Community perception of service delivery
A Case Study of Impendle Local Municipality

By

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the community and local Council of the Impendle Municipality.

ABSTRACT

With an ever increasing number of service delivery protests recorded each year, an inquiry into the quality of public service in South Africa might well be overdue. The fact that most service delivery protests have turned violent, upsetting community life and damaging private and public property is an urgent call for action from government. Yet as some have argued, this state of public service, though not deliberate, might be largely a direct consequence of government action. The government is thus accused of laxity in staffing, monitoring and evaluation, as well as implementing the audit and evaluation reports. As the prime implementer of government policy, programmes and projects, local government bears much of the brunt of this government inaction. The result is compromised quality in service delivery. This study investigates one such impact of government action on a Category B municipality. As a victim of boundary re-adjustments in 2009, Impendle Municipality has not received any financial complement to meet the service demands of its expanded jurisdiction. The assumption has been that with the increased number of communities within the municipality and no complementary budgetary increase, service quality at Impendle Local Municipality will be compromised. Using the service quality (SERVQUAL) theory, the study investigated this assumption through an assessment of: access, communication, competence, courtesy, credibility, reliability, responsiveness, securities and tangibles. Using mixed methods of data collection and analysis, the study purported to understand community perceptions on the quality of municipal services. Data was gathered through a triangulation of focus groups (conducted in each of the four wards within the municipality) and self-administered questionnaires with 80 of the 7432 municipal residents. The data was then triangulated in analysis to assess the community perceptions on the status of service quality. The study concluded that, in as much as the quality of service is low at Impendle, the problem is more with procedural issues of service delivery than it is an impact of boundary re-adjustments. Lack of access, poor communication, unstandardized service, and lack of reliability, credibility and courtesy, were viewed by participants as major issues compromising service delivery. However, the fact that these challenges are direct contraventions of the South African blueprint on service delivery – *Batho Pele* – re-affirms the need for effective co-operative governance in South Africa.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
Batho Pele	People First
CDW	Community Development Workers
COGTA	Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs
DA	Democratic Alliance
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
IDASA	Institute of Democracy in South Africa
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LED	Local Economic Development
MECs	Members of the Executive Committee
NP	National Party
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
PAMB	Public Administration Management Bill
PALAMA	Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy
PMB	Pietermaritzburg
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAMDI	South African Management and Development Institute
SAPS	South African Police Services
SEDA	Sector Economic Development Agency
SERVQUAL	Service Quality Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Impendle Municipality is located on the south-western boundary of uMgungundlovu District, which is regarded as the heart of the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. It shares a boundary with the Sisonke District to the south and the KwaSani Local Municipality. To the north is uMngeni Local Municipality, which is closely tied to the Impendle Municipality in terms of agriculture and tourism potential (Midlands Meander). Impendle Municipality shares its eastern boundary with Msunduzi Local Municipality, which is the economic hub of uMgungundlovu District. To the west are District Management Areas of the Drakensberg that fall under the Transfrontier Development Initiative, related to the World Heritage Site. According to the Impendle Municipality Draft Integrated Development Plan (IDP) (2013/2014), Impendle Municipality is identified as one of the smallest municipalities in the country. In line with Section 9 of the Municipal Structures Act (No.117 of 1998), the 2009/2010 Integrated Development Plan of Impendle Municipality declares the municipality as a category B since it shares municipal executive and legislative authority in its area with a district municipality within whose area it falls.

Impendle Municipality generates little revenue and, as a result, depends on national government grants in order to carry out its responsibilities. According to Impendle Municipality Integrated Development Plan Review (2009/10:9), about 80% of its budget is obtained from grant funding from National Government, Provincial government and Development Bank of South Africa. Due to its skimpy revenue collection, the Impedle Municipality is unable to meet the budget for some of its core services that are critical to its existence (Impendle Municipality IDP, 2015/2016:16). The inability to meet the budget for new posts in the technical department has a negative impact on service delivery and proper maintenance of the municipal assets (Impendle Municipality IDP, 2015/2016:16). Recently, the new boundary demarcation increased the municipality's boundary area as well as its population. Although the population of the municipality has increased, the grant it receives from the national government has not. Ideally, an extension of the municipality's boundaries should be complemented by increased grants to make up for the increased population, but this is not the case. Despite the lack of additional funding, the municipality is still expected to

use the same budget in providing services and developing and maintaining infrastructure (Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 1998). Furthermore, the municipality is expected to deliver services similar to those being provided by other municipalities. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate perceptions of community members on services rendered by the local municipality.

According to the Local Government Property Rates Act (No. 6 of 2004) it is the duty of municipalities to charge rates on properties and for services rendered within their areas of jurisdiction. Once rates are collected, they are reflected as income of that particular municipality. Thus, municipalities' budgets increase through collection of rates. However, it is very difficult for rural municipalities such as Impendle to collect rates due to their high level of poverty and unemployment (Impendle Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan: 2009/2010).

The Local Government Municipal Structures Act of 2008 allocates powers and functions to municipalities according to size and capacity. The following powers and functions are allocated to Impendle Local Municipality and communities expect services in these areas to be delivered to their satisfaction: a) Building regulations, b) Electricity reticulation, c) Local tourism, d) Municipal planning, e) Municipal health services, f) Storm water, g) Trading regulations, (h) Billboards, (i) Cemeteries, (j) Cleansing, (k) Control of public nuisance, (l) Fencing (m) Licensing of dogs, (n) Licensing and control of undertakings that sell food, (o) Local amenities, (p) Local sports facilities, (q) Municipal parks and recreations, (r) Municipal roads and (s) Noise pollution.

The rationale that informed the selection of this case study of Impendle Municipality was compounded in 2009 when the boundary was extended to include new populations cut off from neighbouring KwaSani Municipality. This change in geographic boundary and population did not result in an increase in the budgetary allocation to Impendle Municipality. Consequently, this scenario put financial pressure on the municipality, leading to a negative impact on the level and quality of services delivered to the community members.

1.2 Preliminary literature study and rationale

Every five years, South Africa holds local government elections. During these elections, new local councillors are elected into office. The months preceding the elections are often

characterised by rhetoric from political parties about service delivery, which is aimed at canvassing for votes from citizens. The promises made by political parties during electioneering raise the expectations of citizens as they look forward to government officials fulfilling their promises. However, the quality and type of services received do not always match this expectation. Among other things, lack of skills, corruption and lack of financial resources constrain the ability of municipalities to fulfil their constitutional mandate (Auditor General Report in KZN Legislature, 2011, Mananga, 2012). This situation is more acute for municipalities such as Impendle that generate little internal revenue. Recently it has been noted with grave concern that a number of municipalities have been engulfed in service delivery protests (Stanton, 2009:64).

Sometimes service delivery protests turn violent and irate communities damage both private and public property resulting in losses sometimes amounting to millions of Rands. In some instances, people even get killed during protests. According to Carrim (2010:19) *"27% of the protests since 2004 have taken place in Gauteng, 14% in North West, 12% in both Western Cape and Mpumalanga, 11% in Free State, 10% in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal 7%, 4% in Limpopo and 3% in Northern Cape. Forty five percent of the protests have taken place in the metros. Thirty four have been in informal settlements"*. Stanton (2009:6) concurs with Carrim by citing various service delivery protests across the provinces and alluding to the fact that residents across South Africa are demanding better quality services from their local authorities. For example:

> *"3000 residents of Diepsloot (Gauteng province) took to the streets demanding basic services. In Durban (KwaZulu-Natal province), 5000 people from informal settlements marched through the city centre demanding houses and services. In Mitchells Plain (Western Cape Province) barricades were erected and tyres were burned, excrement and rubbish were dumped onto the streets. In a protest in Harrismith (Free State province) a boy was killed during a brawl with police. A typhoid outbreak in Delmas (Mpumalanga, North West province-s) led to protesters demanding the resignation of the municipal manager. Port Elizabeth (Eastern Cape Province) suffered weeks of protest by thousands of people from informal settlements. Angry residents complained about dirty water, frequent electricity outages, faulty street lights and overflowing sanitation infrastructure."*

Stanton (2009:3) argues that the poor quality of services being provided by municipalities is a result of the systemic and structural conditions under which they operate:

> *"The basic service delivery obligations of local municipalities are strenuous and financially challenging, and will continue to be as long as local municipalities rely on or are controlled by other spheres of government in meeting their constitutional mandate, especially with regard to the intergovernmental transfers of fiscal resources."*

Compared to other categories of municipalities, administrative decentralisation of basic service delivery has negatively impacted more on category B municipalities (Stanton, 2009:28). In a 2007 report entitled *States of Cities Financial Report,* the SA Cities Network (cited in Stanton, 2009:104) states that category B municipalities are particularly faced with the dual challenge of extending service delivery into rural outlying areas as well as upgrading informal settlements by providing basic services "at RDP level". Given that Impendle is a Category B municipality, it is not surprising that it is faced with a number of service delivery challenges. Central to this is the fact that the municipality is unable to generate sufficient income to meet its constitutional obligations. A report by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) (2005:80) confirms this challenge faced by category B municipalities when it states that *"[r]evenue raising capacity is another challenge for municipalities particularly those in former apartheid regime homelands where incomes are low and poverty is acute"*.

The situation in Impendle Municipality is compounded by the 2009 boundary demarcation. For the municipality, the boundary demarcation resulted in the inclusion of people who were previously under KwaSani Municipality. The increase in its geographic boundary and population was not complemented by an increase in budgetary allocation. Consequently, this has put financial strain on the municipality, eventually affecting the delivery of services to the community. Accordingly, findings and recommendations of this study will be of practical value and will be presented to the council and Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) for consideration and implementation.

1.3 Delimitations of the research

Impendle is a rural Municipality, and households are widely dispersed. The wide geographical distribution of the population has both budgetary and time implications for research. Due to financial and time constraints of the researcher, only ward committees from each of the four wards were approached as respondents. In addition, 80 households were identified in each of the four wards and a questionnaire was administered to one individual from each household. Since the study is limited to only one local municipality, its results may not be generalisable to other local municipalities. However, the findings of the study could complement similar studies that have been undertaken in other local municipalities. In addition, the study could act as a point of departure for other academics who intend to pursue research along a similar line of enquiry. The

strength of this research is underpinned by the fact it adopts a mixed method. This allowed the researcher to triangulate qualitative and quantitative data thus giving robust information about the research questions. Through this, the study built on previous studies that have only employed a single method of data collection.

1.4 Research problem and objectives

In 2009, the boundaries demarcating Impendle Municipality were enlarged. This may have affected the delivery of services to the local community since the population increased, while the budget allocated remained the same. This may also have affected the nature and manner in which Impendle Municipality delivers services to the community. This study sought to explore the perceptions of Impendle community members regarding the quality of services they receive from the municipality and ascertain the level of satisfaction with services they receive within the new arrangement. In order to address this problem, the study posed four fundamental questions as outlined in section 1.4.2 below.

1.4.1 Research objectives

The main objective of this study was to understand the community's perceptions of services rendered by Impendle Municipality to its constituents by pursuing the following specific objectives:

1. To investigate the perceptions of Impendle Municipality community members on service delivery.
2. To identify the kinds of services communities in the Impendle Municipality expect from the local municipality.
3. To identify challenges facing Impendle Municipality in relation to delivery of services.
4. To establish whether the new boundary demarcation has any impact on the quality of services delivered by Impendle Municipality.

1.4.2 Research questions

This research was informed by four key research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of Impendle Municipality community members on service delivery?

2. What are the expectations of Impendle community on the Municipality's service delivery?
3. What are the challenges facing Impendle Municipality in relation to delivery of services?
4. What is the impact of the new boundary demarcation on service delivery on Impendle Municipality?

1.5 Broader issues to be investigated

According to Section 40 of the Constitution of South Africa of 1996, local government has an unprecedented status as a distinctive sphere of government. Local government is also interdependent and interrelated with the national and provincial spheres. The Constitution further states that municipalities have the right to govern on their own initiative. Autonomy granted to the local government sphere entails that it has the prerogative to perform certain functions (The White Paper on Local Government, 1998).

The fundamental objectives of local government relate to providing democratic and accountable government, promoting social and economic development, a healthy and safe environment and encouraging community involvement in local government matters in relation to the services. Local government also has to ensure that services are provided to communities and that this is done in a sustainable manner (Section 52(1) of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996). This right should be accompanied by the responsibility to structure and manage its administration, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community and promote social and economic development of the community (Section 52(1) of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996). All municipalities are expected to achieve these objectives, regardless of how big or small they are. The Constitution further places an obligation on municipalities to carry out certain functions which are stipulated in Schedule 4 Part B and Schedule 5 Part B. It is the duty of a municipality to find ways and means of carrying out those responsibilities.

Previously, municipalities were able to carry out their constitutionally mandated functions through rates and taxes received from communities. The Local Government Property Rates Act (No. 6 of 2004) empowers municipalities to levy taxes on properties and for services rendered in their areas of jurisdiction. The Act states that all revenue raised should be spent in accordance with the budget to provide services and develop and maintain infrastructure in the municipality. In return for the payment of taxes and rates, the community expects services to be delivered by the municipality. Recently it has been noted that a number of municipalities, especially those in rural

areas, are struggling when it comes to provision of services because of insufficient revenue collected through rates and taxes (Impendle Local Municipality, Integrated Development Plan: 2009/2010). Concerns for the rates base of rural municipalities have also been raised by members of Parliament in the Pietermaritzburg Legislature (Liptak, 2011:1). Impendle Local Municipality is one of the municipalities situated in deep rural areas where the unemployment rate is so high that people are unable to pay rates and taxes. Consequently, the municipality relies on government grants to deliver its mandate (Integrated Development Plan, 2009/2010).

In Impendle Municipality, the struggle to deliver services adequately has been exacerbated by the new boundary demarcation where certain communities that previously belonged to Kwa-Sani Municipality are now within the boundary of Impendle Municipality (Integrated Development Plan, 2009/2010). However, the rates base is static and the budget allocation does not show any significant change from 2010 to 2011 (Impendle Annual Budget 2011/2012). In view of the increase in population, there are concerns in terms of service delivery. It has been argued that decline in the quality of service is because some municipalities cannot afford to provide for the increased population. Consequently, a greater number of community members have to share the small budget of Impendle Municipality. With the high unemployment rate of 60%, most people in the municipality rely on pensions and social grants (Baily, 2011:74). Against the backdrop of the financial constraint being by the municipality, this study focuses on the perceptions of communities in relation to the type and the quality of services they expect.

According to the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1995), service delivery is defined as *"the ability of a public institution to deliver services to the communities in an efficient and effective manner"*. Central to this definition is the idea that services delivered must be efficient and effective, which requires that these services must be of an acceptable quality and that the cost must be reasonable. The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995) further states that "improving the delivery of public services means redressing the imbalances of the past while maintaining continuity of service to all levels of society, focusing on meeting the needs of the 40% of South Africans who are living below the poverty line and those, such as the disabled, and Black women living in rural areas, who have been previously disadvantaged in terms of service delivery". Given that most South Africa's poor are located in rural areas, municipalities in rural areas are duty bound to deliver quality services to them.

1.6 Theoretical framework

The study used service quality (SERVQUAL) theory in analysing the research problem. According to Buttle (1996:8) publications that have used this theory have applied it in a variety of industrial, commercial and not-for-profit organisations including car servicing, hotel, dental services, travel and tourism, hospitals and local government. SERVQUAL theory is based on the view that the customer's assessment of service quality is paramount. In their original formulation, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), cited in Buttle (1996:9), identified 10 components of service quality. These include: reliability, responsiveness, competency, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, knowing the customers and tangibles. According to Parasuraman et al. (1985:85) SERVQUAL is an instrument that measures the perceptions of customers about service quality. It measures customers' expectations before service encounters as well as the perceptions about the actual service experience. By comparing customers' expectations with the quality of service received, the theory makes it possible to measure how satisfied a customer is with the quality of service received. Mathematically, SERVQUAL can be expressed in a formula format as follows: $Q = P - E$; where Q represents quality, P represents perceptions, and E represents expectations.

This formula implies that if expectations equal perceptions the consumer is technically satisfied. When perceptions exceed expectations, the consumer is more than satisfied. When expectations exceed perceptions, the consumer is dissatisfied and this will reflect in a negative SERVQUAL score (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990:200). The rationale behind the selection of this theory is that it has proven to be a reliable instrument in accessing the level of satisfaction among customers (beneficiaries) of services across various disciplines.

The study was also underpinned by the principles of *Batho Pele*, which are crucial in dealing with issues of service delivery. The *Batho Pe*le principles were adopted by the government to ensure that people are come first in delivering a service. They are enshrined in the 1998 White Paper on Transformation. The objective of the White Paper is to provide a policy framework and a practical implementation strategy for the transformation of public service delivery. It outlines the following principles for service delivery, which eventually were adopted by the government as *Batho Pele* (People First) principles, namely:

- ➢ Consulting users of services;
- ➢ Setting service standards;
- ➢ Increasing access;
- ➢ Ensuring courtesy;
- ➢ Providing more and better information;
- ➢ Increasing openness and transparency;
- ➢ Remedying mistakes and failures; and
- ➢ Getting value for money.

For a municipality to be successful in service delivery, the first step is to consider the needs of the community. This is an obligation spelt out in Section 73(1) (a) of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000). In order to understand the needs of communities, it is pertinent for municipalities to consult with community members. From these community consultation sessions, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which is the heart of the municipality, is generated. Within the municipality, there should be proper systems and resources to help the municipality deliver services efficiently and effectively. If services are delivered smoothly to the community, people participate in all systems of the municipality and are encouraged to pay for services. The municipality then receives accolades for performing well.

1.7 Research methodology

The research employed a mixed methodology of data collection, presentation and analysis. Using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the study aimed to enhance research rigor and reliability of the findings. The research design employed in this study was a case study. According to Yin (2014:34) a case study is determined by 'how' and 'why' research questions, by events in which the researcher has no control, and is restricted to contemporary situations, not to situations in the past. This research used triangulation method of data collection to gather data for the purposes of this research. According to Olsen (2004:3), *"triangulation is defined as the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic"*. There are two types of triangulation, data triangulation and methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation adopts both quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

The strength of methodological triangulation lies in its ability to produce results that cannot be generated when only either a qualitative or quantitative method is applied (Risjord, Moloney & Dunbar, 2001:18). It does this by synthesizing the strengths of both qualitative and qualitative research methods. A qualitative approach to research was employed because of its ability to facilitate in-depth interpretation and understanding of the perceptions of the research participants regarding service delivery. The study began with a literature review of community perceptions of service delivery in South Africa with special focus on Impendle Local Municipality. The quantitative approach was used to complement the shortcomings of the qualitative approach. For the quantitative aspect, a questionnaire was developed and administered to the participants. This research was grounded on finding the actors' perspectives, which is the insider or "emic" view of the community's opinion on service delivery (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270).

1.7.1 Sampling

In Impendle Municipality, there are four wards and each of them has a ward committee. The ward committee in the municipality is constituted by the councillor (representing the ward in the Council), who must also be the chairperson of the committee of not more than 10 persons (Corporative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2011). Focus group interviews were conducted with two of the ward committees, Ward 2 and Ward 3,that were randomly selected. In addition to the ward committees, there are 7432 households at Impendle (Integrated development Plan, 2011/2012). Eighty households were randomly selected from the four wards, twenty from each, and a survey questionnaire administered to one respondent from each of the households.

1.7.2 Data collection

In order to collect quantitative date, a structured questionnaire was administered to respondents from each of the selected households. One of the main advantages associated with conducting a questionnaire is that it provides the researcher with an opportunity to reach a larger sample than would be possible by using other techniques, anonymity and confidentiality can be assured and data analysis can be determined from the outset (Pickard, 2007: 183). For the qualitative part of the study, a semi-structured interview schedule was developed and administered to respondents in their respective focus groups. According to Thomas, MacMillan, McColl, Hale and Bond (1995:206), a focus group interview is *"a technique involving the use of in-depth group*

interviews in which participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population, this group being 'focused' on a given topic". A tape recorder was used to record focus group discussions to ensure that the exact responses given by the study participants were captured. Thus, the study triangulated sources of data both from self-administered questionnaires and from focus groups. The interview schedule and the questionnaire are attached as Appendices I and II.

1.7.3 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used in analyzing the data for this study. According to Bischof et al. (2011:88) thematic analysis *"provides a flexible and useful tool to identify and organize key themes from qualitative data".* This analytical framework enabled community members' perceptions of the services being provided by the municipality to be grouped into themes. Quantitative was analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The focus group interviews were transcribed and analyzed through thematic analysis. The analysis presented descriptive responses and checked for correlations as well as associations between responses.

1.8 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of seven chapters, outlined as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the research. It begins by giving a detailed background to the study as well as the reasons for choosing the topic. The chapter also explores the objectives of the study as well as the key questions the study sought to answer.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 reviews the literature pertinent to the research questions. It begins with a review of the role of local government as a sphere. The chapter also reviews the challenges local governments face in the delivery of services and efforts being made to address them. This review enables us to situate the service delivery challenges being faced in Impendle Local Municipality in a wider context.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

This Chapter presents the theoretical framework that guides the study and discusses the advantages of the SERVQUAL theory in illuminating the issues being investigated.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Chapter 4 sets out the research design and methods employed in the study. It begins by providing justification of the suitability of the chosen design and method. Issues such as sampling techniques, data collection as well as data analysis are addressed in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Data presentation

The Chapter presents the findings of the research, which are categorised into themes to facilitate eventual discussion.

Chapter 6: Interpretation of findings and data analysis

In this Chapter, the findings of the research are discussed. The discussion of the results is done based on themes and guided by the theoretical framework.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations

This Chapter provides a general conclusion to the study. It gives a synthesis of the study by highlighting the current state of service delivery in Impendle Municipality, the challenges to service delivery, the disparity between community's expectations, and the actual service being received. The chapter also makes some policy recommendations on how the problems of service deliver in Impendle Municipality can be addressed.

1.9 Summary

This introductory chapter has discussed the background of the study, its rationale as well as the theoretical framework underwriting it. The objectives and the methodological aspects that guided the study were also discussed. The chapter also gave an overview of how the dissertation is structured. The following chapter provides a literature review on the subject of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the research problem, through an elaborate background section, research objectives and the rationale for the present study. The current chapter reviews literature on the subject of discussion. The amount of literature on the issue of service delivery in South Africa is overwhelming. However, some literature has been reviewed on the understanding of service delivery in South Africa during (pre-1994) and after (post1994) the apartheid era. The chapter also assess the available legal provisions for service delivery, good governance in public service delivery, and implications of poor delivery in South Africa.

2.2 Conceptualising service delivery

Given the growing acknowledgement that traditional service delivery approaches have failed to adequately address the needs of many societies, various national, state and local initiatives have called for significant reform in how services are provided to societies. This new approach involves individualised empowering of consumers' strengths and encourages their active participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of services pertinent to them. In Allen's (2002:476) view, the traditional service delivery approach, which is often more deficits-oriented, and professionally and programmatically driven, differs from the new approach in that service delivery involves the implementation of four distinct service delivery practices: (1) providers are expected to focus on consumer strengths and capacities, rather than consumer deficits; (2) an expectation that providers will extend their focus beyond the traditional assessment of treatment needs; (3) providers are expected to focus on the needs and strengths of the entire society, rather than only a target client; and (4) providers are required to include societies in goal identification.

Given that there are many South Africans who are poor, service delivery is envisioned to alleviate poverty in post-1994 South Africa by considering a number of issues: decentralization and participation can reinforce historical distributions of privileges;

community ownership is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for effective service delivery to individuals in rural communities; when managed well, private outsourcing can benefit the poor; and the abolition of user fees is often not the best way to ensure access to basic services.

Bekker (n.d.:3) assigns the task of service delivery to local government and outlines some basic purposes of local government, as follows:

- Essential-services supplier
- Communal-needs satisfier
- Unique-needs provider
- Urbanisation regulator
- Democracy developer
- Responsiveness and accessibility enhancer
- Consumer-cost recoverer
- Control improver
- Inhabitant educator
- Prejudice diminisher

2.3 Legal provisions for service delivery in South Africa

The 1996 Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996:1) conceives of a constitution as the supreme law of the country and is meant to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights (Tushnet et al., 2013). The Constitution lays the foundation for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law. It is also meant to improve the quality of life of all citizens, free the potential of each person and build a united, democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

With the dawn of democracy in 1994, the government of South Africa, under the leadership of the ANC, strove with the best intentions to devolve administrative powers to include provincial and municipal leaders. The 1996 Constitution mandates that service delivery be

oriented towards meeting the developmental challenges facing South Africa. Sing (2012:549) states that in early 2002 a debate began on building and increasing the capacity of a joint three-government sector approach to service delivery' an approach seen as paramount to ensuring a comprehensive strategy to curb the challenges of a developmental state. As such, Sing (2012) continues, in 2007 the Public Administration, Leadership and Management Academy was formed to support the capacity building thrust or principle enabling legislation and the Public Administration Management Bill was published in 2008. These joint strategic interventions call on legislators, institutional leaders, civil society organisations and other stakeholders to ensure innovative and creative vision to service delivery.

Chapter 10 of the South African Constitution contains specific provisions pertaining to public administration. It speaks of ethical or normative guidelines to be observed by all public personnel in the provision of service to society. The basic human rights of South African citizens are found in the Bill of Rights detailed in Chapter 2 and are based on the democratic tenets of human dignity, equality and freedom.

With these provisions, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is the hinge or hub of service delivery transformation. Service delivery transformation encompasses achieving and promoting higher levels of economic growth, addressing and reducing poverty and underdevelopment, building and sustaining institutional capacity, improving safety and security, and building national and international partnerships. Sing (2012:550) observes that in operational terms this means service delivery institutions, by means of their infrastructural, logistical, and financial and human resources, must promote and achieve a high quality of life, living and livelihood for all South Africans.

Section 178 of the Interim Constitution (Act 200 of 1993), for instance, determines that local government conduct its administrative and financial affairs within some prescribed principles of public administration, accountability and good governance. Ronald and Henry (2000), cited in Kiwanuka (2012:50), conceive of good governance as a process through which public decisions are reached collectively. In other words, the notion of good governance entails the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs. Therefore it is a composite of the traditions, institutions and processes that determine how power is exercised, how citizens express their views and how public decisions are

reached. It is for this reason that the Constitution of 1996 tasked local governments with the responsibility to carry out service delivery at local levels.

Local government is the third sphere of government yet it is the most important wing of government because of its proximity to the citizens, and is regarded as an engine for service delivery to communities. Despite its important role as a service deliverer, communities in South Africa still experience a relatively slow pace of service delivery by municipalities, culminating in ever-growing protests across the country. This is alarming because Section 40 (1) of the Constitution stipulates that government is constituted as national, provincial and local, which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated.

In order to remain relevant, Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act provides for the establishment of ward committees in all ward levels across all local municipalities. In the Handbook for ward committees (2005), ward committees are defined as ordinary workers, playing a critical role in ensuring necessary contact between the people and government institutions. The primary objective of ward committees is to enhance participatory democracy in local government and identify and initiate projects that improve the livelihood of the people they intend to serve. For this reason, Mubangizi and Gray (2011:212) observe that the ANC started with the best of intentions and the result was a range of social service policies based on human rights and social justice standards of the Western world, such as the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (RSA 1994), the White Paper on Social Welfare (RSA 1997a), the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (RSA 1997b), and the White Paper on Local Government (RSA 1998).

As a principle that shapes good governance, the rule of law requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced fairly and enjoyed by all citizens. No persons, by virtue of any characteristics, should be deprived of the opportunity to participate in the development of the state. The law ensures the full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities and vulnerable populations. Despite South Africa's appealing legislative framework, it is ironic that most citizens are still being excluded in the arenas of decision-making (Masango, 2002:104). Existing structures of governance are expected to make sure that democracy and democratic rights and privileges are enjoyed by everyone without fear.

The White Paper on Local Government (1998) calls for changes in the way municipalities function in order to meet outcomes of developmental local government. IDPs are thus seen as vehicles to meet this mandate (DPLG 2000:19). Section 35 of the Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000) defines the IDP as the *"principal strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning, and development, and all decisions with regard to planning, management and development in the municipality."* Njenga (2009) observes that IDPs help:

- ensure the effective use of scarce resources in municipalities;
- ensure ward-based planning;
- speed up service delivery;
- attract additional funds;
- strengthen democracy;
- overcome the legacy of apartheid; and
- promote co-ordination among Local, Provincial and National Governmental institutions.

According to Letseka (2003:74), the South African constitution enshrines the right to education for everyone, but the reality is that, almost 22 years after the transition from apartheid to democracy, the country's education system remains relatively differentiated. For instance, schools that serve the majority of poor and previously deprived blacks suffer from systematic inefficiency and dysfunction, while the schools that serve the rich and affluent classes (black and white) are stable and efficient in their delivery of solid education. Letseka (2003:74) further notes the difficulty faced by primary school children learning under trees in the rural areas of Limpopo Province. In some rural villages in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, school children must cross the crocodile-infested Tugela River every day to get to school because the local municipality has not built a bridge so they can safely cross the river.

In her thesis "*The perceptions of Youth on Service Delivery Violence in Mpumalanga Province*", Jili (2012:17) observes that service delivery is not a privilege but a right, according to the Constitution, but accompanying those rights are certain responsibilities on the part of the citizenry. By this the author means that citizens are expected to pay water and electricity rates monthly. Given that most South Africans are unemployed, one wonders how these unemployed citizens will pay their rates. Therefore, having a sound constitution does

not necessarily mean that every citizen has equal access to services provided. Instead, the real issue that needs to be addressed is how effective these constitutional promulgations are to all South African citizens.

2.4 Service delivery in South Africa

2.4.1 Service delivery pre-1994

The concept of service delivery must have existed before 1994 in South Africa, but it was mainly carried out within racial domains; whites enjoyed a lion's share of the national cake while the other races, especially black South Africans, were treated quite unfairly. Dubow and Jeeves (2005:48) remark, for instance, that after 1948 the government moved quickly to reverse the reforms to unemployment insurance, ensuring that African workers were excluded for the next 25 years. Despite this backdrop, the NP never abolished South Africa's extraordinary, non-contributory old-age pensions or disability grants. When this racial discrimination of the black community by the white rulers escalated, Dubow and Jeeves continue, it brought shame and embarrassment to the government both locally and internationally in the 1980s. With constant reforms, the old-age pension remains the core of South Africa's system of welfare to date.

The public welfare, however, blindfolded many South Africans and they took it for granted, contemplating extensions of the welfare system as if such initiatives were commonplace around the world. Dubow and Jeeves (2005:49) state that in its 1994 election manifesto, the Reconstruction and Development Programme, the African National Congress (ANC) promised basic welfare rights, apparently including the right to income security. For this reason, it can be argued that provisions for welfare service in the early 1940s were a short-lived radical moment in the history of social policy in South Africa and one that had enduring significance. According to Dubow and Jeeves (2005:50), Africans, Indians and Coloureds were excluded from social citizenship until the 1940s after which they enjoyed some social rights though with standards defined in racially discriminatory terms despite their political rights. This social citizenship exclusion worsened their situation and poverty among these communities became the order of the day (Shwartz, 2011; Seekings, 2010).

Broodryk and Coetzer (1994:573) conclude that the protest marches that South Africa experienced in 1989 were an indication of a step towards the new South Africa, including the first government-approved peaceful anti-apartheid march in Cape Town and political violence marking the weeks leading up to the September 1989 parliamentary elections. This is invokes the idea, as indicated by Hiidenhovi, Nojonen and Laippala (2002:59) cited in Arries (2008:42) that the consumers' satisfaction with a service or product is the main aim of product design in the field of commodities and trade implying the traditional concept that value is a function of cost and quality is satisfaction. If citizens are not satisfied with services offered to them by their own government, they resort to taking measures to find why and, in the case of South Africa, massive protests seem to be the way to go as exemplified by the ANC's struggle for liberation.

2.4.2 Service delivery post-1994

Mubangizi and Gray (2011:213) offer statistical information to the effect that of South Africa's 47 million people a) 61% of the African population, nearly 38 million, people are poor compared with only 1% of the white population of close to 4.1 million people; b) unemployment is more than 30%;,and c) urban disintegration characterises poor people ravaged by AIDS and HIV. In order to avert acute poverty and unemployment, service delivery becomes a pivotal step to take because of the central role it can play in poverty alleviation (Burger, 2005:483). Accordingly, in the short-term, services can help relieve some of the most severe burdens of destitution, while in the long-term the subsidisation of investments in health, education and other departments can help provide an exit from persistent poverty.

A third of working South Africans of all ages get by on less than $2 a day. Half of South Africans under the age of 24 looking for work cannot find a job. The vast majority of blacks still languish at the bottom end of the economic spectrum; the average income for black households is a sixth of that for whites. For people like doctors, there remains little meaningful opportunity (Fairbanks 2013:30). Poverty is apparently a high social priority in a country where about 37% of households survive on less than R1000 per month. What is central in terms of service delivery here has to do with service outputs and service outcomes

in which the former refers to quantity of service offered, while the latter tries to ascertain whether or not the services rendered improve people's lives.

The amount of poverty in South Africa is bad to an extent that those employed do not get enough money for sustenance. The rate of unemployment is high and those mostly unemployed are the youths. The gap between the rich (mostly whites) and the poor (mostly black) is increasing every day. With these realities, poverty becomes a high social priority. There is a connection between issues of poverty and service delivery, in that services offered (service outputs) and services rendered (service outcomes) determine whether or not people's lives have been improved.

Issues relating to skills and competency discrepancies in the public sector worsen as one gets closer to the citizen. Ramphele (2012:125) observes that at the national level, the departments closest to people, especially vulnerable poor people, such as Education, Health, Social Development and Correctional Services, are often run by poorly equipped people at the operational levels. Provincial and local authority structures are frequently found to have inadequate governance processes in place resulting in ineffective performance that robs the majority of South Africans of their basic needs entitlements. Considering that quality service delivery is, as conceived by Arries (2008:43-44), a multiphase interactive action, which coincides with the characteristics of excellence whereby any unprofessional conduct could reduce its delivery processes, the real questions or issues that need to be addressed in order to alleviate poverty or improve quality service processes are, but are not limited to, the following:

- Does increased decentralisation and participation empower the poor?
- Is community ownership required for successful rural service delivery?
- Does outsourcing to private providers result in the underservicing and overcharging of the poor?
- Do user fees exclude the poor?

As the mandate of public sector organisations is the provision of quality services by government to its citizens, a good reputation is established through quality service provision. Crous (2004) cited in Ngidi (2012:35) argues that through consultation, government ensures

it is not pursuing its own agenda, but rather the general welfare of the broader population by encouraging the public to participate in policy-making. The sole purpose of the public service undertaking consultation is to ascertain that consensus building is observed in almost all public endeavours, the absence of which robs citizens of decent services that they ought to receive. Routine consultations guarantee that the government knows and understands the priorities of citizens. Therefore, all four issues outlined in the previous paragraph matter to empower the poor.

With the first ever democratic elections that occurred in 1994 and the election of the first black president in South Africa an era dawned in which most South Africans, especially the black community and those formerly marginalised under the apartheid regime, nursed hopes for employment opportunities, poverty alleviation, socio-economic and political development. However, these hopes are unfulfilled, which Visser and Twinomlrinzi (2001:1-4) attribute to failure of government to improve public service delivery. Within South Africa, these authors, using the interpretive paradigm primarily to enhance the understanding of the phenomenon of government for public service delivery, contend that their investigation found that the government has one primary service delivery programme, namely social grants. Gray and Mitchell (2007) cited in Mubangizi and Gray (2011:212) contend that policy implementation has proved difficult because of major problems in the public service sector, lack of service delivery capacity and resources, inadequate human resources, widespread corruption, especially in provincial government, and a fee-for-service culture.

Ramphele (2012:123) expresses concern that under the presidency of Thabo Mbeki, a crippled non-health sector was evident and laments breakdown in management under Members of the Executive Committee (MECs) that left a trail of disasters resulting in unnecessary deaths of vulnerable people due to cadre deployments. Further, in the second half of 2011, according to Ramphele (2012:124), the Development Bank of Southern Africa released a report of a study commissioned by the Minister of Health, Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi. The findings are interesting: major health facilities including tertiary hospitals were headed by CEOs who had no experience of health systems. Accordingly, many had qualifications in health administration, which are largely theoretical courses that do not adequately prepare their holders for logistical and technical challenges of running modern health facilities. These misguided appointments boomeranged into decline of quality of public health services with

devastating consequences for poor people. The health, education and social development sectors have been undermined by inappropriate policies, ineffective leadership and management as well as political bargaining within the governing party's tripartite alliance.

While successive post-apartheid South African governments resorted to blaming others for their failure to govern, the reality is quite the opposite. Some strikers explained to reporters that it was black leaders of the National Union of Mines (NUM) and the ANC, not the whites, whose insults and cruelties had driven them to strike. *"We are being exploited; both the government and the unions have failed to come to our rescue"* (Fairbanks, 2013:28). The miners had even repurposed an apartheid-era protest song, swapping *"boers"*, the old nickname for white Afrikaners, with the NUM.

The government is blaming others for its failures and using this to woo voters. In the 2011 local elections, for instance, Ramphele (2012:121) argues the ANC chose to only tell about its successes and the risks voters face if they voted for other parties not committed to the ideals of freedom. Another example, however, showed the contrary though successive ANC administrations publicised as a success. This is particularly regarding provision of housing. Ramphele (2012:121) observes:

> *"The national Home Builders Registration Council reported in 2011 that of the just over 3 million RDP houses built, 2.6 million or 87 per cent were unsafe for those living in them. It estimated that a total of R59 billion was needed to remedy both minor and major defects in these houses. This is the cost of giving tenders to build houses for poor people to politically connected people with limited skills. It further demonstrates how corruption is a tax on poor people who have to forgo basic services and better quality accommodation because money is being diverted into the pockets of those who have captured the state for their own interests. There is no report of any of those involved in these tenders being held to account for failure to perform."*

The analysis of these findings suggests that government is not aligned to the service delivery philosophy, *Batho Pele* (People first). In Arries' (2008:42) view, the underlying belief that captures the *Batho Pele* culture is one of belonging, caring and service. In so doing, public service needs to be transformed by a vision which is representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of clients. This philosophy requires that all governmental departments render public services that resonate with the Human Development Indicators for development.

Batho Pele, in itself, is a government initiative to provide citizens with quality services in every area. However, Tsepo, Conny and Mabel (2007:1-4) note that there have been complaints by citizens that many government departments are not delivering services to the public as prescribed by the Constitution and the White Paper on Transforming of Public Service Delivery. The xenophobic attacks which took place in May 2008, Steenkamp (2009:439-447) explains, are a result of dissatisfaction, intolerance and antagonism or a signal to the government to do better in terms of delivering services. Certainly at the heart of this violence lies socio-economic deprivation.

Courtesy is a *Batho Pele* principle that relates to ethical behavior. Crous (2004), cited in Ngidi (2012:26), suggests that the conduct of public employees should be above reproach in executing their official duties; and public employees should be free from vested, selfish interest and display selfless behaviour. This is in response to some public servants' thinking that they are appointed and paid a salary to better their lifestyle, forgetting that they have to serve tirelessly.

Maseko (2008), cited in Ngidi (2012:23), observes that *Batho Pele* is not outward-looking only, as it also starts from within. He suggests that all sections within government departments should have a set of service standards on how they could contribute towards bringing a better life for all in South Africa and not for self-enrichment. This is to say that the purpose of this world is not to have and to hold, but to give and to serve. If this is upheld as a guiding principle for life, there can be no other meaning for the applicability of quality services in the public sector but to serve and to give.

According to the *Batho Pele* principles public institutions are obliged to adhere to the following:

- Responsibility for providing efficient, effective and economic services;
- Accountability for quality service provision;
- Transparency on how government departments are managed;
- Considerate treatment of the public;
- Information sharing on the quality of services provided;
- Provision of equal services to all citizens; and

- Consulting with citizens about the services they are entitled to receive (White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997:10).

It must be said that the post-1994 government is willing to redress the sufferings of many poor South Africans, but it lacks the tools and technical knowhow. For instance, Krugell, Otto and Van Der Merwe (2009:316) point out that in 1994, South Africa adopted the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to encourage the government to delve into service delivery mechanisms to meet the basic needs of citizens. Strides have been made in this regard to redress the appalling situation of its population. One such example is that, despite bureaucratic inefficiencies and delays, Mubangizi and Gray (2011:214) observe there are several instances where private provision has brought tangible benefits to communities such as the privatisation of the Benoni Fire and Emergency Services in Gauteng that led to reduction in the cost of rates because of savings made by the municipality on labour and capital costs.

Ramphele (2008:14) however, much as she has been critical of the ANC, claims that much achievement has been realised, especially after 1994 democratic elections:

There are signs of success everywhere. We have a national constitution that is widely acclaimed. We have a solid legal and judicial system. We have woven the fragments of our divided past into a nation that calls itself South Africa. We have accomplished some transformation feats in the public sector that were unthinkable…we have a strong and growing private sector that is also increasingly coming to terms with the challenges of broadening the base of participation by black people in growing the wealth of the nation…but we have much more to do to turn our remaining challenges into opportunities for future success. A central challenge in the transformation process is the quality of the human-capital base we have inherited from apartheid.

This implies that not only questions regarding poor education, provision of poor health services to oppressed majority and low levels of skills across sectors to meet the demands of modern socio-economic and political systems can be blamed for poor service delivery today. The real issue is the reality that South Africans, black and white, have had to experience themselves as citizens of a modern, non-racial democracy on their home ground.

Nevertheless, analysis of the positive strides has been limited to national or provincial levels when, in fact, the RDP's main responsibility is meeting the needs of the people at the local governmental level. For this reason, Ile (2010:51-57) states that fifteen years after South

Africa's democratic elections, a significant percentage of the population is yet to access basic services and infrastructure because of government's slow pace of service delivery. In recent times, following the April 2009 national elections, various forums were held to debate good governance and issues related to service delivery. The emphases of these forums are not only to have better policies, but also to speed up service delivery and improve the quality of life by the ANC government. Ile (2010) suggests that the government revise and consider all mechanisms that hampered service delivery in the past.

Sing (2012:550) explains that as the largest employer in the country, the Public Service (national and provincial departments) underwent three transformation phases. During 1994-1999, the era of Rationalisation and Policy Development was predominant. It focused on rationalising the Public Service into a single outcomes-based institution in order to replace the eleven separate racially and ethnically-based Public Services born out of the apartheid regime. It was a period during which the Public Service had to ensure and direct the pace of reconciliation and nation-building. Modernisation and Implementation dominated the period 1999-2004. Emphasis was on the enactment and amendment of legislation and regulations so as to enable public service departments to accept responsibilities for overall management. This entailed decentralisation and delegation of authority to executive authorities. Ministers and senior public service managers formed the enabling measures. The Public Service was obliged to institutionalise and use information technologies, a practice necessary to ensure economical, efficient and effective service delivery. On the labour front, many collective agreements were reached. From 2004 onwards, the era of Accelerating Implementation commenced. It became incumbent on the Public Service to give momentum to maintaining and promoting sustainable livelihoods, ensuring access to services, developing and sustaining comprehensive social security measures, promoting the constitutional rights of the public   as well as establishing collaborative partnerships with Africa and the global community.

In order to strengthen and achieve service delivery mandates within a national and international context, Sing (2012:551) continues, a discourse led by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) began emerging in 2007. Central to the discourse was the fact that the Constitution mandates the national, provincial and municipal sectors of government, although distinct, to function jointly in order to secure and sustain a high quality of life, living and livelihood for all South Africans. To enable and give effect to this

integrated approach to service delivery, the Public Administration Management Bill was published in 2008. It establishes the policy and organisational requirements, norms and standards necessary for enabling integrated service delivery. Significantly, this approach is a paradigm shift from the old-fashioned single public service department practice to a convenient single-window practice, functioning either through a physical structure or in cyberspace.

True to democratic-spacing and transparency-based public administration and management practice, the Public Administration Bill stipulates the maintenance and establishment of service charters by institutions of government, private and non-governmental sectors. Sing (2012:551) observes that also included in this Bill is the determination of a framework for service centres across South Africa. It clearly sets out the role and purpose of information and communication technologies in enhancing integrated service delivery. Economical, efficient, effective and accountable service delivery is a constitutional mandate. Organisational effectiveness and clear definition of roles and responsibilities are pre-requisites for impact-driven service delivery. To this end, the Bill makes provision for the establishment of national and provincial departments as well as municipalities.

The South African Handbook on Community Development Workers (DPSA, 2007) indicates that despite efforts to decentralise through the three spheres of democratic government, with each sphere in its own way striving to be responsive, it still remains a challenge for communities to communicate effectively with their elected representatives and government officials. In his State of the Nation address on 14 February 2003 President Thabo Mbeki identified the need for a new public service stratum of multi-skilled community development workers to establish community development workers as ordinary workers, playing a crucial role in deepening democracy to enable communities to shape government service delivery to meet their needs and to empower communities to make more effective use of existing government services.

Ward committees have come to be identified as prominent channels for communication through which communities inform municipal councils about their needs, expectations and problems. Naidu (2008:86) thinks that the present structure and form of ward committees in South Africa is dysfunctional and that it has undermined the role participation plays within

the municipal structure. Some of these dysfunctions, according to Buccus et al (2007:23), emanate from one or more of the following:

- Ward committee members lack credibility to influence decision-making.
- Ward committee members lack commitment in their endeavours.
- There is an evident lack of training for ward committees and some perceive ward committees as a mere stepping stone towards realising their political ambitions.
- Power relations (that is political interference) undermine the role of ward committees – a ward councillor is a politically-elected representative and, by default, s/he is chairperson of a ward committee that has the potential of promoting partisan interests.
- Ward councillorss do not support community development workers in performing their function.
- CDWs experience exclusion within municipal matters because they are perceived as government informants.
- Sector departments do not prioritise development cases brought by CDWs to their attention.

In fact, in the Community Development Workers Handbook, the roles of the Community Development Workers (CDW) are clearly stipulated, among which are:

- To link communities with all government spheres and departments
- To facilitate public participation in government development projects (for example, Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Local Economic Development (LED)
- To find solutions to identified needs and blockages by interacting with national, provincial and local government structures.

The notion of participation has always been central to the philosophy of community development, which advanced the idea that in a representative democracy both formal and informal structures are needed for ordinary people at the local level to have a voice in decision-making processes. Participation or political participation is defined as *"taking part in the formulation, passage or implementation of public policies"* (Anderson et al, 1972:5). This definition is, however, insufficient because it may be assumed as undifferentiated. What it really means is the mode of participation, intensity of participation and quality of participation. In other words, it needs to spell out who takes part in what, where, when, and

how. 'Imbizo' (singular) or 'izimbizo' (plural) came to be adopted as one of the ways through which both formal and informal structures can play part in their own governance and service delivery processes.

According to Buccus et al. (2007:19) *"izimbizo are the most common mechanism through which ordinary citizens experience public participation."* Carrim (2001:14) asserts that the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 requires municipalities to *"develop a culture of governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance"*. According to Hartslief (2008:138), etymologically, *"imbizo"* derives its origin from the Zulu language, meaning "gathering". According to Buccus et al. (2007:44), the term *'izimbizo'* has always been part and parcel of South Africans' culture. It has formed part of the African indigenous knowledge for many years and carries the traditional association of a gathering. In principle 'izimbizo':

- Strengthen the relationship between the state and citizens.
- Instil civilism and people-centered governance.
- Are intended to provide members of the public with opportunities to receive direct communication about government programmes; and hold government leaders accountable for service delivery.

Buccus et al (2007), cited in Mubangizi (2011:216), acknowledge that while 'izimbizo' attract large numbers of the community, they do not necessarily translate into meaningful participation. As such good organisation and a strong political will are required to change an 'imbizo' from a social event into a participatory one. If this is not properly articulated, 'izimbizo' may suffer from irregularities because they provide little opportunities for meaningful input and lack continuity or follow-ups. Since humanity began to cluster together to form communities there has been a need to satisfy its collective needs. Cloete (1989:2) and Cloete (1993:4) note that the ancient Greeks and Romans were some of the first civilisations to establish cities and what are today referred to as municipalities, while South Africa started such gatherings in Cape Town after 1652.

Efforts towards maintaining a quality service delivery require an integrated approach to tackle the challenges facing South Africa. There is a need for extensive training and development of public service managers at all levels of the three-sector service delivery

configuration. This alludes to what Sing (2012:552) calls a 'massification approach.' In order to promote and sustain this massification approach, the Public Administration, Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) came into being on 1 August 2007. This was a reconstitution of the South African Management and Development Institute (SAMDI). According to Sing (2012), 'PALAMA' in Sesotho means 'to ascend and get aboard'. The principal aim of 'PALAMA' is to facilitate training, rather than be a provider of training, moving from a competitor for training to collaborator in training involving multi-stakeholder partnerships. The new capacitating driving force in Sing (2012:553) is given momentum by Clause 32 of the Public Administration and Management Bill (PAMB). In fact, Clause 32 stipulates that PALAMA must promote and enhance the development of human capacity in all service delivery institutions. This task must be quality and impact-driven. The new capacitating approach is the bedrock for supporting the three-sector unified approach to service delivery in a developmental state. PALAMA was later repositioned and received presidential assent to become the National School of Government (NSG) through an Act of Parliament in December 2014. The main role of the NSG is to deliver services that address the challenges of poverty and inequality in South Africa.

Another significant factor that hampers quality service delivery in South Africa is the rapid population increase that public servants have to deal with. Whether or not critics will argue otherwise, population density presents a direct and symbiotic relationship between human poverty and ecological destruction. Two main factors usually contribute to population increase in any given country: high birth rates and foreign migrations. Ramphele and McDowell (1991:21), for example, argue that pressure on the environment is increased by high birth-rates among the poor of South Africa but, above all, by the artificial movement and distribution of that population. Citing Charles Simkins, a specialist in Southern African demography, these editors argue that a rapidly increasing population, in the context of slow economic growth and inadequate development, could lead to even more rapid deterioration of the environment, hence poor service delivery in these areas.

2.5 Good governance in public service delivery

In the context of South Africa, with its apartheid history, good governance serves as a corrective measure that seeks to bring government closer to the people and people closer to

government. This study has identified 7 characteristics that are associated with the principles of good governance, ethics and integrity. They are outlined in 2.5.1 to 2.5.7 below:

2.5.1 Participation

As stated earlier, public participation is an important element of good governance, which still remains unrealised (Zondi, 2014:9). The absence of this indicator (public participation) shackles the consolidation of good governance. Hemson (2007:66) claims that participation, as the first element of good governance, reveals that non-discriminatory participation platforms for both men and women are a cornerstone of good governance. Participation could either be direct or through a legitimate intermediate institution or representation. Public participation has an inherent capability to open up opportunities of freedom of association and expression and also advocate for the establishment of organized civil society. The legitimation of participation allows for the establishment of civil societies which can be defined as *"a pluralist realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or a set of shared rules where people act collectively in a public sphere"* (Diamond, 1994:58).

2.5.2 Transparency

Increasing access is meant to include, especially for the traditionally disadvantaged, providing useful information so that citizens are aware of government activities, increasing openness and transparency in government to foster effective stakeholder participation and providing effective and efficient public service delivery. According to Crous (2004: 1), cited in Ngidi (2012:25), transparency helps keep the public service clean, effective and free from nepotism and corruption. According to Cheema and Rondinelli (2007:56) *"transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are to be done in a manner that follows rules and regulations that are clear to all parties involved"*. In a recent study, Karamoko (2011: 1) argues that the South African government is not yet transparent enough about its channels of decision-making. The absence of transparency within bureaucracy triggers uncontrollable protests as has been evident in South Africa across all provinces. In good governance, decisions should be made largely on the buy-in of citizens because they are affected by a social problem. The community needs urgent service delivery intervention and

deserves to be heard. Mubangizi (2011:9) argues that the decision-making process should be transparent enough in spaces for public participation so that people are able to see what is about to be implemented for their benefit.

2.5.3 Responsiveness

According to Gaventa (2005:66) *"good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe. Failure to meet this element damages the essence of good governance. Being responsive also means integrating citizens' voices when tailoring responding development interventions or plans"*. There is usually a chasm between the citizen and the central or regional/provincial levels of government. Citizens find this gulf difficult to span because their members of parliament, for instance, would be relatively unknown to them. In contrast, a strong system of local government endears these representatives to the electorate and it may even be possible for the Member of Parliament personally to visit the voter.

Kendall (1991:88) suggests that because of its smaller scale, local government can and should respond quickly to local needs. Local government is adaptable. Consequently its response ought to be faster than when a citizen approaches central government about an issue. Ordinary citizens usually experience some frustrations with central government when not represented because of the possibility that they may not be heard or that responses to their queries may not be timely. If it happens that citizens experience poor relations with their local authority, the bureaucratic frustrations encountered at the higher level are also likely to occur at the local level. It is, therefore, vital that local authorities keep abreast of the actual needs of local inhabitants so that they do not govern by guess work, but base their governing functions on the day-to-day realities at the local level.

2.5.4 Consensus-orientation

This element is evidently meagre because 20 years into democracy, most South African citizens are still feeling sidelined in decisions on developmental programmes that directly pertain to them. Protests across South African provinces are indications that the government does not adequately collaborate with citizens in collective decision-making. Gaventa (2005:34) notes that: *"reaching a consensus in good governance means the acceptance of*

ideas from all parties to be affected by a final decision." This basically means that even if there are mechanisms in place, participation is by only some sections of people and not by the general population.

2.5.5 Equity and inclusiveness

Public participation is easy to achieve if it is rooted on equitable levels and where everyone is included. To feel a sense of belonging is one of the most satisfying attributes a citizen of a given family, society or country can have. Karamoko (2011:19) envisions that it is lack of equity and inclusiveness that have provoked uncontrollable protests in South Africa. When one feels like a foreigner in one's country, it engenders anger to an extent that protest is inevitable because of the social exclusion and 'exile' from one's home. Such feelings in a governmental structure emanate from lack of consultation and exclusion during important decision-making processes relating to issues of service delivery that directly affects citizens. Consultation, according to Bekker (n.d.:54), means that the people, and not any party leaders or other influential person, persons or body, should ultimately decide which public policies would best serve to advance the common welfare. Mubangizi (2005: 9) argues that in the context of South Africa there are elements of government institutions attempting to become responsive, but the challenge is that they seem to use a top-down approach and, in most cases, exclude the majority of the citizens, especially the poor, from voicing their opinions on governmental agenda. The top-down approach discourages the essence of good government.

2.5.6 Effectiveness and efficiency

The South African public service will be judged by one criterion (Ngidi, 2012:208) - its effectiveness in delivering services that meet the basic needs of all South African citizens. The author calls for all organisations to monitor their performance on a regular basis to ensure that they are either meeting or exceeding their own service mandates. That standard should be as simple, quantitative and easy to analyse as possible to allow for quick comparisons with past performance. This exercise is to invoke the idea that service standards are an integral part of any service improvement initiative and, consequently, deserve a significant amount of attention. This will only bring out the beauty of the correlation between high customer satisfaction ratings and the public's opinion of government.

Scotts (2009) argues that: *"good governance means that processes and institutions should produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal."* Fortuin (2010:10) contends that there is limited evidence of government being effective in responding to the needs of people. Government institutions are still very far from ensuring efficiency in the delivery of services to people. Karamoko (2011:20) claims that a large number of protests have also been about questioning government's effectiveness in the provision of service delivery and a demand for value for money.

2.5.7 Accountability

Diamond (1994: 5) claims that accountability is a key requirement for good governance. Not only governmental institutions, but also the private sector and civil society organisations must be accountable to the public. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law. Mubangizi (2010: 10) argues that democratic states still lack accountability to their constituencies and adds that levels of poor accountability or no accountability dents the maturity or deepening of democracy. Poor accountability on the part of government destroys citizens' trust and the state's legitimacy. This often leads to citizens collaborating to overthrow the government, instead of supporting and protecting it. It further reduces levels of patriotism and a sense of belonging in the process of cementing the process of forming the nation state.

Evidently, South Africa as a democratic country has failed to realise adequate implementation of this element of good governance. This evident failure of good governance poses a major setback for the country to become a developmental state.

2.6 Implications of poor service delivery

Persistent failure of government to deliver quality services to citizens has resulted in overwhelming protests in South Africa since 1994. The sense of relative deprivation and inequality within an urban context is pivotal to conceptualising why protests occur. People are patient enough to wait for service delivery in their vicinity but patience runs short when they keep seeing other municipalities get maximum quality service delivery in good time while they continue waiting in vain. Constant marginalisation and social exclusion felt by communities in informal settlements, the general desperation for services in these areas, and

lack of information from the municipality are some factors that stir protests. Governments at all levels (national, provincial and local) should not be aloof, but rather devise some practical measures to determine and understand why service delivery protests are taking place and what can be done to mitigate them. Several studies recognise that the youth are the main participants in service delivery violence, yet there is no study that explores why the youth are the main proponents of violent protests.

Jain (2010), cited in Jili (2012:36), defines violent protests as those in which some of the participants have engaged in physical acts that either cause immediate physical harm to some person or are substantially likely to result in such harm. The intentional injury of a police officer, foreigner, government officials, burning down houses or other structures, looting shops, throwing stones at people, burning tyres to blockade roads and other similar acts comprise violent protest. Acts such as organising marches to government departments, peaceful demonstrations, intentionally pouring human waste in airport buildings and hanging posters detailing lists of grievances are designated as non-violent protest.

Statistically, Jain (2010), cited in Jili (2012:36), reported that in 2007 approximately 41.66% of protests were violent, including a high of 48% in the third quarter and a low of 23.08% in the fourth quarter. In 2008 approximately 38.13% of protests were violent, with a peak of 45.45% in the second quarter and a trough of 34.28% in the fourth quarter. In 2009 approximately 43.60% of protests were violent, with a high of 50.65% in the third quarter and a low of 21.95% in the fourth quarter. In 2010, approximately 54.08% of protests were violent, with 64.06% in the first quarter and 35.29% in the second quarter being violent. It can be seen from this scenario that the proportion of violent protests were relatively constant during 2007-2009 and increased in 2010. With these statistics on violent protests throughout these years, one wonders why the trend is rising, instead of decreasing, as it should if the government were committed to quality service delivery.

This alarming increase in community protests has been documented by other organisations, with Municipal IQ reporting that 105 major service delivery protests had taken place during 2009 and that early trends in 2010 showed that the year had the potential to match, if not exceed, the already high 2009 figures. By and large, community protests have become the order of the day over the last couple of years and seem to be continuing. Municipal IQ also

indicated that summer and winter produce varying rates of protests; that is, few protests in summer and more in winter, indicating that those who do not have basic services like electricity and water and adequate houses feel the wrath of winter and engage in protests.

Allan and Heese (2011), cited in Jili (2012:38), report that there is an escalation in the number and severity of service delivery protests; this is confirmed by the Municipal IQ's Hotspots Monitor, which indicates that the occurrence of major service delivery protests across South Africa registered its highest mark since 2004 in 2011. Given this, there is a growing concern amongst the public and policy analysts as to why these protests take place, when government and analysts' response has so far done little to curb public fears. Sometimes, people are uncertain whether or not these protests are all about quality service delivery or whether other extraneous confounding factors play a part. Municipal IQ, on its part, has concluded that the term *"service delivery protest",* if not always accurate, is adequate, as it describes a protest that is galvanised by inadequate local services or delayed service delivery, which the municipality is responsible for.

Most importantly, in most of these recent violence and protests, it is the youth who are involved. African youths are generally confronted with issues relating to joblessness, HIV and AIDS, poor health facilities and service delivery. The Southern Africa Trust (2011), cited in Jili (2012:38), has reported that Southern African Youth Movement's (SAYM) President Alfred Sigulda argues that the challenges the region faces are about young people. The most hungry are young people, the unemployed are young people and the working poor are young people. Even though Africa has the African Union Youth Charter, adopted by the African Union in 2006, which recognises the rights of young people and calls on all state parties to ensure that national policies include young people's development, this is far from realized. Jili (2012:38), quoting Clayton Peters, divisional head for skills development and national youth service at South Africa's National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), argues that few policies at national level specifically address the needs of young people. Since it is the youth who are mostly involved in protests across South Africa, it is of paramount importance to get to the essence of what stirs them to protest either violently or peacefully.

An area notorious for service-related protests, especially in 2005 and 2006, was the community of Phomolong within the Matjhabeng municipality. Botes et al. (2000), cited in Mubangizi and Gray (2011:216), argue that these protests were directed at Matjhabeng municipality and brought to the surface by widespread dissatisfaction of citizens with their local government, not least with some of the goals of its IDP, such as debt recovery, the introduction of prepaid meter systems and rightsizing of the municipal organization. It is interesting to note that during the protests, it became clear that many people were ignorant of the IDP process, rendering community participation insufficient and ineffective. Unawareness indicates lack of information sharing with the local citizens. A leading South African Sunday newspaper documented no less than 15 serious incidents of protests that occurred in the area within a year. Service delivery protests spread like wild fire against local municipalities in smaller, rural and poorly resourced towns. Between February 2009 and March 2010, Keepile (2010), cited in Mubangizi and Gray (2011:216), reported that no less than 25 service delivery protests occurred. These protests in themselves are signals that the community wants to be part of its own governance as well as a cry for creating space for dialogue on understanding state-society relations.

Research carried out by the Municipal IQ's Hotspots Monitors showed clear evidence that most protests continue to occur in informal settlements in the largest metropolitan areas, a perpetuation of the trend of previous years. Cities such as Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and Cape Town in recent times experienced a surge in service delivery protests in 2011 for instance, in addition to a number of specific cases in the provinces of the North West and Mpumalanga, such as the now notorious Balfour. Municipal IQ research on poverty levels in wards, for instance, recorded protests indicating that while communities in these vicinities are very poor and contain some of the highest unemployment rates in the country, they still have better access to local services than residents in the poorest municipalities in the rural areas in Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal than the national average. This, however, is not a consolation because their neighbouring wards in more formalised areas benefit from upgraded services.

Municipal service delivery protests according to Matebesi (2011), cited in Jili (2012:34), were to a large extent responsible for making the former black townships ungovernable. In 2004, for instance, after the dispensation of the new political wave, South Africa experienced momentous unrest at local government level, despite the emphasis on good municipal

governance by the national government. Incapacity to deliver on mandates, coupled with factors such as individual political jungles, poor communication and ineffective client interface were key contributors to the surge in violent protests. Matebesi's (cited in Jili, 2012:34) study identified not only the reasons for the protests, but also early warning signals and provided lessons on how to prevent or manage these in future.

In studying the consequences of violent and non-violent protests, Renat (2011:78) observes that the current literature is mostly mute on the issue of why some ethnic collectives prefer violent political action over non-violence. Renat's study (2011) reveals that ethnic groups that enjoy a higher educational status are less likely to employ violent strategies, but rather resort to peaceful means of finding solutions to their problems. This conclusion was reached by testing the hypothesis using data on 238 ethnic groups in 106 states from 1945 to 2000. The results of the statistical analysis indicated that those with higher levels of education attainment were more prone to engage in non-violent protest as opposed to those groups with low education levels. This implies that education is necessary to informing people when it comes to problem solving and that the government has failed to offer quality education to some of these communities that turn violent. Ramphele (2012:120) succinctly puts it that the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that was to have provided housing, water and sanitation, education and health care for poor people was neither successful nor sustained long enough to adequately address the vast needs left in the wake of so many decades of neglect. Nemeroff (2010:19) reported housing protests in the Western Cape and the Free State in which councillors were dragged from public meetings by citizens angry about lack of water and also riots in the Mandela metropolitan area. This reveals public dissatisfaction with the slow pace at which the government fulfills its service delivery mandate.

Closely linked to the housing issue is the provision of basic services including water, electricity and sanitation. This does not only affect the ANC, but also other political parties that govern some regions, such as the DA. For instance, Ramphele (2012:121) illustrates that the ANC made much of the inequity of the Makhaza open toilet saga in Khayelitsha as an example of the Democratic Alliance's racist allocation of resources in Cape Town. According to Ramphele (2012), no one can justify 51 open toilets even if one could argue about the details of the Makhaza case. It is clear that the task or responsibility for executing the Cape

Town project in Khayelitsha was no excuse for the DA-governed city to allow toilets of destitute residents to remain open until the incident was brought to light. In this situation, one can trace the trends of blame shifting and lack of good relationships between government and some political parties. Here, the ANC blamed the DA for not providing proper toilets for its indigent citizens. The most interesting part Ramphele (2012:122) identified is that when the scandal of 1600 open toilets in the Rammulotsi Township in Viljoenskroon came to light just a week before the May 2011 local elections, the ANC at first denied knowing about them. Later, the Free State secretary general of the ANC acknowledged that they had become aware of them in July 2010. This is a typical example of responsible government refusing to be responsible, but blaming others for their failure.

In as much as it is obvious that local governments inadequately deliver services to citizens because of insufficient budgets, corruption, unskilled personnel or that citizens are not willing to participate in government structures such as ward committees for lack of information, there is, however, as indicated by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa's (IDASA) Dialogue Unit, frustration over service delivery which has been exacerbated by dysfunctional relationships between citizens and government officials, even among government departments and between government and other political parties that all have compounding mutual negative misperceptions about each other.

Unions play a vital role in South African workforce. Every decision that the public sector takes has to be in consultation with the trade unions formations. Dr. Meshack Radebe, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Environmental Affairs cited in Phenyane and Ngubane (2013:10), argued that since he came to office, public servants have been engaging in acts of corruption in their provision of service to citizens and thus fulfilling their egocentric needs before those of citizens. According to Radebe, unions demanded his removal when he confronted the corrupt actions of some of these public servants. What Radebe has done with these threats of removal is not part of this argument. Mbili, cited in Padayachee (2013:2), asserts that unions have become government in South Africa which, to some extent, blocks government commitment to provide effective, efficient and economic services to the citizens because of interference by these unions.

"The relations between unions and their political friends have suffered something of rapture, and we find the trade unions have really had to take much more independent state" (Jennings, 2013:4). Since many union pioneers went into high positions in government, politics and management has drained capacity from unions. Due to lack of capacity, unions are too quick to strike, often illegally, and this is becoming a major threat to the economy. This is due to a double-edged issue: the unions are short of good leaders and the government is short of people who can implement policy. Jennings (2013:4) argues that real policy implementers (managers) are easily targeted as sell-outs. This very fact makes competent people either refuse appointments to offices or assume office but behave in accordance with what his or her already-in-job colleagues do. Grounds for negotiation are not prepared, unions and employers just embark on negotiations, which becomes very adversarial and suddenly results in a wildcat strike.

President Jacob Zuma quoted in Tau, Sapa and Reuters (2013:1) condemns illegal strikes, but is of the view that strikes are a feature of democracy and should not be regarded as a problem. Serving under the same government, former trade unionist, Cyril Ramaphosa, Deputy President of the ANC, quoted in Weavind (2013:1), made his position on workers' rights clear when he ordered Shanduka Coal Management to review its decision to dismiss 250 workers who staged on an illegal strike. Given the stance of these two powerful men, one would agree that illegal strikes are not condoned as determined in the Constitution of South Africa. However, to dismiss 250 workers because they are striking for their own rights, which these powerful figures failed to fulfill, is contradictory. Who could possibly rip a poor man or woman off his or her single and only blanket during winter when the poor person has no electricity and goes to claim it, but the person who is assigned the responsibility to provide electricity does not provide it? When two powerful factional leaders in the same ruling party have different views on strikes, whose policy and principle is being used? If top government officials are not coordinated in governmental goals, how do they provide quality services to the people they serve? Given the lack of coordination among the ruling party's leaders, no strike should be termed legal or illegal.

It is true that sometimes citizens abuse their power because anything done by people for the people is either good or bad though transformed government that prioritises its citizens creates no chance for unethical behavior. Ngidi (2012:211) notes that government officials

nowadays due to this barrier have a tendency to not consult or render services in a transparent manner largely because they are challenged for petty issues by customers, both internal and external. This creates an obstacle for managers to be effective, efficient and economical, because during the consultation process and being transparent, the recipients of services always look for ammunition to knock down the management.

Most of the abuse of power resides with the top public servants. Money meant to improve people's lives is being used by top government officials to fulfil their selfish interests. Malan and Smith (2001:61) argue that leaders who adopt an egoistic position perpetuate an institutional culture of poor governance and performance. In Dorasamy's (2010:50) view, often a culture of unethical conduct reigns to the detriment of a competent public service. An example to consolidate these arguments lies with the rubrics of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses meant to fulfil the South African Constitution, 1996 (26) (1), which states that *'everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing'*; but these houses are being sold by the very councillors that have been voted to power. Afrika and Hofstatter (2013:2) further state that Sphiwe Nyanda, the former communication Minister, could not ask Dina Pule, the then Minister of Communications about her private life; instead he had to approve Pule's trip with her lover. Even if it is not yet proven, the report of the Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, about President Zuma's Nkandla residence upgrade is yet another example of how top government officials abuse their power by robbing the poor to better their private lives. The South African President and the ruling party are tirelessly making efforts to deal with corruption and poor service delivery. This is evidenced in the reshuffling of the cabinet more than three times in one term and in the removal of ministers. The question still remains: how have these measures improved the quality of life of ordinary South Africans regarding service delivery?

In the South African Police Services (SAPS) more abuse of power is revealed. The guiding motto of SAPS is 'Protect *and Serve.*' Nevertheless, the authority vested in them helps some police officers get away with murder since few citizens understand their rights. In most cases, when rape victims seek help they end up being humiliated and raped by the same officers whose main mandate is to serve and protect. Mkhize (2013:4) confirms that in Ondini (Northern KwaZulu-Natal) a family went to a police station to open a rape case. On arrival the suspect attended them and chaos erupted in the police station. The family since then has

not received any information regarding progress on the case including the court appearance of the suspect. The often repeated accusation that the police protect their own is not farfetched. The acquittal of seven police officers in Tlhabi (2013:2) for the murder of Tatane has seriously undermined the entire criminal justice system. Because of all these and similar circumstances, the public thinks it has the right to riot and protest. However, the poor continue to be marginalised.

Other reasons for the dysfunctional public sector are the number of vacancies and the misalignment between those deployed to positions and their capacities to execute the assigned responsibilities. Ramphele (2012:124) argues that the widespread nature of the problem is illustrated in reports from the Auditor-General:

- All national departments had an average vacancy rate of 18 per cent with the highest being 46 per cent of the positions for senior managers and highly skilled staff.
- The Auditor General reported that 11 departments were not complying with acceptable time frames and only five of those had reported (as they are required to do) on the reasons for their non-compliance.
- At times officials were requested to act in more senior positions than those for which they were qualified, but for periods not exceeding 12 months, yet instances were found where officials were receiving acting allowances beyond the 12-month cut-off point. It was pointed out that *'prolonged acting periods can be an indication of ineffective processes to appoint or recruit suitable permanent staff'*.
- The selection processes for personnel have specific procedures for verifying criminal and financial/asset records, citizenship, financial status, qualifications and previous employment, but the report found evidence that they were not being followed at all in some departments (for example, Defence, The Presidency and Public Works) while the processes were incomplete in other departments (for example, Water Affairs, Home Affairs, Health, Human Settlements).

The challenge of delivering essential basic services fell to municipalities that, because of their meagre resources, were forced into partnership with private sector producers. Given that some municipalities are either too big or too small, and given that in some circumstances municipal and local leaders are either incompetent or corrupt, quality service delivery to

beneficiaries has been halted. The SAIRR Fast Facts, found in Ramphele (2012:126), reports that in October 2010, in his medium-term budget review, the Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan, said that government agencies were investigating fraudulent tenders valued at R25 billion. The Special Investigating Unit (SIU), the report says, estimates that 20 to 25 per cent of state procurement expenditure, amounting to roughly R30 billion, is lost to overpayment or theft every year. To confirm the intensity of corrupt practices in the government department, Ramphele (2012:126) argues that more than 1540 cases of fraud involving some R850 million in social grants in KwaZulu-Natal alone were reported to the police in an 18-month period. Public officers such as Sicelo Shiceka, Minister of Traditional Affairs and Co-operative Governance for instance, spent more than R335000 on a visit to Switzerland to see a girlfriend in prison while claiming to be on official 'World Cup duties'. He was subsequently fired from office in 2011 after the Public Protector found him guilty of dishonesty and the abuse of public resources.

Another prominent example of abuse of power and public resources is the case involving the then Commissioner of Police, General Bheki Cele, and Gwen Nkabinde-Mahlangu in 2010 when they leased out office premises for government departments at inflated rentals and without proper tender procedures to politically connected businessman Roux Shabangu - one in Pretoria and one in Durban. The (date) August 2010 *Sunday Times* cited in Ramphele (2012:127) reported that the National Police Commissioner, General Bheki Cele, had breached tender rules in approving a R500 million lease for new office accommodation for the police in Pretoria. Subsequently, the Public Protector, Ms Thuli Madonsela, ascertained that Cele was involved in unlawful acts and he was axed in June 2012 by the current President, Jacob Zuma, while the then Minister of Public Works, Gwen Nkabinde-Mahlangu was dismissed in October 2011. The ruling party's condoning of such corrupt behaviour violates all rules for the accountability of public servants. Ironically, other public servant found guilty of disregard of proper public conduct and accountability are being rewarded with senior positions, which seems to convey the message that as long as the governing party accepts you as a worthy and loyal member, wrong-doing is of no consequence.

In the health sector, things are not good either. Even if Kersbergen's (1996:169) claims that the healthcare system of the 21st century is changing as a result of healthcare reforms focusing on cost, quality and access, Jooste and Jasper (2012:57) argue that in spite of the

fact that the South African government spends 8.7% of its GDP on health (more than any other African country), mortality rates for children younger than 5 years of age have increased since 1990. Arries (2008:42) further stresses that consumers of healthcare have become increasingly aware of their right of access to quality healthcare and participation in healthcare decisions that impact on their health. Decreased resources and budget restrictions are a reality for healthcare institutions in South Africa and could be one of the major drawbacks since many healthcare centres cannot keep up with modern equipment to facilitate their work with patients.

2.7 Summary

The picture that emerges of a public service struggling to come to terms with its representation of the framework is the right step (however limited); it is in the realm of implementation where it really matters. The sad reality is that the interface between public servants and citizens is still characterised by un-empathetic public servants and disempowered citizens. In the absence of rigourous monitoring and penalties for non-compliance, this dreadful past and present is also the disconcerting future. The quality of public service delivery depends on the *"People first"* principle, not on egocentric (selfish) motives.

While South Africa has a comprehensive legislative framework governing service delivery, multi-dimensional obstacles continue to provide opportunities for unethical conduct which hinders implementation of effective, efficient and economic service delivery. Despite laws, regulations and performance management appraisals in the public sector, challenges still remain and people continue to fight for their lives. Though apartheid had its share in inequality in service provision, the gaps created continue to expand. Amenities of life must be made available for public servants at workplaces, for example, rehabilitation centres similar to the fitness programme for soccer players. Public servants' self-image must be addressed; reasonable accommodation for every employer (employee?) must be prioritised; and counselling sessions must be made available.

For South Africa to be effective, efficient and economical in its mandate it must train its progressive communities on rights and limitations and available resources must be realised. *Batho Pele* must be progressively applied; it must graduate from being a White Paper into an Act. It must also be advanced as a tool to eliminate levels of malpractice in both the private and public sectors. *Batho Pele* must also be used as a tool to measure performance appraisal by different leaders in government and the public sector. South Africa has to learn from welldeveloped countrieswhat it required to advance to that stage; even adopting the private sector style in managing human resources will definitely make a difference. Batho Pele agency is being coined in South Africa and its mission is generosity, opportunity, leadership and development. Its role will be to facilitate the implementation of *Batho Pele* principles in South Africa.

The South African government has to be constantly aware of and promote new, innovative and creative means of overcoming the challenges of a developmental state. Evidence of such innovative and creative action is reflected in the three-government sector approach to service delivery described and explained in the Public Administration Management Bill of 2008. This capacitating innovation is reflected in the establishment of the Public Administration, Leadership, and Management Academy in August 2007. However, joint strategic actions by legislators, leadership of service delivery institutions, and civil society formations, will serve to effectively ensure that the three-government approach and the capacitating institutions measure, achieve and sustain their objectives.

CHAPTER 3:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 discussed the literature relevant to this study. As part of the literature review in the previous chapter, studies dealing with service delivery in general and in South Africa were discussed. The dynamics of service delivery in pre- and post-democratic South Africa were discussed and an allusion to *Batho Pele*, a South African policy on the attitude of public service, was also made. This chapter provides the theoretical framework underwriting the study. A theoretical framework guides the process of a study. According to Mertens (1998:3) a theoretical framework, *"has implications for every decision made in the research process"*. The theoretical framework that underwrites this study is the service quality-theory (SERVQUAL). This chapter unpacks the service-quality theory and attempts to point out its relevance to the study.

3.2 Understanding services

Services vary in their interpretation and meaning. According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2011:37) and Payne (1993:37) services can be understood as economic activities offered by one party to another or activities containing some element of intangibility. Services are intangible because they are actions or performances, not objects. This particular attribute is a pivotal feature of services. Since they are performances or actions, they involve some levels of interactions with customers or with property in their possession and do not result in a transfer of ownership. Quality service delivery can, therefore, be understood as an act or multiphase interactive action carried out by staff in one moment or situation, the dimensions of which are assurance of competence, active attentiveness, dissemination of information, polite manners and helpfulness, which add valuable meaning to consumers' experiences (Hiidenhovi et al., 2002:60). As such, Payne (1993:7) observes that four unique characteristics stand out to distinguish between services and goods: intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability.

3.2.1 Intangibility

Intangibility refers to the immateriality and non-empirical nature of something; they cannot be touched or even located; only their reflex actions can be seen. The complexity in perceiving the intangibility of services is further indicated by Zeithaml et al. (2009:20) as the most distinguishing characteristics of service. Since services are considered as performances or actions, rather than objects, they do not appeal to the senses. That is, they cannot be seen, felt, tasted or touched in the same manner as tangible goods. Mudie and Cottam (1999:5) make it even harder to understand the intangibility of service when they note that potential customers are usually not in a position to perceive a service before, during or after the services is delivered.

More often than not, services are described using tangible nouns, but this obscures the essential nature of the service which remains intangible. Berry (1980) (cited in Gabbott and Hogg, 1998:27), argues that even though the performance of most services is supported by tangibles, the essence of what is purchased is a performance. Therefore as McLuhan (1964), cited in Gabbott and Hogg (1998:27), points out, it is the process of delivering a service which comprises the product. Critics would certainly argue that if something does not appeal to the senses, there is no possibility of knowing it because the human faculty of knowledge begins from experience of a particular thing. As such, while services usually are accompanied by physical evidence which, in some situations, the consumer can use in order to make the product less abstract and more tangible, there will always be an intangible element to the service product.

3.2.2 Heterogeneity

Heterogeneity concerns the potential for high variability in the process of performing services. The quality of service delivery can vary from one producer to the other, from one customer to the other as well as circumstances of the days and environment in which they are performed. Succinctly put, Gabbott and Hogg (1998:28) argue that heterogeneity refers to the fact that services are delivered by individuals and, therefore, each service encounter will be different by virtue of the participants, the time of performance or the circumstances. However, heterogeneity in service output is a problem for labour-intensive services since people in the workplace do not approach their potential customers or duties in the same way.

This is as Langeard, Bateson, Lovelock and Eiglier (1981:16) argue, because many different employees have different behaviours when, say, they contact an individual customer. While others may seem to know their work and behave ethically, some may lack these faculties which eventually raises the problem of consistency of behaviour affecting the customer's perception of the services offered by the employees.

It should be borne in mind that where individuals and interpersonal exchange is involved there may well be attractions in having personalisation and customisation. Therefore, the quality of services may differ depending on who the provider is as well as the time and manner in which they are provided.

3.2.3 Inseparability

Inseparability underlines the simultaneous interaction between the producer and the consumer. According to Thomas (1978), cited in Gabbott and Hogg (1998:27), the degree of this interaction between the transacting parties depends on the extent to which the service is 'equipment-based' or 'people-based'. Equipment-based services such as telephones and vending machines deliver the same service to whoever consumes them, while people-based services employ human service providers. Therefore a variation of individual consumer experiences of service delivery is inevitable. This feature assumes that nothing can be produced for its own sake, but for another good. That is, if something is produced, it must be consumed or used. It implies that, as Palmer (2001:16) and Mudie and Cottam (1999:7-8) argue, as goods are generally produced first, offered for sale and finally sold and consumed, inseparability causes this process to be modified for services. Accordingly, one can say that people-based services are less structured than equipment-based services or goods-producing activities. This is because goods are simply produced, sold and consumed, whereas services are sold and then produced and consumed concomitantly.

For service production, it is necessary for the customer to be physically present. Other services may be produced and delivered in circumstances where the customer's presence is optionalor may rely on written communication such as distance-learning courses or home banking. No matter the nature and extent of contact, the potential for inseparability of production and consumption remains (Mudie and Cottam 1999:7-8). However, the inseparability of the role of the service provider and consumer leads to a lack of

standardisation since the purchaser and the individual delivering the service can change the way in which the service is delivered and what is delivered. This has important implications for the process of evaluation.

3.2.4 Perishability

Perishability of services describes the real time and nature of the product. Lovelock and Wirtz (2011:251) view perishability as a characteristic that affects the production of services. The authors maintain that most services are perishable and cannot be stored and sold at a later stage. This characteristic poses a challenge for any capacity-constrained organisation that faces wide swings in demand. As Gabbott and Hogg (1998:28) argue, unlike goods, the consumer cannot store services. The inability to build and maintain stocks of the product means that sudden demand cannot be accommodated in the same way as goods, that is, the consumer cannot stockpile services against a possible need in the future. In certain circumstances, the consumer may decide to delay consumption but not to consume more in advance of requirements.

As long as human beings are involved in some performances, the challenge usually emerges, which Mudie and Cottam (1999:9) identified as more prevalent in those organizations that involve people in delivering their services. Mudie and Cottam (1999:9) argue that if demand far exceeds supply it cannot be met, as in manufacturing, by taking goods from the warehouse. Similarly, on the occasion that capacity is higher than demand, the revenue and/or value of that service is lost. In the same way, the experience of using public transport is different during rush hours from other times of the day. Donnelly and Skinner (1990), cited in Gabbott and Hogg (1998:29), observe that consumption is inextricably linked to the presence of other consumers and their presence can influence the service outcome. Given these examples, there always needs to be the sensibility, awareness and balance by producing companies to assess the needs of their customers before producing the quantity of their products.

3.2.5 Ownership

Another feature of services that Kotler (1982) cited in Gabbott and Hogg (1998:29), discusses is that of ownership. According to this author, when a product is sold, the purchaser generally

obtains ownership of it. By contrast, in the case of a service, the purchaser only has temporary access to or use of it. This means that what is owned is the benefit of the service, not the service itself. For example, when a purchaser goes on holiday, he or she has the benefit of the flight, hotel and beach but does not own them. Gabbott and Hogg (1998:29) conclude that the absence of ownership stresses the finite nature of services for purchasers. There is no enduring involvement in the product, only in the benefit.

Table 3.1: Unique service characteristics and their problems

Intangibility	1. Services cannot be stored
	2. Cannot protect services through patents
	3. Cannot readily display or communicate services
	4. Prices are difficult to set
Inseparability	1. Consumer involved in production
	2. Other consumers involved in production
	3. Centralised mass production of services difficult
Heterogeneity	1. Standardization and quality control difficult to achieve
Perishability	1. Services cannot be inventoried

Source: Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1985:35)

3.3: The gaps model of service quality
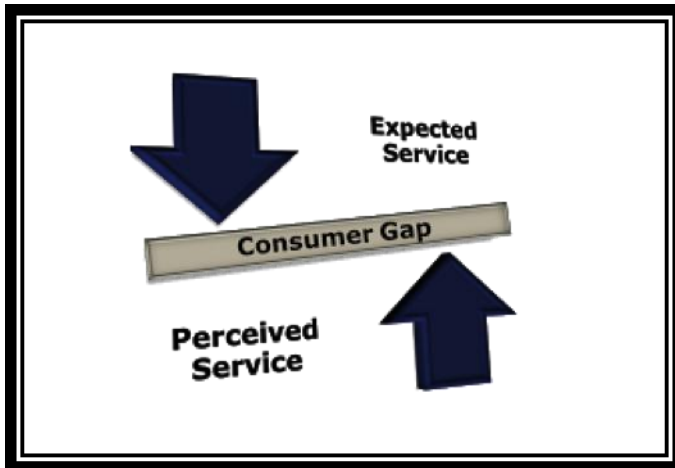
Figure 3.1: Difference between customer expectations and customer perceptions

Source: Hussein (2010:25)

Zeithaml et al. (1990), cited in Bergman and Klefsjö, (1994:270), discuss a model explaining various reasons for customer dissatisfaction. The model illustrates the path from the expectation of customers to their experience in that the experience of customers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with services offered determines the level of their expectation, hence continuity or vice versa. This model demonstrates the gap that exists between customers and service providers. The customer gap is established as the most important to satisfy in service-providing industries. It signifies the variance between 'service as expected' and 'service as perceived'. According to Deans and Von Allmen (2003:1), the scenario here demonstrates a before and after phenomena whereby expectations refer to the points of reference that the customers/clients have before experiencing the service and perceptions referring to the way they received/perceived the delivered service.

Five gaps have been identified and are explained in the following sections.

Gap 1: Between customers' expectation and management's perceptions of those expectations (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1985:270-271).

This gap demonstrates the disparities that emerge because senior management and top officials do not comprehend what clients regard to be of high quality. It is the knowledge of what clients want and expect that forms the basis of delivering quality services. In order for

the service provider or any organisation that provides services to satisfy its customers, they must have a clear knowledge of what their clients expect. However, because services are hard to determine, it is difficult for service providers to measure the satisfaction level of their customers. Gap 1, therefore, becomes considerably significant in companies that offer services compared to those that manufacture goods with a tangible quality dimension. Despite the impeccability of the knowledge of clients' expectations, this gap model is constrained by a lack of comprehensive market research, inadequacy of upward communication and multiple levels of management and complex bureaucracy.
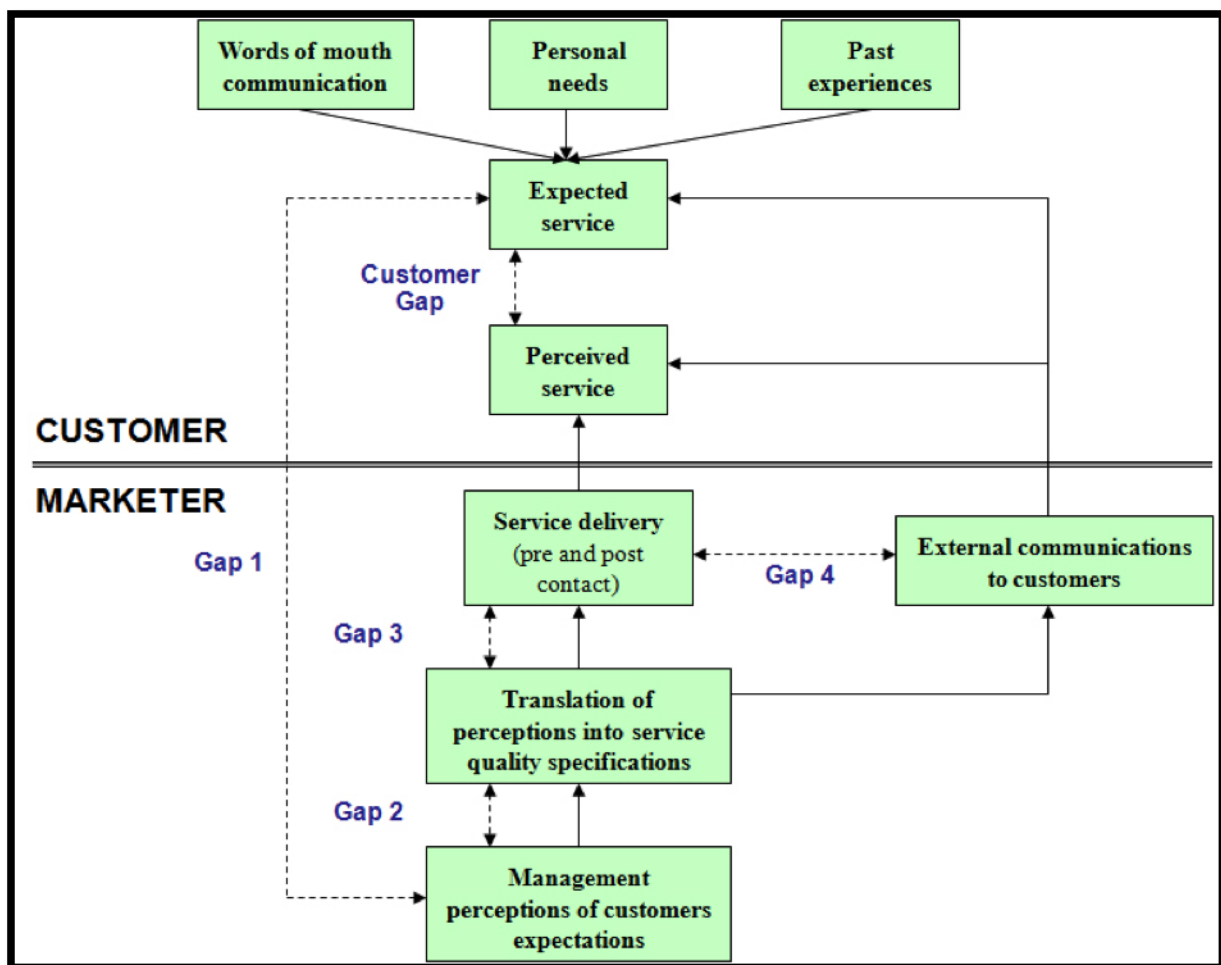
Figure 3.2: Consumers' expectation and management's perception

Source: Zeithaml et al. (1985:270-271)

Gap 2: Between management's perception of customers' expectations and service quality specifications (Zeithaml et al., 1985:272).

This is established as a wide gap in many companies. Even though customer expectations are known, they are not easily matched or increased because of difficulties that arise from inconsistent responses to demands from customers, attributable to the failure of top management to commit to service quality. Gap 2 model is constrained by a lack of adequate commitment by management in giving quality services, infeasibility perception, lack of creating a standardised task and not creating a goal .

Top management in many organisations may be aware of customers' needs and demands, know exactly what to do, when, where and how, but fail to achieve their goal because of poor policy implementation frameworks. In some instances, policies are clear and easy to follow, but because of inadequate capacity, poor leadership, negligence and/or corruption, may prevent programmes from being implemented as expected. In a different, but somewhat similar manner, Ramphele (2012:2), in discussing *good governance*, agrees with this model by outlining what hampers service delivery: rising corruption, weakening of state and civil society institutions, poor economic management, skills and capital flight, politics dominated by short-termism, ethnicity or factionalism, and lack of maintenance of infrastructure and standards of service.

Gap 3: Between service quality specifications and service delivery (Parasuraman et al., 1985:45)

There are instances where service providers significantly understand what their customers expect, and even set appropriate specifications, but in the end fail to meet their customers' expectations. Therefore, a gap exists between service specification and its actual delivery to the customers. This could be caused by employees who do not have the necessary capacity or lack motivation to provide the service to levels desired by customers. In this case, it is critical to note that the contact person in charge of the expected service has a significant role to play in motivating employees and ensuring that they do not sabotage service delivery. Gap 3 model is constrained by roles that are ambiguous and conflicting, unsuitable employees, unreliable technology, inappropriate supervisory regulatory systems, lack of perceived control and lack of teamwork (Parasuraman et al., 1985:45).

Given that multi-dimensional societies such as South Africa have different cultural orientations, there are always complexities. The difficulty of dealing with these complexities

is the problems or reasons this gap model has outlined above. The capture of polity in organisations is characterised by a patronage-driven system in which a small ruling elite, political associates, legislators and public servants are provided with responsibilities in return for loyalty, regardless of their competence and performance. Therefore, the ambiguity in defining roles, role conflicts, lack of skilled personnel, poor infrastructure in work places and inadequate teamwork are the very reasons that create this gap between service quality specification and service delivery.

Gap 4: Between service delivery and external communications to customers about service delivery (Parasuraman et al., 1985:46).

This gap arises between what the service provider promises to customers and what it eventually delivers. Therefore, accurate and appropriate communication from the service provider, realistic advertising and public relations that does not exaggerate the promises or give wrong impressions in delivering service which customers may perceive as high in quality matters. This is to say that the manner in which the service is advertised may either increase or decrease customers' expectations. This gap is higher in service-providing schemes than in those that produce physical goods because people who provide these services may not be controlled in the same manner as machines. This gap may be breached by inadequate horizontal communication among operations, marketing and human resources; that is, between advertising agencies and sales operations, and propensity and overpromising. (Parasuraman et al., 1985:46).

In many institutions and organisations, there is an apparent power differential in that the flow of power is top-down, rather than bottom-up, which is more favoured in recent governing structures. As such, the challenge faced by the gap model is one of trying to redeem itself from this top-down pandemic in many institutions. Inadequate communication between top officials and the people they are meant to serve and insufficient human resources present a problem to bridging this gap. Skilled personnel who know what their responsibility demands would not make promises that are unattainable. Making promises without fulfilling them creates mistrust and frustration between the promising party and those who are to benefit from the promises. In a nutshell, a service provider must promise what it can eventually deliver to its customers or else fall under the axiom of 'talk is cheap'. An example of overpromising or empty promises is that of the ANC which has failed to provide adequate

housing; successive ANC administrations have, nonetheless, touted the provision of housing as a success.

The Mandela and Mbeki presidencies, according to Ramphele (2012:118), focussed on stabilising the macro-economic base of the post-apartheid economy following conventional wisdom of the 1990s informed by economists associated with what became known as the Washington Consensus. One cannot dispute some of the arch-principles of ensuring a stable macro-economic framework and fiscal discipline as a stepping stone for economic prosperity. This concept was coined by John Williamson in Washington DC in 1989, which he believed was necessary for Latin America's recovery from the economic and financial crises of the 1980s. Employing another continent's socio-economic reform strategy in South Africa leaves one puzzling as to what kind of society one would like to establish and what kind of socio-economic relations should underpin the vision of a constitutional democracy that is united in diversity and social justice. Ramphele (2012:119) contends that this kind of replication of reform strategies is doomed to failure to engage in national discussions about the nature of socio-economic transformation sought for in South Africa. Ramphele further argues that the opportunity for these discussions was lost by the conscious exclusion of violations of socio-economic rights from the deliberations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which focused only on gross violations of human rights. The outcome of the four gaps leads to the fifth one.

Gap 5: Between customers' expectation and perceived service (Parasuraman et al. 1985:46).

For a service to be rated as good, it has to match or extend beyond what the customers expect. Whether customers judge services they receive either as low or high depends on how they perceive the actual delivery in relation to their expectations. Just as freedom demands that citizens be allowed to make free choices about their preferred needs, so is their perception about services delivered to them. Quality service delivery means that the services are of value to the people. Ismail Serageldin, cited in Ramphele (2012:59), defines values as that which creates communities out of individuals. Values enable transactions to take place and bridge the inter-generational divide. Values are what make human society worthy of the designation 'human.' The reasons why ordinary citizens perceive services delivered to them as low emanate from failure to translate the values that their representatives committed themselves

to offering into the practice of governance that makes freedom a reality in the lives of all citizens. This is attributable to the persistant problems of inefficiency and maladministration in poor societies or provinces.

Nguyen (2013: 1) summarises the gap model by Zeithaml et al. (1985) with the following five key points, each relating to a specific gap:

1. Customer gap: The difference between customers' expectations and perceptions - the service quality gap.
2. The difference between what customers expected and what management perceived about the expectation of customers.
3. The difference between management's perceptions of customer expectations and the translation of those perceptions into service quality specification and design.
4. The difference between specifications or standards of service quality and the actual service delivered to customers.
5. The difference between the services delivered to customers and the promise of the firm to customers about its service quality.

Service provider leaders, in essence, may not always understand what characterises high quality to consumers in advance, what features a service must have in order to meet consumer needs and what levels of performance on those features are needed to deliver high quality service. This is to say that service marketers do not always understand what consumers expect in a service. Therefore, the gap between consumers' expectations and management perceptions of those expectations will have an impact on the consumers' evaluation of service quality.

As indicated in the second point, sometimes management may be aware of consumer expectations, but the seriousness that management assigns to quality problems differs. For instance, the dichotomy between what one says and believes in, that is, producing a perfect product, may differ when it comes to act upon what one has promised. This means that a variety of factors - resource constraints, market conditions, and/or management indifference may result in a discrepancy between management perceptions of consumer expectations and the actual specifications established for a service. Subsequently, this discrepancy would affect quality perceptions of consumers. This means the gap between management

perceptions of consumer expectations and the firm's service quality specifications will affect service quality from the consumer's point of view.

Even when rules and guidelines are in place for performing services well and treating consumers correctly, high quality service performance may not be a certainty. This is because there is a strong influence on the service quality perceived by consumers and that performance cannot always be standardised. The reason for service quality problems emanates from the crucial role of contact personnel. Therefore, the gap between service quality specifications and actual service delivery will affect service quality from the consumer's perspective.

Information dissemination of the media is another factor that influences consumer expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1985:45). If it is accepted that expectations play a pivotal role in consumer perceptions of service quality, then service providers must be wary of advertising or communicating more than they can deliver in real life. This is because promising more than can be delivered will raise initial expectations, but lower perceptions of quality when the promises are not fulfilled. However, overlooking the need to inform consumers about efforts to assure quality that are not visible to consumers also determines their perceptions of service quality to be offered. As such, external communication can affect not only consumer expectations about service, but also consumer perceptions of the delivered service. On this basis it can be concluded that the gap between actual service delivery and external communications about the service will affect service quality from a consumer's standpoint.

Consumers are, most of the time, overwhelmed when they receive a service that far exceeds or meets their expectation. This indicates that judgements of high and low service quality depend on how consumers perceive the actual service performance in the context of what they expected. Consequently, the quality that a consumer perceives in a service is a function of the magnitude and direction of the gap between expected service and perceived service. In a nutshell, Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1990), cited in Gabbott and Hogg (1998:107), argue that operationalising the concepts of service quality and customer satisfaction depends upon examining this central gap by establishing customer expectations, understanding how these expectations are used to assess customer perceptions of the service, and finally how this influences consumer behaviour.

3.4. Closing the gaps

If the main concern for an organisation or service provider is to achieve better satisfaction to their customers and to create a stronger and longer term relationship, then closing the gaps described above is of utmost importance. Expectations from customers are usually difficult to determine and quantify since they may range from a scale of 'minimum endurable expectations' at the lowest to 'exceptional expectations or wishes' at the top. The gap between a client's 'desired service' and 'adequate service' is commonly known as their 'zone of tolerance'. A zone of tolerance satisfies, that is, it is a zone of service delivery that is good enough. It is, therefore, important for the service provider to understand this zone as customers who are beyond its demarcations are regarded as those with concerns over the quality of the services being delivered. While it is not likely that all customers will fit within the tolerance zone, it is important to know who fits in. It is further vital to note that not all clients fit in one zone and to understand that one must come to terms with understanding that different service dimensions contain different zones. Deans and Von Allmen (2003: 1) contend that this is the reason why it is important for service providers to know how these gaps manifest themselves in different customers over a certain period of time so that they can establish appropriate mechanisms of closing them.

3.5. Customer expectation of service

3.5.1. Types of service expectations

According to Zeithaml (2009:76) expectations are considered only as an entry point towards which delivery of services are referenced. The level of expectation held by a customer determines the level of that customer's satisfaction. Therefore service providers need to invest time and resources in order to understand, evaluate and administer them. For example, considering that one is in need of receiving a certain service, expectations of the service can vary from low to high. Figure 3.3 illustrates different levels of service expectations from high (top) to low (bottom). It is important to note that the kind of service expectation will determine the kind of choices and assessment of the service provider which, at some time, is not perceived at the same level by different service providers. Thus the idea of client expectations is vital to service evaluation.

As consumers acquire information from sources available to them, they draw together information from both memory and the environment as a summary of what is known about the likely service experience.
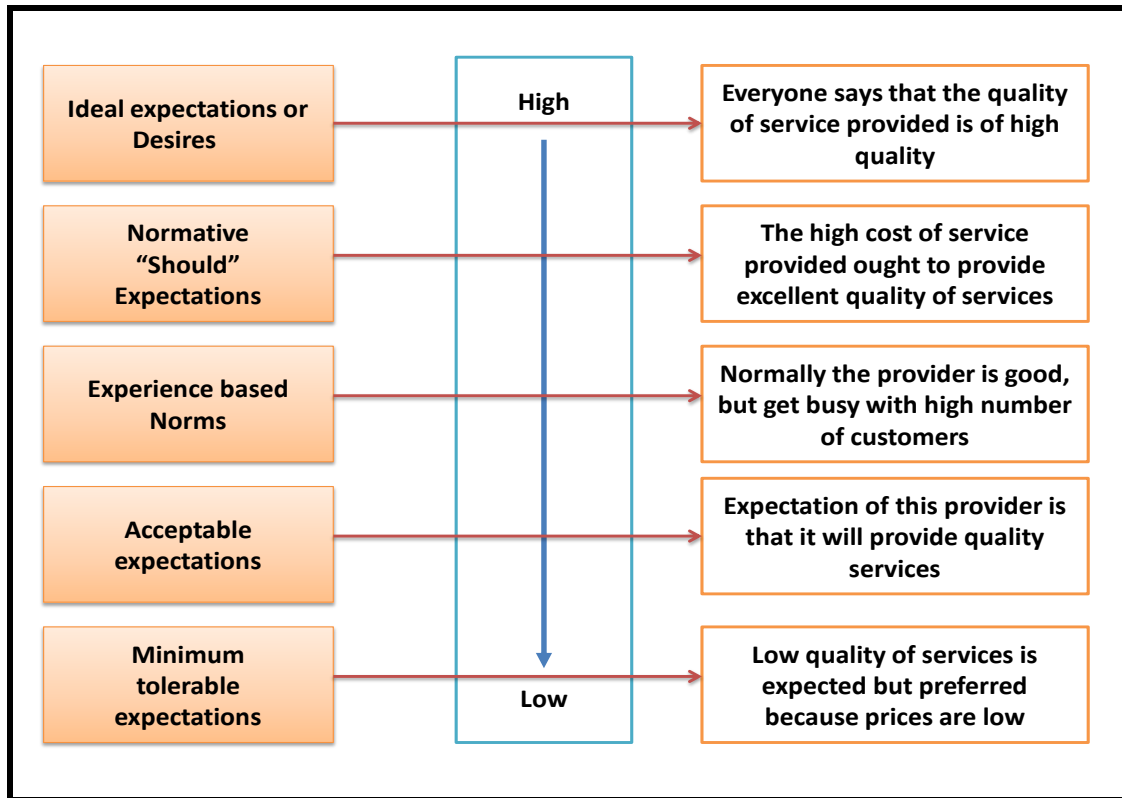
Figure 3.3: Classification of customer service expectation

Source: Adapted from Teas (1993), cited in Zeithaml et al. (2009:76)

In Figure 3.3, Zeithaml (2009:77) depicts that different customers have different types of service expectations about services they receive, with the highest known as the *desired service*, that is, the level of service a customer wishes to receive; in other words, the "wished for" level of service performance. The desired service is the level of service the customer believes it "should be" or "can be". This can be translated as expecting for the right service in the right place and time. However, there are other factors that limit the customer from accessing the desired or the hoped-for service. These circumstances require the customer to accept a certain level of service provided. This Zeithaml et al. (2009:77) refers to as *adequate service* – the level of service that the customer is likely to accept. In other words, it is the minimum tolerable expectation at the bottom level acceptable to the customer.

Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1991: 52), cited in Gabbott and Hogg (1998:52), suggest that expectations have two levels, desired and adequate. The desired level, according to the authors, is the service the customer hopes to receive, a blend of 'can be' and 'should be'. Adequate level is based on a prediction of what the service will be. The authors suggest that separating the desired from the adequate is the 'zone of tolerance' within which they expect the service to be carried out. Figure 3.4 illustrates the standards of expectations on the upper and lower levels of the customer's expectations. Figure 3.4 outlines the boundaries within which customers make their assessment, what they hope for or what they deem acceptable.
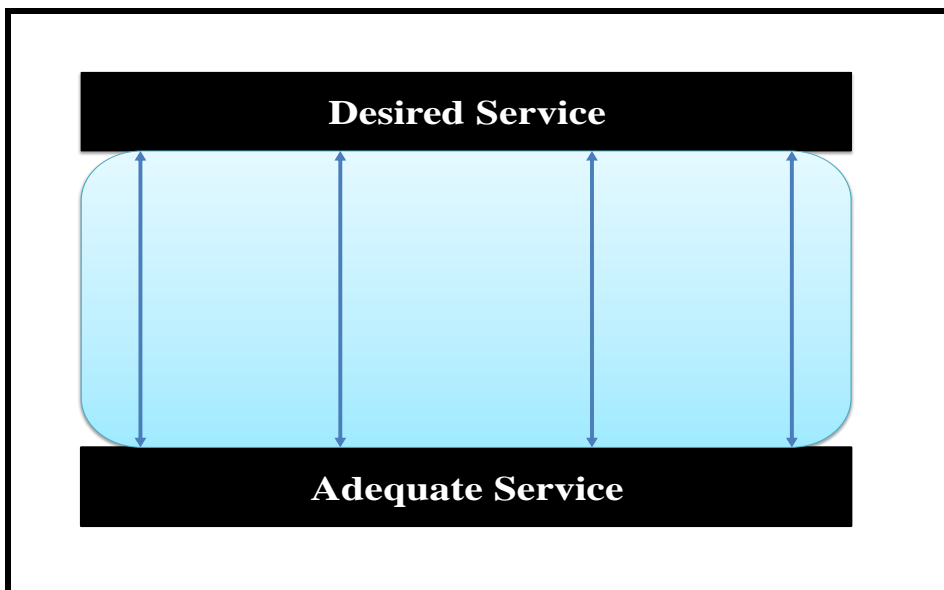
Figure 3.4: Dual customer expectation level

Source: Adapted from Zeithaml et al. (2009:77)

The zone of tolerance referred to, however, varies from consumer to consumer and potentially from one situation to the next, mediated by individual consumer's experiences. Due to the level of availability of information, consumers evoke sets of alternatives that are likely to fulfil their expectations, which form the basis of comparison and choice. Zeithaml (1981), cited in Gabbott and Hogg (1998:53), argues that because of the nature of services and difficulties in obtaining effective information, consumers tend to be more loyal once they have found an acceptable alternative. Therefore, if the consumer has previous experience of a service, it is likely that the consumer may have a small expectation. Levitt (1981), cited in Gabbott and Hogg (1998:54), expresses the view that it is important for consumers to

establish metaphors for tangibility or cues that help them 'tangibilise the intangible' in order that they may create a credible expectation.

3.5.2. Customer perceptions

Gabbott and Hogg (1998:41) understand perceptions as changes which take place between our sensation of the stimuli and our assessing of meaning or explanation to them. This process is more subjective than objective because meanings and explanations are allocated to stimuli according to plan or heuristics because they are feelings derived from fundamental belief and experiences. According to the manner in which customers perceive services, how they evaluate whether they experience quality services and whether they receive satisfactory services are dimensions of understanding customer perceptions of services they receive. It is also critical to note that quality and satisfaction is determined by customers' perception of services, not on any theoretical assumption of what service satisfaction should be.

It is apparent that consumers perceive services differently. The subjective and individualistic nature of perception, coupled with the myriad of stimuli received before, during and after a service experience make generalisations both difficult and risky. This is because of the individual differences in perception which Gabbott and Hogg (1998:41) identified as perceptual selection and sensory thresholds. Perceptual selection, according to these authors, refers to the fact that the ability to process information is limited and the response by consumers is likely to be very selective in allocating their valuable processing abilities. In real life, therefore, consumers will respond to stimuli depending on whether they have noticed it, either in terms of its existence or non-existence or any change in it. This very circumstance, according to the authors, forms the sensory thresholds, that is, whether the stimuli itself or the change to the stimuli is sufficient to 'break through' into consciousness. Clearly, one can argue that the congruence of these two effects is a pivotal dimension in both the design and delivery of service products. Thus, perception can be said to be at the heart of the consumption process, both in terms of its effect upon choice, the experience of service consumption and parallel evaluation.

3.5.3. Satisfaction versus service quality

Even though some researchers have used satisfaction and service quality as interchangeable, recent attempts have been made to explore new meanings and distinctions that separate the two. Basically, the two concepts are related in that they share similar causes and underlying outcomes. However, as much as these conceptions share some common characteristics, satisfaction is perceived as a broader concept. Service quality's emphasis is explicitly on service dimensions. Gabbott and Hogg (1998:100) argue that consumers make two evaluative judgements about a service: 'is it of good quality? and 'am I satisfied?' To understand the relationship between these two concepts, one should consider whether satisfaction is an antecedent to service quality, that is, an accumulation of satisfying or dissatisfying experience, or whether high service quality leads to satisfied customers.

If it is agreed that we use the terminology of consumer behaviour, it can be argued that quality is predominantly a cognitive response to attributes, while satisfaction is predominantly an emotional or affective response. Sections 3.5.3.1 to 3.5.3.5 outline some attributes to concretise satisfaction and service quality.

3.5.3.1 Reliability

This refers to the ability of the service provider to perform services as promised in a dependable and accurate manner. Some attributes include:

- Providing services as promised
- Dependability in handling problems encountered by customers
- Aiming to perform services right with the first attempt
- Providing services at the time assured
- Maintaining records that are clear and accurate. (Parasuraman et al., 1985:45).

For anyone to be able to rely on a certain service provision, it is deemed necessary that the same strategy or policy direction effected in one area should be able to produce the same results when employed in another context. Hayes (1992:32) defines reliability as the extent to which measurements are free from random-error variance. This is because random-error variance decreases the reliability of the measurement. This requires performing duties as promised, facility for customers to refer to the service provider should something go wrong, keeping actions promised completed within some standard time frame and keeping

accountability of every service offered. Let people say *"when Mr/Mrs X says this he or she will deliver because he or she always says 'since I said I would I can'"*. Most people can easily depend on reliability of a service provider when a greater number of the people are part of the decision-making processes of the services rendered to them. Therefore, participation levels which enhance reliability may be the result of a conscious attempt by a local council, a department of a local authority, or a ruling party, to legitimise a particular policy regime. If participation is used in this sense, it implies that those in power use their positions to indicate approval or support for their policies hence reliability.

3.5.3.2 Responsiveness

This refers to the readiness of the service provider in delivering services promised in a prompt manner. The skills and competency discrepancies in the public sector become worse as one gets closer to the citizen. For example, at the national level, the departments closest to people, especially vulnerable poor people, such as Education, Health, Social Development and Correctional Services, are often run by poorly equipped people at the operational level. Provincial and local authority structures are frequently found to have inadequate governance processes in place, resulting in ineffective performance that robs the majority of citizens of their basic needs entitlements. A service provider is regarded as responsive when it keeps customers updated about when services will be delivered, it provides time of services for customers, it is always ready to assist customers and is disposed to listen and respond to concerns raised by customers (Parasuraman et al., 1985:46).

Good governance calls for response to services to stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe by service providers. Failure to meet this element ruins the essence and credibility of good governance. When there is responsiveness, citizens get integrated in mind and body and together tailor developmental interventions or plans. Ordinary citizens, more often than not, are frustrated with central government when not represented because of the possibility that they may not be heard or that response to their queries may not be timely. The whole idea is to keep customers updated as to when service will be delivered, be ready to assist customers at every moment and listen and respond to concerns brought forward by customers. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that local authorities walk side-by-side with ordinary citizens in moments of the actual needs of local inhabitants so that they do not govern by guess work, but base their governing functions on the day-to-day realities at the local level.

3.5.3.3 Assurance

This refers to the ability of employees to relay trust and confidence due to their knowledge. Assurance is a form of courtesy that inculcates in citizens that they can trust their service providers when they fulfil what they promised they would do timeously. As Ramphele (2012:148) observes, when citizens are governed as subjects, rather than participating in governance as citizens, the government's underperformance is brought to the surface limiting the citizens' sense of security and confidence that they deserve. Given this circumstance, the most challenging aspect of the process relates to building trust within the citizenry across the barriers of party politics and ideologies.

The ability to instil confidence in customers, assure them of security, courtesy and having adequate knowledge to answer customers' concerns is congruent with having good leadership. The leadership alluded to here is a kind that embodies the vision, values and principles of the society which societies aspire to become. Ramphele (2008:295) argues that transformative leadership is not just about having black people, women or other previously disadvantaged people in leadership positions. It is about credible, visionary leadership that expands the boundaries of possibilities for all citizens, enabling them to contribute their talents, experience and skills to create a successful, prosperous democracy. Therefore, developing a shared vision by leaders is an important starting point that depicts a structure that ordinary citizens can rely on because it would offer confidence and assurance of the security of the society or customers.

3.5.3.4 Empathy

Empathy refers to the personalised attention accorded by a service provider to customers. When it comes to dealing with human beings, as a leader, this attribute requires a selfless giving of the leader to the service of those in need. Empathy is the antithesis of fraud and corruption. Where these vices exist, empathy is automatically excluded because it is an attribute or value that directs one's attention towards serving the other, but not stealing from them. It is unfortunate that many institutions in South Africa and around the world are engaged in fraud and corrupt practices.

Service delivery takes place in a particular culture. It can be argued that the dominant factor in service delivery within a context of transformation is that of culture. Drennan (1992:233) defines culture as 'the way things are done around here', which suggests that culture creates the context within which service delivery occurs. Kitson, Harvey and Hyndman (1998:151) are of the view that context includes the forces at work which give the physical environment a character and feel. This remark suggests a direct relationship between culture and context. According to Bate (1994:12) culture is not something an organisation has, but something an organisation is. It is a label or metaphor for, not a component of, the total work organisation. When any service provider puts the interest of the consumers above all else, then he or she should do so within the context/need of the person or society.

Empathy is a human quality, but above all it is a divine quality that encourages practitioners to give appropriate care and prioritise the needs of those in question as their needs arise. This means that those endowed with the responsibility of leadership should do so in such a way that reflects a divine response to serving those who are in need. The concept of *Batho Pele* resonates very well with empathy, especially with reference to South Africa. Arries (2008:42) acknowledges that the underlying belief that captures the *Batho Pele* culture is one of belonging, caring and service. This means that service providers are supposed to be as representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive as possible in dealing with their clients.

3.5.3.5 Tangibles

Tangibles refer to favourable physical facilities and equipment as well as appearance of personnel. Equipment has to be up-to-date; facilities and materials linked with service provision have to be visually appealing.

The etymology of the word 'satisfaction' originates from the Latin word *'satis'* (enough) and *facere* (to do or to make), according to Oliver (1993) cited in Gabbott and Hogg, (1998:104). Thus, the original meaning of the word relates to an adequacy construct though it has changed meaning over the centuries to refer to gratification and fulfilment. Though services are actions or performances, for their effects to be felt and seen it requires relevant tools and materials to be used. In response to the modern phenomena of the world, equipment has to be modern and effective in order to realise a qualitative output within a specific period of time.

This means that service providers invest in modern technologies that facilitate easy and timely production of goods and services. Examples of such equipment may include, but are not limited to, the use of computers in work places, communications technologies such as internet access, telephones, facsimile, television, modern agricultural equipment, vehicles for easy movement of workers and transportation of products from one place to another, and learning and hospital equipment. This equipment, among others, should be appealing and modern.
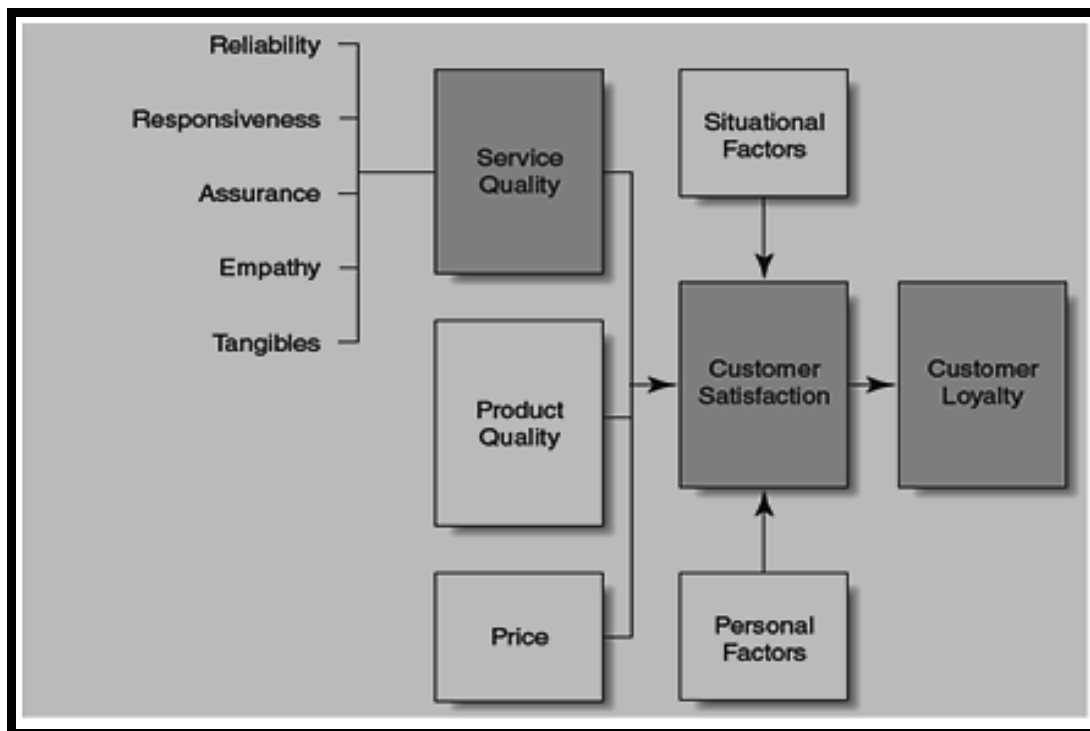
Figure 3.5: Customer perceptions of quality of service satisfaction

Source: Adopted from Zeithaml et al. (2009:103)

Satisfaction, however, is also regarded as more inclusive, being influenced by the perception of service quality, product quality, price and other factors such as situational as well as personal factors. It is worth noting that satisfaction occurs at multiple levels within and during a service encounter. Consumers may either be satisfied or dissatisfied with a contact person, service provider or service products, the environment in which the service is carried out or even with the whole service structure. Given this scenario, satisfaction can be termed as a state of mind that can change at any given time only to be reassessed at a later encounter (Zeithaml et al., 2009:104).

3.5.4 Transaction versus cumulative perceptions

While considering perceptions, customers will have perceptions of single, transaction specific encounters, including perceptions of a service provider based on all their experiences. How employees of a company that provide services cause the customers to perceive the quality of the services provided is based on the specific transaction encounter. By extension, it is possible for a customer to have a perception about the entire company based on that single specific event. However, a series of these time-specific transaction encounters may adjust the nature of the perception of that particular customer after combining all the experiences of a particular service provider that eventually form cumulative perceptions. Zeithaml (2009:104) argues that in order to have a better view while assessing the perception of customers of the quality of services they receive, it is critical to understand all these time specific perceptions.

Simply put, cumulative perception dwells on the greater good for a greater number of people, derived precisely from individual experiences. Cumulative perception cannot simply be subsumed into one aspect. It requires considering all the factors that contribute to make it a whole. The time specific perceptions alluded to hinges on considering all stakeholders conjoined in a specific service delivery project. This is to say that no single institution, period or circumstance can yield a cumulative perception. Rather it is the past, present and future experiences of individuals and communities that produces cumulative perception.

3.5.5 Customer satisfaction

The concept of customer satisfaction may appear easy to understand, but calls for special attention to define it. Oliver (1993), cited in Zeithaml (2009:104), defines customer satisfaction as customer's fulfilment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature or the product of service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment. The consumer's satisfaction with a service or product is the main objective of product design in the field of commodities. According to Hiidenhovi, Nojonen and Laippala (2002:59), this view is based on the notion that consumer satisfaction has an effect on business success. As such, the discerning of the consumer of any service, insofar as the quality of the product and service is concerned, has become increasingly important in quality circles. This is aimed at achieving improved productivity and cost-effectiveness.

Satisfaction has been interpreted to mean the customer's evaluation of a service provided or received from a provider, whether or not that service has met the expectations and needs of the customer. If the customer does not appreciate the services received, it leads to service dissatisfaction. The reason for mass protests in many South African communities relates precisely to dissatisfaction with the kind of services rendered; that is, what citizens receive is counter to their expectations, as promised. In sum, satisfaction, other than knowledge, can appeal also to inner feelings, including contentment, pleasure, and delight fulfilment, as well as relief and ambivalence.

3.5.4.1 Determinants of customer satisfaction

Service delivery involves a multi-disciplinary team of actors. The interaction of this team of actors during service delivery can either have a positive or negative impact on customers' experience of such a service. Customer satisfaction is determined by a variety of factors. As Figure 3.5 shows, customer satisfaction is dependent on specific features such as product or service features, product perceptions and service quality, including price. There are other more personal factors that come into play in determining the level of satisfaction attained by a customer.

The nature and variety of the product provided determines the level of satisfaction of a given customer. Customers' emotions can also affect their perceptions while accessing services. In his study of outpatients' experience of quality service delivery, Arries (2008:45) states that because of the types of service offered, outpatients unanimously expressed their satisfaction with the management they received from the medical team and described them as *"helpful"*. One outpatient verbalised this as follows: *'[the] doctors and the physio went out of their way to help me ...'* Another patient said that *'... the doctors in this place are much more considerate and helpful ... he even took my hand and tells me that everything will be all right ... I felt so special, and yet I would have expected this from the nurses but I didn't ...'*. This is a typical example of satisfaction. Katz (1993:34) is of the view that good customer relations do not just happen automatically. They are the product of careful planning, close control and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and needs. Helpfulness of the medical staff is, according to Katz and Seifer (1996:32), important in patient treatment as the patient is assisted to manage his/her own health by positive input made by staff through constructive suggestions and behaviour. Therefore if nurses, who claim to be caring professionals, want to

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deliver quality healthcare service, they should be much more aware of the behaviour that they demonstrate towards other people and to their patients in particular.

Sometimes when a customer is in a bad mood at the time of acquiring a service, it may affect their perception of the experiences of services received. This means emotions at particular moments influence customers' satisfaction with service provided although this is ephemeral and less important because some emotions are just fleeting. Consumers of services love comparing services received in their vicinity with those of other areas. Once they find out that the services they are provided with are poorer than another region, they raise an alarm. As such Zeithaml (2009:105) argues that the perception of equity or fairness is another important factor that enables customers to evaluate their satisfaction of the services provided or received. For example customers may want to find out whether they have been served equally and with fairness compared with other customers.

3.5.6 The Kano Model of customer satisfaction

Bergman and Klefsjö (2006:282) reiterate that the quality of services provided is determined by their ability to satisfy the needs and expectations of a customer. However, these authors claim that this is not enough and suggest that service providers should exceed the expectations and needs of their customers. Exceeding customers' needs and expectations shows service providers' level of commitment to constant innovation in improving the quality of goods and services. In order to capture this dynamic, Bergman and Klefsjö (2006:282-283) distinguish customer satisfaction in three categories: basic needs, expected needs and exciting requirements, as shown in Figure 3.6.

Bergman and Klefsjö (1994:283) maintain that in any scenario for service delivery, the least expectation by any customer is whether it meets or provides for basic needs. These needs are obvious and it is unnecessary to mention them. If basic needs are not met, the customer will definitely not be happy and will remain dissatisfied. However, to satisfy a customer something more than the provision of basic needs is needed. Any economy or organisation that concerns itself with only providing basic needs has no vision for its own development. Provision of basic needs is a constitutional mandate and does not fall under the creative work of any organisation. After ensuring that consumers have basic needs an organisation must strive to produce or provide other services that supplement basic needs. When there is

innovation and progress, consumers become satisfied with an organisation's services because they find something beyond the ordinary that they expected in the market. The exciting dimensions of services provided are the initiatives of the provider and can only come as a surprise to the customer. As Bergman and Klefsjö (2006:283) suggest, the degree of customer satisfaction is dependent on the correlation between the customer's expectation and his experience as well as the organisation's image.
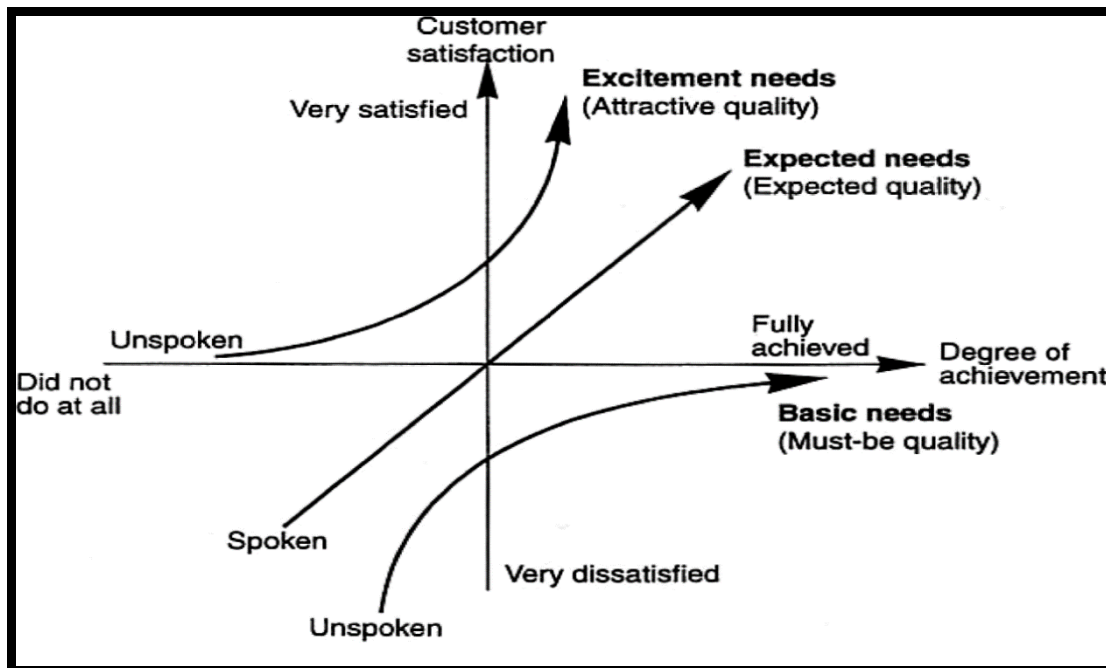
Figure 3.6: The Kano Model of customer's satisfaction

Source: Bergman and Klefsjö (2006:282)

Quality service delivery is a multiphase interactive action, which coincides with the characteristic of excellence (Hiidenhovi et al., 2002:60). Thus, to meet the needs of both consumer and service provider in a way that adds valuable meaning to the experiences of consumers is seen as a critical dimension of quality service delivery whereby satisfaction is expected. However, whether this is the case insofar as consumers' experiences of the quality of service delivery at a given time and context has to be established. In Figure 3.6 it can be seen that consumers' levels of satisfaction range from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. The reason for this could be that the service provider in this case has invested different levels of service commitments. Thus, providing basic needs only brings about dissatisfaction whereas going beyond the boundary of basic services adds to the quality of services offered whereby

customers can express contentment and satisfaction due to the pleasure provided by the service provider.

Consumer satisfaction is also infuenced by other factors such as those Gummesson (1988) demonstrates in his 4Q-model.
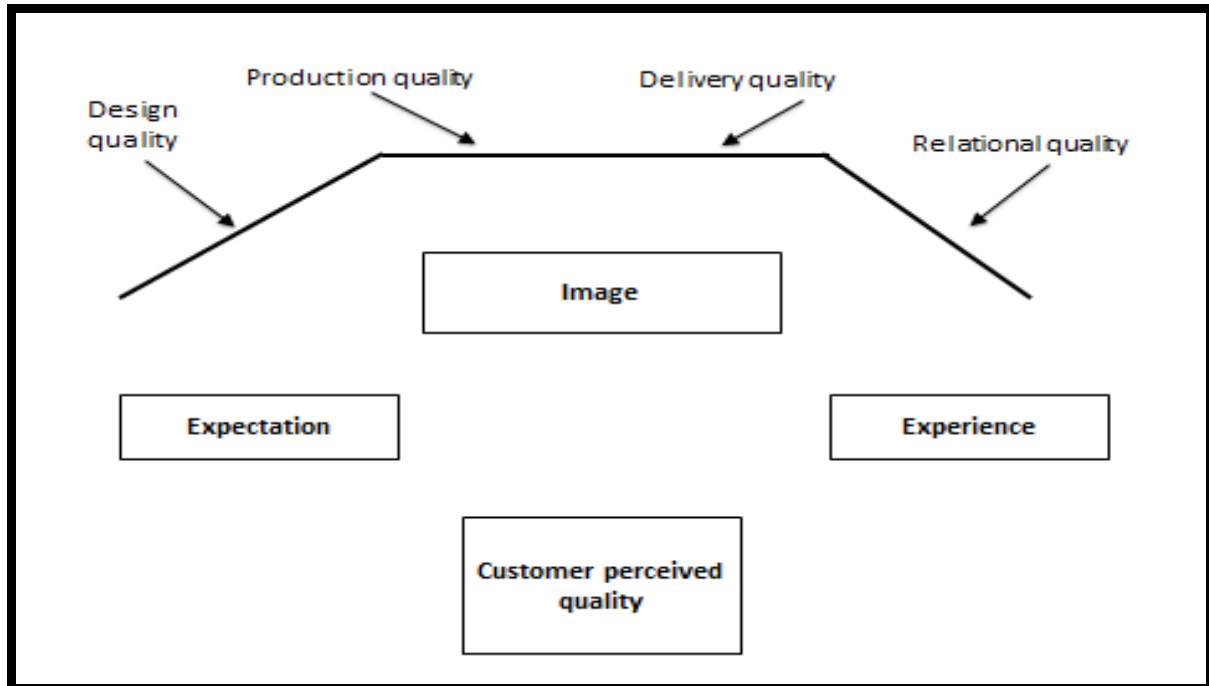
Figure 3.7: Gummesson's 4Q-model

Source: Gummerson (1988), cited in Berman and Klefsjo (1994:284)

Bergman and Klefsjö (1994:284) suggest that focus groups are excellent tools which a service provider can use to establish the exact needs and expectations of customers. Potential customers can come together to discuss their previous or expected experiences of a particular product. This is important because service providers, through focus groups decisions, can identify specific needs of consumers.

Ngidi (2012:13) states that one of government's most important tasks is to build a public service capable of meeting the challenge of improving the delivery of public services to citizens of South Africa. Accordingly, the transformation of the public service is to be judged rightly by the practical difference people see in their everyday lives. *Batho Pele* is one of the initiatives that the Department of Public Service Administration launched to turn words into

action. The needs of citizens must come first and be satisfied and people ought to view and experience the public service in an entirely new way. For effective implementation of the *Batho Pele* framework, both external and internal customers must render and receive services without fear, favour and prejudice. This is the design quality that is expected.

According to Crous (2004), cited in Ngidi (2012:2), public services are not a privilege in a civilised and democratic society; they are a legitimate expectation. Smith (1991), cited in Ngidi (2012:2), argues that one of the core functions of any organ of state is to provide one or more public services aimed at improving the quality of lives of citizens. The provision of public services by the public sector is not a mechanical process of getting products of reasonable quality to people at acceptable costs, but a primary means of promoting human development and image, thereby restoring human dignity. In this regard, institutions are created and organised in a particular form to render services or products which are essential to people. When products are attractive to the population, people express satisfaction with the service providers and render their support to them.

There are particular challenges to bringing marginalised rural populations into mainstrean development planning and practice, not least the level of sophistication needed to understand local issues in relation to policy making and planning processes, basic rights and existing legislation. While the rhetoric of participation has always permeated development planning discourse, it has not always been backed by concrete programmes aimed at widespread public participation. This influences customers' perceived quality of services if they are left at the periphery.

3.6 Service Quality (SERVQUAL)

Service quality, as established by Zeithaml (1987), cited in Parasuraman et al. (1988:15), involves perceived quality of services delivered, whereas perceived quality is the judgment that the customer places over the services delivered. As such, service quality differs from the objective quality as it is based on customer's attitude, pertaining to his or her satisfaction, which is a result of the matching of expectations with perception of the delivery. This very fact presents the dilemma and challenge to the quality of services because people have different attitudes towards things and it becomes difficult to measure the satisfaction level of

every individual. However, it is important because it keeps service providers on their toes to constantly improve their service strategies to meet the needs of every citizen.

According to Parasuraman et al. (1985:47) customers use various positive criteria to assess the quality of services that can be fitted in ten potentially overlapping dimensions:

- *Access:* This means that it is easy for customers to contact their service providers. This would include clarity on when the customers could contact their providers for any information and remaining consistent in their operating hours.
- *Communication:* This means the ability of the service provider to talk to the customer in a manner that the customer can easily understand.
- *Competence:* This refers to the time spent in processing the required skills and the knowledge required to perform the service.
- *Courtesy:* This dimension refers to the behaviour of the service provider and is identified with politeness, consideration and kindness.
- *Credibility:* This refers to the character of service providers, including trustworthiness as one that can be believed, as well as honesty to their customers.
- *Reliability:* This means the consistency of the delivery and dependability. This includes timeliness and exactness of service provision, availability of actual or relevant information and clear invoice procedures.
- *Responsiveness:* This dimension refers to the willingness of the company and its employees to help the customer.
- *Securities:* This refers to the assurance of freedom from risk, doubt and danger to the customers.
- *Tangibles:* This refers to the physical setting in which the service is provided. This physical environment includes the organisation, equipment, persons as well as clothing.
- *Understanding/Knowing the customer:* This refers to the character of the service provider to know and understand the preferences of their customers.

In sum, these dimensions point to the confidence of the customer in those that provide services. Figure 3.8 illustrates the SERVQUAL model:
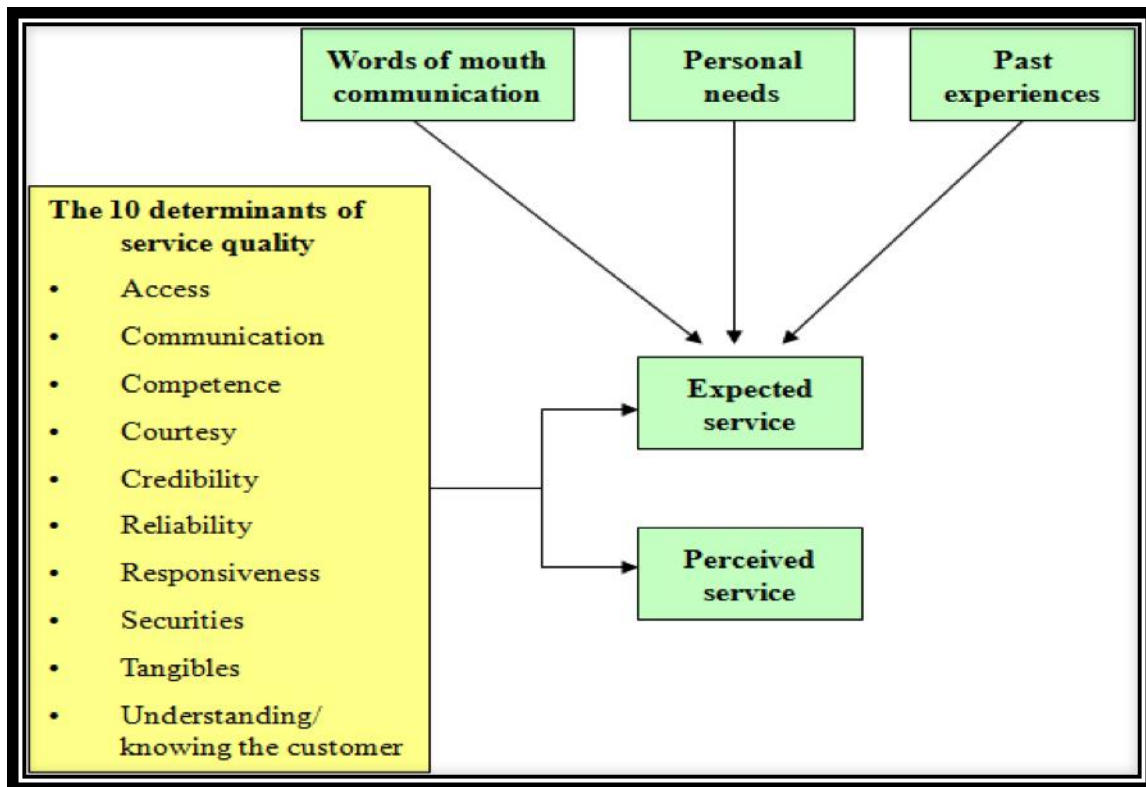
Figure 3.8: The SERVQUAL model

Source: Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1985: 271)

3.7 Customers' role in service delivery

According to Cermak, File and Prince (2011:94), participation has been shown to be associated with defining the quality, satisfaction and future interactions towards service providers. Customer participation in service design and delivery forms a significant factor in shaping their perceptions regarding services they receive. If they are given roles to play within the specification or delivery of certain elements of services, then their evaluation of the quality of service and their perception will be determined by their level of involvement (Cermak et al., 2011:90). Zeithaml (1981), cited in (Cermak et al., 2011:90), maintains that the simultaneity of production and demand means that customers who receive the service get involved in the design and service delivery as it is being produced. Thus, the central question that remains is whether increased customer participation improves customer perception of services provided or received. Several authors attest to this assumption: that the more customers participate in service design and delivery, the more their perception of satisfaction

of services improves (Bateson, 1985; Cermak, File & Prince, 1991; Mills & Morris, 1986; Zeithaml, 1981) cited in Cermak et al. (2011:90).

Levels of customer participation across different services		
Low customer presence required during service delivery	Moderate: Consumer Inputs required for service creation	High: Customer Cocreates the service
Products are standardized	Client inputs (Information, materials) customize a standard service	Active client participation guides the customized service
Service is provided regardless of any individual purchase.	Provision of service requires customer purchase	Service cannot be created apart from the customer's purchase and active participation
Payment may be the only customer input	Customer inputs are necessary for an adequate outcome, but the service firm provides the service	Customer inputs, choices and actions cocreate the outcome.

Figure 3.9: Levels of customer participation across different services

Source: Hubbert (1995), cited in Zeithaml et al. (2009:388)

Participation that only requires the physical presence of the customer may be regarded as low level of participation. This may range from low, moderate to high level of customer participation where the customer plays an active role in creating inputs, choices and actions to shape service outcomes (Zeithaml et al., 2009:388). Participation or political participation is defined as *"taking part in the formulation, passage or implementation of public policies"* (Anderson 1972:5). What this definition means is the level of participation, intensity of participation and quality of participation. In other words, it needs to spell out who takes part in what, where, when and how.

As indicated in Chapter 2, the notion of participation has always been central to the philosophy of community development, which advances the idea that, in a representative democracy, both formal and informal structures are needed for ordinary people at the local level to have a voice in decision-making processes. Mubangizi (2010:213) argues that participation has been central to all forms of community development, from consensus-

oriented liberal models to conflict-oriented Marxist models. Participation has been reconfigured as choice with responsibility and more accurately denotes user take up of social services. It has led to the construction of new relationships between service users and state service rendering structures. Different models of participation are needed in developing contexts, especially among the rural poor who all too often are overlooked by development planners, researchers and policy makers.

According to Zeithaml et al. (2009:388) the participation of a customer in service delivery processes contributes to the narrowing or widening of the gap depending on the level of participation. This is determined by behaviours that are suitable or unsuitable, active or inactive, creative or destructive. Depending on the level of involvement by the customer it will result in low, medium or high customer participation. No matter what, one of the most obvious and probably the most decisive reason for the establishment of participation is the fact that, collectively, a group of people is in a more favourable position to negotiate successfully with their leaders than individuals are on their own. For a fact, the participation of citizens in their governance ensures that local government is run according to the principles of good governance and that expectations of the inhabitants of towns and cities are met. Whether or not these expectations are realistic, constructive interaction between local authorities and their communities should be encouraged to ensure that all stakeholders are at least informed about the expectations of the community and the ability of service providers to deliver services.

3.8 Summary

There are three key issues discussed and addressed in this chapter to unpack the service quality theory. Firstly it discussed and explained the five features/characteristics that distinguish services and goods and makes the services be of quality. The four features were drawn from Payne (1993: 37): intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, heterogeneity, and the fifth, ownership, from Kotler (1982) cited in Gabbott and Hogg (1998:29). The second key issue discussed is that of consumer gaps; the gaps found between customer expectations and customer perception. Five gaps were identified: customers' expectation and management's perceptions of those expectations, management's perception of customers' expectations and service quality specifications, service quality specifications and service delivery, service delivery and external communications to customers about service delivery

and customers' expectation and perceived service (Zeithaml et al., 1985:272). The third key issue is the service quality (SERVQUAL) theory in service provision postulated by Zeithaml Zeithaml (1987), cited in Parasuraman et al. (1988:15). This chapter also distinguished and explained the ten dimensions that determine service quality.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework guiding this study. Three theoretical strands were discussed: conceptualisation of services, Gaps model, and SERVQUAL theory. This chapter explains the methodology used in the study. Since the study aims at understanding the perceptions of community members with regards to service quality, it was necessary that the researcher should design an effective methodology. The methodology basically explains different means and methods utilised in carrying out a particular study. As such, this chapter discusses the research context, sampling methods, methods of data collection, data analysis, as well as ethical considerations dealt with in this study.

4.2 Research design

A research design is a set of guidelines on how the researcher intends to reach the aim of the study. As a plan or roadmap for the study, it is essential that the set design is followed during the course of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:108). A good design allows the researcher to test the hypothesis upon which the research question rests. Such a research design accentuates the correlation between dependent and independent variables and, as such, highlights the problematisation of the study.

Social research can be divided into three broad approaches - qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method approaches. In qualitative research, a phenomenon is analysed without the use of statistics and other forms of quantification. One of the strengths of a qualitative research is that it allows flexibility in its approach. However, it incurs the weakness of bias due to its subjectivity (Anderson, 2003:34). In quantitative research, the use of mathematical technique is employed. A quantitative research tests samples and draws general conclusions from them (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011:152). As such, quantitative research has the merit of objectively explaining one phenomenon in a way that allows the results to be universally applied to sufficiently similar cases.

Some of the methods of carrying out qualitative, quantitative or mixed research approaches are: historical, experimental/positivist and interpretive (Ngulube, 2010: 252). A historical research method is a research about people, places or events in the past. This method is suitable for carrying out qualitative research due to its narrative, literature and mythical nature. Experimental or positivist research method is concerned with carrying out research that aims at exploring correlations of causal and effect variables (theory testing). It is usually suitable for quantitative research (Creswell & Clark, 2007: 5). Interpretive research method employs the analysis of words, ideas and theories in a bid to discover, understand and describe a phenomenon. Although it is mostly used in qualitative research, to some extent it is also appropriate in quantitative research (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011: 152).

The research method employed in this study is a case study. According to Yin (2014: 282), a case study is determined by the 'how' and 'why' research questions, by events in which the researcher has no control, and is restricted to contemporary situations and not to situations in the past. Fidel (1984:274) states that a case study, as a research method, brings together many data collection methods (triangulation) in a bid to capture the complexity of a single case:

> *As a research method, case study seems appropriate for investigating phenomena when (1) a large variety of factors and relationships are included, (2) no basic laws exist to determine which factors and relationships are important, and (3) when the factors and relationships can be directly observed.*

This research used two research approaches, that is, triangulation. According to Olsen (2004:103), *"triangulation is defined as the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic"*. There are two types of triangulation: data triangulation and methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation adopts both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. However, over and above the above-mentioned criteria, the researcher does not have to select the case but an intrinsic case study focuses on the case because it is interesting (John & Rule 2011:8). Accordingly, *'case study method is a popular approach that allows researchers to develop and present an in-depth view of a particular situation, event or entity'* (John & Rule 2011:4). Yin (1989:11) gives a more comprehensive description of case study:

> *Case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The case study enquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data*

needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

The strength of a case study lies in its ability to produce results that cannot be generated when either qualitative or quantitative method is applied individually (Risjord, Moloneyand Dunbar, 2001:41). It does this by synthesising the strengths of both the qualitative and qualitative research methods. A qualitative approach to research was employed because of its ability to facilitate in-depth interpretation and understanding of the perceptions of the research subject regarding service delivery. The study began with a literature review of community perception of services delivery in South Africa with special focus on Impendle Local Municipality. The quantitative approach was used to complement the shortcomings of the qualitative approach. For the quantitative aspect, a questionnaire was developed and administered to the participants. The research was grounded on finding the actors' perspectives (insider or "emic" view) of the community's opinion on service delivery (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270).

However, regardless of statistical exactness of quantitative research, it has limitations in exploring social phenomena similar to the one under investigation in this study. Since it is outcome-oriented, quantitative research approach gives results that are close to the theory that is being tested (Creswell & Clark, 2007: 5). Ironically, it denies a researcher room for flexibility and creativity (Ngulube, 2010: 252). In a mixed method research, there is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods in an inquiry (Venkatesh, Brown and Bala, 2013:21). Although it requires a skilled researcher who is able to identify the limitation of quantitative or qualitative, mixed method research has the most insightful understanding and finding of a particular study.

4.3. Sampling

In Impendle Municipality there are four wards, each of which has a ward committee. The ward committee in the municipality is constituted by the councillor representing the ward in the Council, who must also be the chairperson of the committee of not more than 10 persons (Corporative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2011: 1). Focus groups interviews were conducted with two of the ward committees, those of Ward 2 and Ward 3, which were randomly selected. In order to administer the questionnaire, eighty households were

randomly selected from 7432 households in Impendle (Integrated Development Plan, 2011/2012) using random sampling. Twenty households were selected from each ward. At first, a household was selected arbitrarily and thereafter every third household was included in the sample. If no one was available or willing to participate in a certain household, the next household was selected, and thereafter the same pattern was repeated until the target was reached. A structured questionnaire was administered to one respondent from each of the selected households.

4.4. Data collection

In order to collect quantitative date, a structured questionnaire was administered to respondents from each of the selected households. One of the main rationales associated with conducting a questionnaire is that it provides the researcher with an opportunity to reach a larger sample than would be possible by using other techniques, anonymity and confidentiality can be assured and data analysis can be determined from the outset (Pickard, 2007: 183). For the qualitative part of the study, a semi-structured interview schedule was developed and administered to respondents in their respective focus groups. According to Thomas, MacMillan, McColl, Hale and Bond (1995:206), a focus group interview is

> *a technique involving the use of in-depth group interviews in which participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population, this group being 'focused' on a given topic.*

A tape recorder was used to record focus group discussions to ensure that the exact responses given by the study participants were captured. Thus, the study triangulated sources of data that included quantitative data from questionnaires and qualitative from focus groups. The interview schedule and the questionnaire are attached as Appendices I and II.

4.5 Data analysis

Data analysis can refer to a variety of specific procedures and methods. It often involves goals, relationships and decision-making, in addition to working with the actual data itself (Lacey & Luff, 2001:20). Different strategies provide analysts with organised approaches to working with data, enabling the analyst to create a logical sequence for the use of different procedures. In as much as both qualitative and quantitative data require distinct methods of

analysis, many studies use mixed methods of data analysis. Without analysis and interpretation, quantitative data is just a mass of numbers, while qualitative data is a string of words and phrases. Analysis and interpretation gives the meaningless data meaning, establishes relationships and leads to possible theorization (Lacey & Luff, 2001: 22).

Since this study used mixed methods of data collection, data was analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. Quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in which the questionnaire results were analysed using descriptive statistics and presented in tables and graphs. Qualitative data from focus groups was analysed through thematic analysis.

According to Bischof et al. (2011:88), thematic analysis *"provides a flexible and useful tool to identify and organize key themes from qualitative data"*. Thematic analysis is a method of data analysis usually used in qualitative studies for textual data, which formed a large part of this study. Thematic analysis is a technique used for identification, analysis and reporting patterns (themes) within data. *"A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set"* (Braun & Clarke 2006:35). Thematic analysis also interprets diverse features of the research topic and explicates the theoretical position within a particular research. This analytical framework enabled community members' perceptions of the services being provided by the municipality to be grouped into themes.

4.5 Research rigour

The credibility of any research work is vital to the use of its product findings. Even though measured differently in different types of research, reliability and validity are important aspects of all research – especially in qualitative research in which the charge of mediocrity needs to be countered (Lacey & Luff, 2001:22). In qualitative research, what determines rigor is its trustworthiness, which ensures the extent to which the results can be trusted (Given and Saumur, 2008:896). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:290) trustworthiness refers to the 'truth value' of a research study, its credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

In this study, triangulation - through the combination of both focus group discussions and questionnaires - was used to improve the reliability and validity of the study. In addition, comparing the study with other studies in the context was also a source of validity of the study results.

4.5 Ethical considerations

With research that involves human participants, it is important that issues of ethics be borne in mind when selecting participants, collecting data, and/or analysing and presenting the research findings. Any research study is subject to Codes of Ethics and good practice for the protection of participants (Polit & Beck, 2012:152). Ethical codes are based upon a few generally accepted moral values of respect for individual beneficence, respect for human dignity and justice. To ensure ethical considerations, these three broad principles, on which standards of ethical conduct research are based, were followed.

4.5.1 Beneficence

Beneficence imposes a duty on a researcher to minimise harm and maximise benefits. Polit and Beck (2012:152) state that it is the researcher's duty to avoid, prevent or minimise unnecessary harm in studies with humans. The author further stated that participants have a right to be protected from exploitation and should be assured that their participation or information they might provide would not be used against them. The right to freedom from harm and discomfort was maintained as participants were not subjected to any risk of harm or injury. The study was reviewed by the University's Ethics Committee and clearance was granted (Appendix III). Permission was sought from and granted by Impendle Municipality (Appendix IV). Personal and sensitive issues were avoided. No unrealistic promises were made to the participants.

4.5.2 Informed consent

Respect for human dignity includes the right to self-determination and to full disclosure (Polit and Beck, 2012:154). The information letter explaining what the study was about was provided to the participants before commencement of the study, and the participants signed a consent form (Appendix V). Participation in this study was voluntary and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study even if they had previously given their

consent. No form of coercion was used on those individuals who refused to participate in the study. Confidentiality of records was maintained by anonymising data – by removing any personal identifiers to responses on the transcripts and completed questionnaires.

4.5.3 Benefit to participants

Since the study deals with a subject of interest to many in South Africa, the results could be used to influence policy and delivery of services in the municipality. The researcher intends to engage the municipal authority on the findings of the study and to facilitate the use of the recommendations contained to improve service delivery at Impendle Municipality.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has explained the research methods used to collect data on the subject matter of this study. The main part of the chapter presented the data that was collected through a self-administered questionnaire and four focus groups interviews. The chapter also reviewed how research rigor and ethical concerns were addressed in the study. The next chapter presents the results of data collection.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology used in this study. As case study method was used, the chapter showed how appropriate methods of collecting and analysing data were employed to accentuate the advantages of this method. This chapter presents the data gathered through various methods at Impendle. This data presentation is divided into two: qualitative data (focus groups) and quantitative data. Qualitative data is presented in textual format, giving thick extracts and descriptions of the responses from focus groups. Individual respondents from both focus groups were coded as "M" for those in ward 3, while "N" was used for those in ward 4. Quantitative data is tabulated and presented in graphs and pie charts.

5.2 Focus groups data

Adequate service delivery seems to be contingent upon the dynamics of interaction between the customer and the service provider. In the absence of a standardised measure of what this entails, it means that service satisfaction is a negotiated function between the two stakeholders. According to Hiidenhovi et al. (2002:60) quality service delivery must be understood within the context of multiphase interaction between the provider and the customer. This takes into consideration not only the tangibles delivered, but also the process and context within which such delivery has been made, assurance of competence, active attentiveness, dissemination of information, politeness of the staff and all the other procedural issues considered relevant by the stakeholders (Hiidenhovi et al., 2002:60). This fact is substantiated by the interview responses from residents of Impendle Municipality. To capture the dynamics of multiphase interaction in negotiating the quality of the service delivered, data was analysed for customer expectations, comments on access, communication, standardisation, tangibles, courtesy, reliability and credibility.

5.2.1 Expected service

It can be assumed that for services to be valued and seen as valuable or judged for quality and adequacy, they have to somehow address a perceived need by customers. For Zeithaml (2009:76), customer expectations of services are the entry point to service delivery, to which service providers need to invest time and resources, and understand and evaluate them since they form a vital part of service evaluation. For the four wards in Impendle, a number of expected services were captured in the interviewees' responses. The main needs ranged from tangibles like bridges, roads, buses and lighting conductors, to intangible services like employment, banking and security. For example N2 noted that lack of some of these services had caused '*prevalence in disaster [in which] some people even lost their lives.*'

Reiterating the need, and somehow the domino effect caused by lack of some of the services, N1 noted that:

> *Bridges are low if there [is] heavy rains cars can't (sic) cross the bridge. As such, if there is disaster person who are supposed to help can't get here because they can't cross the bridge…*

The need for bridges in Impendle was echoed by all participants from the four focus groups. M2 observed that *one of the things we usually experience is severe storms, which sometimes end-up taking people's lives when they try to cross the river…!*

The most affected by this lack of service seemed to be school children who, according to many respondents, fall victim to flooding rivulets within the community. Some learners end up missing school for the duration of flooding and for the greater part of the rainy season because of lack of bridges. This was substantiated by M4, as he recollected:

> *Some other day we went to the rivers where school kids cross, we checked every river. I am sure Councillor Gwala remembers; we called each other to go check the conditions of the river where school kids cross like at Mlaba and Gomane. We were convinced that we need a bridge there….*

As a result of this perceived need, respondent M2 recommended as follows:

> *I think the municipality should invest in building railway bridges. Even at my place, one girl lost her life. I think that railway bridges are needed at Mnyandu.*

N2 corroborated by arguing that in order to mitigate the challenges faced by school children, footbridges are needed:

Around December last year the adaptation came here to check where bridges should be built. The places we were showed were by Asande School [and it was concluded that] we should build a footbridge there ... by Hlelolusha School [another] footbridge is needed there....

Another expected service seemed to be around the issue of banking and other intangible services like different means of transportation. In that regard M2 made a comprehensive observation:

The other thing the community would be grateful for is the shopping centre. Here at Impendle we have a big problem of being far from town, we don't have banks around here, and they are all in PMB of which it costs a lot to go there. There are times where we need bank statements we [are] required to go [instead] to PMB just for bank statements. So it would be better if we have a shopping centre here.

M6 further supported this observation and highlighted the issue of transport when he argued, equally comprehensively, that:

There are many things disturbing us here, [for one,] we do have ATMs and [also] when one wants to open a bank account they have to go to PMB. In other places when one wants to take a taxi they take it and when they want to take a bus they do so. Now those are the things we ask why they are not happening here. If we could get advice on what we can do to have buses here ... because here you are forced to take a taxi even if you don't like taxis. Sometimes one go to PMB to buy many things that can be hard to put all of them in the taxi.

The respondents also had a common perception of the need for employment creation and training and skills development that goes with it. On employment, the challenge was not only that "*finish matric and stay home because they are no jobs*", but also the fact that people were generally apathetic and reliant on government for everything. As such, it came out as a concern that a change in mentality is needed since up until then *"when people think of the municipality they think of employment..."* This concern was put into perspective by M10:

The other thing is if SEDA can come up with a way of training people so that at the end they can be able to help themselves without waiting for the government to employ them and do things they can benefit from. And for the disabled people, we know that they are funds for them but most of the times they don't (sic) get help because of the money they [are] getting for their disability.

However, when asked for their utmost need or challenge, participants from all wards seemed to perceive their needs in terms of accommodation (houses) and access roads. From some of their articulations one would have also added affordable water and electricity, as many were

expressing concern of the standardisation and affordability of these basic services. The need for decent houses seemed to arise from the perennial snow. According to N2;

> *If the whole community can have houses that could be great because …the snow is really a problem around here, especially Ward 4 and Ward 3 it takes maybe 7 days. The last there was snow here maybe 105 houses were covered by the snow….*

The need for roads is exacerbated by floods and snow. N1 felt that this needs urgent attention since *"… when there is snow we don't go anywhere maybe for a week … [as such] we also like [to have] tar in the main road …"* The need for proper access roads was also based on access to other strategic places like town and school and to enhance accessibility by service providers to Impendle. Otherwise, the participants from all wards seemed to have categorical and comprehensive need perceptions and, to a large extent, they also seemed to know whose duty it was to provide them. However, communication between the community and service providers (mainly government) seemed not to be always smooth.

5.2.2 Access

According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985:47), *access* refers to the ease with which customers are able to establish contact with their service providers. This includes clarity on when the customers could contact their providers for any information and providers remaining consistent in their operating hours. For the respondents, access to the providers was hampered, or at times completely hindered, by poor road network, unavailability of service providers, and lack of clear channels of communication and, according to the respondents, an inexplicable absence of service providers in offices or on their phones. This concern was comprehensively stated by M10 as follows:

> *At Phindangene the problem is the network arial … the spring season is around the corner so we will have problems and it is going to be hard for people to report in time like they will have to come to report in person because of network problem. Even the road is in bad condition so taxis don't want to use our road. As I was coming here I left many people at the bus stop waiting for taxis.*

This network problem seemed to be a common experience in both wards, as N2 corroborated: *'The other challenge there is [lack of] along the road by forest … when there is an accident people can't report…'* N1 further expounded on the implications of this lack of proper road service by noting that when there is *'a problem is that cars can't get here because of the bad condition of the road but as we discussed that they are working on that matter…'* This lack

of telephone network and navigable roads means that access is severed between the communities and the service providers.

With reference to some government departments like the police, Department of Agriculture and social workers (from the Department of Social Development), respondents noted worrying trends of inaccessibility. According to M3; *"sometimes people want help but can't get hold of anyone who can help ... not even cops…"* This was supported by M6, who noted with concern, that the people in charge of social work were not as accessible as one would want. He observed that the leadership of social work at Impendle was *"always not available for us if one get that chance to talk with her …"* The picture was further compounded by adding the inaccessibility of people from the Department of Agriculture, who were also regarded as inaccessible during times of need by M4. Some of these trends seemed to have an impact on communication between service providers and the communities.

5.2.3 Communication

Communication, in this context, refers to the ability of the service provider to talk to the customer in a manner that the customer can easily understand (Parasuraman et al., 1985:47). From the interview with participants, one gathers three different but interrelated perceptions on communication: lack of communication, poor communication, and inconsistent communication. One can, however, get an insight into the existence of a smooth-albeit-not-standardised communication.

Perceptions of poor communication range from lack of explanation for certain procedural measures to unclear procedures. N1 captured one of these instances: *"there is this issue of grannies ... R100 are debited from their pension grant from SASSA [with no explanation]. We have been reporting that issue since last year and we are not getting help."* The issue seemed to have not been well communicated or communicated at all, since some reported to have heard about it 'on radio' as it was said that it was for 'airtime'. However, these deductions where shown not to have been consistent as testified by N1: *"I don't know how they do it because they have never debited on my pension…"*

N3 observed that the same was the case with the municipality and water services. According to N3, the municipality:

... don't come to check meters that means they just estimate that maybe in that house they used this much water, one get their statement when they went there themselves to check how much they owing. When they going to close the water they don't report. They don't listen to the local they said they employed by the district that is uMgungundlovu so I don't get it when they don't listen to us who use this water because the district doesn't stay here...

This observation about water was also echoed in the other ward by M9:

I want to emphasis on the water complain, somebody spoken about stand pipes, we have meters so other people around here are already paying for it the problem is that pipes burst and the uMgungundlovu come to bill us we still have to pay....

An instance of lack of communication was also observed in the case of the demarcation of the municipality by M6 and M2, respectively:

There is this thing of which we don't know if it going to happen or not...we hear that some people from our Ward 1 will go back to Sabelweni. This thing is really abusing the community and it will end-up pushing them to strike....

That issue is really disturbing ... we have experienced that [before]. We were under Ward 2 [before] this boundaries thing and then we were then moved to Ward 3. It [has been] really hard on us because Ward 3 had already planned on how they do ... it looks like we have being left out ... then again we hear rumours that we will go back under Ward 2...

Another observation that would normally be regarded as an instance of poor communication is the case of how the budget allocation for each municipality is calculated. Some respondents (N3 and N1) seemed to have an idea or 'hearsay' on the matter:

N3: *They usually say that the budget they get is determined by the people who registered by IEC (as voters) ...since we only have 4 wards here at Impendle that we means we not many so our budget is small I think that the main challenge which makes other services to not delivered in time....*

N1: *It is said that the budget is determined by the people who are registered to vote...[however] there is a lot happening when we are voting, like other people waste ballot papers. We don't know how we can avoid that especially with the youth because they complain that the government doesn't do anything for them so why must they vote....*

Other instances of lack of or poor and inconsistent communication were indicated by statements such as: "*... I don't know how they calculate it*" (N3); "*...you must go check it at the municipality...*" (N3); "*I think they should ask us first before they come*" (M6), and; "*...but then where can one take a matter to?*" (M6). All these reveal worrying trends of poor communication.

Inconsistent communication was captured in these two responses from M3 and M6, respectively, from Ward 1:

> *… they said they are coming back to discuss about the Sabelweni community who are getting water free of charge…They take that water from our tank and we end-up paying more ….*

> *This issue of water is one of the things that disturb me … people around here keep on asking why people from Sabelweni are using the water they are not paying for. The uMgungundlovu bill us with the water they take here to the Sabelweni community.*

As a result most of the respondents were keen to continuously engage service providers, and appreciated every gesture in that direction from the providers or anybody they associated with service provision. This was clear in statements such as the following made by M3, M10 and M3, respectively:

> *We are happy that you came here and we hope that you will take what we were discussing to the relevant departments maybe there will be a different.*

> *While you are still on that departments matter, they should send at least one person on their behalf to take complaints because… really the meetings are usually managed by the members of the community only.*

> *We want them to come with the feedback, the other thing we asked them is the feedback on meters that how much a meter is,… if it free they will have to tell us …and which meters they will start to charge because you find that we use less water but pay more … some people's meters are old and they not working anymore but they get charged… that means they (municipality) just guess (estimate).*

The appreciation was even evident in simple statements such as '*I would like to thank you for coming here to discuss our issues*' (M8), and '*please give us your contacts*' (M3)

The issue directly linked to that of communication was that of responsiveness.

5.2.4 Responsiveness

Responsiveness is a concept usually associated with good governance, which refers to the willingness of the government to listen and attend to the needs and concerns of the governed (Faguet, 2011: 1). In this study, there are a number of statements that indicate community concern with issues of responsiveness from their service providers. These range from an indication of lack of priority and insensitivity on the part of the providers to the pleas of the needy community: *"we wanted to make it on the 21st but they said they having a party"* (M3). Also longer time lags between a communicated need and the service was brought forward as

a sign of lack of responsiveness: *"we did report the matter to the municipality and disaster management they promised to take care of the matter but till now we have never got any explanation regarding the matter"* (M3). Lastly, M3 observed the worrying preference of some departments not to communicate directly to the community, in spite of the fact that they had given them their contacts:

> *The fire matter people (sic) are not getting used to the contacts we give them; they believe that is something happens they will take the matter to the councillor…if you could advise us on how to make them get used to phoning the numbers we give them….*

It can be argued that apart from these procedural concerns of service provision, one of the major issues in quality service provision is the capacity of the provider to provide the services in question.

5.2.5 Competence

According to Grindle (1997:4) competence or capacity has three dimensions: organisational, human and institutional. These speak to the management and organisational systems, expertise and qualifications as well as policy and legal frameworks within which a particular entity operates (Grindle, 1997:6). These, according to Parasuraman et al. (1985:47), have implications for service provision in terms of the time spent in processing particular services, the accuracy of the performance and the appropriateness of the service provided in line with the expected need. In the current study respondents seemed concerned with this aspect of service provision. These concerns can be summed up in three areas: lack of sufficient and competently trained personnel, limited financial and logistical capacity and insufficient inputs and requisite equipment. In this regard statements by N3 and N2, respectively, are instructive:

> *Maybe to add on that, if you could improve on infrastructure … like when there is fire we do have a car but then you find that it is broken-down, so it can't help in that matter. And at disaster office Zwe is working alone so it hard to go to each and every people who reported….*

> *Policemen have a problem that the vans don't stay here, they stay in PMB… they only use them during the day. Sometimes you call them and they tell you that the van is in PMB…. We met with Mr Mabaso on Monday regarding the disaster issues that they experienced difficulties here, he then explained that we should brief the community about the small budget …They were explaining that the disaster budget is only R100 000 so it is hard to get where they want to be in terms service delivery."*

N3 also observed the shortage of competent staff; *"... and they said they don't have meter readers so the Department of Water should employ people who will check meters..."* This lack of efficient service delivery had another dimension, which was explained by M6, with regard to social workers; '*... you don't get help because she doesn't know everything... she sometimes tells you to come some other time because she still going to ask from others and you see there is still a long way to go*'. This lack of capacity had clear implications on how services are delivered. The implications were identified as existing in terms of the quality of work done and the time taken to do by M6, N4, N2 and M6 in the following statements:

> *Then there is a clinic issue; the government is [delaying] in adding the number of workers. You find that people go to the clinic around 7 am and come back late round about 5 because of long queues. The number of nurses in the clinic is not enough to serve all people ....*

> *If we [are] promised services they shouldn't take a long time like the phase 2 houses we've been waiting for ....*

> *Sometimes policemen take their time ... sometimes one reports a problem that requires them to come to us and they take their time to attend....*

> *Eskom started to install (electricity) but did not finish because they [did not] have enough material with them and when they were making infit they found that other houses are far between each other so they will have to come back with long electrical cords. So we were saying Mr Shabalala will contact them to come and continue with the work because they [had] started at Pimrod they still have to go to other wards....*

5.2.6 Tangibles, security and courtesy

From the interviews few things were said about tangible services that have been received, security offered as a result of service provision and about courtesy of street-level bureaucrats within service provision entities. However the latter two can always be implied from preceding discussions. According to Parasuraman et al. (1985:47) tangibles, security and courtesy refer to the physical setting in which the service is provided, the assurance of freedom from risk, doubt and danger, and the behaviour of the service provider identified with politeness, consideration and kindness, respectively.

M3 made a general comment on courtesy: *"people are afraid to go to some departments for help because they know they won't get it in peace simply because workers don't have good relationship with them, they don't treat people well."* This was further substantiated by a specific observation by M3 from social work:

> *Speaking of their boss, that child is short-temped, she is really rude to old people…Not in a proper manner even, as old as I am it is really hurting to be scolded by them for their work ….*

Apart from this, nothing much was said with regard to tangibles, security and courtesy.

5.2.7 Reliability and credibility

One would argue that these two determinants of quality service provision are co-extensive; with one feeding into the other. Parasuraman et al. (1985:47) define reliability as consistency and dependability in terms of timeliness and exactness of service provision, availability of actual or relevant information and clear invoice procedures. Credibility is seen as trustworthiness, believability and honesty (Parasuraman et al., 1985:47). A few perceptions of reliability and credibility were observed from the interviews. With regard to reliability, most respondents referred to perceived services as 'luck'. This was captured in such statements as *"We were lucky to get help…"* (M1) or *"luckily … they did that for us"* (M6). This is somehow telling, given the fact that the particular service providers are duty-bound to provide services but are not doing so at their own discretion.

N1 gave a somehow comprehensive response with implications for reliability:

> *We usually get help… but then we got problems when it comes to furniture they promise us but they don't give us …other than that we get help in other things they do give us food but maybe for that time only and you have a problem when time goes on.*

This statement was substantiated by M6, on a different but not entirely unrelated issue:

> *Not leaving out issues like snow season, sometimes our cattle die and when we contact the Department of Agriculture, they don't approach [the matter] satisfactorily. You find that cattle rot in the mountain ... they say they will come to check those dead cattle but they don't ... We end up hearing that others got rebates for the cattle they lost and others get nothing. So I suggest if you could help in encouraging them to work accordingly.*

There were, however, some positive statements on reliability from the respondents: "*…but this CWP and PWP is really helpful*" (M6), "*we thank our municipality… there are lots of things they have done for us and they are still working*" (N1).

Even though from the preceding observations and sentiments from respondents one would almost guess the credibility of service providers, according to the respondents of Impendle, the respondents had mixed perceptions. On the one hand, respondents felt that the providers had been "*helpful and [their] services are good …and should be given another chance of leading again*" (N3). On the other hand, respondents were 'disappointed' and 'fed-up' as the observed that some departments and service providers had "*many promises that they don't keep*" (M6). This negative evaluation was highlighted in statements pertaining to several providers by M6 and M9:

> *Social workers have a problem in helping the community, you report a matter to them and they do nothing about it. They can't even go to people who need help, they [are] not working to see what they can help with instead they just bring back the work to the person who reported it. Why am I saying this it because I went there with people to report the crèche issue that it is not registered, if I remember properly the crèche's registration is their job so they had to register it but … they couldn't do that so the crèche ended up closed. So I think they are not doing their job well.*

> *People think the uMgungundlovu [District] is robbing them because they own this water and they are charged more than people from PMB (Pietermaritzburg town). The other thing is [that] the government promised us free litres [of water], I can't remember how many but we have never [received] them.*

As Parasuraman et al. (1985:47) argue, these are distinct but related determinants, to have a holistic of assessing customer's perceptions on the quality of services provided and the provision; these must be treated as overlapping dimensions.

5.3 Questionnaire data

5.3.1   Demographic characteristics

a. Gender

The questionnaire was distributed to both men and women who were randomly selected. Given the universal demographic reality, women are more than men, as such more women were selected in the sample. The gender differences are shown on the diagrams below.

Table 5.1: Respondent's gender frequency

	Frequency	Percent
Female	43	57.3
Male	32	42.7
Total	75	100.0

As shown from Table 5.1, women constituted 57.3% of the sample, while men were 43.7%. These percentages are graphically represented below.
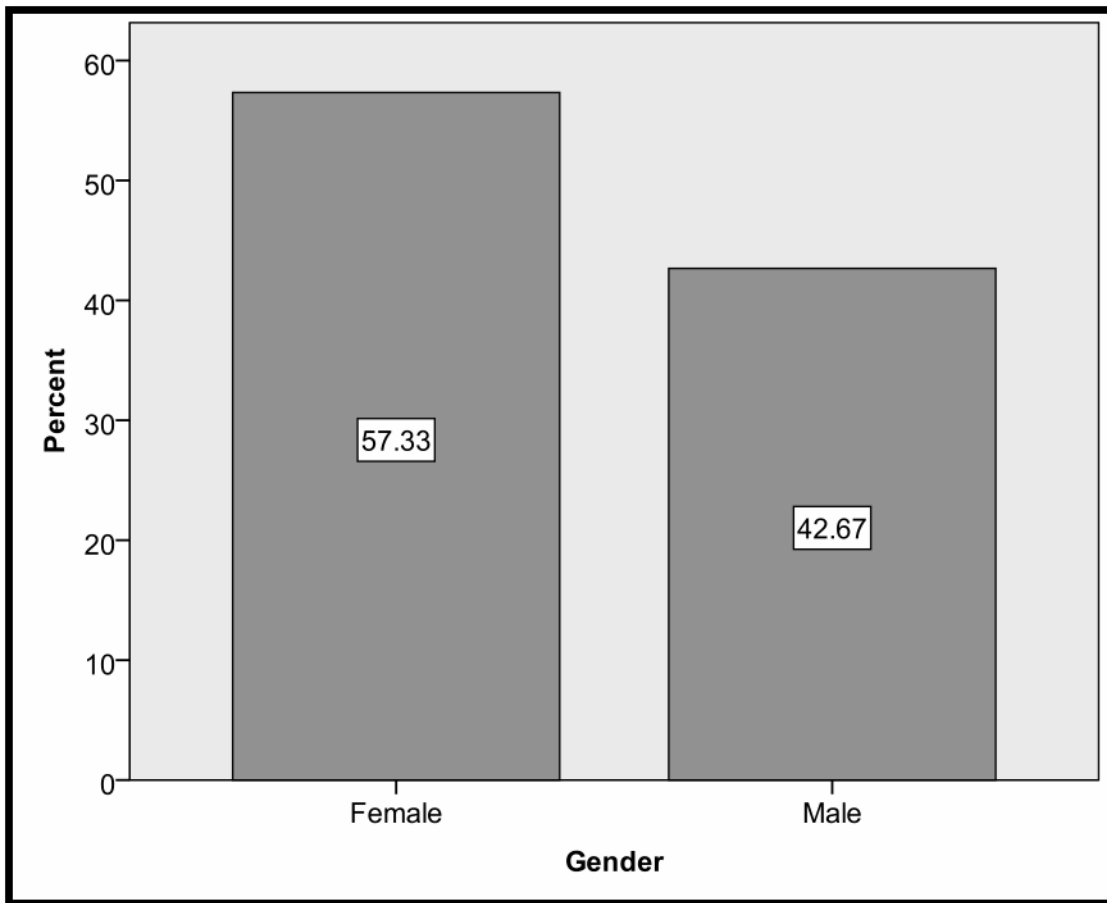
Figure 5.1: Gender percentages of respondents

b. Age

To be representative, the sample included a variety of age-sets. As shown in Table 5.2 below, the age-sets ranged from 18-20 to 71-80 years. The majority of the participants were aged between 21 and 70 years; with highest frequency being participants from the 31-40 age-set (19) followed by 41-50 age-set (15). As such one can say that, generally, the participants for this study were middle-aged adults in their mid-30s to late-40s. The following table and graph depicts these age dynamics.

Table 5.2: Age-sets of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-20 Years	3	4.0
21-30 Years	12	16.0
31-40 Years	19	25.3
41-50 Years	15	20.0
51-60 Years	9	12.0
61-70 Years	13	17.3
71-80 Years	4	5.3
Total	75	100.0
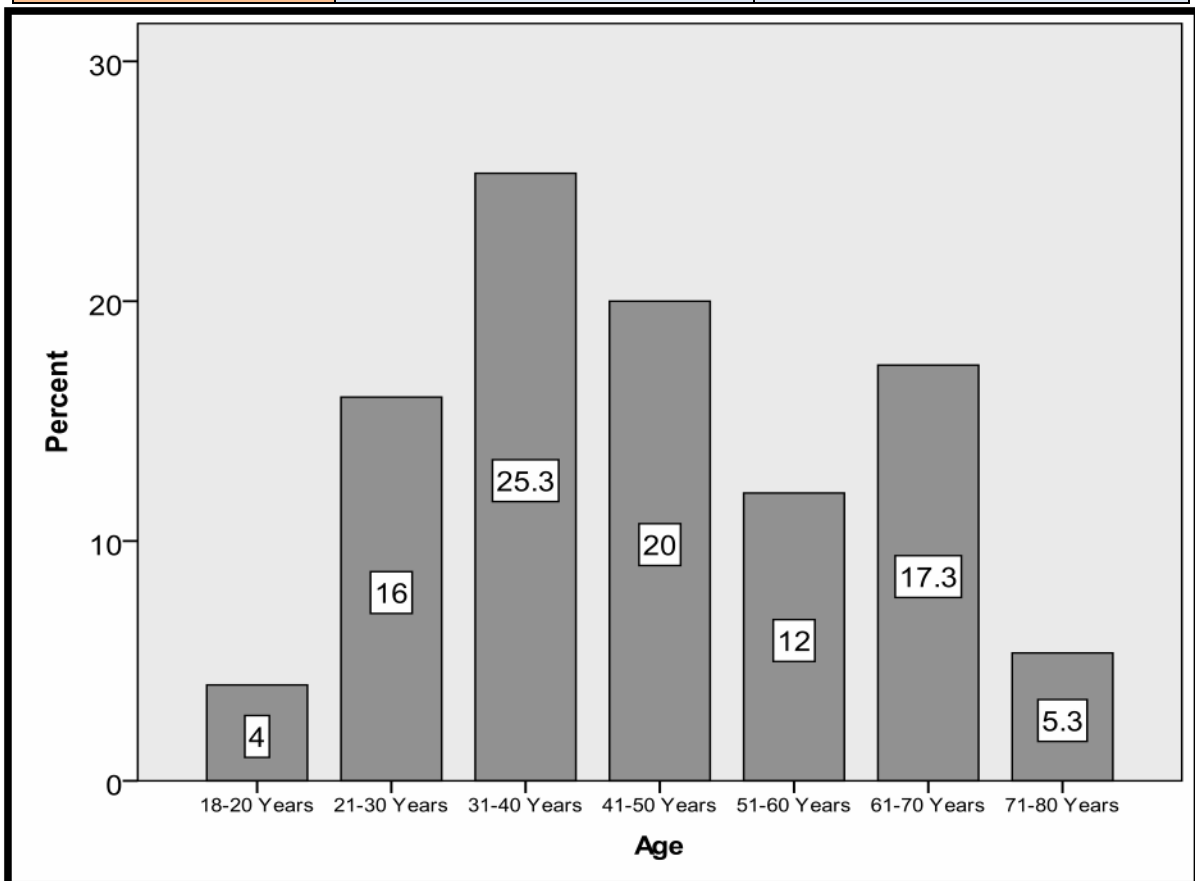
Figure 5.2: Age percentages for respondents

c. Education level

Even though the sampling employed did not precisely control for educational level of respondents it was, however, possible to delineate respondents by educational levels as shown below.

Table 5.3: Educational level of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Primary	22	29.7
Matric	21	28.4
Degree/Tertiary	24	32.4
Postgraduate	7	9.5
Total	74	100.0
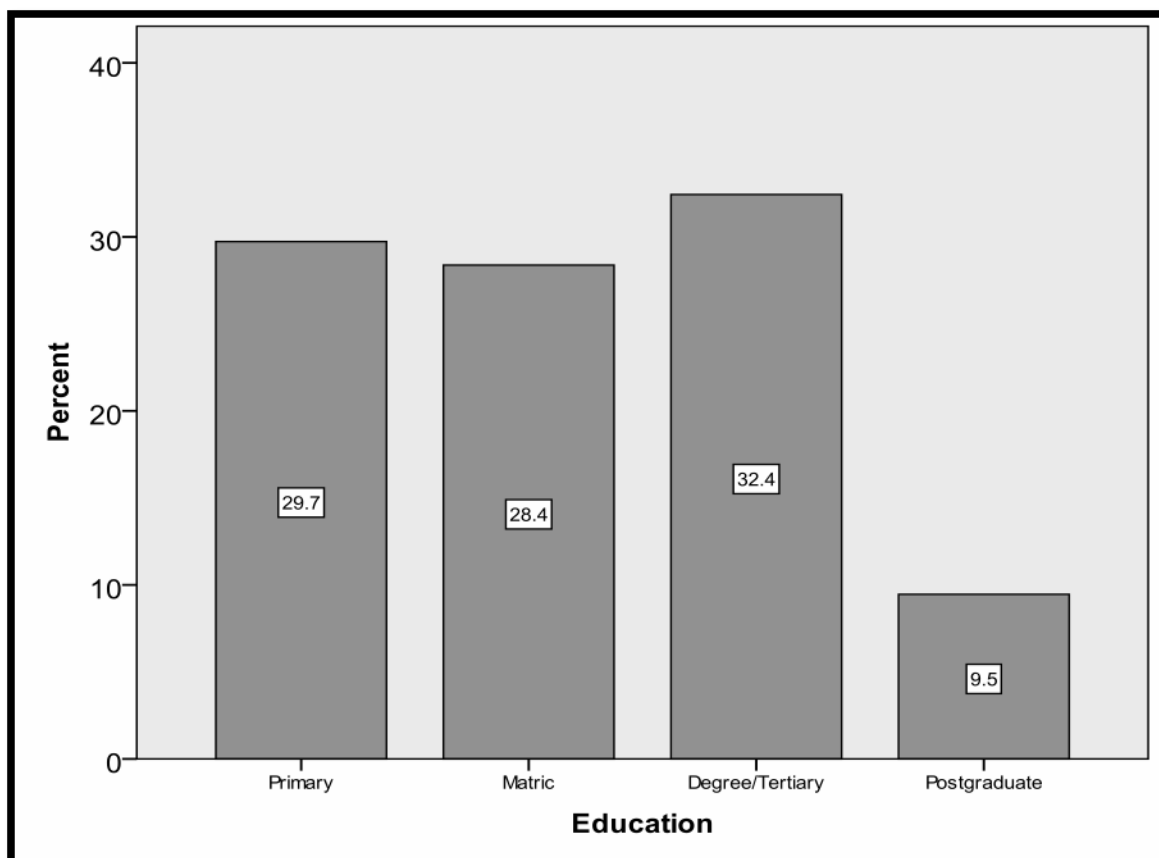
Figure 5.3: Educational level percentages of respondents

d. Employment status

Respondents could also be differentiated in terms of employment status. As shown in Table 5.4 below the majority of questionnaire respondents were unemployed at the time of the survey. Only 28% of the respondents were formally employed, while 12% were self-employed. The outcome of this research indicates that levels of poverty among the respondents were expected to be rife due to low levels of employment recorded.

Table 5.4: Employment status of respondents

Employment status	Frequency	Percent
Yes	21	28.0
No	45	60.0
Self Employed	9	12.0
Total	75	100.0
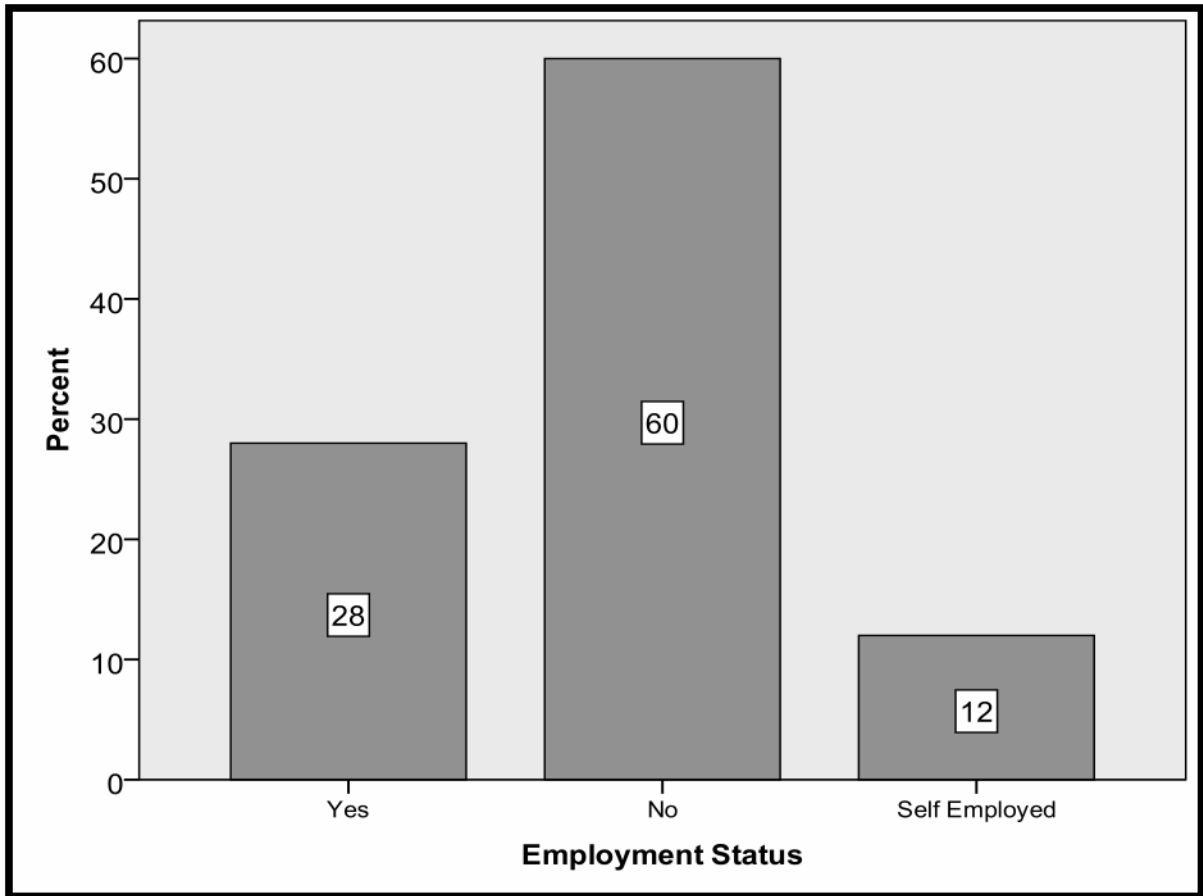
Figure 5.4: Employment status percentages of respondents

5.3.2 Perception on service delivery

A perception score was computed using a summation approach from the six variables on attitude of municipality workers. The expected minimum score is 6, while the expected maximum score is 30.

Table 5.5: Descriptive summary of perception score

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception on Workers Score	73	6.00	30.00	18.18	5.39

Table 5.6: Gender perceptual difference towards Municipal workers

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Error Mean
Perception on Workers Score	Female	43	18.72	.882
	Male	30	17.40	.867

Female community members seem to have more positive opinions towards Impendle Municipality workers compared to men. To check if this difference in perception is significant, a t-test was carried out at 5% level of significance. The results are shown in Table 5.7. The calculated t value was found to be 1.031 (p-value=0.306). This means that there is no significant difference between the perception of men and women in Impendle Municipality.

Table 5.7: T-test for equality of means results

	t-test for Equality of Means						
						95% CI	
	t	df	p-value	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Perception on Workers Score	1.031	71	.306	1.321	1.281	-1.234	3.876

Perception on service delivery has many facets and cannot be measured using one question in the study tool. To overcome this, several questions were asked in the questionnaire, ranging from necessity of services to quality of services offered by the Impendle Municipality. In total, 13 Likert scale items were used in an effort to measure service delivery perception.

5.3.3 Reliability analysis

A reliability analysis, using Cronbach's alpha, was done on this section of data. The reliability analysis is presented in Table 5.4. A value of Cronbach's alpha above 0.70 is desirable (Sekaran, 2006:1).

Table 5.8: Reliability analysis

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I think that the Impendle Municipality understands the kind of services that we need in this locality	33.17	42.616	.453	.610
I feel that Impendle Municipality informs us adequately regarding the decisions they make on service delivery	32.32	39.132	.541	.586
Impendle Municipality delivers services that it promises to the local community within the time they promise to do so	32.54	43.899	.272	.635
I think that Impendle Municipality is prompt in delivering their services to the local community	32.77	43.269	.414	.616
Political leaders at the municipality pay attention to the service demands of their local community	32.67	44.902	.319	.630
I am confident in the manner at which Impendle Municipality delivers services to the local residents	32.64	42.705	.418	.614
The municipality is doing enough to address concerns raised by residents during service delivery protests	33.30	44.450	.246	.639
Residents of Impendle Municipality have adequate water supply	33.00	44.265	.245	.640
Residents of Impendle Municipality have adequate electricity supply	33.04	43.777	.252	.639
Residents of Impendle Municipality receive satisfactory garbage collection services	33.58	50.571	-.135	.709
Roads in Impendle Municipality are well maintained	33.81	44.155	.233	.642
The municipality informs us when certain services shall be performed.	33.19	42.243	.327	.626

Impendle Municipality shows interest in looking for opportunities where local people can benefit in accessing more efficient services.	32.84	43.136	.300	.631

From the reliability table, it was found that the question on garbage collection was not reliable enough in measuring perception on service delivery in this study. From the reliability analysis, it was found that deletion of this variable would result in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.709, which meets the desired threshold from the literature. The remaining 12 items were used to calculate perception on service delivery score.

5.3.4 Boundary and population size impact on service delivery

Respondents were also asked about the impact of municipal size on service delivery. This question was directly linked to the aim of this study, which is to assess the impact of boundary re-adjustments on the quality of service delivery. As shown on Tables 5.9 - 5.10 and Figures 5.5 - 5.6, respondents thought that neither a population increase nor an increase in the geographical size of the municipality has a significant impact on service delivery.

Table 5.9: Huge municipality population limits service delivery

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	16.0
Disagree	19	25.3
Not Sure	23	30.7
Agree	14	18.7
Strongly Agree	7	9.3
Total	75	100.0
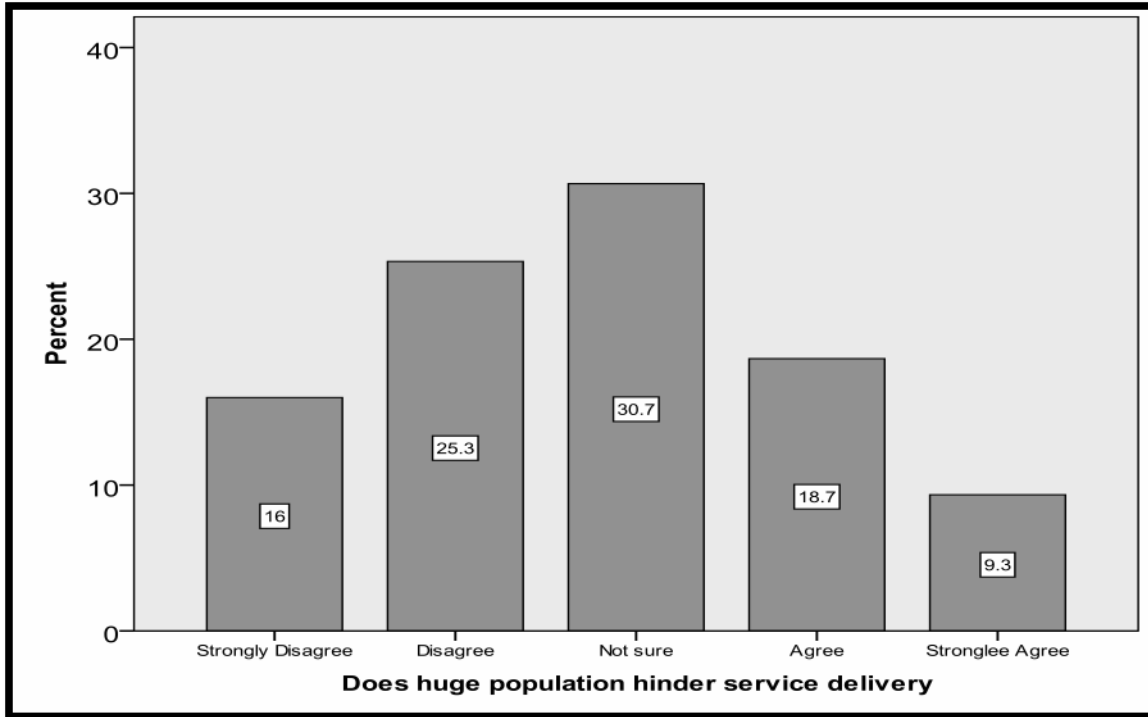
Figure 5.5: Huge population hinders service delivery

As shown in Figure 5.5, many respondents (30.7%) were not sure on the correlation between population size and quality of service delivery, the majority of respondents (41.3%) disagreed that a large population hinders service delivery. This was in contrast with those who agreed (18.7%) or strongly agreed (9.3) with the assumption that population size had a negative correlation with service delivery.

On the impact of municipal physical size to service delivery, the results were the same. As shown in Table 5.10, 41.2% of the respondents disagreed with the assumption that a bigger municipal size hinders service delivery. The majority of respondents still were not sure (44.6%) about the correlation of the two – it is likely that this was a technical question and the selected respondents were not in a position to establish a link between the two. Only 16.3% affirmed the assumption that a bigger municipal size will hinder service delivery.

Table 5.10: Huge size of municipality hinders service delivery

| Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	11	14.9
Disagree	18	24.3
Not sure	33	44.6
Agree	9	12.2
Strongly Agree	3	4.1
Total	74	100.0

Figure 5.6 shows the results of the inverse proposition; smaller municipality will lead to better services. Again, respondents seemed consistant in their perceptions, with 41.2% negating the premise, while 16.3% affirmed it, buffered by a huge number of respondents who were not sure (44.6%) of the correlation.

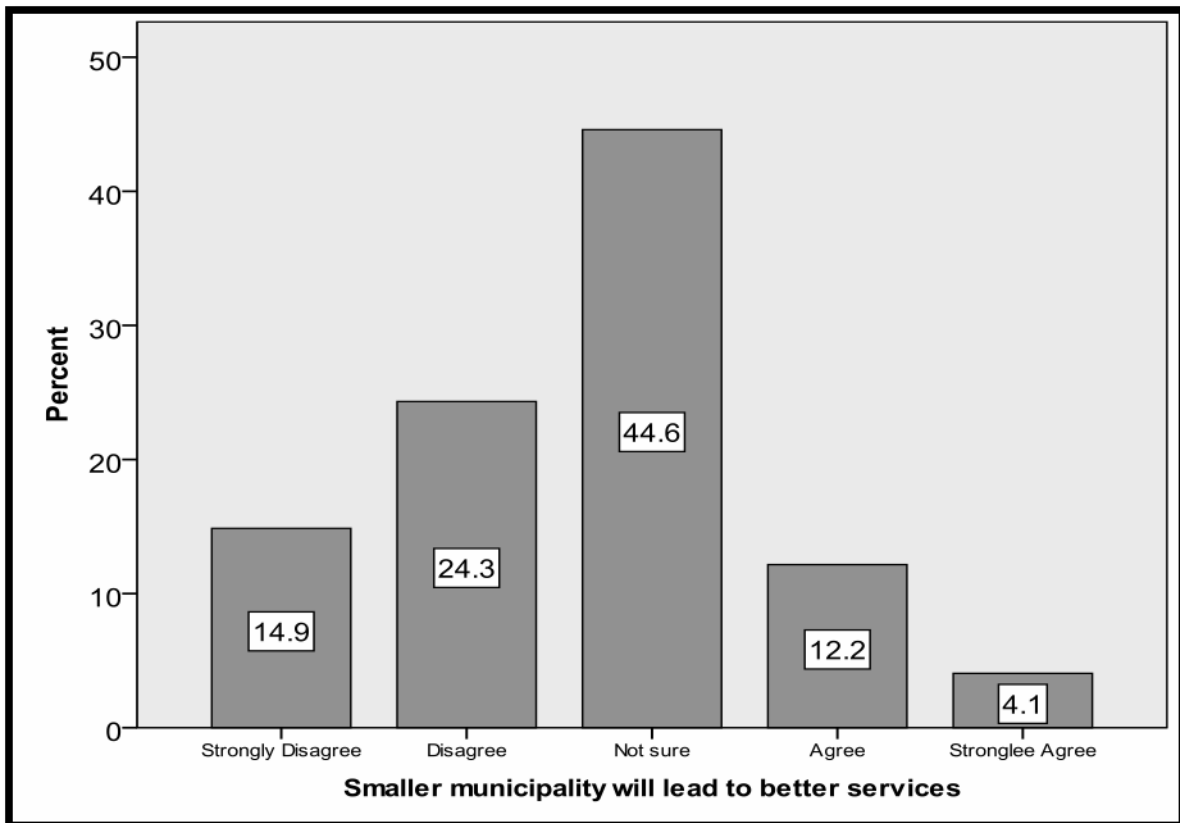Figure 5.6: Smaller municipality will lead to better services

5.4 Summary

This chapter presents results from two systems of data collection: focus groups and a questionnaire. Focus groups data (from four ward committees) are presented with regards to respondent's expectations and perceptions, while questionnaire data presented quantifiable data of the study, which include demographical information.

CHAPTER 6

Interpretation of Findings and Data Analysis

6.1 Introduction

The main objective of this study was to understand community perceptions of services rendered by Impendle Municipality to its constituents. The previous chapter presented two sets of data obtained through focus group interviews and questionnaire survey. This chapter presents the results of analysis done on both quantitative and qualitative data gathered for the purposes of this study. Quantitative data were analysed by means of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 13.0. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequencies, tables, percentages and correlation tests were used in the data analysis and summaries. Thematic analysis was used for qualitative data. In order to obtain a reliable and valid picture of the perceptions of the community regarding the quality of service delivery, quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated in analysis.

6.2 Major findings

The rationale of this study is based on the recent changes in the boundary and population of Impendle Municipality on which the assumption is that this may have affected the provision of services by the municipality. It was argued in Chapter 1 that what compounds the problem in Impendle is that being a rural municipality already struggling with revenue generation, an increase in the jurisdiction of the municipality did not come with complementary budget increase. As such, it is the assumption of this study that with more people and liabilities added to the territory without complementary financial increase, either the services provided or the quality thereof will be negatively affected.

This section presents major findings from the data shown in the previous section. The research findings show that a lot of expectations of services were not rendered. This section uses the SERVQUAL theory and data from literature review to categorise and understand the findings. As indicated in Chapter 3, the SERVQUAL theory is an instrument for measuring the perceptions of customers about service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988:85). The theory measures customers' expectations before service encounters as well as the perceptions about

actual service experience. As such, the results are broadly categorised into two: service expectations and service perception. A stand-alone category on service quality will be included, which shows how perceptions incorporated the two categories.

6.3. Community perceptions on expected services

6.3.1 Major finding 1: Moderate expectations for government services

From both interviews and questionnaire responses, community members of Impendle seemed to know what is expected of the municipality, as indicated by their expressions of a number of expectations on service delivery. Most respondents expected that most of the services must be provided by government. These expectations ranged from tangibles like bridges, roads, buses and lightning conductors, to intangible services like employment, banking and security. However, most respondents did not want any handout; they envisioned a government service provision that empowers local communities through training and infrastructure development.

Conclusion 1

From the above finding, it can be concluded that the communities of Impendle Municipality have high service expectations from government. Even though most are willing to work to improve their lot, they hope that this instigation will, and must come from government and its parastatals. According to Zeithaml (2009:76) customer expectations of services are the entry point to service delivery, to which service providers need to invest time and resources understanding and evaluating (Zeithaml, 2009:76). However, Parasuraman et al. (1985:270-271) explain that there will always be a gap between customer expectations and what can be provided as services. The ability of service providers to navigate this gap constitutes customer satisfaction.

There is always contention as to what is genuine customer/community expectation; whether a community has the ability to in fact expect services it needs, and to know what is possible and what is not. Zeithaml (2009:79) acknowledges that different customers will, of necessity, expect different services and service quality. Of services that can be expected by consumers/customers, Gabbott and Hogg (1998:52) identify two: desired services and adequate services. The desired services are the wished for services based on customers' needs

or wants, and again this will differ from customer to customer since clearly all customers are not the same, and as such have different circumstances. Adequate service is the minimum level of services customers are likely to accept and still be satisfied. Separating these two levels of service expectations is the zone of tolerance (Zeithaml 2009:77) mediated by individual experience and loyalty. Based on individual expectations from service consumers the zone of tolerance may be larger or smaller (the distance between desired and adequate services). The zone of tolerance is also elastic based on consumer loyalty to service providers. There are many reasons why a consumer will be loyal to a particular provider. Whatever the reason, the loyal consumer is likely to widen the zone of tolerance.

Looking at the above expectations by Impendle community, theirs can be classified as adequate service expectations of which, based on their clear not-so-good experiences with services, they do not have high expectations. As such, most people expect to meet government half-way even in the provision of services that the government has to provide. As such, the respondents applauded agencies like SEDA, who offer people training opportunities and try to make community members assertive and independent of the dilemma of 'thinking that the municipality is the only source of employment'. The other moderating factor of these expectations seems to be an overwhelming loyalty to the ANC government. Most community members would contest the service delivery system and begrudge the quality of services provided, and yet they will not question the inadequacy of the entire political organisation of the ANC; most of them would make excuses of why services are not provided as they should be. This again widened their zone of tolerance.

One can even argue that the most compelling argument presented for many service expectations was based on their comparison of services provided in other neighbouring municipalities, particularly Msunduzi Municipality, whose Pietermaritzburg area seems to be well serviced. Jain (2010), cited in Jili (2012:36), speaks to these comparisons which lead to unrealistic service expectations and violent protects. The other factor for service expectations was the grandiose promises made by service providers, particularly during electioneering; these lead to a narrow zone of tolerance since they give an impression that government is able to do more than it actually can (Ramphele, 2012:59).

The adequate service expectations inclination may also be due to the level of education of the respondents, in which over 70% respondents have matriculated, with more than 40% having tertiary qualifications, meaning that the respondents were educated citizens with clearly defined service expectations. Most respondents seemed restrained and self-critical. For example, some respondents commented on the culture of entitlement endemic in their community. They argued that community members were generally apathetic and too reliant on government for everything. These avenues of personal and community development were appreciated as leading to the capacity of people to helping themselves without *"waiting for the government to employ them and do things."* This study therefore concludes that, in as much as people of Impendle had clear expectations of what the government and municipality can do for them, they also want to be part of the service delivery system in their community.

Recommendation 1: Include community and non-state actors in service design and delivery, through extensive consultative process

Consultation has been regarded as the surest way of ensuring that service provision closely approximates to consumer expectation. Since this seems to be lacking in the South African public service, this study recommends an emphasis on this practice. Through this consultative exercise, the study argues that the public sector will realise the value of incorporating non-state actors in the design and delivery of services. Given the fact that Impendle community members have categorical expectations of what the government ought to do for them, including them in the decision-making through bottom-up processes can provide advantages. On the one hand, as Ngidi (2012:25) notes, consultation tempers people's expectation and moderates their ideas of what can and cannot be done. On the other, this inclusivity may pre-empt negative social consequences like protests, and reduce the complications and cost of service delivery since people may offer to deliver some of the services themselves. According to Cermak, File and Prince (2011:90) the inclusion of non-state actors, particularly service consumers, in public service design is invaluable in shaping their service expectations. This also means that the community's evaluation of service provision and individual services will be realistic and moderate; in other words it widens the zone of tolerance. Impendle Municipality, therefore, has to include community organisations, non-governmental organisations, and community members in the decision-making process of service delivery.

6.3.2 Major finding 2: Contextualised expectations

Other than venting only aspirations of middle class lifestyle, the largely rural community also had typical working class expectations of RDP houses, electricity, indigent water quotas and bursaries for their children. With apparent contradictions to the general self-determination aspirations, most respondents still articulated the need for free houses for 'the whole community'. Many respondents were very detailed in their expectations; they were mostly concerned about their community primary schools, access roads, cell phone reception and flooding. Even generalized challenges – lack of and inadequate communication, lack of service delivery capacity and resources, inadequate human resources – were given localized attention. As such, community members did not want blanket services; they needed contextualized services, hence the feeling that municipal officials seemed not to know what the community needs.

Conclusion 2

Different customers have different types of service expectations. The youthful and educated respondents at Impendle were likely to expect and value services with regard to employment creation, training and business opportunities, while the elderly expected more 'home-making' services like roads, schools and houses. Zeithaml (2009:77) argues that different classes of clients have different categories of *desired* and *wished for* services. It is up to the service provider (Impendle Municipality) to assess these dynamics in order to be appropriately responsive. The argument is that service providers who constantly communicate and access people's expectations receive favourable evaluations for the service they provide. This is not only so because the client tends to be lenient in judging responsive providers, but it is also true that with constant communication providers are able to provide what is actually required. This is also what the *Batho Pele* through the principle of 'consultation of the service users' is expected to achieve.

According to Parasuraman et al. (1985:272) consultation aims at bridging two gaps: between consumer's expectation and service provider's perceptions (Gap 1), and service provider's perceptions and service quality specifications (Gap 2). That means, if Impendle Municipality consults the community on what services are needed, they are likely to align their understanding of community needs with that of the community. By the same token, they are

likely to bring the community's expectations in alignment with what is available and achievable, given the available resources. At the same time, with constant consultation, the municipality is likely to turn its aligned understanding of community needs into services specifications. As such, with consultation, both the municipality and community are on the same page not only on service expectations, but also on what is possible within Impendle Municipality.

Recommendation 2: Enhance needs assessment strategies and practice

The assumption is that there are no communication avenues between the government and various communities to ascertain the actual, differentiated needs of community members. As such the study recommends that the municipality, in the spirit of the *Batho Pele* principles, establishes clear lines of communication and access between itself and the communities. If possible, the municipality can establish a customer hotline or a helpdesk at the municipal offices, as well as create clear community structures that will enable a clear line of communication between the municipality and the community. These structures will not be substituting already established structures like ward committees and councillors, but will work with them in order to provide relevant authorities with credible information of community needs and perceptions. The Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council espoused the concept of Service Charters:

> *[a]s social contracts, commitment and agreement between the State and public servants ...or a document that enables service beneficiaries to understand what they can expect from the State and will form the basis of engagement between government and citizens or organs of civil society* (PSCBC, 2013:3).

This study also recommends that the municipality can use the Service Charter to capture the expectations and perceptions of the community, in order to align services with genuine needs of the community.

6.4 Community reaction upon service perception

6.4.1 Major finding 3: Services provided are inaccessible and non-responsive

Through the statistical analysis of gender and service perceptions, it was shown that there is no significant difference between what males and females perceive as quality services.

Regardless of these differences, responses from both data collection instruments revealed a general negative perception of service delivery. Most community members interviewed complained about access, communication and reliability issues that hindered service delivery and negatively impacted on the quality of services provided by Impendle Municipality. The respondents complained about hampered access, lack of communication, poor communication and inconsistent communication, unresponsive officials, lack of competent personnel and limited financial and logistical capacity and/or gross unreliability of the municipality. These are discussed under two headings below: lack of access and responsiveness.

Access

Access - the ease of customers in getting into contact with their service providers (Parasuraman et al. 1985:47) - includes clarity on when the customers could contact their providers for any information and remaining consistent in their operating hours. For the respondents, access between them and the providers was hampered, or at times completely hindered, by poor road network, unavailability of service providers, lack of clear channels of communication and, according to the respondents, an inexplicable absence of service providers in offices or on their phones. As such it can be argued that access was in fact hindered by lack of service delivery. This is because most of the things that seem to be impediments to service delivery at Impendle Municipality are in fact undelivered services like roads, bridges and transport.

Access was also impeded by human-made hurdles. Most public servants from a number of front-line departments like the police, Department of Agriculture and social workers (from the Department of Social Development), were reportedly inaccessible with no tangible reason given when required.

Responsive service delivery

In this study there are a number of statements that indicate community concern with issues of responsiveness from their service providers. These range from communication hurdles (lack of communication, poor communication, and inconsistent communication) to lack of priority and insensitivity on the side of the providers to the pleas of the needy community. Lack of consistent communication seemed to be the major issue and those who tried to rectify the

issue found themselves thrown into the bureaucratic mazes around South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and Department of Social Development (DSD). The issue of communication was also seen to be problematic with the billing of electricity, where community members complained of lack of municipal capacity in installing and reading electricity and water meters. The other issue related to poor communication concerned demarcation of the municipality and budget allocation. However, when triangulating the responses from the interviews and questionnaire, the issue of inconsistent communication was highlighted.

Almost in direct contrast to the responses given in interviews, the questionnaire respondents seemed to be satisfied with the level of communication and information flow between municipal officials and community members. This might be nothing more than an incidence of inconsistent communication rather than false responses. This is further substantiated by most of the respondents who were keen to continuously engage the providers and appreciated every gesture in that direction from the providers, or anybody they associated with service provision.

Community members under study also showed concern about the lack of response by public officials towards service provision protests. There seemed to be a general dissatisfaction over the way the municipality deals with service delivery protests. Most respondents strongly disagreed (37^+ %) on the adequacy of efforts put in place by the municipality in responding to protests in terms of attending to the problems or communicating with the protestors.

Conclusion 3

Service provided is perceived within the context of expectation (Zeithaml, 2009:76). Sometimes if what is desired is not what is received, service perception may be very low. In other words, because people do not appreciate poor quality services they sometimes do not count the service as being rendered. Without commenting too much on a particular service received, Impendle community members, in line with SERVQUAL theory, commented on the context in which particular services, like social security, housing, water and sanitation, electricity and public security are provided. By and large, community members were dissatisfied with the accessibility and responsiveness of the municipal services. Parasuraman et al. (1985:45) alludes to the fact that even though consumer expectations may be

incorporated into service quality specifications, and guidelines for service provision exists, *'high quality service performance may not be a certainty.'* This results from a number of factors within and without the service delivery system.

Firstly, it is apparent that consumers perceive services differently (Gabbott & Hogg, 1998: 41). This is uncontroversial given the fact that customers have different expectations due to their differences. Community members under study were not only differentiated by age and education level, but also by gender; as such they were likely to perceive services differently. From the interviews it became clear also that community members were differentiated on the basis of their proximity to the service delivery system. In as much as ward committees are supposed to directly liaise with the ward councillor and/or the municipal council with regards to pertinent issues on the community (Municipal Structures Act, 1998, sub-section 74 (a) and (b)) if this were properly done, then members of the Ward Committee have to be privy to certain information about the municipality and its service provision, to which the general public is not. However, from this study, it was revealed that some members of the ward committee know more than others, hence the differential zone of tolerance in service expectations and perceptions (Parasuraman et al., 1985:46). This may even explain different perceptions from two sets of information, focus groups and questionnaires.

Secondly, emphasising the above point as Gaps 4 and 5 propositions of Parasuraman et al. (1985:46) contend, the judgment of services provided is also contingent on the interactions between service delivery and external communication (Gap 4), on the one hand, and expected versus perceived services (Gap 5), on the other. Advertising is regarded as one factor that modulates the zone of tolerance and perception. If consumers are told to expect more and less is delivered they are likely to have disappointed perceptions. Through electioneering and other forms of public consultations, community members are made to believe that a lot of services are available to their needs; as such, a lot is expected and when it is not delivered critical perceptual sentiments are observed. According to Parasuraman et al. (1985:46) *"the quality that a consumer perceives in a service is a function of the magnitude and direction of the gap between expected service and perceived service."*

Thirdly, the rate of responsiveness of service delivery is determined by three factors: levels of communication, competence and courtesy in that order. Communication, in this context, refers to the ability of the service provider to talk to the customer in a manner that the customer can easily understand (Parasuraman et al., 1985:47). According to Grindle (1997:4), competence or capacity has three dimensions: organisational, human and institutional. These speak to the management and organisational systems, expertise and qualifications, as well as policy and legal frameworks within which a particular entity operates (Grindle, 1997:4). These, according to Parasuraman et al. (1985:47), have implications in service provision in terms of the time spent in processing particular services, the accuracy of the performance and the appropriateness of the service provided in line with the expected need. As such, responsiveness is associated with good governance, which refers to the willingness of the government to listen and attend to the needs and concerns of the governed (Faguet, 2011:1). By the same token Ngidi (2012:208) argues that, ultimately, public service is judged on its ability to meet the genuine needs of the citizens. From the data, all these senses of responsiveness seem to be contravened by Impendle Municipality; services are not provided on time, there is inadequate communication about services, some staff seem not to be as competent as they should be, and some services take longer to deliver.

Lastly, service provision at Impendle Municipality contravenes the principle of subsidiarity, which is the rationale for decentralization and local governance, even in South Africa. The principle states that services are best provided by the level closer to the people. According to Kendall (1991:88), because the local government is smaller in scale, and nearest to the people, it is better placed to be accessible and responsive to the genuine local needs. The local government is supposed to know the actual needs of the citizens and not govern on guesswork (Kendall, 1991:88). If properly implemented then the issues of access and responsiveness ought not to arise at the local government sphere. However, Impendle Municipality presents different dynamics. The fact that access and responsiveness are problems in local municipalities like Impendle raises broader questions of either the viability of decentralized governance or the earnestness of its implementation.

Recommendation 3: Establish effective system of Monitoring and Evaluation

In order for the service providers to constantly ensure that their service delivery system is both accessible and responsive to the citizens, effective monitoring and evaluation systems must be put in place. Day-to-day monitoring will track the effectiveness of the delivery system in reaching out to target communities and the types and quality of outputs. Mid-term reviews and occasional assessments may give a general picture with regards to the attainment of the objectives and goals, as well as assessing the rate at which the impact is realised. Sing (2012:552) points to the possibility of using ICT to enhance integrated service delivery in South Africa. Management Information System is reportedly a great tool in this regard; even appreciated by the South African government (Presidency, South Africa, 2007: 1).

6.4.2. Major finding 4: Services are unreliable and unstandardised

A few perceptions of reliability and credibility were observed from the interviews. With regard to reliability, most respondents referred to perceived services as 'luck'. This was captured in such statements as '*We were lucky to get help…* or '*luckily … they did that for us'*. This is somehow telling given the fact that the particular service providers are duty-bound to provide services and are not doing so out of their own generosity. There were, however, some positive statements of reliability from some respondents who were happy with the assistance given by certain sections of the Department of Social Development.

As can be seen from the above, the respondents had mixed service perceptions. On the one hand respondents felt that the providers had been '*helpful and [their] services are good …and should be given another chance of leading again'.* On the other hand, respondents were 'disappointed' and 'fed-up' as they observed that some departments and service providers made '*many promises that they don't keep'.*

This disatisfaction on the service provision and its quality also ran through a number of questionnaire responses for services like water, electricity, road manatinance and garbage collection. What comes out clearly in the preceding responses is the unreliability and lack of standardisation of services. While some are happy with services given, others seem to feel side-lined.

Conclusion 4

Credibility and reliability are co-extensive determinants of quality service provision, one feeding into the other. Parasuraman et al. (1985:47) define reliability as consistency and dependability in terms of timeliness and exactness of service provision, availability of actual or relevant information and clear invoice procedures. Credibility is seen as trustworthiness, believability and honesty (Parasuraman et al., 1985:47). Lack of credibility, reliability and standardisation of services in Impendle may result from a number of factors. These may include lack of trained and professionalised staff and corruption resulting from discretionary powers of the street-level bureaucrats (contact personnel). Parasuraman et al. (1985:45) alludes to the challenge of controlling public service employees, and thus standardising services. The influence and discretionary authority carried by these front-line public officials is an important determinant on how service delivery will be dealt with. Ramphele (2012:2) augments this assumption by arguing that, regardless of excellent programmes, sometimes the implementation lets the government down.

Through different mechanisms of training and professionalization of the public service, South Africa has attempted to deal with the incompetence of public servants in a bid to increase service quality and reliability. According to Crous (2004), cited in Ngidi (2012:2), another challenge faced by the government, even municipal government, is to convince its employees that public services are not a privilege in a civilised and democratic society; they are a legitimate expectation. However, from the people's attitude, and through them, that of the officials, there is a perception that public servants retain the discretion on who should and should not get certain services. This is retrogressive to the letter and spirit of the *Batho Pele* and other service delivery legal frameworks that attempt to create a people-centred public service.

However, this must not take away the context-specificity of municipal service provision, in which the municipality has discretion in assessing genuine needs in its jurisdiction and attending to them sensitively. In as much as the community members of Impendle Municipality may be having experiences and service needs similar to those of rural South Africans, Impendle Local Municipality has its own unique dynamics not distinct from its neighbouring municipalities. As such, the assessment of service quality may require the acknowledgement of contextual vagaries of each municipality.

Recommendation 4: Monitor and Evaluate Adherence to Batho Pele Principles

Given the findings and the conclusion drawn from them, this study recommends that Impendle Municipality enhances adherence to national and provincial legislative frameworks on effective service delivery. In the spirit of *Batho Pele*, Impendle Municipality can strive towards a people-centred service provision, through the usage of Citizen and Service Charters, to assess the impact of services provided, and gauge citizen satisfaction.

6.5 Municipal size, service quality and community satisfaction

6.5.1 Major finding 5: Community members are not satisfied with service quality

Service quality is a derived assertion, using service expectation and perception as proxy indicators (Parasuraman et al., 1985:46). This is also corroborated by Parasuraman et al. (1988:13) in their argument that unlike goods quality that can be directly measured through durability and number of defects, service quality needs proxy qualitative indicators that measure the approximation of the difference between service perceptions from service expectation. As such, the analysis of the four major findings discussed above give an approximation of service quality as judged by Impendle community members. As shown above from their moderate and contextualised expectations, community members perceive municipal and other government services as inaccessible, unstandardised, unresponsive and unreliable.

Using the ten service quality determinants from the SERVQUAL theory, community members also had some perceptions on staff competence, courtesy, and empathy, which also have bearing on perceived quality. The concern with competence resonated in all participants. According to Parasuraman et al. (1985:45) competence entails the possession of requisite skills and knowledge to carry out the required job. The respondents complained about the lack of equipment (like cars) and well-trained personnel from municipalities to discharge quality services. The municipality was portrayed as lacking sufficient budget to hire enough competent personnel to discharge services. Some departments like SAPS were reportedly in need of sufficient cars to respond effectively to needy communities. This lack of capacity had clear implications on how services are delivered.

However, most responses from the community indicate that this lack of capacity has a negative impact in a number of services, as shown in the rectification of mistakes below. The fact that a large percentage of respondents are not satisfied with the way the municipality rectifies mistakes in service delivery might seem negligible on its own, yet within a large picture it impacts negatively on the service quality perception of community members. This may also indicate lack of empathy and courtesy by public servants. According to Parasuraman et al. (1985:45) these include politeness of staff, understanding, and provision of individualized service/attention. This was clearly lacking as perceived by the respondents.

Conclusion 5

According to SERVQUAL, service quality is determined by a mathematical formula: SQ =PS – ES. From a moderate expectation to negative perception, clearly the answer is negative. This is mainly because in all of the ten determinants, the Impendle Municipality service delivery has been negatively scored. Bekink (2006:389) also gives another criterion for service quality, which is basically a summary of the ten SERVQUAL determinants.

> *For them to be regarded as of high quality, services must be **suitable for the purpose** for which they are demanded, they must be **timeously** and **continuously** rendered, and within **safe** and **accessible** contexts. Above all, service users must be **satisfied** with particular services.*

Here, Bekink (2006: 389) alludes to the many different aspects that must be integrated within the service provision task of the municipality. This study concludes, therefore, that service quality is made up of many variables from the competence and professionalism of staff to the availability of funds, and abiding within available legislative frameworks. It is also imperative to note that, based on the results of this study, service quality differs from goods quality. For service quality the perception of quality is as important, if not more, as the objective quality (Parasuraman et al. 1988:15). What citizens think about services is a major aspect of service quality and will greatly determine their satisfaction.

Recommendation 5: Establish integrated service delivery systems through encouraging attentive citizenship and responsive municipal services

In order for a municipality or the rest of government to be sure that whatever services they provide leads to satisfaction in recipient communities, feedback should be encouraged from communities on services perceived. The study recommends that as part of its monitoring and

evaluation strategies municipality should put in place mechanisms to access service feedback from communities. The use of suggestion boxes, toll free lines and other means should be put in place for community members to evaluate different service providers within municipalities. Overall, the interaction between community and municipality should be heightened (Ramphele, 2012:122).

On the other hand, lack of municipal capacity is a reality, not only in Impendle, but in a number of local municipalities in South Africa (Stanton 2009:3). As such, this study recommends other means of enhancing this capacity through public sector reform. One such example is the easing of bureaucratic inefficiencies and delays through privatisation of certain services (Mubangizi & Gray, 2011:214). There have been several instances where private provision has brought tangible benefits to communities. Ramphele (2012:126) advocates for a moderate reform in which government works with other non-state actors through public-private partnerships (PPPs) in order to harness advantages of both sectors, while minimising disadvantages and costs of providing certain services. Lastly, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa institutes a system of co-operative governance, from which different intergovernmental forums can be established. As such, several national, provincial and municipal departments, although distinct and independent, can function jointly in order to secure and sustain a high quality of life, living and livelihood for all South Africans (Sing, 2012:551).

6.5.2 Major finding 6: Municipal or population size does not hinder effective service delivery

Since 1990, one of the major questions democratic South Africa had to struggle with was that of municipal demarcation, which took almost a decade to be finalised. Section 24 of the Municipal Demarcation Act (No. 27 of 1998), spells out the rationale for this tedious, yet absolutely necessary, process. Part of the objective of the demarcation process was to: '*enable municipalities fulfill their constitutional mandates',* which among other things were the '*provision of services to the communities in an equitable and sustainable manner'*. As such, the Demarcation Board had to grapple with questions of municipal constitution, tribalism, historical injustices, the size of municipality and the like, in order to make sure that the new boundaries actually created territories that were better placed to fulfill their constitutional mandates. As can be imagined, the process of demarcation is not a once-off activity; to attain the best fit it is an iterative process.

Impendle Municipality, as a current victim of this 'iterative process' of re-adjustment has to re-configure itself so that it continues to offer the best services to its people. As such, the communities were also asked on their perceptions of the correlation between municipal size and the quality of service provision. On this, most respondents indicated that neither municipal size nor population increase impacts negatively on the quality of service delivery.

Conclusion 6

The correlation of service delivery quality and the size of the jurisdiction has been established in literature, giving rise to decentralisation policies (Rondinelli (1981) and Stanton (2009). Ramphele and McDowell (1991:21) have also argued that this is true in the South African context, given unbridled population increase from high birth rates and immigration. The assumption that increased population compromises the quality of service delivery has also seen clashes between community members, and between nationals and foreign nationals. This inverse correlation between service delivery and population size is also supported by a number of economic models. As such, the fact that community members at Impendle perceive a negligible relationship between the two may have more to do with their competence in answering that question than their subjective take on it. As a result, the study concludes that, with regards to the impact of municipal adjustments on service delivery, this study could not provide reliable responses due to the incompetence of the respondents. Besides, the substance of this determination may be difficult to ascertain given the comparative nature of the question.

Recommendation 6: Comprehensive study needs to be undertaken

Given the incompetence of the respondents to answer this question, and insufficiency of the data collected in this study to infer the answer, the study recommends that a more comprehensive study be done. This prospective study should include both municipal officials and community members. The focus of such a study should be exclusively comparative and experimental in nature, in which it focuses on the before-and-after scenarios of municipal service delivery.

6.6 General Conclusion

The assessment of service delivery is a complex but necessary endeavour. It is complex because there are many factors that impact on service quality and on people's judgement of it. It is at the same time necessary since the progress of a society depends on the quality of services delivered by the state to its people. The assessment of service quality in Impendle Municipality is therefore such a complex yet necessary task. As seen above, some of the complexity is due to the fact that the SERVQUAL theory used and the instruments do not offer full proof causal relationship between variables. Public managers should also encourage local communities to attend public fora like Izimbizos in order to participate in prioritizing community needs and eventually be engaged in the eventual implementation process.

For example, in as much as one can logically move from service quality to customer satisfaction in most market-orientated transactions, in the public service this is not always possible and neither is the reverse. One can equally not move from satisfaction to service quality with full certainty. Zeithaml et al. (2009:76) allude to this problem when commenting on service expectations and satisfaction. Accordingly, service expectations determine the kind of choices and assessments people make of the service and its provider. When people like the residents of Impendle are clearly deprived of continuous and timeous service provision, and refer to whatever they are given as 'luck', they are likely to have high regard of the little service provided. As such, one can understand why most of the interview respondents had non-normative expectation of services – almost begging the municipality to provide certain services rather than invoking a culture of entitlement.

Many factors can produce the results that have been discussed. However, that notwithstanding, the clear existence of consumer gap in service provision in Impendle Municipality is a cause for concern. The lack of a zone of tolerance (Deans & Allmen, 2003: 1) in service provision is indicative of the lack of consultation between the municipality and community members. As such, what the municipality provides ends up becoming a function of guess work or blanket service provision, rather than service expectations grounded on the real needs of the Impendle community.

However, Deans and Allmen (2003: 1) argue that in public service, satisfaction should not be the goal, it should rather be to *satisfice* – provision of services that is good enough. But without thorough consultation and communication, that zone of service tolerance may not be established. This is so because there are many factors that influence service quality evaluations and customer satisfaction. In the responses given above there were a lot of contradictions, or apparent disagreements, on the service evaluations. For example, while there was almost consensus in the negative evaluation of services such as garbage collection, road maintenance and electricity provision, respondents were not exactly agreed on issues of municipal staff competence, communication, staff availability and courtesy. This might be a function of many socio-political dynamics at play within the municipality rather than a reflection of reality on the ground or lack of service standardisation.

Zeithaml (2009: 77) talks of how what can be seen as acceptable expectations can actually be lenient expectations. Community members have many reasons why they would want to be lenient in assessing municipal service provision. These include party political affiliations and service reliability. Gabbott and Hogg (1998: 28) argue that service satisfaction is not always an antecedent of service quality. The fact that some respondents will give a veneer of being satisfied or having received high quality service may be due to their alliance to the particular political party running that municipality. On the other hand, lack of reliability of service provision makes community members unaware of receiving any service at all. As such, the little they get gives them the semblance of satisfaction.

What comes out during the present study is the fact that the government in Impendle may not be well aligned with the national service delivery philosophy of *Batho Pele* which emphasises responsive and courtesy service delivery. The general dissatisfaction of the people of the process and actual services cannot be undermined by minor disagreements. As concluded by other researchers elsewhere, insufficient service delivery is tantamount to betrayal of citizens by government officials (Tsepo et al., 2007:3). However, in the case of Impendle, one recommends a rigorous, constant and timeous consultation between the municipality and the citizens to ascertain service needs of the citizens and to explain to the citizens the resources standing of the municipality.

6.7. Issues for further research

Having deliberated on community perceptions on municipal services at Impendle Municipality, the study's finding are but a part of the whole picture. In order to gain the whole picture on the effects of boundary re-adjustments and service delivery, the voice of the municipality needs to be heard. As a result, further research needs to be done on the following three areas, which were not part of the scope of the present study. Firstly, municipal perceptions of community perceptions needs to be explored. For example, do municipal officials know what community members think about municipal services? The assumption will be that, should they know, then they are likely to alter the service delivery system in a manner that accommodates people's perceptions. Secondly, if the municipality knows what people think with regards to services provided, they are likely to address their communal service expectations and perceptions. Lastly, research may also need to be done on municipal perceptions on challenges of service delivery. The reality of inadequate service is glaring, evidenced by numerous service delivery protests each year. However, apart from 'damage-control', blame-shifting, and media statements by top political officials, no official word is heard on what leads to poor service delivery. A systematic study on front-line municipal staff still needs to be undertaken to find out from the municipality's perspective the reason for poor service delivery.

6.7 Summary

Assessing service delivery quality is a mammoth task; itself complicated by many intervening factors. The analysis of service quality in Impendle Municipality reveals a negative evaluation by community members. Generally, the community has a moderate expectation of services, mostly due to the fact of disappointing previous service delivery. Most citizens at Impendle perceive government service delivery as inadequately accessible and standardised. In as much as most participants did not find any correlation between municipal size and service quality, contrary to the assertions in the literature, this study contends that the participants had insufficient knowledge to give credible answer to this question.

CHAPTER 7:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This study set out to investigate and assess community perceptions on the quality of municipal service delivery at Impendle Local Municipality. The previous six chapters presented the background, rationale, methodology and results of this investigation. This chapter concludes this investigation by providing the summary of the study, an overview of general findings and recommendations.

7.2 Summary

From the literature review it was noted that local government is generally an administrative level of government – the level responsible for public service delivery and putting government decisions into effect. In South Africa local government is the third sphere of government, alongside the national and provincial government. According to the Constitution of South Africa, these exist in a co-operative arrangement – each sphere having its distinct identity, yet in collaboration with other spheres in a manner that aligns policies and programmes. In this regard, Section 40 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 stipulates that government is constituted as national, provincial and local, which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated. In this context, the distinctive role of local government in South Africa is service delivery to communities.

In the same vein, Chapter 4 of the *Municipal Systems Act,* 32 of 2000 emphasises this reality by establishing ward committees in all ward levels across all local municipalities. Thus, as the then Minister for Provincial and Local Government, Mr. Mafumadi, reiterated, ward committees play a critical role of ensuring the necessary contact between the people and government institutions in the course of service delivery. The White Paper on Local Government (RSA 1998), which establishes the principle of 'developmental local government', calls for changes in the way municipalities function. This service provision edge of local government sphere in South Africa is further reiterated in numbers of other legislative framework, both at the national level as well as the provincial and local level.

However, as shown in the preceding chapters, these administrative levels in South Africa are in a coexistence known as 'co-operative governance' – which ensures that each sphere is distinct, interrelated and interdependent.

Chapter 2 also noted the evolution of service delivery and local governance in South Africa. Following several scholars, the chapter noted that local governance and service delivery that existed prior to 1994 was racially skewed – with 'white only' areas serviced more efficiently than places where other racial groups resided. Scholars like Dubow and Jeeves (2005: 49) argue that social services also existed only for whites. This racially skewed service delivery pattern created a system of dual cities – or a tale of two cities in one – with one part of the city well-serviced and well-functioning, with the other almost in ruins. This was true for the country as a whole, is such a way that when the new government came to power in 1994 there was an enormous task of redressing these imbalances. Hence the implementation of all the redistributive policy frameworks alluded to above.

With the dawn of democracy in 1994, the government of South Africa under the leadership of the ANC strove with the best intentions to devolve administrative powers to include provincial and municipal leaders. In essence what the ANC government attempted to do was to reform local governance, by creating a wall-to-wall municipal system that incorporated areas that previously belonged to different jurisdictions into one municipal authority (Stanton, 2009: 6). By 2000 there existed, after a long process of local governance reform, three types of municipal systems – metropolitan, district and local municipalities. In addition, other measures were also put in place to enhance service delivery and make sure that the new local government system would meet its developmental objectives. For example, in 2007 the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy was formed to support the capacity building of public servants. Through various means the government aimed at an inclusive approach of service delivery – bringing business (through Corporate Social Responsibility), civil society and government together in service provision.

In 2003, the government enacted the blueprint of service delivery, the *Batho Pele* principles. The *Batho Pele* principles are essentially principles of good public governance – mandating the street-level bureaucracy to provide efficient, effective, responsive and service of good quality to citizens. It was an attempt by the South African government of domesticating the

New Public Management principles and ensuring a people-centric public service, in the wake of years of poor services.

However, many scholars have voiced their dissatisfaction of post-1994 public service. The criticism has really been on the quality of service *viz a viz* the commitment and promise made by the ANC pre-1994. Other scholars have suggested that poor service delivery in post-1994 administrations has been caused, among other things, by endemic corruption and patronage. Ramphele (2012) investigated such challenges in the health sector, and concluded that because the ANC had dual mandates, to cater for the general public as well as to give its cadres jobs, it resorted to deployment of card-carrying members to crucial positions, some of whom did not have requisite qualifications to hold such posts. As a result this crippled many sectors of governance. Accordingly, health, education and social development sectors have been undermined by inappropriate policies, ineffective leadership and management, as well as political bargaining within the governing party's tripartite alliance (Ramphele, 2012:124). No matter what the reality has been, Gray and Mitchell (2007) cited in Mubangizi and Gray (2011:212) contend that major problems in service delivery have included: lack of service delivery capacity and resources, inadequate human resources, widespread corruption, as well as unstandardized service provision – evidenced by an expansive rate of service delivery protests throughout the country.

As such, many have argued that while South Africa has a comprehensive legislative framework governing service delivery, multi-dimensional obstacles continue to provide opportunities for unethical conduct which hinders implementation of effective, efficient and economic service delivery. Despite laws, regulations and performance management appraisals in the public sector, challenges still remain and people continue to fight for their lives. This picture has been exacerbated by fluid municipal boundaries which have left many local governments confused and inefficient.

In Chapter 3, the service quality (SERVQUAL) theory, which was used in understanding the dynamics of service quality at Impendle community, was described. SERVQUAL theory was founded on the view that the customer's assessment of service quality is paramount. In their original formulation, Parasuraman, Zeithalm and Berry (1985:200), (cited in Buttle 1996:9), identified ten components of service quality. These include: reliability, responsiveness, competency, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, knowing the customers and tangibles. According to Parasuraman et al. (1988:85), SERVQUAL is an instrument that measures the perceptions of customers about service quality. It measures customers' expectations before service encounters as well as the perceptions about the actual service experience. By comparing customers' expectations with the quality of service received, the theory makes it possible to measure how satisfied a customer is with the quality of service received. As a result, data collected through interviews and questionnaire surveys was analysed using these components of the service quality theory.

As such, adequate service delivery seems to be contingent upon the dynamics of interaction between the customer and the service provider. In the absence of a standardised measure of what this entails it means that service satisfaction is a negotiated function between the two stakeholders. According to Hiidenhovi, Nojonen and Laippala (2002:60), quality service delivery must be understood within the context of multiphase interaction between the provider and the customer. This takes into consideration not only the tangibles delivered, but also the process and context within which such delivery has been made, assurance of competence, active attentiveness, dissemination of information, politeness of the staff, and all the other procedural issues considered relevant by the stakeholders.

This fact is substantiated by the interview responses from the participants of Impendle Municipality. To capture the dynamics of multiphase interaction in negotiating the quality of the service delivered, data was scanned for: customer expectations; comments on access; communication; standardization; tangibles; courtesy; reliability; and credibility.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide the results of the study done in Impendle Local Municipality. The rationale that informed the selection of this case study of Impendle Municipality was the re-adjustment of municipal boundaries among two municipalities of uMgungundlovu District – where in 2009 parts of KwaSani Municipality was re-demarcated to fall under Impendle

Municipality. However, this change in geographic boundary and population did not result in an increase of the budgetary allocation to Impendle Municipality. As a result, this scenario put financial pressure on the municipality, leading to a negative impact on the level and quality of services delivered to the community.

7.3 Summary of findings and recommendations

The results from this study were categorised into two: service expectation and service perception. As such, there were five major finding across these categories.

7.3.1 Service expectation

The study made a number of findings with regards to the service expectations of community members at Impendle Municipality. Firstly, there was general expectation from among participants that municipal authorities should visit them to assess what communities need. This was driven by years of experience, in which the municipality has been seen to renege in this responsibility. As a result, many participants seemed aggrieved over this lack of communication and responsiveness from the municipal authorities, which results from most crucial services expectations being ignored. Most respondents were thus aggrieved in the assumption that the municipality does not actually do what it is supposed to be doing as per several legislative frameworks of service delivery. As such, the study recommends that Impendle Municipality strengthen its systems of capturing, tracking and evaluating customer/consumers' expectations and perceptions of services provided.

Secondly, most of the respondents also complained about poor access, communication and responsiveness from the municipality. This led to a lot of ignorance among community members on what the municipality was doing regarding certain service domains. In some way there seemed to be no explanation on certain activities done by government and municipality. Respondents complained about lack of access and lack of communication in places like the Police Department, Social Development and the Municipality. In this regard, the study recommends that the municipality, in the spirit of the *Batho Pele* principles, establishes clear lines of communication and access between itself and the communities. If possible, the municipality can establish a customer hotline or a helpdesk at the municipal offices, as well as create visible community structures that will enable a clear line of communication between

the municipality and the community. These structures will not be substituting already established structures like ward committees and councillors, but will work with them in order to provide relevant authorities with credible information of community needs and perceptions.

Thirdly, either due to scarcity of tangible services or lack of provisions, community members under this study seemed less concerned about assessing quality of service than the quantity. They wanted more bridges, regular rubbish collections, enough water, more RDP houses, shopping centres and roads. Only a few of them commented of the competency of staff to provide adequate services, the quality of houses provided and so on; this gave an impression that these community members were worried more with the number and amount of services than the quality provided. In this regard, the study argues that in order for municipality or the rest of government to be sure that whatever services they provide leads to satisfaction in recipient communities, these communities should be encouraged to provide feedback on services perceived. The study thus recommends that, as part of its monitoring and evaluation strategies, the municipality should put in place mechanisms to access service feedback from communities. The use of suggestion boxes, toll free lines and other means should be put in place for community members to evaluate different service providers within municipalities. Overall, the interaction between community and municipality should be heightened.

7.3.2 Service Perception

With so many expectations, the satisfaction of community needs seemed distant. As anticipated, many respondents indicated concern with issues of responsiveness from their service providers. Respondents felt there was lack of prioritisation and sensitiveness on the side of the municipality to the pleas of the needy community. This lack of responsiveness was mooted to be directly proportional to the competency levels of municipal staff. However, other respondents felt that the municipality was ill-equipped to provide their needs due to logistical problems. The assumption that Impendle Municipality lacks strategies of assessing people's needs is evidenced on the finding above, that services provided do not respond to genuine needs of the community. The study reiterates the recommendation of an effective monitoring and evaluation system, in order to ascertain what the recipients really need, and assess whether what is provided meet the genuine needs of the community.

The study also found complaints with unreliable services. As such, the study found that community members regarded perceived services as 'luck'. This is somewhat telling given the fact that the particular service providers are duty-bound to provide services, and are not doing so out of their own generosity. This disatisfaction on service provision and its quality included services such as water provision, electricity, road mantainance and garbage collection. From the finding above the assumption is that Impendle Municipality's service provision in unreliable and lacks credibility. As such, the study recommends that the municipality increases the reliability of service delivery. In the spirit of *Batho Pele*, Impendle Municipality can strive towards a people-centred service provision.

7.4 Conclusion

Given that there is still a great number of South Africans who are poor, service delivery is envisioned to alleviate poverty in post-1994 South Africa by considering that: decentralisations and participation can reinforce historical distributions of privileges; community ownership is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for effective service delivery to individuals in rural communities; when managed well private outsourcing can benefit the poor; and that the abolition of user fees is often not the best way to ensure access to basic services. However, due to the constant re-demarcation of municipal boundaries in a bid to render effective service delivery, this study contends that with no effective means of tracking services delivered and the perceptions of the recipients towards such services municipalities may continue with delivering unresponsive and unreliable services.

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Appendix 1: Letter of presentation by the Supervisor

School of Management, IT
and Governance

Humanities Research Ethics Office
University of KwaZulu-Natal

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

May 23 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Letter of Introduction seeking permission to collect research data
(Mr Emmanuel Xolani Muthwa)

This letter serves to introduce and confirm that Mr.Emmanuel Xolani Muthwa is a registered master's student of Public Governance at the University of KwaZulu Natal. He is conducting research on community perceptions of service delivery at the Impendle Local Municipality.

The outcome of the study is expected to assist in identifying the kinds of services communities of Impendle expect from the local municipality. As part of the requirements for the award of a Master's degree, Mr Muthwa is expected to undertake original research in an environment and place of his choice. The UKZN ethical compliance regulations require him to provide proof that the relevant authority where the research is to be undertaken has given approval.

I greatly appreciate your support and understanding in granting Mr Muthwa permission to carry out research in your area(s). Should you need any further clarification, do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Signature

Dr. M.O. Dassah (Academic Leader and Supervisor)
University of KwaZulu-Natal
School of Management, IT and Governance

Appendix 2: Letter of consent

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
· School of Management, Information Technology and Governance

Dear respondent,

Masters in Administration Research Project
Researcher: Emmanuel Xolani Muthwa (033 897 6944)
Supervisor: Dr Maurice Oscar Dassah (031 260 7673)
Research Office: Ms. P Ximba (031 260 3587)

I am Emmanuel Xolani Muthwa, a Masters in Administration student at the School of Management, Information Technology and Governance of the University of Kwazulu Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled 'Community perception of service delivery: a case study of Impendle Local Municipality'. The aim of this study is to understand the community perceptions of services rendered by Impendle Municipality to its constituents.

Through your participation I hope to understand your perception in terms of service delivery within Impendle Municipality's area of jurisdiction. The results of the survey are intended to contribute to a better understanding of how well the municipality is rendering services the community.

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 survey. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the School of Management, Information Technology and Governance, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

The survey should take you about 20 minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature :

Date : 16 May 2014

Appendix 3: Letter of consent (continued)

<div align="center"><u>On separate page</u></div>

<u>CONSENT</u>

I..(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating 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

....

Appendix 4: Permission to conduct research from Impendle Municipality

UMKHANDLU WASEKHAYA IMPENDLE

Private Bag X 512
Impendle
3227

Tel: 033/996 0771
Fax: 033/996 0852
nana.tshabalala@impendle.gov.za

IMPENDLE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

E.X.Muthwa
6 Strat eleven
Macalister Road
Pelham

Dear Mr Muthwa

RESPONDING TO YOUR REQUEST: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH AT IMPENDLE AREA

This letter serves to confirm that you have been granted the permission to conduct your research as proposed within Impendle area of jurisdiction.

Kindly note that the municipality is looking forward to assist you with all relevant information that you might need whilst conducting your research.

Yours sincerely

THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER

Appendix 5: Ethical clearance letter from the University of KwaZulu-Natal

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

14 November 2014

Mr Xolani Muthwa 211559490
School of Management, IT and Governance
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Muthwa

Protocol reference number: HSS/1381/014M
Project title: Community perceptions of service delivery: A case study of Impendle Local Municipality

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 14 October 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr Maurice Oscar Dassah
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Brian McArthur
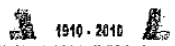Cc School Administrator: Ms Angela Pearce

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Appendix 6: Questionnaire

Dear respondent

My name is Emmanual Xolani Muthwa, a master's student of Public Governance at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am conducting a study on community members' perceptions of service delivery in Impendle Municipality for a Master of Public Administration degree.

I would be very grateful if you could spend a little of your time to respond to a few questions. It should not take you more than 30 minutes.

You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer. The data you supply will be held in strict confidence and will NOT appear in any documents or publications. Should you have any queries concerning this survey, you are free to contact Dr M O Dassah (my research supervisor) on Dassah@ukzn.ac.za.

Please complete all sections of the questionnaire as honestly and openly as possible. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Gender

Male	Female

2. Age _____

3. Highest Academic Qualification_____

4. Employment

Yes	No	Self Employed

SECTION B: SERVICE DELIVERY

Please tick the most appropriate level in the following items:

5. I think that the Impendle Municipality understands the kind of services that we need in this locality:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. I feel that Impendle Municipality informs us adequately regarding the decisions they make on service delivery:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. Impendle Municipality delivers services that it promises to the local community within the time they promise to do so:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. I think that Impendle Municipality is prompt in delivering their services to the local community:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. Political Leaders at the municipality pay attention to the service demands of their local community:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. I am confident in the manner at which Impendle Municipality delivers services to the local residents:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. Service delivery protests in Impendle Municipality always turn violent:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

12. The municipality is doing enough to address concerns raised by residents during service delivery protests:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. Residents of Impendle Municipality have adequate water supply:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

14. Residents of Impendle Municipality have adequate electricity supply:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

15. Residents of Impendle Municipality receive satisfactory garbage collection services

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

16. Roads in Impendle Municipality are well maintained:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

17. The municipality informs us of when certain services shall be performed:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

18. Impendle Municipality shows interest in looking for opportunities where local people can benefit in accessing more efficient services:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

19. The municipality has a huge population that limits the government to deliver services efficiently:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

20. If the size of the municipality is reduced, residents of Impendle Municipality are likely to receive better delivery of services:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

21. I think that the Impendle Municipality has personnel with the required skills for the purpose of ensuring that the services are rendered accordingly:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

22. Kindly rate the following to the best of your knowledge the attitudes of municipal workers while interacting with community members.

	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly dissatisfied
	1	2	3	4	5
Availability					
Accessibility					
Courtesy					
Information sharing					
Openness and transparency					
Remedying mistakes and failures					

Name of respondents (Optional): ....

Appendix 7: Focus group interview guide

Focus Group Interview Guide

Hello, my name is Emmanuel Xolani Muthwa, a Masters candidate with the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am conducting a study regarding the perception of service delivery in Impendle Municipality.

I would like to ask you a few questions. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer. The questions should take about 30 minutes. After the questions you can ask whatever questions you may have. Your name will be held in strict confidence, and will NOT appear on any documents or publications unless with your express permission. Please answer the questions as honestly and openly as possible. There is no "right" or "wrong" answer.

1. What do you think is the level of service delivery in Impendle Municipality?

2. What kind of services do you think that the community expect to receive from Impendle municipality?

3. What do you think are the main challenges hindering effective delivery of services in Impendle Municipality?

4. Are you aware that the boundaries of Impendle Municipality have been increased? If yes, how do you think this has affected delivery of services in Impendle Municipality?

5. What do you think should be done in order to improve the level of service delivery in Impendle Municipality?

6. What is your additional comments do you have regarding service delivery in Impendle Municipality?