Government communication and dissemination of government information – the use of research to enhance effectiveness

by

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ABSTRACT

There are indications of concern by governments for public opinion even centuries ago. The use of scientific research though, was only introduced by governments to enhance the effectiveness of government communication and the dissemination of government information during the last few decades of the twentieth century. The main aim with this research is to contribute towards improving the research used in South Africa by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in order to enhance the effectiveness of government communication and the dissemination of government information. As research can contribute towards enhancing the effectiveness of government communication and the dissemination of government information, it is considered as being of critical importance to contribute towards improving the quality of relevant research in South Africa. No research has been conducted before in South Africa regarding the use of research to enhance the effectiveness of government communication and the dissemination of government information. The methodology used to address the aim and objectives of this research was that of a qualitative, non-empirical study conducted by means of a literature review.

The research provides a brief theoretic overview of research in communication. It records the use of communication research by government in South Africa since 1936 as well as the process of transforming government communication after 1994. Furthermore, it records government communication and information dissemination in other countries, with specific reference to the use of research.

Various conclusions derive from this research. Among these is a clear indication of the necessity of conducting communication research in a scientific way, by applying sound theoretical principles. It also indicates that there is a good platform and strategic framework from which government communication research in South Africa can be improved further, and that South Africa can learn from relevant research conducted by governments in other countries. The researcher presents a wide range
of recommendations for consideration, as well as potential areas for further research regarding this broader theme.

**Key words:**

Communication research; government communication; government information; information dissemination; Government Communication and Information System; South African Communication Service; Bureau for Information; Department of Information.
EKSERP

Daar is aanduidings dat regerings selfs eeu gelede begaan was oor openbare mening. Dit is egter eers gedurende die afgelope paar dekades dat regerings wetenskaplike navorsing benut ten einde die effektiwiteit van regeringskommunikasie en die disseminasie van regeringsinligting te verhoog. Die hoofdoel met hierdie navorsing is om by te dra tot die verbetering van navorsing wat in Suid-Afrika tans gedoen word – deur die regering in die algemeen en deur die Regeringskommunikasie- en Inligtingstelsel (RKIS) spesifiek – ten einde die effektiwiteit van regeringskommunikasie en die disseminering van regeringsinligting te verhoog. Aangesien navorsing bydra tot verhoging in die effektiwiteit van regeringskommunikasie en die disseminering van regeringsinligting, word gereken dat dit van kritieke belang is om die kwaliteit van relevante navorsing in Suid-Afrika te verhoog. Geen navorsing is tot op datum in Suid-Afrika onderneem rakende die benutting van navorsing om die effektiwiteit van regeringskommunikasie en die disseminasie van regeringsinligting te bevorder nie. Die metodologie wat benut is om die hoofdoel en die sekondêre navorsingsdoelstellings van hierdie navorsing aan te spreek, was dié van ‘n kwalitatiewe, nie-empiriese studie wat onderneem is deur middel van ‘n literatuuroorsig.


Verskeie gevolgtrekkings spruit voort uit die navorsing. Dit sluit in ‘n duidelike indikasie van die noodsaaklikheid om kommunikasienavorsing op ‘n wetenskaplike wyse te onderneem deur die toepassing van ter sake teoretiese beginsels. Die navorsing dui ook daarop dat daar ‘n goeie vertrekpunt en strategiese raamwerk is
vanwaar kommunikasienavorsing deur die regering verbeter kan word en dat Suid-Afrika kan leer uit relevante navorsing wat gedoen word deur regerings in ander lande. Die navorsing bied ook ‘n verskeidenheid aanbevelings aan vir oorweging, en gee ‘n aanduiding van verdere navorsing wat op die studiegebied gedoen kan word.

Sleutelwoorde:

Buro vir Inligting; Departement van Inligting; inligtingsdisseminasie; kommunikasienavorsing; regeringsinligting; regeringskommunikasie; Regeringskommunikasie en Inligtingstelsel; Suid-Afrikaanse Kommunikasiediens.
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Opinions expressed, conclusions reached and recommendations made in this dissertation are my own and should by no means be perceived as reflecting the opinions, conclusions or recommendations of GCIS.

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