The use of public participatory communication channels for effective interaction with communities in Mahikeng local municipality

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DECLARATION

By submitting this full dissertation, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the authorship and owner thereof (unless explicitly stated otherwise) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any other qualification.

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Signature

Mr Monei Oria Monei

……

Date

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This letter serves to confirm and acknowledge that this research study titled; **THE USE OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY WITHIN MAHIKENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY,** by **MONEI ORIA MONEI,** has been proofread and edited by LifeMark Consulting.

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ABSTRACT

This is a study that sought to understand the way in which government entities communicate with regards to the service delivery in this case in the context of local governments. The aim of the study sought to explore the way in which public participatory communication channels were used and to what extend were effective with communities in the Mahikeng Local Municipality. The study was guided by three objectives which were: examination of the extent to which public participatory communication channels were used, assessing the effectiveness of the channels used in the context of service delivery and proposing effective communication and efficient communication channels for the motive of improving service delivery. The aim of the study was to explore the use of public participatory communication channels for effective interaction with communities in Mahikeng local municipality.

The study used a mixed research methodology in undertaking its aims and objectives. Due to the methodology data was collected through face-to-face interviews and questionnaires. The study was premised on the participatory communication theory which understands communication in the context of local government and public participation through the lenses of participatory communication theory. Participatory communication theory is one the relatively young theories to emerge in the field of communication and require the buy-in of the public in the decision-making processes.

The study established that service delivery is a challenging issue in the context of South African local government and the use of effective communication processes can greatly enhance the provision of quality services to the residents of municipalities. This study has established that community engagements undertaken by the local municipality are not being effective as the needs and contributions of the public are not seriously being taken into consideration. There is increasing fatigue of the public to take part in municipal engagements as there is a feeling that they are just a charade earmarked to just be public relations opportunities for politicians.

The study concluded by stating that there is the need for political willingness to abide by the spirit of democracy and Ubuntu which are the cornerstone of this country. Communication systems should be designed and undertaken in a manner that

provides opportunities for two-way interactions and the views of the public being seriously taken into consideration.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Communication is an important aspect in the operations of organisations and institutions. In the business world were the activities and operations are done in a split of a second, communication becomes the glue that holds the institution and its stakeholders (Karácsony & Bokor, 2021: 116). Communication plays an important role or in other words is the way by which the exchange of ideas and transmission of messages is ensured (Ranaut, 2018: 33). Communication is not only important in the private business world but also important in the government for the citizens have every right to know the operations and whatever developments will be taking place within the government and all its levels (Salieva, 2020: 72).

The thrust of this study is to establish the value of communication in the context of local government operations with regards to service delivery. There have been few researches which focused on government communication systems worse still in the context of South Africa which includes Taherdoost (2016) and Tengan and Aigbavboa (2017). It is the background from which this study is built from. Service delivery is a very big and thorny issue in the South African political and public administration. South Africa almost on a day-to-day basis faces protest by residents over poor service delivery (Mamokhere, 2019). Based on the background provided above, it is essential to explore the use of communication in enhancing service delivery in planning institution. Municipalities use different communication platforms to engage with the public; however, this study focuses on *Imbizos,* media (radio and televised broadcasting), and social media (websites, Twitter and Facebook).

The lack of adequate communication between different stakeholders does not only compromise development and service delivery, but it also weakens trust between the stakeholders which to a larger extent results in project failures (World Bank, 2009). Without effective communication, municipalities usually fail at their role of informing communities, mainly because the municipalities are not able to scan the external environment to identify threats and opportunities as they lack information. Furthermore, Commins (2007:1) observed that failure of services is not just technical

but is also a result of a lack of engagement of different sectors such as the public, private, and non-profit organizations.

Local government is required to clearly identify local development needs and opportunities as well as to plan a response to these (Masiya, Davids & Mangai, 2019). Each local municipality is mandated by law to come up with a people driven and centred Integrated Development Plan (IDP) which spells out the vision and projects that have to be undertaken for the benefit of the community. Participatory communication in the context of service delivery can enable community members to identify their basic service needs and participate during implementation, thus improving their skills and generating their livelihoods (Masuku & Jili, 2019). In addition, participatory communication is of importance during evaluation and monitoring of project implementation which contributes towards the sustainability of developmental matters, (Jimoh & Van Wyk, 2014).

The study proposes to examine the extent and level to which the participatory communication is existent and utilised in the context of Mahikeng Local Municipality with regards to service delivery.

1.2 Background of the Study

The ushering of the new democratic dispensation in South Africa in the year 1994 brought with it the need for a local government system that is anchored by the participation of everyone (Bvuma & Joseph, 2019). The new system entailed that the general population provides their own input in terms of what they intend to see with regards to service delivery and infrastructural development (Ndevu, 2019). The key highlight of this new democratic dispensation in the local government system has been the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) which carries the inputs of the public pertaining the plan envisioned by the residents of a municipality (Abrahams, 2018).

The participation of the residents is crucial in the current local government structure. When the municipality is undertaking the formulation of the IDP it is by law (the Municipal System Act (2000), and the Municipal Structures Act (1998)) required that the residents of the municipality take part through public meetings and ensure that their aspirations are captured (de Visser, 2019). The collaboration between the local municipality and the residents is important not only for the formulation of the IDP, but

also for the continuous assessment and evaluation of the performance in relation to the targets set in the IDP document (Kraai, Holtzhausen & Malan, 2017).

Despite the introduction of the IDP's service delivery issues have remained a challenge and as has been mentioned before, South African local municipalities continuously face service delivery protest almost on a day-to-day basis (Garcia-Zamor, 2019). However, most municipalities are faced with challenges to foster participation and buy-in of stakeholders (Einstein, Palmer & Glick, 2019). It has been also observed that municipalities are struggling with the issues of engaging stakeholders in the process of service provision (Pahl-Wostl, 2019).

da Cruz, Rode and McQuarrie (2019) state that the public is generally not interested in taking part in consultative meetings and other collaborative communication initiatives by the municipalities. This has naturally resulted in service delivery protests, disintegration of projects which are geared towards developing infrastructure and delivering services (Falco & Kleinhans, 2019).

It is also imperative to provide a brief background about Mahikeng Local Municipality which is the focus area of the study. The area is known as the Mafikeng Local Municipality (NW 383). Formerly known as Mafikeng, Mahikeng Local Municipality is situated in the North West Province and is 25 kilometres south of the Botswana Border (Mahikeng Local Municipality, 2021). It is the Capital City of the North West Province and used to be known as the City Council of Mahikeng. The Municipality is a considerably big local Municipality as compared to other four local Municipalities located within the area of jurisdiction of Ngaka Modiri-Molema District Municipality. Those neighbouring local Municipalities which border the Ngaka Modiri-Molema District Municipality are: Ramotsere Moiloa Local Municipality, Tswaing Local Municipality, Ditsobotla Local Municipality and Ratlou Local Municipality (Mahikeng Local Municipality, 2021).

The total area of the Mahikeng Local Municipality is approximately 3 703 km. It is divided into 28 wards consisting of 102 Villages and Suburbs. The population of the Municipality is estimated at 271 501 people. Approximately 75% of the area is rural. The rural areas are in the southern and western part of the Municipality and are under Tribal control.

Mahikeng Local Municipality like other local Municipalities was brought about by the new Local Government transformation in South Africa. Mahikeng Local Municipality is a Category B Municipality established in terms of Section 12 of the Municipal Structures Act. The Municipality has adopted the Executive Mayoral system which entails concentration of executive authority in the hands of the Executive Mayor. It is as system wherein the Executive Mayor, assisted by the Mayoral Committee and its administration, led by the Municipal Manager, executes the mandate of Council and the electorate (Mahikeng Local Municipality, 2021).

Its rich and diverse history dates back to 1852, when the town was founded, then in 1899 to 1902 during the Anglo-Boer War, as well as the Mafikeng Siege. Its town is home to the Mahikeng Museum, with its antique steel ceiling, old town clock, Sol Plaatje's history, and display of rock species. The Mahikeng Airport, situated 5km west of the Mmabatho Central Business District (CBD), boasts a landing strip of 4.6km, one of the longest runways in the world (Mahikeng Local Municipality, 2021). The municipality covers an area of approximately 3 646km² and includes major cities and towns such as Mahikeng, Mmabatho, Ottoshoop. Figure 1 below, shows the study area. The study focuses on selected wards within Mahikeng Local Municipality which is located in Ngaka Modiri Malema District Municipality as shown on the map below.

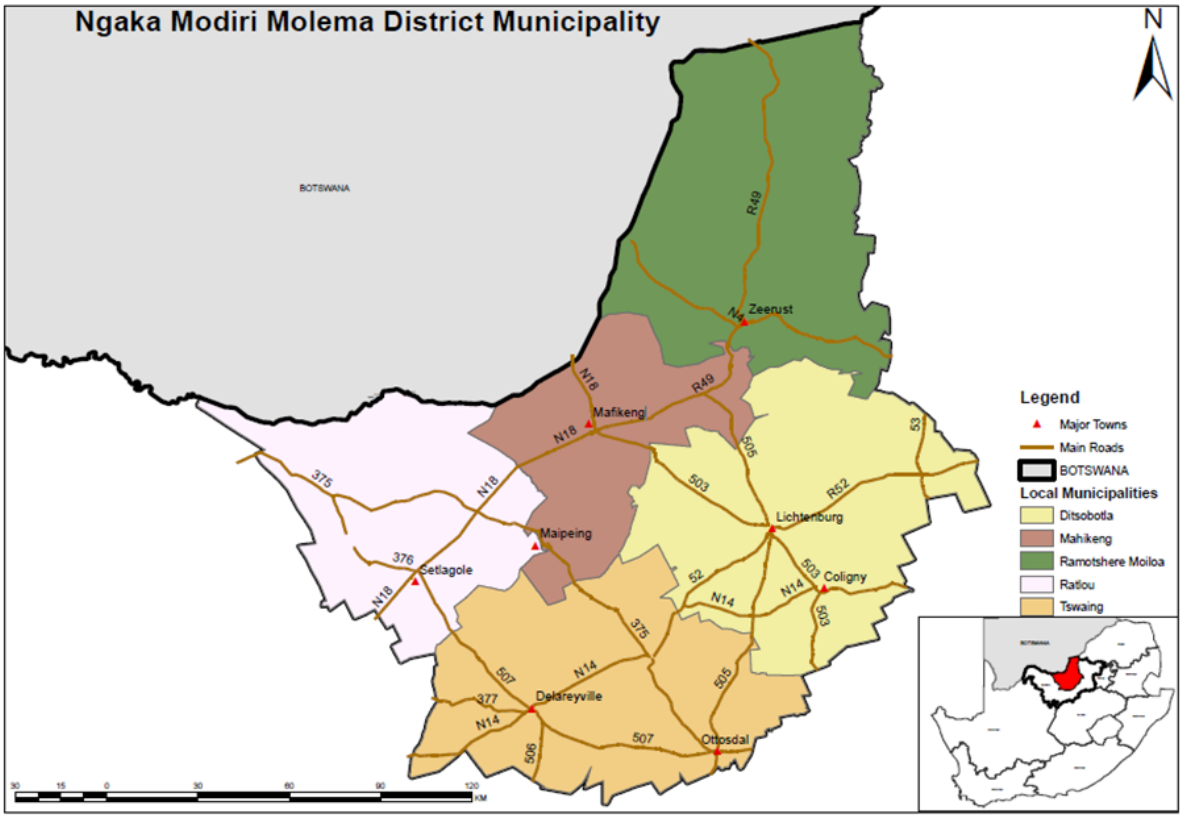

Figure 1: The geographic scope of Mahikeng Local Municipality within Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality

Source: Edited by Author 2017, from Mahikeng Local Municipality IDP, 2017

Evaluating the use of communication in the process of delivering services is critical. The study aims to develop a strategy for public engagement and internal municipal communication framework. This will help municipalities to understand opportunities and constraints of utilizing communication as a tool to deliver services to its residents. Exploring methods for engaging stakeholders in the process of service delivery adds to the body of academic knowledge, which in turn help other researchers who wish to conduct related studies in the same field. The research proposes viable recommendations which Mahikeng Local Municipality can utilize in order to improve communication, firstly within the municipality's organizational structures as well as between the municipality and the community it serves.

1.3 Problem Statement

Mahikeng Local Municipality like many of the South African local municipalities is constantly faced by service delivery protests and poor infrastructure in communities

that are located within the municipality (Mahikeng Local Municipality, 2021). Service delivery protests have increased since 2017 with the most intense one being municipal wide protest that engulfed the whole city in 2018 (Mahikeng Mail, 2019). Service delivery protests are a clear indication of the breakdown of effective communication channels between the municipal authority and its residents (Falco & Kleinhans, 2019). If there are effective participative communication structures, one can argue that service delivery protests will be something that will be rare to take place, which is not the case in the context of Mahikeng Local Municipality.

Given this background it is imperative to understand the communication systems employed by the Mahikeng Local Municipality, critically examine and see how best it is effective in helping the institution to deal with its core business that is providing public services. Another crucial point to also put into consideration is that there is no study undertaken looking at the communication system aspect of the municipality. This does not only focus on Mahikeng municipality only but applies to the rest of the municipalities.

There is extensive literature on public participation in the local government level and its lack thereof (Mofolo, 2016, Nyalunga, 2016 and Phooko, 2014), with only Sebola (2017) being the only one (according to this study) with current research on communication systems and their effective use and contribution in local government operations management.

Given the foregoing, a question that remains unanswered is:

"How are public participatory communication channels for effective interaction with communities used in Mahikeng local municipality?"

1.4. Aim of the Study

The study aims to explore *the use of public participatory communication channels for effective interaction with communities in Mahikeng local municipality*.

1.4.1 Research Objectives

- Examine the extent of public participatory communication channels used by the municipality in the process of service provision to the communities
- Assess the effectiveness of the participatory communication channels utilized by the Mahikeng Local Municipality in promoting service delivery.

- To propose effective and efficient communication engagement channels between the government and communities in the process of service provision.

1.5. General Research Question

The present study's main research question is: *"how are public participatory communication channels for effective interaction with communities used in Mahikeng local municipality?*"

1.5.1 Research Questions

- To what extent are public participatory communication channels used by the municipality in the process of service provision to the communities?
- What type of participatory communication channels utilized by the Mahikeng Local Municipality in promoting service delivery?
- Which are the effective and efficient communication engagement channels between the government and communities in the process of service provision?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study explores the use of different communication tools used by Mahikeng Local Municipality to address service delivery issues of the residents. According to Swanepoel and de Beer (2006:28) people are mobilised by development agencies and government to participate in development efforts and projects. It is therefore fundamental that there should be a clear understanding of what constitutes communication and which strategies are relevant in improving service.

It is further important to conduct this study to establish how far the municipality's participation processes align with communication strategies and tools used by the municipality. Furthermore, it is critical to understand how the community itself perceive their role in participation and what they consider as appropriate communication channels and processes that the municipality should adopt in the process of addressing their challenges.

This study will contribute to the growth of literature on the critical role of communication in local government processes. As has been mentioned above, there's little information existing that is focused on the role of communication and local government

operations in the context of service delivery. The study will seek to not only influence the Mahikeng Local Municipality but other local municipalities and local government policy makers in terms of understanding the subject matter of effective communication in the context of ensuring the participation of the citizens.

1.7 Study Layout

Chapter One:	This chapter provides background into the study; it touches on the relationship between communication, participation, service delivery, and participatory communication. It highlights the focus of the study and discusses the critical problem that underpins this study, its research questions and objectives, theoretical framework and preliminary review of literature, methodological orientation, ethical considerations as well as research limitations.
Chapter Two:	This chapter provides a synopsis of the available relevant literature relating to communication in the form of public participation and the role it plays in service delivery and public participation. Furthermore, the chapter lays a foundation for better understanding of the context of the study, including the theories and models that underpin the study.
Chapter Three:	This chapter provides the guideline and description of the research methodology aligned with achieving the study's aim. This chapter links objectives to the type of research data collection instrument that were be used to achieve the said objectives.
Chapter Four:	This chapter presents an analysis of the collected data as well as the results yielded from the analysis. The data was presented as objectively and completely as possible for each of the research questions provided in chapter one.
Chapter Five:	This chapter presents the discussion and major conclusions of the study. A discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the study, as well as the researcher's view of how the results should be used, together with suggestions for further research were presented in this chapter.

Chapter Six:	The chapter provides a final conclusion of the study, but also indicate areas for future research.

1.8 Chapter Summary

The present chapter introduced the research concerns of government communication, public participation and service delivery in Mahikeng Local Municipality. The chapter discusses the critical problem in question. The next chapter focuses on the gaps in the existing literature and places the present study within the theoretical context of the global perspectives.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a snapshot structural foundation of what the study is all about and how the study will be carried out. The research title, objectives and aim were all provided in chapter 1. The thrust of this section is on the discussion of the existing literature on the subject matter. The chapter will provide a theoretical framework that provides and explains the foundational theory from which the study will build from. Key discussions will focus on defining key terms and concepts together with providing key gap areas and arguments that the study would have established. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section being on theoretical framework and the second section on the literature review.

Section 1

2.2 Theoretical Framework

A research study has to be built from a theory that the influences the way in which the research views reality. Theories provide the foundational basis of shaping a perspective and the way in which people view reality (Braidotti, 2019: 32). There are a number of communication theories which all seek to explain and provide a framework from which to understand the communication processes as a whole. Each theory views communication from a unique point of view and it is the prerogative of the researcher to identify an appropriate theory that best explains the subject matter under research.

2.3 Participatory Communication Theory

The study understands communication in the context of local government and public participation through the lenses of participatory communication theory. Participatory communication theory is one the relatively young theories to emerge in the field of communication and has been extensively used in the programming of development projects which require the buy-in of the public in the decision-making processes (Mutyala, 2019: 46).

Participatory communication is a concept that entails the theory and practices of communication adopted to include the public in the decision-making process of a development project or program (Jacobson & Garlic, 2021). At the crust and core of the existence participatory communication as a theoretical framework of designing a communication system is the importance of the participation of the public and all involved stakeholders in the making of decisions (Mutyala, 2019). Scholars such as Paulo Freire (1979) and others made use of participatory communication theory in studying interpersonal interaction and community development processes (Van der Waldt, 2010). Since then, the need to use participatory communication model in project planning and academic conceptualisation has increased substantially (Molale, 2014).

Participatory communication theory values the critical nature of the uniqueness and identity of the participants of the community (Gbadago, 2020). Freire (1983: 76) refers to this as the right of all people to individually and collectively speak their word: “This is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every individual. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone nor can he say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words”. It points to a strategy, not merely inclusive of, but largely emanating from, the traditional “receivers” as key stakeholders in the decision-making process (Blumler, 2015).

Participatory communication theory came into prominence during the 1950-60 largely due to the work of Daniel Lerner an American scholar on development that brought it into limelight in 1958 through a research study of communication and development (Turmudi, 2019). Another key development highlight of the concept had to do with. Wilbur Schramm’s 1964 study on the role of media for national development, communication researchers assumed that the introduction of media and certain types of educational, political, and economic information into a social system could transform individuals and societies from traditional to modern (Ngai, 2017).

2.4 Participatory Communication Theory Approaches

Participatory communication theory has a structured logical process that is guided by a rational and systematic framework. The theory is also inclusive of two approaches propounded by different scholars in explaining participatory communication. There is the dialogical pedagogy propounded by Paulo Freire (1970; 1973; 1983; 1994), and

the second involves the ideas of access, participation, and self-management propounded by UNESCO debates of the 1970s (Berrigan 1977; 1979). In spite of wide acceptance of these principles of democratic communication in participatory communication projects, there exists today a wide variety of practical experiences and intentions (Igbe, 2021). The two approaches will be explained in detail below.

2.4.1 Freire's Dialogical Pedagogy

According to this approach, subjugated individuals must be treated as fully human subjects in any political and development process as their input is valid based on basic understanding of human rights (Gadotti, 2017). This implies dialogical communication. Communication in which all parties concerned do have a stake and a right to speak out their views in the decision-making process. At the crust of this approach, is the theological belief of autonomous of personhood of each human being and demands respecting for otherness in this case that of another human being (Waisbord, 2020).

According to Freire, individual opportunity and contribution is not important in comparison to collective aspect of decision-making processes (Gadotti, 2017). It is imperative to note that such a view is highly unpopular by politicians and public administrators in most parts of the world especially in countries where democracy is still to be more matured and stronger (Fernández-Aballí Altamirano, 2020). One demerit with Freire's approach is that it focuses much on the dialogical communication which largely applicable in a group meeting setting scenario (Guilherme, 2021). The theory does not provide room for communication tools such as radio, television and print. The theory is also allocating little focus and attention on the aspect of language which is a critical aspect or the form and structure of communication and tends to focus on the intentions of communication actions (Peruzzo, 2020).

2.4.2 Access, Participation & Self-Management in UNESCO Discourse

The UNESCO discourse is the second aspect of the approaches within the participatory communication theory. The UNESCO discourse on language about access, participation, and self-management stemmed from a 1977 meeting in Belgrade (Servaes & Malikhao, 2020). The discourse provided key operational working definitions for the key terms that were the focus area in conceptualising and structuring participatory communication. The UNESCO discourse was done from a

social impact and development aspect which sought to provide a clear framework from which development practitioners could reference from in structuring their development programmes (Swarnawati, 2018).

The term "*access"* was defined as the utilisation of media (in all its forms) for public service (Swarnawati, 2018). The term "*access"* according to the UNESCO discourse was defined also as the potential opportunities at the disposal of public to select from and use guaranteeing means of feedback. The second concept being "participation" was conceptualised as higher level of public involvement in communication systems than mere access (Yemer, 2020). According to the discourse perspective of the term participation is beyond mere representation but is inclusive of robust debates, consultations and engagements that are organic and binding (Turmudi, 2019). The third and final concept is the "*self-management*" is the most advanced form of participation. In this case, the public exercises the power of decision-making within communication enterprises and is also fully involved in the formulation of communication policies and plans (Swarnawati, 2018).

The UNESCO discourse stated that access and participation of the community members were the key factors. The discourse valued the importance of community media which the community has access to it for community relevant information (Swarnawati, 2018).

2.5 Section Summary

Section 2 Literature Review

2.6 Communication and Service Delivery in South Africa

Communication is an important aspect in the management of local government operations. The legal instruments that govern the operations and the way municipalities have to be managed clearly specify the communication requirements and standards that are supposed to be implemented (Sebola, 2017).From the Constitution and local government legislative provisions it becomes apparently clear that public involvement in governments' affair is mandated for the benefit of the general public and relevant institutions to exercise and express their constitutional

rights to be well informed and participate (Mofolo, 2016). The purpose of public participation is to ensure that stakeholders affected by public authority's decision have a right to be consulted and contribute to such decision (Sebola, 2017).

According to Booth (2009:43), any development that takes place within a municipality has to be communicated to the local community through accessible media. The communication is supposed to be made in line with the demands of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. Municipalities have a myriad of communication tools to choose from in terms of providing real time updates and development to the general community. Local newspapers and radio stations are low hanging fruits that are effective in communicating effectively (Sprain, 2017). The Municipal Systems Act also demands that municipalities communicate in an official language that is clearly understood in the particular community (Booth, 2009). In addition to this a copy of every notice that must be published in the Provincial Gazette or the media in terms of this Act or any other applicable legislation, must be displayed at the municipal offices.

It is also trite to state that when a local municipality invites the public to submit representations or comments on any subject matter, it must be stated that if the individual cannot write should come to the municipal offices during working hours to register the comments and an official should transcribe the comments (Booth, 2009). Manthwa and Ntsoane (2018) observed that the processes are just but relevant on paper only rather than being practically implemented. The scholars' further states that a majority of the municipalities prefer to undertake things at last minute basis which is devoid of proper communication channels and in many cases being largely reactionary especially when the community had been striking.

According to Aklilu, Belete and Moyo (2014), residents of municipalities have their constitutionally given rights which they are entitled to utilise and maximise on when it comes to providing critical input in the decision-making processes on things that have to do with their community. Maphazi, et al. (2013) observed that local communities with vibrant and strong participation levels in the affairs of their local community tend to be achieving more socio-economic milestones in comparisons to those who are not engaged. Therefore, the concept of communication and service delivery to the public has the influence on policy development and implementation through participation;

while government's role is to implement the policy and development initiatives based on the public views (Mothepu, Lekonyane & Van Jaarsveldt, 2015).

2.7. Principles of Communication and Participation

According to Al-Kodmany (2020), communities are mobilised by the government and all its entities constantly and non- profit organisations to participate in the development projects that will be taking place in the community. Phooko (2014) observed that the community should not be mobilised to a limited, prescribed, or token extent but whatever public participation initiative should be organic. The critical point being the community participates; the participation should be in all the facets of the project. From the planning to the finished product and handing over stage, the community should be part and parcel of the whole project life cycle. To do this, there is the need to abide by the principles of communication and participation. The following are the identified principles of communication and participation explained in detail:

2.7.1 Principle 1: Learning and Development Through Communication Systems

Public participation processes should ensure that a culture of learning and growth is cultivated (Tazin & Yaakop, 2018). This culture should be beneficial to both parties that is the leadership and authorities of the local government or government and the general public. It is imperative that both parties contribute to the development of mutual respect and understanding of all stakeholders with respect to their values, interests, rights and obligations (Tazin & Yaakop, 2018).

During the processes it is also important to engage in conflicting perspectives and values and by all means the parties concerned should be able to reach general acceptance of the proposal toward a decision that promotes and supports sustainable development should be pursued, (Gamil, & Rahman, 2017). It is imperative to incorporate, communication systems, in the learning and developing processes of local government developments projects.

2.7.2 Principle 2: Selecting Appropriate Participants and Representation

It is imperative to choose an appropriate group of participants which is both representative and inclusive of all the socio-economic and demographic profile of the community (Nyalunga, 2016). Outreach initiatives must be conducted from a basis of

a genuinely democratic leadership that provides the platform for everyone to participate and communicate (Gamil, & Rahman, 2017). It becomes very irrelevant if the choice of participants does not match the correct data and the services to be rendered. It is also important to note that proper participants must be chosen to deal with a specific challenge or to provide the people with the appropriate service (Gamil, & Rahman, 2017).

2.7.3 Principle 3: Accountability and Communication Systems

Accountability and communication systems must be structured in such a way that best serves the people with regards to fulfilment of agreed ideas by both parties the facilitators and the communities involved. This requires good record-keeping and reporting of both processes and outcomes reached at the meetings or mediation platforms involved, (Swanepoel and de Beer, 2006:28). It is essential to mediate between communications and putting in place systems that guarantee that people's needs and requirements are met. This can be done if measures to supervise and ensure that when those who are supposed to deliver are held accountable for their errors, shortcomings and under delivering tendencies, (Lesia, L. 2011).

2.7.4: Principle 4: Accessibility and Communicative Participation

Accessibility is very important so that no participant is excluded due of lack or absence thereof of physical access to meeting places, timing, language, appropriate support or lack of access to any other communication systems platforms. All the parties involved should be well versed with the rules, structure and procedures of the participation process (Gamil, & Rahman, 2017). The benefit will be evidenced by the improved credibility of the process for all involved. A public participation undertaking and communication protocol should occur at the most appropriate level of decision-making for instance at the policy planning level (Manthwa & Ntsoane, 2018).

2.7.5 Principle 5: Credible and Rigorous Communication Procedures

Public participation process should abide by clearly identified ethics for its credibility. Ethical considerations should be inclusive of the personnel used to facilitate the meeting and how impartial and fair will they likely be (Tazin & Yaakop, 2018). The greatest challenge municipalities are facing across the world is poor service delivery due to a number of factors, one such factor is lack of credible and rigorous

communication procedures to alert the public of state of affairs and get ideas on how to address issues. Local governments sometimes misrepresent situations to the public in order to avoid conflicts and strikes which in actual fact are normally successfully short-term but has dire long-term consequences.

2.8 Global Context of Government Communication Systems and Service Delivery

It is imperative for a study from a global aspect understand the dynamics of a subject matter in other countries. This provides gaps and areas of reflection that can be used to deal with a local context.

2.8.1 International case study: Communication and Engagement in the Budget Formulation in Brazil

The most common aspect that attracts the most attendance and participation in the Brazilian local government operations is the budgeting planning process (Funk & Philips, 2019). The thrust and core focus area of participatory budgeting process is to address severe disparities in the living standard of the city residents, by bringing these residents on board during participatory processes (Gilman & Wampler, 2020). Under this budget initiative, it is conducted every year and all the residents from all the socio-economic backgrounds are by law supposed to be involved.

The city of Porto Alegre in Brazil is a popular local government authority that is well known for its genuine participatory processes. The participation of the public in the budgeting processes started in the municipality of Porto Alegre, the capital of Brazil's southernmost state, Rio Grande do Sul, in 1989 (Leduka 2009:4). The trend stemmed from the brainchild idea of the Workers' Party, which was a political party that won the 1988 the mayor and outright control of the Porto Alegre and had campaigned on a platform to reverse the practice of spending more resources in the affluent suburbs of the city while neglecting the poorer neighbourhoods (Leduka 2009:4).

From January the budgeting cycle is kick-started and by March there will be plenary discussions and public meetings grouped amongst thematic areas of sport, education, health and environment among others (Su, 2017). The motive of the plenary meetings is to get an appreciation of the needs that each ward and district have for further interrogation and budget estimations (Bocatto & Perez-de-Toledo, 2019).

After the first plenary discussions that take place in the first half of the year, the second regional plenary meetings take place from the month of August going into the year (Su, 2017). These meetings start from the regions and each region send delegations to the combined local government meetings where the full council meetings are held and budgets voted after careful and robust analyses of the needs and the resources at the disposal of the municipality (Calisto-Friant, 2019). The regional representatives have to push for the needs and demands of their areas and the full council has to make decisions that are in the best interests of all the communities.

The budgets are less likely controversial since there is an intentional and genuine process that is done from the start to the finish signalling that it's a people centred process (Bocatto & Perez-de-Toledo, 2019). The communities are likely to get the services they would have requested for, largely due to the fact that the budgeting process would have been opened for them and it is an effective two-way communication street between the residents and the municipality (Bocatto & Perez-de-Toledo, 2019).

2.8.2 International Case Study from Developing Countries: A Case Mexico

Mexico provides an interesting case study of government communication systems use in the context service delivery in local governments. It is trite to mention that the Mexico into states and each state is further sub-divided into municipalities which are in possession of executive powers and autonomous (Staudt, 2019). Mexico has put in place a system that involves an election commissioner doing background checks on the elected council members with much emphasis being the mayor if necessary and sufficient engagements with the community (Silvonen, 2021).

In the event that there is no proof of adequate community engagement undertaken, the electoral commissioner can potentially disqualify the mayor-elect (Silvonen, 2021). Due to this system framework, there has been extensive priority of community engagements by the political leadership with their communities to understand their needs and feedback (Silvonen, 2021).

Effective communication among government leader, civil servants and communities plays vital role in improvement service delivery processes as far as execution of their core mandate is concerned. This phenomenon is sometimes overlooked by local

government in the country which leads to associated problems of service delivery protests and destruction of property leading to under-utilization of communication channels in Mexico (Zárate-Toledo, Patiño & Fraga, 2019).

Surveys in Mexico have showed that even though there has been advancement in technology oral communication dominates the mode of information delivery in communities requiring communities to be directly communicated with through mass meeting, gathering and other direct conversation platforms rather than using other communication platforms (Zárate-Toledo, Patiño & Fraga, 2019). It was again found out that information flow has almost always been downward from the top hierarchy to subordinates in Mexico. This has led to recent discoveries by renounced researcher in the country to advocate for various ways of improving effective communication for quality service delivery in rural areas of Mexico in order to improve service delivery protocols in the country (de San, 2019).

2.9 Regional Context of Communication in the Context of Service Delivery

In order to understand municipal service delivery and the use of communication in the form of public participation, it is also imperative to take notes from other regional peers within Africa. A number of case studies are available that seeks to show how communication systems can be used to promote effective service delivery within the local government entities.

2.9.1 Kenya

Kenya provides a good place to start with. The country prioritises the public participation in all local government processes. The growth and penetration of the internet within the African continent has as of recent helped the communication processes between the public and the local government authorities in Kenya. There is extensive use of social media and community radios that seek to effect social change in the socio-economic development of communities and politicians being

According to Lee (2017), the local municipality equivalent in the Kenya is known as a county government which is responsible for the socio-economic development of a specific demarcated area. An interesting case study is found in the Nakuru County in convening citizens for political discussion and collective action around County

government affairs through the use of social media tools and community media in the form of community newspapers and radio (Jairo, 2018).

Over the years, Kenya has progressively shifted from a centralized to a decentralized form of governance. This paradigm shift was due to the shortfalls that are often characteristic of highly centralized government systems. Through this shift, more power and influence has been legally been mandated to the public to ensure that their influence is incorporated in the decision-making processes. The counties are mandated to communicate and continuously engage with the community during decision making processes (Kimathi, 2017).

2.9.2 Ghana

In the context of Ghana, the country has made great stride in improving service delivery and at the same time eradicating corruption. This was made possible through implementation of effective communication systems such as the introduction of information technology in most local government offices across the country (Tengan & Aigbavboa, 2017). Government undertook a survey which gathered the key insights from the public on what was ought to take place in the management of local governments (Tengan & Aigbavboa, 2017).

Asante (2020), states that Ghana is in possession of laws on local government being mandated to be as inclusive as much as possible with regards to the information dissemination as much as possible. Local government authorities are required to communicate by the most effective means within their localities pertaining every critical development taking place (Asante, 2020). In rural local authorities there is the use of public meetings to engage the people and in the urban areas there is extensive use information communication tools due to the digital divide (Ile & Boad, 2018).

2.10 Policies and Legislation Relevant to Communication and Service delivery in Local Government

South Africa since 1994 at the inception of the democratic dispensation, democracy is the cornerstone of the government. The right to participation and information access constitutionally mandated rights that every individual has every right to enjoy (Hungwe, 2017). Participatory communication has some of its aspect covered within the existing South African legislative instruments. The following are the legal instruments that deal

with participatory communication in the context of local government for the motive of improved service delivery:

2.10.1 Constitution of South Africa, No. 108 of 1996

Section 151(1) (e) 152 and 195 (e) of The Constitution mandates local municipal authorities to ensure that there is extensive public involvement in all the decision-making processes that have an impact upon the development and well-being of the local community. The relevance of The Constitution in service provision to local communities, community organisations, and the public in general should be actively encouraged through formal processes such as public hearings.

2.10.2 Municipal systems Act No 32 of 2000

The Municipal Systems Act No 32 is the most detailed act with regards to the regularisation of local government operations (Hove & Osunkunle, 2020). Local municipalities are mandated to ensure that there is high level participation of the community. The local municipality is mandated to communicate each and every development taking place within the community using the most appropriate language that is common and inclusive in the area (McLaverty, 2017).

Section 5 of the Act provides a detailed expression of the public role in contributing to the decision-making processes. The act states that the municipality should be in a position of engaging and receptive of the views and demands of the people in a civil manner as enshrined by the law. One can argue that if municipalities would just implement the demands of the law there would be fewer occurrences of service delivery protests as there would be clear continuous lines of communication (Hofisi & Pooe, 2017).

2.10.3 National Policy Framework for Public Participation of 2007

The Draft National Policy Framework for Public Participation (2005:1) states that the South African government is committed to a form of participation which is genuinely empowering, and not manipulative. This involves a range of activities including creating democratic representative structures (ward committees), assisting those structures to plan at a local level (community-based planning), implementing and monitoring those plans using a range of working groups and community-based

organisations, supporting community-based services, as well as supporting these local structures through a team of community development workers. Once this has been formulated, service delivery is essentially made possible and the public will feel encouraged to be part of all developmental matters for the municipality.

2.10.4 Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act of 2013

This is an act that seeks to regulate one of the most important municipal activities which is land use planning. It is important to note that within such a highly technical activity also requires the contribution of every resident (Ababio & Asmah-Andoh, 2017). Section 1 of the Act stipulates that a municipality should come up with a 20-year Spatial Development Framework (SDF) which should be in line with the municipal IDP and should be reviewed every five years (Abrahams, 2018). With the formulation of the SDF, it is required that the views of the community be factored in the document and any land use plan communicated to the residents who should be given the chance to provide their comments on the development before it is passed (Abrahams, 2018).

2.11 Communication Tools and Systems

In undertaking the communication processes of a municipality, it is imperative to state that there are a variety of communication tools that are effective in their own rights in the communication processes (Oyero et al., 2018). Below are a number of identified communication engagement tools are discussed:

2.11.1. Social media

The emergence and growth explosion of social media networks has created a plethora of platforms for the facilitation and communication of information and ideas about service delivery in developed countries something which developing countries are supposed to adopt and implement as soon as yesterday (Hrůzová & Hrůza, 2021). One of the positive effects that social media had on communication systems is that it has allowed the municipalities to easily and instantaneously communicate to the communities which are supposed to be served, (Kim & Hastak 2018).

In the modern day communicating through the social media is the most effective and faster way of communicating that is able to reach people on the go. It is encouraging to note that a majority if not all local municipalities in South Africa have social media

handles where they communicate all the important information and the residents are able to comment and have their feedback received by the municipality (Pavlova, 2018). The researcher being from the Mahikeng area is privy to a building that was meant to become hardware next to mall and was not a good convenient. Due to social media, the residents made their views known forcing the municipality to act and the construction of the hardware was stopped.

2.11.2 Websites

In the 21st century, the seriousness of any organisation is evidenced by the existence of a website. Websites have become the digital welcome sign board that brings tells the story of the institution (Gil-Garcia, Dawes & Pardo, 2018). Websites provides a real time on the go information to the residents who would have visited the site.

2.11.3 Community Engagement Forums/Indabas

This is a traditional communication method that involved the residents of an area coming together to discuss their concerns. It remains the most effective communication that provides the platform for effective communication (Preece, 2017). In the context of local municipalities during the formulation of the IDP document, authorities are mandated to have meetings with the people to have their input.

These are traditional methods of engagement and communication which to some extent helped to understand problems and challenges of the people especially those with difficulties in communication or who couldn't utilise technologically advanced skills and methods. Nonetheless the method also has its limitations such as time consumptions as other people can come to the meetings then demand another time to be set so that their needs can be addressed. It is though this type of communication that ward committee meetings are undertaking which are very important to the participation dynamics in local municipality (Sebeco, 2019).

2.12 Challenges of Poor and Ineffective Communication Systems

There are many challenges that arise to hinder effective communication systems, and these may occur at any stage in the communication process. Challenges may lead to the flow of information being distorted and affecting the effective utilisation of time and causing misunderstandings and confusion. It is the premise of fffective communication

to ensure that communication hurdles are removed and information achieves its intended objectives.

2.12.1 Lack of an Effective Communication Plan

Effective communication requires forethought, especially when the target is an executive community that you don't regularly speak to ensuring that your messages get through, you need to put them in a context that matters to the executive, (Hagen et al., 2018). To do that well, one need to be able to see things from their perspective, not yours. While communication starts at the top, it is often a case of relying on grapevines to spread the word as the message is filtered down.

Lack of clarity creates inconsistencies, and people begin to assume meaning and relay incorrect information, (Hagen, et al., 2018). Although the information and the message which needs to be communicated might be perfect more often than not if given or passed to the wrong group of people then the information can be lost out rightly.

2.12.2 Poorly Structured Content

Without correct context and organisation, the community will misinterpret a message intended to reach the community. With more political leaders at the municipalities, it is not a surprise most of communities protest post-election victories as politicians poorly structure messages and over promise people services they cannot afford to fulfil. This challenge in communication systems often leads to service delivery disputes and massive community strikes. When communities are given information that is distorted more often than not retaliate and cause far worse damage to infrastructure than is anticipated by government officials (Makoni, 2018).

2.12.3 Over-relying on Technology to Disseminate Messages

Technological advancement is very critical and excellent to communicate with communities. The use of emails and intranet are faceless communication channels which depend on other mediums to convey and relay messages, (DePaula, Dincelli, & Harrison, 2018). It is often a bigger challenge when technology fails to directly transmit a message and messes up the direct message which ends up causing more problems than anticipated, (DePaula, Dincelli, & Harrison, 2018).

2.12.4 Cultural Barriers

Cultural barriers shape the way we think and behave. It can be seen as both shaping and being shaped by our established patterns of communication. Cultural barriers to communication often arise when individuals in one social group have development different norms, values, or behaviours to individuals associated with another group. Cultural differences lead to difference in interest, knowledge, value and tradition. Therefore, people of different cultures will experience these culture factors as a barrier to communicate with each other, (Menon, 2000).

2.13 Dialogue and Praxis in the Context of Participatory Development

The world as we know it is dialogic. Any reality that is constructed only through monologue such and such is real because I think or feel that it is lacks verification. Monologue is not 'truth-making'. Only dialogue externalises, expresses itself socially, because in dialogue there is not just me, there is always another, there is always a you. So it is that we gain access to reality through shared language and through the verbally inherited frames of reference which constitute knowledge. All being that we encounter is presented linguistically (Nicholson, 1991).

Dialogue is the first stage of developing a community that supports common interests and goals. Dialogue does not require a pre-determined agenda or a desired outcome. Engaging in dialogue simply helps to focus on a particular issue or concern that requires further input from a community Dialogue can occur in assemblies of people with shared interests, affinities, or goals. Dialogue can also occur in spaces where people convene for reasons of dissatisfaction or confusion or tension. Both shared frustration or desire are useful for engaging people in dialogue and further action (Warburton, 2018).

The core of dialogue is that people speak for themselves about their own truths, realities, experiences, and knowledge. Yet, this is not always easy. Speaking with others about our beliefs, values, and principles requires trust. There is risk involved and these risks must be addressed intentionally. Participants must thoughtfully create safe spaces that establish openness to sharing ideas and welcoming difference of opinion. Such security usually requires the recognition that power exists between

individuals and in groups. Power exists because of age, status, title, experience and other identity traits that are either valued or devalued in a community (Toots, 2019).

Power cannot be taken out of the dialogue situation, but it can be addressed. To do so we can begin by simply acknowledging that who we are influences how we see the world, how others see us and how others view our contributions and influence. Many of the assumptions that people make may not be true, but they will affect our encounters with each other. In effective dialogue, all contributors must be open to adjusting their assumptions about others and even altering the usual arrangements of power (Warburton, 2018).

2.14 Chapter Summary

This chapter looked at the linkages in literatures regarding the effectiveness of communication system on service delivery in local government institutions using Mahikeng Municipality as a case study. The chapter looked closely at the theories and case studies which were explained in detail to place the study from a wider lens and perspective. The study also looked at the literature gaps on previous and existing studies on the use of communication systems to improve service delivery in local municipalities. The next chapter is on research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a review of the literature on the subject matter. The chapter provided a discussion on the theoretical approach that shapes and provide a foundational perspective that guides the study. The thrust of this chapter is to discuss the methodological dynamics of undertaking the research. The chapter will discuss the issues of the research methodology, design and data collection.

3.2 Research Methodology

Research methodology is defined as the systematic process of structuring the procedures with regards to the collection of data (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). In research, the methodology section allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability (Dodds & Hess, 2020). There three key research methodologies in the research world which are qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methodology.

Shank (2004:5) observed that qualitative research is one way or the other a structured form of an empirical investigation into meaning which elaborates elements more than they are described on the surface. It can be concluded that the qualitative paradigm is inclusive of identifying the research participants' perceptions that are the basis that a phenomenon is built from. Qualitative research is prone to creating new concepts and emphasises constructing theoretical interpretations by the researcher (Neuman, 2011:15). Quantitative research methodology on the other hand is defined as a research methodology is mainly used to get an understanding of an idea from a statistical perspective (Nayak & Singh, 2021). Mixed research methodology is the combination of the two where the weaknesses inherently in each of the other methodologies (Bairagi & Munot, 2019).

In the context of this study, a mixed research methodology was adopted which is a combination of the two research methodologies. A mixed research methodology which is also termed as triangulation adopts the use of both quantitative and

qualitative methodologies in a study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:109). The benefit of using mixed methods research is that the weaknesses and strengths in each approach complements the other when used together and the study become more significant and systematic (Ivankova, Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2016:330).

Mixed research methodology provides a basis of a researcher gaining more insight and information from the use of both methods rather than the use of standalone quantitative and qualitative methods (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The use of mixed methodology in research entails the use of triangulation which is making sense of both the qualitative and quantitative data. The study findings upon appropriate and proper triangulation of the data are more valid and applicable as the use of mixed methodology offsets the weaknesses inherently found in each of the methodologies (Opoku, Ahmed & Akotia, 2016).

3.3. Research Design

According to Dannels (2018) a research design is defined as the structured manner in which research is conditioned to undertake the collection and analysis of data in the context of meeting the aim and objectives of the study. A research design provides detailed information pertaining the dynamics involved in carrying out a study. Monette (2008) cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002:143) conceptualise research design as the process by which a researcher's perspective for the purpose of a particular study is outlined and espoused with regards to how the study will be carried out.

The study adopted a descriptive research design in order to provide a full status quo of the communication challenges between the municipality and community in the process of service provision. According to Kothari (2004:08), a descriptive research design is designed to describe specific behaviour as it occurs in the environment.

Descriptive studies provide a fertile ground for the realization of high-quality data that is crucial in the study coming up with recommendations, for example an improvement in the communication processes to enhance service provision. It is trite to state that the research design is also linked to qualitative data, such as the type of narrative data collected in a case study, may be organized into patterns that emerge, or it may be

classified in some way, but requires more detailed analysis (Sahin & Mete, 2021). The research design was again adopted to provide a narrative of whether the communication tools used by the municipality are appropriate to address the needs of the residents. Therefore, the research approach as described below will be qualitative in order to link the research design to the research approach utilized.

3.4 Sampling and Population

This section provides the discussion of the recruitment of the participants who took part in the study and the methods used for their selection.

3.4.1 Population

Population is conceptualised as term that denotes the total number of variables within a specific environment or location with a defined boundary (Etikan & Babtope, 2019). The study area, after filtering all the unnecessary respondents, was found to have a total of 84 239 households as per the 2011 census. These comprised of the total population from which the researcher drew a sample from.

3.4.1 Sampling

Sampling is defined as a structured process of selecting participants from the pool of the general population (Taherdoost, 2016). In research terms, a sample is a defined as group of people, objects, or items that is recruited from a larger population for measurement and contribution of their opinions on a subject matter. The sample should be representative of the population to ensure that we can generalise the findings from the research sample to the population as a whole. A sample being a representative of the greater population facilitates the researcher to observe the variables in an efficient manner and collecting field data which is relevant to achieve the intended study objectives.

3.4.2 Stratified Random Sampling Method

According to Neumann (2003), “in statistics, stratified sampling is a method of sampling from a population which can be partitioned into subpopulations”. In statistical surveys, when sub-populations within an overall population vary, it could be advantageous to sample each subpopulation independently, (NEAH 2014). Proportional stratified random sampling method was used to select samples from the

population of different households in Mahikeng Local Municipality which had a total household population of 84 239. The sample for each selected ward was then derived using the Neumann`s formula, which is:

$$\text{sample size per study location} = \frac{total\ household\ population\ in\ ward\ 1}{total\ household\ population\ in\ 5\ selected\ wards\ in\ MLM} \times 385$$

$$\text{sample size of Mahikeng LM} = \frac{2523}{11042} \times 385 = 88$$

3.5 Data Collection

Primary data was collected from within Mahikeng Local Municipality using Key Informant Interviews (KII) and questionnaires which were administered to respondents, as well as field observations. These instruments played an important role in collecting valuable primary data from municipal officials, specifically the members of the Technical Services department who answered the questionnaire to fulfil the aim and objectives of the research. The researcher to further triangulate the data and strengthen the arguments conducted interviews with key informants within Mahikeng Local Municipality, and then administered a questionnaire to household heads.

3.5.1 Rational for Informants' Interviews and the Information Required

There are two key informants that have been identified for selection for this study. These are the Director of Technical Services Directorate and the Director of Communication Department as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Key Informants and Information Required

Municipal Department	Key informant selected	Key information required	Linkage to research objectives	Location of access required data
1. Department of Technical Services	Director of Technical Services	• Budget required for	Implications of poor communicatio	• Mahikeng LM

		technical services. • Total budget backlogs in service provision to communities. • Methods used to engage with stakeholders in service provision.	n on the technical provision of services.	
2. Communications Department	Director of Communications	• Methods used to engage with stakeholders. • Frequency of engagement with the stakeholders • The ways of communication that the municipalities have in place to communicate to communities.	This determines the role the Department plays in communicating with stakeholders such as the community.	• Mahikeng LM

Source: Author's construct, 2017

Table 3.2 shows that the Director of Technical Services was selected as an interviewee in order to understand how the department is affected by poor communication and integration with other departments in the process of providing services to residents. It is assumed that the municipality faces challenges in service provision, but little is known about how this has been influenced by poor communication. The Director of Communication was also chosen as an interviewee to provide clear insights into the role the department is playing in fostering communication and participation between the municipality and the community. This directorate also provided insight into the methods used to engage different stakeholders in the process of providing these stakeholders with services.

3.5.2 Administration of questionnaires to respondents

Questionnaires were designed and disseminated to the respondents in prearranged and selected locations in Mahikeng Local Municipality. However, the set of questionnaires that were disseminated to household heads contained closed questions for easy responses from the interviewees as well tabulating in the atlas programme which was used to process collected data.

3.5.3 Administration of Questionnaires to Respondents

Based on the National Education Association Handbook (2014), the formula for calculating sample size, 385 questionnaires were distributed to respondents (see Appendix A). The wards were used as strata to which households were selected from and household heads were used as respondents. The questionnaires were proportionally distributed across the study area based on Neumann`s (2003) formula shown above. The use if the wards as strata was to try and strike a balance on the disproportional populations in the wards and eliminate bias and over representation in some wards that in others.

Table 3.1 below shows the distribution of questionnaires in different locations and categories of municipal consumers within the municipality:

Name of ward	No of households	NQD	%NQD	NQR	%NQR

1. Ward 1	2 523	88	23%	80	21%
2. Ward 2	2 338	82	21%	78	20%
3. Ward 3	2 693	94	24%	94	24%
4. Ward 4	2 593	90	23%	85	22%
5. Ward 5	895	31	8%	30	7%
Total	**11 042**	**385**	**100%**	367	100%

Source: Authors Field Data 2015, Statistics South Africa 2011

Table 3.1 shows how questionnaires were disseminated in different wards of Mahikeng Local Municipality. The wards were chosen from a pool of both rural and urban set up which were then selected proportionally throughout the selected wards within Mahikeng Local Municipality. The distribution of questionnaires was done in such a way that each ward received a proportional number of questionnaires from the total sampling frames to enhance the objectivity of results. This method was utilized as it meant to balance the household heads selected in each and every ward within the local municipality.

3.5.4 Secondary Data Collection Methods

Secondary data which is confined to the use of communication was sourced from both published and unpublished secondary sources such as books by different authors. These books helped the researcher to understand how the use of communication in the form of public participation and other communication platforms (media, IT, meetings) affects service delivery in the selected wards in Mahikeng Local Municipality

from an international, regional, and local context. Already published researches on the same field communication systems and local governments were also consulted to try and find the gaps in literature which was discussed in Chapter two of this study. The gaps helped the researcher to refine the study objectives and the aim as well as create proper research instruments especially data collection tools that matched the correct data to answer the research questions.

Cartographic and aerial maps of a scale of between 1:3000 and 1:5000 was used to identify areas that could be selected for the distribution of the questionnaires to household heads. This data assisted not only in locating the study area and the wards, but also in illustrating the physiography and demographic characteristics of the focus areas and the households in the five wards in which the questionnaires were administered. Most of the maps that were used, particularly those that illustrate the study area boundaries, were accessed online from the Municipal Demarcations Board.

3.6 Data Analysis

The study accumulated and analysed data through the adoption of qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. The premise of using both quantitative and qualitative data analyses was on the basis of marrying data from primary (field) and secondary (published) sources. The data was processed, edited, coded where necessary, and presented in the form of tables, cross tabulation, bar graphs and pictures, then comprehensively described and explained.

3.6.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data was analysed and interpreted using qualitative analytical tools such as thematic content analysis in order to discover meaningful patterns that are descriptive of the level of communication use by the selected five wards that fall within the Mahikeng Local Municipality.

3.6.2 Deductive Data Analysis

Deductive analysis is explained by Hammond and Wellington (2013) as a structured step-by-step methodology which influences the way in which collected data is analysed and organised to present it in a manner that is flowing and effective. Therefore, in the context of this research, deductive analysis was utilised for the basis

of identifying commonalities and differences from the gathered data. The merits of the deductive analysis approach are that it provides the capacity to save time and effectively using resources whilst undertaking a study (Hammond & Wellington, 2013).

Deductive data analysis technique was similarly utilized to compare the impact of poor communication on the part of the municipality in the process of providing services. Aerial and field work photographs were then made use of in order to collect relevant primary data pertinent to the subject of study. Observations were resolutely and selectively done to gather data necessary for the study. It is assumed that the community requires services such as street lighting, an efficient refuse removal system, clean water, and electricity to enable them to participate when engaged by the municipality. Therefore, the field observations and surveys were conducted, and photographs taken in order to check the quality-of-service provision to the residents.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained an Ethical Clearance letter from the North-West University. The researcher also had an obligation to seek the respondents' permission to conduct the study. Additionally, the respondents were provided with sufficient information to make informed decisions on whether they wished to participate in the study or not. This encouraged the respondents to provide their views without fear or prejudice on the subject matter which led to objectivity of the research results. The outcomes of the research were reported fairly and accurately and made available for academic purposes and any other critical situation that may be necessary for the development of society and the municipality at large.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the research methodologies that were used by the study and the justification thereof for the basis of choosing each particular aspect. The chapter provided the core aspect of a study which entails how research was conducted and has a bearing on the reliability and credibility of the study findings. The next chapter provides a discussion on the findings of the study both from a quantitative and qualitative form.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The thrust of this chapter is on the discussion of the findings gathered by the study from the interviews and questionnaires used as the data collection tools of the research study. In this chapter, considering that the study was a mixed methodology inspired, the chapter will provide the data findings in both qualitative and quantitative nature. The chapter will use triangulation to find common points and marry the two different data sets together.

4.2 Demographic Analysis

Section A of the questionnaire and the interview guide was solely aimed at extracting the demographic profile of the participants of the study. It was of paramount importance in this research to discuss and establish the demographic composition of its participants. Demographic information constitutes independent variables that are devoid of manipulation because it is factual information provided by the participants.

According to Lee and Schuele (2010), demographic was derived from Greek words for people (demos) and picture (graphy) to refer to particular characteristics of a population. These characteristics include age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, income, education, home ownership, sexual orientation, marital status, family size and health and disability status (Lee & Schuele, 2010).

Critical to this study were the age, gender, income level and level of education. These independent variables need to be statistically and qualitatively examined to assess the potential if they have a meaning on the participants' views on communication processes in the context of public participation in local government operations.

4.2.1 Age

The age variable was critical to establish in this study. Age is a critical component and variable that has an impact with regards to shaping the views and perceptions of participants (Igwe & Chukwu, 2016: 130). A 20-year-old is likely to have a different view to that of an 80-year-old participant on the same thing (Igwe & Chukwu, 2016:

130). The table below shows the age aspect of the demographic profile in a greater detail:

		Frequency	Per cent
Age	18-20 years	4	3%
	21-30 years	36	30%
	31-40 years	57	47%
	41-50 years	18	15%
	51-60 years	7	5%
	Total	**122**	**100%**

Figure 1: Age [Source: Field data] (2021)

From the table above the study established that the majority of the participants were between 31- 40 years who accounted for 47 % of the total participants. Including all the age groups less than 40 years the study had close 80% of its participant being youthful was an interesting aspect for the researcher. The age demographics aspect is sync with the general age dynamics available in the area. According to Statistics South Africa (2020), Mahikeng Local Municipality population dynamics are as follows: 29, 6% for the 0-14 years age group, the working age (15-64) 64,3% and elderly (65+) accounting for 6,2%.

The majority of the participants have the potential of possessing incredible experience of understanding the nature of communication processes in the context of the local government public participation. It is therefore unsurprising for the study to have the majority of its participants being drawn in the 30 years and upwards considering the already provided demographic profile of the community.

4.2.2 Level of Education

The study also sought to understand the level of education each participant had managed to acquire in his/her life. It is critical for a study to understand and establish the level of education of its participants. The level of education of the participants is critical to research as education has the propensity of shaping the views and perceptions of an individual (Singal, et al., 2015). The level of education in a study like this is crucial as it has the capacity to provide rational contributions for the study especially with regards to understanding communication processes and aspects such as the IDP (McLaverty, 2017). One would assume that the more educated the participants in a study, the more the critical and reliable the insight and data the study

will have. The level of education dynamics inherent in this study is provided in the table below:

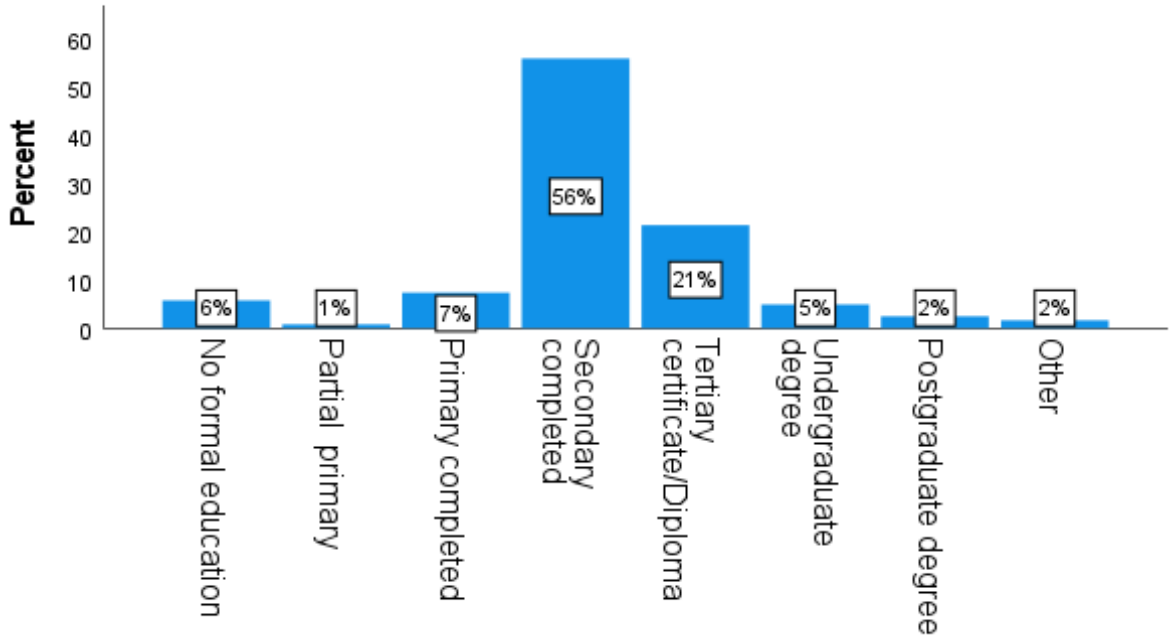

Figure 2: Level of education [Source: Field data] (2021)

From the graph above, it can be established that the majority of the participants in this study were in possession of basic education qualifications. A total of 84% of the participants are in possession of basic education qualification from the minimum qualification of Matric qualification up to tertiary level. This was a good trend for the study as the majority of the participants were in possession of basic education qualification which makes it easier for communication in as much as reading and writing is concerned with regards to the questionnaires and interviews (Reidy, Orpinas & Davis, 2012: 780).

4.2.3 Level of Income

The level of income of the participants in a study is an important demographic aspect that requires analysis. Income level of an individual is an indicator of the socio-economic bracket one belongs to and has a propensity to shape the views and perceptions of an individual on a subject matter. A person with a higher level of income is likely to reside in the low-density suburb where services are likely to be provided by

the municipality whereas a person with a low-income level will most likely stay in a low-income area which in most cases is not prioritised by the local municipalities when it comes to service delivery (Abramson, Garfield & Redlener, 2007).

If one asks the two different people who hail from two different sets and levels of income, their perceptions of the service delivery and the way in which the local municipality operates might actually be different. It is therefore imperative to understand the impact income level has on the information a study will be influenced and informed from (Mendelson, Sheridan & Clary, 2021). The level of income dynamics in the study is provided for by the table below:

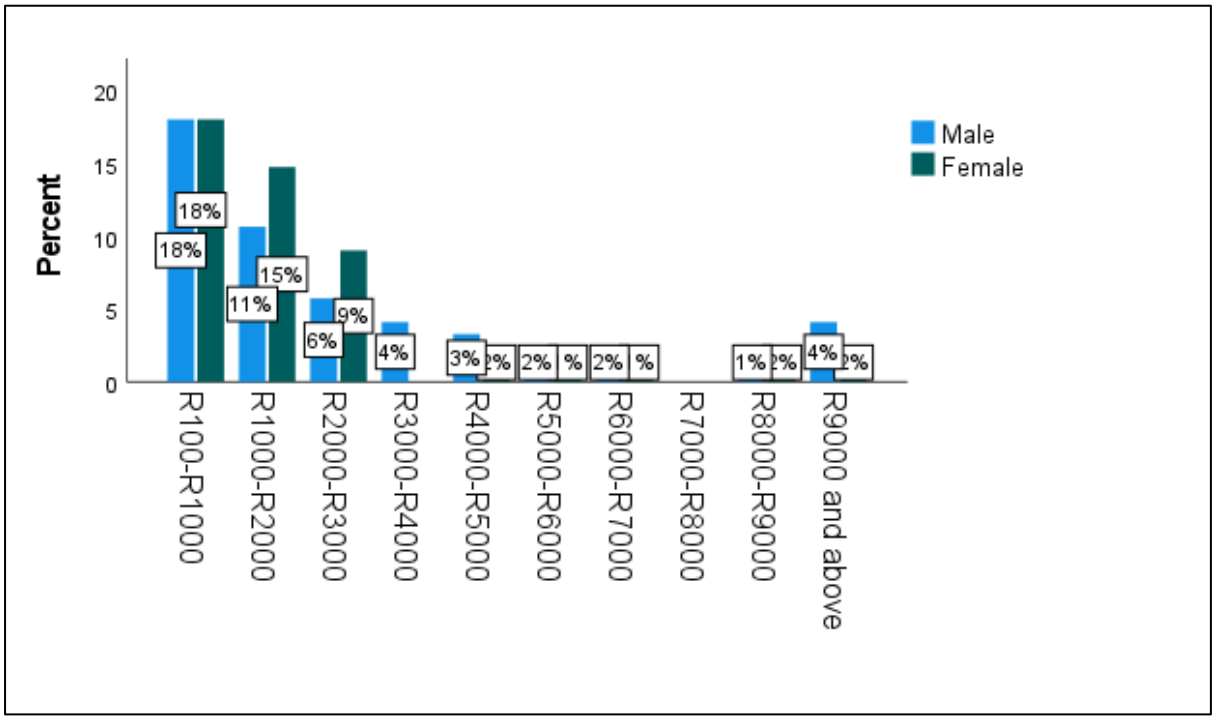

Figure 3: Level of income [Source: Field data] (2021)

From the table, the study established that the majority of the participants who took part in this study are largely from low-income thresholds and are also in many cases residing in low income areas. This is interesting to note considering that these are the people who will likely provide a more realistic appreciation of Mahikeng Local Municipality on the basis that they are not prioritised based on their income levels and the areas where they will likely reside (Juta & Olutade, 2021).

4.2.4 Gender and Race

Gender and race are important variables in a study as they provide another interesting dimension for one to understand a perceptive (Mars, 2018). The table below provides the gender and racial dynamics involved in the study:

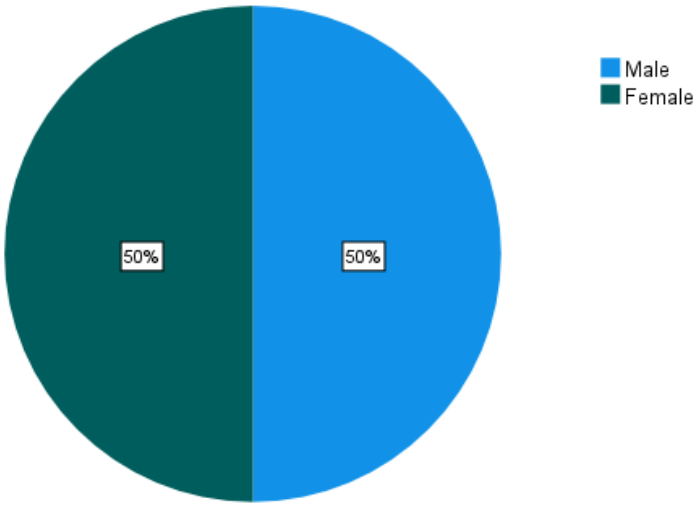

Figure 4: Gender [Source: Field data]

		Frequency	Per cent
Race	Coloured	25	21%
	Black African	94	77%
	White & Others	3	3%
	Total	**122**	**100%**

Figure 5: Race [Source: Field data] (2021)

An interesting trend is that the study had 50-50 in terms of the gender dynamics of the study. The researcher had anticipated a trend in which the study was going to have more females rather than their male counterparts considering that according to Statistics South Africa (2020) which states the local municipality has 55 % of its population accounted for by females. From a racial point of view, the dynamics in the study are in sync with the population dynamics inherent in the local municipality. The area is predominantly black African, followed by the coloureds and the white other races such as the Indians (Mahikeng Local Municipality, 2020).

4.3 Communication Systems Used by Mahikeng Local Municipality

Section B of the questionnaire and the interview guide sough to find the methods of communication the Mahikeng Local Municipality used in the communication processes. Establishing the methods and tools used is paramount to then build from there in assessing the tools and methods used by the municipality. Below are the sub-section findings based on section B of the data collection tools used:

4.3.1 Means of Communication used by Mahikeng Local Municipality

The study sought to understand the methods and tools used by the Mahikeng Local Municipality (MLM) in communicating service delivery issues with its residents. The diagram below provides a summative idea of the responses of the participants.

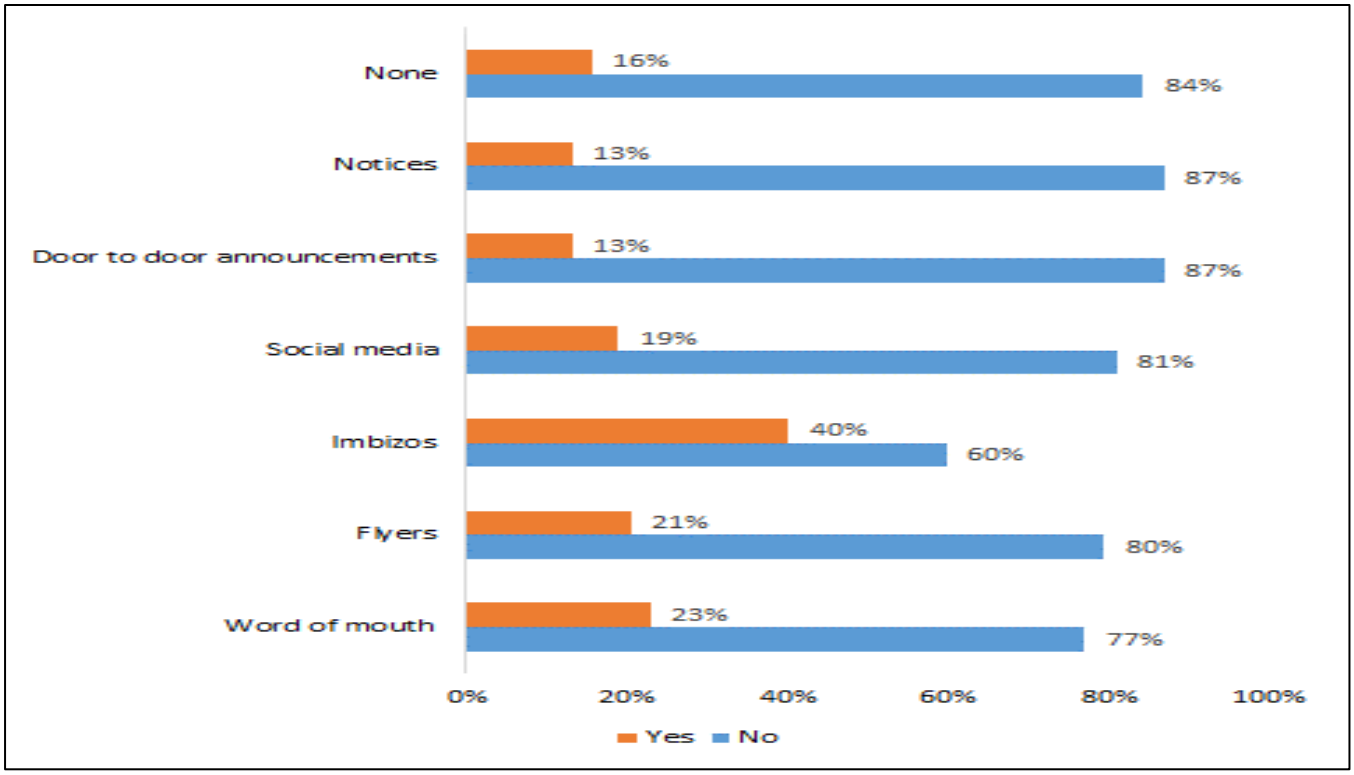

Figure 6: Means of communication [Source: Field data] (2021)

From the graph above, the majority of the participants alluded to the fact that the most common means of communication they had communicated with the municipality had been the door-to-door announcements, social media, flyers and notices. A good thing about the trend established from the responses of the participants is the fact that Mahikeng Local Municipality seems to be using a combination of traditional and modern communication tools. Imbizos which are time-consuming and structured

meeting have the highest number in terms of the No answer and might likely has to do with the time factor it takes to be engaged in proper community meetings. This is likely the case considering that from an age factor the majority of the participants are generally young and the age range being largely mobile and busy engaged with their individual work commitments as identified in the study by Rondinelli (2017).

4.3.2 Effectiveness of Means of Communication

After having identified the means of communication used by the municipality and the trends on the part of the participants, the study sought to understand the views of the participants with regards to the effectiveness of the means of communication. This being both a quantitative and qualitative question, the following are both the quantitative and qualitative responses accrued from the responses from the participants:

From a quantitative aspect, the majority of the participants felt that their means of communication they had used in their communication were effective. The table below provides diagrammatical evidence:

		Frequency	**Per cent**
Effectiveness of means of communication	**No**	54	44%
	Yes	69	56%
	Total	**122**	**100%**

Figure 7: Effectiveness of means of communication [Source: Field data] (2021)

From a qualitative aspect, the following are the responses provided by the participants:

> *"They all have both advantages and disadvantages….however imbizo meetings are difficult to conduct considering that people are very busy and generally less interested in municipal affairs due to political fatigue." [Participant 22]*

Another participant had this to say:

> *"I find social media effective as it provides two-way kind of communication and convenient considering that people are very mobile and busy to sit down and engage in a meeting." [Participant 102]*

Participant 59 had this to say:

> *"I find Imbizo meeting effective on the basis that the views of the community tend to be factored in and the municipal officers can see and feel our feelings on certain issues." [Participant 59]*

Participant 89 stated the following:

> *"I measure effectiveness based on the number of people reached, I find social media very effective because people can comment their views and the municipality can take note and take the required action." [Participant 89]*

Participant 56 had this to say:

> *"Social media and imbizo meetings at least provide two-way communication and they can reach a lot of people I find them effective." [Participant 56]*

From the responses provided for by the participants one can conclude that effectiveness is a difficult aspect to measure as all the means of communication have both advantages and disadvantages. From the responses of the participants effectiveness of any means of communication is premised on the number of people it can reach at the same time providing two-way communication and this is collaborated by Sebola (2017).

4.3.3 Frequency of Communication Processes

The study sought to understand the frequency of communication between the participants and the municipality. Frequency in communication is an important aspect

as it allows for the stakeholders concerned to be in the loop of the developments taking place. According to the Municipal Systems Act, local municipalities are mandated to communicate religiously and constantly with their constituency. The graphical presentation below provides the trend identified from the participants' response:

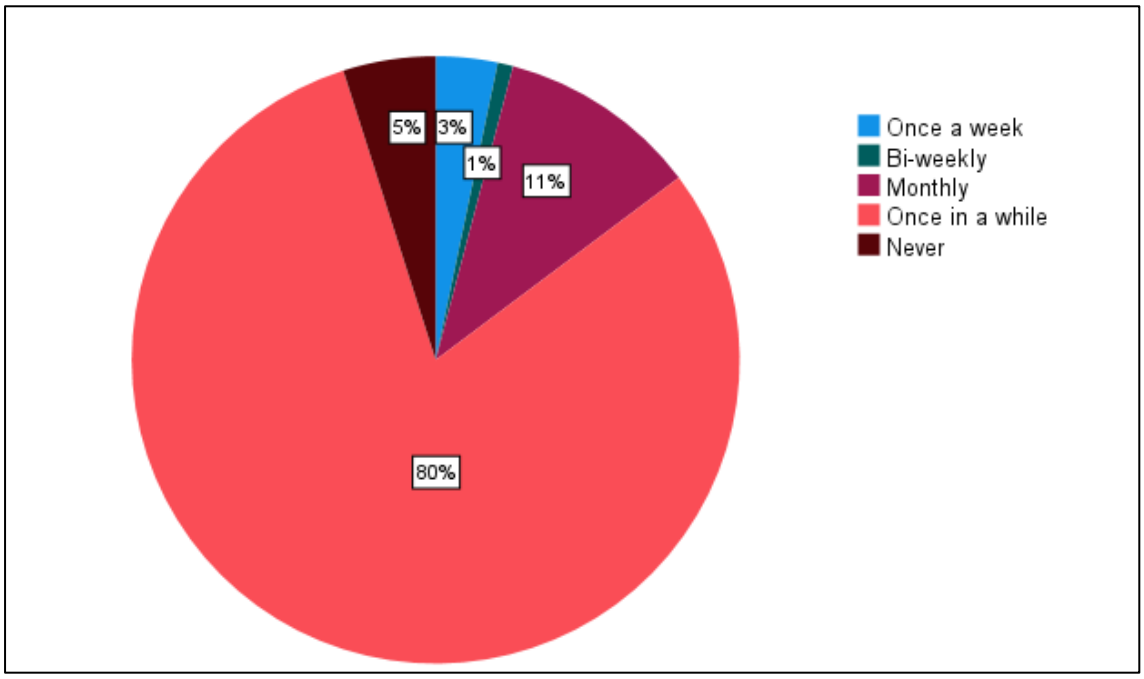

Figure 8: ***Frequency of communication: [Source: Field data] (2021)***

This was rather shocking trend on the part of the researcher considering that close over 80% of the participants had alluded to the fact that they use social media. One would assume that social media considering its convenience, it therefore increases the frequency of communication but that is not the case in this study. It is therefore imperative to understand why such a trend exists could it be that the participants are not eager to engage with their municipality or that the municipality itself does not constantly engage with its constituency.

The study also sought to establish the frequency of attendance of meetings on the part of the participants. The study observed that the majority of the participants were in the "sometimes" bracket. The chart below provides the breakdown of the responses.

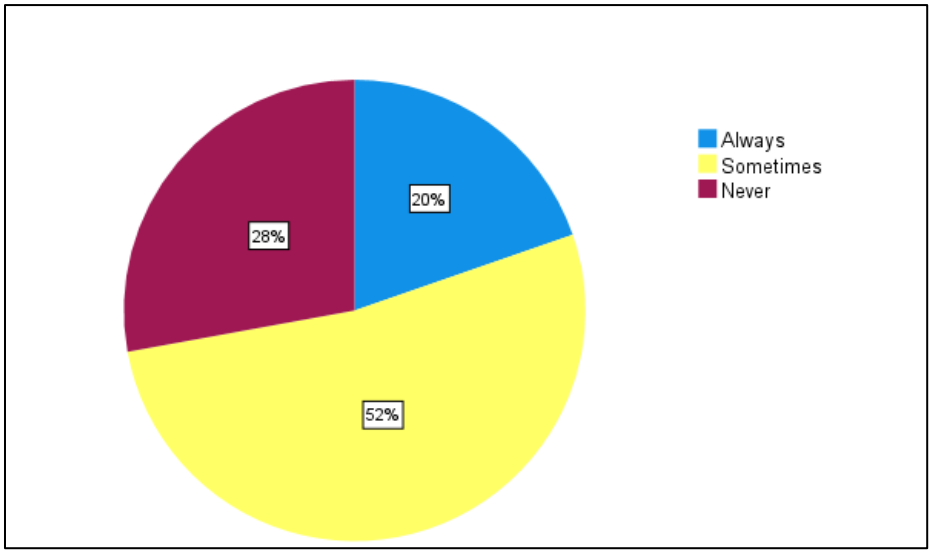

Figure 8b: How often do you attend community meetings regarding development matters? (Source: Field data) (2021)

The researcher sought to understand the existence of the trend from the interviews which provided opportunities to ask further questions. The following are the interview responses provided for by the participants:

A communication official from the municipality had this to say:

> *"On our part we communicate at least three time per week on social media and weakly through notices in the local newspaper and once per week as well through a radio programme on a local community radio station." [Participant 120]*

From this response of the municipality, it showed that the municipality is communicated very consistently through a number of platforms. This is also collaborated by Gosego (2021) who states that the local municipality communicates constantly but the residents might not be quantify it as communication on their part on the basis that they might not provide their feedback.

One of the participants had this to say:

> *"The local municipality might be communicating constantly on my part I am really not bothered as I engage when I feel like it and have been in access with their (MLM) communication." [Participant 97]*

Participant 67 had this to say:

> *"Providing notices in the paper and a radio program in as much as it counts as communication on the part of the municipality, to us (residents) it's not because the ability for two-way communication will be non-existent hence it won't be meaningful communication on my part." [Participant 67]*

From the two responses and many others not provided, as a researcher I would be tempted to conclude that that the frequency of communication on the part of the municipality is there, however the problem could be on how effective the communication is. The participants seem to be less interested in the communications provided for by the local municipality. It could be that the communication produced by the municipality is not engaging enough to be attractive on the part of the participants or that it could be due to political fatigue that the residents have as observed by Gosego (2021).

4.4 Mahikeng Local Municipality Communication Policy & Implementation

Section C of the interview guide and questionnaire south to understand the knowledge of the existence of a communication policy on the part of the participants. It is important than any policy of the local municipality be shared, taught and explained to the constituency, for the existence of a well-informed citizenry that knows and understand the processes and standards. It is also important that the general public participates in the formulation of policies that have a bearing on the level of quality and standards on the service delivery.

4.4.1 Knowledge of the Local Municipal Communication Policy

The questionnaire sought to understand from the participants if they knew of the existence of the communication policy of Mahikeng Local Municipality. From the responses it was clear that the majority of the participants were not privy to the

existence of the municipal communication policy. The diagram below provides a summative pictorial explanation of the trend observed from the responses of the participants.

Knowledge of MLM Communication Policy & Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	8%
No	2	1%
I don't Know	110	91%
Total	**169**	**100**

Figure 9: Does the municipality have a communication policy and strategy? (Source: Field data) (2021)

From the responses provided by the participants, the majority of the participants do not know the existence or presence thereof of the communication policy and strategy of the local municipality. The researcher undertook an extensive search and observed that participants drawn who were from the local municipality are the ones only who possess the knowledge about the existence of communication policy and strategy.

This was something the study made a follow up of through an interview from a participant who is a municipal official.

> *"Expecting the public to know about the existence of a municipal policy is rather far-fetched. Reality on the ground is that very few people are interested in that kind of information." [Participant 10]*

The views of participant 10 made sense. These are deeper intricacies that the majority of the people might not be much interested in for a variety of reasons. What people rather expect could probably be a municipality that communicates with the rather than being interested in the communication policy that spells out how the municipality should communicate.

4.4.2 Formulation of the Communication Policy

The study sought to understand the dynamics involved in the formulation of communication policies and strategies from the people that are well-informed in the

subject area. The study sought to find if there were guidelines that are followed in the formulation of communication policies of the local municipality.

One participant had this to say:

> *"When making communication policies we consult with many stakeholders that include the councillors and ward committee members as representatives of the public." [Participant 09]*

Another participant shed light on the matter by stating thus:

> *"Key to the formulation of policies is the input of the public whom we are supposed to serve, we have to ensure that the views of the public are factored in and we use councillors and ward committees to solicit the inputs of the community." [Participant 3]*

From the qualitative responses provided above, the key aspect that the study observed was that the public should be given the chance to participate and provide their inputs in the formulation of policies.

4.4.3 Training and Capacity Building in Communication

The study sought to also find the existence of initiatives that are aimed at improving the communication processes of the local municipality. This was also a section that was earmarked only for the participants drawn from the local municipality to understand the deeper technical aspects that the general public might not be privy to. Capacity building and continuous training initiatives are important in the continuous development of a product and aiding in the organisation's ability to produce quality services or products (White, Percy & Small, 2018).

Participant 10 had this to say:

> *"All the departments are mandated to review their departmental policies every quarter to ensure they are delivering and operating in a manner that is demanded for by the policy." [Participant 10]*

Another municipal official had this to say:

> *"As a department in–charge of communication we review the policies every quarter and we do workshops that also provide training opportunities." [Participant 7]*

Participant 5 stated thus:

> *"The quarterly policy review workshops help us to evaluate ourselves and areas that need improvement." [Participant 5]*

From the responses, the study observed that there are policy review workshops that are done very quarter and are evaluative in nature. These workshops help the municipal officials in charge of communication to review the policies and improve on weaknesses for the motive of continuous growth and provision of high-quality communication services.

4.5 Community Satisfaction

The study sought to understand the level of satisfaction on the part of the participants with regards to the communication processes of Mahikeng Local Municipality. The satisfaction of the participants is a yardstick for the municipality to measure the effectiveness and impact thereof of the communication processes.

4.5.1 Stakeholders and Direct Information

Question 15 of the interview guide and question 10 of the questionnaire sought to establish and identify the key stakeholders that were responsible for the dissemination of information to the community. The local municipality when doing its operations works with a structure that is inclusive of many stakeholders who include ward committees, ward councillors, traditional leaders, the local municipality executive and

municipal officials (Gosego, 2021). Below is a graph that shows the responses of the participants with regards to the questions asked:

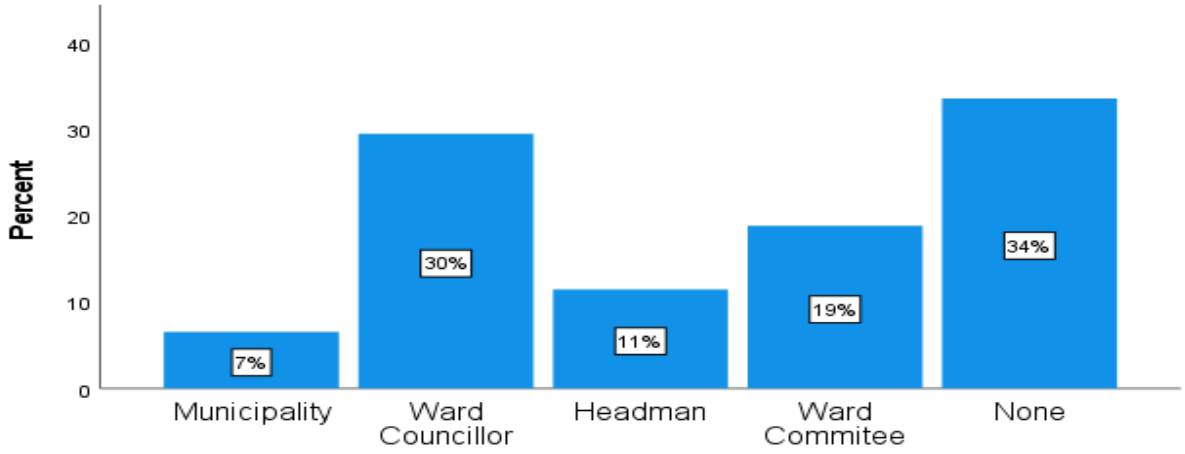

Figure 10: Who provide information to you regarding development (Source: Field data) (2021)

From the responses of the participants, it is very important to note that the councillor was the official who happens to provide the participants with development information. Councillors are by the nature of their job the closest focal point between the local municipality and the community and in this case provide development information to 30% of the participants. A worrying trend however is that 34% of the participants said none of the listed stakeholders were the responsible for providing development information about their local areas. This therefore shows that something could be wrong with regards to the communication processes of the local municipality.

4.5.2 Consideration of Public Inputs

The local government system of South Africa is built from the principles of democracy which ensures that the government in all its levels and forms should be guided by the views and demands of the people. The government is for the people, by the people and of the people (Rondinelli, 2017). It was therefore imperative for the study to understand if the participants felt that the contributions, they make to the local municipality are being taken into consideration. The diagram below provides the trends established by the study:

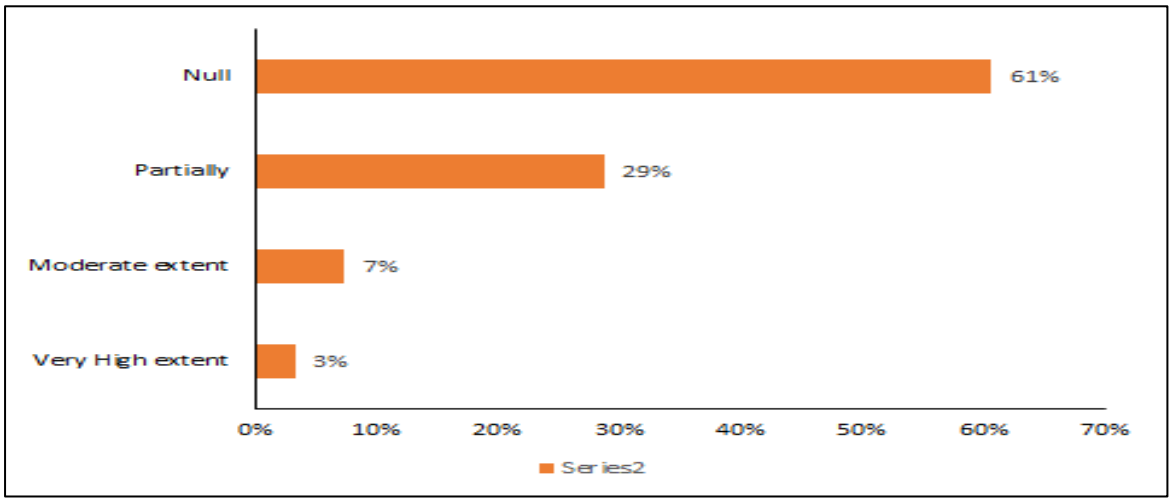

Figure 11: To what extent does the Municipality incorporate your ideas of making service provision better in the service provision strategies? (Source: Field data) (2021)

From the responses, the study observed that the majority of the participants felt that their contributions did not matter at all. This was actually a shocker on the part of the researcher to have such a high number of participants feeling their contributions do not matter and is not taken into consideration. This finding is also in collaboration with the views of the Ababio and Asmah-Andoh (2017), who state that people view that any engagements made between the local government and the people is generally done for the sake of the legal requirements that the municipalities are supposed to abide with but there is little impact the contributions of the people have in directing the strategic direction of the municipality. Hove and Osunkunle (2020) further observed that the key decisions are made by the politicians and they undertake operations that provide political capital to them rather than the development needs of the public.

The interviews sought to understand the basis for the existence of such a trend and established the following:

> *"All the meetings we have are for show, nothing is acted upon after we make our contributions." [Participant 22]*

Participant 86 had this to say:

> *"They do whatever they would want to do, not what we want as the community." [Participant 86]*

Participant 45 provided a power example that was in sync with the idea that the contributions of the public does not really matter by stating thus:

> *"The community wanted the road fixed, they never did anything to that effect for years but they built a community centre which was not a priority to the community and is nothing but a white elephant." [Participant 45]*

From the responses of the participants, it is clear that more is needed to be done to ensure that the true spirit of democracy that underpins the South African government in all its forms and levels is implemented. The lack of consideration of the public inputs could be the basis of the lack of interest on the public to engage and participate in municipal issues as they would know that their ideas and contributions do not matter (Hove and Osunkunle, 2020).

4.5.3 Service Delivery Satisfaction of the Participants

The study sought to understand the level of satisfaction of the participants with regards to the service delivery and communication processes of the Mahikeng Local Municipality. It was imperative to establish the phenomenon from a demographic aspect. The graph below provides the established trends from an age demographic aspect:

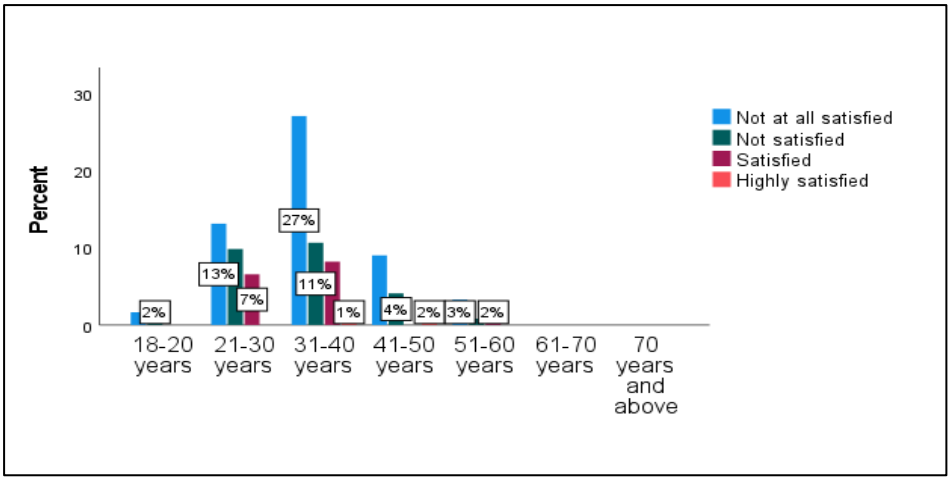

Figure 12: Level of satisfaction by age (Source: Field data) (2021)

From a gender demographic aspect, below is a graph that provides the trends:

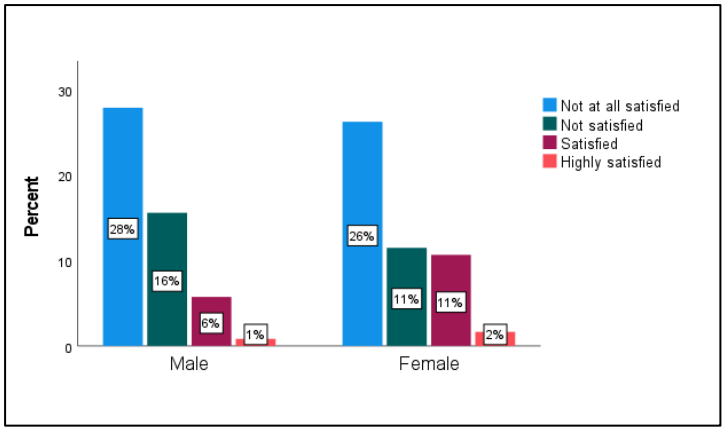

Figure 13: Level of satisfaction by gender (Source: Field data) (2021)

The graph below provides the level of satisfaction from a racial demographic aspect:

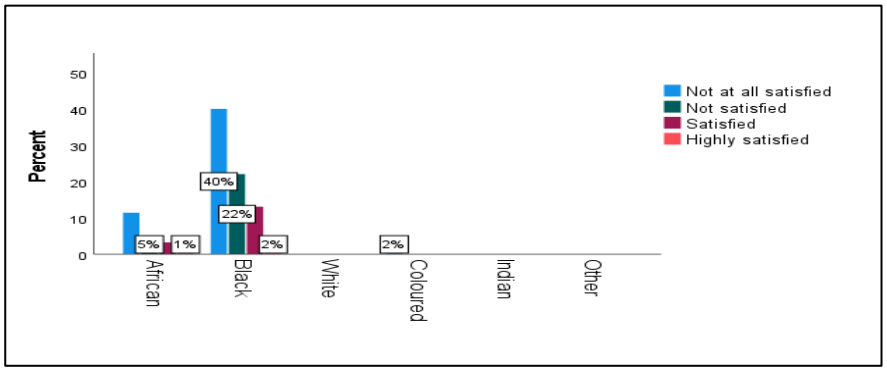

Figure 14: Level of satisfaction by race (Source: Field data) (2021)

The graph below provides the general satisfaction levels of all the participants:

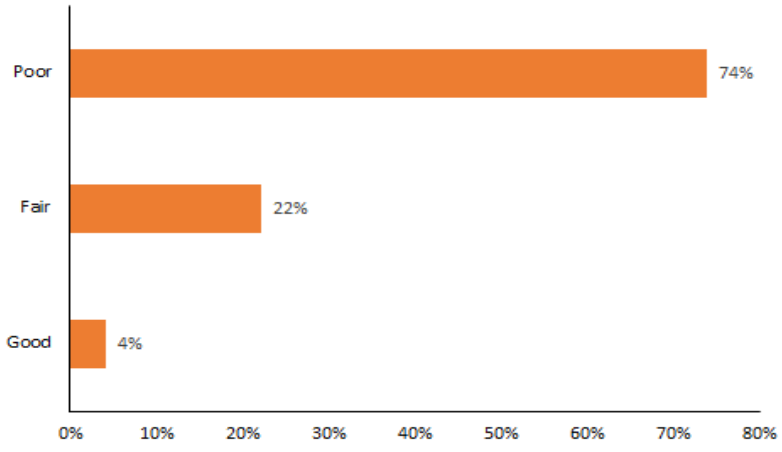

Figure 15: Level of satisfaction (Source: Field data) (2021)

The graph below provides a more detailed expression of the participants with regards to the level of satisfaction on a number of aspects:

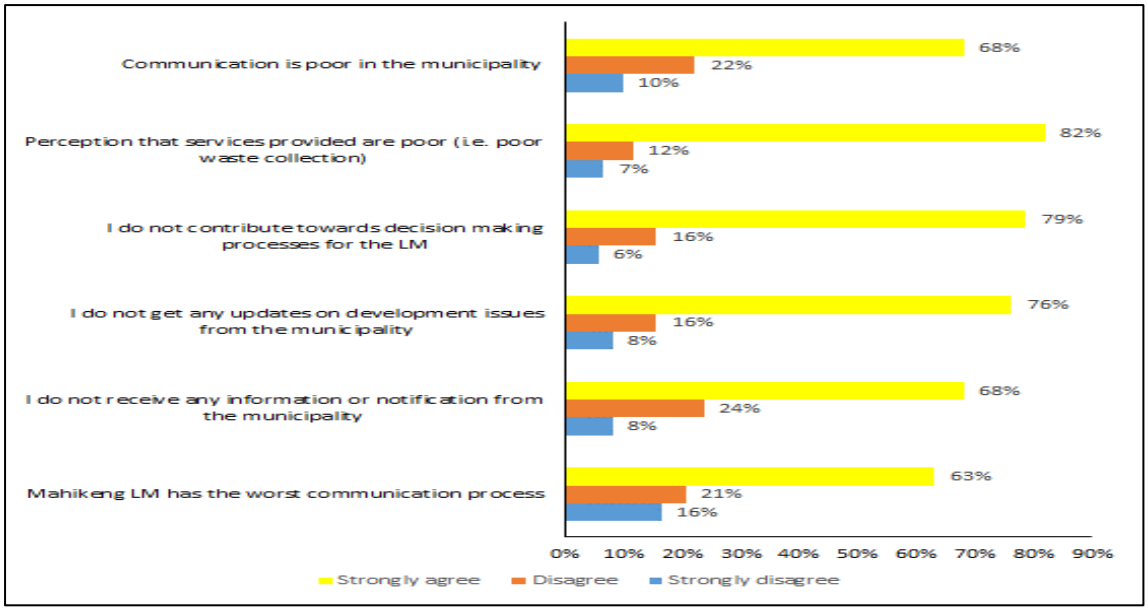

Figure 16: Level of satisfaction (Source: Field data) (2021)

From all the graphs provided above, it is clear that there are poor levels of satisfaction on the part of the participants. It is therefore important for the local municipality to improve its communication processes for the benefit of service delivery. Once the public feels that their inputs are valid and that the municipality is interested in the needs and wants of the community, service delivery levels of satisfaction will improve on the part of the residents.

4.6 Challenges and Recommendations

Section E of the questionnaire and the interview guide sought to establish the challenges and possible recommendations that can be used to address the challenges.

4.6.1 Political Interference

Political interference was observed to be the biggest challenge that affects effective communication which has an impact on the service delivery capacity of the local municipality. However, an interesting observation was that there was an equal share of the views on the subject matter. Half of the participants were of the view that politics does not comprise on effective communication and service delivery, whilst the other had the opposite view.

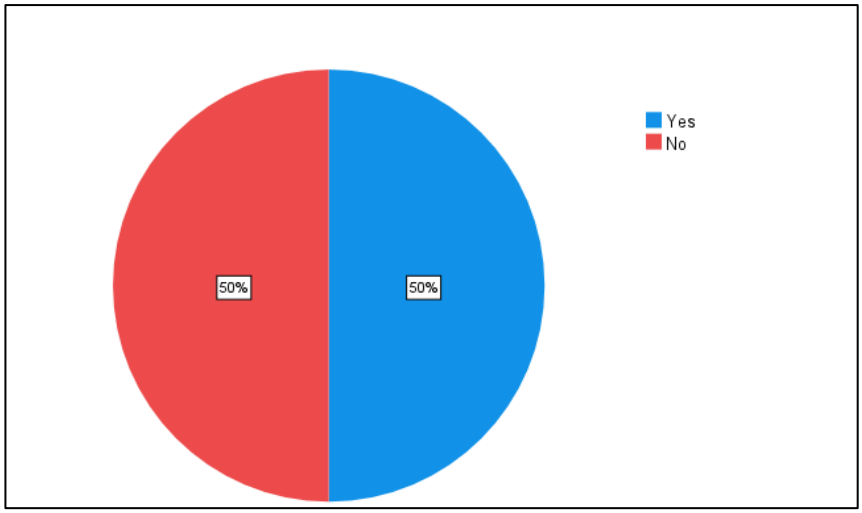

Figure 17: Do you think political interference compromise quality of service provision within the Municipality? (Source: Field data) (2021)

4.6.2 Time of Communication

Another critical challenge that was established by the study had to do with the time of communication on a development. The majority of the participants were of the view that they should be informed and participate in the project at the inception rather than at the end. This is very crucial if one is to achieve effective and increased participation of the public in a project. The graph below provides a synopsis of the trend observed by the study.

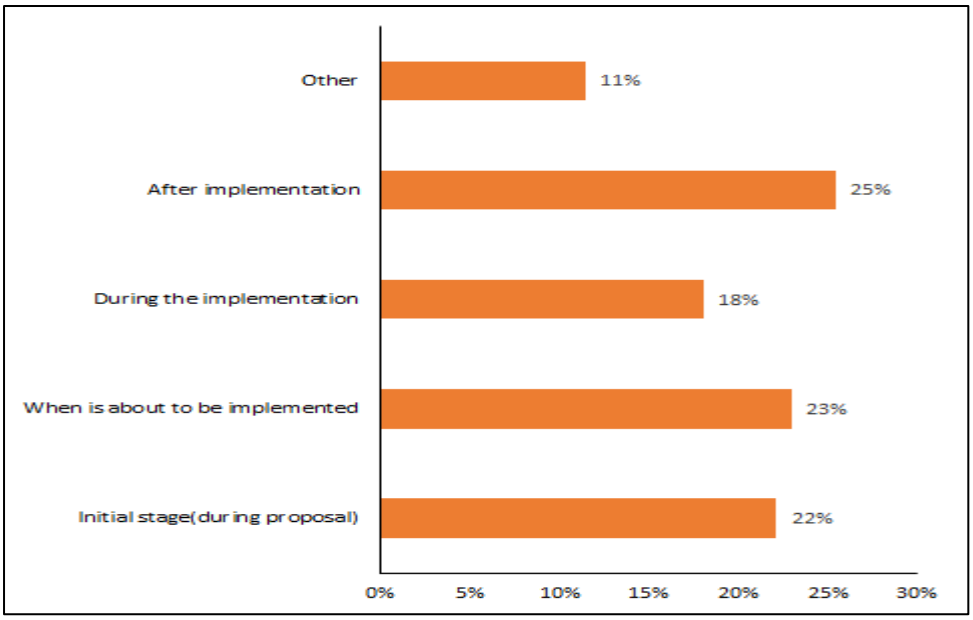

Figure 17: At what stage do you get information from the municipality regarding service delivery? (Source: Field data) (2021).

The qualitative data gathered provided an explanation why it was necessary to have proper timing with regards to communicating with the community. Participant 23 had this to say:

> *"Communication should be at the start of the project for effective participation from the start to the end of a development project" [Participant 23]*

Participant 74 had this to say:

> *"Communicating at the end is wrong because one is merely reporting without giving me the opportunity to air out my views when the project started." [Participant 74]*

From the responses it is clear that the participants are recommending that the communication process be holistic and be intensive from the beginning of a project for the benefit of maximum buy-in of the public.

4.7 Discussion of Results

The thrust of this section is the integration of the findings from the interviews and questionnaires. The following are critical areas that the study managed to identify from the findings as reported in the previous chapter:

- The study established that communication is a very important aspect in the effectiveness of the operation of a local municipality. Effective communication provides the platform for the local municipality to communicate with its residents all the times and operate on the basis of the needs of the community that would have been identified through communication.
- Mahikeng Local Municipality uses a number of communication tools constantly to be in a position to ensure that the residents of the area are well informed on all the activities taking place. The study established that the municipality uses a mix of traditional and modern communication tools. From a traditional aspect, the municipality still uses door-to-door method where it sends agents to communicate a certain matter to the residents. The municipality also makes

use *imbizo* meetings where the community comes together to discuss a subject matter. From a modern aspect the municipality uses social media as it has a Facebook and a Twitter page where it provides updates to the people.

- The communication tools that the local municipality uses are premised on the need to reach out to a number of residents in the area. Social media and imbizo meetings are the most common tools that seem to have a lot of people having access to the information from the local municipality.
- Residents of Mahikeng local municipality do however feel that the communication processes and systems in place are ineffective as the feedback provided to the local municipality is not taken into consideration. Participants alluded to the fact that the municipality does not take into considerations the views and inputs the community makes to the council.
- The study established that community engagements between the municipality and the community are just nothing but a charade. Participants were of the view the local municipality tends to undertake such initiatives for the sake of abiding by the legal mandates as enshrined in the Municipal Systems Act. The needs of the community are rarely taken into consideration as the political leadership simply undertakes the projects and operations, they themselves would want to do.
- The study established that there are high levels of dissatisfaction on the part of the participants with regards to the service delivery issues. The majority of the participants were not satisfied with the quality-of-service delivery with regards to development projects and communication processes which should increase the participation of the public in the development of their communities.
- The study also established that one of the biggest challenges was the political interference in the operations of the local municipality that over-rides the effectiveness of the participation of the public.

4.8 ASSESSMENT OF THE RESEARCH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SET AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main research aim was to:

Explore the use of public participatory communication channels for effective interaction with communities in Mahikeng local municipality.

The research objectives that the research sought to meet were to:

- Examine the extent of public participatory communication channels used by the municipality in the process of service provision to the communities
- Assess participatory communication channels utilized by the Mahikeng Local Municipality in promoting service delivery.
- Propose effective and efficient communication engagement channels between the government and communities in the process of service provision.

The set objectives of the research objectives were met through the following ways:

Objective 1: Examine the extent of public participatory communication channels used by the municipality in the process of service provision to the communities.

This objective was at the core of the research study and sought to understand the means of communication that the MLM were using which enhances the participation of the public to effect the change and development they need to see in their municipality. This objective as the study established the means of communication that the municipality used and how effective were they to ensure the participation of the public. The study with regards to this objective, established that the municipality uses both modern and traditional communication tools very much frequently. However, the participation of the public to effect the change or the developments they would want to see is rather a challenge despite the level of extensive communication that the municipality undertake.

Objective 2: Assess the effectiveness of the participatory communication channels utilized by the Mahikeng Local Municipality in promoting service delivery

The thrust of this objective was to understand and assess the effectiveness of the communication channels used by the Mahikeng Local Municipality. Communication is very much key to the provision of quality services to the residents. The ability for people to participate in the communication process of the municipality entails that they have the ability to make decisions about issues that affect their well-being on a daily basis. This objective was met through section D of both the questionnaire and

interview guide which sought to understand how satisfied the participants with the communication channels and the service delivery offered were.

The study established that the communication channels were not as effective as shown by the low levels of satisfaction on the part of the participants and the problems identified. In meeting the objective, the research established that the majority of the people felt that their contributions were not being taken into consideration rendering the whole public participation need a futile exercise

Objective 3: Propose effective and efficient communication engagement channels between the government and communities in the process of service provision

The thrust of objective 3 was all about providing the recommendations after having identified the challenges that affect effective participation and communication for the benefit of improving the service delivery. Section E of the interview guide and the questionnaire sought to find the possible solutions to address the problems and challenges identified. Some of the recommendations were given and the following chapter will dedicate space to the discussion of the possible recommendations.

4.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter provided all the key findings that were gathered by the study and used both qualitative and quantitative methods in the analysis and presentation of the data. The chapter provided key discussions which were in line with the set objectives of the study. The next chapter is chapter 5 which provides the pinnacle and summative discussion of the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This is the pinnacle of the whole study. The thrust and focus of this study is to provide a summative conclusion of the whole study and assess the study within the context of the set research objectives. The chapter will end by giving its own conclusion and recommendations that can be implemented to deal with the problem in an effective manner.

5.2 Conclusion

The study on, “The use of government communication systems for service delivery within Mahikeng Local Municipality”, provides the following conclusion:

5.2.1 Effective Communication is Crucial for Service Delivery

The existence of effective communication is very much important for the benefit of improving service delivery. Effective communication entails the communication between two parties and the feedback that is received is the one that each party would be intending to have or rather being on the same page (Tazin & Yaakop, 2018). Effective communication entails that the community and the municipality are on the same page and understand each other’s needs and expectations.

With regards to the MLM communication with the community, there are a number of barriers to effective which requires attention. The contributions of the community should be validated and taken into consideration and acted upon if the level of participation of the community is to increase. Currently there seems to be fatigue of the community to take part in the initiatives of the municipality and that can be changed when the communication processes are made to be effective where the parties involved have a voice to effect and influence decision making processes.

5.2.2 Service Delivery is a Key Cornerstone in Local Governance

The issue of service delivery is an important issue that the majority of the residents and citizens of the country take very much seriously. There is need for local government to be as robust as possible in ensuring that service delivery is enhanced for the benefit of the social cohesion of the communities. The failure of effective delivery of services is a best recipe for the continuous protest that continues to affect the country on a daily basis. The protests are actually a sign that shows how ineffective the communication process between the local government and the community is. Once the community has its basics sorted, in more ways than one there would be peace and the avoidance of destructive as evidenced by the protests that continuously take place.

5.2.3 Effective Communication Channels are Key

The study established that there is the need to use effective communication channels for the importance of ensuring service delivery. Effective communication entails the two-way communication between two parties. Effective communication also entails that the two parties are to be in a position where they can understand each other and communicate on the same wave length. Communication should not be one way with only one party communicating and the other receiving all the time but rather as interactive as much possible. To achieve that, local municipalities have to adopt communication channels that provide the capacity to achieve effective communication.

The study established that *imbizo* meetings are very much effective in engaging in robust discussions that help the municipality and its citizens to be on the same wavelength. The study established that the local municipality is also making use of social media and mass media frequently to ensure that it keeps its residents up to date with the developments taking place in the municipality area. However in many cases the communication is rather one way and the comments and suggestions of the people not being considered except when there is an uproar on such platforms that is viral.

5.3 Policy Recommendations

The study had one of its objectives being the provision of recommendations as enunciated by the participants of the study. The following are the identified policy recommendations:

- Communication has to be effective. The Mahikeng Local Municipality and the government at large should cultivate a culture of communicating effectively with the people. The requests and contributions of the people should be taken into considerations.
- The ethos of democracy and freedom should translate to the practical implementation of open communication channels between the local municipalities and the communities.
- Communication entails transparency. Political leaders and municipality managers should communicate in a manner that ensures that people understand the real nature and state of the municipality to avoid unrealistic demands from the community which would assume that resources are available.
- There is extensive need to effectively use the mass media and the new media mainly social media to ensure that there is an open communication channels between the community and the local government.
- It is imperative to note that it also makes political sense for the powers that be to ensure that there are open lines of communication with the community and that the inputs of the people are taken with the seriousness they deserve. The ability of the political powers to deliver on the provision of services to the community is in itself an important aspect that ensures the sustainability of political careers of political office bearers and general stability in the community.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study in many more ways than one, contributed to the growth of the academic scholarship on the subject of local governance in the context of communication systems. The study provided the areas which require improvement and what the local municipalities are doing well. The study also dwell on the area on the new media in this case social media which is continuously being utilised by the government and local

municipalities. There is however need for extensive and further investigation on the effectiveness of social media in enhancing effective communication in the context of service delivery.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter was the pinnacle of the study which provided key summative points that highlighted the study. The study provided its own conclusive positions on certain areas of the study and an assessment of the study within the context of the research aim and objectives.

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Annexure 1: Questionnaire

Dear Respondent

I Mr **Monei Oria Monei**, student number (16742362) am a postgraduate student doing a Masters' degree in Communication within the School of Communication at the North West University. I am conducting research on: **"The use of Government communication systems for service delivery within Mafikeng Local Municipality"** in the North West Province. I would like you to complete the attached questionnaire. Your anonymity is assured, and all the information you provide will be treated with confidentiality. The data will be used for the purpose of this research project only. Your participation will be of great assistance to the success of the study. Should you have any further question(s), please, do not hesitate to contact the researcher at omonei@nwpg.gov.za. Thank you for your co-operation.

Instructions: Please, read each item below carefully, and respond as honestly as possible. Please, answer all the items. **There is no wrong or right answer**. Further instructions may be given, when necessary.

SECTION A:

1 Please indicate your highest education level attained

No formal education	Partial primary	Primary completed	Secondary completed
Tertiary certificate/ diploma	Undergraduate degree	Postgraduate degree	Other(specify)

2 Please indicate your employment status

Full time employment	Part time employment	Student	Other(specify)

3 Please indicate your monthly income range

R100- R1000	R1000- R2000	R2000- R3000	R3000- R4000	R4000- R5000

R50000- R6000	R6000- R7000	R7000- R8000	R8000- R9000	R10000 <

4 Please indicate your age range

18-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	70<

5 Please indicate your gender

Male	Female

6 Please indicate your historical racial category

African	Black	White	Coloured	Indian	Other (specify)

7 Where do you come from?

Name of village	District	Province	Country

8. What is your Councillor's name?.....
.....

9. Where do you live?

SECTION B: Communication Dynamics

10. What are the main means Mahikeng LM communicate with you?

1	Word of mouth	
2	Flyers	
3	Imbizos	
4	Social media	
5	Door to door announcements	
6	Notices	

11. How do you communicate with Municipality for anything?

1	Once a week		2	Bi-weekly		3	Monthly		4	Once in a while	

12. To what extent does the Municipality incorporate your ideas of making service provision better in the service provision strategies?

	1	2	3	4
	Very High Extent	**Moderate extent**	**Partially**	**Null**
Extent of incorporating community ideas in promoting service delivery				

13. Do you think political interference compromise quality of service provision within the Municipality?

1	Yes		2	No	

If yes what are your suggestions to curb political interference within the municipality

……
……
……

14. Who provide information to you regarding development?

Municipality	
ward councillor	
Headman	
ward committee	
None	

15. How often do you attend community meetings regarding development matters?

1	Always		2	Sometimes		3	Never	

16. At what stage do you get information from the municipality regarding service delivery?

Initial stage (during the proposal)	
When is about to be implemented	
During the implementation	
After the implementation	

Other (specify)

Section D: Community Satisfaction

17. Are you satisfied with the way you get information from the municipality regarding service delivery?

1	Not at all satisfied		2	Not satisfied		3	satisfied		4	Highly satisfied	

18. How do you rate the level of communication between the municipality and community?

1	**Good?**		**2**	**Fair?**		**3**	**Poor?**	

Please provide the reason

……
……
……
……
……
……

Section D: Challenges and Recommendations

19. What do you think should be done to improve communication between the Municipality and Community?

……
……
……
……
……
……

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following constraints hinders you from paying services?

Constraints hindering payment of rates and services		**1**	**2**	**3**
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Strongly agree**
1	Mahikeng LM has the worst communication process			

2	I do not receive any information or notification from the municipality			
3	I do not get any updates on development issues from the municipality			
4	I do not contribute towards decision making processes for the LM			
5	Perception that services provided are poor (i.e., poor waste collection)			
6	Communication is poor in the municipality			

21. Which of the following do you think the municipality should improve in terms of its communication processes?

1	More imbizos		**2**	Flyers		**3**	More notifications		**4**	Door to door announcements	**Other specifiy**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION {HOUSE HOLD QUESTIONNAIRES}

Annexure 2: Interview Guide

Dear Respondent

I Mr **Monei Oria Monei**, student number (16742362) am a postgraduate student doing a Masters' degree in Communication within the School of Communication at the North West University. I am conducting research on: **The use of Government Communication Systems for Service for service delivery within Mahikeng**. I would like you to complete the attached questionnaire. Your anonymity is assured, and all the information you provide will be treated with confidentiality. The data will be used for the purpose of this research project only. Your participation will be of great assistance to the success of the study. Should you have any further question(s), please, do not hesitate to contact the researcher at omonei@nwpg.gov.za. Thank you for your co-operation.

Instructions: Please, read each item below carefully, and respond as honestly as possible. Please, answer all the items. **There is no wrong or right answer**. Further instructions may be given, when necessary.

SECTION A:

7 Please indicate your highest education level attained

No formal education	Partial primary	Primary completed	Secondary completed
Tertiary certificate/ diploma	Undergraduate degree	Postgraduate degree	Other(specify)

8 Please indicate your employment status

Full time employment	Part time employment	Student	Other(specify)

9 Please indicate your monthly income range

R100- R1000	R1000- R2000	R2000- R3000	R3000- R4000	R4000- R5000

R50000- R6000	R6000- R7000	R7000- R8000	R8000- R9000	R10000 <

10 Please indicate your age range

18-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	70<

11 Please indicate your gender

Male	Female

12 Please indicate your historical racial category

African	Black	White	Coloured	Indian	Other (specify)

7 Where do you come from?

Name of village	District	Province	Country

8. What is your Position?.....

9. Department?

SECTION B

10. Which of the following engagement methods is used by Mahikeng LM to communicate with different stakeholders?

Imbizo	
Public meetings	
Ward councillors	
Community development workers	
Other (specify)	

11. Do you think methods used to communicate with the stakeholders are effective?

Yes		No	

Please justify the above response

……
……
……
……

Section C: Communication Policy

12. Does the municipality have a communication policy and strategy?

Yes		No		I don't Know	

13. Are there guidelines or policies the municipality adheres to when developing a communication strategy or policy for the municipality?

Yes		No	

Please elaborate

……
……
……
……..

14. Does the municipality provide education and training with regards to the communication policy, preparation, implementation and its function?

Yes		No	

Please elaborate

……
……
……
……

Section D Community Satisfaction

15. Which of the following stakeholders are involved in the direct communication process with the people? *You can select more than one response*

Ward councillor	
Tribal council	
Headman	
Ward committee	
CDWs	
Whole community	

16. Does municipality take the input and views from the community to inform planning, development and decision-making processes?

Yes		Yes but		No		No but	

Please elaborate

……
……
……
……

17. How often do you visit the community with regard to the development and planning issues?

Please explain

……
……
……
……
……

18. Are you satisfied by the level of community participation?

Yes		No	

19. How is the relationship between the municipality and communities?

Good		fair		Poor	

20. At which stage does community get information about developments and planning from municipality?

Initial stage (during the proposal)	
When is about to be implemented	
During the implementation	
After the implementation	
Other (specify)	

Section E: Challenges and Recommendations

21. What are the challenges faced in fostering effective communication with households?

……
……
……
……

22. What do you think can be done to solve the above-mentioned challenges?

……
……
……
……

23. Is there any information you want to provide not covered in this questionnaire?

Instruction: Please tick ☑ or ☒ cross on your response

Your participation is highly appreciated. Thank you