

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF THE
THUSONG SERVICE CENTRES**

Thesis

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The problem which this thesis addresses concerns the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of the Thusong service centres, which are intended to provide integrated services to communities. This research on Thusong conducted an empirical analysis using a field survey approach to determine what factors impact on Thusong's effectiveness. This research is conducted by means of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The constituent parts of the thesis jointly contribute to an assessment of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of Thusong as an integrated services centre. In other words, how effective are Thusong's governance arrangements to promote these centres as integrated services centres? The first chapter contextualizes the problem statement of this research. The second chapter frames integrated services centres in terms of theory. The third chapter provides a literature review of the governance arrangements of Thusong, based on the theoretical framework on integrated services centres. The fourth chapter explains the research methodology of this research. The fifth chapter presents the findings of the research on Thusong, whilst the last two chapters constitute an analysis of the findings and a summary of the answers to the research questions.

Primarily, the research findings recognize that the measures of effectiveness used for this research reflect that Thusong's governance arrangements are not effective to promote it as an integrated services centre. Secondly, the research indicates that Thusong can do more to enhance the capacity of its service providers to solve problems and serve clients. Lastly, there is not enough evidence in order to conclude that the institutional arrangements of Thusong contribute to the efficient and effective delivery of services as a collective.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGM:	Annual General Meeting
CDW:	Community Development Worker
DISSC:	District Intersectoral Steering Committee
GCIS:	Government Communication and Information Service
GSC:	General Services Counter
GWMES:	Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System
IDP:	Integrated Development Plan
IGRF:	Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act
LED:	Local Economic Development
LISSC:	Local Intersectoral Steering Committee
MB:	Management Board
MPCC:	Multi-purpose Community Centre
NGO:	Non-governmental organisation
NISSC:	National Intersectoral Steering Committee
PISSC:	Provincial Intersectoral Steering Committee
PSC:	Public Service Commission
SASSA:	South African Social Security Agency
SDF:	Spatial Development Framework
SLA:	Service Level Agreement
TAU:	Technical Assistance Unit

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The introductory chapter of Anne Mette Kjaer's book (2004) on governance starts with an anecdote that serves as a useful analogy to the analysis of Thusong. "In the mid-fourteenth century, an Italian artist named Lorenzetti painted his famous frescos illustrating the stark contrasts between good and bad governance. One of the frescos pictures a beautiful city where justice reigns, where young women are dancing, children playing, and men working. Some are ploughing, others cultivating wine. In contrast, the part of the frescos illustrating bad governance shows a satanic tyrant on a throne and justice lying tied up on the ground. There are no cultivated fields, no one is working, and the only activity is the killing of men and the raping of women".

Kjaer writes that like Lorenzetti, political scientists have long considered governance to be important for the well-being of a country's citizens. However, she says "governance was traditionally associated with government, with the exercise of power by political leaders. The concept was not widely used in the post-Second World War years, but during the 1980s it re-emerged with a new meaning, now referring to something broader than government".

For the purpose of this research it is possible to make a comparison between this anecdote and the Thusong service centres (a programme of government, hereafter referred to as Thusong). Thusong's website states that "these centres are a programme of government which was initiated in 1999 as one of the primary vehicles for the implementation of development communication and information, and to integrate government services into primarily rural communities". These centres are one-stop, integrated community development centres, with community participation and services relevant to people's needs.

It is necessary to have a clear understanding of the definition of the 'development communication and information' paradigm, as understood by

government. According to Thusong's website the focus of this paradigm is on the poor and disadvantaged, whose profile reflects not only a dearth of access to information, but also features as the main target of government's socio-economic programmes. These people are to be found mainly in the townships and rural areas.

As a programme of government, Thusong is vested within the Government Communication and Information Service (GCIS). The mandate of GCIS is to provide strategic communication, leadership and support to all of government. Their website states that "our vision is government communication that empowers and encourages citizens to participate in democracy and improve the lives of all" (GCIS, 2001).

At the time when this research report was being finalized there was talk that the Thusong programme of government would shift from GCIS to the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). The reason for this proposed shift was that the South African government had been undergoing some restructuring following the 2009 national elections. As a result of the restructuring, the mandates of the various departments had changed and it was therefore anticipated that Thusong would have a better fit within COGTA. This shift was also a recommendation emanating from a review undertaken in 2009 on Thusong by the Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) in the National Treasury.

Upon enquiry, GCIS' Mr Moferefere Moloi explained that the name 'Thusong' means 'a place of help' in the Sesotho language. He furthermore explained that Thusong was formerly known as 'multi-purpose community centres' (MPCCs). The rationale behind the name change was to create a distinct brand image and to avoid confusion and ambiguity. The example he used was that "various public buildings are referred to as a multi-purpose community centres, e.g. community halls and stadiums, due to their nature of housing a multitude of facilities such as sport and public events".

With reference to Kjaer's anecdote, this research will not investigate Thusong in order to make a judgment whether it is well governed or poorly governed. Neither will this research try to argue whether Thusong is contributing to the

'care of human life' or not. Those are valid questions, but do not constitute the aim of this research. Having stated what this research report does not intend doing, the premise on which the research report is based now follows: that is whether these centres have effective governance arrangements in place in order to achieve their aim, namely: to help the poor and disadvantaged. The emphases are on the governance arrangements of Thusong in order to effect these aims.

The reason for conducting this research is that the findings are expected to fill a gap which currently exists in terms of the major review that was completed by TAU. The aim of the TAU review was to answer a range of questions about Thusong and to develop recommendations and options for the future. These questions related to clarity of the rationale and objectives, logic and thoroughness of the programme planning, achievements, effectiveness and efficiency, good practice, and monitoring and evaluation.

The TAU review had emanated from the 8th Annual Thusong Workshop held in Gauteng in December 2008. A key recommendation from the workshop was that the time had come for a thorough review of the Thusong programme. The programme had entered its 10th year of operation and it was considered a good landmark for undertaking such a review. The current academic research project takes stock of the governance arrangements in Thusong, and also considers the TAU report in the context of the research findings.

2. Context and statement of the research problem

The research problem this thesis addresses revolves around the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of Thusong in order for the South African government to promote it as integrated services centres. The grounds for associating Thusong with integrated service centres are that it exhibits specific characteristics (explained below) associated with such centres. This association justifies a question around Thusong's effectiveness, since it falls within a specific theoretical framework.

2.1. A brief literature review of Thusong

Thusong provides information and services to communities, through the *development communication approach*, in an integrated manner. The primary emphasis of this approach is to plan with communities, to create structures which offer communities and developers equal power, and use communication methods that are, fundamentally, participatory in nature. This requires that government planners, developers or community workers listen to the advice of communities and change the views they hold themselves (GCIS, 2001). This principle boils down to the old adage John C. Maxwell¹ describes as 'the partnership principle': working together increases the odds of winning together. The reality is that development programmes which plan for communities or supply information that planners believe communities need, fail to be relevant initiatives and, more often than not, fail to be sustainable (GCIS, 2001).

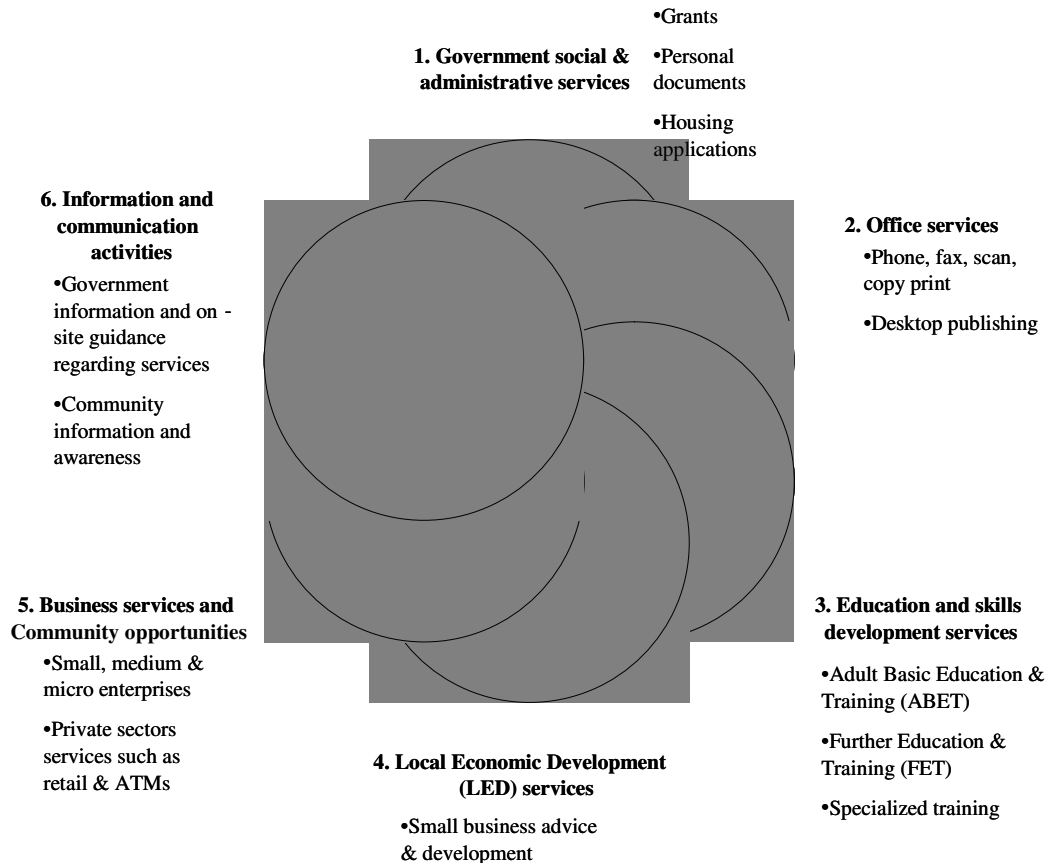
Some of the most important features of this approach relate to the expressed need for face-to-face interaction between government and citizens. A high premium is placed on the introduction of information and communications technologies to such communities. Using such modern means as the internet, e-mail and computers, the aim is to promote computer literacy and access to technology (DPSA, 2008).

Each Thusong reflects an individually tailored range of services, although, as a minimum, a number of 'anchor services' are provided. This notion of anchor services can be useful to encourage a cluster system in terms of integrating services and providing a model for further roll-out in the short, medium and long term. The high demand that exists for some services, such as identity documents, social grant applications, payment of electricity and water and the unemployment insurance fund, illustrates that a few key services are requested most frequently (The Presidency, 2006). Thusong provides a hub of activities and a variety of services, organised according to the six-block service model (see Figure 1). Since community needs are supposed to be the driving factor in service provision, this model is modified to suit the context and environment of

¹ John C. Maxwell (born 1947) is an evangelical Christian author, speaker, and pastor who has written more than 50 books, primarily focusing on leadership.

each Thusong (GCIS, 2006).

FIGURE 1: THE SIX-BLOCK SERVICE MODEL OF THUSONG



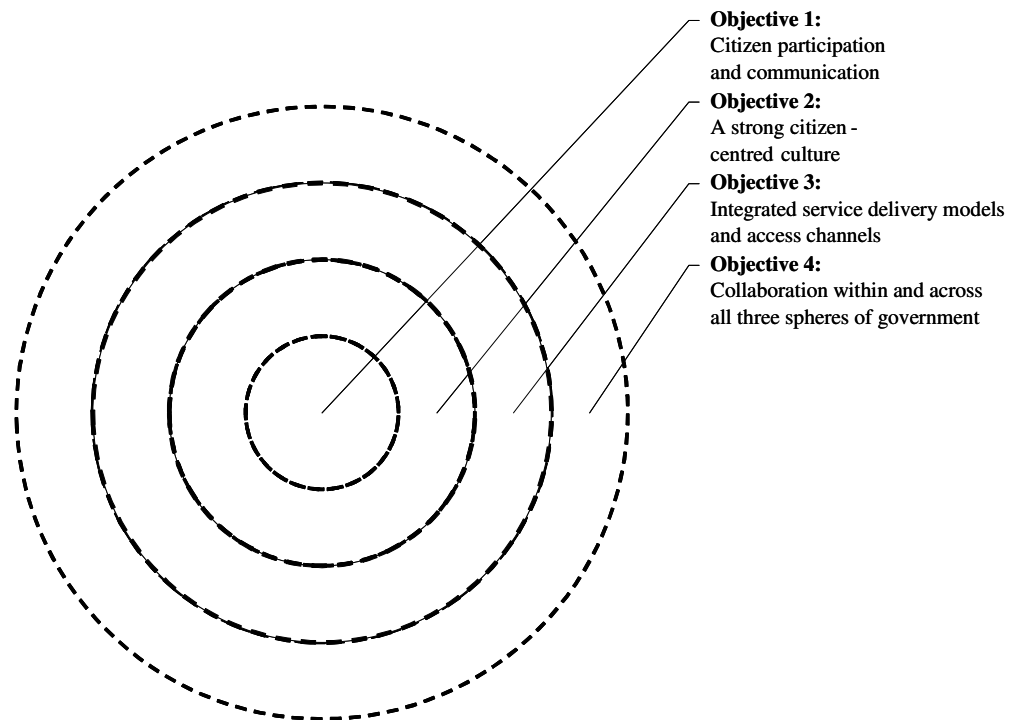
Source: Author's conceptualization

Thusong forms part of the South African government's 'access strategy', a framework within which all access initiatives should exist and operate in government. This strategy states that it "is consistent with the broad focus of government to provide improved service delivery by enhancing access to services and information aimed at improving the quality of life of all South African citizens" (DPSA, 2008).

The strategy furthermore states that "access is treated as a multi-dimensional concept which includes aspects such as social, cultural and financial and geographical accessibility. An access point refers to the point where citizens

come into contact with government to get information, communicate with government and/or transact services” (DPSA, 2008).

FIGURE 2: THE FOUR OBJECTIVES OF THE ACCESS STRATEGY OF WHICH THUSONG IS AN ESSENTIAL PART



Source: Author's conceptualization

As depicted in Figure 2, the objectives of the Access Strategy are multi-faceted and include (DPSA, 2008):

1. Citizen participation and communication: Facilitating participation of citizens in the delivery of services and the packaging of information. This will contribute to strengthening social accountability in government for the delivery of services and information.
2. A strong citizen-centred culture: Developing a public service that has a strong citizen-centred culture. This includes taking measures to prevent corruption in the public service.

3. Integrated service delivery models and access channels: Repackaging service offerings and developing new models and ways of providing services and information, firstly, to maximise the effectiveness of face-to-face service interaction and, secondly, to maximise the take-up of self service for citizens through the use of technology.
4. Collaboration within and across all three spheres of government: Strengthening collaboration between the three spheres of government to provide improved access to services and information in a more integrated manner where possible, providing the citizen with a single view of government.

In terms of the third objective, citizen-centred service delivery is the core principle guiding the development of the government's access strategy. This entails bringing together information and services across organisational boundaries into service offerings that make sense to citizens. The goal is to provide citizens with more responsive, one-stop, easy-to-access and personalised services.

Looking at the problem statement of this research report with regard to integrated service delivery models and access channels, the reason for asking whether Thusong is effective in terms of its governance arrangements is because the researcher is keen to establish whether the governance arrangements of Thusong as an integrated services centre are effective to deal with the problems they aim to solve. Thusong's business plan aims to have a Thusong in every local municipality by 2014. This is a commendable endeavour in itself – even more so in light of the fact that no assessments have been done on the manner in which these centres are governed.

3. Conceptualization of key terms

Recognizing that the concept of 'governance' is subject to debate, it is helpful to draw on a number of informative analyses and reports emanating from within the South African context. Firstly, in 1996, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa wrote an article entitled "Swords into ploughshares: The challenge of effective governance in a

democratic South Africa". The article looks at the changes which have taken place in the nature and function of governance in South Africa. Ramaphosa's insight is useful since he notes a substantially improved relationship between the government and the people on all levels and a new commitment to openness by the South African Parliament. He stresses the importance of establishing democratic principles, institutions and practices to ensure that the democratic changes achieved so far are permanent.

Furthermore, the Presidential Review Commission (PRC) on the Transformation of the South African Public Service in 1998 identified a series of defects in the South African Public Service and recommended a series of reforms to improve the process of governance in general and public services delivery in particular.. The findings of the PRC shed light on the challenge to create a new organisational ethos, a shared vision, new work ethics and to bring services closer to the people.

Also, recently the King Commission on Governance released the Code of Governance Principles for South Africa (2009) and the Report on Governance for South Africa (2009), together referred to as "King III". The publication of King III was necessitated by the new Companies Act² (No. 71 of 2008) of South Africa and changes in international governance trends since the release of the second King Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa (King II) in 2002.

In contrast to King I³ and King II, King III applies to all entities, regardless of the manner and form of incorporation or establishment. Principles are drafted on the basis that, if they are adhered to, any entity would have practised good governance. The compliance with the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) has established many of the governance practices within the public sector and the challenge is now to assess what changes, if any, are needed to achieve King III compliance (PWC, 2009).

² South Africa's new Companies Act aims to promote some recourse for companies in distress, reduce the cost of doing business in the country, promote corporate governance and transparency and empower shareholders (PWC, 2009).

³ In 1992 the King committee on corporate governance was formed in South Africa and, in line with international thinking, considered corporate governance from a South African perspective (PWC, 2009).

When it comes to conceptualizing 'governance', the United Nations (2010) defines it as "the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented" (or not implemented). Similarly, the World Bank (2010) defines governance as "the capacity of the government to effectively manage its resources and implement sound policies, and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them".

However, the author of this thesis agrees with the definition of governance coined by the Institute of Democracy in Southern Africa (Idasa). Idasa defines governance as "the way in which services and public goods are allocated and delivered and the interaction between public, economic and social actors in society". This definition is perfectly suited for this thesis since the following three elements are involved: state capability (the ability of leaders to get things done), accountability (the ability of citizens to hold leaders to account) and responsiveness (how leaders behave in responding to the needs and rights of citizens) (see Idasa, 2009).

According to the literature on the governance arrangements of integrated services centres in general, various factors (expanded upon in Chapter 2) are thought to be associated with the effectiveness of such centres. The main measures of effectiveness which will be used for this assessment are mission and vision, governance and decision-making, planning, leadership and management, staffing, communication / trust, evaluation and lastly centre benefits. These measures are derived from the work of Morehead (2008). Morehead's contribution concerned the effectiveness of rural health networks.

This thesis is not only concerned with governance itself, but with effective governance and that requires a definition which takes this controversial concept one step further. Fortunately, the general understanding of the word 'effective' is clear-cut which simplifies the conceptualization of 'effective governance'. Arnwine (2002) reflects on effective governance by explaining it as having the following characteristics: "it is efficient, allows a respectful conflict of ideas, is simple, is focused, is integrated and synergistic, has good outcomes and preserves community assets".

The definition of effective governance arrangements which will be used throughout this thesis will be: “the way in which services and public goods are delivered and the interaction between (public, economic and social) actors in society in terms of mission and goals, governance and decision-making, planning, leadership and management, staffing, communication / trust, evaluation and centre benefits”.

While several measures of effectiveness in terms of the governance arrangements of integrated services centres have been identified throughout the literature, and conceptual approaches provided, few researches have utilized these approaches or any other approach to empirically analyse the possible measures of effectiveness, particularly with regard to integrated services centres. These measures can be seen as themes, each containing theme-related questions which serve as indicators of the ‘strength’ of each of the measures at the Thusong centres.

4. *Motivation for the research*

A key motivation for this research emanates from the existence of two important reports, one published by the Public Service Commission (PSC) in 2002 (discussed below) and the other published by the National Treasury in 2009 (as mentioned earlier). The first report covers research undertaken by the PSC in 2002. It revolved around the impact of MPCCs on the acceleration of service delivery, human resources development, government programmes, information dissemination and the use of other resources within Thusong. Today, eight years later, much has changed in terms of the landscape of Thusong. Other than the name change, there has also been a change in the number of Thusongs and the services they offer. The 2002 report can be compared with the research results obtained for this thesis eight years later, to assess the effectiveness of Thusong then compared to the present.

The second report was compiled by TAU in the National Treasury. This TAU review aims to understand the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of Thusong as this programme entered its tenth year of operation in 2009. The need for this review had been expressed at the 8th Annual Thusong

Workshop held in Gauteng in December 2008. The motivation for the current scholarly research project which lead to this thesis is underpinned by the need to fill the gap on specific governance issues not covered in the TAU review.

5. *Research aims and objectives*

The research on the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of Thusong is important in the light of the limited number of empirical studies on integrated services centres in South Africa. What is currently known in terms of recent and relevant information, revolves around strategic and operational matters and emanates from the review done by TAU in 2009.

In terms of strategic matters, information exists with regard to which services blocks work better than others and the need for the amendment of the primary goal of Thusong going forward. The TAU review argued that Thusong's goal should be more focused on delivering government social and administrative services. From a strategic point of view, the review argues that there is a need for a shift in emphasis from target numbers of Thusongs towards rather meeting universal access standards. From an operational point of view the TAU review revealed substantive information about planning processes, ownership issues, funding and maintenance of buildings (pp. 13-19).

The TAU review, in other words, investigated a wide range of important matters related to Thusong and grouped these matters according to key issues, such as progress against targets, provision of services, accessibility and special location, funding and sustainability, centre management, infrastructure, utilization and branding (pp. 20-33).

In this context, this thesis aims to achieve three objectives, namely to:

- add to the available literature on Thusong by putting forward an assessment of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements. This objective will have been successfully achieved if the information gathered on the measures of effectiveness is comprehensive enough to be seen as an opinion on Thusong's governance arrangements;

- add to the available literature on integrated services centres in South Africa through the contribution of empirical research. This objective will have been successfully achieved if the theoretical framework (on integrated service centres) used to direct the research, proves to be successful for conducting research on specifically the governance arrangements of these centres, and
- influence the functioning of the governance arrangements of Thusong by pointing out possible shortcomings in any of the seven measures of effectiveness, which constitute the definition of governance arrangements in this thesis.

6. Framing integrated services centres in terms of theory

The literature and theory on integrated services centres and the governance arrangements of these centres have generally provided conceptual approaches, as well as identified possible measures of effectiveness. Chapter 2 explores the relevant theory in detail, whilst the current section illuminates the broad theoretical context in relation to the research questions and coinceptualisations.

Firstly, Redburn (1977), Hagebak (1979), Agranoff (1991), O'Tooley (1993) and Waldfogel (1997) provide a conceptual approach to defining and describing integrated services centres.

Three decades ago (1977:264) Redburn wrote that human services integration "has many possible operational meanings, including structural changes – whether involving some further centralization or not – and changes in the character of services or their manner of delivery". Hagebak (1979:575) took the definition a step further by explaining that "service(s) integration focuses on the multiple needs of individuals and families through communitywide service delivery networks, bringing all community services together in a coherent whole, working toward unified approaches to policy development, administration, planning, and service delivery".

Part of the complexity of defining human services integration is that few generally accepted models exist at the local level. On that note Agranoff

(1991:533) refers to services integration as “the quest for the development of systems that are responsive to the multiple needs of persons at-risk: victims of the most severe problems”. What Hagebak and Agranoff have in common is what seems to be the pivotal axis around which these centres build their reason for existence: the multiple needs of people.

Waldfoegel (1997:467) emphasises the pivotal axis by stating that the basic premise of service integration is that individuals and families who have complex and multiple needs are not well served by a service delivery system that is specialized and categorised. An assumption can be made that scholars differ on the rationale for services integration and that the principal problems which service integration initiatives seek to address, are availability and efficiency.

Secondly, Fine (2000), Eggers and Goldsmith (2004), Josserand *et al.* (2006), Kamensky (2007) and McGuire and Agranoff (2007) offer a typology of the evolution of integrated services centres. Fine (2000: 2) write that “over the twentieth century, human services came increasingly to be organised along specialised lines. Professional expertise and a more targeted approach developed, along with increased government support. Services also came increasingly to be provided from within the structure of government”.

In this regard it is impossible to ignore the discourse which points to the core business of these centres in the direction of what is now commonly referred to as networks. Eggers and Goldsmith (2004) describe the diversity of networks in government management. Josserand *et al.* (2006:54) write that “more than a simple exercise in reinvention, the postbureaucratic era is characterized by hybridity”.

Thirdly, Kettl (2000), Hill and Lynne (2004), Saz-Carranza and Vernis (2006), Millward and Provan (2006), De Seve (2007) and Sändstrom (2008) describe the governance arrangements of integrated services centres and their impact on effectiveness. Finally, the Vinson Institute of Government (1992), O’Tooley (1993) and Fine (2000) outline the benefits of integrated service centres.

When it comes to governance arrangements, Kettl (2000:128) notes that transformations in governance have made government horizontal in two ways: firstly, in terms of the search for service coordination and, secondly, in terms of integration with nongovernmental partners in service provision. These two trends (coordination and integration) are in line with the argument by Hill and Lynne (2004:1) that "governance fever is catching: many of public administration's leading scholars have embraced the concept of governance to frame the ongoing discourse on public management reform".

Hill and Lynne (2004) deepen their discussion on public management reform by defining public sector governance as "regimes of laws, rules, judicial decisions, and administrative practices that constrain, prescribe, and enable the provision of publicly supported goods and services through formal and informal relationships with agents in the public and private sectors".

Saz-Carranza and Vernis (2006:420) state that clear understanding and knowledge of the aims and goals of the different organisations involved in the network, as highlighted by different authors, are crucial aspects making information flows of vital importance. "Although common wisdom declares that the network aims must be clear to all, the common situation is that these are usually not explicitly agreed upon". Saz-Carranza and Vernis (2006:421) furthermore note that "networks require endogenous conflict resolution mechanisms as well as other governance mechanisms serving as channels through which the different actors interrelate, such as the inter-partner interface".

Other than conflict resolution mechanisms, a series of elements have been identified which will lead to successfully managed networks: commitment to a common purpose; trust among the participants; governance; access to authority; leadership; distributive accountability / responsibility; information sharing; and access to resources (De Seve, 2007:50). When it comes to the value that integrated services centres add to society, Sändstrom (2008) writes that "...the effectiveness of traditional Weberian hierarchies, designed to manage the wicked problems of society and related dilemmas of collective action, are called into question. Instead, the establishment of networks, stretching beyond

these formal hierarchies, is considered to be an imperative task for public administration". Sändstrom (2008) continues: "The networks that emerge in relation to the processes of joint problem solving are sometimes, as indicated above, the result of deliberate strategy and political decision making". Both these quotations help shed light on the criteria for effective management of governance networks, and thus help form the analytical framework for the rest of this research project.

7. *Research design and research questions*

This research on Thusong conducted an empirical analysis using a field survey approach to determine what factors impact on Thusong's effectiveness. The specific Thusongs that were investigated were selected by means of stratified random sampling. Once the Thusongs were identified, a questionnaire was distributed to respondents (centre managers and senior communication officers at these centres). In the next phase of the research, the researcher interviewed six key actors in the Thusong domain (different people from the group of questionnaire respondents). This research was therefore conducted by means of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The motivation for engaging in both methods is explained in detail in Chapter 4. This research design was deemed essential in order to move towards answering the primary and two secondary research questions.

The primary research question guiding this research report is:

- (1) How effective are Thusong's governance arrangements that have been put in place to promote the centres as integrated services centres?

The secondary research questions are:

- (1) Does Thusong enhance the capacity of its service providers to solve problems and serve communities?
- (2) Do the institutional arrangements of Thusong contribute to the efficient and effective delivery of services as a collective?

The research questions are empirical questions, as they address a real-life problem, namely to analyse the measures of effectiveness of Thusong as an integrated services centre. Furthermore, these are evaluative questions, as they will put forward an assessment regarding the research questions.

8. *Limitations of the study*

There were some limitations to this research project. For the qualitative research it had been the intention to interview a variety of respondents affiliated with the centres, but 59 per cent of the responses were obtained from senior staff in the TAU of the National Treasury. They were also very involved in the TAU review of Thusong. Secondly, while they are recognized as important, citizens and community members could not be surveyed on their perceptions about Thusong. This may explain why the findings about the benefits these centres have for the communities they serve are mostly favourable. It is nevertheless most important to gain insight into the managers' assessments of achievements and problems. This set of findings will also be interpreted as such. A third limitation, as with all research, is that bias may occur during interview conduction and analysis. However, appropriate precautionary methods, e.g. an interview schedule and triangulation, were used to minimize such bias. The researcher is confident that this has been achieved.

9. *Organisation of the thesis*

The introductory chapter of this thesis was intended to draw the parameters of this study. Even though not in full, the current status quo of Thusong and its characteristics have been described in order to understand the need for this study. This chapter presented the reasons for selecting the particular problem, the rationale for the study and the objectives of the research. The remainder of the thesis will consist of four broad based chapters and a concluding chapter.

The next chapter focuses on the theoretical perspectives on integrated services centres. The brief theoretical framework put forward in the introductory chapter provided the structure according to which the second chapter will be handled. Four themes were selected because of their recurring pattern throughout the

literature and were thus deemed important enough to serve as the objective for this chapter. The four themes are: a conceptual approach to defining and describing integrated services centres; a typology of the evolution of integrated services centres; government arrangements of integrated services centres and the impact of these on their effectiveness, and the benefits of integrated services centres on the communities they serve. The combination of these four themes presents a substantial explanation of the way the integrated services centre society operates on a theoretical level.

The third chapter provides a literature overview of the background and governance arrangements of Thusong. This overview assesses Thusong from four viewpoints, based on the four themes that structured the second chapter. Firstly, it looks at Thusong from a conceptual point of view. Secondly, it explores the evolution of Thusong as an integrated services centre since its inception 10 years ago. Thirdly, it investigates the governance arrangements of Thusong and the impact of those on its effectiveness. Lastly, this chapter assesses the benefits which Thusong exerts on the communities it serves – from the perspectives of the respondents in this research, but also as measured against the Thusong objectives.

The fourth chapter outlines the research methodology used in order to obtain answers to the research questions. This chapter explains why the mixed methods approach was selected for the purpose of this study. The quantitative and qualitative approach for data collection, as well as the target population and sampling are discussed in detail. This chapter is concluded by an explanation of how the data were analysed. It also considers the ethical considerations that were taken into account in this research project.

The fifth chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative findings of the research on Thusong. This chapter starts with presenting the close-ended questions on the seven measures of effectiveness of the questionnaire. Thereafter the findings of the open-ended questions, which served as questions of clarification for some of the measures of effectiveness in the quantitative questionnaire, are presented. Lastly, this chapter presents the findings from the

qualitative open-ended questions (the questions in the qualitative interviews were formulated from the quantitative findings).

The sixth chapter is an analysis of the findings of the research on Thusong. This chapter is structured according to the findings of Chapter 5. The chapter hence analyses the findings according to the seven measures of effectiveness and also the centre benefits of Thusong.

The concluding chapter provides a summary of the research report in the context of the research questions and research objectives. This chapter ends with a few sections on the comparison of these research findings to other relevant work, as well as considerations and implications of specific findings of the research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FRAMING INTEGRATED SERVICES CENTRES IN TERMS OF THEORY

1. *Introduction*

"It is the theory that decides what we can observe", were the famous words of Albert Einstein. True to his words, the theoretical framework this chapter will put forward will inform the literature review on Thusong as an integrated services centre in Chapter 3. It will equally direct the empirical aspects of the investigation and offer the context in which to assess the contribution of the current project. Part of the complexity of defining integrated services centres is that few generally accepted models exist. This means that these centres are best explained through a hybrid of different theoretical elements.

This chapter starts with the presentation of an an overview of the available theory on integrated services centres and specifically begins with a definition and description of these centres as depicted by various scholars. The second aspect the chapter investigates is the evolution of these centres over a number of years. The aim is to ascertain what the latest trends are, to consider what is outdated and what the current thinking is.

Furthermore, in order to cover the essence of the research questions, the theory on the governance arrangements of these centres, as well as the impact governance arrangements have on the effectiveness of these centres are investigated. The last part of this chapter looks at the theories concerning the benefits these centres have on the communities they serve. The theoretical framework is constructed in such a way that the views of the various scholars are presented chronologically.

2. *The rationale behind integrated services centres*

This section considers the questions of how integrated services centres are referred to in the literature and how and why these centres emerge. These are

valid questions, because the literature offers evidence that integrated services centres appear under different labels, ranging from 'human service delivery systems' (Redburn, 1977), to 'alternate service delivery methods' (Hagebak, 1979), to 'one stop integrated government human services access centres' (Agranoff, 1991) and 'integrated human services access centres' (Kahn and Kamerman, 1992).

More than three decades ago, Redburn (1977:264) wrote that human services integration "has many possible operational meanings, including structural changes – whether involving some further centralization or not – and changes in the character of services or their manner of delivery". Hagebak (1979:575) took the definition a step further by explaining that "services integration focuses on the multiple needs of individuals and families through community-wide service delivery networks, bringing all community services together in a coherent whole, working toward unified approaches to policy development, administration, planning, and service delivery".

Yet most authors think of such centres as having the following basic components: common service areas; co-location (a number of services 'under one roof'); joint core services (sharing outreach, intake, diagnosis and evaluation, referral, follow-up, and transport among all agencies); case planning (a number of specialists design a treatment program to meet the multiple needs of a given client); case management (a single service worker is assigned to the client to assure that he receives the services); joint management services (including use of specialized staff, shared equipment and consultative service), and common eligibility (Hagebak, 1979).

In terms of the target groups of these centres as well as their structural make-up, Agranoff refers to services integration as "the quest for the development of systems that are responsive to the multiple needs of persons at-risk: victims of the most severe problems" (1991:533). Service integration has also been defined by Kahn and Kamerman (1992:317) as "a systematic effort to solve problems of service fragmentation and of the lack of an exact match between an individual or family with problems and needs and an interventive program or professional specialty, with the goal of creating a coherent and responsive

human services system". What is striking about these complex definitions is the central idea that it is all about an effort to match people's needs with specific interventions – the whole notion of 'access' comes to the fore.

Now that the term integrated services centres has been defined in line with various labels, it is necessary to further explore where these centres fit in, in terms of integrated service delivery models. O'Tooley writes that "two reform movements are dominating discussions of the future of human services delivery: a movement toward greater privatization of human services delivery and a movement toward more integration of human services. Both movements are directed at changing the current fractured and bureaucratic system of services delivery, both movements promise greater effectiveness and efficiency, and both offer to increase agency sensitivity to client needs" (1993:501). Significantly, O'Tooley's explanation emphasises human services delivery.

Waldfoegel helps us to get a sense of the rationale behind these centres. The basic premise of service integration is that individuals and families who have complex and multiple needs are not well served by a service delivery system that is specialized and categorised. Although scholars differ on the rationale for service integration, many would agree that the principal problems services integration initiatives seek to address are availability and efficiency (Waldfoegel, 1997:467).

Waldfoegel (1997) lists the intended outcomes of service integration efforts: first, to attain a better match between communities' needs and the services provided and, second, to create a more coordinated system for delivering those services. Attaining these goals requires both the capacity to identify individuals' and families' needs and the capacity to make adjustments to the service delivery system to meet those needs.

These points are important since they suggest that it is no good to simply put an integrated services centre in place and assume that all problems are solved. At the state level, this means having a process to identify and adapt to changing needs. It also means removing barriers to integration and taking positive steps to facilitate integration, whether through integrating services in existing

programmes or coordinating services across programmes (Waldfoegel, 1997: 467).

A recent definition by Browne *et al.* (2007:1) states that “integrated human services have emerged as one way of coordinating currently autonomous services for populations with complex needs”. It is clear from the work of Waldfoegel and Browne that the success of these centres is highly dependent on having knowledge of the real needs of communities. Having said that, it will be useful to know how these centres evolved since their inception, in terms of strategies to stay in touch with the changing and complex needs of communities.

3. The evolution of integrated services centres

Fine (2000:2) write that “over the twentieth century, human services came increasingly to be organised along specialised lines. Professional expertise and a more targeted approach developed, along with increased government support. Services also increasingly came to be provided from within the structure of government”.

There has been some shift away from these patterns, towards coordinating and integrating complementary services. This has taken two major forms: integration by geographical location (involving regional planning authorities and community level projects) and integration of a variety of different services used by particular citizens. The continuum on which these centres are placed has changed in terms of the dialogue and terminology depicting integrated services.

It is impossible to ignore the dialogue which points the core business of these centres in the direction of what is now commonly referred to as networks. Eggers and Goldsmith (2004) describe the diversity of networks in government management. They argue that government agencies, divisions and offices are becoming less important as direct service providers, but more important as generators of public value within the web of multi-organisational, multi-governmental and multi-sectoral entities that increasingly characterize modern government. This is a movement away from hierarchical government

bureaucracy of the 20th century, which was a predominantly organisational model used to deliver public services and fulfill public policy goals.

An interpretation of the argument of Eggers and Goldsmith, suggests that this is the late 20th and increasingly 21st century solution to numerous and complex challenges of public service delivery and the fulfillment of public policy goals. This network creates a marketplace of new ideas inside a bureaucracy and fosters cooperation between colleagues.

Josserand *et al.* (2006:54) write that "more than a simple exercise in reinvention, the post-bureaucratic era is characterized by hybridity. Bureaucracy dominated the last century, and despite a vibrant debate about its demise towards the end of the last century, it is by no means clear that it has been outdated. The refurbished bureaucracy is an original combination of old types in a dynamic perceived as new, leaving a management whose identity was formed in the old ways of doing and being disconcerted as to how to implement the changes in their identity that are demanded". What Eggers, Goldsmith and Josserand seem to agree upon is that the concept of post-bureaucracy is centered on unobtrusive peer-based teamwork controls.

De Seve (2007:50) puts forward an argument which compels the researcher to take a step back and recognize that integrated services centres cannot only be seen as a form of 'service delivery model', they must certainly be seen within the realm of what is called 'managed networks'. Browne *et al.* (2007:1) explain that "networks of integrated human services have emerged as one way of coordinating currently autonomous services for populations with complex needs". It is, however, necessary to note that these centres need to be regarded in terms of network theory, and specifically intergovernmental networks, because generally network theory is used to apply to cooperation between government, non-governmental organisations and business.

Kamensky (2007) quotes Thomas Friedman⁴ in saying that “three trends are changing the world: the emergence of three billion new people in the global economy; the role of technology in collapsing time and space; and the shift in power structures from hierarchical and vertical to diffuse and horizontal. The convergence of these three trends is the most important force shaping global economies and politics in the early 21st century”. This quotation by Friedman is highly relevant for this research since it shows that the philosophy behind integrated services centres is a global phenomenon which is not just continent or country-specific.

Also, the three trends observed by Friedman serve as a type of framework within which the philosophy behind integrated services centres can be measured. The argument by McGuire and Agranoff (2007) is in line with Friedman when they write that many networks come forward because of the failure of government or the non-profit sector to adequately produce goods or services, in which case the network idea may grow slowly over time and the network may appear destined to eventually arise.

Kettl (20001) wrote about high performance government and argues that even the most informal look at how government programmes actually operate raises big questions about orthodox theories of public policy: “Translating big ideas into reality requires collaboration among many players. Government social service programmes ripple out through a huge collection of non-profit community-based organizations”.

He substantiates his argument with an example (20001): “...airport security is a complex partnership among airlines, airport authorities, and federal, state and local governments. That, at its core, is the meaning and puzzle of networked government: gathering the players, coordinating their work, and ensuring that the result promotes public interest. This example contains the very essence of what integrated services centres and voluntary collaboration between stakeholders entail.

⁴ Thomas Friedman is an American journalist, columnist and multi Pulitzer Prize winning author. He is an op-ed contributor to The New York Times, whose column appears twice weekly.

4. *The relation between having governance arrangements in place and the impact of this element on the effectiveness of integrated services centres*

In elaboration of the point made by Kettl (2000:128) in Chapter 1, that transformations in governance have made government horizontal in two ways, it can now be argued that integrated services centres fall within the ambit of managed networks, and that it is useful to look at the governance arrangements of service delivery models which fall within this sphere.

A clear understanding and knowledge of the aims and goals of the different organisations involved in the network are crucial, as highlighted by different authors. This arrangement makes information flows vitally important. Although common wisdom suggests that the network aims must be clear to all, the common situation is that these are usually not explicitly agreed upon. A cause of this situation is that aims have three dimensions along which they may vary.

Firstly, aims may vary: they may be those of collaboration, of the organisation and of the individual. The second dimension is that of the openness of the aims: they may be hidden, assumed or explicit. The means by which aims may be achieved is the third dimension: they may be achieved via the individual alone, via the organisation alone or via collaboration (Saz-Carranza and Vernis, 2006:420).

Saz-Carranza and Vernis (2006:421) furthermore state that "networks require endogenous conflict resolution mechanisms as well as other governance mechanisms serving as channels through which the different actors interrelate, such as the inter-partner interface". What has come to the fore in terms of governance arrangements are aims and goals, communication, and conflict resolution mechanisms. What is still missing are information with regards to leadership, and management of integrated services centres.

Milward and Provan (2006) write about the essential tasks for network managers and list five such tasks: management of accountability, management of legitimacy, management of conflict, management of governance structure and management of commitment. They ultimately argue that addressing complex

public sector problems effectively is not simply dependent on whether the problem is managed through a hierarchy as opposed to a network. While networks have many advantages over hierarchies, networks can certainly be ineffective and fail. As with organisational hierarchies, effectiveness depends heavily on good management.

A series of elements have been identified by De Seve (2007:50). He argues that these will lead to successfully managed networks; commitment to a common purpose; trust among the participants; governance; access to authority; leadership; distributive accountability / responsibility; information sharing, and access to resources.

A very relevant statement by Kettl (2000:2) is that "...the mismatch between academic theories and operating realities is more than just an arcane puzzle for academics". A basic dilemma for governance in the 21st century is the question: how to make government effective enough to get its job done while holding its officials accountable in their exercise of power?

Thus far this section has considered the possible relation between having governance arrangements in place and the impact of these on the effectiveness of integrated services centres.

5. The benefits of integrated services centres on the communities they serve

In concluding this chapter, a valid theoretical question is what benefits integrated services centres impart to the communities they serve. There are surely two perspectives from which the question can be answered: firstly, from the view of community members and, secondly, from the view of the staff at the centres.

Nearly every community has subjective evidence of increased effectiveness because of better coordination and services planning, yet much of this increased coordination has occurred without real changes in inter-organisational structures and funding streams (Fine, 2000).

Theory also suggests that “true services integration runs counter to political logic”. Lawmakers prefer to segment services. This is, firstly, because numerous, competitive and overlapping legislative committees foster a plethora of small special-focus programmes. Secondly, because legislators gain political credit for creating ‘new programmes’ (that, in fact, often overlap with existing programmes), and, thirdly, because legislation is often drafted in a categorical manner so as to meet the needs of well organised special-interest groups (O’Tooley, 1993).

O’Tooley then puts forward reasons why service integration is a much better option. Firstly, it will be more effective because citizens will be able to find everything they want at one-stop, family centres. Secondly, access to services will be assured through programme hooks, and a more comprehensive set of services will be available because of more coordinated systems-level planning. Thirdly, a better fit will be made between citizens’ and community needs and the array of services made available because of more coordinated planning, information sharing and pooling of agency funds. Finally, direct service workers will be more knowledgeable about the entire array of services available, more capable of delivering a wider range of services and less blindly loyal to their own agency’s need to retain clients, especially when these clients would be better served elsewhere.

In addition, it can be argued that services integration is thought to be more efficient because it eliminates the duplication of tasks such as intake, eligibility assessment, diagnosis, social history taking and case management that currently occur at the beginning of nearly every service delivery activity.

Fine (2000:2) states that the proponents of a holistic or an integrated approach to human service delivery argue that it generates greater effectiveness, efficiency and increased agency sensitivity to citizen needs, eliminating the deficiencies encountered with a ‘fractured bureaucratic system’.

6. Conclusion

This chapter aimed at answering the question of how integrated services centres are referred to in the literature and how the theory explains the emergence and development of these centres. The argument was put forward that the success of these centres is highly dependent on the real needs of communities being known. This chapter also explained the evolution of these centres in terms of patterns of integration, either geographically or by means of a variety of different services.

The chapter interpreted the theory in such a way that the researcher suggested that the notion of integrated services centres are the 21st century solution to numerous and complex challenges of public service delivery and fulfillment of goals. The last two aspects investigated were the relation between having governance arrangements in place and the impact of that element on the effectiveness of these centres. A finding in this regard was that a clear understanding and knowledge of the aims and goals of the different service providers involved in an integrated centre are crucial. Lastly, the theme of community benefits was touched upon and the researcher highlighted that theory suggests that true services integration runs counter to political logic.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF THUSONG

1. *Introduction*

Foundations were laid in Chapter 2 to conduct a literature review on Thusong, looking at four thematic areas relevant to the research question of this thesis. These thematic areas are: history and background; evolution of Thusong; governance arrangements of Thusong, and the benefits of Thusong. The challenge in this literature review is that there is not a wealth of resources to consult other than formal government publications such as business plans, strategic plans and annual reports. A very helpful resource for this chapter in particular was the TAU review (2009). One part of the TAU document dedicated a relatively substantial section to the history and background of Thusong.

This chapter hence draws on the TAU report and TAU-cited literature. This is largely government documentation that for current purposes fulfills the function of literature. The chapter then further extends the review with reference to other government documentation on the topic. Part of the rationale for this study is precisely that academic scholarship still has to cover the Thusong and Thusong-related aspects of governance and government institutional arrangements. It is one of the areas in which it is hoped that this research project and thesis will make a useful contribution.

2. *Thusong as an integrated services centre: history and background*

The TAU review (2009) contains a chapter entitled 'History of the Thusong Service Centre Programme'. Parts of this chapter are highly relevant to this section of the research report and will therefore be integrated in order to facilitate a thorough understanding of the background of Thusong.

In 1996 a Communication Task Group Report⁵ recommended the development of Multi-purpose Community Centres (MPCCs) to expand access to information. This led to Cabinet Memorandum No. 15 of 1999 which mandated the GCIS to facilitate and co-ordinate the establishment of MPCCs, also called 'first generation' Thusong centres (TAU, 2009:13). According to the first generation business plan, MPCCs were "identified as the primary approach for the implementation of development communication and information".

A National Inter-Sectoral Steering Committee (NISSC) was established to coordinate the MPCC programme. The original target was to have one MPCC in each district by 2004 (GCIS, 2001). Sixty-five centres had been established by the end of 2004. Some were purpose-built, some started in unoccupied municipal buildings and some were even housed in shipping containers. Some were built under the auspices of the community-based Public Works Programme⁶ (TAU, 2009:13).

In May 2004, President Mbeki announced in his State of the Nation Address that by 2014 every municipality would have a MPCC, thereby increasing the number of MPCCs to be established to 283. The second generation Thusong Services Centres business plan (GCIS, 2001) later increased the overall target to 300, recognising the likely need for more than one centre in metropolitan municipalities and certain local municipalities (TAU, 2009:13).

In 2006 a business plan for Thusong Service Centres, or second generation centres was approved by Cabinet. As described in the new business plan, the second generation centres differed from the first in that there was an emphasis on providing certain government services (such as identity documents, birth certificates and social grants), in addition to development communication and

⁵ The Task Group on Government Communications reported back to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki in October 1996. The mandate required the Task Group on Government Communications to examine government communications at the local, provincial, national and international level and to make recommendations on new policies, structures and budgets. Particular mention was made of the need to examine training and affirmative action policies; of the way in which ownership of the media affects government communication; and of South Africa's international information dissemination (The Presidency, 2006).

⁶ The emphasis of the Community Based Public Works Programme is the alleviation of poverty especially in rural areas. The key is to empower local communities to become self-sustaining (The Presidency, 2006).

information. Other services, such as vocational training, skills development, literacy and computer classes and community gardens, could also be provided at or from these centres, and these were included in the second generation business plan (TAU, 2009:13).

Up to this point, the main catalyst for action was the Communication Task Group Report (1996), which led to a number of committees and business plans, as briefly touched upon. A second important catalyst for action is the DPSA's Access Strategy (2008). This Strategy argues that citizen-centred service delivery is the core principle guiding the development of the access strategy. In South Africa, this means bringing together information and services across organisational boundaries into service offers that make sense to citizens.

An attempt to interpret the Strategy (2008) reveals that its goal is to "provide citizens with more responsive, one-stop, easy-to-access and personalised services" (p. 17). This approach is aimed at attaining integrated service delivery and it is envisaged to generate two outcomes. Firstly, it is to make a wide range of government services available from a single location or source (DPSA, 2008: 18). Secondly, it is to ensure that the location or source is as close as possible to the people, especially the previously marginalised rural and urban communities (DPSA, 2008:18).

The Access Strategy (2008) propagates two forms of service delivery integration that would allow integration at a front-office level: one-stop services and seamless services.

Firstly, one-stop services provide access to information and a range of services in one convenient location through a multi-channel approach, be it physical or electronic.

They include the following:

- Establishment of integrated service centres where various government services as well as information are provided in a single location to ensure

maximum effectiveness of face-to-face service interactions, and to increase citizen convenience and maximise the use of public resources.

- Maximising the uptake of self-service through the use of technology in order to enhance choices available to citizens in the way they wish to access information and services, and to reduce the costs of delivering services. (A high premium is placed on the introduction of information and communication technologies to such communities. Using such modern means as the internet, e-mail and computers, the aim is to promote computer literacy and access to technology).

Secondly, seamless services fully integrate the provision of related services, where the services are provided to citizens by one jurisdiction acting on behalf of one or more jurisdictions (departments) within or across the three government spheres. Another meaning of a seamless service includes the dedication of a single person to handle all of a citizen's concerns.

The Access Strategy (2008) furthermore reveals that comparative research has shown that a number of countries around the world have adopted the one-stop services model. This is borne out by, for instance, Fine *et al.* (2000) who prepared a report for the New South Wales Cabinet Office, presenting empirical evidence of the use of coordinated and integrated approaches to human service delivery. It focuses on the evidence of successful integration initiatives involving community-based projects and those that cater for the needs of specific groups.

The South African public service has also adopted this model in the form of integrated service centres and through e-government⁷. Integrated service centres in South Africa are known as Thusong and work in partnership with local communities, the private sector and civil society. South Africa's Thusong centres aim to bring government information and services closer to the people to promote access to opportunities as a basis for improved livelihoods. Related to access, Thusong aims to promote cost-effective, integrated, efficient and sustainable service provision to serve the needs of citizens better. Lastly,

⁷ E-Government allows citizens to access government information and services via electronic means that makes it easily findable, readily available, accessible, understandable and usable (DPSA, 2008).

Thusong aims to build sustainable partnerships between government, business and civil society and to create a platform for greater dialogue between citizens and government (DPSA, 2008).

The rationale for Thusong is set within the development-communication paradigm. This paradigm reflects a democratic approach to a public communication and information system, as it aims to put the information needs of citizens first in the communication process. Some of the salient features of this approach relate to the expressed need for face-to-face interaction between government and citizens (DPSA, 2008).

The South African government's mandate and approach to Thusong are aligned to a number of policies. The concept of development communication is promoted in these policies, giving ample space to the interface between government and citizens so as to facilitate access and progress at a local level. The following policies are relevant in this regard: Communication Task Report (1996), White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997), Municipal Structures Act (1998), Cabinet Memorandum No. 15 (November, 1999), Public Finance Management Act (1999), Municipal Systems Act (2000), Municipal Finance Management Act (2003) and the 2004 President's State of the Nation Address (May 2004).

3. The evolution of Thusong as an integrated services centre since its inception 10 years ago

Against the backdrop of the literature vacuum from which to draw information on Thusong, it is nevertheless worthwhile to consider government documentation. Though limited, government documentation has contributed to a solid understanding of the history and background of Thusong. These same documents were used to craft an understanding of the evolution of Thusong over the last decade.

Mention has been made of the first and second generation business plans. It is important to follow chronologically how Thusong started: initially the term MPCC

was used and it had a slightly different aim. The business plan for the first generation MPCCs stated that the goal was to “provide every South African citizen with access to information and services within five minutes of their place of residence within 10 years” (TAU, 2009:14).

The first generation business plan describes the aim of an MPCC in terms of empowering the poor and disadvantaged by means of access to information, services and resources from both governmental and non-governmental sources, which can be used for their own development. It furthermore describes the benefits of MPCCs in terms of communities benefiting materially by receiving a wide range of services that were previously difficult and/or expensive to obtain. This benefit should be understood against the reality of accessing information and services in South Africa (It involves the frustration of being referred from place to place and office to office when trying to access government services.) (TAU, 2009:14).

The frustration of being directed from pillar to post (in contrast to the envisaged benefits of MPCCs) leads to an understandable despondency and a lack of confidence in government’s ability to deliver quality services. This phenomenon is especially exacerbated in rural areas where distances are vast and the cost of travelling to urban centres to access services is high (TAU, 2009:14).

The main rationale for the first generation MPCCs therefore appears to have been to use access to information to drive development. The rationale for the second generation Thusong centres is slightly altered: an additional emphasis on providing certain government services was introduced. The second generation plan states that the central aim of Thusong is to “bring government services closer to people (and especially the poor and marginalised).” This is elaborated upon as follows: “The Thusong Service Centre programme was initiated to...extend services of government, in an integrated manner, closer to outlying areas where people live. Primarily, the focus was on rural and underserved communities” (TAU, 2009:14).

South Africa’s integrated services centres evolved from being MPCCs to becoming Thusong centres. The evolution entailed more than just a name

change: it involved a change in emphasis. The emphasis changed from aiming to empower the poor and marginalized by providing access to information, to bringing government services closer to the people. There was a remarkable change in both the 'product' (access to [general] information versus access to government services) of which citizens will be the beneficiaries and also in terms of the 'target group' for which the 'product' is available. The 'target group' changed from being specifically the poor and marginalized to being the people in general, although definitely including the poor and marginalized.

4. The governance arrangements of Thusong as an integrated services centre

The parameters of the emergence, growth and change of Thusong have been established. However, the manner in which Thusong is governed has not yet been explored and the research question of this thesis demands a thorough understanding of the status of the governance arrangements of Thusong. This section attempts to expand on the functioning of Thusong in terms of its 'target group' and its 'product'.

In order to do justice to an attempt to investigate the governance arrangements of Thusong, it is important to highlight the current vision of Thusong: 'Access to integrated government information and services to build a better quality of life for all'. The mission statement too needs to be considered: 'To roll out the Thusong Service Centre programme so as to ensure equitable and effective access to government information and services by 2014, through working in partnership with local communities, the private sector and civil society; and the co-ordinated and integrated efforts of the three spheres of government' (GCIS, 2008).

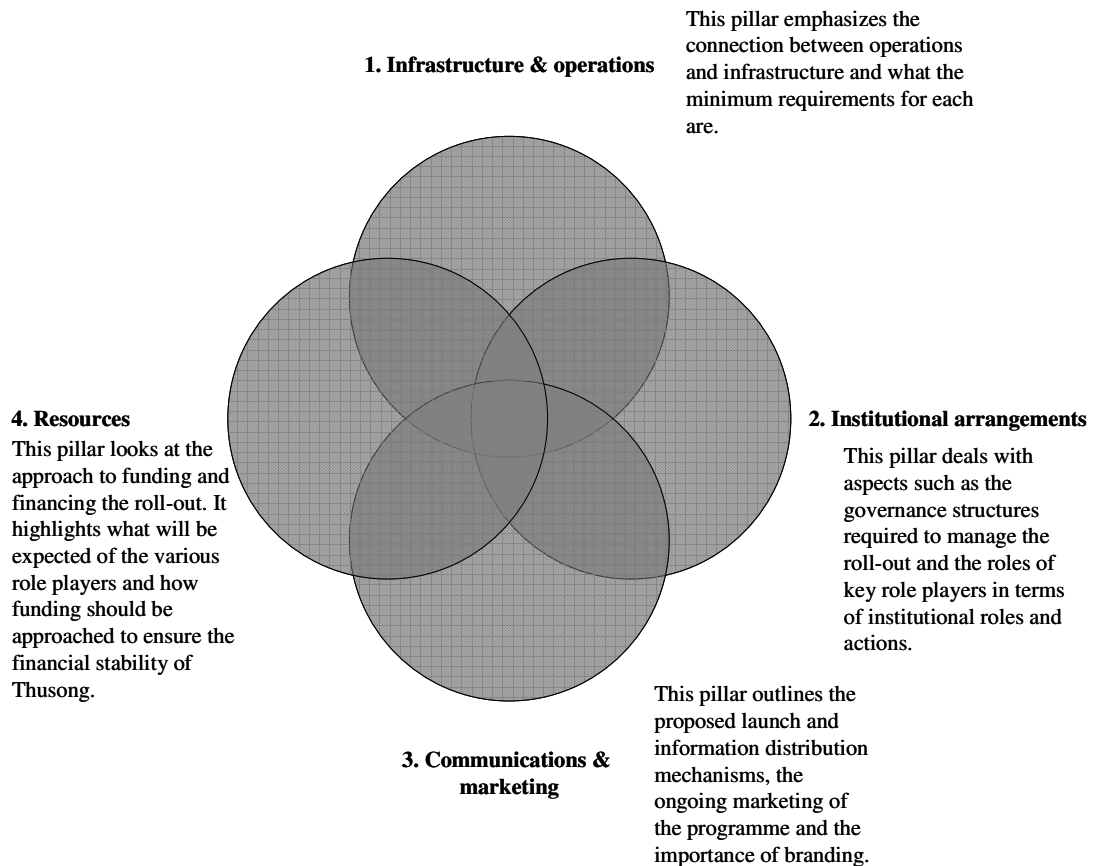
The vision and mission statements of Thusong are strong and a number of principles form the bedrock of the programme. The vision and mission ensure that constitutional and legislative directives are given content during the roll-out. They are also developed in the context of the need to operationalise the Thusong principles, which underlie public-sector activity and promote high levels of service delivery to citizens (GCIS, 2008).

The objectives of Thusong essentially provide a link between the mission and the strategy component of the business plan reflected by the four pillars (see Figure 3 below) as contained in the general business plan of Thusong. The business plan provides the basis for a monitoring and evaluation system which will ensure that the programme achieves what it sets out to within the given time frame to 2014. The business plan includes a set of high-level strategic objectives and detailed, specific objectives linking to the four pillars (GCIS, 2008).

The Thusong centres provide a hub of activities and a variety of services, organised according to the six-block service model. This service model consists of the following elements: government, social and administrative services (grants, personal documents, housing applications etc), office services (phone, fax, scan, copy, print etc), education and skills development services, local economic development (LED) services, business services and community opportunities, and information and communication activities. This six-block model reflects an 'ideal' Thusong. However, since community needs are the driving factor in service provision, it is modified to suit the context and environment of each Thusong (GCIS, 2008).

Of the utmost importance for the success of Thusong are partnerships within government and with other sectors. Partnerships will facilitate efficient, effective as well as integrated and sustainable service delivery in the implementation of the four strategic pillars (The Presidency, 2006:3).

FIGURE 3: THE FOUR STRATEGIC PILLARS CONTAINED IN THE BUSINESS PLAN OF THUSONG



Source: Author's conceptualization

Each Thusong centre provides an individually tailored range of services. However, as a minimum, a number of 'anchor services' are identified which should be available in all centres. Government services have been identified as the central component of Thusong. In this regard, there is a set of specific government services, regarded as 'anchor services'. In the first instance, the anchor services reflect the most basic level of social and administrative services, enabling the empowerment of citizens. They include obtaining access to personal documents, such as identity documents, and obtaining access to grants through applications and/or payouts (GCIS, 2008).

In the second instance, these anchors support the Thusong model in improving the communication and information interface between government and citizens. As a result, an additional anchor for all centres is the on-site provision of

communication and information services (for example, information around economic or education services) that can be accessed by the community, and in most cases would take the form of a general services counter (GSC). The provision of anchor services alone, however, may not fully realise the objectives of the programme, particularly relating to the empowerment of citizens and the achievement of operational sustainability (GCIS, 2008).

To enhance the sustainability of Thusong, it is critical that options of accommodating a variety of 'add-on services' are explored. The 'add-on services' can be grouped into blocks. The combination of all six blocks and associated services would reflect an 'ideal' Thusong, but one that would not necessarily be feasible or desirable in all contexts. The business plan of Thusong emphasises that the essential components of the programme need to be equally strong if the vision of the programme is to be achieved. Services and infrastructure need to be rolled out in an appropriate manner. Institutional and management capacity needs to be built to effectively administer and roll out the programme.

The programme, at the broader level, and Thusong, at local level, need to be marketed and promoted in a manner that will improve awareness of both the agencies responsible for the roll-out and the clients or end users of the services. Resources need to be made available not only for Thusong infrastructure (and associated feasibility studies), but for market and promotional activity as well as human resource and management capacity-building (GCIS, 2008).

The section on the governance arrangements of Thusong managed to highlight a golden thread that links the vision and mission statements to the starting point of activities and services. There is also clarity in the distinction between anchor and add-on services.

5. *The benefits Thusong has on the community it serves*

This last section of the literature review chapter focuses on the benefits of Thusong in order to answer a specific research question of this thesis. The business plan (2008) of Thusong contains a section on the potential benefits these centres will have on communities, based on theory emanating from the

development communication paradigm (as explained in the introductory chapter as well). However, the researcher is aware that these envisaged benefits (like strategic goals and objectives) are strategic 'wish lists' at times far removed from reality. Nonetheless, for the purpose of the literature review, it was imperative to establish government understands this.

Thusong's business plan (2008) states that Thusong is a base from where information products and services are sent to all parts of the district. Similarly, Thusong links communities to the government's distribution network of publications and products about government programmes and activities. Furthermore, community participation events, campaigns, exhibitions and roadshows at Thusong provide communities with information they can use to improve their lives and develop the community.

Some specific benefits to communities include the following: local economic development, integrated service delivery in line with requirements of the Municipal System Act, improvement in infrastructural development, education and skills development, access to information and services closer to where people live, access to technology and a platform for partnerships which empower communities through, for example, sustainable projects that encourage ownership and self-employment, as well as employment of others (TAU, 2009).

Directly linked to the notion of community benefits is the need to have measurable objectives in place that government can use to measure whether the intended outcomes have been reached. In this regard, the document states that "the monitoring and evaluation of Thusong is the responsibility of all spheres of government as partners in the roll-out of these centres. Several key areas are critical if the roll-out of centres is to achieve the strategic objectives of the business plan. Firstly, there is a need to measure the impact of the business plan on the roll-out of Thusong countrywide. In this regard, the four pillars of the business plan are taken as a point of departure" (TAU, 2009:32).

The TAU report goes further by declaring that there is a need to conduct detailed monitoring and evaluation of the impact of Thusong on a local level to assess whether the centres are operating effectively and delivering the information and

services to the extent and in the manner that communities need them. Communities get services they were unable to obtain in the past, and participate in activities that allow for two-way communication between the government and the people (TAU, 2009:32).

6. *Conclusion*

This chapter consisted of four main parts which together formed the literature review of the Thusong service centres, and the themes of this chapter emanated from the themes used in the theoretical framework of Chapter 2. In terms of Thusong's history and background, the point was made that Thusong is the culmination of a number of reports and strategies, and that the South African government has a specific approach to and mandate for Thusong. Regarding the evolution of Thusong, much has happened during the past 15 years, with the initial thinking of the South African government about integrated service centres having changed from MPCCs to Thusong centres.

Importantly, the complex environment in which the governance arrangements of Thusong are manifested reflects a golden thread which can be traced right through from the vision and mission to the services it provides. Lastly, this chapter briefly examined the envisaged benefits Thusong centres have on the communities they serve, and the necessity to have proper monitoring and evaluation structures in place in order to conduct ongoing monitoring of this important aspect became apparent.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. *Introduction*

For the purpose of this research report, whereby Thusong will be studied as part of the community of integrated services centres and whereby the main focus will be on the effectiveness of the governance arrangements, a case can be made for using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In quantitative research, the researcher is ideally an objective observer who neither participates in nor influences what is being studied. In qualitative research, however, it is thought that the researcher can learn the most about a situation by participating and/or being immersed in it (Le Court, 2004).

2. *Research problem and questions in relation to the descriptive approach*

According to the literature on the governance arrangements of integrated services centres in general, various factors (e.g. aims & goals, conflict resolution mechanisms, communication) are thought to be associated with the effectiveness of integrated services centres. Given those findings on measures of effectiveness by Kettl (2000), Hill and Lynne (2004), Saz-Carranza and Vernis (2006), Milward and Provan (2006), De Seve (2007) and Sändstrom (2008), the primary research question of this research is: 1). How effective are Thusong's governance arrangements that have been put in place to promote the centres as integrated services centres? The secondary research questions of this research are: (1) Does Thusong enhance the capacity of its service providers to solve problems and serve citizens? (2) Do the institutional arrangements of Thusong contribute to the efficient and effective delivery of services as a collective?

To examine these questions and to explore the impact of various factors on the effectiveness of integrated services centres a descriptive approach, employing field surveys, was adopted. The descriptive approach aims primarily at gathering

information (i.e. descriptions and explanations) about the object of study, but does not wish to modify the object. The intention is to find out how things are and it includes gathering opinions about the desirability of the present state of things, but it does not include planning any improvements. The work of Lucas and McConkie (1980: 33) suggests that such a descriptive approach is applicable in carrying out this research project, as it will assist in describing the interrelationships among the measures of effectiveness as well as the benefits which Thusong has on the communities it serve.

3. Mixed method, sequential approach to research

A combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis was incorporated for this research in order to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both, as propogated by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:14). These two writers use the following example to illustrate their conviction:

"You visualize a continuum with qualitative research anchored at one pole and quantitative research anchored at the other, mixed methods research covers the large set of points in the middle area."

Thus, in a mixed methods approach, "the researcher bases the inquiry on the assumption that collecting diverse types of data best provides an understanding of a research problem. The study begins with a broad survey in order to generalize results to a population and then focuses, in a second phase, on detailed qualitative, open-ended interviews to collect detailed views from participants" Cresswell (2003:21).

Olsen (2004:1) takes the usefulness of the mixed methods approach further by writing that "recent developments in the philosophy of science have argued that the two traditions should not have a separate-but-equal status, and should instead interact". Cresswell (2003) furthermore distinguishes between three general strategies associated with the mixed methods approach, namely concurrent, transformative and sequential. The concurrent procedure entails the researcher collecting both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time during the study in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research

problem. The transformative procedure entails the researcher using a theoretical lens as an overarching perspective within a design that contains both quantitative and qualitative data. The sequential procedure will be incorporated in this research.

The purpose of this phenomenological⁸ study is to understand the governance arrangements of Thusong as an integrated services centre. As stated in Chapter 1, the governance arrangements will generally be defined as “the way in which services and public goods are delivered and the interaction between (public, economic and social) actors in society in terms of mission and goals, governance and decision-making, planning, leadership and management, staffing, communication / trust, evaluation and centre benefits”.

Furthermore, for the purpose of this thesis the problem calls for the identification of factors that influence the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of Thusong. In the context of the current study, a qualitative and quantitative approach is appropriate. The problem statement specifically points to the suitability of the quantitative method for certain parts of the investigation.

Golafshani (2003) defines quantitative research as research which allows the researcher to familiarize him/herself with the problem or concept to be studied, while Atieno (2009) suggests that quantitative research is empirical in nature. The quantitative method is crucial for this research since it enabled the researcher to obtain data from a large number of participants who all had to answer the same set of questions by means of a fixed set of answers. This enabled the researcher to familiarize herself with the problem under consideration.

For the purpose of this thesis, qualitative research is understood as an inquiry that is useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon – the measures of effectiveness for Thusong – according to the definition of Cresswell (2008). The qualitative method enabled the researcher to ask participants broad,

⁸ Understanding the essence of experiences about a phenomenon (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2007).

general questions, collect the detailed views of participants in the form of words (or images), and analyse the information for description and themes. From this data, the researcher interpreted the meaning of the information, drawing on personal reflection and past research.

Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) add that qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. For this research report, qualitative research is necessary since Thusong is being studied in its natural setting and this research attempts to interpret the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of these centres in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

The intent of this two-phase, sequential, mixed methods study will be to put forward an assessment on the effectiveness of Thusong's governance arrangements as part of the community of integrated services centres. This leads to the two phases of this project's research process.

3.1 Phases in research implementation

In the first phase, quantitative research questions address the measures of effectiveness and the benefits of Thusong by surveying a stratified random sample of centre managers and senior communication officers (65 respondents, randomly selected from 137 centres in the nine provinces of South Africa). The reason for selecting 65 had to do with the number of items measured in the questionnaire and also the type of data analysis the researcher intended conducting.

The assessment is based on an analysis of the perceptions of the centre managers and senior communication officers on the measures of effectiveness and the benefits of the Thusong centres. The reason for selecting centre managers and senior communication officers for the quantitative data collection is that there is one person for each of the two positions at each individual Thusong centre. This made sampling easy (also see below). The data collection for the quantitative research took place by means of mostly close-ended

questionnaires and the approach for data analysis was statistical – specifically frequency tables and graphs.

Data from this first phase were explored further in the second and qualitative phase. In this phase, qualitative interviews were used to probe significant quantitative results by exploring aspects of the effectiveness of Thusong with key staff members in several institutions responsible for these centres. The reason for following up with qualitative research in the second phase was to better understand and explain the quantitative results. The data collection for the qualitative research took place by means of open-ended interviews and the approach for data analysis was theme-related.

4. Benefits of the mixed method approach for this study: triangulation

Other than the mixed method research meaning, which triangulation generally refers to and which is applicable to this study, Denzin (1970) also distinguishes between four forms of triangulation. One of these is specifically related to this study, namely data triangulation. The other three are investigator triangulation⁹, methodological triangulation¹⁰ and theory triangulation¹¹. Data triangulation entails gathering data through several sampling strategies, so that slices of data at different times and social situations, as well as on a variety of people, are gathered (Denzin, 1970).

Yin (1994) underlines the importance of triangulation, stating that the use of multiple sources of evidence is important for construct validity. The concept of construct validity refers to the relevance of getting correct operational measures for the phenomena studied. In other words, construct validity is the degree to which inferences the researcher has made from his/her study can be equated to

⁹ Investor triangulation involves multiple researchers in an investigation (Denzin, 2006).

¹⁰ Methodological triangulation involves using more than one method to gather data, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires and documents (Denzin, 2006).

¹¹ Theory triangulation involves using more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the phenomenon (Denzin, 2006).

the concepts underlying the research. For example, the researcher measures the effectiveness of the governance arrangements as an outcome. For the purposes of this report, the assumption is that the definition (operationalization) of the effectiveness of governance arrangements in this study can be equated to the rest of the world's concept of the effectiveness of governance arrangements (see Chapter 1 of this report for conceptualization).

5. *Procedures for handling qualitative and quantitative data collection*

In terms of the procedures (methods and sampling) utilized for collecting both the quantitative and qualitative data, the following two elements need to be stressed: sequence and emphasis (Cresswell, 2008). As noted above, the sequential procedure was used for this research: the questionnaires were carried out first to identify the key issues and then interviews were carried out to build upon the information generated from the questionnaires. The emphasis on quantitative and qualitative data is equally strong in this research report and each one of these methodologies contributed to answering the research questions, because the researcher had both statistics and reasons explaining those statistics.

Quantitative data collection procedures

In terms of the quantitative data collection, a set of questions, based on the literature on the effectiveness of integrated services centres was developed (see Annexure A for a complete example of the questionnaire). The questionnaire contained 36 structured closed-ended and 13 open-ended questions divided into two distinct, yet interrelated, parts. The first part examined seven measures of effectiveness derived from the work of Morehead (2008). The second part of the questionnaire examined centre benefits in terms of the greater community it serves.

For the first part, each of the seven themes contained between three and 11 questions for which respondents had to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. The seven measures of effectiveness were

mission and goals, governance and decision-making, planning, leadership / management, staffing, communication / trust and lastly evaluation.

TABLE 1: DEFINING THE SEVEN MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS AS DERIVED FROM THE WORK OF MOREHEAD (2008)

Measure of effectiveness	Definition	Number of close- and open-ended questions in the questionnaire for this measure of effectiveness
1. Mission and goals	The degree to which Thusong service providers are committed to centre goals.	3
2. Governance and decision-making	The extent to which there is a clear sense of the Thusong's purpose and to which the centre has a well defined governance and decision-making processes.	8
3. Planning	The extent to which Thusong's strategic planning is ongoing and inclusive of its service providers.	5
4. Leadership / management	The degree to which the centre has strong and committed leadership and has adequate and qualified staff to carry out centre goals and objectives.	6
5. Staffing	The degree to which Thusong has enhanced the existence of its service providers, enabled its service providers to acquire resources, reduced the cost of services for its service providers, improved access to services for service providers' clients, and improved service providers' client outcomes.	5
6. Communication / trust	The degree to which the independent service providers trust one another, have ongoing communication which utilizes multiple methods and mediums, and function as a single unit through shared decision making.	4
7. Evaluation	The extent to which Thusong's strategic planning is ongoing and inclusive of its service providers and to which the centre has developed and implemented multiple methods of measuring the centre's progress and impact.	4

For the second part, three questions were asked related to centre benefits. The respondents also had to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. A four-point Likert scale was used. This is a forced choice method since the middle option of "neither agree nor disagree" is not available (see below). The motivation for using a four-point scale was informed by findings from a study by Garland (1991:66). He examined the effect on survey results of having no neutral or mid-point on a Likert scale.

His research provides some evidence that social desirability bias, arising from respondents' desires to please the interviewer or appear helpful or not be seen to give what they perceive to be a socially unacceptable answer, can be minimised by eliminating the mid-point category from Likert scales. For this reason the researcher chose not to give the respondents from Thusong the option to say "neither agree nor disagree": because of they don't agree with a statement they might perhaps not want to selected "disagree" and then opt for "neither agree nor disagree".

In terms of sampling, the senior communication officers and centre managers of all the Thusongs in various urban and rural nodes of South Africa served as the target population for this research. In other words a sample of 65 respondents was selected from a population of 243 staff members representing 137 centres in nine provinces. Sampling methods are classified as either probability or non-probability. In probability sampling, members are selected from the population in a random manner. These include simple random sampling¹², systematic sampling¹³, stratified random sampling and cluster random sampling¹⁴ (Henry, 1990).

For this research, stratified random sampling was used. With stratified random sampling, the population is first divided into a number of parts or 'strata' according to some characteristic, chosen to be related to the major variables being studied (Henry, 1990). The stratification factor was the specific province in which each respondent resides. This factor was chosen in order to ensure that there would be a fairly equal representation of responses from the nine provinces of South Africa. The survey thus used the nine strata as follows:

- 8 Respondents in the Western Cape
- 5 Respondents in the Northern Cape

¹² In a simple random sampling of a given size all such subsets of a frame are given equal probability (Cochran, 1997).

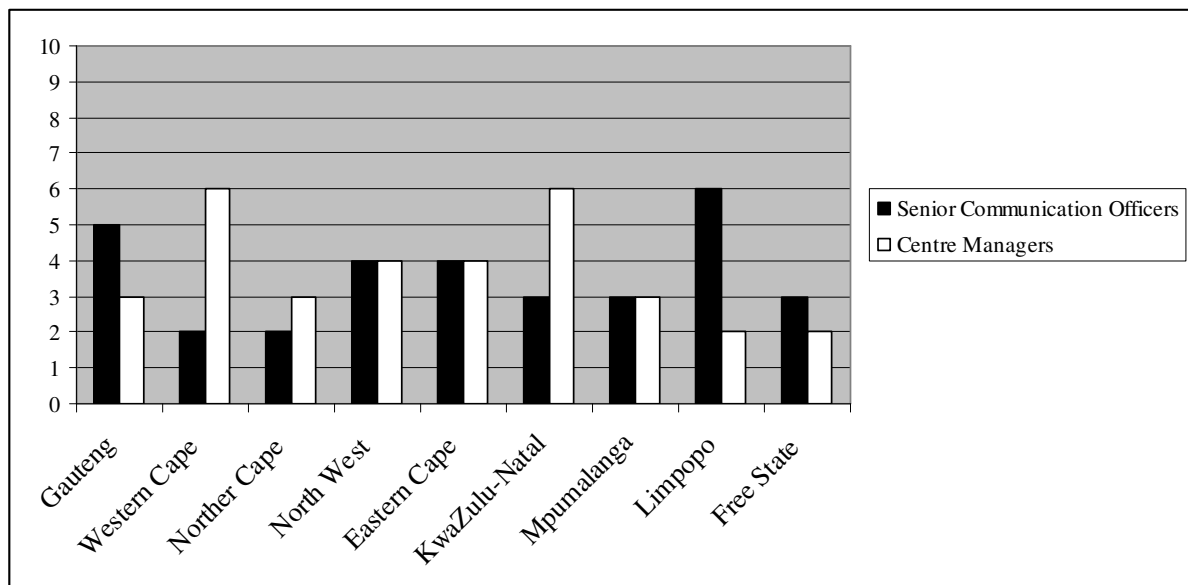
¹³ Systematic sampling relies on arranging the target population according to some ordering scheme and then selecting elements at regular intervals through that ordered list (Cochran, 1997).

¹⁴ Cluster random sampling is an example of multistage sampling: in the first stage a sample of areas is chosen; in the second stage a sample of respondents within those areas is selected (Cochran, 1997).

- 8 Respondents in the Eastern Cape
- 8 Respondents in Gauteng
- 6 Respondents in Mpumalanga
- 9 Respondents in KwaZulu-Natal
- 8 Respondents in Limpopo
- 8 Respondents in North West
- 5 Respondents in the Free State

Simple random samples were then selected from each stratum. The same proportion was selected within each stratum, making the sample a proportionately stratified random sample. A comprehensive list of all the senior communication officers and all the centre managers of all the Thusong centres was obtained from the Thusong website. A stratified random sample of 65 individuals was selected from the population group of 243 and questionnaires were sent to them to fill out. Figure 4 specifies the proportion of responses from senior communications officers vis-à-vis centre managers.

FIGURE 4: DISPLAY OF THE SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLE OF 65 RESPONDENTS ACROSS NINE PROVINCES



The researcher had to obtain the assistance of the Government Communication and Information Service (GCIS) for the distribution of the questionnaires. Due to the bureaucratic nature of government, in the sense that it would be a challenge

to get officials to complete questionnaires that are not part of their normal work, the assistance of the GCIS was essential.

An explanatory letter from The Presidency¹⁵ was sent to the target population of this sample (see Annexure D). GCIS informed all the Thusong centres (by means of the letter) about the independent research which was going to take place. The questionnaire was e-mailed and faxed from the office of Mr Michael Currin, Chief Director for Provincial Coordination and Programme Support and the respondents had to fax or e-mail their responses to either the researcher or GCIS. There was a deadline by which respondents had to respond. Table 2 below is a presentation of the content of the quantitative questionnaire.

TABLE 2: CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONS USING A 4-POINT LIKERT SCALE FOR QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION IN QUESTIONNAIRE

Close-ended questions		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Mission and goals					
1.	The mission of the Thusong centre is clearly expressed in writing.				
2.	The purpose and mission of your Thusong centre are understood by the staff of the centre.				
3.	Staff is committed to the goals of your Thusong centre.				
Governance and decision-making					
4.	Your Thusong centre has a governing board or a steering committee. For example: Local Intersectoral Steering Committee (LISSC).				
5.	The governing board or steering committee provides support regarding oversight issues.				
6.	The governing board or steering committee is representative of the staff of your centre.				
7.	The governing board or steering committee was approved by all staff of your centre.				
8.	Decision making processes regarding all issues of the				

¹⁵ The reason why the letter was sent from The Presidency was that the researcher's initial supervisor for this research project was based in that office. Due to unforeseen circumstances on the side of the supervisor, the researcher had to find a new supervisor who came on board after the quantitative questionnaires had been distributed.

	centre are stated clearly in writing.				
9.	Decision making in your centre involves input by staff of the centre.				
10.	There is a definite mechanism for resolving internal staff conflicts.				
Planning					
11.	There is an integrated and coordinated planning process in place for your centre.				
12.	Strategic planning is ongoing with opportunities for staff input.				
13.	The centre's strategic / business plan has been distributed to all staff.				
14.	The Thusong centre's strategic / business plan identifies specific products and services, as well as targeted customers.				
15.	There is an integrated and coordinated planning process in place for your centre.				
Leadership / management					
16.	The day-to-day administration of the centre is managed in a satisfactory manner.				
17.	The staff provides services to the people within a framework of Batho Pele and customer care values.				
18.	The staff and the community development workers (CDWs) have a working relationship.				
19.	CDWs are incorporated as part of the centre.				
20.	The centre is operational, in other words community members have access to services during normal working hours.				
21.	Staff is responsible for the resources of their own offices. For example: budgets for their services, compilation of monthly reports and appropriate office equipment.				
Staffing					
22.	Number of staff is enough to carry out centre activities.				
23.	Staff is trained and capacitated to do their work.				
24.	Staff is committed to the centre.				
25.	Staff has the technology, equipment, and software needed to maximise productivity.				
26.	Number of staff resigning from their positions at the centre is low.				
Communication / trust					
27.	Staff communicates regularly with each other. For example: regular meetings.				

28.	Staff uses the centre as a forum for sharing information and/or problem solving. For example: staff learns from each other's mistakes because mistakes and lessons learned are shared with one another.				
29.	Staff has electronic capability of communicating with one another. For example: staff communicates regularly with each other through e-mail / sms / phone.				
30.	Staff members trust one another. For example: service provider staff trusts each other's integrity with regards to decision-making because they work together on projects.				
Evaluation					
31.	The centre has a defined method of evaluating its performance. For example: there are indicators and data collection methods for reporting purposes.				
32.	Evaluation is based on the impact of the centre on the communities in its service area. For example: the centre knows that the services it provides addresses the needs of the community.				
33.	Evaluation findings are used to improve centre performance, decision making, and strategic planning.				
Thusong centre benefits					
34.	There is a public perception that your centre is solving the problem(s) it intends to address.				
35.	Your centre has improved integration / coordination of services.				
36.	Your centre has improved access to services for community members.				

Table 2 showcases the questions asked for the seven measures of effectiveness as well as centre benefits. Each measure contained between three and seven questions and respondents only had one choice of answer per question. The questionnaire consisted of 36 close-ended questions. Table 3 presents the open-ended questions, strategically located below certain close-ended questions, in order to afford the respondents the opportunity to give reasons for indicating that they agreed or disagreed.

TABLE 3: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS FOR QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION IN QUESTIONNAIRE

Question		Reason for asking this question
1.	In which province is your Thusong centre located?	Even though the respondents were pre-selected by means of the sampling method explained above, the researcher included this question as a measure of verification. The elements which needed verification were whether the questionnaires did go out to the stipulated number of respondents per province,

		since they had been sent out by GCIS. Also, even though the researcher had the names of the pre-selected respondents on a spreadsheet, the individual questionnaires with their responses remained anonymous.
2.	What is your position at your Thusong centre? Are you a senior communications officer or a centre manager?	This question was necessary, also as a measure of verification, reason being that there were only these two categories of people who could participate in this questionnaire.
3.	Is your Thusong centre still in operation? If NO, please provide reasons.	This question was necessary since the answer may have influenced the rest of the respondent's answers.
4.	How many years has your Thusong centre been in existence? (Please write down the date when your Thusong centre opened.)	This question was necessary in order to compare results, in terms of whether there is a difference in results between older and younger centres.
5.	How many service providers (different departments / organisations) are in your Thusong centre? (Please write down number of service providers.)	This question facilitated the comparison of results, in terms of whether there is a difference in results between centres with fewer and more service providers.
6.	If your Thusong centre had growth, please indicate the number of service providers that you have added since your centre began. (Please write down the number of service providers which the centre started with and the number of service providers which the centre has now.)	This question also aided the process of comparison, in terms of whether there is a difference in results between centres with fewer or more service providers.
7.	In your view, does all staff of the centre understand why they are part of Thusong?	This is a follow-up question to a Likert-scale question. Written, elaborated reasons for the respondent's answer are necessary in order to understand responses.
8.	One open-ended question was posed to respondents in terms of whether their specific centre has a strategic / business plan for the financial year.	This is a also follow-up question to a Llikert-scale question. Equally, elaborated reasons for the respondent's answer are necessary in order to understand responses.
9.	Please explain in one sentence how the governing board or steering committee was selected.	This is a follow-up question to a Likert-scale question. The researcher considered written reasons for the respondent's answer a necessity in order to understand responses.
10.	Does your centre have any indicators in place against which performance are measured? If yes, please explain.	
11.	The following is a list of activities and services which your centre aims to address. Which of these six categories are addressed most regularly by your centre, in other words, the community needs this service frequently? Please tick all that apply.	This question was necessary in terms of the six-block service model in order to understand how the needs of communities differ from province to province.

12.	Please explain any improvements that your centre has made in terms of the problem(s) it addresses.	This is a follow-up question to a Likert-scale question. The researcher considered written reasons for the respondent's answer a necessity in order to understand responses.
13.	What element or activity about your Thusong centre makes it successful?	
14.	What would make your Thusong centre more effective?	

From Table 3 it is evident that most of the open-ended questions were asked with a specific reason in mind. A common reason behind most of the questions was to obtain measures of verification. Other reasons included the need for comparing results by means of facilitating comparisons.

The questionnaire was sent to 65 respondents via fax and e-mail with a formal letter of request to participate in the research and guaranteeing respondents' anonymity. Unfortunately, only 45 respondents returned the questionnaires which led to the decision by the researcher not to conduct descriptive statistics or correlation and regression analyses since the sample was too small. Of the 45, two of the responses were discarded due to more than half of the questions having been left unanswered. Approximately 56% of respondents were senior communication officers employed at the various centres, while the remaining respondents were centre managers (44%).

Qualitative data collection

With regard to the qualitative data collection, the questions as well as the findings from the quantitative questionnaire guided the content of the qualitative interview schedule (see Annexure B). This schedule telescoped the questionnaire to become an abbreviated version as semi-structured open-ended qualitative interview questions. The interview schedule contained eight sections: one each on the seven measures of effectiveness (mission and goals, governance and decision-making, planning, leadership / management, staffing, communication / trust, evaluation) and an eighth one on centre benefits.

As part of the interview schedule the results from the quantitative data collection were described to the interviewees below each section. The researcher

questioned them on whether they agreed or disagreed with these findings and they were requested to explain their answers. The formulation of the questions for the interview schedule generally began with words such as "how," "what," and "why". The interview schedule furthermore attempted to inform the interviewee what the researcher was attempting to "discover," "explain," "explore," "identify," or "describe". As far as possible, words such as "relate," "influence," "impact," "affect," or "cause" were avoided for this part of data collection, in line with the recommendations by Creswell (2008).

With regard to conducting the actual qualitative interviews, the researcher approached the nine provincial directors, as well as technical advisors at the TAU of the National Treasury. Chairpersons of the PISSC in each of the nine provinces were requested to participate in the interviews. Not all persons approached for interviews granted the interviews: six people agreed to be interviewed. The names and designations of the interviewees are attached as Annexure C to this research report. Because the researcher is located in Gauteng and the interviewees were spread across the country, the interviews were conducted by teleconference. In order to streamline this process, the researcher e-mailed the interview schedule to the interviewees in advance of the teleconference. The researcher then set up a suitable date and time to contact the interviewee; the interviews on average took 45 minutes. Table 4 lists the questions asked in the qualitative interviews, while Annexure B contains the full interview schedule of which these questions form a part.

TABLE 4: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS USED FOR QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION IN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Question 1: In your experience, would you say that the purpose and mission of Thusong in general are understood by centre staff and that they are committed to the goals of Thusong?
Question 2: Help me understand whether the structures and processes are in place to really believe that Thusong is well governed? What are the requirements that you would say Thusong need to have in place in order to be called "well governed"?
Question 3: From your perspective, are the strategic planning processes within Thusong coordinated? Are they consultative? Kindly share with me the reasons for your answers.
Question 4: Are you in agreement that the leadership and management of Thusong centres in general are in a good condition? Are they in a good condition, except for the fact that staff lacks physical resources to conduct their work effectively? What are the most serious shortcomings? Are these being addressed, and (if they are) how is it being done?

Question 5: Are you aware of any problems in terms of channels of communication within Thusong which may have an effect on the relationship which staff members have with one another? Please share with me the essential details of these systems.

Question 6: In your knowledge, is there a recognized performance evaluation system in place which is available for usage by Thusong management? If there is, please tell me more about it. For example, I would like to understand how it was derived, and how it is operated.

Question 7: Based on the quantitative responses it seems as if staff do believe that their Thusongs have a positive impact on the communities they serve. Help me to understand what kind of feedback and feedback mechanisms are available in order for them to have such a belief.

The qualitative questions in Table 4 were formulated based on the results of the quantitative questionnaires. Considering that the quantitative questionnaires were directed towards either agree or disagree responses, the qualitative questions were formulated in such a way as to get the interviewee to qualify or disqualify the quantitative result. Due to the nature of qualitative interviews, interviewees responded to the questions based on their personal knowledge and experience.

6. *Data analysis and interpretation*

In Chapter 2 of this research report the theoretical framework which informs the data gathering approach was outlined. However, data do not 'speak for themselves': they require interpretation. To the degree that this is possible, the researcher presents the readers with sufficient data in an annexure for them to test the approach of this report and to draw their own conclusions. Chapter 5 of this research report will analyse the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative research. The researcher is aware that methods of interpretation vary and as a result tried to follow the practices employed by relevant and reputable published studies.

Quantitative questionnaire: data analysis and interpretation

For the quantitative data analysis, the researcher followed certain standard procedures (lead by the work of Schneider, 2005). Firstly, the researcher cleaned the data by making very sure that the data were correct (checking data transcription) and that missing values (not answered questions in a survey) were clearly identified as missing data. Secondly, the researcher gained knowledge

about the data (produced graphics) and also created graphics and tables that show relationships. These graphics and tables show the possible responses, the total number of respondents for each part, and the percentages of respondents who selected each answer. Lead by a report from Hopkins (2002), the researcher confined extensive tabular data to annexures and selected only the most important tabular data for inclusion in the main body of the research report.

Qualitative interviews: data analysis and interpretation

Thorne (2000:69) remarked in a journal article that data analysis is the most complex and mysterious of all of the phases of a qualitative project, and the one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in the literature. The method which the researcher used for qualitative data analysis emanated from the theoretical and methodological approaches as discussed in chapters 2 and 4. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) seemed to be the most appropriate. IPA is an approach to qualitative research with an idiographic focus, which means that it aims to offer insights into how a given person, in a given context, makes sense of a given phenomenon (Smith *et al.*, 2009).

The researcher interviewed a small number of people (six in total). Interviewees were sampled purposively (because the selected candidates can offer a meaningful perspective on the topic at hand). The researcher gathered qualitative data from research participants using interviews. The interviews were approached from a position of flexible and open-ended inquiry, and the researcher adopted a stance which is curious and facilitative. IPA usually requires personally-salient accounts of some richness and depth, and it requires that these accounts be captured in a way which permits the researcher to work with a detailed verbatim transcript. Data collection does not set out to test hypotheses and this stance is maintained in data analysis. The researcher reflected on her own preconceptions about the data and attempted to suspend these in order to focus on grasping the experiential world of the interviewees (Smith *et al.*, 2005).

7. *Ethical considerations*

This section deals with the ethical issues involved while research is carried out, and with many more issues that get involved when work is written up. During the writing phase, the researcher was cognisant of the difference between ethical and unethical practices in technical writing. Furthermore, the researcher attempted to adhere to the following ethical principles (as propagated by Resnik, 2009): reporting data, results, methods and procedures in an honest manner. In other words there was no fabrication, falsification or misrepresentation of data. The researcher also strived to avoid bias in the research design, data analysis, data interpretation and other aspects of research where objectivity is expected or required.

The researcher did all possible to avoid careless errors and negligence and to keep good records of research activities, such as data collection, research design and correspondence with interviewees (Resnik, 2009). Lastly, the researcher is open to criticism and new ideas and is committed to honouring patents, copyrights and other forms of intellectual property. Specifically with regards to this thesis, the researcher had to be aware of and obey relevant laws and institutional and governmental policies because of the dilemma of the politics of knowledge production.

8. *Conclusion*

This chapter on the research approaches and methodology utilized by the researcher focused predominantly on the methods were used in order to answer the research questions. The researcher explained that the mixed methods approach, which incorporated a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, was adopted for this research.

This chapter explained that the reason for using the mixed methods approach was for triangulation purposes – specifically data triangulation. Thereafter an attempt was made to describe the procedures implemented for handling quantitative and qualitative data collection. The last two topics this chapter discussed were the manner in which the researcher approached the data

analysis and the interpretation thereof. Lastly, the researcher shed some light on the ethical considerations which guided this research report.

CHAPTER 5

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH ON THUSONG

1. Introduction

This chapter contains a presentation of all the data collected as part of the thesis research. The implications and conclusions of these findings are analysed and reviewed in detail in the next chapter. As discussed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), there are two main sources for the primary data:

- **Structured close-ended and open-ended quantitative questionnaires** completed by a simple random sample of 65 senior communication officers and centre managers from 137 Thusong centres across nine provinces.
- **Semi-structured open-ended qualitative interviews** with six interviewees, who were either Thusong provincial directors or technical advisors at TAUs.

The mixed methods approach that was adopted for this research, in other words a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis helps the study draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both. The intent of this two-phase, sequential mixed methods study was to put forward an assessment on the effectiveness of Thusong's governance arrangements as part of the community of integrated services centres.

2. Quantitative findings

The quantitative findings will be presented in the same order in which the questions in the questionnaire were arranged. Firstly, findings of the close-ended questions on the seven measures of effectiveness as well as centre benefits will be presented:

Findings on measurement 1: mission and goals

Findings on measurement 2: governance and decision-making

Findings on measurement 3: planning

Findings on measurement 4: leadership / management

Findings on measurement 5: staffing

Findings on measurement 6: communication / trust

Findings on measurement 7: evaluation

Findings on the benefits of the Thusong centres

Secondly, findings of the open-ended questions, which served as questions of clarification on some of the measures of effectiveness in the quantitative questionnaire, will be presented. There were 14 questions asked of which three were very poorly answered. Fortunately for the researcher the other questions prompted the respondents to provide truthful and relevant answers.

TABLE 5: PROVINCIAL BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS FROM THUSONG CENTRES

Province	Number of senior communication officers participating from this province	Number of centre managers participating from this province
Gauteng	5	0
North West	3	0
Limpopo	5	1
Mpumalanga	1	3
Eastern Cape	3	1
Northern Cape	2	1
Western Cape	2	7
Free State	3	2
KwaZulu Natal	0	4
TOTAL	24	19

Findings of the close-ended questions on the seven measures of effectiveness in the questionnaire

The sections below will first present the findings of part 1 of the quantitative questionnaire, which were close-ended questions on the seven measures of effectiveness. This section will furthermore present findings in part 2, the section on the benefits of Thusong on the communities it serves. Part 3 of this section will present the findings of the 13 open-ended questions which were placed randomly in the quantitative questionnaire. The aim of these open-ended questions was to give respondents the opportunity to provide a reason for giving a specific quantitative answer. For each of the three parts, the findings will be

presented firstly as a narrative, followed by a frequency table and an interpretation of the table as well as a graph.

Findings on measurement 1: mission and goals

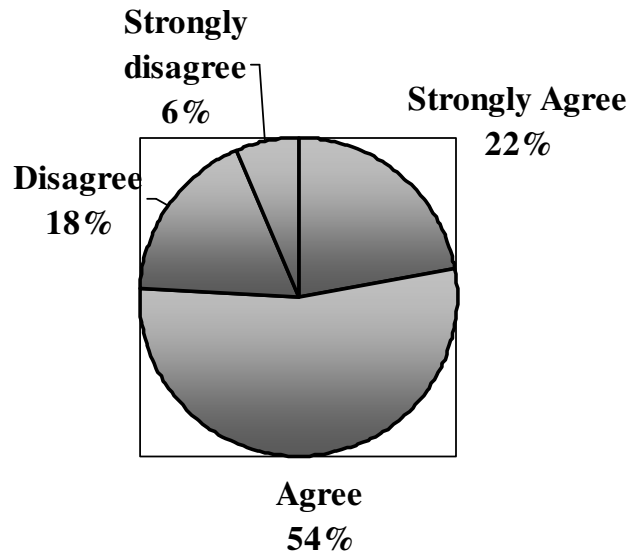
Three questions were asked regarding the respondents' centre mission and goals. When asked if the centre's purpose and mission were clearly understood by all members, if members were committed to centre goals, and if their centre's mission was clearly expressed in writing most respondents agreed.

TABLE 6: FREQUENCY TABLE OF FINDINGS ON THE MISSION AND GOALS OF THUSONG FROM 43 RESPONDENTS

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
MISSION AND GOALS				
The mission of the Thusong centre is clearly expressed in writing.	11 of 43	17 of 43	12 of 43	3 of 43
The purpose and mission of your Thusong centre are understood by the staff of the centre.	9 of 43	25 of 43	6 of 43	3 of 43
Staff is committed to the goals of your Thusong centre.	9 of 43	27 of 43	5 of 43	2 of 43

The definition of 'mission and goals' for this research is the degree to which Thusong service providers are committed to centre goals. From Table 6 it is possible to detect that the three questions (as a whole) on mission and goals produced the following results in terms of the four-point Likert scale. A total of 22% of respondents strongly agreed and 54% of respondents agreed with all three questions. Eighteen percent of respondents disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed with all three questions. The majority of the respondents were thus in agreement with the statements.

FIGURE 5: COMPOSITE MEASURE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING WITH ALL STATEMENTS ON THE MISSION AND GOALS OF THUSONG



Findings on measurement 2: governance and decision-making

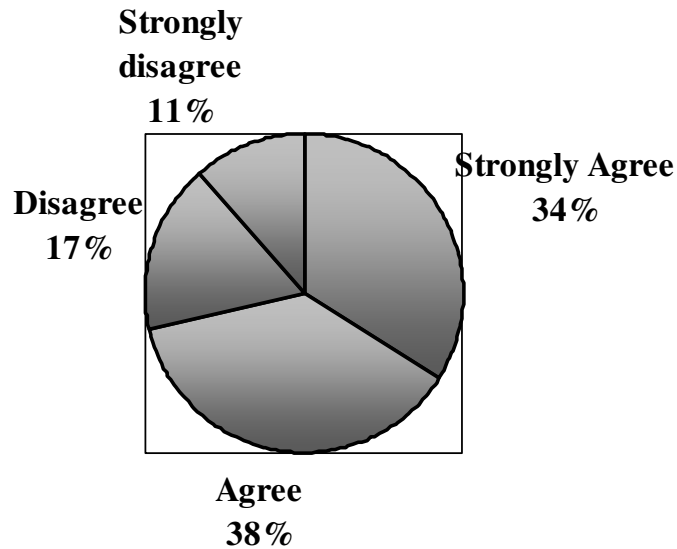
Seven questions were asked regarding the respondents' centre governance and decision making. Most respondents agreed that their governing board or steering committee was representative of their staff, as well as approved by all staff. Most also responded that decision making in their centres involved input from staff. Finally, a majority of respondents agreed that centre decision making processes were clearly stated in writing and that there was a definite mechanism for resolving internal conflicts in their centre.

TABLE 7: FREQUENCY TABLE OF FINDINGS ON THE GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING ARRANGEMENTS OF THUSONG FROM 43 RESPONDENTS

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING				
Your Thusong centre has a governing board or a steering committee. For example: Local Intersectoral Steering Committee (LISSC).	18 of 43	16 of 43	3 of 43	5 of 43
The governing board or steering committee provides support regarding oversight issues.	12 of 43	16 of 43	8 of 43	7 of 43
The governing board or steering committee is representative of the staff of your centre.	8 of 43	23 of 43	5 of 43	7 of 43
The governing board or steering committee was approved by all staff of your centre.	8 of 43	16 of 43	5 of 43	7 of 43
Decision making processes regarding all issues of the centre are stated clearly in writing.	10 of 43	15 of 43	13 of 43	5 of 43
Decision making in your centre involves input by staff of the centre.	11 of 43	20 of 43	8 of 43	3 of 43
There is a definite mechanism for resolving internal staff conflicts.	8 of 43	19 of 43	11 of 43	8 of 43

The findings presented in Table 7 reveal that 34% strongly agree, 38% agree, 17% disagree and 11% strongly disagree with the governance and decision-making arrangements of Thusong. Again it is the 'agree'-component which came out strongly on the statements on governance and decision-making. These answers must be seen against the definition of 'governance and decision-making', which is the extent to which there is a clear sense of Thusong's purpose and to which the centre has well defined governance and decision making processes.

FIGURE 6: COMPOSITE MEASURE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING WITH ALL STATEMENTS ON THE GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING ARRANGEMENTS OF THUSONG



Findings on measurement 3: planning

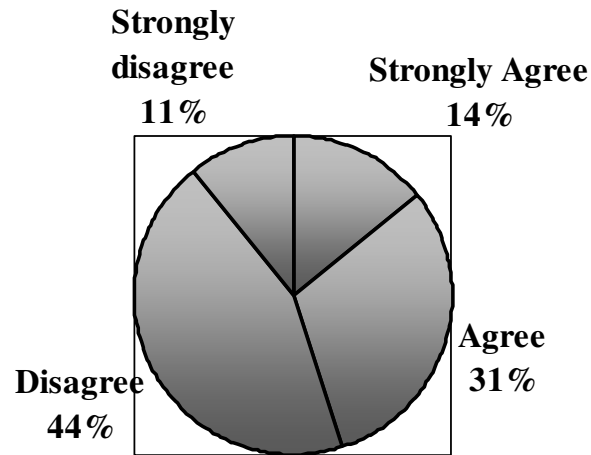
In the questionnaire, four questions were asked about the strategic planning of the respondents' centres. Most of the respondents agreed that there was an integrated and coordinated strategic planning process in place for the centre and they believed that strategic planning was ongoing in their centre with opportunities for staff input. The majority of respondents disagreed that their centre's strategic plan had been distributed to all staff and also did not agree that their centre's strategic / business plan identified specific services.

TABLE 8: FREQUENCY TABLE OF FINDINGS ON THE STRATEGIC PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS OF THUSONG FROM 43 RESPONDENTS

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
PLANNING				
There is an integrated and coordinated planning process in place for your centre.	11 of 43	17 of 43	12 of 43	3 of 43
Strategic planning is ongoing with opportunities for staff input.	9 of 43	25 of 43	6 of 43	3 of 43
The centre's strategic / business plan has been distributed to all staff.	9 of 43	27 of 43	5 of 43	2 of 43
The Thusong centre's strategic / business plan identifies specific products and services, as well as targeted customers.	11 of 43	17 of 43	12 of 43	3 of 43
There is an integrated and coordinated planning process in place for your centre.	9 of 43	25 of 43	6 of 43	3 of 43

The definition of 'planning' is the extent to which Thusong's strategic planning is ongoing and inclusive of its service providers and to which the centre has developed and implemented multiple methods of measuring the centre's impact. The highest percentage in Table 8 is 44% for disagreeing with statements on strategic planning arrangements, while 31% agree with statements on strategic planning arrangements. The discrepancy of 13% between agree and disagree is not substantial. However, this is the first measure of effectiveness which has a stronger negative than positive response.

FIGURE 7: COMPOSITE MEASURE OF RESPONDENTS DISAGREEING WITH ALL STATEMENTS ON THE STRATEGIC PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS OF THUSONG



Findings on measurement 4: leadership / management

Six questions were asked about the leadership and management of the respondents' centres. Most of the respondents agreed that: 1) the day-to-day administration of the centre is managed in a satisfactory manner; 2) the staff provide services to the people within a framework of Batho Pele and customer care values, and 3) the staff and the community development workers (CDWs) have a working relationship.

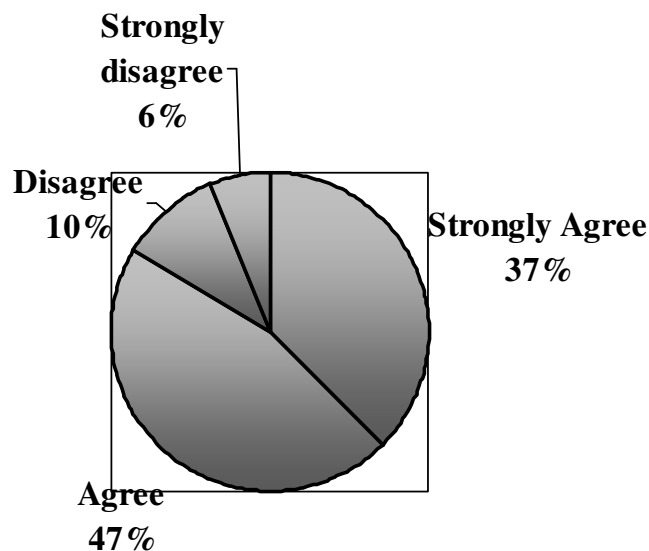
TABLE 9: FREQUENCY TABLE OF FINDINGS ON THE LEADERSHIP / MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS OF THUSONG FROM 43 RESPONDENTS

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
LEADERSHIP / MANAGEMENT				
The day-to-day administration of the centre is managed in a satisfactory manner.	15 of 43	19 of 43	6 of 43	1 of 43
The staff provides services to the people within a framework of Batho Pele and customer care values.	14 of 43	26 of 43	4 of 43	0 of 43
The staff and the	16 of 43	23 of 43	3 of 43	0 of 43

community development workers (CDWs) have a working relationship.				
CDWs are incorporated as part of the centre.	9 of 43	18 of 43	11 of 43	2 of 43
The centre is operational, in other words community members have access to services during normal working hours.	27 of 43	16 of 43	0 of 43	0 of 43
Staff is responsible for the resources of their own offices. For example: budgets for their services, compilation of monthly reports and appropriate office equipment.	18 of 43	20 of 43	3 of 43	1 of 43

The definition of 'leadership / management' is the degree to which the centre has strong and committed leadership and has adequate and qualified staff to carry out centre goals and objectives. From Table 9 it is evident that the majority of respondents agree with the questions that the leadership and management arrangements are of such a nature that they can answer positively.

FIGURE 8: COMPOSITE MEASURE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING WITH ALL STATEMENTS ON THE LEADERSHIP / MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS OF THUSONG



Findings on measurement 5: staffing

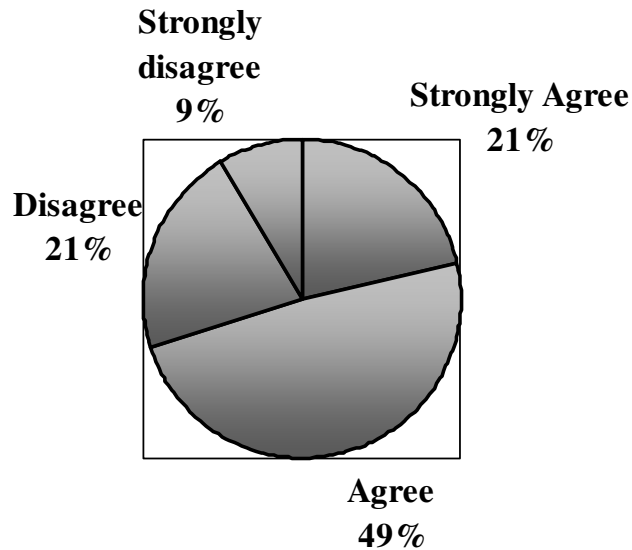
For this measurement, most of the respondents agreed that: 1) staff is trained and capacitated to do its work; 2) staff is committed to the centre; and 3) the number of staff resigning from their positions in the centre is low. Finally, the majority of respondents disagreed that staff has the technology, equipment and software needed to maximise productivity.

TABLE 10: FREQUENCY TABLE OF FINDINGS ON THE STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS OF THUSONG FROM 43 RESPONDENTS

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
STAFFING				
Number of staff is enough to carry out centre activities.	5 of 43	13 of 43	19 of 43	5 of 43
Staff is trained and capacitated to do their work.	7 of 43	26 of 43	4 of 43	4 of 43
Staff is committed to the centre.	11 of 43	26 of 43	2 of 43	0 of 43
Staff has the technology, equipment, and software needed to maximise productivity.	6 of 43	14 of 43	15 of 43	6 of 43
Number of staff resigning from their positions at the centre is low.	14 of 43	20 of 43	3 of 43	3 of 43

For this research report, 'staffing' is defined as the degree to which Thusong has enhanced the survival of its service providers, enabled its service providers to acquire resources, reduced the cost of services for its service providers, improved access to services for service providers' clients and improved service providers' client outcomes. The findings presented in Table 10 are perplexing, because disagreeing with the statement that staff has the technology to maximise productivity is contradictory to agreeing with the statement that staff is trained and capacitated to do their work.

FIGURE 9: COMPOSITE MEASURE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING WITH ALL STATEMENTS ON THE STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS OF THUSONG



Findings on measurement 6: communication / trust

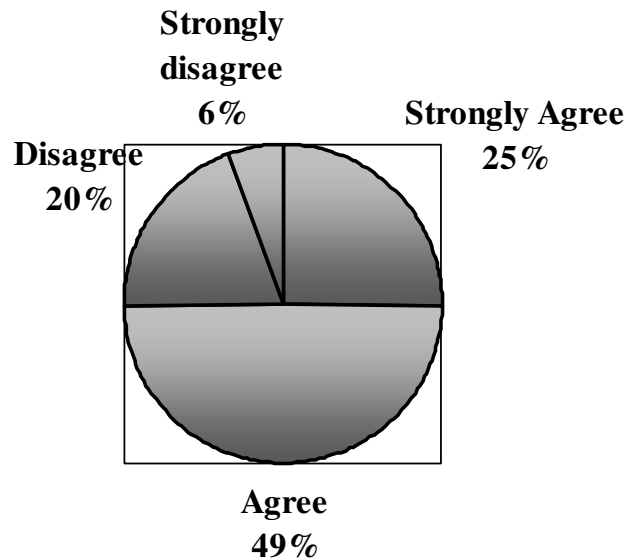
Four questions were asked regarding communication and trust in the respondents' centres. Most of the respondents indicated that their centre's staff communicates regularly amongst each other. Similarly, most of the respondents agreed that staff used the centre as a forum for sharing information and / or problem solving. They also agreed that staff had the electronic capability of communicating with one another. Finally, when asked whether or not staff members trust one another, it was the opinion of a majority of respondents that they did.

TABLE 11: FREQUENCY TABLE OF FINDINGS ON THE COMMUNICATION / TRUST ASPECTS OF THUSONG FROM 43 RESPONDENTS

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
COMMUNICATION / TRUST				
Staff communicates regularly with each other. For example: regular meetings.	10 of 43	22 of 43	8 of 43	2 of 43
Staff uses the centre as a forum for sharing information and/or problem solving. For example: staff learns from each other's mistakes because mistakes and lessons learned are shared with one another.	13 of 43	23 of 43	8 of 43	1 of 43
Staff has electronic capability of communicating with one another. For example: staff communicates regularly with each other through e-mail / sms / phone.	9 of 43	13 of 43	12 of 43	6 of 43
Staff members trust one another. For example: service provider staff trusts each other's integrity with regards to decision-making because they work together on projects.	10 of 43	25 of 43	4 of 43	1 of 43

'Communication / trust' is defined as the degree to which the independent service providers trust one another, have ongoing communication which utilizes multiple methods and mediums, and function as a single unit through shared decision making. Figure 10 indicates that close to half of the respondents agree (49%) while 6% strongly disagree.

FIGURE 10: COMPOSITE MEASURE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING WITH ALL STATEMENTS IN TERMS OF THE COMMUNICATION / TRUST ASPECTS OF THUSONG



Findings on measurement 7: evaluation

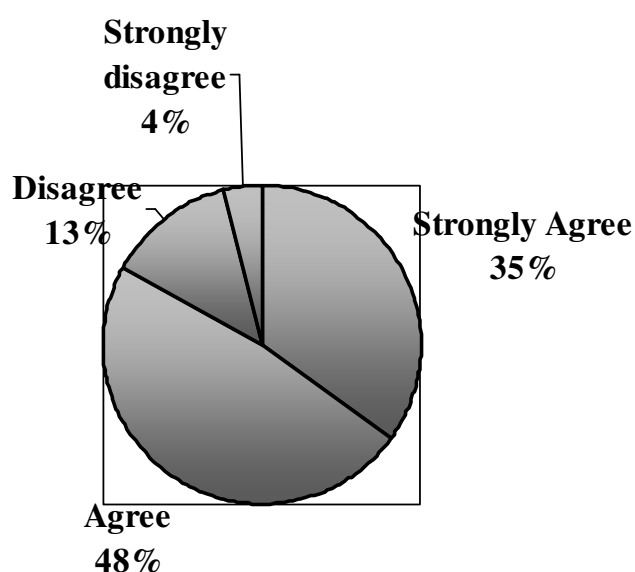
Respondents were asked three questions about the evaluation processes of their centres. Only 26% of those who responded strongly agreed that their centre had a defined method of evaluating its performance. However, most agreed that evaluation in their centre was based on the impact of the centre on the communities it serves. Finally, most respondents agreed that evaluation findings were used to improve network performance, decision making and strategic planning.

TABLE 12: FREQUENCY TABLE OF FINDINGS ON THE EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS OF THUSONG FROM 43 RESPONDENTS

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
EVALUATION				
The centre has a defined method of evaluating its performance. For example: there are indicators and data collection methods for reporting purposes.	11 of 43	23 of 43	7 of 43	2 of 43
Evaluation is based on the impact of the centre on the communities in its service area. For example: the centre knows that the services it provides address the needs of the community.	13 of 43	22 of 43	4 of 43	1 of 43
Evaluation findings are used to improve centre performance, decision making, and strategic planning.	12 of 43	20 of 43	6 of 43	3 of 43

'Evaluation' is defined as the extent to which Thusong's strategic planning is ongoing and inclusive of its service providers and to which the centre has developed and implemented multiple methods of measuring the centre's progress and impact. Again, as was the case with the previous measure, the majority of respondents agreed, but there are isolated cases of individuals who strongly disagreed.

FIGURE 11: COMPOSITE MEASURE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING WITH ALL STATEMENTS ON THE EVALUATION ASPECTS OF THUSONG



Findings on the benefits of the Thusong centres

Respondents were asked about the benefits of their centres at the three levels. Those of the 43 respondents who chose to answer whether or not there was a public perception that their centre is solving the problem(s) that it intends to address, mostly agreed. When asked whether their centres had improved integration / coordination of services, a majority of the respondents agreed. Finally, when asked whether or not their centres had improved access to services for community members, most respondents agreed that they had.

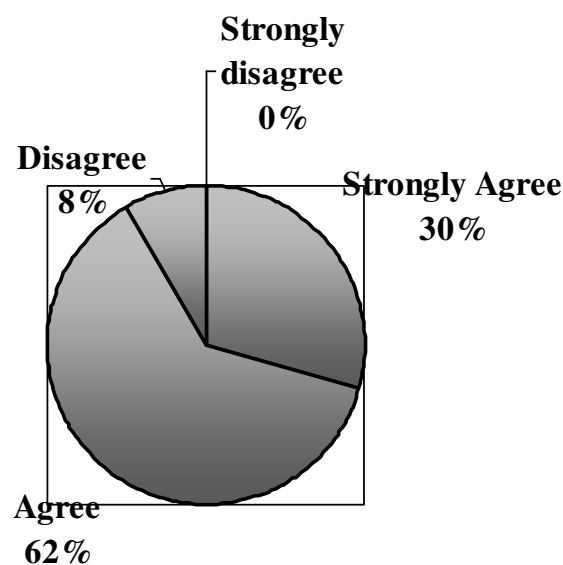
TABLE 13: FREQUENCY TABLE OF FINDINGS ON THE BENEFITS OF THUSONG FROM 43 RESPONDENTS

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
CENTRE BENEFITS				
There is a public perception that your centre is solving the problem(s) it intends to address.	12 of 43	27 of 43	2 of 43	0 of 43
Your centre has improved integration / coordination of services.	11 of 43	27 of 43	5 of 43	0 of 43
Your centre has improved access to services for community	14 of 43	26 of 43	3 of 43	0 of 43

members.				
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'Centre benefits' is defined as the degree to which there is a staff perception that the centre is solving the problems it intends to address. The findings presented in Table 13 show that there is a 62% agreement rate – which is the highest rate for any of the measures thus far. This should not be surprising since it can be presumed that the centres have a positive effect on the communities they serve.

FIGURE 12: COMPOSITE MEASURE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING WITH ALL STATEMENTS ON THE CENTRE BENEFITS OF THUSONG



Findings of the open-ended questions which served as questions of clarification on some of the measures of effectiveness in the quantitative questionnaire

Thirteen open-ended questions formed part of the quantitative questionnaire, six of the 13 were posed before the close-ended questions started and the remaining seven were purposely placed to clarify certain close-ended questions. The intent of the last seven open-ended questions was to obtain written reasons for some of the close-ended answers. However, overall the responses to these questions were very poor and it was challenging to present the findings of these parts of the questionnaire, seeing there is very little substance to the answers.

The results presented below are the sporadic findings of those individuals who did put in the effort to jot down reasons for their answers and the findings should be seen rather as isolated interpretations from particular individuals than general conclusions.

Findings on question 1 (measure of verification): In which province is your Thusong centre located?

Respondents were asked to make a cross in the appropriate box next to the province which they resided in. As explained in Chapter 4, this question served as a measure of verification for the researcher in order to establish whether the questionnaires did end up in those provinces selected by the simple random sample. This question did serve its purpose in that the intended number of questionnaires for each specific province reached their destination.

Findings on open-ended quantitative question 2: What is your position at your Thusong centre? Are you a senior communications officer or a centre manager?

Respondents were asked to make a cross in the appropriate box next to either senior communications officer or centre manager. Also, as explained in the previous chapter, this question served as a measure of verification for the same reason as above. The researcher wanted to make sure that the questionnaires did end up going to the specifically selected respondents in each province. Respondents were not asked to provide their names since anonymity was guaranteed from the onset when the questionnaires were distributed.

Findings on open-ended quantitative question 3: Is your Thusong centre still in operation? If no, please provide reasons.

Respondents were asked to answer 'yes' or 'no' in terms of whether their centre was still in operation. This question was included to cover the eventuality of selected respondents still completing the questionnaires even if their specific centre was no longer operational (for whatever reason). The question was important in order to detect whether such a situation had any effect on the way the respondent answered the questions. All respondents answered 'yes', although one respondent wrote the word 'barely' next to the 'yes' box. The majority of respondents strongly agreed that their centres were operational.

Findings on open-ended quantitative question 4: How many years has your Thusong centre been in existence? (Please write down the date when your Thusong centre opened.)

The aim of this question was to obtain information in terms of the context in which the selected respondents operate. The value of this question would have come to the fore if there were great discrepancies in the results between the answers of the various respondents. However, fortunately or unfortunately, there were no major discrepancies in the answers. Still, the responses from the 43 respondents varied from centres which had been operational for three months only to more than ten years.

Findings on question 5 (question to facilitate comparison): How many service providers (different departments / organisations) are in your Thusong centre? (Please write down number of service providers.)

The aim of this question was also to obtain information in terms of the context in which the selected responses operate. The value of this question would have come to the fore if there were great discrepancies in the results between the answers of the various respondents. However, this question was very poorly answered.

Findings on open-ended quantitative question 6: If your Thusong centre had growth, please indicate the number of service providers that you have added since your centre began. (Please write down the number of service providers which the centre started with and the number of service providers which the centre has now.)

Like the response to question five, the value of this question would also have come to the fore if there were great discrepancies in the results between the answers in the various questionnaires. However, this question was very poorly answered.

Findings on open-ended quantitative question 7: In your view, does all staff of the centre understand why they are part of Thusong?

An open-ended question was asked in terms of whether respondents thought all staff of the centre understand why they are part of Thusong. Of the 43

respondents, 31 indicated 'yes', while the rest indicated 'no' without justifying their reply. The researcher admits that this question might have been difficult to interpret since it was not clear from the formulation that the researcher actually wanted to know whether there was a broad understanding among service providers about the philosophy behind Thusong as stated in the access strategy of government.

Findings on open-ended quantitative question 8: Does your centre have a strategic / business plan for the current financial year? Please state 'yes' or 'no'.

One open-ended question was posed to respondents in terms of whether their specific centre had a strategic / business plan for the current financial year. The majority of respondents answered that they did not have such a plan in place. This finding tallies with the finding of the TAU review (2009) which was that "almost none of the officials interviewed, at all levels, had actually read the latest generic business plan. Even fewer had acted upon it, citing problems such as 'unfunded mandate', the fact that the Thusongs were just one of many duties and responsibilities, lack of executive authority and no interest from other role players to ensure efficient service delivery through the Thusongs".

Findings on open-ended quantitative question 9: Please explain in one sentence how the governing board or steering committee was selected.

This question was deemed necessary, since the researcher wanted to know whether there were inclusive processes in place in which afforded all service providers the opportunity to form part of the selection process albeit only to nominate members for the committee. This question did not get any response from any respondent which could be seen as an answer in itself.

Findings on quantitative question 10: Does your centre have any indicators in place against which performance is measured? If yes, please explain.

This open-ended question was posed to respondents in terms of whether their centre had any indicators in place against which performance could be measured; there was a good balance between 'yes' and 'no'. The respondents who answered 'no' did not justify their answers while the respondents who answered 'yes' had mostly similar answers: information-sharing sessions, monthly statistics and surveys.

Findings on quantitative question 11: The following is a list of activities and services your centre aims to address. Which of these six categories are addressed most regularly by your centre, in other words, which are the services the community needs frequently? Please tick all that apply.

The researcher specifically included this question in the light of the six-block service model explained in Chapter 3 of this research report. This model consists of the following elements: government services, social and administrative services, office services, education and skills development services, local economic development services, business services and community opportunities and lastly information and communication activities. The aim of this question was also to be able to contextualize the discrepancies in answers in terms of whether respondents who come from centres which offer more services than others have different answers than those which offer fewer services. The answers to these questions were somewhat disappointing, but it could also very well be an indication of the way things are in practice. Respondents were requested to make a cross next to each service which is frequently needed: as it turned out, they only ticked one or two options.

Findings on quantitative question 12: Please explain any improvements that your centre has made in terms of the problem(s) it addresses.

Like the response to question 5, the value of this question would also have come to the fore if there were great discrepancies in the results between the answers in the various questionnaires. However, this question was very poorly answered.

Findings on quantitative question 13: What element or activity about your Thusong centre makes it successful?

The researcher inserted this question to gain a perception of the one element that, according to respondents, made their specific centre successful. The assumption was that most respondents would respond the same way by stating for instance 'friendly service'. However, most respondents skipped this question. Interestingly, the TAU review (2009) in this regard reports that according to the first generation business plan, MPCCs were identified as the primary approach for the implementation of development communication and information. In the light of this reality the results from the interviews suggest that Thusongs'

success can only be determined by the degree of partnerships which exists between organised civil society and government.

Findings on quantitative question 14: What would make your Thusong centre more effective?

The researcher considered this question to be necessary in order to complement the report's search for an assessment on the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of Thusong. This question was answered quite well and the responses were not very varied. The majority of the responses indicated that 'resources' would improve their centre. Unfortunately the word 'resources' was left open for interpretation by the researcher since respondents didn't elaborate on what they meant.

3. Qualitative findings

As explained in Chapter 4, follow-up interviews were conducted with six people who are either involved in the leadership, management or strategic issues of the Thusong centres. These follow-up interviews were used to clarify some of the findings regarding the analysis of all centres. Interviewees were asked to clarify, describe and explain the findings of each of the seven measures of effectiveness as well as the centre benefits. There was consensus among the six interviewees, most shared views similar to the findings which emanated from the quantitative questionnaire.

Findings from the qualitative open-ended questions

With regard to the qualitative data collection, both the the questions and findings from the quantitative questions were utilized for the qualitative interview schedule, in an abbreviated version as an open-ended semi-structured interview. The interview schedule was structured in such a way that it contained seven sections.

Findings on qualitative question 1: In your experience, would you say that the purpose and mission of Thusong in general are understood by centre staff and that they are committed to the goals of Thusong?

One interviewee expressed his concern about an underlying false concept in that people should take caution not to think of Thusong as a centre but to think of it

as a service. "The general thinking that Thusong is all about a building which operates as a one-stop-shop is risky because the philosophy behind Thusong gets lost through this thinking. Thusong is all about bringing services to the people and giving people access to services and information". Related to the aforementioned point, one interviewee mentioned that "the notion of bringing services closer to the people has lately become the focal point when it comes to decisions about the location of new centres".

Another interviewee explained that "the staff in Thusong I would say partly understands the purpose and mission of Thusong and is committed to the goals of Thusong. The reason for saying partly is because we still struggle to obtain statistics as the staff is first answerable to their department before the Thusong management".

A last interviewee responded to this question by saying "No! Most staff I interact with on a daily basis fails to give a clear understanding of their role. The general view is that the role of Thusong differs from municipal area to municipal area. But if you look at the general objective of the programme it is not so!".

Findings on qualitative question 2: Help me understand whether the structures and processes are in place to really convince that Thusong is well governed? What are the requirements that you would say Thusong need to have in place in order to be called "well governed"?

The interviewees agreed that Thusong is managed by a centre manager and at some centres there are management committees which consist of service provider representatives. They confirmed that there are LISSCs which constitute centre management as well as GCIS officials and members of the community. However, although they acknowledged that the requirements were to have the structures as mentioned above, they said that they should be structures which move the Thusong goal forward with goals and objectives and not only be used for having meetings. .

One interviewee argued that ownership of the centre itself is a problem. "In a certain province this programme was just transferred from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Local Government. It is hoped that this will ease the problem of who owns and maintains the building infrastructure,

etc. However, this has resulted in quite a few Thusongs being neglected in terms of toilet facilities, cracks all over the building, broken windows, etc. However, the role of the centre manager regarding content and promoting government's programme of action remains a problem area as the Thusong is also a key government information and service delivery point".

Findings on qualitative question 3: From your perspective, are the strategic planning processes within Thusong coordinated? Are they consultative? Kindly share with me the reasons for your answers.

In line with the findings of the TAU review (2009), all interviewees agreed that the reason that the field survey revealed that a few people strongly disagreed with statements regarding planning is that there is not a generic planning system in place for all Thusong centres. It also came to the fore that strategic plans exist for all centres, but individual centre plans do not. This was an issue which struck most interviewees when they were prompted to explain whether there was a reason why individual centres didn't have their own business plans. The response was basically that a move in that direction would probably be the next step in the evolution of Thusong.

One interviewee strongly expressed his view on this question by saying "No! Some Thusongs will hold annual planning meetings while most simply ignore this vital planning priority. Communities are only consulted around the need for the Thusong to be established. To a large extent they are then excluded from the actual programme implementation at the Thusong. Some centres have not held annual general meetings (AGMs) for years which invalidates their current leadership structures. The other issues are that of management boards (MBs) of the Thusong compared to management by the municipality. The MBs have no real authority to force the municipality to repair or fix the Thusong and this generally is where the problem lies with ownership. If the municipality takes full responsibility for the Thusong it will be worked into the municipality's annual programme of action. This can also be done via the MBs, but they tend to have too much political infighting to manage the centre properly - tending to fight about employees, finances, etc."

A last interpretation of findings from the interviews argues that the strategic planning processes happen at national level and to some extent at the provincial

level. They are coordinated in the sense that it is expected of provinces to replicate what has been done at national level. They are not necessarily consultative because participation in the Thusong programme is to some extent voluntary and service providers are not compelled to be part of the programme and it is not part of their performance agreements.

Findings on qualitative question 4: Are you in agreement that the leadership and management of Thusong centres in general are sound, except for the fact that staff lack physical resources to conduct their work effectively? What are the most serious shortcomings? Are these being addressed, and (if they are) how is it being done?

One interviewee mentioned that "this research on the governance arrangements of Thusong with respect to the seven measures of effectiveness is very significant since these centres have no legislative mandate". Another interviewee said that "Thusong came into being by means of a cabinet memorandum. In 1996 a Communication Task Group Report recommended the development of MPCCs to expand access to information. This led to Cabinet Memorandum No. 15 of 1999 which mandated the GCIS to facilitate and co-ordinate the establishment of MPCCs, also called 'first generation' Thusong service centres".

From the interviews it is easy to detect that the most serious shortcoming remains that all centres do not have actual budgets. This impacts on the effectiveness of Thusong itself. As one interviewee put it: "In order to communicate with local residents you need a communications budget to promote Thusong and its programmes in the local community. So budget for staff salaries and actual content remains the key problem next to ownership of the Thusong itself".

A last interviewee answered this question by stating "no, it is not in good condition as mentioned above." It was not part of their performance agreements and they rendered service there on a 'voluntary basis'. The most serious shortcoming were that there was individual planning by departments like the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), South African Post Office and Home Affairs with their plans to set up centres around the country and integrated planning was not taking place, he explained.

Findings on qualitative question 5: Are you aware of any problems in terms of channels of communication within Thusong which may have an effect on the relationship which staff members have with one another? Please share with me the essential details of these channels.

From the interviewees, the researcher gathered that there are people working for various government departments reporting to Thusong for work. However, they are only accountable to their department and not to the municipality or centre manager. They therefore refuse to submit monitoring and evaluation reports directly to the centre manager. It then becomes extremely difficult to monitor the impact of Thusong in a particular community. The interviewees said reporting should be clarified, that all departments based at a Thusong should submit monthly reports to the centre manager who in turn should submit this report to the municipality and lead provincial department. "The problems in terms of channels of communication are some officials may not feel comfortable to provide statistics to centre managers and will escalate that to their supervisors who delay the reporting process".

Findings on qualitative question 6: To your knowledge, is there a recognized performance evaluation system in place available for usage by Thusong management? If there is, please tell me more about it. For example, I would like to understand how it was arrived at and how it is operated.

One interviewee responded by saying "no, I have not seen or been exposed to such a performance management system. Centre managers within the province earn varied salaries – these range from R4 000 per month to R20 000 per month. Perhaps this also points to the fact that there is no real understanding of the expected role of the Thusong". Similarly, another interviewee explained "no, I am not aware of any besides the occasional surveys being undertaken by the Office of the Premier at some but not all Thusong centres".

Findings on qualitative question 7: Based on the quantitative responses it seems as if staff do believe that their Thusongs have a positive impact on the communities they serve. Help me to understand what kind of feedback and feedback mechanisms are available in order for them to have such an opinion.

"The impact to some extent is clear. People no longer have to travel long distances to get access to IDs, etc. They can now enter a Thusong, get a temporary ID and apply immediately for a welfare grant. However, this depends on whether these departments operate at the centre. Communities have access to telecentres and IT if they have this at the Thusong. Some Thusongs are linked to clinics, libraries, etc. and at most of these Thusongs you get access to government info on how to start a business and thereafter how to access relevant government funding for that business". A brief response to this question from another interviewee was "the feedback mechanisms we use are suggestion boxes which of course are not filled in regularly".

Complementary to the findings of the qualitative interviews, the TAU review (2009) also reports that "the latest thinking is to place centres in shopping malls where people can stop by on a Saturday / Sunday morning whilst they are shopping, since they don't have time to go there during the week". Almost everyone interviewed suggested that services be provided on Saturdays. Men who are only home on week-ends and farm workers, who cannot easily take leave from work, cannot go to the Thusong Centres or access the mobile services during normal office hours. Also, they would like to attend classes in the evenings, after work or over weekends. In some centres, service providers such as the Department of Home Affairs and the municipality do stay open longer during the week if there is a particular demand and also work on Saturdays.

4. Conclusion

The intention of this chapter was to present the findings of the quantitative and qualitative findings in a systematic manner in order to minimize the risk of omitting any information in either the questionnaires or the interviews. In order to simplify the aforementioned risk, the researcher started off presenting the findings of the close-ended quantitative questionnaires, followed by the the open-ended quantitative questions. After that, the findings of the open-ended qualitative interviews were captured in such a way that the views of the six

interviewees were integrated. Specific significant quotations, which emanated from some of the interviews, were also presented.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH ON THUSONG

1. Introduction

Alfred North Whitehead¹⁶ truthfully said "it requires a very unusual mind to undertake the analysis of the obvious". This chapter will as a result aim to state the 'obvious' emanating from the previous chapter on findings, but also the barely visible and unapparent. The researcher found this chapter particularly challenging since there was a feeling of disillusionment about the results presented in the previous chapter on findings.

The expectation from an analysis chapter in the field of general research methodology is high: there are expectations of unraveling the truth, of looking beyond the obvious and viewing data from an independent critical point of view. All these expectations complicated the attempt to produce an analysis chapter worth its salt, reason being that the findings chapter didn't produce many surprises.

From a research point of view, this chapter presented the researcher with the opportunity to explore the findings of this research in relation to the recent findings of the TAU review (2009). The TAU review was used as a baseline and where there was convergence or divergence with this research on certain measures of effectiveness, it was described as part of this chapter.

2. Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative findings

In general, an analysis of the measures of effectiveness, as perceived by the respondents, revealed important estimates of effectiveness for the governance arrangements of Thusong to promote it as an integrated services centre. Generally, an analysis of the quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews illustrates that planning, leadership and management are two measures of Thusong about which respondents in general hold less favourable

¹⁶ English mathematician who became a philosopher, he wrote on algebra, logic, foundations of mathematics, philosophy of science, physics, metaphysics and education (Kemerling, 2010).

opinions. Furthermore, findings reveal that staff members at Thusong centres are generally optimistic about their centre's mission and goals, governance and decision making as well as staffing issues, communication, trust and evaluation.

2.1. 'Mission and goals' as a measure of effectiveness

In line with the TAU review (2009), the findings of this research report concur that the aim to have a Thusong centre in each local municipal area by 2014 seems to overshadow the essence of what Thusong is all about. The findings on mission and goals suggest that there is room for a shift in emphasis from target numbers of physical centres towards meeting universal access standards and targets in poor and marginalised areas through integrated service delivery.

Another specific analysis with reference to practice versus theory is that Thusong's objectives are in line with the intended outcomes of services integration efforts which are, firstly, to attain a better match between clients' needs and the services provided and, secondly, to create a more coordinated system for delivering those services. However, attaining these goals requires both the capacity to identify the needs of individuals and families, as well as the capacity to make adjustments to the service delivery system to meet those needs.

An interpretation of the alignment between the objectives of Thusong and the outcomes of services integration efforts assisted the researcher to identify the gap which exists between the supply and demand side. The question is whether the South African government needs to do slightly more to establish the needs of citizens, or to act more appropriately on the known problems; citizens on the other hand need to learn to hold government accountable. Up till now, the notion of citizen-agency has not been a clear reality among ordinary citizens and the attainment of this reality is unlikely to occur instantaneously. However, the service delivery protests which have been taking place from 2005-2010 may be an indication of citizen-agency awakening.

The gap in both the supply and demand side is important since it implies that it is no good to merely put an integrated services centre in place and consider the problem solved. The needs of communities change and this researcher considers this knowledge gap (or action gap) to be a weakness of Thusong. At government

level, a process to identify and adapt to changing needs is needed. The researcher is of the opinion that the analysis of mission and goals relates to the measures of effectiveness of the governance arrangements identified with Thusong. The leadership of Thusong should recognize this need.

2.2. 'Governance and decision-making' as a measure of effectiveness

The analysis of the findings on 'governance and decision-making' as measure of Thusong effectiveness seems to suggest that there is substantial room for improvement in terms of the governing of specific Thusong centres. Also, there is a need for better ways of including staff in decision-making and resolving internal staff conflict. It appears as if the 'behind the scenes' governance arrangements are weak.. This is evident from the survey results, where both the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' components are below 40%.

Another important issue in terms of analysis of responses is the necessity to address roles and responsibilities of specific stakeholders involved in the governing and execution of tasks related to Thusong. Only when this understanding is in place, would the infrastructure problems experienced by many of these centres be addressed appropriately.

In contrast to the TAU review (2009), this research report on Thusong reveals that there are not definite mechanisms in place for resolving internal staff conflicts. However, such mechanisms will, due to differences in procedures and culture, depend on the complexity and number of organizations, and their interdependence.

2.3. 'Planning' as a measure of effectiveness

The analysis of this set of findings illustrates that there are integrated and coordinated strategic planning processes in place. The qualitative data, however, reveal that there is no generic planning system in place for individual Thusong centres and that individual centres are not in possession of their own centre-specific strategic plans. In other words, there is a general strategic plan for all Thusongs across the board, but each Thusong doesn't have its own strategic plan customized to the specific needs of its specific environment and citizens. The fact that Thusong has no legislative mandate puts the findings from interviewees in context since this may be imperative if the governance

arrangements of these centres are to be improved in order to promote them as integrated services centres.

Related to the previous observation is the fact that each Thusong centre can have an individually tailored range of services. However, the strategic plan identifies certain anchor services as the minimum services to be provided by each centre. The dynamics of having a choice on the one hand, and being prescribed to on the other hand, is possibly a sign of uncertainty as to how much autonomy individual centres may or can have.

2.4. 'Leadership / management' as a measure of effectiveness

The one obvious point of analysis for this measure is that the findings are not in direct contrast to the analysis of the findings on mission and goals, governance and decision-making and planning. To justify this, the majority of respondents agreed that Thusong service providers were committed to the centre goals. Similarly, the majority agreed that there was a clear sense of Thusong's purpose and that the centres had well defined governance and decision-making processes in place.

In the same way, there is only a slight difference between agreeing and disagreeing that Thusong's strategic planning is ongoing and inclusive of its service providers and that the centres have methods of measuring their impact. The observation on leadership / management is that the majority agree that the centres have strong and committed leadership and qualified staff to carry out centre goals and objectives, but the majority is still less than 50%, which is a low score.

Therefore, an analysis of the findings on leadership and management shows that even if the 'compliance' arrangements are in place (CDWs incorporated as part of the centre and services provided within a framework of Batho Pele) it doesn't follow that Thusong has strong and committed leadership and has adequate and qualified staff to carry out centre goals and objectives.

This measure of effectiveness could not be compared to the TAU report since there was no convergence between the aspects of leadership which this report investigated in relation to the aspects investigated by TAU.

2.5. 'Staffing' as a measure of effectiveness

From a governance point of view, such matters as whether there is enough staff to carry out the work and whether staff has the equipment to do the work or even what the staff turnover rate is, are all important indicators of the degree to which Thusong enhances the survival of its service providers. From an analysis point of view, this finding is very important since Thusong (formerly known as multi-purpose community centres) by 2010 had been going for 11 years. The analysis of the staffing measure links up with the analysis of mission and goals insofar as the focus of Thusong is too much on increasing numbers rather than on increasing standards. The TAU report (2009) is not vocal about staffing questions, such as whether there is enough staff to carry out the work and whether staff has the equipment to do the work or even what the staff turnover rates are. Interestingly, the TAU report (2009) does reveal that "staff training is slowly getting underway".

2.6. 'Communication / trust' as a measure of effectiveness

For the purpose of this research report, the issue of communication / trust is crucial when assessing governance arrangements. This measure of effectiveness should be analysed against the notion of social capital. For this purpose, there is a need to differentiate between different types of social capital, like the difference between 'bonding' social capital, that is to say links among people who are similar in ethnicity, age, social class etc., and 'bridging' social capital, which are links that cut across various lines of social cleavage (OECD, 2004).

Arguably, 'bridging' social capital is more relevant here since the questions which this measure of effectiveness asked were predominantly perception questions. It appears that there is a degree of trust among respondents and interviewees, but the mediums of communication are a component which needs improvement. Again, like the previous measure, the TAU review (2009) has no findings on this measure of effectiveness at all.

2.7. 'Evaluation' as a measure of effectiveness

The purpose of this question was to analyse whether Thusong has developed and implemented multiple methods of measuring the centres' progress and impact. The analysis shows that there is a need for a performance monitoring and

evaluation system for Thusong. The interesting part is that the business plan of Thusong provides the basis for a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system which will ensure that the programme achieves what it sets out to within the given time frame to 2014. The business plan also includes a set of high-level strategic objectives and detailed specific objectives linking to the four pillars. In an attempt to merge the content of the business plan above with the findings from the quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews, it is clear that in theory the M&E system exists, but not in practice.

2.8. 'Thusong centre benefits'

The interview analysis in this thesis shows that government (and other) services are brought much closer to the local people through the centres, and the field surveys completed by respondents indicated that this is much appreciated. Easier access to services is also resulting in increased use of services.

Due to varying service requirements and contexts not all integrated service centres need be of the same order. While it is the aim of government to have one integrated service centre in each local municipality by 2014, the form that they should take is not specified and they vary from small Thusong service centres, providing a selection of anchor services, to centres located in urban shopping malls and which +provide an inclusive range of services. Various factors such as the local needs of communities and the nature of the environment should be taken into account. What is important is that there is improved access to services and information.

The analysis suggests that Thusong at least to a certain extent has improved access to services for community members. Similarly, Thusong links communities to government's distribution network of publications and products about government programmes and activities. Community participation events, campaigns, exhibitions and road shows at Thusong centres provide communities with information they can use to improve their lives and develop the community.

In contrast, the TAU report (2009) reveals that there are often challenges with regard to the frequency of service provision, where services are provided on certain days per week only, and many interviewees indicated that they would have preferred services to be provided more frequently. In addition, service

provider hours are supposed to be covered in the Service Level Agreements (SLA's), but in many instances staff does not adhere to these hours.

3. *Discussion of analysis*

The analyses on each of the measures of effectiveness should at this stage be seen within the realm of what in this research report is meant by 'effective governance arrangements'. The introductory chapter of this research report states that the understanding of effective governance arrangements is 'the way in which services and public goods are delivered and the interaction between (public, economic and social) actors in society in terms of mission and goals, governance and decision-making, planning, leadership and management, staffing, communication / trust, evaluation and centre benefits'.

Firstly, this research report and the TAU report (2009) are on par in that the focus seems to be too much on increasing the number of Thusongs across South Africa by a certain deadline, at the cost of focusing on the standard and quality of the many elements which make up the seven measures of effectiveness. Related to the unbalanced focus, is the further finding of this research that the South African government is not doing enough to establish the needs of its citizens (gap between supply and demand explained above) and, similarly, citizens should hold government accountable. The question is perhaps whether citizens know how to hold government accountable.

Secondly, in further support of the argument about the unbalanced focus, the analysis reveals a deficit in Thusong when it comes to human resource capacity with regard to having enough staff in place and also capacitating the staff who are there (material resources, training etc).

Thirdly, this research report differs from the TAU report (2009) in that the findings of this report indicate that there is much room for improvement in terms of the 'behind the scenes' governance arrangements of Thusong. An example of such arrangements, which require more thorough and rigorous processes, is to deliberately involve staff in decision-making processes and putting effective mechanisms in place for solving internal staff conflict.

Then, in agreement with the TAU report, it is evident that there is no customized strategic planning in place, there is only a general plan for all Thusong centres.

The inevitable result of this situation is that centres don't have the liberty of sculpting the specific centre according to real needs because the services they should offer are to a certain extent prescribed.

Finally, and looking beyond the surface of the situation on leadership and management, there seems to be a lack of the understanding of what good leadership and management practices are. The reason for this statement is that the analysis reveals that there is the view that mere compliance is a good enough characteristic of leadership and management, while the theory demands more. The 'theory' referred to here is to have a M&E system in place in a strategic plan as a compliance issue. However, to have an operational M&E system with measurable objectives is a practical issue which requires attention to details of standard and quality.

4. Conclusion

This chapter analysed the findings emanating from the quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews. The objectives were to compare the quantitative and qualitative findings that the project delivered, and then to emphasise the areas of convergence and divergence between this research Report and the TAU review of 2009. The chapter also extracted information which will provide an answer to the question on the effectiveness of Thusong's governance arrangements to promote it as an integrated services centre.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

1. *Introduction*

This concluding chapter summarizes and discusses the most important findings of the study. It brings together findings in terms of the theoretical framework as well as the answers to the primary and secondary research questions. The chapter also puts forward some considerations and implications of specific findings of the study, along with the general conclusions. The researcher finally highlights recommendations for further research.

The findings of this research report on Thusong can be utilized by the South African government as well as other state and non-state actors as a resource in terms of ascertaining the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of Thusong. Other than the TAU review (2009), pertinent research has been done by the Public Service Commission (PSC) in 2002. These reports can be compared to assess how things have changed over time.

2. *Overview of the theoretical framework and research questions*

Previous literature on integrated services centres provided some evaluations and conceptual approaches for assessing effectiveness, but little research has empirically evaluated the measures of effectiveness for integrated services centres. A review of the theory on the governance arrangements of integrated services centres illustrates the complexity in determining the effectiveness of Thusong, i.e., there are various perspectives from which to view effectiveness.

Additionally, the theory on integrated services centres highlights that there are many effectiveness measures, both in terms of the governance arrangements of integrated services centres and the benefits which these centres have on the communities they serve.

Furthermore, many authors (e.g. Kettl, 2000; Hill and Lynne, 2004; Saz-Carranza and Vernis, 2006; Millward and Provan, 2006; De Seve, 2007; and

Sändstrom, 2008) describe the governance arrangements of integrated services centres and their impact on effectiveness.

Thus, it was the intent of this research report to answer the following primary research question:

How effective are Thusong's governance arrangements that have been put in place to promote the centres as integrated services centres?

The secondary research questions of the research project were:

Does Thusong enhance the capacity of its service providers to solve problems and serve clientele?

Do the institutional arrangements of Thusong contribute to the efficient and effective delivery of services as a collective?

Several steps were taken to answer these three research questions. A set of questions, based on the theory on the effectiveness of integrated services centres was developed. They were clustered according to measures of effectiveness and centre benefits. The approximately forty-five structured, close-ended and open-ended questions were elaborated in a questionnaire that was distributed by means of a field survey.

The questions developed for the quantitative research were also utilized for qualitative research, this time in an abbreviated version as semi-structured open-ended interviews with key actors in the field of integrated services centres. Both the quantitative and qualitative instruments collected data on the measures of effectiveness and the criteria for centre benefits. The questionnaire consisted of two distinct yet interrelated parts: the first part examined seven measures of effectiveness derived from the work of Morehead (2008).

These measures of effectiveness can be seen as themes because each one of them has several subsidiaries which extrapolated necessary information about specific themes from participants. These measures are: mission, governance and decision making, planning, leadership, staffing, communication/trust, and evaluation. The second part of the questionnaire examined centre benefits in terms of the greater community it serves.

Since a descriptive approach was deployed to answer the research questions the objective of this study was to gain knowledge about the object of the study (the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of Thusong), without attempting to modify the object.

3. *Primary Research Question: How effective are Thusong's governance arrangements to promote it as an integrated service centre?*

Upon completion of this research report, it is safe to assume that the premise on which Thusong is based is that government needs to establish the needs of citizens and citizens need to hold government accountable. However, findings indicate the contrary. This principle is potentially a strong enabler for good governance of the Thusong centres. From a leadership point of view, Thusong should understand the importance of government identifying and adapting to the needs of citizens.

Furthermore, the Thusong centres have a system for strategic planning in place, but planning seems to be too generic. In order for the governance arrangements of individual centres to improve, the strategic planning system should be customized according to the size and needs of each individual centre. Also, findings reveal that government's focus is too concentrated on increasing the number of Thusongs by 2014 instead of focusing on the quality and the standard of the seven measures of effectiveness.

Based on the these findings, an attempt to answer the primary research question obligates the researcher to make a judgment call in terms of how effective Thusong's governance arrangements are to promote it as an integrated services centre. There is evidence enough to argue that Thusong's governance arrangements are insufficient to honour the theory on integrated services centres.

4. *Secondary Research Question 1: Does Thusong enhance the capacity of its service providers to solve problems and serve its 'clientele'?*

Although this question can be answered in the positive, the appropriate question in this regard should rather be the extent to which Thusong enhances the capacity under discussion. Relatively speaking, this area is covered in an unsatisfactory way and there is much room for improvement in the quest for

excellence. The fact is that there is not enough staff in place and the staff members in place are not capacitated sufficiently.

5. *Secondary Research Question 2: Do the institutional arrangements of Thusong contribute to the efficient and effective delivery of services as a collective?*

There is enough evidence for this question to be answered negatively. It is important, however, to realize that efficient and effective delivery of services can only be sufficiently determined if there are proper evaluation systems in place – which there are *not* (as discussed in detail in Chapter 6). The efficient and effective delivery of services as a collective is an outcome of good ‘behind-the-scenes’ governance arrangements like involving staff in decision-making and having internal staff conflict resolution mechanisms in place. Also, the lack of understanding of what good leadership and management practices are is the last factor that contributes to answering this question in the negative.

6. *Comparison of study findings to other relevant work*

The research on the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of Thusong is important in the light of the dearth of empirical studies on integrated services centres in South Africa. As a result the research aimed to achieve three objectives. Firstly, this research intended to add to the available literature on Thusong by putting forward an assessment of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements. Secondly, the research aimed to add to the available literature on integrated services centres in South Africa through the contribution of empirical research. Thirdly, the research aimed to influence the functioning of the governance arrangements of Thusong by pointing out possible shortcomings in any of the seven measures of effectiveness which constitute the definition of effective governance arrangements.

7. *Recommendations for future research*

This research report highlighted the opportunities available for similar research on this topic, given sufficient resources. Further research may prove significant if the sample size were to be much larger, since that will enable correlation and regression analysis. Further research on this topic can also extend the reach of the questionnaires to people associated with Thusong in a different capacity than

just senior communication officers and centre managers. Further research on Thusong should also consider incorporating the view of ordinary citizens in the community by means of a citizen report card. This will give a good indication of what services citizens really need, and what the delivery format of such services should be.

8. Conclusion

This thesis argued that all is not well with the governance arrangements of Thusong. The conclusion was reached, firstly, by means of framing integrated services centres in terms of theory, and, secondly, by means of a literature review of the governance arrangements of Thusong based on the theoretical framework on integrated services centres. Following on the theory and the literature was the research methodology, the findings of the quantitative questionnaires and the qualitative interviews, and finally the analysis of the findings.

The thesis started with an analogy on governance which illustrates governance by means of art. This is a fitting metaphor since it is possible to paint a fresco on the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of Thusong to promote it as an integrated services centre. At this stage, the fresco of Thusong is still in the process of being painted – the artist can still incorporate interesting paint techniques and richer colours to make it a painting which will be adored by millions. Alternatively, the artist can throw a cloth over the painting and never see the outcome of this fresco. As the Thusong centres are becoming institutionalized, this study will hopefully contribute to effective governance arrangements being put in place.

This thesis started with an analogy on governance, which illustrates governance in terms of a work of art. It is a fitting metaphor, since the creation of effective governance arrangements for Thusong to promote it as an integrated services centre is certainly a creative process. At present the Thusong artwork is unfinished and the artist can still enrich and enhance it to create a masterpiece. Alternatively, the artist can throw a cloth over the easel and hide it somewhere in a corner, never to have completed it to its full potential. As the Thusong centres are becoming established institutions, it is hoped that this study will

contribute to lending them the appeal of a true work of art, through the inclusion of effective governance arrangements.

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ANNEXURE A

THUSONG SERVICES CENTRES SURVEY

Instructions:

UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED, ALL ANSWERS WILL HAVE TO BE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR OPTIONS:

Strongly Agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

1. In which province is your Thusong Centre located?

Province:	Please make a cross in the appropriate box:
Gauteng	
Western Cape	
Eastern Cape	
Northern Cape	
Free State	
Mpumalanga	
Limpopo	
North West	
Kwa-Zulu Natal	

2. What is your position at the Thusong Centre?

Please make a cross in the appropriate box:			
Senior Communication Officer		Centre Manager	

3. Is your Thusong Centre still in operation?

Please make a cross in the appropriate box:			
Yes		No	

If your answer in question 2 is NO, please provide reasons:

How many years has your Thusong Centre been in existence?
(Please write down the date when your Thusong Centre opened.)

How many service providers (different departments / organizations) are in your Thusong Centre?
(Please write down number of service providers.)

If your Thusong Centre had growth, please indicate the number of service providers that you have added since your Centre began. (Please write down the number of service providers which the Centre started with and the number of service providers which the Centre has now.)

Mission and Goals: The following is a list of statements regarding the mission and goals of your Thusong centre. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Please make a cross in the appropriate box:			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. The mission of the Thusong centre is clearly expressed in writing.				
5. The purpose and mission of your Thusong centre are understood by the staff of the centre.				
6. Staff is committed to the goals of your Thusong centre.				

In your view, does all staff of the centre understand why they are part of Thusong?

Governance and Decision Making: The following is a list of statements regarding governance and decision making in your Thusong centre. Please tell me how much you agree with each statement.

	Please make a cross in the appropriate box:			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. Your Thusong centre has a governing board or a steering committee. For example: Local Intersectoral Steering Committee (LISSC).				
8. The governing board or steering committee provides support regarding oversight issues.				
9. The governing board or steering committee is representative of the staff of your centre.				
10. The governing board or steering committee was approved by all staff of your centre.				
Please explain in one sentence how the governing board or steering committee was selected.				
11. Decision making processes regarding all issues of the centre are stated clearly in writing.				
12. Decision making in your centre involves input by staff of the centre.				
13. There is a definite mechanism for resolving internal staff conflicts.				

Planning: The following is a list of statements regarding the strategic planning process of your Thusong centre. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Please make a cross in the appropriate box:			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. There is an integrated and coordinated planning process in place for your centre.				
15. Strategic planning is ongoing with opportunities for staff input.				
16. The centre's strategic / business plan has been distributed to all staff.				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17. The Thusong centre's strategic / business plan identifies specific products and services, as well as targeted customers.				
18. There is an integrated and coordinated planning process in place for your centre.				

Leadership/Management: The following is a list of statements regarding the leadership / management of your Thusong centre. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Please make a cross in the appropriate box:			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19. The day to day administration of the centre is managed in a satisfactory manner.				
20. The staff provides services to the people within a framework of Batho Pele and customer care values.				
21. The staff and the community development workers (CDWs) have a working relationship.				
22. CDWs are incorporated as part of the centre.				
23. The centre is operational, in other words community members have access to services during normal working hours.				
24. Staff is responsible for the resources of their own offices. For example: budgets for their services, compilation of monthly reports and appropriate office equipment.				

Staffing: The following is a list of statements regarding your Thusong centre staffing. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Please make a cross in the appropriate box:			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25. The day to day administration of the centre is managed in a satisfactory manner.				
26. The staff provides services to the people within a framework of Batho Pele and customer care values.				
27. The staff and the community development workers (CDWs) have a working relationship.				
28. CDWs are incorporated as part of the centre.				
29. The centre is operational, in other words community members have access to services during normal working hours.				

Communication/ Trust: The following is a list of statements regarding communication and trust in your Thusong centre. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Please make a cross in the appropriate box:			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30. Staff communicates regularly with each other. For example: regular meetings.				
31. Staff uses the centre as a forum for sharing information and/or problem solving. For example: staff learns from each other's mistakes because mistakes and lessons learned are shared with one another.				
32. Staff has electronic capability of communicating with one another. For example: staff communicates regularly with each other through e-mail / sms / phone.				
33. Staff members trust one another. For example: service provider staff trusts each other's integrity with regards to decision-making because they work together on projects.				

Evaluation: The following is a list of statements regarding the evaluation processes of your Thusong centre. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Please make a cross in the appropriate box:			
	Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly

	agree			Disagree
34. The centre has a defined method of evaluating its performance. For example: there are indicators and data collection methods for reporting purposes.				
35. Evaluation is based on the impact of the centre on the communities in its service area. For example: the centre knows that the services it provides addresses the needs of the community.				
36. Evaluation findings are used to improve centre performance, decision making, and strategic planning.				
Does your Centre have any indicators in place against which performance are measured? If yes, please explain.				

The following is a list of activities and services which your centre aims to address. Which of these six categories are addressed most regularly by your Centre, in other words, the community needs this service frequently? Please tick all that apply.

	Please make a cross next to each service which is frequently needed by the community which your centre serves:
Grants	
Personal documents	
Housing applications	
Phone, fax, scan, copy, print	
Postal services	
Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)	
Further Education and Training (FET)	
Small Business Advice and Development	
Small, medium and micro-enterprises	
Other private sector services such as retail and ATM's	
Government information and on-site guidance regarding services	
Community information and awareness	
PLEASE LIST ANY OTHER:	

Thusong Centre Benefits: The following is a list of statements regarding the possible benefits of your centre. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each. If a statement does not apply to your Centre's purpose, please check not applicable.

	Please make a cross in the appropriate box:			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37. There is a public perception that your centre is solving the problem(s) it intends to address.				
38. Your centre has improved				

integration / coordination of services.				
39. Your centre has improved access to services for community members.				

Please explain any improvements that your centre has made in terms of the problem(s) it addresses.

What element or activity about your Thusong centre makes it successful?

What would make your Thusong centre more effective?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME. IT IS MUCH APPRECIATED AND YOUR INPUT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE FURTHER IMPROVEMENT OF YOUR THUSONG CENTRE.

ANNEXURE B

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE THUSONG SERVICE CENTRES: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS WITH SENIOR STAFF ASSOCIATED WITH THESE CENTRES

1. Briefing

1.1. Background

This is an academic research project for the Master of Management in Public Policy at the Graduate School of Public & Development Management (P&DM), University of the Witwatersrand. I commenced with my research report at a similar time as the review of the Thusong Service Centre Programme (commissioned by the Technical Assistant Unit (TAU) in the National Treasury upon request from GCIS).

The reason for conducting this review emanated from the 8th Annual Thusong Workshop held in Gauteng in December 2008. A key recommendation from the workshop was that the time had come for a thorough review of the Thusong programme. The programme had entered its tenth year of operation and it was considered a good watershed / landmark to do such a review.

At the time when the review was released by GCIS, the quantitative interviews for my research report had already been completed. It is in the light thereof that qualitative interviews with key staff involved with Thusong will be valuable to 'qualify' and interpret the quantitative results. In addition, this set of qualitative interviews hopes to explore key participants' own assessments of the levels of success or failure of the Thusong centres.

1.2. Main differences between the national review and the academic exercise
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1.2.1. Research aims and objectives of both exercises

The aim of **my research** is to investigate whether Thusong as an integrated services centre really works. More specifically I aim to assess the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of Thusong in terms of specific measures of effectiveness as well as the benefits which these centres have for the communities they serve. My research questions relate to the following aspects of the Thusong programme:

- Mission and goals
- Governance and decision making
- Planning
- Leadership / Management
- Communication / Trust
- Evaluation
- Centre benefits.

The aim of **the TAU-review** was to answer a range of questions about the programme and to develop recommendations and options for the future. These questions related to the following aspects of the programme:

- Clarity of the rationale and objectives
- Logic and thoroughness of the programme planning
- Achievements
- Effectiveness and efficiency
- Good practice
- Monitoring and evaluation

1.2.2. Methodology used for both exercises

For the first phase of **my research** a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodology was used. In the first phase quantitative research questions addressed the measures of effectiveness and the benefits of Thusong by surveying a stratified random sample of centre managers and communication officers (60 people, randomly selected from 137 centres in nine provinces). Information from this first phase will now be further explored in the second qualitative phase.

The **TAU-review** was carried out through a combination of desk-top reviews, interviews and site visits. Interviews were carried out with relevant officials from national government departments and agencies and provincial governments, and also with centre managers, municipal officials and users. The interviews were combined with site visits to a selection of Thusong Service Centres in five provinces (KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Western Cape, Mpumalanga, and Eastern Cape).

2. Question and prompts

Opening question: in terms of your knowledge of Thusong, how truthful do you think the respondents I selected for my qualitative research would have been in answering the questions I asked them. Do you think they would have been inclined to generally give more positive answers?

MISSION & GOALS

In **my research** three questions were asked regarding the respondents' centre mission and goals. When asked if the centre's purpose and mission were clearly understood by all members, if members were committed to centre goals, and if their centre's mission was clearly expressed in writing most respondents agreed.

The TAU-review reports that in terms of centre management, centre managers knew what the aim of the programme is and what their own duties are (even if they had not all been provided with the the standard job description or key performance indicators).

Question 1: In your experience, would you say that the purpose and mission of Thusong in general are understood by centre staff and that they are committed to the goals of Thusong?

Response:

GOVERNANCE & DECISION-MAKING

In **my research** most respondents agreed that their governing board or steering committee was representative of their staff, as well as was approved by all staff. Most also responded that decision making in their centres involved input from staff. Finally, a majority of respondents agreed that centre decision making processes were clearly stated in writing and that there was a definite mechanism for resolving internal conflicts in their centre.

Question 2: Help me understand whether the structures and processes are in place to really believe that Thusong is well governed? What are the requirements that you would say Thusong need to have in place in order to be called "well governed"?

Response:

PLANNING

In **my research** most of the respondents agreed that there was an integrated and coordinated strategic planning process in place for the centre, as well as believed that strategic planning was ongoing in their centre with opportunities for staff input. The majority of respondents disagreed that their centre's strategic plan had been distributed to all staff, as well as felt that their centre's strategic / business plan identified specific products and services.

Question 3: From your perspective, are the strategic planning processes within Thusong coordinated? Are they consultative? Kindly share with me the reasons for your answers.

Response:

LEADERSHIP / MANAGEMENT

In **my research** most of the respondents agreed that: 1) the day-to-day administration of the centre is managed in a satisfactory manner; 2) the staff provide services to the people within a framework of Batho Pele and customer care values; 3) the staff and the community development workers (CDWs) have a working relationship. The majority of respondents strongly agreed that their centres are operational, in other words community members have access to services during normal working hours. In addition, most of the respondents also agreed that: 1) staff is trained and capacitated to do their work; 2) staff is committed to the centre; and 3) the number of staff resigning from their positions in the centre is low. Finally, the majority of respondents disagreed that staff has the technology, equipment and software needed to maximise productivity.

The **TAU-review** reports that there are often challenges with regard to the frequency of service provision, where services are provided on certain days per week only – many interviewees indicated that they would have preferred services to be provided more frequently.

The **TAU-review** furthermore reports that although all Thusong Service Centres have posters featuring the 'Batho Pele' principles posted somewhere and although these principles are often discussed during monthly meetings, they are not always adhered to. There are stories of rude behaviour by officials from the service providers, including acting in an impatient manner with members of the public taking up too much of their time. Also, officials sometimes arrive late, leave early and go on extended lunch or tea breaks, even while people are waiting.

The **TAU-review** lastly reports that the institutional arrangements for the programme need to be strengthened so that the lead department, provincial coordinators and centre managers have more power over other programme participants to enable them to ensure that what needs to be done gets done.

Question 4: Are you in agreement that the leadership and management of Thusong centres in general are in a good condition? Are they in a good condition, except for the fact that staff lacks physical resources to conduct their work effectively? What are the most serious shortcomings? Are these being addressed, and (if they are) how is it being done?

Response:

COMMUNICATION / TRUST

In **my research** most of the respondents believed that their centre staff communicate regularly with one another. Similarly, most of the respondents agreed that that staff did use the centre as a forum for sharing information and / or problem solving, as well as felt that staff has the electronic capability of communicating with one another. Finally, when asked whether or not staff members trust one another, it was the opinion of a majority of respondents that they did.

Question 5: Are you aware of any problems in terms of channels of communication within Thusong which may have an effect on the relationship which staff members have with one another? Please share with me the essential details of these systems.

Response:

EVALUATION

In **my research** twenty six percent responded strongly agree that their centre had a defined method of evaluating its performance. However, most believed that evaluation in their centre was based on the impact of the centre on the communities in its service. Finally, most respondents felt that evaluation findings

were used to improve network performance, decision making, and strategic planning. One open-ended question was posed to respondents in terms of whether their centre has any indicators in place against which performance can be measured. There was a good balance between yes and no.

The **TAU-review** reports that the review has not gone as far as to develop a logic model for future monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

Question 6: In your knowledge, is there a recognized performance evaluation system in place which is available for usage by Thusong management? If there is, please tell me more about it. For example, I would like to understand how it was derived, and how it is operated.

Response:

CENTE BENEFITS

In **my research** out of the forty-three respondents who chose to answer whether or not there was a public perception that their centre is solving the problem(s) that it intends to address, most of the respondents agreed. When asked whether their centres have improved integration / coordination of services, a majority of the respondents agreed. Finally, when asked whether or not their centres have improved access to services for community members, most respondents agreed that they have. Three open-ended questions were asked to respondents in this regard. Firstly, they had to explain whether their centre has made any improvements in terms of the problems it addresses. The answers to this question were so diverse that no golden thread could be detected. Secondly, it was asked what element or activity of their centre makes it successful? These answers displayed a definite trend in that the majority indicated strategic elements such as communication, cooperation and coordination.

The **TAU-review** reports that at the centres visited it was clear that government (and other) services are brought much closer to the local people through the Thusong Service Centres and interviews with end-users and centre managers indicated that this is much appreciated. Easier access to services is also resulting in increased use of services.

The **TAU-review** also reports that the Thusongs are not always located in the area where they would have the most impact, meaning, close to the biggest population with the greatest need for services.

Question 7: Based on the quantitative responses it seems as if staff do believe that their Thusongs have a positive impact on the communities they serve. Help me to understand what kind of feedback and feedback mechanisms are available in order for them to have such a belief.

Response:

ANNEXURE C

LIST OF 6 INTERVIEWEES FOR QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS:

Name of interviewee	Institution represented	Date of interview
1. Mr Shanil Haricharan	National Treasury, Technical Assistance Unit	Telephonic interview: Thursday, 8 April 2010.
2. Mr Matthew Cullinan	National Treasury, Technical Assistance Unit	Telephonic interview: Friday, 9 April 2010.
3. Mr Clifford Legodi	Gauteng Office of the Premier	Telephonic interview: Friday, 9 April 2010.
4. Mr Trevor Mokeyane	Thusong Provincial Director: Free State	E-mail and telephonic interview: Monday, 12 April 2010.
5. Mr Brent Simons	Thusong Provincial Director: Western Cape	E-mail and telephonic interview: Tuesday, 13 April 2010.
6. Mr Sean Phillips	National Treasury, Technical Assistance Unit	E-mail and telephonic interview: 6 April 2010

ANNEXURE D

LETTER BY THE PRESIDENCY TO INFORM RESPONDENTS ABOUT RESEARCH



THE PRESIDENCY: POLICY COORDINATION AND ADVISORY SERVICES (PCAS)

Private Bag X1000, PRETORIA, 0001

PARTICIPATION IN QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir / Madam:

I am writing to ask your help in a study on the effectiveness of the Thusong Service Centres. Marece Wenhold, a student of the Public Development and Management (P&DM) School at the University of Witwatersrand is conducting a research project for the Masters of Management in Public Policy. Ronette Engela (Chief Policy Analyst: Government Wide Monitoring & Evaluation) in The Presidency is the supervisor of this project. To accomplish the research project, Ms Wenhold will be collecting data on the characteristics of effective Thusong Service Centres.

Your participation is very important. This information will assist in the determination of what makes Thusong Service Centres effective. Overall, these findings have the potential of improving the effectiveness of Thusong which could raise the level of service delivery and, therefore, the quality of life for residents in rural areas.

Your answers will not be identified with you or with your Thusong Service Centre by name. All information will be aggregated to describe the overall trends. This voluntary questionnaire should take you approximately 20 to 25 minutes to complete.

Please feel free to contact Ms Wenhold at mwenhold@gmail.com or 082 905 1311, if you have any questions or difficulties with the questionnaire. If you would like to see a summary of the survey results, please indicate this on the final question of the questionnaire. Thank you very much for helping us with this important study.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Engela'.

Ronette Engela
Chief Policy Analyst: GWM&E
Policy Co-ordination & Advisory Services
The Presidency