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**STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS ON VISITORS' CENTRE AS A STRATEGIC TOOL
FOR ENGAGEMENT: LESSONS FROM A POWER STATION VISITORS' CENTRE IN
THE VAAL REGION**

**Submitted in the fulfillment of the requirement for the degree Magister
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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the Magister Technologiae in Public Relations Management at the Vaal University of Technology, is my own work, and has not been submitted by me for a degree at another university.

By: Teboho Ntsabiseng (20350911)

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Abstract

Relationships are important for building good reputation for the organisation. The purpose of the study was to explore stakeholders' perceptions on visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement. The study followed a qualitative approach and data was collected using semi-structured interviews and a sample of fifteen (15) participants was randomly selected.

The results showed that the visitors' centre is perceived by stakeholders as being an important establishment, and that face-to-face interaction or engagement with employees is important. It therefore appears that the centre serves as a hub of information; where individuals learn about a very large entity where information is collected and packaged in a comprehensive manner that creates mutual understanding between stakeholders and the organisation.

However; the findings also revealed that, for the visitors' centres to be successful in implementing their strategies of becoming a one-stop shop for stakeholders and delivering user-friendly messages about the organisation; the entity need to consider the ever-changing technological advancements such as using 3D and interactive models that will excite the public.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder perceptions can be built and shaped by how organisations interact with their audiences on regular basis (Fletcher, Guthrie, Roos & Pike 2003:508). Bhoite (2016:132) define stakeholder perception as a process, whereby individuals look into how one selects, organises and interprets stimuli into an important and clear picture of the world. Perceptions are created by stakeholders, whether positive or negative. Conversely, Jahangirian, Borsci, Shah & Taylor (2015:512) state that when stakeholders perceive the organisation negatively, it create a communication gap between the two parties which may lead to lack of support for activities of the organization. Stakeholder perceptions can be embedded in the engagement plans of the organisation (Herrera, Sasidharan, Hernandez & Herrera 2018:91).

Engagement of stakeholders on visitor attractions to organisations has been underestimated (Garrod, Fyall, Leask & Reid 2012:1159). Stakeholder engagement has become an increasingly important aspect of organisational communication between the target audience and local communities in which it operates (Cornelissen 2017:41). Spitzbeck & Hansen 2010:379 contend that engagements between the two parties should be more open and transparent to create good relationship. Stakeholder relationships should be employed in a way that communities are fully aware of the organisation's strategic plans (Sayce, Shuman, Connor, Reisewitz, Elizabeth, Miller-Henson, Poncelet, Monie & Owens 2013:59).

Granville, Mehta and Pike (2016:74) highlights that organisations have diverse stakeholders with varying levels of vested interests, thus stakeholder engagement and relationship management are important as they build trust, resilience and performance. Whilst engaging optimally, visitors expect integrated systems and products that enables them to navigate through the visitors' centre with ease. This can be done by understanding the needs of your stakeholders and technological advances in the market to enable visitor experience and collaboration (McCabe, Sharples, & Foster 2012:36). Stakeholder engagement has become an area of interest to academic professionals (Garrod *et al* 2012:1159). Clearly little study has been done on the topic in the context of visitors' centre. Equally, the study aim to

explore stakeholder perceptions on the visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement.

Visitor's centres are an important hub of information for the organisation. Pearce (2004:8) defines a visitors' centre as a "clearly labelled, publicly accessible, physical space with personnel providing pre-dominantly free of charge information to facilitate visitors' experience and impart knowledge". Visitors' centres should create beneficial working relationships with stakeholders to ensure continuity of support and the sustainability of the visitors' centre operations Tourism Queensland Industry Innovation Team (2012:6). The study, therefore was undertaken to explore the stakeholder perceptions of the visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement in order to nurture stakeholder relationships.

1.2 RATIONALE AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study acknowledges that the perceptions of stakeholders can be highly divergent from the reality of a firm's investments (Peloza, Loock, Cerutti & Muyot 2012:75). This study further seeks to redress the gap in the literature by exploring the perceptions of stakeholders on the visitors' centre.

The visitors' centre is mandated to assist with information sharing and educating the public about the organisation and its business. The visitors' centre in the Vaal region represents all fifteen (15) coal-fired power stations in South Africa, and more people have developed an interest in visiting the centre in learning more about coal and power generation, as well as the measures in place to reduce the carbon footprint of emissions. However, the extent to which the relationships are built, the efficiency of engagement with stakeholders is not known, and this researcher has not found any documented study to support the assumption. In South Africa the literature supporting the assumption is perceived to be limited as per the findings of the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher is of the notion that there is no clarity on the viability of the visitors' centre operations with regards to building such relationships with stakeholders. The study thus sought to explore stakeholder perceptions of the centre as a strategic tool for engagement. The study will contribute to the field of communication and add value to stakeholder management as a concept.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore stakeholders' perceptions on visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement.

1.4 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem that this study investigated was stakeholder perceptions on the visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement. There are various visitors' centres in South Africa such as Clover South Africa, the South African Broadcasting Corporation and South African Breweries World of Beer among others. For example, Clover SA has an allocated time of one hour thirty minutes per tour with three sessions in a day (<https://www.clovervisitorscentre.com/>). This means, that in such a limited time, a strict schedule needs to be followed and this may restrict visitors when engaging on other matters not on the schedule.

For the visitors' centre in question, only one comprehensive tour is conducted daily for a minimum of four hours and the centre is flexible in changing the focus to what the visitors deem to be more important, instead of following a strict programme. However, there is not enough time to get visitors' feedback at the end of the tour in order to engage and determine their perceptions and experiences on the visitors' centre and its role thereof. Hence, the study explored stakeholders' perception on the visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement.

1.4.1 Research Question

The principal question for the study was "What is the stakeholders' perception on visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement?"

1.4.2 Research Sub-questions

- What is the visitors' centre strategic role to stakeholders?
- What is the reputation of the visitors' centre as perceived by stakeholders?
- What is the role of the visitors' centre in stakeholder management?

1.5 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this qualitative study were as follows:

- to explore the visitors' centre strategic role to stakeholders;
- to determine the reputation of the visitors' centre as perceived by stakeholders; and
- to explore the role of the visitors' centre in stakeholder engagement.

1.6 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Theories, which formed the foundation for the study included stakeholder engagement management and stakeholder relationship theory established by Edward Freeman in 1984. The SAGE Handbook of Public Relations quotes Edward Freeman's stakeholder engagement and management theory which relates to relationships among stakeholders as being a bond that holds everything together and ensures organisational success (Heath 2010:128).

The theories have been justified for their accuracy in description, influential power and their validity when it comes to stakeholder relationship theory and their supporting principles (Donaldson & Preston 1995:65).

1.6.1 Stakeholder Engagement Management

Stakeholder engagement is crucial in forming perceptions through communication. Communicating to an organisation's stakeholders creates dialogue, which can be of mutual benefit to both parties (Patrizia & Gianluca 2013:97). A good relationship with potential stakeholders can create shared value at all levels of engagement.

The identified individuals and groups need to be considered, accounted for, communicated with, and accommodated in some way in order to sustain the organisation's commitment to financial goals, as well as an acceptance of its operations within specified environments (ATSDR 1997). The organisation's relations should be rated to be worthwhile by both direct market and non-market stakeholder groups which may be carried over and may impact the views of other groups which previously have never had an interest in the organisation (Cornelissen 2017:44).

For organisations to garner support from the stakeholders, they need to be able to engage each one on their different level, to dedicate resources and must have the

ability to listen to target audiences, while bearing in mind that different groups may well have varying expectations (Sayce *et al.* 2013:60). The visitors' centre establishes relationships with stakeholders through engagements that assist interactions. These engagements can bring about changes that will help the organisation in improving services and products offered, but they need to be documented and monitored as and when they happen.

1.6.2 Stakeholder Relationship Management

The visitors' centre is vital for building relationships with different stakeholders (Sliva 2018:2). Bourne (2016:431) mentions that, just as each situation, project, event, or any scenario may be unique, that is what stakeholders are as well, unique. Stakeholders as individuals, clusters or organisations have a set of characteristics such as expectations, perceptions and a hierarchy of engagement (Sliva 2018:7). The organisation's stakeholder relationship focuses on groups, which should be included in the overall strategy, due to their effect on the organisation and its decision-making powers (Tullberg 2013:127). For stakeholder relationship theory to work successfully it should not be used to generalise; but rather focus on issues related to governance, loyalty and the decision process (Tullberg 2013:128). Van der Meer, Verhoeven, Beentjes & Vliegthart (2017:426) argue that when an organisation goes through a crisis, stakeholder relationships also change and these need to be managed in a way that will favour the organisation whilst not compromising the wellbeing of stakeholders and their relationships with the organisation.

Attention is given to stakeholders within organisations when making decisions (Pinheiro 2015:3). To create value and sustain the relationships coupled with ethical behavior, there needs to be a balance between the interests of organisational stakeholders and their relationships with the organisation (de Gooyert, Rouwette, van Kranenburg & Freeman 2017:402). The visitors' centre is the first contact of the organisation and can be utilised to maintain healthy relationships with stakeholders of the organisation by involving them in all decision-making processes by striving to change negative perceptions of other stakeholders. Good stakeholder relationships will help the organisation in times of crises.

1.7 METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This study adopted a qualitative interpretive research design, which Khothari (2004:2) defines it as a type of research that is based on communication with the emphasis on others' experiences and also on formulating theories with the possibility of exploring new phenomena. A pilot study was conducted to determine the viability of the study where preliminary findings for the study were used to be studied further and explored. This study served as a basis for further research.

Khothari (2004:8), clarifies the difference between research methodology and design by defining methodology as a systematic way of solving the research problem, while the term design refers to the method or plan that the researcher will use in conducting the research in order to reach a conclusion or recommendations for further study. Edmonds and Kennedy (2013:112) also define the qualitative method of research as "a process of collecting data and analysing it with a view of making sense and meaning from results". Here the researcher generally studies a phenomenon as this appears in its natural context with no manipulation or control.

1.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Burkett & Morris (2014:109) state that, when involved in research, especially a qualitative study where the researcher can be an active participant, the process of maintaining trust is of paramount importance. The notion of trustworthiness should be taken into consideration by showing that due diligence has been done (Williams & Morrow 2009:576). A clause on all material was used to ensure that participants consent to participate in the research voluntarily and also established the anonymity of their answers to this research with written consent from the participants. All information collected was confidential to avoid harm, and no changes were made to any of the responses received. There were also no names or addresses of participants, but each were assigned a unique identity number.

1.9 QUALITY

Quality in qualitative research is a delicate issue, since various studies approach this topic in different ways (Riggs 2015:57). The following key concepts for quality assurance will be discussed: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, Confirmability and Authenticity.

1.9.1 Credibility

Credibility of data refers to participant views, perceptions and experiences interpreted by the researcher who will not enhance the study by giving his own experiences and verifying these with the research participants (Cope 2014:89). The researcher ensured that the participants are engaged extensively in order to understand their viewpoint and given a chance to make their own recommendations of what can be done in order to get the positive results from the entire study.

1.9.2 Transferability

With transferability, the idea is to ensure the study is generally accepted and claims made within specific probabilities of error (Halldorsson & Aastrup 2003:327). The researcher ensured that the findings of the study could be tested in various contexts to find out whether the participants' responses can be evaluated by anyone who is interested in the study.

1.9.3 Dependability

Anney (2014:278) refers to dependability as being how stable the findings of the research will be over time, by using an audit trail. The researcher put the study on a pilot to test if another researcher can carry this out with similar findings produced, however this can create challenges as not all results of qualitative studies can be the same.

1.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to steps taken by the researcher to ensure that the study findings are a true reflection of participants' experiences and ideas (Shenton 2004:72). Here the researcher arranged the raw data together with the transcribed notes for anyone who would like to have reference concerning bias, motivations and interests of the researcher. The raw data was transcribed and stored in a cloud space.

1.9.5 Authenticity

Cope (2014:89) says that, with authenticity, the researcher reports the feelings and experiences of the participants in a faithful manner whereby quotes are reported in a descriptive manner. Here the notion of differing views were elaborated and consensus between participants recorded accordingly. The researcher also involved other

researchers such as the mentors, colleagues and supervisors in the field who may be interested in the study to authenticate the study.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are a matter of integrity on a personal level, but their implications reaches much further than the individual (Du Plooy-Cillers, Davis & Bezuidenhout 2014:262). The researcher introduced the survey to the respondents and requested permission from both Eskom management and respondents to conduct this research.

1.11 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focused on participants who were visiting the centre, since the researcher had easier access to them; however, this meant interviews may have to be shortened due to time constraints. The researcher experienced challenges when it comes to persuading individuals to participate, as the study was voluntary.

1.12 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following concepts were used during the course of the study:

1.12.1 Visitors' Centre

This refers to a facility that hosts the public, educates, and entertains them while they acquire information about the organisation (Tourism Queensland Industry Innovation Team 2012:3).

1.12.2 Power Station

An electrical power station refers to a facility where one form of energy is converted to another, which will be electricity (Deshpande 2012).

1.12.3 Eskom

Eskom is the power utility, which generates, transmits and distributes electricity in South Africa (McDonald 2009:23).

1.12.4 Stakeholder Perceptions

Stakeholder perceptions are unique experiences of individuals that have acquired information through various means and attaining awareness of their surroundings which enable them to make assumptions about things (McDonald 2011:13)

1.12.5 Stakeholder Engagement

This is the process used by an organisation to engage relevant stakeholders for a purpose to achieve accepted outcomes (Deloitte 2008:2)

1.13 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The structure of the dissertation is set out below.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background to the Study

In this chapter the study was introduced and the rationale as well as context and background to the study clarified. The purpose, problem statement as well as the methodology and design for the study together with the clarification of key concepts were addressed. The theoretical foundation was introduced for the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Context to the Research

Chapter 2 presented the review of the theoretical foundation to the study and gave context as to why this research is important. The literature review introduced stakeholder management as the founding theory for the study. Then stakeholder perceptions, engagement, strategic tool for engagement as well as reputation management supported the founding theory to focus the study in the field of communication.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Design

In this chapter the methodology used for the study and the specific design were outlined. The methodology highlighted the population to be targeted, the sample size as well as techniques that were used to conduct the study. The methods and integrity of the study were also outlined to produce a credible study.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter 4 discussed the presentation of interview raw data, the analysis methods used, and interpretation of the data collected. Thematic analysis was adopted as a guide for the data analysis and the six steps intensely reviewed to ensure data integrity.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter 5 presented the conclusion and recommendations of the research study. Here the researcher gave concluding remarks, value of the study as well as recommendations for future research in this field.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the literature review for the study was discussed. The researcher looked at stakeholder theory as being the founding theory for the study. The stakeholder perceptions can be built and shaped by how organisations interact with their audiences on an on-going basis. These interactions ensure that the process of communication and relationship building within the organisation is of a strategic nature (Fletcher *et al* 2003:508). Stakeholder perception has been defined as being the process, whereby individuals look into how one selects, organises and interprets stimuli into an important and clear picture of the world (Bhote 2016:132). According to Jahangirian *et al* (2015:512), when stakeholders perceive the organisation negatively, this can create a communication gap between the two parties which may lead to lack of support for activities of the organisation.

The stakeholder engagement can be viewed differently by organisations, where organisations view pressure groups as legitimate and often make efforts to interact intensely with those perceived to have legitimate power over the organisation (Garrod *et al.* 2012:1161). Sheldon, Lyn, Bracci & Phillips (2015:79) state that organisations need to engage stakeholders on the organisation's strategic direction and clearly outline benefits and impact to stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement can be viewed by individuals as being successful when trust between the organisation and its stakeholders is experienced through support of each other's activities (Boadi, He, Bosompem, Say & Boadi 2019:3). For example, when Eskom communicates load shedding schedules this ensures that its stakeholders can make a decision to start switching off their non-essential power consuming appliances.

For stakeholder engagement to be successful, the tools used are also important taking into consideration the target audience and their background. Engagement tools can differ according to target audience preferences, for instance, preferring face to face interactions more than electronic communication (Jahangirian *et al* 2015:512). According to Finley, Suellentrop, Griesse, House & Brittain (2018:38), stakeholder education using appropriate engagement tools can assist in enhancing the behavior of target audiences. In agreement, Canella, Mikolasek, Rostock, Beyer,

Guckenberger, Jenewein, Linka, Six, Stoll, Stupp & Witt (2018:762) emphasise that, when appropriate tools are used, stakeholders engagement will likely be effective.

Visitors' centres across the world are used as tools for interdependent engagements between stakeholders i.e. the organisation and its target audiences (Waligo, Clarke & Hawkins 2015:90). The visitors' centre could be permanent and either natural or man-made with the purpose of drawing public individuals and groups for the purpose of entertainment, interest or education. Most organisations use visitors' centres as the tool for connecting external stakeholders to the internal affairs of the organisation (Leask 2010:155). Leask furthermore on (2016:336) added that recently visitors' centres have been used as research tools for organisations in which stakeholder participation and feedback are recorded and evaluated in terms of operational processes for business continuity.

To ensure that visitor perceptions are taken into consideration and also that the visitors' centre supports the organisation's purpose of stakeholder engagement and management the loyalty of target audiences becomes evident when repeated use of the visitors' centre is realised. This means that stakeholders find value by visiting the centre and the organisation can supply more resources to ensure continuity of supply (Han, Park, Chung & Lee 2016:1328).

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO THE STUDY

The study was founded on the stakeholder theory as the main conceptual framework. The theory concentrated on the stakeholder engagement, visitors' centre as a strategic tool when communicating, perceptions of stakeholders towards organisations emanating from engagements and, lastly, the relationships formed from these engagements as well as the overall organisational reputation established from stakeholder engagement.

2.3 COMMUNICATION THEORY

Communication theory dates back to the 14th century and has mainly been used in transmission communication using telephone lines. The formal introduction of communication theory occurred in 1949 when Shannon presented a paper on "Mathematical theory of communication". Communication from the concept of communication theory, according to Griffin, Ledbetter & Sparks (2015:6), is defined as

an interaction between two or more people that requires a response. Cleary, Harran, Luck, Potgieter, Scheckle, van der Merwe and van Heerden (2008:8) add two words “expression and interpretation” to the process of communication.

This means that for clear communication to take place, there should be interaction, expression and interpretation. For communication to occur, there should be a need to communicate and a clear goal to be achieved by communicating. This can be interpreted differently by stakeholders in varying situations at different times (Dainton & Zelle 2011:1).

2.4 STAKEHOLDER THEORY

Stakeholder theory dates as far back as 1963, where the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) issued a report which defined stakeholders as groups the organisation depend on for survival and without whose support the organisation will cease to exist (Fontain, Haarman & Schmid 2006:6). This idea was then modified by the father of the stakeholder concept Richard Edward Freeman in 1984.

Freeman (1984:46) defines stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation’s objectives”. Stakeholders may act against managers for failing to execute their responsibilities to the organisation (Freeman 2004). Stakeholder theory is fundamentally about how businesses work at their best and is descriptive, prescriptive and instrumental in nature (Smudde & Courtright 2011:137). Shen, Dumont & Deng (2018:599) mention that stakeholders may have interests that are self-orientated which may be different or even worse, conflicting, hence the organisation’s main task should be to achieve the balance in satisfying diverse needs of multiple stakeholders.

Stakeholder theory identifies the conceptualisation of value as the main driver for organisations which should also be shared by all stakeholders who have an interest on the organisation (Theodoulidis, Diaz, Crotto & Rancati 2017:174). de Gooyert *et al.* (2017: 403) and Schembri, Tang, Fletcher & Dimitratos (2019:2) reinforce that considering stakeholders opinions and addressing their issues improves the performance of the organisation mainly through increased trust, good reputation, an environment conducive to doing business and gaining profits.

Theodoulidis *et al.* (2017:175) however points out that trying to please everyone is not always possible, so organisations should consider whether stakeholder interests will form part of the organisation strategy. Freeman, Wicks and Parmar (2004:365) differ in that although stakeholder theory can mean many things to different people; it does not follow that it should be cast as everything non-shareholder orientated, as these are also stakeholders. Stakeholder theory suggests that organisations should treat their stakeholders with respect, should incorporate some stakeholders into corporate governance structures, and encourage participation of all stakeholders in the decision-making process of the organisation (Rose, Flak & Saebo 2018:363).

Boaventura, Bosse, de Mascena & Sarturi (2019:1) outline that, for organisations to better master stakeholder management, they should create value across all levels of stakeholders and ensure the even distribution of that value. Corporate governance from the stakeholder perspective entails that organisations should do business in a highly moral way and not be separated from the urgency of dealing with issues which may cause greater harm to the organisation and impact the value created (Lindsey, Mauck & Olsen 2018:2). The moral obligation to manage relationships can be attributed to how organisations treat their stakeholders, and this leads to value added for the organisation (Derakhshan, Turner & Mancini 2019:99).

Stakeholders are viewed as being integral to the visitors' centre success because if you do not get visitors then it means you might as well close shop (Boaventura *et al.* 2019:12). These stakeholders add value to the organisation as they come up with various suggestions and comments that, if implemented, can assist the organisation. Stakeholders tend to reciprocate what organisations put on the table. If the organisation is open to stakeholders, they also respond with good relationship building tactics.

2.4.1 Stakeholder Engagement

The stakeholder engagement, Bourne (2016:431) suggests, when engagements take place, there should be a consideration that stakeholders are unique and the notion of one fits all should be eliminated when putting together strategies. Mitchel, Wood and Agle (1997:855) formulated a model that would assist organisations in categorising stakeholders and also the process of prioritising these according to their level of power, legitimacy and urgency. Moreover, Waligo, Clarke and Hawkins (2014:1342)

relate the participation of stakeholders and activations to the success of an organisational strategy. If you know, who can easily influence the organisation's strategy then you are more inclined to keep them closer.

Stakeholder engagement is important in ensuring that the organisation is aware of the public concerns about the operations, development and management in a more transparent manner (Waligo *et al.* 2014:1343). Maher & Buhmann (2019:1) suggest that organisations should employ the bottom-up approach when engaging stakeholders and should ensure that the affected individuals lead and manage these engagements. While Wiesmeth (2018:3) agrees to the latter, he also adds that engagements should be able to create value through the incorporation of relevant stakeholders to achieve the broader organisational purpose.

When stakeholders are engaged and feel that they are valued as strategic partners by the organisation, stakeholders tend to support organisational strategy formulations (Pyrialakou, Gkritza & Liu 2019:506). Nair (2019:3) similarly elaborates that, for engagement to be deemed successful, the integration of all stakeholders should be in place to assist in strategy formulation that will ensure organisational sustainability with knowledge being converted to further innovative ideas to keep stakeholders informed at all times. Munro, King and Polonsky (2006:1812) mention approaches that may be undertaken during stakeholder engagement which are: willingness to participate, common interest; have necessary resources; and get a neutral party to facilitate the engagement process.

Boadi *et al* (2019:2) argue that even when organisations have strategies and plans to engage stakeholders, very little might be known about the target audiences which could jeopardise the links between organisations and stakeholders. Bloom, Beetsch, Harker, Hesterlee, Moreira, Patrick-Lake, Selig, Sherman, Smith, Valentine & Roberts (2018:206) reiterate the importance of meaningful partnerships to create effective stakeholder engagements to demonstrate mutual benefits and collaborations from the planning stage going forward, between the target audiences and the organisation. In addition Aakhus & Bzdak (2015:188) outline that these engagement strategies should be designed as an ongoing process that will make communication easy rather than a difficult, impossible and unimagined single once-off event.

Stakeholder engagement should be used as a dynamic maintainable remediation practice for collecting paramount useful information from participants and identifying

societal needs, while evaluating and integrating risk perception of stakeholders (Harclerode, Lal, Vedwan, Wolde & Miller 2016:132). Baniyamin and Rashid (2016:236) introduce a term called Quality Of Life, which is normally referred to as goodness of life in nurturing relationships point. Here the authors are focusing the engagement on the bodily, mental and sociological state of being, which emphasises the importance of connecting to participant reactions, or linking to their previous understanding and interests. In contrast organisations may have difficulties in identifying and correctly placing stakeholders in categories for a number of reasons, one being that the organisation operates in a highly fragmented and diverse environment with different patterns of ownership and areas of operation (Garrod *et al* 2012:1159).

Organisations at times fail or miss what the stakeholder's interests in the organisation are, which might cause resistance during the implementation stages (de Gooyert *et al* 2017:404). Organisations need to acknowledge barriers and develop ways in which they can overcome these barriers, for instance a decision to address and eminent need or create a plan to solve a problem (Ferguson, Chan, Santelmann & Tilt 2017:447-448). Cotton (2015:1944) has a view that if there are competing stakeholders there should be a plan in place that will look at both parties' perspectives and opinions. Aakhus and Bzdak (2015:189) further highlight trust as being the reason why most stakeholder engagement collaborations fail and partnerships collapse.

Stakeholders feel important when they are engaged fully, and are involved in opinion and decision-making processes. Engaging individuals who visit the centre daily creates a bond between stakeholders and these can be used during strategy planning sessions where executives will be advised on what the external or those lower in the hierarchy can add their voice for the benefit of the organisation.

2.4.1.1 Visitors' Centre as a Strategic Tool for Engagement

The visitors' centre can be used as a strategic tool for stakeholder engagement and become more beneficial for organisations when the centres are operated and managed by qualified people who have insight and expertise on the organisation (Garrod *et al* 2012:1159). External stakeholders can use visitors' centres as information hubs that can be accessed conveniently to gain more information about the organisation and its operations (Waligo *et al* 2015:90). The visitors' centres as

Kamolpattana, Chen, Sonchaeng, Wilkinson, Willey & Bultitude (2015:69) furthermore explains should be able to enhance stakeholders' attitudes and behaviour by influencing their knowledge towards the organisation.

Kato-Nitta, Maeda, Iwahashi & Tachikawa (2018:858) state that, for the promotion of stakeholder participation in visiting information hubs or knowledge centres, organisations should give the target audience a chance to ask controversial questions and make their own inputs to enhance the already existing strategies for sustainability and reliability in the future. The visitors' centres can trigger further conversations between stakeholders and the organisation as the target audiences become aware of some of the activities that were not readily available, or new information provided when they visit these centres (Draper 2018:84).

Management of the visitors' centres is very important for the organisation's stability and continuity so that the centres are adequately managed and the marketing thereof is innovatively developed and imaginatively promoted to draw more and more visitors (Patsiaouras, Veneti & Green 2018:75). In agreement Allahar (2015:1) mentions that, when putting together a strategy for the visitors' centres, the organisation must ensure that a more holistic approach that is properly developed and professionally managed should be put in place to strengthen relationships between stakeholders and the organisation. For all to work better for everyone involved, the organisation should give more attention to managing visitor use of the facilities and that the visitors abide by the rules of the organisation at all times (Fefer, Stone, Daigle & Silka 2016:1).

Most visitors' centres around the world have recently make use of social media to get in touch and engage with their stakeholders by communicating their activities, and also by building and sustaining communities of visitors (Romolini, Fissi & Gori 2020:1753). Mcgeary, Seekamp, Larson, Smith & Davenport (2019:23) highlight that visits are influenced by multiple factors such as times within which specifications on course modules need to be completed and constraints within which these visits should be undertaken. For instance, international visitors are mostly prioritised over the locals and schedules need to be changed so that these visitors can be accommodated within their stay in the country; which then means that those booked during that time should be rescheduled to a later date.

Visitors' centres need to adopt strategies of engaging their stakeholders beyond the service encounter. This should be done by integrating the physical, cognitive and emotional connections with stakeholders over and above their face to face interactions when at the establishment. This will develop stronger stakeholder relationships and greater loyalty and advocacy (So, Wei & Martin 2020:2). In the same way Yen, Teng & Tzeng (2020:3) indicate that the centres should embrace stakeholder value co-creation behaviour, which will entail the actual involvement of visitors by showing participation and citizenship in value creation. This can be done by being innovative and in developing new ideas, services and promotions from stakeholder feedback and engagements at all times.

The visitors' centre is viewed as being the first point of entry when one needs access to the organisation. Individuals can get to the centre to obtain all the required information from the centre. The visitors' centre can serve as a one-stop shop and point individuals to the right direction, if further assistance is required.

2.4.2 Stakeholder Perceptions

Stakeholder perceptions emanate from both proven and unproven facts obtained about the organisation or person from various sources. These perceptions may gain support for the organisation, or resistance to their products, as well as reduce the risk of reputational damage to the organisation (Sefcik, Johnson, Yim, Lau, Vivio, Mucchiani & Cacchione 2018:61). Liu and Ma (2017:1) emphasise the issue of sustainable development of visitors' centres by promoting evaluations on stakeholder perceptions on an ongoing basis. This can be achieved by diversifying and personalising visitor experiences and obtaining feedback on the process and operations of the centres.

Pomeranz et al (2013:95) argue that expanding visitors' centre operations to more locations can increase stakeholder participation; however this can come with many challenges such as accessibility, and financial impact to the organisation as well as management issues of obtaining highly qualified personnel to run these centres. Fletcher *et al* (2003:505) mention that perceptions should be treated like intellectual capital by organisations where intangible assets are identified and reported to assist in strategic analysis and ongoing strategy planning. Perceptions, as Streckenreuter &

Wolf (2013:59) both assert, should be dealt with in a strategic manner by organisations.

McCarthy & Muthuri (2018:132) bring in a new point that perceptions of stakeholders should not just be taken for granted after they have assisted the organisational strategy, but they should be monitored during and after implementation as these could change due to environmental factors. Jahangirian *et al* (2015:512) introduce another view on stakeholder perceptions that most relationships are affected by: the fear of the unknown, or reluctance to change; difficulty in understanding organisational operations by external people; the level of uncertainty in cause and effect analysis; and lastly expert opinions from those in the field.

Decisions not to involve stakeholders in the decision-making processes can be seen as a stumbling block and a reason for stakeholders to reject relationship building with the organisation and thus not supporting their strategies and vision (Ferguson *et al* 2017:447). In agreement Harclerode *et al* (2016:132) state that, to gain support from stakeholders, organisations need to engage them thoroughly so that they can get honest feedback and institute remedial actions to deal with any societal needs that may occur at any moment. Perceptions of stakeholders and their opinions are needed at all times by the organisation in order to align with what the customer wants and the sustainability of visitors' centres to continue to operate (Herrera *et al*. 2018:91).

Overall the centres and organisations need to create value for the stakeholders and to achieve this, stakeholder management should be implemented and get practical solutions on the plan in order to deal with visitors' expectations and gain support from them in the long term (**Ranangen 2015:21**). **Li *et al* (2017:251)** outlines that participation and stakeholder engagement might not always be favourable to the organisation, as individuals could be reluctant to share their views or opinions with others due to fear of victimisation or being downplayed. Stakeholder perceptions will also be influenced by the satisfaction levels which need to be studied extensively before and after interactions (Lu, Chi & Liu 2015:87). Lastly de Vries, Tummers & Bekkers (2018:270) assert the concept of innovation where organisations and their visitors' centres need to introduce new ways of doing things and ensure that their approach is simple to understand and that stakeholder feedback is incorporated in these innovative ideas.

Stakeholder perceptions can assist the organisation in aligning their strategies with what stakeholders deem important and need to see happening within organisations. When perceptions are managed according to what the organisation requires this can add value to the operations and anything that is not compatible be changed. Stakeholder perceptions are vital to visitors' centre survival, as those that have been to the facilities can act as spokespeople to create interest for others encouraging them also to visit the centre (Lui and Ma 2017:4).

2.4.3 Stakeholder Relationships

Stakeholder relationships arise from ongoing interactions between the organisation and the identified individuals who are influential in the achievement of goals and the sustainability of the organisation. Line and Wang (2017:85) state that, when stakeholders are positioned strategically to be principal decision-makers, they tend to take charge and commit to supporting the organisation to reach its peak. Stakeholder relations deal with the active management of the business environment, the increase in shared interests that will assist in developing business strategies (Freeman 1984). Obeng (2019:327) agrees that organisations need to manage their relationships with stakeholders by proactively adopting a broader view and trying to satisfy each stakeholder group as these will affect the organisation's success in one way or the other.

However, Obeng (2019:329) also argues that, while organisations look at the broader stakeholder relationship management, it is vital that stakeholder concentration index is considered, whereby a strategy focus on stakeholders' impacts on the organisation's goals. Smudde & Courtright (2011:137) suggest that, for stakeholder relationships to be aligned the following questions are needed: How are stakeholders created? How can relationships with stakeholders be maintained? How can these relationships be improved? From these questions, one can make up a strategy to manage the stakeholder relationships. Stakeholders are different and may have views, opinions and attitudes that do not align to the group they belong to, which will require the organisation to develop responsive methods that will ensure adequate stakeholder participation (Hardy & Pearson 2018:247).

Friedman & Miles (2001:5) identify two ways that define stakeholder relationships. The compatible or incompatible ideas and interests, as well as necessary and contingent relationships, form four relationships that require certain strategic actions when they

occur. With necessary compatible relationships, it means that all parties have something to win and it is necessary to protect this relationship. The contingent compatible arrangement is when two parties have the same interest but there is no direct relationship between these parties. The contingent incompatible arrangement is when two parties have separate, opposite and unconnected sets of ideas or interests; and so it becomes a challenge when one tries to put their position forward. Lastly, the necessary incompatible relation occurs when interests of material nature are related, but operating these may lead to relationships being jeopardised. The Commission Green Paper (2001:10) recognises that organisations integrate social and environmental strategies in their business operations and stakeholder interactions.

Korschun (2015:613) points out that most relationships between the organisation and its stakeholders should be based on high moral commitments and principles which will position the organisation as a good corporate citizen that upholds values.

The organisation should consider stakeholder interests and not ignore claims simply because dealing with them does not serve the strategic interests of the organisation (Donaldson & Preston 1995). Adongo, Kim and Elliot (2019:44) mention that, trustworthy relationships are seen to last longer because both parties are now able to cope with the uncertainties of each other's actions. Stakeholder theory suggests that organisations should treat their stakeholders with respect, incorporate some stakeholders into corporate governance structures, and encourage participation of all stakeholders in the decision-making process of the organisation (Rose *et al.* 2018:363).

Visitors' centres can create new relationships with stakeholders of the organisation and enhance those existing relationships. This is possible as the centres are regarded as the face of the organisation, and the information they share with stakeholders can assist in cultivating future prospects for the organisation. The support to organisational strategy and management of proactive issues can be achieved through the relationship building where stakeholders will act as spokespeople for the organisation.

2.4.4 Reputation Management

Reputation management, according to Silver and Shaw (2018:277), becomes evident when stakeholders start to track and manage the impressions they convey and identify intentions about the organisation. This goes for organisations as well. They need to

scan the environment and consider every stakeholder that can affect the image and put plans in place to manage impressions. Perez-Cornejo, de Quevedo & Delgado-Garcia (2019:505) state that corporate reputation can be viewed as being the one important intangible asset the organisation has. Reputation management can be achieved when organisations consistently manage a positive image to build, maintain and protect their identity with stakeholders (Cornelisen 2017:63).

Reputation management becomes threatened when stakeholder expectations are not aligned to the organisation's actual behaviour. This means that a gap is created between the two; and the larger the gap, the higher the risk or reputational damage (Perez-Cornejo *et al.* 2019:506). In agreement, Gatzert (2015:487) emphasises that reputation damaging events impact stakeholder loyalty, and satisfaction which will add to the risk of losing financial and human capital for organisations. Moreover Kebete & Wondirad (2019:83) point out that, when organisations are viewed as disregarding environmental and air quality laws causing damage and threatening stakeholder wellbeing, this causes a distrust and rejection of the organisation's products and services even if the organisation still contributes to the social responsibility of the communities. When organisations are perceived to lack ethical behaviour and values are questionable, then stakeholder trust becomes jeopardised and support for the organisation's goals and objectives comes under scrutiny (Yadav, Dash, Chakraborty & Kumar 2018:142).

2.4.4.1 The Importance of Reputation for Organisational Success

Corporate reputation is important in any organisation as this assists the organisation to be a source for continuous competitive benefit (Perez-Cornejo *et al.* 2019:505). Reputation according to Gatzert (2015:485), can be viewed differently by stakeholders, which can assist the organisation in multidimensional reflection on the financial and non-financial benefits for the organisation. This means that reputation is not only considered to determine organisational monetary achievements but also social aspects. Corporate reputation as Yadav *et al* (2018:140) mention can be improved through corporate philanthropy where organisations voluntarily merge their business operations with social and environmental concerns that contribute to the organisation's financial performance, customer loyalty, employee satisfaction and attractiveness of the organisation.

Perez-Cornejo *et al* (2019:506) insist that organisational reputation should be considered a credible indicator for stakeholders because, if an organisation is not behaving the way it is expected to, it may lose the human and financial capital accumulated over the years. Lu *et al.* (2015:87) refer to the evaluation of organisations using cognitive/perceptive and the affective aspects. Organisational reputation can be measured by the authenticity of messages and actions taken to ensure reliability, trustworthiness, originality and true in substance (Ram, Bjork & Weidenfeld 2016:111).

2.4.4.2 The Impact of Stakeholder Perceptions on Reputation

Stakeholders tend to identify with organisations because of their held reputational perceptions and thus support their products or services, which results from continuous investments in reputation management (Voss & Mohan 2016:4178). Virvilaite, Tumasonyte & Sliburyte (2015:641) mentions that word of mouth communication can help the organisation towards a positive outlook when it comes to reputation and increased brand awareness, loyalty and quality. Yadav *et al.* (2018:140) reiterate the importance of stakeholder perceptions on reputation management as one aspect that can merge the organisational activities with actual performance for the benefit of both parties.

Stakeholders will view the organisation as a trustworthy entity when is considered to be open and transparent in the operation it undertakes. When relationships have been established and are perceived to be solid, organisations can maximise potential support of the identified stakeholders to act as ambassadors for the organisation and intensify their penetration to new audiences using the already identified ambassadors (Simon 2017:12). Attitude of stakeholders towards organisational reputation and brand identity depends on the overall evaluation by stakeholders and their held perceptions (Voss & Mohan 2016:4177). A weak reputation can harm an organisation in a matter of seconds and to rebuild this reputation can take years (Wang, Yu & Chiang 2016:1329). Organisations therefore need to build and maintain strong reputation on an ongoing basis not just a once off approach.

Reputation management should be an integral part of any organisation to gain support from stakeholders and establish new relationships. When an organisation's reputation is threatened stakeholders tend to lose interest and trust in that organisation and this

can affect both human and financial capital. Organisations should ensure that they disseminate standard messages to all stakeholders, even if the mode of delivery is different. This will assist in gaining support as no contradictions will happen and thus the reputation of the organisation will always be intact, no matter the challenges the organisation can face.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the theoretical foundation for the study by looking at various theories and supporting concepts. It looked at how interpersonal communication can be employed to deal with day-to-day operations of the visitors' centre whereby interactions are commenced with discussions between individuals and groups.

It all starts with interactions that happen between two or more people and getting their perspectives and sharing ideas on organisational operations, and educating those who need more clarity while entertaining those who just want to have fun. However, everything is done for a purpose and the visitors' centre is mandated with the task of ensuring that both internal and external stakeholders are fully aware of the business models and processes.

Coupled with communication, stakeholders are entrusted with the role of being spokespeople for the organisation to those they come in contact with, to encourage them also to visit the centre and learn more about any issues they might be questioning. The visitors' centre is then used as strategic tool to foster engagements between the organisation its stakeholders. Relationships are built from perceptions received from these conversations and ordinary visitors now become important stakeholders of the organisation in that issues of mutual interest are discussed and feedback is received and all put together to formulate strategies that will assist the organisation in the future.

Stakeholders are managed according to their level of influence with the organisation and relationships are maintained or changed accordingly to fit in with what stakeholders deem to be of mutual interest. From this emanates the organisational image and identity, which should be protected at all times however without impacting the relationships the organisation has with its stakeholders. From all this then there

develops a reputable company that takes care of its stakeholders needs and deals with issues in a way that satisfies everyone.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

On this chapter, the study introduced the research methodology, and design as well as the methods of data analysis used to determine stakeholder perceptions on the visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement. The research methodology defined the study population and the sampling size, which was employed to justify the reliability and validity of the research.

3.2 METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The study was based on a qualitative interpretive research design. As Panneerselvan (2016:2) defines it, research methodology is a structure of representations, processes and practices used to find the results of a research problem. Qualitative research is a strategy that usually highlights arguments rather than quantification in the gathering and scrutiny of data (Bryman 2016:294). The primary objective of the methodology is to examine and accomplish outcomes that are true or most valid. Durdella (2019:4) states that, when one is conducting a qualitative study, there are several concepts that relate to description, discovery, exploration, interpretation and verification.

Flick (2018) says that qualitative research is sometimes used to describe and explain social phenomena by analysing the experiences of individuals, interactions and documents. Bryman (2016:31) similarly outlines this process where he mentions that in a qualitative study, the emphasis is put on an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research; it has rejected the application of norms and represents a view on social reality. Hesse-Biber (2017:4) points out that the qualitative research approach starts with questions such as how, why and what. This study undertook an exploratory research design that investigates a problem to be studied further (Hesse-Biber 2017:13).

3.3 POPULATION

A research population is loosely defined as being a large gathering of individuals or items that are regarded as the main focus of a systematic enquiry (Marshall & Rossman 2006:61). Research is done for the betterment of the population. However,

one cannot study the entire population; investigators often cannot test every target population in a study as this may be too expensive and time-consuming. A research population is also known as a pre-defined gathering of individuals or objects recognised to have comparable characteristics (Bryman 2016:548). All individuals or objects within a certain population usually have a common, binding characteristic or trait. Asiamah, Mensah & Oteng-Abayie (2017:1610) identify the three types of population. Firstly, it is the general population defined as the largest group that the researcher can potentially select from for the study. Target population talks to the refined general population by mainly eliminating any participants to research that might violate the study objectives. Lastly, accessible population will be those individuals who are available or willing to participate in the study. For this study, the target population was the visitors who come for tours at the power station on a daily basis.

3.4 SAMPLING DESIGN

Population sampling design, according to Durdella (2019:184), starts with the research context and the researcher. Here the researcher needs to look at the research purpose and select relevant participants to achieve this purpose. Lavrakas (2008) outlines the design as being the road map that the researcher employs to determine how study participants are to be selected.

3.4.1 Sampling Technique

According to Taherdoost (2016:20) sampling is the process of selecting participants from the population being studied. The technique for sampling can either fall under probability which states that here the random selection of participants is considered so that each unit has a definite chance of being selected, or non-probability sampling which acknowledges that not all units of the study will be selected (Bryman 2016:131). For this research convenience sampling of non-probability sampling strategy was used. As Etikan, Musa & Alkassim (2016:2) define it, convenience sampling is used when study participants are readily and easily available. This technique was selected as it will be easier to gain access to participants, as they will be visiting the power station's visitors' centre.

3.4.2 Sampling Size

Sample size differs in any research project, due to various factors, ranging from the research question, the objective of the study, conceptual framework and many other reasons. Durdella (2019:191) points out that a quantitative study might require a large sample size as this is regarded as the justifiable reason for generalisation, while for qualitative studies fewer sample sizes are accepted and data collection happens until no new categories, themes or explanations emerge from the data collected (Marshall 1996:523). For the purpose of this study a sample size of fifteen (15) respondents was selected.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data can be collected in different ways when pursuing a qualitative research study. Some of the methods include observations, content analysis, individual and group interviews (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick 2008:291). Harrell and Bradley (2009:2) state that using the correct data collection method and techniques results in high quality research with credible findings.

3.5.1 Semi-structured Interview

For the purpose of this study a one on one semi-structured interview was used to gather information to determine stakeholder perceptions concerning the visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement. Bryman (2016:550) defines semi-structured interviews as the type where the interviewer has a series of questions that are in a general form and the interviewer has the prerogative to ask further questions to clarify responses. This type of interviews are regarded as being relevant in situations where little information is available about the study phenomenon or detailed insight is required from study participants and most questions should be open-ended (Gill *et al.* 2008:292).

3.5.2 Procedure for Data Gathering

The process for data gathering used in the study was to have interviews with the selected participants. The interviews were held between 19 January to 31 May 2020 at the participants preferred location (i.e. the VUT main campus, the UJ APK campus, Sedibeng College Sebokeng campus, UP main campus, NWU Potchefstroom

campus). During the sessions, a minimum of ten minutes and a maximum of thirty minutes were taken to conduct the interviews. A voice recording and rough notes were taken during the interviews.

3.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is important in a qualitative study to validate research findings and to persuade other researchers and policy-makers in considering the study to be noteworthy (Shenton 2004:63). Several procedures to refine trustworthiness as discussed by Nowell, Norris, White & Moules (2017:3) are: credibility which mainly considers the researcher's representation of the respondents' views; while transferability has to do with case-to-case transfer between researchers; then dependability is raising the logical; traceable and clearly documented research process; while confirmability which deals with how the research data is interpreted and findings clearly derived from the data acquired. Lastly authenticity has to consider the faithfulness of the reported data and when audited or the same data used by another researcher the research arrive at the same comparable but not contradictory findings.

3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

A good qualitative research is one that should be considered to be valid and reliable. Aurini, Heath & Howells (2016:61) state that, for research to be considered both valid and reliable, it should be free from bias and reactivity by the researcher. For research to be considered valid and reliable, intense interviewing procedure where respondents' feedback is interpreted can assist and can suggest different labels to meet rigor in a study (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers 2002:15). To ensure that the study is valid and reliable the interview process had to be made available to be tested at different times and under similar circumstances. A pilot study was conducted with two participants between 05 and 15 December 2019 to examine the feasibility of the approach to be undertaken by the researcher.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has detailed the research methodology considered for the study. A qualitative research method was used after careful consideration of the research topic and purpose of the study. After the population for the study had been identified, a sample was selected using a convenience sampling of non-probability

sampling strategy. The size of the sample determined to support the objectives of the study. Data collection method for the study was then chosen and the process for data collection and thematic data analysis clearly outlined. Lastly, the chapter discussed trustworthiness, data validity and the reliability of the study.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an attempt was made to expose the theoretical foundations on stakeholder perceptions on visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement. The literature review conducted in Chapter Two revealed that stakeholder perceptions emanate from engagements between stakeholders and the organisations, while evaluating the tools used for these engagements that will lead to stakeholder relationships and ultimately shape the organisation's reputation.

This chapter outlined the findings from interviews conducted with fifteen (15) participants, and analysed the raw data obtained from interviews conducted with the study participants by using thematic analysis as a guide to credible study results.

4.2 INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

The interviews took place on a one-on-one and telephonically with fifteen (15) participants depending on the availability and accessibility of and to the participants. The interviews were divided into two settings; where eight (8) study participants' interviews were conducted on a one-to-one approach while due to the global COVID-19 pandemic; the remaining two (2) interviews took place telephonically and five (5) via Microsoft teams. The interviews took place between 19 January and 31 May 2020 with the researcher traveling to most of the one-on-one interviews where there was a conducive environment that included boardrooms at university campuses. Those interviewed telephonically and on Microsoft, were called at their convenient time, which was scheduled beforehand; and plans made in advance, on how the interview were going to be conducted. During the interviews, data was collected using a voice recorder and field notes were taken simultaneously by the researcher.

4.3 TREATMENT OF DATA

Data analysis was conducted following the recommendations of Clarke & Braun (2013:121-122) to thematic analysis by using the six phases as a guide, becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes and analysing the findings. Maguire & Delahunt (2017:3351)

emphasises the importance of data analysis as being a central bond to a credible qualitative research that is highly regarded in the reflection and clarification of the real nature of the world.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Qualitative data analysis according to Hesse-Biber (2017:307) involves a process of collecting raw data and making sense of it by coding, then revisiting the collected data by tracking to establish patterns of new experiences as one can receive more data then creating themes.

4.8.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis according to Braun & Clarke (2006:6) is a method used for qualitative research data analysis that organises and describes data sets in much more detail. This method is used to identify, analyse and report patterns within the received data. Guest, MacQueen & Namey (2012) outline the steps of thematic analysis which are familiarising oneself with data collected, assigning preliminary codes to the data in order to describe content, searching for patterns and themes across the interviews, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report. During interviews the researcher used the voice recorder and also transcribed major points or quotes from the respondents and also developed codes. The codes were then grouped into smaller patterns at various stages of data collection to create themes.

4.8.1.1 Becoming Familiar with the Data

The researcher conducted interviews with the selected population; using semi-structured interviews to record participants' viewpoint and opinions on how the visitors' centre could be used as a strategic tool for engagement. The recordings of the interview were then transcribed into meaningful datasets.

4.8.1.2 Generating Initial Codes

In this phase, the researcher formulated initial codes after intense familiarisation of the feedback received from interviews and identifying similar responses that constructed patterns in the feedback. This phase was then concluded by organising the codes into meaningful datasets.

4.8.1.3 Searching for Themes

In this phase, the researcher started arranging codes into themes that could be used to support the study. Themes were formulated by looking at codes that were used to build up a coherent and meaningful pattern that was relevant to the research questions.

4.8.1.4 Reviewing Themes

In this phase, the researcher broke down other themes into separate themes looking at data within themes to cohere meaningfully and showing clear and identifiable distinctions between themes.

4.8.1.5 Defining Themes

The researcher chose themes that reviewed a more convincing and compelling story about the data. Some themes were divided into sub-themes because the diverse meaning which the quotes/codes could perhaps raise, despite their connection to the main theme.

4.8.1.6 Findings

The final phase of the analysis was to bring together all the extracts of the datasets from the interviews and tell a compelling story about the study, coupled with the supporting literature.

4.9 DATA VERIFICATION AND VALIDATION

The process of data analysis involved the researcher interpreting the study findings by the provision of objective evidence to ensure coherence and fulfilment of the purpose and the rationale of the research. Morse *et al.* (2002:17) indicates that a good qualitative research is iterative rather than just linear. This means that the researcher needs to go back and forth to link the similarities and variations between the research question, literature review, data collection and analysis. Data was systemically checked, and the conceptual work of analysis and interpretation monitored and confirmed constantly to verify the data and to avoid bias in the research findings. Therefore, if the study were to be reviewed under similar circumstances it would reproduce the same results, and the study would then be considered reliable and accurate.

4.10 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The researcher conducted interviews with fifteen (15) participants who had visited and interacted with the visitors' centre personnel on one or several occasions. Out of fifteen (15) participants, eight (8) were interviewed using a one-on-one approach and the other seven (7) interviewed telephonically and on Microsoft. The participants were chosen according to their availability and willingness to undertake the interview.

All participants were given a unique tag for example P1 or P15 for participant 1 and participant 15 respectively. Interview guide, schedule and raw data have been listed in the appendices. The research findings from the data analysis were tallied using codes; and listed below are categories of themes identified from the dataset collected during interviews with participants.

4.10.1 Definition and Role of the Visitors' Centre

The participants were asked about their opinion concerning what the visitors' centre entails and the role it plays. P4, P9, P11, P13 and P14 said, *"The visitors' centre is a formal place within the organisation that deals with the external public"*. While P3 added that, *"The centre could serve as a window into the organisation where external people can view from the outside through this window and learn what is done on the inside"*. In support, P12 said, *"The centre is a wing of communication"*.

P13 said that the role of the centre *"is to educate, entertain and inform the external stakeholders about the company operations and other activities"*. In addition, P8 said, *"People understand the company better by visiting the centre, which serves as an intermediary and closes the gap between the company and the external public"*. P2 indicated that the centre *"serves as a motivation and excitement for visitors to explore and learn better"*.

Furthermore, P4 stated, *"Visitors make appointments to visit the centre, so that they are given the information about the operations of the organisation, and what opportunities are available for people from the outside"*. P7 went on to say, *"The centre provides practical experience for the external public; and represent the organisation in a professional and ethical manner, while accessing the information easily and experience what happens within the power station on a daily basis"*.

According to P6, *“Some visitors’ centres are paid while others are free but their role is the same to give mainly information and educate about the organisation’s operations”*. P9 raised a point that, *“The centre can also be an establishment not affiliated to a specific organisation however servicing various entities to offer information about their products and services”*. Furthermore, P11 affirmed, *“The centre goes through a systematic process on what is undertaken when making a product; and the information should be packaged and presented in a way that will best suit the audience of the day”*.

Table 4.1: Definition and Role of the Visitors’ Centre

Quotes/Codes	Comments generated
A formal place or setting	<p>P3 “A window looking into the organisation from the outside.”</p> <p>P5 “An establishment by the organisation where external people can come.”</p> <p>P9 “A formal centre within or separate from the organisation.”</p> <p>P12 “A wing of communication within the organisation.”</p>
Sub-Quotes/Codes	Comments generated
Informative	<p>P1 “The place is more like where you get information about the company and how it operates.”</p>

	<p>P4 “People from the outside make appointments to visit; and they are given information about the organisations’ operations and what opportunities are available.”</p> <p>P8 “It makes outside people understand the company better, and closes the gap between people and the company.”</p> <p>P13 “Educate, entertain and inform the external stakeholders.”</p>
Motivation	<p>P2 “Visitors become motivated and excited.”</p> <p>P7 “The role first and foremost is to represent the organisation in a professional and ethical manner.”</p>

4.10.2 Importance of the Visitors’ Centre

The participants unanimously agreed that the visitors’ centre is important for people, visiting taking into consideration various reasons why they feel it is the best place for the public to get information. P3 said, “*The centre gives one the insight of what power generation is about, as most people do not understand this process*”. Likewise, P4 declared, “*The centre is very important that it allows external people to gain more information about the company and advice on what opportunities are available within the organisation*”.

Furthermore, P5, P6 and P7 mentioned, *“The centre serves as a one-stop shop; where individuals come to get information about a very large organisation, collected and packaged in a simple and user-friendly manner which creates a bond between stakeholders and the organisation”*.

Participant 9 specifically focused on the academic aspect of the visitors’ centre, and said: *“Students are given theoretical information at the institutions but this gets more interesting and exciting when students come to the centre to see the practical experience of what is being taught in classes”*. P14 in agreement, also added, *“Without the visitors’ centre it could probably be difficult to gain access into the organisation, which has been the issue with other organisations without this establishment”*.

P11 raised the issue of mentoring and coaching that is over and above the centre’s mandate and said, *“People come and find it interesting to be guided professionally by someone within the organisation”*.

Table 4.2: The importance of the Visitors’ Centre

Quotes/Codes	Comments generated
Practical real life experience	<p>P1 “In fact we are going to prove the theoretical part in a practical version and allow learners to experience the real deal about what we teach them in class.”</p> <p>P3 “The visitors’ centre will give them the opportunity to be in areas that they can’t go into, for example into the boiler or turbine.”</p> <p>P12 “This works well when one has been physically present at the</p>

	establishment and has seen what is being spoken about.”
Sub-Quotes/Codes	Comments generated
Easy access to information	<p>P1 “These centres allow us access into the company without any hassles.”</p> <p>P4 “They allow external people to gain more information about the company and advice on what opportunities are available.”</p> <p>P9 “Without the visitors’ centre I think it would be difficult to get into any organisation.”</p> <p>P14 “You can access the most critical information about the organisation being communicated by the centre.”</p>
Assist in decision making	<p>P4 “The centre also assists those visiting to make good decisions on their electricity usage.”</p> <p>P6 “Whilst on the tour, you are already encouraged either to take engineering subjects for your career or to apply for available positions already advertised.”</p>

4.10.3 Information Sharing by the Visitors' Centre

Asking about the information shared with visitors. P1, P2, P4, P5 said, *"The information received was helpful and eye opening as it created a link between theory and practice due to practical examples shared by the centre which creates a better understanding of the processes of operations followed by the power station"*.

Furthermore, P3 added, *"The information shared was delivered professionally as the facilitator was knowledgeable and visitors were afforded the opportunity to engage by asking questions"*. In support, P6 and P8 went on to say, *"The information made sense as the personnel at the centre tried by all means to use simple language that everyone understands, instead of using very technical terms as it is often the case at the university"*.

Over and above the information shared, P7 highlighted, *"Visitors are given the opportunity to experience what Eskom employees at the power station get to do on a daily basis and that widens visitors' perspective and answers a lot of questions that they had when they were being taught in class"*. P12 said, *"There was information we were not aware of and coming to the centre with the structure and order of the presentation made perfect sense, especially on some of the processes we were not aware of, which were elaborated on"*.

However, in contrast, P14 said, *"Even though the information shared was valuable, the personnel however was not entirely open to share some of the information, which created a rift between the host and the visitors"*.

4.10.3.1 Usage of Information Shared During the Visit

The participants were asked if they could use the information shared with them in the future. P1 mentioned, *"The information was clear and even additional material like pamphlets will be very useful for future reference"*. P3 affirmed this by saying, *"Even when the questions were not answered at the centre, it was later verified with someone that had more knowledge about the subject during the plant tour which made more sense when elaborated upon"*.

Participant 4 and P5 alluded, *"The information shared at the centre cleared any myths heard about electricity production which means going forward the correct processes"*

will be followed and educating others will be much easier". P6 and P8 consequently, mentioned, *"The information was elaborate; and will assist in future engagements and in further research"*. P10, P12 and P13 declared, *"The information was shared chronologically which made it easy to understand, and will assist in applying some of the theories in the future"*.

However, P14 asserted, *"The information was clear, even though it was not complete, which was sparked by the host who seemed to be disorientated and that made things very difficult for meaningful engagements"*.

4.10.3.2 Concerns Raised During the Visit

When asked about concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit. P4 and P10 highlighted, *"Time constraints were one aspect that made the tour be rushed through"*. P7 added, *"There was information that was not shared, for example the issue of Eskom not privately owned and the building of coal-fired power stations instead of green energy stations and lastly the supply of electricity to our neighbouring countries while there are so many outages and load shedding in South Africa"*. In support, P14 emphasised, *"The presenter was always mentioning the issue of time when questions were raised which ended up not being fully addressed"*.

Table 4.3: Information Sharing by the Visitors' Centre

Quotes/Codes	Comments generated
Knowledge hub	<p>P2 "Before I visited the centre, there was some information I did not understand, and being there has enlarged my experience and knowledge."</p> <p>P4 "This information made more sense as it confirms what is being taught and clarified most of the misconceptions"</p>

	<p>about power stations and environmental impacts.”</p> <p>P5 “The usage of models and videos made it easy for us to understand what we normally hear about.”</p> <p>P14 “The information was valuable, however the personnel were not open enough to share some information.”</p>
Sub-Quotes/Codes	Comments generated
Clarity and ability to use the information shared	<p>P1 “For me, I have even taken the information I got from the centre and added to my lesson preparations.”</p> <p>P4 “This cleared any myths, which means going forward I can follow the correct process and educating others.”</p> <p>P8 “The suggestions on electricity safety, usage and environmental challenges within the home came in very handy, as these will be shared with other people in the community.”</p>

	P13 “The structure of presentations is what makes everything so interesting and easy to articulate.”
Concerns and questions raised during the visit	<p>P7 “Yes, there was some information that was not shared mainly due to time constraints.”</p> <p>P14 “The host kept on mentioning time when we raised issues and some questions were not fully addressed.”</p>

4.10.4 Need for Repeat Visits

When asked if this was their first time visiting the centre, and if they thought, it would be necessary to visit the centre again in the future. Out of the fifteen (15) participants, ten (10) said that it was their first, while five (5) said it was not the first time visiting the centre. All the interviewed participants indicated that, given the chance, they would visit again. P1 said, *“There was some information not covered especially in one tour, it would be necessary to visit again”*. P2 and P3 added, *“We get a new group every year, so we arrange for these to come through. However this also assists in getting new piece of information all the time one comes to the centre”*.

P4 highlighted, *“Since there seems to be technological changes and advancements, there might be more information that could be obtained by coming back”*. Furthermore, P7 and P11 said, *“A lot changes occur frequently, for example the way presentations and tours are conducted with the upgraded information and activities; so this means that visiting the centre again will be beneficial”*. In the same way, P8 declared, *“Visiting again would assist in fostering long-lasting relationships especially when one will be applying for jobs”*.

Table 4.4: Repeat Visits to the Centre

Quotes/Codes	Comments generated
Sustaining relationships	<p>P3 “Every time I go, there is some new piece of information.”</p> <p>P6 “Coming and joining other groups would be best.”</p> <p>P8 “Foster long-lasting relationships especially when one will be applying for jobs.”</p> <p>P9 “From the university, we have made it part of the curriculum for our students to visit the centre once or twice a year.”</p>

4.10.5 Information to be Added by the Visitors’ Centre

The researcher then asked the participants if they thought there was any information that should be included into the visitors’ centre tour plan. P2 said, *“The introduction of interactive models where learners can touch and experience would be a great thing”*. P3 mentioned, *“While the current presentation is good, there are areas for improvement such as the non-working models that needs repairing”*. P4 indicated, *“There should be groups that are considered for an intense plant tour such as engineers and technical people”*.

Furthermore, P7 stated, *“If projects and initiatives on sustaining the company can be shared with everyone that will gather support from the public”*. Likewise, P10 said, *“More information could be added if the time factor is looked at”*. While P12 and P14 indicated, *“The information could be categorised according to areas of interest and*

subject matter experts be part of the tour”. P13 suggested, “Introduction of fun activities can talk to younger people would be great for the visitors’ centre”.

Table 4.5: Information to be Added by the Visitors’ Centre

Quotes/Codes	Comments generated
Technological advancement	<p>P4 “I think it will be necessary since technologies change all the time.”</p> <p>P7 “The other thing is to introduce interactive modelling and 3D into your facilities.”</p> <p>P13 “Structural and technological reforms like fun activities for younger visitors.”</p>
Review of tour times	<p>P10 “Apart from the time aspect all was good for a newcomer.”</p> <p>P15 “I think mostly the issue of time should be looked into as this will allow visitors to ask questions and get clarity not in a hurry.”</p>
Involvement of technical staff and review of overall Eskom strategy on sustainability	<p>P7 “Projects and initiatives on sustaining the company can be shared with everyone.”</p> <p>P14 “Include subject matter experts to address more technical questions.”</p>

4.10.6 Target Audience for the Visitors' Centre

The participants were asked who they thought could benefit from visiting the centre. P1, P3 said, *“Students from Grade 10, who are starting to select streams: coming to the centre would assist them to make career choices and be interested in the engineering field”*. In addition, participant 4 indicated, *“Anyone from young to old could benefit by visiting the centre as it is not only curriculum based but there is also general information such as electricity safety and other fun facts are shared by the visitors’ centre”*.

In the same way, P6 mentioned, *“By visiting the centre people are able to make sound decisions on their career choices, especially engineering-based as the centre does not only concentrate on Eskom, but other industries as well”*. In addition, P7 said, *“The visit to the centre could change the mind-set of learners in seeing that engineering or technical fields are not difficult areas of study if one is determined and motivated”*.

Furthermore, P13 said, *“Anyone could benefit by visiting the centre, young ones to understand electricity safety, older ones to make clear career choices, and adults to better understand how to save electricity and opportunities available”*.

Table 4.6: Target Audience to Visit the Centre

Quotes/Codes	Comments generated
Educational and career choices	<p>P1 “Some people regret not having this information at an early stage to make decisions on their career choices.”</p> <p>P3 “Schools, universities, colleges, parents and professionals, as well as career guidance counsellors who can add value to the education of the young ones.”</p>

	<p>P11 “People who would like to go into business with Eskom.”</p> <p>P13 “Older ones helped to make clear career choices.”</p>
Electricity safety and saving	<p>P4 “What is shared is not only curriculum based but also general electricity safety.”</p> <p>P7 “People can come to appreciate what Eskom is doing to combat the issues such as bridging and stealing of electricity.”</p>

4.10.7 Recommendation to Visit the Centre

Lastly, when asked if they would recommend this visitors’ centre to anyone, all participants said yes; they would encourage and recommend that those who have not visited the centre do so, in order to see the practical activities of what is being taught there. P2 said, *“In our area of work, everyone within the field should visit the centre in order to understand the workings of a power plant and the activities that can implemented to ensure that learners and students adhere to safety protocols when dealing with electricity”*.

P3 added, *“The word of mouth could do so much in ensuring that more people are aware of the centre and get to experience what we were exposed to”*. P9 and P13 went on to say, *“I would recommend people to come and learn more about things over and above just electricity production, and what the media is not sharing with the public”*. P10 indicated, *“The recommendation would be for people out there to come and understand why the country is experiencing load shedding, infrastructure issues*

and the high-level issues Eskom is dealing with currently, in order to appreciate the hard work done by the organisation”.

4.11 DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher discusses the findings based on the theoretical framework explored in the previous chapters.

4.11.1 Stakeholder Perceptions

This researcher is of the opinion that the stakeholder perceptions are a very important concept to organisations as they may be either a supportive or a detrimental mechanism that affects company operations and ultimately their survival. In the same way, an observation by the researcher highlighted that most visitors perceive the centre as being a place where one can come through to get over and above the organisation’s information. Toader, Michalcewicz-Kaniowska, Zajdel & Dimitrescu (2015:7) define a visitors’ centre as “a permanently established physical location that provides visitors with information, interest and entertainment about the organisation”. They further state that the visitors’ centre is a vital part of the organisation’s customer experience.

P3 corroborated this by mentioning, *“The centre is like a window, looking into the organisation from the outside, which provides an overview of the day-to-day operations while trying to make sure that the information is user friendly and delivered professionally”.* From the research, it is evident that the visitors’ centre could be regarded as an establishment, where the external public comes to for information about the organisation and learn more about the practical operations the organisation undertakes on a daily basis. Perception of participants showed that the centre is mainly a formal information hub, which is set up as an extension of a department, or a stand-alone section. This is supported by P4 who said, *“The centre is a formal place where the public comes to get information”.* P6 also affirmed, *“The centre could be a facility within the organisation that deals with external people”.*

The role of the visitors’ centre ranges from a mere information-sharing place to a more structured knowledge, motivation and an exploration offering to those coming to visit. P2 said, *“When a person comes to the centre they can explore and learn better as most of the things are practical”.* P5 said, *“The centre acts as a go between whereby*

visitors are provided with comprehensive information; and in turn made them aware how they affect the operations of the organisation". Muhunthan (2017:5) confirmed this idea in his study where he stated that the visitors' centre can promote a positive experience by offering reliable visitor information about the organisation. Muhunthan (2017:5) further outlines that the centre can enhance enjoyment, repeated visits and serve as brand ambassadors for the visitors' centre. In support, P7 and P8 stated, "The visitors' centre offers information and practical experiences on how the organisation operates".

From the findings, it is evident that the centre is indeed important to the people that come to visit due to the nature of engagements, reliable and professionally confirmed information provided to visitors. This is affirmed by Gao, Lin, & Zhang (2020:4), where they outline that, for visitors' centres to be considered important, they should engage in motivation and involvement of the visitors for the value and creation of experiences that provide positive image of the establishment. In support, P7 stated, *"The centre is important as it highlights all the operations of the organisation, and this can be tailored according to the visitors' focus"*. In the same way, P9 stated, *"This is a place where visitors can see real life experiences apart from what is shared on other platforms such as website or printed material"*. The personal touch of the visitors' centre makes it important. Su, Nguyen, Nguyen & Tran (2020:3) corroborates this statement by confirming that visitors' experiences are emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual impressions that they gain by engaging with the visitors' centre, which makes it different from others, by being unique, holistic and functional.

4.11.2 Stakeholder Engagements and Relationships

Engagements with stakeholders enable the organisation to understand how the external public view the organisation and develop with strategies that will assist in enhancing the efforts or remedying any challenges that arise from these engagements. Kebete & Wondirad (2019:83) support this view when they discuss sustainable visitors' centres. They declare that visitor interactions with the centre occur in unique settings involving interrelated values and interests. These interactions require sensitive and responsible engagements ensure a regulated flow of information and efficient use of the feedback received from the visitors. In the same way, P2 stated, *"Visiting the centre and the information shared with them enlarged the*

experience and knowledge, which assists in lesson preparations at the university". P3 also mentioned, *"The information shared by the visitors' centre was informative and the facilitator was knowledgeable about how the power station operates"*. In addition, P7 indicated, *"The practical experience of the visit where they were afforded an opportunity to interact with employees is what made them feel like part of the organisation"*.

During the study, the researcher found out that, when engaging with stakeholders, the information shared needs to be clear, concise and those receiving the information should be able to comprehend and use it. In support of this perception Weng, Liang & Bao (2020:1), emphasise that in interpersonal communication, which the centre uses, the tour guide can actively deliver the organisational values, interact with visitors on a personal basis, give immediate feedback, and satisfy their emotional needs by sharing over and above what has been scheduled on the programme. P1 corroborated this perception by stating, *"The information shared was clear and we have included part of it in the lesson preparations to enhance the curriculum to add first-hand experience with the students"*. Likewise, P4 declared, *"The information cleared myths that they always had about power generation and this will assist them in educating others in the future"*.

Stakeholder engagements pave way for better and fruitful relationships between stakeholders and the organisation. This researcher found this out when asking the participants, whether this was their first time visiting the centre, and if they would be willing to come back again given a chance. Murdy & Pike (2012:1281) support the above by stating that the key goals of stakeholder relationships are to enhance brand loyalty, increase customer retention, and stimulate repeat visits to the centres. P7 and P11 who have both been to the centre more than once respectively mentioned, *"Things change, technologies evolve and this requires one to always get updated with new information"*. Participants consistently agreed that they would visit the centre again given the chance, which shows that, with successful stakeholder engagements, relationships could be built and maintained. Regularly returning visitors are not only much easier to convert, they are also more likely to become amazing brand advocates. Kruger, Botha & Saayman (2012:110) confirm this idea by mentioning that visitors who have been recruited by those who came before have a fear of missing the experience

and also, other entertainment as well as the recreational activities offered by the visitors' centre.

4.11.3 Visitors' Centre as a Strategic Tool for Engagement

Visitors' centres are the face of the organisation, and they should employ strategies and models that support the values and mission of the organisation. This can be done by introducing new ways of doing things and aligning these to evolving technological advances that are supported by research. Waligo, Clarke & Hawkins (2013:343), in justification of this notion, advise that when strategies are created, they should relate to what stakeholders deem important and support visitors' centre sustainability. The researcher identified ideas shared by the participants during the study for the enhancement and relevance of the visitors' centre. P2, P3 and P13 supported the ideas by suggesting, *The visitors' centre should look at advancing the technology by introducing interactive models and 3D technology, where visitors can touch and experience live material, which will get them excited while they learn*". P7 added, *"Over and above interactives and 3D modelling, the visitors' centre could introduce more ideas such as virtual presentations, where the learners do not need to leave the classroom but rather the presentation is done online to save on cost and travel time"*. Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan (2010:573) add that visitors' centre marketing should include co-ordination, leadership and advocacy, development of an attractive set of facilities, and liaison, as well as visitor services to ensure successful implementation of the strategies.

In the same way, P14 emphasised, *"Subject matter experts could be involved in the tours to assist with the more technical questions"*. Cvitanovic, van Putten, Kelly, Feldman, van Steveninck, Mackay, Badullovich & Gourlay (2020:1) endorse this notion when they advise that a key component to successful visitors' centres is an effective and clear communication and engagement strategy which is focused on raising awareness and giving out concise information about the organisation to different stakeholders. They further highlight that the information shared with visitors should impart knowledge and be useful for the future.

Throughout the research, it has emerged that stakeholders value the visitors' centre and regard them as experience establishments that offer a variety of knowledge sharing tactics. The centre is an information hub that is mandated to educate, entertain

and inform the public of the organisation's operations and core strategies. Stakeholders form part of the visitors' centre community viewed as useful contributors to the centre by providing feedback, which could be used as a link between both the organisation and its stakeholders, which creates long-lasting relationships and ultimately influence the organisation's reputation and stakeholder communication.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided the analysis, discussion and interpretations of the results. This chapter provides an overview of the study by presenting a clear answer to the research question and objectives. The research report confirms the value of the study, along with the limitations that the researcher faced during the study. The researcher ends the chapter with recommendations for further research and conclusions.

To achieve the objective of this study, the following overarching and sub-questions were formulated.

Main question:

What is the stakeholders' perception concerning the visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement?

Sub-questions:

Research sub-question 1

- What is the visitors' centre strategic role within the organisation?

Research sub-question 2

- What the reputation of the visitors' centre is as perceived among stakeholders?

Research sub-question 3

- What is the role of the visitors' centre in stakeholder engagement?

5.2 CONCLUSION

Taking into account the study objectives and research questions, the analysis of the interviews has highlighted important points that the visitors' centre can implement and become a strategic tool for stakeholder engagement. The theoretical framework of the study ensured that an extensive literature review was conducted, in order to

support the outcome of stakeholder engagement, relationships, and reputation management of the organisation using the visitors' centre as the strategic tool for stakeholder perceptions.

The interviews conducted with participants confirmed that the visitors' centre is an important aspect of the organisation because individuals have easy access to the information and can be able to support the theory with practical examples. The findings have proven the visitors' centre to be a valuable experience to the participants in that they can now compare processes and the information given with what they have learnt, or with general information acquired from various sources. After the interviews, it is clear that the participants found the experience of visiting the centre to be an important one that ensured that their perceptions about the organisation somehow changed for the better; and they emphasised that they would recommend others to visit the centre. This shows the strategic nature of the visitors' centre which closes the gap between the relationships of external stakeholders with the organisation.

The study has highlighted that the visitors' centre could be regarded as an experience centre that provides solutions and resources for better quality power generation. Recommendations that the centre should incorporate revolving and emerging quality information and digital aspects were part of most responses, as well as the idea of collaboration to convene various types of people can be achieved with the digital age. The centre is regarded also as a source of organisational and personal heritage and identity. Lastly, it was established that the visitors' centre could be a strategic tool, which could enable engagements, and build relationships with stakeholders that would eventually affect or support organisational reputation.

The centre is viewed as a link between the organisation and its stakeholders who sought to find more information about coal technologies and measures in place to generate power responsibly and in a sustainable manner. Individuals who visit the centre daily hold pre-conceived perceptions based on information obtained from various sources and they either confirm these perceptions or alter their thinking after visiting the centre. The ideas and suggestions of the visitors to the centre are collected and recorded. The study has revealed that the visitors' centres' operations can build sustainable relationships with these visitors and feedback can be used to formulate

strategies that will assist the organisation's viability and efficiency in order to be a reputable and easily accessible part of the organisation to its stakeholders.

5.3 VALUE OF THE STUDY

This study could be used to add value to further research by exploring various concepts, and expanding them in the field of communication, stakeholder relationship and reputation management. Further research could be done in other similar centres to indicate whether the results are comparable or different. A mixed method research study could be done to have a deeper understanding on stakeholder engagement. A related possible study of which would look into different visitors' centres in the country and globally could be conducted in order to understand the operations and strategic intent of both establishments.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations were evident to the study:

- The study was conducted at only one visitors' centre.
- The interviews had to be arranged at the participants' convenient time, which resulted in some being delayed due to other commitments.
- The impact of COVID-19 saw some interviews being conducted telephonically and on MS teams which also contributed to the delay in conclusion of the field work.
- The researcher had to substitute participants who could not connect on MS teams with those who had access.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are made based on the findings of the study, as well as recommendations for the future. Researchers could replicate the investigation carried out in this study by comparing the stakeholders' perceptions on visitors' centres as a tool of engagement at other centres in South Africa.

- Organisations should put in place methods of measuring stakeholder perceptions by implementing a feedback system, such as online forms

and surveys using cellphone technology, as well their guiding principles such as analytics to enable to collation of results.

- Have suggestion boxes at key points to ascertain visitors' perceptions / suggestions.
- Establish a stakeholder forum or committee including community members to gather suggestions and ideas on how best to service stakeholders.
- The feedback system such as online forms and surveys for the stakeholder perceptions could be used to continuously assist in improving the services offered by the centre such as the implementation of technologically advanced models and hours of operation.
- The introduction of virtual visits due to the new normal should also be looked into, where visits could be arranged and conducted online while not taking away the personal experience of visitors.
- It would be good to design state of the art digital communication artefacts that are more relevant for the digital global village.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The visitors' centre in the Vaal region caters for a variety of stakeholders across the country and abroad, representing coal-fired power stations in South Africa. The centre is viewed as a link between the organisation and its stakeholders, which sought to find more information about coal technologies and the measures in place to generate power responsibly and in a sustainable manner.

The ideas and suggestions of the visitors to the centre are collected and recorded. However, the collected data has not been used to support the fact that the visitors' centres' operations build sustainable relationships with visitors and whether feedback is used to formulate strategies that will assist the organisation's viability and efficiency. Therefore, this study gave clarity on how the visitors' centre could be used as a strategic tool for engagement and feedback received from visitors used to enhance the organisations stakeholder management policies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Interview Guide

STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS ON VISITORS' CENTRE AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR ENGAGEMENT: LESSONS FROM A POWER STATION VISITORS CENTRE IN THE VAAL REGION

Dear Participant

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study. The purpose of the study is to explore stakeholder perceptions on the visitors' centre as a strategic tool for engagement.

The interview should take not more than **30 minutes** to complete. You are requested to share your perceptions and there is no right or wrong answer, only your opinions are important. Your individual answers will be confidential as all information will be consolidated to provide a holistic view of the research analysis related to stakeholder perceptions. The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. You will be provided with a summary of the findings upon request. The research is purely for academic purposes and the information obtained will be kept confidential.

Yours Sincerely

Interviewer

Participant

Teboho Ntsabiseng

Give your opinions regarding the following statements; remember you can elaborate as much as you want in order to substantiate your viewpoint

Section 1

This section will address stakeholder perceptions

1. In your opinion what do you understand by the word visitors' centre and what role or function of the visitors' centre should be?
2. Do you think the centres are important to the people visiting them? elaborate

Section 2

This section will address stakeholder engagements and relationships

1. When you visited the centre, what did you think about the information shared with you?
2. Was the information shared during the visit clear, and can you be able to use this information in your everyday life going forward?
3. Did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?
4. Was this your first time visiting this centre?
 - a. If no, do you think anything changed from the last time you visited?
 - b. If yes, do you think it could be necessary to visit the centre in the future?

Section 3

This section will address the Visitors' Centre as a strategic tool

1. Do you think there is information that can be included by the visitors centre not addressed during your visit?
2. Who do you think can benefit by visiting the centre?
3. Would you recommend this visitors centre to anyone?

Appendix 2 – Field Study Feedback

FIELD WORK – INTERVIEWS OF FIFTEEN (15) PARTICIPANTS SELECTED CONVENIENT NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING

P1

Interviewer: Thank you for allowing me this time to conduct the interview with you about the visit you have encountered recently at our power station, I will be asking you a few questions and during the interview I will be recording as well as taking some notes, and would like you to give your opinion and be elaborate as possible. If there is anything else we have not discussed then I will give you a chance to voice it at the end, never mind me because I will also be taking notes while you are talking.

Interviewer: So, the first question eh, in your opinion, what do you understand by the word visitors' centre, like in your own words, what you would say is a visitors' centre and the role this centre should have?

Participant 1: Well, I think it is a centre where, like in a company you have production and the centre will then elaborate on what you do as a company and various jobs, like a technician; their job in the company is this one and this is what you need in order to be a technician. The place is more like where you get information about the company and how it operates.

Interviewer: Alright, I think that's great, thank you so much, and then, do you think they are important in people visiting these centres?

Participant 1: Yes, for me it is important, eh if I can recall, in my subject electrical trade, that's where like we explain electrical distributors and electrical equipment, so it is good where now we take the students to your centre so that they can see physically the equipment that we are talking about in class. In fact, we are going to prove the theoretical part in a practical version and allow the learners to experience the real

deal about what we teach them in class. So yes these centres are very important as they allow us access into the company without any hassles as well.

Interviewer: What do you think the role or function of the visitors' centre should be, in like, I know you have already mentioned this but would you like to expand more on what we can do specifically at this visitors' centre?

Participant 1: Okay, I think the expansion should be time, the time given to visitors is not sufficient, there should be more of practical tours in areas of interest, for example, if electricians are visiting and they need to see the rotor, they should be taken to that specific area not only explain to them. The role of the centre is therefore to facilitate access and possibilities of the visitors to be able to go into areas that they might be interested in.

Interviewer: So you mean we should include more of technical people to assist with tours?

Participant 1: Yes definitely, you should include technical people to assist in explaining some aspects, which they will be more elaborate than when a non-technical person is explaining.

Interviewer: Great, and then when you visited the centre, what did you think about the information shared with you?

Participant 1: For me the information was fruitful, it was supporting what theory is saying, you know you elaborate how do you generate, transmit and distribute electricity, from start where the coal comes from and how it is being transported, burnt and disposed of. Therefore, you have given us more information that supports what we teach in class.

Interviewer: And then, was the information shared during the visit, was it clear, could you be able to use it especially in your work environment

Participant 1: Yes, the information that was shared with me was clear, I can be able to use the information, even the additional material like pamphlets we are given, it's actually

specific from what we expect from the centre. For me I have even taken the information I got from the centre and added to my lesson preparations to enhance the curriculum to add the first-hand experience with the students.

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?

Participant 1: No, for me the questions were addressed and addressed well, the personnel at the centre were very knowledgeable and gave examples that everyone could relate with. So the information was really user friendly. I can be able to use this information in the future

Interviewer: Even though, probably for your kids, they wanted more clarity on certain aspects

Participant 1: Yah, I can say it was a matter of time, not really, that information or questions were not addressed fully.

Interviewer: Uhhh, was this your first time visiting the centre

Participant 1: Yes, it was the first time for me

Interviewer: Do you think it could be necessary to visit the centre again to get more information

Participant 1: Yes, it is necessary, remember that there are some of the sections that we did not cover the last time, so we would need to come and focus on some areas as we know you cannot cover everything in one day

Interviewer: Do you think that there is information that can be included during the visit that we did not include when you were at the centre.

Participant 1: For me well no, because I believe all the information is there, it all depends of who is presenting that might miss some things, but I feel everything is being covered

Interviewer: And then who do you think can benefit by visiting our centre?

Participant 1: Alright, eh, people who can benefit from these visits are students from grade 10, you know when you start with maths and science and want to follow technical field, you need to know this information in an early stage. Some people regret not getting

this information earlier and making decisions based on assumptions so if they are exposed to this early on they can make the right choices

Interviewer: And older people like industry people or pensioners; do you think they can also benefit from these tours?

Participant 1: I think it is very important for them to go to the centre as well; because some of these people they do not know the electricity value chain. Again, be educated on the safety side of electricity usage, which is more important because some people they just call anyone from the streets to fix their electricity problems, which can be very dangerous.

Interviewer: And then lastly, would you recommend anybody to come to the power station and visit?

Participant 1: Yes, from my side, I can recommend people to come to visit, and in sometime during the year we need to include the main stream, who are people that will be going into the industry very soon to have the background of how this really works.

Interviewer: Oh, well thank you so much, we are at the end of our interview and as I have explained, this is for academic purposes and the results can be shared with the employer and participants as and when needed.

P2

Interviewer: Thank you very much for allowing us to do this interview with you, during the interview I will be recording as well as taking notes, so the interview is going to be an open discussion and I will be doing follow up questions as well. Firstly in your opinion what do you understand by the word visitors' centre, like what do you think the visitors' centre is and the role it should have?

Participant 2: Okay, the visitors' centre is where visitors come to get the information regarding the power station; because you know, there is a lot of things that students do not know and some of them they believe what they see, you can tell them about Eskom and

all that but when they really see it, it is much better, they become motivated and excited. So the visitors' centre to me is a place where we motivate our learners, where they explore more and learn better. They become more excited when they see these things we always tell them about at face value

Interviewer: Alright, thank you, and then do you think these centres anywhere in the country, do you think they are important for people to visit them?

Participant 2: Yes, they are important because I have realised from my students, when they come back they will not stop talking about the power generation if it is Eskom, and if it is Sasol, they won't stop talking about petrol and they will even want to know better. They will go to the internet to google; it becomes exciting because they saw the whole thing how it really works.

Interviewer: Okay, alright and then uhm, what do you think the role of these visitors' centre should be, what should they be giving out there?

Participant 2: Number one, at the moment people who go to these centres are those that know about the visitors' centre but we do have people who do not know about the visitors' centres, so I feel that the visitors' centres must also go to the high schools, try to go to the matriculants, uhhh let them know that there is a visitors' centre operating this way, I believe if us at the tertiary level receive learners who already went there, they will get here, motivated, they will perform and they will really know what they want

Interviewer: When you visited the centre, what did you think about the information that was shared with you at that time?

Participant 2: Well, I cannot lie, even myself there were things that I did not know or understand better, so going there, I think I have been there about three years now. So it has enlarged my experience, my knowledge, even when I am giving my lessons, they are much better because of the information I received from the visitors centre. The

information is always so much better and more elaborate as you go through the tour every year and new information is added at all times. This gives the visitors a better understanding of the operations and processes followed for different operations.

Interviewer: And then was the information shared during the visit clear, and can you be able to use this information in your everyday life going forward?

Participant 2: Yes, it was very clear, especially from how power is being generated, we need a lot of water from the river, we need coal so and so. Everything was clear, I do not have any loopholes whereby I would say that part was not clear. This you can also see from the post visit lessons at the college that the students now have a better understanding and the questions they ask are more related to what they have seen or heard when they were visiting

Interviewer: So I think this one goes back to the one we just spoke about, did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?

Participant 2: No, I can't pick up one because normally the facilitator will ask if there are any questions and then we will raise our hands to ask questions. We are very free when we go there, even learners I don't recall one of my learners complaining to say but I was not given a chance to ask questions. They will come back even talking about the visit the entire day

Interviewer: Okay, was this your first time visiting the centre?

Participant 2: No, this was my third time

Interviewer: So would you go back again and why?

Participant 2: Yes, the reason is, every year we get a new group, so each and every level 4 group; I take them there so that they also get to see the generation process and all that, so it is a continuous thing each year

Interviewer: So do you think there is information that can included by the visitors' centre that was not addressed during the visit, any other information over and above maybe?

Participant 2: Uhhmm, what I can say is maybe to improve or to have something new is a good thing, eh in the visitors' centre there is a place where the students go in the exhibition. I think if we can have interactives where learners can touch stuff, because you know how learners love experiencing live things, it gets them excited. That could be a good thing.

Interviewer: And then, who do you think can benefit by visiting these centres?

Participant 2: Uhhmm learners who are doing Maths and Science and want to be in the engineering field, I believe those are the learners who will benefit

Interviewer: Do you think anyone else who is maybe at corporate and also older people can benefit by going to the centres and why?

Participant 2: Yes, you know learning is for everyone, we cannot say because you are a mother you can't go there. Like let me make an example, I am working at Sedibeng, because I am the electrical lecturer, I am the only one exposed to the visitors' centre. But I feel that my colleagues must also go there to learn more.

Interviewer: Would you recommend this visitors' centre specifically to anyone?

Participant 2: Yes, I would, hence I said that the experienced I have felt there, other people can also have a chance to see that, especially my colleagues, because I am in electrical field, but there are people that are doing mechatronics, and this is mechanical and electrical, so they can also benefit.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, we are actually done, that was it and we will compile everything and after that compile a report and give feedback. Again thank you for giving us this time.

P3

Interviewer: Thank you for taking this time to allow us to do the interview with you, during the interview please note that I will be recording the whole session and also taking some notes, so this is going to be an open discussion. So, let's start, in your opinion what

do you understand by the word visitors' centre and the role or function of this centre?

Participant 3: Visitors centre to me is a window looking to the power station or the organisation from the outside, and the role is to really be informative of what the organisation does on a daily basis. How the power station as this was the particular interest operates and how they stay within their environmental agreements with the government

Interviewer: Do you think these centres are important to the people visiting them?

Participant 3: Yes, the centre as said gives you insight of what power generation is about, as most people really do not understand this. The visitors centre will then take you through the process and afford you the opportunity to ask questions about certain areas of interest which allows visitors a platform to engage with the personnel and get clarity on what they have already learnt and to get confirmation about these aspects of the production process. The visitors centre will give them the opportunity to be in areas that they can't be able to go into by giving out this information, for example going into the boiler or inside the turbine.

Interviewer: When you visited the centre, what did you think about the information that was shared with you?

Participant 3: I was happy with the information as it was informative, the facilitator was knowledgeable about how the power station operates. The information was given out very professionally and we were given the opportunity to engage so it was not just one way which made it even more interesting where most myths were discarded and the correct information obtained. The information is also provided in written form which is verified and that adds even more value on what we consume from the visitors centre.

Interviewer: Was the information shared during the visit clear, and can you be able to use this in your everyday life going forward?

Participant 3: The information was clear and informative. There was a lot of questions that we asked and some of these were not answered at the centre but later dealt with when we went inside the station. The information was verified with subject matter experts and it made more sense when elaborated upon by the technical staff.

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?

Participant 3: I would say that there were no concerns or questions that were not answered because those that we could not get answers to at the visitors centre, they were dealt with when we went into the station. This cleared all the confusion and elements of information distrust from the visitors which added more confidence in the centre and its operations. Well there are some questions that one would not want to answer especially if they are not familiar with certain areas within the power station but rather seek for extra assistance from the areas involved. I loved how the presenter took up the concerns raised and made a follow up then came back and gave feedback even after we have left the power station.

Interviewer: Was this your first visit to this centre?

Participant 3: No, I have visited the centre more than once after recommendations from my colleagues and yes I would visit again because all the time I go there is some new piece of information that comes up. I know that you will ask me later on if I would recommend anyone to visit you guys and I must say the recommendation I got made me to look at electricity production differently after my first visit and I was attracted to visit again so that I can get clarity on some of the information that I got across as I was busy doing some research.

Interviewer: Do you think there is information that can be included by the visitors' centre not addressed during your visit?

Participant 3: Well the current presentation showing the history is excellent, and can be improved by informing more. The information is comprehensive and given very nicely because it goes according to how the process happens in the station, so people will not get lost on the way. Safety induction is very good being taken to the centre as this is where everyone starts before going into the station, so they know exactly how to behave when going inside. We need to work on the generator model that gives basics on how power generation is done. These models do not need a lot of money to repair, so if you get your technical guys especially those that recently graduated to assist, maybe give them these as part of their training outputs it can assist the centre a lot. With regards to posters I think we need to look at interactive models and 3D modelling not just having one picture all the time there. This can also be done with the assistance of your graduates in training to come up with concepts on how they can enhance the centre. The centre should be interesting and invite people to come over and over especially us who are in the education space and looking at improving technological advances of the country and our organisations.

Interviewer: Who do you think can benefit by visiting the centre?

Participant 3: Well, I think that people who can benefit from visiting the centre is Schools to assist them to make career choices and get interested in the engineering field, universities who have engineering students and those doing environment, safety and other courses that are related to power generation, technical students from colleges and other universities, parents and professionals in the field of engineering, career guidance counsellors can also add more value by visiting the centre and assist in inviting their groups to come to the centre.

Interviewer: Would you recommend this visitors' centre to anyone

Participant 3: I already have and will continue to do so. I believe that the word of mouth can do so much in ensuring that more people are aware of the centre and get to experience what we have been exposed to.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, this is the end of our interview and the information will be collated and results shared with everyone as and when required.

P4

Interviewer: Firstly, let me thank you for giving us the opportunity to conduct this interview with you. I will be asking you some questions and allow you to respond based on your opinion then follow-up if there is any clarity from my side. The interview is going to be an open discussion and I will be recording and taking notes throughout the session. Well in your opinion what do you understand by the word visitors' centre and the role the centre should have?

Participant 4: The visitors' centre is a formal place where the public comes to get information about the workings of the company, and the role is mainly to give concise insight on how the organisation operates. So people from the outside make appointments to visit and they are given information about the organisations' operations and what opportunities are available for people coming from the outside.

Interviewer: Alright and do you think these centres are important to people visiting them?

Participant 4: Yes these centres are very important as they allow external people to gain more information about the company and advice on what opportunities are available. The centre also assists in those visiting to make good decisions on their electricity usage and the safety associated with using this precious resource. It just opens eyes and make people to look at the organisation in a different light.

Interviewer: So, when you visited the centre, what did you think about the information shared with you?

Participant 4: The information shared during the visit was valuable in that comparison of theory, practice and live experiences made so much sense and assisted us in more understanding of how things are done at the station. This information made more sense as it collaborates what is being taught out there and misspelled most of the misconceptions we always heard about power stations and environmental and livelihood impacts.

Interviewer: Was the information shared with you clear, and can you be able to use this information in your everyday life going forward?

Participant 4: Yes the information shared was clear and this cleared any myths we always heard about electricity production which means going forward I can be able to follow the correct process and educating others.

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns, or questions that were not addressed when you visited the centre?

Participant 4: Apart from time constraints, everything that was shared was clear and all the questions addressed. We were allowed to ask questions and get any clarity during the tour and some of the information that we could not get at the time of the visit was then shared later to us through email which was shared with us during lessons at the university

Interviewer: Was this your first time visiting the centre

Participant 4: Yes, this was my first time

Interviewer: Do you think it will be necessary to visit the centre again in the future?

Participant 4: Yes, I think it will be necessary since technologies change all the time and with new inventions there are some aspects that we might not have dwelled much into. There is also areas that were not touched due to our specific interest but I will come back to get more insights on other areas and get the holistic view of the power station especially those areas not part of the main presentation.

Interviewer: Do you think there is information that can be included by the visitors' centre not addressed during your visit?

Participant 4: Not that I can think of, however I feel that there are groups that need to intensely follow the plant tour as there are areas that are not covered currently. Since the visiting time is restricted, it would be better to provide the information online as well.

Interviewer: Who do you think can benefit from visiting the centre?

Participant 4: Anyone from young to old can benefit by visiting as what is shared there, is not only curriculum based but also general electricity safety and other fun facts. So from my experience I feel that people who are interested in engineering, big scale projects and those that want to follow the technical career path should visit to be able to get information on how to apply, get motivation and be able to share the information with others within their space.

Interviewer: Lastly, would you recommend anyone to visit the centre?

Participant 4: Definitely, I think people need to visit the centre to learn more about electricity and power stations.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, our interview has come to an end and I really appreciate your participation. We will be analysing the data and the results can be shared as and when required.

P5

Interviewer: Thank you for giving us this opportunity to do this interview with you, we would like to get your opinion on the experience you had while visiting the centre and get your perception of the value the centre adds if any. The interview is going to be an open discussion and I will be recording and taking notes throughout the session. So in

your own opinion what do you understand by the word visitors' centre and the role it should play within the organisation?

Participant 5: Okay, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity, well for me the visitors' centre is or can be seen as an establishment by the organisation where external people can come to learn more about products and services offered by the organisation and the role is mainly to provide up to date information about the organisation at large. This means that people from outside the organisation come through the visitors centre to learn more about the organisation and how external people impact the operations of the organisation at any given time.

Interviewer: And do you think these centres are important to the people visiting them?

Participant 5: Yes, these centres are important in that they serve as a one stop shop for the organisation. One goes to a specific place to get information about a very large entity and gets this from the centre as all the information about the organisation is collected and put together in one simplified format or presentation. The centres also serve as more friendly way of connecting external people with the organisation because there is that face to face interaction unlike getting the information from the internet, the centre is two way.

Interviewer: So, when you visited the centre, what did you think about the information that was shared with you?

Participant 5: The information shared was important in that it explained the process and measures put in place to prevent damage to the environment and people. From the start we got to the centre we were welcomed and introduced to the staff and took through the safety brief which made us aware of any hazards in the vicinity and then taken through the presentation which gave us a high level detailed overview of the power station and the operations that happen in the station on a daily basis. Then shown videos that emphasise the safety of people and the environment after we were

taken into the plant to see the huge machines. All the time the information shared was comprehensive and professional.

Interviewer: Was the information shared during the visit clear, and can you be able to use it in your everyday life going forward?

Participant 5: As mentioned the information we received was very comprehensive and delivered professionally. The usage of models and videos enhanced the presentation in a way that what we normally hear about we could relate to when shown the areas within the station. So yes the information shared was clear and yes, I can be able to use this information going forward.

Interviewer: Awesome, so did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?

Participant 5: Well the interaction with the tour guide was very informal and we were given a chance to ask question during the presentation and when we went in, if you did not understand the guide would stop and explain what is not clear at the moment. So in essence, no, there was no concerns or questions that were not addressed during my visit to the centre. We felt at home, could ask any question as they normally say, no question is a stupid question. One guy asked if there are fish in the water used at the cooling tower and it became a joke however most of us confessed that we did not understand the purification process and this was clarified to us.

Interviewer: Was this your first time visiting this centre?

Participant 5: Yes, it was the first time coming to this visitors centre

Interviewer: Do you think it could be necessary to visit the centre again in the future?

Participant 5: Yes given the chance I would visit again so that I can gain more knowledge on other areas of the station that were not touched during my visit. There is so much information that one can get hold of and use during application processes,

interviews, research projects and business opportunities, so this will assist if you gain more and more knowledge from the station via the visitors centre.

Interviewer: Oh that is great, so who do you think can benefit by visiting the centre?

Participant 5: Anyone can really benefit from visiting the centre. Like your primary school learners start doing electricity process from grade 6 and it gets intensified as they go up especially at grade 9 where now they have to choose their career paths. From Grade 10 learners can now start planning for their future in engineering and see what other career opportunities are available in Eskom. Some of the learners this can be beneficial more since this is part of the curriculum however, general information can be for anyone irrespective. For any other person, I think visiting the centre can be very important to learn how to use electricity wisely and safely at your own home, how to save money by switching off non essential equipment and always reporting defects to any electrical infrastructure in your house or in your community.

Interviewer: Thank you hey, so do you think you would you recommend this visitors' centre to anyone?

Participant 5: Yes I will keep on recommending people to come and visit and also share the information with schools around my hood.

Interviewer: Thank you very much the formal interview has now ended and again would like to share my appreciation for making time for this interview

P6

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to this interview, please note that I will be recording the session and taking notes as well and the discussion will be open so feel free to voice any opinions. So let us start, in your opinion what do you understand by the word visitors' centre and what role or function of the visitors' centre should be?

Participant 6: According to my understanding the visitors' centre is a facility within the organisation that deals with external people and the role is to provide information

about the company. So that means anyone from the public can book with the centre and go through to learn more about Eskom and power station generating electricity using coal and water. To my understanding some visitors centres are paid while others are free but their role is the same to give mainly the information and educate the public about the organisation's operations.

Interviewer: Alright, do you think the centre is important to people visiting them?

Participant 6: Yes, the centre is important as it gives more information than what could be on the website or on fliers. The way the visitors centre operates it goes over and beyond just giving information but it creates a bond between the people and the organisation in that whilst on the tour you are already encouraged to either take engineering subjects for your career or to apply for available positions already advertised. This information becomes first hand as you get release dates and also given contact details to communicate with internal staff whenever you need to find out if posts are out.

Interviewer: Okay, when you visited the centre, what did you think about the information shared with you?

Participant 6: The information shared was important and made sense. We get to be taught theory at school and when lecturers explain we get lost because we are not sure what are they talking about especially using very deep technical terms, but when you get to the visitors centre the personnel try by all means to use very simple language so that everyone understands what they are talking about.

Interviewer: Was the information clear, and can you be able to use it in your everyday life going forward?

Participant 6: The information was clear and more elaborate and this will assist me in my future engagements and in my studies. Given the time we spent on various areas, we always had questions for clarity and we were answered accordingly. This made it

very easy for everyone to follow the process and link all the aspects of power generation.

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?

Participant 6: No, I did not have any concerns and all questions were answered as we would be given a chance to ask questions and when the person taking us in the plant was not sure, they got to get more information for us at the control room, where most of the technical people are based.

Interviewer: Was this your first time visiting the centre?

Participant: Yes it was my first time

Interviewer: Do you think it could be necessary to visit the centre again in the future?

Participant 6: Yes, it would be necessary so that I can gain more knowledge. When we are at the centre it was said that we would be taken only to parts of the plant that are relevant to our curriculum because for us to know the entire power station we would need close to 18 months of learning. So I feel that coming and joining other groups as time goes it will be best so that I can be able to ask some of the questions about other things we did not touch during our visit.

Interviewer: Do you think there is information that can be included by the visitors centre not addressed during your visit?

Participant 6: Not that I can think of, the information was elaborate enough. From the minute we got to the visitors centre, we were reminded of what the tour is all about and how it is going to go and when we finish one part of the tour the person taking us through the station will recap that now we have done so many areas and we are left with a certain number. When we get to each area, we spent an amount of time trying to explain and asking questions about that aspect of the plant.

Interviewer: All right, who do you think can benefit by visiting the centre?

Participant 6: I think anyone interested in electricity production and want to go into engineering can benefit a lot from visiting the centre. The information shared can assist them to make sound decisions about their subject choices and career paths within Eskom. As for other people it will be very beneficial as they will learn preventative measures concerning to their appliances overload, safety measures when it comes to electricity fires, shock and other related aspects.

Interviewer: Would you recommend this visitors' centre to anyone?

Participant 6: I would recommend that everyone in the country and anywhere in the world visit the centre to find more information on the best organisation in South Africa and Africa

P7

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to the interview and making time available. I will be asking you questions and need you to answer based on your experience when visiting the centre. So during the interview I will recording and taking notes but you can relax and be as elaborate as possible. Well, what do you understand by the word visitors' centre and what role do you think visitors' centres should serve?

Participant 7: Thank you and it is a privilege to do this interview, so the visitors centre I can say it is a place where people outside the organisation come to this establishment for information and practical experiences on how the organisation operates, and the role is first and foremost to represent the organisation in a professional and ethical manner. People come from outside the organisation and access information easily through the visitors centre while getting the experience of what happens within the power station on a daily basis

Interviewer: Okay and do you think the centre is important to the people visiting them?

Participant 7: Yes the centre is very important because it highlights all the operations of the organisation and the information can be tailored according to ones focus. Different

people come to the visitors centre for various reasons, for example curriculum purposes and some just for gathering information for their general use while others use this information for purposes of research and career prospects, so yes the visitors centre is very important in facilitating the dissemination of this information using correct tailored channels to every unique audience.

Interviewer: Thank you, and when you visited the centre, what did you think about the information shared with you?

Participant 7: The information shared during the visit was very important because it answered some of the questions that are not addressed anywhere else. So as I have mentioned, most people really come to the visitors centre for information gathering and using this for a lot of purposes and when I visited the station we were afforded an opportunity to experience what employees of Eskom get to do on a daily basis and this widened our perspectives and answered a lot of questions that I and my fellow students had especially what was taught in class.

Interviewer: Then did you think the information with you during the visit was clear, and can you be able to use this information going forward?

Participant 7: Indeed the information was very clear and understandable, it matched what we read about and also new information which sparked more interest in the topic. Yes I can be able to use this information in the future. The way the information was presented to us it flowed chronologically to understand all the involved steps of power generation from the time coal leaves the mine and when ash is transported at the back end of the mine. This made so much sense that some of the conceptions that Eskom is polluting the environment were cleared and measures that are put in place outlined

Interviewer: So did you have any concerns or questions that were not address during the visit?

Participant 7: Yes, there was some information that was not shared, for instance the issue of Eskom not being privately owned so that people can pay for electricity and the issue of building power stations that are using coal whilst we can use rather cleaner energies in South Africa like other countries. The other issue that was not raised clearly was the supply of electricity to our neighbouring countries whilst we are currently under a strain of power outages and loadshedding in South Africa. Other than that most of the information was clearly answered and even referral done by the personnel doing the tour.

Interviewer: Well was this your first time visiting the centre?

Participant 7: No, it was not the first time, I have visited the station before when I was at high school and now being an Eskom Young Engineer, there are many projects that I am undertaking for my degree to be completed.

Interviewer: Do you think anything changed from the last time you visited?

Participant 7: Yes a lot has changed especially with regards to how information is presented and the tour conducted however, the facilities are really degrading immensely. The bicycle has been broken since my matric year and now it is after 4 years and it is still not working. That is really embarrassing when there are so many Engineers in Training within Lethabo that can take up the project to fix that model.

Interviewer: Do you think there is information that can be included by the centre not addressed during your visit?

Participant 7: Yes, I think if new projects and initiatives on sustaining the company can be shared with everyone that will gather support from the publics. The other thing is introduce interactive modelling and 3D into your facilities. There is so much that can be done with regards to technological advances and introducing more innovative ideas such as going to schools and doing presentations there without learners leaving the

classroom. This will be more on a virtual nature where you can even send a link present to the classroom and do the presentation from the station as well.

Interviewer: Uhhmm, thank you so much for such feedback, so who do you think can benefit by visiting the centre?

Participant 7: Anyone can benefit but mostly learners doing math and science and those that want to follow engineering studies. From primary and high school learners can be assisted and their mind set changed in a way that they see that engineering or technical fields are not these difficult areas of study. People need to visit the centre to be able to learn how to handle electricity, appreciate what Eskom is doing and to assist in combatting the issues such as bridging and stealing of electricity.

Interviewer: Well I am not sure if I should ask this question after the previous answer, anyway let me ask. Would you recommend anyone to visit this visitors' centre?

Participant 7: lol oh yes I would recommend people to visit and learn more about this precious resource we have being Eskom

Interviewer: Thank you very much for a comprehensive discussion, I am sure this will add so much value when we do the analysis. Thank you again

P8

Interviewer: Thank you for making time for this interview, I would like to get your opinion based on the visit you had to the visitors' centre, the interview will be an open discussion and I will be recording and also taking notes during the session. So in your own opinion what do you think the word visitors' centre mean and what role does the centre play?

Participant 8: For me the visitors' centre is a place where people go to get information about the organisation and the role is to make outside people understand the company better. The visitors centre plays an intermediate role between the organisation and the external people in that most of the information and activities of the organisation the

visitors centre people are more informed than specialists within the organisation that are only focused at their specific areas. So having the visitors centre closes the information gap between people and the company.

Interviewer: Okay, and then do you think the centre is important to people visiting?

Participant 8: Yes the centre is important as it gives an overview of the company's operations and gives information over and above what could be on the company's website, printed material and other mediums. The visitors centre has a very powerful tune to all these as the interaction is mainly face to face and when I went to visit everything we did was not structured as we were allowed to seek clarity as and when required. So the personnel was really professional but not formal at all

Interviewer: When you visited the centre, what did you think about the information share with you?

Participant 8: The information shared was valuable and important in making me understand the organisation better. The way the information and sessions are structured it made it very easy for me to link every area and what it does at a specific time in the process of generating electricity and also what measures are put in place to protect the infrastructure as well as people within the station.

Interviewer: Was the information shared with you clear, and can you be able to use it in your everyday life?

Participant 8: Yes the information was clear and understandable, the way the information was structured, it made it very easy for one to be able to articulate what was shared and link this to our everyday lives and I can be able to use it going forward. The suggestions on electricity safety, usage and environmental challenges within the home came in very handy as these will be shared with other people in my community.

Interviewer: So during the visit, did you have any concerns or questions not addressed during the visit?

Participant 8: No the information shared was concise and all the questions were answered. We were given a chance to ask questions if we did not understand something and this made it clear that we get as much information as possible, the tour guide was also friendly which made it easy to interact with.

Interviewer: Was this your first time visiting the centre?

Participant 8: Yes, it was my first time visiting

Interviewer: Do you think it could be necessary to visit the centre again in the future?

Participant 8: Yes, I believe visiting the centre again will give me an opportunity to get more information and gain access to foster long lasting relationships especially when one will be applying for jobs at least you will be knowing someone in the inside to assist you.

Interviewer: Do you think there is information that can be included by the visitors' centre not addressed during your visit?

Participant 8: No the information shared was enough unless there is anything new to share, The way the tour was conducted everything was outlined very well and detailed fully for us to understand what is happening within the organisation

Interviewer: Who do you think can benefit by visiting the centre?

Participant 8: Anyone who is interested in engineering and production of electricity can benefit, especially your school learners and tertiary students who are involved in engineering and technical subjects. Other people can go to the power station to get more information about how electricity is generated and the processes required to get power in your house

Interviewer: Would you recommend this visitors' centre to anyone?

Participant 8: Yes I would recommend the centre to others mainly

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time, we will share these findings with the organisation as well as the university and can also make them available to you after the study has been concluded. Thank you

P9

Interviewer: Thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview with us, I will be asking you a few questions regarding your recent visit to the centre. During the interview I will be recording and taking notes as well. Okay, so in your opinion what do you understand by the word visitors' centre and what role should these centres play in society?

Participant 9: All right thank you, well in my own understanding the visitors centre is a formal centre within the company or separate from any organisation but servicing several companies to offer their product and service information to the public which is not part of the organisation but rather people who are interested in the organisations' certain processes or activities and willing to learn more about these. Tso the visitors centre will then act as an intermediary between the organisation and the public by sharing the knowledge to the external stakeholder.

Interviewer: Do you think these centres are important to the people visiting them?

Participant 9: Definitely just speaking from an academic point of view, this is a place to take student to see real life examples of what industry is doing. We tend to lecture with a certain focus when we are at the university but coming to the centre the students get a totally different viewpoint which they then use the information to supplement what they have learnt in class. Without the visitors centre I think it would be even difficult to get into any organisation as it has been manifested when you don't have a dedicated person who is willing to assist and take you through the plant mainly because they might have their own workload to concentrate on and cahse deadlines.

Interviewer: When you visited the centre what did you think about the information shared with you?

Participant 9: The information shared was very relevant, the way the information was shared, it summarised the activities in an orderly fashion whereby even someone not going into the plant tour by just being at the visitors centre will come out having a clue of what exactly is being done inside the plant, this met the expectation of the group and sparked an interest from the students who are mainly focused on environmental studies.

Interviewer: Was the information shared during the visit clear and can you be able to use it in your everyday life?

Participant 9: The information was clear, informative, useful and can be used in the future. As I have mentioned the way the information was presented to us, it was in an orderly fashion and followed the sequence making it very easy to articulate and relate to something that you have not seen before

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?

Participant 9: No, all the questions that we had could be addressed at the time of the visit, I cannot think of anything that came up and could not be answered

Interviewer: Was this your first time visiting this centre?

Participant 9: No, this was not the first time, from the university we have made it part of the curriculum for our students to visit the centre once or twice a year so that they can complete a project on the pre and post processes in the power station

Interviewer: I am not sure if I should ask this question already as I think you have just answered it but then, do you think it could be necessary to visit the centre again in the future?

Participant 9: Yes, will be visiting again in the very near future

Interviewer: Do you think there is information that can be included by the visitors' centre not addressed during your visit?

Participant 9: Not anything specific really, all the information that is needed for our curriculum is covered and more even

Interviewer: Who do you think can benefit by visiting this centre?

Participant 9: School kids, students, academics, general publics that are interested in power generation and anyone who needs information about power stations, environmental issues and big projects happening within the energy sector

Interviewer: Would you recommend this visitors' centre to anyone?

Participant 9: Definitely, I would recommend people to come through and learn more about things over an above just electricity production

Interviewer: Thank you very much for the time, and we will share the results when they are available with you if needs be, thank you again.

P10

Interviewer: Thank you again for agreeing to do this interview with me, the main aim is for completion of the degree and assist the organisation with the results we will be getting from the study. Well during this interview, I will be recording and taking some notes as well, so please do not mind me much but I want us to make this as informal as possible. So in your opinion what do you understand by the word visitors' centre and what role or function should the centre serve?

Participant 10: Thank you very much, eh, I would say the visitors' centre is kind of a department whereby external people coming to the organisation get welcomed and be guided throughout the entire organisation. The function will be to give information of the processes of the organisation and whose who in the organisation is doing what when and how.

Interviewer: So, do you think the centre is important to the people visiting them?

Participant 10: Yes the centres are very important because from my personal experience I did not know anything about the organisation until I came to the centre. The information

that I got by coming over to the centre was over and above what the website or other information platforms could provide.

Interviewer: When you visited the centre, what did you think about the information shared with you?

Participant 10: The information shared with me was really good, the way the information was provided made sense and I got an overall overview of what is to be expected when I go into the plant and what procedures need to be followed at all times.

Interviewer: Was the information shared during the visit clear, and can you be able to use this in your everyday life going forward

Participant 10: Yes, the information was shared on the day was very clear and can be used to apply some of the theories in the future.

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?

Participant 10: Yes I had some concerns that were not addressed during the visit which were mainly due to time constraints we could not get some of the answers to the questions we had.

Interviewer: Was this your first time visiting the centre

Participant 10: Yes, this was my first time coming to the centre

Interviewer: Do you think it could be necessary to visit the centre in the future?

Participant 10: Yes, for better understanding and getting used to the place and processes of the power station, I believe it would be more beneficial when you get through the process for the second time or more times.

Interviewer: Do you think that there is any information that can be included by the visitors' centre not addressed during your visit?

Participant 10: No, I think apart from the time aspects all was good for a newcomer that visited the station

Interviewer: Who do you think can benefit by visiting the centre?

Participant 10: Everyone can actually come and visit the centre, those who would like to know more about electricity production, load shedding and the likes are mainly the ones who will benefit or find it interesting to visit the station.

Interviewer: Would you recommend anyone to visit this centre?

Participant 10: Yes, I would recommend everyone to visit the centre to learn more and get to know why we have loadshedding, infrastructure issues and the money being owed by Eskom to other countries and the world bank.

Interviewer: Thank you for the time that you afforded us for the interview. We will be doing the analysis and conclude the findings which will be shared with you if you are interested on a later stage.

P11

Interviewer: Thank you for making time for this interview, the session will be an open discussion and I will be recording and taking notes throughout, please do not mind me. So in your opinion what do you understand by the word visitors' centre and what role should the visitors' centre serve?

Participant 11: Well thank you, the visitors' centre according to my understanding is a formal setting within the organisation where outside or external people or what we call publics go to for the purpose of accessing information about the company and also understanding how the company operates by going through the step by step process on what is undertaken when making up a product, and the role therefore should be to disseminate information to the public by ensuring that it is packaged and presented in a way that will best suit the audience of the day.

Interviewer: Do you think the centre is important to the people visiting?

Participant 11: Yes, the visitors' centre is important to those visiting, as it gives outside people more information about the company and this is done at face value. Everyone that visits the centre has an opportunity to be exposed to more than just knowing what is

produced at the organisation but also things such as career opportunities and mentoring and coaching by the employees of Eskom

Interviewer: When you visited the centre, what do you think about the information shared with you?

Participant 11: The information shared was useful, I can say the way it was presented to us it made more sense than when you read about these things on the net or other mediums

Interviewer: Was the information shared with you clear, and can you use this going forward?

Participant 11: Yes the information was clear and the presentation done in a user friendly manner, I can be able to use it in my everyday life. The person presenting was really nice and ensuring that we understand before we can move on

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?

Participant 11: No I did not have concerns and the questions were answered fully, the way the presentations were made, it ensured that we understood what was being said and at any point before moving forward we would be asked if there are any questions for clarity.

Interviewer: Was this your first time visiting the centre?

Participant 11: Yes, this was my first time coming to the station

Interviewer: Do you think it could be necessary to visit the centre again in the future?

Participant 11: Yes since the information changes frequently, I think it will be necessary to visit again so that one can be able to be up to date with the developments within the organisation and plans for South Africa when it comes to electricity demands

Interviewer: Do you think there is information that can be included by the visitors' centre that was not addressed during your visit?

Participant 11: No I don't think there is any information to be included unless something new comes up then that would need to be included in the future.

Interviewer: Who do think can benefit by visiting the centre?

Participant 11: Anyone, especially from grade 10 that are interested in engineering, but when I visited the centre I realised that it is not only engineering people that should visit but rather those that would like to have knowledge about electricity in general and also go into business with Eskom as there is so much that is done there than just making electricity.

Interviewer: Would you recommend this visitors' centre to anyone?

Participant 11: Yes I would recommend people to visit the centre

Interviewer: Alright, thank you very much for your time to do this interview, with regards to results we will make these available as and when necessary when the study has been concluded.

P12

Interviewer: Thank you for allowing us to do this interview, it will be an open discussion and I will be recording and taking some notes as well. I will be asking you a few questions starting with this one. In your opinion what do you understand by the word visitors' centre, and what role do you think the centre should play?

Participant 12: Thank you, the visitors' centre according to my understanding is a wing of communication within the organisation that serves the outside public in giving information about the organisation and its processes and this part is mainly focused at ensuring that external people have a better understanding and viewpoint about the organisation.

Interviewer: Do you think the centre is important to the people visit?

Participant 12: Yes, I think the centre is important as it gives the outside public insight on how the organisation operates, this works well when someone physically comes to an establishment and see what is being spoken about.

Interviewer: When you visited the centre, what do you think about the information shared with you?

Participant 12: The information shared was useful, it got presented in a way that one can be able to understand and articulate what has been shared. The information was really worth coming over as there were other things that I was not even aware of and it made such perfect sense.

Interviewer: Was the information shared with you clear, and can you be able to use this in your everyday life?

Participant 12: Yes the information was clear, the chronological way of presenting the information made it easy to understand and merge with what you already knew about electricity production, and yes I can be able to use the information shared in my everyday life as this is exactly like what we do everyday, from the minute we wake up until we go to bed in the evening. We always have to consider how we use electricity and put ways in place of saving whatever we can.

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?

Participant 12: No I did not have concerns and all the questions were addressed professionally. The presenter of the day was really friendly and made the information so easy to understand while kept checking with everyone if there are any clarity seeking questions at any time.

Interviewer: Was this your first time visiting the centre?

Participant 12: Yes this was my first time and it felt really great being there lol

Interviewer: Do you think it could be necessary to visit the centre again in the future?

Participant 12: Yes it would be beneficial to visit again in order to get more knowledge of some of the areas of the power station

Interviewer: Do you think there is information that can be included by the visitors' centre not addressed during your visit?

Participant 12: Yes the information can be categorised according to areas of interest and shared accordingly, for example someone might want to know more about safety aspects or environmental processes or vacancies, bursaries and the actual power generation

Interviewer: Who do you think can benefit by visiting the centre?

Participant 12: Grade 9 to 12 learners as well as tertiary students can benefit a lot by visiting the centre. Some groups of people that can really get to visit the station is environmentalists, engineers, civil people and big project co-ordinators to come and draw strength from what has been done in Eskom over the years.

Interviewer: Would you recommend this visitors' centre to anyone?

Participant 12: Yes, I would recommend mainly school kids to come and learn more about electricity

Interviewer: Thank you very much for the time you have afforded us and we will be in touch if there is any other thing and also share the results as when necessary.

P13

Interviewer: Thank you for your time to do this interview, well the interview will be an open discussion and I will be recording and taking notes during the session so please feel free to voice out any opinions you have. So, firstly please tell me in your opinion what do you understand by the word visitors' centre and what role or function of the visitors' centre should be?

Participant 13: Well the visitors' centre according to me would be an established department in the organisation that deals specifically with information sharing to the public and the role is to educate, entertain and inform the external stakeholders about the company operations and any other activities performed in the company as this is an all-rounder for the organisation.

Interviewer: Do you think the centres are important to the people visiting them?

Participant 13: Yes the centre is important in that it gives high level explanation on what to expect when you get into the organisation, then when you do the plant tour you already have an idea of what to expect and to see in the plant.

Interviewer: When you visited the centre, what did you think about the information shared with you?

Participant 13: The information shared with me was intriguing and very interesting as some of it was the first time hearing about it. The fact that years were taken to build these big structures and the efforts that went into these projects was amazing really.

Interviewer: Was the information shared with you clear, and can you be able to use it going forward?

Participant 13: Yes the information shared with me was clear and this can be useful when undertaking lessons with learners and students in the future. The structure of presentations is what makes everything so interesting and easy to articulate. Had a lot of new things explained.

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?

Participant 13: Not that I can recall, the information that was shared was really sufficient for one to be able to make sense out of.

Interviewer: Was this your first time visiting the centre?

Participant 13: No, this was not my first time visiting and well I don't think it would be the last as we normally book for our learners for tours yearly.

Interviewer: Do you think anything changed from the last time you visited?

Participant: Yes a lot has changed as some more information has been included and activities for the visitors have also been upgraded. This makes coming to the centre even more interesting and worthwhile.

Interviewer: Do you think there is information that can be included by the visitors' centre that was not addressed during your visit?

Participant 13: I think what could be added is the structural reforms of the centre itself, like including interactive models, fun activities that can talk to your younger people. Make every little bit in the centre count to the maximum effect to the visitors.

Interviewer: Who do you think can benefit by visiting the centre?

Participant 13: Anyone can benefit, young ones to understand electricity safety, older ones to make clear career choices and adults to better understand how to save electricity and career opportunities

Interviewer: Would you recommend this visitors' centre to anyone?

Participant 13: Yes, I would recommend it to everyone to come and see the things that we do not get to learn through the media about Eskom.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time, the interview has ended and we will share the results once everything has been concluded.

P14

Interviewer: Thank you very much for making time for this interview, our discussion will be informal and I will be recording as well as taking some notes. So let us start. In your opinion, what do you understand by the word visitors' centre and what role or function of the visitors' centre should be?

Participant 14: The visitors' centre is a formal setting of the organisation that is used to be the link between the external stakeholders and the organisation and the role is to facilitate information sharing from the inside to the outside world

Interviewer: Do you think the centre is important to the people visiting them?

Participant 14: Yes, the centre is important as it is not always possible to gain access into the organisation so the facilitation by the centre becomes very important, you can be able to access the most critical information about the organisation being communicated by the centre, so yes it is pretty much important.

Interviewer: When you visited the centre, what did you think about the information shared with you?

Participant 14: The information shared was valuable however the personnel was not open enough to share some information. This created a rift between the visitors and hosts when some of the questions were getting out of hand.

Interviewer: Was the information shared during the visit clear, and can you be able to use this information in your everyday life going forward?

Participant 14: The information was clear even though some of it was not complete, the host seemed so disorientated and this made things very difficult for us to engage in a meaningful conversation, however the information shared I can be able to use going forward even though it will need to be complete.

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed during the visit?

Participant 14: Yes I had some concerns that the personnel was always mentioning the issue of time when we raise issues and some questions ended up not being fully addressed. The way we were treated on the day was not the best.

Interviewer: Was this your first time visiting the centre?

Participant 14: Yes, this was my first time that is why I was overwhelmed with the information and wanted to know more

Interviewer: Do you think it could be necessary to visit the centre again in the future?

Participant 14: Yes, definitely and this time will be prepared with my structure of questioning and hopefully will get the opportunity to be able to engage in debates and source information that can assist me going forward.

Interviewer: Do you think there is information that can be included by the visitors centre not addressed during your visit?

Participant 14: Yes, I think for some visits, you should include subject matter experts to address the more technical questions, even the issue of time should be looked into and dealt

with as some people are mainly interested in certain areas of the plant and not everything.

Interviewer: Would you recommend this visitors' centre to anyone?

Participant 14: Yes I would recommend people to visit the centre

P15

Interviewer: Thank you again for giving me this time to conduct the interview. The discussion will be informal and I will be recording and also taking some notes during the session. I'll be asking questions and getting your opinion about the visitors' centre, so in your opinion what do you understand by the word visitors' centre and the role these centres should play?

Participant 15: According to my understanding is one place where when one wants to visit the organisation, they get welcomed and it serves the role of giving outside public the basic understanding of what is happening within the organisation

Interviewer: Do you think the centres are important to the people visiting them?

Participant 15: Yes, for me I think these are important as most people do not know what is happening within the organisation so the centre gives them an overview before even getting to see the real life experiences

Interviewer: When you visited the centre, what did you think about the information shared with you?

Participant 15: The information was helpful, especially for student to link what happens at school and the industry, it made more sense to be able to see live what we get taught in class versus what we were shown at the station level.

Interviewer: Was the information clear, and can you be able to use this information going forward?

Participant 15: Yes the information was clear, the approach that was used by the presenter to share information made it very easy to understand and follow on how the process happens.

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns or questions that were not answered during the visit?

Participant 15: No, everything with regards to visit was clear and questions answered however, it would always come up at some point when you back at campus to try link what you were told and what is in the textbook which at times wants you to try get more information

Interviewer: Was this your first time visiting the centre?

Participant 15: Yes this was my first time visiting and I would sure want to go back again to gain more knowledge

Interviewer: Do you think there is information that can be included by the visitors centre not addressed during your visit?

Participant 15: I think mostly the issue of time should be looked into as this will allow visitors to ask questions and get clarity not in a hurry, however the information shared was sufficient and brought about more interest in the mechanics of the power station

Interviewer: Who do you think can benefit by visiting the centre?

Participant 15: I think both students and professionals can benefit by visiting the centre, because most have theory understanding and not the practical aspect of how things are done in the industry

Interviewer: Would you recommend this visitors' centre to anyone?

Participant 15: Yes, I would recommend people to come through

Appendix 3 – Interview Schedule and Demographics

Interview Schedule – Field Study

Participant	Date	Mode	Duration	Gender	Stakeholder Category
P1	19 January 2020	Face to Face	33 Minutes	M	Lecturer
P2	22 January 2020	Face to Face	35 Minutes	F	Lecturer
P3	24 January 2020	Face to Face	38 Minutes	M	Lecturer
P4	31 January 2020	Face to Face	32 Minutes	M	Student
P5	11 March 2020	Face to Face	35 Minutes	M	Student
P6	15 March 2020	Face to Face	40 Minutes	F	Student
P7	16 March 2020	Face to Face	38 Minutes	M	Student
P8	19 March 2020	Face to Face	39 Minutes	M	Student
P9	20 April 2020	MS Teams	42 Minutes	F	Lecturer
P10	22 April 2020	Telephonic	50 Minutes	F	Employee
P11	24 April 2020	Telephonic	37 Minutes	M	Employee
P12	04 May 2020	MS Teams	33 Minutes	M	Student
P13	19 May 2020	MS Teams	39 Minutes	M	Student
P14	26 May 2020	MS Teams	42 Minutes	F	Employee
P15	31 May 2020	MS Teams	60 Minutes	F	Lecturer