is imperative to effectively market brand messaging as it assists the corporate in building loyalty and trust with its stakeholders. Branding is linked to the identity and reputation of an organisation. Hence, it is in their best interests to understand brand identity.

Barker (2013), views the IMC perspective as a competitive brand strategy which ensures that messages are affiliated with the corporate brand, uses appropriate media to communicate with customers cost-effectively with the aim of enhancing mutually beneficial relationships and conducts environmental scanning to address crucial elements. The implementation of integrated marketing communication serves as a catalyst for enhancing the corporates brand. In regard to IMC, it is imperative that the organisation transmits consistency in the messages that are being communicated to stakeholders. The messages that are being communicated should be consistent internally and externally in order to maximise the brand reputation of the organisation. Strategic communication is vital in an organisation where people work together to accomplish the success of a company. They should focus on enhancing communication with relevant customers by applying a two-way communication stream. The organisation may balance its communication by means of understanding customer needs and wants, incorporating these into the organisation's goals, values

and ensuring that they strategically communicate such factors towards reaching the desired growth. Implementing an effective communication strategy enables the organisation to build positive and long-term relationships with stakeholders that will sustain the organisation in the future (Grunig, 2002).

It is imperative to use strategic communication to solve issues that arise from the company and issues associated with the brand while still being media-neutral, focusing on the end results and content stakeholders, rather than profit only. However, it is difficult to maintain the reputation of a brand and brand loyalty due to the effects of mass media which constantly scrutinises businesses which affect the perspective of various stakeholders. However, Barker (2013), argues that to effect true integration which benefits both the organisation and all its stakeholders, the point has been reached where the intentional communication activities of communicators should make business sense as part of a holistic approach which includes Strategic Integrated Communication (SIC) solution to business and brand problems, as well as engagement with stakeholders. Therefore, there is an emphasis that there is a link between the two integrated approaches. It is then the decision that is taken by the organisation, as to which communication is implemented based on the success of the reputation of the brand.

When marketing a brand, it is important to receive feedback from customers, whereby the organisation interacts with its targeted audiences and facilitates two-way communication. The IMC serves as a two-way communication stream, whereby organisations reach out to targeted audiences and transmit the required messages. The two-way communication approach is interconnected to Grunig's two-way symmetrical theory. Integrated marketing communication is strategically used by the organisation to build mutually beneficial relationships between stakeholders (Grunig, 2013) For example, the King Cetshwayo district municipality has a Facebook page which could be used to convey crucial information to the public. The platform enables the audience to react and share views pertaining to the news. In the next chapter, Grunig's excellence theory is explained further with aligning communication technologies and reputational management of an entity. The Internet is ubiquitous and is an exemplary channel to communicate and market a brand. It is a medium of communication which is easier to access, for example, when a customer wants to check information regarding a brand, he or she may log onto the Internet using their

cell phones or a computer for easy accessibility. Companies should use new technologies to gain a competitive advantage by sharing information and being transparent.

Transparency

Media channels in an organisation should be controlled and managed by experts who will ensure that the content of information is accurate and reflects towards the goals and objectives of the organisation. Barker (2013), indicates that not only does the Internet integration create a low-cost gateway to global customers, but it has also become a crucial element in relationship building due to the important role it can play in networking on a global scale. If managed, it can make provision for the sharing of business information, transactions and knowledge creation. Organisations should implement processes that will strategically manage and sustain beneficial relationships between itself and its stakeholders whilst managing and enhance the brand's reputation. Organisations need to adapt towards change and the evolving of new technologies in enabling growth with regards to the brand's identity. It should be in the best interests of the brand to strategically use all channels to effectively communicate the brand's message, such as new media (Barker, 2013).

Strategic management

Strategic management is a process that deals with thinking, making decisions regarding the organisation's visions, objectives and mission, aligning these with current and futuristic results. Strategic management emphasises on strategic decisions which define the enterprise as a whole. According to Steyn (2002), Strategic management refers to the environment within which the organisation operates and develops its strategies. Witcher and Sum Chau (2010), define strategic management as the management of an organisation's complete purpose, in ways that ensure that the needs and enablers of the present are balanced with those of the future. Strategic management is influenced by issues that concern the organisation and its stakeholders. Organisations strategically manage their issues using the information and transmitting this information towards their members.

Organisations should build relationships with stakeholders who are interested in the manner that the organisation conducts itself. However, they need to examine the expectations and values that these stakeholders have towards the reputation of the brand. Strategic management also entails how an organisation can respond to the public after a crisis has occurred. Organisations analyse and interpret stakeholder's perspectives towards the brand and management can draw conclusions, form strategic decisions and implement these strategies towards satisfying key stakeholders (Steyn, 2002).

Dealing with post-merger issues in organisations

This section deals with factors which lead to organisations dealing with post-merger issues and is directly related to objective three. A merger is the combinations of two or more entities which are structured to formulate change and assist strengthen the business. It also involves the combination of resources between the organisations. The study deals with the local municipalities merging and this section obliges to identify factors which contribute to post-merger challenges.

In an organisation that has facilitated change, it is imperative that the organisation's culture does not change. In dealing with post-merger is important and it is essential that the organisation relates and enforces team building in uniting and strengthening the team to achieve business needs. Incorporating employees after a merger is vital in ensuring a speedy productivity (Kokemuller 2019). When dealing with merging organisations, management ought to focus on clear and precise communication with internal stakeholders. Transparency is important throughout the process in order to gain understanding from employees; this aids employees from being demotivated.

It is of utter importance for the employees to engage and have a voice regarding their opinions. Therefore, it eliminates a hostile environment towards new employees. It reinforces the work morale and builds positive relationships. In ensuring adequate communication and respect towards each other eliminates uncertainty due to lack of communication. In addressing internal stakeholder managers ought to accentuate the job security of the employees, for example, fear of losing a job. These are challenges employees face within a changing environment.

Brand reputational management techniques

This section deals with factors which lead to brand reputational management techniques within organisations and is directly related to objective four. This section also evaluates King Cetshwayo district municipality's performance relating to the merger. The reputation of a company is crucial, as it strengths the entire company. Companies need to monitor, manage and sustain their reputation since their reputation influences employee and stakeholder behaviour and attitudes within the company and towards the company.

Reputation management

Reputation is concerned with the views, beliefs and opinions of the public. These opinions may be caused by experiencing a service offered by a specific organisation or purchasing goods and services of that brand. Secondary influences also shape a reputation whereby a customer is persuaded by either a friend or family's views and expressions concerning the brand. Roper and Fill (2011), believe that the reputation of the product is determined by the views of its customers and consumers, whereas the reputation of a company is fabricated by the beliefs of a variety of people based on the products or service.

Reputation involves the satisfaction of its stakeholders, De Chernatony and Harris (2000), state that reputation defines the manner the organisation is perceived and ensuring that the opinions of stakeholders is crucial. The satisfaction of the stakeholders is beneficial towards an organisation in the long-term. It is also essential for a brand to be fully understood and defined as this form or shapes the stakeholder's perspective of a corporate brand. Doorley and Garcia (2011), add that reputation is reinstated by effectively operating three aspects which consists of consistent performance, appropriate conduct and effective communication.

Every municipality has a reputation. The reputation may be good, neutral or bad, however, it is how the organisation directs and manages it that matters. Brand reputation is also concerned with being socially responsible. The external environment affects the perspectives of what stakeholders think the organisation is. Therefore, an organisation must deliver promises set towards the local community. In so doing, the

organisation will be regarded as a good corporate citizen amongst its local communities and stakeholders.

Reputation is a two-way stream, whereby the municipality needs to rely on feedback provided by stakeholders to move forward. Municipalities should focus on mutually beneficial relationships with their customers while concurrently acting as good citizens, as the organisation will be communicating and acting in a manner that best suits the interests of both the organisation and its stakeholders. A good brand reputation assists the company to grow which helps the business to build positive relationships and be widely recognised.

Valuing reputation

The company's reputation is determined by the perception of all stakeholders, which is correlated with the actual procedures, practices and the performance of that organisation. A company may be viewed in a variety of ways, however; this differs ranging from one stakeholder to another. The perception of the organisation's reputation can be formed by strategic actions of the organisations that's evaluated by stakeholders to form a favourable perception towards the organisation (Davies, Chan, Vin has da Silva and Roper, 2003). An organisation is built by its employees, stakeholders, what it projects towards the community. The employees represent the organisation's brand and it is through the manner they carry themselves that the identity of the organisation is expressed to the surrounding community (Rayner, 2003). Reputation improves when employees are happy in their workplace. For example, an organisation should be able to provide employees with incentives for their work. Therefore, employees and the community are important in determining the performance of an organisation.

Management should be equipped in exercising certain tasks and responsibilities that will assist in managing the organisation's reputation (Rayner, 2003). An organisation has to be transparent in its communication with the community. Effective communication ensures that the public is aware of the issues within the organisation and hinders speculation. Facilitating communication and feedback with stakeholders will ensure that the organisation is sustained in the long-term. A company's future is

based on a positive reputation and success. Reputation is affected by relationships that are established with stakeholders, delivering customer services and products that the corporation provides.

Organisations must consider the surrounding environment where they are established, for example, the development of local communities. The reputation of an organisation is influenced by the positive contribution towards the environment that it is operating in. Although reputation does not only favour the positive influence it consists of both sides namely, good and bad. A reputation of a company can be tarnished due to negative publicity, internal and external dissatisfaction from stakeholders.

IMAGE CONTROL

The study also correlates the image and brand reputation of local municipalities. The reputation of the municipality is affected or determined by the process which the municipality uses to manage change.

Since a company is recognised by its brand, corporate brands are a representation of the organisation. The company's profile is constantly viewed and assessed by the public. Therefore, corporates expose or strategically market themselves to the external environment, as this will favour the organisation and build positive relationships that will reflect a good image, for example, the identity of the brand. Kapferer (2008) indicates that corporate brand is evident through strategic marketing and advertising.

Every municipality is also an organisation and therefore, they must efficiently facilitate effective communication. Such communication may be distinguished through a variety of communication mediums. New technologies have changed the way information is communicated and it will also assist in enhancing the organisations' or corporates' brand. Communication technologies are emerging, and companies have to incorporate new technologies to enhance their goals, objectives and vision. Communication technologies consist of a spectrum of communication channels. Some of these communication channels have been used such as blogging, twitter and the Internet. Communication technologies enable society to access and publish information about daily activities. An organisation that uses communication technologies enables stakeholders to share news, views and creates a platform for open communication. The study also delves into evaluating the specific

communication measures used by King Cetshwayo District Municipality and strategies that the organisations use in building a positive relationship with customers.

Technology is evolving, and it is increasingly easier to access a company's or person's profile. Municipalities need to be visible to their audiences, which require them to communicate using technologies such as social media. The media plays a significant role in scrutinising companies about their brands and publishing them. Roger and Fill (2011), state that reporters are frequently seeking information which is perceived as poor conduct by organisations; hence the public is always popular fare. However, companies have realised the importance of reputation management for their brand. Several things define the reputation of a brand such as employees, customers and suppliers. It is relatively difficult for a brand to redeem itself after a crisis, although companies need to effectively maintain and sustain the reputation of the brand. It is a competitive advantage to have a positive identity and image. Reputation differs whereby a brand may be represented in a negative or in a positive manner, this could enhance or damage the corporate reputation. Mass media tends to expose business and its brands and constantly evaluates their corporate performance. A good image tends to attract loyal customers and satisfy stakeholders which enhance the reputation of a company.

People's perception of government services

This section deals with factors which lead to people's perception of government services and is directly related to objective five.

Government services are facilitated to enhance the community's quality of life. Government services are utilized in order to execute efficient service which would generate opportunities for the public. Acquiring customer satisfaction is based on rendering exceptional services and exceeding their expectations. Society's perception of government services is based on aspects that influence the service provided. These include friendliness, queuing system (how long it takes to wait to be assisted), resolving account queries, communication strategies used to reach or influence the public and word of mouth. The above-mentioned factors shape the impact of the public's perception of service delivery. It is important for organisations to establish open communication and transparency with their customers. Regular feedbacks which

are monitored, and two-way communication are essential in maximising customer satisfaction. The satisfaction of customers produces a positive perception and good recommendations from people that have experienced customer-centricity and were satisfied.

Elements which affect the delivery of services in local municipalities include the inability to sustain and manage finances, failure to deliver required services to the public and insufficient funds which will assist the municipality to generate processes to execute services. Asha (2014), notes that local governments is still unable to provide basic services to the previously ostracized and underprivileged society, specifically in townships and rural areas of the country. Local municipalities should ensure a healthy environment and economy for its surrounding residents. Furthermore, municipalities are accountable for providing services that meet the basic needs of disadvantaged communities in an affordable manner (Asha, 2014). In delivering services which are acquired by the local municipalities should aim at enhancing and sustaining its reputation. Therefore, service delivery is one of the significant factors modelling people's perception of the government.

Conclusion

The objective of chapter 2 provides a literature review on the subject of reputation management and communication. Reputation management within King Cetshwayo District Municipality is essential to monitor and maintain the organisation's brand image. The municipality ought to be transparent when communicating with its stakeholders regarding services rendered because the messages that they communicate with the public should be in line with those associated with that of the municipality.

Facilitating effective communication enables the municipality to hinder possible threats towards the organisation. Online communication is simply based on how fast the methodology of sending questions, comments, compliments and grievances. The interaction between these parties places the organisation at a competitive advantage, as it could be easy for them to respond immediately based on grievances or questions. The next chapter relates to communication models which are aligned with the study. The models are incorporated so to discover the relevant communication models which

are associated with the research. Hence, it provides an improved understanding of the study.

Chapter 3

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher provides an overview of the conceptual theories that were relevant to reputational communication within the municipality. Correlating the theories assists the researcher to place the study in perspective and also gain a better understanding of the conceptual framework that is relevant to reputational communication. A framework is a support structure which guides the process of the research so that analysis and recommendations follow scientific pathways. Frameworks assist the researcher in maintaining the focus of the study by adhering to relevant principles and practices (Mortensen, 1972). The framework took into account two specific communication models to obtain a precise understanding of reputational communication at the King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

The framework consists of various functionalities and various ways of evaluating whether it is productive. Although there are other more specific uses for frameworks, the core drive or aim of the framework derived here, is to pose questions that provide clarifications about phenomena.

This chapter conceptualises a framework for reputational communication at the King Cetshwayo District Municipality by examining the symmetrical model in conjunction with the Stakeholder model.

UNDERSTANDING A FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework comprises theories that relate to features of the investigation. Conceptual frameworks are representations of the study which are frequently associated with the aim of the study. Conceptual frameworks direct the manner in which data is collected. A conceptual framework is an illustration which may be presented in detail in the attempt of obtaining the relationship between two or more aspects. A conceptual framework is a theory that the researcher effectively practices

in their study. The conceptual framework of the study comprises of theories relevant to the empirical study. These theories guide the researcher in determining data analysis and formulating conclusions on the study.

THE ADVANTAGES OF FRAMEWORKS

Frameworks enquire one to ask questions. A framework is imperative as it offers an overall perspective as well as a point of reference to interpret raw data and to make analyses. Although models are flexible, they create calculated pathways to vague destinations.

Frameworks also aid in describing complex events (or issues). Therefore, the purpose of a model is not to ignore complexity, but models tend to provide a structured order.

LIMITATIONS OF MODELS

Frameworks can lead to over-generalisation. When designing communication frameworks, it generally leads to simplification.

MODEL A: Symmetrical Model

A model is a systematic illustration of an object or event in idealised and abstract form (Mortensen, 1972). Models are pictures with descriptions of certain theories and provide general perspectives through observing and interpreting images.

The model used in this study is the symmetrical model. The model is derived from the Excellence theory of communication initiated by James Grunig. The excellence theory is a theory that is related to Public Relations. Public relations are a discipline within the communication field. It involves establishing relationships both with the internal and external stakeholders. Public relations need to be practiced to benefit the public and the organisation whilst establishing and sustaining a mutual beneficial relationship (Botan and Hazelton, 2006). The excellence theory delves in PR specialists executing effective communication from the organisation to the public and involves managing the organisation effectively.

Grunig, et al (2006), state that the excellence theory conveys an approach to evaluate PR departments, to explain the significance of PR and offers an opportunity of teaching public relations. The promise of the theory is to evaluate the value of public relations in the organisation. Botan and Hazleton (2006), affirms that PR concerns

building valuable relationships either from the internal or external environment between the organisation and the publics. The value of PR in an organisation is determined by excellently practising the programs that will aid in building mutual relationships. For example, the King Cetshwayo district municipality ought to excellently practise developmental programs towards the local communities through establishing developmental programs with the use of communication technologies.

The use of symmetrical communication in an organisation enquires that the entity establishes and sustains relationships with its targeted audiences. The symmetrical model encompasses a two-way communication. The symmetrical model is concerned with reaching out to the public whilst, maintaining the organisational culture. The effect of the model is not to change the organisational culture but the perspective of the organisation based on the views of the public sphere (Grunig, 2013). The application of the symmetrical model is beneficial for both parties, which includes the entity and the surrounding environment where it is established.

Types of Practice	Explaination
1- Pure Asymmetry Model	Communication used to dominate public, accept dominant coalition's position.
2- Pure Cooperation Model	Communication used to convince dominant coalition to cave in public's position
3- Two-way Model	Communication used to move public, dominant coalition, or both to acceptable "Win-Win Zone"
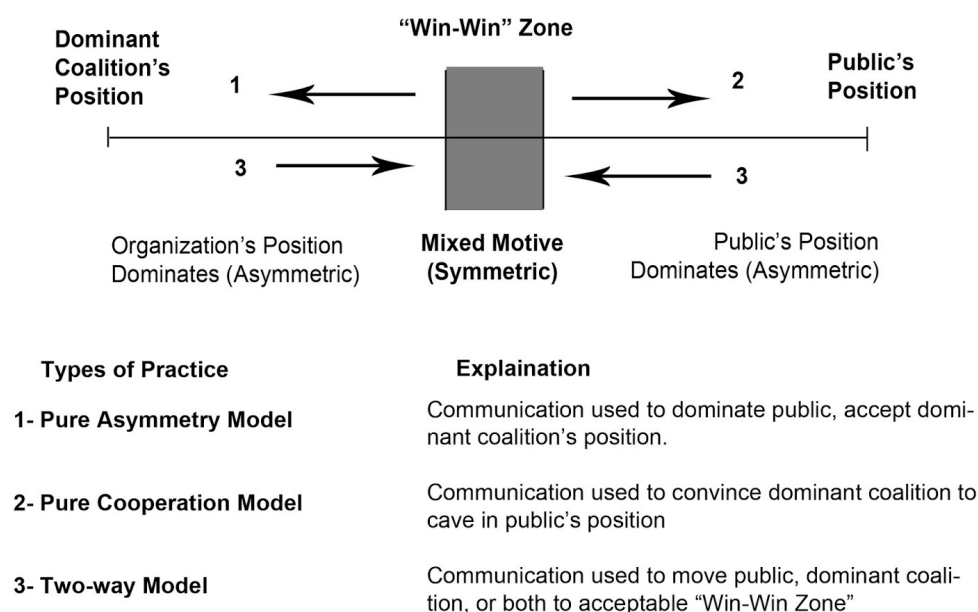
Source: Yaxley (2013)

Figure 1: New model of Symmetry as two-way practice

Application of the Symmetrical Model

One of the primary concerns of an organisation is to ensure that it sustains a good reputation. Organisations that offer service delivery, work hard to build loyalty from their customers. When they are successful in building loyalty, it provides satisfaction. An organisation's reputation is crucial, and the study investigates reputational communication at the King Cetshwayo District Municipality. The Symmetrical model is incorporated into the study as it facilitates two-way communication whereby, the municipality communicates with the community and receives feedback concerning change occurring in the surrounding environment.

The Symmetrical model is applied where reputational communication is based on enhancing effective communication within the King Cetshwayo District Municipality. The Symmetrical model serves as a form of human communication, whereby the municipality communicates with its targeted audiences. In the process of change, King Cetshwayo District Municipality should ensure that its reputation is sustained. Management must address the changes that are occurring within the district to the local community. However, various forms of communication may be used such as public speaking, newspapers, conferences and new media. Hence, using a variety of communication channels will ensure that the intended message reaches the targeted audiences. Reputation within an organisation could be affected by various factors for example, service delivery, poor governance, poor management and lack of communication. Therefore, it is vital that organisations sustain their reputation. The reputation of an organisation is also influenced by its customers and employees.

King Cetshwayo District Municipality has been implementing change regarding the amalgamation process; hence it is essential for the residents of the affected local communities to be informed.

Overlap exists between the Excellence theory and Stakeholder theory as both theories observe the organisation in establishing mutually beneficial relationships. The application of the excellence theory and stakeholder theory is essential for the success of the entity. In enabling executing the functionalities of these theories it aids in enhancing the reputation of an organisation.

MODEL B: Stakeholder Model

The stakeholder theory was identified and described by R. Edward Freeman. Freeman (1984) defined a stakeholder as any entity that can affect or is affected by the success of the organisation's objective. Clarkson (1995), identifies various stakeholders as elements with authentic interests in the organisation, all participating in the organisation to obtain benefits.

Organisations include external and internal stakeholders, for example, shareholders, customers, suppliers, employees, management and the local community. Freeman (1984) affirms that an organisation can be defined as a series of connections of stakeholders that the managers of the organisation attempt to manage. The prosperity of the organisation depends on these stakeholders. The stakeholder theory deals with stakeholder management and evaluates the organisation's performance. However, performance is enhanced by the trust and loyalty of stakeholders. Therefore, if the organisation has a good reputation it will provide positive performance and be financially compatible with other competitors in increasing social wealth.

Management should balance the relationships with the organisation's stakeholders. Internal stakeholders which are shareholders have a say in matters that involve the organisation at large as they hold a certain percentage within the organisation. If organisations treat stakeholders as valuable members, it builds a positive relationship. Stakeholder theory is mostly related to social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility is when the organisation gives back to local communities. When an organisation is socially responsible it benefits in the form of enhanced reputation, improved employee/customer loyalty. The stakeholder theory ensures that organisations are responsible for their stakeholders and also balance the interests of all stakeholders that are involved whilst ensuring satisfaction amongst them.
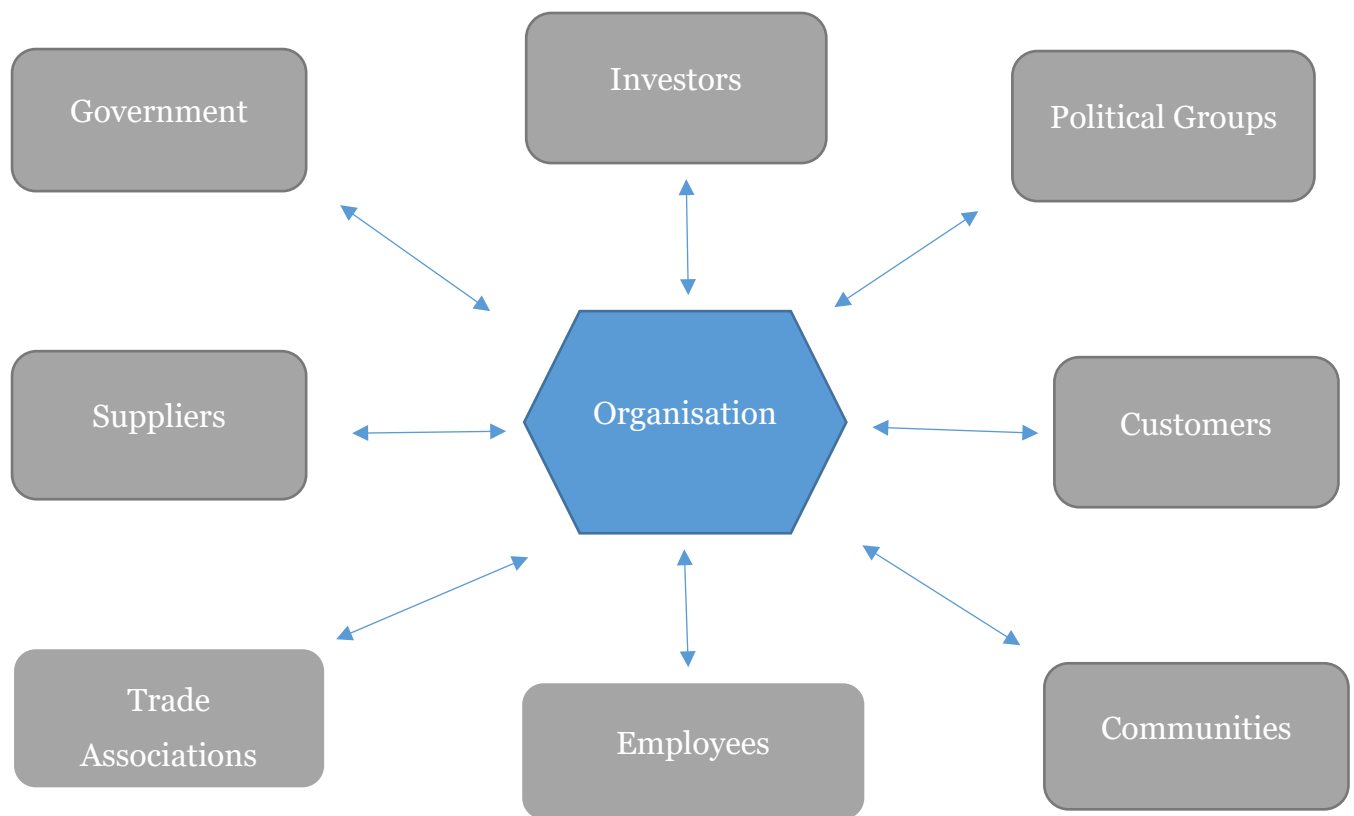
Figure 2: The Stakeholder Model

Source: Donaldson and Preston (1995)

Stakeholder models point out that an organisations responsibility involves ensuring that it's vigilant and effectively communicates with its surrounding environment, internal and external stakeholders (Post, Preston and Sachs, 2002). Freeman (1984) states that stakeholder theory delves in effective communication with various stakeholders rather than influencing their perceptions. The theory facilitates a two-way relationship between stakeholders and the respective organisation. All organisations have distinct functions and operate in a particular manner that ensures their success. However, they should effectively communicate with their targeted audiences and should be able to identify who these stakeholders are.

Donaldson and Preston (1995), defines stakeholders as any group or individuals which have similar interests in an organisation. Hence, it indicates that each stakeholder is significant and deserves treatment that is equivalent. Defining stakeholders in an organisation is imperative and usually, stakeholders are classified into primary and secondary stakeholders. As in the above-illustrated diagram, the primary group are

those stakeholders who are viewed as important to the survival of the organisation and most often are those that have some formal contract with the organisation which includes owners, employees, customers, suppliers and investors. The secondary stakeholders are classified as vital groups that provide the organisation with credibility and approval for its activities, for example, government, trade associations, political groups and communities.

Application of the Stakeholder Model

The study relates to the stakeholder theory because the theory highlights a two-way relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders. The King Cetshwayo District Municipality should prioritise creating relationships with its stakeholders. A reputation of a firm is determined by stakeholders who contribute towards the firm. Therefore, stakeholders such as employees, communities, suppliers, trade association, government and political groups are essential to the survival of municipalities. Management should consider the interests of these stakeholders.

King Cetshwayo District Municipality is in the process of change, and management needs to involve all stakeholders that are involved in the change process can balance their interests. Stakeholder engagement eases an enhanced effort in corporate performance and assists in the enhancing of the reputation of an organisation. Stakeholder theory includes the process of communication, whereby the municipality engages with local communities. Furthermore, the dialogue is identified as an imperative communication channel between stakeholders and the organisation to improve a more advanced form of engagement and understanding (Burchell and Cook, 2006).

Stakeholder theory places emphasis on dialogue as an important channel of communication which may be used to interact with the organisation and its stakeholders. The organisation can interact with internal or external stakeholders using dialogue as a means of communicating. Various communication channels may be used in reaching out to targeted audiences.

The outline of the conceptual framework

The study incorporates the Symmetrical model and the Stakeholder model. Together these two models may provide a solution towards the municipality in ensuring that disadvantaged towns are provided with communication tools that encourage

sustainable development. The study also evaluates as to whether the municipality can maintain and sustain its reputation. The Symmetrical model gives effective two-way communication between the municipality and its stakeholders. The Stakeholder model complements the Symmetrical model because it deals with the organisation effectively channelling communication where the organisation interacts with its stakeholders. These two models can be used to investigate reputational communication. The Symmetrical model centres on the organisation expediting excellence practice towards the public. The symmetrical model stresses value within the Public Relations field.

It is imperative that external stakeholders or members of the community can express their concerns on relevant perspectives regarding issues. The municipality should not take relevant problems for granted. In so doing, it maximises openness and transparency which allows management to have alternatives and choices when it comes to dealing with change.

The study facilitates the use of these two models and incorporates them in finding a solution to the research problem. The study integrates these two models to evaluate the reputation of the municipality in order to maximise communication and to examine ways which would encourage stakeholder engagement.

The following illustration analyses the key variables that attribute to the relationship between the two theories. The two models are correlated to form a theory relevant to the study whereby the researcher implements the theory in obtaining a conclusion on the research conducted.

CONCLUSION

This chapter was based on the Symmetrical model to understand the issues which are associated with change within the King Cetshwayo District Municipality and in sustaining a positive reputation. An important issue of miscommunication and advancements in new media was identified as a key to understanding why communication to these disadvantaged towns has been unsuccessful. Stakeholder theory, as well as the Symmetrical model, was used to understand and eliminate the confusion to the message sent to internal and external stakeholders. Theoretically, this provided a solution (conceptual model) to the problem. However, this model

cannot be used as the cardinal underpinning solution and needs to be further scrutinised using quantitative and qualitative surveys. This is follows in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a conceptual theory/ model for the study. This chapter outlines the following key areas: research procedures, discussing both methodologies: qualitative and quantitative research methods, target population, unit of analysis, data collection methods, validity of the research and the analysis of data.

Research procedure

A research procedure focuses on the manner in which the researcher gathers information regarding the particular topic of interest. The research procedure consists of two research paradigms which include: qualitative and quantitative research methods. These paradigms differ based on the appropriate method to use in the study.

Coldwell and Herbst (2004), state that research is imperative in organisations as it eases uncertainty by providing information which heightens strategic implementation. The proposed research methodology will thus be a quantitative research design and qualitative research design.

Quantitative research design

Formulating the quantitative research design in the study includes surveys and content analysis, structured interviews and survey questionnaires were conducted. Welman, Kruger and Mitchel (2005) state that quantitative research deals with a large number of participants, cases and the analysis of results which are highly based on statistical significance.

Qualitative research design

The study also used a qualitative research method, which includes the literature review that has been conducted and the research questions that are based on the study. The qualitative research design is presented through interacting on a one-on-one basis, transcribing data and being able to view non-verbal communication from respondents when answering questions. According to Welman et al (2005), qualitative research deals with primary information gathered from the study's participants. The qualitative research method is flexible and can change based on the participants' responses or in a specific direction that the research results may be headed. The study ensured that the data is valid. Moreover, statistics resulting from the study are gathered from the King Cetshwayo District Municipality and the four amalgamated local municipalities which include: Ntambanana Municipality, UMhlathuze Municipality, uMfolozi Municipality and Mthonjaneni Municipality.

Unit of analysis

Unit of analysis refers to specific elements included in the population to draw findings. The units of analysis are also elements that a researcher would like to answer in the compiled research question. There are different types of units of analysing namely, individuals or society, collections, events, organisations Welman et al (2005). Bernard (2000), states that the researcher is able to determine the unit of analysis after formulating a research topic, based on the fact that the researcher needs to select a certain set of units (members/elements) and strategies to formulating the population of the study. The object that serves as a unit of analysis is the organisation and the individuals from the surrounding environment.

The target population

The term population describes a group of individuals upon whom the research will be applied, and conclusions will be formulated. For the purpose of this study, the researcher identified the population to be drawn from King Cetshwayo District Municipality's employees, management and from four local municipalities. The research focused on the part of the municipalities that were affected by the amalgamation process that was initiated after the 2016 provincial elections. In some

instances, certain citizens of King Cetshwayo District may have no chance at all of being included in this research due to the focus of the study pertaining to the research problem and time constraints. Zikmund (2003), affirms that the population of the study ought to be precise and should involve units which are relevant to the research.

The target sample for this research was drawn from selecting the King Cetshwayo District employees, management and local residents via the stratified random sampling method. Questionnaires were administered to the unit of analysis and distributed a maximum of 500 questionnaires.

SAMPLING FRAME

According to Welman et al (2005), sampling frame consists of a list of the study's selected population. Sampling frame refers to records of the target population from which the sampling units are drawn. The sampling frame of this study comprised of 500 participants in the King Cetshwayo district municipality. The King Cetshwayo district employees will be interviewed. The questionnaires will be distributed to the residents within the surrounding municipalities namely; uThungulu municipality, uMfolozi municipality, uMhlathuze municipality and Ntambanana municipality. The participants involved in the study were residents in the following areas: UMhlathuze, Mfolozi, Mthonjaneni and Ntambanana municipality. The total population of King Cetshwayo district municipality is 917 315. uMhlathuze municipality is one of the largest municipalities which consists of a population of 410 465. The total population of Mthonjaneni municipality is 78 883 whilst, Mfolozi is 144 363. The wards in Ntambanana were amalgamated into Mthonjaneni and uMhlathuze municipality (Census 2011 and Community survey 2016). A portion of the respondents interviewed consisted of the district municipality's employees. A sampling frame is a list of the population from which the sampling units are drawn.

Sampling procedure

A sample consists of elements of the population or the target population which typically refer to humans, groups, organisations or institutions where results of the study are generalised. The sampling procedure is differentiated between two types of samples, namely, probability samples and non-probability samples. In probability sampling, the researcher can conclude that any member of the population will be included in the sample. In non-probability sampling, the researcher cannot determine whether each member of the population will be represented in the sample. A sample forms part of the units of analysis in the study (Easton and McColl 2007). In this study, probability sampling was used in ensuring that each participant within the population is included.

Probability sampling techniques include random sampling, stratified random sampling, systematic sampling and cluster sampling. For this study, the researcher used stratified random sampling which ensures that all units of analysis are included in the sample. Stratified random sampling consists of more than one variable. Therefore, stratified random sampling requires smaller samples in order to obtain valid results. The stratified sampling was used when randomly selecting employees within the district for the sampling frame, and also the potential target population from the affected surrounding environment. In the organisation, employees were selected based on their level of professionalism and their involvement towards the impact of change determined.

Du Plooy (2002:119) provides a representative sample table which indicates a sample size that provides a 95% confidence level.

Population size	Sample size
Infinity	384
500 000	384
100 000	384
50 000	381
10 000	370
5 000	357
3 000	341
2 000	322
1 000	278

Table 1: Sample size at 95% confidence level

Source: Du Plooy (2009:119)

Determining the sampling procedure

The researcher incorporated stratified random sampling as mentioned above. The sample was drawn from a large scale whereby participants were issued with questionnaires. Stratified random sampling involves a combination of more than one variable where firstly, the study was based on the specific areas that were affected by the change after the amalgamation process. The second variable included the individuals that were involved in planning and executing the amalgamation process in the local municipalities. There are numerous sampling techniques, but the researcher selected stratified random sampling as the study's unit of analysis consisted of more than one variable. For example, the local municipalities that were merged and the district employees involved in strategizing, planning, implementing and executing the procedure for municipalities to be merged.

Respondent briefing

Prior to administering questionnaires and conducting interviews with the respondent, the researcher provided each respondent with a letter of informed consent and participant informed declaration. Such forms were filled by the respondents or participants after they had read and understood what the research entails. A pilot study of the questions, aims and objectives were conducted in order to determine whether they are clear. Hence, before the structured interviews were conducted, the researcher forwarded an access letter to the unit of analysis within the department. Participants were provided with a respondent statement.

Data collection methods

Data collection is a series of methods that researchers use to gather information pertaining to the specific study. For this research, data was collected in distinct ways using secondary data for example, books, journals, the web, social media and newspapers. Relevant data from various sources was used so that the information is clear and understandable. The study used a combination of methods to collect data which included interviews and questionnaires. The research conducted consisted of semi-structured interviews in collecting data where the King Cetshwayo employees were interviewed. Questionnaires were administered to communities. Data was collected using quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a form of the data collection procedure that is conducted in order to gather accurate information regarding the research. The study used survey questionnaires, and these were voluntary questionnaires where participants could take part if they were willing. There are two sets of questionnaires being administered to residents in different languages. The researcher formulated a questionnaire in English and translated the questionnaire to Zulu. This is imperative because parts of the areas that fall under King Cetshwayo District Municipality are rural. The two types of languages serve to accommodate every participant within the targeted population.

Before answering the questionnaire, respondents were issued with the following: candidate's declaration, respondent's statement, a letter of informed consent and an

informed consent declaration. In so doing, it ensured that participants were aware of the topic. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions and aimed to identify the research problem. The questionnaire was designed in a manner that is referred to as the research objectives. Furthermore, this assisted the researcher to collect precise information relating to the aims and objectives of the study. The questionnaire consisted of 38 closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. Questions are formulated particularly to avoid being biased.

Interviews

Interviews are another form of data collection technique that was conducted in this research. The research involved gathering information using primary data. However, this involved the use of structured interviews. The researcher scheduled with the King Cetshwayo District Municipality's employees and researcher aimed to gain insight particularly from internal stakeholders involved with the amalgamation of municipalities. The interview questions consisted of 40 close-ended questions and 1 open-ended question. The interview questions administered were aligned with the research objectives of the study. The researcher scheduled interviews individually with the respondents. However, participants that encountered difficulty in answering parts of the questionnaire were assisted by orally questioning them and filling in their responses. During the interview, the researcher transcribed additional information that was relevant and related to the research undertaken.

The one-on-one interviews and questionnaires were correlated with both methods specifically analysed the particular medium of communication facilitated by the municipality in engaging with stakeholders whilst, sustaining its reputation. The aim of the interviews is to investigate how the King Cetshwayo District Municipality manages its reputation after the amalgamation. The study's intention was to ascertain which communication process and strategies were implemented by the district in maintaining the organisation's reputation.

Respondents were provided with an informed consent declaration, interview schedule and an access letter prior to the interview. Respondents were informed about the form of research being conducted including the objectives of the study. Ethical considerations were enforced and maintained throughout the data collection process.

Data analysis

The data gathered from questionnaires and interviews were collected, prepared and organised so that it may be coded. The researcher gathered the information to be analysed and interpreted. The data collected was consistent and arranged systematically in order to analyse uniformity and accuracy and was the raw material from primary sources. The data acquired were grouped according to the section that the responses originated from and was coded and collected using statistical techniques. Data obtained from was presented using a variety of methods namely, bar charts, pie charts, histograms, diagrams and graphs.

The data collected were prepared and coded; the preparation process ensured that the collected data was accurate and that it was converted from raw to a reduced form where the researcher would analyse and interpret the information. Coldwell et al (2004), states that data coding is a procedure whereby data is gathered in various techniques. Hence, it reduces large numbers of respondents into specified responses which contain critical information.

As mentioned previously the researcher will distribute questionnaires within four local municipalities namely, Mthonjaneni municipality, UMhlathuze municipality, Mfolozi municipality and Ntambanana municipality. The researcher went to the above-mentioned areas to gather information regarding the research and allocated questionnaires based on the population within each municipality. As both methods were used in this research, the information collected can be triangulated against each other to ensure validity.

Validity

The research ensured that the findings of the study were valid and adapted to internal validity, whereby the changes that affected the organisations variable are actually due to the independent variable (Welman et al. 2005). For example, the change occurring in the King Cetshwayo district municipality is dependent on the amalgamation procedure that is affecting the local municipalities. It is imperative to analyse the responses received from the targeted population as to whether the information is valid.

Ethical considerations

The research was conducted voluntarily, and respondents participated willingly. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research. The researcher ensured that the ethical considerations of the study were maintained. Confidentiality was maintained and the participant's personal details were not revealed. Therefore, their anonymity was protected. Protecting the respondent's anonymity is also based on the assumption that most of the respondents do want to keep their information confidential.

The ethical considerations respected the rights and privacy of the respondents and the municipalities that were involved in the study. The researcher sought permission from the municipality by submitting an access letter, informed consent declaration and a letter of informed consent. Permission to undertake the study and ethical clearance was granted by the research ethics committee for the researcher to conduct fieldwork in King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher detailed the methodology to be used in the study. The chapter discussed how the data will be collected, the information regarding the targeted population, sample size and as to how validity will be measured. There were two stages of obtaining data which were the questionnaires and structured interviews. In the next chapter, the researcher analyses data which is obtained from the sample. The chapter details the instruments acquired in gathering data.

DATA ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter these are the issues that are being discussed:

- The data obtained in the study is analysed in the chapter.

- The chapter provides an interpretation of the results gathered.

- The findings collected from the respondents is summarised.

This chapter relates to the topic as it critically analyses information which is retrieved from primary sources namely residents from the affected communities. The chapter serves as a basis to support the relevant information provided about sustaining reputation in the King Cetshwayo District municipality. However, it is important because this helps in order to draw conclusions and recommendations on this particular study. Hence, this chapter is important as it is beneficial for futuristic researchers to reflect on the study or research conducted.

The previous chapter outlined the research method that the study undertakes. In this chapter, the researcher examined the data obtained from the questionnaires and provided an interpretation of the results gathered. The researcher also provided a summary of the verdicts from the responses received. This chapter will provide particular information which the King Cetshwayo District municipality may use in attempts to enhance and maintaining its brand reputation.

Analysis of data (section a)

The chapter focuses on critically evaluating data retrieved from respondents. The tables and graphs were drawn from using MoonStats and it is analysed based on the objectives. Simply, just as the literature review was aligned to the objectives of the study, the **analysis of data is also aligned to the objectives** of the study.

Gender of respondents
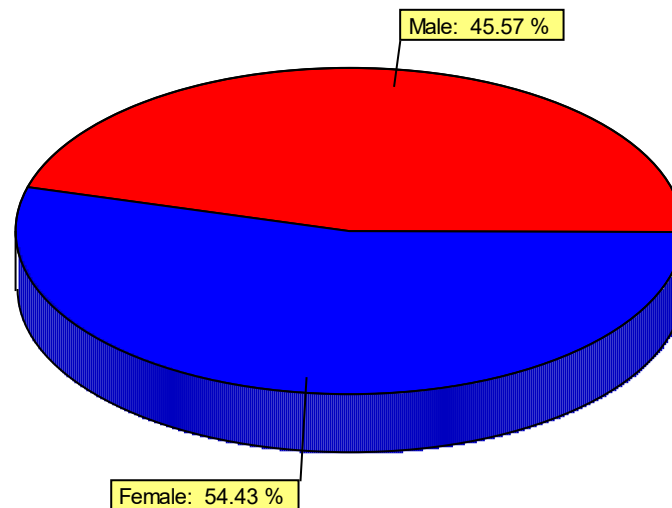
Figure 3: Gender

Figure 3 provides a graphical representation of respondents according to their gender. In this study, 54.43% of the respondents were female and 45.57% were male. From the pie chart above, more females than males are visiting the municipality offices. However, the female respondents were eager to partake in the survey. It is due to the fact that a higher percentage of females were patient and willing to share issues that arose or affect the district. This section analyses responses which relate to the gender of respondents under the King Cetshwayo District municipality. The graph shows the gender of the respondents who were involved in the study. Females dominate a high percentage than the male respondents involved in the research.

SECTION B: TOPIC-BASED ON OBJECTIVE ONE

This section is aligned to objective 1.

SERVICE DELIVERY

This section analyses responses to the statement: "The overall service delivery was poor" based on objective one.
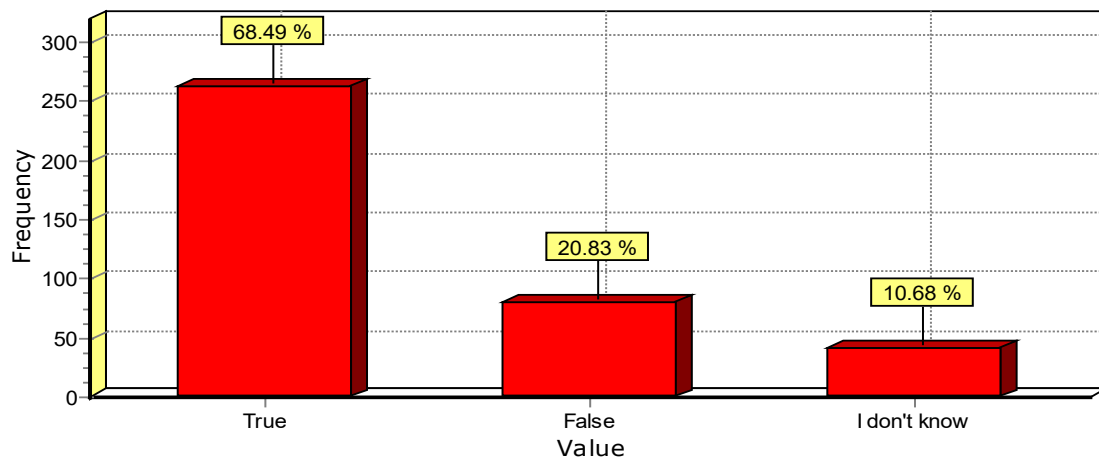
Figure 4: Service delivery

Figure 4 reveals that the majority, 68.49% of the respondents say it is true that the overall service delivery of the municipality was poor, 20.83% say it is false and only 10.68% of the total respondents felt they do not know. A high percentage of the respondents indicated that the service delivery was poor within the Ntambanana municipality. Therefore, the municipality was incorporated with better performing municipalities. CoGTA advised that the local municipality that was financially unstable be closed. One of the issues that arose was of poor service delivery for residents by the municipality. However, this is because the municipality did not have adequate resources to distribute and effectively execute its duties towards the community.

The graph indicates that a high majority of respondents admitted that the overall service delivery of the municipality was poor. Whereas few respondents have indicated false, a few respondents indicated that they do not know. A number of respondents felt that the service at Ntambanana municipality was poor, which could

be one of the reasons as to why the municipality was demolished. A high number of respondents indicate poor performance. Therefore, this graph serves as evidence as to one of the core factors which negatively affected the local municipality. In ensuring that the reputation of an entity is sustained, the internal stakeholders should guarantee that the services rendered are exceptional and focus on customer-centricity.

Management of finances

This section analyses the response to the statement: "finances were difficult to manage" based on objective one.
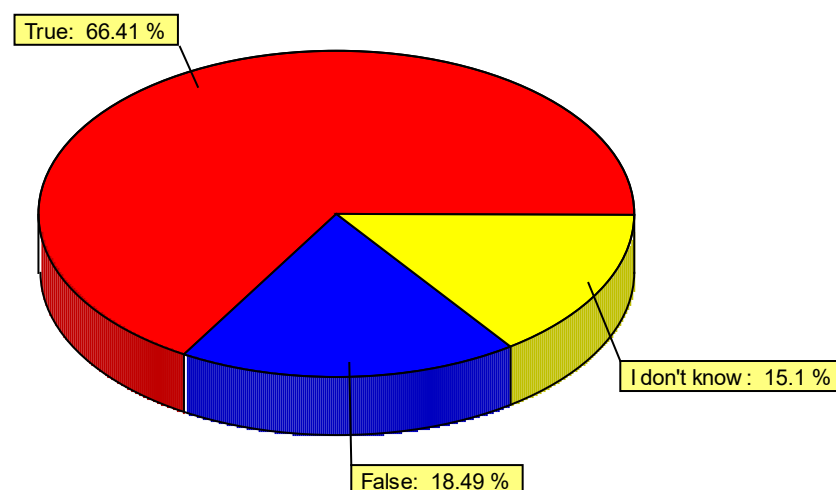
Figure 5: Finances

The graph illustrates that more than 67% of the sample population, which is the majority of the respondents indicated that it is true the finances were difficult to manage; 18.23% said it is false and only 14.06% made it clear that they do not know. Many of the respondents indicated that finances were difficult to manage and that is part of the reason for merging with the Ntambanana local municipality. The aim of the demarcation is for municipalities to ensure that efficient service delivery is provided to local residents. It is imperative for municipalities to execute impeccable service delivery as some of the residents are ratepayers. Hence, it makes it difficult for those

who are paying rates not to be provided with enough service. Ntambanana municipality is mostly dominated by landowners and some areas are governed by traditional leaders. These residents mentioned above do not pay rates making it difficult for other residents and the municipality to generate finances. Poor management of finances is amongst the elements which are detrimental to the sustainability of an organisation. When the finances of the organisation are not maintained, it negatively affects the reputation of the municipality. It is because the municipality becomes unable to render services efficiently.

Organisations habitually pursue several goals. Organisations aim to achieve an increased number in profit, manage technological leadership whilst enhancing customer satisfaction and community welfare. Building relationships with stakeholders is essential and ensuring that efforts regarding solving societal issues are implemented may result in improving the reputation of the organisation. The above aspects form part of the financial point of view of an organisation (Chandra, 2011).

Sustainability of municipalities

This section analyses responses to the statement: "Low income to these municipalities to sustain themselves" based on objective one.

```
      -------------------------------------
      Value          N       %    Cum. %
      -------------------------------------
      True          252    65.63   65.63
      False          61    15.89   81.51
    I don't know    71     18.49  100.00
      -------------------------------------
        TOTAL        384   100.00
      -------------------------------------
             Missing cases: 0
```

Table 2: Low income

The table demonstrates that a significant number of respondents stated that they believe that low income to these municipalities makes it difficult to sustain themselves, while the other portion disagrees, and a few do not know. The Ntambanana municipality also merged because the municipality could not sustain itself. As illustrated in the above table, part of the difficulty was in the management of finances. The managing of finances within the municipality is based on the fact that they could not generate adequate finances because of certain residents who do not pay rates.

The municipalities which were demolished struggled with keeping abreast with the financial flow. Such issues arise and cause strain because poor income within municipalities implies that the municipality is unable to perform the duties set out, which amongst others, involves service delivery. The forces of change are caused by small attributes which may include poor service delivery and financial constraints. Where the municipality is generating less income, the municipality is likely to fail in providing services, for example, the community needs clean water, they also need the rubbish to be collected from their yards. Ntambanana municipality has a majority of residents that do not pay rates however these residents have to receive the same service or equal distribution of services as the ratepayers. According to Argenti and Drunkenmiller (2004), "reputation refers to leadership, management and organisational operations, the quality of products and services and crucially relationships with stakeholders. It is also connected to communication activities and feedback mechanisms".

Rates payers

This section analyses responses to the statement: "land is owned by people who do not pay rates, therefore making it difficult to generate money" based on objective one.
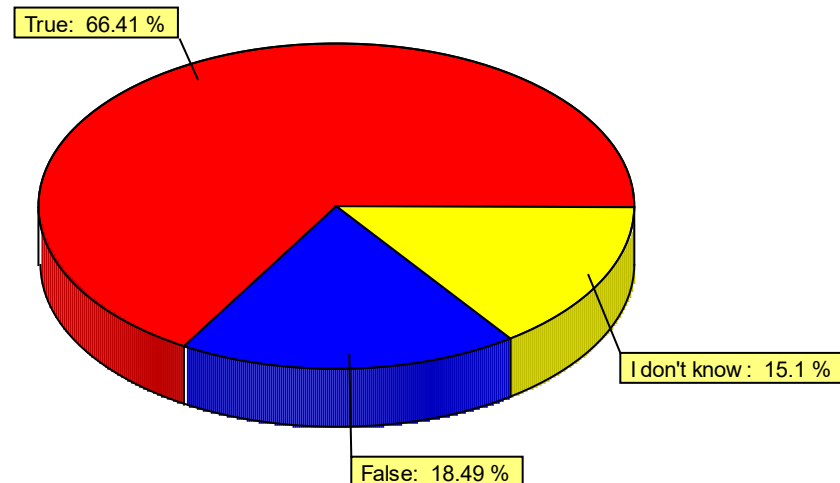
Figure 6: Land

Figure 6 shows 66.41% indicated that it is true the land is owned by people who do not pay rates thereby making it difficult to generate money, 15.15% indicated that they do not know and 18.49% indicated that it is false. Ntambanana consists of remote rural areas, for example, some people still fetch water from the lake. The area has traditional leaders who are chiefs and oversee these areas. According to the Ntambanana Municipality's integrated development plan (2008), the largest part of the land within Ntambanana municipality is owned by tribal authorities. The land is owned by private landowners such as farmers, which results in them not paying rates. Having the minority of people contributing to the financial flow impacts on the sustainability of the municipality. Each of the above points mentioned relates to the forces of change.

Manageability of the Ntambanana municipality

This section analyses responses to the statement: "The Ntambanana municipality has become unmanageable".
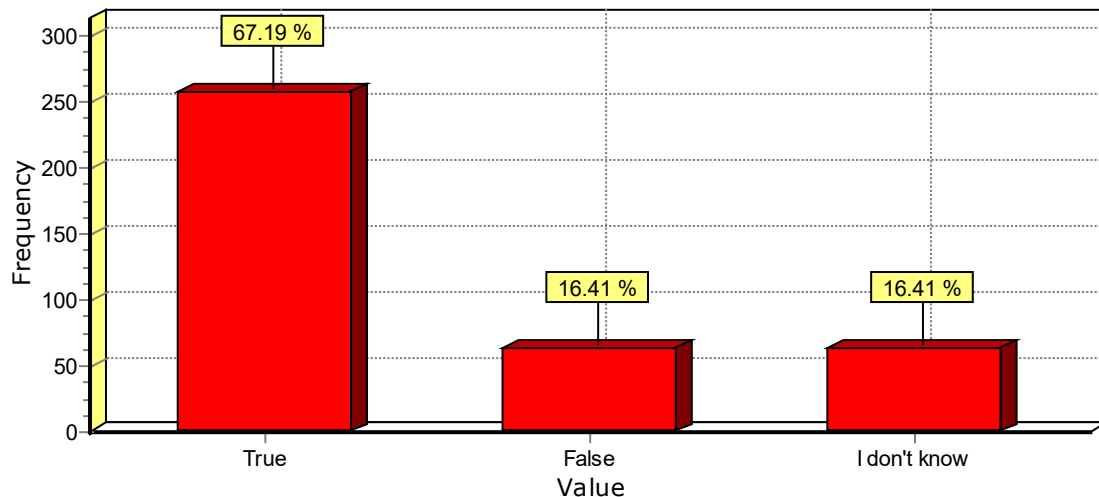
Figure 7: Municipal unmanageable

Figure 7 shows that 67.19% say it is true that the Ntambanana municipality has become unsustainable; both 16.41% of the respondents say it is false and they do not know respectively. 67.19% of the participants indicated that it is true that the municipality has become unsustainable. A high percentage states that the Ntambanana municipality has become unsustainable. An equal number of respondents disagreed and also did not know whether the municipality has become unmanageable. There is a range of issues affecting the Ntambanana municipality which includes poor management of finances, poor income and minimal ratepayers contributing to the unsustainability of the municipality. The merging of municipalities was to ensure that municipalities function effectively.

SECTION C: TOPIC-BASED ON OBJECTIVE TWO

ACCOUNT QUERY

This section analyses the response to the statement: "It takes very long for a person to resolve an account query at the municipal office" based on objective two.
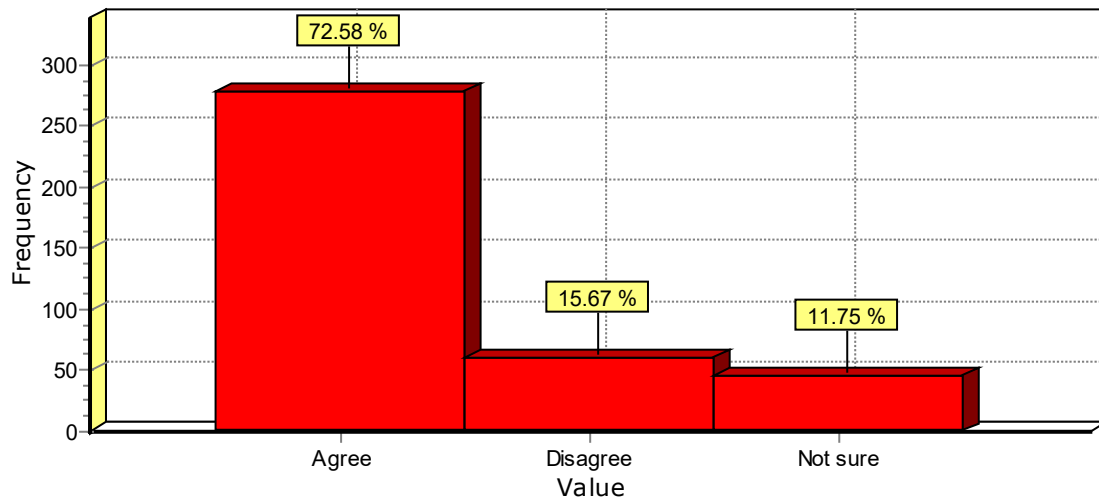
Figure 8: Account query

Figure 8 discloses that 72.58% agree that it takes very long for a person to resolve an account query at the municipality, 15.67% disagree and only 11.75% do not know. 72.58% of the participants expressed that it takes long to resolve a query; this is due to the fact that many people residing within Mbonambi and Ntambanana municipality find it difficult to travel to the nearest municipality after the merger. The participants expressed that travelling the huge distance negatively affects them, hence, making it difficult to make enquiries.

A small number disagreed which almost correlates with the respondents who were not sure. Participants related this question based on their experiences. It is upon management to expedite service delivery and should balance society's needs (Kapoor, Paul and Halder, 2011). Residents from rural areas found it more difficult to access the municipality in resolving their accounts. For example, people are unable to travel whenever they want because of the limited transportation within these areas. Based on the data gathered it is imperative that the municipality uses communication technologies whereby it is easy for the community members to resolve account queries more rapidly.

Communication

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Many of us live in isolated rural areas which make it difficult for these rural people and municipal offices to communicate with each other" based on objective two.

```
------------------------------------
Value          N       %    Cum. %
------------------------------------
Agree         278    72.40   72.40
Disagree       58    15.10   87.50
Not sure       48    12.50   100.00
------------------------------------
  TOTAL        384    100.00
------------------------------------
```
Missing cases: 0

Table 3 Communicate

Table 3 shows that 72.40% of the respondents agree that many of them live in isolated rural areas which are too far away from the municipal offices making it difficult for these rural people and municipal offices to communicate with each other, 15.10% disagree and only 12.50% indicate that they are not sure. Many participants from Mbonambi and Ntambanana felt that it is too far for them to commute to the municipality, showing lack of communication. They have an issue with transportation if they need to visit the municipal offices for enquiries. People in isolated rural areas find it hard to be informed about the processes occurring within the district.

The King Cetshwayo District municipality is dominated by rural areas. The Ntambanana local municipality is situated in the rural part of the district. The area could be regarded as a disadvantaged area. The table above shows a number of participants who agree that they are from rural areas. Comparing these results to those that disagree could indicate participants who reside under uMhlathuze or the Mfolozi municipality which involve towns, whereas people from Ntambanana, Mthonjaneni and Mbonambi travel a distance to go to town. For example, transportation in Mbonambi

is limited and is based on certain times that the bus arrives and picks people up at the bus stops. Taxis are also scarce in these areas. It becomes difficult for society to engage with the municipality.

In disadvantaged towns, some people are not equipped with modern technology. This hinders members of society in effectively communicating with the municipality in gathering information regarding their accounts or resolving problems which they encounter. The municipality has to strategise as to how they could reach the masses. Grunig (2013), notes that "an organisation that practices public relations strategically develops programs to communicate with publics, both external and internal that provide the greatest threats to and opportunities for the organisation. These strategic publics fit into categories that many theorists have called stakeholders".

The municipal offices are amalgamated into one municipality in Richards Bay Amalgamation of municipal offices
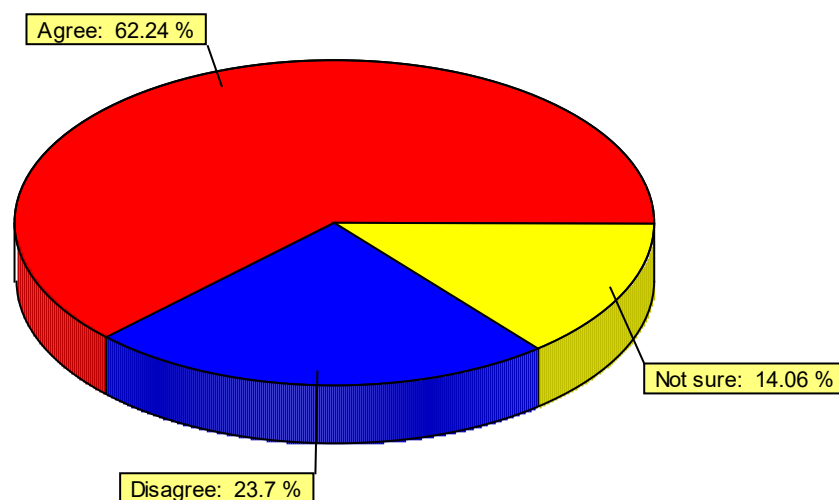
Figure 9: One municipality

Figure 9 outlines that 62.24% of the total respondents agree with the statement that "further to the above, the problem will get worse when the municipal offices are amalgamated into one municipality in Richards Bay", 23.7% disagree and 14.06% are not sure. The wards from the demolished municipality were absorbed into various local municipalities. The wards were incorporated under the King Cetshwayo District municipality. The issue that arises is that people from the rural areas ought to travel in

order to resolve or deal with their concerns relating to the municipality, for example, bill, rates, water and electricity payments.

A high percentage agrees that it is true that the offices have collaborated. The people residing in Ntambanana have to travel to Richards bay offices to get help resulting in the Richards bay municipality being busy and having a lot of people who require assistance, this potentially increases the queues. When queues increase, it requires expert efficiency from the staff. Failure to implement produces unsatisfied clients and a lot of people complaining about the service rendered. Therefore, customer centricity is impaired.

The government resolved the issue of municipalities lacking service delivery. The merger of municipalities was designed so that better performing municipalities could strengthen disadvantaged municipalities. It requires much effort from the district municipality to work hard in distributing services accordingly. The study intends to analyse the management techniques used by the King Cetshwayo district municipality in enhancing and sustaining reputation after the merger.

Use of old technology

This section analyses the responses to the statement: "The current municipality still uses old technology which does not allow it to communicate with the rural people (who form the majority of their customers)" based on objective two.
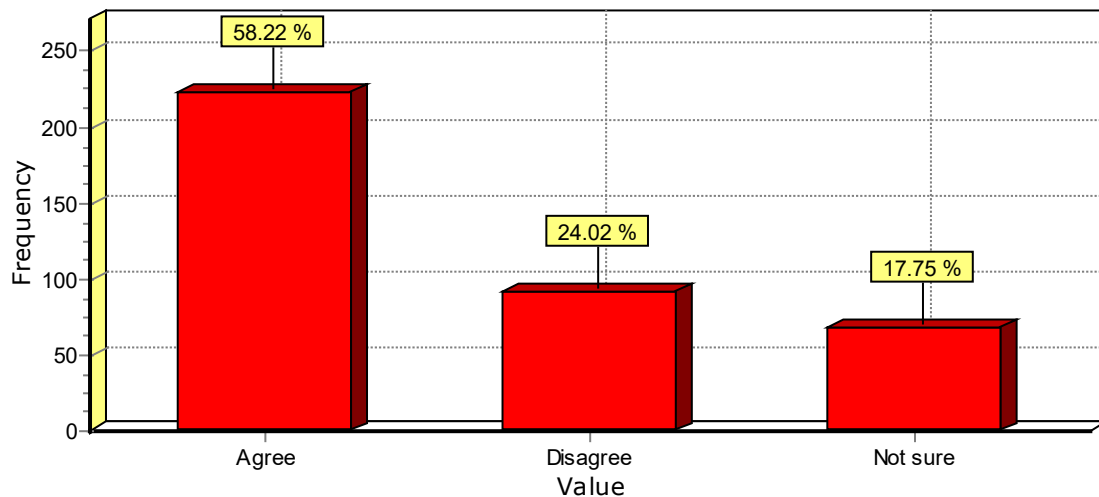
Figure 10:Technology

The graph indicates that a high percentage of the participants still prefer the old use of technology. This could be because a portion of the district lies in remote rural areas. The use of modern technology is still foreign to them, for example, some people are not familiar with new media which include Instagram, and do not have access to the internet at any time as they wish. Some of the public places do not have internet access such as Wi-Fi.

Some people are senior citizens basic types of cell phones and travelling poses a challenge. It limits exposure to various communication technologies. Old technology is still regarded as one of the communication strategies the municipality uses to communicate with customers. Amongst these technologies is the SMS strategy, and delivering letters door-to-door which specify the account, balance and amount which is in areas. This is currently one of the strategies the municipality uses to communicate with the public.

The graph displays three different responses from the communities. A high percentage agrees that the municipality uses old technology. Society has transformed and most residents in urban areas use smartphones which enable them to access applications on their phones. These applications serve as mediums of communication, namely; emails, Facebook, twitter. It is important that the municipality exercises different forms of communication.

Reliable Internet connectivity

This section analyses the response to the statement: "No attempts have been made by the municipality to provide the rural community with reliable internet connectivity" based on objective two.

```
-------------------------------------
Value          N        %    Cum. %
-------------------------------------
Agree        236    61.62    61.62
Disagree      87    22.72    84.33
Not sure      60    15.67   100.00
-------------------------------------
 TOTAL             383    100.00
-------------------------------------
```
Missing cases: 1

Table 4: Reliable internet connectivity

The above table discloses that several respondents highlight that the municipality has not made any effort in supplying areas with reliable internet connectivity. A high number of such respondents were people who reside in rural areas and townships. For example, malls in these areas hardly have Wi-Fi connectivity where residents could have an internet connection. People residing in rural areas seldom have devices that could easily connect them to the Internet. The municipality should try and reach out to the remote rural areas and educate the community about communication technologies. Technologies transform the human conditions. We live in an era where technology timelessly advances (Restivo, 2005). The municipality should capitalize on connecting the internet to civilians as this will assist in curbing negative elements which may affect the municipality such as crime. The youth could be inspired by keeping busy and discovering ways of sustaining themselves via the internet. For example, with Bit coins, Forex trading. Overall, the government ought to improve on this factor. The King Cetshwayo district municipality should embrace internet connectivity in order to access social media sites in excellently practising the execution

of strategic communication. The use of communication technologies within organisations facilitates symmetrical (two-way communication) approach.

The government's governance problems

This section analyses the responses to the statement: "The government seems to be addressing their governance problems by amalgamating the municipalities – they are not solving the people's problems" based on objective two.
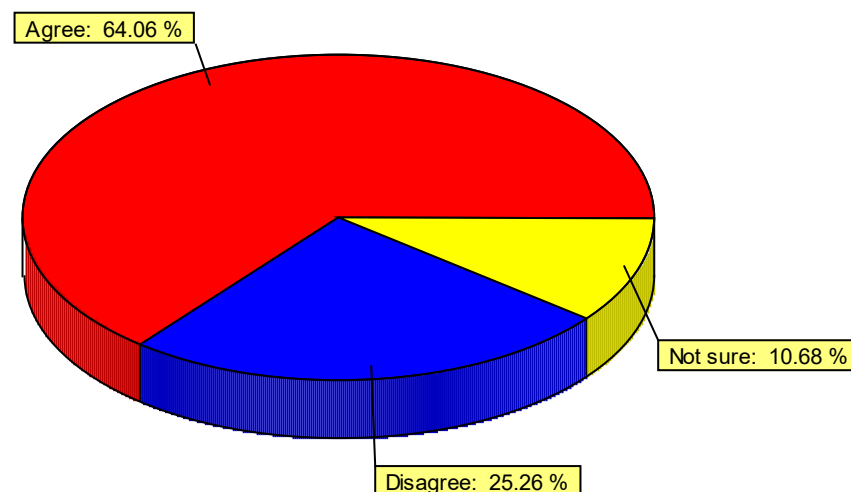
Figure 11: Government

A high number of people indicate that the solution the government made towards the municipalities is not enough in solving problems. The government incorporated municipalities which were not able to sustain themselves due to reasons that caused them to be eradicated and dispatched some of the wards within the demolished municipality to the four local municipalities under the King Cetshwayo District municipality. Residents show that the implementation of this procedure does not solve problems. The government needs to make sure that it structures municipalities in such a manner that both parties' benefit. There are various issues that affect communities, and some are yet to be managed. Within the King Cetshwayo district municipality, some participants feel that there is still much that needs to be done by the government.

Issues of concern involve, transportation, development in particular areas and transparency from the municipality towards local communities.

In amalgamating local municipalities, it is crucial that government obtains systems which are beneficial to the public and the entity. One of the essential tools delivered to heighten reputation is strategic communication. In any situation is it imperative for the PR department to communicate using various mediums of communication to reach a diverse society. Hence, this increases transparency, trust and customer satisfaction.

Ratepayers subsidise poorer municipal areas

This section analyses the responses to the statement: "The merger will make life worse for the people who pay their rates because their money will be used to subsidise the poorer municipal areas" based on objective two.
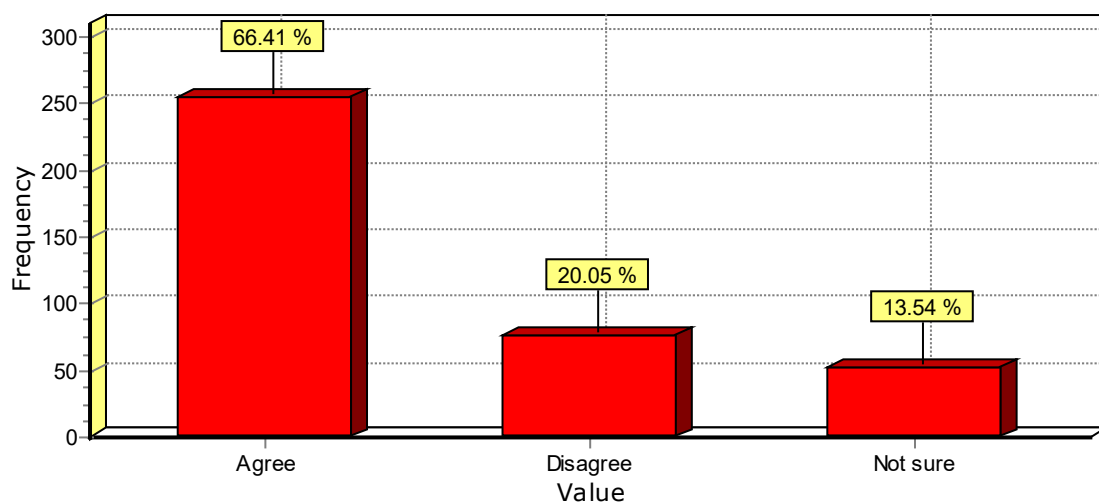
Figure 12: Merger

The graph shows that many respondents agree with the statement. Participants viewed the merger as threatening because of the two contrasts that emerge. These contracts involve the ratepayers as opposed to landowners who do not pay rates. Both parties require adequate service to be rendered efficiently. The fact still remains that the people who are paying rates shall continue with the process of ensuring that they

do pay their rates. A portion of the population in the research disagreed with the statement. The participants had issues of service delivery regarding the fear of having insufficient services provided to them. This is because some feared that they will pay rates whilst others did not. In so doing, they felt that it will cause a problem to those who do pay rates. A high percentage of residents are discouraged by this situation. According to Dzengwa (2017), it is important that society apprehends the significance of the services provided by local municipalities. The core issue is the value that society attaches to the services they have received.

Section D: Topic-based on objective three

General improvement of services

This section analyses the response to the statement: "We would like to see a general improvement of services" based on objective three.
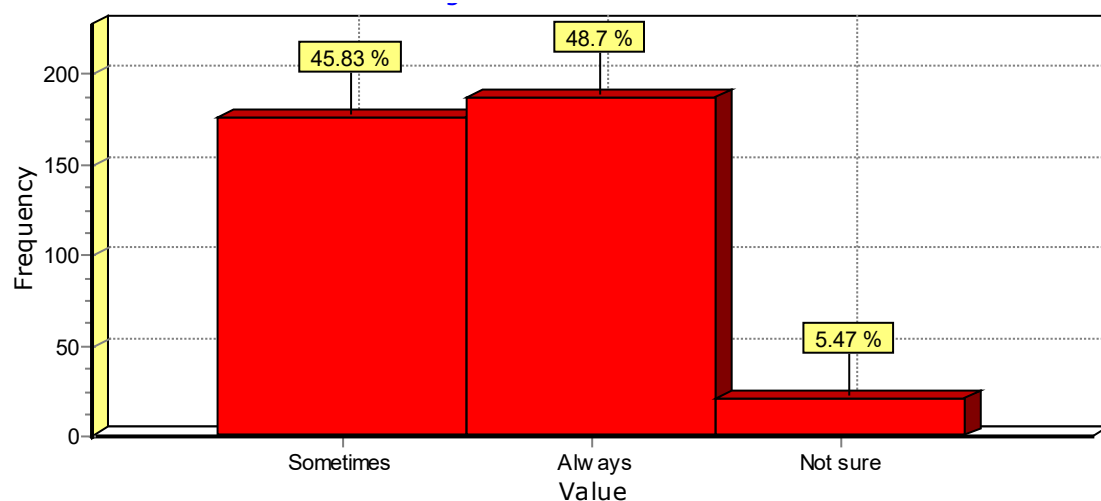
Figure 13: Improvement

The graph shows two responses which are similar. The respondents scored high on the statement indicating that they would like to see the improvement "always" and also "sometimes". In any organisation, the internal stakeholders within that organisation should cater to external stakeholders. Building positive relationships enhances the

chance of having customers who are satisfied. When the municipality renders excellent service, the community will be delighted. This, however, goes as far as being at an advantage when it comes to local government elections. When government supplies and meet the needs of society they are likely to be voted again in office for several years. The municipality can minimize issues that arise from society by strategically planning ways whereby they can reach the public. The municipality can formulate a way as to deal with the obstacles faced by the public. In any entity it is advisable to improve the services rendered to clients or customers. Services can be defined as an action whereby organisations sustain and advance the well-being and the manner which people operate. Services are associated with additional benefits or with a product and goods of an organisation (Kapoor, Paul and Halder 2011). Organisations should focus on customer centricity in order to maximise customer satisfaction. The graph shows that the community prefers that the municipality improves its services. In doing so, the reputation of the municipality shall be enhanced. The municipality can engage with its external stakeholders in determining what society prefers. Grunig (2013), mentions that organisations should treat both internal and external stakeholders equitably as it strengthens the organisation where it creates loyalty and positive relations. Whilst, an organisation where ideas pertaining to the organisation are not shared usually fails as there are different perceptions.

DELIVERY ON THEIR PROMISES

This section analyses the response to the statement: "We would like the municipalities to deliver on their promises" based on objective three.

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Sometimes	154	40.10	40.10
Always	208	54.17	94.27
Not sure	22	5.73	100.00
TOTAL	384	100.00	

Missing cases: 0

Table 5 Deliver on promises

In table 5, a high number of respondents indicate that they would like the municipality to always deliver on their promises. In creating a brand for oneself, that person ought to be reliable. Brand reputation of an organisation focuses on what the organisation does. For example, if government promises the public that they will aid people in rural areas with developing their road facilitating adequate transportation and building modern facilities which include new media. The municipality must deliver and perform what they promised the public when they were running for elections. It is difficult to reach all areas but with effective communication between the municipality and the community it is possible to ensure radical development. Reputation deals with the notion that what a company does, must be in line with what the company says. The community members express that they would like the municipality to maintain adequate service delivery. Whatever the municipality communicates with the public should be implemented and the municipality should consider the views and opinions of the residents. In so doing, it will increase a customer-based relationship which is founded on trust between the relevant parties.

Enhancing the reputation of the district

This section analyses responses to the statement: "We would like the merger to enhance the reputation of the district" based on objective three.
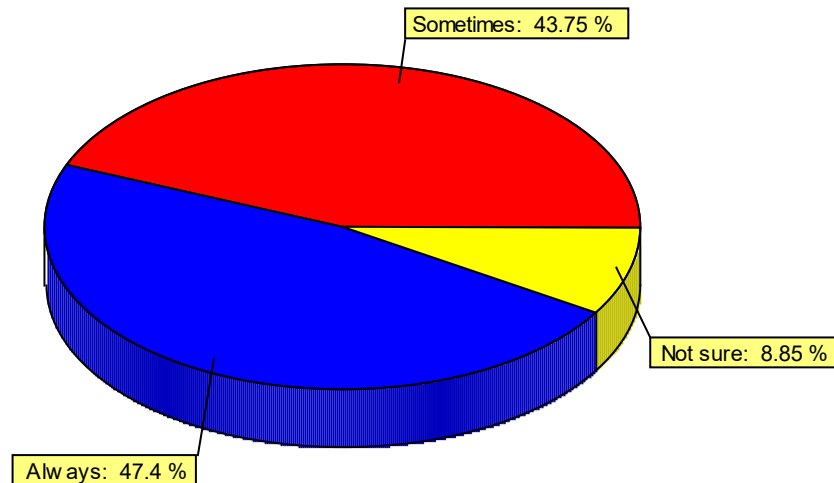
Figure 14: Enhance reputation

Figure 14 shows that respondents agree that they would like the merger to enhance the reputation of the district. The King Cetshwayo District municipality should enhance its reputation by involving customers or society and being transparent. For prospects the municipality should engage with the local communities in gathering information pertaining to the challenges which are faced by the public. In minimizing these challenges, the municipality will create a safe environment for example, if a certain community complains about crime within the neighbourhood the municipality could provide the youth with developmental programmes which will stimulate them. It is part of being socially responsible. CSI indirectly links the organisation's reputation to improvement while creating a warm environment and loyal customers. The participants were encouraged because the merger enhanced the reputation of the district as the wards that were unsustainable were absorbed. The reputation of the district will be enhanced if the above-mentioned factors on the graphs stipulated are met.

IMPROVEMENT IN COMMUNICATION

This section analyses the responses to the statement: "We would like to see that there is an improvement in communication between ALL the residents and the NEW MERGED municipality" based on objective three.
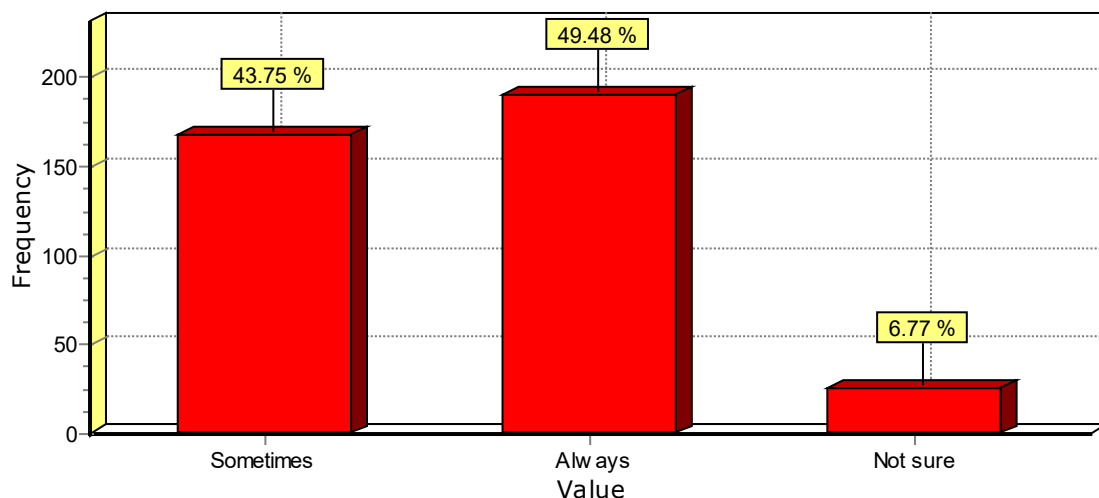
Figure 15: Improvement in communication

Figure 15 indicates that most respondents would like the municipality to improve communication. The municipality needs to utilize different forms of communication to the surrounding environments. Priority in developing rural areas and providing these communities with technology will create a better society where people will be equipped with their skills; advancing these communities also creates job opportunities. An organisation must be transparent in its communication with the community. Effective communication ensures that the public is aware of the issues within the organisation and hinders speculation. Facilitating communication and feedback with stakeholders will ensure that the organisation is sustained in the long-term.

Section E: Topic-based on objective four

Use of the Internet to communicate with residents

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Municipality must make use of the Internet to communicate with residents" based on objective four.
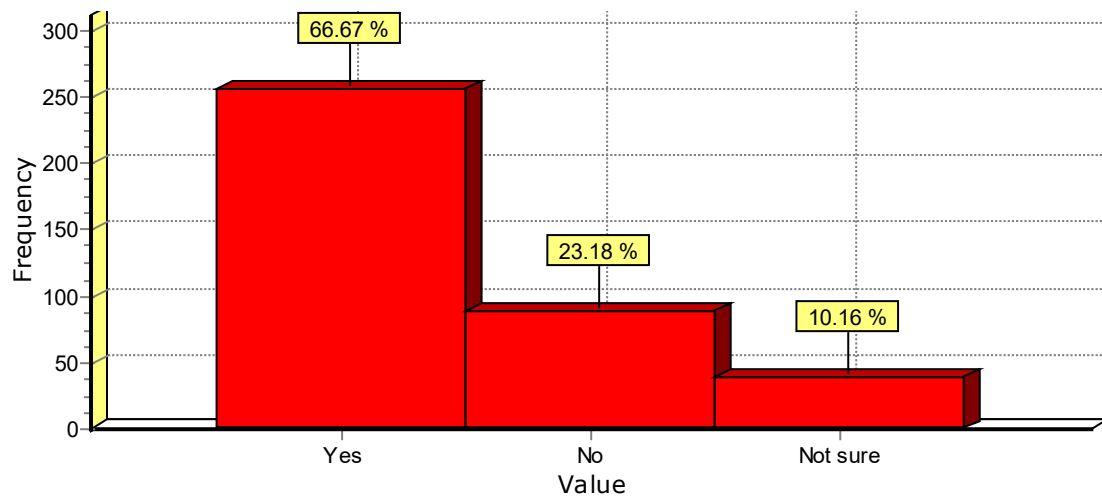
Figure 16: Internet

The graph illustrates that most of the respondents said yes, the municipality should make use of the Internet as some people are unable to go to the municipality themselves. They would prefer to do things electronically. In certain areas within the local municipalities, residents are not computer literate, which hinders the residents in conforming to relevant technology. The internet is a form of mass communication. Although it hinders certain individuals based on training or acquiring computer skills. The internet serves as an essential form of communication which stores and transmits information faster (Sehgal and Khetarpal, 2006). The municipality should present developmental programmes in certain undeveloped areas and assist the community in being computer literate. The number of people demanding the usage of the internet has increased. Society sees the need for the municipality to communicate using modern technology. Technology has evolved and parts of the areas within the district have access new media. The internet is amongst the easiest tools used to reach the audience. When the King Cetshwayo district municipality delivers developmental programmes that would educate and skill the youth, it is generating a system of empowering its local communities. Organisations have to be socially responsible pertaining to their operations and respond to society's expectation regarding the enterprise.

Use of the newspaper as a means of communication

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Municipality must make use of the newspaper to communicate with residents" based on objective four.

```
-------------------------------------
Value         N       %    Cum. %
-------------------------------------
Yes          275    71.61   71.61
No            66    17.19   88.80
Not sure      43    11.20   100.00
-------------------------------------
 TOTAL        384   100.00
-------------------------------------
```

Missing cases: 0

Table 6: Newspaper

The table demonstrates that many of the participants involved in the survey believe that the municipality should communicate using print media as one of the communication mediums. Print media is one tool which involves traditional communication. The municipality could update society pertaining to any changes or events which concern local communities. The King Cetshwayo District municipality has a local newspaper called the 'Zululand Observer'. The municipality could make use of such form of communication which reflects as one of the tools that the public prefers. This form of communication is one that could reach and be accessed by a lot of people. For example, the elderly and the youth can read and receive valid information. A society which still believes in traditional communication shall benefit and also those that are not equipped or familiar with new media. Overall, this form of communication is amongst the public's choice. This correlates with the above figure where the participants expressed that they would like the municipality to communicate with them using the Internet. The municipality could combine these mediums of communication to ensure that they reach a vast audience. The King Cetshwayo District has local newspapers whereby the municipality may communicate with

external stakeholders via the print media. This increases the chance of people being updated regarding any changes.

Use of the television to communicate with residents

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Municipality must make use of the Television to communicate with residents" based on objective four.
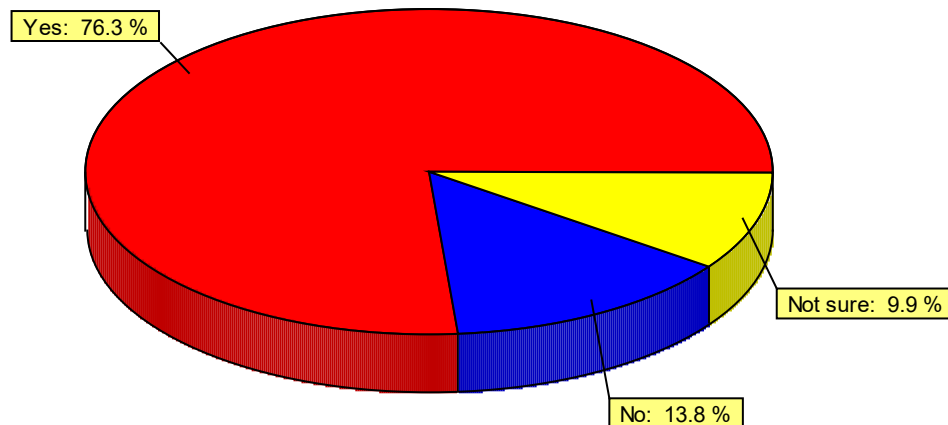
Figure 17: Television

Figure 17 indicates that a high percentage of the population would like the municipality to communicate using the television. Television is one of the popular mediums of communication, which influences a wide audience. Television conveys live images or discussions from different locations. Television is regarded as a medium of mass communication as it reaches a large population (Sehgal and Khetarpal, 2006). The television is one form that some of the residents relate to. The King Cetshwayo District municipality has a channel assessable on DSTV called 1KZN which is based in Richards Bay, where the municipality can broadcast to relevant stakeholders and inform people regarding changes.

The King Cetshwayo district municipality should incorporate integrated communication in order to reach the masses. The procedure of incorporating integrated communication assists organisations to effectively reach out to stakeholders. When communicating with any stakeholder, organisations should use supplementary communication channels and different media to reach them. Gronstedt (2000), defines

Integrated Communication (IC) of an organisation where various mediums of communication are used to reach out to the targeted audience and stakeholders in order to build profitable relationships with them.

Use of radio to communicate with residents

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Municipality must make use of the radio to communicate with residents" based on objective four.
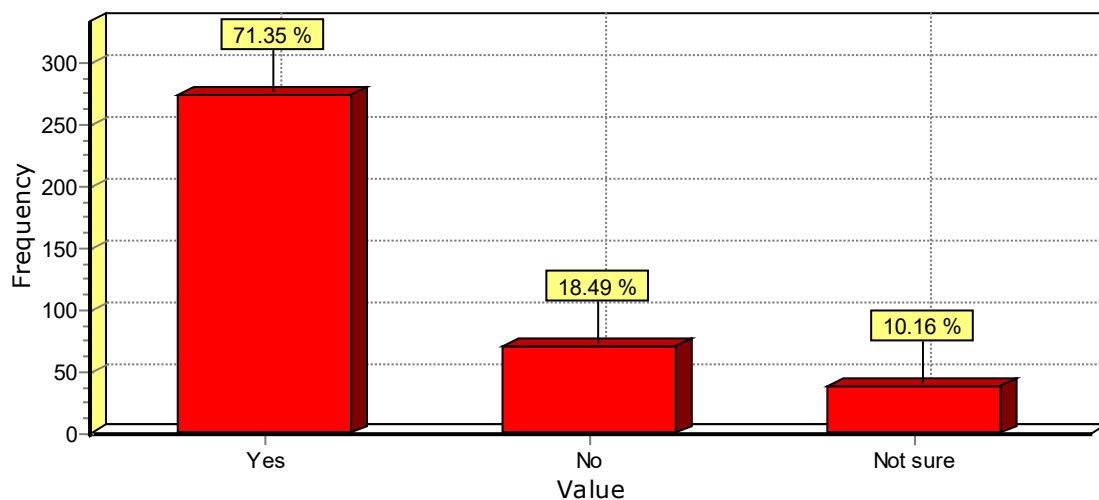
Figure 18: Radio

Figure 18 indicates that respondents would like the municipality to communicate using the radio. This form of communication is also regarded as traditional communication. Rural communities relate to this form of communication, based on their limited access to technology. There are various ways of communication and reaching out to the public. The participants highly support the municipality communicating with them through the radio, whilst a small portion disagrees. Several participants would like various ways of communication. The King Cetshwayo District municipality has a local radio station called Cora FM, so the municipality may use it in order to reach diverse individuals. The radio station is more accessible than the other mediums of communication mentioned in the above figures. In remote rural areas where there seems to be an issue of computer literacy using this medium of communication, they can easily connect to the radio as opposed to the Internet.

Using websites to communicate with residents

This section analyses the responses to the statement: "Municipality must make use of the organisation's website to communicate with residents" based on objective four.
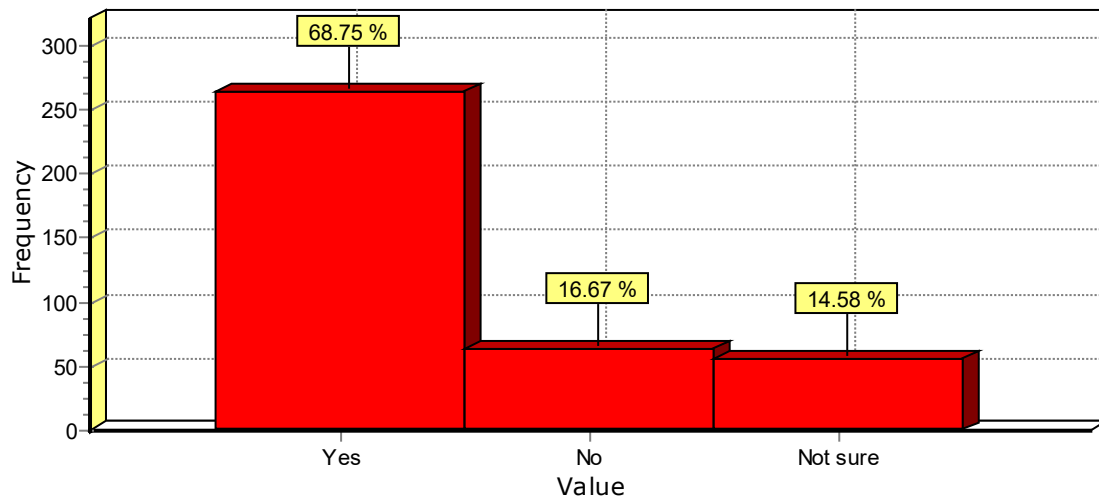
Figure 19: Organisation's website

Figure 19 points out that 68.75% say yes, the municipality must make use of the organisation's website to communicate with residents, while 16.67% say no and only 14.58% are not sure. This figure correlates with the Internet demand that the residents express where the municipality can reach the public by putting up posts on their web page. The residents affirm that they would like the municipality to frequently update their website. However, within this survey, it does not stipulate as to which age group had an overall effect on the sampled results. The study comprises a general overview of the sampled population.

Community meeting with residents

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Municipality must make use of community meetings to communicate with residents" based on objective four.

```
-------------------------------------
Value          N       %    Cum. %
-------------------------------------
Yes           285    74.22    74.22
No             70    18.23    92.45
Not sure       29     7.55   100.00
-------------------------------------
TOTAL         384   100.00
-------------------------------------
```

Missing cases: 0

Table 7: Community meetings

The table shows that there is a high number of respondents who believe that the municipality should communicate by scheduling meetings with the community. Community meetings are not required by everyone as there is a percentage that disagrees with the statement. The municipality still uses this form of communication with residents. These meetings are normally held by councillors within their wards and they discuss issues affecting the residents in that area. Some members of the community which are part of the meetings broadcast these meetings using loud hailers from street to street, informing people. Another way is through letters which are delivered door-to-door for the residents in that specific area. People are normally accustomed to this form of communication in townships and rural areas and still prefer

the municipality to communicate with them using it. Residents believe that regular meetings should be held by internal stakeholders to communicate with the public.

The use of Facebook to communicate with residents

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Municipality must make use of Facebook to communicate with residents" based on objective four.
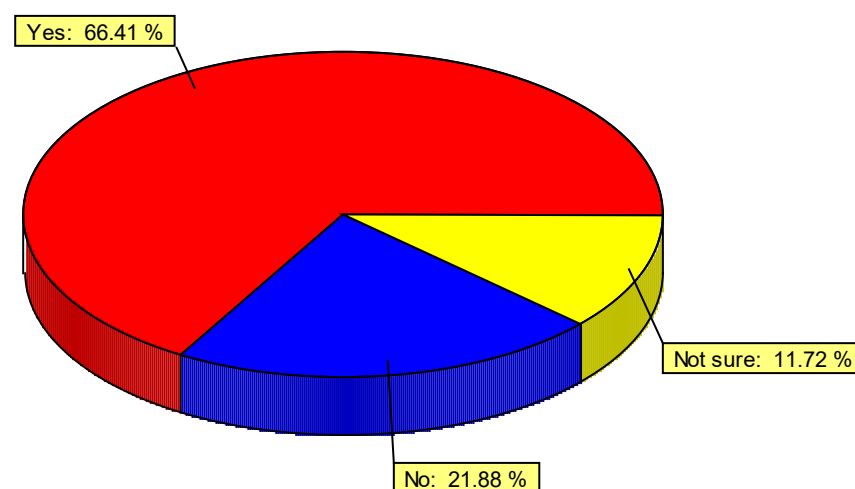

Figure 20: Facebook

The pie chart shows that a high percentage of respondents agree that the municipality should communicate using Facebook. The King Cetshwayo District municipality has a Facebook page where it posts issues which relate to the community. The municipality should update the Facebook page on a regular basis. The municipality should focus on updating local issues; for example, the president of South Africa was in the district attending a local church, where he addressed the community. Such matters should be communicated on social media and alert the public of certain events. Facebook is one tool which is mostly accessed by the young generation and the municipality could also post job vacancies on Facebook to maximize economic growth and job opportunities. Participants affirm use of the Internet as the main communicative model they would

prefer. They refer to the Internet as a vast communicative system which is easily accessible, and it does not waste time when gathering relevant information.

The use of Twitter to communicate with residents

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Municipality must make use of Twitter to communicate with residents" based on objective four.
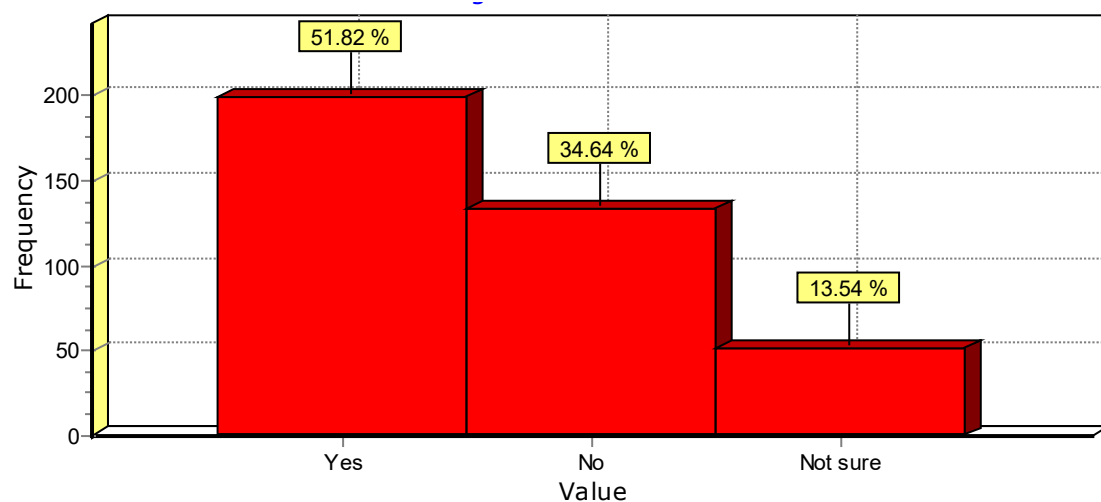
Figure 21: Twitter

Figure 21 outlines that 51.82% checked yes, the municipality must make use of Twitter to communicate with residents; 34.64% checked no and 13.54% checked not sure. The citizens prefer modern technology, namely twitter. It is amongst the mediums of communication which have been mentioned. Twitter is a form of social media easily accessed through smartphones. The municipality has a twitter account whereby it posts pictures of events that occurred in the King Cetshwayo District municipality. This particular form of communication is highlighted by the public in order for them to be kept abreast with the certain developments and social events.

Use of WeChat to communicate with residents

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Municipality must make use of WeChat to communicate with residents" based on objective four.
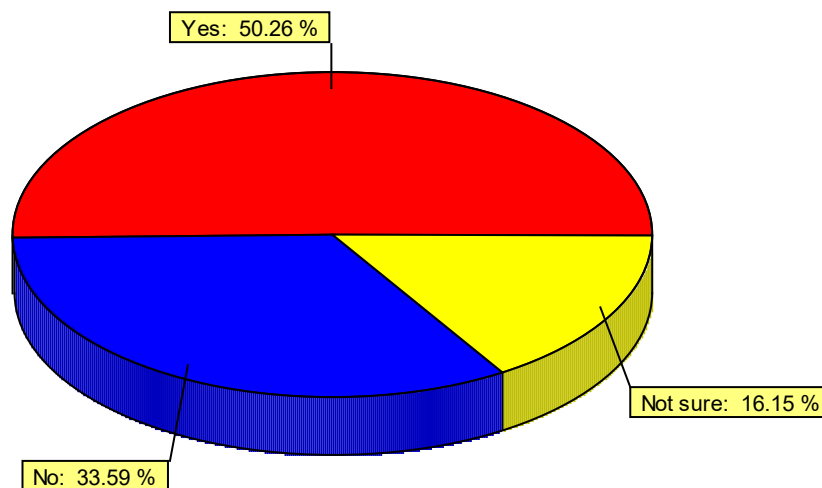
Figure 22: WeChat

The pie chart shows that the responses differ. WeChat appears to not be popular and most people do not use WeChat. This implies that not everyone is exposed to this particular social media. When compared to the other social media networks, this one is not considered as a viable tool for the municipality to communicate with society. This form of communication is not utilized by the municipality.

Use of Instagram to communicate with residents

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Municipality must make use of Instagram to communicate with residents" based on objective four.
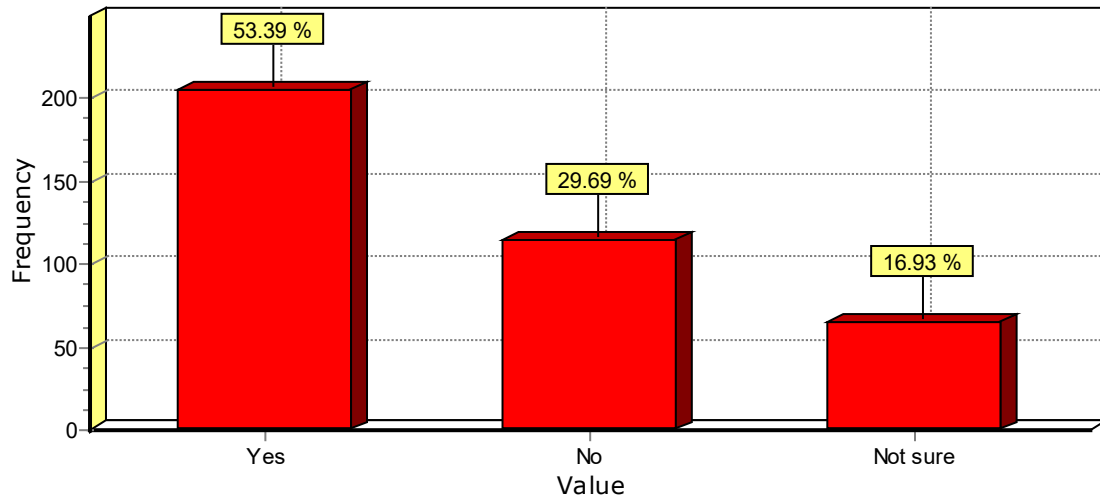
Figure 23: Instagram

Figure 23 discloses that 53.39% agree that the municipality must make use of Instagram to communicate with residents, 29.69% say no and 16.93% are not sure. Instagram is another medium of communication whereby society is able to share photos or videos of themselves. The Kind Cetshwayo District municipality has an Instagram page where the colleagues post photos of themselves. The district advertises events, for example, auditions or competitions. The municipality ought to update this medium on a regular basis in order to keep society keen regarding events that occur.

Use of Micro-blogging

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Micro-blogging is one of the new trends preferred by the public" based on objective four.
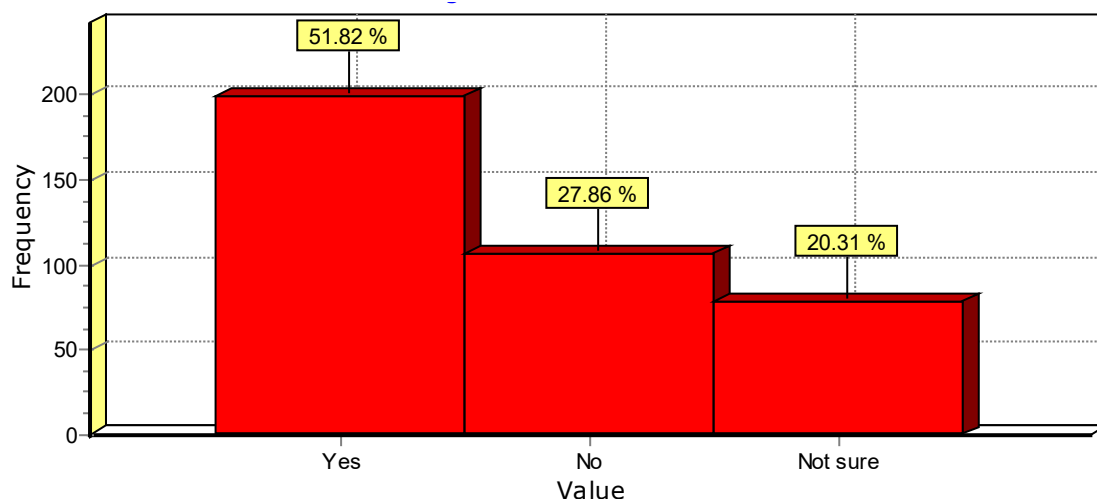
Figure 24 Micro-blogging

The graph displays that the community prefers the municipality to consider communicating via micro-blogging. Micro-blogging is a form of communication which is accessed online. It is a form of a blog where users can share comments or video links. Moreover, the municipality has to consider all different forms of communication to facilitate when interacting with its external stakeholders.

Personally resolving problems

This section analyses the response to the statement: "Many of us prefer to go personally to the municipality to resolve our problems. The new municipality must take measures to resolve our problem within one visit (on the same day)" based on objective four.

```
---------------------------------------
Value          N       %    Cum. %
---------------------------------------
Agree         278    72.40    72.40
Disagree       58    15.10    87.50
Not sure       48    12.50   100.00

---------------------------------------
  TOTAL        384    100.00
---------------------------------------
         Missing cases: 0
```

Table 8 Resolve problems

The table illustrates that an increased number of participants shared that they would like the municipality to resolve their problems the same day. For example, if the client's

78

account was in areas, the municipality reconnects the clients account after facilitating proof of payment. The community expects the organisation to be proactive. It is easier for some respondents that prefer face-to-face communication to go personally to inquire about their issues. As individuals we have different cognitive perspectives, and some people prefer face-to-face communication in order to resolve their problems. Some residents prefer the traditional method of resolving queries directly. It is fitting for most of the account queries to be resolved faster and within the same day.

Call centre

This section analyses the response to the statement: "The new municipal office must have a very well organised phone-in problem-solving technique. People must be able to phone the municipality and the municipality must be able to return the call within 24-48 hours with a solution" based on objective four.
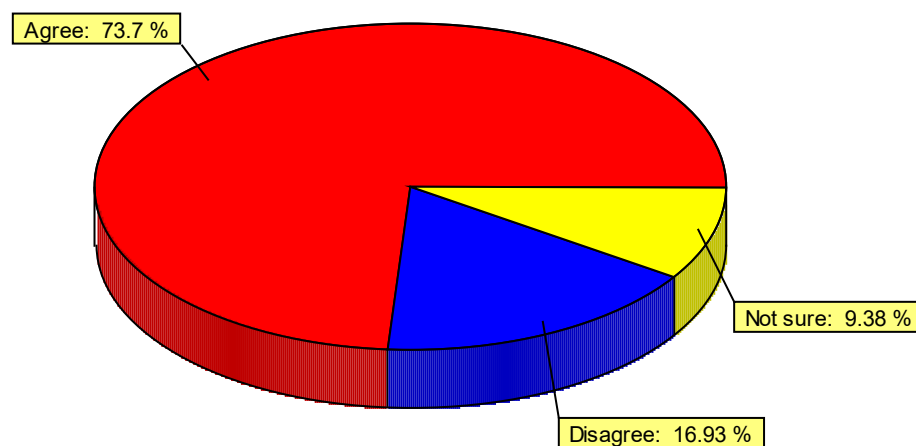
Figure 25 :Phone-in problem-solving technique

The pie chart shows that most of the population prefer the municipality to be able to resolve issues over the phone. Participants indicated that it is not everyone who is able to make it to the municipality to communicate face-to-face. The organisation should consider having a call-centre, whereby clients' accounts could be resolved over the phone. If the client has a problem the municipality should contact the client with a

solution. The phone-in problem-solving technique is one of the essentials that the public chooses for the municipality to communicate with them. It is evident that the participants prefer personal communication where they are able to interact with the municipality's personnel.

COMMUNICATION VIA CELL PHONE AND SMS

This section analyses the response to the statement: "The municipality must communicate with the residents using a cell phone and SMS strategies" based on objective four.
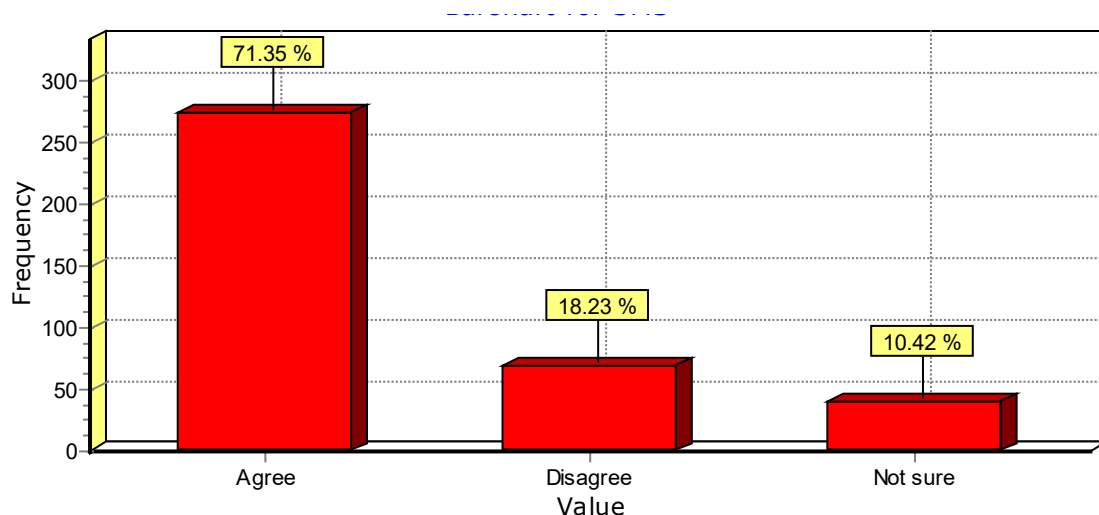
Figure: 26 Cell phone and SMS strategies

The graph displays a high percentage of respondents who would like the municipality to communicate with residents using a cell phone and SMS strategies. Currently, the municipality is practising this strategy whereby customers are alerted through their cell phones. The method of reaching clients via cell phones is an easy method and a practical one since cell phones are owned by a lot of people. Messages can reach masses within a short period of time. It is an easy way of transmitting information and hinders disturbances such as noise. Even if the community is disadvantaged, with this method they could be reached. The SMS could be in different languages to different

communities or individuals. The municipality does alert residents through facilitating the SMS strategy regarding rate payments and the discontinuing of services, if it is applicable to the resident.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE USE OF EMAILS

This section analyses the response to the statement: "The municipality must communicate with residents using Email" based on objective four.
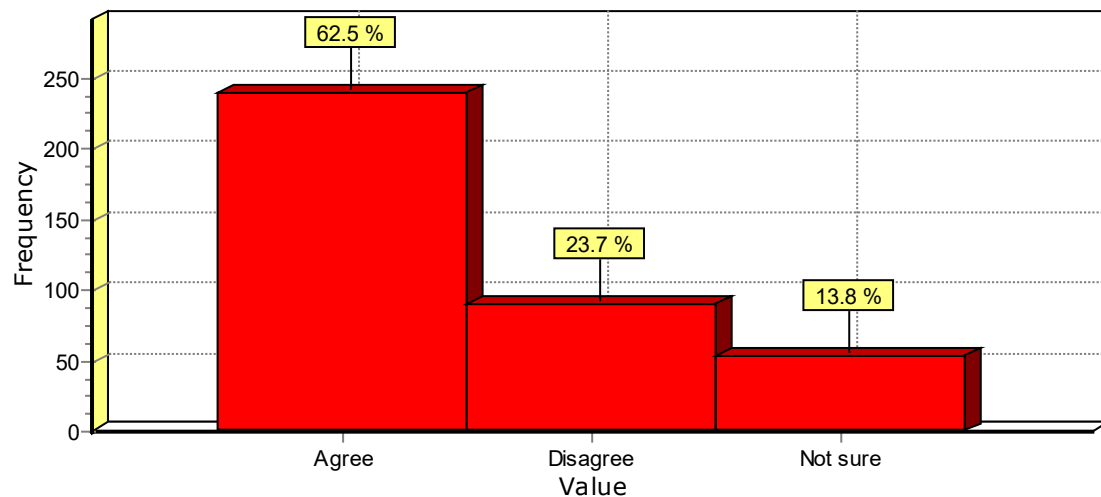
Figure: 27 Email

Figure 27 shows that several respondents agree that the municipality must communicate with residents using email. The study shows that the public has different cognitive perspectives and prefer a variety of methods. A high percentage of residents find it is easier for the municipality to send emails to reach their external stakeholders. Furthermore, emails form part of the Internet circulation preferred by many of the respondents. It is evident that new media communication is in demand.

Communication using letters via postal delivery

This section analyses the response to the statement: "The municipality must communicate with residents using letters via postal delivery" based on objective four.

```
-------------------------------------
Value         N       %    Cum. %
-------------------------------------
Agree        233    60.68    60.68
Disagree      97    25.26    85.94
Not sure      54    14.06   100.00
-------------------------------------
 TOTAL       384   100.00
-------------------------------------
```

Missing cases: 0

Table 9 letters

The table illustrates that a high percentage agree that the municipality should use letters using the post office. Although it is out-dated, it still seems to be preferred. The table shows several respondents disagree and are also not sure about this particular form of communication. The reason for this is that not everyone is accustomed to new technology. Society has people who still believe and practice traditional methods. Letters are a type of mail that involves messages received by the post office, and these messages are delivered to individuals. This form of communication is not often used.

One-one-one meeting with the municipality

This section analyses the responses to the statement: "The residents prefer to meet personally with the municipality to discuss issues" based on objective four.
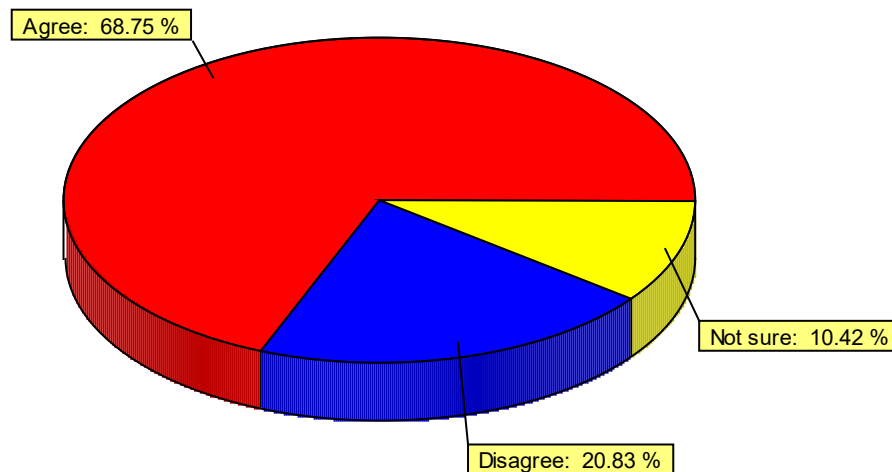
Figure 28 Discuss issues

Figure 28 demonstrates that 68.75% say yes, the residents prefer to meet personally with the municipality to discuss issues; 20.83% say no and 10.42% are not sure. The pie chart demonstrates that a high percentage of respondents noted that they would like to meet personally and discuss issues. The results show that personal communication is one factor that society prefers to interact with internal stakeholders to resolve their account queries.

Communication via traditional communication methods

This section analyses the response to the statement: "The residents prefer communicating with the municipality via traditional communication methods, for example, using public speakers and newsletters" based on objective four.
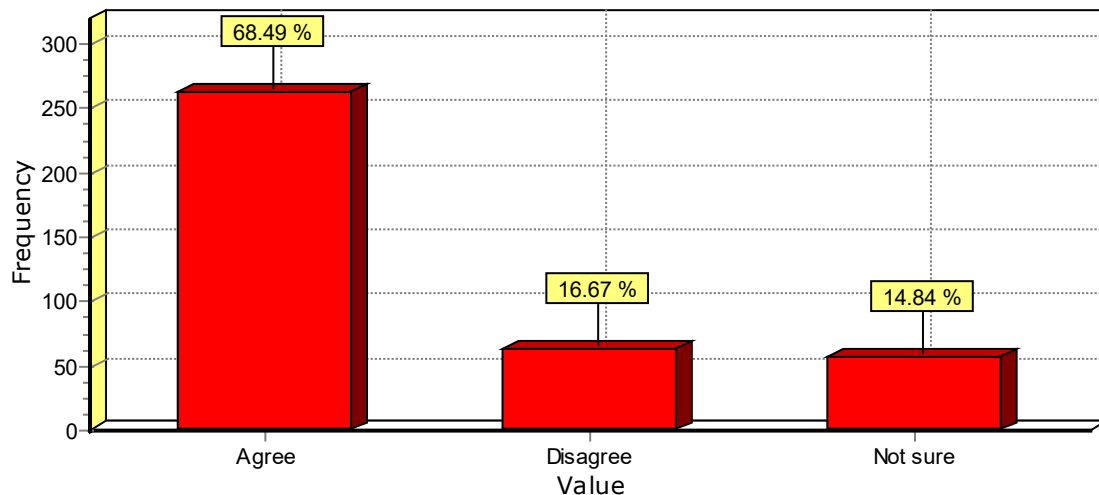
Figure 29 Traditional communication methods

Figure 29 indicates that 68.49% say yes, the residents prefer communicating with the municipality via traditional communication methods, for example, using public speakers and newsletters, 16.67% say no and do not agree with traditional communication and 14.84% are not sure. In some areas of the municipality, the public still chooses traditional communication. This may be because not all municipalities are developed. Some areas within the district have individuals who are not broadly exposed to new media technologies. Hence, they prefer traditional communication methods.

Analysis of data (section b)

The following analysis was guided by the questions and the responses from the King Cetshwayo District employees. The analysis was as follows:

SECTION A: TOPIC-BASED ON OBJECTIVE ONE

THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC)
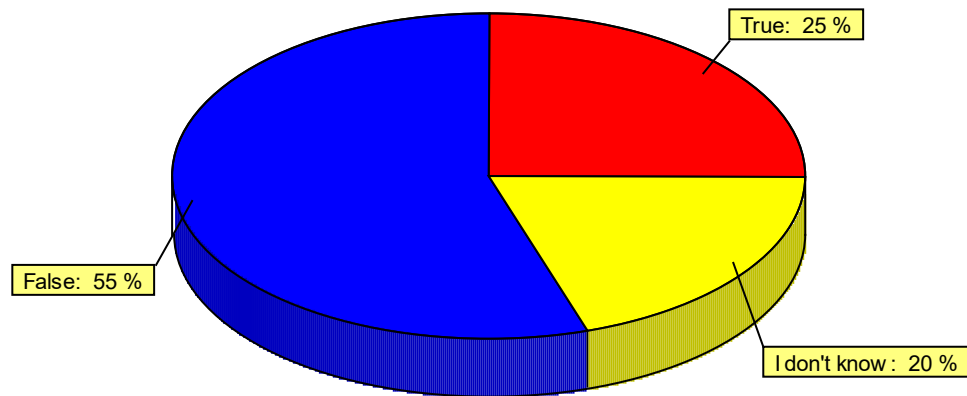
Figure 30 The African National Congress (ANC)

Figure 30 reveals that 55% of the respondents say it is false that the African National Congress (ANC) initiated the merger of the municipalities. However, 25% indicated that the statement is true and only 20% explain that they do not know. Within the King Cetshwayo District Municipality, there is a portion of the employees who are unaware of specific procedures which took place regarding the merger. However, it displays that 20% of the respondents do not know how the amalgamation process started.

THE DEMARCATION BOARD
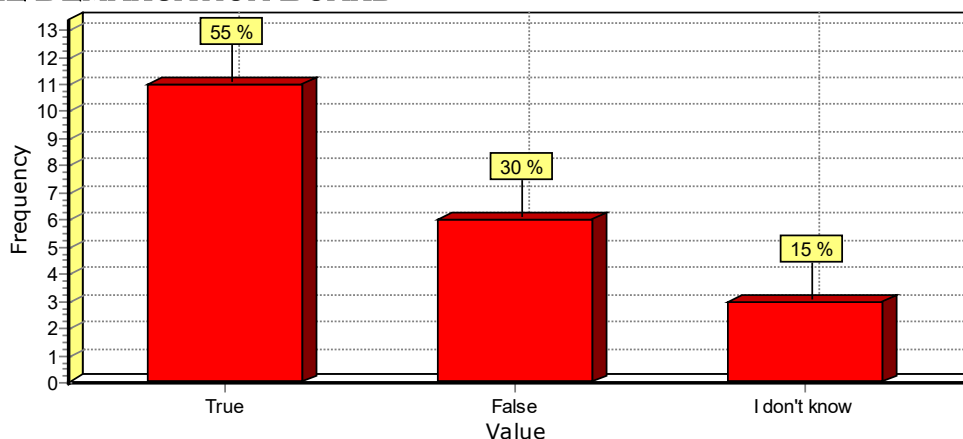
Figure 31 Demarcation Board

Figure 31 illustrates that 55% of the respondents indicated that it is true the Demarcation Board initiated the merger of the municipalities, while only 30% indicated

85

false, and 15% do not know. The Demarcation Board was formulated by the local government, under the Municipal Demarcation Act of 1998. The Board deals with the functions of municipalities and demarcation of municipal boundaries.

THE AMAKHOSI AND THE OTHER CRITICAL PARTNERS OF OUR COMMUNITIES
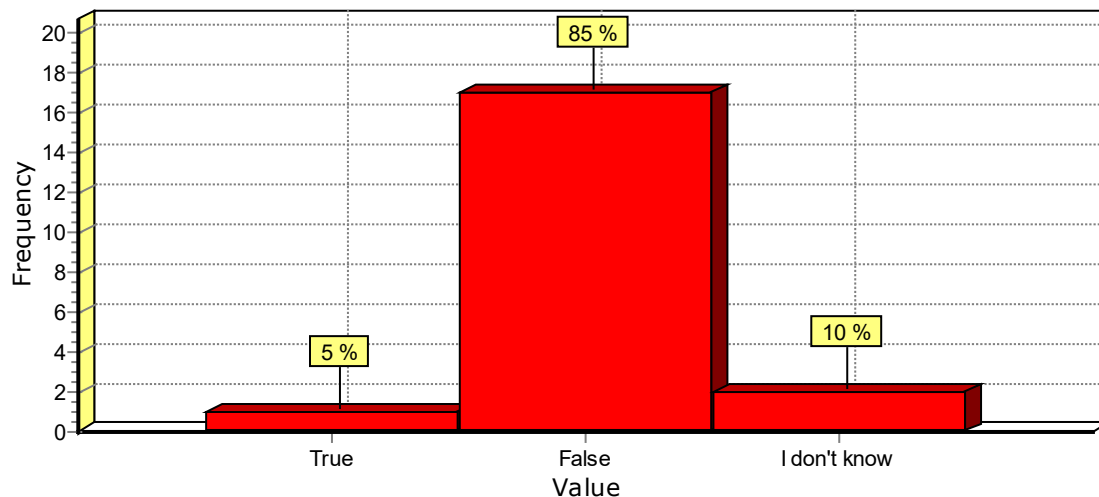
Figure 32 Amakhosi

Figure 32 demonstrates that 85% of the total respondents refuse to believe that the Amakhosi and the other critical partners of our communities initiated the merger of the municipalities. However, 10% indicated that they do not know and only 5% say it is true. As the graph indicates, a high percentage of the respondents did not agree that the merger was initiated by the Amakhosi. This is because the merger was initiated by the municipal structures. The Amakhosi are part of the community as traditional leaders. Hence, they were informed about the merger after certain principles were followed by the government to implement changes within specific areas.

```
-------------------------------------
Value          N       %    Cum. %
-------------------------------------
True           4     20.00    20.00
False         13     65.00    85.00
I don't know   3     15.00   100.00
-------------------------------------
TOTAL         20    100.00
-------------------------------------
```
Missing cases: 0

Table 10 The Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)

Table 10 shows that 85% say it is false that the Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) initiated the merger of the municipalities, while 20% indicated true and only 15% do not know. Of significance is that the amalgamation of the municipalities was initiated by the Demarcation Board. The Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs implemented the change within the affected local municipalities. The Demarcation Board is responsible for the delimitation of wards within the municipalities. It is guided by the constitutional law created by the local government.
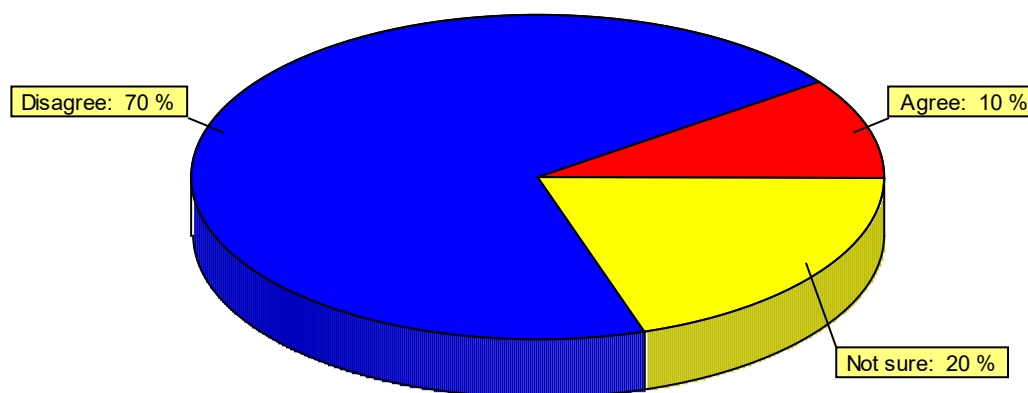
Figure 33 Service delivery

Figure 33 discloses that 70% of the respondents disagree that the overall service delivery at Ntambanana municipality was poor, 20% are not sure and 10% agree. The graph shows that the respondents do not agree that the overall service delivery was poor, as the municipality did execute the required services to the public. There is a difference as opposed to the earlier findings produced by community members where a high percentage of the respondents agreed that the service was poor.Finances at Ntambanana municipality
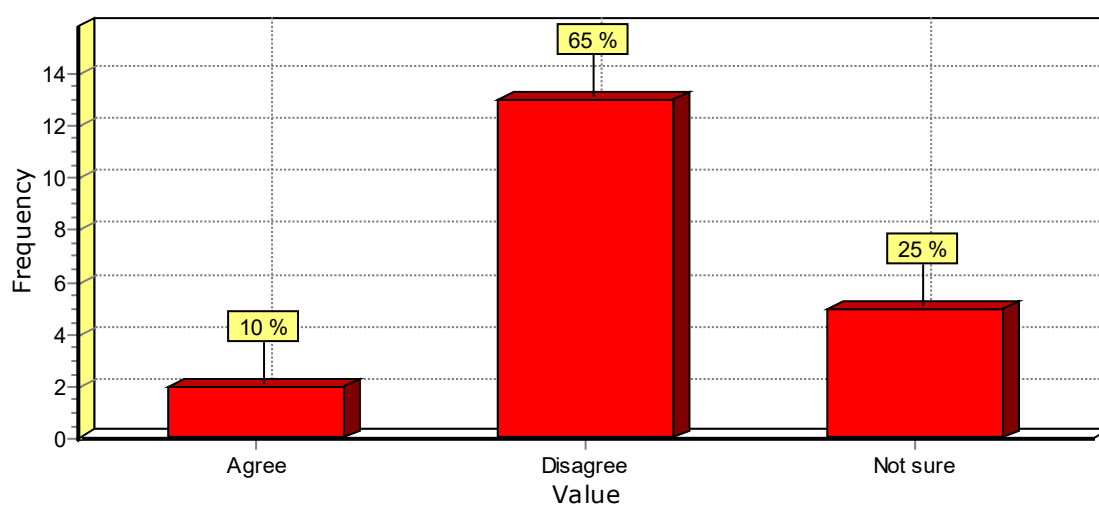
Figure 34 Finances

Figure 34 outlines that 65% of the total population say that finances at Ntambanana municipality were difficult to manage, 25% indicated that they are not sure and only 10% agree. This figure reflects that the local municipality could not manage finances efficiently. The Ntambanana municipality was unsustainable since the municipality was not generating money. This may be due to the issues mentioned in the study which concern the local municipality having a portion of the residents not paying rates. The municipality does not have enough capital to generate finances in order to render services towards the community.

LOW INCOME AT INDIVIDUAL MUNICIPALITIES
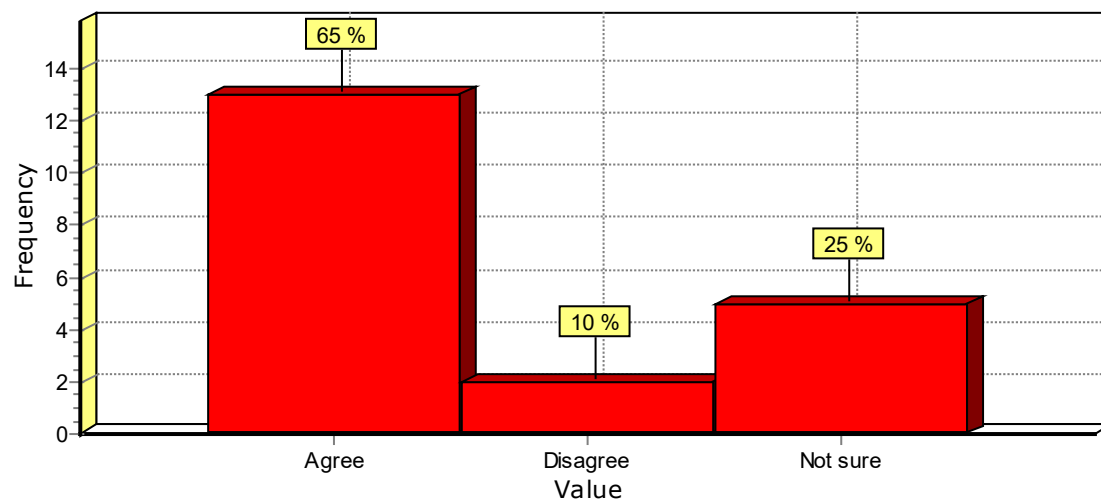
Figure 35 Income

Figure 35 shows that 65% of the respondents agree that low income made it difficult for the individual municipalities to sustain themselves, 25% are not sure as to what caused the local municipality to be absorbed by better performing municipalities and only 10% disagree. Ntambanana municipality consists of landowners and these owners do not pay rates towards the land. The municipality strives to deliver adequate services to the fellow residents even though some residents do not pay rates. The municipality has failed to generate income to sustain itself.

Section B: topic-based on objective two.

The municipality activities on the website

```
--------------------------------------
Value          N      %    Cum. %
--------------------------------------
True          13    65.00   65.00
False          2    10.00   75.00
I don't know   5    25.00  100.00
--------------------------------------
TOTAL         20   100.00
--------------------------------------
         Missing cases: 0
```

Table 11 Activities

Table 11 indicates that out of all the respondents, 65% shows that it is true that the municipality has a website where clients can view all municipal activities, 25% do not know and 10% indicated that the statement is false. The 10% of the respondents felt that it is not true that clients can view all the activities as the municipality's web page does not consist of in-depth information, and does not update its website regarding community meetings and procedures in place to resolve queries.

ONLINE VIEWING OF ACCOUNT BALANCES
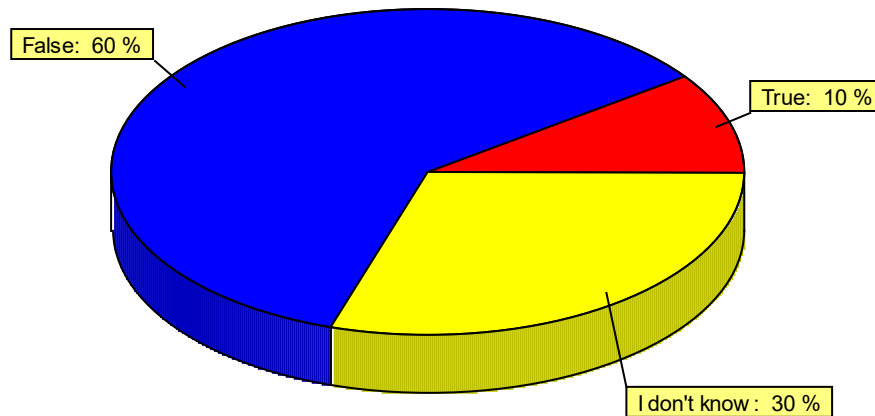
Figure 36 Account balances

Figure 36 explains that 60% chose false to the statement that the municipality has a website where clients log in and view their account balances, 30% do not know and only 10% say it is true. A high percentage of the respondents commented by saying it is false that the municipality has a system where they are able to check their balances. It is imperative for the municipality to be transparent towards internal and external stakeholders. This increases the likelihood of having clients that are satisfied with the service rendered. The municipality does have a website, although they should consider alerting customers about the feasibility of using a website in settling their account balances.

ONLINE PAYMENT ON OUTSTANDING ACCOUNTS
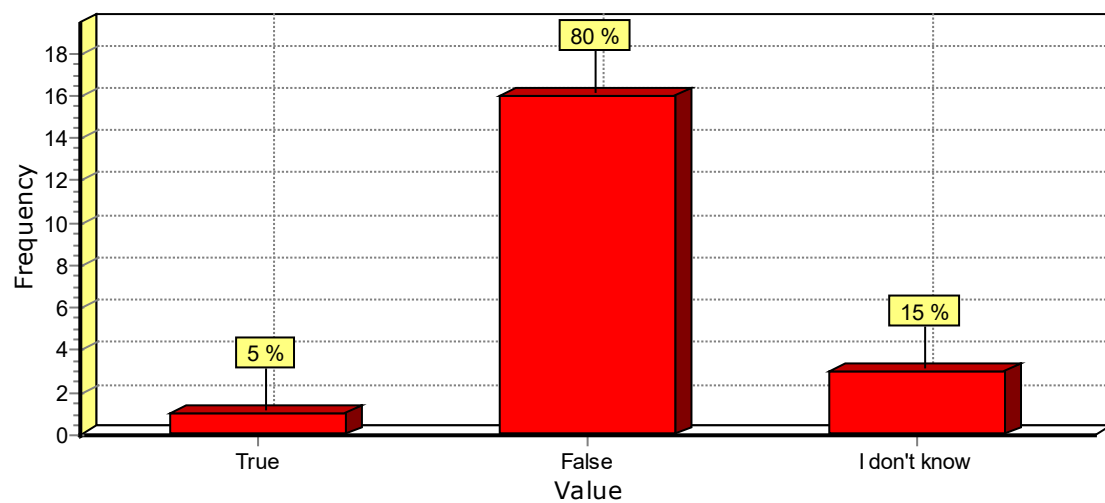
Figure 37 Outstanding accounts

Figure 37 describes that 80% of the respondents say it is false that the municipality has a website where clients go online and pay their outstanding accounts, 15% do not know and only 5% indicated that the statement is true. As mentioned above, the municipality should incorporate in their website adequate information, making it easier for society to settle their outstanding balances.

ONLINE SUBMISSION OF QUERIES
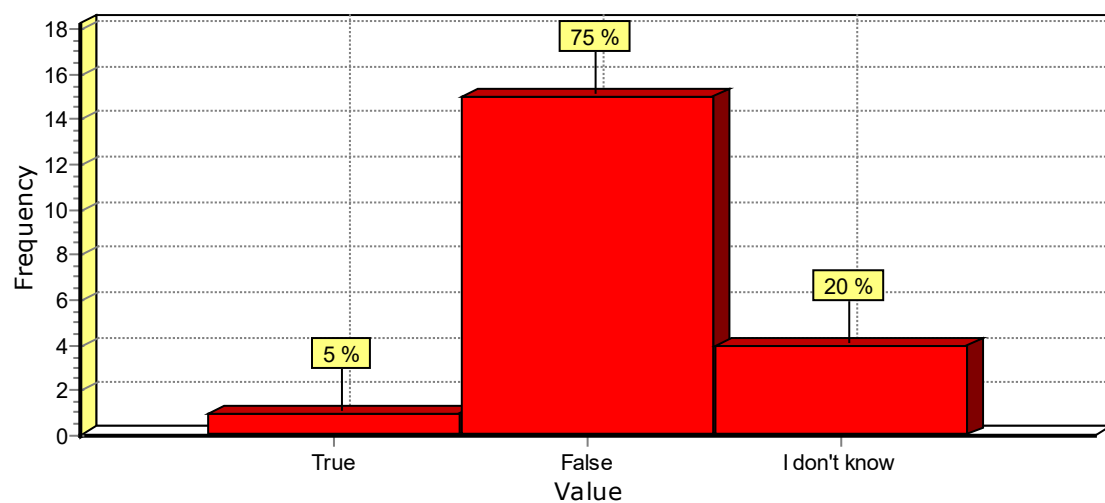
Figure 38 Submit queries

Figure 38 points out that 75% of the respondents say it is false that the municipality has a website where clients go online and submit queries, 20% do not know and only 5% refer to the statement as true. The municipality has a suggestion box inside the municipality where the community can share their views and ideas. However, the municipality should facilitate diverse ways of communicating with the community in reaching a wider audience.

WALK-IN HELP DESK TO ASSIST CLIENTS WITH ACCOUNT PROBLEMS

Value	N	%	Cum. %
True	15	75.00	75.00
False	2	10.00	85.00
I don't know	3	15.00	100.00
TOTAL	20	100.00	

Missing cases: 0

Table 12 Walk-in help desk

Table 12 displays that 75% of the respondents indicated that it is true each municipality has a walk-in help desk to assist clients with account problems, 15% do not know and 10% feel like the statement is false. The respondents agreed that each municipality has a walk-in help desk, where they aid customers with account payments and queries.

PLANS FOR PEOPLE TO BE ASSISTED WITHIN AN HOUR
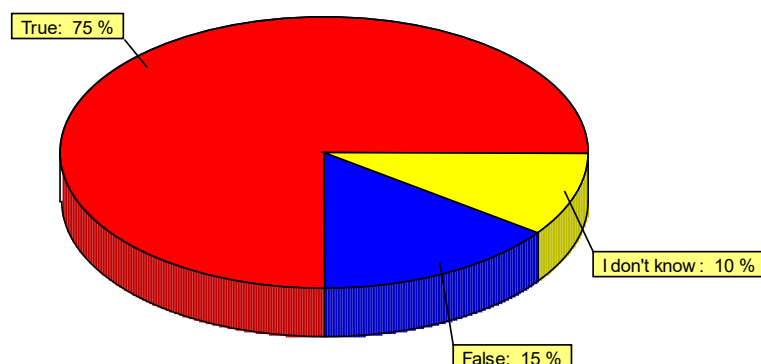
Figure 39 Assisted within an hour

Figure 39 reveals that 75% of the respondents mention that it is true the municipality has plans for people to be assisted within an hour of walking into the municipal offices. The municipality makes an effort to assist people within an hour. They try to work as promptly as possible. 15% of the respondents say it is false and only 10% do not know.

SUITABLE SEATING AND WAITING AREAS
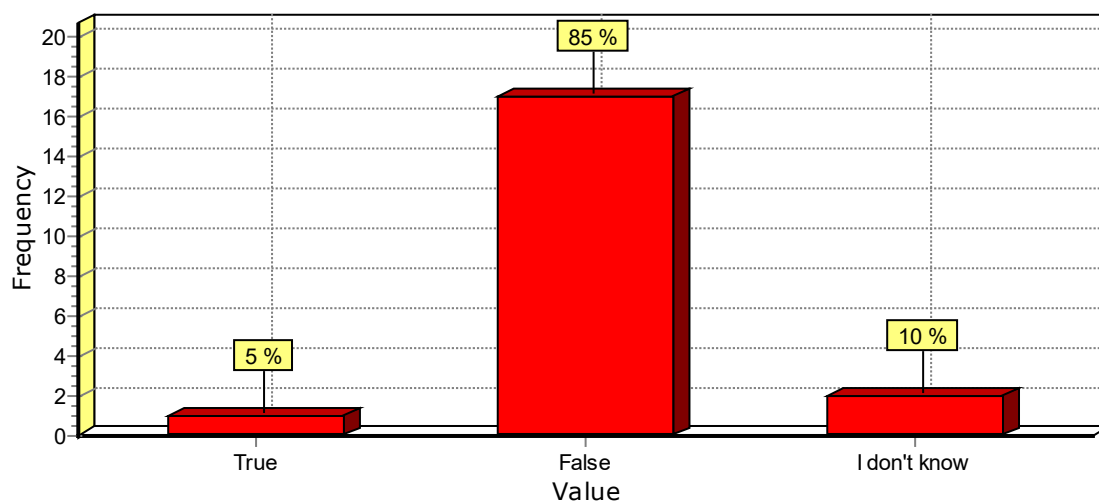
Figure 40 Suitable seating for clients

Figure 40 illustrates that 85% of the respondents indicated false to the municipality having suitable seating for clients who are waiting for consulting. Most of the

municipalities do not have seating arrangements for customers who are waiting in the queue. 10% of the respondents do not know and only 5% say the statement is true, although the municipality does have separate queues for the elderly during peak periods. They minimise the queues by assisting the elderly first in a separate line where they would not have to wait if in the other queues.

THE MUNICIPALITY COMMUNICATES WITH CLIENTS VIA SMS
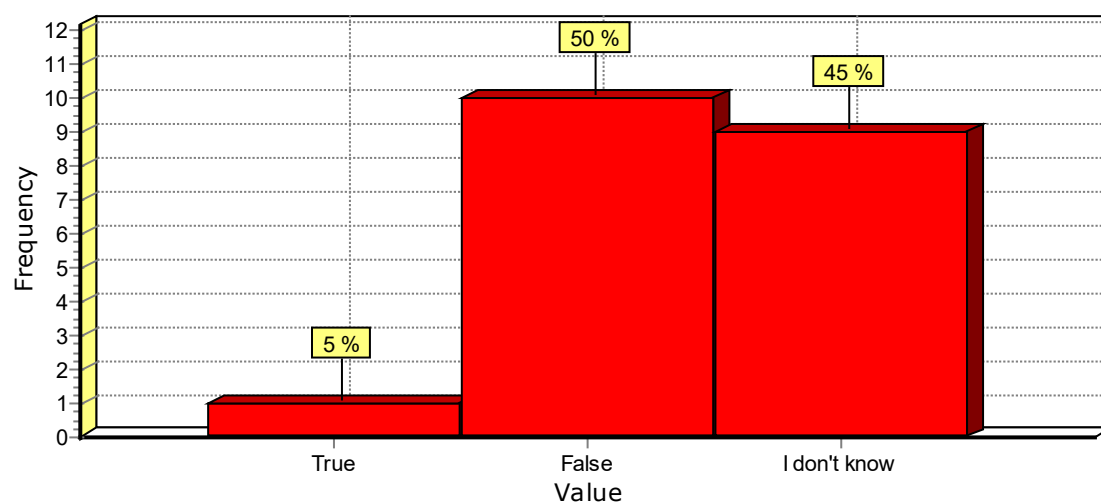
Figure 41 Communicate via SMS

Figure 41 demonstrates that 50% of the respondents declared that it is false that the municipality communicates with clients via SMS, 45% do not know and only 5% indicated that it is true. The municipality has an SMS strategy to reach its clients by informing them of their balances. Although this procedure is not familiar to some community members messages are nevertheless sent. There seems to be a large percentage of respondents who do not know. These results contradict as it clearly shows that there is a small portion that is aware.

SECTION C: TOPIC-BASED ON OBJECTIVE THREE

RESOLVING AN ACCOUNT QUERY AT THE MUNICIPAL OFFICE

```
-------------------------------------
Value          N       %    Cum. %
-------------------------------------
Agree          1     5.00     5.00
Disagree       5    25.00    30.00
Not sure      14    70.00   100.00
-------------------------------------
TOTAL         20   100.00
-------------------------------------
```
Missing cases: 0

Table 13 Account query

Table 13 shows that 70% of the respondents are not sure that it takes very long for a person to resolve an account query at the municipal office, 25% disagree and only 5% agree. Many respondents have indicated that it does not take very long for account queries to be resolved.

AREAS IN THE DISTRICT ARE RURAL
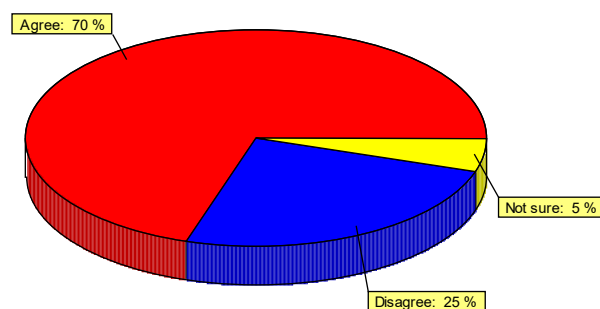
Figure 42 Rural

Figure 42 discloses that 70% of the respondents agree that areas in the district are rural, 25% disagree and 5% are not sure. It is important to acknowledge that most of

these areas of the district are rural; however, there are places where people are computer illiterate.   Rural areas make it difficult for the municipality to expedite the growth of new technology.

LACK OF NEW TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE
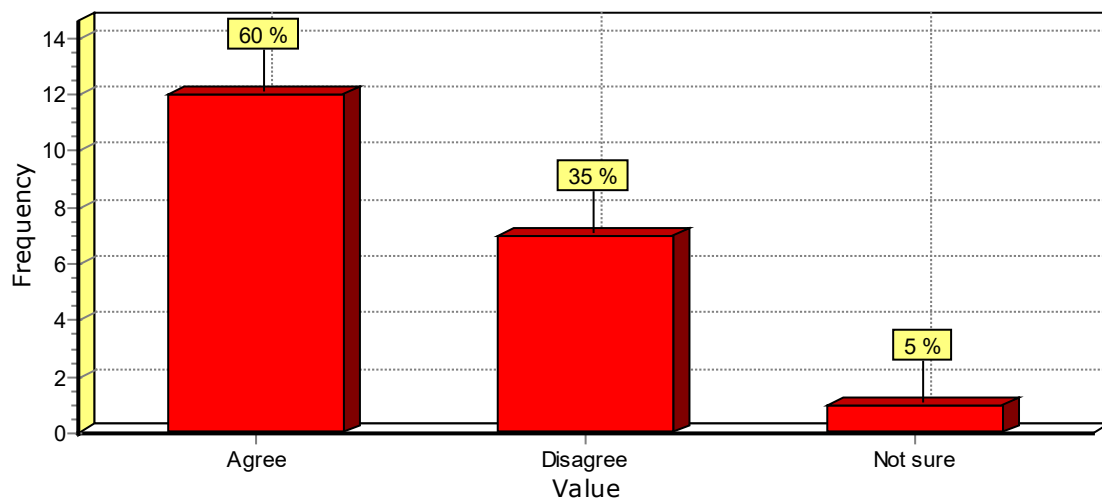
Figure 43 New technology

Figure 43 outlines that 60% of the respondents agree that there is a lack of new technology infrastructure, 35% disagree and 5% are not sure. As there is a lack of new technology, the district needs to make sure that the local areas within the district are developed and the community is provided with developmental programmes to stimulate them. This will be advantageous towards the municipality as it will consist of many people who are skilled and equipped.

Poor Internet connection within rural households
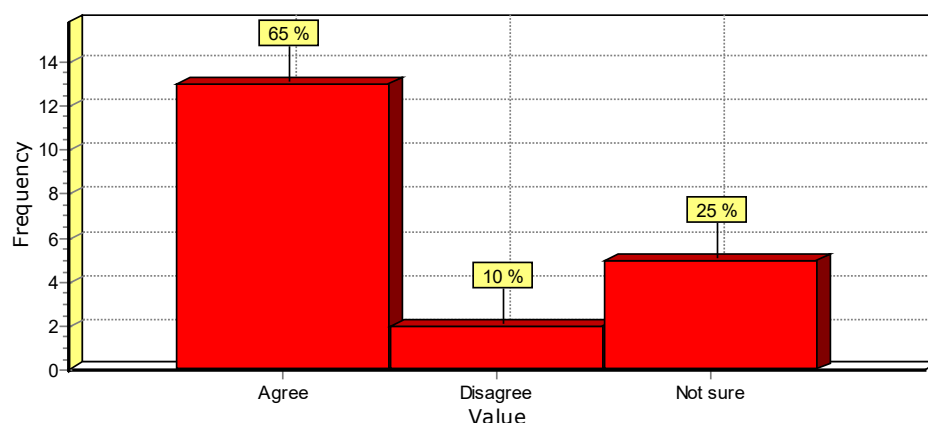
Figure 44 Internet

Figure 44 reflects that 65% of the respondents agree that there is poor Internet connection within rural households. The municipality needs to ensure that residents are knowledgeable when it comes to the Internet. 25% are not sure and 10% disagree. Internet connection is limited in rural areas. Individuals who reside in these areas are not fully exposed to new media. The government should play a role in educating and ensuring that we have a society that is knowledgeable when it comes to accessing the internet. It could be advantageous to people living in secluded areas because they could make payments or enquire about their accounts online rather than physically going to the municipality to acquire assistance.

The amalgamated municipality is different from the demolished municipality

----

Value	N	%	Cum. %
Agree	15	75.00	75.00
Disagree	2	10.00	85.00
Not sure	3	15.00	100.00
TOTAL	20	100.00	

Missing cases: 0

98

Table 14 Amalgamated municipality

Table 14 indicates that 75% of the respondents agree that the state of matters within the amalgamated municipality is different from the state of matters as in the previous municipality, 15% are not sure and only 10% disagree.

THE RATE-PAYERS CONCERNING PROPERTY OWNERS THAT DO NOT PAY RATES
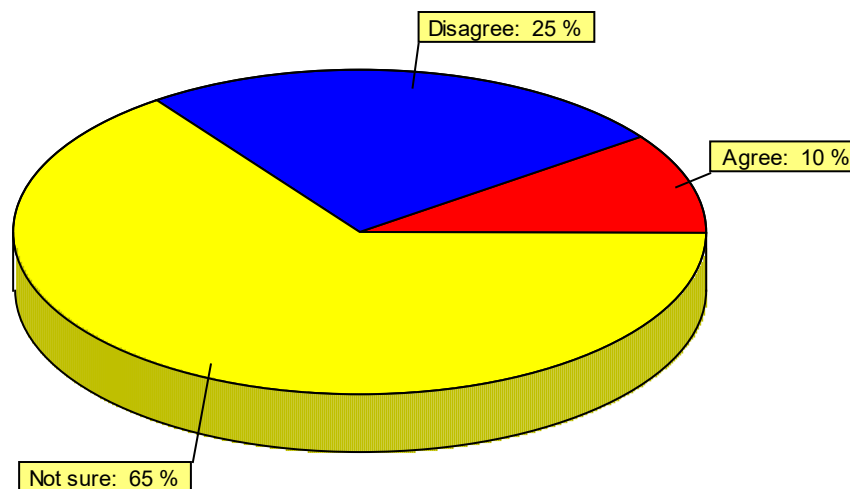
Figure 45 Rate-payers and property owners

Graph 45 explains that 65% of the respondents are not sure about the concern of the ratepayers regarding property owners that do not pay rates, 25% disagree and 10% agree. The Ntambanana municipality mainly consists of landowners and there is a small portion that pays rates. This is amongst the issues that made the municipality poor. There was insufficient flow of money to sustain the organisation.

PLANS TO IMPLEMENT GOOD PRACTICES AT THE MERGED MUNICIPAL OFFICES
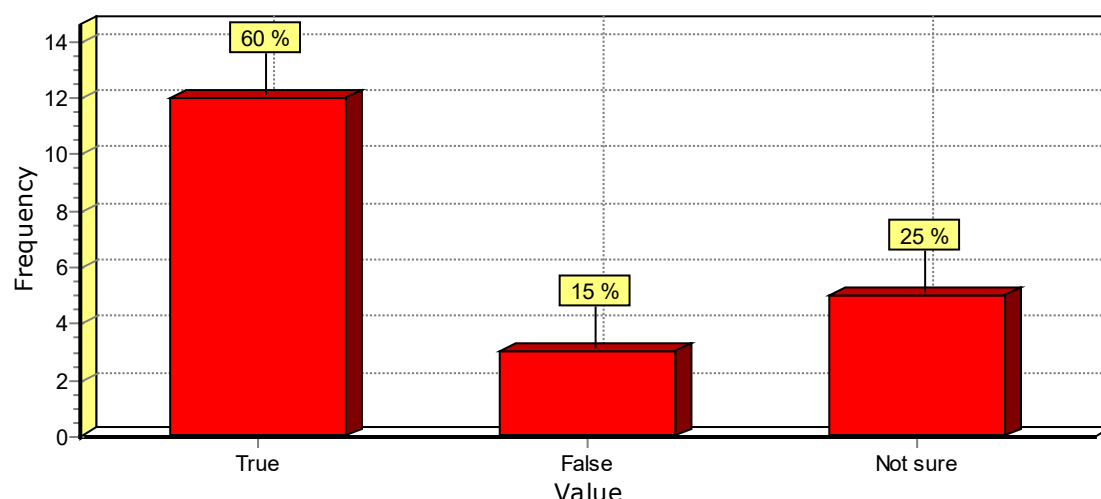
Figure 46 Good practices

Figure 46 shows that 60% of the respondent's mention that it is true they have planned to implement good practices at the merged municipal offices, 25% are not sure and 15% indicated that the statement is false. There is a strong sense that service delivery will increase, and this improves customer satisfaction. The implementation of good practices is vital for fostering unity amongst residents and municipal operations.

PLANS TO IMPLEMENT ONLINE MECHANISMS/FACILITIES TO ASSIST CUSTOMERS

```
-------------------------------------
Value          N        %    Cum. %
-------------------------------------
 True          1      5.00     5.00
 False        16     80.00    85.00
 Not sure      3     15.00   100.00
-------------------------------------
  TOTAL       20    100.00
-------------------------------------
        Missing cases: 0
```
Table 15 Online mechanism/facilities

Table 15 points out that 80% of the respondents say it is false that they have planned to implement online mechanisms/facilities to assist customers, while 15% are not sure

and 5% indicated that it is true. The municipality needs to implement such facilities as it will make it easier for people who are not always able to be assisted face-to-face within the municipality.

PLANS TO IMPLEMENT CELL PHONE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH RESIDENTS
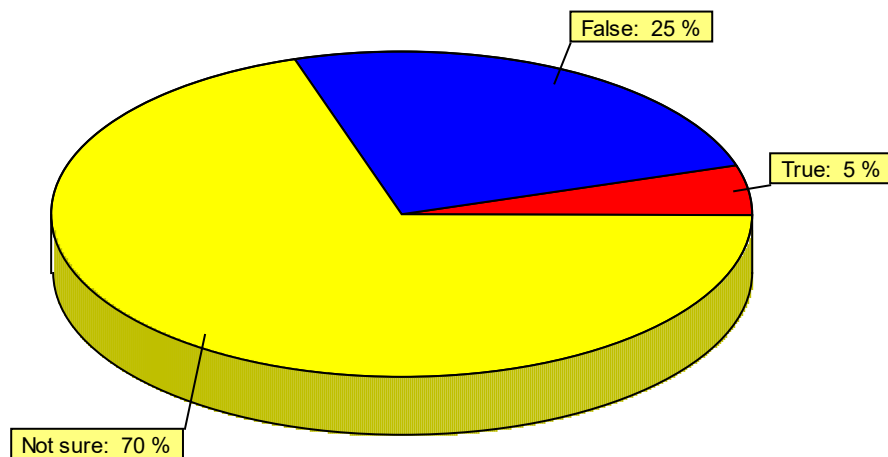
Figure 47 Cell phone

Graph 47 reveals that 70% of the respondents are not sure that have planned to implement cell phone communication techniques to stay in touch with residents, 25% says it is false and 5% indicated that it is true. The municipality was interviewed based on the communication techniques with the usage of a cell phone. The responses gathered were not certain since it is something that the municipality has not implemented yet. Improving communication via cell phones may include sending statements via phones using a form of MMS, and statements being sent in the form of an email where residents can download the attachment to view their statements. Implementing this technique, would help decrease queues at the municipality and provide a society that is satisfied with the efficiency of the municipality.

FINDING WAYS OF IMPROVING SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC
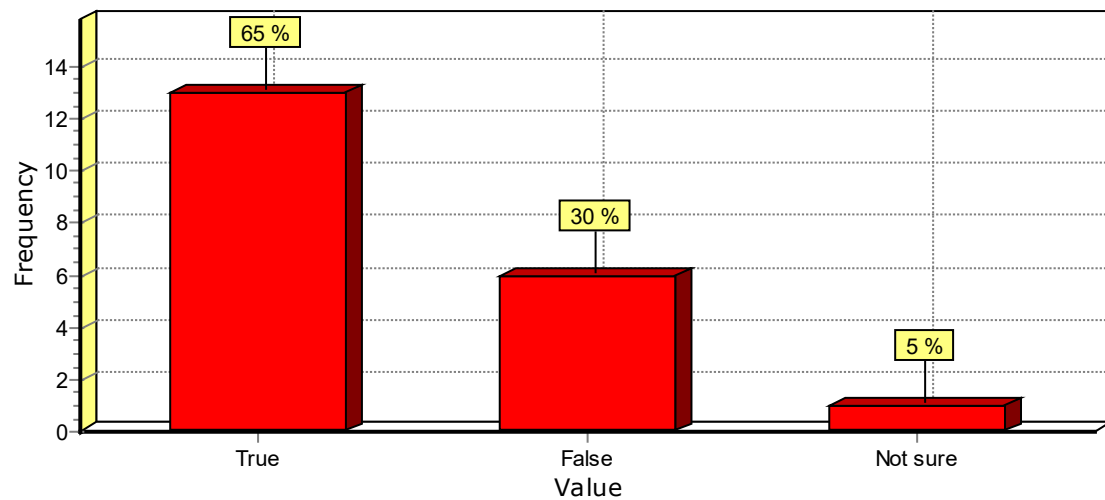
Figure 48 Meetings

Figure 48 illustrates that 65% of the respondents agree that it is true; they are currently engaged in a series of meetings to find ways of improving their service to the public, 30% indicated false and only 5% are not sure. Services entail satisfaction, resolution, solutions and delight. These are experiences drawn from customers pertaining to the service rendered (Kapoor, Paul and Halder, 2011).

INTEGRATED CRISIS COMMUNICATION (ICC) FRAMEWORK FOR ENSURING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS
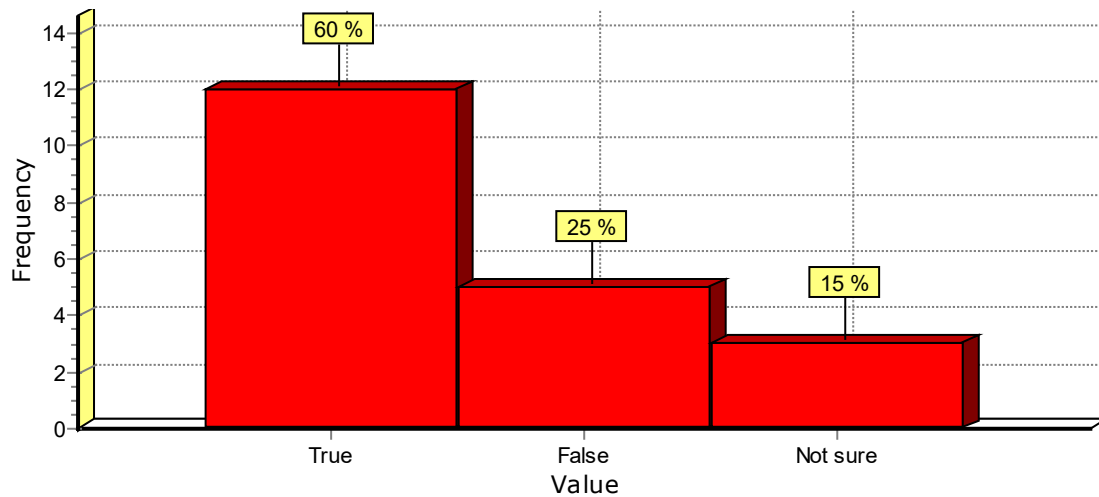
Figure 49 Integrated Crisis Communication (ICC) framework

Graph 49 demonstrates that 60% of the respondents agree that they plan to facilitate Integrated Crisis Communication (ICC) framework in ensuring effective communication with all stakeholders, 25% say it is false and only 15% are not sure. Municipalities urgently need to facilitate effective communication strategies with their stakeholders by using an Integrated Crisis Communication (ICC) approach. Crises impair the reputation of a company if the public relations sector fails to provide society, media and stakeholder's accurate facts pertaining to the event. Hence, sustaining a reputation with the media is crucial as this could be used as an opportunity to salvage them if an unfavorable incident were to occur.

A COMMUNICATION EXPERT TO INTERACT AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS.

```
--------------------------------------
Value        N       %    Cum. %
--------------------------------------
True         1     5.00     5.00
False       16    80.00    85.00
Not sure     3    15.00   100.00
--------------------------------------
```

103

TOTAL   20   100.00

                          Missing cases: 0

Table 16 Relationship with stakeholders

Table 16 shows that 80 % of the respondents mentioned that it is false that they rely on a communication expert to interact and build relationships with stakeholders, 15% are not sure and 5% indicated that it is true. Businesses ought to build structured positive relationships with their stakeholders in order to gain customer loyalty. According to Grunig (2013), affirms that organisations which incorporate public relations as part of their strategic management process efficiently enhance their communication within the organisation.
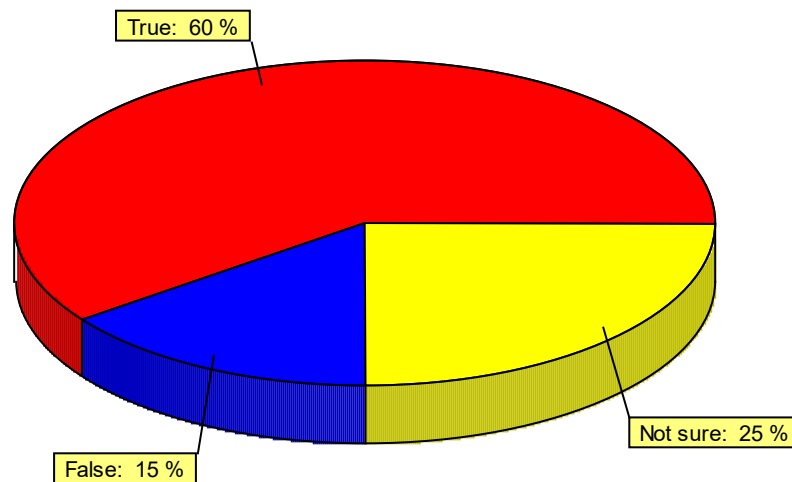
Figure 50 Organisational problems

Graph 50 discloses that 60% of the respondents indicated that it is true they plan on addressing and identifying organisational problems through strategic management, 25% are not sure and 15% indicated that it is false. It is imperative that the organisation plans on addressing organisational problems and also evaluating issues that need attention. Strategic management deals with the organisation, strategically planning and creating decisions concerning the environment of the organisation.

SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA.
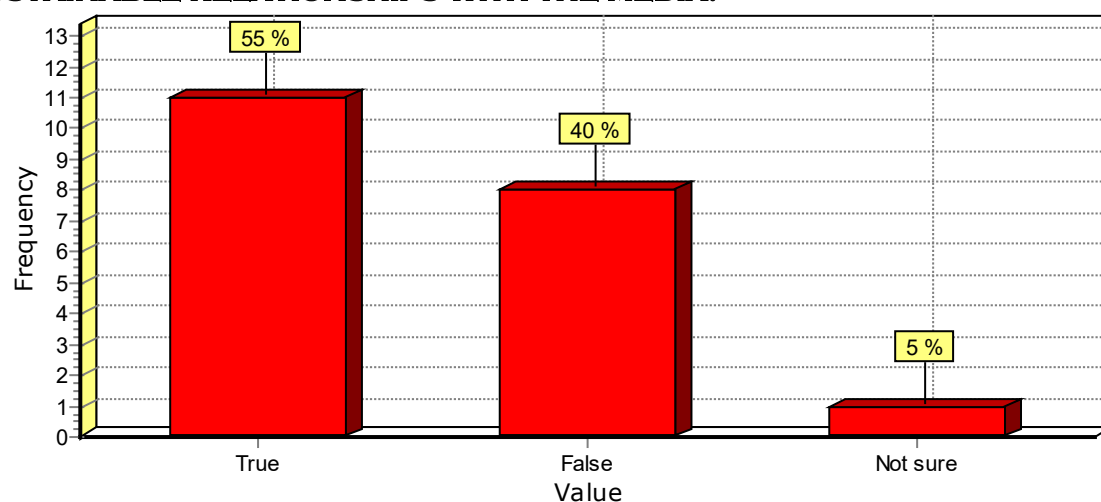
Figure 51: Relationships with the media

Figure 51 outlines that 55% of the respondents say it is true that they have planned to build sustainable relationships with the media, 40% indicated false and 5% are not sure. A variety of new media technologies are essential to be used in ensuring a dimension of strategic communication. Communication entails two or more parties establishing a mutually beneficial relationship in order to reach their aims and goals. Strategic communication should be applied internally and externally, initially from a managerial level, to local communities. However, this will ensure that implementing change in the organisation and amongst the local community has to be successful. It is imperative to build positive relationships with the media and effectively communicate with the public when a crisis occurs.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IF A CRISIS WERE TO OCCUR
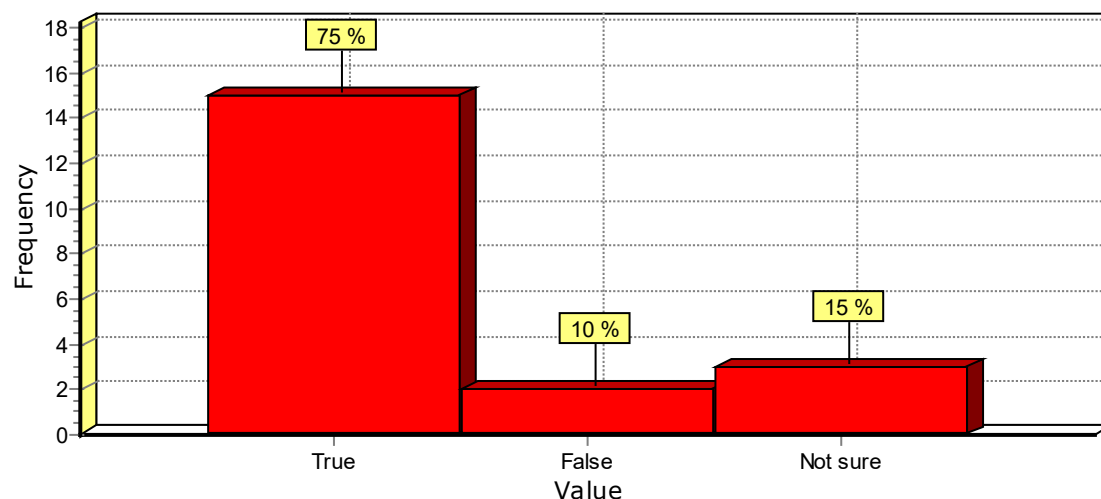
Figure 52 Communication strategies

Graph 52 illustrates that 75% of the respondents indicated that it is true they have communication strategies in place for the employees, consumers, customers and stakeholders if a crisis were to occur, 15% are not sure and 10% indicated that the statement is false. Organisations are established and operate in environments that are accustomed to change. In order for organisations to survive and be able to sustain long-term success, they should be able to adapt to environmental challenges. Managing crises within organisations requires them to strategically communicate with their stakeholders. The King Cetshwayo district municipality must incorporate feasible crisis management strategies to deal with possible problems.

Section E: topic-based on objective five

People prefer communication with the municipality using cell phones and SMS strategies

```
---------------------------------------
Value          N        %    Cum. %
---------------------------------------
True          11    55.00    55.00
False          8    40.00    95.00
Not sure       1     5.00   100.00
---------------------------------------
   TOTAL          20   100.00
---------------------------------------
```

Missing cases: 0

Table 17 Cell phones and SMS strategies

Table 17 reveals that 55% of the respondents mentioned that they have identified that most people prefer communication with the municipality using cell phones and SMS strategies.

Most people prefer communicating with the municipality using Email
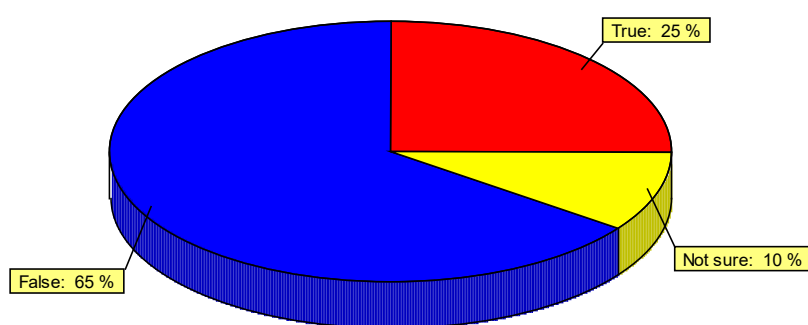
Figure 53 Email

Graph 53 indicates that 65% of the respondents feel it is false that they have identified that most people prefer communicating with the municipality using email, 25% indicated it is true and 10% not sure.

Most people prefer communicating with the municipality using a website
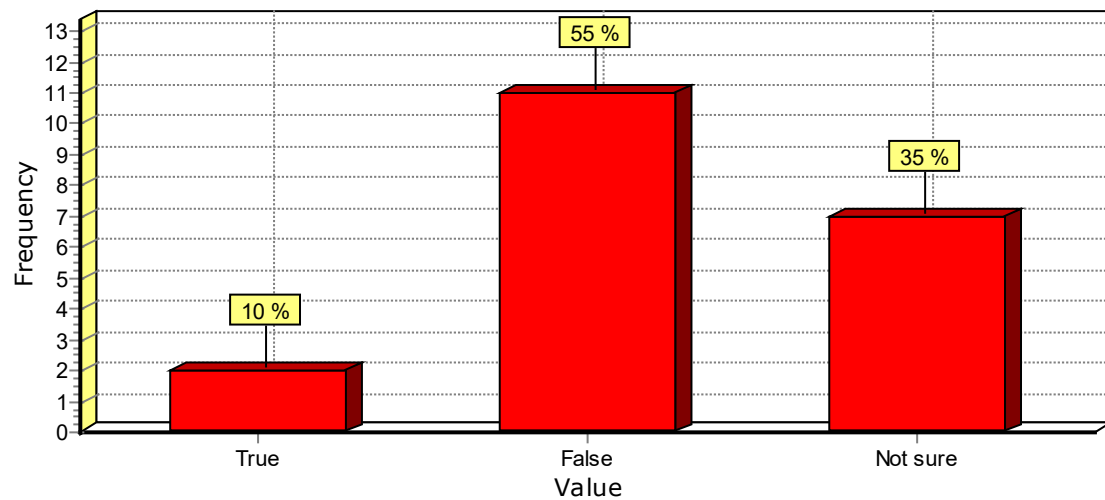
Figure 54 Website

Graph 54 outlines that 55% of the respondents say that it is false that they have identified that most people prefer communicating with the municipality using a website, 35% are not sure and 10% indicated that it is true.

Most people prefer communicating with the municipality using snail mail.
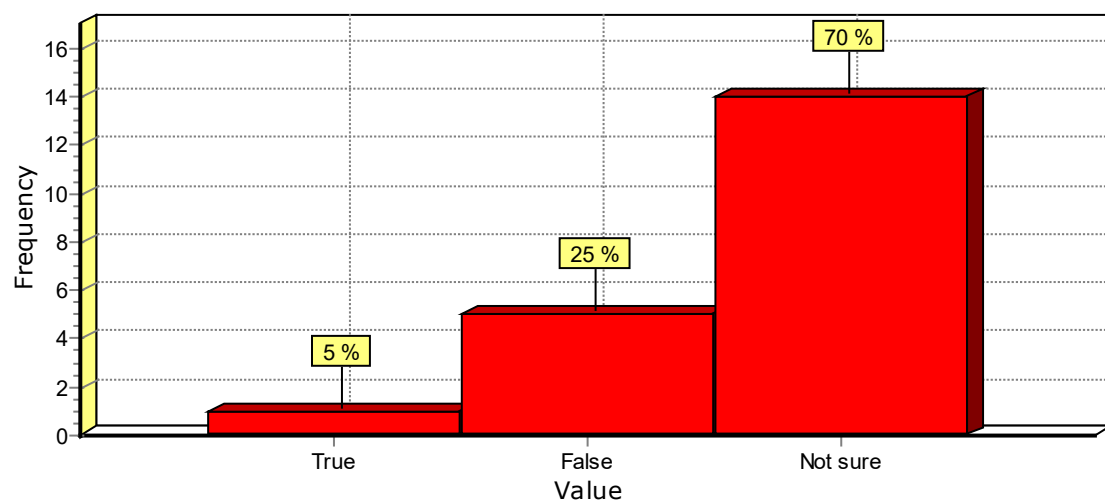
Figure 55 Snail mail

Figure 55 discloses that 70% of the respondents are not sure that they have identified that most people prefer communicating with the municipality using snail mail, 25% say it is false and 5% indicated that the statement is true.

MICRO-BLOGGING IS ONE OF THE TRENDS PREFERRED BY THE PUBLIC.
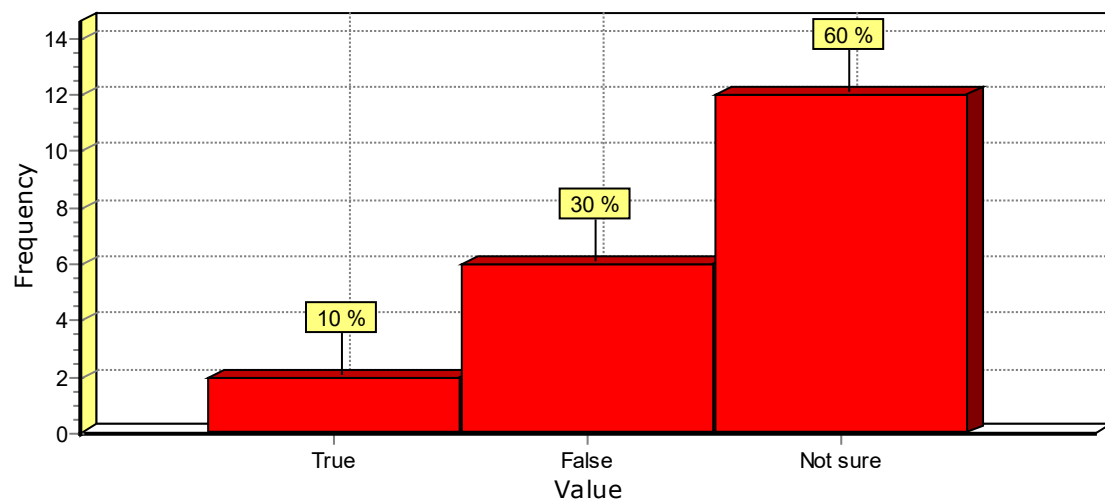
Figure 56 Micro-blogging

Figure 56 shows that 60% of the respondents are not sure whether they have identified that micro-blogging is one of the trends preferred by the public, 30% say it is false and 10% indicated that it is true.

MOST PEOPLE PREFER TO GET TOGETHER WITH THE MUNICIPALITY TO DISCUSS ISSUES

```
-------------------------------------
Value        N       %    Cum. %
-------------------------------------
True        11    55.00    55.00
False        2    10.00    65.00
Not sure     7    35.00   100.00
-------------------------------------
 TOTAL          20   100.00
-------------------------------------
        Missing cases: 0
```

Table 18 Discuss issues

Table 18 demonstrates that 55% of the respondents say it is true that they have identified that most people prefer to get together with the municipality to discuss issues, 35% are not sure and only 10% indicated that it is false.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE MUNICIPALITY VIA TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION METHODS
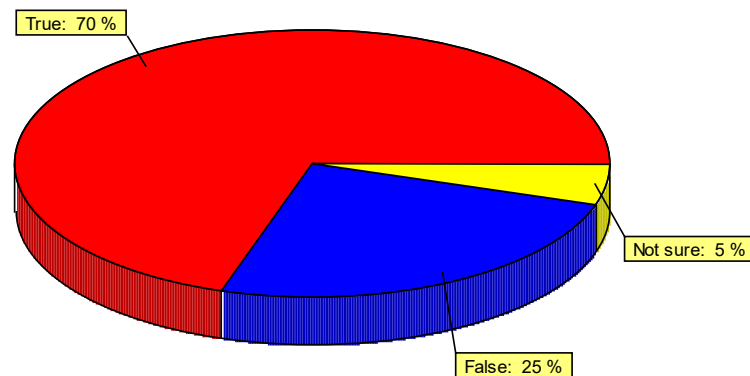
Figure 57 Traditional communication methods

Figure 57 illustrates that 70% of the respondents say it is true that they have identified that most people prefer communicating with the municipality via traditional communication methods, 25% say it is false and 5% are not sure.

WE HAVE IDENTIFIED THAT SOCIETY PREFERS A DIRECT RESPONSE FROM THE MUNICIPALITY.
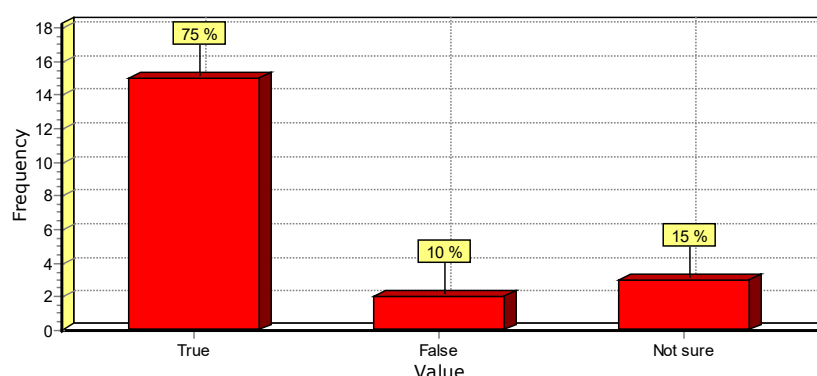
Figure 58 We have identified that society prefers a direct response from the municipality

Figure 58 reveals that 75% of the respondents indicated that it is true they have identified that society prefers a direct response from the municipality while 15% and 10% respectively indicated false and not sure.

Conclusion

In this chapter, research data was analysed and elucidated based on the research findings gathered. In the following and final chapter, the research was concluded, and recommendations were drawn.

Chapter 6

DEDUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, the research conclusion was discussed, and recommendations were drawn. The research question and the objectives were re-stated in order to determine whether they were successfully addressed by the research. The chapter includes recommendations for the King Cetshwayo District Municipality regarding change and sustaining its brand reputation through communication. The research assessed the aims and objectives of the study.

The research and data collection design and methodology

The research conducted in this study was theoretical in nature using a triangulation of methodologies: qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. The change that occurred after the 2016 provincial elections is the focus of the study where there was a delimitation of wards and a conglomerate. The research delved in evaluating the enhancement of the King Cetshwayo District Municipality's reputation as a brand.

In any survey, it is imperative to pilot the questionnaire with a relatively small group of people to ensure that there is no ambiguity and misunderstandings which may offend the participants regarding the questions administered. These procedures were described in chapter 4. The study facilitated the use of various data collection methods namely, structured interviews and questionnaires. Thereafter, the responses were analysed and interpreted in chapter 5. This chapter correlated with the purpose of the study in order to discover which communicative methods are preferred by the public. The municipal communicative structures were also correlated as to investigate the attributes that facilitate the enhancement of the King Cetshwayo District Municipality as a brand.

The research problem re-visited

The research problem investigated in this study is as follows:

How the King Cetshwayo district municipality manages its reputation through the use of communication within the amalgamated municipalities.

The question was answered in chapter 2 (literature review) and chapter 5 (results and analysis) of this study. In chapter 2 the management of the King Cetshwayo District Municipality's reputation within the amalgamated municipalities was discussed. The questionnaires feedback in chapter 5 indicated that communication in rural areas is still an issue. The respondents preferred various ways of communication from the municipality. Municipalities should effectively communicate with the media and should incorporate integrated communication in asserting that internal and external communication with key stakeholders is maintained. Pollard and Hotho (2006), states that "media has the power to shape the public opinion of an organisation and therefore highlight the importance of sufficient communication and relationships with the media." Organisations should keep society informed about their products and services they should transmit the required message that will positively reflect towards the company.

What the organisation proclaims should be in line with what it does, or it will raise concerns with its stakeholders and targeted audiences. The study discusses the stakeholder and the excellence theory of public relations. The theory deals with symmetric communication in an organisation whereby, the organisation diligently interacts with its stakeholders (Grunig, 2013). Media influences the beliefs of the public and the manner in which they view the organisation. Chapter 3 outlined the elements facilitated to enhance reputation.

Companies ought to identify the threats that affect them in order to manage possible ramifications. This will assist management to eradicate disasters and ensure good plans of action can enable them to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. Management would be empowered to deal with adverse situations before problems escalate. Such action plans would assist management in implementing calculated changes and strategies for the benefit of the organisation and its clients. Engelbrecht (2009), states that risk management provides the company with an opportunity to eliminate or to mitigate particular risks.

DEDUCTIONS

The key research findings of this study are as follows:

- There is a need for a communication strategy between the municipality and their external stakeholders (the community). In gathering results there was an indication that most of the population felt that there is little communication facilitated regarding the implementation of change. The involvement of community members in decision-making processes will increase relevant feedback essential for the district to note, regarding the change. Steyn (2002), explains that communication strategy is developed through the internal environment, namely, mission of the organisation, corporate culture and vision. It also delves on accessing the external environment. Communication strategy involves a strategic thinking process by communication practitioners and managers executing strategic decisions.

- Residents require an improvement in communication from the municipality. In addition, a high percentage of residents expressed that they would prefer diverse ways of communication through new media. Goodman (2000) defines corporate communication as "the total of a corporation's effort to communicate effectively and rewardingly". In an organisation, positive communication is determined by having a strategy and focusing on the audiences.

- There is a lack of communication technologies; whereby many external stakeholders indicated that there is no enough improvement with new technology particularly for remote rural areas. Technology in some parts of the district is still difficult. Some people are not yet properly exposed to new media, this include, blogs, Twitter, Instagram. Corporate advertising involves television, radio, internet and website advertising in order for the organisation to generate and sustain a positive image. The reputation of an organisation is affected through mass communication which entails the promotion of products and services of the organisation (Cornelissen, 2011).

- Feasibility of transportation needs to be addresses. There seems to be some difficulty experienced by community members who reside in disadvantaged

towns regarding travelling to the respective municipalities. Some areas around the municipality are not sufficiently developed and as it is difficult in some communities to get to town from the secluded rural areas. Therefore, transportation in such areas needs improvement.

- Transparency within the organisation is crucial. The municipality should involve the public in matters that concern change. This will aid in obtaining views from the public resulting in both parties being satisfied. An organisation has to be transparent in its communication with the community. Effective communication ensures that the public is aware of the issues within the organisation and prevents speculation. Facilitating communication and feedback with stakeholders will ensure that the organisation is sustained in the long-term. A company's future is based on positive reputation and success. Reputation is affected by relationships that are established with stakeholders, in delivering customer services and products that the municipality provides.

- The reputation of an organisation is determined by the public's perspectives. Reputational management in organisations is related to leadership, management and organisational operations, the quality of services rendered and most importantly the established relationships with stakeholders. However, reputation is also associated with communication activities and feedback mechanisms provided by stakeholders.

- Reputational management is sustained through a solid communication performance by the organisation's management and feedback from stakeholders that aids in making better-informed decisions. Management should be equipped in exercising certain tasks and responsibilities that will assist in managing the organisation's reputation (Rayner 2003).

- The municipality has CSR programmes in place to deal with social and economic needs. Corporate social responsibility depends on each and every business assessing the goods and services that they are rendering to the community. It is in the self-interest of the business to undertake the various forms of corporate social responsibility (CSR), as this generally benefits the business.

- The King Cetshwayo District municipality has communication mediums such as print media, that is, a local newspaper called Zululand Observer. Secondly, the district has a local media television channel that showcases local talent. Thirdly, the district has a local radio station whereby external stakeholders may be reached.

The research objectives re-visited

The research objectives of the study were achieved, and they are re-stated below:

- To determine what factors motivated change within the King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

The change within the King Cetshwayo District municipality is associated with the amalgamation of the local municipalities. One of the local municipalities, namely Ntambanana municipality, collapsed and its wards was absorbed by the better performing municipalities. The restructuring change was due to the local municipality being financially unsustainable and not being able to function as a whole.

- To identify communication strategies which the merging municipalities have to satisfy customer needs.

The municipality has identified communication strategies and implementation communication tools that will reach the masses. The municipality communicates with the public by the distribution of SMS, circulating letters and facilitating ward meetings.

- To detect problems which the society encounters after the merger of the municipalities.

The challenges which were faced by the public concern the lack of communication regarding the current change. The community which resides in Ntambanana finds it difficult to easily access the new municipalities due to issues in transportation. In rural areas transportation is scarce. The municipality ought to communicate with the citizens using a variety of communication methods. It is imperative that the municipality develops the disadvantaged communities in formulating a better society.

- To evaluate the brand reputational management techniques of the new merger.

The reputational management technique within the municipality is associated with effective communication between internal and external stakeholders. Municipalities are governed by the constitution, ensuring that institutions adhere to the policies and procedures. The King Cetshwayo district municipality implemented principles with regard to the amalgamated municipalities. The municipality is governed by the municipal demarcation board. The municipal demarcation is governed by the municipal demarcation act of 1998. The municipality ought to be socially responsible to its surrounding environment in the implementation of CSR.

- To identify the publics' choices for communication by the municipality.

Publics choices of communication vary based on the different geographic areas that the public is exposed to. The spectrum of communication is broad and it is also based on the different age groups, for example, youth versus adults. However, the municipality should exercise an effective communication medium to reach and satisfy the masses.

Recommendations

- Communication is essential for any change intervention and can be the difference between a successful process and a disastrous process.

- Municipalities must take note that with any change process that affects the community, the municipality should appoint relevant parties that would facilitate reaching out to external stakeholders and involving them in the process. The stakeholder management approach deals with effectively communicating with all stakeholder groups which involves communities, government, investors, customers, employees, shareholders and the media. The sustaining of an organisation is dependent on the manner that it is viewed by key stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2011).

- The municipality should re-look at the disadvantaged towns and facilitate the required improvements assisting clients or customers traveling to the municipality without obstacles.

- The municipality should consider upgrading their communication systems. The municipality could aid in building relationships with targeted audiences by

frequently updating their web pages, in order to transmit crucial information that is public-orientated.

- The municipality should consider placing itself at a competitive advantage in aligning the organisation with different communication technologies. For example, the municipality can have a blogger amongst its employees that will assist in publishing information regarding news that affects the organisation's daily activities or information shared from conference meetings.

- The municipality should effectively communicate with the local media which consists of the local newspaper (Zululand Observer), television channel (1KZN) and the radio (Cora FM). However, this is essential and should incorporate integrated communication in asserting that internal and external communication with key stakeholders is maintained (Pollard and Hotho 2006).

- Municipalities should keep society informed about their products and services. They should transmit the required message that will positively reflect on the company. Hence, what the organisation professes should be in line with what it does, otherwise, it will raise concerns towards its stakeholders and targeted audiences. Media influences the beliefs of the public and the manner in which they view the organisation.

- The King Cetshwayo District Municipality ought to identify the threats that affect them in order to manage possible ramifications. This will assist management to eradicate disasters and good plans of action can enable them to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. Management would be able to deal with adverse situations before problems escalate. Such action plans would assist management in implementing calculated changes and strategies for the benefit of the organisation and its clients. Engelbrecht (2009), states that risk management provides the company with an opportunity to eliminate or to mitigate particular risks.

- The government should be transparent towards the public in implementing change. The government needs to inform the public with reinforcement through the various media channels. Obtaining views from the public is crucial as organisations may use this to their advantage as they strategise in improving their brand, making external stakeholders mutually satisfied.

- The municipality ought to build positive and sustainable relationships with the surrounding communities.

- Some municipalities have procedures in place to train society, and government should have developmental programmes to equip communities that are not privileged.

- Employees are the basis of an organisation. They should strategise in working together and focusing on customer-centricity. Employees form part of the brand reputation of that respective organisation. It is up to these internal stakeholders to present themselves in a prim and proper manner.

REFERENCES

Argenti, P.A., and Drunkenmiller, B., 2004. *Reputation and the corporate brand*. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 6(4), 368-374.

Asha, A.A., 2014. *Attitudes and perceptions towards local government service delivery efforts in Limpopo province South Africa*. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol. 5. No.20. Available online at www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/download/3728/3653. [Accessed on 25 March 2019].

Barker, R., 2013. *Strategic integrated communication: An alternative perspective of integrated marketing Communication: South African Journal of Communication Theory and Research*, 07 October 2013, 39:1, 102-121.

Bernard, H.R., 2000. *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Boston: Sage.

Botan, C, H., and Hazelton, V., 2006. *Public relations theory 1.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bruhn, M., 2008. *Planning integrated marketing communications. In communication and leadership in the 21st century,* ed. H. Sievert and D. Bell, 13-34, Gutersloh, Germany: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Burchell, J., and Cook, J., 2006. *Assessing the impact of stakeholder dialogue: changing relationships between NGOs and companies*. Journal of public affairs, 6, 210-227.

Burke, W.W., 2018. *Organisation change, theory and practice*. 5th Edition. Sage publications, United States of America.

Coldwell, D. and Herbst, F. J., 2004. *Business Research*, Juta and Co. Ltd, Cape Town.

Cornelissen, J., 2011. *Corporate communication. A guide to theory and practice*, 3rd Edition. Sage publications, New Delhi.

Chandra, P., 2011. *Financial management. Theory and practice,* 8th Edition. Tata McGraw Hill education private limited, New Delhi.

Clarkson, M, B, E., 1995. *A stakeholder framework for analysing and evaluating corporate social performance,* Academy of management review.

Davies, G., Chan, R., and Vinhas da Silva, R., and Roper, S. 2003. *Corporate reputation and competitiveness.* London and New York, Routledge. Available online at http://books.google.co.za/books?isbn-041528743X [Accessed 21 on February 2019].

de Chernatony, L., and Harris, F. 2000. *Developing corporate brands through considering internal and external stakeholders*, corporate reputation review, 3(3), 268-274.

Doorley, J., and Garcia, H,F., 2011. *Reputation management. The key to successful public relations and corporate communication*, 2nd Edition. Routledge, New York.

Donalson, T., and Preston, L, E., 1995. *The stakeholder model of the corporation.* Available online at http://www.researchgate.net%2figure%2The-input-output-model-Donaldson-and-Preston-1995_fig1. [Accessed 26 on August 2020].

Dube-Ngcube, N., 2014. *Provincial Gazettes (KwaZulu-Natal).* no.1168 of 26 June 2014. From www.greengazette.co.za.

Easton, V, J., and McColl, J, H., 2007. *Statistics Glossary: Sampling.* Available online at http://www.stats.gla.ac.uk/steps/glossary/sampling. [Accessed 26 on August 2020].

Engelbrecht, H, J., 2009. *Pathological knowledge-based economies: towards a knowledge-based economy perspective on the current crisis.* Prometheus.

Freeman, E., 1984. *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach.* Boston, MA: Pitman.

Goodman, M, B., 2000. *Corporate communication: The American picture.* Corporate communications: An International Journal.

Gleeson, P., 2019. *Factors that may cause change in an organisation.* Available online at http://smallbusiness.chron.com/factors-may-cause-change-organisation-203.html [Accessed on 17 March 2019].

Grunig, L.A., Grunig, J.E., and Dozier, D.M., 2002. *Excellent public relations and effective organizations a study of communication management in three countries.* NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Grunig, J., Grunig, L., and Dozier, D., 2006. *The excellence theory.* NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Grunig, J.E., 2013. *Excellence in public relations and communication management*, New York, Routledge. Available online at http://books.google.co.za/books?isbn-1136691758 [Accessed on 22 February 2019].

Gronstedt, A., 2000. *The customer century: lessons from world-class companies in integrated marketing and communication.* New York: Routledge.

Holborn, L., and Moloi, L., 2012. *The problem with SA local government.* Available online at http://www.moneyweb.co.za/moneyweb-soapbox/the-problem-with-ds-local-government. [Accessed on 3 August 2014].

Human Sciences Research Council. 2015. *Spreading the news: the use of ICT to raise rural living standards.* Available online at http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/review/hsrc-

reviejw-may-2013/spreading-the-news-the-use-of-ict-to-raise-rural-living-standards#sthash.FRcPFQyw.dpuf [Accessed on 25 May 2015].

Karakose, T., 2008. *Reputation Management in Educational Organization: Suggestion of a new model*, April 2008, 6(1).

Kapfere, J.N., 2008. *The new strategic brand management.* London, Kogan Page.

Kapoor, R., Paul, J., and Halder, B., 2011. *Services marketing, concepts and practices.* Tata McGraw hill education private limited, New Delhi.

Khoza, A., 2016. *Zwelithini welcomes renaming of uThungulu to King Cetshwayo District Municipality.* Available online at http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/zwelithini-welcomes-renaming-of-uthungulu-to-king-cetshwayo-district-municipality. [Accessed on 27 July 2016].

Kokemuller, N., 2019. *Post-merger HR and Cultural Issues.* Available online at http://smallbusiness.chron.com/postmerger-hr-cultural-issues-14400.html. [Accessed on 24 March 2019].

Mortensen, C, D., 1972. *Communication: The study of human communication*, New York: McGraw-hill book co.

Norton, M.S., 2018. *Dealing with change. The effects of organisational development on contemporary practices.* Rowman and Littlefield. London.

Odden, L., 2007. *Future of online PR and reputation management*. Available online at http://www.toprankblog.com/2007/06/future-online-pr/. [Accessed on 20 June 2013].

Post, J.E., Preston, L.E., and Sachs, S., 2002. *Redefining the Corporation: Stakeholder management and organisational wealth.* Standford: Standford University Press.

Pollard, D., and Hotho, S., 2006. *Crises, scenarios and the strategic management process:* Strategic management Journal.

Ramsay, R., 2014. *Ntambanana to be dissolved*. Zululand Observer. Available online at http://zululandobserver.co.za/41294/ntambanana-to-be-dissolved/. [Accessed on 1 August 2014].

Rayner, J., 2003. *Managing reputational risk*. Jonh Wiley. The United Kingdom.

Reichheld, F., and Markey, R., 2011. *The ultimate question 2.0.* Available online at http://netpromotersystem.com/about/measuring-your-net-promoter-score.aspx   . [Accessed on 20 March 2019].

Restivo, S., 2005. *Science, Technology and Society: An Encyclopedia*. Oxford University Press.

Roper, S., and Fill, C., 2012. *Corporate reputation: Brand and Communication*. London. Pearson Education limited.

Sehgal, M.K., and Khetarpal, V., 2006. *Business Communication*. 1st Edition. Excell books, New Delhi.

Steyn, B., 2002. *From strategy to corporate communication strategy: a conceptualisation*. Research paper. Dept. of Marketing and Communication Management. The University of Pretoria.

Strokes, R., 2011. *eMarketing: the essential guide to digital marketing*. 4th Edition. Capte Town:Quirck eMarketing (pty).

Welman, C., Kruger, F., and Mitchell, B., 2005. *Research Methodology*. 3rd Edition. Oxford University press Southern Africa, Cape Town.

Witcher, B, J., and Sum Chau, V., 2010. *Strategic management, Principles and Practice,* Cengage learning EMESA, UK.

Yaxley, H., 2013. *The two-way symmetrical model. 2-way symmetric communications*. Available online at http://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Two-way-symmetrical-model-source-Yaxley-Heather-2013-2-way-symmetric_fig2_327415792. [Accessed on 26 August 2018].

Zikmund, W, G., 2003. *Business research methods*. 7th Edition. Thomson Southwestern Kentucky.

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Participant)

Project Title: THE KING CETSHWAYO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY'S REPUTATIONAL COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT WITHIN ITS AMALGAMATED MUNICIPALITIES

Nwabisa Luthuli from the Department of Communication Science, University of Zululand has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1.   The purpose of the research project is to identify management strategies that are implemented by the municipality regarding change. The purpose of the study is also to evaluate the impact of the merger and to determine the sustainability of the district's reputation. It is to analyse the psychological effect of the community members, employees, management that is based on the transition.

2.   The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.

3.   By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards implementing effective change in King Cetshwayo District Municipality and enhancing the brand reputation of local communities. I will also be contributing towards developing our communities as a citizen this will assist in future endeavours.

4.   I will participate in the project by sharing my views, beliefs and cognitive perspective in answering the questionnaire that the researcher will be administering to me.

5.   My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.

6.   I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

7.   There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that

8.   The following risks are associated with my participation: That some of the questions may be confidential and may feel uneasy about answering some questions. However, there may also be fear with employees in disclosing information and insecurities regarding top management.

9.   The following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: By ensuring that the participant is comfortable with participating in this project. The researcher will ensure that there is no ambiguity or misunderstanding based on the questionnaire and when conducting interviews.

10.   There is a 20% chance of the risk materialising

11.   The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of a dissertation. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.

12.   I will not receive feedback regarding the results obtained during the study.

13.   Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by:

   ➢ Researcher: N. Luthuli [076 278 3834]
   ➢ Supervisor: Prof. H. Rugbeer [035 902 6210]
   ➢ Co-supervisor: Dr G.M. Naidoo [035 902 6164]

14.   By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

15.   A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I, …………………………………………………………………….. have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

…………………………………

………………………………………

Participant's signature

Date

ANNEXURE B: ACCESS LETTER

P.O. Box 1364

New Germany

3610

Cell: +27 7213 01825

Email: Nwabi.luthuli@gmail.com

King Cetshwayo District Municipality

Private Bag X1025

Richardsbay

3900

Phone No: +27 (0) 35 799 2500

Fax No: + 27 (0) 35 789 1409

Email/Web: www.uthungulu.org.za

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH AT KING CETSHWAYO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

I Nwabisa Luthuli, student number 200812895, hereby tender my request to conduct an interview in your respective organisation. The research topic of the study is: The King Cetshwayo District Municipality's Reputational Communication Management within its amalgamated municipalities.

This interview is conducted for academic purposes, which will be submitted as part of the proposed degree, Masters in Communication Science from the Arts Faculty at the University of Zululand. The study is conducted under the expert guidance of Prof. H. Rugbeer and Dr G.M. Naidoo.

The research critically analyses how an organisation tends to maintain its identity. The study evaluates the 3 local municipalities that will be merging under the King Cetshwayo District municipality, as Ntambanana municipality will be dissolved. Therefore, the study evaluates the reputational impact and effect that the district will have. However, through the use of new technologies the researcher tries to adopt a procedure implemented in communicating with the public to sustain the brand image. It examines strategies implemented towards protecting and enhancing the organisation's image, identity and brand.

I hope that my request will be accepted.

Thank you

Regards

Nwabisa Luthuli

ANNEXURE C: **LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

Department of Communication Science

MA Communication Science Research Project

Researcher: N. Luthuli (072 1301 825)

Supervisor: Prof. H. Rugbeer (035 902 6210)

Co-supervisor: Dr G.M. Naidoo (035 902 6164)

Dear Respondent,

My name is Nwabisa Luthuli (student number: 200812895). I am a Masters student in the Department of Communication Science at the University of Zululand. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled:

The King Cetshwayo District Municipality's Reputational Communication Management within its amalgamated municipalities

Through your participation I hope to understand:

➢ To determine what factors motivated change within the King Cetshwayo District Municipality.

➢ Communication strategies which the merging municipalities have in plan to satisfy customer needs.

➢ To detect problems which the society encounters after the merger of the municipalities.

➢ Brand reputational techniques of the new merger.

➢ The publics' choices for communication by the municipality.

The results of this survey are intended to contribute to the advancement of change in local municipalities.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this research project. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the researcher. If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, please contact me or my supervisors at the numbers listed above. It should take you about 10-30 minutes

to complete the questionnaire. I hope you will take the time to complete this questionnaire.

Sincerely

Researcher's signature ---------------------------------   Date ----------------------------------

ANNEXURE D: RESPONDENT STATEMENT

For office use: Respondent number:----

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

The King Cetshwayo District Municipality's Reputational Communication Management within its amalgamated municipalities

MA Communication Science Research Project

Researcher: N. Luthuli (072 1301 825)

Supervisor: Prof. H. Rugbeer (035 902 6210)

Co-supervisor: Dr G.M. Naidoo (035 902 6164)

CONSENT

I --- (full name of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

-------------------------------------   -------------------------------

Signature of participant   **Date**

ANNEXURE E: CANDIDATES ORIGINALITY DECLARATION

ORIGINALITY DECLARATION

Full Names and Surname	Nwabisa Luthuli
Student Number	200812895
Title of Dissertation/Thesis	**The King Cetshwayo District Municipality's Reputational Communication Management within its amalgamated municipalities**

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's policies and rules applicable to postgraduate research, and I certify that I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, complied with their requirements.

………………………………   …………………………..

Signature   **Date**

Research Integrity Officer

I declare that this thesis is, safe for the supervisory guidance received, the product of my own work and effort. I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, complied with the University's Plagiarism Policy and acknowledged all sources of information in line with normal academic conventions.

I have not subjected the document to the University's text-matching and/or similarity-checking procedures.

Candidate's Signature	
Date	

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The study uses structured interviews to collect the required information. This research is for academic purposes. The researcher is investigating the impact that the merging of municipalities and the demolishment of one municipality has on the reputation of the organisation and whether it can be maintained strategically or through the use of new media. The interview attempts to get a professionals perspective on the field of study.

The interview is due to the respondent's willingness and confidentiality will be highly maintained. However, the department and level of the participant will not be mentioned in the study.

<u>Interview questions</u>:

SECTION A

- Determine what factors motivated change within the King Cetshwayo District Municipality

The municipal mergers in the province include Ntambanana, Mthonjaneni, uMfolozi and uMhlathuze on the north coast. The following organisations may/may not have influenced the merger.

Please place ONE tick (√) or a cross (**X**) for each statement below					
NO	Indicate whether these statements are true or false	TRUE	FALSE	I DO NOT KNOW	Office use
1	The African National Congress (ANC) initiated the merger of the municipalities				1
2	The Demarcation Board initiated the merger of the municipalities				2

3	The Amakhosi and the other critical partners of our communities initiated the merger of the municipalities.				3
4	The Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) initiated the merger of the municipalities.				4

Municipal mergers in the province include Ntambanana, Mthonjaneni, uMfolozi and uMhlathuze on the north coast. The following factors may/may not have influenced the merger.

Please place ONE tick (√) or a cross (**X**) for each statement below					
NO	**Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below:**	AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	Office use
5	Overall service delivery at Ntambanana municipality was poor				1
6	Finances at Ntambanana municipality were difficult to manage				2
7	Poor income made it difficult for individual municipalities to sustain themselves.				3

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS		
NO	**STATEMENT**	**RESPONSE**
8	In your opinion do you believe that there was <u>any other force</u> which brought about this merger?	
9	Do you have any advice to give with regard to the merger?	

SECTION B

- Identify communication strategies which the merging municipalities have in place to satisfy customer's needs.

Please place ONE Tick (√) or a cross (**X**) for each statement below					
NO	**Indicate whether these statements are true or false**	**TRUE**	**FALSE**	**I DO NOT KNOW**	**OFFICE USE**
10	The municipality has a website where clients can view all our activities.				1
11	The municipality has a website where clients log in and **view** their account balances.				2
12	The municipality has a website where clients logon and **pay** their outstanding accounts				3
13	The municipality has a website where clients logon and **submit queries**.				4

NO	STATEMENT				Office use
14	Each municipality has a walk-in help desk to assist clients with account problems.				5
15	The municipality has plans for people to be assisted within an hour of walking into the municipal offices.				6
16	The municipality has suitable seating for clients who are waiting for consulting				7
17	The municipality communicates with clients via SMS				8

- Detect problems which the society encounters after the merger of the municipalities.

Do you agree with the following statements?

Please place ONE Tick (√) or a cross (X) for each statement below					
NO	STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	Office use
18	It takes very long for a person to resolve an account query at the municipal office.				1
19	Generally, access to new communication technology is challenging in Districts which are in rural areas.				2

NO	STATEMENT				Office use
20	The amalgamated municipalities have modern communication technology				3
21	Rural communities have excellent Internet connectivity.				4
22	The communication and service delivery within the amalgamated municipality is better than the previous structures.				5
23	Ratepayers are still unhappy about that fact that non-payers are benefitting from services which they have not contributed to.				6

- Evaluate the brand reputational management techniques of the new merger. (What do you have in plan…)

Please place ONE Tick (√) or a cross (X) for each statement below					
NO	STATEMENT	TRUE	FALSE	I DO NOT KNOW	Office use
24	We have planned to implement good practices at the merged municipal offices.				1
25	We have planned to implement online mechanism/facilities to assist customers.				2
26	We have planned to implement cell phone communication techniques to stay in touch with residents.				3

NO	STATEMENTS				Office use
27	We are currently engaged in a series of meetings to find ways of improving our service to the public.				4
28	We plan to facilitate Integrated Crisis Communication (ICC) framework for ensuring effective communication with all stakeholders.				5
29	We rely on a communication expert to interact and build relationships with stakeholders.				6
30	We plan on addressing and identifying organisational problems through strategic management				7
31	We have planned to build sustainable relationships with the media.				8
32	We have communication strategies in plan with the employees, consumers, customers and stakeholders if a crisis were to occur.				9

- Identify the public's choices for communication by the municipality.

Please place ONE Tick (√) or a cross (**X**) for each statement below

NO	STATEMENTS	TRUE	FALSE	I DO NOT KNOW	Office use
33	We have identified that most people prefer communication with the municipality using cell phones and SMS strategies.				1
34	We have identified that most people prefer communicating with the municipality using email				2

35	We have identified that most people prefer communicating with the municipality using a website				3
36	We have identified that most people prefer communicating with the municipality using snail mail.				4
37	We have identified that micro-blogging is one of the trends preferred by the public.				5
38	We have identified that most people prefer to get together with the municipality to discuss issues				6
39	We have identified that most people prefer communicating with the municipality via traditional communication methods.				7
40	We have identified that society prefers direct response from the municipality.				8

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION
Do you have contact details and information as to who I could interview next?

ANNEXURE G: QUESTIONNAIRE

Respondent no: ....

Questionnaire for Residents

**UNIVERSITY OF
ZULULAND**
RESTRUCTURED FOR RELEVANCE

VOLUNTARY QUESTIONNAIRE

The King Cetshwayo District Municipality's Reputational Communication Management within its amalgamated municipalities

Researcher:	Nwabisa Luthuli
Student number:	200812895
Supervisor:	Prof. H. Rugbeer
Co-supervisor:	Dr. G.M. Naidoo

Faculty of Arts

Department of Communication Science

University of Zululand

Please complete this survey questionnaire on evaluating reputational brand management and how the amalgamation process impacted the municipalities. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. Please answer all questions provided.

• Please complete the questionnaire by pen, and do not revise your initial answers.

• Please sign the letter of informed consent, giving me permission to use your responses for this research project.

• Please place a Tick **(√)** or cross**(x)** in the box where required.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

In this section, you will be required to provide general and personal information.

1) Initials and Surname

Please provide the following details by selecting either a cross (x) or tick (√).

2) Gender

		Office use only
Male		1
Female		2

This questionnaire is based on the role of reputational communication at the King Cetshwayo District Municipality. Reputation is of immense importance to organisations, therefore the study investigates the amalgamation of local municipalities. For example, King Cetshwayo District Municipality is experiencing change, whereby four of its local municipalities will be amalgamated, namely; Ntambanana, Mthonjaneni, uMfolozi and uMhlathuze.

In this scenario, the Ntambanana municipality will be demolished after the 2016 local government elections. Ntambanana will be merged with uMhlathuze, Mthonjaneni and some of the local wards from Ntambanana will be incorporated to Mfolozi municipalities. The survey deals with reputational communication in general. It is hoped that another survey would be conducted in the near future, where external change will be viewed against King Cetshwayo District Municipality. You may, however, express your views on the current change regarding the district in the last question of the survey.

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION B: **Question based on objective one**

	In your personal opinion, what do you think led to the merger of these municipalities? Please place ONE Tick (√) or a cross (X) for each statement below				
NO	**STATEMENT**	**TRUE**	**FALSE**	**I DO NOT KNOW**	**Office use**
1	Overall service delivery was poor				1
2	Finances were difficult to manage				2
3	Poor income to these municipalities to sustain themselves,				3
4	The land is owned by people and does not pay rates whilst making it difficult to generate money.				4
5	The Ntambanana municipality has become unsustainable.				5

SECTION C: Statement based on objective two

	These are the **challenges** we face at or by the municipality Please place ONE Tick (√) or a cross (X) for each statement below				
NO	**STATEMENT**	**AGREE**	**DISAGREE**	**NOT SURE**	**Office use**
6	It takes very long for a person to resolve an account query at the municipal office.				1

7	Many of us live in isolated rural areas which are too far away from the municipal offices which make it difficult for these rural people and the municipal offices to communicate with each other.				2
8	Further to the above, the problem **will get worse** when the municipal offices are amalgamated into one municipality in Richards Bay.				
9	The current municipality still uses OLD technology which does not allow it to communicate with the rural people (who form the majority of their customers)				3
10	No attempts have been made by the municipality to provide the rural community with reliable Internet connectivity.				4
11	The government seems to be addressing their governance problems by amalgamating the municipalities – they are not solving the people's problems.				5
12	The merger will make life worse for the people who pay their rates because their money will be used to subsidise the poorer municipal areas.				6

SECTION D: Question based on objective three

	What would you like the municipality to do from the perspective as a customer? *Please place ONE Tick (√) or a cross (X) for each statement below*				
NO	STATEMENT	SOMETIMES	ALWAYS	NOT AT ALL	Office use
13	We would like to see a general improvement of services				1
14	We would like to the municipalities deliver on their promises				2
15	We would like to that the merger would enhance the reputation of the district.				3
16	We would like to see that there is an improvement in communication between ALL the residents and the NEW MERGED municipality				4

SECTION E: Question based on objective four

	What are some of the communication methods which you would like to see in the new municipal structure? Please place ONE Tick (√) or a cross (**X**) for each statement below				
NO	**STATEMENT**	**YES**	**NO**	**NOT SURE**	**Office use**
17	The municipality must make use of the Internet to communicate with residents.				1
18	The municipality must make use of the newspaper to communicate with residents.				2
19	The municipality must make use of the Television to communicate with residents.				3
20	The municipality must make use of the radio to communicate with residents.				4
21	The municipality must make use of the organisation's website to communicate with residents.				5
22	The municipality must make use of community meetings to communicate with residents.				6
23	The municipality must make use of Facebook to communicate with residents.				7
24	The municipality must make use of Google to communicate with residents.				8
25	The municipality must make use of twitter to communicate with residents.				9

26	The municipality must make use of LinkedIn to communicate with residents.				10
27	The municipality must make use of WeChat to communicate with residents.				11
28	The municipality must make use of Instagram to communicate with residents.				12
29	Micro-blogging is one of the new trends is preferred by the public.				13
30	Many of us prefer to go personally to the municipality to resolve our problems. The new municipality must take measures to resolve our problem within one visit (on the same day)				14
31	The new municipal office must have a very well organised phone-in problem-solving technique. People must be able to phone the municipality and the municipality must be able to return the call within 24-48 hours with a solution.				15
32	The municipality must communicate with residents using cell phones and SMS strategies.				16
33	The municipality must communicate with residents using Email.				**17**
34	The municipality must communicate with residents using snail mail.				18
35	The residents prefer to meet personally with the				19

	municipality to discuss issues.	146			
36	The residents prefer communicating with the municipality via traditional communication methods, for example, using public speakers and newsletters				20

Please use this space to comment on change / rotational management:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation