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The Effects of Corruption Scandals on Public Trust

An Empirical Study of Two Municipalities in Eswatini

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between corruption scandals and public trust through an empirical study conducted in two municipalities in Eswatini. It assessed the relationship between public trust and four socio-demographic variables namely; gender, age, level of education and occupation. The two fundamental questions are first: to what extent does corruption scandals in Eswatini municipalities affects public trust? Second, to what extent does gender, age, level of education and occupation relate to trust in public institutions? The study revealed that corruption scandals contribute to loss of public trust in institutions. It further revealed that people's perceived size of corruption scandals influences their level of trust in public institutions. In assessing the relationship between socio-demographic variables and trust, the study discovered a valid relationship only with age. This was demonstrated through a survey conducted in two municipalities in Eswatini, one with a recent corruption scandal and one without a recent corruption scandal. Respondents from the municipality without a corruption scandal indicated high level of trust to their municipality while those from the municipality with a corruption scandal indicated low levels of trust. Respondents who indicated to know corruption scandals were asked to rate them in terms of size and a majority of those who perceived scandals as big indicated lower levels of trust while those who perceived scandals as small or moderate indicated high levels of trust.

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This research is dedicated to the yet to be realized democratic government in Eswatini which we are battling for, I believe it will be a point of reference for public institutions as they build health relations that are vital for development with citizens.

ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|---|
| ACC - | Anti-Corruption Commission |
| AG - | Auditor General |
| AU - | African Union |
| CPI - | Corruption Perceptions Index |
| DC - | District Commissioner |
| EAC - | European Advisory Council |
| EWSC - | Eswatini Water Service Corporation |
| ICC - | International Criminal Court |
| MHUD - | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development |
| NACS - | National Anti-Corruption Strategy |
| NAP - | National Anti-Corruption Action Plan |
| NDMA- | National Disaster Management Agency |
| NDP- | National Development Plan |
| POCA - | Prevention of Corruption Act |
| PUI - | Peri-Urban Interface |
| SADC - | Southern African Development Community |
| SNL - | Swazi Nation Land |
| TDL - | Title Deed Land |
| UNCAC - | United Nations Convention against Corruption' |
| UNDP - | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNODC - | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The study examines the relationship between corruption scandals and public trust in institutions of government particularly local government structures. It seeks to establish the effects of corruption scandals on public trust in such institutions through a comparative perception survey that targeted citizens who have been both exposed to corruption scandals and those who have not. The trust relationship between citizens and public institutions is very important and serves as a prerequisite for effective service delivery and implementation of development plans. In the absence of trust, states can have difficulty with implementing their programs. According to Askvik et al. (2010) “trust in public institutions can be interpreted as a basic requirement for the proper workings of a democratic political regime; trust tends to promote popular support and reduce resistance to the regime” (p.418). This means that states need to make great efforts in ensuring that the level of trust on institutions is always kept at enabling degrees for them to smoothly discharge their programs through these institutions. The benefits of high level of public trust are mutual to states and their citizens since greater public trust means the existence of a harmonious environment and cooperation which are necessary ingredients for development.

While many studies of public trust point out that public distrust is caused by numerous factors, the focus of this study is on corruption scandals. The interest on corruption scandals was informed by the context in which the study was carried out and it was based in Eswatini formerly known as Swaziland. Eswatini is one of the countries that have been hit hard by the scourge of corruption. This is despite that the country has in line with the rest of the world developed mechanisms of combatting corruption at all levels. According to Hope (2016) “corruption in Swaziland is now regarded as persistent, permeating the society as a whole. In fact, the Swazi media, civil society organizations, and even government officials are now frequently engaged in pointing out the corruption crime problem in their country” (p.131-132). Simelane (2012) points out that the main problem is they system of government which in his view is inherently corrupt. Simelane (2012) further argues that the inability of the Eswatini government to record meaningful progress in the fight against corruption is greatly linked to the institution of the monarchy because it allows itself to be a sanctuary to corrupt

people. Eswatini is an absolute monarch and by law, the head of state cannot be questioned on anything wrong that he is deemed to have done and therefore the name of the monarch is mainly used when corruption suspects are called to account resulting to investigations to hit a dead end. Most notably, even if the corruption suspects would be lying when using the name of the monarch, that cannot be verified with the monarch since the monarch cannot be linked to any investigation.

The study was conducted in two municipalities in Eswatini which were carefully chosen to represent municipalities with residential areas and with more service delivery responsibilities to residents. In the case of Eswatini, municipalities are structures of local government that are governing in urban jurisdictions or areas that are not yet urban but which the national government intend to urbanise and therefore declared as urban. The study chose to base the study within municipalities because according to Morphet (2008), local government institutions are the first resort in any community when individual are faced with problems or in need of essential services and they serve as a conduit through which the development of people at local level is extended. Therefore, their proximity to people and the service obligations they carry render them important sites of research on the topic of trust and corruption. Municipalities carry out a litany of operation whereby the possibility of corrupt behavior cannot be ruled out, in fact reports of the Auditor General (AG) in Eswatini have always pointed out to several cases of corruption in municipalities each and every year.

There are several studies that have focused on the relationship between corruption and public trust. They have used varying methodologies, different tools of analysis and they have made varying findings. Ares & Hernández (2017) argues that “in the presence of corruption we would expect citizens to develop negative orientations towards political institutions and to withdraw their support from corrupt politicians. However, empirical studies do not provide a univocal answer about the impact of corruption.” (p.1). It is not in every contexts whereby corruption scandals have resulted into high level of distrust. The quest to explain these variations is part of the reasons many studies including this one are interested in these variables. One of the explanations of the variation can be the observation made by Ares & Hernández (2017) that the effects of corruption scandals on corruption are time bound and they weaken with time and therefore the period in which a study has been conducted after a corruption scandal matters a lot. In this study, one of the arguments advanced is that the perception on the size of the scandal also counts. People who perceive corruption scandals

linked to certain institutions as huge are most likely to also perceive their level of trust on the institutions as low.

The study draws from the institutional theory to conceptualize the relationship between corruption scandals and public trust and also to derive testable hypotheses. The institutional theory assists us to define institutions and to trace trust origin, development and sustainability or disintegration of trust in institutions. According to Mishler & Rose (2001) “trust in institutions is rationally based; it hinges on citizen evaluations of institutional performance. Institutions that perform well generate trust; untrustworthy institutions generate skepticism and distrust” (p31). From such propositions, the study is able to examine if indeed citizens’ evaluation of institutions’ state of corruption has a bearing on their level of trust in them.

1.2. Statement of the problem

A variety of literature on institutional trust have one common conclusion which is that public trust on institutions of government matters. Hitlin & Shutava (2022) argues that lack of trust has serious consequences for any country and by logical extension for any institution whose interests are the people. “When people do not trust their government, they are more likely to opt out of voting and other types of civic participation” (Hitlin & Shutava, 2022 p.7). Hardin (1998) buttress the view by Hitlin & Shutava (2022) by asserting that “the standard contemporary argument for the importance of trust in government is related to the common view that without normative commitments by citizens, government cannot gain obedience from citizens” (p.10). Therefore trust should be a concern of every institution serving the public. Corruption has been identified by many researches as one of the contributing factors to trust decline and this factor is a rife reality in Eswatini. Mishler & Rose (2001) state that “corruption in Swaziland is now regarded as persistent, permeating the society as a whole to the point that the Swazi media, civil society organizations, and even government officials are now frequently engaged in pointing out the corruption crime problem in their country” (p.33). This is besides that the country has enacted countless anti-corruption measures.

There is however a salient research gap on the studies of corruption and trust in the Eswatini context. Many studies on corruption in the country has been mainly focused on corruption’s effects on macro development and on evaluating anti-corruption mechanisms and absolutely none has paid attention to trust. This study therefore fills the research deficiency gap in the

context by providing a baseline reference on the impacts of corruption on trust. At a higher level, the study contributes in filling the global knowledge production inequality by placing the study not only in a socially and culturally unique context but also to one that has been shallowly studied by global comparisons.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine the effects of corruption scandals on public trust and further aims to achieve the following:

- To analyze the effects of socio-economic and demographics factors on the relationship between corruption scandals and trust
- To examine the impacts of public perception on the size of corruption scandals in relation to their level of trust

1.4. Research Question

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does corruption scandals in municipalities affects public trust?
2. To what extent does gender, age, level of education and occupation relate to trust in public institutions?

1.5. Justification of the study

The fact that the issue of public trust is among the top most socially relevant topics in political sciences and public administration cannot be over emphasized. The consequences of lack of trust in public institutions have been well explained and no structure or institution which is serious and deliberate in serving the public would afford to lose the trust of its target population. The study therefore is worth undertaking particularly in a country where corruption which is mainly cited as a contributing factor to trust decline is rampant. The findings of the study will provide insights to institutions serving the public on the danger that high levels of corruption can extend to their operations.

It has been mentioned already that the effects of corruption on public trust in Eswatini is an

area that have lacked scholarly attention. This study to the best of my knowledge is the first of its kind if not among the very few. It will therefore be of benefit to researchers who will want to explore the topic further and will serve as a base reference in this regard. The study does not only contribute to the local knowledge pool but also present to the global knowledge pool findings from a context with unique social and cultural context that has not been studied.

The research findings will be of significant use to a number of institutions inclusive of policy makers, public administration practitioners and civil servants in both informing decision making and operational processes. The study highlights in its conceptual framework how trust can be produced, maintained and destroyed by reports of corruption. It further makes an assessment and findings on the significance of socio-economic and demographic factors in the relationship between corruption and trust. These contributions provide vital information that can aid anti-corruption and trust building programs.

1.6. Organization of the study

The study is organized in the outlined order: this chapter provides a brief summary of what the study is about and the main arguments readers should expect to find. **Chapter 2** present the context of municipalities in Eswatini and a narrative picture of corruption and anti-corruption measures that have been put in place. **Chapter 3** outlines theoretical and conceptual frameworks making an analysis of how the relationship between corruption scandals and public trust has been studied and also present how the concepts are measured. **Chapter 4** present the methodology of the study which carries the research design, procedures of sampling and obtaining data as well as limitations that have accrued. **Chapter 5** present the findings of the study and a discussion which makes a scientific sense of the findings. **Chapter 6** is the last chapter which carries the conclusion of the study and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTANDING THE ESWATINI LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTEXT

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the context of local government in Eswatini is discussed. It is important to discuss the entire local government system at this juncture so that a clear understanding of its layout is established before the findings of the empirical examination of municipalities are presented. This helps in comprehending where municipalities lie within the local government system and also so that the unique dynamics of the Eswatini local government system are appreciated. If this section would only focus on municipalities and omit the wider local government context, it can be very difficult for a reader who is not familiar with local government in Eswatini to appreciate the methodological choices, the analysis and the recommendations the study proposes that they are taken forward as further scholarly enquiries. In the latter part of this chapter, a brief discussion on corruption with a particular focus in municipalities is presented. One might wonder why such an elaborate context in Eswatini is essential, as mentioned there are very few scholarly outputs focusing on local government and corruption in Eswatini, this study will serve as part of the base of contemporary outputs forming the discourse on local government with focus on corruption and trust in the country.

2.2. Local Government and its Features

To begin with the definition of local government. While this concept has been defined in various ways by different authors, there is a visible common denominator among the so many definitions. According to Chandler (2001) “local government refers to the authorities and dependent agencies that are established by parliament to provide a range of specified services and represent the general interests of specific areas under the direction of a locally elected council” (p.1). Miller *et al.* (2000) posit that “by local governance we mean the commissioning, organization and control of services such as health, education, policing, infrastructure and economic development within localities” (p.1). Miller *et al.* (2000) further proceed to mention that “local government is above all a political vehicle for communicating, organizing and expressing the concerns, visions and problem-solving capacity of local people” (p.28).

From the two foregoing definitions we can deduct several features that are common. Chandler (2001) observes that local government has an element of authority while Miller *et al.* (2000) state that it involves commissioning and control. No one can think of commissioning and controlling anything without having an authority to do so and also, we cannot think of authority as an end in itself. Both authors are making the same sense with the other talking about authority as a tool and the other talking about authority as functions. Second, Chandler (2001) posits that local government involves agencies established by parliament to render certain services while Miller *et al.* (2000) state that it is a political vehicle. In this regard, both definitions implies that local government is an instrument through which services are rendered and that the establishment of local government is politically sanctioned. Last, all the definitions talk about interests and local areas. Chandler (2001) on one hand directly states these as “interests of specific areas under the direction of a locally elected council” (p.1). Miller *et al.* (2000) on the other hand express these as concerns of local people. This means that there are common features through we can identify local government and differentiate it from other institutions even when they appear similar. Ndreu (2016) sums up the features as follows:

- Local government has statutory status; therefore, it is defined, recognized and functions on the basis of the laws of a country.
- These bodies have the right to decide about their own local taxes on the territory where extend jurisdiction.
- Local governments are characterized by the right of local community participation in decision making process or management of local affairs.
- They have the capacity to act independently from central government bodies, within the limits set by law, through the decentralization process or the principle of local autonomy.
- These bodies serve the general interest of the citizens.

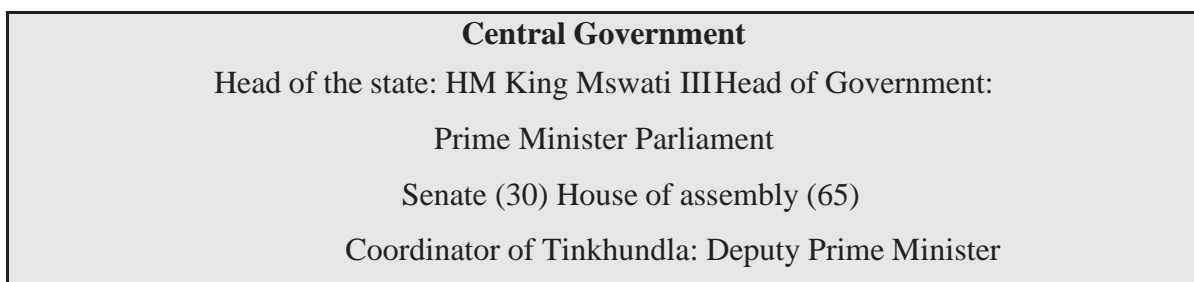
Considering the definitions made above and the common features within them and those outlined by Ndreu (2016), local governments can be defined as institutions that are politically sanctioned (established and sustained through political processes) and bestowed with the responsibilities of service provision within specified areas in line with the needs and interests of the people within those areas.

2.2.1. Local Government in Eswatini: Its Nature and Key Features

We now look into the nature and features of local government in Swaziland. Like all local government institutions worldwide as mentioned above by Ndreu (2016), local government in Eswatini derives existence and authority from a number of parliamentary statutes. Discussing the layout of local government in Eswatini, Mkhonta (2007) mentions that local government in Eswatini is divided into two sections, one being government in rural areas and the other being government in urban areas. The legal tools that established local government are contextually different. The study will expand on the background accounting for this duality in the forthcoming sections. Mkhonta (2007) reveals that “local government in Eswatini is the second level of government, after the national government. ¹The local government system in urban areas was created through the Urban Government Act No. 8 of 1969 whilst local government in rural areas was created using separate instruments, namely, the Regional Councils Order of 1978 and the Establishment of Parliament Order of 1978 (amended in 1992)” (p.94).

This means that after the first tier of national government, we have the second tier which is local government divided into two distinct models and contexts. Sihlongonyane & Simelane (2017) discuss this duality and its impacts at length, they mention that local government structures under rural areas are known as “Tinkhundla” while local government structures in urban areas are known as municipalities and are categorized as either city council, town councils or town boards. Local government in rural areas and local government in urban areas does not only differ with regard to the establishing and regulatory statutes but they also differ structurally and functionally.

Figure 2.1 Government Structure of Eswatini



¹Where all the instruments can be accessed <https://www.gov.sz/index.php/documents-policy>

| | | | |
|---|------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Regional Government Four Districts (Hhohho, Manzini, Shiselweni, and Lubombo) Regional Administrator and Regional councils | | | |
| Local Government | | | |
| Urban areas Urban councils Municipalities (13) | | Rural areas Rural councils Tinkhundla (59) | |
| City Councils | Town Councils | Town Boards | Bucopho (Inkhundla board committee) |
| Wards | | Chieftdom | |

The layout of local government in Eswatini. Source: adapted from Sihlongonyane & Simelane (2017)

The table above is sourced from Sihlongonyane & Simelane (2017) and it has been updated with current information. It outlines the layout of local government in Eswatini and clearly puts where municipalities and Tinkhundla lies. The regional government does not count and it has never practically existed, there is only a small regional committee that coordinates traditional affairs. The table shows that there are ²13 municipalities and ³59 Tinkhundla structures. According to Mkhonta (2007) “each of the Tinkhundla (⁴an Inkhundla) consists of 3-6 ⁵chieftdoms” (p.122). It also shows that urban areas are governed by municipal councils while Tinkundla are governed by board committees. All of these structures govern on the basis of being elected by local people as defined by electoral laws except at chieftdom level. Chieftdoms are traditional structures that have roots in the feudal epoch, being a chieftdom principal (chief) is hereditary and chieftdom committees are appointed by the principal. Marrengane (2021) agrees with this point in saying that chieftaincy is hereditary like in monarchies and in the case of Eswatini chiefs are upwardly accountable to only the King. “Tinkhundla is administered by elected officials for council roles, in this case called the Bucopho and the Indvuna, which are recognized as the political heads of the constituency” (Marrengane 2021, p.260).

² Statement by MHUD <https://www.gov.sz/index.php/about-us-sp-1053405439/141-test/2146-media-statement-by-the-hrh-prince-simelane>

³ Contained in the 2018 national elections report <https://www.elections.org.sz/online/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2018-NATIONAL-ELECTIONS-REPORT-1.pdf>

⁴ Menas Tinkhundla in singular term

⁵ They are units that forms a single Inkhundla, can be seen as territorial layers below an Inkhundla level

It is simple logic that the rural system of organizing people is the oldest since there was a point in time where Eswatini did not have urban areas. However, we must not assume that the rural system was equivalent to local government because historical accounts reveals that it saliently lacked many of the features outlined above when local government was defined. It cannot be disputed that the system of organizing in rural areas has not been always in its current form, Sihlongonyane and Simelane (2017) state that “Tinkudla did not begin as political structures but they were later given a political meaning. Traditionally, Inkhundla refers to a place where people/community assembles for talks or engages in activities” (p.9). This tells us that indeed Tinkhundla were at some point not considered as local government institutions. While it is important to trace the evolution of Tinkhundla to local government and local government in its entirety, it will be time and space consuming to discuss the step-by-step process from primitive times to the present. However, to fully comprehend the system of local government as it exists today, it is important to discuss at least the emergence of local government and its development. The evolution process is discussed from the arrival of European settlers in territories that are in the present-day forming part of Eswatini. To start from this period is necessitated that the arrival of Europeans had a bearing in modelling local government in the country.

Whittington (1970) points out that “the Swazi nation have always had one nucleated centre, the seat of the Paramount Chief, since its arrival in the territory in the eighteenth century” (p.28). According to an account by Gillis (1999) who wrote on the political history of the Swazi nation upto 1921, he reveals that the early Swazis to settle in present day Eswatini lived a nomadic life, travelling in search of food and running away from conflicts to safer spaces. Gillis (1999) reveals that those who were found already settled in the territories were conquered and later assimilated to be under the rulership of the arriving Swazi clan. There was no local government at that time but there were local territories that were presided over by chiefs on behalf of the king. These localities were known as chiefdoms as they are still known today. The table above highlighted that chiefdoms are the last bottom layers in the administration of rural areas today and leading them is hereditary as per traditions.

2.2.3. The Origin of Urban Settlements in Eswatini

Since we have seen above that Eswatini was at somepoint fully rural and that in our descprition of local government in the country we have mentioned the existince of a dual

system of local government situated in parallel rural and urban contexts, it is important that a background of the origin of urban settlements is presented. The intention is not to get deeper on the process of urbanisation but to lay a foundation that is enough to understand the birth of the dual system of local government in the country and subsequent developments.

The urbanisation of Eswatini did not come in a different manner from that of many countries in Southern Africa. The history of the urbanisation of Southern Africa is mainly attributed to its colonisation by Europeans. Whittington (1970) posits that “the penetration of Africa south of the Sahara by white traders and settlers brought many new features into the landscape. One of the most significant and far-reaching was the introduction of the concept of urban dwelling and the concomitant development of urban centers” (p.26). This argument is buttressed by Sapire & Beall (1995), they state that “the location and establishment of most towns and cities were influenced by colonial strategic and commercial imperatives and the proximity of extractive raw materials. The particular character of urbanisation and urbanism in Southern Africa arises from both the relative novelty of the urban form and the depth and longevity of labour migrancy in the region” (p.3).

For the part of Eswatini, Mkhonta (2007) reveals that indeed “towns were developed during the colonial period as administrative, commercial and industrial sites. The roots of urbanisation were laid in the 19th century at the time when European concessionaires were streaming into Swaziland in search of land and minerals” (p.102). Whittington (1970) concurs with Mkhonta (2007), he mentions that “the first European settlement in this area (Eswatini) was by a German, Bremer, who in 1885 opened a store and hotel” (p.28). Whittington (1970) further states that near the trading point and adjacent to a Swazi Royal Kraal, a Provincial Headquarter of the British, Boer and Swazi government officials was created in 1890 and subsequently a village around it gradually emerged. Minerals were discovered in various parts of the country and accordingly urban settlements increased. Mkhonta (2007) reveals that the country was later divided into several administrative towns and at this time the country had become a British protectorate. “To facilitate effective administration, the British divided the country into six districts Mbabane, Mankayiyane, Siteki, Hlatikulu, Piggs Peak and Manzini, each headed by a District Commissioner (DC). The districts were units of administrative control only” (Mkhonta 2007, p.104). Now the country found itself with several urban areas which were under the administration of the British. Rural areas continued to be under the administration of chiefs who were exercising their duties at the behest of the

monarch and the monarch at this time was working closely with the Europeans.

2.2.4. The Emergence of Local Government and its Evolution

The attempts to institute local government formally can be traced within the formalisation of the administrative partnership agreement between the monarch and the British when the country became its protectorate. The country at this time did not only find itself with the different contexts of urban and rural areas, it now had different races (Europeans and Africans). These differences were deeper than mere settlement and colour: these two races had different cultures, different languages, different interests and different policy approaches. The proposed idea according to Sihlongonyane & Simelane (2017) was that the Europeans should look after urban areas and the king and chiefs oversee the rural areas. Whittington (1970) observes that “this meant a distinct separation of the quarter occupied by whites from that occupied by black” (p.27). This was the policy of white settlers almost everywhere in Africa. Sihlononyane & Simelane (2017) further point out that as a result when a new king (King Sobhuza II) was coronated in 1921 he ruled side by side with a European Advisory Council (EAC) which was established “in the same year to advise the resident commissioner on matters affecting European interests”(p.3).

Discussing the evolution of local government, Mkhonta (2007) trace its origin from legislations that were promulgated from as early as 1912. This was before the installation of the king in 1921 and the establishment of the EAC. Mkhonta (2007) mentions that “the first step towards introducing local government was taken in 1912 with the Urban Areas Proclamation of 1912, which dealt with the general administration of declared urban areas” (p.106). I think this legislation was necessitated by that the towns and its surroundings were growing faster as they were an attraction for employment opportunities and services that were available in towns. The proclamation according to Mkhonta (2007) “empowered the High Commissioner ‘to make regulations for good government of towns and of areas adjacent thereto’, and recognized the District Commissioner as urban authority” (p.106).

Mkhonta (2007) also outlines another step which he says was taken in 1964. “In 1964 the Town Management Proclamation was issued, establishing semiautonomous municipalities in Mbabane and Manzini” (Mkhonta 2007, p.106). According to Mkhonta, “the proclamation contained provisions for the declaration of Board areas, their establishment and composition,

the conduct of meetings, the employment of staff, and various financial matters. Owing to this proclamation, the Manzini urban area was declared the Manzini Town Management Board in 1964. The proclamation empowered the Board to levy rates (property tax) in its area of jurisdiction.” (p.106). This was indeed a massive development since it stipulated the management principles of municipalities and presented an avenue for revenue generation and made strides to render local government autonomous.

5 years after the Proclamation of Town Management was made and just a year after the country obtained independence, the Urban Government Act of 1969 was enacted. The Act prescribes the declaration of municipalities, the composition of councils, duties of councils and their accountability measures among other things. Section 55. (1) of the Urban Government Act outlines duties of the councils as to “control, manage and administer the municipality; maintain and cleanse all public streets and open spaces vested in the Council or committed to its management; abate all public nuisances; safeguard public health, and provide sanitary services for the removal and disposal of night soil, rubbish, carcasses of dead animals and all kinds of refuse; and establish or take over and maintain, subject to the extent of its resources, any public utility service which it is authorised or required to maintain under any law and which is required for the welfare, comfort or convenience of the public and many more among a long list of functions. Mkhonta (2007) observe though that the Act “does not seem to draw a clear distinction between a municipal council on the one hand and a town council on the other. The Act defines council to mean a municipal or town council, as the case may be, established under the provisions of Part 2” (p.127). That is one of the shortcomings of this legislation which however the study is not particular about.

In 1978, another instrument of local government emerged, this was when the Regional Council’s Order No.22 of 1978 was decreed by King Sobhuza II. Mkhonta (2007) observe that it is at this point where “Tinkhundla were legally given a status equivalent of local councils to promote development in rural communities and to foster the participation of people in development” (p.95). Tinkundla had been existing in traditional forms as gathering places for meetings and for holding events. Marrengane (2021) mentions that the roles of Tinkhundla that were now legally defined by the Order were to “ a) offer a forum for the discussion and debate of local community concerns; b) promote the socioeconomic progress of the community; c) provide a physical space to organise community labour in service of the chief or the Ngwenyama; and d) create a decentralised form of public administration”

(p.259). This order bestowed upon traditional structures responsibilities that were carried out by the modern government in municipalities.

After the Regional Council's Order No.22 of 1978, the current constitution of the Kingdom of Eswatini was enacted in 2005. The constitution pronounces itself on local government. It empowers parliament to enact a unitary system of local governments based on Tinkhundla and also stipulates the functions of local government. The Swaziland Constitution (2005) outlines the functions of local government as follows:

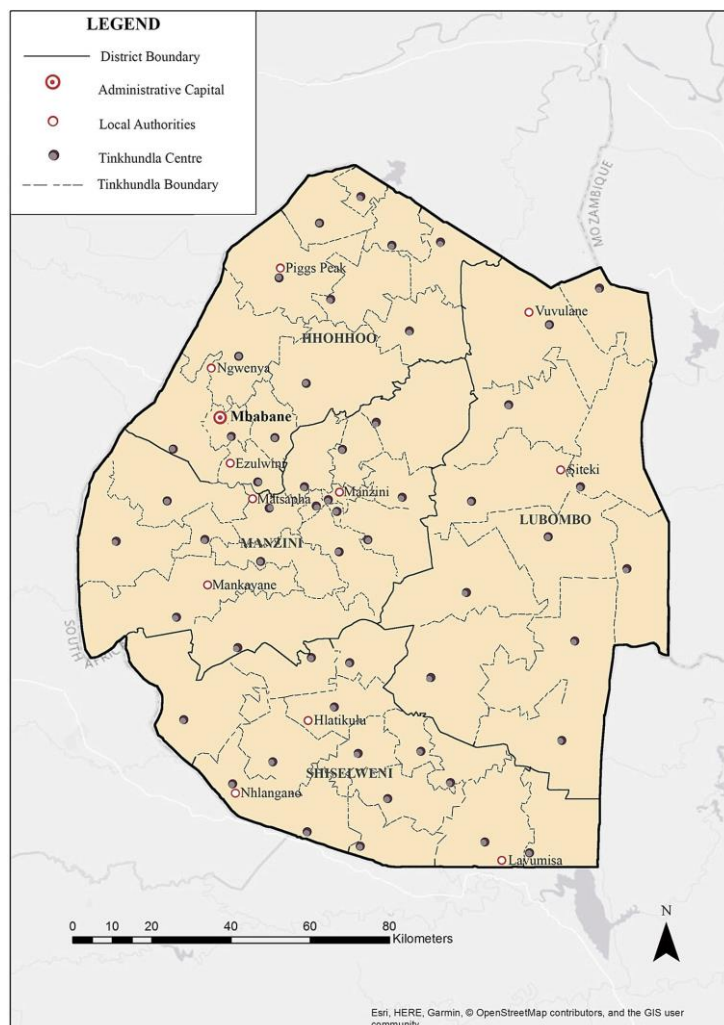
- to ensure in accordance with the law the efficient management and development of the areas under jurisdiction
- to protect life, public property, improve working and living conditions, promote the social and cultural life of the people, raise the level of civic consciousness, preserve law and order within its area, and generally preserve the rights of the people of that area
- organize and promote popular participation and co-operation in respect of political, economic, cultural and social life of the area under its control.

The final instrument to make pronouncements on local government is the decentralisation policy that was adopted by parliament in 2006 known as the "Swaziland Decentralisation Policy of 2006". The policy was set to practicalise the pronouncements made by the constitution on local government. It outlines 2 levels of local government by adding regional councils above urban government and inkundla. Mkhonta (2007) argues that "the country's decentralisation programme requires the enactment of a new statute or statutes that must be in conformity with the country's new Constitution. It is envisaged that to bring the policy into effect, two pieces of legislation – the Local Government Act and Local Government Planning, Budgeting, Finance and Audit Act – will have to be promulgated" (p.133). Implementation of the policy remain stifled even today and none of its beautiful proposition has come into fruition. What was envisaged by Mkhonta in 2007 has also not materialised. The policy simply deepened clientelism by giving rise to the creation of structures which lack practicable roles while however on public service payroll.

2.2.5. The attempt to Harmonise the Duality

The accounts in the above sections reveals that there are two systems of local governments in

Eswatini existing parallel. These systems are characterized by different cultural orientations and principles. While Tinkhundla lean more on traditions, urban government lean more on the modern principles that were upheld by Europeans. Over and above that, the coordination of local government lies with different line ministries and this make uniform development of local people impossible. The challenges of the duality also play out in the management of towns as just next to the town boundaries begins a new system of management which clashes with the urban system. Moreover, the mandate of chiefs is overseeing ⁶Swazi Nation Land (SNL) while municipalities oversee ⁷Tittle Deed Land (TDL) and there are a lot of conflicts over the boundaries that have set chiefdoms and municipalities against each other. Marrengane (2021) observes that “the co-existence of two governance regimes create disharmony in terms of authority, and more critically, disabled service delivery that could meet the growing urban population’s needs” (p.262).



⁶ Land under the watch of traditional authorities considered to be owned by the nation at large

⁷ Private land owned by individuals

Figure 2.2 Map showing municipalities & Tinkhundla. Source:Marrengane (2021)

Marrengane (2021) argues that “the reach of traditional authorities includes any region with SNL, and therefore, includes urbanized spaces. For chiefdoms that fall within urban boundaries, authority and administration lines are further muddled, as local government and Tinkhundla areas overlap, thus, sharing jurisdiction” (p.260). This means that there are some sections of land within the urban areas’ boundaries that are under chiefs and not the urban authority. In such spaces people acquire land under different procedures and the planning of settlements in such areas is different and offset settlement planning. Sharing the same sentiments with focus on the Peri-Urban Interface (PUI), Sihlongonyane (2003) argues that outskirts of municipalities “fall outside a strong and effective regional (district) governance and non-existence of legislated mandates for local government. Hence there is fragmentation of land use, policy and legislation, resource management, institutional operation and no vision” (p.40).

When one look closely to the local government instruments that were enacted from 1978, it can be observed that there is a motive to create a uniform system of local government and put it under the directive of one ministry and under similar sets of legislations. While the Regional Council’s Order No. 22 of 1978 did not directly express this intention, the instruments that came to echo it clearly do. Marrengane (2021) concurs with this point by mentioning that “constitutional reforms and the adoption of a decentralization policy in 2006 gave clear and formal expression to the tensions that continued to hamstring the bifurcated governance system while also offering insights for policymakers into how to address these. In fact, the Constitution specifically addresses this tension, as is seen in this critical passage mandating harmonization between the dual authorities at the local level” (p.266).

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Eswatini (2005) in section 218 (1) states that “parliament shall within five years of the commencement of this Constitution provide for the establishment of a single country-wide system of local government which is based on the Tinkhundla system of government, hierarchically organized according to the volume or complexity of service rendered and integrated so as to avoid the urban/ rural dichotomy.” The constitution further state in section 219 (2) the procedure and consideration when harmonizing the systems. It states that “in defining local government areas the Commission

shall - (a)take into account existing chiefdom areas; (b) redraw Tinkhundla boundaries as may be necessary; (c) integrate urban and rural areas where necessary.” The decentralization policy (2006) echoes the same intentions, it mentions in section 8.1.2 that urban government within their boundaries must form a single Inkhundla as a mean to integrate urban government within the Tinkhundla system. In the near future, it is envisaged that there will be new legislations and a single system based on Tinkhundla.

It is noteworthy though that despite the pronounced intentions to harmonize the system of local government, very little have been done towards achieving this. Tinkhundla remains with very little socio-economic and political responsibilities even today. Unlike municipalities, Tinkhundla have no clear development plans, zero autonomy and without capacity to render local government duties. In fact, they operate the same as before 1978. Sihlongonyane & Simelane (2017) mention that “due to centralization of funding and authority, many of the Tinkhundla offices severely lack infrastructure. There is hardly an office computer or a telephone in some of the Tinkhundla centres” (p.10). This makes studying municipalities in examining trust very rational compared to studying Tinkhundla given the objectives of the study.

2.3. Corruption and the Anti-Corruption Program in Eswatini: Zeroing Down on Municipalities

Having discussed the local government terrain in relation to its origin and institutional framework and most of all having stated why the study choose to focus on municipalities over Tinkhundla in examining public trust, I now look into the state of corruption in the country and zooming down on municipalities which is the study’s unit of analysis. The study begins from general observations of corruption in the country and then outlines the common corruption conduct and the measures that have been put in place to alleviate corruption in municipalities. I end by making an analysis of the strength and weaknesses of the anti-corruption program in the country.

Defining corruption has proven to be not an easy task and many authors have devised many definitions to explain corruption. According to Gyimah-Brempong (2002) “corruption means different things to different people depending on the individual’s discipline, cultural background, and political leaning” (p.186). What Gyimah-Brempong (2002) suggest is that

corruption may be viewed as contextual and is perceived differently by people. The definitions that are presented below shows that indeed corruption is thought differently. Gyimah-Brempong (2002) defines the term corruptuon “as the use of public office for private gain” (p.186). This is a short and less revealing definition that focuses only in the public sector. One can argue that using public office or authority thereof for self-benefit does not always amount to corruption. Will we consider a public official who types a personal letter using an office computer and email it using office internet corrupt? I doubt that such would be perceived as corruption in many contexts while perhaps it might in some.

Hope (2017) considers corruption as crime. “It involves behavior on the part of officeholders or employees in the public and private sectors, in which they improperly and unlawfully advance their private interests of any kind and/or those of others contrary to the interests of the office or position they occupy or otherwise enrich themselves and/or others, or induce others to do so, by misusing the position in which they are placed” (Hope 2017, p.2-3). What needs to be appreciated in this definition is that unlike the one Gyimah-Brempong (2002), this concede that corruption happens beyond the public sector. What is arguable though is labelling corruption as crime. If we apply the common definition that crime is an offence that is punishable by law, we can conclude that not every corrupt behaviour is considered crime. There are instances where people are found to have committed corruption acts which are however not prosecutable in criminal courts.

Now, while we acknowledge the difficulty of defining the term corruption, we can see that there are some common features in the definitions or rather a common point of convergence among many researchers of corruption. Jain (2001) observes that “there is consensus that corruption refers to acts in which the power of public office is used for personal gain in a manner that contravenes the rules of the game” (p.73). Simelane (2012) buttress the foregoing point by mentioning that “many definitions of corruption highlight the action of individuals to appropriate resources for individual gain. It needs to be noted that defining corruption remains contextual and dependent on the angle of analysis and inquiry” (p.423). In this study we accept the specified corrupt conducts as outlined in the Prevention of Corruption Act of 2006 (POCA) to constitute corrupt behavior. The POCA (2006) provides a litany of offences that are considered as corrupt conduct and such includes the exchange of bribes, depriving the public revenue resources which the government is entitled to, unlawfully using public positions to influence personal gains and extending advantages to self and others without following dure processes among many things.

Hope (2017) observes that the “principal types of corruption existing in most African countries are: (1) Bribery, kickbacks, and facilitation payments; (2) Embezzlement, theft, and fraud; (3) Offering or receiving of an unlawful gratuity, favor, or illegal commission; (4) Favoritism, nepotism, patronage, and clientelism; (5) Money laundering; and (6) Conflict of interest/influence peddling” (p.3). Almost all the types mentioned by Hope (2017) are listed by the POCA (2006). This may be a lace curtain showing us that while corruption is contextual and varying across cultures and places, there are glaring commonalities of corruption among the different countries of Africa. This can be a very interesting area of scholarly attention because African countries are by and large contextually different.

2.3.1. The State of Corruption in Eswatini

Like many topics that have attracted scholarly attention, there are also antagonistic scholarly positions on the effects of corruption in society. In my own observation at least, the position that corruption extend negative impacts is society seem to enjoy popular support by scholars, governments and development institutions. Bissessar (2009) observes that “corruption has plagued human society throughout history and continues to manifest itself in many nations of the world. Since the 1980s, international agencies, especially the World Bank, have focused on corruption as the single most important aspect for achieving good governance” (p.336-337). Apart from losing money, through corruption the provision of government services like healthcare, education, roads and infrastructure development suffer. This has a great potential of rendering governments unpopular and incapable to lead in the face of the public. Hope (2017) posits that high level of corruption “undermines the rule of law, weakens governance, leads to violations of human rights, inhibits political stability, hinders economic development, reduces social policies, diverts investments in infrastructure and public services, and erodes the quality of life” (p.37).

Eswatini is among the top countries in the list of those faced with high levels of corruption. But the problem with corruption is that it is mostly conducted in secrecy and making it difficult to be easily detected. It is highly possible therefore that the statistics on corruption are either under-reported or over-reported. Reliance in measuring corruption seems to be much on perception of corruption than on actual cases of corruption. However, because corruption takes place behind closed doors, a lot of countries would record corrupt-clean

scores if actual cases were to be used because what could only count as a case of corruption is one that has been detected, investigated and declared by competent agencies to have been indeed an act of corruption.

Simelane (2012) posits that in Eswatini, “most indications and revelations of corruption only come out in the observations of individual citizens and the print media” (p.424). This could be perhaps revealing some challenges with the agencies that are tasked with carrying out anti-corruption programs. Simelane (2012) reveals that “the first official and public revelation of the extent of corruption was made by the Minister of Finance, Majozi Sithole in 2005, when he said, ‘the twin evils of bribery and corruption have become the order of the day in the country to the point that corruption was costing the Swazi economy approximately ⁸E40 million a month” (p.424).

The most recent spectacle of corruption probably for most governments throughout the world and Africa in particular was around the COVID-19 era when governments were responding to the pandemic. The highlight of this in Eswatini was seen with the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) which was tasked with mitigating the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and its response measures. Writing in his weekly column in the Times of Eswatini about the rot in the NDMA, Dlamini (2023) reveals that “the NDMA failed to account for over E3 million spent on hand sanitizers during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and over E30.9 million related to response programs to the pandemic. On other audit records of the NDMA Dlamini (2023) further reveals that the agency was flagged for failure to account for several expenditures on emergency response projects amounting to over E45 million inclusive of “fuel funds amounting to E11 million; funds for child-headed households programme; and Cyclone Eloise project amounting to over E34 million” (p.25). These could be just a tip of an iceberg since no investigations have been made in relation to these cases.

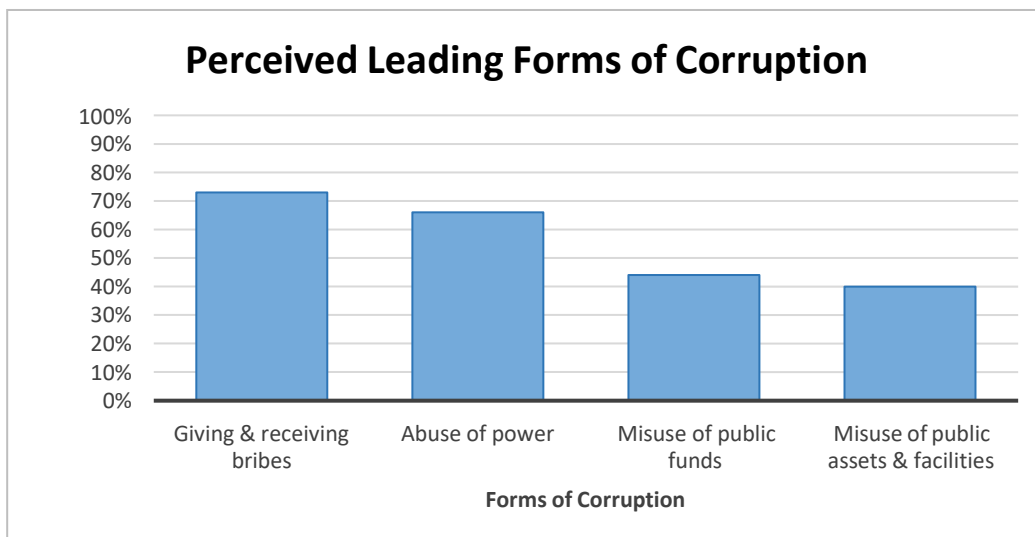
There are many cases of expenditure irregularities that are often pointed out by the Auditor General (AG) which if they can be investigated can undoubtedly reveal corruption elements. The ranking of the country with regards to corruption pictured from 9 years ago, Hope (2017) reveals that “the revised methodology Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2014 ranked

⁸ Approximately USD2.2 million

Swaziland at 69 out of 175 countries with a score of 43 (where a score of 100 is very clean and 0 is highly corrupt)” (p.33). A National Corruption Perception Survey (NCPS) report released by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in 2017 reveals that 93% of Swazis view corruption as a major issue of concern and points out the common types of corruption in the country. ⁹In the most recent 2022 CPI rankings the country scored 30 points and was ranked 130 out of 180 countries. This shows a decline in the country’s performance in fighting corruption when compared with previous years within the 9-year period.

Discussing the common types of corruption in the country, Simelane (2012) argues that that “according to official and public wisdom, Swaziland has experienced both petty corruption which includes small bribes to obtain everyday services and grand corruption that includes payments to secure government contracts or major licenses, change regulations or influence the shape of laws” (p.424). Hope (2017) adds that “although the key areas most affected by corruption include public contracting, government appointments, and school admissions, one type of significant corruption gaining in currency in the Kingdom is that of nepotism/favoritism” (p.35). According to the NCPS (2017), as shown in the figure below: the leading form of corruption is giving and receiving bribes, abuse of power followed by misuse of public funds and public assets.

Figure 2.3 Common Forms of Corruption in Eswatini



Source: National Corruption Perception Survey (2017)

⁹ Eswatini CPI rankings by Transparency International <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022/index/swz>

Getting on the study's specific area of focus, municipalities. We cannot separate the corruption taking place in municipalities from that of the wider national context and across the sphere of government in general. In the logic of Venard (2009) on organisational isomorphism which relates to the development of organisational traits by organisation within a similar context, "organizational isomorphism is the trend of organizations to become homogeneous and pursue similar actions, including corrupted behavior" (p.60). The corruption in municipalities is similar with the corruption in many institutions of the state. Bribery, abuse of power, misuse of funds and assets at local government level have been mainly reported by the media and reports of the Auditor General. ¹⁰Simelane (2010) published a commission of inquiry report that was investigating land allocation in Mbabane Municipality, he mentions that it was discovered that government resources were used to pay rates for residents of two senior management employees under shady means. Simelane (2010) further states that two officers were found to have purchased property at an under-valued price in April 2008 and had only paid half of the amount once and defaulted in the subsequent years without being held accountable. The above two cases carry elements of misuse of public funds and abuse of power by the officers to extend to themselves advantages at the expense of the public. Elements of bribery might also exist if other officers were paid not to report the matter. ¹¹Zwane (2018) of the Eswatini Observer published a reflection on a series of commission of enquiries in local government that unearthed cases of conflict of interest, land grabbing from widows and vulnerable residents and as well as misappropriation of funds in many municipalities. In our view of corruption in municipalities, it is reasonable not to see them as distinct from other institutions since they are all bounded by a similar national anti-corruption framework as we will see in the coming paragraphs.

We cannot doubt though that the true picture of corruption in Eswatini remains hidden because many acts of corruption that takes place in a daily basis are conducted in secrecy and at times even when they are noted the people who are witnesses does not always report. The NCPS (2017) found that 25% of witnesses do not report corruption because they just mind their own business; 24% does not report because they do not know the ACC itself and that 14% was afraid of victimization while 19% did not know the reporting procedures. One

¹⁰Can be accessed at <http://www.times.co.sz/news/20365-two-city-council-officials-in-corrupt-sales-of-govt-property.html>

¹¹ Can be accessed at <https://new.observer.org.sz/details.php?id=4913>

limitation of the corruption discourse in Eswatini is that much attention is put upon the financial audits' reports when they in fact present accounts of expenditure compliance rather than corruption in its wide facets.

2.3.2. The Eswatini Government's Anti-Corruption Program

The country considers corruption as a source of many serious problems including impending development and economic growth. This is evident through several speeches by government authorities and policy documents, the NCPS (2017) outlines that His Majesty King Mswati III has in many occasions spoke against corruption and urged Swazis to refrain from corrupt practices in order for the country to develop. "After His Majesty pronounced zero tolerance for corruption in 2012, the Government responded to the call by making corruption a stand-alone key pillar in the 2013-2018 Government Programme of Action" (NCPS 2017, p.2). The current National Development Plan (NDP) spanning from 2023 to 2027 outlines that "the poor performance of the economy is characterized by fiscal bleeding, slow growth, price hikes and high levels of perceived corruption" (p.xiv). The NDP (2023) also highlights government's commitment to prioritize the fight against corruption in the country towards 2027. The country has also undertaken international commitments in relation to ending corruption. Sutherland (2014) mentions that "Swaziland is a signatory to: the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol against Corruption; African Union Convention on Preventing and Combatting Corruption; and United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)" (p.391). All these statements and commitments show how the government views corruption as a negative element in society and that something must be done to combat it.

Like many countries, Eswatini has an institution that is tasked with leading and coordinating the anti-corruption program. According to Hope (2017), "the primary institution charged with combating corruption in Swaziland and mitigating its consequences is the ACC" (p.40). We will see in the coming paragraphs that there are many other agencies that support the fight against corruption and their relationship with the ACC. "The ACC was officially launched in February 1998 pursuant to The Prevention of Corruption Order No. 19 of 1993 (read as one with The Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 1997) that created it" (Hope 2017, p.40). Simelane (2012) support the argument on the formation of the ACC and outlines its mandate by stating that "legally, the commission was founded on the Prevention of

Corruption Order of 1993 and for the first time the country had an agency responsible for combatting corruption. Its chief mandate was to conduct investigation work, corruption prevention, and public education programmes” (p.427). Hope (2017) buttress the forgoing point by mention that “the mandate of the Commission is to prevent, investigate, and educate with respect to corruption and the prevention component tasks the ACC with taking the necessary measures to prevent all forms of corruption in the country, with particular emphasis on public and private bodies” (p.40). It is noteworthy that at its formation the ACC scope included both the public and private sector as per the assertion by Hope (2017). Most corruption agency have proven to fail at earlier stages due to their limited scope.

Tracking the historical developments on the anti-corruption program. Simelane (2012) reveals that although the ACC was the first agency to be established to address the corruption issue, the agency itself and its founding legislation were not the first anti-corruption initiatives. He further reveals how the anti-corruption program have been a trial and error over the years like many wicked problems. Simelane (2012) points out that the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1986 was the first legislation aimed at addressing corruption. “This legislation failed to make a difference as there were no individuals prosecuted for corruption and there was no indication that corruption was decreasing” (Simelane 2012, p.426). The reasons for the failure of the legislation are not clearly outlined and no single person was prosecuted under it despite that there was clearly indication that corruption was continuing.

Simelane (2012) further reveals that the PCA of 1986 was followed by the Prevention of Corruption Order of 1993 and it did not do much to curb corruption and prompted the creation of the ACC in 1998. It appears though that there were difficulties with enforcing the PCO since there was no accountable enforcing agency and hence the establishment of the ACC 5 years later. It is said though that the ACC had its own fair share of challenges at birth which culminated into its temporary suspension by the High Court of Eswatini. According to a background account by the ACC (2017) annual report “during the year 2002, the case of the Crown Vs Mandla Ablon Dlamini, Criminal Case Number 7 of 2002, interrupted the operations of the Commission as the High Court held that the Prevention of Corruption Order of 1993 was null and void. This ruling paralyzed the Commission and all activities pertaining to operations came to an abrupt halt” (p.5). This is the instrument whose existence of the ACC was based and its suspension automatically meant the suspension of the ACC. Simelane (2012) however adds that the problems were more than just legally based when he states that

“from the very beginning it was faced with serious operational problems such as shortage of qualified staff, equipment, office accommodation and transport” (p.427).

To correct the legal quagmire and to retain the existence of an operational anti-corruption agency Simelane (2012) reveals the government enacted the Prevention of Corruption Act (POCA) of 2006 which laid the foundation for the relaunch of the ACC which took place in 2008. The ACC in its form today, derive existence from the POCA of 2006. Hope (2017) posits that “the POCA, 2006 gives the Commission the mandate to examine the practices and procedures of public and private bodies in order to facilitate the discovery of corrupt practices and secure the revision of their methods of work or procedures which, in the opinion of the Commissioner, may be prone or conducive to corrupt practices.” (p.40).

A lot of progress although on a limited scale has been realized within the period since the enactment of POCA of 2006 up to today. Simelane (2012) attest to the foregoing point by mentioning that “subsequent to the promulgation of POCA of 2006, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) financed the agenda for combatting corruption in Swaziland with a main focus on crafting a national strategy for combatting corruption and capacitating the commission in terms of staff development and training” (p.427). Indeed, positive strides can be located from that intervention, UNODC (2020) country report reveals that “in 2007, Eswatini adopted the comprehensive National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) and developed the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NAP), which provides the framework for the implementation of NACS” (p.3). UNODC (2020) further outlines that the strategy takes a holistic approach that consider the involvement and active participation of civil society, the media, academia and other stakeholders and the ACC serves as the secretariat for the implementation of the strategy.

Taking stock of the of the ACC, UNODC (2020) report identifies several areas of progress, it states that: “in addition to the adoption and amendment of laws; it has conducted two National Corruption Perception Surveys, in 2010 and 2017; established an online mechanism for reporting to ACC; organized anticorruption training sessions for various sectors; and engaged in preventive advocacy and media awareness campaigns” (p.3). The ACC (2017) annual report also outlined that it supported the implementation of the NDP which was adopted in 2016 by conduction a series of activities inclusive of conducting a substantial

number of educational awareness exercises across sectors and stakeholders. We can observe the changes made within the institutional framework of the anti-corruption program. Unlike yesteryears, the institutional framework is now more inclusive and takes into account the role of non-government actors in particular the media and civil society. Second, it can be observed that the program has now taken a proactive approach rather than being reactive to cases of corruption that has occurred. As outlined above, the failures of legislations would be measured by the number of cases brought for prosecution and not on the behavioral that would come through proactive means such as education and preventive advocacy.

2.3.3. Anti-Corruption Controls within Municipalities

It has been already outlined that the nature of corruption in municipalities in Eswatini is not distinct from that occurring in the wider national context. It has been pointed out also that the media has in several occasions reported on cases of misuse of public funds, misuse of public assets, bribery, abuse of power and conflict of interests culminating to unfair decision making within municipalities. The study now looks into the controls that have been put in place to fight corruption within these areas. In the wider national scope the UNODC (2020) Country Report outlines the key institutions involved in preventing and countering corruption as inclusive of the ACC, Royal Eswatini Police Service, the Auditor General (AG), Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (ESPPRA), Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Civil Service Commission (CSC), National Anti-Corruption Forum (NACF), The Attorney General's Office and Ministry of Justice. These institutions interact with cases at different level depending on the nature of the case and the stages in which the case is engaged. For example: some cases are simply dealt with at the areas where they occur without the involvement of other institutions; some do not reach the level of prosecution while others do and the role of some structures are based on enacting legislation rather than operationalizing them. The controls that are discussed are those that are directly linked to municipalities in preventing, detecting and processing cases of corruption when they have occurred.

i. The Anti-Corruption Commission

The most obvious agency in the fight against corruption at every level and scale is the ACC. The ACC has been largely discussed earlier as an agency that is tasked with the duty to

“examine the practices and procedures of public and private bodies in order to facilitate the discovery of corrupt practices and secure the revision of their methods of work or procedures which, in the opinion of the Commissioner, may be prone or conducive to corrupt practices” (Hope 2017, p.40). This means that the ACC can be able to apply itself in every institution and sector ones it has reasonable grounds to do so. However, as outlined by Simelane (2012), the ACC is faced with a lot of challenges that stifle its smooth operating. In reacting to corruption cases, the ACC heavily rely on whistleblowers and in many cases as it has been mentioned by the NCPS (2017) report that many witnesses do not take the initiative to report corruption. The ACC however remains an easily accessible avenue for the public to report corruption. With a preventive approach, the people at local level should be the main target of the ACC in implementing its preventive and anti-corruption advocacy.

ii. Internal Controls

As mentioned, that municipalities in Eswatini derive their legal existence from the Urban Government Act (UGA) of 1969, this legislation also provide for internal controls that are key in preventing, detecting and punishing corruption within urban Councils. By internal controls, we mean measures that are within the municipal institution. First, in the election and appointment of Councils and management officials, the Urban Government Act of 1969 makes provisions that outlaws the election of councilors who have been convicted of corruption related offences within a specified period as would from time to time be determined by the national electoral laws governing local government elections. Such a provision enables the election of citizens with clean corruption track record and ex-offenders who have stayed clean for a certain period. Nonetheless, it can be as well viewed as unfair to the very few who are caught and made to pay for their sins because the many who remains uncaught continue to commit corruption while enjoying eligibility rights to be elected.

The second provision relates to pecuniary interest of councilors. Section 24. (1) of the Urban Government Act of 1969 prohibits councilors from engaging on matters without making declaration whereby their spouses, partners, children, close relatives or anyone they are closely attached to has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest. “He shall if he is present, disclose to the meeting the fact that he has such pecuniary interest and if there is any discussion or if a division is called for thereon, he shall not participate in such discussion or vote in such decision but shall forthwith leave the meeting until such matter has been

disposed of by the meeting” (Urban Government Act of 1969, Section 24 (1)). This provision seeks to prevent decision makers on engaging on a matter where they have direct interest because chances are high that they might act in a bias manner. However, while the thought behind this control is reasonable, it cannot be always beneficial. Once a conflict of interest is declared by a fellow colleague, the other colleagues may be influenced to support him or her and that defeats the intent of the recusal idea.

Third, the Urban Government Act of 1969 requires all municipalities to conduct independent audits of their financial accounts and share the audit report with the Council and the Minister. The Minister and Council applies themselves to the report and upon being satisfied, the Minister directs that it is “made open to public inspection without payment during normal office hours, and a notice to this effect shall be displayed at the Council’s offices and published in a newspaper circulating in the municipality” (Section 103 (3)). Financial audits are effective measures of identifying irregularities on expenditures and thereby making it possible to detect the misuse of public funds. Their limitation of audits is that they only focus on financial aspects and at times assets living many areas that are prone to corrupt behavior. Nonetheless, the controls are devised in a way that they should complement each other and none of them is self -sufficient to address corruption.

Finally, the founding legislation also outlaws bribery. Section 122. (1) of the Act stipulates that a councilor, employee the Council or anyone carrying out duties on behalf of the Council should not accepts for himself any gift, reward or anything other than the payment to which they are entitled. Section 122. (2) proceed to outlaw the giving or promise to give to a councilor or employee of the Council carrying out their duties gifts, rewards or any other benefits in exchange for anything concerning the Council. This provision does not only condemn corruption committed by council personnel but also condemn acts aimed at corrupting Council duty bearers.

iii. Ministerial or Central Control

The Urban Government Act of 1969 provide avenues for the MHUD which is the line ministry responsible for municipalities to detect acts of corruption and any other regularities by instituting two different forms of enquiries. First, the Minister can at any given point in time appoints an inspector to assess the status and affairs of municipalities. Section 105. (1)

of the Urban Government Act of 1969 state that “the Minister may at any time, by notice published in the Gazette, appoint any person to be an inspector for the purpose of inspecting the observance and performance of a Council on the duties and powers imposed or conferred upon it by the provisions of the law”. The Urban Government Act of 1969 further empowers the appointed inspector to attend any meetings of the Council or its committees and inspect any books, finances, statements, contracts, stores and assets and report back to the Minister the outcome of his or her inspection.

Much like the appointment of an inspector, the Urban Government Act of 1969 also empowers the Minister to appoint a Commission of Enquiry when he or she deems so. “If the Minister: has cause to suspect that a Council has failed to observe and perform any of the duties and powers conferred or imposed upon it by the provisions of this or any other law; or has cause to suspect that a Council has done or performed any act, matter, or thing without due authority in that behalf; or has cause to suspect that any present or former member of a Council has abused his position as a member or neglected to perform his duties as a member; or is otherwise of the opinion that an investigation should be made into the affairs of a Council; he may, in his discretion, appoint a commission of one or more persons to enquire into and report to him the findings” (Urban Government Act of 1969, Section 107 (1)). Upon the reports of the appointees, the minister can either refer the case to the police if criminal elements have been detected or the ACC if its expertise is needed. The police or the commission in turn refer cases to the prosecuting authority if deemed to be prosecutable.

We can see that in both provisions the legislation gives fair Ministerial oversight for corruption to be detected, investigated and punished at ministerial level. It is also noteworthy that the circumstances in which the Minister can set up a commission of enquiry or appoint an inspector are closely related to corruption which does not only relate to public funds but also the abuse of authority and many other forms. These provisions themselves can serve as a corruption deterrence to Council as they empower the Minister not to seek permission or alert the Council prior to making the appointments, the thought of that investigations can occur anytime keeps account-givers on toes.

iv. The Auditor General

The office of the Auditor General (AG) is another structure that partake in the assessments of

municipalities with a view of establishing expenditure compliance. According to Kunene (2010), “the office of the Auditor General is fundamental in the accountability of the financial management of government” (p.31). The AG’s office in its 2021 report posited that “the office continues to add value by monitoring and evaluating the use of the national budget for the purpose of giving reasonable assurance to stakeholders that the funds appropriated by Parliament have been used for the intended purposes” (Auditor General’Report 2021, p.ii).

The AG’s office derives its existence and mandate from the Constitution of Eswatini enacted in 2005. Section 207. (1) provides for the establishment of the office and section 207. (3) stipulates that AG’s office shall be responsible for auditing and reporting on the public accounts of Eswatini and thereby empowering the AG to have access to all books, records, reports and all documents relating to public accounts. Upon conducting audits on public accounts, section 207. (5) provides that the AG shall submit reports to the Minister of Finance who shall in turn submit the reports to parliament. In terms of Part IV of the Public Finance Management Act of 2017 relating to accounting, reporting and auditing, local government in general and municipalities in particular are required to submit their audited reports to the Ministry of Finance in account for subventions or grants that have been received from the government. What set the internal audit apart from the AG’s audit is that the latter is then submitted to national parliament where it is interrogated by the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee. The AG’s interaction with the municipalities can unearth misuse of funds and public assets.

v. Parliamentary Public Account Committee

The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee is established by section 209. (1) (b) of the Eswatini Constitution of 2005. It is a committee of parliamentarians that receive and interrogate the report of the AG. Kunene (2011) describes the committee as “constituted of 12 members elected from the House of Assembly with the mandate to investigating and reviewing past, current and committed expenditures of government and organizations receiving funds from government corporations” (p.34). Kunene (2011) further outlines that “the role of the PAC is mainly dependent on the report of the AG and acts as a parliamentary follow-up to the report” (p.34). The PAC has powers to call accounts holders from departments that have been flagged by the AG’s audit for questioning. Upon investigating the circumstances related to the audit expenditure anomaly, the committee then makes

recommendations. Such recommendations can include prosecution and recovery of the lost funds and assets. Hope (2016) provide a success story of the PAC in mentioning that “the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Ninth Parliament, and the Parliament as a whole, in their attempt to deal with the consequences of corruption, managed to recover almost E30 million (approximately US\$ 4 million) in unnecessary expenditure” (p.138). This actually happened around 2010.

The PAC despite its efforts, it has not been able to effectively deal with corruption. It has been mainly criticized as powerless and only targeting small cases while ignoring large scale corruption perpetuated by the powerful elite. The current PAC itself conceded that it lacked power to enforce decisions and as such has become a joke. Mhlongo (2021) writing for the Times of Eswatini reveals that the Deputy Prime Minister refused to implement recommendations of the PAC without explanation, the Deputy Prime Minister had been advised by the committee to suspend officials of the NDMA found to be non-compliant with procurement expenditure around the COVID-19 period. It is said that the Deputy Prime Minister wrote a short letter stating that he would not implement the recommendation. In the same article, Mhlongo (2021) further state how other members of parliament who were not members of the committee were expressing their dismay on the lack of respect for the committee which they argued that its was perrenial. The committee however, remains a important tool which can be effective if given maximum support and empowered to be enforce its decisions.

vi. Eswatini Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (ESPPRA)

As the term suggest ESPPRA is an agency that is responsible for regulating public procurement in Eswatini. The Public Procument Act of 2011 interprete procurement as “the acquisition: by purchase, rental, lease, hire purchase, license, franchise or any other contractual means, of any type of goods, works, services or assets or any combination or goods, works, services or assets” (section 2). From this logic it follows therefore that the acquisition of goods using public resources is public procurement. The Act proceed to state that using public funds wheter wholly or partially constitute public procurement. The ESPPRA was established in terms of section 9 of the Public Procurement Act of 2011 and is mandated by the Act to serve as an autonomous regulatory agency with the responsibilities for policy

formulation, regulation, oversight, professional development and information management. Kunene (2010) posits that ESPPRA was formed in reaction to glaring weaknesses of the then procurement system after severe criticism and recommendation by the African Development Bank (AfDB). “The AfDB had observed that the procurement system was not transparent and was regulated by outdated laws” (Kunene 2010, p.36).

ESPPRA is positioned as a preventive tool of corruption in the public procurement sector. In its oversight role, section 10 of the Public Procurement Act of 2011 tasks the agency with: monitoring compliance by procuring entities; conducting audits of any procurement activities and investigating procurement activities that are suspected to be non-compliant. These tasks put the agency as a watchdog of the public in the process of procurement. However, on close scrutiny loop holes are notable. One of the weak areas is the provisions of the Procurement Act on deviation. The Public Procurement Act, 2011 in section 6 provides for that ESPPRA can allow deviations from the procurement regulations and such include “(a) where exceptional requirements make it impossible, impractical or uneconomical to comply; (b) where market conditions or behavior do not allow effective application of the methods, rules, processes or documents; (c) for specialized or particular requirements that are regulated or governed by harmonized international standards or practices; or, (d) where national security may be compromised” (Public Procurement Act 2011, section 6(I)).

The provision for deviation has already been pointed out as an enabler for legitimized corruption. One case in point is with regard to a tender awarded by Matsapha Town Council on behalf of the Election and Boundaries Commission to a company tasked with providing Information and Technology expertise on local government election. Nkambule (2023) reported in the Times of Eswatini that the tender was awarded to the most expensive bidder despite that the ¹²Royal Swaziland Technology Park and other companies were ranging at 80% lesser than the company that was awarded. Nkambule (2023) reports that the irregularities prompted the court to halt the transaction pending investigation. Mhlongo (2021) also reported that the NDMA officials who were found to have misused public funds around the COVID-19 era had been given the privilege to deviate in terms of section 6 of the Public Procurement Act. Such has a potential of defeating the anti-corruption objectives in which the Act and the agency were founded.

¹² A state enterprise responsible for science and innovation

2.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that the fight against corruption is more than the sum of the legal and policy framework a country has and far more than the sum of anti-corruption agencies. Hope (2016) asserts that “combating corruption must entail a holistic reforms approach that also takes into consideration the country-specific cultural environment that influences the nature and extent of corruption” (p.130). Perhaps the traditional and cultural norms need to be studied on how they contribute to corruption in the country. Simelane (2012) place the monarch at the center of the lack of progress despite the many reforms that have been made. Simelane (2012) argues that “the most serious way in which the monarchy contributes to the failure of the anti-corruption agency is the extent to which it allows itself to be used by corrupt people as a shield against investigation and prosecution for corrupt activities. It is not uncommon in Swaziland for people who are being investigated for criminal offences to send a gift of cattle to the king and afterwards the investigation dies a natural death” (p430-431).

A lot still needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of both the anti-corruption agencies and the anti-corruption program itself. One of the widely highlighted challenges is lack of public distaste for corruption while anti-corruption programs thrives when the public is incentivized to report. De Sousa (2015) opines that one of the draw backs could be the lack of legislations to protect whistle blowers.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Introduction

The study examines the effects of corruption scandals on trust and this chapter discusses how trust and corruption scandals as individual concepts have been thought and as well as how their relationship has been studied and the conclusions that have been drawn based on the studies. It draws from the institutional theory to analyze the relationship and to guide the research methods. Therefore, the dependent variable or the variable that is being explored is trust while the independent variable is political scandal. It is here where the causal relationship between corruption scandal and trust is demonstrated at least in theory. The study also examines the impacts of socio-demographics in the relationship between corruption scandal and trust: these are age; gender; occupation; and level of education. The work of conceptualizing corruption scandals will be almost easy compared to trust since the concept of corruption has already been dealt with and the only remaining component of it is scandal.

3.2. Definition of Concepts

3.2.1. Corruption Scandal

The concept of corruption scandal is a combination of two distinct concepts (corruption and scandal) whose definitions are all contested. We have seen in chapter 2 when we defined corruption that the term has been defined differently by various authors, nonetheless, a working definition that applies in the study was established. To recap, we have said that what the study considers as an act of corruption are the acts that are outlawed by the Eswatini anti-corruption legislation, the Prevention of Corruption Act of 2006. The Act outlines offences such as bribery, giving assistance with regard to contracts and tenders, corrupt transactions by or with public or private bodies, cheating of public revenue and involvement in decisions where there is conflict of interest. This definition can surely have short comings when applied in other context but for the purpose of this study whose context is Eswatini, it is justifiable to stick with it. Now, having ironed out the concept of corruption, we remain with the task of conceptualizing scandals. The most fundamental questions that we have to answer in this case are first, what is a scandal? Second, what qualifies a corruption case to be a corruption scandal? Clearly not every corruption case amount to a scandal and we need to discern the objects of a scandal before we present the concept in its whole form.

As it has already been mentioned that scandal is also a contested concept, we will see that different scholars have as well proposed varying definitions of the term scandal. Our task in this regard will be to deduce the image of a scandal from their proposed definitions. This part shall allow us to identify the intrinsic properties of a scandal so that we are in a position to tell what is a scandal and what is not among other things that resemble it. According to Solé-Ollé & Sorribas-Navarro (2014), a scandal refers to a public allegation of corruption brought to the public by the media. From this definition we can identify features that already form the base of our image of a scandal, for it to exist: there should be an allegation that involves corruption, the allegation should reach the public; and the media is involved. This definition is however too shallow for our purpose of distinguishing scandals from everything else while obtaining a definition that is applicable to all sort of scandals. It suggests that scandals relate to public allegations. If we were to assume that by public allegations, they mean allegations involving public institutions or public officials, can we accept that allegations that are not public in that sense are not scandals? The answer I hold is no because I have come across many scandals that were not involving public institutions and officials. Second, the definition also suggest that a scandal has to be an act of corruption, but there are many things we have seen and heard of as scandals that were not necessarily acts of corruption. We bear this definition in mind with its short comings and proceed to other authors.

According to Adut (2005), a scandal is "the disruptive publicity of transgression" (p.219). This definition also needs to be further unpacked in order for us to understand what image does the author holds about scandals, so that in our minds we also see what he sees and be able to conclude if it is an image widely held by many other scholars. Jacobsson (2008) making a review of Adut (2005), states that Adut (2005) sees "three main components in a scandal: a transgression (real or alleged), a publicizer (publicizing the transgression), and a public (reacting to the transgression)" (p.536). Jacobsson (2008) further argues that "the element of publicity is essential because without it an allegation cannot be a scandal: a transgression may be widely known - as was the case with ¹³Oscar Wilde's sexual preferences and lifestyle long before the scandal broke out" (p.536).

From these definitions (Adut, 2005: Solé-Ollé & Sorribas-Navarro 2004) we can note some convergence. First, both definitions link scandal into to an allegation. Solé-Ollé & Sorribas-

¹³ <https://www.history.com/topics/gay-rights/oscar-wilde-trial>

Navarro (2014) mention that a scandal refers to a public allegation while Adut (2005) as unpacked by Jacobsson (2008) confirms the existence of an allegation in a scandal, however, Adut (2005) adds that the allegation must not just be an allegation but one that signifies a transgression. We cannot confidently assert that the definition by Solé-Ollé & Sorribas-Navarro (2014) is devoid of the consideration of transgression, it is possible that corruption is mentioned as a representation of a transgression since corruption is considered a distasteful phenomenon in many society. Second, all the definitions assert that scandals are characterised by publicity or media involvement. Solé-Ollé & Sorribas-Navarro (2014) mention that the allegation has to be brought to the public by the media for it to become a scandal and Adut (2005) also states that there should be a publicizer (publicizing the transgression). Lastly, both definitions assert that scandals must reach the public and Adut (2005) goes further on this point to add that the public is not only recipients of the allegation but react to it.

The sense that we get from the above definitions is that scandals evolve. They begin as allegations of transgression, reach the media which convey it to the public and the public react to it. Because our intention is to deduce a conceptual understanding that will be applicable to all sort of scandals, the question that needs to be asked at this point is first, whether the above-mentioned features exist in all scandals and whether the said evolution applies to all scandals? To begin with the last question, several authors seem to vouch that at the base of scandals are allegations of transgression which are then narrated as news that cause different emotions to the public. Quoted in Tumber & Waisbord (2019), Lull & Hinerman (1997) observe that scandals generally commence when news reports about behaviors and statements by individuals and institutions that violate laws and for an issue to become a scandal it must be narrated into a story which inspires widespread interest and discussion.

This means that even when the transgression has been reported in the media and has reached the public, it is not a scandal if it has not caused widespread discussion or rather sparked public debate. Tumber & Waisbord (2019) support this point in mentioning that “scandals spur debates about central issues that define social and political life: legality, morality, ethics, inequity, and the behavior of powerful individuals and institutions” (p11). But can we accept that every controversial transgression that reach the public domain and do not spark widespread debate at least to an extent that can be noticed does not amount to a scandal? I argue that it is very rare that a controversial issue can reach the public domain without

anyone talking about it, it can rather be a few people than none at all. This is perhaps where the categorization of scandals by size originates. Bayle & Rayner (2016) posits that the size of a scandal depends on the size of the mobilization which is played by the media and such mobilisation plays out differently with every audience. Reported transgression can spark debates at a village level, among a circle of friends and small concerned groups which can only be detected at a micro-level. Notwithstanding the observation by Tumber & Waisbord (2004) that scandals at times meet a numb public opinion that is accustomed to continuous revelations about scandalous behavior to a point where they become indifferent, we cannot rule small scale-scandals as non-scandals. If we are to rule any matter as a non-scandal, we will have to first satisfy ourselves that it was absolutely of no interest to any group at whatever scale. Jacobsson & Löfmarck (2008) observe that while it is impossible to measure precisely how society is upset at any given time, we can get insights nowadays from social media by reading the analytics and making online polls.

Considering the definitions above and the features that we have deducted; and mindful of the intention that at the end a much more accommodative definition which considers that scandals exist in different scales and in different context is produced, one can refer to scandals generally as news about transgressions that extend an element of shock and spark debates to those who receive them. Logically, in fusing the two concepts of corruption and scandals, we therefore refer to corruption scandals as news about transgressions related to the outlawed acts by the Prevention of Corruption Act of 2016 that extend elements of shock to the public and spark debates. It is important to make concepts to fit in at a particular context to improve the validity of constructs.

3.2.2. Trust

The vast literature on trust have proven that trust is a complex concept and as such, a subject of intense debates and disagreements among researchers and scholars. Newton (2001) observes that the problem with the concept of trust is that “it has a constellation of synonyms: mutuality, empathy, reciprocity, civility, respect, solidarity, empathy, toleration, and fraternity” (p.203). It thus makes reaching a universal definition of this concept very difficult. Gleave *et al.* (2010) attest to the fact that an agreed upon definition of trust together with a dominant theory have upto this far eluded literature. O'Doherty (2022) argues that “competing definitions cannot be evaluated for their proximity to ‘the truth’ because there is

no concrete object commonly known as ‘trust’ against which definitions can be compared and the best that could be done is to compare operational and scientific definitions of trust with common and everyday uses of the term” (p.3). Even if we would take O’Doherty’s (2022) logic, it will still be difficult to compare and converge with ease the mass of the varying definitions within the so many operational fields. However, his suggested approach is valid and in my observation the most commonly used.

To better understand the concept of trust perhaps we need to first look into how we express trust behavior in our daily lives. If the meaning of trust is attached to our daily activities maybe we can be able to extract or understand some of its elements from what we do. Now and again we tell those closer to us that we trust them and at times makes expressions that we trust God, do we ever think deeply what we mean by saying that? Baier (1986) argues that we are so familiar with trust to the point that we do not even notice its presence. But when we say we trust our partners and those close to us, at times it can usually be with regard to a secret that we share, or with something valuable to us. Baier (1986) makes an example of the expression of trust and states that “given that I cannot myself guard my stamp collection at all times, nor take my rubber tree with me on my travels, the custody of these things that matter to me must often be transferred to others, presumably to others I trust” (p.231). If we can trust, logically it means that we cannot trust at some point. We can create an image of trust if we can engage our minds on the questions that: under what conditions do we trust and not trust; and who do we trust and why? These questions prepares us to engage on some of the proposed definitions.

Many authors have made efforts to unpack the concept of trust although at different theoretical angles and operational contexts. Baier (1986) define trust as “letting other persons (natural or artificial, such as firms, nations, etc.) take care of something the truster cares about, where such "caring for" involves some exercise of discretionary powers” (p.240). Giddens (1990) sees trust “as confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles (technical knowledge)” (p.34). “Trust is an expectation that partners, including potential partners, have goodwill and benign intent in their dealing with us” (Yamagishi & Yamagishi 1994, p.136).

From these definitions it is clear that trust is thought and explained differently. For Baier (1986) trust entails giving to a second party permission or powers to take care of things that

are most valuable to you. This could be information, money or maybe obtaining services that are very vital to be messed up. Giddens (1990) can be understood as holding that trust has to do with belief in the consistency of the second party on meeting your expectations because they have certain qualities. Giddens' view in this regard implies that the trusting person must first do an evaluation of the second party to assess either the extent of probity or technical skills. Lastly, Yamagishi & Yamagishi (1994) view trust as expectation that the second party will act in accordance with our wishes based simply on their goodwill and kindness.

But why do we have to trust in the face place? Most of the authors above present conflicting basis for trusting others save for that the need for trust arise where the things valuable to us are threatened, this can be properties, lives and many things that we care about including proper services. Giddens (1990) argues that trust presupposes elements of risk, he holds that we trust under conditions of uncertainty. He supports this point by mentioning that "someone who buys a used car, instead of a new one, risks purchasing a dud. He or she places trust in the salesperson or the reputation of the firm to try to avoid this occurrence" (Giddens 1990, p.31). Giddens suggest that we must evaluate the parties we trust or rather the options we have when faced with conditions of uncertainties. But such will require us to have information about the options which might not be there. Yamagishi & Yamagishi (1994) base their definition on the premise of lack of information and thus concluded that we trust those we trust because having little information about them, we can only rely on that they will interact with us out of their own kindness.

Given the dilemma of conflicting definitions and conceptual understanding of trust, we shall recall that in the logic of O'Doherty (2022) that the best we can do is to compare operational and scientific definitions of trust with common and everyday uses for our purpose. O'Doherty (2022) further argues that "we need to develop more comprehensive and pluralistic ways of understanding and studying trust. In particular, 'trust' should not be thought of as an object, but rather as a phenomenon with at least three distinct aspects: a psychological aspect (the trust felt be a person experientially), a normative aspect (whether someone should be trusted or not), and a relational aspect (the nature of the relationship between a 'truster' and the party they do or do not trust)" (p.4). Our definition of trust in government which is the focus of the study will be borrowed from Hitlin & Shutava (2022), who defines trust in government "as the public's perception of government based on expectations of how it meets their expectations" (p.7).

3.3. The importance of trust

Many studies on trust suggest that trust in society brings more good than harm for both citizens and governments (Hitlin & Shutava 2022; Nannestad 2008; Tolbert & Mossberger 2006). Highlighting the benefits of high level of trust in society, Uslaner (2000) mentions that “trust is the chicken soup of social life. It reputedly brings us all sorts of good things- from a willingness to get involved in our communities to higher rates of economic growth, to satisfaction with government performance, to making daily life more pleasant” (p.569). We cannot exhaust the accounts on the importance of trust that are outlined by the vast literature focusing on this area but we will highlight just a few of the commonly shared views.

Trust is argued to be a major contributing factor in strengthening social order. Seligman (1997) observes that power, dominance and coercion can be a temporary solution to social and political problems but cannot in the long term be sustainable tools and therefore requires the existence of high level of public trust to endure social hiccups. In our definition of the concept of trust we have observed that trust is anchored on the belief that the trusted party will meet expectations and it is mainly based on evaluations by the truster. Therefore in the event that the social order is no longer regarded as a trusted system to solve problems and improve life, the people will seek an alternative and thereby spelling disruption of the order. Seligman (1997) argues that “such aspects of social organization as the structuring of the major markets in society (of power, prestige, and wealth), the construction and definition of the Public Good (and the myriad public goods of which it is constructed), and the rules and regulations for the public distribution of private goods rest on some interplay of coercion and consent, of market and community, of instrumental and affective commitments and so also of the extent of trust in society” (p.15). In this case if trust becomes a missing link, the order can be threatened and the use of force has proven to be not sustainable.

Hitlin & Shutava (2022) posit that “trust is crucial for reasons both conceptual (the legitimacy of well-functioning democracies relies on trust) and practical (government needs to be trusted so it can effectively serve the public)” (p.7). What is legitimacy and why does governments need it? Bitektine & Haack (2015) define legitimacy as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions and are carried out in

the interest of the people” (p.50). It follows therefore that an entity that does not enjoy the popular perception that its actions are desirable and proper will be faced with a disobedient clientele or of the people it serves. Tolbert & Mossberger (2006) share the same sentiments that trust is important for legitimacy and stability. One case in point can be the legitimacy challenge of the International Criminal Court (ICC) which has been widely criticized as being biased in its operations. This legitimacy problem led to its incapacity to effect decisions through the State Parties. South Africa’s refusal to arrest Sudan’s President Al-Bashir during his visit in South Africa in 2015 as narrated by Nortje (2017) is a good illustration of how institutions that faces legitimacy problems find it hard to carry their mandates. Nortje (2017) further mentions that South Africa threatened to withdraw from the ICC thereafter, which is an indication of how the stability of institutions can be threatened when legitimacy has been eroded. The States Parties in this case express distrust on the ICC.

High level of trust is also credited for promoting civic participation and enhancing democracy in societies. According to Tolbert & Mossberger (2006) declining levels of trust has been found to be correlating and causal to declining political participation. The same sentiment is shared by Hitlin & Shutava (2022) who posit that “when people do not trust their government, they are more likely to opt out of voting and other types of civic participation” (p.7). Uslaner (2000) vouch that civic participation is important because “an active and engaged citizenry is motivated by a shared sense of common purpose that ultimately helps people find compromises to difficult issues and over and above that in a trusting society, ordinary people take active roles in their communities, join voluntary organizations, give to charity, and volunteer their time” (p.569). This consideration asserts that when citizens in their individual capacity and in their various collective entities are bounded by mutual trust, they will be able to cooperate, live in harmony and share resources among each other which is a good thing for societies.

Having observed the benefits of trust as they have been discussed, it is not an absolute truth that the subsistence of trust in society always brings positive outcomes. There are many atrocities that thrive in the atmosphere of trust. Baier (1986) argues that “not all the things that thrive when there is trust between people, and which matter, are things that should be encouraged to thrive. Exploitation and conspiracy, as much as justice and fellowship, thrive better in an atmosphere of trust” (p.231-232). Many accounts of victims of rape, those who have escaped at the hands of serial killers and the many exploited in different ways often

mention how their abductors would first win their trust to lure them. The disadvantages of high level of trust although seemingly weighing lightly compared to advantages, are a reality of many societies.

3.4. Dimensions of Trust

From the varying approaches of studying the concept of trust and the varying outcomes of these studies, what we obtain are many typologies of trust. Nannestad (2008) correctly observes that “the research on generalized trust or other types of trust does not proceed from a common understanding of what the term “trust” designates and there is not even agreement on the category to which trust belongs” (p.414). We therefore find ourselves with many classifications of trust which are in most cases categorized in the most conflicting ways. For example, in Fjaeran & Aven (2020), the dimensions of trust are categorised into general trust and skepticism. Discussing trust in public sector institutions, Höglund *et al.* (2019) mention that trust is multidimensional and it changes dimensions depending on the context or field in which it is being applied. It is not the ambition of the study to interrogate the different typologies but it simply seek to create a basic understanding of the concepts of trust for its own selfish purpose of answering the research question. The types of trust that are discussed are carefully chosen to guide us to operationalise the concept.

The study considers two dimensions of trust whose generalizability in my view is persuasively applicable across many contexts and fields. The first dimension is strategic and normative trust and the second dimension is generalized and particularized trust. These dimensions have received sufficient space in literature inclusive of works by (Uslaner 2000; Nannestad 2008; Gleave *et al.* 2010, Yamagishi & Yamagishi 1994) to name but a few. What is good about these classifications as we will see in the forthcoming discussion is their wide extent of generalizability: whether trust is discussed in the field of medicine with regard to method of diagnosis to a patient that can be trusted or is discussed in the commercial sector in relation to which service providers can be trusted and in politics with regards to which political party can be trusted, these classifications are applicable. These dimensions further provide an insight about the basis on which people tend to trust others or institutions in society.

3.5. Strategic Vs Normative Trust

Caution needs to be exercised when studying this dimension of trust because different phrases are often assigned to the terms strategic and normative. Nannestad (2008) notes that strategic trust is at times referred to as rational trust while normative trust is referred to as moral trust. To avoid the confusion that may arise when other phrases have been used, it is important that clear familiarity with the properties or features of each type is maintained so that they are easily distinguishable under the guise of any terminology.

To begin with strategic trust, Uslander (2000) states that this type of trust is “based upon experience and knowledge of others” (p.573). This means that in our interaction we confer trust to the option or party which we have knowledge of and which we have interacted with in the past. Interpreted differently, it suggests that we place our trust on certain options because we know they are reliable through personal experience. Nannestad (2008) support this view by saying that “rational concepts of trust see the phenomenon as embedded in a logic of consequentiality” (p.414). Nalbandov (2009) unpacks the logic of consequentiality to mean that decisions are taken based on rational choice made subjectively to the expected outcomes and it entails that decision makers are aware of their capacities, are informed and are able to identify the option with the maximum output among others. Quoted in Nannestad (2008), Hardin (2006) posits a theoretical example of rational trust known as “encapsulated interest”. Nannestad (2008) states that the concept implies that “trust is a three-part relationship in which A trusts B with respect to x” (p.415). “For us to trust you we must believe your motivations toward us are to serve our interests, broadly conceived, with respect to the issues at stake” (Hardin 2006, p. 68).

What does it mean in trusting practical terms? This means that when we vote politicians into office, conferring into them our trust that they will deliver quality policies, we do so based on our knowledge of their capabilities and usually amassed through our encounter with them. This notion further suggests that when you do not have knowledge, and experience about something you do not engage on strategic trust. The definition of trust given by Giddens (1990) that we trust parties based on their reliability given set of outcomes or events is closely linked to this type of trust.

We now turn to discuss normative trust, often referred to as moralistic trust. Uslander (2000)

defines this type of trust as “trust in people whom we don't know and who are likely to be different from ourselves. Moralistic trust assumes that we don't risk so much when we put faith in people we don't know, because people of different backgrounds still share the same underlying values” (p.572). Moralistic trust stands in sharp contrast with strategic trust which assumes that there is less risk when we base our trust on the trustworthiness of the options or parties we interact with. Nannestad (2008) mentions that moralistic trust is inherited through socialization. “It is not primarily based on personal experiences or other information, and certainly not based on calculations of utility or risk” (Nannestad 2008, p.415). While strategic trust is based on the logic of consequentiality, Nannestad (2008) posits that norm-based concepts is based on logic of appropriateness. Nalbandov (2009) explains the logic of appropriateness to mean making decisions “based on normative beliefs that make behaviors or actions appropriate under certain conditions and inappropriate under others” (p.25). Seligman (1997) argues that “the obligation to be trustworthy, and so to fulfill promises, arises from the moral agency and autonomy, from the freedom and responsibility, of the participants to the interaction” (p.6).

While the point of view of all these dimensions are valid to a certain extent, they have great limitations if are to be applied straight-jacketed across all scenarios that requires the exercise of trust. The insistence of strategic trust on knowledge and history is first impractical given that we do not always have information readily available, what happens when we have to make swift trust decisions? Second, the idea of rational choice-based decision making cannot be applicable when a trust option had to be made in circumstances of wicked problems (new and novel). Applied in political contexts, strategic trust stand opposed to inclusion of young people without experience in decision making processes, its insistence on experience suggest that young people cannot be trusted with political positions in the presence of old and seasoned candidates. For moralistic trust, experience have proven that trusting blindly is a recipe for disappointments: screening the trustworthiness of those we interact with remains very important when we have the time and information to do so to avoid placing ourselves at risks on the basis that strangers can be trusted.

3.6. Particularised Trust Vs Generalised Trust

In the second dimension we begin by discussing particularized trust. Nannestad (2008) states that particularized trust assumes that “trust must necessarily be trust in a particular person we

know or at least have information on, and that it must necessarily refer to some particular issue or domain” (p.414). This notion basically assumes that not everyone must be trusted but over and above that, it holds the view that trust varies across certain classification or groupings. Gleave *et al.* (2010) buttress this point by mentioning that when we confer trust to individuals we know, we engage in particularized trust. Uslaner (2000) observe that particularized trust is faith only to a certain category of people and anyone outside that category is deemed untrustworthy. “Particularized trusters are wary of dealing with people who are different from themselves and have a narrow view of their moral community” (Uslaner 20, p.574).

Making a practical example of particularized trust, Uslaner (2000) mentions that religious fundamentalists who see nonbelievers as heathens are a perfect illustration of particularized trust. This type of trust places the decisions to trust not on experience or calculation of utility and absolutely not on social normative standards but on certain specific features. There are two features that can be taken to define this type, the first is that trust is particular to things or people we know and second that trust is particular to a certain domain. If we were to choose who to trust within a particular political context, we would first need to have knowledge about both the available options and their track record in that domain. Our judgement to either trust or not will then be influenced by our knowledge of them and the features which we associate with trust. Uslaner (2000) posits that particularized is a recipe for conflicts among different groups because it assumes that most people don't share similar values. Particularized trust seems not to pay any particular attention to outliers by putting certain groupings under one blanket; in the example made by Uslaner (2000), everyone who is not a Christian is put under the same blanket of heathens.

We now turn to generalized trust. According to Gleave *et al.* “when actors trust individuals they know nothing about, trust is generalized to the larger society or nation” (p.211). Nannestad (2008) posits that the core assumption of generalized trust is that “one can trust strangers and/or that it is possible to speak about trust even if the domain of trust is not well-specified” (p.414). This type does not associate trust with any class of people in society and it seemingly hold a positive view that people are equally capable of either being trustworthy or untrustworthy regardless of their backgrounds. This type unlike those based on evaluation believe in giving people or options a chance to prove their worth. Uslaner, (2000) argues that “generalized trust creates the "bridging" bonds that link people to folk unlike themselves”

(p.574). It is common that you meet a person in a plane or bus and begin conversations that marks long lasting relationships. Most people who have become partners and started families usually start off as complete strangers and give each other an opportunity.

Discussing the benefits of generalised trust in society, Uslaner (2000) argues that “generalized trust leads people to get involved in their communities, even if they don't expect reciprocity and even if they have found some people less than trustworthy” (p.574). If anyone were to adopt the principle of trusting those you know and of your same kind, that person would probably have a small circle of friends and miss out on the benefits that comes with belonging into a large and diverse community. However, trusting generally has its own disadvantages as well. For example, if you are in favor of a certain policy direction, you cannot trust political parties whose ideological inclination stand opposed to them. You therefore before you accord your trust to each of them have a background information about their ideological positions. The most important thing to do when exercising trust, is to be able to strike a good balance of the discussed types of trust and their options. Each one of the types in its absolute form is applicable within a certain context and not in others. The problem with trust as Yamagishi & Yamagishi (1994) observe is that we only realize that our options were wrong only when we have been disappointed. In many instances as it has been discussed above, circumstances do not warrant us sufficient time to evaluate our trust options particularly when decisions have to be made swiftly. Even when, sufficient time will be accorded to satisfy ourselves with our options and draw closer to certainty, chances of disappointment would still exist because trust by its very nature, is an exercise of prediction.

When you look into all these dimensions of trust, you can observe that their difference is thin and at times confusing. Strategic trust and particularised trust almost share the same features of being knowledgeable of the trust options, while strategic trust insist on knowing the risks and weighing options based on utility assessment, particularised trust insist on knowing the features and domain. Both of them as Yamagishi & Yamagishi (1994) refers to them, are knowledge-based trust. One can as well note that both particularized and generalized trust are puzzling and at times self-contradictory at least in their phrasing. The contradiction in particularized trusts for example is that it is in itself generalized trust. It generalizes its assumptions within a particular domain: within the domain of religion, all Christians are generally perceived as trustworthy while those who are atheist are not accorded the same view. The confusion can also be observed in strategic trust which sometimes exist as

particularized trust. The theory that A can trust B based on X, can be interpreted to confer to B a particular trust status and domain. In the field of trade, a customer (A) can trust the businessman (B) to sell them quality products based on that he is interested in keeping customers (X). Anyone who is involved in trade is not as vested as the businessman: the marketing agency, the cleaner and security personnel in the business cannot be trusted in the same way as the business man since the business is closer to his heart. This is a particularized form of trust, that business owners do not share the same values with their workers.

3.7. Theories of Trust in Institutions: Situating the Impacts of Corruption Scandals on Trust

In this section, the study gives a theoretical conceptualization of trust in institutions. It looks at how trust has been thought to originate, develop, sustained and lost by institutions. It also highlights how the aspect of corruption scandals is theoretically featured in the trust debate in institutions. When we discussed the dimensions of trust above, we mentioned that we were dealing with how trusting behavior has been thought to unfold generally across different terrains and we noted that all the types of trust that have been outlined in the dimensions are applicable to institutions. Institutions can either be trusted because people have knowledge about them on their trustworthiness or they can be just generally trusted on no knowledge basis. Moreover, trust on them can either be based on a process of evaluation or simply on normative basis that they ought to be trusted as institutions with a mandate of serving the people. We now depart from the general and zooming in to institutions of the public in particular political institutions and municipalities to be precise. What we want to observe in this case is how theory explain the production and further development of trust (either negative or positive) in political institutions.

Literature is filled with a myriad of theories which unpack trust in institutions and guide studies thereof. Gleave *et al.* (2010) demonstrate this multiplicity of theoretical angles by revealing that in sociology, the determinants of trust is categorised within four explanations namely: civil society, institutional quality, culture and values, and demographic homogeneity. Mishler & Rose 2021 also present two theoretical traditions that they claim compete “as explanations for the origins of trust and offer very different perspectives on the prospects for developing sufficient trust for democratic institutions to survive and function effectively” (p.31). What is however the most notable point of distinction among the theories is how they

locate the point of trust origination. While others are of the view that the point of trust origin are internal to institutions some contends that trust originate outside institutions. We approach the discussion in this section along these two contending scholarships. The study has been persuaded to take the explanation made by Mishler & Rose (2001), where distinction reflecting the dimensions of trust origin is made between cultural theories and institutional theories. According to Mishler & Rose (2001), “cultural theories differ principally from institutional theories with regard to the extent to which trust is conceived as exogenous or endogenous to political institutions. Cultural theories view trust as exogenous, a basic character trait learned early in life, whereas institutional theories view trust as endogenous, a consequence of institutional performance” (p.33). We adopt this framework because it relates to political institutions which are also the study’s subject of interest.

3.7.1. Cultural Theories

To begin with cultural theories, Mishler & Rose (2001) observe that the main assumption of cultural theories in relation to political institutions is that trust in institution originates externally to the institutions, meaning that the institutions have no control on public’s trusting behavior towards them. To understand them more clearer on this assertion, we first need to understand what is it that they view as external and internal spheres to political institutions. Unfortunately Mishler & Rose (2001) are not explicit on their distinction although they do mention a few examples of what constitutes the external sphere to political institutions. These are the spaces of inter-personal interactions outside of the political system and they include the family and the web of community organisations. This is similar to what Putnam (1995) considers as containing social capital. By social capital Putman (1995) refers to the “features of social life-networks, norms, and trust-that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives” (p.664-665). We can therefore conclude that the exogeneous space to political institutions is the civic space where personal and interpersonal interactions take place and where the cultural theories locate the origin of trust in institutions.

Now that the point of origin has been dealt with, we look at how cultural perspective perceive the conception and development of trust to the point where they relate with political institutions. Mishler & Rose (2001) observe that trust is a product of “long-standing and deeply seeded beliefs about people that are rooted in cultural norms and communicated through early-life socialization” (p.31). “Virtually from birth, individuals learn to trust or

distrust other people by experiencing how others in the culture treat them and how, in return, others react to their behavior” (Mishler & Rose 2021, p.33). What the cultural perspective suggest is that public trust in political institutions is a product of social experience amassed from as low as the family level outwardly to the broader civic space composed of academic, religious and cultural institutions to name but a few. Put simply, either a person trust a political institution lesser or more is dependent upon his or her socialisation on trust behavior according to this perspective. Rose et al (1997) buttress this point by confirming that the link between the individual and the institution is a result of political socialisation. Mishler & Rose (2001) further argues that “the institutionalization of trusting interactions within a culture creates a path-dependent process in which diffuse socialization mechanisms transmit, from one generation to the next, positive (or negative) predispositions toward representative institutions and democratic governance” (Mishler & Rose 2021, p.34).

If we were to assume that the Arab Spring which was characterised by anti-government protests in the Arab world around the 2010(s), under this perspective our interpretation of those events would be that they were not events that occurred as a result of people’s evaluation of the governments’ effectiveness but they were the climax of socialised distrust. Through their lived experience under the governments from generations to generations, the people reached a point where they had to challenge their governments. If we were to conduct a study assessing public trust in the police service on and around the ¹⁴unfortunate murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis by the police, under this perspective we would expect that event not to have a bearing or influence on trust in the institutions but rather the lived experience of the public in their interaction with the police. It suggest that an event devoid of a historical connection on trust, cannot at all alter trust.

Cultural theories, just like institutional theories as we will see in forthcoming discussions makes analysis at two societal level which are macro and micro levels. Mishler & Rose (2001) mentions that “whereas macro-cultural theories emphasize the homogenizing tendencies of national traditions and make little allowance for variation in trust among individuals within societies, microcultural theories focus on differences in individual socialization experiences as sources of significant variation in political trust within as well as between societies” (p.32). In this regards, what we see is that macro theories assumes that

¹⁴ See the story on the NY Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html>

people who share the same culture and values are likely to hold the same trusting behavior and at the micro level accepts that variations due to factors such as age, political and economic background can account for variations among individuals.

While it is apparent that cultural theories hold some degrees of validity when we look at developments in the trust debates, we cannot however agree that its claim to validity is absolute, in fact it is lesser than many accounts. It is agreeable that some of our trusting behavior has to do with our upbringing and experience, we see that with the distrust exhibited by people who grew and still growing up under apartheid regimes and racial societies. The children of Palestine are a good case in point in their relation with Israel forces along the disputed borders, they view the Israel Security Agencies with an undoubted sense of distrust because of the historical interaction that have had with them. It was surely the same case with South African citizens during the apartheid era, their experience and teachings from generation to generation presented the government as an institution that could not be trusted. The same cannot be said in the modern era where face-to-face interaction has been greatly reduced by new technologies and with socialisation having advanced into a global scale through the internet and social media in particular. People find themselves having to make a trust decision on institutions that they meet for the first time and on institutional modes of interaction that have never been part of their socialisation and experience. People still makes decisions under novel conditions.

Second, there is no evidence of the most advanced logic of trust that has ever been socialised to a certain section of society. If trust was an art that is mastered through the course of life and generational inheritance, we would surely have a society or group with both the most advanced socialisation program on trust and with the visibly most trusting instincts. Trust as we have discussed has been proven to be the most valuable property necessary for societal development and as such, if there were ways in which it would be organically cultivated outside of political institutions, most governments would have invested on those programs in the same way they are investing to many programs that are a threat to cooperation, peace and development as lack of trust is.

The weaknesses of the theory is summed up by Newton (2001) who observes that “survey research fails to uphold some of the basic claims of these theories. In the first place, there is very little evidence that membership of voluntary organizations has much of a relationship

with individual attitudes of trust. In the second place, the evidence shows that social trust between citizens is not at all closely related to political trust between citizens and political leaders. In the third place, survey research suggests that different sorts of people express social and political trust, for different reasons. It follows that social and political trust do not have common origins in the same set of social conditions; they are different things with different causes” (p.201).

3.7.2. Institutional Theories

For institutional theories, their main assumption is that the point of trust origin is within the institutions’ control. This is in contrast with the culturalists’ point of view that trust in political institutions originates exogeneously. According to Mishler & Rose (2001) “institutional theories hypothesize that political trust is politically endogenous based on the expected utility of institutions performing satisfactorily” (p.31). Institutional theories suggest that people’s evaluation of the performance or rather effectiveness of the institution is the basis on which they trust or distrust institutions. This is closer to the dimension of trust that we termed strategic or rational trust when we discussed trust dimension. Mishler & Rose (2001) further advance their view by mentioning that “trust in institutions is rationally based; it hinges on citizen evaluations of institutional performance. Institutions that perform well generate trust; untrustworthy institutions generate skepticism” (p.31). This view is further buttressed by Fard & Rostamy (2007) who observe that “institutional theorists view high performance as the root of trust in government while linking distrust mostly to the poor performance of government” (p.333) . The development and decrease of public trust according to this theory as put by Lepsius (2017) is reproduced through positive results and lost through negative results.

If in this context we were to use the same example of the Arab Spring and George Floyd cases mentioned under cultural theories. We would explain the Arab Spring and posit that the anti-government protests as expressions of distrust were a result of the people’s evaluation of the governments’ performance and their conclusions were that they were performing below standards and therefore not warranting to be supported. Unlike the cultural explanation, the consideration is that it was the failure of the governments to deliver that prompted distrust and the protests thereof, not socialised distrust to the system. In studying public trust on the

police on and around the case of George Floyd, we would expect the manner in which the police service or the justice system dealt with the matter to have a bearing on public trust.

Institutional theories also makes analysis both at the macro and micro level, Mishler & Rose (2001) observes that, “macro-institutional theories emphasize the aggregate performance of institutions in such matters as promoting growth, governing effectively, and avoiding corruption. The outputs of institutions are assumed to determine individual responses. By contrast, micro-institutional theories emphasize that individual evaluations of institutional performance are conditioned by individual tastes and experiences, for example, whether a person thinks that political integrity or economic growth is more important and whether that individual personally has experienced the effects of corruption or the benefits of economic growth.” (p.32). This means that at the macro-level focus is put on the performance of the institutions while at the micro level focus is on the perception of the individual based on his or her evaluation. The expectation at the macro level is that institutions that performs well are trusted by the public while at the macro, members of the public who views institutions as performing well will trust them more.

Institutional theories have also received their fair share of criticism. While their assumptions are applicable in many instances and contexts, they as well does not claim infinite validity. It is true that institutions have an influence on how the public perceive them. Institutions that are reliable and consistent will have the confidence of the public and confidence is highly associated with trust (Yamagishi & Yamagishi 1994; Giddens 1990). However, it is still true that a person can make a trust decision under circumstances where there are no performance records of an entity. Over and above that, it is not entirely true that perceived well performing institutions always correlates positively with levels of public trust. Rose *et al.* (1997) observe that in the post communisim era among the countries which were under the USSR, there was a relaxation of repression, improved respects for freedoms and human rights to the point that the states would be categorized as doing better, however, for some citizens the level of trust never improved. This then brings to the fore that trusting by socialisation cannot be entirely ruled out in the trust debate.

Furthermore, Mishler & Rose (2001) observes that “although institutional theories agree that political trust is endogenous, they disagree about which aspects of performance are important or how performance is assessed” (p.36). This is a great challenge to the institutional theory

because the diverse nature of the public in their economic classes and social cleavages have diverse expectations of institutional outputs and therefore different performance evaluation criteria. How then can the evaluation of performance be harnessed to have one universal meaning? This is impossible, but the theory concedes this variation at the micro level analysis that variations are expected depending on how individuals perceive their gains from institutions. Mishler & Rose (2001) further posits that “in new democracies, the political character of institutions can matter as much as their policy outputs, and political outputs can matter as much as economic performance” (p.36). In our analysis and formation of hypotheses for studies we must be alive to these theoretical contentions.

3.8. Conceptual Framework

To situate and conceptualise the impacts of corruption scandals on public trust, we draw guidance from the institutional theory and borrow very little from the cultural theories. For corruption scandals to influence public trust in institutions, they have to be committed endogenously to the assessed institutions. It is theoretically unfathomable and empirically void that a corruption scandal within the civic space can have a bearing on public trust in a public institution that has nothing to do with the scandal at all. Therefore, the source of trust and of distrust needs to be located within the institution whose trust is being assessed. In the logic of the cultural perspective, the foregoing point may be countered by arguing that a corruption scandal in a civil society organisation can create a growing perception among members of the public that most institutions within a given society are generally corrupt and therefore public institutions cannot be an exception, this would be a claim that exogenous corruption scandals affect public institutions. However, I argue that corruption scandals unlike corruption itself are real case scenarios and their existence are never based on perceptions: they can only affect institutions that are party to the scenario. The only way a corruption scandal that has occurred externally to a political institution can affect trust in it, is when the political institution has a mandate or jurisdiction to address the scandal, it will either gain trust or lose it based on how the public evaluate its interventions. If the dominant perception is that the intervention was satisfactory, the institution will gain more trust and it will lose it if the dominant perception is contrary. This reasoning is valid under the institutional theories as opposed to cultural theories.

While there are scholarly positions to the effect that corruption is necessary in society, the

dominant view is that corruption is considered a negative factor in society (Simelane 2012; Bissessar 2009; Hope 2017). According to Caillier (2010), “citizens lose faith in democracy, and in their democratically elected government, when public officials have become corrupt” (p.1017). In most cases, the public get to know about corruption cases committed by their governments through the media. We have above termed the media revelations of transgression inclusive of corruption as scandals. Reported cases or scandals highlight the existence of corruption in institutions and influence public opinion. Bowler & Karp (2004) support this view by mentioning that the effects of scandals “does not stop with popularity but has wider consequences for the public’s view of politics and political institutions” (p.271). Corruption on its own when not reported in the media remains unknown to the public but when it has been reported and widely reach many people, the institution will be seen as corrupt and evaluated as such by the public and thereby losing public trust.

According to Lee (2018), not all scandals and so are corruption scandals have the same impacts on institutions and politicians. Lee (2018) further observes that “supporters of the implicated politician are likely to dismiss the factuality, seriousness, and/or relevance of a scandal” (p.716). I argue that while many factors can affect the severity of a scandal, the extent to which public react to a transgression reflects the posture or stance of public policy to the related transgression and thereby the commitment of governments to them. If a Gender-Based Violence report committed by a policy maker does not send shockwaves, it reflects how the public takes lightly the issue of Gender Based Violence and the extent to which the government has mobilized society and committed itself to fight it. This is the same case with corruption scandals, how public react to them reflects the level at which governments have mobilized the public against corruption. The level of commitment by governments at the macro level and performance of governments in addressing corruption have a bearing on the level of public trust accorded to it as per the institutional theories. I argue that, corruption scandals lower public trust in institutions and concede that there can be variation on the severity of scandals based partly on the reason I have made above. I further add that the impacts of corruption scandals on public trust are further regulated by the public’s perception of the size of the scandal. Based on the assumptions of the institutional theory, the following hypotheses will be tested.

H1: Residents of a municipality with a recent corruption scandal will rate their level of trust on their municipality lower compared to residents of a municipality without a recent corruption scandal.

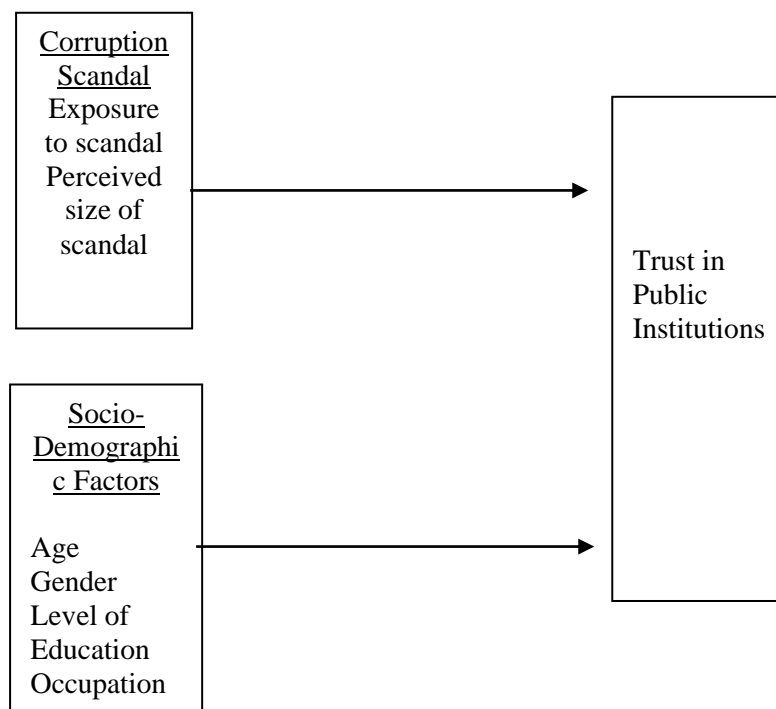
The above hypothesis is made at macro-level of analysis and setting together two municipalities, one with a scandal and one without a scandal. The underneath hypothesis then focuses on trends with the individual and therefore at a micro level.

H2: *Residents who have been exposed to a corruption scandal have less trust compared to those who have not been exposed to corruption scandals.*

H3: *Respondents who perceive a corruption scandal as big has low trust on institutions compared to those who perceive it as small*

H4: *There are statistically significant relationship between public trust: and gender; age; occupation; and level of education.*

Figure 3.1 Conceptual Model



Source: Authors synthesis 2023

3.9. Operationalization of Variables

Before we define operationalisation, it is important not to take for granted the need for bringing clarity on the term variable because operationalisation in this case is about variables. Answering the questions that: what is a variable and what does it mean to operationalise them

will assist in establishing an understanding on how we are going to test the hypotheses we have made and why. The term variable is defined by Creswell & Creswell (2018) who note that “a variable refers to a characteristic or attribute of an individual or an organization that can be measured or observed and that varies among the people or organization being studied” (p.93). This means that in this section, we are discussing the features or characteristics of our subjects which we want to measure and our subjects are residents of municipalities and municipalities themselves. We are therefore looking for features that will enable us to test the hypotheses.

According to Bryman (2012) and true of many scholars and authors, variables are categorised into two main types: independent and dependent variable. Bryman (2012) outlines that dependent variable is the one which is to be explained in a study while an independent variable is the one that has a causal influence upon the explained variable. The dependent variable is dependent upon the condition of the independent variable, what you do to the independent has to affect the dependent. For example, in the hypothesis we have made that “residents who have experienced corruption scandals by their municipality will rate their trust in municipalities lower compared to residents who know no corruption scandal by their municipality”. The claim suggests that the trust that residents have on municipalities is dependent on their exposure to corruption scandal or rather corruption scandals causes low trust among residents.

Now on operationalisation, Sarantakos (1998) defines operationalisation as “the process of converting concepts into their empirical measurements, or of quantifying variables for the purpose of measuring their occurrence, strength and frequency. It is employed when concepts are vague, unclear or abstract, thus involving a process of translating abstract concepts into synonymous empirical referents” (p.130). Kellstedt & Whitten (2018) buttress this point by mentioning that “we operationalize when a variable moves from the concept level in a theory to the real-world measure for a hypothesis test” (p.22). This put simply, refers to the act of observing hypothetical claims. For this study, the concepts or rather features or variables are corruption scandals, perceived size of corruption scandals, public trust or trust in government and socio-demographic factors. This part is about how do we observe the hypothesis or theoretical claims that have been made in relation to the variables. Because some of these concepts are abstract and cannot be measured directly like other variables, we operationalize them using certain indicators that are believed to reflect or describe their existence.

3.9.1. Dependent Variable: Public Trust/Trust in public institutions

The variable that we measure and explain in this study is public trust or rather trust in institutions of the public which are municipalities to be precise. As per the definition made by Bryman (2012), this is our dependent variable. In our conceptualization of trust, it was defined as the public's perception of government based on how it meets their expectations, a definition shared also by Hitlin & Shutava 2022. Now we picture public trust as perception held by the public based on their evaluation of how public institutions satisfy their expectation. In the logic of institutional theory, we said evaluations based on performance. Now, how do we assess the existence and volume or magnitude of public trust in an institution? How do we say that institution A enjoys more public trust than institution B? Rose *et al* (1997) posit that in a survey study as this one "to assess current levels of trust in civil and political institutions, we require survey data of mass attitudes and questions that appropriately measure trust" (p.95). Askvik *et al.* (2010) buttress this argument by mentioning that "when citizens indicate that they trust certain institutions, we interpret this to mean that they find these institutions trustworthy; their opinion is based on the relevant institutional images they have constructed, and it accords with whatever criteria they use to decide whether an institution can be deemed trustworthy" (p.418).

This study assesses the level of trust in municipalities by means of a survey that asks questions believed to reflect their perception of trust in the institution. The problem though with this assessment in the case of Eswatini is that we do not have previous data on the public trust in the municipalities we are studying, it is therefore impossible to tell whether the expressed levels are normal or abnormal (they reflect an increase or decrease from previous periods). However, I am confident that the measurement is fit for the study purpose because it is able to assess comparative variations between municipalities and residents in the current period and thereby enabling us to test our hypothesis. We are neither measuring growth nor decrease but the state of public trust at present.

In measuring trust and the perceived size of corruption scandals, the study used the questions: "*To what extent do you trust your local government?*" The response categories are five on a Likert-type scale from trust very much to do not trust at all and from very big to very small respectively. The 5 points scale has the point 3 as the central position symbolizing neutrality

allowing respondents to express a position of indifference and thereby correctly capturing their feeling as opposed to scales with even numbers which are used in other studies. In responding to this question and ranking the responses we believe that respondents are making a true description of their trust in the institutions. If our first hypothesis is true, the municipality that has recently had a corruption scandal will show lower level of trust than that which has not experienced a recent scandal.

3.9.2. Independent Variable: Corruption Scandal

The study's main independent variable is corruption scandal. This is the characteristics from which changes in public trust are observed. We argue that its presence has causal influence on public trust in municipalities. How then do we observe the existence of a corruption scandal and link it to a public institution and observe the assumed changes on public trust? This question forms the essence of this section. We have conceptualised corruption scandals as news about transgressions related to the outlawed acts by the Prevention of Corruption Act of 2016 that extend elements of shock to the public and spark debates. This means that what we link to public institutions as corruption scandals are reports about transgression relating to corruption in Eswatini that have sent shockwaves to the public and stirred public debates. The selected corruption scandal is elaborated in the methodology under sampling methods. To qualify as a scandal, there must be evidence that it has shock the public and sparked debate. This can be assessed through the frequency of media reporting about the development of the scandal and reaction of the public through social media and other platforms. The corruption scandal relating to the scandalised municipality meets the criteria.

The study makes three claims in relation to corruption scandals. First is that a municipality with a corruption scandal within the past 5 years is least trusted compared to a municipality without a scandal. This was operationalised by selecting one municipality with a scandal and one without a scandal in the past 5 years and comparing the level of public trust as operationalised in the above section. Second, the study claims that residents who have been exposed to a corruption scandal or who will indicate to know a corruption scandal by their municipalities will indicate lower level of trust on municipalities compared to residents who will indicate that they don't know any corruption scandals by their municipality. Respondents were asked the question that: *do you know any corruption scandal by your municipality?*

They answered on a “Yes & No” choice and this was compared against their response on how much they trust their municipalities. Last, the study claims that residents who perceive a scandal as huge will indicate less trust compared to those who view the scandal as huge. We operationalised this by asking the question: *what do you think was the size of the scandal?*”. The response categories are five on a Likert-type scale from small to very big and the responses were compared with their rating of level of trust municipalities.

3.9.3. Socio-Demographic Factors

Both the institutional and cultural theories concede that socio-demographic variables account for variations in observed subjects in relation to public trust. Mishler & Rose (2001) posit that “micro theories emphasize that political trust varies both within and between societies as a result of different political socialization experiences linked to differences in education, gender, or other social structural influences and/or because people with different political values and interests evaluate political and economic performance differently” (p.40).

Different studies have made varying discoveries regarding the relationship between trust and socio-demographic factors. The tested hypothesis depend on the theoretical framwerk used. The cultural theories believes that because people of different ages, occupation, education and gender undergo different stages of socialisation, their trust behavior will also vary. Brehm & Rahn (1997) making a case for the cultural persective argues that “variation in social capital can be explained by citizens' psychological involvement with their communities, cognitive abilities, economic resources, and general life satisfaction” (p.999). For the case of institutional theory which is guiding this study, it posits that the difference at the individual level either by gender, occupation, age or education is accounted for by individual evaluations of institutional performance and are conditioned by individual tastes and experiences.

In this study we are simply confined into testing for statistical significance or covariance of the socio-demographic variables and trust without making inference on the possible reasons influencing the evaluations of individuals. We can only speculate in the discussion that perhaps respondents are either negatively or positively impacted by municipal programs and activities to make whatever evaluations that they make. Those who will be interested in taking the study further with regards to this aspect will build from our conclusion on these

relationships. The study only makes the claim that “*there are statistically significant relationship between public trust: and gender; age; occupation; and level of education.*”. Respondents were required to mention their age; state their gender; level of education; and occupation which was then analyzed through SPSS.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

In many research papers under this chapter the term methodology although commonly used as the topic, it is usually left undefined. It is even very common to confuse methodology with methods whereas they are distinct terms. Before mentioning what this chapter is about, it is important that the term methodology is first understood. Sarantakos (1998) explains this terms as “literally meaning the science of methods (method + logy, the latter being a Greek word which can liberally be translated to mean 'the science of', in the same way it is used in geology, psychology, sociology, etc.) and contains the standards and principles employed to guide the choice, structure, process and use of methods, as directed by the underlying paradigm” (p.34). This chapter therefore carries the science of how the study will be conducted, it outlines the methods and techniques that the study will use to satisfy or answer the research questions. This includes the research design and methods of selecting subjects, collecting data and making analyses. In addition, the chapter provides a justification of the decision to utilize the aforementioned designs and methods. It also outlines how the validity and reliability strengths of the research will be ensured.

4.2. Research Design

This subtopic of research methodology has been addressed differently by various researchers and scholars. As observed by Creswell & Creswell (2018), in some papers it is often referred to as research strategy. In the work of Bryman (2012), he explains that he refers it to strategy as a simple meaning of a general orientation to the conduct of social research. The most common and widely used reference however remains research design at least in my own observation. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018) “research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research study” (p.49). Toshkov (2018) observes that “research design is about getting valid answers to research questions in a reliable and efficient way” (p.219). Toshkov (2018) proceeds to mention that it involves the optimization of the validity and scope of application of scientific inferences in line with the ambitions of the researcher and in consideration of research ethics.

There are three widely common categories of research designs that researchers utilize to answer their research questions. These are qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Creswell & Creswell (2018) contends that “the researcher not only selects a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods study to conduct; the inquirer also decides on a type of study within these three choices” (p.49). The rationale for choosing a design is attributed to many factors. “Methods of social research are closely tied to different visions of how social reality should be studied. Methods are not simply neutral tools: they are linked with the ways in which social scientists envision the connection between different viewpoints about the nature of social reality and how it should be examined” (Bryman, 2012, p.19). Toshkov (2018) buttress this foregoing point by mentioning that “at the first, most general, level research design is about the adoption of certain general ontological and epistemological positions and a broad theoretical outlook” (p.219). Creswell (2019) adds that it is not only scientific considerations in the form of worldviews and ideological outlooks that shape the choice of researchers in this regard but such factors as the research problem, the personal experiences of the researcher, and the audience for whom the report will be written.

In this study I use quantitative methods. This choice is neither necessitated by the audience the research is attributed to nor my personal experience but my firm belief that the state of being of public trust warrants an objective study that deduce universal principles and procedures of inquiry in order to optimally satisfy the research question. The ambition of the study is to test hypothesized theory in the relationship between corruption scandals and public trust. The study also seeks to provide a quantified description of this relationship than to provide contextual interpretations. One can state that beside my view of the state of being of trust and how it can be studied, the research problem itself being the relationship between corruption and public trust warrants a study which does not pay attention to specific context but which examine relationships between these concepts objectively across context, time and spaces through the application of accepted universal scientific procedures.

Contrasting between quantitative and qualitative methods, Bryman (2012) mentions that “quantitative research can be construed as a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data and that entails a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which; the accent is placed on the testing of theories, has incorporated the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism in particular and embodies objective reality” (p.35-36). “By contrast, qualitative research can be

construed as a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data and that predominantly emphasizes an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research in which; the emphasis is placed on the generation of theories, has rejected the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism in particular in preference for an emphasis on the ways in which individuals interpret their social world and embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation" (Bryman 2021, p.36). Because the intention of the study is to test theory and provide a quantified analysis, the option of quantitative methods is the most suitable. This quantitative study adopts the survey design method. According to Fowler (2014) survey research produces statistics or numeric description of a study population by studying a sample of that population through interviews with the intent of generalizing from a sample to a population. The advantage of a survey study in this regard is its cost effectiveness and its capability to make generalizations over experiments.

4.3. Sampling & Data Collection

According to Fowler (2014) sampling is the exercise of "selecting a small subset of a population representative of the whole population. This means that before a sample is taken, the population must be clearly defined. The study examines the relationship between corruption scandals and public trust through an empirical study conducted in two municipalities in Eswatini with a view of establishing other variables that are moderating the relationship. Therefore, the interest of the study is to interview dwellers or residents of Eswatini municipalities. Selection here takes place in two stages, first being the selection of the municipalities and second being the selection of interviewees within the municipalities.

The sample size of municipalities is 2 municipalities and the method of sampling is purposive sampling that gives us municipalities of almost the same features differing within the following characteristics:

1. One municipality with a corruption scandal that is not older than 5 years at the commencement of the research.
2. One municipality without a corruption scandal in the past 5 years at the commencement of the research.

Sarantakos (1998) states that "in this sampling technique (also known as judgmental sampling) the researchers purposely choose subjects who, in their opinion, are thought to be

relevant to the research topic. In this case, the judgement of the investigator is more important than obtaining a probability sample.” (p.152). Swaziland has a total of 11 urban local government structures which vary in terms of population, size and stages of development. Some of these institutions were declared urban local government structures while they were not urban in the common definition of the word but just on the basis of that they are in strategic locations which the national government wants to urbanize. For example, some of the structures have business properties and no residential areas and some are without clearly defined boundaries. This means that there are urban local government structures that have very limited social responsibilities of people’s interests and some without dwellers at all. The purposive sampling methods comes in handy on this regard so that fully functional municipalities, one with a recent scandal and one without a recent scandal and both being a place of dwelling for residents whose perception we are seeking are selected.

The purposefully sampled municipalities in the study are Matsapha and Nhlangano Town Councils. Perhaps some may argue that the use of purposive sampling here and the selection of only two cases for a quantitative study has the potential of weakening the degree of its external validity and that it could have been more suitable for a comparative qualitative study or of mixed methods, well that can be a good observation. However, although the study will draw comparisons, it does not have much interest in the specific context of the municipalities. It only seeks to analyze the trust behaviour of residents from two opposite scenarios of a municipality embattled with corruption scandals and one without scandals through the application of universal scientific laws in an objective manner and draw generalizations. Further studies with interest on contextual influences can then be made based on this one. Matsapha and Nhlangano municipalities to the best of my knowledge represent the two opposites scenarios of interest to the study.

4.3.1. Brief Background of the sampled municipalities.

i. Matsapha Municipality

Matsapha is a town situated in the Manzini region which is in the central part of Eswatini. The town was declared a Town Council in 2012 and is governed under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MoHUD). It covers a total area of 2236.4 hectares and has a residential population of about ten thousand people. The town harbours the largest

industrial site in the country characterized by factories, warehouses and several shopping centers. It also houses schools, residential areas and as well as farms. The daytime population of the town is estimated to be 35 000 people, this means that caution has to be taken when defining residents and carrying out the interviews so that it is only data from the targeted population (residents) that is captured.

From November 2018 to February 2020, the Matsapha Town Council took the lead among municipalities on the Eswatini media space mostly for the wrong reasons. The town was embattled by a governance crisis which was characterised by conflicts among councillors themselves and between the council and the administrative officials of the town. The situation became unworkable to the point that the Minister of Housing and Urban Development established a Commission of Enquiry to investigate the governance affairs of the town. In its findings which were released around April 2019, the commission unearthed a glaring corruption scandal that shocked almost the entire country. It found that in the recruitment of the Corporate Services Manager (CSM), whereby a princess to the Eswatini royal family was hired, the council usurped the powers of the consultant they had engaged to do the recruitment. The commission further found that the eventual winner (the princess) had a relationship with the Chairman who was a Mayor at the time and part of the recruitment panel but could not recuse himself. Furthermore, the commission found fraudulent misrepresentation to council by the CSM on her academic qualifications.

ii. Nhlangano Town Council

Nhlangano Town Council is located in the Shiselweni region of Eswatini which lies in the most southern part of the country. The town serves as a gateway to some of the key roads and ports of trade in Southern Africa, mainly Durban, Richards Bay and the port of Maputo. It was declared a Town Council in 1994 and is governed under the MoHUD. The town covers a total space of 1300 hectares and has a residential population of around ten thousand people similarly to Matsapha. It is not as industrialised as Matsapha despite having been declared a town many years before Matsapha. The town also harbours several schools, factories and shopping centres. In the study, Nhlangano represent a corrupt free scenario in the past five years and its population trust attitude is measured against that of Matsapha with the assumption that residents of Nhlangano trust their local government more than that of

Matsapha.

To ensure objectivity and to compensate for the shortcomings of the purposive sampling method used in the selection of the municipalities, in the sampling of the interviewees the study used systematic sampling which is highly recommended for quantitative studies if random sampling proves impractical. Fowler (2014) argues that “unless a list is short, has all units prenumbered, or is computerized so that it can be numbered easily, drawing a simple random sample can be laborious and, in such situations, there is a way to use a variation called systematic sampling that will have precision equivalent to a simple random sample and can be mechanically easier to create” (p.18-19). Sarantakos (1998) confirms that indeed this kind of sampling has high reliability, high degree of representativeness and high generalizability of the results. Fowler (2014), contends that no sampling method is fully perfect, he mentions that “any sample selection procedure will give some individuals a chance to be included in the sample while excluding others. Those people who have a chance of being included among those selected constitute the sample frame” (p.15).

Due to budget constraints and the timeframe accorded to this study, the sample size is 60 respondents per municipality which culminate to a total of 120 respondents for the study. The sample frame has been sourced from the billing data base of the water service provider in both municipalities which is the Eswatini Water Service Corporation (EWSC). This means that the residents forming the sample are only registered clients of the EWSC. The study insisted on using this sample frame over the municipality data base because the municipalities only have property owners and thus highly exclusive. Using the municipality data base would imply the exclusion of residents who are not owning property particularly the young majority and middle-income earners.

Fowler (2014) advise that “when drawing a systematic sample from a list, the researcher first determines the number of entries on the list and the number of elements from the list that are to be selected. Dividing the latter by the former will produce a fraction.” (p.19). The total entries of the sample frame were 6864 and 7435 in Nhlngano and Matsapha respectively and were divided by 60. In Nhlngano every 114th client was selected and in Matsapha every 124th client was selected. The instrument of data collection used were survey questionnaires.

4.4. Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the study used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS is a commonly used tool to analyze quantitative data in studies across academic fields and spaces of practice. The package was consistently used to describe relationships among the variables including the distribution of values in the form of means, modes and medians. To assess relationship among variables the study used non-parametric SPSS components since the data proved to violate the requirement of parametric tests with regards to requirements of normality.

4.5. Quality of the Research

Giving an account on the quality of research, Yin (2018) mentions that “because a research design is supposed to represent a logical set of statements, you also can judge the quality of any given design according to certain logical tests” (p.78). Yin (2018) continues to identify four aspects of research quality which are, construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. Creswell & Creswell (2018) confirms this by mentioning that validity in quantitative research tests whether you can draw meaningful and useful inferences from scores on the instruments while reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of an instrument. The foregoing statements by Yin (2018) and Creswell & Creswell reveal that validity and reliability tests are not only limited to instruments as the account by Creswell & Creswell might be understood but covers the entire design of the research.

4.5.1. Construct Validity

Yin (2018) mentions that construct validity relates to the identification of the correct operational measures for the concepts being studied. Toshkov (2016) concurs with Yin, he states that “construct validity concerns the relationship between the operationalized concepts used in the empirical research and the theoretical concepts” (p.173). This means that construct validity concerns itself with how what it is being measured is well captured by the measure being used as dictated by theory. For example, in this study one of the variables we are measuring is trust which is a variable that cannot be observed with our eyes and as such requires certain indicators to be deemed existent. The concern of construct validity therefore is how well the indicators represent public trust. In this study we have two variables which

are corruption scandal and trust. In ensuring validity in the operationalization of these variables, the study relied on widely accepted definitions and standardized scales that has been used by many researchers who have studied the same concepts.

In measuring trust and the perceived size of corruption scandals, the study used the questions: *“To what extent do you trust your local government? and what do you think was the size of the scandal?”* respectively. The response categories are five on a Likert-type scale from trust very much to do not trust at all and from very big to very small respectively. The 5 points scale has the point 3 as the central position symbolizing neutrality allowing respondents to express a position of indifference and thereby correctly capturing their feeling as opposed to scales with even numbers which are used in other studies. This measurement has been widely used by many researchers who study trust and such include renown figures like Christensen et al. when they studied the effects of service satisfaction, culture, and demography on trust in local government in 2019. I am not implying that using measurements that have been used by many other scholars guarantees an evasion of threats to construct validity but measurements are standardised when a satisfactory level of their effectiveness has been realised and accepted.

4.5.2. Internal Validity

Kleven (2007) defines internal validity in quantitative studies as “validity of inferences from an observed covariation to a causal interpretation” (p.227). Yin (2018) asserts that internal validity can only work for explanatory or causal studies and not ones that are descriptive or exploratory in nature. Yin (2018) further mention that the intent of internal validity is to establish the existence of a causal relationship between variables and denounce covariations that are spurious. The question of how can causality be proved with precision is still a subject for debate and constant search among many researchers. Nonetheless, in every explanatory study a causal conclusion has to be made after observing the relationship among variables.

Kleven (2007) observes that the task of proving causality “is fundamentally a rational process, even if some designs control some threats to internal validity, leaving no need for discussion of those threats” (p.227). Kleven (2007) further mention that the role of statistical control in this regard is to support the rational discussion by testing how well the causal theory fits the data but he is also quick to mention that caution must be observed because the

causal model may be wrong even when it fits well with the data. This means that we cannot be fully certain about our conclusions on causality even when we have controlled for confounding variables because those variables will only be those that came into our minds during the analysis or those that are identified by the model itself. To improve the degree of internal validity, the study will strive to make random selections of objects and ensure that the objects themselves and the constructs of measuring the variable fits well with the model. I hold a strong view that to agree or disagree with a causal model, you first have to make sure that the entire research procedure is strongly aligned with the dictates of the model on what to be measured and how it should be measured. The study will then use regression models to control for suggested confounding variables. However, as Kleven (2007) concluded that “causal interpretations will always be more or less uncertain, at least in non-experimental designs” (p.228), the causal conclusion remains open to falsification by new evidence in further studies.

4.5.3. External Validity

Kellstedt & Whitten (2018) defines external validity “as the degree to which we can be confident that the results of our analysis apply not only to the participants in the study, but also to the population more broadly construed” (p.89). Kleven (2007) buttress the foregoing point by mentioning that “with external validity we mean validity of inferences from the context of the study to a wider context or to other contexts. This is the issue of generalization, or the issue of transferability” (p.229). This means that for a study to claim a high degree of external validity the results of its analysis must be transferrable beyond the observed sample to the population. In this study, we must be able to generalize the conclusions to all residents of urban local government which is our population.

From the statements given by Kellstedt & Whitten (2018) and Kleven (2007), we can logically proceed to say that for a sample to claim generalizability, it must first claim representativeness of the population or context which we want to apply generalization to. The study used systematic sampling to select respondents which gave all respondents a fair chance of being selected thereby providing satisfactory conditions for fair representation and subsequently generalization. Moreover, the study sample frame obtained from the local area EWSC was strategically chosen because it was more representative than the municipality data base which keeps records of property owners and have nothing about tenants within the

premises of property owners. Therefore, the method of sampling and the composition of the sample frame enhance in ensuring a high degree of generalizability.

4.5.4. Reliability

Reliability is also one of the key quality aspects of a research. In literal sense, reliability refers to the degree of consistency. Bryman (2012) discuss this aspect and mentions that “reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable. The term is commonly used in relation to the question of whether the measures that are devised for concepts in the social sciences (such as poverty, racial prejudice, deskilling, religious orthodoxy) are consistent” (p.46). Creswell & Creswell (2018) shares the same definition of reliability and observe that a reliable instrument is one that produce the same results under similar stimuli. For a survey study such as this one to satisfy its reliability, it has to ensure that its whole procedure is reproducible with the same results if it is redone under the same conditions. This requires reliable methods of selecting cases and reliable tools of collecting data and reliable methods of analysis.

Measures undertaken to ensure reliability of this study is first that the process of how sampling was done, how data was collected and which instruments were used is well outlined in the methodology providing a blue print for its step-by-step repetition. This allow for the reliability test of the procedures to be undertaken without deviations. Second, Fowler (2014) advice that one of the critical things survey researchers need to pay attention to in increasing reliability is to ensure the reliability of their questioning, he state that questioning must ensure that “when two respondents are in the same situation, they should answer the question in the same way” (p.76). Here Fowler (2014) talks about the reliability of the study’s data collection instrument which is questionnaires. “In order to provide a consistent data collection experience for all respondents, a good question has the following properties: the researcher’s side of the question-and-answer process is entirely scripted, so that the questions as written fully prepare a respondent to answer, the question means the same thing to every respondent and the kinds of answers that constitute an appropriate response to the question are communicated consistently to all respondents” (Fowler 2014, p.77). The study drew guidance from Fowler (2014) and ensured that questions are uniform, clearly drafted and clearly explained to respondents. Last, the 5-category scale was beneficial because every value on it has a meaning and as well as a neutral value which allowed respondents to share

their real perceptions unlike other scale categories that requires respondents to make arbitrary ratings that they can even easily forget because it lacked meaning.

4.6. Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study ranges from issues of conceptualization, sampling and data collection procedures and budget limitations. First, the conceptualization of corruption scandal which is the independent variable in the study has a potential of limiting the study. A corruption case that qualifies as a scandal is one that causes strong social reactions and public outrage. The respondents can be aware of many corruption cases which greatly shape their trust perceptions on their local government but without these cases being considered in the study as scandals. For example, the people of Nhlangano which the study has categorized as scandal free can be aware of many corruption cases impacting on their level of trust to the municipality while they are neglected by the study.

Second, the sample frames obtained from the EWSC in the municipalities are exclusive in nature since they include information of only those who pay water bills. This exclude the many residents who are not accounts holders at the water service providers. Furthermore, the accounts holders may not necessarily be the residents of the municipalities but accounts holders simply because they have the financial muscle to foot the bills or they have payment obligation because they own and lease properties in these municipalities. This does not only extend bias but also present non-respondents in the sample frame.

Last, the sampling method in both stages of municipality and respondents' selections carry a strong potential to reduce the external validity of the study. To begin with the selection of municipalities, the method used is purposive sampling. Although it was reasonable to do so in light of that the characteristics of the municipalities that were sought required prior knowledge about them, there are other municipalities in Eswatini with almost similar characteristics which were not sampled that might have presented a different perception. The study would have at least increased the sample size in this regard. With the selection of respondents, again the sample size is too little for an ideal confidence level of external validity. Both municipalities have about ten thousand residents but only 0.01 percent of the population has been sampled and this also has an implication on generalizability.

4.7. Research Ethics

In the conduct of scientific inquiry, there are some ethical obligations that researchers need to uphold. Let us begin by clarifying what is meant by ethical obligations in research. Bos (2020) opines that “research ethics has to do with norms, values, and practices concerning the collection, analysis, and dissemination of scientific findings about the world” (p.38).

Sarantakos (1998) shares the same sentiments with Bos (2020), he is of the view that “ethics refers to whether the proposed study is ethically justifiable and follows ethical standards and principles in its design, execution and application of the findings” (p.120). Ethics are indeed a very important feature of research. Giving an account on the importance of ethics, Fujii (2012) states that “ethics matter in all types of political science research, whether ethnographies or surveys, elite or non-elite interviews, focus groups or field experiments because most political science involves human subjects who can be harmed if researchers are not ethical” (p.717).

We now look into the ethical consideration made in with regard to both human subjects and procedures. Israel & Hay (2006) provide several areas that researchers must consider and among the applicable ones to this study are the respondents’ right to informed consent and privacy or confidentiality. “Informed consent implies two related activities: participants need first to comprehend and second to agree voluntarily to the nature of their research and their role within it (Israel & Hay 2006, p.61). The right to informed consent was upheld in this study, respondents were made aware of their rights and they were told what the study is about and that their participation was fully voluntary. Second, Israel & Hay (2006) also observe that in most times respondents in research consent on the basis that the information obtained about them will be used only by the researchers and they give it voluntarily to the researcher in confidence. Therefore, researchers have the obligation to keep respondents’ information confidential. In this study, although the sample frame provided the information of respondents, in the report they are kept anonymous and the information was never taken out of the premises of the EWSC.

Apart from the ethical considerations relating to human subject, researchers also have to be ethical with regards to the procedures spanning from sampling to reporting and etc. Israel & Hay (2006) state that ethics is about what is right, good and virtuous and this extend into ensuring that the research is not drawn into disrepute. Researchers needs to be fair and just as

they carry out research procedures. Johnson *et al.* (2020) advise that “researchers should be objective in accepting and reporting findings and not falsify results” (p.331). “The term falsifying, literally meaning ‘rendering false,’ entails forms of manipulation that allow researchers to use a dataset that supports biased or even erroneous claims. It includes ‘trimming’ (leaving out certain findings) and ‘massaging’ (slightly changing) data, as well as altering images, misrepresenting results, and simply not reporting findings” (Bos 2020, p.119). Israel & Hay (2008) shares the same concerns, they state that “by caring about ethics and by acting on that concern we promote the integrity of research since much of what we do occurs without anyone else ‘watching’, there is ample scope to conduct ourselves in improper ways” (p.5). The study also upholds the ethical principles of fairness and it strived to fully maintain objectivity in undertaking the many procedures forming the design, analysis and reporting of the findings.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter hereby present the results of the survey, perform an analysis of the data and make interpretations on how they relate to the research questions. Summing up the section on analysis and interpretation in research, Creswell & Creswell (2018) observe that “an interpretation in quantitative research means that the researcher draws conclusions from the results for the research questions, hypotheses, and the larger meaning of the results and report how the results addressed the research question or hypothesis” (p.282). Johnson *et al.* (2020) concur with Creswell & Creswell (2018) by mentioning that analysis is about absorbing a lot of numbers and trying to discern patterns among them. This is basically what this section is about. Creswell & Creswell (2018) notably emphasize that an analysis must relate to the scope of the study and be confined in dealing with the research question or hypothesis. Indeed, having data at one’s disposal can be exciting and tempting to the point that researchers may find themselves making analyses that are beyond the scope of the study and cloud the research goals in the process.

The goals of the study were to; examine the effects of corruption scandals on public trust, to analyze the effects of socio-demographic factors on trust in public institutions and as well as to examine the impacts of public perception on the size of corruption scandals in relation to their level of trust. To practicalize these objectives, the study made claims at two levels: macro and micro levels. At the macro level, the study claimed that: *a municipality with a recent corruption scandal will be rated lower compared to a municipality without a recent corruption scandal in terms of trust.* At the micro level, where comparisons are based on individual subjects, the study made these three claims: (i) *residents who have been exposed to a corruption scandal have less trust compared to those who have not been exposed to corruption scandals;* (ii) *respondents who perceive a corruption scandal as big has low trust on institutions compared to those who perceive it as small;*(iii) *there are statistically significant relationship between public trust: and gender; age; occupation; and level of education.* The study therefore makes a presentation of findings, arguments and draw conclusions based on these claims. It later discusses how the study makes a contribution to the existing body of knowledge on corruption and trust.

5.2. Effects of Corruption Scandals on Trust in Municipalities

As already highlighted, the study’s claim at macro level was that a municipality with a recent corruption scandal will be rated lower compared to a municipality without a recent corruption scandal in terms of trust. A perception survey on residents’ trust in their municipalities was conducted and scores of trusts were ranging from “Don’t Trust at All to Trust Very Much” in a 5-point Linkert scale whereby 1 represented the lowest evaluation point while 5 represented the highest evaluation point. A descriptive analysis of the result was undertaken to determine central tendency and dispersion of scores. According to Johnson *et al.* (2020) “central tendency describes the typical value of a variable while dispersion describes how the data are distributed around that typical case” (p.343). Johnson *et al.* (2020) further explained that the word typical value is used in relation to three concepts of central tendency which are the mode (the most frequently observed value), median (the middle value) and mean (average). Table 5.1 shows the of responses on trust by municipality. It further displays the values of central tendency and dispersion.

Table 5.1 Frequency table of trust responses in municipalities

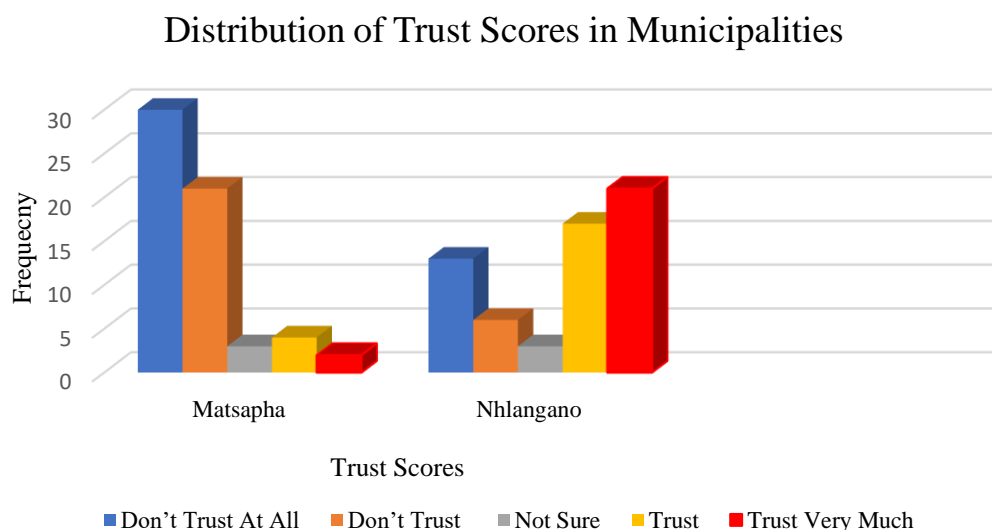
| Municipality | Matsapha | | Nhlangano | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | f | % | F | % |
| Don’t Trust at All | 30 | 50 | 13 | 21.7 |
| Don’t trust | 21 | 35 | 6 | 10 |
| Not Sure | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Trust | 4 | 6.7 | 17 | 28.3 |
| Trust Very Much | 2 | 3.3 | 21 | 35 |
| Total | 60 | 100 | 60 | 100 |
| Mean | 1.78 | 3.45 | | |
| Median | 1.50 | 4.00 | | |
| Mode | 1 | 5 | | |
| Std. Deviation | 1.043 | | 1.578 | |
| Variance | 1.088 | | 2.489 | |
| Skewness | 1.566 | | -.57 | |

Source: survey 2023

A comparison of the two municipalities as shown in Table 5.1 reveals that respondents in

Matsapha who indicated that they don't trust their municipality and those who indicated that they even don't trust the institution at all accounted for 85% of the observed sample. Those who indicated that they trusted their municipality in Matsapha were only 6 while those who were uncertain about their trust position were 3, accounting for 10% and 5% respectively. In Nhlngano, those who indicated to trust their municipality together with those who indicated even much more trust accounted for 63.3% of the sample. Those who indicated uncertainty of their trust position and less trust accounted for 5% and 31.7% respectively. This means that we have a large portion of respondents in Matsapha showing less trust in their government and a large portion in Nhlngano showing much trust for their government. If we look at the data central tendency, we see that that the most observed score in Matsapha was 1 which denote "Don't Trust at All" and indicating the lowest point of trust. The median value was 1.5 while the mean or average was 1.78. This means that for Matsapha, both halves of the observed values lie below and above 1.5 while the total average score is 1.78 with a standard deviation of 1.043 indicating the distance of observed values from the mean. Nhlngano's most observed score was 5 which indicated the highest point of trust and middle value was higher than that of Matsapha at 4 while the average score was 3.45 indicating higher levels of trust than Matsapha. The distribution of the scores is further demonstrated in Figure 5.1 below. Figure 5.1 show a graphic picture of how the values are dispersed in terms of the most reported and the medium point. The observation both from Table 5.1 as indicated by the typical values shows that Matsapha scores less on trust compared to Nhlngano as claimed by our hypothesis.

Figure 5.1 Distribution of trust scores in municipalities



Source: survey 2023

We however, cannot conclude based on the mere observation of the data patterns as presented both in the table and the chart that the data behaviour has not occurred by chance until we conduct tests for statistical significance. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018) by statistical significance, we mean that “the observed scores reflect a pattern other than chance” (p.282). We have observed the difference in the scores suggesting that the trust scores of the municipalities are different with Nhlngano showing high trust levels than Matsapha, it is the statistical significance of this difference that we should base our conclusions on. T-tests becomes the preferred method, however that procedure is not suitable for our data as it is clear both from the table and chat that the distribution of data is not normal. “T-tests assumes normal distribution” (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Johnson et al 2020). Our data therefore violates the requirement of normality to conduct a parametric procedure.

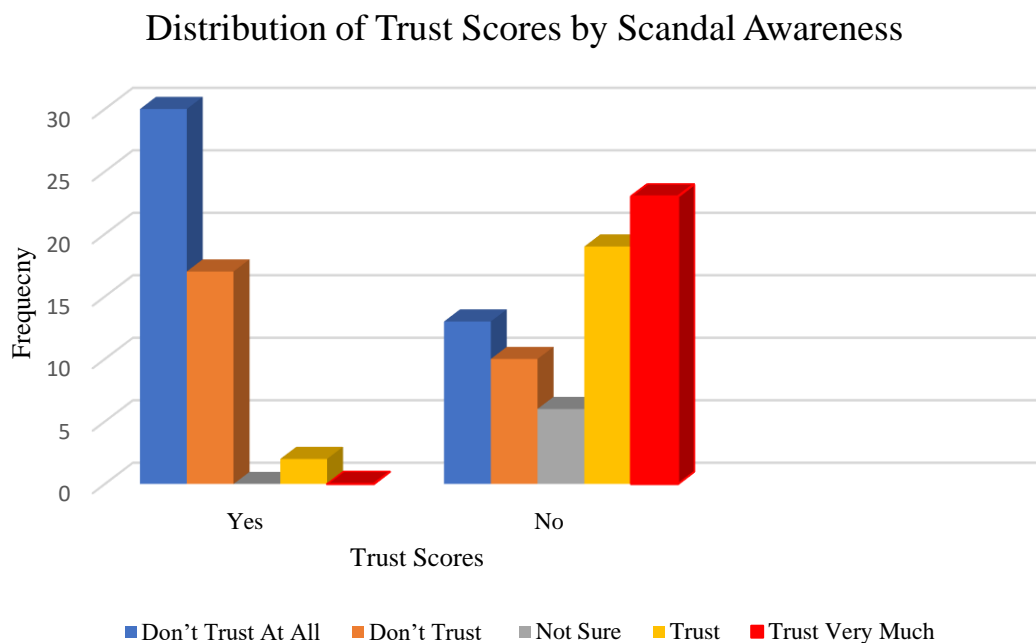
Nachar (2008) reveals that “in the event that a distribution is not normal, a non-parametric (also known as distribution free) test becomes useful.” (p.13). Fagerland (2012) concurs and stresses that “non-parametric tests have two applications. First, as simple methods to analyze ordinal data, such as degree of pain classified as none, mild, moderate, or severe. Second, as alternatives to parametric tests, most often used when there is evidence of non-normality” (p.2). For this study, it is evident when you look into the distribution charts and the frequency table that there is no normality and therefore the choice had to be a non-parametric test. Nachar (2008) vouch for the Mann-Whitney U Test and states that “the Mann-Whitney U test can be used to answer the questions of the researcher concerning the difference between his groups and it can also be used when the measured variables are of ordinal type” (p.13). Notably, this test uses the median as the typical value instead of the mean like parametric tests.

The Mann-Whitney U Test was opted for to evaluate the levels of public trust between Matsapha and Nhlngano municipalities. The test showed significant differences in the levels of trust in Matsapha (median = 1.50, n= 60) and Nhlngano (median = 4.00, n =60), $U=813.50$, $z = -5.369$, $p = < .001$, $r = 0.49$. This provided for the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of that the observed difference are not by mere chance. It is noteworthy that the significance was coupled with a high degree of effect size as indicated by $r=0.49$. According to Rice & Harris (2005) “Cohen stated that the values of “r” for small, medium, and large effects, respectively, are .1, .3, and .5.” (p.617.). The r value of 0.49 falls within the large effect range.

5.3. Effects of resident’s exposure to corruption scandals on Trust

The study made two hypotheses in relation to individual’s interaction with corruptions scandal. The first hypothesis was that residents who have been exposed to a corruption scandal have less trust compared to those who have not been exposed to corruption scandals. In the survey residents were asked if they knew any corruption scandal that have taken place in their municipalities within the past 5 years. They answered on an yes and no choice and their responses on trust in institutions were observed. The study also additionally sought to check the pattern of awareness about scandals in relation to respondents’ duration of residence in their municipalities. One can expect that those who have resided in Matsapha for more than two years are at least aware of the scandal which the study assumes to be influencing trust levels in Matsapha, that is however going to aid the discussion rather than being a key finding. Figure 5.2 presents the pattern of responses by residents who indicated that they were aware of a corruption scandal and those who indicated unawareness against trust.

Figure 5.2 Distribution of trust scores by scandal awareness



Source: survey 2023

Table 5.2 Frequency table of scandal awareness and trust

| Scandal Awareness | Yes | | No | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | F | % | F | % |
| Don't Trust at All | 30 | 61.2 | 13 | 18.3 |
| Don't trust | 17 | 34.7 | 10 | 14.1 |
| Not Sure | 0 | 0 | 6 | 8.5 |
| Trust | 2 | 4.1 | 19 | 26.8 |
| Trust Very Much | 0 | 0 | 23 | |
| Total | 49 | 100 | 71 | 100 |
| Mean | 1.47 | | 3.41 | |
| Median | 1.00 | | 4.00 | |
| Mode | 1 | | 5 | |
| Std. Deviation | .710 | | 1.517 | |
| Variance | .504 | | 2.302 | |
| Skewness | 1.932 | | -4.77 | |

Source: survey 2023

As observed in Figure 5.2 and Table 5.2, about 49 respondents acknowledged to know a corruption scandal in their municipalities while 79 responded to the contrary. Among the 49, 95.9% indicated low trust in their municipalities with only 4.1% indicating trust. Those who indicated not to know a scandal had about 32.4% indicating low trust and about 26.8% showing trust in their government. This provided a go ahead for a significance test and again the Mann-Whitney U Test was performed to test the levels of trust between residents who have been exposed to corruption scandals and those who have not been exposed in the past 5 years. The test showed significance in the levels of trust in those exposed to corruption scandals (median = 1, n= 49) and those not exposed to corruption scandals (median = 4, n =71), $U=578.0$, $z = -6.430$, $p = .001$, $r = 0.58$ Hence the displayed level of trusts in municipalities were considered not to have occurred by chance, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. It is also observable that the effect size is at a higher level according to Cohen's categorization.

The second hypothesis at the micro level was that respondents who perceive corruption scandals they have witnessed as big has low trust on institutions compared to those who

perceive them as small. In the survey those who indicated that they knew a corruption scandal that took place in their municipalities were further asked to rank the scandals according to size. Their responses were measured in 5 point Linkert scale where 1 represented the lowest rank (very small) and 5 represented the highest rank (very big). Table 5.3 shows that out of 61.2% respondents who indicated the lowest rank of trust, 46.9% of them had indicated to be aware of either a big or a very big scandal. Of the 61.2% who indicate the lowest level of trust, 10.2% ranked the scandal they knew as small. There are very few respondents who indicated to know as scandal and ranked it lower in terms of size. None of the respondents ranked scandals they knew as small but 18.4% and 20.4% of those who were exposed to corruption scandal ranked them small and moderate respectively. This may however present an exclusion bias which weaken the case made by the hypothesis.

Table: 5.3 Relationship between perceived size of scandal and trust

| Scandal Size Perception | Very Small | | Small | | Moderate | | Big | | Very Big | | Total | |
|-------------------------|------------|---|----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| | F | % | f | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | | |
| Don't Trust at All | - | - | 5 | 10.2 | 2 | 4.1 | 8 | 16.3 | 15 | 30.6 | 30 | 61.2 |
| Don't trust | - | - | 2 | 4.1 | 8 | 16.3 | 5 | 10.2 | 2 | 4.1 | 17 | 34.7 |
| Not Sure | - | - | - | | - | | - | | - | | | |
| Trust | - | - | 2 | 4.1 | - | | - | | - | | 2 | 4.1 |
| Trust Very Much | - | - | - | | - | | - | | - | | | |
| Total | | | 9 | 18.4 | 10 | 20.4 | 13 | 26.5 | 17 | 34.7 | 49 | 100 |

Source survey 2023

What we observe from the table is very short of telling us if the results are statistically significant. We can only see an association of low level of trust with high perceptions of scandal size, but this is not balanced since we do not have enough cases to show how low perception on scandal size can relate. Since the data here is also not normal, the study again used a non-parametric test to check for significance of the association implied by in the table. The study used a different type of test from the last two tests, this is known as the Kruskal-Wallis Test (KWt). According to Vargha & Delaney (1998) this test is considered an equivalent to the Mann-Whitney U test, the difference is that it can take more than 2 groups while the Mann-Whitney U Test has a limit of two groups. The KWt was carried out to

evaluate the levels of trust in relation to perceived scandal size, the results proved that there is statistically significance difference between perceived scandal size and level of trust, $H(3) = 11.576, p = .009$ and the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the research hypothesis as the observed p value is below .05.

5.4. Socio-Demographic Factors and Trust

The study also hypthesized that there is statistically significance relatinonship between public trust and four socio-demographic factors, namely: gender, age, occupation and level of education. The hypothesis was made without specifying the direction of the relationships or making assumption on whether the relationships are negative or positive. This is so because, the institutional theory assumes that the variance on trust behaviour among individuals can only be accounted for by their evaluation of institutional performamance. Their evaluation can be subjective to a number of conditions which can be all summed up as benefits from the institutions or positive views. Whatever they benefit or does not fairly benefit or either view negatively or positively will influence individual’s trust in governments differently. To even make assumption on the subjective factors cannot be possible in a purely quantitative study because it does not ask “why”. If we were to try to answer why there are variances associated with the socio-demographic factors, a mixed methods study would have to be conducted so that the context is well undertood. In the study we only tested for statistical significance of relationships if there are any and those with interest to take the study forwards on the findings will have a valuable resource to depart from. The study however provides a visual idea of how the the observed interaction between each socio-demographic variable and trust was structured. This is shown through bar charts that displays the median as the typical value and a value in which the Kruskal-Wallis Test focuses on.

Table: 5.4. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results

| Variable | KWt H | Df | p-value |
|--------------------|--------|----|---------|
| Gender | 1.542 | 1 | .214 |
| Age | 10.876 | 2 | .004* |
| Level of Education | 1.555 | 5 | .097 |
| Occupation | 7.249 | 4 | .123 |

Notes: *p < 0.05

Gender 5.4.1

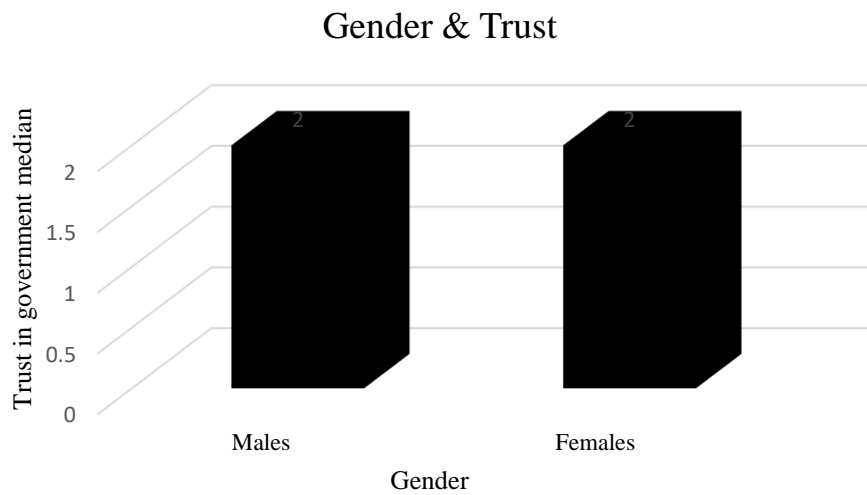


Figure 5.3 Relationship between gender and trust (source: survey 2023)

The Kruskal-Wallis Test was performed to make an assessment of the levels of trust in municipalities according to gender, the results showed that there is no statistically significance variance between males and females in relation to level of trust in municipalities, $H(1) = 1.542, p = .214$ and the null hypothesis is retained.

5.4.2 Age

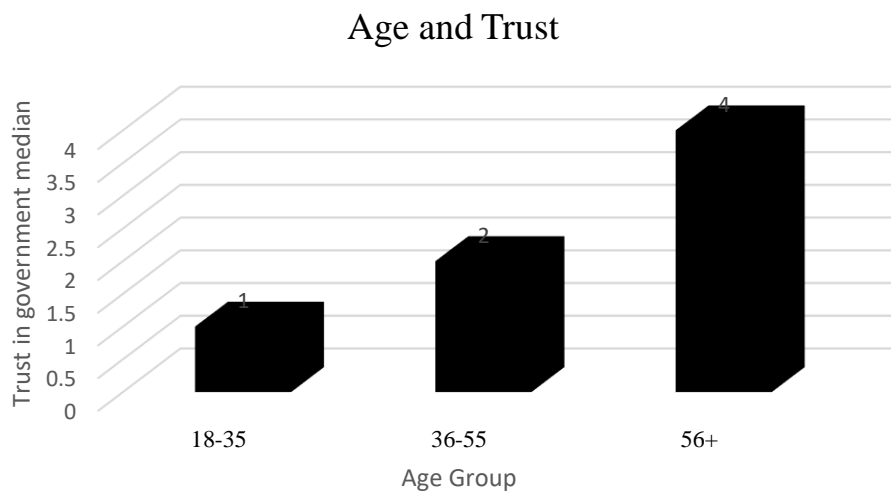


Figure 5.4 Relationship between age and trust (source: survey 2023)

To evaluate the level of trust in municipalities according to age between age groups ranging from 18-

35 (young), 36-55 (middle age) and 56+ (old), a Kruskal-Wallis Test was carried out and the results proved that there is a statistically significant relationship between age and levels of trust in municipalities, $H(2) = 10.876$, $p = .004$ and the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the research hypothesis.

5.4.3 Level of Education

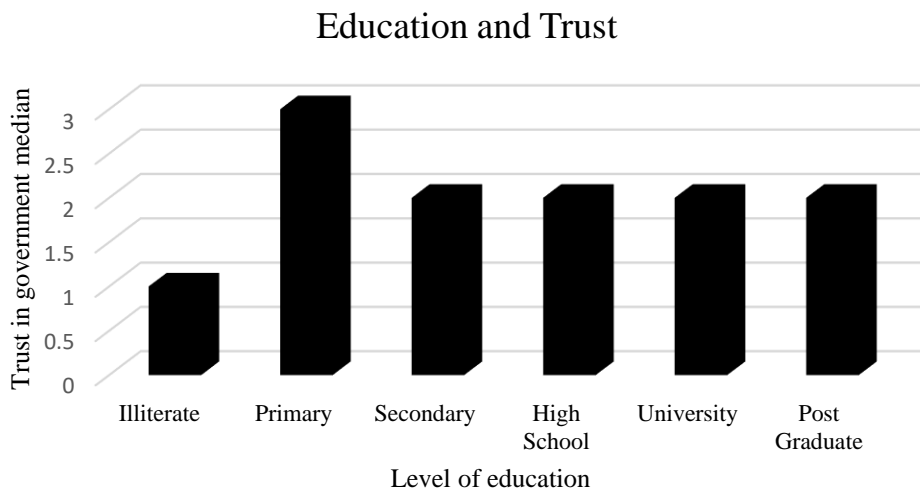


Figure 5.5 Relationship between education and trust (source: survey 2023)

The Kruskal-Wallis Test was performed to analyse trust in municipalities across levels of education as shown in Figure 5.7, the test revealed that there is no statistically significant relationship between trust and levels of education, $H(5) = 1.555$, $p = .907$ and the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between levels of education and trust falls.

5.4.4 Occupation



Figure 5.6 Relationship between occupation and trust (source: survey data)

Lastly, the Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to evaluate the relationship between occupation and trust in municipalities whereby various occupations were assessed, the results indicated that there is no statistically significant relationship between occupation and trust, $H(5) = 7.429$, $p = .123$ and the null hypothesis is accepted.

5.4. Discussion

This part of the study discusses the implications of the results, assesses its consistency with other research findings and how it contributes to the body of knowledge on public trust and corruption scandal. It is worth mentioning that this study differed in approach from many studies which have assessed the impact of corruption on trust in institutions. Several studies do not take a general approach and focus on institutions as a single unit, but they study them in terms of their components. They view the components like legal framework, personnel and institutional culture as extending varying impacts on how the public can evaluate and trust institutions. Many researchers have studied institutions in terms of trust to the officials presiding over them, their laws and policies and as well as questions related to generalised trust in the institutions holistically (Solé-Ollé & Sorribas-Navarro 2014; Caillier 2010). Nonetheless, the study was able to successfully assess and produce valid and comparable findings with a lot of studies.

The study has both validated a number of studies and produced contrary outcomes to some. In assessing the effects of corruption scandal on public trust in institutions, the study discovered that corruption scandals extend negative consequences to institutions particularly within societies that are highly intolerant to corruption. The link between corruption and distrust was long established in literature (Gyimah-Brempong 2002; Solé-Ollé & Sorribas-Navarro 2014; Tambulasi 2009) and this study only confirmed it in a different context. The idea that trust diminishes in institutions that are associated with widely reported corruption breaking news has been validated. The margin in which the level of trust in the two municipalities differed is too wide and cannot be thought of as just an occurrence without any relation to statistics and theory. As expected, Matsapha, the municipality which represented a corruption associated scandal was the least ranked and moreover, a majority of respondents who indicated that they know a corruption scandal rated their municipalities lower in terms of trust. This is a clear indication that corruption bears negative impacts on institutional trust.

The study may seem to have reproduced a common position in the corruption and trust literature that corruption scandals erode public trust, but over and above that the study makes a contribution to the scholarly discourse on trust and corruption by bringing an element that is under-explored. In the wider corruption scandals and trust research, the mentioning of the impacts of the perceived size of scandals is saliently invisible if not missing. This study explored people's trust attitudes in accordance with how they perceive sizes of corruption scandals they have witnessed. It discovered that people who perceive corruption scandals as huge tend to show lower levels of trust than those who perceive them as either small or moderate. The statistical significance test validating this claim was coupled with a high level of effect size in terms of Cohen's categorization and minimising doubts that the finding may lack generalisability. This is a matter which institutions should take seriously considering that scandals themselves can at times be psychological crafts rather than real cases of transgression, but they will still do the same harm.

The study also validated the view that age is strongly related to trust in institutions and rejected claims on other socio-demographic variables such as gender, occupation and level of education. A positive relationship was witnessed that as people age, they tend to be more trusting. The reason for such can only be a discovery of a study design that will pay attention to context rather than a quantitative study. According to Putman (1995), in all his statistical analyses, age has always been a second predictor of trust. He reveals that a majority of older people have more trusting attitudes and confirms the discovered direction in this study. Interestingly, the study did not find education as statistically significant against many studies that have found education highly correlated with trust. The observation by (Soot & Rootalu 2012; Putman 1995, Gleave *et al* 2010) that better educated people and people with better socio-economic background are more trusting towards public institutions proved invalid.

While the study holds a great extent of validity, there remains a number of threats that weaken the confidence with which strong conclusions may be drawn from the findings. First, the study has inherited the shortcomings of the non-parametric test. Nachar (2008) posits that "non-parametric test does not depend on assumptions on the distribution (i.e. one does not need to postulate the data distribution of the target population) and have a number of disadvantages compared to parametric tests" (p.29). It therefore extends a weakness which should have been non-existent if parametric procedures were applicable. However, Nachar (2008) also allays fears that the non-parametric procedures are not as bad.

Second, the pure adoption of institutional theory and paying little attention to the external environment of institutions has its fair share of disadvantages. Several studies have proven that socialisation plays a key role in trust building and as put by (Hope 2017; Simelane H. S., 2012), corruption cannot be well studied and understood without paying attention to the cultural context that shapes the subjects of the study. What may account for the heavy skewness of the trust patterns in the responses might be that there are serious cultural and social considerations that the study overlooked. There is a significant number of respondents, about 32.4% who indicated no exposure to scandals but high levels of lack of trust. This might be because there are other contextual factors that the study overlooked.

Lastly, while the study is able to show differences in the levels of trust in municipalities, it is incapable of strongly asserting causality. It cannot clearly describe the point in which trust began to diminish as a result of the said scandals, this is so because there is no prior study where an argument that trust has either diminished or increased can be based. Moreover, while the research hoped to present Nhlango as a scandal free municipality, it appeared that there are respondents in Nhlango who indicated to know scandals in their municipality. This weakens the strength of our conclusions.

In conclusion, with all the limitations that have been portrayed including the small sample size, the study remains a valid reference and holds a reasonable degree of generalisability. The sampling methods and the data collection procedures complemented a lot of weaknesses. The random sampling methods provides a fair share of allowance for generalisability, as the respondents undoubtedly represent the targeted society and people. There was also a 100% response rate courtesy of face to face interviews which further controlled for false respondents as it might be the case with non face to face surveys. The research therefore provides a true picture of reality albeit in a small scale.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1 Introduction

The study has been able to examine the relationship between corruption scandal and trust in public institutions. It further assessed the relationship between gender, age, level of education and occupation and trust in institutions. The conclusion that is drawn from these observations are that: corruption scandals have negative impacts on trust in public institutions; public perception of scandal sizes influence the relationship between trust and corruption scandals; and that the effects of socio-demographic variables as observed with age, gender, level of education and occupation vary with contexts perhaps depending on either how people of different ages, level of education and fields of work evaluate the performance of institutions. We also note that there are theoretical shortcomings with the institutional perspective that can be complemented when blended with cultural theories. We have seen that the results suggest that further probing that takes into account the impacts of socialisation and culture that defines people and their behavior may need to be undertaken to answer outstanding questions.

6.2. The Study's contribution to Society

The worth of a study is its contribution to the tangible problems faced by society rather than to be an academic monument. The study highlighted the importance of trust in society and pinpointed that in the absence of trust, there is lack of cooperation and institutions are unable to discharge their primary work of developing citizens. The study further linked and qualified corruption as a significant determinant of lower levels of public trust. The findings of the study therefore gives an indictment to public institutions to prioritise the fight against corruption so that in the broader quest of ensuring optimal trust, corruption becomes a least concern. One can argue that combatting corruption is impossible and a losing battle in many societies. However, it is not the absolute absence of corruption that is ought to be achieved but the efforts against it can inspire trust. According to Lepsius (2017) "when corruption is made public, debated and criticized, and finally, institutionally sanctioned, the institutional order is strengthened. It is not the behavior of individuals who represent institutions that reduces trust in institutions but rather individuals' unsanctioned behavior that does so" (p.14).

While I acknowledge fully the view that corruption scandals are destructive, I do hold the view that in a positive light, they provide an opportunity for public institutions to prove their

effectiveness to a wider keen audience. As put by Hinerman (1997) that the nature of scandals is that they attract public interest which follows the story with keenness, then when an institution can deal with the scandal in a perceived just way it can surely boost the trust levels. The performance in dealing with the scandal becomes the basis for evaluation. On the same logic, an institution can worsen trust levels on a wide scale if it is deemed to have failed to address a corruption scandal justly.

6.3. Recommendations for future studies

The study has been able to examine the impacts of corruption scandals in public institutions in Eswatini and to assess the relationship between trust and socio-demographic variables. A number of observations have been made that warrant further enquiry and some of the areas are recommended below:

- The study has discovered against many researches that education and occupation does not have statistical significance with trust in public institutions. There is a need to conduct a study to establish what accounts for this variance. This was an unusual finding that needs a follow up.
- It might be possible that the shortcomings of the national government affects how citizens relates with local government. There is a need to explore trust patterns between the national government and trust.
- In carrying out future studies evaluating the relationship between corruption scandals and public trust, an approach that will use several cases of institutions with corruption scandals of almost the same magnitudes might produce different results if a follow up in this same study is considered.
- It has been revealed by Simelane (2012), that culture reinforces corruption in Eswatini and that the monarch aid the perpetuation of corruption by allowing itself to be a sanctuary of corrupt people, there is a need to explore the interplay between culture and corruption in the country to test the assertion by the researcher.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaire

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Topic: The Effects of Corruption Scandals on Public Trust: An Empirical Study of Two Municipalities in Eswatini

SECTION A: SOCIO-ECONOMIC & DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

Instructions:

- i. Tick (✓) where appropriate in the last row

1. NAME OF MUNICIPALITY

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2 |
| Matsapha | Nhlangano |
| | |

2. SEX

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1 | 2 |
| Male | Female |
| | |

3. AGE

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18-35 | 36-55 | 56+ |
| | | |

4. EDUCATION (What is the highest grade you completed?)

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Illiterate | Primary School | Secondary School | High School | University Degree | Post Graduate Degree |
| | | | | | |

5. Occupation

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Student/studying | Looking for job | Public sector | Private sector/self | Retired |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------|--|
| | | | employed | |
| | | | | |

SECTION B

1. To what extent do you trust your local government?

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Don't Trust All | Don't Trust | Not Sure | Trust | Trust Very Much |
| | | | | |

2. For How long have you been a resident of the Municipality

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Less than 2 Years | 2-5 years | 5 years and above |
| | | |

3. Do you know any corruption scandal in the Municipality

| | |
|------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 |
| Yes | No |
| | |

4. If "YES", What do you think was the size of the scandal

| | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Very Small | Small | Moderate | Big | Very Big |
| | | | | |

5. How did you know of the scandal

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Newspapers | Radio/TV | Social Media | Other (specify) |
| | | | |
| | | | |