

ENHANCING POLICY COMMUNICATION FOR IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY AT JOE MOROLONG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work enclosed in the dissertation is my own original work, except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at university for fulfilment of a degree.

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Date

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates ways of enhancing policy communication for improved service delivery at Joe Morolong Local Municipality. The study sought to analyse and investigate the relationships between the communities and the management who manage service delivery and its possible impact to the brand image of the organisation. Often seen as a township, Joe Morolong Local Municipality is described as a strategic public service delivery organization. This study is aimed at evaluating how policy communication enhances service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality. The research is our contribution to the solution of rampant wild cat service delivery protests around Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation investigates how policy communication enhances improved service delivery at Joe Morolong Local Municipality at Churchill Village, Kuruman District, Northern Cape Province.

The communities of Joe Morolong Local Municipality, in the course of their daily lives, are affected, directly or indirectly, obviously and subtly, by an extensive array of municipal policies and how they are communicated to them and all other relevant stakeholders. More often, the problem with policies lie in the implementation thereof, thus forming a policy gap.

The task of the municipality is providing a multitude of services to the community, including roads, integrated housing, bulk services, sanitation, financial viability and good governance, local economic development etc. Councillors and senior management discuss the Integrated Development Plan and Budget for each financial year annually. The councillors and officials of Joe Morolong Local Municipality have their own way of doing things - either contributing positively or negatively to the issue of service delivery around the communities of Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

1.2 Background

The main emphasis of the research is on how policy communication enhances Joe Morolong Local Municipality's improved service delivery.

Better municipal service delivery is expected to improve the livelihood and well-being of human beings. Policy communication and improved service delivery ultimately contribute towards community building, prosperity and local economic development. Improved service delivery in the country (South Africa), Northern Cape Province, but John Taolo District Municipality and their local municipality, the Joe Morolong Local Municipality, have not been given the needed attention it deserves. The greater

proportion of the communities of Joe Morolong Local Municipality suffer as a result of the unpleasant situation caused by poor service delivery. Therefore there is a need for the municipality to develop strategies to enhance policy communication for improved service delivery in the Joe Morolong Local Municipality. There is a need for collective responsibilities of all communities, private sectors enterprises (including the mines within the jurisdiction of Joe Morolong Local Municipality), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Sector Departments, District Municipality (John TaoloGaetsewe), Provincial and National Government to fulfil their mandates.

1.3 Problem statement

This document deals with enhancing policy communication for improved service delivery - Joe Morolong Local Municipality, like other municipalities in South Africa, experienced a high level of service delivery protests in the past. The study is intended to evaluate how policy communication enhances improved service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

In spite of many years of existence of local government, integrated development planning (IDP) and budget and public participation in most municipalities have poor service delivery and it might be as a result of none or poor policy communication.

The service delivery systems of the municipality are under-funded with unreasonable expectations from the communities, poor performance by the work force and service providers, poor management, poor leadership and poor policy communication and this unpleasant and uncomfortable situation has had a serious negative impact on service delivery.

This study therefore seeks to identify measures that must be put in place to enhance policy communication for improved service delivery in the Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The goal of this study is to understand how policy communication enhances improved service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

1.5 Aim and objectives

For a variety of reasons, there has been an increase in the number of service delivery protests for the past years in Joe Morolong Local Municipality despite the mitigation measures government has come up with to curb the effects of the policy communication. If we are to assess the effects of the policy communication, it will be important first to know what the current situation is with regards to policy communication outlook and how this has affected the Joe Morolong Local Municipality's improved service delivery and the researcher could help the municipality to revive and survive under the given circumstances.

This research aims to determine the impact of the policy communication on service delivery in the municipality by unearthing problems associated with the causes and effects and identify some of the solutions to the problems of the Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

1.5.1 Specific research objectives

The aim of this study has been to assess the situation of enhancement of policy communication to improved service delivery and its effects in the Joe Morolong local municipality and make recommendations to inform policy.

The following specific objectives are pursued:

- To find out whether policy communication has had an effect on service delivery in the Joe Morolong Local Municipality.
- To find out how the Joe Morolong Local Municipality can best guard itself against a similar policy communication for improved service delivery in the future.
- To propose solutions that will help mitigate the effects of policy communication for improved service delivery in the Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

1.5.2 Research questions

Considering the problems in enhancing a policy communication for improved services delivery, the research questions to be considered are;

- a) How does policy communication enhance service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality?
- b) How does the municipality communicate potential governance policies to the communities?
- c) What are the solutions to help mitigate the effects of policy communication?

1.5.3 Significance of the study

With recent protests about service delivery in the country, there has been a lack of or poor communication of governance policies by the municipalities to the communities and other stakeholders. The aim of research will be to give an overview of the enhancing policy communication for improved service delivery at Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

1.5.4 Limitations of the study

Research is a systematic way of collecting, analysing and interpreting data in order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned (Leedy&Ormrod, 2005:2). The focus group will be only the senior management of which some are still new in local government. These limitations may be addressed in future research

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In chapter one the general introduction and background to the research were discussed, including the problem statement, research justification, research aim and objectives, scope, research questions and research methodology. This chapter provides the theoretical background for the study in addition to the introduction. The review of literature provided cited various literature sources from the different journals, reviews and books that were done elsewhere in relation to enhancing policy communication about improved service delivery indicators used in the analysis and discussion. Policy-making and implementation are often presented incrementally. Challenges included municipal capacity, both structurally and in terms of skills, but also mismanagement and corruption.

The chapter first gives brief details according to this order: 2.2 Local Government Environment, 2.2.1 Local Government Legislative Framework, 2.2.2 Establishment of Local Government in South Africa, 2.2.3 Local Government Affairs Act, 1983 (Act 91 of 1983), 2.2.4 The Regional Services Council Act, 1985 (Act 109 of 1985), 2.2.5 Local Government Act, 1991 (Act 128 of 1991), 2.2.6 The Local Government transition Act, 1993 (Act 209 of 1993), 2.2.7 Local government was formally divided into three phases, 2.2.8 The current South African Local Government, 2.2.9 Legislative Foundations of Local Government, 2.2.10 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), 2.2.11 The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998, (Act 117 of 1998), 2.2.12 The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000)... 2.2.13 Functions and powers of local Government, 2.2.14 Executive and Legislative Powers of Local Government, 2.2.15 Developmental Local Government, 2.2.16 Local Economic Development, 2.2.17 Integrated Development Planning for Local Government, 2.2.18 A Broad Understanding of Integrated Development Planning, 2.2.19 Democratising Local Government, 2.2.20 The Ward Committee System, 2.2.21 Community Participation in Council Meetings, 2.2.22 Community Participation in the IDP

Process, 2.3 Broader Literature Study,2.3.1 Causes of Poor Service Delivery,2.3.2 Policymakers,2.3.3 Administration Leadership,2.3.4 Task Group on Government Communications,2.3.5 Defining the Policy Gap,2.3.6 Political Communication,2.3.7 Government Information Project (GIP),2.3.8 Integrated Development Planning (IDP),2.3.9 Service and Service Quality,2.3.10 Batho-Pele,2.3.11 Public Participation and 2.4 Conclusions

2.2 Local Government environment

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997:15) defined service delivery as:

the ability of any public institution to deliver services to the communities in an efficient and effective manner. Improving the delivery of public services means redressing the imbalances of the past and, while maintaining continuity of service to all levels of society, focusing on meeting the needs of the 40% of South Africans who are 'living below the poverty line and those, such as the disabled, and Black women living in rural areas, who have been previously disadvantaged in terms of service delivery.

The objectives that have been mentioned above are in many ways linked to service delivery because they all encourage an efficient provision of services to the citizens and communities who will then be empowered and be able to participate effectively in a democratic government during the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) consultation processes.

An understanding of the evolution of the present-day local government system in South Africa should be understood from 18th century, during the 19th century and the 20th century and the transition period from 1990 to 1996. That is the birth of the present local government system in South Africa that sought to address the disparities that were propagated by the past Apartheid regime.

During the 18th century in South Africa, the first administration of local government was that of Jan Van Riebeeck when he arrived in 1652 at Cape. The first authoritative structure was the HeerenMajores (the 17 directors of the Dutch East

India Company) which later included the Cape Colony (Ismail *et al.*,1997:39). The inclusion of the Cape Colony made it difficult for the 17 directors of the Company to administer local affairs in the outlying areas hence the need for the development of a local government system for the rural areas.

During the 19th century in South Africa, 1820saw the arrival of the British Settlersin the Cape which resulted in the abolition of thePolitical Council which was replaced by the Burgher Senate. The British Settlers introduced their own English system, notably the Municipal Corporations Act, 1835 (Act18 of 1835) which introduced the concepts of Mayor, Councillors, the Town Clerkand Council Committees (Craythorne, 1997:1). The Municipal Ordinance Act, 1836(Act 1 of 1836) was passed in terms of which municipal councils were established atthe Cape and the Burgher Senate was changed into the Board of Commissioners andWard Masters (Ismail *et al.*, 1997:1). Among the responsibilities ofthe commissioners provided for by the Municipal Ordinance Act,1836 (Act 1 of 1836) were to do the following:

- a) appoint police, watchmen, night patrols and street-keepers to protect life andproperty, regulate their duties, and issue them with weapons and clothing;
- b) provide and maintain fire-engines;
- c) provide and maintain public lighting systems, water supplies and drainagesystems; and
- d) make and repair public streets, roads and places (Green, 1957:20).

In Natal, the Natal Municipal Ordinance was published in 1854 as a result of the introduction of ordinances. The Natal Municipal Ordinance of 1854 marked an important improvement from the earlier legislation that was passed in the Cape.

Argued by Craythorne (2003: 10) this newer legislation brought into being, for the 1st time in South Africa, the following concepts:

- a) Towns were constituted as corporate bodies;
- b) Representatives were elected by voters registered on a voters' roll;

- c) The councils decided on local tax (rates), levied on property which had been valued;
- d) Auditors had to be appointed;
- e) The Town Clerk and senior officials were appointed and not elected at a public meeting; and
- f) The committee system was introduced.

During the 20th century, during the period of pre-transition, high levels of dissatisfaction about the White-led government in general among Blacks led to the formation of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912. Unrest became inevitable. In 1960 the Sharpeville uprising occurred, followed sixteen years later by the Soweto uprising, followed eight years later by the 1984 unrest, followed four years later by the unrest of 1988 (Craythorne, 1997:3).

1983-1996 were years of transition period when enactment of the Promotion of Local Government Affairs Act, 1983 (Act 91 of 1983), the Regional Services Councils Act, 1985 (Act 109 of 1985) and the Local Government Transition Act, 1993 (Act 209 of 1993). These legislations shaped South African local government.

2.3 Enabling Legislation for Local Government

Some of the objectives of the Act were:

- a) the establishment of an action committee of the co-ordinating council;
- b) the establishment of a demarcation board in respect of certain areas;
- c) the establishment of an executive committee of the demarcation board;
- d) the establishment of committees to hold enquiries for the demarcation board;
- e) the rendering of development aid to local authorities;
- f) the establishment of municipal development boards for that purpose;
- g) the designation of persons or institutions for purposes of membership of the co-ordinating council;

- h) the improvement of communication between certain committees and local authorities relating to certain matters;
- i) the extension of the functions of the said committees and the assignment of functions by local authorities;
- j) the empowerment of the local authority to enter into certain agreements;
- k) the authorisation of Ministers of the State to delegate certain powers relating to local government affairs; and
- l) provision for incidental matters.

The provision of the act was for better administration of local government though it was criticised because of its exclusion of rural areas, hence the introduction of the Act 109 Of 1985.

The political party, African National Congress (ANC) felt that this Act would not lead to the establishment of a non-racial, democratic, non-sexist and transparent democratic local government in South Africa.

The ANC in turn submitted its own recommendations for restructuring local government among which are:

- a) the creation of a definite, legitimate and fully-constituted system of local government, which can only be done in the context of a unitary and democratic South Africa, in which the powers of local government are conferred on it by a constituent assembly or any other democratically delegated legislative body;
- b) the creation of a national and democratic tradition of local government as a priority, as well as interim structures of local government which will lay the basis for a smooth transition to definite future systems;
- c) local authorities should be delimited, taking into account the principles of non-racism and the redistribution of resources;
- d) these interim structures should strive to overcome some of the limitations imposed by the apartheid and homelands system;

- e) affirmative action programmes had to be introduced and implemented to address the historical racial and gender imbalances resulting from the apartheid era; and
- f) metropolitan government structures had to be created for cities and big towns, and unified local authorities for small towns and other areas (Ismail *et al.*, 1997:61).

2.4 Democratising Local Government

The importance of community participation is a democratic right accorded by the Constitution. Section 152(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) states one of the objectives of the local government being to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matter of local government. It should also be noted that the Bill of Rights has serious implications for local government. Local government has the prime responsibility of remaining accountable to its constituencies. Its decisions will have to be open and accessible to the communities it works with and represents. The extension of rights of communities is further reiterated by Fox *et al.* (1991:5) who maintain that consumers of products or services supplied by public organisations in a democracy are often in a situation where they have certain rights which enable them to act as regulators or to elect or appoint regulators to act on their behalf. These consumers are often also suppliers of economic or political resources as taxpayers or the electorate. According to Schwella *et al.* (1996:22) public organisations owe their existence to the needs of the communities.

In the local government context the following elements must be part and parcel of any true democracy:

- a) Generally democracy is defined by reference to the procedural and substantial principles which appear necessary to its operation.
- b) Political office-bearers should act in the interest of the people.
- c) Government should operate through the rule of law.

- d) Political office-bearers should be accountable to and removable by the people, either directly or through their representatives.
- e) There must be equal opportunity to practise democracy: all citizens should be able to vote, and the vote of every citizen should count equally.
- f) If policy disagreements appear, they should be resolved by the principle of majority decision.
- g) The minority groups in the community should be in a position to protect their interests, therefore, the idea of democracy should not include tyranny by the majority.
- h) Basic civil liberties, such as freedom of speech and assembly must be maintained (Roberts & Edwards, 1991:23).

2.5 Political communication

Political communication is broadly defined as any form of communication that implements, negotiates, or recognises power relations. In this way, political communication may occur between two people, or it may be a speech heard by millions.

Political communication differs from political participation, because participation is an activity that is intended to influence government. Yet communication, broadly, is “the relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response” (Griffin, 2009). These messages require communicators to make conscious decisions about the form and substance they take. Likewise, interpreters of the message must choose how to interpret it.

The interpretation will vary from individual to individual based on personal experience, mood, education, or any other number of variables. The important root of this definition of message is a process; both steps require a reference to previous communication and possible communication in the future.

Claimed by Lilleker (2006) is the notion that communication between the ruling organisation of a society and the people is central to any political system; however, in a democracy political communication is seen as crucial.

D. Gelders, Ø. Ihlen / Government Information Quarterly 27 (2010) 34–40

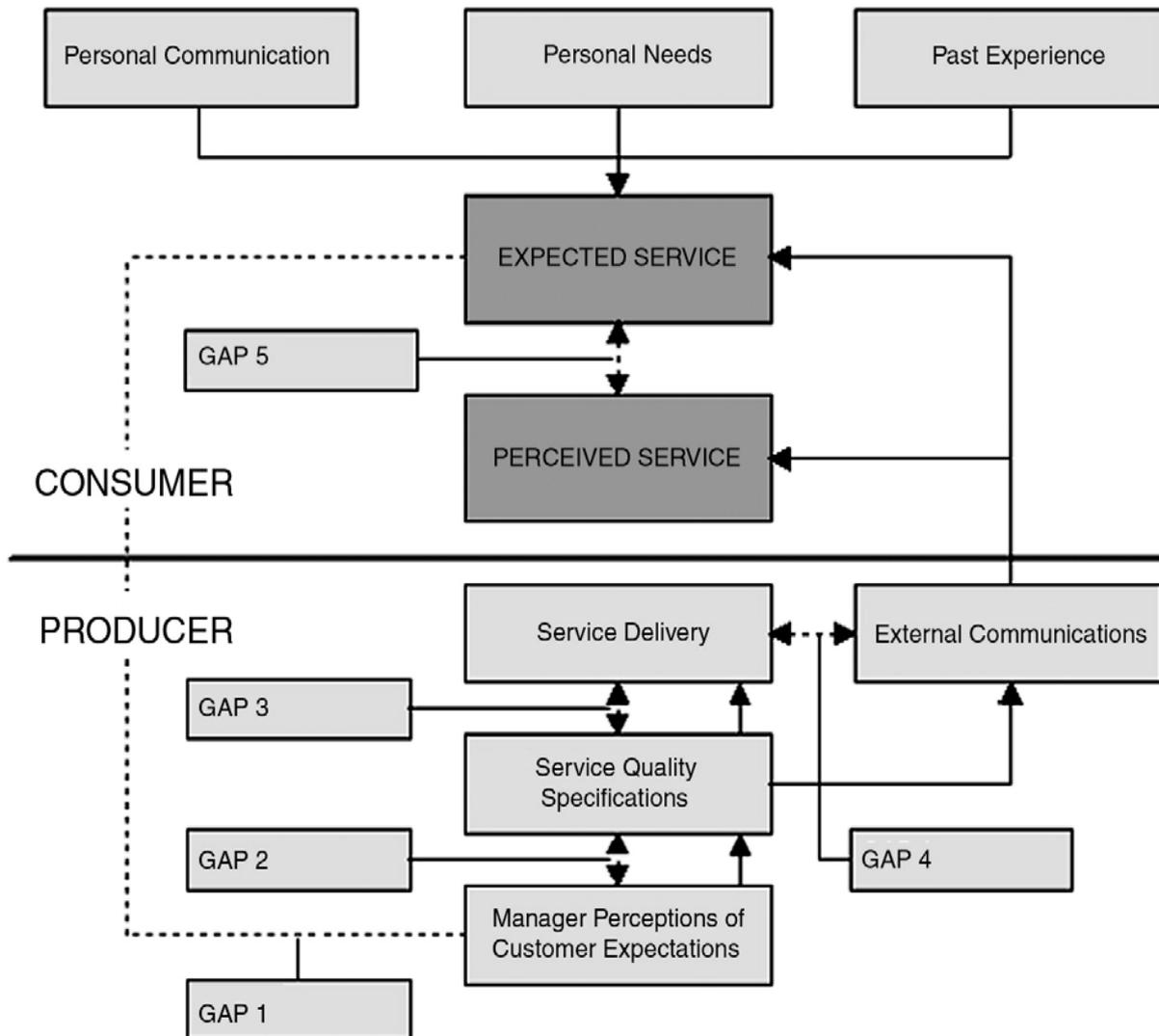


Fig. 1. Gap analysis model by Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990).

Although communication can take a variety of forms and can occur across various media, it is important for the dissemination of information between parties. And in order to be “political”, communication involves the transfer of message about political information.

Perloff defines political communication as “the process by which a nation’s leadership, media, and citizenry exchange and confer meaning upon messages that relate to the conduct of public policy” (1998:8, also see Bennet, 2007). According to Lilleker (2006), the political sphere is composed of the state and its various political actors, who communicate their views to the rest of the society to be considered legitimate political leaders.

Yet recent data actually suggest that the internet is increasingly being used to engage in political activities, both participatory and communicative (Smith, 2009)

According to Bennett andlyengar (2008), political communication has faced increasing demands for adaptation. These demands are encouraged by new media technologies, including tools such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and social media that alter the ways in which citizens interact with each other as well as with the elites and vice versa and that affect the dynamics of political communication as both research and practices. This factor is well-covered, although not well-theorised in some recent publications (Bennett &lyengar, 2008, Holbert, Garrett & Gleason, 2010).

2.6 Conclusion

The current policy communication at the municipality has the potential not to enhance improved service delivery in the municipality. The communities have unlimited and unrealistic expectations from the municipality with a constraint on resources at hand. The extent and harshness of the implications of poor policy communication that enhances improved service delivery reflect the union of several factors, some of which are common and others are new.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter aims at presenting the scientific and analytical framework for the study. Thus, the approach and methodology adopted and used for the study are discussed. The research design adopted and the processes used in undertaking the research are also presented and discussed. It also presents the data requirements, forms and sources, data collection and analysis tools and instruments used as well as method of presentation and reporting of findings.

Every research project, study or survey, needs sound planning indicating the entire process and procedures on which it is based. This is what is referred to as a research design. The research design describes those processes and procedures, the researcher will use in order to find the answer, or an insight to the proposed research question, or questions. It describes how the study is conducted, indicating the general plan: how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects and methods of data collection used (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:). It forms the basis for fulfilling research objectives and answering questions (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:81).

The research process for this study was accomplished in two parts or phases. First, the theoretical phase process in which a comprehensive literature review was undertaken with aim of exploring and establishing enhancing the process of policy communication for improved service delivery at Joe Morolong Local Municipality. In addition, the literature survey examined a number studies relating to talent management activities in the enhancing policy communication for improved service delivery. The data collected in the literature review provided an insight and understanding of the research questions and further, provided the necessary background information which guided the empirical process of the study (Marczyk, Matteo&Festinger, 2005:48).

A qualitative research approach was followed to obtain an understanding (Leedy&Ormrod, 2001; Lindloff, 1995) of the way in which political communication enhances improved service delivery at Joe Morolong Local Municipality. Semi-structured interviews (Leedy&Ormrod, 2001; Rubin & Rubin, 1995) were conducted with the:

- Accounting Officer
- Director: Community Services
- Director: HR and Corporate Services
- Director: Internal Audit
- Director: Local Economic Development
- Director: Infrastructure and Service Delivery
- Manager: PMS and IDP
- Manager: Legal Services.

All the interviewees were selected because of the contribution they could make to the study, and therefore formed part of a convenience sample (Leedy&Ormrod, 2001). The aim of the interviews was to enhance the researcher's insight into the research phenomenon even though the qualitative interpretations resulted from an intensive analysis of a small sample (Lindlof, 1995:57). All the participants agreed to the recording of the interviews, in order to ease the analysis of data. The main purpose of the interviews was to obtain an understanding of the perceptions of senior managers on the role of policy communication, and the effect of these perceptions on improved service delivery.

This dissertation uses a lot of information available from various books on policy communication, service delivery, conferences and panel discussions, blogs and newspaper articles, and various regulatory bodies.

This research study has a number of inter-related objectives set within the context of communication:

- a) How does policy communication enhance service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality?

- b) How do the municipality communicate potential governance policies to the communities?
- c) What are the solutions to help mitigate the effects of policy communication?

The valuable aspect of the research work relates more to Objective 1. The opportunity to find out if the policy communication had an effect on service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality. Therefore mostly secondary data are used to analyse the objective. Chapter 2 (literature review) identified a gap in existing research that there was ample evidence for the need for different municipalities to guard against the impact of policy communication on improved service delivery. Objectives 2 and 3 were addressed in the previous section of the literature review. Therefore Objective 1 furthers the research through collection and analysis of empirical secondary data. Data were collected and analysed on how the policy communication affected the municipality and provide an opportunity to further explore objectives 2 and 3 in the context of the Joe Morolong Local Municipality. Furthermore a comparison of the literature review and the real world was done to further gain understanding of the effects of policy communication on improved service delivery and to be better placed to contribute to measures that could be used to guard against the poor policy communication.

3.2 Research paradigms

The theoretical frameworks which guide researchers are referred to as *paradigms*. Research paradigms are a set of assumptions, values, or beliefs about the aspects of reality which give rise to a particular world view and serve as lenses or organising principles through which researchers perceive and interpret reality. This assertion is alluded to by Burke (2007:477), when he asserts that:

The research paradigm, once chosen, acts as a “set of lenses” for the researcher – it allows the researcher to view the fieldwork within a particular set of established assumptions, thus merging the abstract usefulness of the paradigm with the practical application of conducting rigorous research.

According to Bogdan and Biklan (1982:30) a theoretical paradigm is the identification of the underlying basis that is used to construct a scientific investigation or “a loose

collection of logically held together assumptions, concepts and prepositions that orientates thinking and research". It can also be referred to as a basic belief system, or world view that guides the investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:105), or as a "set of interrelated assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organised study of that world" (Filstead, 1979:34).

The two main philosophical dimensions which distinguish existing research paradigms, are ontology and epistemology. Ontology refers to the view of how one perceives reality (Wahyuni, 2012:69), or the nature of the essence of social phenomena being investigated (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2006). It can also be referred to as the research domain of social sciences (Lor, 2011:12).

The ontological question as Guba and Lincoln (1994:108) postulate can be explained in terms of:

What is the form of nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it? For example, if a "real" world is assumed, then what can be known about it is "how things really are and how things really work". Then only those questions that relate to matter of "real" existence and "real" action are admissible; other questions, such as those concerning matters of aesthetic or moral significance, fall out of a legitimate scientific inquiry.

Epistemology on the other hand, is a branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge and the process by which knowledge is acquired and validated. Wahyuni (2012:69) views it as the beliefs on the way to generate, understand and use knowledge that are deemed to be acceptable and valid. It is concerned with the "nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope and general bias" (Honderich, 2005:260).

The epistemological question, as further suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1994:108), interrogates the nature of relationship between "the knower or would-be knower" and what can be known. The answer to this question as Guba and Lincoln, further state, can be constrained by the answer already given to the ontological question. Hence, depending on the reality assumed by the researcher, the epistemological assumptions will be shaped by whether, the reality is assumed to be real, or otherwise. If it is real, "then the posture of the knower must be one of "objective

detachment or value freedom in order to be able to discover “how things really work” (Guba& Lincoln 1994:108).

3.3 Research strategy

According to (Ghuari&Grinhaung 2005:115) when a researcher has little control over events and when the focus is on a current phenomenon in a real life context and further to answering ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions, a case study is the preferred approach .Furthermore, Descombe (2000) states that when focusing on one or a few research units with the purpose of achieving in-depth information, the preferable approach is the case study. Therefore, the researcher adopted a case study approach in order to gain deeper insight into how the policy communication has enhanced improved service delivery at theJoe Morolong Local Municipality. Although generalizations are rendered difficult through a case study approach, there are clear benefits to be achieved. As Bell (1993:8) has noted, “the strength of the case method is that it allows the researcher to concentrate on specific instances and situations to identify interactive processes at work”. The objective is to understand to find out if the policy communication had an effect on improved service delivery at theJoe Morolong Local Municipality.

3.4 Research approach

Creswell (2008) describes research approaches, or methodologies as broad, holistic, methodological guides or roadmaps that inform a particular research motive or analytical interests. The methodology, as Marczyk, De Matteo and Festinger (2005) assert, encompasses the planning process, data collection, analysis of data and the final presentation of the results. It is the overall approaches or perspectives to the research process and is concerned mainly with the following issues:

- Why certain data arecollected
- What data arecollected
- Where aredata to be collected and
- How will data be analysed and presented (Collis & Hussey, 2003:55).

In essence, it defines what constitutes a research activity, utilises and is applicable to a model; states the methods to apply and how to measure progress and success and how to communicate the results (Clerke, 2005).

Discussed below is a brief summary of the three central approaches, or methodologies to any research study. These are the quantitative, qualitative and the mixed method research approach.

3.5 Population and sampling

The population for this study is defined as the public sector (municipality) that carries out service delivery to the communities during the sampling timeframe. The research sampled all the departments of importance in the municipality as it would help answer the question as to how policy communication enhances service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality. This methodology was chosen in order that all the key and necessary information regarding effects of policy communication to enhance service delivery could be analysed.

3.6 Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data for the qualitative phase. Semi-structured interviews are often used when the researcher wants to go deeply into a topic and to understand thoroughly the answers provided. Semi-structured interviews consisted of several key questions that helped define the areas to be explored, but also allowed the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Gill *et al.*, 2008:291). Semi-structured interviews can provide participants with some guidance on what to talk about, which they many find helpful. The flexibility of this approach particularly compared to structured interviews, can also allow the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the research team (Gill *et al.*, 2008:291).

An interview schedule was developed after compiling the results from the survey. There were eleven pre-set questions for the interviews. The time allocated to each participant was thirty to forty-five minutes. The researcher administered the

interviews himself, but sought assistance with the transcription of the data from senior researchers at his workplace. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews, which normally use open-ended questions, was to probe and also give participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses, as quantitative methods do. Open-ended questions have the ability to evoke responses that are: meaningful and culturally salient to the participant, unanticipated by the researcher, rich and explanatory in nature (Mack *etal.*, 2005:4).

3.7 Dataanalysis

Data analysis is a process that helps researchers to get the meaning out of the collected data or the message relayed by the data (Leedy&Ormrod, 2005). The study uses primary and secondary sources, and it's both qualitative in nature. The primary sources include official documents and reports. Secondary sources will include relevant books, service delivery reports, Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and budget of the municipality, municipal policies, relevant books, articles, academic papers, and newspaper reports. The aim of this data collection was to find out the related data regarding the research topic. The data thus obtained were an essential part of the dissertation topic. These are consulted not only for background purposes but also to assist in supporting and substantiating the information for the research.

3.8 Data analysis for the qualitativephase

Qualitative data analysis as indicated by McMillan and Schumacher (2006:364) is a relatively systematic process of coding, categorising and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest. The qualitative analysis for this study was accomplished through the normal steps usually followed in qualitative research. Data that had been collected during the interviews using a tape recorder, were transcribed, organised into data files and uploaded in Nivo software for analysis. Data were then organised on the basis of themes, categories, general ideas that informed the research questions. This process of pattern seeking involved using techniques such as data trustworthiness, triangulation, finding discrepancies or negative evidence, category ordering and sorting. The interpretation was done according to narrative structure (McMillan and Schumacher (2006:363-364).

3.9 Nature of the research

Baumard and Ibert (2001) state that of the fundamental choices a researcher has to make involves determining what approach and what type of data are most suitable to address the research question. The authors state that the approach choice can be either qualitative or quantitative and the data to be collected can be either primary or secondary and they argue that certain approaches and certain data are possibly incompatible.

This dissertation assesses the effect of political communication in service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality. A qualitative methodological framework has been used to gain deeper understanding and interpretation of those findings.

3.10 Types of research

3.10.1 The Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research is defined as 'the goal of qualitative research is the development of concepts which help us to understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) settings, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences, and views of all participants' (Pope & Mays, 1995:42).

Qualitative research consists of a number of differently developed methods that are best suited to address questions of particular interest.

It is an umbrella term that covers a variety of styles of social research, drawing on a variety of disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology.

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Qualitative research consists of a number of differently developed methods that are best suited to address questions of particular interest. There are, however, some general themes of qualitative research design that apply across all approaches and

methodologies. Qualitative research is therefore an umbrella term that covers a variety of styles of social research, drawing on a variety of disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology.

3.10.2 Quantitative research

Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world.

This research method is used:

- to describe variables;
- to examine relationships among variables;
- to determine cause-and-effect interactions between variables' (Burns & Grove 2005:23).

3.11 Advantages of qualitative research

Its advantage and strength is uncovering more about people's experience, it focuses on a small groups, it can be less expensive than quantitative research which may require large groups of participants or expensive measurement tools.

3.12 Disadvantages of qualitative research

Qualitative research methods collect data about what your select group of participants feel or think, or how they behave. One cannot necessarily use these data to make assumptions beyond this specific group of participants. It is not a research method that conveniently allows for the collection of statistical data.

3.12 Ethical considerations

According to Weman and Kruger (1999:171) ethical considerations come into play at three stages of the research process: when the participants are recruited, during the intervention, and in the release of the study. In order to comply with the requirements for ethical conduct, firstly, the ethical code for research of North-West University was adhered to. Secondly, permission was sought from the Joe Morolong Local

Municipality to conduct this study before it commenced. Thirdly, all respondents were notified about the aims of the study and the ethical requirements that the researcher had to meet. In this research, the respondents were assured of confidentiality on any information provided and further assured that information obtained would be used strictly for research purposes, which believed that the outcome of this as an academic purpose will benefit the Joe Morolong Local Municipality in general.

Collins (1998) suggests that the value and quality of the research must outweigh any potential discomfort, inconvenience or risk experienced by participants and other people from when data are collected.

Public Services are rendered within the realm of public administration which is described as the world in which government and its institutions function to deliver services (Crouse, 2002:49).

The term *ethics* refers to questions of right or wrong and in planning any study it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that ethic concerns relating to respect, dignity and welfare of people who participate in the research are properly addressed (Fraenkel&Wallen, 2006:55). In addition, they also assert that this must be undertaken with cognisance to the regulations and professional standards that govern the conduct of research with human participants (Fraenkel&Wallen, 2006:55).

Before conducting this study, permission was sought to conduct research in the organisations identified for this study. Broadly, the following efforts were undertaken to deal with of issues of ethics and confidentiality:

- I. A covering letter and informed consent form, together with the questionnaire formed part of the official invitations to respondents. The informed consent form clearly indicated to the participants that taking part in the study was of their own free will and that they could terminate their participation at any time if so wished.
- II. The researcher applied to the ethics committee of North-West University for ethical clearance before embarking on the field research and an ethical clearance was issued in this regard. The questionnaire was also sent to the ethical committee for clearance.

- III. A covering letter from the faculty signed by the researcher's supervisor was obtained. The letter clearly stipulated the title, the nature and the purpose of the study.
- IV. The researcher made sure that all the above were adhered to in the qualitative phase of the study as well.
- V. There were no envisaged risks in the study and participants were fully informed of this.
- VI. There was also a promise by the researcher to avail the final report to any of those participating municipalities that might be interested to have one. This was the only tangible benefit for those municipalities and for those participating in the study, the researcher emphasised knowledge gain as the only benefit for their participation.

According to Creswell (2008:75) in survey research, investigators disassociate names from responses during the coding and recording process. They should then discard data so that the data do not fall into the hands of other researchers who might appropriate it for other purposes. For this study, participants were informed that data were to be reported in aggregate form and respondents' e-mails were to be immediately discarded and removed from the researcher's computer after data entering. This was to indicate to participants about how confidentiality issue would be handled.

For the qualitative research process, a request was made to participants to use a tape-recorder during the interviews. This was assented to by all the participants. Free and open discussion between the researcher and each participant in the interviews was encouraged before the interviews could start to establish rapport between the interviewer and the interviewees and to freely talk about issues of confidentiality.

3.13 Limitations

Research is a systematic way of collecting, analysing and interpreting data in order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned Leedy and Ormrod (2005:2). Therefore because of the vastness of the municipality, the interviews would only be limited to senior management of the

municipality and a purposive sampling would be used to limit the information to the area of study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a presentation and analysis of the research findings, focusing in particular on enhancing policy communication for improved service delivery at Joe Morolong Local Municipality. The research findings draw on the interviews of senior management at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality. The findings are very much in accord with the situation in other municipalities throughout the country and are a cause for concern. This is a developing municipality, but in embryonic form it is already displaying all the elements of dysfunctionality so prevalent in South African municipalities in most of the provinces. Its relative isolation and distance from large centres obviously add to the difficulties that it experiences.

Joe Morolong Local Municipality as a developing municipality in Kuruman (Northern Cape Province) has already experienced the effects of enhancing policy communication for improved service delivery. However, the overarching poor service delivery countrywide as indicated above did not leave the Joe Morolong Local Municipality unaffected with regard to protests by outraged residents who are justifiably frustrated and angry about the lack of provision of the most basic services.

The following research objectives that were outlined at the beginning of the study indicate where the emphasis lies in the issue of policy communication and the ways in which it can enhance and improve service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality:

- a) How does policy communication enhance service delivery at Joe Morolong Local Municipality?
- b) How does the municipality communicate potential governance policies to the communities?
- c) What are the solutions to help mitigate the effects of poor policy communication?

a) How does policy communication enhance service delivery at Joe Morolong Local Municipality?

From the literature review section, different authors have identified the causes of the way in which policy communication can enhance service delivery and in the process serve the people better because of their better understanding of the issues and constraints that exist in the municipality.

The municipality has more administrative policies than service delivery policies which in itself is already a problem, as emphasis on administrative process means that these activities occupy the municipal officials to the extent that they forget that the real issue is what happens on the ground and to what extent people are receiving the services that they are entitled to. The municipality has minimal resources and is then faced with unreasonable expectations from the communities. The policies of the municipalities are not applied fairly and implemented to the letter, and political power play and political interference in administration are experienced and those unfortunate activities impact negatively on service delivery. This is a problem throughout the country and is bound to increase in intensity as the Local Government elections approach and political interference as well as political manoeuvring tend to stand in the way of effective service delivery even more, as service delivery becomes a recurrent theme in the political canvassing processes and campaigns.

b) How does the municipality communicate potential governance policies to the communities?

The municipality has responded with a slackening of service delivery policy (as contained in the IDP) that in turn has had its own negative effects on activity and policy communication. This downturn in activity is causing unemployment to rise sharply and, with it, a political response to protect the municipal economy through various combinations of municipal subsidies and grants from mines.

The municipality recognises that efficient service delivery and public participation are essential to achieve the socio-economic development objectives enshrined in the IDP (Integrated Development Plan). Notwithstanding the IDP and budget

roadshows that are held now and then, the municipal policies are not communicated to the communities. The policy communications are not fully implemented and therefore they are neither enhancing nor improving service delivery within the jurisdiction of the municipality. This is a serious problem, because in most municipalities the IDP is not properly aligned to the municipal budget and this is a further factor paralysing service delivery, as the lack of this alignment leads to serious confusion when it comes to spending patterns, and often things are simply not done because of this confusion. Ordinary members of the community are highly frustrated when capital intended for service provision infrastructure is not spent, and a vicious circle ensues. It is crucial that ordinary members of the community should be informed, in a way that is easily understood, how these processes are supposed to work. Convening opportunities for public information, and very importantly, participation, is a difficult act and often these meetings disperse with nothing constructive to show for it.

c) What are the solutions to help mitigate the effects of policy communication?

The municipality has taken several steps to mitigate the effectiveness of policy communication and enhancing and improving service delivery in their municipality, including Imbizos, public participations, regulatory reforms, and budget and IDP roadshows. The measures adopted differ from ward to ward or village to village, depending on available resources as well as the degree of vulnerability to the crisis. All these efforts are laudatory, but in a widely dispersed rural environment the execution of these activities becomes difficult and frustrating, and hence following steps outlined above is difficult and frustrating.

The researcher is of the opinion that the municipality should more effectively address their challenges through a number of initiatives which have been put in place but as pointed out above there are a number of factors that inhibit the effective pursuit of these activities. It will need political will, more consensus among decision-makers and more commitment from officials to achieve better results in terms of the effectiveness of communication of any policy issues to the affected residents of the area. Communication remains the cardinal and crucial elements in this arena, and

failure of communication for whatever good or bad reason underlies most of the problems experienced so acutely by especially the residents of poor and rural areas..

4.2 Summary of findings

The findings of this study are based on the analysis and discussion of policy communication for improved service delivery as discussed with the participants at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

The participants pointed out that the municipality is responsible for provision of bulk services to the communities including clean water, adequate sanitation, habitable housing, storm water drainage, refuse removal, passable roads, etc. The participants were all informed participants who could speak with authority about the services provided (or incompletely provided) and there is in many instances a remarkable overlap between the problems pointed out by the various participants.

The following information was obtained from different participants during interviews and discussions.

Participant 1 raised the following issues:

First among the issues raised was the rural nature and the vastness of the municipality which of necessity would impact on the effectiveness of any service delivery. In line with most other municipalities in the country the funding needs and requirements far outstrip the availability of funding, and this is highly problematic, as the community inevitably and out of frustration because of lack of enough information holds unrealistic expectations. The geographic location of the Municipality poses a further problem, and within the context of the steady worsening of the macro-economic environment all these problems are exacerbated.

Add to this the perpetual political interference and the power play among politicians and there is a clear recipe for disaster. The close links between municipal officials and politicians have led to a misunderstanding of roles and responsibilities which provides a fertile soil for corruption and dishonest practices. This is unfortunately a reality in most such municipalities in the country.

While municipalities suffer from lack of expertise, the filling of vacancies is a problem because of inefficient and inappropriate recruitment processes, and this, linked to inadequate training interventions, exacerbate the problems. The number of vacancies in many municipalities is unacceptably high, and people remain appointed in a temporary or acting capacity for periods far exceeding the accepted norms.

The most serious aspect of the problem is that present policies do not accommodate rural areas, and there is frequently a non-alignment with legislation. An obvious outcome of this is then that insufficient review processes are followed which do not yield appropriate outcomes and officials often out of sheer frustration simply fail to fulfil certain functions.

Participant 2 raised the following issues:

The second participant also referred to the insufficient induction and training of staff in terms of policies and procedures. The issue of geographical spread also came up, and as with participant 1 there is a lack of clarity regarding role clarification between local and district municipalities and sector departments. The non-alignment of the IDP with the various departments has several serious effects, including conflict of interest in activities, unfunded mandates, poor collaboration and communication between spheres of government and non-alignment between local, provincial and national programmes. Of serious concern is the conflict of interest in activities, which is in line with what the first participant said about conflicting roles between politicians and officials. This is a recurring problem, as most participants refer to it. It is an issue that will have to be resolved but will probably only be resolved once the political will is there to deal with it effectively.

Participant 3 raised the following issues:

Participant 3 expressed worry about the fact that bylaws are not in place for all tasks, and this is further exacerbated by the fact that there is misinterpretation of legislation emanating from conflicting legislation. The equity plan implementation plan is simply done for purposes of compliance and not for purposes of redressing inequalities and in the process valuable expertise is not implemented and frustration and resentment are the inevitable outcome.

A worrying factor expressed earlier is the high staff turnover and the failure to attract and retain highly-skilled staff (this is due to the low grading of the municipality, non-competitive remuneration packages and so forth). There is a certain level of mistrust between councillors and administration that definitely hampers communication. Of serious concern is the issue of insufficient funds to replace old infrastructure – throughout the country and especially in smaller municipalities this has reached crisis proportions, and the necessary skills to do the work are also lacking. This can also be linked to the lack of alignment between the IDP and the budget, and the fact that most residents do not understand the process, and even where the process is understood there is often a lack of will and skill to effect the alignment, and this has serious consequences for the effective installation and replacement of infrastructure needed to take the services to the people.

Participant 4 raised the following issues:

Participant 4 raised a few other issues apart from the ones already mentioned. He refers to the inefficient Performance Management System (PMS) as a serious concern, but also refers to political interference, poor communication with the community and the lack of stakeholder ownership. Performance Management lies at the heart of the problems experienced in terms of how people perceive and execute their duties. Performance management managers are often not appointed, and even when appointed seem unable to carry out their professional mandate, which leaves the gate wide open for employees to shirk their duties and to render sub-standard work with no disciplinary measures in place.

He also lifts out the inevitable financial problems. The budget constraints, linked to insufficient resources in general, the misappropriation of funds all worry him. Add to that the lack of capacity in the municipality to deal with the present problems and which is inevitably triggered by the planning sequence, and the fact that the budget is often completed before the reviewed IDP is completed. This has serious consequences for prioritization of needs and of course also has implications for compliance with legislature. It is striking to note that the participants all pinpoint the problems quite accurately, but that because of the general lack of alignment and cohesion among employees and sections of the municipality one person can do very little to ameliorate the situation.

Participant 5 raised the following issues:

The issues raised by Participant 5 echo many of the concerns raised thus far, but also add some more. The issue of geographical distances is a difficult one, and impacts on matters such as tourism (for example, tourism not being community-driven) and environmental protection. This participant has serious problems with staff and staff functions. The absence of monitoring and evaluation systems seriously impairs effectiveness. This extends to underperformance of contractors and service providers, and clearly there is also a lack of political will regarding service delivery and development. All these problems lead to crisis management, which is the direct outcome of a lack of structured planning and effective time management. This is made worse by a resistance to change, which makes change management problematic. This is also the first participant to remark on the issue of the management of cultural diversity, which can also be highly problematic for a municipality. The issue of the implementation of the MFMA requirements also arises in his comments, and he further comments on this issue of legal support, which is a problem that is increasing as municipalities engage in contracts without due process and the incidence of litigation increases at a great rate.

Participant 6 raised the following issues:

He reiterated the problem of the geographic location of the Municipality with all its concomitant problems and constraints, and also raised the issue of political interference and/or power play, which is also a recurrent issue among the participants. The skills and capacity of politicians also came into his discussion, and he spoke of the perennial and serious problem of managers who are politically connected and who abuse this by means of obtaining tenders for themselves and/or families or friends. He also commented on insufficient induction and training of staff when it came to policies and procedures. The poor collaboration and communication between spheres of government also came into play in his discussion, and he was quite vocal about the failure to attract and retain highly skilled staff at the municipality (because of the low grading of the municipality, non-competitive remuneration packages, etc.) and he referred specifically to mistrust between Councillors and

Administration. He echoed the problem of budget constraints and commented on the issue of poor leadership and the non-performance or under-performance of contractors and service providers, which would often be the result of corruption in the awarding of tenders to non-qualifying or non-compliant contractors. This would also include misappropriation of funds and the ineffective and inefficient utilisation of funds

He felt very strongly about the failure to involve communities in the IDP process and target setting – which is also a recurrent motif.

Participant 7 raised the following issues:

Participant 7 once again reverted to a number of issues raised by the other participants. These dealt with the failure to involve communities in the IDP process and target setting, the failure to provide a proper platform (or any platform, for that matter), the lack of will among communities to become involved, the inadequate skills pool, and concomitant with that the failure to balance skills with employment equity (exacerbated because of the lack of funds to implement the employment equity plan), the skills (or lack thereof) of the management team, and the whole issue of employment satisfaction and wellness. Municipal workers have demotivated and demoralized because of the hugeness of the problems and the seeming impossibility of ever improving the processes and hence the level of effectiveness of service delivery, and a sense of job satisfaction among workers.

Participant 8 raised the following issues:

Participant 8 raised a large number of issues. These started off with concerns about the lack of an effective budgeting process to prioritise needs and to ensure that external funding would be forthcoming. The following issues came to the fore in this context, viz. budgetary constraints, insufficient resources and the lack of funds to implement employment equity adequately and in line with legislation and to balance the needs of the workplace with the requirements of the legislative framework.

This linked inevitably with the lack of will among staff to ensure effective service delivery, which touched on the issue of performance of non-core functions, and the

level of skills of staff and management, a recurrent issue voiced by most of the participants.

Another recurrent issue was the misappropriation of funds and the ineffective and inefficient utilisation of funds, an inevitable concomitant of the lack of an integrated planning process. This included the following issues:

- The planning cycle is not effective (the budget is often compiled and even tabled, because of time constraints, before the IDP is completed, which of course renders the IDP process irrelevant, a purely cosmetic exercise to yield minimum compliance)
- The prioritisation of needs is a further casualty of this state of affairs, because an inaccurate and incomplete IDP will of necessity mean that needs cannot be prioritized properly as they cannot be identified accurately because of the way in which processes fit into each other.
- Crisis management becomes the norm when things go awry because of this state of affairs, and this leads inevitably to the next problem, which is the lack of structured planning. Small municipalities are particularly vulnerable in this context, as their distances from metropolises and large municipalities mean that they struggle to attract strong talent in the management field.
- Lack of structured planning, as outlined above, underlies most of the problems experienced by the municipality.
- Time management constitutes part of the problem outlined above – time management is only realistically possible once clearly delineated plans are on the table, which can only happen if proper processes are followed, including as a bottom line a proper IDP followed by a proper and realistic budget and plans flowing from these.
- Failure to include communities in planning is therefore a crucial gap in the entire process of running a municipality, and that is why it is so important to investigate the issue of community involvement in planning, and the all-important process of communication styles and approaches when engaging with communities.

Inevitably issues such as these arose from a problem aired by all participants, viz. non-compliance with relevant legislation, policies and procedures, and a lack of an effective system of communication with stakeholders to ensure, *inter alia*, community involvement in the decision-making of the municipality. Included in this main point are the following issues, viz. lack of ownership, lack of political will and a lack of a platform for community involvement.

Another recurrent theme was the lack of an effective and integrated performance management system which would include monitoring and evaluation as well as effective project management. The entire situation was also exacerbated by non-performance or service providers, the lack of effective change management, the lack of funds to implement employment equity, the lack of effective management of cultural diversity (an issue that had arisen elsewhere as well), the lack of an effective system to ensure employee wellness and satisfaction, as well as a lack of legal support, and the respondent also echoed the concern running through all the responses, viz. the issue of geographical distances and small communities.

A larger percentage of the respondents believed that geographical location of the municipality made it difficult to render quality and effective services. Furthermore abuse of political power was a concern.

Looking at the issues raised by different participants, it must be pointed out that the municipality needs more resources, skills and capacity in order to deliver appropriate services to the communities.

A greater percentage of the participants did not want to elaborate more on political interference and political power or any influence from the ruling party. Participant 3 is of the opinion that the level of education of councillors, experience, and five-year terms of both councillors and senior manager are also contributing factors to poor service delivery.

The overall impression was that the municipality did not undertake effective policy communication and thus did not enhance service delivery as swiftly as communities would have liked it to and to which communities are entitled in the context of the Constitution of South Africa.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with an analysis and discussion of the research results. The results suggest that most of the participants believed general policy communication to enhance improved service delivery was a fair demand, but would need a lot of improvement in order to render better services to the communities and to sustain them. This of necessity impacted on the duty of government to provide services to citizens to enable them to live decent lives and have access to the crucial basic services that they are entitled to.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to draw conclusions and give recommendations based on the results obtained in the previous chapter. The study investigated how policy communication enhances (or could enhance) service delivery in the Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

This dissertation was structured in five chapters in order to achieve the objectives of the report. Chapter one provided an overview of the problem, pointing out that public communication about potential policies is important for a variety of reasons. The study published by Kleinnijenhuis and van Hoof (2006) showed that public satisfaction with the government is increased more by the communication of policies and potential policies than by the communication of results (implemented policies).

In chapter two, brief details were provided on the following: administrative leadership, the task group on government communications, defining the policy gap, political communication, the government information project (GIP), integrated development planning (IDP), service and service quality, Batho-Pele and public participation.

Chapter three provided an overview of the research methodology, and a qualitative research approach was followed to obtain an understanding (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Lindloff, 1995) of the way in which political communication enhances improved service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

Chapter four discusses and analyses the research findings, focusing particularly on enhancing policy communication for improved service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

Chapter five, this chapter, attempts to draw conclusions and provide recommendations based on the results obtained in the previous chapters. The study

was aimed at exploring and establishing enhanced policy communication for improved service delivery at the Joe Morolong Local Municipality.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Introduction

In this study the researcher examined how policy communication enhances service delivery by using a qualitative research method that involved interviewing senior management members of the municipality. No interviews were undertaken with other personnel in the municipality in this study. These limitations may be addressed in future research. It emerged very clearly that a lack of adequate resources does hamper service delivery of bulk services in the Joe Morolong Local Municipality. It is therefore important to ensure that these services are delivered effectively to the communities. It should be pointed out that recommendations made to the municipality automatically apply to the provincial and national governments because both of the latter provide for resources in municipalities which are the local sphere of government.

5.2.2 Recommendation to the Municipality

The recommendations to the Municipality can be summed up in the following points derived from the various interviews held with senior staff of the Municipality. These recommendations are listed in terms of their importance and brief comments made about them.

The municipality should strengthen its community participation programmes and collective engagement of communities on issues relating to service delivery in all municipal wards and all its stakeholders. This matter was a recurrent issue in the discussion with participants, and it is in line with problems experienced in other municipalities countrywide. The seriousness of the problem is just exacerbated because of the relative isolation of this municipality from other larger centres and the problems associated with that, such as the ability to attract and retain skills and a deteriorating situation in terms of infrastructure.

Regarding the non-payment culture with regard to services is a serious issue, as this impacts enormously on the ability of the municipality to function adequately because its revenue collection is under pressure when payments are not made. As the provision of services remains the single biggest source of revenue of a municipality, non-payment can paralyse the municipality. Therefore households should be encouraged to pay for their services – but this remains a vicious circle as one cannot really expect to improve the payment culture if the services are defective or non-existent.

The municipality must consult with communities about the services that should be delivered to them so that they are able to indicate the level of services they would need, but this ties in with the previous point about creating a culture of payment otherwise it would be impossible to provide the needed services. Thus there is a real need to establish function oversight and advisory bodies to act as a link between the municipalities and the people, but this would require a dedicated and sustained effort to inculcate in the people to the culture of participating and adding their contribution in terms of payment for services to enable the municipality to fulfil its commitments to the people.

Dealing with fraud, corruption and improving accountability is a countrywide problem and it goes along with the segregation of functions between councillors and management of the municipality. A great deal of the fraud and corruption occurring in the municipality can be attributed to this blurring of lines.

The indigent register should be continuously updated in order to source more funding for the households who cannot pay their services because of the level of unemployment. Misappropriation of funding for the indigents should also be addressed. This would depend to a large extent on the development and implementation of a proper indigent policy and register.

The municipality should ensure adequate maintenance and improve infrastructure (including ageing infrastructure) to accelerate the effectiveness of service delivery. Old and decrepit infrastructure contributes significantly to the failure to provide proper services, especially when it comes to water.

Furthermore, the municipality should strengthen its community participation programmes to obtain buy-in from community members into programmes undertaken by the municipality.

It has become very clear that human resources are not adequate and this has impacted negatively on service delivery, therefore the municipality should provide adequate and fully capacitated human resources to enable effective service delivery. The municipality should introduce performance management system that will enhance performance of employees thereby improving service delivery.

From all of the above complaints it is clear that this municipality is subject to all the ills suffered by especially smaller and rural municipalities across the country. It is imperative that solutions be found to counter this and to ensure that the communities served by this municipality receive the services that they are entitled to.

5.2.3 Recommendation model

The findings of the research suggest that in the Joe Morolong Local Municipality there is a need to develop a service delivery model that will help the municipality to deal with service delivery issues. In terms of Chapter 6 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) the monitoring tool that is currently recommended for municipalities is a Performance Management System. The system manages performance of both the organisation (municipality) and individual employees to encourage better performance.

Figure 2: Service-delivery Model

Step 1.
Consultation

Step 2.
Service discussion

Step 3.
Implementation
(Service-delivery standards)

Step 4.
Monitoring
(Capacity-building)

Step 5.
Performance management
(Capacity-building)

Step 6.
Evaluation
(Review)

5.2.4 Suggestions for further research

Whilst the Joe Morolong Local Municipality has shown some successes in the provision of service delivery, the interviews suggest that services have not been satisfactorily provided and this is largely due to a lack of resources. It is also recommended that future research can be conducted on how the government can help provide municipalities with adequate resources so that municipalities can deliver services effectively especially in the case of small municipalities who have the further problem of attracting and retaining good staff and efficient processes when compared with the larger municipalities and the metropolises. Local government is where there is real and actual contact citizens and government structures, and therefore the development and maintenance of good local government structures will make all the difference in the provision of services to the residents of the municipality, who are also citizens of the country who are entitled to those sections in the Constitution of South Africa that outline the commitment of government to the well-being of its citizens.

5.3 Conclusion

The objectives of this research were to find out how policy communication enhances improved service delivery to communities by the municipality. This chapter discussed the analysis and discussion of the research results. The results suggest that most of the participants believed that general provision of service delivery is fair but needs a lot of improvement.

5.4 Reflection on the research and methodology

This research was focussed on how policy communication enhances improved services delivery in the municipality. The study addressed the issues it set out to address but with challenges. The scope of this study was limited due to available resources, viability in terms of distances and time constraints. It would therefore be necessary in later research in this field, which has been shown in this study to be of crucial importance, should be supported with more substantial funding and other support for a researcher to undertake a fuller study and have results that can be extrapolated to other municipalities and areas.

5.5 Reflection on the findings of the research

Regardless of the constraints stated in the above section, the important findings that the study has discovered are the roles played by political interference, poor performance by municipal employees, a general and crippling lack of resources, a lack of skills and capacity, poor community consultation, the apathy of communities in terms of active involvement and the ever-present lack of funding at all levels – all these inhibit the proper consultation processes that should lead up to more effective service delivery among all spheres of government but more specifically local government, and with a special on small and under-resourced local municipalities.

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