Examining Community Perceptions: A Participatory Development Communication Study on the Establishment of JB Marks Local Municipality

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Dissertation accepted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Magister Artium* in Communications at the North-West University

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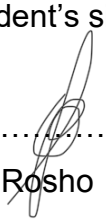
Graduation: May 2025

DECLARATION

I, Motlalepula Ziphora Rosho with the student number **17122988**, hereby declare that this dissertation titled "**Examining Community Perceptions: A Participatory Development Communication Study on the Establishment of JB Marks Local Municipality"** submitted to the School of Communication under the supervision of: Prof Aaron Tshidzumba and Dr Mooki Lobelo is my own work and has not been previously in whole or in part submitted to any University for any degree.

Student's signature Date



04/05/2025

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MZ Rosho

Acknowledgements

It's been a journey of maximising the body of knowledge and demonstrating the critical path of communication as a key element towards development in society. I want to first appreciate my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr Aaron Tshidzumba and co-supervisor Dr Mooki Lobelo for their constructive critique and unwavering patience to support me to conclude the study.

My indebtedness goes to many of my support system especially colleagues Pheello Setona and Mpho Motloung whom we argued from time to time in making them to understand my topic from a context of participatory development communication and its interface to public governance.

My sincere thanks go to my family members, my son Lesedi Rosho and friends, especially who were patient to allow me to always explain why this topic and its centrality to contribute towards body of knowledge in development through communication. I will not conclude the acknowledgments without appreciating the SAPAAM family that I recently interacted with through academic platform as I was about to conclude the study, I drew strength from your conference of 2023.

To my academic home the North West University Mahikeng campus I am in the academia because it all started with the then UNW and now NWU, you remain the cutting edge! To my comrades, colleagues and friends my sincere thanks for the support.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine community perceptions of the development communication of the JB Marks Local Municipality in the North West Province of South Africa. The qualitative research methodology was adopted to carry out the study. Purposive sampling was applied to select the participants who were chosen for the study. The identified participants were chosen since they had the relevant informant that was needed for the study. Focus group discussions and interviews were conducted to solicit for qualitative data needed for the study. The sample size of the participants used to collect focus group discussions and interviews was sixty-eight participants. Saturation was reached at the sixty eighth participants and there was need to interview other participants as it was a duplication of the results obtained. The results confirmed that there was no proper consultation among the stakeholders on the merger of the Tlokwe and Ventersdorp Municipalities. It was reflected that the participants were not given adequate information during the consultative exercise. The participants were not involved in the decision making of the merger of the municipality. In this study the following were recommended: there is a need to have a participatory developmental communication strategy in place to ensure that sufficient outreaches are done. Communication departments should be part of the process from conceptualisation up to execution and conclusion of the plan. Implementation of the participatory developmental communication strategy would go a long way towards enforcing outreaches. Effective communication channels need to be put in place for efficient and effective communication among the various stakeholders. Allocation of resources is essential if the programmes are to be successful and this will also enhance the developmental agenda. Thorough community engagement is needed and hence structures need to put in place to facilitate consultative dialogue with the stakeholders. The municipalities are custodians of the development agenda. There is a need for them to ensure that they plan and implement developmental programmes, hence the need to communicate these developmental programmes to the stakeholders.

Key words: amalgamation, communication, development, stakeholders, strategy.

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ABBREVIATIONS

COGTA	: Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs
DPSA	: Disability People of South Africa
MDM	: Mass Democratic Movement
PDC	: Participatory Development Communication
PSC	: Public Service Commission
SGB	: School Governing Board
TCC	: Tlokwe City Council
VLM	: Ventersdorp Local Municipality
RSA	: Republic of South Africa
SALGA	: South African Local Government Association
VLM	: Ventersdorp Local Municipality

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Community participation, in its simplest form, means that people in the community and institutions like the government should be able to talk to each other and be persuaded about things that affect everyone. Participants will therefore share views and information on a particular matter or topic that may be affecting them; however, the engagements may also enrich the thinking of participants (Cherdpong & Alexander, 2013; Grillos, 2021).

For the purpose of this study, participatory development communication is community perception and thinking, whereby the established JB Marks Local Municipality has attitudes and responses that indicate dissatisfaction with the JB Marks Local Municipality establishment. People from different groups involved in the engagement process may not have gone far enough because people in the community are still unhappy with the services they are receiving, which is now being blamed on the merging of the two municipalities (Masenya & Molepo, 2020). Both communities did not support the merger of the former Ventersdorp and Tlokwe City Council Local Municipalities; as a result, it might have contributed to the current service delivery challenges.

The participatory development communication process plays a central role in engaging with communities and stakeholders. According to Sebola (2017), communities must be informed and consulted in all stages of policy development. Furthermore, Sebola (2017) argues that there is always a bias in the information disseminated to communities, as it either selects its audience or responds to the voters who supported the governing party. According to McPhail (2009); Grillos, Zarychta & Nelson Nu˜nez, (2021) the participatory approach to development communication emphasises the impact of individuals on perspectives, specifically focusing on the development of the developing world. According to the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000, a municipality is required to inform its community about the

various tools, processes, and procedures that are available to promote and enable community participation.

The local government sphere is at the centre of development through provisions for service delivery, which therefore calls for constant interaction with stakeholders on any policy shift or on new developmental projects that are to be introduced. The role and views of stakeholders are always important in the process of community participation. Participatory development communication must always find expression in any intention for policy change or strategy to bring about new development. Msibi and Penzhorn (2014:03); Servaes (2020), emphasise the significance of including the public in any developmental activities that may directly benefit or affect them. Currently, the development communication method that involves participation is perceived as a broad and standard operational process that needs to be followed for formal reasons.

However, people aren't using creative approaches. Ongkiko and Flor (2006:4) argue that development communication was born as a result of societal problems that can be traced to root causes, and the only solution to resolving them is through information and communication. The process of public participation that is required in the integration of the municipalities is best described by Corrigan (2017:6) as “the process in which parliament, provincial legislatures, municipal councils, and other organs of the state can be able to interact with the citizens, organisations, and government entities in the affairs that affect them”. Therefore, participation will always be part of a learning process that empowers communities to express their views (Yoon, 1997; Grillos, 2021). Sharma and Uniyal (2016) explain communication as an instrument that creates conversations and networks for discussion with various stakeholders or communities.

According to Cornelissen (2014); Shabangu, (2025) communication in the context of government emphasises information sharing and interchange to foster productive discourse between the government and communities. The Republic of South Africa's Constitution, Chapter 7, Section 151, states that the goal of local government in municipalities is "to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government" (South Africa, 1996). In this

perspective, Section 155, Sub-section (3) of the Constitution explains the creation of municipalities. Laws at the national level must: "(a) define the standards by which an area should be divided into municipalities of one category A or both categories B and C; (b) define the standards and processes by which an independent authority determines municipal boundaries; and (e) subject to Section 229, provide for a suitable allocation of powers and responsibilities among municipalities when an area contains municipalities in both categories B and C." When it comes to the allocation of powers and responsibilities, a category B municipality and a category C municipality may have different arrangements than when a category E3 municipality and that category C municipality do so (South Africa, 1996).

The JB Marks Local Municipality is a Category B municipality in the Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality in the North West Province of South Africa. It is the largest municipality of the three in that district, making up almost half the district's geographical area. It was established by the merger of the Ventersdorp and Tlokwe City Council Local Municipalities in August 2016. It comprises the towns of Potchefstroom and Ventersdorp. Over 200,000 people are living in this community. The decision to establish the JB Marks municipality was considered due to the poor fiscal performance of the two municipalities' lack of adequate revenue sources, backlogs that were almost insurmountable, high rates of poverty and unemployment, inadequate planning and execution of the budget, misconduct, and low skill development facilitation (Lavaras, 2018).This process was per the Municipal Demarcation Act articles 24 and 25, which make provisions concerning the criteria for demarcation procedures, objectives, and factors to be considered by the Board when making determinations on the limits of municipalities.

The Act further stipulates the importance of notifying stakeholders and the public in general about the processes for determining those municipal boundaries. This study sought to examine whether community perceptions were taken into consideration when former Tlokwe City Council (TCC) and Ventersdorp Local Municipalities (VLM) were amalgamated in establishing JB Marks Local Municipality. This study focuses on JB Marks Local Municipality, specifically the two townships of Ikageng and Tshing, respectively that are considered to be prominently localities to black communities, with

an emphasis on the examination of the community's perception in the manner in which the execution of community and stakeholder communication was processed.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Under the previous regime in South Africa, fundamental choices pertaining to growth based on their daily needs and community affairs were made without proper or no consultation at all. This arrangement made community members passive receivers of public goods and services lacking the chance to fully recognise their requirements, take action and determine their fate (Tadasse et al. 2006; Grillos et al., 2020). Communities are empowered to actively participate in the development of policies, strategies and mechanisms to enhance and endorse the tenets of participative developmental interaction within local government spaces (Shabangu, 2025). The participatory development communication process intends to interact with communities, ensure that all stakeholders are on board with matters affecting them, give clarity where there are areas of concern, and further consolidate community views while also persuading them during discussions. After the local elections in August 2016, the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) and the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs decided to combine the Tlokwe City Council and Ventersdorp Local Municipalities (Lavars, 2018). Numerous scholars, including Masenya and Molopo (2020), also concluded that the merger of the two municipalities has led to more harm than good when the state of financial governance has not responded to the needs of communities. Two years after the merger of these two municipalities, the SABC News (2018) reported a situation whereby the residents of Ventersdorp requested that they be removed from the merger in the newly amalgamated JB Marks Local Municipality as they felt that there have been service delivery provision failures in their community. The process and implementation of public participation in the merger of municipalities required that different levels of government or state agencies talk to communities about policy changes or issues related to development (Corrigan, 2017). Participatory development communication was needed before merging the two municipalities; the views and inputs of the communities were supposed to be considered and, in this case, proper consultative participatory development communication was not adequately done. It is against this background that a study be carried out to address the dissatisfaction of the

communities concerning the involvement of communities in the participatory development communication agendas to address challenges affecting the JB Marks merged municipality.

1.3 GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTION

The above background gave rise to the following general research question:
To what extent did participatory development communication occur between the stakeholders (the municipality, ward councillors, and community members) in the merger of Tlokwe and Ventersdorp local municipalities?

The specific research questions are:

1.3.1. What are the principles of participatory development communication processes relevant for local government communication in South Africa?

1.3.2. What are the stakeholders (the city council, the community, and ward councillors) perceptions concerning the nature of participatory development communication in the establishment of JB Marks Local Municipality?

1.3.3. How effective is the service delivery to the community?

1.3.4. To what extent are stakeholders satisfied with the service delivered to the communities?

1.4 OBJECTIVES

The main research objective of the study was:
To examine the extent to which participatory development communication occurred between the stakeholders in the merger of Tlokwe and Ventersdorp local municipalities.

The specific research objectives of the study were:

1.4.1. Examine the literature for the principles of participatory development communication processes relevant to local government communication in South Africa.

1.4.2. Analyse stakeholders (the city council, the community, and ward councillors) perceptions with regard to the nature of participatory development communication in the establishment of the JB Marks Local Municipality.

1.4.3 Determine the effectiveness of service delivery to the community.

1.4.4 Establish the satisfaction of stakeholders on whether service delivery to the communities has been met.

1.5 POINTS OF DEPARTURE

It is further crucial to conduct this study to establish how far the provincial as well as national governments promote public participatory development communication processes that are aligned with community perceptions during the establishment of JB Marks Local Municipality. The idea behind the participatory development communication process is that getting beneficiary groups involved makes development projects stronger in terms of their abilities and ways of thinking. This empowers and leads to self-transformation and self-reliance, assuring long-term viability (Rahman, 1993; Conyers & Hills, 1990; Flint & Blyth, 2021). According to recent research, development communication should occur within the theoretical framework of the participatory development communication process. This has been acknowledged as the standard method of participatory development communication (Mefalopulos, 2008; Dyll & Tomaselli, 2024).

South Africa, just like any other developing country in Africa, has an important role to play in making sure that all stakeholders take part in any discussions for change or development. It is for this reason that South African municipalities must continuously apply participatory development communication approaches for each municipality (for example, Imbizos, Lekgotla, and Ward Forums). Participatory development is defined

as a condition in which the community has an active role in making decisions regarding the implementation of developmental initiatives that concern them.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several repositories for literature from various institutions, and the following served as a summary of the literature review that was consulted. There has been much written on the subject of participatory communication and development communication in local government; nonetheless, there has not been a study comparable to the current issue that exclusively examines community perceptions of the establishment of local municipalities through a merger of existing local municipalities. Buys (2006); Farisani and Tshilo (2022), for instance, only discusses a rural community's involvement in local economic growth and entrepreneurship when examining how a South African rural community participates in the global economy. The research investigates participatory development communication while amalgamating the former Tlokwe Town Council as well as Ventersdorp Local Municipality to launch the current JB Marks Local Municipality.

1.6.1 Community perceptions through engagement processes

Buccus et al. (2008:1); Hofer et al. (2024) posit that as much as the issue of public participation processes: is gaining attention in South Africa, there has been a failure to significantly improve public participation. To make policies and decisions that deliver public goods and services, processes need to be improved and people need to be encouraged to participate by giving them better ways to communicate. Enhancing public participation processes is rooted in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which therefore promotes the values of democracy. The researcher argues that developmental communication would therefore act as an enabler to empower communities with information on processes that are to be undertaken before decisions are to be made.

Global trends in developing communities suggest that governments are establishing administrative systems and channels that promote development communication for the public (Vigoda-Gadot, 2002; Atique, Htay, Mmtaz, Khan, & Altalbe, 2024). The

idea of the developmental state still says that the developmental communication paradigm is needed to help the government, and its people better meet the needs of the community (White, 1988:4; Inyang, Alegu, & Makau, 2020). Participatory development communication in the South African setting is explained as a means of enhancing citizen-government ties. In this investigation, the focus is on local government (Mathebula, 2015; Malemane & Nel-Sanders, 2021). This study further assessed the process of development communication that drove public participation in engaging with various stakeholders during the amalgamation of the TCC and VLM.

Participatory development communication in a developmental state must reflect a partnership principle fostering a two-way engagement between the people and their government and communication. The people-centred approach to engagement by local government with communities' remains the bedrock for fostering relationships, as well as calling for reliance on communication tools for the success of any form of engagement through public participation. Central to the Municipal Demarcation Board's decisions regarding boundary demarcation and re-demarcation relate to the process of public involvement and to enable the community to both learn about and take part in the formulation of policy (Mathebula (2015:4) and Sebola (2017:27). According to the ANC discussion document (2000) when it comes to local government growth, it is assumed that the local authority should have the strength and capacity to offer the public services at a local level. This entails constant interaction with stakeholders with regard to the modern state of affairs, including developmental communication through modern-day mechanisms such as YouTube, social media, and other related methods.

1.6.2 Public participation within local municipalities

Bob (2018:04) asserts that it is evident how the civil service can undermine public participation utilizing subpar communication procedures, which impedes the transfer of resources to the impoverished through inadequate participatory development communication. The involvement of municipal communities as stakeholders in the demarcation process might lead to conflict when it comes to resource sharing, as Mathoho (2015) stresses. This conflict emerging from different approaches could have been the case in the Tlokwe City Council and Ventersdorp local municipalities'

integration. This is due to the existing differences in residents' socioeconomic standing, the surroundings in which they reside, and their ability to utilise the available participatory systems and communication channels. The challenges will be explored in the integration of the Tlokwe City Council and Ventersdorp Local Municipalities.

Although many government officials are aware of public involvement and its procedures, Slotterback and Crosby (2012); Hofer et al. (2024) contend that they still lack a solid grasp of how to create effective procedures that will produce desired results through participatory development communication. This reflects on the importance of strategies for effective communication through various mediums of communication for effective decision-making.

1.6.3 Good Governance and Public Policy

Here, "good governance" is defined as the democratic government's accomplishment of the most suitable development policy goal, which is the society's sustainable development. This is accomplished by mobilising, utilising, and coordinating all public and non-profit sector resources in the most effective, efficient, and democratic manner possible on a national and worldwide level (Cloete, 2003; Cleome, 2011; Cilliers, 2021).

Managing the government's business is the definition of governance, whether national, provincial, or local, openly and transparently with possible effective implementation. One way that a state adapts to its outside environment is through governance. Another way is through ideas or speeches that explain how social systems work together and the role taken by the state in its involvement (Koliba, Meek, & Zia, 2011; Mudzusi, Munzhedzi & Mahole, 2024). As to Olawu and Saku (2002), governance encompasses more than just the government itself; it is the manner in which a government interacts with the society it oversees. However, according to Cloete et al. (2011); Munzhedzi (2021), governance is a system of institutions, policies, and values that a society uses to manage its social, political, and economic affairs through interactions between the public, private, and governmental sectors.

In order to improve or address perceived needs and problems in society in a particular way and bring about the desired changes in that society, public participation is a public sector declaration of intent, sometimes accompanied by a more comprehensive programme of action (Cloete & De Coning, 2011; Nguyen, Drejerb & Marques, 2024). According to Munger (2000); Nguyen et al. (2024) policy analysis is the process of evaluating and selecting options according to how well they will serve a particular purpose or set of values. The policy lays out standards for information sharing, including which platforms and methods of sharing should be used. Policies give distinctions and definitions for public engagement as well as standards for analysing the efficacy and efficiency of the communication system.

The process of integrating municipalities and borders requires any form of participatory development communication in order to gain buy-in from affected communities. The interaction with various stakeholders remains significant in participatory development communication for advocacy in keeping constant contact in the decision-making process. Therefore, the diversity of communities in pursuing any engagement will always require a participatory development communication approach or strategy to ensure effectiveness and transparency to derive a more inclusive and consultative process.

1.7 IMPORTANCE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

In light of the study's significance and contributions, it's critical to remember that it examines the best ways to disseminate this kind of knowledge through participatory development. Policies give distinctions and definitions for public engagement as well as standards for analysing the efficacy and efficiency of the communication system. Communication processes are set up in local government. This is because the study and its contributions are important because they show how vulnerable communities are in rural South African local municipalities right now. Through this study, the researcher hopes to confirm that the hypotheses and suggestions from the investigation will enhance communication about participatory development between local governments and their communities.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In its current form, the Republic of South Africa's Constitution is based on the people-centred principle, where the views of the communities are important for any development (Constitution of the RSA, 1994). Scholars have also affirmed the centrality of communication, where participatory development communication theory creates an enabling environment for communities to start a dialogue and express their views for social change (Msibi & Penzlorn, 2014; Khumalo, 2021).

The researcher in this instance followed a social theory approach, whereby the study largely followed the macro theories. Its paradigms have identified two theoretical approaches that will confirm participation communication for development as the central foundation (Earl, 2004; Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2023). The study further emphasised the role played by stakeholders in expressing their views while policy positions or frameworks seek to bring about development. The establishment of JB Marks has led to many contradictory views, as it has not yielded any positive results where the community can attest to the benefits of service delivery. The state of financial governance of the JB Marks has also deteriorated over the five years of its first administration as a merged municipality, where reports of irregularities were also indicated through the Auditor General of South Africa Report (2017–2018 and 2018–2019).

In this study, the researcher has identified two theoretical approaches, namely participatory communication and participatory development communication. The theories mentioned are detailed as follows:

1.8.1 Participatory Communication Approach

The participatory development communication approach came about because it is thought that getting beneficiary groups involved in development projects will help them grow and improve their coping skills, sustainability through change and independence (Rahman, 1993; Conyers & Hills, 1990; Khumalo, 2021). In this case, the theory will examine the stakeholders' active involvement in the consolidation of the two municipalities. Communities that understand their place in development projects will

undoubtedly provide a response to the question of community involvement and how the opinions were combined.

Since the 1950s, a variety of theoretical and empirical traditions have merged in the field of development approaches through the use of participatory techniques and development theories. Though this convergence led to conceptual confusion, it also provided a rich analytical vocabulary (Waisbord, 2001; Ako, 2017). The field has not had a straight path of development where new methods have supplanted and replaced older ones. Rather, a variety of concurrently applied theories and practices with varying disciplinary roots have existed. This section of the study lists the many development theories, explains where they came from, how they are used in real-world situations, makes comparisons, and highlights their advantages and disadvantages. Additionally, it examines the primary conceptions of the participatory development approach as well as its main application tools.

1.8.1.1 Public participation theory

Democracy, involvement, engagement, openness, and good governance are all linked with the idea of public participation (Bozo & Hiemer, 2016). In the absence of these components, the public participation process could be regarded as having been implemented improperly. Good governance is the cornerstone of the South African constitution, and citizens' ability to participate ensures that the government is answerable to them. The understanding that the public is the primary source of policy ideas and decision-making is the foundation of a robust and sound public participation process. Public participation in policy decision-making is viewed by Bryson and Carroll (quoted by Sebola, 2017) as a feature that simplifies rather than complicates the life of policymakers since it allows the public to voice their opinions during the formulation and decision-making process. From the perspective of this theory, the study will examine the MDB and demonstrate that the public involvement model may not have been effectively applied. In meetings with stakeholders, it will also establish the participatory development communication method. The public participation categories are listed below.

Types of public participation

A survey of the literature reveals that there are various forms of involvement. The way the public engages varies based on the various activities that take place in their community. The public may take part in meetings, elections, decision-making procedures, and other events, for instance. Various academics, including Davids *et al.* (2004) identified the different types of participation.

Table 1.1: Typologies of public participation

TYPOLOGY	HOW THE PUBLIC COMMUNICATES
1. Inert involvement	The public is involved when they are informed about what is occurring or has already occurred; this is known as a top-down approach announcement made by project managers or authorities. The opinions of the general populace are frequently ignored and have no bearing.
2. Engagement in the dissemination of information	Through television programmes, public hearings, interviews, or other public involvement strategies that the authorities may use, the public participates by answering questions asked to them.
3. Taking part through consultation	People engage in the process by offering their opinions to professionals, consultants, and planners. These experts outline the issues and potential solutions, and they may adjust them based on how people react. (PSC:2008)
4. Incentives with material goods	Participation style in which members of the public trade goods like labour or food.
5. Involved Engagement	Individuals take part in capacity building, action plan formulation, and collaborative situational analysis. Participation is viewed as a right in this context rather than merely a way to accomplish project objectives. PSC (2008).
6. Self-awareness	The general public contributes by acting on their own initiative.

Source: Author's Construct (2017)

From the table above, it can be deduced that public participation is a multifaceted process. The typologies of participation also apply in South Africa, these are applied in various departments within the municipalities in relation to the manner in which they

communicate with stakeholders. In 2008, PSC conducted a study titled "Evaluation of the Implementation of the Batho Pele First Principle," which focused on consultation. The study encouraged involvement and information sharing, and the results showed that departments primarily used this kind of public participation. The public may participate, but they are not informed of or provided with explanations regarding how their opinions will be used. Consequently, this affects the degree of public involvement.

1.8.2 Participatory Development Communication

Participatory development communication (PDC), defined by Van Rijn (2005) as the use of mass media and conventional, interpersonal means of communication to empower communities by enabling them to visualise their goals and find solutions to their development issues and problems, is the theory or model study under consideration. Additionally, the phrase refers to the communication theory and practice that is employed to include individuals in the decision-making process which is a necessary part of growth. The elements found in the multiplicity framework are included in the participative approach. It emphasises the value of local communities' cultural identities as well as democratisation and participation on all fronts—international, national, local, and personal. It suggests a course of action that comes primarily from the traditional "receivers" and is not only inclusive of them. The fundamental ideas that are necessary for the conscientization process—which results in liberating social change—are discussion, communication, and action (Servaes & Lie, 2013). Communities must be included in the development process, and from the outset, two-way communication with the government and development organisations must be established. To build a cohesive and similar plan of action and end result that benefits all parties involved in rural development, all those engaged in the processes must interact with one another. To realise a community that aspires to higher development goals, local communities must foster a culture of self-determination. Participatory communication, according to McPhail (2009), emphasises everyone's fundamental right to be heard, to speak for themselves, and to not be represented or compensated by another party. This transparent communication strategy aims to build trust and encourage native populations in third-world nations to participate in their own development. The self-determining model focuses on creating situations that support this kind of communication between the indigenous population and the intervening

parties rather than defining conditions that already exist. This is especially true when it comes to the economic development of emerging nations.

An approach to rural development that is people-centred is emphasised by participatory communication. The development's beneficiaries must take an active role in it. Appropriate relationships between key stakeholders are necessary, as is a proper, efficient, and successful information exchange. Davids et al. (2011) state that the integrated, people-centred approach heavily incorporates the concept of people-centred development, which is defined as the development's building blocks: public engagement, social learning, empowerment, and sustainability. Views, preferences, and decision-making are exchanged in both directions.

According to Servaes et al. (2013), reciprocal collaboration is emphasised in participatory communication at all involvement levels. The community must serve as the starting point since it is there that issues related to living circumstances are discussed and connections with other communities are made. More significantly, participation is enabled when it comes to choosing the topics covered in the messages and the selection process. Additionally, involvement does not mean that planners, institutional leaders, and development experts have no more place in this process. It simply indicates that recommendations for policy changes are taken into account and that the opinions of local public groups are taken into account prior to the distribution and allocation of funds for development projects.

De Beer and Swanepoel (2000) distinguish between two different schools of thought in the participatory development debate: those who support radical participatory development and those who support liberal or humanistic viewpoints. The latter (radical) groups contend that involvement can only be successful if it is direct and gives communities the final say over how to run their affairs. Three justifications exist for participatory communication, according to McPhail (2009):

- The native population has the fundamental human right to contribute to the formation of their advancement;

- Incorporating the native population will garner more support, which will facilitate the achievement of shared goals;
- The native population possesses pertinent information regarding their circumstances and are unique resources without which a development project may fail.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative approach was adopted in order to offer a procedural, practicable and morally responsible technique of gathering evidence by methodically obtaining believable and reasonable reports of their experiences (Ingleton and Seymour, 2001). Retrospective recollections of experiences of the subjects were obtained through semi-structured interviews that incorporated critical communication approaches, consultations, campaigns and other participatory communication processes.

Since the goal of the study is to explore and uncover fundamental characteristics of a phenomenon, a qualitative research approach was adopted. According to Nieuwenhuis (2010a), "qualitative research typically focuses on the meanings and interpretations of participants by interacting with and observing them in their natural environment (in situ)." Because the study focused on descriptive explorations that included a range of viewpoints and perspectives rather than the quantity of material gathered, a qualitative method is pertinent JB Marks Local Municipality communities, specifically the township of “Ikageng” and “Tshing”.

By focusing on the participants perceptions of experiences, when considering what they saw, heard, and experienced (Redfern and Norman, 1999), it is thought that significance and meaning may be gleaned from their testimonies. In order to lessen the possibility of information being overlooked or forgotten, participants were asked to describe their impression of the new JB Marks Local Municipality. They were also asked to use critical participatory communication techniques to discuss a situation in which they had been directly involved and had worked with JB Marks Local Municipality during the previous 12 months. Rajasekar, et al (2013:5) describes research methodology as comprehensive investigation of finding solutions to scientific and social problems through objective and systematic analysis and approach.

1.9.1 Population

The target population makes up the entire sets of units where the data were used to make inferences. Lavrakes (2011) defines population as that which describes the units in which the findings of the research which is generalised. Population parameters are summary descriptors of elements of interest in the demographic (Cooper & Schindler, 2014) (incident percentage, mean and variance). The available population is the population that can be realistically reached by the scholar (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. 2015). The accessible population in this study will be made up of the actual residential area of the researcher. The unit of analysis will be made up of individuals, groups, artefacts, geographical units as well as social interactions. Unit of analysis is defined as the major entity which will be used to analyse the study (Maree, 2016). Unit of analysis can differ depending on the research being conducted.

In research, a population is a collection of elements that share certain characteristics and are specified by the sample criteria that the investigator will determine (University of Missouri, 2010).

1.9.2 Sampling

In this study, purposive sampling was employed. With a specific goal in mind, the researcher used his or her own discretion to choose a sample made up of components that include the most distinctive features of the population (Maree & Pietersen, 2010). According to writers like Wimmer and Dominick (1991:68), respondents in a purposive sample are picked because they are reachable by the researcher and have the required qualities.

Participants in this study included community members who particularly lived in Ikageng and Tshing, respectively, as well as representatives from the Municipal Council (the Municipal Executive Mayor and Manager, who are in charge of both governance and administration). An investigation was conducted into the present communication tactics and strategies that were employed throughout the municipality's establishment.

Two focus groups from each of the two communities provided data, as did

unstructured interviews with representatives of the JB Marks Local Municipality. "The focus group interview strategy is based on the assumption that group interaction was productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experiences and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information," according to Nieuwenhuis (2010b), cited in Molale (2020). This made it possible for the researcher to come to specific conclusions and findings that might be hard to refute.

The two focus groups were chosen from the community, each having a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 participants. Council members for each ward were chosen, not from the residents of the focus groups. To improve representation, the study approached them via random selection. Using this method, the researcher can choose subjects who are representative of the population under study by drawing on his experience (Bailey 1982:100).

1.10 DATA COLLECTION

According to Kabir (2016:202), data collection is the process of uniformly and systematically obtaining and measuring information on variables of interest in order to test hypotheses, evaluate results, and respond to research questions. The study employed the subsequent approaches for gathering qualitative data:

- Semi-structured interviews: Using this qualitative technique, the researcher will be able to get first-hand accounts from important participants.
- Focus groups: this type of data gathering will centre on community members and provide them with the chance to converse with the facilitator and one another in order to gather their opinions.
- Participant Observation: Using this approach, the researcher will be able to take part in a number of municipality-sponsored public involvement sessions, witness firsthand how participatory communication methods impact communities, and also gather field notes.

1.11 DATA ANALYSIS

The best data analysis techniques for examining data gathered through qualitative methods in research are content analysis and thematic coding. Content analysis is a methodical technique to qualitative data analysis that finds and summarises message content, according to Nieuwenhuis (2010b). This method allowed the researcher to comprehend the results completely and offer precise recommendations that accurately reflected the data that was gathered. Similarly, the researcher created all of these categories and themes by employing a thematic coding method since "the tough intellectual work of analysis is generating categories and themes" (De Vos, 2005). The process of painstakingly going over the transcribed data, line by line, and breaking it down into digestible analytical units is what this is (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b). After the interviews were transcribed, there are phases of thematic analysis that need to be followed in order to analyse the data, state Braun and Clarke (2006).

1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Some obstacles or constraints that could impact the research include:

- BIASNESS
  Since the researcher works for the provincial government and resides in Mahikeng, Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, data collection and analysis may be impacted by the researcher's reporting lines at work. Nonetheless, Nieuwenhuis (2010a), cited in Molale (2020), asserts that qualitative research views the researcher as the research instrument during the data collection process and accepts researcher subjectivity as an inescapable aspect.
- ACCESS TO PARTICIPANTS
  Since the respondents might not all reside in the same Ward, having to gather them all under one roof for focus group interviews could be a constraint. The researcher will schedule meetings and notify participants of the planned light lunches in an effort to address the difficulty in recruiting subjects.

1.13 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Two settlements in the North-West Province's JB Marks Local Municipality—Ikageng and Tshing Townships—were the sites of this investigation.

1.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Individuals participating in research studies have rights to secrecy and anonymity, voluntary involvement, and informed consent, according to Gorman and Clayton (2005:43–44). As a result, this study will make use of a number of techniques to provide the necessary anonymity and secrecy. Personal interviews will have confidential discussions, and interviewees guarantee that no individual participants will be mentioned in the reporting. All participants will be made aware of their consent and it will be made clear that all participants, regardless of the consent, can decide to if at any point throughout the interview they feel uncomfortable, they should leave without any prejudice.

The following ethical procedure will be followed:

- The research proposal was sent to the ethics committee at North-West University for review in order to get unbiased input on whether the planned research will be carried out in a way that is morally acceptable.
- All participants from the JB Marks Local Municipality, Ikageng and Tshing will be contacted telephonically firstly and in writing to provide them with background on the proposed research as well as to obtain permission to conduct interviews with them.
- Participation is entirely voluntary, and participants may opt out at any time.
- Interviews will be transcribed, and these transcripts will not bare the participant's names. All interviews will be confidential and will therefore be the main or primary tool through which sensitive and fruitful information will be gathered.

According to Haslam and McGarty (2014), they state that the participants will provide the researcher with sensitive information about themselves. Therefore, the researcher needs not to abuse the trust that will be placed on them. Privacy and anonymity of the

respondents is extremely important which the researcher always has to respect during the duration of the study.

1.15 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 gives a basic overview of the study, introducing the problem statement, its goals, and the questions, aims, and significance of the research.

Chapter 2: A review of the literature and the study's theoretical stance are presented in this part. For the purpose of demonstrating the importance of the study, a review of the literature that is closely related to the goals of the investigation and to community perspectives, participatory communication, and development, will be covered. Previous and current research will be used as supporting evidence.

In Chapter 3, the study's methodology, the measures used to collect the data, and the units and techniques for data analysis are presented.

Chapter 4: The study will describe the procedures for gathering and analysing data.

Chapter 5: Discusses the data and covers broad conclusions. It also provided the recommendations.

1.16 SUMMARY

For sustainable development to be achieved, communities and stakeholders must be actively involved in decision-making that impacts growth. Through a number of legislative measures, development groups, experts, and governments recognise the value of participatory development communication as a means of enacting meaningful social change that would guarantee sustainable advancement and empowerment. Since communication is essentially a social action that articulates social interactions between people, it follows that involvement in development initiatives cannot occur without some sort of communication (Servaes, 1999: 13). Basic development decisions in South Africa were made on behalf of the people during the previous apartheid regime; as a result, the people were left as passive recipients of public goods and services, unable to recognise their own needs, take action to meet them, or determine their own course in life (Penzhorn, 2010). However, the South African

governance model underwent modifications following the end of apartheid, incorporating participatory aspects into the decision-making process. The next chapter focused on presentation of literature review.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The study's goals and research questions were presented in the previous chapter. This chapter surveys pertinent studies on participatory development communication to address research issues, purposes and objectives.

Even in the twenty-first century, issues surrounding participatory development communication are still crucial on a worldwide scale. Development can be understood as an ethical political process of social change, and any intervention or change of this kind will, whether expressly stated or not, have a significant impact on the lives of those engaged (Penzhoen, 2010: Hofer et al., 2024).

For sustainable development to be achieved, communities and stakeholders must be actively involved in decision-making that impacts growth. Through a number of legislative measures, development groups, experts, and governments recognise the value of participatory development communication as a means of enacting meaningful social change that would guarantee sustainable advancement and empowerment. As Servaes (1999: 13); Servaes (2020) points out, communication is at its core a social action, the articulation of social interactions between people. It follows that without communication, people cannot participate in development activities.

The Republic of South Africa's (1996) Constitution describes this new kind of transparent, responsible governance that takes into account the demands and advancement of the populace. Strategies and mechanisms have also been put in place to support the principles of participatory communication at the local government (municipal) level, in keeping with the government's goals of democratising development and guaranteeing that communities actively participate in their own development policies (DPLG, 2005:11; Malemane, 2021).

To show how participatory development communication has taken centre stage for development at all relevant times in the past and present in the nation, however, the

research study is not thoroughly investigated. Comparably, the research project aims to investigate how the integration of the local municipalities of Tlokwe and Ventersdorp before the 2016 local government elections used participatory development communication and its guiding principles.

2.2 PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

The development community began to question the top-down methods that were primarily employed in the 1950s and 1960s (Agunga, 1996:138; Khan, Gupta, Daum, Birner & Ringler, 2024) and the inefficiency of the two outdated paradigms of development (dependency and modernization) in the early 1970s, which is when participatory approaches in development first emerged. According to Buchy, Ross, and Proctor (2000); Ofosu-Anim and Back (2021), political science and development theory provide the majority of the literature's foundation for the idea of participation, suggesting that it is not a novel idea.

Up until that point, developed nations would prescribe development in exchange for financial or other forms of support. However, after experiencing firsthand the results of numerous failed initiatives and policies, these nations began to doubt their own recommendations. People's circumstances, whether they be material, social, or psychological, have rarely improved as a result of development (Arnst, 1996; Ho, 2022). Additionally, ideas like empowerment, emancipation, and involvement emerged during the growth process thanks in part to the "driving force of democratisation." This gave rise to the idea that community adoption of development efforts that are suitable for them is strengthened by grassroots participation.

Similar to developers, communicators adapted to the change towards development participation by incorporating the new methods into their work (Yoon, 1999; Jansen, & De Souza Santos, 2024). In contrast to approaches that prioritise project implementation outside of a timeline and treat beneficiaries as passive recipients of the final product, participatory communication places a strong emphasis on people's involvement throughout all phases of a communication development project (Thomas, 1994; Mamokhere, 2022). A new strategy emerged in response to communication mismanagement failures, which led to a theory of information and knowledge sharing,

trust, and commitment to development initiatives. Various basic principles underlie the concept of participatory development communication, and they can be outlined by White (1994), Thomas (1994), Ayee (1993), Servaes (1996) and Mamokhere and Mayer (2022) as follows:

- Viewing participation as a learning process: One way to conceptualise participation is as a learning process. Individuals are empowered to establish their own objectives and make their own choices, allowing them to completely realise their potential and arousing people's latent abilities.
- It takes time and dedication to see the effects of participation; this can be difficult for implementers as well as the community because the results do not happen right away.
- Integrity, trust, and dedication: mutual cooperation results in integrity, trust, and dedication from both the top and the bottom. Being a part of the community entails listening to others, valuing the opinions of others, and developing mutual trust.
- Power and control: The notion of generative power and control is suitable for and consistent with the participation concept. Participation in the context of development refers to fairer of sharing political and economic power as well as bolstering the influence of the underprivileged majority.
- Liberation: When people are able to steer their own lives, they feel liberated because they are confident in their ability to do so. Genuine engagement is liberating; it is an emancipatory process (White, 1994; Thomas, 1994; Ayee, 1993; Servaes,1996; Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022).

The ideas of participatory development communication are well acknowledged, as are the benefits this approach offers for development initiatives. However, Yoon (1997); Khumalo (2021) has noted that in practice, the implementation of the concept has proven to be immensely challenging, contradicting the common consensus.

2.3 PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

An authoritarian style of governance was represented in the apartheid era, which cast a shadow on South Africa's growth history. The majority of South Africans, especially

the black population, were unable to exercise their fundamental right to participate in politics, society, and the economy because of this strategy (Penzhorn, 2010; Marutlulle, 2022). Individuals and groups were not given any control over their own growth and were instead viewed as passive beneficiaries of it. The majority of Black South Africans were reluctant to bring up issues that directly harmed and worried them because the security cluster enforced the law.

A new approach to development that was in line with democratic governance ideals emerged in 1994 with the emergence of democracy and a new democratic administration. The lives of the impoverished and historically disadvantaged were to be improved through the implementation of new laws, programmes, plans, and strategies. According to Everett and Gwagwa (2005); Marutlulle (2022) the policies promoted community empowerment, engagement, and democratic involvement in the development process. The South African governance structure has positioned municipalities, also known as local government, to promote social development, economic growth, and service delivery at a local level in order to strengthen these democratic and participatory approaches towards development.

The local government sector is the front line of service delivery. It is heavily regulated when it comes to implementing development and change plans, but it also has explicit rules for stakeholder engagement and public participation. Communities must be consulted before proposals for new development are made, and their opinions must be taken into account, particularly when they align with the local government's duties as defined by Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

It is necessary to investigate the lack of communication, particularly with regard to public engagement in local government, in order to identify the process's advantages and disadvantages while consulting with relevant parties. Participatory communication procedures are not given priority in order to guarantee that they inform stakeholder participation for social change. The ComTask Report was designed to guide communities on how to learn about the many initiatives undertaken by the government to effect change and to foster an atmosphere that would facilitate the implementation of changes that would improve society (ComTask, 2000; Republic of South Africa, 2024).

Additionally highlighting the crucial role that local communities must play in bringing about change in their areas is the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (Municipal Systems Act, 2000). It hasn't been all that successful in putting in place a legislative framework on stakeholder involvement, where communication is a crucial factor in development or change. Serious flaws in the 1994 democratic elections regarding community engagement in effecting change have been pointed up by numerous academics. Numerous pressure groups existed before, and the mass democratic movement (MDM) opposed the political structure that disregarded the opinions of those who were racialized and/or economically marginalised. With nearly eleven local government, provincial, and national elections held, South Africa's democracy allowed qualified voters to express their rights at the polls, allowing for yet another method of involvement.

2.4 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Naidoo (2010); Odoom, Dick-Sagoe, Opoku & Obeng-Baah (2024) assert that participatory development communication is a crucial component of contemporary development theory and practice. Although some sceptics doubted that this strategy would result in the necessary success, there was hope that it would be more successful. Some of the issues are addressed by (Ali, 2017). One issue with this strategy is that it is ineffective when used in a crisis that requires immediate top-down action. In other words, it might not work for immediate, pressing problems. An additional critique of the participatory approach is that it places too much focus on interpersonal contact while undervaluing the role that mass media might play in participatory growth. Particularly, mass media is minimised in favour of group-level interaction in Freire's idea of dialogical communication.

2.4.1 Theoretical framework on participatory development communication

The research study will look into the theories around participatory development communication to unearth other scholars' views on the subject matter. Theories are important in building the body of knowledge and understanding the historical developments of concepts in the study.

2.4.2 Theory of Participation

With the globalisation of media space, there have been various instruments on display that can be used in communication with all parties in the system of communication. Traditional methods of participation in the communication system have been based on physical contact and one-on-one interviews where people's non-verbal communication behaviour can be observed.

According to Reed (2008); Makumu and Mlambo (2024) participation is a process in which the public, stakeholders, or individual groups are engaged and involved in decision-making. In a country like South Africa, where the apartheid system was the order of the day, participation in the processes of government was limited to only certain groupings, while the black majority was excluded from participating in some of the most important utilities. Cornwall (2006) also indicates that in the late 1930s, there were existing inequities that allowed power to be placed in the hands of oligarchic rulers, resulting in little opportunity for popular participation. Buchy, Ross, and Proctor (2000) conclude that participation is not a new concept, and its support based on literature originates from political science and development theory.

2.4.3 Theory of Development

Development is a multi-dimensional process that entails major changes in social structures and popular attitudes (Todaro and Smith, 2012; Mahlangu & Ruhode, 2020). To quantify the success of any programme or government's productivity indicators, one of the measurements is based on the level of development it has taken. The development is measured based on the point at which a programme has moved to another point of target. According to Rist (2002), the half-century between 1950 and 2000 has been characterised by an age of development that has been superseded by the age of globalisation and sustainable development. Wass (1969; Abuiyada, 2018) argues that history shows that a lack of commitment to development has been endemic in the Protectorate since the time of creation. Development allows growth in the community and can be applied to enhance people's quality of life.

2.4.4 Theory of Communication

Communication has developed into a very central component in people's lives throughout the world and has become a necessity. Mather (2022) suggests that previously, the homo-sapiens were not exposed to communication through language but involved themselves in communicating using hand signs or gestures, acting, dancing, and noises through whistles, drums, and vocal sounds like grunting or changing pitch. Novak (2019) also agrees that symbols and images were used to portray information in the 500,000 BCE.

According to Juneja (2015), S.F. Scudder in 1980 proposed the communication theory and emphasised the critical aspects of life that exist through communicating with others. Communication as a tool is important in transporting information from one person to another. Communication is viewed as the process by which people interactively create, sustain, and manage meaning (Axley, 1984). As Tlokwe and Ventersdorp merged to become one municipality, what is critical is the empowerment of communities through the communication method that was necessary for concluding this integration. The flow of communication with communities and all stakeholders is what is important for participation in such a development.

2.4.5 Theory of Amalgamation

Amalgamation means the merger and conversion of two individual entities or objects that come together to form one entity or project. In Africa, amalgamation occurred post-World War I when the fusion of the northern and southern protectorates came together in 1914 when the colony of Lagos was established alongside the southern protectorate. Hooton (1932) provides a perspective and historical development of “amalgamation” and explains that the term is known as intermarriage or interbreeding of different ethnicities or races. Whereas in the United States it was replaced after 1863 by the term miscegenation, the term derived from metallurgy linked with the metaphor of the melting pot that infused cultural assimilation as well as intermarriage of different ethnicities (Hooton, 1932).

2.4.6 Theory of Stakeholders

Stakeholders are mostly referred to as extended individuals or groups connected through a particular common goal. Groups and persons that a company depends on to accomplish its goals and who have a legitimate interest in the operations and results of the company are known as stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Freeman, Harrison & Zyglidopoulos, 2018). The understanding of a stakeholder depends on the context it seeks to achieve in any circumstantial endeavour. It is defined by Freeman (1984) as any group or individual impacted by the accomplishment of the organization's goals. According to Clarkson (1995), a stakeholder is a group or person who has or claims to have rights or stakes in the operations of a company.

In the context of the research study, stakeholders are used to define groups or organisations such as non-government organisations, religious movements, and any political party included during the data collection processes. It is complex to have a stakeholder arrangement where a group or individuals are not represented by a common goal. Stakeholders' interests are what give the definition of stakeholder meaning and existence. The interests of the stakeholder are central to any expectation where a decision is to be made in the interest of the community or institution.

2.4.7 Theory of Community Formation

Community formation is based on individual families coming together in one location as family units to form residents within the jurisdiction of the area. Diaz (2000) submits that a community is created through a relationship between people who are governed by natural ties of kinship and friendship, familiarity, and the old-fashioned habit of doing things in customary ways. Barrett (2011) argues differently from the researcher that a community may not have a physical location but is demarcated by being a group of people with common interests. Boyles (1997) depicts that the word “community” was first identified and defined by Aristotle, who referred to it as a group established by men who shared values.

2.5 MAJOR APPROACHES TO PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

Progress in both participatory development and communication among various ideas of participation are generally recognised by researchers and development practitioners. These are the concepts of access, participation, and self-management proposed by UNESCO and by Freire's dialogical pedagogy. According to Servaes and Malikhao (2008); Wickenden (2024), a development project that identifies as participatory acknowledges these fundamentals of democratic communication processes in development undertakings.

The ideas of empowerment, development/social change, and participatory communication are all based on Freire's concept of dialogue. To break free from oppression, prejudice, estrangement, and disempowerment or dehumanisation, the oppressed need to have conversations with one another (Freire, 2005; Wickenden, 2024). This turns involvement into a political process requiring status quo modification that requires status quo modification in order to reallocate power (White, 1994; Bordenave, 1994; Thomas, 1994; Wickenden, 2024). According to Freire (2005); Wickenden, (2024), through discourse, the impoverished can critically perceive their place in society and consider their circumstances motivating them to free themselves from political, social, cultural, and economic inequalities. The essential component of participatory communication required for genuine engagement is dialogue. The importance of mass media and information communication technology in promoting dialogical communication is minimised by Freire's reliance on dialogue as the core of social change for group-based communication (Waisbord, 2002; Wickenden, 2024).

In its 1977 approach to participatory communication, UNESCO placed a strong focus on the development initiatives' use of access, participation, and self-management. Servaes and Malikhao (2008); Servaes (2020) define access as the use of media for public service, which includes chances for the general public to select pertinent programmes and have feedback mechanisms. The public's involvement in the communication process, encompassing its creation, planning, and management, is referred to as participation. Such participation extends beyond public consultation during the decision-making process. The third notion, self-management, describes the highest forms of involvement, such as the beneficiaries exercising their authority

during the formulation of communication strategies and policies. Generally speaking, these significant ideas are referred to be normative theories of alternative communication that promote sustainable development.

2.5.1 Factors Affecting Participatory Communication

It has been accepted that participatory communication has the potential to support sustainable development. In the debate on development, participation is a catchphrase that is promoted as a viable and optimistic route towards sustainable development. However, some problems that limit its usefulness and potential. The various obstacles to the widespread use of participatory communication for development are covered in this section. We learn about the bureaucratic obstacles that prevent the use of participatory communication from Waisbord's (2008); Hofer, Wicki and Kaufmann (2024) institutional viewpoint on the difficulties of the practice. Three approaches exist for the institutional dynamics to diminish the capacity of participatory communication. These are the formal specifications for the message, establishing communication as a subdiscipline, and looking for technical fixes for political issues. Wiasbord (2008); Hofer, Wicki and Kaufmann (2024) outline two factors that impact on the practice of engagement in development and these are bureaucratic obstacles and subordinate status of communication.

2.5.2 The bureaucratic obstacles

The bureaucratic roadblocks are one of the elements influencing the adoption of a participative approach to development. Participatory development approaches may not be compatible with the bureaucratic structure of development organisations. Conventional organisational protocols uphold comprehension and utilisation of communication as technical proficiencies for disseminating developmental messages. Additionally, officials typically choose informational communication strategies because participation is thought to be a time-consuming strategy requiring a large number of human resources (Wiasbord, 2008; Hofer, Wicki & Kaufmann, 2024).

2.5.3 The Subordinate Status of Communication

The second obstacle that hinders the application of participatory approaches is the status of communication given by development organisations. The status of communication in development organisations is found to be subordinate. Usually communication is housed in health, financial, or agricultural programmes in a way that obliges it to play only a role of subsidiary discipline. Such dependence takes away its autonomy, and hence it fails to determine its objectives and approaches. Professionals from other disciplines thus assume the authority to determine its status. For example, individuals from programme management and other fields sometimes determine goals and approaches to communication (Wiasbord, 2008; Hofer, Wicki et al, 2024).

2.5.4 Distancing political issues

The second barrier that prevents participatory approaches from being applied is the communication status that development organisations provide. It is discovered that communication in development organisations is in a subordinate position. Typically, health, financial, or agricultural projects structure communication in a way that limits its use to that of a secondary discipline. Because of this dependence, it loses its autonomy and is unable to decide on its goals and strategies. Thus, experts from various fields get the power to decide what kind of status it has. For instance, people in the fields of programme management and other disciplines occasionally decide on communication objectives and strategies (Cronkleton, Evans, Addoah, Smith Dumont, Zida & Djoudi, 2021).

2.6 POLICIES AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ON PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

The implementation of a regulatory framework on engagement with stakeholders where communication is a key driver to bring about change or development has not been that effective. Many scholars have expressed serious weaknesses in the 1994 democratic elections in terms of the maximum participation of communities in bringing about change. Yorkston and Baylor (2010) mention some of the challenges that have to do with the physical being of individuals, such as difficulties with speech, language,

voice, and hearing problems, and accordingly, this affects a person's ability to participate in life. Molale (2019) made an observation with Matlosana local municipality with regard to development communication and participatory challenges, whereby the method of disseminating information regarding pre-determined plans in the community is perceived as one-way. According to Jakoet-Salie and Ramolobe (2023); Brynard, 1996; Leboea, 2003; Ababio, 2004; and Williams, 2006, among other things, lack of public accountability, unequal power between citizens and officials, and self-serving tendencies that result in conflicts, are characteristics of participation practices in local government in South Africa.

The pre-apartheid era had many pressure groups, and the mass democratic movement (MDM) rejected the government system that circumvented listening to the voice of the marginalised in terms of class and race. The democracy in South Africa, with almost eleven elections held by both local governments and provincial and national elections, allowed eligible voters to exercise their rights through the ballot box, which allowed another form of participation.

2.6.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

RSA (1996) Constitution states that openness, responsibility, and responsiveness are essential to people's lives and advancement. Public participation, as defined by Holmes (2011), is a democratic process that allows individuals and groups to influence government decisions for the improvement of socio-political and economic situations. It is established in the South African Constitution. A basic component of democracy, citizen participation in local government upholds the principles of good governance as outlined in the Republic of South Africa 1996 Constitution.

To uphold the people's fundamental rights and provide public goods and services, Section 152 of the Constitution encourages responsible leadership at the community level (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). It is also suggested that, through a constitutional framework, the municipalities are empowered to enforce engagements with citizens on local governance affairs through numerous tools of communication (Zondi and Reddy, 2016). Section 195 of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which encourages community involvement in public

policy-making and good governance as vital elements of local democracy, lends support to this viewpoint.

2.6.2 Local Government: Municipal Structure Act, 117 of 1998

The Act's Sections 19(2) and (3) direct municipalities towards fostering citizen involvement in municipal affairs, and the legislative framework mandates that municipalities be able to create ward committees that will favour governance that allows representative democracy through participation (Municipal Structures Act, 1998). Facilitation by the ward committees in matters that are associated with the development of the communities is critical, and what needs to be implemented is the mechanism of communication necessary. Section (7)(e) promotes a ward participation system, which permits committees to set up for wards to handle issues of local relevance (Municipal Structure Act, 1998).

2.6.3 The Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act No. 27 of 1998

Through the Municipal Demarcation Act No. 27 of 1998, the Republic of South Africa's (1996) Constitution also provided for the creation of the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) to establish or redraw towns' boundaries. The MDB, in its responsibilities, can also conduct assessments of the capacity and viability of the municipalities that were established and would further engage with the affected citizens, especially when they arrive at a particular decision to activate changes relevant to their prescripts.

As stipulated in the Act, the Municipal Demarcation Board has the authority to call for a platform to engage with stakeholders, especially during the process where they intend to bring about changes in so far as the demarcation of boundaries or delimitation of wards is concerned. The Municipal Demarcation Board must always notify the public of its intentions and also allow public objections or comments when carrying out its core mandate. The process of notification is part of communication where public engagement or participation will have to ensue and create platform for consultation of the affected parties, (Mathebula, 2018). The expectation by the communities is that the Municipal Demarcation Board must ensure that engagements with communities take place as stipulated by the Municipal Structures Act (1998).

2.6.4 Local Government: Municipal System Act, 32 of 2000

The Municipal Systems Act of 2000 mandates that municipalities encourage public involvement and increase the ability of citizens, council members, and municipal officials to participate in participatory procedures. According to Kaunda (2021), the Municipal System Act requires the municipality to provide opportunities for the community, personnel, and council members to participate in capacity building and the Integrated Development Planning process. Together with the Constitution of the Republic, the Municipal Systems Act encourages the involvement of communities in the affairs that affect them, and municipalities must develop tools that will enable these processes to be implemented smoothly. De Visser (2021) proposes that funds must be made available to support participatory community involvement. Furthermore, De Visser (2021) suggests that in the case of those who are illiterate, municipalities must establish mechanisms that will allow or help people to make their comments in writing, and the option as such must be communicated for comments as stated in Municipal Systems Act, Section 21(4).

2.7 SERVICE DELIVERY

There are other chapters and parts of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa pertaining to local government and service delivery. According to Patience and Nel (2021) the number of protests in South Africa is a reflection of municipalities' failure to fulfil their constitutional mandate, which negatively impacts the populace.

In local government, meeting the needs of communities with high-quality, long-lasting services is crucial, and this is made possible by competent, experienced, and skilled individuals carrying out their assigned tasks with realistically beneficial outcomes (Mkhwatsha-Ngwenya & Khumalo, 2020).

The three main components of capacity building are individual, institutional, and environmental capacity. It is a multifaceted process. This can be accomplished through hiring qualified candidates, public managers, and capable political representatives (Mkhatshwa-Ngwenya and Khumalo, 2020). Nonetheless, every community has distinct needs that differ from one municipality to the next. Examples

of these needs include the requirement for waste collection, Wi-Fi and internet access, and clean water, all of which must be met. Communities still influence local government and leadership, even though municipalities can provide fundamental needs or not.

2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The bulk of the fundamental causes of development initiatives that fall short may be traced back to the target population's insufficient involvement in the decision-making processes (Fraser and Ville, 1994). Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations working in the development sector concur that one of the main reasons why many development agendas and programmes fail is that people's involvement is not taken into account when developing initiatives. The primary reason for both the failure of development projects that first appear to be succeeding and the accomplishment of the predetermined goals and objectives has frequently been attributed to this lack of engagement.

The idea of participatory communication is widely acknowledged by scholars and development communication specialists as the most suitable framework for directing their work in developing nations. While proponents of participation acknowledge that the approach is preferable to evil, they equally accept its limitations. "It is a concept that has proven to be immensely challenging in application," observes White (1994), who holds a similar opinion. This explains the uneven success in the past ten years in participatory development communication. The problem can be summed up as the several context-specific elements that impact a given emerging nation, such as the social and cultural context, the religious milieu, the power dynamics, and the existence of other organisations. Bessette (2004) states that these variables control the suitability of using PDC in a particular context. The success of participatory development communication is also influenced by a number of other elements, including credibility, sincerity, and dedication to the development agenda.

This chapter examined pertinent research on participatory development communication and gave a general overview of the history, goals, and theoretical underpinnings of development communication theories as well as the variables

influencing participatory development communication. The research methodology utilised to conduct the study was the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focused on presentation of the research design that was used to carry out the study. The research methodology that was applied to do the study was also discussed in this chapter, the population as well as the sample size for the Focus Discussion Groups and the face-to-face in-depth interviews. Additionally, the data collection techniques used to collect the qualitative data for the study as well as the data analysis strategy were discussed. Finally, the ethical considerations were deliberated on. The researcher concentrated on the data gathering process and research strategy in this chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is used in this study to enable the researcher to make a determination of the information received and whether it will be appropriate for the study. De Vaus (2001) and Trochim (2006) refer to research design as an overall strategy and analytical approach that is chosen in the study that allows integration in a coherent and logical way. The study has chosen to implement an explanatory and descriptive research design in order to gather information with regard to the obligations employed in participatory development communication.

The descriptive research design is aimed at understanding whether there was a lack of communication in the integration and demarcation decisions taken at the local municipalities of Tlokwe and Ventersdorp, which resulted in the establishment of JB Marks local municipality. The issue of exhausting other avenues of communication in the establishment of the JB Marks local municipality has not been clearly explained and explored in any study; therefore, the researcher is investigating participatory development communication. Finding as many accurate descriptions as possible of a phenomenon's qualities, interactions between variables, or relationships between

phenomena is the aim of descriptive research (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, and Bezuidenhout, 2021).

The descriptive research approach is suitable because it gives a true picture or description of the traits based on the actions, viewpoints, aptitudes, convictions, and experience of a specific person, circumstance, or group.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Sileyew (2019), research methodology refers to the process or system that researchers employ to carry out their investigations by formulating problems and objectives and then presenting the findings from data collected in accordance with those objectives. For this study, the researcher has opted to use a qualitative research methodology. Some of the questionnaire procedures were based on one-on-one involvement and focus groups, while others were semi-structured and allowed the researcher and respondents to communicate via virtual meetings.

3.4 POPULATION

Population is defined by the Merriam-Webster-Webster Dictionary (2023) as the total number of individuals living in a nation or territory, or as the total number of people occupying an area or constituting a whole. According to Polit and Hungler (1999), the population is thought to consist of all items, subjects, or individuals who meet a certain set of requirements together.

The researcher conducted the study with all people living in the two local municipalities, which included all races, stakeholders, both male and female, and young and old people living in the jurisdiction of the municipalities. The population of the study consists of 184,284 people. The preference of the researcher in the study was that people had to be those living in the area of interests, South Africans who were eligible to vote in the national and local government elections, as well as personnel in the state apparatus, particularly senior managers, who were affected by the amalgamation.

3.5 SAMPLING

Kandance (2005) defines sampling as the process of choosing a subset of the population in the study region to serve as the representative sample for the entire population. The sampling was done with members of the community of Ventersdorp and Potchefstroom local municipalities together with non-government organisations and political parties in an individual and group formation. The process of sampling is choosing a little portion of the population to generalise back to a larger population (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The population that needed to be researched was too large, and this necessitated a sampling research method, and the researcher further preferred non-probability, which allowed them to randomly choose the target group within the communities of both towns to participate in the study.

3.5.1 Sample Size

This involves the number of those that the researcher has decided to use for the collection of the information through the already chosen qualitative method. The data used in the study has been taken from community members, previous mayors of the two municipalities, and workers, as well as other organisations within the communities. Accordingly, the adequate determination of sample sizes is critical in conducting the research study (O'Neill, 2022).

Sixty-eight people who took part in interviews and focus groups made up the study's sample size. These were specifically chosen since they possessed the data required for the investigation. The features of the sample size are shown in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1: Sample Size

Description	Pseudonym
Focus Group Discussion 1: JB Marks Officials	A to K
Focus Group Discussion 2: DPSA Forum	A1 to O1
Focus Group Discussion 3: Potch Women's Forum	A2 to T2
Focus Group Discussion 4: Ventersdorp and Ikageng Communities	V to Z
Interview with Pastor	A3
Interview with Business Forum - Vetersdorp	B3
Interview with SGB Members	C3 to D3
Interview with Academic Specialist	E3
Interview with Councillors	F3

Source: Primary Data

3.6. DATA COLLECTION

The means of collecting primary information from the relevant participants was through focus group discussions and interviews within the town of Tlokwe and Ventersdorp local municipalities. The committees that represented the side of the government, such as the Municipal Demarcation Board, became part of the mandated individuals in the integration of the towns. The researcher is satisfied with the conduct of all those interviews, and the objective of the research study was achieved.

3.6.1 Rationale for informants' interviews and the information required

Through consultation and discussions with other relevant stakeholders, three informants were identified and used in the research study. These are senior managers within the municipalities who formed an integral part of the integration of the municipalities. Key informant interviews involve people or individuals that are selected to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on the reasons (Kumar, 1989). In this section, in-depth interviews were done with political parties' representatives and

leaders, as well as current and previous municipal managers, to seek their views on the integration of the two municipalities to form JB Marks local municipality.

Table 3.2: Informants Rationale

Organization representative	Position of key participant/s	Centrality of information to study	Linkage to research objectives	Location where data was collected
Committee member of Municipal Demarcation Board	Executive member	• Public participation • Method used in the participatory development communication with different stakeholders	Participatory aspects that were used a tool to communicate.	Ventersdorp and Tlokwe local municipalities
Senior Manager	Municipal Manager (2014-2016)	• Notification and preparation of invitations • Methods of communication	• Determination of development communication application. • Processes in implementation of participatory development communication.	Tlokwe local municipality
Senior Manager	Chief Executive Officer	• Financial implications on the processes • Value for money proportion		Ventersdorp local municipality

Researcher's construction, 2023

The above table provides information concerning key activities that took place before and after the integration of the two towns, particularly the processes that affected positive and negative participation elements in line with the use of developmental communication. The selected individuals who were interviewed by the researcher provided detailed information that is critical to the study on how the processes affected participatory development communication and the financial implications that may be positive or negative as a result of the integration. The municipality's Chief Executive Officer was selected in order to determine whether there was a financial impact that

might have hindered or affected the processes of developmental communication that have or would have encouraged public participation.

3.6.2 Secondary data collection methods

Secondary data collection was used to gather information from sources such as published and unpublished books, journals, or articles by other authors. The books and journals studied for literature purposes assisted the researcher in understanding how parties involved in the processes of integration used other means of development communication forums such as media, meetings, and social media to understand their objectives in participating in processes of demarcation formulation.

3.7. DATA ANALYSIS

The collected qualitative data obtained were analysed into themes with the aid of the NVIVO qualitative data analysis package. The data was first coded and then finally analysed into codes to extract the themes from the data. Five themes emerged from the analysis: information asymmetry, community engagement, municipal service quality, public administration, and developmental agenda. These themes were discussed in the next chapter.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

An ethical clearance from Northwest University allowed the researcher to conduct the study as well as obtaining consent from those who were interviewed on the subject matter. Per the work and research conducted, the outcomes are accurately presented and reported in line with what the research intended to obtain.

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The qualitative research approach utilised in the study to obtain the required data is presented by the researcher in this chapter. The importance of how the data was collected was further emphasised in this chapter, which covered the people that were

contacted and the methods by which the information was processed, edited, and disposed of for the reader's attention.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to investigate how the community perceived the participatory development communication study on the creation of JB Marks Local Municipality. The results of the data analysis are covered in this chapter. In order to establish the legitimacy and relevance of the data sources, the chapter started with describing the features of the individuals who provided data. The part that followed addressed data saturation to demonstrate that ample relevant data informed the findings. The pilot study was also discussed and it highlighted confirmation of the feasibility of the study prior to its full implementation. The discussion of findings followed an explanation of the coding of qualitative data as well as data topics. The emphasis in the next part was on emphasising how the findings answered the study questions. The data needed resulted in results that addressed the study's objectives, since addressing the research objectives would allow the investigation to tackle the research issue. The findings' contribution to knowledge was further discussed.

4.2 IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Data were collected from sixty-eight participants who were drawn from different forums, as illustrated in Table 4.1 below. Since the participants were supposed to be anonymous, pseudonyms were used to identify them. Five interviews and four focus group sessions provided the data. The method used to identify the participants and the pseudonyms used are reflected in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Participant Identification

Description	Pseudonym
Focus Group Discussion 1: JB Marks Officials	A to K
Focus Group Discussion 2: DPSA Forum	A1 to O1
Focus Group Discussion 3: Potch Women's Forum	A2 to T2
Focus Group Discussion 4: Ventersdorp and Ikageng Communities	V to Z
Interview with Pastor	A3
Interview with Business Forum - Vetersdorp	B3
Interview with SGB Members	C3 to D3
Interview with Academic Specialist	E3
Interview with Councillors	F3

Source: Primary Data

The qualities of the participants were significant since they demonstrated that the participants were appropriate and capable of addressing the research objectives. The individuals who took part in the research were those who had a direct bearing on this study and could provide relevant contributions. The JB Marks senior officials represented group one eleven people took part in the focus group sessions; the second group was comprised of DPSA Forum officials with fifteen officials. The Potch Women's Forum was the third focus group discussion with twenty participants. The fourth focus group discussion group was made up of the Ventersdorp and Ikageng communities. Apart from the talks held in focus groups, interviews were carried out with a pastor, a business forum representative, two SGB members, an academic specialist, and a councillor representative to examine community perceptions of the participatory development communication study on the establishment of JB Marks Local Municipality and draw conclusions from this study. Only the participants who made the relevant contribution were identified and approached for the focus group discussions and interviews.

4.3 DATA SATURATION

In this study, data saturation occurred when there was no more new information created from interactions with participants. Some participants reflected substantial signs of statement repetition as they emphasised themes, they believed were most important when discussing ways to improve the participatory development communication study on the establishment of JB Marks Local Municipality. From the sixty-nine participants, the ideas and expressions were the same as what the other participants had said. Consequently, the researcher was satisfied with the data acquired and concluded the data collection process.

4.4 PILOT STUDY

The pilot study was conducted with five participants who did not participate in the main study to avoid bias. The main study demonstrated that the study was viable and could be completed within a realistic time frame. It was also shown that the objectives would be addressed to the satisfaction of the interviewer due to commonalities in the participants' points of view. Participants also stated that they had no difficulty answering the questions. In terms of sensitivity, participants indicated that the questions were fair and did not contain any sensitive conclusions. It also emerged that the questions sought reasonable information to aid in the development of credible findings and recommendations for strategies for improving participatory development communication strategies for the establishment of JB Marks Local Municipality.

4.4.1 Coding of Data

The codes utilised for data analysis into themes are shown in Figure 4.1 below. There were five themes identified from the data analysis: information asymmetry, community engagement, municipal service quality, public administration, and developmental agenda. These themes are discussed below in the next section.

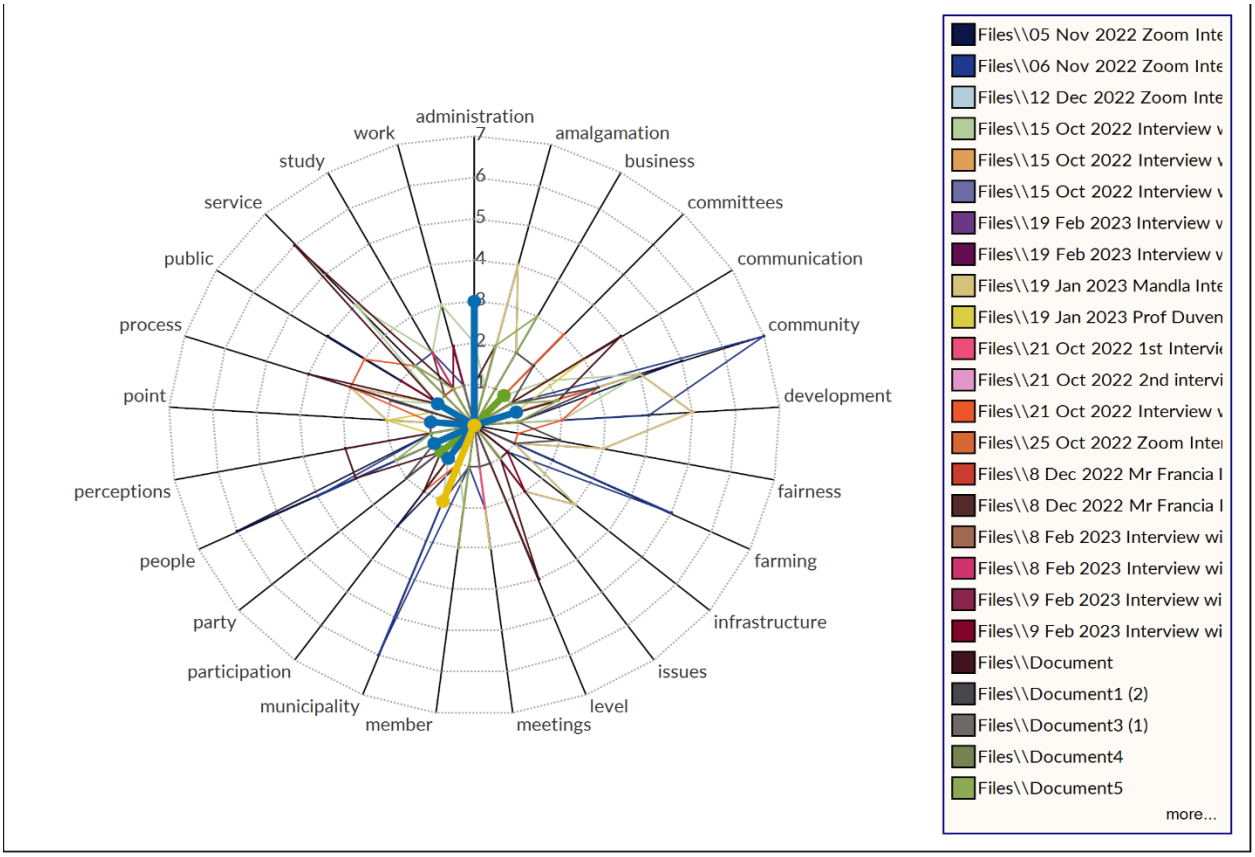

Figure 4.1: Data Coding

4.5 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The five themes obtained from the qualitative data analysis were analysed through NVIVO 11, and these are discussed below:

4.5.1 Theme One: Information Asymmetry

The first theme that was identified in the NVIVO 11 analysis is information asymmetry. The word cloud in Figure 4.1 below reflects the importance of information. It is difficult to make sound decisions without proper information. The information that the municipality officials and the COGTA officials had was completely different from the information that the community had. The community members, as part of the stakeholders, were not given important information they were supposed to know.



Figure 4.2: Information Asymmetry

Participant A indicated that:

"Amalgamation of the two municipalities did not go on very well due to information asymmetry. The community members were not given the information that they were supposed to know; as a result, they supported the amalgamation based on the insufficient information that they were given."

Matters of participatory development communication remain of worldwide significance even in the twenty-first century. One way to conceptualise development is as an ethical political process of social change. Any change or intervention in this process will, whether explicitly stated or not, have a significant impact on the lives of those involved (Penzhorn, 2010; Shabangu, 2025). However, there was no effective communication during the merger process. The stakeholders were not well informed.

Participant D believed that:

"There was a need for the responsible authorities to be fair and transparent in their dealings with the stakeholders. The stakeholders, being part of the community, were

not well advised and were starved of information. Some of the reasons were based on political grounds, and hence the community did not know all that. All the information was not released to them."

Further to that, Participant F said that:

"Merging a performing municipality with a non-performing municipality was a transaction that was not supposed to have happened. That decision was not a viable one, and the community members were not given this information. There was no effective information given to some of the stakeholders."

Participant K indicated that:

"Lack of an effective communication strategy was the main problem that caused the stakeholders to not be properly informed of all the activities that were taking place. Most of the stakeholder groups were not given the relevant information they needed to know. It ended up not being a participatory approach since most of the stakeholders were not afforded the opportunity to participate."

However, the literature points out that various basic principles underlie the concept of participatory development communication, which are:

Learning through participation: One way to think of participation is as a process of learning. People are given the freedom to choose how they want to live, which helps them reach their greatest potential by allowing them to make their own decisions and set their own goals (Ayee, 1993; Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022).

It takes effort and time to participate: The community and implementers may find it frustrating that participation benefits are not instantaneous; they require patience, dedication, and involvement (Thomas, 1994; Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022).

Honesty, trust, and dedication: reciprocal cooperation fosters these qualities in both upper management and the grassroots. Participation entails having mutual trust, listening to others, and appreciating the attitude of one's counterpart (Servaes, 1996; Wickenden, 2024).

Control and power: The notion of generating control and power is suitable for and consistent with the participation concept. Participation, in the context of development, refers to the more equitable distribution of political and economic power as well as the fortification of the power of the underprivileged majority (Ayee, 1993; Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022).

Liberation: The confidence people get in their abilities to steer their own lives is a liberating experience in and of itself. True involvement is liberating; it is an emancipatory encounter (White, 1994; Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022).

The other participants, such as Participants B, C, E, G, H, I, and J, concurred with the views of Participants A, D, F, and K. They, however, reiterated the need for a participatory developmental communication strategy that would help to guarantee the participation of all parties concerned in developmental issues.

Participant A1 indicated that:

“Ineffective communication was the root cause that caused the community members not to receive timely information. It takes effective communication channels and strategies to ensure that Information that is pertinent and timely is communicated to the stakeholders."

The views of participant A1 were agreed upon with participant G1, who added that:

“Formal communication channels are significant if participatory development communication has to be achieved.”

Participant G1 said that:

“Communication channels need to be established in order to enable effective participatory communication among the stakeholders.”

All the other participants, B1, C1, D1, E1, F1, H1, J1, K1, L1, M1, N1, and O1, concurred with the views of A1 and G1. A literature review was also in support of these views. Act 32 of 2000 concerning Municipal Systems also emphasised the central role that the communities must play to bring about change in the localities (Municipal

Systems Act, 2000). The implementation of a regulatory framework on engagement with stakeholders, where communication is a key driver of change or development, has not been that effective during the merger of the two municipalities.

Participant C2 was of the opinion that:

"*We were not informed at all as a forum. The authorities never sought our opinion. Our voice was not heard. There was no transparency in the way the merger was communicated to the stakeholders."*

Participant M2 was of the view that:

"It is not good for the authorities to use traditional methods of communication only. There are various methods of communication that can result in a larger outreach these days. It is essential that the authorities make use of these communication systems, such as Zoom, teams, and other media that do not require the physical appearance of participants."

Participant T2 indicated that:
"It is critical that authorities involve us in decision-making processes. Without proper consultative processes, it becomes difficult or impossible for us to be involved in decision-making."

All the other participants were in agreement with the views of Participants M2 and T2. A literature review also supports these views. With the globalisation of media space, there have been various instruments on display that can be used in dialogue with every participant in the communication system. According to Reed (2008); Makumu and Mlambo (2024) participation is a process in which the public, stakeholders, or individual groups are engaged and involved in decision-making.

Participants V to Z agreed with the rest of the participants in the focus discussion groups. They agreed on the need to maintain dialogue and that effective communication channels needed to be established. The merger of the Tlokwe and Ventersdorp Municipalities was hindered by ineffective stakeholder communication. The effective channels of communication were not utilised.

Interviews were conducted, and participants A3, B3, C3, D3, E3, and F3's views were aligned with the views of the focus discussion group. It is imperative that dialogue be maintained through a participatory approach. There are a few different ideas about participation and participatory development, but development practitioners and academics generally accept two approaches. These relate to the concepts of access, participation, and self-management proposed by UNESCO and by Freire's dialogical pedagogy. According to Servaes and Malikhao (2008); Wickenden, (2024), a development project that identifies as participatory acknowledges these fundamentals of democratic communication processes in development undertakings.

4.5.2 Theme Two: Community Engagement

The second theme identified by the word cloud, as illustrated in Figure 4.3, is community engagement. It is a critical tool that needs to be applied if participatory developmental communication systems are to be effective and yield positive results. Matters of participatory development communication remain significant worldwide even in the twenty-first century. One way to conceptualise development is as an ethical political process of social change. Any change or intervention in this process will, whether explicitly stated or not, have a significant impact on the lives of those involved. (Penzhorn, 2010; Shabangu, 2025).



Figure 4.3: Community Engagement

In terms of community engagement, Participant A indicated that:

"There was no adequate engagement with the community. Lack of proper communication systems and channels caused a lack of proper community engagement. There is a need to concentrate on the establishment of community engagement communication channels to ensure that the community is well engaged and informed of the development that might be taking place."

A literature review supports the idea that any form of development must be informed by a process of consultation that allows engagements with various stakeholders, including communities, non-profit organisations, religious movements, and others (Anciano, 2014; Makumu & Mlambo, 2024).

Participant F indicated that:

“Mechanisms must be put in place to support community engagement in various ways and means. Communities must be informed and allowed to take part in issues that affect them.”

Participant H said that:

“*Community people know what works for them. They know what is good for them. It is therefore necessary to engage and involve them when seeking solutions that can assist in addressing the problems they face. They have some of the solutions that may be needed to solve their problems, so involving them would help to address the challenges they face.”*

It is imperative that the municipality provides opportunities for community, staff, and council members to participate in capacity building initiatives as well as the Integrated Development Planning process. Together with the Constitution of the Republic, the Municipal Systems Act encourages the involvement of communities in the affairs that affect them, and municipalities must develop tools that will enable these processes to be implemented smoothly. De Visser (2021) proposes that funds must be made available to support participatory community involvement. Furthermore, De Visser (2021) suggests that in the case of those who are illiterate, municipalities must put in place systems that will allow or help people to make their comments in writing, and the option as such must be communicated for comments in Section 21(4) of the Municipal Systems Act.

In all the focus group discussions and interviews, participants were in support of the views of participants A, F, and H. Community engagement is highly needed since it gives the community room to give their input on issues that affect them. Communities know what they need, and they know what works out for them. It is better to involve them rather than impose things on them.

4.5.3 Theme Three: Municipal Services Quality

The third theme, as illustrated in Figure 4.4, is municipal service quality. Municipalities provide services to their residents. The quality of the services rendered by the

municipalities is therefore very important. It is very important that municipal clients get the quality services they are supposed to receive.



Figure 4.4: Municipal Services Quality

Participant K indicated that:

"The quality of services delivered by the municipality is not up to the required standard. Lack of proper communication is affecting the level of service delivery."

Participant A1 is of the opinion that:

"The municipal employees are failing to render the required services to the localities. Insufficient funding is impeding the communities' capacity to be efficient and effective."

However, it is the responsibility of the local government and municipalities to provide basic services to the communities, such as housing, water, refuse collection, and electricity, to everyone. Additionally, they must ensure that communities, especially vulnerable citizens like women and children, are taken care of. Local municipalities are failing to provide quality service delivery. (Masiya, Davids, & Mangai, 2019). The supply of goods, benefits, and activities that satisfy their needs in their communities is

referred to as service delivery. Since the goal of government is to meet the needs of the people, it is well known that service delivery is essential to the growth of any branch of the government.

Participant T2 was of the view that:

"The local authorities are the providers of basic services, and yet they fail to do what they are supposed to do. Service delivery is ineffective in municipalities. Local authorities are failing to fulfil their mandate."

Participant V was of the view that:

"The local authorities are short-changing the communities. Their failure to provide the basic services that they are supposed to provide is a cause for concern. The business communities as well as the other community members are finding it difficult to cope under such conditions."

All the other participants concurred with the views of Participants K, A1, T2, and V. The participants who were interviewed also uttered the same sentiments.

The literature review points out that infrastructure and basic service delivery are the purview of local governments. To guarantee that service delivery is adequate, the local government needs to have appropriate performance measurement tools. There are no efficient systems in place to keep an eye on and enhance service delivery. However, this has influenced the delivery of local government services (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Mabizela and Matsiliza (2020) agreed with Armstrong and Taylor (2020) that local governments have a responsibility to sustainably deliver services in order to promote both social and economic growth. Additionally, they have to continue building a healthy and safe environment in their communities.

It is believed that providing residents with public goods and services is a process of service creation that yields both tangible and intangible value (Municipal Research and Service Centre, 2005). Every town has specific needs that differ from one municipality to the next, including the requirement for internet, Wi-Fi, waste collection, and clean water. Communities still retain influence over local government and

leadership, even in cases where municipalities are unable to provide fundamental needs. Because local government is such an important branch of the government, a number of studies have proposed that the failure of local government to provide better services impedes growth and acceptability by society (Munzhedzi, 2020).

4.5.4 Theme Four: Public Administration

Figure 4.5 illustrates theme four, which is public administration. The way municipalities are run determines how effectively they perform in service delivery, which is their constitutional mandate. Municipalities have the mammoth task of ensuring that they provide quality service and infrastructure to the various communities within their jurisdictions. However, these municipalities do not render adequate services to the stakeholders. Public administration is therefore compromised, and there is a lot that is desire



Figure 4.5: Public Administration

Participant E indicated that:

“Some municipalities have become dysfunctional. The way they are run makes it difficult for them to fulfill their mandate. Their performances are beyond what is expected of them. Shortage of skilled personnel and lack of efficient and effective management and leadership skills are causes of concern in these municipalities.”

In support of the views of Participant E, Participant I1 indicated that:

“The way the municipalities articulate their day-to-day activities is a cause for concern as it hinders development and growth. The development and expansion of service delivery being hampered by the failure to provide quality service to communities and hence affects the standard of living of the residents.”

Participant B2 said that:

“Municipalities as public administrators of the local authorities are not fully functional, and hence their operations are not effective towards service delivery.”

Participant C3 said that:

“There is a lot of sanity needed if municipalities are to operate effectively. Ineffective and inefficient administration is taking place.”

All the participants concurred with the views of Participants E, I1, B2, and C3. They were all worried about the way municipalities, as public administrators of the local authorities, are run. Their inefficiency and ineffectiveness are highly affecting the expansion and improvement of the communities.

The literature review, however, supports that municipalities can provide or fail to meet the basic necessities, nonetheless, communities still have influence over the local municipality's leadership and management. Because this area of government is so crucial, some scholars contend that the failure of local government to provide better services impedes the development and acceptance of society (Munzhedzi, 2020).

4.5.5 Theme Five: Developmental Agenda

Figure 4.6 below depicts the fifth theme, which is the developmental agenda. Municipalities have a duty to ensure that communities grow and develop. Local areas have to be developed and become self-sustaining. Development is a multifaceted process that involves significant shifts in prevailing ideas and social institutions (Todaro & Smith, 2012; Mahlangu & Ruhode, 2020). To quantify the success of any programme or government's productivity indicators, one of the measurements is based on the level of development it has taken. The development is measured based on the point at which a programme has moved to another point of target.



Figure 4.6: Developmental Agenda

Participant F indicated that:

"Development allows growth in the community and can be applied to enhance people's quality of life; however, there is no development taking place, and the lives of the people are adversely affected. It is imperative that the development agenda be taken as a matter of priority if the municipalities are to develop the communities."

Public participation policies in local government in South Africa are typified, among other things, by self-serving inclinations that cause conflicts and a lack of public accountability and power imbalances between citizens and authorities (Ababio, 2004; Williams, 2006; Jakoet-Salie & Ramolobe, 2023).

Participant K reinforced that:

"There is a need for municipalities to come up with regulatory frameworks that incorporate communication strategies if they want to succeed in fostering development agendas in their local communities."

All the participants were in agreement with the sentiments of Participants F and K. The implementation of a regulatory framework on engagement with stakeholders, where communication is a key driver of change or development, has not been that effective. Many scholars have expressed serious weaknesses in the 1994 first democratic elections in terms of the maximum participation of communities in bringing about change (Yorkston and Baylor, 2010; Mhlongo, 2020).

Community participation should not be thought to be a one-way information-dissemination mechanism. It should be a two-way traffic where the municipality gives information to the community and expects to receive feedback from the community, and vice versa (Molale, 2019).

4.6 DISCUSSING RESULTS AGAINST RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The results were discussed against the research objectives in this section; this was done to substantiate whether the research objectives were addressed in this study. This activity was carried out to ensure that the problem statement leading to the carrying out of the study was adequately addressed through the results that were obtained from the primary research. The results discussion assisted in addressing the main research objective in addition to the goals of the secondary research objectives. The primary goal of the study was to determine how much participatory development communication took place between the parties involved in the local municipality merger of Ventersdorp and Tlokwe. The goals of the secondary research were:

To examine the principles of participatory development communication processes relevant to local government communication in South Africa

- To analyse stakeholders (the city council, the community, and ward councillors) perceptions concerning the nature of participatory development communication in the establishment of the JB Marks Local Municipality.
- To determine the effectiveness of service delivery to the community.
- To establish the satisfaction of stakeholders on whether service delivery to the communities have been met.

4.6.1 The extent to which participatory development occurred

The main research objective was to acquire information regarding the degree of communication about participatory development that took place between the parties involved in the merger of Tlokwe and Ventersdorp local municipalities. The research objective was adequately answered. The participants indicated that adequate communication was not provided. They were not given adequate information concerning the merger of the two municipalities. Participants lamented the need for municipalities to have proper communication channels to enable effective communication.

4.6.2 Principles of the Participatory Development Communication Process

The first secondary research objective sought to examine whether the principles of participatory development communication processes that were pertinent to South African municipal government communications were applied in the merger of Tlokwe and Ventersdop local municipalities. The research objective was well addressed, as it was established that the participants suggested that the participatory development communication methods processes were not adhered to. However, the participants reflected that there was no participatory development communication strategy. In the absence of a communication strategy, it becomes difficult to communicate effectively.

4.6.3 Analyse Stakeholder Perceptions with Regards to Participatory Development Communication

The next secondary research objective focused on the analysis of stakeholders' perceptions with regard to how the JB Marks Local Municipality was established through participatory development communication. The results from the participants reflected that the stakeholders were not properly communicated with. The local authority officials did not provide adequate information to the participants. The fact that the municipalities had no effective participatory developmental communication strategy reflects that the stakeholders did not participate in the participatory development communication effectively. The research objective was, however, adequately addressed.

4.6.4 Effectiveness of Service Delivery to the Communities

The third secondary research objective centred on how well community services were delivered. The findings of the primary research demonstrated the absence of high-quality service provision. There was much that was wanted in terms of service provision. The outcomes demonstrated that the municipality had fallen short of both its goals and its mandate. Creating a communication plan would be very helpful in addressing the service delivery issue challenges that are affecting the municipality. This research objective was well addressed.

4.6.5 Stakeholder Satisfaction with Service Delivery

The fourth secondary research objective examined whether stakeholders were satisfied with service delivery. According to the participants, the stakeholders were dissatisfied with the way the services were provided. Lack of effective service delivery had adversely affected the growth and development agenda of the communities. The stakeholders' anticipated development agenda had been stalled by the ineffective service delivery experienced at the municipality. The research objective was fully addressed.

4.7 CONTRIBUTION OF RESULTS

The results from the primary research had a significant contribution to academic dialogue by reflecting that there is a need to ensure ensuring a developmental communication approach based on participation is in place and used to make sure the community groups are effectively reached out to and are not left out in matters that involve the development of their communities. Communication is two-way traffic, and the views of the participants must be heard for the purpose of development. This view emanates from the fact that municipalities lack established communication plans, and this becomes a serious challenge. It would be ideal to use various communication methods besides the traditional ones. The COVID-19 advent has brought other means of virtual communication, such as Zoom meetings and Teams.

4.8 SUMMARY

Following the data analysis, the outcomes were covered in this chapter. The section initially dealt with the participants' characteristics that provided the data collected. In addition to that, the saturation point was established, as this is critical in qualitative data collection. The data and the pilot study's outcomes were taken into consideration, coding as well as the themes that were established from the data were deliberated upon. The results were compared against the research objectives to ensure that the problem statement and the research objectives were addressed. The data collected and analysed had to address both the research objectives and the research problem. The contributions of the results to academic dialogue were deliberated on, and finally the chapter was concluded.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the main research findings on community perceptions—a participatory development communication study on the creation of JB Marks Local Municipality in South Africa—were summarised based on the literature review and primary research findings. After compiling the principal findings, the primary study findings, and the review of linked literature, the conclusions are drawn. Recommendations and potential areas for additional investigation were also provided.

5.2 OBJECTIVES REVISITED

The main research objective of the study was:
To examine the extent to which participatory development communication occurred between the stakeholders in the merger of Tlokwe and Ventersdorp local municipalities.

The secondary research objective of the study was:

- To examine the principles of participatory development communication processes relevant to local government communication in South Africa
- To analyse stakeholders (the city council, the community, and ward councillors) perceptions concerning the nature of participatory development communication in the establishment of the JB Marks Local Municipality.
- To determine the effectiveness of service delivery to the community.
- To establish the satisfaction of stakeholders on whether service delivery to the communities have been met.

5.3 MAJOR FINDINGS SUMMARY FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Even in the twenty-first century, issues surrounding participatory development communication are still crucial on a worldwide scale. One way to conceptualise development is as an ethical political process of social change. Any change or

intervention in this process will, whether explicitly stated or not, have a significant impact on the lives of those involved (Penzhorn, 2010).

For sustainable development to be achieved, communities and stakeholders must be actively involved in decision-making that impacts growth. Through several legislative measures, development groups, experts, and governments recognise the value of participatory development communication as a means of enacting meaningful social change that would guarantee sustainable advancement and empowerment. As Servaes (1999:13); Servaes (2020) points out, communication is at its core a social action, the articulation of social interactions between people. It follows that without communication, people cannot participate in development activities.

Basic development decisions in South Africa were made on behalf of the people during the previous apartheid regime; as a result, the people were left as passive recipients of public goods and services, unable to recognise their own needs, take action to meet them, or determine their own course in life (Penzhorn, 2010; Shabangu, 2025). However, the South African governance model underwent modifications following the end of apartheid, incorporating participatory aspects into the decision-making process.

The Republic of South Africa's (1996) Constitution describes this new kind of transparent, responsible governance that takes into account the demands and advancement of the populace. Strategies and mechanisms have also been put in place to support the principles of participatory communication at the local government (municipal) level, in keeping with the government's goals of democratising development and guaranteeing that communities actively participate in their own development policies (DPLG, 2005: 11).

The development community began to question the top-down methods that were primarily employed in the 1950s and 1960s (Agunga, 1996:138) and the inefficiency of the two outdated paradigms of development (dependency and modernisation) in the early 1970s, which is when participatory approaches in development first emerged. According to Buchy, Ross, and Proctor (2000), involvement is not a new concept as its support base in literature originates from political science and development theory.

With the globalisation of media space, there have been various instruments on display that can be used in communication with all parties in the system of communication. Traditional methods of participation in the communication system have been based on physical contact and one-on-one interviews where people's non-verbal communication behaviour can be observed. According to Reed (2008), participation is a process in which the public, stakeholders, or individual groups are engaged and involved in decision-making.

Communication has developed into a very central component in the lives of people across the globe, and it has become a necessity. Mather (2022) suggests that previously, the homo sapiens were not exposed to communication through language but involved themselves in communicating using hand signs or gestures, acting, dancing, and noises through whistles, drums, and vocal sounds like grunting or changing pitch. Novak (2019) also agrees that symbols and images were used to portray information in the 500,000 BCE.

According to Juneja (2015), S.F. Scudder introduced communication theory in 1980 and emphasized the crucial aspect of life that exists through communicating with others. Communication as a tool is important in transporting information from one person to another. Communication is viewed as the process by which people interactively create, sustain, and manage meaning (Axley, 1984). In the amalgamation of the two municipalities of Tlokwe and Ventersdorp, what is critical is the empowerment of communities through the communication method that was necessary in concluding this integration. The flow of communication with communities and all stakeholders is what is important for participation in such a development.

Development is a multi-dimensional process that entails major changes in social structures and popular attitudes (Todaro and Smith, 2012). To quantify the success of any programme or government's productivity indicators, one of the measurements is based on the level of development it has taken. The development is measured based on the point at which a programme has moved to another point of target. According to Rist (2002), the half-century between 1950 and 2000 has been characterised by an age of development that has been superseded by the age of globalisation and sustainable development.

5.4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The empirical findings are discussed in this section. The results from the four focus group discussions as well as the five interviews are deliberated on in this section. The empirical findings are linked to address the research objectives as well as the research problem. The qualitative data analysis established five themes, which are information asymmetry, community engagement, municipal service quality, public administration, and developmental agenda.

5.4.1 Findings on Information Asymmetry

It was established that the municipal officials held on to critical information, but the information was not disseminated to the stakeholders. Consultative dialogues were not effective, and as a result, the stakeholders were not given relevant information for them to contribute effectively to issues that affect their development and welfare as well as the development of their area. Participatory development communication matters are issues of major concern the world over, hence the need to ensure that stakeholders are reached. The participants indicated that consultative forums were not effectively conducted due to inadequate communication strategies and channels.

5.4.2 Findings on Community Engagement

There was no adequate, effective engagement with the community members. Poor communication strategies and a lack of proper communication systems and communication channels were cited. There is a need to concentrate on the establishment of community engagement communication channels to ensure that the community is well engaged and informed of the development that might be taking place. Community members know what works for them. They know what is good for them. It is therefore necessary to engage and involve them when seeking solutions that can assist in addressing the problems they face.

5.4.3 Findings on Municipal Service Quality

The empirical findings reflected that there was no quality services delivered. Lack of proper communication is also a hindrance to quality service delivery. Misuse of resources and an unskilled workforce also contribute to poor service delivery. Local municipalities are failing to provide quality service delivery; however, it is the duty of local government and municipalities to provide basic services to the communities, such as housing, water, power, and garbage collection to all people and to ensure that communities, especially those with vulnerable members like women and children, are taken care of.

5.4.4 Public Administration

Empirical evidence revealed that the way municipalities are run determines how effectively they perform in service delivery, which is their constitutional mandate. Municipalities have the mammoth task of ensuring that they provide quality service and infrastructure to the various communities within their jurisdictions. However, these municipalities do not render adequate services to the stakeholders. Public administration is therefore compromised, and there is a lot that is desired.

5.4.5 Developmental Agenda

Empirical results revealed that municipalities have to ensure that communities grow and develop. Local areas have to be developed and become self-sustaining. Development is a multi-dimensional process that entails major changes in social structures and popular attitudes; however, it has been reflected that there are limited developmental agendas in the local areas. The communities are yearning for development.

5.5 KEY CONCLUSIONS

The key conclusions that were based on the primary and secondary findings are discussed in this section below.

The results of this study reflected that the JB Marks Municipality needed to improve communication in order to reach out to a larger number of participants in their participative developmental communication dialogue and in their efforts to gather as many opinions as possible that would help them come up with viable solutions in the merger of Tlokwe and Ventersdorp Municipalities. The lack of effective communication strategies and channels had a double effect as it contributed to the inability to reach out to as many groups and participants as possible, which has further led to continuous protest actions as well as the failure to maintain social coercion. Lack of development and growth of the developmental projects caused by a lack of adequate consultations has stalled progress and development of the projects in the local areas.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which participatory development communication occurred between the stakeholders in the merger of Tlokwe and Ventersdorp local municipalities.

The following were recommended in this study:

- There is a need to have a participatory developmental communication framework and strategy in place to ensure that sufficient outreaches are made to solicit adequate information before implementation of the developmental programmes.
- Communication departments should be part of the process from conceptualization up to execution and conclusion of the plan.
- Implementation of the participatory developmental communication strategy would go a long way towards enforcing outreaches, which is a prerequisite to ensuring that communities are adequately reached out to.
- Effective communication channels need to be put in place for efficient and effective communication among the various stakeholders within the community and the local municipality.
- Allocation of resources is essential if the programmes are to be successful, and this will also enhance the developmental agenda.
- It is essential to ensure that information asymmetry is avoided. The communities need to be given adequate information for them to participate effectively during the

participatory developmental consultative meetings. Decision-making is adversely affected if the other party in the participative dialogue is not reciprocated.

- Thorough community engagement is needed, and hence structures need to be put in place to facilitate consultative dialogue with the stakeholders.
- The communities need to receive quality service, and the municipalities have to deliver these services in line with South African constitutional obligations.
- The municipalities should have good administrators who are good leaders and managers of public resources and are also capable of maintaining good governance in the municipalities.
- The municipalities are custodians of the development agenda. There is a need for them to ensure that they plan and implement developmental programmes, hence the need to communicate these developmental programmes to stakeholders.

5.7 AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Further studies are needed as research is a constant process. A further study with a wider population and sample size would be recommended. A study incorporating all the municipalities that have done mergers would be much more informative as opposed to the merger of two municipalities. Since this study was qualitative, mixed-methods research that combines both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies would be recommended. The participatory development communication paradigm needs to integrate interactive processes where policy for change brings a common ground for a two-way communication channel that further allows for feedback and accountability between the policy maker for bringing development and the beneficiary of development. Therefore, participatory developmental communication concepts remain central to any agenda for change and development. There is a need to engage and involve the stakeholders and the community in developmental issues.

In this chapter, the main research findings on community perceptions—a participatory development communication study on the creation of JB Marks Local Municipality in South Africa—were summarised based on the literature review and primary research findings. After compiling the principal findings, the primary study findings, and the

review of linked literature, the conclusions are drawn. Recommendations and potential areas for additional investigation were also provided.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This research has underscored the significance of participatory development communication as a fundamental premise for stakeholder participation. It is essential for responsible authorities to recognise the significance of stakeholder engagement through participatory development communication to promote and enhance community involvement in accordance with constitutional mandates. The perspectives, contributions, and insights of the communities are essential, necessitating their integration to foster successful development within these communities. Community members should be recognised as stakeholders, as they possess valuable contributions to societal progress.

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RECRUITMENT LETTER



RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Participants,

My name is ***Motlalepula Ziphora Rosho*** and I am currently beginning a research project for ***my Magister Artium in Communication*** at ***North-West University***.

I am writing this letter to recruit you to form part of this study by answering a few question I have regarding the Establishment of JB Marks Local Municipality. If interested, know that participation will take 15 to 20 minutes, no remuneration or reward will be offered to you. There are no known risks involved in this research.

All answers and results from the research are kept strictly confidential and the results will be reported in a research paper available to all participants on completion.

Thank you and I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Motlalepula Ziphora Rosho

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)

DATE:

BaSSREC Authorisation

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

Title of the research project	**Examining stakeholder perceptions: A Participatory Development Communication study on the establishment of JB Marks Local Municipality**
Ethics number	
Principal investigator	**Motlatepula Ziphora Rosho**
Student number	**17122988**
Address	**20 Knoppiesdoring**
Email address	**mzrosho@gmail.com**
Contact number	**0824695592**

You are being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my Master's degree. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part. Prior to publication of the study's results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data you generate

This study has been approved by the **Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University** (NWU) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the

PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTION LETTER

Dear Participants,

Thank you so much for dedicating your time to attend to this academic interview. This interview is designed to gather information on the entitled: ***"Examining stakeholder perceptions: A Participatory Development Communication study on the establishment of JB Marks Local Municipality."*** Kindly take note that this interview is voluntarily and is strictly for academic purposes. The information provided will be kept confidentially and will not be released to any unauthorized parties. The respondents' identities will be kept anonymous since codes will be used instead of names of respondents. Kindly respond to the interview questions to your best abilities without applying any pressure on yourself.

NB:

- Each answer is important
- Do not provide me with your name, remain anonymous.
- By participating in this interview you give consent that the information may be used for research/academic purposes.

Regards,

Motlalepula Ziphora Rosho
Masters Candidate at North-West University

GATEKEEPER LETTER



GATEKEEPER LETTER

Dear North West Chamber of Commerce and Industry,

My name is ***Motlalepula Ziphora Rosho*** and I am currently beginning a research project for ***my Magister Artium in Communication*** at ***North-West University***.

I am writing to ask for permission to be allowed access to your mailing list/database to seek research participants for a focus group and/or individual interviews. This should take not more than a week and can be conducted at a convenient time and date to be arranged by your good office.

All answers and results from the research are kept strictly confidential and the results will be reported in a research paper available to all participants on completion. If this is possible, kindly e-mail me at mzrosho@gmail.com to confirm that you are willing to allow me access to the required information.

Thank you and I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Motlalepula Ziphora Rosho

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL LETTER

NWU®

BASIC AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONFIDENTIALITY UNDERTAKING

entered into between:

I the undersigned

Prof / Dr / Mr / Ms Motlalepula Ziphora Rosha

Identity Number: 7007190448082

Address: 20 Knopperdoring Street, Soft View, Mahikeng

hereby undertake in favor of the **NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY**, a public higher education institution established in terms of the Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997

Address: Office of the Institutional Registrar, Building C1, 53 Borcherd Street, Potchefstroom, 2520

(hereinafter the "NWU")

1 Interpretation and definitions

1.1 In this undertaking, unless inconsistent with, or otherwise indicated by the context:

1.1.1 "Confidential Information" shall include all information that is confidential in its nature or marked as confidential and shall include any existing and new information obtained by me after the Commencement Date, including but not be limited in its interpretation to, research data, information concerning research participants, all secret knowledge, technical information and specifications, manufacturing techniques, designs, diagrams, instruction manuals, blueprints, electronic artwork, samples, devices, demonstrations, formulae, know-how, intellectual property, information concerning materials, marketing and business information generally, financial information that may include remuneration detail, pay slips, information relating to human capital and employment contract, employment conditions, ledgers, income and expenditures, and other materials of whatever description in which the NWU has an interest in being kept confidential; and

1.1.2 "Commencement Date" means the date of signature of this undertaking by myself.

1.2 The headings of clauses are intended for convenience only and shall not affect the interpretation of this undertaking.

2 Preamble

2.1 In performing certain duties requested by the NWU, I will have access to certain Confidential Information provided by the NWU in order to perform the said duties and I agree that it must be kept confidential.

EDITING CERTIFICATE



Management Consultants

60 Baviaanspoort Road East Lynne

Pretoria. 0186 South Africa

Cell Phone: +27 71 027 7389

(Email: doctormagaisa@gmail.com

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30 January 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: EDITING CERTIFICATE FOR MOTLALEPULA ZIPHORA ROSHO: STUDENT NO: 17122988

This serves to confirm that I Dr. Gibbet Murambiwa Magaisa holder of a PhD in Business Management obtained at Aldersgate University, Philippines, has done the language editing for a Master of Administration Dissertation by Motlalepula Ziphora Rosho: Student No: 17122988 of North-West University entitled: “Examining Community Perceptions: A Participatory Development Communication Study on the Establishment of JB Marks Local Municipality.”



G.M. MAGAISA (PhD)

TANATSWA CONSULTING

CC

GATEKEEPER LETTER



GATEKEEPER LETTER

Dear JB Marks Local Municipality/Office of The Executive Mayor

My name is ***Motlalepula Ziphora Rosho*** and I am currently beginning a research project for ***my Magister Artium in Communication*** at ***North-West University***.

I am writing to ask for permission to be allowed access to your mailing list/database to seek research participants for a focus group and/or individual interviews. This should take not more than a week and can be conducted at a convenient time and date to be arranged by your good office.

All answers and results from the research are kept strictly confidential and the results will be reported in a research paper available to all participants on completion. If this is possible, kindly e-mail me at mzrosho@gmail.com to confirm that you are willing to allow me access to the required information.

Thank you and I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Motlalepula Ziphora Rosho

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESEARCHERS

This code of conduct is applicable to all NWU researchers.

As a researcher of the North-West University (NWU), I subscribe to the rules of the NWU Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (RERC), all applicable policies of the NWU as well as all national and international laws and regulations applicable to my field of study. Furthermore, I commit myself to abide by the ethical principles and responsibilities as set out in the Singapore statement on Research Integrity (22 September 2010), in any and all research endeavours that I undertake as a researcher of the NWU.

The four major principles of research integrity to which I will adhere and that will guide my research are:

- Honesty in all aspects of research
- Accountability in the conduct of research
- Professional courtesy and fairness in working with others
- Good stewardship of research on behalf of others

Consequently I will also adhere to the following ethical responsibilities:

1. I will take responsibility for the originality and trustworthiness of my research.

2. I will stay abreast of and adhere to all institutional, national, and international laws, regulations, and policies applicable and related to my research.

3. I will at all times employ appropriate research methods, base my conclusions on critical analysis of the evidence and report my findings and interpretations fully and objectively.

4. I will keep clear and accurate records of all research that I have conducted in a manner that will allow verification and replication of my work by others, if applicable.

5. I will, where applicable, share my data and findings openly and promptly, in line with external funding rules. This will be done as soon as possible after I have had an opportunity to establish priority and ownership claims.

6. I will take responsibility for my own contributions to publications, funding applications, reports and other representations of my research. I will also and only include authors who meet valid authorship criteria.

7. I will acknowledge the names and roles of those who made significant contributions to my research in publications, including writers, funders, sponsors, and others, but do not meet authorship criteria.

8. In my peer reviews, I will provide fair, prompt and rigorous evaluations and I will respect confidentiality when I review others' work.

9. I will disclose all conflicts of interest (financial and other) that could compromise the trustworthiness of my work in research proposals, publications, public communications, and in review activities.

10. When I publically address a community in the spirit of academic freedom, I will in all stages base my professional comments on research findings (if applicable) and my expertise. I will distinguish between professional comments and opinions based on personal views.

11. Should any irresponsible research practices and/or research misconduct become known to me or brought under my attention, I will report such irresponsible research activities to the appropriate authorities.

12. I will respond to irresponsible research practices or conduct, by taking prompt actions as set out in the procedures of the university. I will also protect those who report misconduct in good faith, to the best of my abilities.

13. I will endeavour to create and sustain an environment that encourage research integrity through education of students, research teams and peers, as well as abide by policies, and reasonable standards for advancement.

14. I will at all times weigh societal benefits against the risks inherent in my work.

Motlalepula Ziphora Rosho	*Original Signed*	09 October 2022
Name:	Signature:	Date: