

ASSESSMENT OF ELEMENTS LEADING TO POOR COMMUNITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPALITIES

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Abstract: The study is an evaluation of community satisfaction on community services and facilities provided by the Matatiele Municipality. The study's goal was to ascertain whether the municipality was providing community services at the rate and expectations of citizens around them and determine whether the citizens are utilizing some of the facilities provided by the municipality, and how happy they are in utilizing such facilities. The study shows that there is a lot of non-satisfaction in terms of services received and, on the responses provided by the municipalities when coming to the complaints about the services and usage of municipal facilities. It is obvious that the municipality still has a long way to go before it can satisfactorily resolve citizen complaints and try to satisfy them with the services they receive.

Keywords: Public Service, Local Government, Community service, South Africa.

Introduction

The preservation, regulation, development, and promotion of flourishing societies can be seen as the government's role in service delivery in the modern state. These duties highlight the complexity of the government's more extensive delivery commitments. Regarding municipal administration, municipalities are required in order to meet both the urgent need for necessities and the Long-term community demands for socioeconomic development. Extended macro-service provision requirements consist of the creation of an environment that is favorable for regional economic expansion, advancing sustainable development, increasing community wellbeing and prosperity, and building municipal infrastructure. Daily needs include the availability of fundamental or necessary utilities including water, electricity, housing, and sanitary facilities.

Research methodology

The study followed a quantitative research method using a questionnaire as the data collection instruments. The quantitative method was chosen because it is perceived to be objective in nature and involving the examination and measurement of the phenomena being studied. The qualitative method was therefore considered to be the best to suit the collection data from the community of Matatiele Municipality. The study used the community members of Matatiele municipality as the study population. The study participants were randomly selected to participate in the study giving every member among

the populace an opportunity to take part in the research. The collected study data was statistically analyzed using the SPSS statistical package for data analysis.

Literature review

Public Service Delivery

Kim (2012) claims that the provision of services consists of an array of relatively localized acts conducted by delegates from governmental departments and private firms to supply residents with the necessary products and services in a way that meets with standards. Local governments satisfy the required duties to supply citizens within their authority regions with essential services such as water reticulation, town roads, housing, solid waste removal, energy, and environmental protection. According to Bachmann and MacCleery (2006, referenced in Murimoga and Musingafi 2014), high standards for public services promote local economies, but inadequate service levels degrade local living standards, slow local growth of the economy, and erode popular belief in local authority. Hernandez (2006) highlights the significance of efficient provision of services in the struggle against poverty, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations Summit 2015). The study demonstrates that the majority of the delivery of public services in poor countries is ineffective, costly, red-taped, cumbersome, not transparent and excessively procedural (Tamrakar, 2010). Inadequate governance and poor service delivery remain grave issues for the majority of local governments. According to Majekodunmi (2012), institutional capacity issues in Nigeria are the cause of the nation's impoverished service delivery due to shortage of needed persons and capabilities, not being transparent, inadequate performance of ward committees, an absence of responsibility on the members of the council, the absence of public engagement in topics of government, disregard for local ordinances and other laws, neglecting to prioritize community needs, and more.

Maropo (2018) described "external factors" to mean "national rules that have an impact on a local authority, such as the legal and oversight framework to keep an eye on the local government and strategies for enhancing abilities". Tamrakar (2010) claims that traditionally, public personnel have acted more like masters than like servants to the people, showing no accountability or transparency. The majority of the time, the employees of local authorities lack the necessary expertise to assist the public with local administration. However, as citizens are now aware of their fundamental right to take part in the services provided by their local government, communities will be using open demonstrations as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction with Town Council service delivery.

Barasa (2010) claims that Kenyan local governments have not been able to deliver even the most fundamental services for several years due to a reduction in their ability. Thus, inadequate delivery of services was brought on by the area's inadequate infrastructure for most municipal governments and their lack of planning to accommodate the growing population residing in their cities. Barasa (2010) identified several internal issues and significant difficulties with delivery of services in Kenya as insufficient base of resources, mismanagement, inadequate institutional and technological resources to broaden service provision, and absence of preparation.

South Africa's local government and service provision

As per Section 152 of the 1996 Constitution of South Africa, local government is responsible for delivering vital services. In addition to other duties, local governments are responsible for fostering social and economic growth, ensuring community service delivery that is sustainable, and the promotion of an atmosphere of safety and security (Constitution, 1996). South Africa has 8 metropolitan cities, 44 municipal districts, and 226 local government municipalities in accordance with an established classification simplified according to the Organized Local Government Act (1997), (South African Government, 2017). The primary duties of all these various kinds of municipalities include providing access to water, sanitary conditions, markets, rubbish collection, and land administration.

Owusu-Ampomah and Hemson (2004) state that providing services is increasingly crucial for municipal government in emerging nations as compared to industrialized countries. They contend that due to constitutional requirements and high poverty rates, in South Africa, the provision of services is seen as a mechanism for the social contract to encourage social integration and increase the degree of comfort for most of the formerly impoverished people due to apartheid administration. According to their perspective, in their 2006 study, Bratton and Sibanyoni found that majority of African people view democratic reform in practical terms, i.e., under the prism concerning if socioeconomic commodities are supplied. Less than half of South African adult inhabitants believed that the country's brand-new local government system was operating effectively, according to their analysis of data from the 2006 Afro Barometer. They discovered that evaluations of local government are frequently subjective, particularly when it comes to how well councilors are regarded to be serving their communities and listening to their concerns.

Voting, according to Diamond and Morlino (2004), is a form of vertical accountability, is one way that the public can express its discontent with municipal government. Dissatisfaction may also be expressed via protests meant to ensure that locals have access to public services if elections are thought to be insufficient to make sure that "Politicians in office have an obligation to account for their conduct." (Diamond & Morlino, 2004). Local political protests, according to Alexander (2010), can take the form of gatherings in large numbers, the development of memos, petitions, toyi-toying, march, abstention, and electoral boycotts, obstruction of roadways, flaming tires, looting, destruction of buildings, ejecting disfavored people from townships, clashes with the law, and the compelled resignation of political figures. Alexander (2010) also points out that rather than the wealthier suburbs, protests about the delivery of services appear to come from poorer districts, particularly shack settlements and townships.

Between 2004 and 2016, there were, South Africa experiences 94 protests annually, on average, according to Municipal IQ (2017), a study team which collects information about demonstrations involving service provision by local governments. This data indicates that, as Bratton (2012) argues, many South African communities lack trust in municipalities' accountability for service delivery. Even if services are now more easily accessible, demands made by demonstrators usually centre on inadequate calibre of the services offered by the city (Hunter, 2015).

Reasons for inadequate provision of services

According to Gwayi (2010), there are several reasons why town governments offer mediocre services, because of a councilor's meddling in the administration, poor

community involvement, the financial plan that is not properly in line with what the federal government demands, political and administrative leadership deficiencies, poorly constructed infrastructure and lack of expertise. According to Makanyeza, Kwandayi, and Ikobe (2012), Sarshar and Moores (2006) conducted a study in the UK that identified the subsequent as the primary obstacles to service provision:

Lack of strategic awareness: According to the research, a large number of employees in charge of practitioners and supervisors were unaware of the concerns raised within the important national framework of guidelines and practices and the impact that ought to have been on their daily activities.

Insufficient abilities: The results of the study's review demonstrated that the operational crew was largely unfamiliar with demands of the requirements for national controls and responsibilities that went along with them. The absence of training or specialized procedures for the organization to include workers at this level was discovered to be the cause of the awareness gap. Because of this, employees were carrying out their responsibilities without the required training, putting their clients' safety as well as their own in danger.

Poor performance monitoring: Monitoring of performance was the issue that impacted on all services, even though they were all equipped with monitoring systems. This was brought on by a general absence of integration and standardization between the various systems.

Poor coordination procedures: Even though each service had own processes that are efficient for identifying the required services, setting up delivery, and overseeing suppliers, Coordination within the directorate was still done through informal means, such as in-person interactions and communicating in person, and the different service groups did not have clear performance criteria that can be enforced. This led to continuing disputes between a few of the groups that provide services, and this diminished the level of service excellence.

Increased worker turnover: Additionally, it was noted that there were not enough managerial resources available and that there was a high incidence of employee turnover among the operational staff, both of which affected the way in which services were delivered.

Results and discussion

Community services

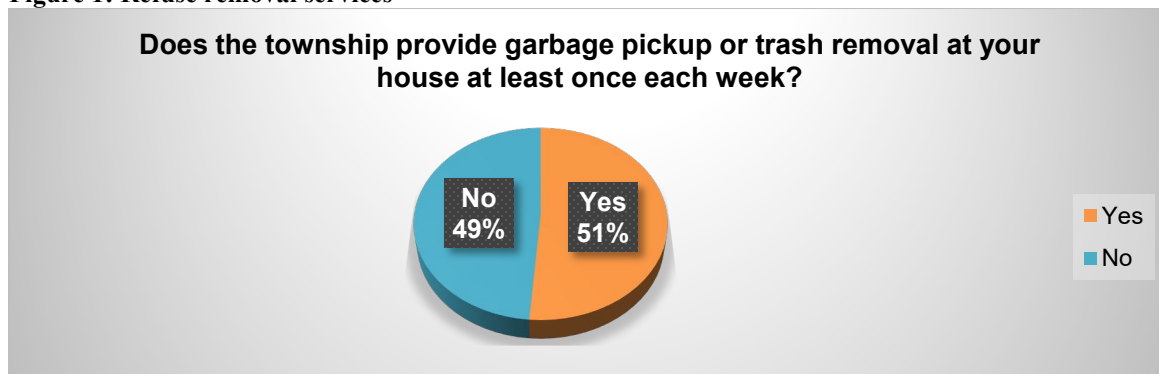
In terms of individual evaluations of their own lives and society, human well-being refers to how well people's needs in society are met on a range of levels, including those related to their physical, economic, social, environmental, emotional, and spiritual requirements (Jowell & Eva, 2009; Gilbert, Colley & Roberts, 2016). The responsibility for delivering such services to citizens often rests with the governments that collect taxes from citizens and companies. The provision of services to the community, including tangible and intangible goods, and/or benefits to the community, is referred to as service delivery, according to Nealer (2014). In a similar vein, providing residents with public activities, benefits, or satisfactions is how Fox and Meyer (1995) and Akinboade, Mokwena, and Kinfaek (2014) provide a definition of public service. The municipality should provide such basic services through the rates and taxes collected from their communities. Below

are the results about the satisfaction level relating to the services provided by the municipality.

Refuse Removal

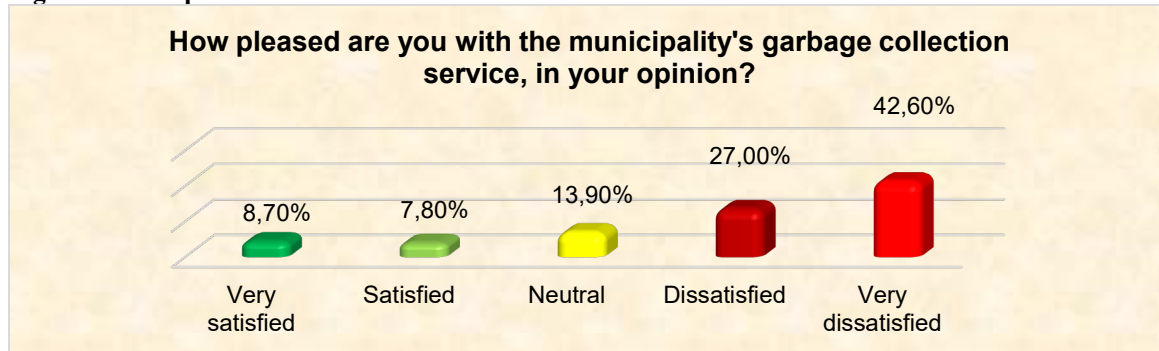
Systems for managing solid waste and providing services can be beneficial for public health, environmental sustainability, economic growth, and eradicating poverty. By reducing the chance for disease-carrying rodents to thrive, as they do at uncontrolled local dumpsites, an improvement in public health can be achieved with efficient solid waste management systems. They help to improve environmental quality by safeguarding water courses and groundwater, as well as combating unlawful dumping and littering. The municipalities are tasked with the responsibility to manage and provide refuse removal services to keep their environment clean.

Figure 1: Refuse removal services



As shown in Figure 1, 51% of the respondents agreed that the municipality is offering refuse removal service. However, 49% disagreed that they do receive such a service from the municipality. It is perceived that those in disagreement are mainly from the rural areas.

Figure 2: Perceptions about the refuse removal services



From the chart above in Figure 2, the most common request is, by far, for refuse removal services. The data reveal that 42,6% of the respondents are very unhappy about the refuse removal services from the municipality. Another 27% of the participants are dissatisfied with the services rendered by the refuse removal department. Only 13,9% of the participants did not comment on the issue of refuse removal. Only 7,8% of respondents acknowledged they feel satisfied with the services of garbage removal, while 8,7% said that they are extremely satisfied with the services.

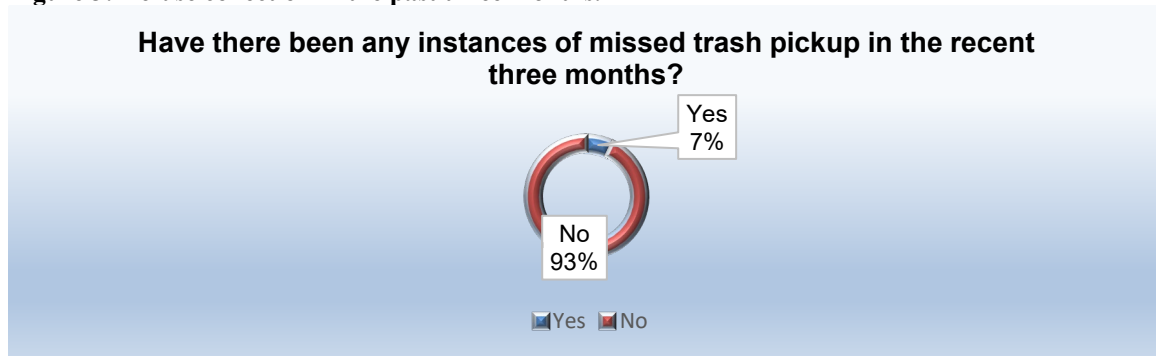
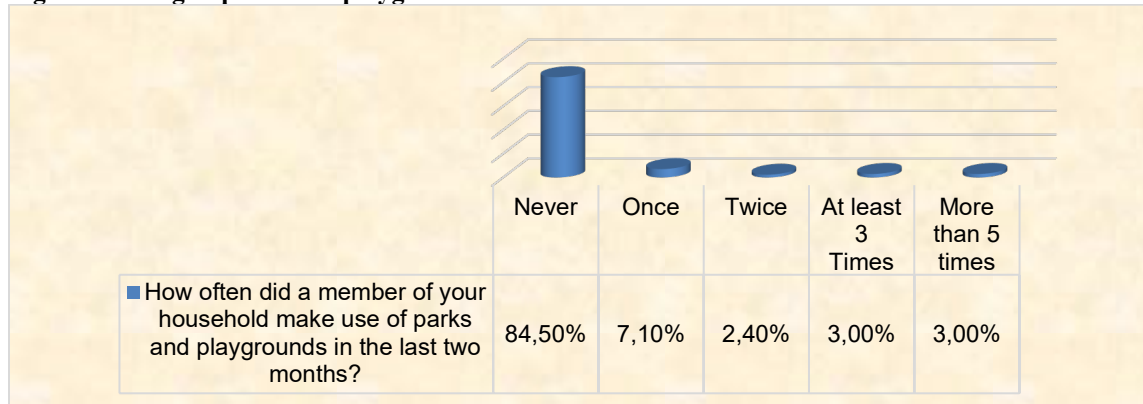
Figure 3: Refuse collection in the past three months.

Figure 3 shows that 93% of respondents denied that they experienced instances where the trash wasn't collected in the previous three months. Only 7% of the respondents said there have been instances where the trash wasn't picked up in their particular locations.

Municipal Parks and Playgrounds

Playgrounds in parks, neighborhoods, and municipalities provide so much more than encourage children to be active. They promote the acquisition of critical life skills, habits, and attitudes. Municipal parks and playgrounds make it easier for parents, grandparents, and other caregivers to spend time with their children and engage in multi-generational play. They improve people's lives by bringing them together and giving them a sense of belonging. In this section, the respondents were asked to comment on their municipal parks and playgrounds and the results are presented hereunder.

Figure 4: Using of parks and playgrounds

Respondents were asked in this section of the study to provide information on how frequently their household members had visited parks and playgrounds in the two months prior. In the past two months, a staggering 84,5% of people, as shown in Figure 4, never visited parks or playgrounds. This might be fueled by the spread of COVID-19 where people are trying to observe the pandemic's protocols of social distancing and to avoid crowded places. In the past two months, just 7,1% of participants said their family members had visited parks and playgrounds at least once. Similarly, another populace agreed that 2,4% of the members of their households went to the parks and playgrounds at least twice in the past two months. Nonetheless, those who visited the parks at least three times in the

past two months accounted for 3% and those who went to the parks and playgrounds more than five times were also at 3%.

Figure 5: Number of parks and playgrounds within the municipality

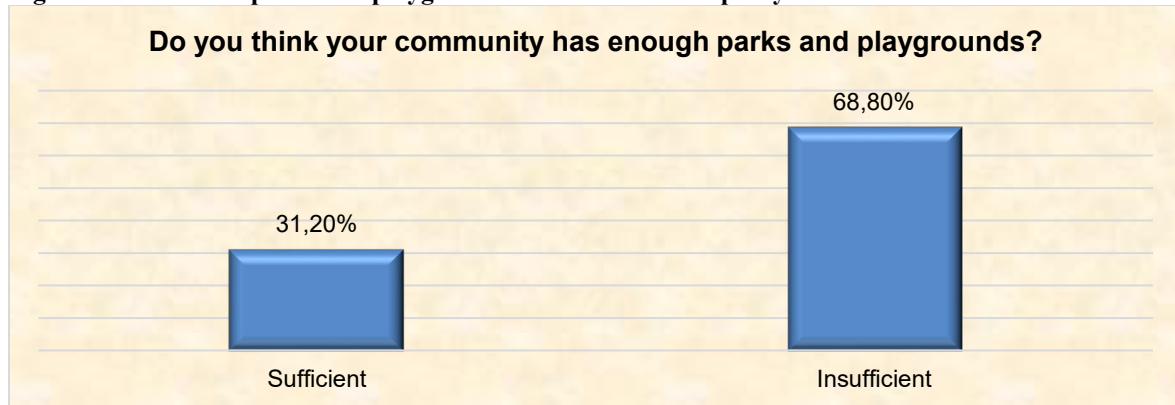
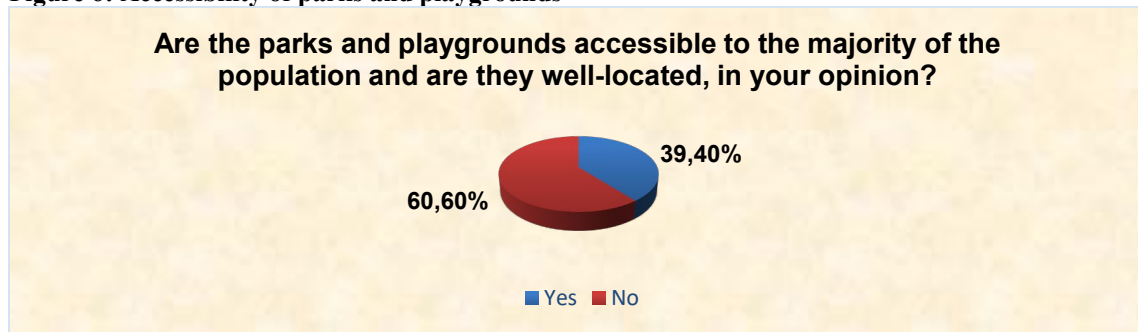


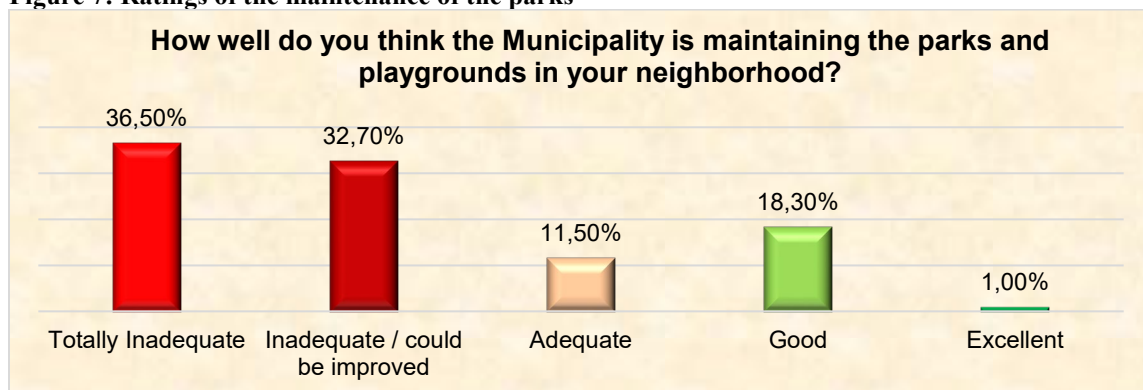
Figure 5 illustrates that 68,8% of participants claimed that there are no sufficient parks and playgrounds in the municipality whilst 31,2% agree that there are sufficient parks and playgrounds in the municipality.

Figure 6: Accessibility of parks and playgrounds



The majority of individuals who responded to this question (60,6%) believed that the parks and playgrounds were not conveniently located and that the bulk of the community could not reach them. Only 39,4% of the participants claim that the playgrounds and parks are well situated and accessible to the community.

Figure 7: Ratings of the maintenance of the parks



When the participants were asked ‘How well do you think the Municipality is maintaining the parks and playgrounds in your neighborhood?’, the majority 36,5% commented that the maintenance is inadequate, 32,7% also claimed that it is inadequate but they could be an improvement. Only 11,5% agreed that the parks and playgrounds are adequately maintained. But 18,3% stated that the parks and playgrounds are in a good state. In the end, 1% of the participants posit that the parks are well maintained they are excellent.

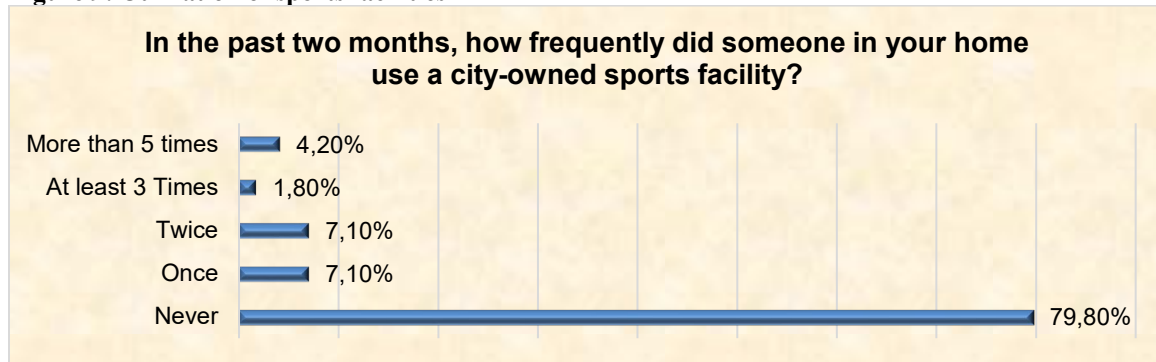
Figure 8: Complaints regarding parks and playgrounds in the past three months



In the pie above in Figure 8, 88,5% claimed that they never complained about the status of the parks and playgrounds in the past three months. Only 11,5% of the respondents complained about the state of the parks and playgrounds in the previous three months.

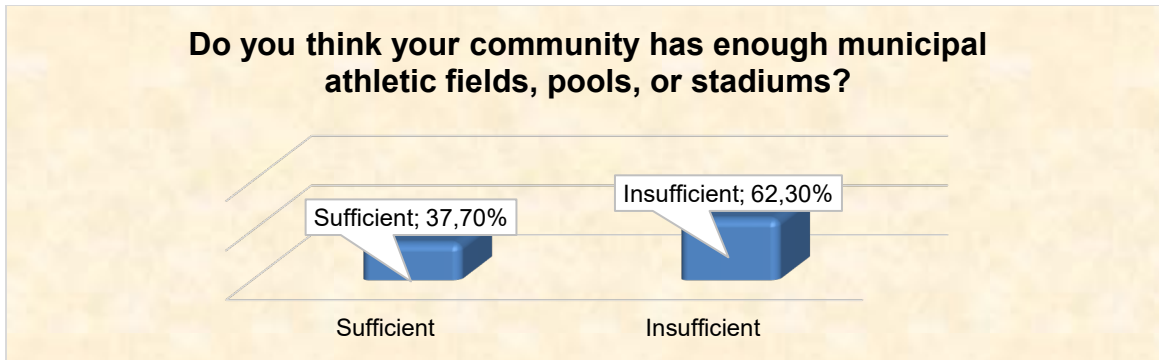
Municipal Sports Fields and Stadiums

Figure 9: Utilization of sports facilities



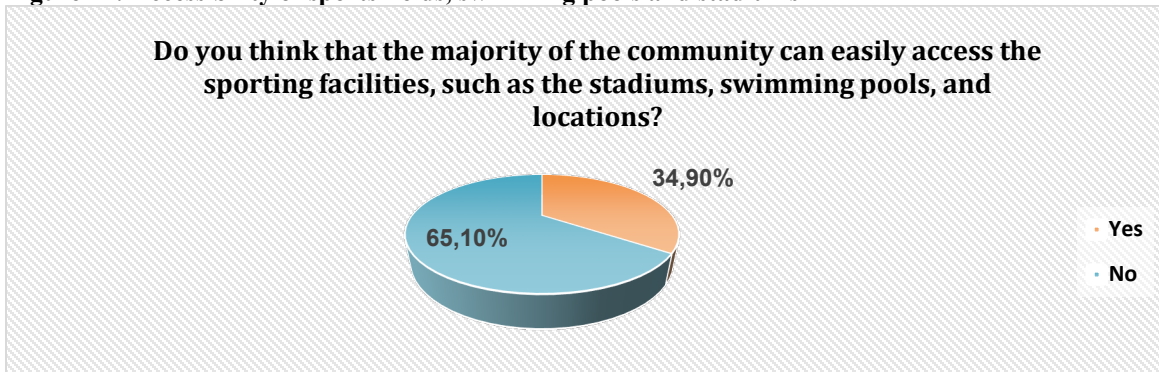
Nearly 79,8% of the participants, as shown in the statistics in Figure 9, did not use the municipal athletic complexes in two months. At least 7,1% of the respondents claim that they have used the sports fields and stadiums once or twice respectively. Those who used the facilities of the municipality at least three times in the past two months accounted for 1,8%. In the end, 4,2% of the participants used the facilities more than five times.

Figure 10: The quantity of sporting venues, swimming pools, and stadiums in local governments



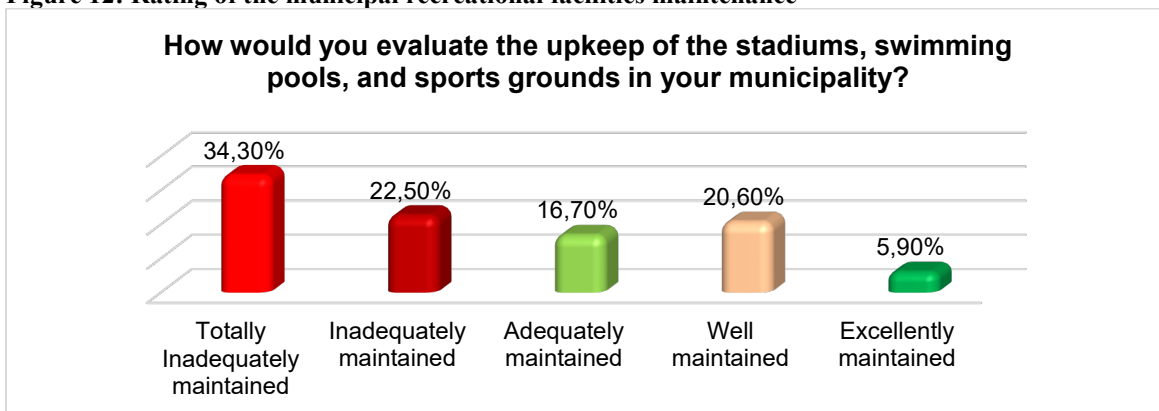
There are insufficient municipal athletic fields, pools, or stadiums? in Matatiele Local government. In all 62,3% claim that the facilities are insufficient whilst 37,7% argue that the facilities are sufficient.

Figure 11: Accessibility of sports fields, swimming pools and stadiums



The data in Figure 11, shows that 65,1% of the participants claim that recreational facilities like sports complex, pools and stadiums are not available to the majority of the population. Only 34,9% agreed that the stadiums, sports fields and swimming pools are accessible to the community.

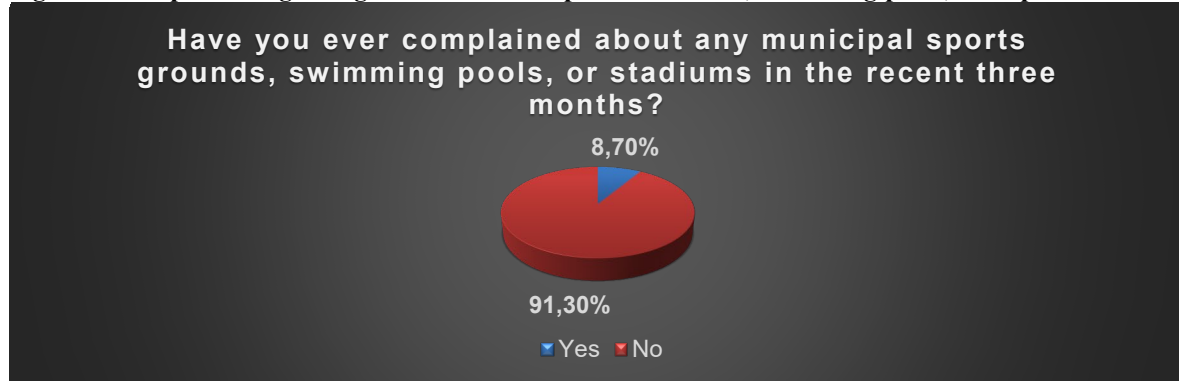
Figure 12: Rating of the municipal recreational facilities maintenance



When the participants were asked 'How would you evaluate the upkeep of the stadiums, swimming pools, and sports grounds in your municipality?', the majority 34,3% commented that the maintenance is inadequate, 22,5% also claimed that it is inadequate but could be an improvement. Only 16,7% agreed that the parks and playgrounds are

adequately maintained. But 20,6% stated that the parks and playgrounds are well maintained. In the end, 5,9% of the participants posit that the parks are well excellently maintained.

Figure 1: complaints regarding the condition of public stadiums, swimming pools, and sports fields

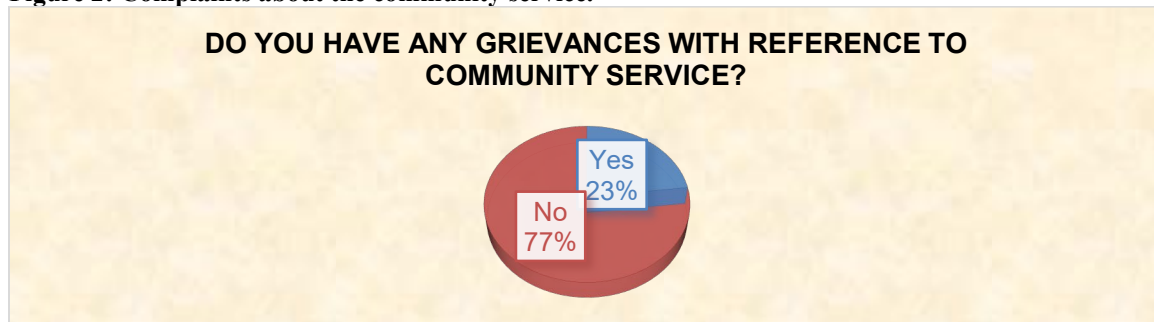


In the pie above in Figure 13, 91,3% of the participants claimed that they never complained about the status of the stadiums, athletic facilities, and swimming pools in the past three months. Only 8,7% of the respondents complained about the upkeep of athletic fields, swimming pools, and stadiums in the previous three months.

Complaints Regarding Community Service

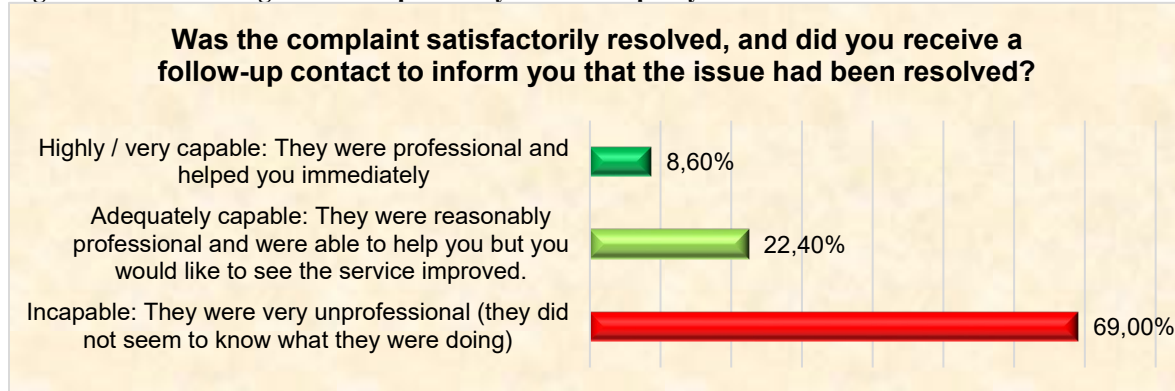
The main responsibility of the community service directorate is to maintain municipal infrastructure as well as to ensure that decentralized administrations with effective service delivery practice cooperative governance and public engagement. Community Services ensures that local citizens have access to at least the most fundamental services. There are huge numbers of services available. These services directly and immediately affect the standard of living for local residents in the area. Poor water quality or irregular rubbish collection, for instance, will lead to the development of unsanitary and hazardous living conditions. Mediocre services can create difficulties in drawing businesses and industries to a location, restricting job opportunities for residents. Compared to metropolitan areas, rural communities may demand different basic services. Often than not, the community complains about the lack of sufficient services in their communities. Therefore, in this dimension, the participants were asked about the range of their complaints to the municipality.

Figure 2: Complaints about the community service.



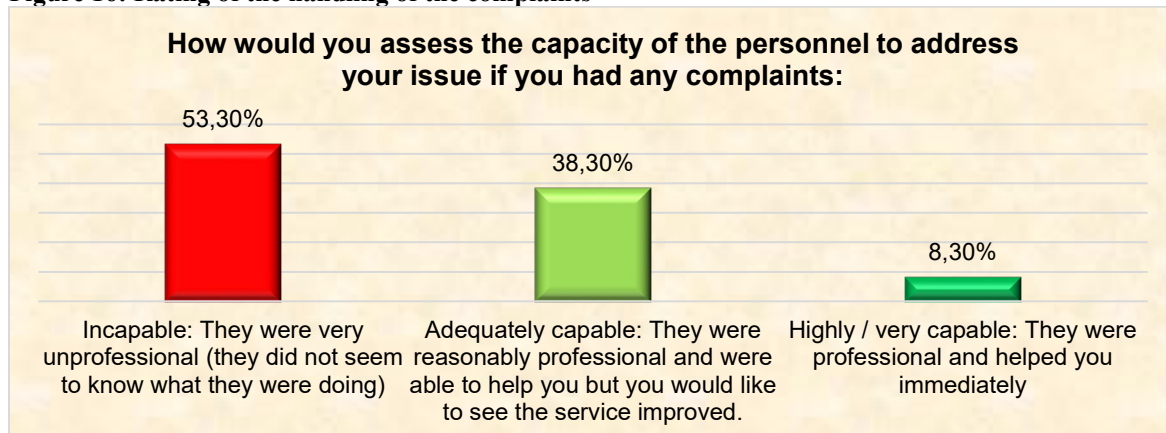
The majority (77%) of those who responded to this item indicate that they never lodged any complaint against the municipality. Only 23% of the respondents have laid a complaint to the municipality.

Figure 3: The handling of the complaints by the municipality.



The majority of responders (69%) expressed the opinion that the municipality cannot handle their problems. They revealed that the officials were very unprofessional and seemed not to know what they were doing. Only 22,4% of respondents say the municipal authorities were helpful and exhibited a respectable level of professionalism, but they would want to watch the performance enhanced. This means that only 22,4% of respondents think the municipal officials were adequately capable of managing their problems. Some (8,6%) of the respondents felt that the respondents were very capable. They further suggest that the officials were professional and helped them immediately.

Figure 16: Rating of the handling of the complaints



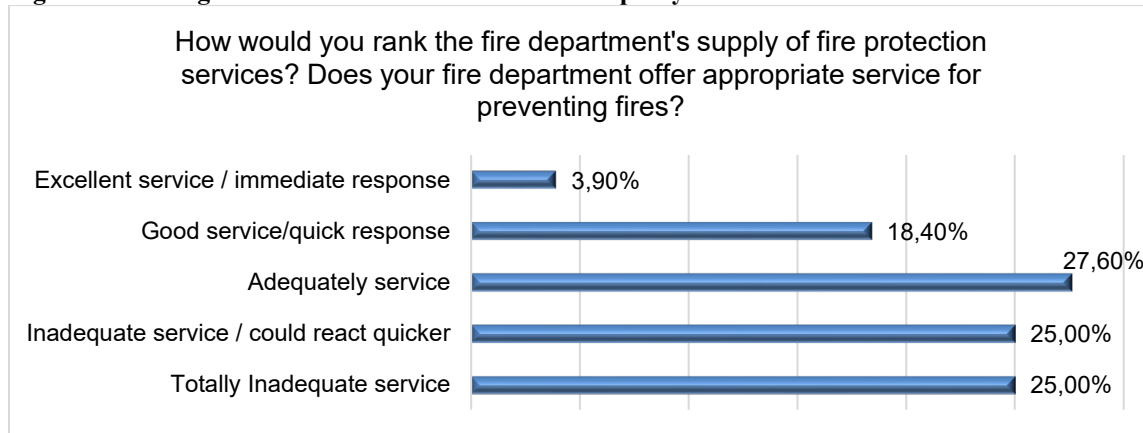
In the data above 53,3% of those who were interviewed indicated that the staff members of the municipality are incapable of dealing with their problems. Only 38,3% suggest that the staff is adequately capable, whilst 8,3% of the respondents suggest that the staff members are highly capable of dealing with their problems.

Fire Department

The Fire Brigade's mission is to deliver a community-centered approach to fire prevention, to combat fires and provide rescue to reduce the calamities caused by nature or humans

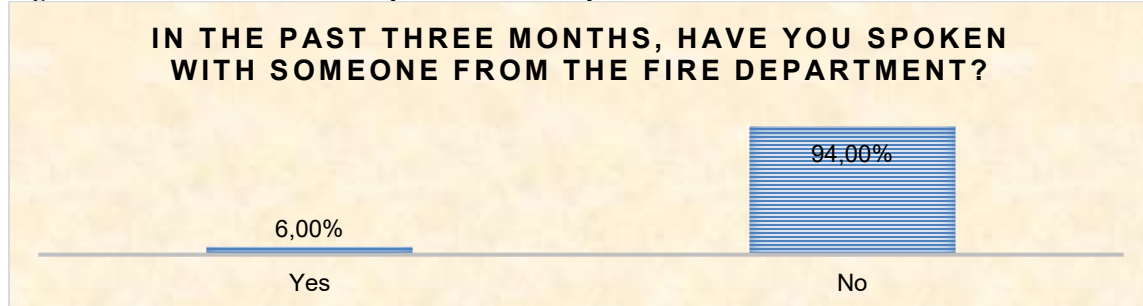
that result in the loss of lives and property. Below are statistics about the performance of the fire services at Matatiele Local Municipality.

Figure 17: Rating of the fire service within the municipality



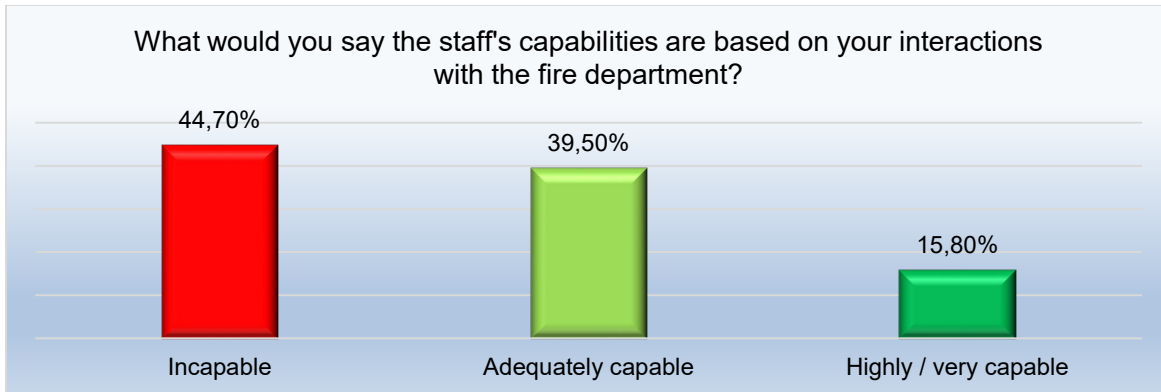
Of the 237 participants who responded to this question, ‘What grade would you give the fire department's delivery of the fire protection service?’ 27,6% reported that the fire department provides adequate service. Almost 50% of the participants lamented that the service is inadequate. Only 18,4% of the participants posit that the fire department is quick to respond to an incident. Was 3,9% of the respondents claim the fire department provides excellent service.

Figure 4: Contact with the fire department for the past three months.



Six percent (6%) of those questioned claimed to have interacted with the fire service within the previous three months. On the other hand, 94% of the participants indicate they haven't spoken to the fire department in the recent three months.

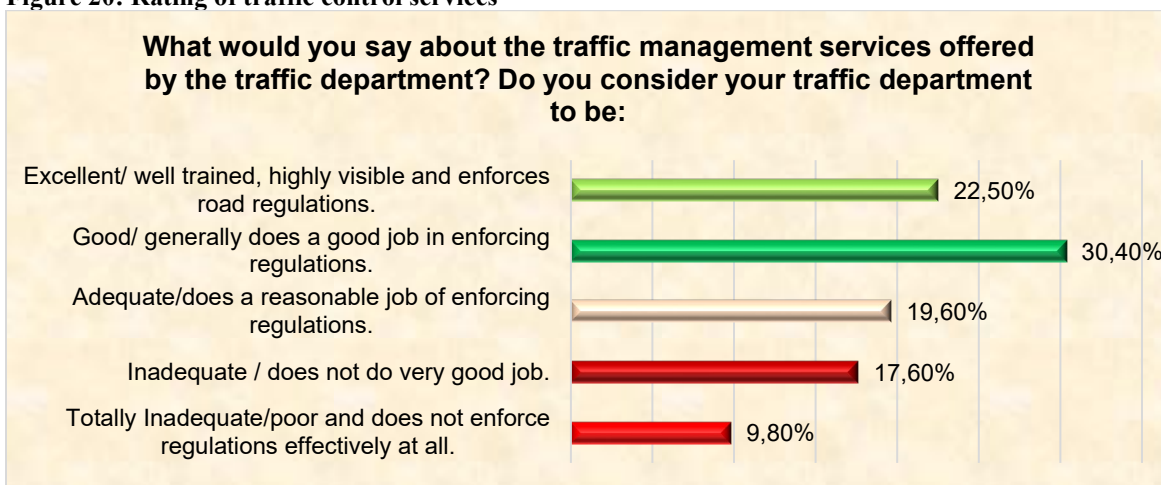
Figure 19: Rating the capability of fire department staff.



The participants in Figure 19 argue that the fire department staff are incapable of handling their queries. But 39,5% suggest that the staff is adequately capable of handling their queries. Only 15,8% of the participants praised the fire department staff for being excellent in their work.

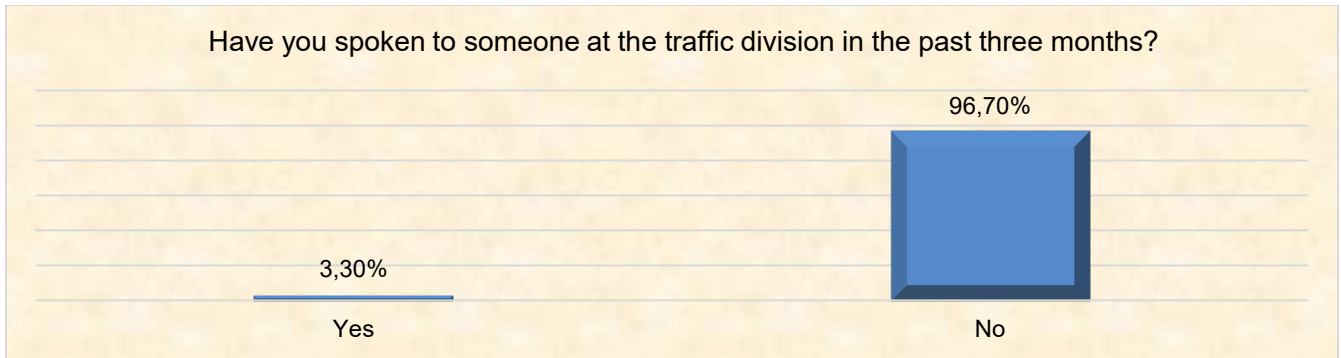
Traffic Services

Figure 20: Rating of traffic control services



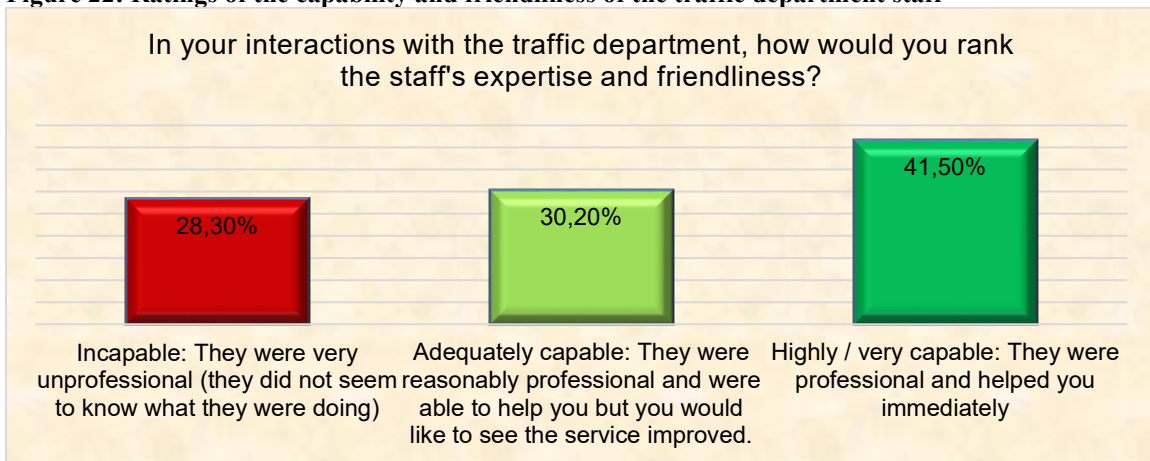
Only a tiny percentage of respondents (9.8%) said the traffic department is insufficient or subpar and ineffective at enforcing laws. Another 17,6% indicated that the traffic department is inadequate in providing the traffic control they do not do a good job according to them. Some participants (19,6%) expressed the belief that the traffic department is doing an adequate job when enforcing the traffic regulations. Almost 30,4% of the respondents argue that the traffic control department is doing a good job in enforcing the regulations. In the end, 22,5% said the traffic department is doing an excellent job, they are well trained and are highly visible when enforcing road regulations.

Figure 21: Contact with the traffic department in the past three months.



In response to the question: ‘Have you spoken to someone at the traffic division in the past three months?’, a range of responses was elicited. Almost 76,7% of the respondents have not contacted the traffic department in the last three, whilst only 3,3% of the participants have been in contact with the traffic department.

Figure 22: Ratings of the capability and friendliness of the traffic department staff



The vast majority of respondents (41,5%) to this question in figure 22 said that the traffic department was very capable of handling their workload and that they were very professional and quick to assist individuals. However, another 30,2% felt that the staff is adequately capable, are reasonably professional and can assist the customers but the respondents further indicated that they would love to see improvement. But 28,3% argue that the traffic department staff is incapable, very unprofessional and they seem not to know what they are doing.

Conclusion

The study evaluated the community service deliveries and facilities received by the citizens across South Africa’s municipalities. The study established that although municipalities are providing community services needed by the citizens, most citizens are not happy with most of the services provided. Most citizens are also not happy with how their complaints on services received and facilities provided by municipalities are handled. Municipalities certainly have a lot to do to ensure that they respond to the complaints of the citizens as and when they lodge compliance. By handling and responding positively to the community service and facilities complaints municipalities could move to a better position in community service deliveries and satisfaction of municipal citizens.

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