



An exploratory study of organisational
communication practices in North West
Provincial Legislature for public
participation

KD Letlhogela



orcid.org/0000-0002-7159-3347

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Supervisor: Dr TTM Lobelo

Graduation: July 2023

Student number: 30623480

DECLARATION

I (full name): Kabo Desmoulins Letlhogela

Student #: 30623480

Declare that the dissertation on an exploratory study of organisational communication practices in North West provincial legislature for public participation, at this moment submitted, has yet to be submitted by me or any other person for any degree.

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3. I also declare that I will not allow anyone to copy my work to pass it off as his or her work.

Signature

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the loving memories of Bakang Sitsi (my late brother) and Mmathomeng Sitsi (my late grandmother).

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With belief, everything is possible.

ABSTRACT

The North West Provincial Legislature, as an arm of government, is mandated to communicate with the public during its public participation processes through different communications methods such as internal newsletter; website and social media platforms; public hearings, public meetings and sectoral parliaments. The current study explored the effectiveness and efficiency of these communication methods and feedback mechanisms used by the legislature to achieve public participation.

The participatory paradigm under the development communication approach was utilised as a theoretical basis to explain how communication is used in participatory processes in the context of government. As the study solicited opinions and perceptions of the internal and external stakeholders of the North West Provincial Legislature, a qualitative research approach was used through semi-structured interviews and self-administered questionnaires. The stakeholders were selected due to their familiarity with organisational communication processes used for public participation, such as public hearings when law-making processes are facilitated in the North West Provincial Legislature.

Findings from the study indicated that the communication methods used by the legislature could be more effective and efficient in bolstering public participation. The majority of respondents indicated that different units in the legislature work in silos. There were also no guiding documents, such as communication strategies or policies, to guide communication in public participation processes. As a result, such a vacuum affects how the legislature communicates with the public during public hearings, public meetings and sectoral parliaments.

The respondents further highlighted that although the legislature is mandated to provide feedback on how it held the Executive accountable on service delivery issues, the feedback mechanisms.

The study concludes and recommends that the legislature embarks on periodic campaigns to educate the people about its work and how it can assist them with public participation processes, such as holding the Executive accountable. The legislature

should ensure it achieves its public participation mandate through convenient communication practices with relevant and specific communities.

Keywords

North West Provincial Legislature, Executive, development communication, public participation, participatory paradigm, North West Province and communication.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Organisational communication practices involve measures where internal stakeholders of the organisation use different communication practices to communicate with external stakeholders to implement the organisation's strategic goals and targets. Angelopulo and Barker (2013:13) state that organisation communication is an overall concept that includes all organisational communication activities and a process where communication is used to exchange messages between the organisation and its internal and external stakeholders. Organisational Communication, therefore, requires interaction between the organisation's internal and external stakeholders to create a common purpose and meaning. Mulder and Niemann-Struweg (2015:12) also argue that organisational communication encompasses all communication activities within a particular organisation; hence it operates in all areas of such an organisation.

In the context of the legislative sector, organisational communication methods such as traditional media, sectoral parliaments, public meetings and feedback mechanisms can assist the North West Provincial Legislature to ensure that it effectively and efficiently communicates with members of the public. Communication can be done through facilitating law-making processes, such as bills or pieces of legislation scrutinised by Members of the Provincial Legislature with communities through organisational methods, such as public hearings in a fair and just manner, as reiterated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Batho-Pele Principles (2014:3) highlights that the stature for clean and transparent governance within various arms of government, such as legislatures or the Executive, rests on a system where communities are consulted on all services provided or rendered to them.

As an oversight role on the Executive, the legislature can use other communication practices such as social media, websites, messaging systems and tribal and municipal meetings to engage the public on whether there has been the provision of services by the Executive and whether it is satisfactory as per community needs. GCIS Communicators' Handbook (2014:67) argues that communication between the government and its public must address community needs within the area of its competency in order to improve their lives.

Therefore, the current study aims to explore the effectiveness and efficiency of organisational communication practices used by the North West Provincial Legislature for public participation processes. It concerns the participatory approach within a government communication context. The organisational communication practices used to facilitate public participation include the publication of legislature work on its newsletter, website and social media platforms; public hearings during the facilitation of law-making processes; public meetings during Committee oversight week in different districts and sectoral parliaments where Members of the Legislature engage different communities, community-based organisations and public representatives. Furthermore, the study explores the effectiveness of the legislature's organisational communication feedback mechanisms for effective and efficient public participation between Members of the Provincial Legislature and communities.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The North West Provincial Legislature has a constitutional mandate to involve communities in its operations, such as law-making processes where bills or pieces of legislation are made, amended or repealed. *Section 118* of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides public access to and involvement in the provincial legislature (Constitution, 1996). It further stipulates that the legislature must facilitate the public's involvement fairly and transparently (Constitution, 1996). Members of the Provincial Legislature and employees are constitutionally mandated to involve its external stakeholders and communicate through various organisational

communication practices on all activities of the legislature that concern them. Provincial legislatures should communicate and involve the public in its activities, such as committee meetings, public hearings, and other relevant legislature work (Constitution, 1996).

Communities are also required to be invited to meetings of different Portfolios or Select Committees of the legislature or through viewing the proceedings through various communication methods such as social media pages or websites of the North West Provincial Legislature. In terms of Rule 266 of the Standing Rules of 2019 of the North West Provincial Legislature, "plenary meeting of the provincial legislature and its Committee meetings must be accessible to the public and the Speaker must inform the public of the proceedings of the House and its Committees by publishing details of the time and place of the meeting and their subject matter" (North West Provincial Legislature, 2019).

A clean and fair democracy entails the government's efforts to maintain a reciprocal relationship with the communities that it serves and ensure that their needs are heard and understood. Ngcobo (2016:2) maintains that in any democratic government, an open and informative communication approach is essential in ensuring that all arms of the government, i.e. the Executive, judiciary and legislatures, have a good relationship with the public. Furthermore, government communication has a constitutional mandate to engage and send messages to the public. If not facilitated well, it might affect the relationship between these stakeholders (Ngcobo, 2016, p. 2). According to Government Communicator's Handbook (2014:9), the government's information should be communicated to all citizens, and it must legitimately influence the communities' opinion through the two-way communication system.

1.3 Problem Statement

Communication should not act only as a tool that sends messages to the organisation's internal and external stakeholders but should play an essential role in changing external stakeholder perceptions and attitudes about the organisation's role. Angelopulo and Barker (2013:123) argue that communication is not merely sending

information but a process of "persuasion, motivation and influencing perceptions, beliefs and attitudes." There needs to be more proper and open communication between the North West Provincial Legislature and communities on how it is also holding the Executive accountable for services provided.

There has been a gap in the literature to explore how organisational communication practices assist North West Provincial Legislature to effectively and efficiently implement public participation. Public participation also means consulting or engaging communities on various service delivery issues not implemented by the Executive as another arm of government. Consultation can be done through sectoral parliaments where specific issues such as health or roads are discussed between Members of the Provincial Legislature and communities. As an interaction tool, communication is viewed as the basis of organisational existence in that it is used daily for personal communication transactions and organisational communication purposes (Ali & Haider, 2012).

The study further identified a gap in the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the feedback mechanisms used by the legislature during public participation processes, such as using feedback sessions of sectoral parliaments to respond to service delivery issues raised during previous sectoral parliaments. It can be through inviting Members of the Executive from different departments or representatives from municipalities to respond to various service delivery issues. Pheega (2012:2) highlights that communication processes between the government and communities are about sending messages and giving feedback on issues raised or how the government has resolved service delivery challenges.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Primary Research Objective

To explore the effectiveness and efficiency of the North West Provincial Legislature's organisational communication practices in facilitating public participation.

1.4.2 Secondary Research objectives

1. To explore the influence of organisational communication practices in the North West Provincial Legislature for efficient public participation processes.
2. To gain insight into perceptions and experiences of Members and Employees of the North West Provincial Legislature regarding organisational communication practices that facilitate public participation.
3. To explore through literature review communication policies and strategies within the North West Provincial Legislature that can assist the organisation in advancing efficient public participation processes.
4. To explore the effectiveness of organisational communication feedback mechanisms used by the North West Provincial Legislature for effective public participation between Members of the Provincial Legislature and community members.

1.5 GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do organisational communication practices assist the North West Provincial Legislature facilitate public participation?

1.5.1 Secondary research questions

- How do organisational communication practices used in the North West Provincial Legislature influence the effectiveness of its public participation processes?
- What are the perceptions and experiences as Members and Employees of the North West Provincial Legislature concerning organisational communication practices used to facilitate public participation?
- How do communication policies and strategies within the North West Provincial Legislature assist in ensuring efficient public participation processes?

- How effectively does the North West Provincial Legislature use organisational communication feedback mechanisms concerning public participation processes?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study have contributed to knowledge on the scientific knowledge in communication studies that aid public participation within the legislative arm of government in South Africa. In the academic field, limited studies focus on how communication practices and methods assist the legislative sector in ensuring effective public participation. It is constitutionally mandated to ensure active citizens' involvement in its activities, such as oversight and law-making processes. Limited academic research exists since there is still limited knowledge on the role of legislatures and parliament in emerging democracies such as South Africa in recent years and how it can benefit communities in addressing service delivery.

Through a literature review, the study also explores the role of communication policies and strategies in the legislative sector to ensure effective and efficient public participation. This seeks to contribute to existing knowledge in the participatory communication discipline in academia.

The process of public participation can only be effective with feedback mechanisms in the legislative sector. When communities address service delivery issues during public participation processes such as sectoral parliaments, they expect the legislature to allow the Executive to respond to them through feedback sessions of those sectoral parliaments. The rationale for the study was embedded in understanding how the North West Provincial legislature is receiving and sending feedback to communities in the province.

1.7 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

- The current research study's theoretical background is based on participatory communication in the context of government communication as aligned to development communication approaches.

- Participatory communication is derived from the development communication agenda on how governments use communication to engage with communities on various development programmes. Otto and Fourie (2016:35) reiterate that participatory communication is best active when all citizens are allowed symmetrical opportunities to reflect and engage on matters concerning them.
- Tufte (2017:13) contends that the main emphasis on using communication for social change is to empower the citizenry by actively involving them in development agendas.
- Du Plooy (2009:24) argues that communication as a scientific phenomenon was established on theoretical background and “research in traditional disciplines, such as sociology and psychology, and more recently based on history, economics, literary studies and information science”.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on organisational communication and public participation in South Africa was reviewed for this study. Babbie (2016:503) emphasises that a literature review serves as a reference for readers by including previous studies on the current research topic.

The study has been conducted through strategic plans and policies of the North West Provincial Legislature, which are subjects of the research; academic journals; legislative frameworks including policies and regulations; thesis and dissertations from various South African Universities focusing on organisational communication and public participation as well as theoretical concepts on participatory theory in the context of government communication.

The following research databases were consulted: Nexus; EBSCOhost; Emerald Insight Journals; ProQuest, and Boloka: NWU Institutional Repository (NWU – IR).

Some of the literature that was consulted include the following:

1. A study by Thungo and Mavee (2021) focused on the role of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature in promoting public participation. Its primary purpose was to check the viability of Gauteng Provincial Legislature's public participation mechanisms from the province's demographic, political and economic profile.
2. A qualitative study by Luka (2019) examined the nature of communication between the Kumba Iron Ore mine and its resettlement project within the Dingleton community in the Northern Cape province in South Africa.
3. A study by Phendu (2019) assessed *the state of public participation in the Western Cape: the case study of Beaufort West Municipality (2016-2019)* with specific reference to the ward committee system; the role of the legislative and policy framework governing public participation; the institution architecture, and the roles of the various stakeholders involved in the public participation.

1.9 RESEARCH APPROACH

Qualitative research studies are used in social research studies to gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders who are researched about a particular subject. Creswell and Creswell (2018:4) state that a qualitative research approach aims to discover and understand people's challenges in a social setting. Kumar (2014:14) further argues that the qualitative research process is entrenched in the principle of following a free and flexible pattern of enquiry. It aims to investigate broader aspects of life by soliciting perceptions of those researched.

Through a qualitative method, this study solicited perceptions and experiences from those responsible for using organisational communication practices in the North West Provincial Legislature to determine public participation. Flick (2014:22) argues that qualitative research is based on examining tangible cases on their locality and people's expressions and activities and their local contexts. Qualitative research studies are generally based on observing or soliciting the opinions of stakeholders on a particular phenomenon and how best certain matters can be resolved.

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN

The current research study employed an exploratory design to examine the communication methods used by the North West Provincial Legislature on how they assist in achieving public participation. Kumar (2014:13) emphasises that exploratory studies are suitable for lesser-known situations.

1.10.1 Population

According to Babbie (2016), the Population of a study implies the target audience aimed at participating in the particular study. The Population of about 300 employees of the North West Provincial Legislature, including Members of the Provincial Legislature, were chosen as they had extensive knowledge of the legislature's work. They are responsible for communicating with members of the communities on the activities of the legislature.

1.10.2 Sampling

The study employed a purposive sampling where each Member of the Provincial Legislature, senior managers in Communications, Research, Public Participation, Office of the Speaker and Committees Units and selected community members and their representatives were sampled. Babbie (2014:510) highlights that purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling where participants are selected based on their knowledge of the subjects. The participants were selected as they work in the North West Provincial Legislature and are familiar with the mandate of the legislature vis-à-vis organisational communication methods during public participation processes. They, therefore, have extensive knowledge of how organisational communication practices assist the North West Legislature in achieving public participation.

Three (3) Members of the Provincial Legislature, i.e. Chairpersons of the North West Provincial Legislature's Portfolio Committees; three (3) managers in the North West Provincial Legislature; ten (10) district coordinators; four (4) members of tribal authorities in four districts of the North West province; fifty-six (56) community members (14 per district) who regularly attend legislature events and sittings were sampled.

1.11 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Semi-Structured Interviews

The study used semi-structured interviews to solicit inputs from subjects within the North West Provincial Legislature and externally. These instruments were essential in soliciting in-depth information regarding the perceptions and opinions of the stakeholders sampled on how they perceive the importance of organisational communications practices that enables the North West Provincial Legislature to facilitate public participation.

According to De Vos et al.; (2011:353), with a semi-structured interview, the researcher will have a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule, but the interview will be guided rather than dictated by the schedule. Quilan et al. (2015) state that open-ended questions are asked during semi-structured interviews and are good at producing effective answers to a particular field of study.

1.12 DATA ANALYSIS

The data from the research study were analysed through content and thematic analysis. According to Landlof and Taylor (2019:310), during data analysis, the qualitative researcher hopes to progress on three fronts: data management, data reduction, and conceptual development.

Content analysis

Leavy (2017:146) argues that content analysis is a process of exploring data, and researchers in the field of qualitative research “analyse not only textual content” but also the context in which it is created. Krippendorff (2019:22) also states that qualitative approaches to content analysis are associated with text interpretations and analysis and unpacking meaning to such content. The North West Provincial Legislature's communication and public participation policies and strategies were reviewed to explore how organisational communication methods are used to ensure adequate public participation.

Thematic Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were analysed after being categorised according to the subject's themes. Brayman and Clark (2016) argue that thematic analysis is a theoretical approach aligned analysis of qualitative data and further observed patterns or themes. The recordings from the semi-structured themes were analysed thematically as per their categories based on the research objectives.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study respects the privacy and anonymity of the individuals interviewed during the data collection processes, and their views were solicited after voluntary consent and participation. Permission to interview and record on tape was obtained from each participant. Although exposing their opinions to the general public poses a risk, their inputs were respected. According to Babbie (2017:67), a research report guarantees anonymity when the researcher – not just the people who read about the research cannot identify a given response with a given respondent. Furthermore, De Vos et al. (2011:129) argue that "no harm should come to experimental subjects and respondents; that prospective respondents should give their informed and consent; that respondents should not be deceived in any way; and that researchers should be competent and responsible".

1.14 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic through semi-structured interviews, so there were various limitations to collecting data. These limitations included a lack of accessibility for participants in the study due to health reasons or hazards. Some of the participants were on self-quarantine, thus limiting or delaying data collection. The researcher further anticipated that by sampling the Members of the Provincial Legislature, management and staff as well we community representatives and general community members, the study unpacked communication challenges and success of the organisation. The limitation on the selected target market is also based on the accessibility of the chosen Population and the vastness of the study in a rural province.

1.15 SUMMARY

In development studies related to the legislative sector and all the arms of government, communication is critical as it assists those organisations in working with communities to resolve their issues. Noske-Turner (2020) states that communication in development sort to internally direct development agencies towards a method based on the process of dialogue amongst the stakeholders and belief and fairness in the development processes.

In the context of the legislative sector, which is a separate arm of government that performs that is mandated to conduct public participation, communication methods can assist the legislature in linking with its external stakeholders, such as communities, in resolving service delivery issues through public participation processes such as public hearings, public meetings or sectoral parliament. Interaction between the legislature and the communities is critical as they can assist the legislature in intervening in service delivery issues through organisational communication.

The next chapter deals with the theoretical background of development communication through various paradigms in the government context and literature related to participatory development communication in development studies.

CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter 1: Introduces the study orientation, background, and research objectives, as well as the methodology of the study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Background and Literature Review with specific reference to participatory development communication.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology, where relevant studies will be discussed and unpacked accordingly.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Interpretation of Data collected in the study from the sampled subjects and analysis of documentation within the legislative sector.

Chapter 5: Discussions and Recommendations

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND & LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses theoretical perspectives linked to development communication and their significance on the role of communication in public participation processes in the legislative sector. Theories which include modernisation, dependency and participatory approaches, were analysed in terms of the relationship between communication and public participation in developmental agendas in the context of the legislative sector. Furthermore, the literature reviewed is linked to communication effectiveness within public participation spaces in government development projects.

In the North West Provincial Legislature as an arm of government, public participation is viewed as a process used to communicate and include communities in the legislature activities such as law-making or oversight processes as part of its constitutional mandates. Through participatory development communication in the legislative sector, various communication methods, which include the publication of legislature work on its newsletter, website and social media platforms; public hearings, public meetings and sectoral parliaments, are utilised in its developmental programmes.

Development communication approaches assist with historical perspectives on how communication was used to interact and engage with communities on developmental programmes. Melkote and Steeves (2015:21) state that development communication should be seen as a process that pushes developmental programmes in society by the government and in partnership with communities as part of their societal norms and how to resolve their socio-economic challenges.

Within the scope of development in government, parliaments or provincial legislatures are not only seen as organisations that only play oversight the Executive as an arm of government which is tasked with providing services to the people but are (legislatures) organisations that communicate with the public through public participation processes on decision and policy making matters such as law-making or holding the Executive accountable. These processes entail communication methods such as public hearings and sectoral parliaments, where specific laws are processed through public consultative processes. Hyde-Clarke (2010:182) highlights that government and non-government agencies implement their policies through development communication via external media to achieve their goals within communities as part of their strategic engagements.

There needs to be more within the literature exploring communication methods used by the North West Provincial Legislature on whether it effectively and efficiently communicates with its stakeholders in public participation processes. Therefore, the studies explored how participatory development communication is essential in ensuring active participation or involvement of communities in various development programmes in the context of various arms of government such as the legislative, Executive, and private sectors.

2.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1 Development Communication

Development communication originated in the 1950s after World War II when developed countries needed to expand their influence through development programs in Third World countries. Waisboard (2003) states that development communication originated in post-war international aid programmes to countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa that were struggling with poverty, illiteracy, poor health and a lack of economic, political and social infrastructures.

Development was meant to transform disadvantaged and poorer communities and change the intended target market's perceptions about particular issues, such as service delivery within development programmes. Kumar (2011) states that the

ultimate goal of development was to change the higher quality of values in society, create an atmosphere for change, and provide innovations through which society may change. Weisbord (2003) also mentions that development is a process linked with transforming ideology and behavioural change from advantaged communities to less privileged ones.

Development communication ensures that those who communicate various social programmes do so with relevant communication media specific to the intended recipients. The main scope and functions of development communication are not exclusively about communicating information and messages, but they also involve engaging stakeholders and assessing the situation (Mefalopulos, 2008).

Communication media is seen as a tool that can be widely accepted by communities in a particular setting if it is relatable to their social settings or cultural environment. McPhail (2009:3) reiterates that development communication is linked with systematic community interventions through various media platforms such as print, radio, telephony, video and the internet or education (training, literacy and schooling) for positive social change.

In the case of the North West Provincial Legislature, systematic intervention can include a change in legislation that affects a particular community, such as amendments to mining rights or laws within mining communities. Communication methods such as public hearings are used to solicit community input during amendments of such legislation.

Development communication was also used not only as an informative mechanism within development programmes but as a system aimed at citizen empowerment and often at advocating for behavioural change in a particular setting. Phuong and Ibrahim (2020) state that the usage of local resources during the transmission of information in development programmes can empower communities and ensure that their goals are met within specific time frames. Noske-Turner (2020) also states that communication for development brings the focus inwards to development agencies and the possibility of practising development centred on dialogue, trust and openness.

Through communication media such as local or regional radio stations, the North West Provincial Legislature can intervene by allowing communities to call in and raise their issues, such as concerns about the local or provincial government's slow progress on service delivery projects. Members of the Provincial Legislature can then hold the Executive accountable and ensure that services are rendered per annual departmental or municipal performance plans.

2.2.2 Modernisation Paradigm

The Modernisation paradigm emerged after World War II from various schools of thought in the Western social sciences. The paradigm represented massive economic empowerment through capital investment and economic growth in the Third World by developed countries from the West. After World War II, many Western economies advocated for intensive industrialisation, capital expansion, and urbanisation in the Third World but through a top-down economic empowerment approach (Melkote & Steeves, 2015; Kumar, 2011; Servaes & Malikhao, 2002).

Dauids and Theron (2014:10) further state that after World War II, there was a thinking from Western schools of thought that for Third World countries to develop, they had to adopt mechanisms found in Western countries or developed nations. They also pushed for extended urbanisation and centralised planning, and governments where development would be pushed through health, education, and agricultural reforms in rural economies.

Development was also viewed as something that only came from the Western economies, which were deemed to have a better perspective on development agendas through economic emancipation and advantages. Mefalopoulos (2008) adds that during the dominant paradigm, there was an overestimated belief that developed Western countries saw themselves as superior and extremely powerful in persuading audiences to change attitudes and behaviours.

Although communication was a one-way, top-down approach from those who brought change, mass media was primarily used as a communication tool in developmental programmes to persuade beneficiaries of development to change how they live. Traditional mass media platforms such as radio were utilised to change people's perceptions about development but through a top-down communication approach which included using Western methods of development (Yagnik and Melkote, 2020:68 and Kumar, 2011).

Criticism of the theory began in the early 1960s when theorists questioned the method used for development in the Third World as a linear process where the targeted audience could not participate in developmental programmes but used persuasion as a method of communication. McPhail (2009:10) reiterates that the developmental agenda from the Western Nations was soon viewed as suspicious and unreliable.

They were becoming the receivers of information that was, in fact, in a one-way communication flow and could not be questioned. The free-flow mantra essentially masked the dominance of the former colonial masters, and now, with the addition of the might and marketing of the US, matters only became worse (McPhail, 2009, p. 10). It was a structural imbalance that suited the industrialised nations' foreign policy needs and communications corporations. Communication in development was not aligned with the social needs or methods of communication used by those who received development.

The paradigm also needed to address fundamental issues such as two-way communication between the developed and developing nations who received either aid or economic empowerment programmes, as seen in the participatory paradigm. According to Mefalopulos (2008), the emphasis on tangible communication products should have addressed the potential of communication as a dialogic, cross-cutting investigative total. Unfortunately, the available data indicated that the most important message was that media were not the answer to development problems, at least not how they were used.

Other critics, such as Webster (on Davids and Theron, 2014:11), stated that the modernisation paradigm is an oversimplified model of development that lacks two essential ingredients, i.e. inadequate historical input and structural perspective, and ignores a wealth of evidence indicating that the process of economic growth cannot be encapsulated in simplistic notions about the displacement of “traditional” values systems and institutions by “modern” ones.

2.2.3 Dependency Paradigm

The Dependency paradigm originated in the 1960s after the failure of modernisation as a dominant paradigm to address critical developmental issues in Latin America, including Africa, and scholars questioned the developed countries' strategies and tactics in addressing social issues in underdeveloped nations. Phuong and Ibrahim (2020:2) state that those who advocated for the dependency paradigm blamed the dominant paradigm for the failure of various development programmes in the third-world economies as it did not take into cognisance their pre-existing socio-economic conditions and cultural settings. The current paradigm supported the advanced need for an equal flow of information worldwide but needed help to achieve its intended objectives.

Critics of the dominant paradigm also stressed that the problems of the Third World or underdeveloped countries were not their own doing but developmental policies and strategies imposed on them by the Western economies. Mefalopulos (2008) also states that proponents of this school of thought criticised some of the core assumptions of the modernisation paradigm mostly because it implicitly put the responsibility and the blame for the causes of underdevelopment exclusively upon the recipients of development, such as Third World countries, neglecting external social, historical, and economic factors and being very Western-centric, refusing or neglecting any alternative route to development. Opposed to the dominant paradigm, dependency theorists argued that the problems of underdevelopment were not internal to Third World countries but were determined by external factors and how former colonies were integrated into the world economy (Weisbord, 2003).

Goonaseka (2009:8) also stresses that under this paradigm, underdevelopment in the Third World resulted from world economic relations, which have created a centre and a periphery, with central economic relations with the peripheral states. Development and underdevelopment are intertwined within the socio-economic systems of developed and Third World countries (Goonaseka, 2009, p. 8).

Some Latin American scholars reiterated that underdevelopment in the Third World countries was due to overdevelopment in the first world economies. These economies neglected basic socio-cultural measures in the southern hemisphere needed for development. Melkote and Steeves (2015,p.228) maintain that other scholars of the dependency paradigm, such as Sunkel, Amin and Goulet, examined the failure of capitalistic systems in many economies result of imbalances between developed and underdeveloped countries.

Dependency theories did not consider and support the wider role that "freer" communication systems and not just media at different levels could play in creating spaces and actively engaging broader sectors of society in development. Despite significant differences between modernisation and dependency theories, their communication model was the same: a one-way communication flow. The main difference between the two theories was who was controlling and sending the message and for what purpose (Mefalopulos, 2008).

According to Davids and Theron (2014:16), the criticism of the dependency theory came from the idea that development was based on the notion of developmental strategies in the developed nations and not necessarily on those who sort development. Socialism, the basis of the dependency theory, was collapsing, and it was becoming evident that the Western economic growth model was confronted with environmental constraints.

2.2.4 Participatory Paradigm

The participatory paradigm gained prominence in the early 1970s after the dependency and modernisation approaches failed to address critical developmental

programmes in the Third World. It emerged after the two paradigms, i.e. Modernisation and Dependency, failed to give beneficiaries of development a voice on programmes brought to them by government agencies. During the two previous paradigms, communities could not participate in programmes brought to them by Western economies. They became observers of development programmes in their settings. Weisbord (2003) mentions that modernisation projects undermined the importance of local knowledge and the consequences of the interaction between local cultures and foreign ideas. The lack of local participation was considered responsible for the failure of different programs brought by the former colonisers.

Both paradigms also ignored basic acknowledgement of the locals' inputs or their points of view as they did not value them. They did not think including them would assist in the development programmes provided. Huesca (2008:181) points out that programmes of development during the earlier paradigms had completely distanced themselves from the socio-economic realities of those who needed development, thus ignoring various structures of communities where development was needed.

New directions meant relooking at the bigger picture of whether allowing the participation of the beneficiaries of development on various projects could yield any desired or positive outcomes. In the early 1970s, scholars from Latin America began deconstructing the dominant paradigm of communication for development and pointing to new directions for research (Huesca, 2008). Lack of participation also gave rise to further community outcry for total inclusion in projects that concerned them in their respective communities. Tufte (2017:56) states that participation was viewed as a transformative tool or agenda in communities. Historically, it emerged as a process of allowing communities to engage in change processes without being left out.

The participatory paradigm argues that people's genuine participation is essential for meaningful change, which should not be dictated and enforced but negotiated and internalised. It meant negotiations through a language or communication method that they are familiar with and culturally understandable and acceptable. The participatory approach emphasises popular participation in self-development planning and execution, employment of local resources, abandonment of top-down approaches,

and integration of traditional and modern systems (Okigbo & Mou, 2017, p. 59). Authentic and genuine communication is usually participatory, so no phase of development communication practice can be said to be utterly bereft of participation, nor can we say that the participation phase has ended (Okigbo & Mou, 2017).

Citizens' participation related to emancipation from poverty and inequality to have a voice where public members can participate in the development and raise issues if they feel left out of development programmes. Tufte (2017) mentions that participation has been closely associated with widespread participation in social movements, from struggles of resistance and rebellion to citizen engagement in deliberation processes and the enhancement of voice and visibility in the public sphere. Furthermore, participation has been tied not to the specificities of development cooperation but more fundamental visions of citizens engaging in articulation and social and structural change (Tufte, 2017).

Even though participation, communities could emerge from disintegrated living conditions to ownership of liberating mechanisms such as development programmes brought to them by the government. In the North West Provincial Legislature context, ownership implies active participation in law-making processes where communities feel fully engaged in an amendment, repealing or making laws that concern them and that their inputs were well captured. Melkote and Steeves (2015:376) add that participation was directed because, often, the development projects aimed to achieve widespread cooperation in increasing agricultural production, improving formal and non-formal education, and limiting family size.

Participation meant that people could participate in development programmes to assist them through a suitable communication medium. A communication medium such as a sectoral parliament where various service delivery issues are discussed, such as social services, can assist participants in ensuring that the North West Provincial Legislature holds the Executive accountable as part of its oversight role. Phuong and Ibrahim (2020) state that interactive engagements between communities and the government could be achieved through specific media that will change their conditions.

Participation also implied active and robust citizen participation through communication media that is understandable and can link various stakeholders in projects. Being robust can mean a situation where community representatives are engaging Members of the Provincial Legislature on various service delivery issues, such as lack of provision of water, and urging them to force the Executive to implement their earlier annual performance plans taken for public consultations before implementation. Kumar (2011) adds that the participatory approach was also aimed at strategically linking development ideas that suited a particular community as long as they led and participated in such development programmes. There is an explicit emphasis on self-reliance, self-development and redistribution of resources between social groups, urban and rural areas, regions and sexes (Kumar, 2011).

2.2.4.1 Participatory Communication

Participation is associated with how communication media can address development communication between stakeholders, such as governments and communities relating to developmental projects. It can mean the North West Provincial Legislature using communication methods such as public hearings to allow communities to participate in law-making processes or holding the Executive accountable. Therefore, participatory communication is closely linked with communication methods that ensure communities participate in development programmes in their respective environments. Communication's role, essentially to inform and influence people, was being revised and proposed as a process of social interaction through the balanced exchange of information which shall lead to change (Kumar, 2011).

Participatory communication further fulfils a broader social function: providing a voice to the poorest and the most marginalised of people around the world. According to Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009), by engaging all relevant stakeholders, participatory communication becomes a tool that helps alleviate poverty, mitigates social exclusion, and ensures priorities and objectives are agreed to and refined by a broader base of the constituencies.

Messages intended for the public should contain content relevant to its recipients and can empower and move communities out of their disadvantaged environments.

Melkote and Steeves (2015) also highlight that the flow of communication within development programmes is based on recipients' needs. Widespread use of such communication strategies also addresses issues such as capacity building and empowerment of the local people and their knowledge and problem-solving experiences.

Participatory communication does not only imply empowerment in situations where arms of government, such as the North West Provincial Legislature, are ensuring that the Executive is held accountable through sectoral parliaments or public meetings where communities raise service delivery issues. It means communities have direct knowledge of how to communicate or interact with Members of the Provincial Legislature as they would have been educated on the processes that should be followed. The functions of communication were not only to disseminate information but also to educate them for development by persuasion through mass media. Interpersonal channels were utilised for communicating development activity feedback (Kumar, 2011). In the modern era, communication in participation has shifted to focus on meaningful engagements amongst stakeholders, hoping to create reasonable social patterns within various government institutions and communities they serve. There should be a linkage between development initiatives and communication channels (Kumar, 2011).

During the facilitation of law-making in the legislature, engagements entail a situation where communities and Members of the Provincial Legislature discuss proposed legislation as it affects them. Those communities' inputs will instil meaning, purpose, and ownership of the laws that will be made, amended, or repealed during public participation. Therefore, the concept of participation communication advocates communication as a tool for social change and encourages interaction between communities and those who brought development, such as Members of the Provincial Legislature through law-making processes. According to Waisbord (2014), participatory communication should encourage interactions between different role players in development. Further, dialogue is necessary as two-way communication between two parties aiming to solve socio-economic problems.

Participatory communication further insists that communities engage in two-way communication with stakeholders or communities during public engagement processes on relevant or specific service delivery issues. Bessette (2006) states that participatory development has changed from a process that uses persuasion as a communicative tool to a system that ensures active participation in those programs through dialogical communication.

With dialogue and progressive exchange of messages between Members of the Provincial Legislature and communities, communities will understand development programmes brought to them by the North West Provincial Legislature. The messages sent across should also have meaning based on socio-graphics and their demographics or through a horizontal exchange of messages that allows for proper feedback (Molale, 2014).

The influence of dialogic communication also lies in the opportunity for stakeholders to unpack the nature of development through active engagements (Mefalopulos, 2008). If civil society is to take a more significant role in conceiving and working for development, then dialogue is unavoidable.

To communities, transformation means the legislative sector holding the Executive accountable so that they can implement service delivery so as to then change their socio-economic statuses and livelihoods at large. It can be achieved through Members of the Provincial Legislature communicating with the Executive through relevant communication platforms in their communities. Waisbord (2003) note that participatory communication further entails questioning inequalities amongst those who are meant to lead communities in developmental processes and transform the socio-economic conditions. Inagaki (2007) also adds that including disadvantaged communities within participatory processes can assist them in valuing commitment to such processes to take ownership of them.

Participatory communication does not only mean dialogic communication between government and communities but also communication methods that can empower those targeted audiences. Empowerment in participatory communication concerns

how communication can empower communities during developmental programs in their respective communities. Jonker (2016) also states that through empowerment, communities can recognise and be familiar with the challenges facing them and how they can address them familiarly and conveniently.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the current study, different studies associated with the relationship between public participation and communication were reviewed. They involve how communication and public participation are linked to development programmes amongst communities. Communication does not only imply interaction but mutual understanding and ownership of the processes involved in development initiatives in the targeted audiences. Various stakeholders need to be cognizant of what is at stake before active involvement in those public participation processes of government. Theron and Mchunu (2016:197) state that public participation in government can only be achieved through suitable communication methods, which can also lead to good service delivery, and that "through communication, development objectives are clear to all as are the means to achieve them as well as the contribution of communities to the development process."

Within the legislative sector, communication entails reciprocal engagements between communities and Members of the Provincial Legislature on various programmes, such as public participation in sectoral parliaments or public meetings. Sebola (2017) highlights that communities need to be fully engaged in public participation to achieve their goals within the legislative sector or government.

Furthermore, in the legislative sector, communities must be at the forefront of the policymaking or law-making processes enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Participation means ownership of those processes and decisions taken thereof. Mefalopoulos (2008) states that most development programmes ignore the aspect of communication when dealing with community development-aligned processes, although they intend to use interactive measures to promote change within communities. Through several communication practices, such as public meetings or

using local and mass media platforms, the legislature can ensure that it forces the government to fast-track service delivery to transform those communities.

Through other communication media, such as the North West Provincial Legislature's website or social media platforms, communities can urge the legislature to intervene on other service delivery issues, such as lack of water, poor maintenance on local roads, or slow progress on service delivery projects. This forms part of the legislature's oversight role on the Executive through active public participation of communities. Inagaki (2007) reiterates that communication can create a favourable ecology for development programmes by re-linking and facilitating interactions between economically, politically and culturally disconnected groups and ideas – indigenous knowledge and science and elite playmakers and rural communities.

2.3.1 Public Participation

In the legislative sector, public participation not only works as a mechanism that connects the institution with the public but also ensures a two-way communication process as per Constitutional mandates. Various communication methods such as traditional media, social networks, websites, public education workshops or public hearings are employed through participatory communication means to ensure that service delivery issues are addressed. Through participatory communication, stakeholders can engage in other developmental issues, such as law-making processes in the legislative sector, where various pieces of legislation are either proposed, repealed or amended or through holding the Executive accountable. John and Etika (2019:70) highlight that the participatory communication process benefits communities through their involvement in community projects and their successes therein. Community members who are directly involved in development projects tend to feel ownership of them as they are aware of every development item in the legislative sector that concerns them.

A study by Thungo and Mavee (2021) focused on the role of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature in promoting public participation. Its primary purpose was to check the viability of Gauteng Provincial Legislature's public participation mechanisms from the

province's demographic, political and economic profile. Access to various communication media and public participation venues was assessed, and the study was further aimed at assessing the influence of communities on the decision-making and feedback processes of the institution during public participation processes.

The study highlighted that Gauteng Provincial Legislature uses the following public participation processes to communicate with the public:

- **House sittings** are where communities are invited to observe the House sessions where MPLs hold discussions or debates, but they (the public) cannot make any inputs. Other methods include committee stakeholder and meetings observation, where communities are invited to make submissions on a particular service delivery matter.
- **Taking the Committee to Communities initiative** is a programme where Members of the Provincial Legislature hold meetings with various community members in different locations to educate them about their role in its three (3) mandates, i.e., law-making, oversight and public participation, and also gathering information about service delivery matters.
- **Public hearings** are held at the legislature or a particular location where community members are invited to make inputs on proposed bills and other matters about service delivery.
- **Public awareness campaigns and workshops:** During these sessions, community members are also educated about the legislature's work and how they can contribute as the institution's stakeholders.
- **Bua le Sechaba campaign** is mainly associated with Committees' work, which includes identifying critical public issues and how they can be resolved through oversight processes.
- **Community education-outreach workshops** of the institution are also related to promoting democracy and the essential functions and mandate of the legislature.
- **Sectoral parliaments** are specifically stakeholder-based, such as the agricultural sector, where Members of the Provincial Legislature from the institution's Committees deal with those issues through engagement processes. A specific department will be called to respond to issues raised by invited stakeholders, which

also promotes democracy and accountability between the legislature, departments and communities (Thungo and Mavee,2021: 168).

According to the study mentioned above, some key challenges in implementing effective public participation at the institution were the socio-economic challenges experienced by communities that hamper them from becoming active participants in the institution's operations, such as law-making, oversight work or holding the Executive accountable.

In another study conducted by Mziba (2020) on the role of public participation in service delivery, a case of a selected township in the Cape Metropolitan area, South Africa, challenges of public participation in service delivery issues were identified as a lack of consultation and information sharing. The study also found that communities needed to be consulted on development programmes in their area.

Participants need more education to help them understand critical public participation processes of the legislature, like how to be involved in law-making or oversight processes. Thungo and Mavee (2021) state that poorer community members are not involved in the critical decision-making processes of the Gauteng provincial legislature as they also need access to communication media used by the institution.

Other challenges experienced by participants include time constraints or lack of access to relevant media and lack of access to transport due to financial constraints. According to Thungo and Mavee (2021), communities need help accessing venues for public participation due to financial challenges. The institution itself has experienced financial problems in engaging communities regularly. Another public participation challenge at the legislature is the direct marginalisation of communities on legislative processes whereby MPLs must use their parliamentary and constituency offices to communicate with the public.

The study recommended that Gauteng Provincial Legislature utilise a multiparty marketing strategy to increase visibility and inclusivity in its public participation processes. Thungo and Mavee (2021) suggest that using Members of the Provincial

Legislature from political parties represented in the legislature, their active involvement can ensure that public participation programmes find greater expression within communities. Furthermore, the institution should ensure that other stakeholders, such as the working class and young people, are invited to attend the public participation programmes to make inputs on the planning and implementation of such programmes.

The institution should also increase participation from other races, such as whites, Indians and the Chinese so that their service delivery concerns can be heard and incorporated into its public participation programmes. It should also be highlighted through planning sessions of such public participation programmes (Thungo & Mavee, 2021).

The study also recommended that stakeholders invited to participate in public participation programmes such as public hearings where proposed pieces of legislation are presented and discussed should be given feedback on such processes. Thungo and Mavee (2021) have further recommended that the institution improve its feedback mechanisms. In addition to providing feedback, same number of stakeholders should be invited to attend such sessions. Peter (2017) also recommends that community structures linked to municipalities, such as ward communities, should be utilised as platforms that provide feedback to communities on decisions taken at the municipal council level and be viewed as influential on overall service delivery matters discussed within the municipal council.

A qualitative study by Luka (2019) examined the nature of communication between the Kumba Iron Ore mine and its resettlement project within the Dingleton community in the Northern Cape province in South Africa. The study was also aimed at determining, through literature study, theoretical principles of the participatory approach that might be relevant to communication between the community and the mine, as well as understanding communication between various community stakeholders and mine representatives. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted and used to understand the communication between the two stakeholders. Luka (2019) also conducted the study to check and observe the principles of participatory communication between Kumba Iron Ore and the Dingleton

community on the resettlement project for social change and whether communities are empowered in the process.

In terms of community participation within the project, the study discovered that only some community members were invited to participate in the planning and implementation processes of the project through suitable communication methods. Luka (2019) mentions that most community members felt that the mine forced the project on them; hence they could not evaluate and be part of it.

The study concluded that the project must adhere to community participation efforts from the planning, implementation and evaluation phases. Luka (2019) highlights that the mine failed to actively engage communities in decision-making processes so that communities could feel ownership of the project. For communication between the mine and the Dingleton community to facilitate community participation, the community must be active participants in planning, implementation, and evaluation and in all decision-making in the programs that benefit them (Luka, 2019).

A study by Phendu (2019) assessed *the state of public participation in the Western Cape: the case study of Beaufort West Municipality (2016-2019)* with specific reference to the ward committee system; the role of the legislative and policy framework governing public participation; the institution architecture, and the roles of the various stakeholders involved in the public participation.

Some of the study's findings indicated that community or public participation could be best enhanced through ward committees as communities prefer them as they 'legitimise' specific key municipal processes such as Integrated Development Planning (IDP). According to Phendu (2019), the participants in the study have also reiterated the fact that through participation in ward committees, service delivery and other issues of development can be achieved and that if communities are allowed to raise their issues through a local ward councillor, they can influence the governance issues in the municipality.

Furthermore, Phendu (2019) discovered challenges related to coalition governments and how they affect public participation. There is a need to review and reconfigure the legislative and policy framework governing public participation and ward committees.

The research study recommended using traditional communication methods such as loudhailers to mobilise communities to attend ward councillor meetings to brief them about developmental issues in their respective municipality, such as presenting budget reports. Lobelo (2020) also reiterates that in order for the government to reach out to more community members to discuss or implement service delivery, there should be a maximisation of the usage of community newspapers and radio stations and enhancement of platforms that can assist the government in sending more messages to communities such as through digital platforms.

2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter examined the theoretical background of development communication in relation to the link between communication and public participation processes in the government context. Various communication development paradigms, such as modernisation, dependency and participatory paradigms, were discussed as how communication played a critical role in developmental programmes. Communication in the legislative sector works as a tool that links the public with Members of the Provincial Legislature through public participation processes such as public hearings, public education workshops, or sectoral parliaments.

The study further analysed literature associated with communication and public participation in the context of government. The following chapter discusses the research methodology utilised to collect information from research participants in the study about their perceptions of the communication methods used by the North West Provincial Legislature for public participation.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The current chapter explores the research methodology used in this study. The study embraced a qualitative research approach to solicit information from the research participants on their perceptions of the organisational communication methods used by the North West Provincial Legislature for public participation. The objective of the current study is to explore and analyse the effectiveness of the organisational communication methods used by the North West Provincial Legislature, which include the publication of legislature work on its newsletter, website and social media platforms; public hearings, public meetings and sectoral parliaments during public participation processes in the legislature. Furthermore, the study is aimed at exploring whether the feedback mechanisms used by the legislature are practical and efficient during public participation processes.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH (METHODOLOGY)

According to Putman and Rock (2018), to create a new meaning to a particular matter, the qualitative research approach utilises exploratory mechanisms through a broader pool of information at the researcher's disposal.

In the current study, semi-structured interviews through open-ended interviews together with a self-administered questionnaire were used to solicit opinions from stakeholders of the North West Provincial Legislature where it communicates with them during its public participation processes such as public hearings, workshops and sectoral parliaments during law-making or oversight processes.

With the qualitative research method, a researcher aims to deeply explore a phenomenon under researched through stakeholders who know and understand the matter. Leedy and Ormord (2018:231) maintain that through qualitative research approaches, the researcher has a chance to deeply explore information or a situation

that has been previously under-explored. Regarding the current study, communication methods used within the legislative sector for public participation are not explored in a broader sense, hence the need to use a qualitative research approach to understand their effectiveness within its public participation processes as mandated by the Constitution.

Jensen and Laurie (2016:11) also add that by establishing lesser-known phenomena, the researcher is at liberty to create or formulate new and specific theoretical approaches that can be used in the future as a fixed point of a research study. A new meaning, which involves more convenient and relevant communication methods, was discovered during the collection of data from the North West Provincial Legislature's stakeholders as well as their general perceptions on whether the current communication methods used are practical and efficient for the communities.

Silverman (2017:7) also adds that the qualitative approach involves many methods to discover new meanings for what is currently studied. Data collection methods such as interviews or self-administered questionnaires did assist the research study in creating more knowledge on the effectiveness of the communication methods used by the North West Provincial Legislature for public participation.

Furthermore, Flick (2015:11) states that one of the main aspects of qualitative research is to first collect participants' subjective viewpoints on a particular matter through various case studies and then produce detailed findings or recommendations on such phenomenon. An in-depth understanding of communication methods used by the legislature for public participation might lead to the creation of new meanings or proposals for the new communication approaches for the institution as suggested by its internal and external stakeholders via qualitative research approaches. Some of the opinions of the research participants included their dissatisfaction with the current methods used, such as the timing of public hearings and sectoral parliaments, which need to be assisting them or the legislature in facilitating public participation.

Lapan et al. (2012:101) reiterate that the other aspect or advantage of qualitative research is progressive interventions that are culturally or locally beneficial to all

communities researched and how they can change their attitudes or belief systems for a better world. In the context of the legislature, seeking perceptions from its stakeholders on communication methods used during public participation processes such as public hearings might lead to a change in approach to hosting those events, thus leading to more content being gathered from stakeholders. More timing and convenience also mean more inputs during law-making processes, thus ensuring that communities' decisions are taken seriously, and they can have ownership as policymakers.

By recommending newer communication approaches for the legislature to the people of the North West Province during its public participation processes, public trust and confidence can be instilled as those communities can trust the institution to implement better service delivery by holding the Executive accountable. The communities will further change their attitudes towards the legislature as it will communicate in a language or an approach they understand or can relate to.

The qualitative research approach is further embedded in an attitude that the research is not structured or formal but allows for open engagements with a variety of issues through descriptive analysis, as it is often done through face-to-face or observational mechanisms (Kumar, 2014, p. 14). The communities or respondents are allowed to be interviewed in their communal settings at their convenience through allows for more open-ended questions or interview approach. It also respects the views and perceptions of the respondents as they raise their issues based on their localised, organisational or expanded knowledge of the subject matter as they are done in an in-depth interview setting.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The current study employed an exploratory research design as it seeks to explore the views or perceptions of the legislature's internal and external stakeholders on their knowledge about communication methods used for public participation processes. Gronmo (2020:429) states that exploratory studies tend to determine the relations between variables. These variables are communication methods and public participation processes of the legislature.

Exploratory studies also allow the researcher to openly explore new meanings to a phenomenon without strict restrictions, thus creating a new understanding of a particular unknown topic. Kumar (2014:13) mentions that exploratory studies aim to define the connection between two approaches and why they interlink.

Leavy (2017:260) also highlights that exploratory studies aim to define and comprehensively outline processes within a particular matter and how they were formulated from their original format. Therefore, the current study plans to describe organisational communication methods used by the legislature and how they aid its public participation mandate with the communities.

3.3.1 POPULATION

The Population within exploratory studies is associated with the available number of participants deemed suitable to be chosen or selected for a particular research study. According to Flick (2015), the Population of a research study involves all possible participants that are related to the study and have a chance of being selected. Babbie (2017) adds that Population states that Population is the total sum of participants from which a study sample is chosen. The Population of about 300 employees and thirty-three (33) Members of the Provincial Legislature and over 4.2 million residents of the North West Province selected the study who have extensive knowledge of the legislature's communication methods used for public participation processes.

3.3.1.1 SAMPLING

3.3.1.1.1 PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

When dealing with purposive sampling, a research participant is intentionally selected because they are capable of answering research questions to their best abilities as they have knowledge of the subject matter at hand. Creswell and Poth (2018) state that during purposive sampling, the researcher selects respondents who have extensive knowledge of the subject matter and believes that they can assist the

research study with relevant and specific information that can be used to form a concrete or substantive argument.

During the research study, a sample of the respondents was selected from employees and Members of the Provincial Legislature and community members who have broader knowledge and information on the organisational communication methods used by the North West Provincial Legislature for public participation processes. Bryman (2012:325) adds that during the purposeful or purposive sampling procedure, the researcher can select respondents capable of giving current answers or responses to the questions of the research study. They assisted the study in formulating meaning and understanding of the effectiveness and efficiency of the communication methods used by the legislature for public participation. For a semi-structured interview, three (3) Members of the Provincial Legislature and three (3) Managers in the North West Provincial Legislature were selected, whilst 70 members of the public, including employees of the legislature, were selected for self-administered questionnaires that were sent via Google online survey through either email or Whatsapp messaging link.

Kumar (2019:307) maintains that during purposive sampling, a researcher has the prerogative to choose respondents who can benefit the study as their knowledge is objective and clear to the subject. The choice is on the researcher as he/she feels that the chosen respondents have relevant experience on the matter under discussion; hence they can assist in the research process.

3.3.1.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

When a researcher aims to solicit in-depth knowledge from the selected sample, semi-structured interviews are often conducted getting more information on the subject matter under discussion in the research study. Lindelof and Taylor (2019:142) mention that semi-structured interviews provide information about a scene from critical informants who possess deep knowledge of goals, missions, personnel, and recent history.

Through observing Covid-19 regulations, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews face-to-face with N=3three (3) Members of the Provincial Legislature (MPLs) who are also Chairpersons of various Portfolio and Select Committees who also usually preside over public hearings or public meetings of the legislature as part of communicating with the public during public participation processes.

Furthermore, through observing Covid-19 regulations, semi-structured interviews were conducted with N=3 three (3) managers in the legislature, i.e. Manager: Communications, Manager: Public Participation, Manager: Research and Manager: Office of the Speaker. These managers are responsible for ensuring that the legislature communicates with communities through public participation processes such as sectoral parliaments, public hearings and public education workshops.

Lapan et al. (2012:253) highlight that purposive sampling acquires its abilities from the will to select respondents with concrete experience in the field under review or study. De Vos et al. (2011:392) also point out that a researcher must first outline his/her plan on why and how those respondents can benefit from the research study before choosing a sample.

Semi-structured interviews often allow a researcher to obtain relevant information on a topic or scenario that needs to be researched. Leavy (2017:139) adds that in-depth interviews can permit the respondents to respond in a language or a manner that they understand, thus adding or providing more content to the research study. They are not based on one-ended answers but comprehensive responses on various issues as per the research topic.

Bryman (2016:157) also highlights that during the interview setting, the questions posed tend to be prolonged and informal, unlike in a formal interview setting. The researcher has the liberty to ask any question, believing that he/she can get informed answers. Some of the data received from interviews revealed information relating to the manner in which the legislature conducts its public participation, as some respondents highlighted that the legislature is using a limited approach to communicate with them how it holds the Executive accountable for service delivery. It

limits communication during public participation processes such as public meetings where service delivery issues are addressed or discussed. Flick (2015:140) further states that for semi-structured interviews, a researcher prepares a set of questions based on the research aim or questions during the interview process.

3.3.1.3 Self-administered Questionnaire

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a self-administered questionnaire was sent via online Google survey to respondents. During an online survey, a researcher developed a questionnaire using software and stored it on an internet server for retrieval by a potential respondent via an internet link (Kumar, 2019, p. 191). Online surveys are instrumental when dealing with a large and geographically diverse sample.

Due to Covid-19 regulations when conducting research, a self-administered questionnaire was converted into an online Google survey sent via email or WhatsApp link to 70 respondents with knowledge of the organisational communication methods used by the legislature for public participation. These respondents were also selected as they have engaged or participated in public participation processes such as public hearings, sectoral parliaments or public meetings/workshops of the legislature.

3.4 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis involves a researcher strategically analysing the data collected from respondents to formulate meaning and understanding. Kumar (2019:474) mentions that during the qualitative content analysis, the researcher intends to categorise thematic meanings after data collection methods such as interviews or a self-administered questionnaire.

Flick (2020:273) also states that the initial approach to qualitative content analysis is based on defining a process or a case within a research study with its specific features and how they intertwine. Creswell (2009:183) adds that qualitative data analysis not only scrutinises information gathered during data collection but plans to

comprehensively interpret received data to articulate its purpose in a formal setting within the research study. It can be done by setting specific themes based on the information gathered during the data collection. Themes include their knowledge of each communication method used by the legislature, their general perceptions of them, and their opinion on the ideal communication method that can be used as well as ideal feedback mechanisms that the legislature should employ during public participation processes such as public hearings or sectoral parliaments.

Data collected from semi-structured interviews were recorded and later transcribed into a summary based on the research aim. It was also based on the themes linked to the research aim to explore the organisational communication methods used by the legislature for public participation. During the semi-structured interviews, the researcher asked the respondents to sign a consent form which included an agreement to observe the COVID-19 regulations, including social distancing protocols.

Kumar (2019:474) states that the process of analysing data collected includes what was recorded during the interview to create themes as per respondents' perceptions or views. Furthermore, Bryman (2001:177) elaborates that data from documents or scripts can be analysed in a formal and organised manner and thematic arrangements.

The self-administered questionnaires were based on the organisational communication practices in the North West Provincial Legislature. Amongst others, the questionnaire asked the respondents assisted on whether traditional media such as radio and television used by the legislature assisted the institution in communicating with its internal and external stakeholders and whether the quarterly newsletter of the legislature communicates its work as part of public participation processes. It also explored whether the feedback mechanisms used by the legislature to communicate with its stakeholders were effective and efficient.

With the two sets of data collection methods, which included semi-structured and self-administered questionnaires, the researcher could analyse it (data) and set it into themes. Some of the key themes included organisational communication methods that

are not effective and efficient in ensuring that North West Provincial Legislature is adequately implementing public participation; duplication of duties by different units within the institution on communicating with the public; shortage of human and financial capital and lack of communication and public participation strategies, and outdated communication and public participation policies. Other themes included feedback mechanisms to ensure that the North West Provincial Legislature responds to issues raised by communities when it holds the Executive accountable. Flick (2020:285) reiterates with themes that the research is about categorically organised data in a detailed manner which includes comprehensive information.

3.5 TRIANGULATION

Triangulation involves the use of different collection procedures with the plan of receiving reliable and credible results. It can be achieved using multiple methods such as self-administered questionnaires, semi-structured interviews or observations. According to Kumar (2019:31), triangulation is focused on utilising numerous data collection sources to strengthen the research study with a belief of getting a credible research result. Furthermore, Creswell and Poth (2018) add that the process can be successful if the researcher does not use one source of data but includes other methods available to ensure that the research results are comprehensive.

In the current research study, the researcher used open-ended semi-structured interviews and a self-administered questionnaire to attain substantiating, reliable and sound findings.

3.6 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

The researcher experienced several challenges during the overall process of collecting data. During the interview process, many Provincial Legislature members were unavailable because they were still working from home due to Covid-19 regulations. The researcher had to travel to their different homes, which meant driving long distances in four (4) districts of the North West Province. They also informed the researcher that the legislature was in recess and thus unable to be physically available

as they were busy with political constituency work in their respective places of residence.

Some managers were also not available because they were busy with the preparations of both the State of the Nation Address and the State of the Province address as well as preparing the fourth quarter programme of the legislature. Others were unavailable as they blamed the multiple strategic planning sessions on the legislature Committees and the administration.

3.7 SUMMARY

Qualitative research methods were used during the collection of data as the study explored communication methods used by the legislature for public participation methods. The exploratory design was employed to understand the perceptions and opinions of stakeholders with knowledge of the communication methods of the legislature; semi-structured interviews and self-administered questionnaires were used during the data collection phase of the study. Furthermore, data from participants from the four districts were collected.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents data collected on the organisational communication methods used by the North West Provincial Legislature for public participation processes.

Three categories of participants, namely Legislators (3), Legislature Managers (3) and Residents (70). Their responses are presented and analysed in the next section.

4.2 RESULTS AND SUMMARY (Members of the Provincial Legislature)

4.2.1 Data from Members of the North West Provincial Legislature (MPLs)

(Interviewee 1: Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Provincial Public Accounts; Interviewee 2: Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs and Interviewee 3: Chairperson of Portfolio and Select Committees of the Legislature).

These respondents are some of the Members of the Provincial Legislature (MPLs) responsible for facilitating organisational communication methods for public participation at the North West Provincial Legislature.

4.2.2. Interview Questions

1. Which organisational communication practices does the Legislature use to facilitate public participation?

Interviewee 1: Legislature uses Facebook as a social media platform; radio for advertising; quarterly newsletter; public hearings during law-making processes; website and media statements for publishing Committee work and public engagement meetings during oversight week.

Interviewee 2: The Legislature mostly used Facebook and Twitter as part of the ^{fourth} industrial revolution; community radio simulcast for public hearings on bills facilitated during the COVID-19 pandemic and media alerts and statements to publicise Committee work.

Interviewee 3: The Legislature used traditional media platforms, petitions systems, and sectoral parliaments targeting particular sectors and conducting direct public hearings.

2. Are these platforms effective and efficient in addressing such public participation processes?

Interviewee 1: Highlighted that Facebook, radio, quarterly newsletter, public hearings, website, media statements and public engagement and public meetings used by the Legislature are weak and ineffective in communicating and reaching out to all the people to ensure that it (Legislature) is interacting with them through platforms.

Interviewee 2: Indicated that Facebook and Twitter, radio simulcast, media alerts and media statements are not assisting it in reaching out to the rural communities of the North West Province but selected and privileged people who often have access to the internet or these methods.

Interviewee 3: Traditional media platforms, petitions systems, sectoral parliaments, and direct public hearings could be more effective and efficient in ensuring the Legislature communicates with the public.

3. What are the known shortfalls of these organisational communication platforms when implementing public participation?

Interviewee 1: States that as the Legislature needs to be more decisive in reaching out to communities, only a few people in the province can access Facebook and Twitter. "People with valuable information cannot be accessed for comments or interactions. Radio is not working as it is not utilised effectively whereby the Legislature can have a slot to certain slots to communicate with the communities through different Portfolio or Select Committees Chairpersons."

The respondent also highlighted that some of the shortfalls of the Legislature's quarterly newsletter are that it needs to be produced monthly and cover all activities of the legislature Portfolio and Select Committees in line with the quarterly programme. "The method of selecting participants during sectoral parliament or public hearings is also flawed as relevant stakeholders are not invited to make good inputs. The timing is also wrong as important participants are not available during these sessions." The respondent further mentioned that the website of the Legislature is "bizarre and a disaster" as it still shows outdated information, such as retired or deceased Members of the Legislature.

Interviewee 2: Mentioned that social networks such as Facebook and Twitter used by the Legislature need to assist it to effectively communicate as they cannot reach out to the ruralness of the North West Province. "Not all stakeholders in the rural province have access to social media platforms due to poverty and inequality. They are only accessible to middle-income earners." Respondents also informed the researcher that the Legislature needs a permanent direct link with community radio stations, so it needs to advance its work. "Legislature is a law-making body that is constitutionally mandated to communicate with the public; hence the National Parliament has a parliamentary channel on television."

Interviewee 3 states that although radio is the most influential media platform, the Legislature must use it to engage with communities continuously. "On the petitions system, petitions take over a year to be resolved; hence the Legislature is ineffective in assisting communities. Another shortfall regarding social media is that the Legislature cannot respond to communities' comments on those platforms as there are no guidelines on social media usage."

"There are no pre-briefings during preparations of public hearings on a particular bill; hence we cannot get relevant stakeholders. At the level of district coordinators who should be communicating the work of the Legislature through public hearings, we do not have the capacity as they only focus on dealing with logistics or preparation of the event, such as catering, thus leaving mobilisation to municipalities who might not know the purpose of the event or invite relevant stakeholders.

4. Do communication methods used in the North West Provincial Legislature influence the effectiveness of its public participation processes?

Interviewee 1: Stated that they partially influenced the effectiveness of its public participation processes.

Interviewee 2: Mentioned that the organisational communication methods used by the Legislature did not influence the effectiveness of its public participation processes as a law-making body that is meant to inform and consult with the public on various issues such as processing of bills and holding the Executive accountable by playing oversight.

Interviewee 3: Highlighted that traditional media platforms, petitions systems, sectoral parliaments targeting particular sectors and conducting direct public hearings used by the Legislature did not influence the effectiveness of public participation due to a lack of political will to fully communicate to the public with a comprehensive approach that is inclusive of all communication methods based on the ruralness and dynamics of the North West Province.

5. What are the perceptions and experiences of Members and Employees of the North West Provincial Legislature concerning organisational communication practices that facilitate public participation?

Interviewee 1: The Legislature should invest resources and human capital within the communications unit to increase visibility throughout the province. "The public participation unit should also recruit extended public works programme workers and community workers to disseminate information such as activities within its programme. It must also educate those communities about its work so that when we arrive at their respective places, we can engage without confusion."

The respondent also said the Legislature should create a database of participants who can participate in its programmes, such as sectoral parliament, and use communication methods such as WhatsApp to update them on its activities regularly.

"We expect that when we go to a particular area, communities should know who we are, yet we do not have regular interaction with them on our work; hence they often confuse us as the Executive."

Interviewee 2: Indicated that the Legislature communicates and fulfils its mandate through a one-way communication method. "We are not even researching what the public expects from us as an oversight body, and we also lack visibility in our communities; hence communication between us and communities is compromised." "We expect that when we get into different communities, people should 'prophecy' who we are and how we can help them. Financial and human capital should be allocated to ensure we are visible through different outreach programmes. If we could be using local radio stations and tribal authorities to communicate with our people, the information could be more relatable, and it can improve our public participation processes."

Interviewee 3: Indicated that the current communication policy should be reviewed to respond to the needs of communities, including those without access to available communication methods. "We have a place like Heaningvlei that does not have a radio or television network but relies on the traditional council for information. The Legislature can use the 54 traditional councils and 18 parliamentary constituencies to educate, inform and consult communities." The respondent also said that the Legislature must partner with local municipalities to popularise its programme. "The petitions method should also be reviewed to include a six-week turn-around time with its public." The respondent further said that the public should have full access to the work of the Legislature on all its platforms, including the website, social media and public spaces such as libraries and municipal and tribal offices.

6. How do communication policies and strategies within the North West Provincial Legislature assist in ensuring efficient public participation processes?

Interviewee 1: Indicated that he needs to be made aware of any policies or strategies available.

Interviewee 2: Stated that with the ineffectiveness of communication between the Legislature and its public, there is a clear indication that they need to assist it in ensuring efficient public participation.

Interviewee 3: Highlighted that the current policies and strategies are not assisting the Legislature as it still needs better communication with stakeholders to ensure efficient public participation.

7. Are these policies updated regularly with current trends to ensure that the North West Provincial Legislature facilitates public participation?

Interviewee 1: The interviewee must know communication policies or strategies and need help answering the question.

Interviewee 2: Informed the researcher that as the Legislature continues to struggle to communicate with its public, there is an assumption that the current communication policies and strategies are based on something other than current trends.

Interviewee 3: Highlighted that the current policies and strategies cannot be based on current trends as the results of organisational communication methods used by the Legislature need to show positive results.

8. How effectively does the North West Provincial Legislature use organisational communication feedback mechanisms concerning public participation processes?

Interviewee 1: Indicated that there were no feedback mechanisms that the Legislature. "After receiving the mandate from communities during public hearings on a specific bill and it being signed into law, we do not return to the same communities through different organisational communication methods to give feedback." He further indicated that even the views raised by communities during public meetings of the Legislature as part of its oversight work still need to be responded to. "We do not call the departments and municipalities to respond to service delivery issues as they are

essential. We do not have a feedback method even through the usages of traditional media like radio, social networks, sectoral parliament or public workshops.”

Interviewee 2: Highlighted that the feedback mechanisms in the Legislature were non-existent. "We have a mandate in terms of the law on ensuring that we provide feedback to bills that have been scrutinised during public hearings, but we are not doing that."

Interviewee 3: Informed the researcher that although the Public Participation Framework prescribes feedback, there has yet to be any publication of decisions made by the Legislature, such as responding to petitions sent on service delivery, as they take more than a year to be responded to.

9. What must be done to ensure that the Legislature delivers feedback to communities after facilitating public participation processes?

Interviewee 1: Mentioned that during public meetings of the Legislature where participants raise service delivery issues, provincial and local government spheres, such as departments and municipalities, should be called to respond to issues raised. "We should ensure accountability as we hold the government accountable. Our yearly strategic plans must include a provision for feedback mechanisms as it is currently not there." Furthermore, the respondent highlighted that the Legislature should also use radio, social media networks, quarterly newsletters, public hearings, websites and municipal and tribal offices to provide feedback on any issues communities raise.

Interviewee 2: The Legislature should have contracts with local and mainstream radio stations where each Committee Chairperson will provide feedback on how it held the Executive accountable. "On a specific radio slot, the Chairperson can call a department or municipality to account, and listeners can call in to raise other issues. We must take questions such as the issue of Taung Skull where the relevant MEC can brief the public about the developments on the project."

Interviewee 3: Informed the researcher that the Legislature must review its communication policy and Rules of the Legislature to provide feedback on issues

addressed in public hearings and meetings. "The issues must also be debated in the Legislature House Sitting, and MECs can respond immediately. We should also strengthen our parliamentary constituencies across the province to ensure that issues raised by communities are responded to through their ideal communication method." The respondent further stated that the decisions and resolutions adopted by the Committee during its oversight meetings should be communicated to communities through various organisational communication methods. "We usually debate these issues at the Legislature House Sittings, yet we never give public feedback; hence they have lost trust in our work as the legislature."

Summary

Members of the Provincial Legislature stated that although the Legislature uses traditional media such as radio and television, social media platforms, petitions system, public hearings and sectoral parliament during public participation processes, the methods are weak and do not reach most intended recipients in the North West Province. Only a few privileged people could access them, and the quarterly newsletter was not printed.

Regarding

law-making processes, the North West Provincial Legislature was also not conducting pre-public hearings to educate communities about bills to be processed through public consultations. Current communication and public participation policies of the North West Provincial Legislature should be reviewed to assist it in reaching many people. There were no feedback mechanisms to address service delivery issues raised during public meetings or engagements.

4.3 RESULTS AND SUMMARY (MANAGERS)

4.3.1 Data from Managers in the North West Provincial Legislature (MPLs)

(Interviewee 1: Manager: Communications; Manager: Public Participation and Manager: Research).

These interviewees were Managers responsible for implementing organisational communication methods used by the North West Provincial Legislature for Public Participation.

4.3.2. Interview Questions

1. Which organisational communication practices does the Legislature use to facilitate public participation?

Interviewee 1: The interviewee stated that the Legislature utilises radio, television, newspapers, public meetings, public gatherings, social media, public hearings and websites to facilitate public participation.

Interviewee 2: The interviewee mentioned that the Legislature uses Facebook pages, print media, community and mainstream radio stations, public education workshops, public hearings, and public meetings.

Interviewee 3: Stated that the Legislature uses public hearings, sectoral parliaments and public education workshops to facilitate public hearings.

2. Are these platforms effective and efficient in addressing such public participation processes?

Interviewee 1: The interviewee highlighted that radio, television, newspapers, public meetings, public gatherings, social media, public hearings, and the website could have been more effective and efficient in addressing public participation in the Legislature.

Interviewee 2: Indicated that only the usage of community radio stations and social media was effective and efficient in addressing public participation.

Interviewee: The interviewee mentioned that public hearings, sectoral parliaments and public education workshops were partially adequate to address the public participation processes of the Legislature.

3. What are the known shortfalls of these organisational communication platforms when implementing public participation?

Interviewee 1: Highlighted that some of the shortfalls were due to Covid-19 regulations where the Legislature could not hold public hearings on the facilitation of bills due to government-directed protocols. "The public gatherings and public hearings are not influential as they are not held at a time when most relevant stakeholders are at work. Hence, they are indirectly were their constitutional right to participate in those gatherings.

Furthermore, radio, television and newspapers were ineffective as the Portfolio and Select Committees of the Legislature do not have a measuring tool to check the impact of these organisational communication methods, including public hearings."

The response also mentioned that another shortfall of public hearings during the facilitation of bills is that before the public hearing, participants are not briefed on the particular bill; hence the event becomes ineffective. "Another shortfall on social media usage is that the legislature cannot get most people to participate due to lack of cell phone data due to poverty."

Interviewee 2: One of the shortfalls in radio usage is that the Legislature needs to have service level agreements with either the mainstream or community radio stations to ensure that it reaches out to a larger population in the province. "Radio as a key communication method should optimally reach out to far rural areas of the province. Other methods such as newspapers as part of print media, public education workshops and public hearings cannot be effective due to lack of proper budget."

The respondent also mentioned that during public meetings or hearings, the Legislature could only reach out to a few people as it often targets only 200 people per

district. "The timing and method of inviting people are also wrong as most knowledgeable people are not present at these events as they are at work. We do not have a comprehensive database of stakeholders we can regularly engage or communicate with as part of our public participation work."

Interviewee 3: States that the shortfalls of public hearings, sectoral parliaments and public education workshops include a need for a more precise understanding of the roles of each unit within the Legislature regarding how it (Legislature) communicates with its public. "Communication unit as a key component of the Legislature that should communicate to its stakeholders is only invited at a later stage; hence we cannot find relevant stakeholders when we communicate. Another similar challenge is leaving municipalities to mobilise the public for us, whereas they always bring the wrong stakeholders to our public participation events."

4. Do communication methods in the North West Provincial Legislature influence the effectiveness of its public participation processes?

Interviewee 1: Stated that communication methods did not influence the effectiveness of its public participation processes.

Interviewee 2: Stated that the influence of organisational communication methods used by the Legislature for effective public participation is limited. "Out of the estimated 4.2 million South Africans, we can only invite 100 people per district; hence the public hearings, public education workshops, public meetings, and public gatherings have limited effectiveness on public participation processes."

Interviewee 3: Highlighted that the communication methods employed by the Legislature did not influence the effectiveness of public participation as the Legislature is not accessible to the rural people of the North West province. "The public hearings, for example, are restricting the number of participants in all four (4) districts of the province."

5. What are the perceptions and experiences as Members and Employees of the North West Provincial Legislature concerning organisational communication practices used to facilitate public participation?

Interviewee 1: Highlighted that for the Legislature to ensure its organisational communication methods are effective and efficient, it needs a system that coordinates communication between the Communications, Public Participation, Committees, Research, and other units that link communication and public participation processes. "We can organise weekly, monthly or quarterly radio interviews for each portfolio or select committee chairperson so that he/she can interact with communities on service delivery issues as part of the public participation work.

"We should also introduce a back-billing system where the Legislature contracts a service provider such as Vodacom to provide data for communities to participate in social media campaigns for a particular subject matter. The data can be reinforced for specific subjects such as public hearings."

Interviewee 2: The Legislature's units should treat each activity or event as an institutional project, not an event of a particular unit, such as a public participation unit. "We need to synergise our work as different units of the Legislature when we communicate. There is a lack of coordinated communication and professionalism in the Legislature; hence we are ineffective in implementing relevant communication with our stakeholders."

Interviewee 3: Indicated that the need for more planning and coordination between units in the Legislature in organising public hearings and public meetings is affecting its public participation processes. "Ideally communications unit should be part of the initial preparations for public hearings, public education workshops or public meetings. We lack proper planning on communicating with our stakeholders to implement public participation."

6. How do communication policies and strategies within the North West Provincial Legislature assist in ensuring efficient public participation processes?

Interviewee 1: Indicated that the policy was available, but a revised version was submitted in December 2021 to the policy committee for review. The respondent also informed the researcher that a communication strategy needs to be updated due to a lack of the legislative sector's communications strategy. "Our communication strategy was never approved or signed by the political leadership; hence it is not done properly."

Interviewee 2: Stated that they were not aware of any policy that deals with communication as it was not her competency, but there is also no policy dealing with public participation either. "The unit is busy trying to draft a customised public participation policy based on the approved legislative sector's public participation framework."

Interviewee 3: Highlighted that he needed to be made aware of policy or strategy on communication or public participation.

7. Are these policies updated regularly with current trends to ensure that the North West Provincial Legislature facilitates public participation?

Interviewee 1: Highlighted informed the researcher that the policy is not updated and is not in line with current trends.

Interviewee 2: Informed the researcher that there was no policy in place on public participation.

Interviewee 3: Informed the researcher he was unaware of any policy, and he could not comment on whether the policies align with current trends.

8. How effectively does the North West Provincial Legislature use organisational communication feedback mechanisms concerning public participation processes?

Interviewee 1: Indicated that the organisational communication's feedback mechanisms are ineffective in ensuring it implements public participation because communication is micromanaged and there are no clear lines between political leadership and legislature administration; hence issues raised during public hearings, public meetings or on social media networks are not addressed. "There is a lack of trust between communication unit and political leadership in the legislature; hence there are no feedback mechanisms in place." The respondent further informed the researcher that there is no independence in the communication unit hence the political interference in the Legislature regarding feedback mechanisms.

Interviewee 2: Informed the researcher that only sectoral parliaments have feedback sessions on issues raised during such events; hence they are effective. "Regarding public hearings where a mandate is received from the public on a particular bill, the legislature is not providing feedback to the same public on whether the specific bill was either signed into law or rejected." The respondent also informed the researcher that the absence of guiding documents or strategies on feedback mechanisms has resulted in the Legislature not effectively giving feedback on issues raised during public hearings, public meetings or social media.

Interviewee 3: Informed the researcher that the feedback mechanisms used by the Legislature during public participation processes could be more effective. "The problem starts with the initial stages of planning for a public hearing for a specific bill. We do not have a system or method on how we plan to present it and whether a feedback mechanism will be employed after the public hearing."

9. What must be done to ensure that the Legislature delivers feedback to communities after facilitating public participation processes?

Interviewee 1: Mentioned that the Legislature must have a service level agreement with the community and mainstream radio stations to ensure that it regularly provides feedback on issues raised during public hearings, public meetings or social media and

website. "every week, various portfolio committee chairpersons can engage the public on various issues as part of holding the Executive accountable, and we can have a call-in where the community engages with the MPLs on those issues."

"We can also have a system that allows for a response on issues raised on social media by capturing and sending them to Office of the Speaker as a political office; then we send back to those community members timeously via social media platforms."

Interviewee 2: Highlighted that only a guiding document can assist the Legislature in providing community feedback.

Interviewee 3: Informed the researcher that during the Legislature's annual portfolio committee planning sessions, feedback mechanisms should be prioritised with human and financial resources. "As the MPLs communicate with the public on issues such as bills facilitated as per legislature programme, there should also be a priority on them to provide feedback through public hearings, sectoral parliaments and public meetings."

Summary

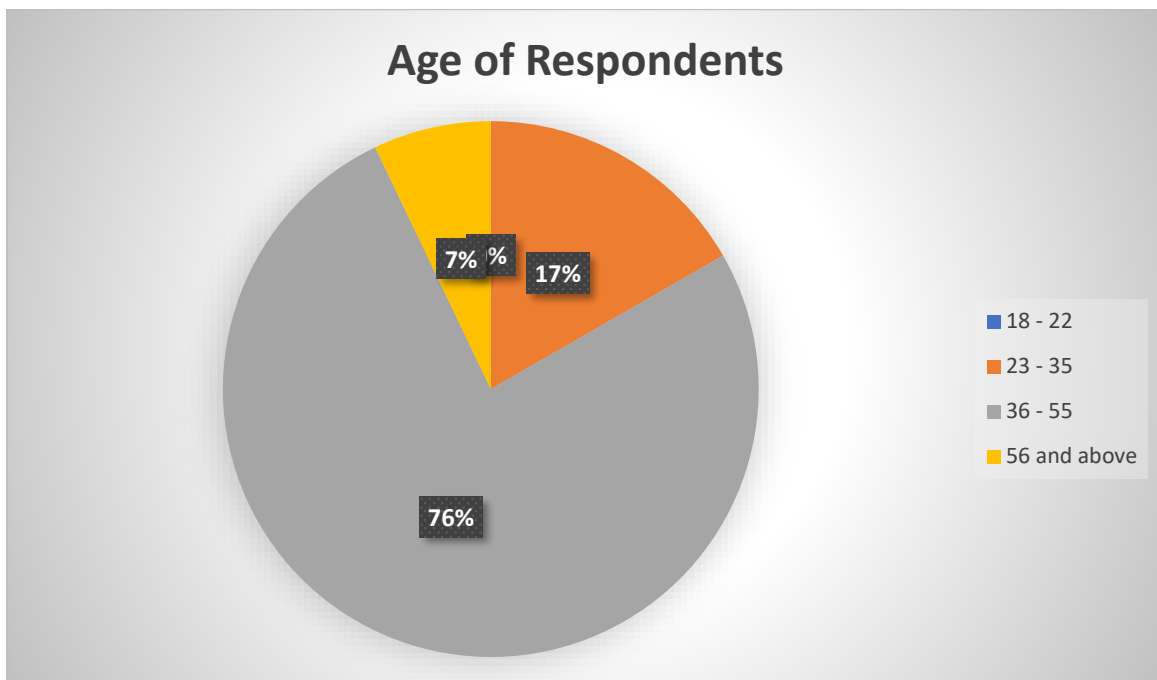
According to the respondents, the North West Provincial Legislature utilises radio, television, public meetings, public engagements, social media platforms and websites, public hearings and public education workshops. Most of these methods are not effective and efficient, and some of their shortfalls were due to COVID-19 regulations that limited the number of people to attend public gatherings and that if there is a public hearing where a particular law will be made, repealed or amended, there is no pre-public hearing to educate communities about such legislation. These methods do not influence public participation processes. Communication and public participation policies are currently under review. There are no feedback mechanisms to respond to issues raised during public meetings except for sectoral parliament's feedback sessions, where various provincial departments and municipalities are called to account and respond to issues raised during previous sectoral parliaments.

4.4 RESULTS AND SUMMARY (COMMUNITIES)

The graphs and tables below are from questionnaires sent to communities in the four North West Province districts chosen for the research study. It is based on their knowledge of the effectiveness and efficiency of organisational communication methods used by the North West Provincial Legislature for public participation.

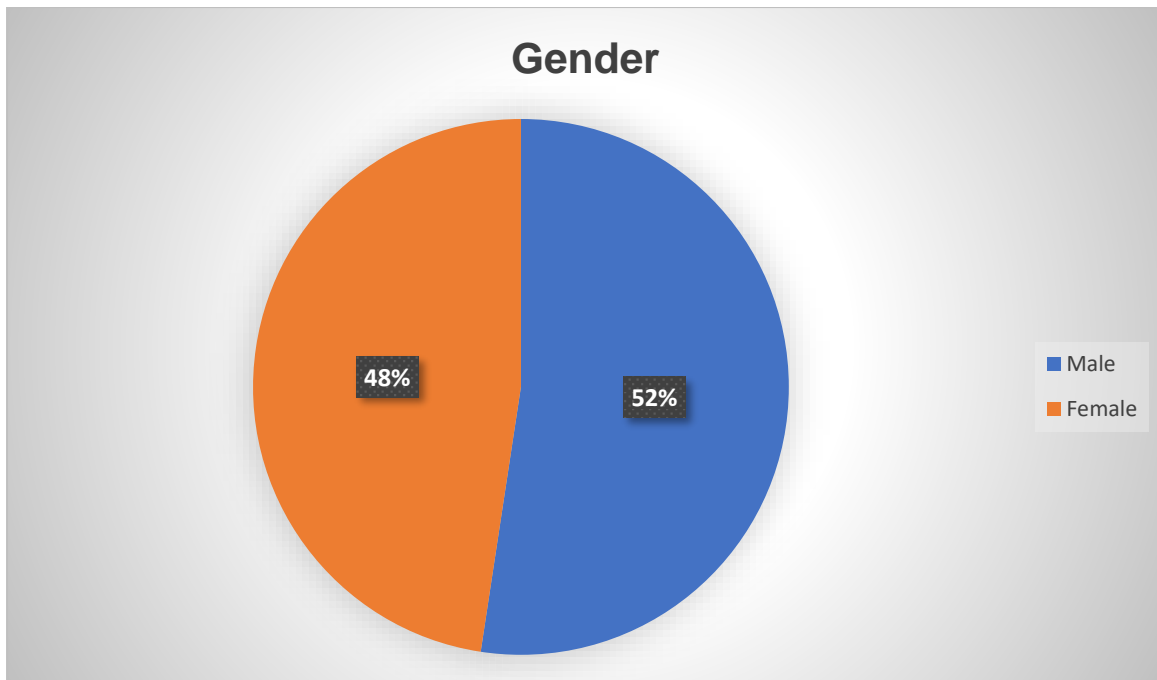
4.4.1 Demographics of the Respondents

Age of Respondents



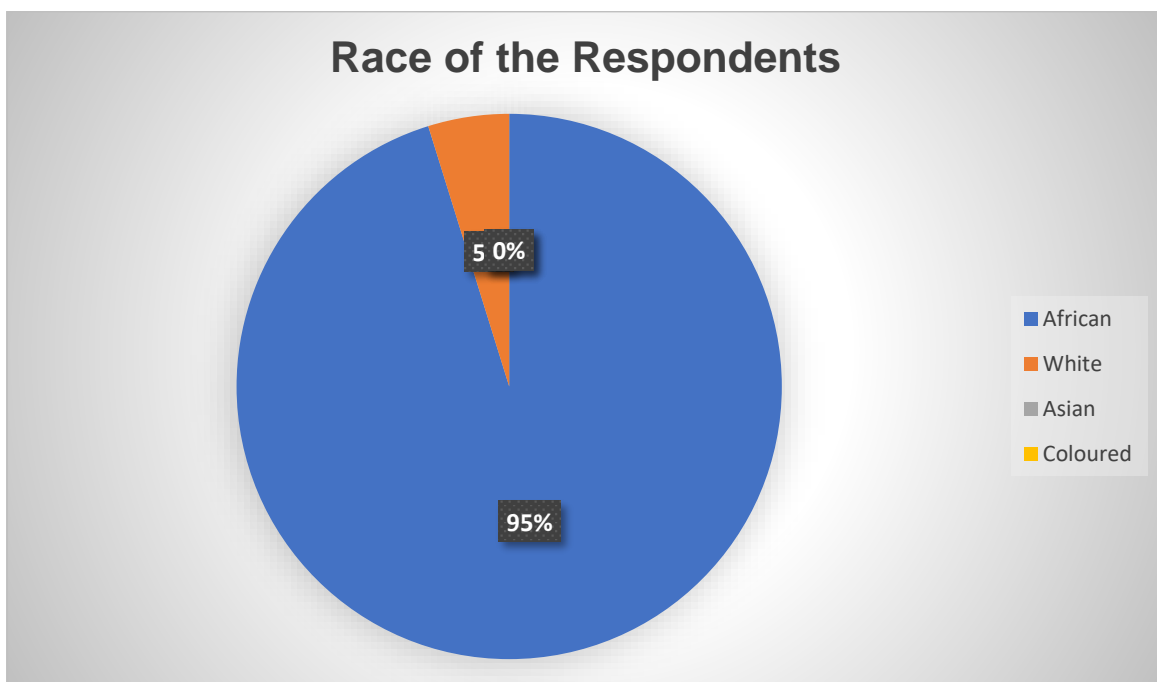
Seventy-six per cent (76%) of the participants were between the ages of thirty-six and fifty-five, seventeen per cent (17%) were between the ages of twenty-three and thirty-five, and seven per cent (7%) were between the ages of fifty-six and above.

Gender



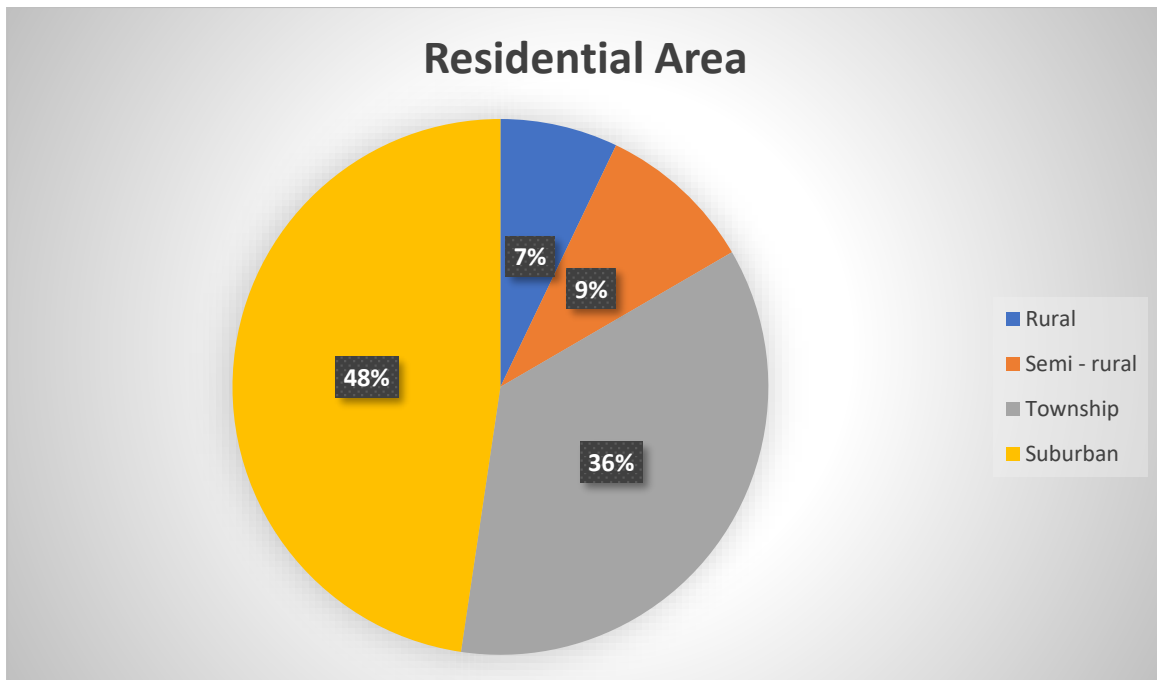
Fifty-two per cent (52%) of the participants were males, whilst forty-eight per cent (48%) were females.

Race of the Respondents



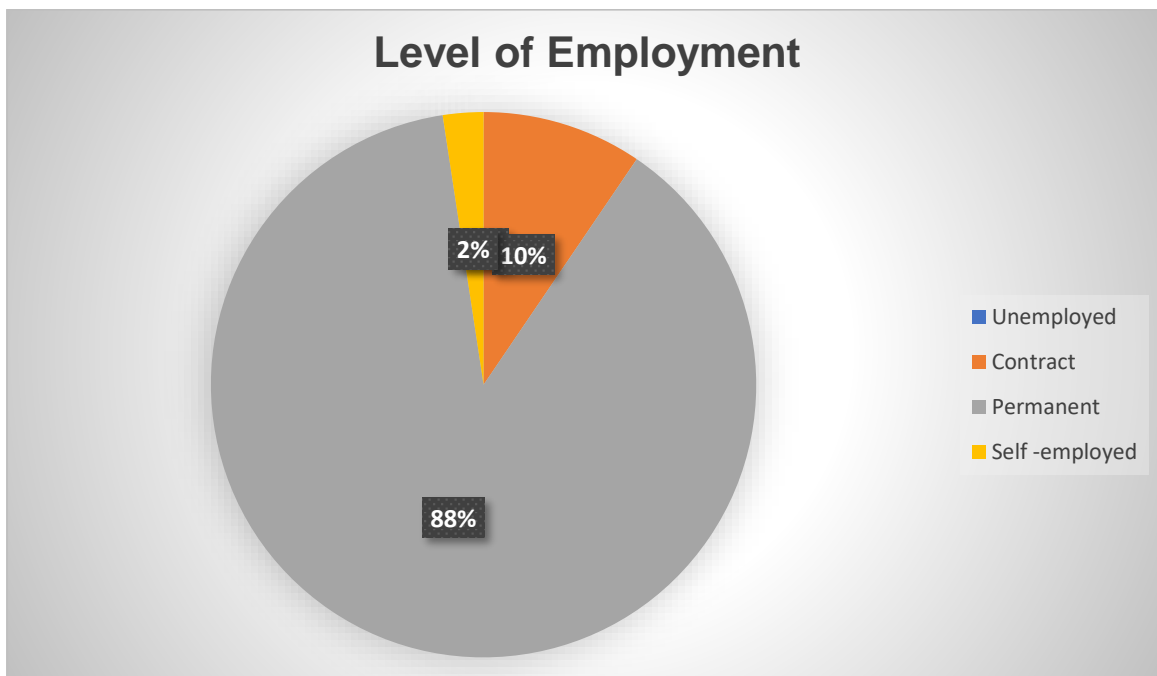
Ninety-five per cent (95%) of the participants were Africans, whilst five per cent (5%) were white participants.

Residential Area



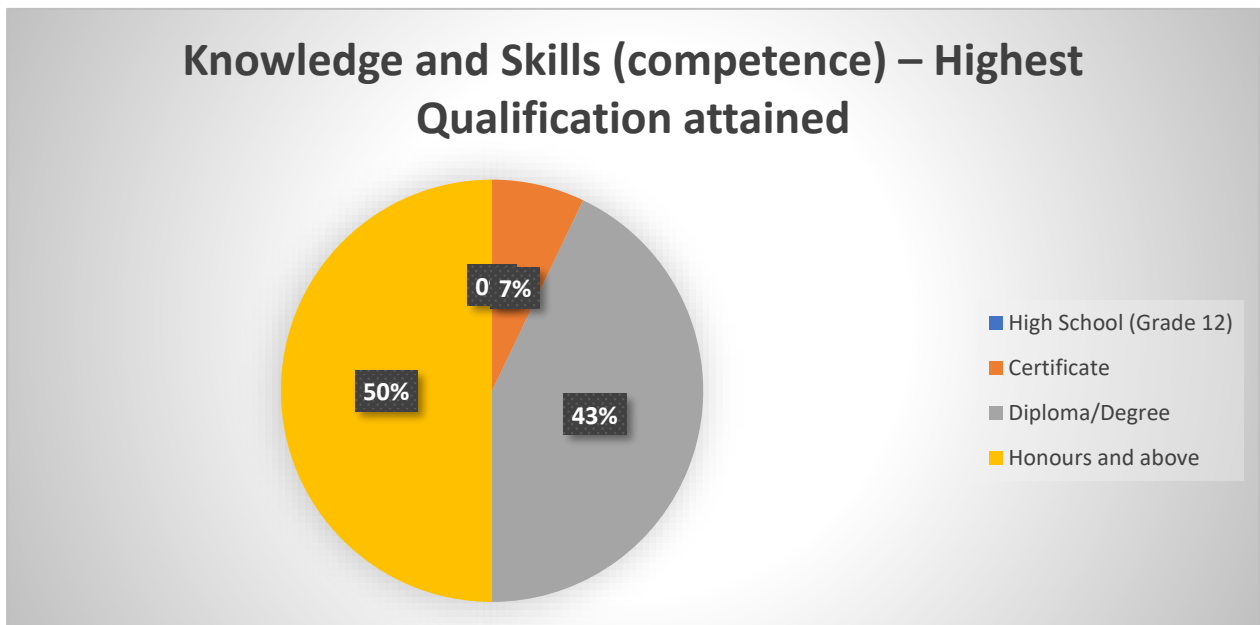
Forty-eight per cent (48%) of the participants live in suburban areas, thirty-six per cent (36%) reside in townships, nine per cent (9%) live in semi-rural areas and seven per cent (7%) in rural areas.

Level of Employment



Eighty-eight per cent (88%) of the participants have permanent employment, ten per cent (10%) have contract employment, and two per cent (2%) are self-employed.

Knowledge and Skills (competence) – Highest Qualification attained

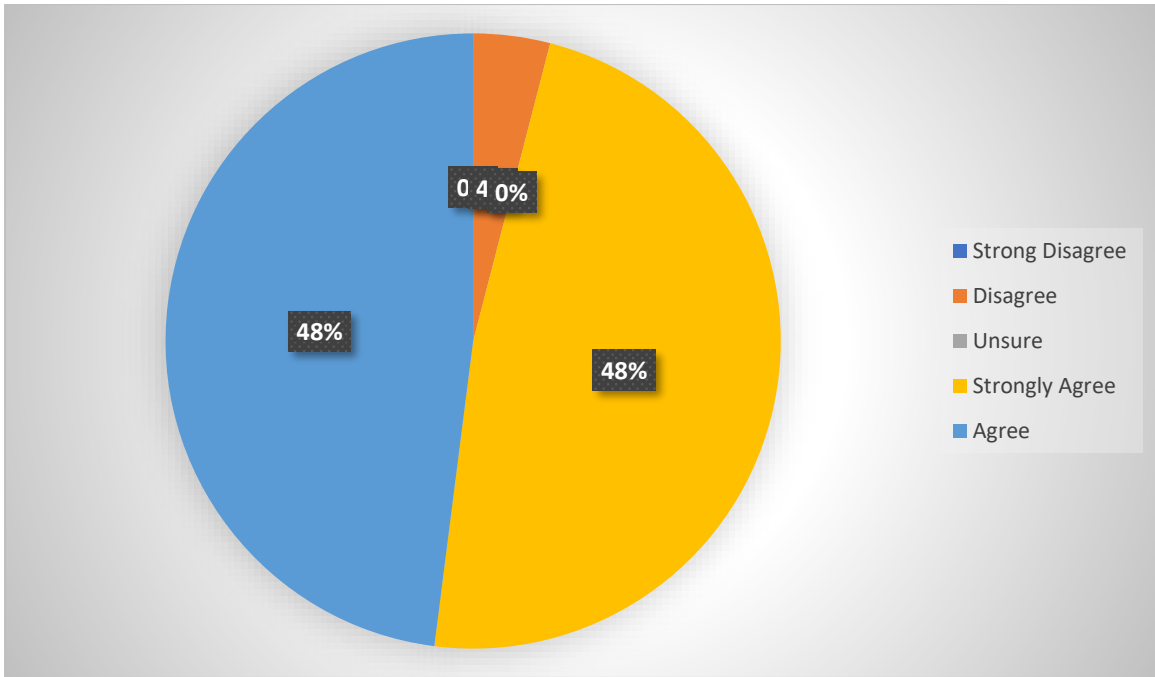


Fifty per cent (50%) of the participants have Honours degrees and above degrees, forty-three per cent (43%) have Diplomas or Bachelor's degrees, and seven per cent (7%) have certificates as the highest qualifications.

4.4.2 Results Based on research objectives

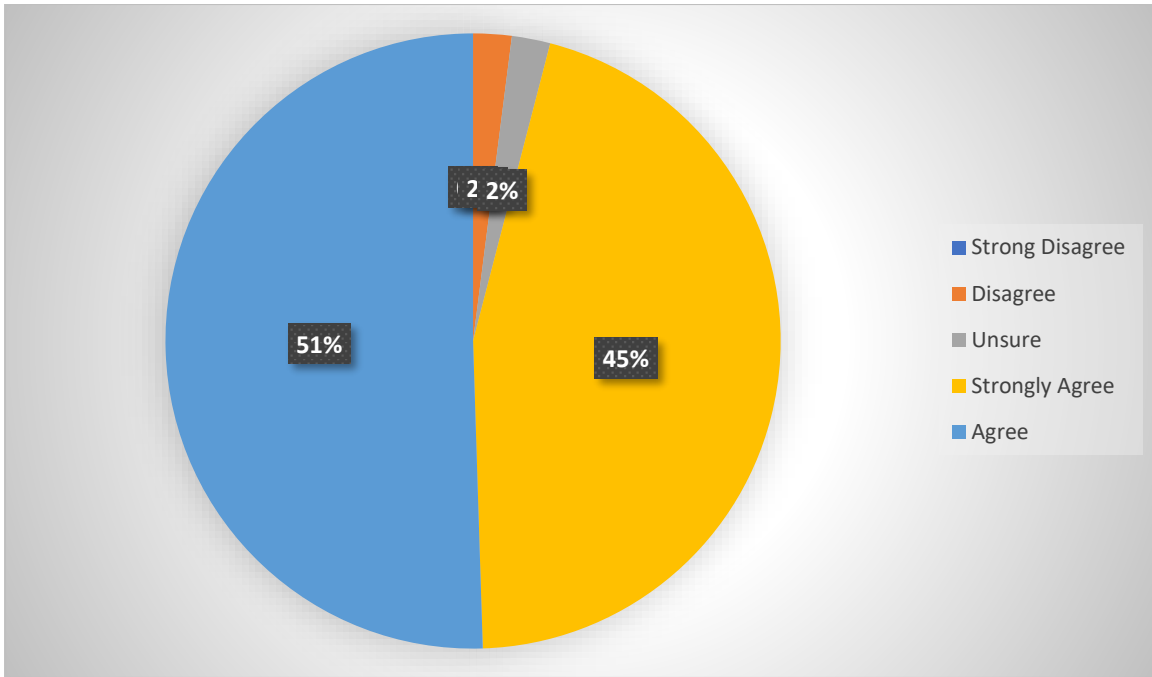
4.4.2.1 Research Objective 1: To explore the influence of organisational communication practices in the North West Provincial Legislature for efficient public participation processes.

- a) The Legislature uses efficient and effective traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers to communicate during public participation processes such as public hearings and sectoral parliament or public meetings.



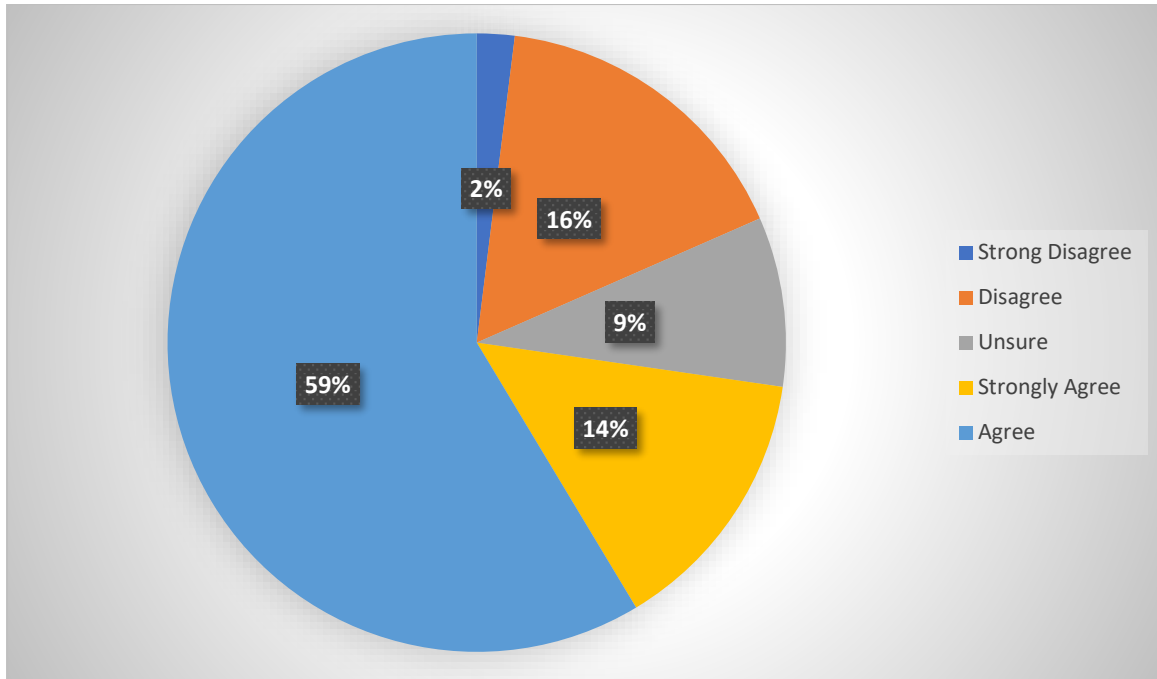
Forty-eight per cent (48%) of the respondents strongly agree, forty-eight per cent (48%) agree, and four per cent (4%) disagree that the Legislature uses efficient and effective traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers to communicate during public participation processes. They highlighted that the Legislature should increase its community outreach programmes like public Hearings and public education road shows and strengthen oversight work.

- b) I utilise and have access to traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers that the Legislature uses to communicate to stakeholders as part of its public participation processes.



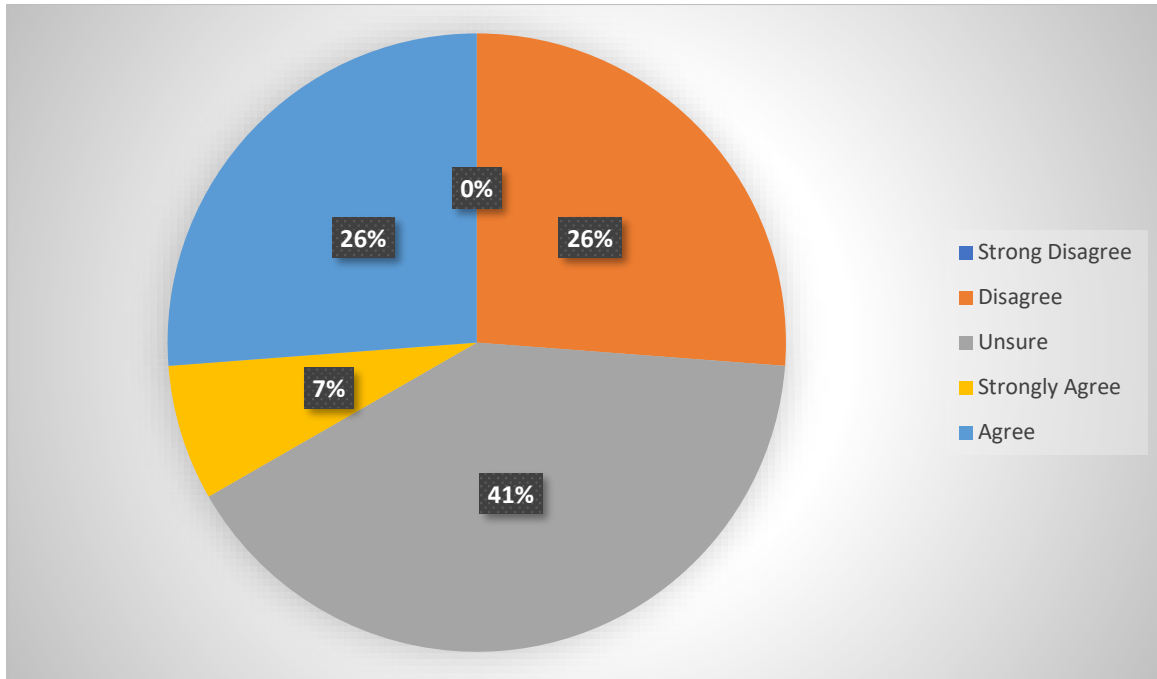
Fifty-one per cent (51%) of the respondents agree, forty-five per cent (45%) strongly agree, and two per cent (2%) are unsure. Another two per cent (2%) disagree that they have access to traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers that the Legislature uses to communicate as part of public participation. They highlighted the Legislature's need to use regional radio stations and regional newspapers to reach out to many provincial communities.

- c) I regularly receive relevant information, such as service delivery issues, through broadcasting and publication of legislature proceedings on its website and social media platforms.



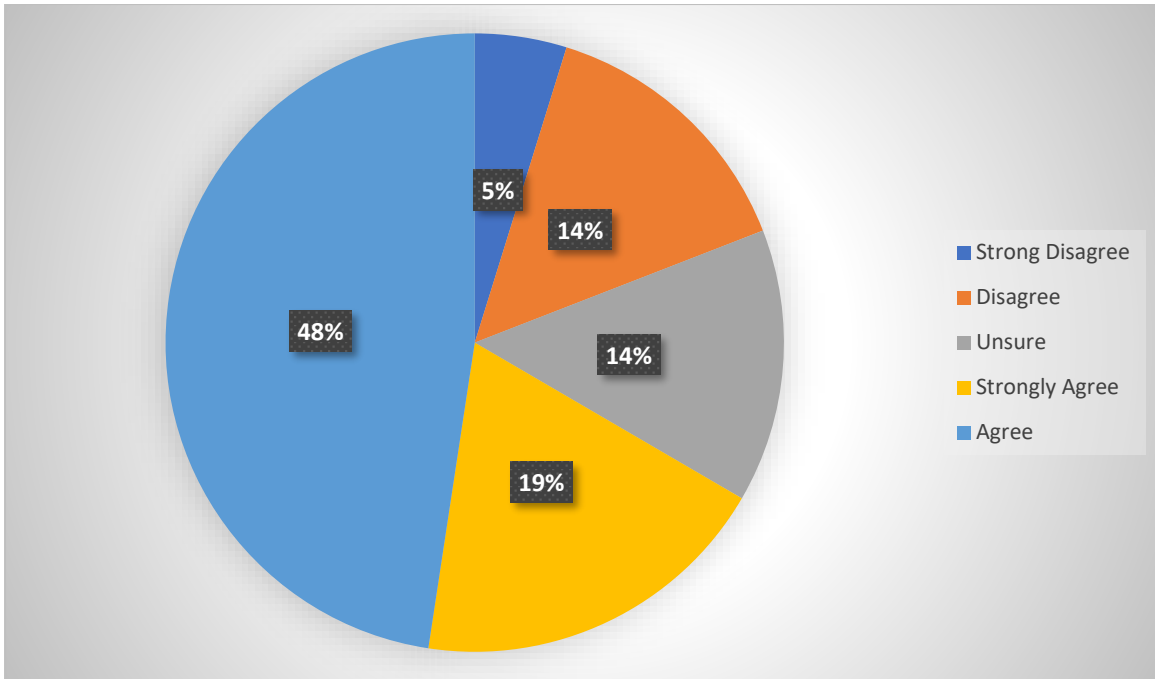
Fifty-nine per cent (59%) of the respondents agree, sixteen per cent (16%) of respondent disagrees, fourteen per cent (14%) strongly agrees, nine per cent (9%) are unsure, and two per cent (2%) strongly disagrees that they regularly receive relevant information such as service delivery issues through broadcasting and publication of legislature proceedings on its website and social media platforms. They highlighted that the Legislature could improve its digital communication platforms by regularly issuing information pamphlets through Whatsapp messaging services, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and by creating a mailing list for all public participation processes' participants. It should also build an interactive digital community engagement portal through which it can push or pull information from residents of the North West province.

- d) The Quarterly newsletter of the Legislature effectively and efficiently communicates the work of the Legislature to its internal and external stakeholders.



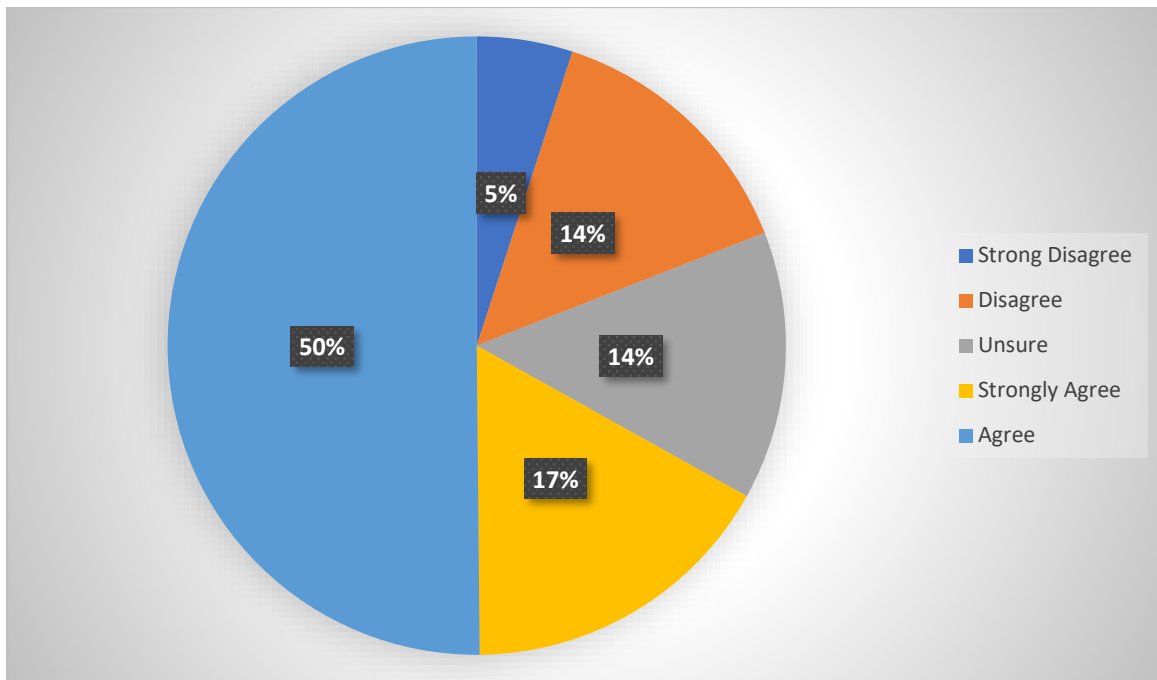
Forty-one per cent (41%) of the respondents are unsure, twenty-six per cent (26%) disagree, another twenty-six (26%) agree, and seven per cent (7%) strongly agree on whether the Legislature effectively uses the quarterly newsletter to communicate its work. Respondents highlighted that as the quarterly newsletter is written in English, hence it cannot reach out to its specific target audience; thus, there is a need to include the Setswana language.

- e) Sectoral parliaments are effectively used to implement communication between stakeholders such as Members of the Legislature, departments and communities as part of public participation processes.



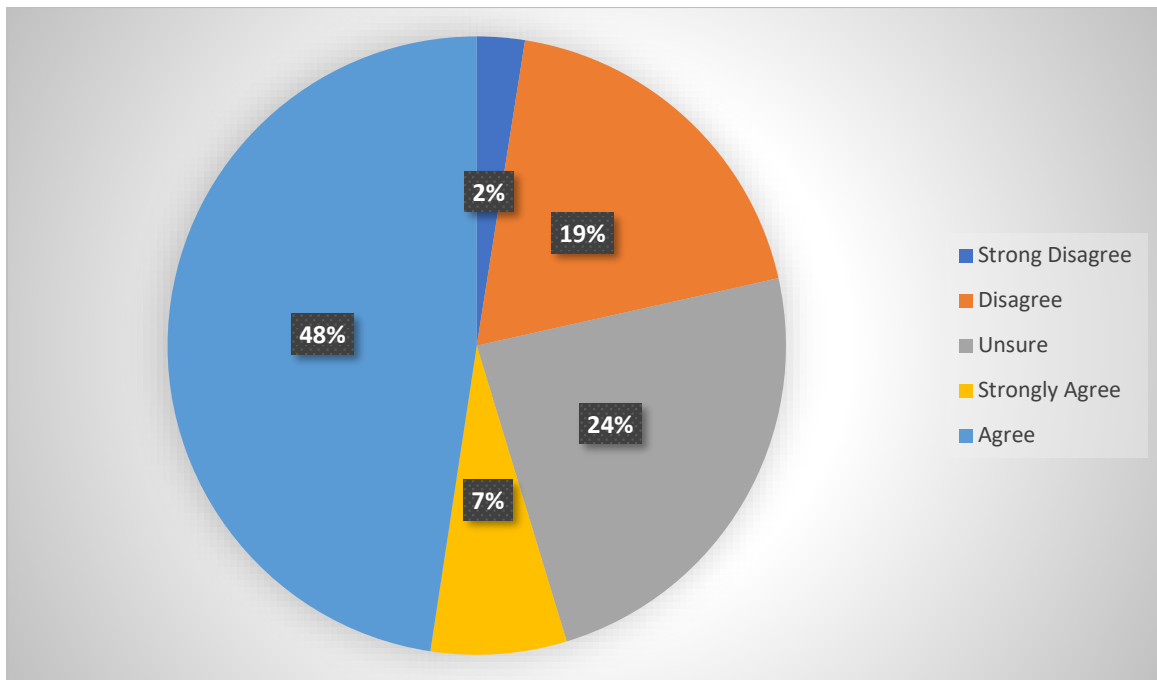
Forty-eight per cent (48%) of the respondents agree, nineteen per cent (19%) strongly agree, fourteen per cent (14%) disagree (14%) are also unsure. Five per cent (5%) strongly disagree that the sectoral parliaments are effectively used to implement communication between stakeholders such as Members of the Legislature and communities. The respondents highlighted that the sectoral parliaments tend to be sector-specific, so they assist the Legislature in communicating with communities.

- f) Public meetings held during oversight week of the Legislature are effectively and efficiently used to ensure that the public raises service delivery issues with the Legislature as part of public participation.



Fifty per cent (50%) of the participants agree, seventeen per cent (17%) strongly agree, fourteen per cent (14%) are unsure and also (14%) disagree, and five per cent (5%) strongly disagree that public meetings held during oversight week of the Legislature are effectively and efficiently used to ensure public raise service delivery issues. They stated that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa requires the Legislature to facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the houses and committees by openly conducting its business.

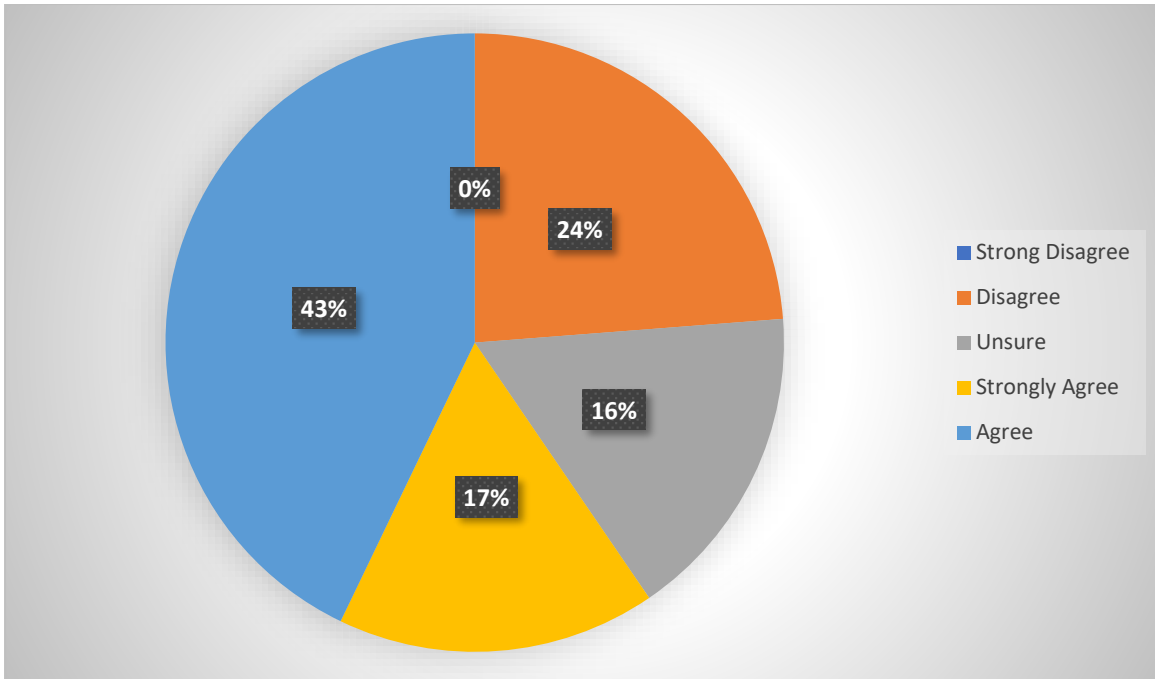
- g) The Legislature regularly uses tribal or local meetings to effectively communicate its work with the public as part of public participation processes.



Forty-eight per cent (48%) of the respondents agree, twenty-four per cent (24%) are unsure, nineteen per cent (19%) disagree, seven per cent (7%) strongly agree, and two per cent (2%) strongly disagrees that Legislature uses tribal or local meetings to effectively communicate its work with the public as part of public participation. They have highlighted that the Legislature should establish a cordial relationship with municipalities and tribal authorities to effectively and efficiently create a good line of communication and also embark on quarterly physical engagements with them for sustainable, more pragmatic and measurable engagements on what the Legislature does and communities ought to achieve.

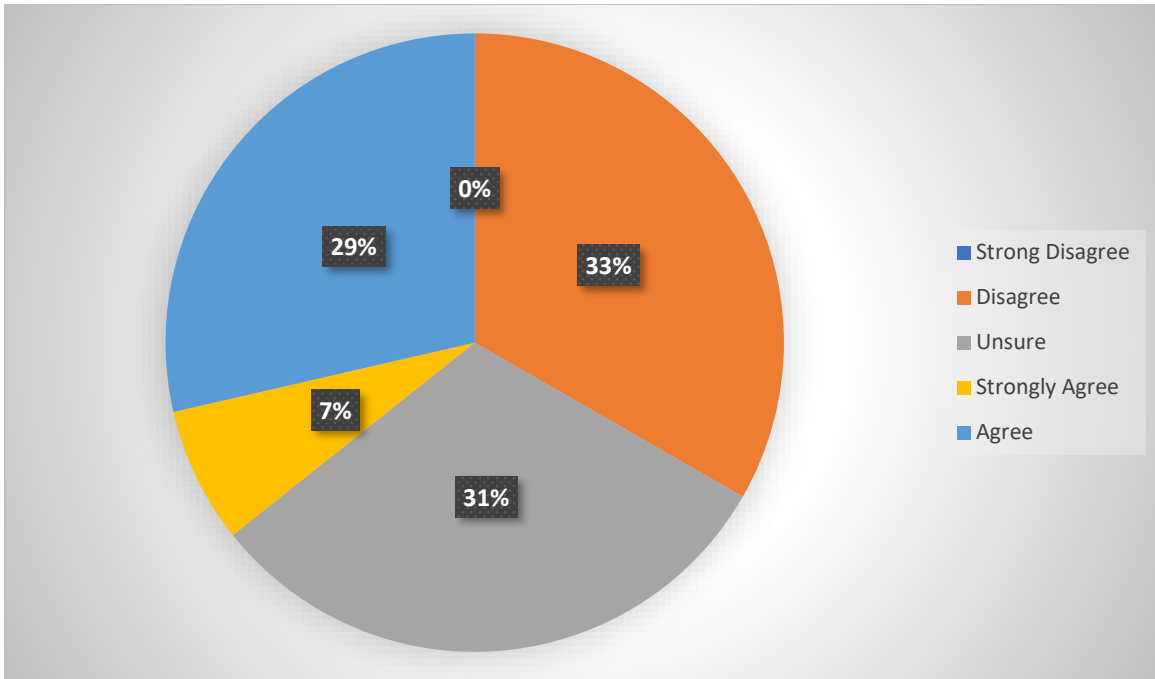
4.4.2.2 Research Objective 2: To gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of Members and Employees of the North West Provincial Legislature concerning organisational communication practices used to facilitate public participation.

- a) Traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers used by the Legislature assist in reaching all communities to participate in public engagement forums such as sectoral parliaments.



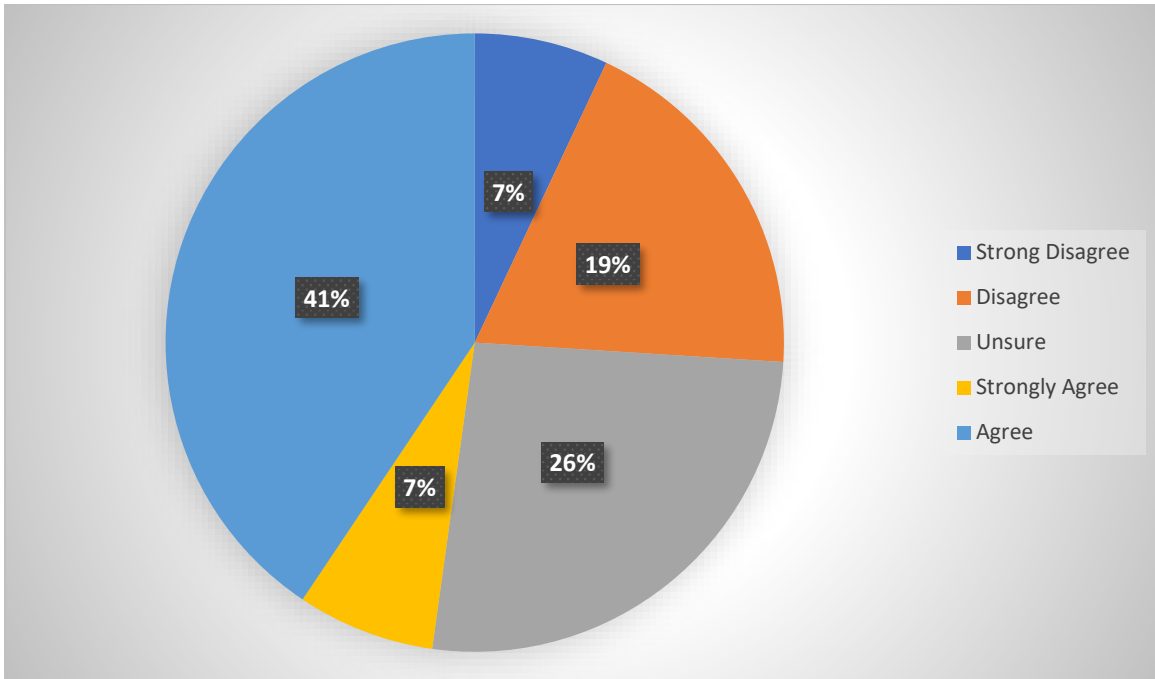
Forty-three per cent (43%) of the participants agree, twenty-four (24%) per cent disagree, seventeen per cent (17%) strongly agree, and sixteen per cent (16%) are unsure that all traditional media platforms used by the Legislature are assisting to reaches all communities to participate on public engagements platforms. The respondents highlighted that the Legislature effectively reaches most sectors of society through various forms of communication.

- b) The Quarterly newsletter of the Legislature reaches all communities to communicate the work of the Legislature as part of its public participation processes.



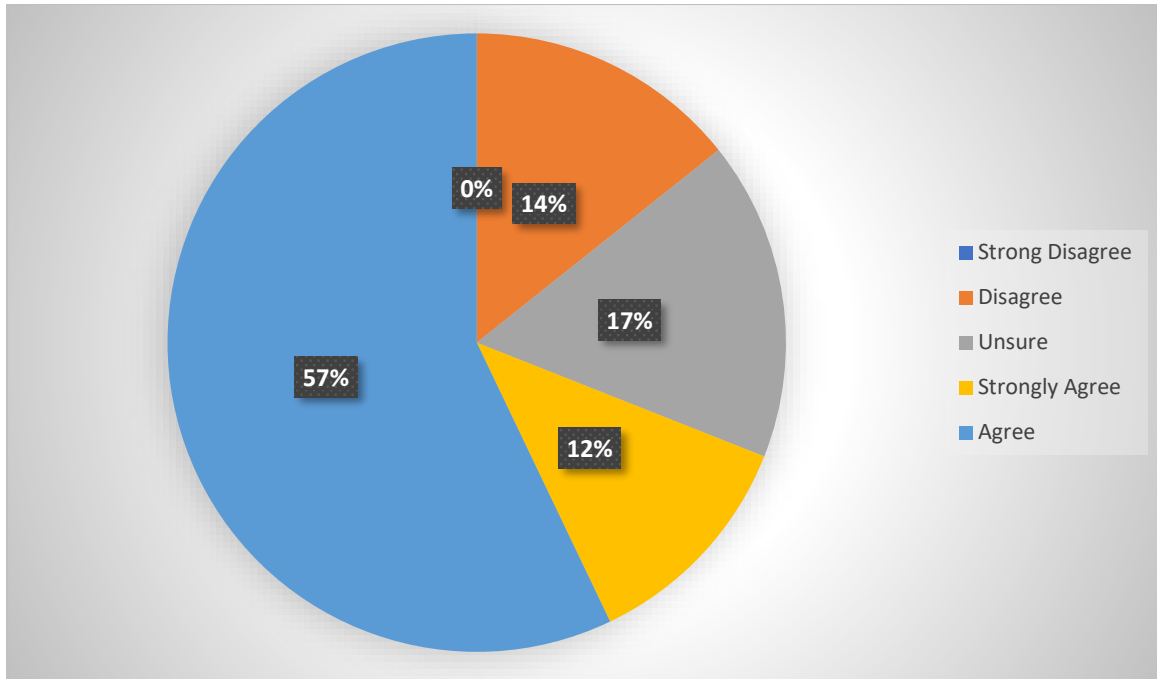
Thirty-three per cent (33%) of respondents disagree, thirty-one per cent (31%) are unsure, twenty-nine per cent (29%) agree, and seven per cent (7%) strongly agree that the quarterly newsletter of the Legislature reaches all communities to communicate the work of the Legislature as part of its public participation processes. The respondents mentioned that they are still determining if the quarterly newsletter reaches communities as they hardly receive its copies in their respective districts.

- c) Public meetings conducted during oversight week of the Legislature reach all communities to solicit their input on service delivery issues as part of public participation.



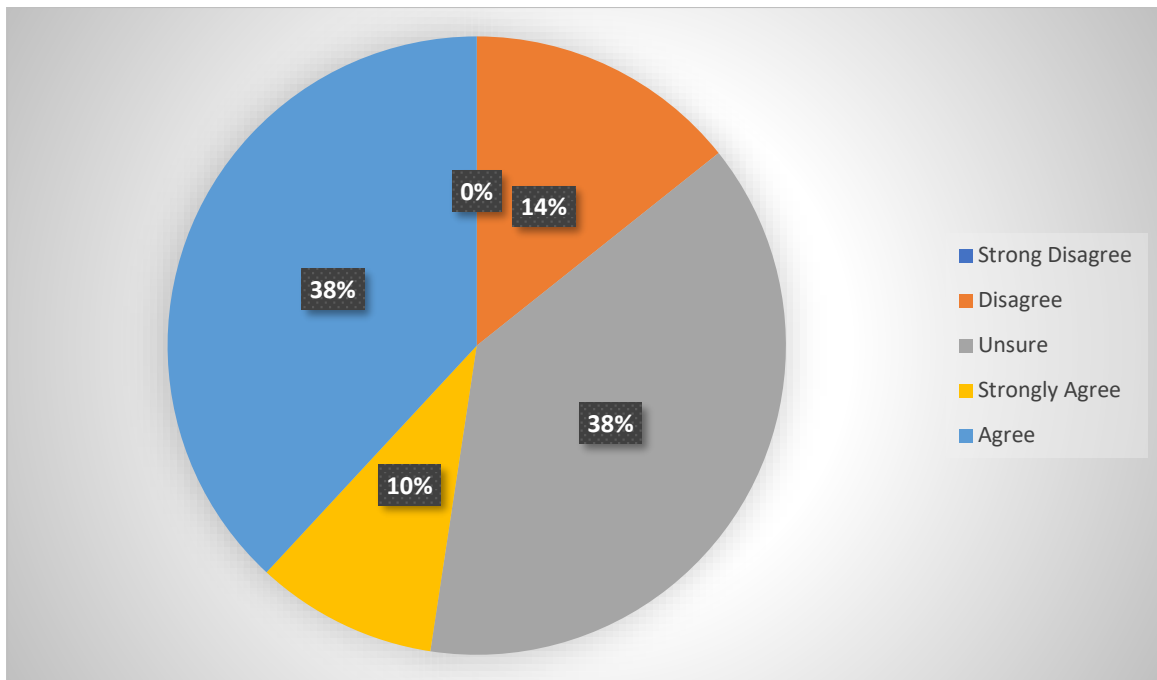
Forty-one per cent (41%) agree, twenty-six per cent (26%) are unsure, nineteen per cent (19%) disagree, seven per cent (7%) strongly disagree, and another seven per cent (7%) strongly agree that public meetings conducted during oversight week of the Legislature reach all communities to solicit their inputs on service delivery issues as part of the public participation. The respondents stated that public participation's public meeting platforms should be taken seriously as the main objective of the Legislature, and the auditor-general should audit strictly on it.

- d) Public education workshops facilitated by the Legislature are effectively used to educate the communities about the mandate of the Legislature and how they can raise service delivery issues.



Fifty-seven per cent (57%) of the respondents agree, seventeen per cent (17%) are unsure, fourteen per cent (14%) disagree, and twelve per cent (12%) strongly agree that public education workshops facilitated by the Legislature are effectively used to educate the communities about the mandate of the Legislature and how they can raise service delivery issues. They highlighted that the Legislature should increase its public education road shows, and public education before specific public hearings is essential to ensuring overall quality output.

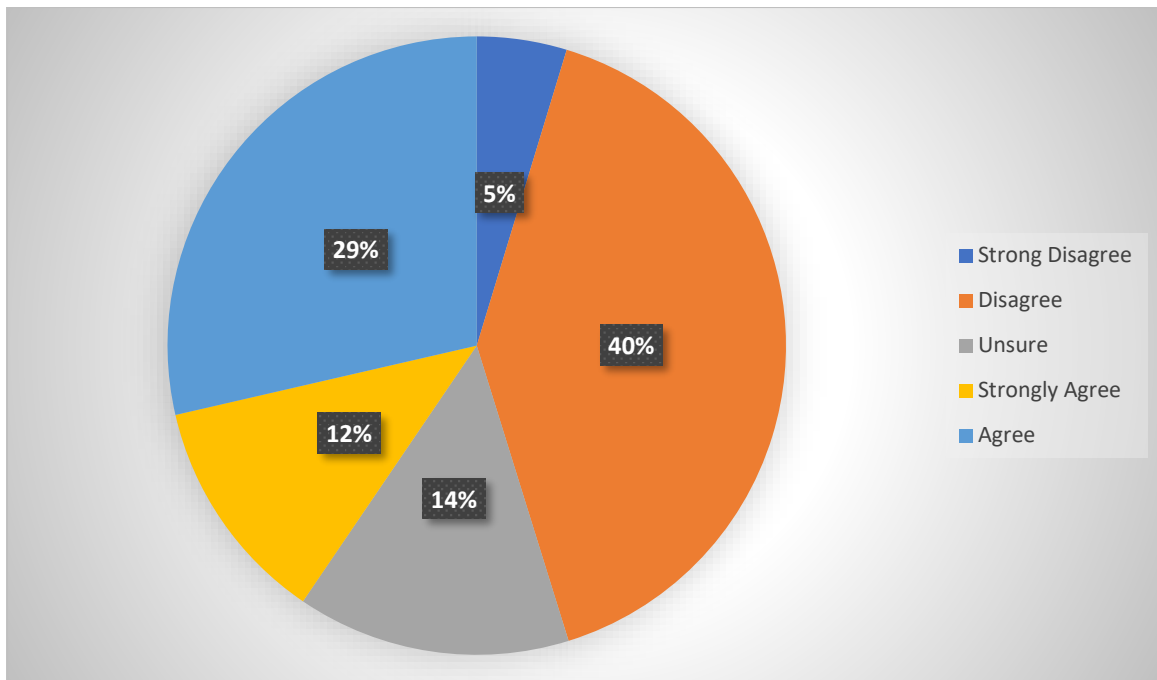
- e) The Legislature consults our tribal authority to select relevant stakeholders in the community who can attend legislature events such as House Sitings, sectoral parliament and public hearings.



Thirty-eight per cent (38%) of the respondents agree, thirty-eight per cent (38%) are unsure, fourteen per cent (14%) disagree, and ten per cent (10%) strongly agree that the Legislature consults tribal authorities to select relevant stakeholders in the community who can attend legislature events such as House Sitings, sectoral parliament and public hearings. The respondents highlighted that for the Legislature to communicate with most community members in far rural areas of the North West Province, it must partner with other key stakeholders such as community development workers, ward councillors and non-government organisations.

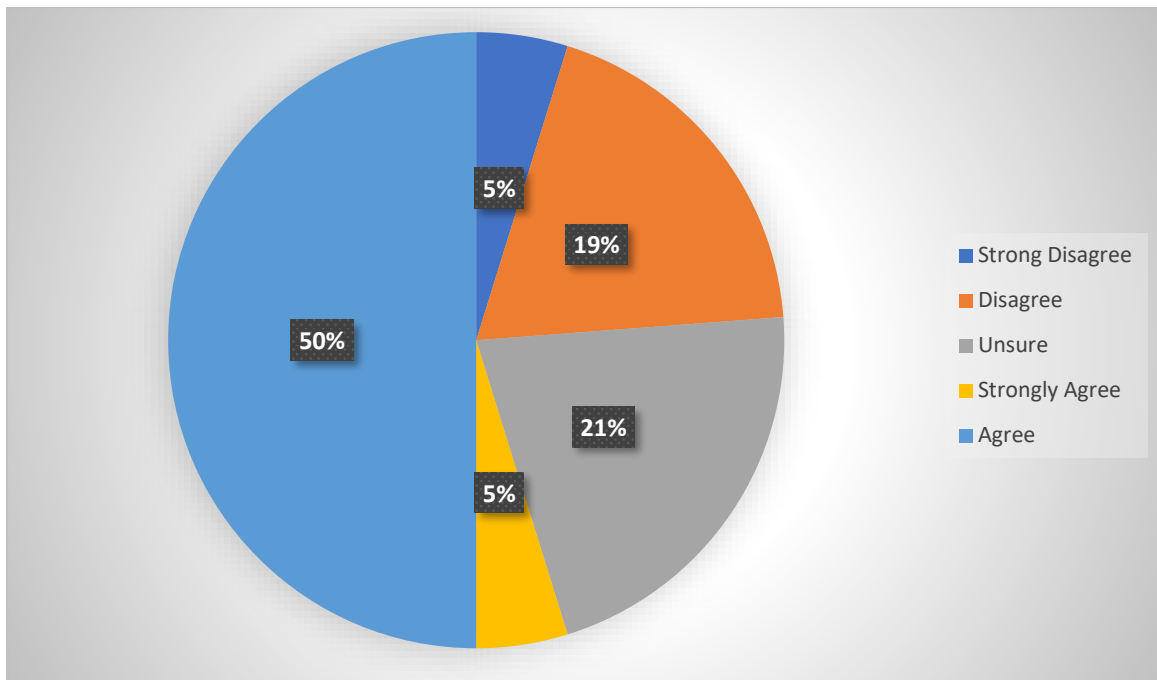
4.4.2.3 Research Objective 3: To check whether the strategic objectives of the North West Provincial Legislature are sufficient in communicating with its stakeholders.

- a) Public Hearings, sectoral parliaments and other events of the Legislature are held at a convenient time and place for me.



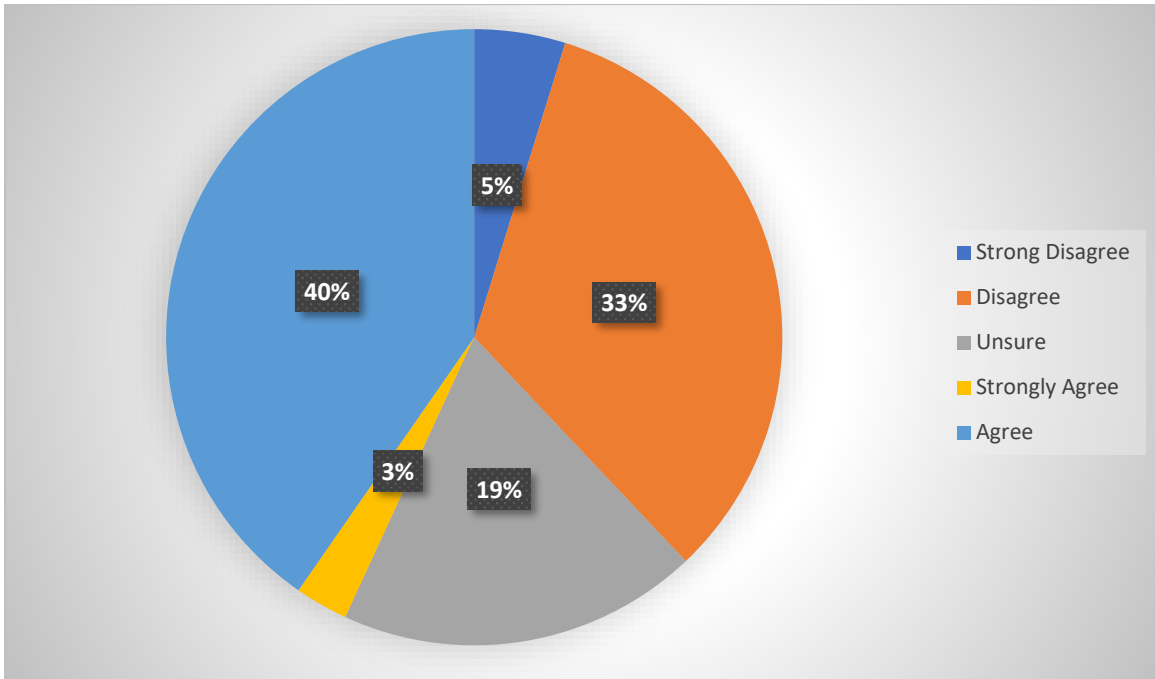
Forty per cent (40%) of the respondents disagree, twenty-nine per cent (29%) agree, fourteen per cent (14%) are unsure, twelve per cent (12%) strongly agree, and five per cent (5) strongly disagree that public hearings, sectoral parliaments and other events of the Legislature are held at a convenient time and place. The respondents highlighted that relevant stakeholders are only available after business hours to participate in public hearings; hence, communicating with them during those hours is convenient. Weekends could be utilised for public engagements, and the Legislature should engage leaders of all stakeholder groups.

- b) Broadcasting and publications of legislature proceedings are held conveniently when our inputs during public participation processes, such as public meetings, are addressed.



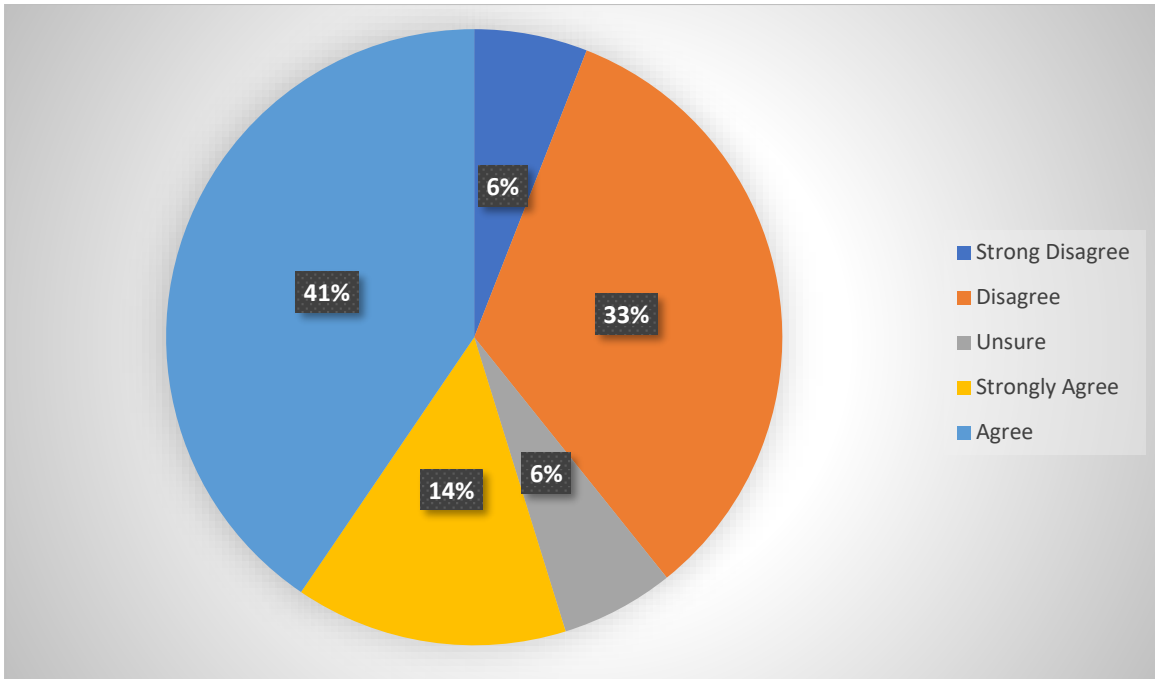
Fifty per cent (50%) agree, twenty-one per cent (21%) are unsure, nineteen per cent (19%) disagree, five per cent (5%) strongly agree, and five per cent (5%) strongly disagree that broadcasting and publications of legislature proceedings are held at a convenient time where our inputs during public participation processes such during public meetings are also addressed. The respondents stated that the Legislature should establish a podcast platform to provide information to those who could not participate on its broadcast platforms and consider weekend meetings so that it can reach out to more participants on its communication platforms.

- c) Public meetings during oversight week of the Legislature are held at a convenient time where they link communities with various departments and municipalities for information sharing concerning service delivery.



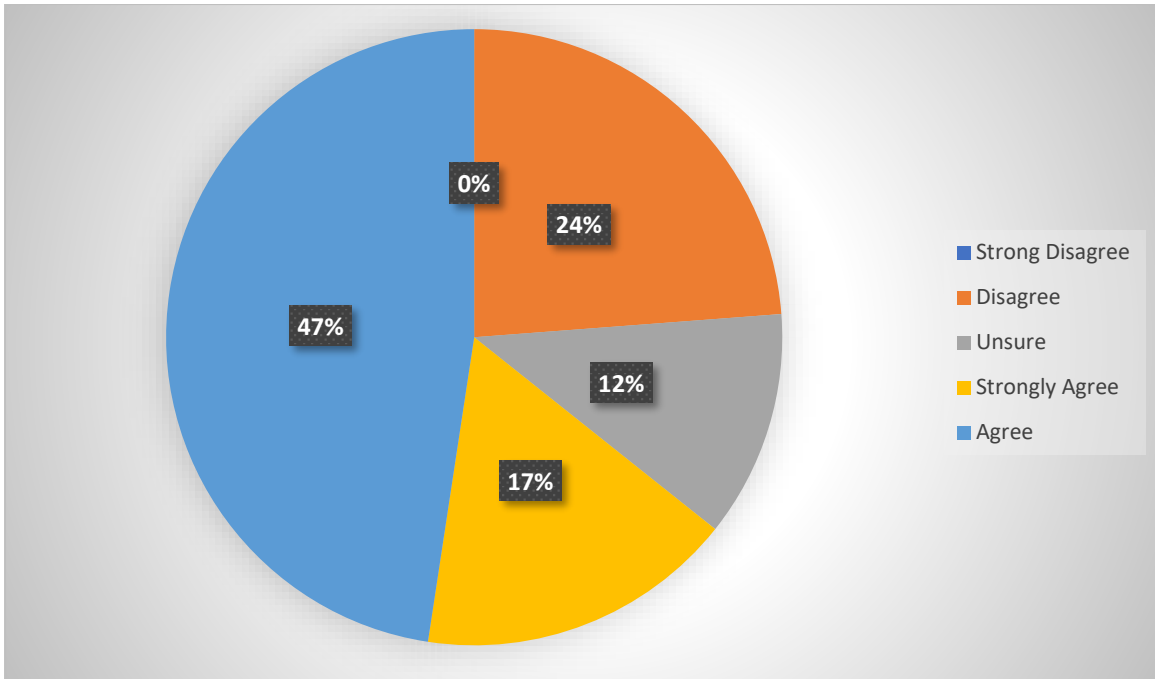
Forty-per cent (40%) agree, thirty-three per cent (33%) disagree, nineteen per cent (19%) are unsure, five per cent (5%) strongly disagree, and three per cent (3%) strongly agree that the public meetings during the oversight week of the Legislature are held at a convenient time where they link communities with various departments and municipalities for information sharing concerning service delivery. Respondents stated that the time and method of holding public outreach programmes such as public meetings must be reviewed.

- d) Traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers are sufficient for inviting communities to various legislature events such as sectoral parliaments.



Forty-one per cent (41%) agree, thirty-three per cent (33%) disagree, fourteen per cent (14%) strongly agree, and six per cent (6%) are unsure. Six per cent (6%) strongly disagree that traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers are sufficient for inviting communities to various legislature events such as sectoral parliaments. The respondents highlighted that although the Legislature can continue using traditional media to communicate, it must also include other methods, such as social media platforms, where most people can access and receive information more quickly.

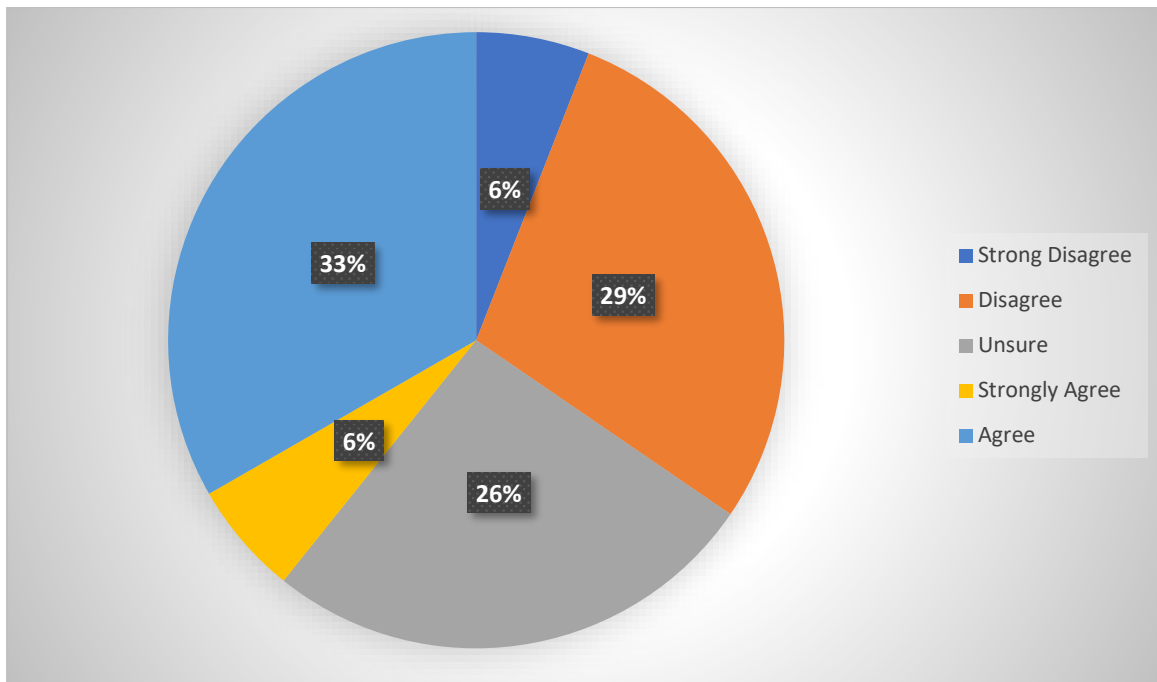
- e) Public education workshops of the Legislature are sufficient methods to assist me in understanding the Legislature's public participation role in government.



Forty-seven per cent (47%) agree, twenty-four per cent (24%) disagree, seventeen per cent (17%) strongly agree, and twelve per cent (12%) are unsure that public education workshops of the Legislature are acceptable methods for assisting me in understanding Legislature's public participation role in government. Respondents mentioned that there is a need to strengthen public participation at the district level to respond to the district development model currently being introduced to intensify coordinated service delivery.

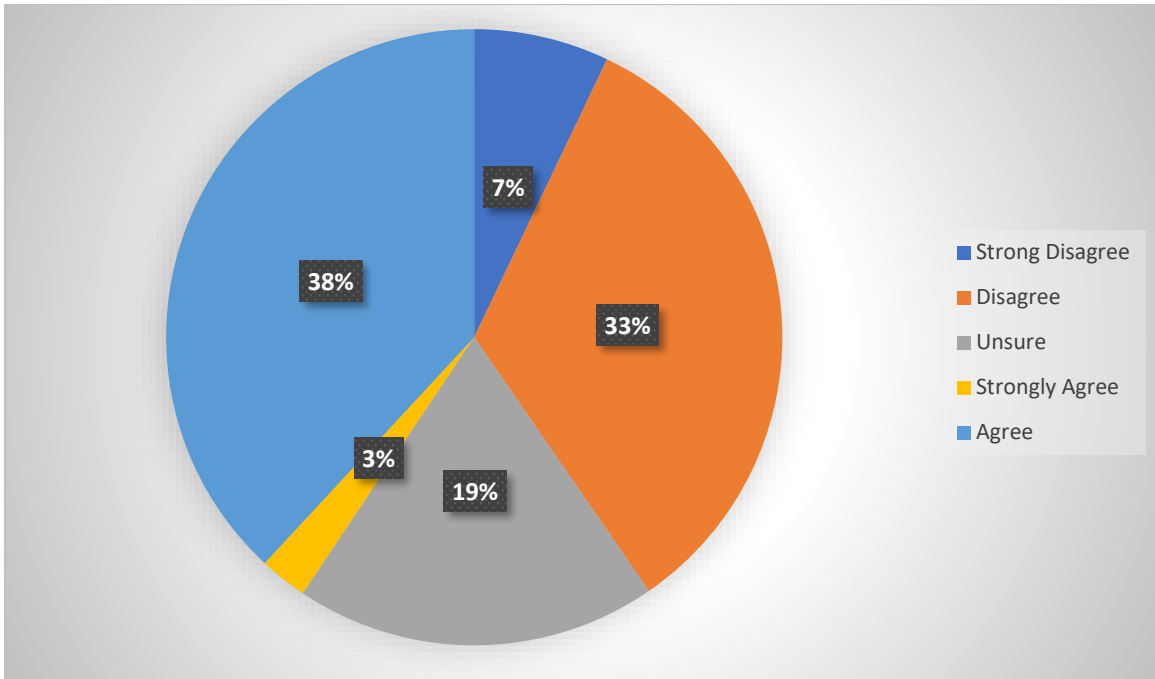
4.4.2.4 Research Objective 4: To explore the effectiveness of organisational communication's feedback mechanisms used by the North West Provincial Legislature for effective public participation between Members of the Provincial Legislature and community members.

- a) Broadcasting and publication of legislature proceedings effectively include feedback on issues discussed by Members of the Provincial Legislature concerning service delivery.



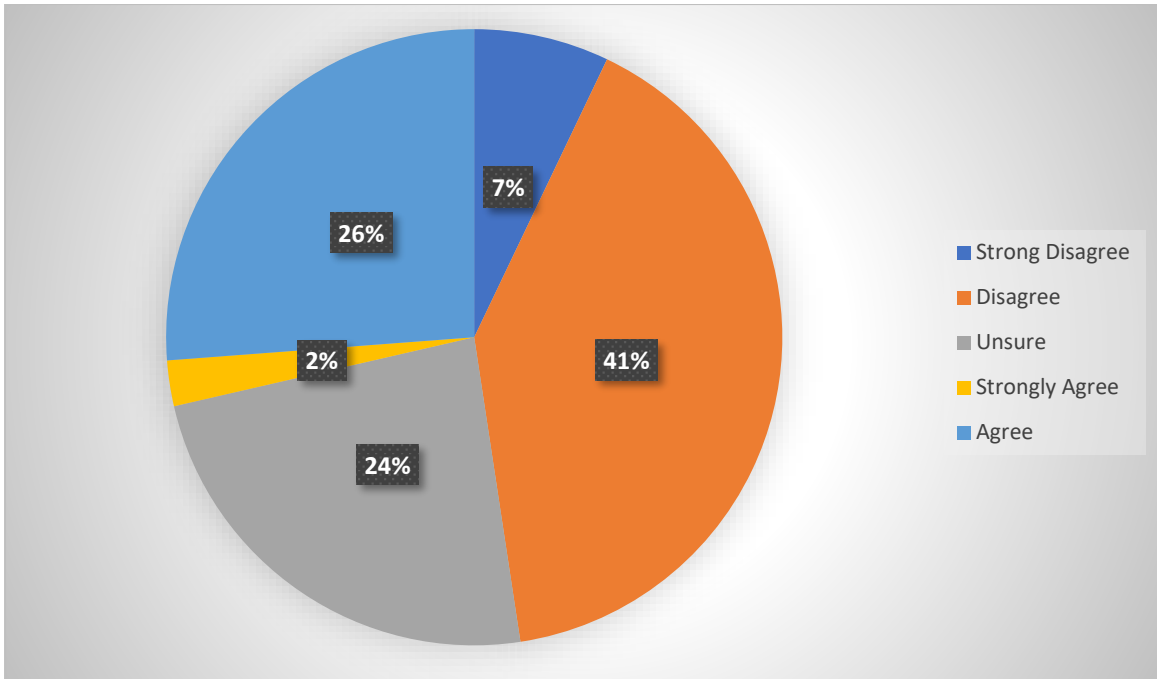
Thirty-three per cent (33%) agree, twenty-nine per cent (29%) disagree, twenty-six per cent are unsure, six per cent (6) strongly disagree, and six per cent (6) strongly disagree that broadcasting and publication of legislature proceedings effectively include feedback on issues discussed by Members of the Provincial Legislature concerning service delivery. The respondents have reiterated that as feedback processes are weak in the Legislature, it should consider conducting two separate sessions, one for engagement and another to provide feedback. Within those feedback sessions, relevant Members of the Executive Councils or public representatives should be invited to provide feedback on service delivery issues. It will boost public confidence in the image of the Legislature.

- b) Legislature effectively uses social media platforms and websites to provide community feedback on issues raised during public participation, such as public engagements.



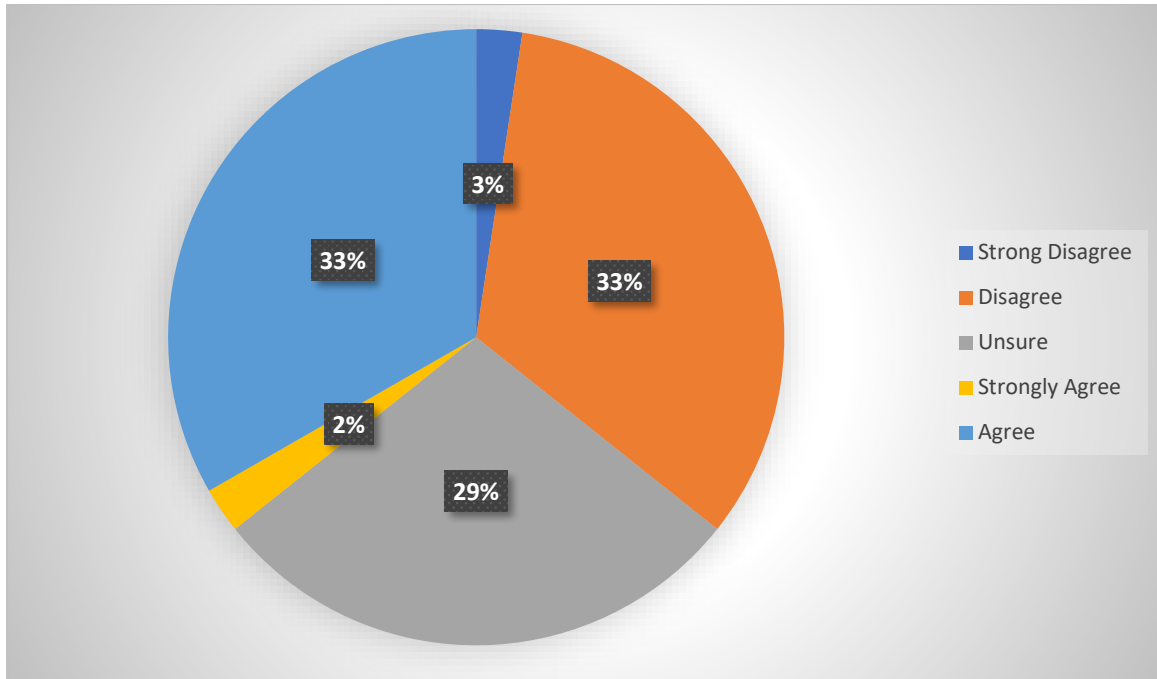
Thirty-eight per cent (38%) agree, 33 per cent (33%) disagree, nineteen per cent (19%) are unsure, seven per cent (7) strongly disagree, and three per cent (3%) strongly agree that the Legislature effectively uses social media platforms and website to provide feedback to communities on issues raised during public participation processes such as public engagements. Respondents mentioned that the Legislature should create social media feedback platforms in addition to traditional media outlets used. It should also ensure that a well-functioning website is interactive with the public and can broadcast feedback on committee meetings.

- c) The Legislature regularly uses traditional media to update communities with feedback on issues raised during public participation processes, such as sectoral parliaments or public hearings.



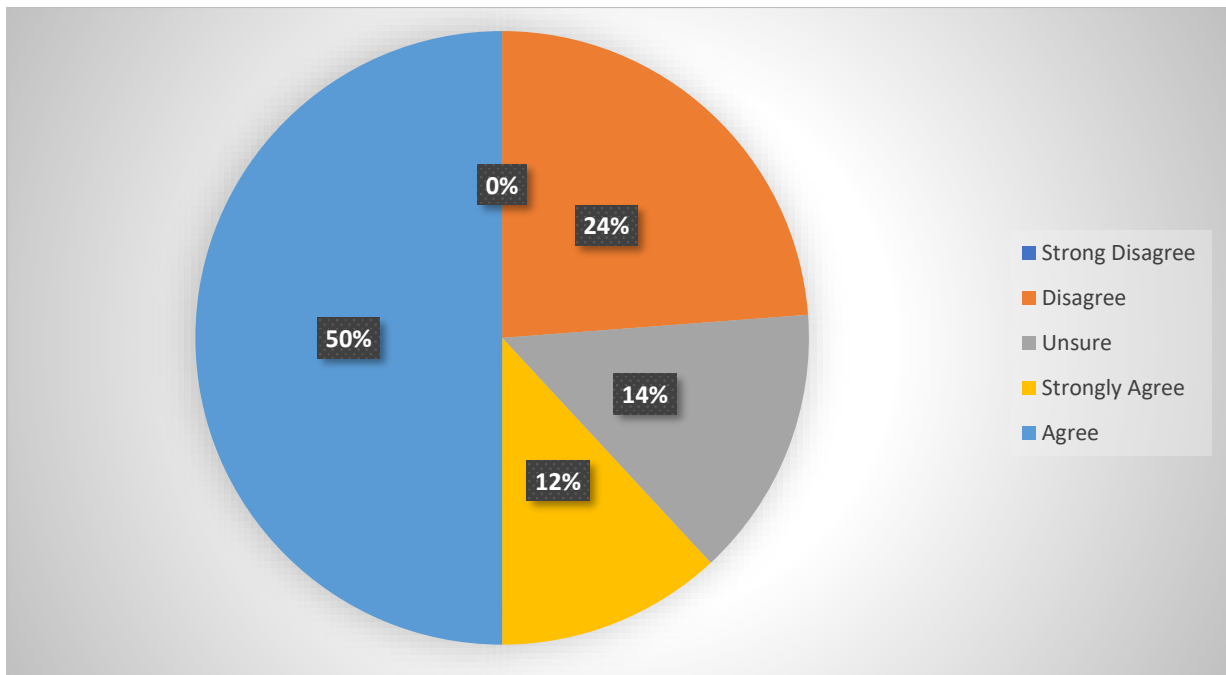
Forty-one per cent (41%) disagree, twenty-six per cent (26%) agree, twenty-four per cent (24%) are unsure, seven per cent (7%) strongly disagree, and two per cent (2%) strongly agree that the Legislature regularly uses traditional media to update communities with feedback on issues raised during public participation processes such as sectoral parliaments or public hearings. The respondents reiterated that the Legislature should schedule routine or regular radio interviews with the public to give feedback on how it is holding the government accountable for service delivery issues raised.

- d) Public meetings during oversight week provide communities with feedback on issues raised in previous public meetings.



Thirty-three per cent (33%) disagree, thirty-three per cent (33%) agree, twenty-nine per cent (29%) are unsure, three per cent (3%) strongly disagree, and two per cent (2%) strongly agree that public meetings during oversight week provide communities with feedback on issues raised in previous public meetings. The respondents have highlighted that the Legislature should collaborate with different stakeholders, such as government departments, municipalities and other public entities, to report back on issues raised in sectoral parliaments or other legislature meetings with the public, such as post-public hearings.

- e) The Legislature uses sectoral parliaments to provide feedback on issues raised in previous sectoral parliaments or other public engagement meetings.



Fifty per cent (50%) agree, twenty-four per cent (24%) disagree, fourteen per cent (14%) are unsure, and twelve per cent (12%) strongly agree that the Legislature uses sectoral parliaments to provide feedback to issues raised in previous sectoral parliaments or other public engagement meetings. The respondents highlighted that during planning sessions of a sectoral parliament, the Legislature should improve on creating feedback sessions to report back to participants. They further informed the researcher that there is a severe need to reflect on the public participation strategy where planning, monitoring and evaluation of public participation processes enhance service delivery.

4.5 Summary

The fundamental objective of the research study was to explore the effectiveness and efficiency of organisational communication methods used by the Legislature for public participation. The study was conducted using semi-structured interviews and self-administered questionnaires with Members of the Provincial Legislature, employees and community members involved in the Legislature's communication processes for public participation.

It was highlighted that some of the organisational communication methods used by the Legislature, such as broadcasting and publication of its events on its website and social media, quarterly newsletter, usage of traditional media such as radio and

television, public hearings, public meetings, public education workshops and sectoral parliaments were not used effectively and efficiently to communicate to stakeholders of the North West Provincial Legislature due to several reasons such as lack of coordinated effort between different units within the Legislature that is responsible for both public participation and communication and lack of communication or public participation strategies. Furthermore, the respondents highlighted that feedback mechanisms used by the Legislature did not enhance feedback on issues raised during public meetings, hearings and sectoral parliament.

The following chapter (chapter 5) deals with discussion and recommendations on what was presented in the current chapter and triangulated with responses from participants to verify whether the communication methods used by the Legislature for public participation are effective and efficient.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses data collected on the organisational communication practices used in the North West Provincial Legislature for effective public participation processes. The information collected primarily focused on exploring the influence of communication methods used by the Legislature and whether they have assisted it in communicating with members of the public as part of its constitutional mandate to facilitate public participation.

It aimed to gain perceptions of Members of the Provincial Legislature, employees and community members on whether the North West Provincial Legislature effectively and efficiently implements public participation processes such as public hearings, public meetings and sectoral parliament. During these community engagement processes, the Legislature holds the Executive accountable for various service delivery issues, such as providing water or other services as part of its developmental programmes.

Through a literature review, the study was also aimed at exploring any communication policies or strategies within the Legislature that guide public participation processes and the effectiveness and efficiency of organisational communication feedback mechanisms within the Legislature.

The study bases its theoretical background on development communication paradigms that include modernisation, dependency and participatory approaches, with the primary guiding paradigm being the participatory paradigm. The paradigm is closely associated with participatory development communication, which entails two-way communication processes between the government or organisations and members of the public during developmental programmes. With the involvement of the public during the development as well as proper communication methods between the two stakeholders, the development will achieve its intended purposes.

The data were categorised as a collective summary of the interviews with MPLS, interviews with employees of the Legislature, and data gathered on the self-administered questionnaires based on each research objective.

5.2 DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 Discussion and Recommendation (MPLs, Employees and Communities)

Objective 1: To explore how organisational communication practices assist the North West Provincial Legislature facilitate public participation. The study aimed to check the influence of communication methods such as the following.

- Publication of legislature work on its newsletter, website and social media platforms;
- Public hearings during the facilitation of law-making processes, such as bills that will either be made, amended or repealed;
- Public meetings during the Committee oversight week in different districts and
- Sectoral Parliaments are where Members of the Provincial Legislature engage different communities, community-based organisations and public representatives.

There has been an extensive gap within the literature to explore the influence of the communication methods such as its internal newsletter, traditional media, which include radio and television; website and social media; public hearings and public education workshops, including sectoral parliaments used in the legislative sector as a separate arm of government that holds the Executive accountable. The problem statement of the research study suggests that communication methods used by the Legislature are not effective and efficient in ensuring that it connects with the members of the public during public participation processes. Lennie and Tacchi (2013:7) reiterate that development communication should include various communication media platforms such as radio, community-based information and technology, dialogues between government and communities and digital technologies aimed at aiding developmental activities.

During public meetings and engagements, MPLs and employees of the Legislature communicate and engage with the public where they raise various service delivery issues, urging the Legislature to hold the Executive accountable.

According to the summary of the **findings** on the organisational communication methods used by the Legislature for public participation processes, participants indicated that the Legislature's communication methods are weak as they are not reaching out to all communities, such as rural communities but are only meant for the selected few privileged people.

The Legislature also uses traditional media platforms, including radio and television, to advertise events such as sectoral parliaments targeting specific groups. However, due to COVID-19 regulations that prohibited gathering people, it used community radio simulcast for public hearings on the facilitation of bills. However, there must be a link between the legislature and radio stations to publicise its work.

The respondents highlighted that the Legislature also uses Twitter and Facebook and its website, quarterly internal newsletter; direct public hearings during law-making processes; media statements for publicising Committee work and public meetings

during oversight week. As the quarterly newsletter is not printed on a quarterly basis, nor does it cover all the activities of the Legislature, it is neither effective nor efficient. Regarding the website, it is not updated regularly as it still shows deceased or retired MPLs.

Respondents also stated that due to unemployment and poverty and the ruralness of the North West Province, communities need access to social media platforms and websites.

The respondents also highlighted that some units are doing duplicate work of other units hence the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the organisational communication methods of the Legislature. As an internal component that should lead communication, the communications unit is not performing due to other units, such as the public participation unit, performing the same function. The public participation unit has also delegated recruiting or mobilising communities to municipalities; hence the wrong stakeholders attend public hearings, public education workshops and public meetings.

The study also found that public hearings are compromised on law-making processes due to a lack of pre-public hearings and workshops where participants can be educated about the particular bill that will be processed later.

Another **finding or challenge** is the wrong timing of the public hearings and public meetings, as they are held during office hours when people are at work and cannot contribute effectively and efficiently. No pre-hearings lead to the actual public hearing where communities can be educated about the particular piece of legislation.

The participants recommended that the legislature increase its visibility within local and regional radio stations and newspapers, digital communication platforms, including Instagram, and community engagement portals, which can attract communities to engage with MPLs. Furthermore, a cordial relationship between the Legislature and tribal and municipal offices should be established to expose its work within those spaces.

The respondents recommended that in order for the communication methods of the Legislature to be effective and efficient during public participation processes, there should be a coordinated approach between the Communications, Public Participation, Committee and other units. Proper planning and coordination of every unit will ensure that MPLs communicate and engage communities on proper channels.

Further, the participants highlighted that the Legislature should formulate a plan that will ensure that there is a weekly, monthly or quarterly radio interview where each portfolio committee chairperson will interact with communities on how they hold the Executive accountable on issues of service delivery as part of its oversight and public participation work.

Manager: Communications recommended that the back-billing system where the Legislature contracts mobile companies to provide data for communities to participate on social media platforms or campaigns should also be introduced. The specific data can only be used for campaigns where the Legislature interacts with communities.

Recommendations

The legislative sector is an arm of government that oversees the Executive, and it is obliged not only to communicate but engage communities regularly on service delivery issues concerning them. Using essential and relevant communication media or methods in public participation is critical and vital as the Legislature can fully understand and resolve communities' service delivery needs through its oversight processes. Melkote and Steeves (2015) state that development communication does not only involve the exchange of messages but rather a liberating communication that will ensure that not only specific but all citizens have the freedom to determine their future through participatory means.

In order for the communication methods of the Legislature can be effective and efficient during public participation processes, the following measures are recommended:

- The Legislature must develop a **public awareness campaign** with proper targets and a budget to increase its visibility amongst communities. The weekly to the monthly campaign will involve MPLs who will educate communities

through various media platforms such as radio and newspapers, website and social media and tribal and municipal meetings on the purpose and role of the Legislature. The awareness campaign is critical as it will assist communities in knowing where to raise service delivery issues, as the Legislature is an arm of government that oversees the Executive.

- The Legislature should develop **service-level agreements** with various local and regional radio stations where chairpersons of various portfolios and select communities of the Legislature, such as health and social development, can participate in weekly one-hour radio shows to educate, engage and listen to service delivery issues. As part of its public participation and oversight processes, the Legislature can bring various departments, municipalities and entities to respond to service delivery issues.
- A **monthly newsletter** incorporating all Legislature activities should be published and distributed to all community centres, including tribal authorities, libraries and community meetings.
- **Website and social media** platforms should be regularly updated with different portfolios and select Committee's work and ensure that there are instant responses to service delivery issues.
- Public hearings and public meetings should be held **conveniently** to ensure equal and fair community representation from different sectors.
- The Legislature should also **utilise tribal meetings** to communicate its work with communities, as the North West is a rural province with more extensive tribal representations.

Objective 2: To gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of Members and Employees of the North West Provincial Legislature concerning organisational communication practices used to facilitate public participation.

As the stakeholders are constitutionally mandated to communicate with the public through different communication methods of the Legislature, the research study aimed to understand MPLs and employees' perceptions and experiences on communication methods used for public participation processes. MPLs are also entrenched, holding

the Executive accountable for service delivery issues and using appropriate and convenient communication methods to engage concerned communities during public participation. Melkote and Steeves (2015) mention that an essential function of communicators in development is to be involved in the measures that will prioritise disadvantaged and marginalised communities.

According to most respondents' perceptions and opinions, the Legislature's work needs to be more visible amongst communities as it uses a one-way communication approach to engage them on various issues during public hearings and public meetings. Although the North West Province has 54 traditional councils and 18 parliamentary constituencies, the Legislature must use them to educate, inform and consult communities.

Other **findings or challenges** include the ineffective and inefficient usage of the communication methods; hence there is a need to employ more people in the communications and public participation units to ensure that they expose the work of the Legislature in communities. Furthermore, the Legislature should add more financial capital to the two units, which will increase public education efforts and even develop and employ community workers who can disseminate information on the activities of the Legislature through a database of participants.

The respondents also mentioned that the public should have complete access to the Legislature's work, including its communication methods, such as websites, social media, and public spaces, including municipal and tribal offices and community libraries and hospitals. Respondents highlighted that other communication methods, such as WhatsApp group messages, could be employed to send information to general or specific participants on activities of the Legislature.

The research participants highlighted that the Legislature should increase its public education campaigns before specific public hearings are held. They are essential to ensuring overall quality outputs from participants during law-making processes.

The respondents highlighted that for the Legislature to communicate with most community members in far rural areas of the North West Province, it must partner with other key stakeholders such as community development workers, ward councillors and non-government organisations. Partnerships in development projects are essential as both the Legislature and the community can have a common ground to ensure service delivery. The Legislature can hold the Executive accountable through the help of communities who live within their respective areas. Tufte (2017) states that participation plays an essential role in ensuring that during development projects, there is correct evaluation and monitoring through community involvement.

Recommendations

The current research objective was aimed at understanding the perceptions and opinions of the implementers of public participation within the Legislature through different communication methods. The research study understood how they view current communication methods and whether they are effective or efficient during public participation processes. Davids and Theron (2014) state that public participation as a concept in development is essential for correcting past inequalities through development projects that can be self-sufficient and sustainable for the future.

Based on the research findings from the Members of the Provincial Legislature and employees of the Legislature, the current study recommends the following;

- The Legislature should increase its **visibility** amongst all sectors of the public through communication methods such as traditional media, social networks and websites, public hearings, public education workshops, sectoral parliaments and municipal and tribal offices' meetings where issues of service delivery are discussed.
- The Legislature should also **utilise community libraries, halls, hospitals and other spaces** to educate the public about how it can assist them in holding the Executive accountable on service delivery issues. Public participation and communication employees can issue **media pamphlets** highlighting its mandate and how it can help communities resolve service delivery issues.

- The Legislature should **employ more employees** in public participation and communication units and **increase its public participation and communication budget** to ensure they educate the communities about its work.

Objective 3: To explore communication policies and strategies within the North West Provincial Legislature through a literature review that can assist the organisation in advancing efficient public participation processes.

The study was also aimed at understanding whether there are any guiding documents, such as communication policies and strategies, that guide the communication work of the Legislature during public participation processes. Without these documents, public participation can never be implemented accordingly, as no framework guides the Legislature's communication methods with the public. Cornelissen (2017) adds that the purpose of a communication strategy is to formulate a reputable image of the organisation with its internal and external stakeholders and align specific communication goals and plans based on the needs of those stakeholders.

Respondents highlighted that there is a communications policy. However, it needs to be updated. The communication strategy is in a draft format as it cannot be aligned with the non-existent legislative sector's communication strategic framework.

Other findings indicated no public participation policy, as the Legislature is drafting one based on the legislative sector's public participation framework.

Recommendations

The current research study recommends that although there is yet to be a communication framework within the legislative sector, the legislature communication unit and other units dealing with organisational communication methods for public participation should **develop both the communication policy and the strategy**. Both the policy and the strategy should incorporate the mandate and needs of the Legislature and desirable communication methods aligned with community needs.

Objective 4: To explore the effectiveness of organisational communication's feedback mechanisms used by the North West Provincial Legislature for effective public

participation between Members of the Provincial Legislature and community members.

Participatory communication as a means of engagement does not only imply a process where MPLs and staff of the Legislature facilitate bills through public hearings but another process where there is feedback on issues that were raised by communities during public hearings, public meetings, sectoral parliaments and public education workshops. The study presupposes that the participatory communication process also implies feedback from the Legislature to communities. During the public hearings on law-making, the Legislature should report back to communities when a particular bill is signed into law, or a particular service delivery matter has been resolved by the Executive. McPhail (2009) argues that participatory communication does not necessarily mean one-way communication processes where messages are sent to the intended recipients but meaningful communication processes where there are engagements between the organisation and its internal and external stakeholders.

The respondents mentioned that although the Legislature has a constitutional mandate to ensure that it provides feedback to the public on pieces of legislation or bills that were scrutinised during public hearings, there are no feedback mechanisms or tools used by the Legislature to report back to the same communities or specific sectors of the public on the issues raised. The Legislature is obliged to report back on whether the bill that was discussed was passed into law or rejected.

The public Participation unit's Manager informed the researcher that only sectoral parliaments have feedback sessions on issues raised during such events; hence, they are effective. "Regarding public hearings where a mandate is received from the public on a particular bill, the legislature is not providing feedback to the same public on whether the specific bill was either signed into law or rejected."

Other respondents indicated that as the Legislature hosts public meetings to discuss service delivery issues, the Legislature must also report to the communities whether departments or municipalities have resolved the issues raised.

Furthermore, other communication platforms such as radio, television or social media and the website of the Legislature are not utilised to report to different public sectors on issues raised during sectoral parliaments, such as agriculture, health or social development matters.

The respondents indicated that as the feedback processes in the Legislature are weak, it should consider conducting two separate sessions; one for engagement and another to provide feedback. Within those feedback sessions, relevant Members of the Executive Councils or public representatives should be invited to provide feedback on service delivery issues. The feedback process will boost the image of the Legislature.

The respondents have recommended that the yearly strategic planning document and quarterly programme of the Legislature should make provision for the feedback mechanism sessions where during public meetings, departments, municipalities and different entities of government are called to respond to service delivery issues that were raised during public meetings of the Legislature with members of the public.

The research participants indicated that the Legislature should implement a strategy where social networks, quarterly newsletters, websites and municipal and tribal offices are used to provide feedback to communities on issues raised. They mentioned contracts with local and mainstream radio stations where different chairpersons of each Committee provides feedback to communities on how they are holding the Executive accountable on service delivery issues. Decisions and resolutions adopted by the Committee during its oversight meetings should be communicated to communities through various organisational communication methods.

Recommendations

The current research objective was aimed at understanding the perceptions and opinions of the implementers of public participation within the Legislature through the usage of different communication methods.

The current research study recommends the following:

- The Legislature should include feedback sessions on service delivery issues raised during public hearings, public meetings, public education workshops and sectoral parliaments. **The sessions should be part of the Legislature's annual planning session with a budget and can be conducted quarterly in each district. During these sessions, it must be mandatory for government departments, municipalities and their entities to account for and respond to service delivery issues raised by communities.**
- A **guiding document** should be developed and incorporated into the Legislature's communication and public participation strategies and annual performance plans of portfolio committees of the Legislature **where a feedback sessions programme** is included.
- The **Legislature's quarterly programme should include feedback sessions in each district where departments, municipalities and entities are called to respond to service delivery issues.**
- The Legislature should also **utilise local and regional radio stations, social media and websites to respond to service delivery issues raised by the public during public meetings during the oversight week of the Legislature in each district.**
-

5.3 CONCLUSION

Development in the legislative sector means using public participation processes such as sectoral parliaments, public meetings and engagements that allow communities to raise service delivery issues and urge the Legislature to hold the Executive accountable for non-delivery of services as prescribed on their annual performance plans and budgets. It also means using a coordinated approach amongst different units within the Legislature and Members of the Provincial Legislature and budget to ensure that communication methods are convenient, relevant, effective and efficient in the communities it serves. These methods can assist the Legislature in involving communities in holding the Executive accountable by exposing service delivery issues that need to be addressed as part of the government's development projects.

Communication methods such as traditional media like radio, television and newspapers; social media; tribal and municipal meetings, sectoral parliaments, public engagements and public meetings are critical tools that, if conducted effectively and efficiently, can ensure that government departments, municipalities and their respective entities deliver services to the people.

Unlike in government departments and municipalities where development is viewed and valued through the actual delivery of services such as healthcare, roads, and education, in the legislative sector, it means communities feel ownership of the law-making process, such as facilitation of bills and oversight processes that hold the Executive accountable. It also means the Legislature uses public participation and communication strategies that can be measurable and provide feedback to the concerned or involved communities on service delivery. It further means community awareness of the fundamental role of the Legislature.

Therefore, the study recommends an inclusive approach which does not only imply communicating the actual work of the Legislature but awareness campaigns coordinated by different units in the Legislature through communication methods that communities can relate to and understand based on their living environment. It also implies how the Legislature can ensure that it changes communities' livelihoods by ensuring that government delivers quality services on time and in a transparent manner that involves them. Furthermore, it means involvement of the actual communities and their representatives as they are fully aware of what is happening on the ground and can quickly inform the Legislature of any wrongdoing when it comes to service delivery from the Executive.

Without proper and convenient communication methods, the Legislature will fail to ensure that the voices of communities are heard during public hearings where certain pieces of legislation are facilitated and can benefit communities, including their representatives.

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ANNEXURE A



North-West University
Private Bag X 2046
Mmabatho
2046

Request for assistance for Interview

I am Kabo Desmoulins Letlhogela, a Master of Arts in Communication student at North-West University. I am researching this topic: **An exploratory study of Organisational Communication practices in the North West Provincial Legislature for Public Participation.**

Please assist in an open-ended interview regarding organisational communication practices used by the North West Provincial Legislature to facilitate public participation. Please answer questions truthfully and honestly. The responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Kind regards

K.D Letlhogela

Interview Questions

1. Which organisational communication practices does the Legislature use to facilitate public participation?
2. Are these platforms effective and efficient in addressing such public participation processes?

3. What are the known shortfalls of these organisational communication platforms when implementing public participation?
4. Are communication methods used in the North West Provincial Legislature influence the effectiveness of its public participation processes?
5. What are the perceptions and experiences as Members and Employees of the North West Provincial Legislature concerning organisational communication practices used to facilitate public participation?
6. How do communication policies and strategies within the North West Provincial Legislature assist in ensuring efficient public participation processes?
7. Are these policies updated regularly with current trends to ensure that the North West Provincial Legislature facilitates public participation?
8. How effectively does the North West Provincial Legislature use organisational communication feedback mechanisms concerning public participation processes?
9. What must be done to ensure that the Legislature delivers feedback to communities after facilitating public participation processes?

ANNEXURE B



North West University
Private Bag X 2046
Mmabatho
2046

Request for assistance to complete questionnaire

My name is Kabo Desmoulins Letlhogela, a Master of Arts in Communication student at North West University. I am currently conducting a research with this topic: **An exploratory study of Organisational Communication practices in North West Provincial Legislature for Public Participation.** The study has been ethically cleared with reference number: **NWU – 00700 – 21 – A7.**

The questionnaire will take about thirty (30) minutes to complete. Please kindly assist in completing the attached questionnaire. You need not write your name as the questionnaire is voluntary. Please answer questions truthfully and honestly. The responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Kind regards

K.D Letlhogela

FACULTY OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE RESPONDENT

Mark relevant box with an X

PERSONAL DETAILS

Age

18-21		22-35		36-55		56 and above	
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Gender

Male		Female	
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Race

African		Asian		White		Coloured	
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Residential area

Rural		Semi-rural		Township		Suburb	
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District

Bojanala		Dr. Ruth Momapati		Dr. Kenneth Kaunda		Ngaka Modiri Molema	
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Level of Employment

Unemployed		Permanent		Contract		Self-employed	
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KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (COMPETENCE)

Highest qualification attained

High School (Grade 12)	Certificate	Diploma/Degree	Honours and above

SECTION B

To explore the influence of organisational communication practices in the North West Provincial Legislature for efficient public participation processes.

<u>No</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Strongly disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Strongly agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>
<u>1</u>	The legislature effectively and efficiently uses its internal newsletter to communicate its work as public participation processes.					
<u>2</u>	The website of the legislature is effectively and efficiently utilised as communication platform to facilitate public participation between the legislature and its stakeholders.					
<u>3</u>	Social media platforms used by the legislature are effective and efficient on communicating public participation work of the legislature.					
<u>4</u>	The legislature effectively and efficiently utilises public hearings to communicate its work with stakeholders a part of public participation processes.					

<u>5</u>	Public meetings during oversight week of the legislature are effective and efficient communication practices where communities can raise their issues concerning service delivery as part of public participation processes.					
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SECTION C

To gain insight on perceptions and experiences of Members and Employees of the North West Provincial Legislature with regards to organisational communication practices used to facilitate public participation.

<u>No</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Strongly disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Strongly agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>
<u>1</u>	The newsletter of the legislature consistently and regularly communicates the overall public participation work of the legislature.					
<u>2</u>	The website of the legislature is consistently and regularly updated with the public participation work of the legislature such as issues raised in community meetings.					
<u>3</u>	The social media platforms of the legislature are consistently and regularly updated on the public					

	participation work of the legislature.					
<u>4</u>	Public hearings are conveniently used as communication platforms where public participation work of the legislature is facilitated.					
<u>5</u>	Public meetings of the legislature ensure that inputs raised by communities as part of its public participation processes are well addressed.					

SECTION E

To explore the effectiveness of organisational communication's feedback mechanisms used by the North West Provincial Legislature for effective public participation between Members of the Provincial Legislature and community members.

<u>No</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Strongly disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Strongly agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>
<u>1</u>	The newsletter of the legislature provides regularly feedback on issues raised during public participation processes of the legislature.					
<u>2</u>	The website of the legislature is used as a feedback mechanism to respond to or communicate any issues that were raised during public					

	participation processes of the legislature.					
<u>3</u>	Social media platforms of the legislature are regularly used to provide feedback to any issues pertaining to public participation processes.					
<u>4</u>	The legislature uses public hearings to provide feedback on any public participation issues raised in previous public hearings.					
<u>5</u>	The legislature holds public meetings to provide feedback on public participation issues that were raised in previous public meetings.					

