Public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Management Sciences in Public Administration
in the Faculty of Management Sciences
Durban University of Technology

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NOVEMBER 2021

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Abstract

Most South African municipalities in South Africa struggle to efficiently provide adequate public services. One of the main reasons for slow and inadequate public service delivery across South African municipalities is ineffective public participation. The consequences of poor public service delivery include the prevalence of violent service delivery protests. Addressing these challenges requires active citizen participation in service delivery matters. The aim of this study is to explore the nature and role of public participation in the delivery of municipal services using a case study of the eThekwini Municipality. To achieve this aim, four main objectives were identified. The first objective focuses on identifying the participation platforms available for the public to effectively contribute to improved municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality. The second objective seeks to establish the challenges experienced in promoting effective public participation in the eThekwini Municipality. The third objective seeks to establish the impact of public participation on service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality. Finally, the fourth objective is to recommend possible ways in which the municipality can implement public participation policies for improved public service delivery.

The study uses a qualitative methodological approach which is executed in two parts. The first part analyses survey data collected using semi-structured interviews from 10 municipal employees working in the Community Participation and Action Unit of the municipality. Secondly, the study analyses data collected through semi-structured focus group discussions with community leaders from three different wards of the municipality. The data collected was analysed using the thematic approach. Three major findings are reported in the study. Firstly, the study reports on four main public participation platforms used in the municipality. Secondly, the study reports on five common challenges experienced in promoting public participation in the municipality. Lastly, the study reports on five benefits of public participation towards improved service delivery. Overall, the study reveals the existence of a strong link between effective public participation and optimum service delivery. Effective engagement was

understood to be the fundamental issue and a gateway to efficient service delivery. The study recommends that public participation platforms be used frequently as a tool to regain community trust, account for budgets on community projects, disseminate information and allow community engagement on public policies and service delivery matters. The municipality should attend to the drivers of poor attendance in public participation meetings and communities should take a centre stage in identifying service based on their priority need analysis.

Declaration by student

In accordance with the rules of the University, I declare that this dissertation is my own work. I further declare that it has never been submitted for assessment of a degree to another University or for another qualification.

Student's signature: ⌐

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother, Bongiwe Phumelele "MaBee" Manqele, my younger brother; Samkelo Trevor and my two late grandmothers; Khethiwe "Khathazile" MaMthethwa okaNyambose and Philisiwe "Nkaniphelile" MaCebekhulu okaLindamkhonto.

Acknowledgements

A special praise to Jesus Christ, my Saviour and gratitude to my ancestors for supernatural powers that sustained me during this journey of accomplishing my dream of completing this dissertation.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Genius Murwirapachena. The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without his continuous support, patience and most of all guidance. Beside the completion of this dissertation, Dr Murwirapachena reminded me that discipline, time management and professionalism are some of the elements that lead to success. He is my academic mentor and a leader.

My appreciation is further extended to the Durban University of Technology staff who assisted me during my study, eThekwini Municipality staff and the community who participated in this study despite challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. I highly appreciate the support and understanding received from Mr Peet Du Plessis, my principal and Head of Revenue Management Unit at eThekwini Municipality.

My appreciation is also extended to my spiritual father, Pastor Khuzwayo and African Gospel Church for their prayers and spiritual support. I am grateful to my family who continuously supported and encouraged me to complete this work. I acknowledge the role played by my close friends, Thathakahle Mkhabela, Thabile Nyawose, Khanyi Gama and Nkosinathi Mkhwanazi, in supporting me emotionally during this journey. A special gratitude is also devoted to Siphilile Mthembu, who has been my pillar of strength and emotional supporter through my journey to fulfil my dream.

Finally, I would like to express my special appreciation to my precious children Ziyanda, Nomcebo and Thembalamanzuza for their patience, love, care and partially relieving me of motherly duties to give way to the finalisation of this dissertation. To my life partner and husband, Thokozani "TK" Kunene, words can never be enough to express how grateful I am for his selfless support towards reaching my goal, endless

love, care and sacrifices. He placed so much value in education that injected courage and passion in me to reach the finish line. Mtimande, Lubambolunye! Ngiyabonga.

List of acronyms

CBP   Community Based Programme

COGTA   Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

EWS   Ethekwini Water Services

ICT   Information Communication Technology

IDP   Integrated Development Plan

IDASA   Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa

MEC   Member of the Executive Council

MFMA   Municipal Finance Management Act

OSS   Operation Sukuma Sakhe

Stats SA   Statistics South Africa

USA   United State of America

Table of contents

List of figures

List of tables

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

South Africa is a unitary state with three spheres of government, namely, the national, provincial, and local governments. Section 40(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) provides that these spheres are unique, inter-dependent and interconnected. The national and provincial spheres are mandated with developing policies that would be implemented by the local government (Naidoo and Ramphal 2018). The formation of the local government sphere is legislated in Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (henceforth referred to as the Constitution), with the mandate to efficiently and equitably deliver services to the public.

Essential services provided by South African local governments (henceforth referred to as municipalities) to their respective communities include water, electricity, sewage collection and disposal, solid waste disposal, road maintenance, parks and recreation, among others. Since the end of apartheid, there have been drastic improvements in public service delivery across South African municipalities. By 2018, over 13.3 million households had access to water services, while approximately 11.9 million households had access to electricity, and about 11.7 million households had access to proper sewage and sanitation (Statistics South Africa 2019).

To efficiently provide public services, municipalities are required by law to involve the public in decision making. The South African Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 provides that communities should participate in municipality's service delivery affairs through ward committees. The prescribed ward committees are established in terms of Section 17(1) of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998. This is in line with Chapter 10, Section 195 of the Constitution which states that public administration should involve creating a democratic culture of public participation and accountability.

The purpose of public participation in municipalities around South Africa is to ratify strategies and legislation, and continuously check and evaluate municipal effectiveness. The ultimate aim is to put the voice of the people at the centre of service delivery. Ward committees and councillors are the key mechanisms through which communities can effectively participate in municipal affairs. Consistent with the Municipal Systems Act, there are about 3 790 Ward Development Committees across South Africa (Chikulo 2016). These committees essentially provide a link between the municipalities and the communities they serve.

Technically, municipalities are obliged to account to and receive feedback from communities on the objectives that are set out in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The IDP is a plan of action that promotes engagement between the municipality and citizens in order to achieve long-term development. In the context of this study, public participation refers to the active role played by the communities in municipal policy making and service delivery related decisions (Mphako 2013). This involves frequent sharing of information between the municipality and its communities.

The issue of public participation does not only exist in South Africa. Various other countries (developed, emerging and developing) have successful public participation stories. One of the many known benefits of such public participation policies is improved service delivery and the satisfaction of communities from public services. The commonly known examples of countries where effective public participation improved the efficiency of service delivery include developed countries such as Canada, Norway, the United States of America (USA) and Australia. Among others, these countries have since experienced an increase in open government wherein public information is proactively disseminated to the public, in pursuant of efficient service delivery, accountability and transparency (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development or OECD 2015).

Developing countries such as Cameroon and Nigeria have gone to the extent of adopting e-participation, wherein the use of information communication technology systems plays a crucial role in public participation. Different authors examined communication technology used for communication between the government and citizens in Peru, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Egypt. These countries participate in

government affairs using YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Skype, and Google documents forums and surveys (Abdelsalam et al. 2013; Belachew 2010; Chatfield and Brajawidagda 2013). Bawack (2018) investigates the effectiveness of e-participation in service delivery in developing countries and revealed that technological communication opened a platform for citizens to discuss and express their dissatisfaction with democratic issues. The utilisation of technological means of communication such as social media positively affects the culture of accountability and transparency and promotes collaboration between the government and its citizen (Bawack 2018).

1.2 Problem statement

Most South African municipalities fail to provide basic public services as per their mandate. For example, the availability of a reliable water supply is still a problem in most municipalities (Weaver et al. 2017). According to Mayosi and Benatar (2014), only a quarter of South African municipalities can deliver optimal services. Despite the presence of some supervisory and institutional structure, municipalities continue to struggle in the provision of basic services to communities (Chigwata et al. 2017; Nkomo 2017).

Cases exist where municipalities fail to deliver the right package of services required by communities. In 2019, the provincial executive of the KwaZulu-Natal province had to intervene in the governance of the Msunduzi Local Municipality due to various cases of poor service delivery and the collapse of good governance (Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs or COGTA 2019). The provincial executive intervention is in accordance with Section 139 of the Constitution which is applied when the Council of a municipality has failed to exercise oversight over its management. According to Ledger and Rampedi (2019), nine (9) municipalities were placed under administration in accordance with Section 139 during the 2016/17 financial year alone. Six (6) more municipalities were placed under administration during the 2017/18 financial year, and by the 2018/19 financial year, a total of twenty-

seven (27) municipalities were placed under administration due to poor financial management and a lack of good governance.

Most municipalities are characterised by an institutional vacuum due to dysfunctional local committees such as ward committees and IDP forums (Chikulo 2016; Naidoo and Ramphal 2018). These forums are supposed to provide channels for public participation. However, their dysfunctionality together with slow service delivery has escalated the number of service delivery protests recorded in South Africa. For example, there were 237 incidents of service delivery protests in 2018, an increase from 152 in 2017 and 137 in 2016 (Municipal Data and Intelligence Survey Report 2018). Such a high prevalence of service delivery protests can be avoided if proper public participation strategies are carefully formulated and implemented. Although public participation policies are well documented in South Africa, their implementation is still a challenge. In most cases, the public sector's management style leaves little room for innovation through broad-based participation (Ahmed and Ali 2006). For example, councillors more often than not, do not reside within the communities they represent (Booysen 2007). On many occasions, this creates problems as they will be unavailable for consultation with their residents. Consequently, residents struggle to make their voices heard in decision making.

In most cases, there is a gap in the existing process of disseminating information to communities and providing progress reports to the public. As a result, communities are usually not aware of what is taking place in their community (Mdlalose 2016; Molepo 2015). For example, in the eThekwini Municipality, ward committees barely meet to discuss service delivery issues and the basic needs of communities (Cameron and Milne 2011). The lack of proper consultations may result in sub-optimal or inappropriate provision of services. More precisely, if communities are excluded from the policy formulation processes, implementing the formulated processes becomes problematic (Nzimakwe and Reddy 2008; Patel 2016).

1.3 Research aim and objectives

The aim of this study is to explore the nature and role of public participation in municipal service delivery using a case study of the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. To achieve this aim, the study is set to satisfy the following objectives:

   i.   To identify the participation platforms available to the public to contribute towards improved municipal service delivery;

  ii.   To establish the challenges experienced in promoting effective public participation;

 iii.   To establish the impact of public participation on service delivery; and

  iv.   To recommend possible ways through which public participation policies may be implemented for optimum public service provision.

1.4 Research questions

   i.   What are the platforms available to the public to contribute towards improved municipal service delivery?

  ii.   What are the main challenges experienced in promoting public participation in the municipality?

 iii.   What is the impact of public participation on service delivery in the municipality?

  iv.   What are the possible solutions for effective public participation in service delivery matters?

1.5 Significance of the study

The proposed contribution of this study is twofold. First, the study contributes towards the promotion of public participation in municipal service delivery matters. Well-

informed residents contribute positively to public programmes. As residents understand the rationale of public participation in municipal service programmes, their desire for participation is likely to improve, leading to effective and improved service delivery. According to Mchunu (2012), the never-ending public protests show the gap between adopted public participation strategies and practice. This study intends to bridge such a gap by examining and recommending strategies that would reposition and improve public participation in local government affairs.

Challenges inherent in the current public participation platforms and processes are examined and more robust processes essential for effective and efficient service delivery are suggested. In doing this, the study contributes towards the effective implementation of public participation and service delivery in South African municipalities. Thus, policy makers will have information to use when evaluating municipal activities that affect local communities, enabling them to devise appropriate interventions in cases where there are shortcomings.

Second, the study contributes to the body of knowledge in the academic literature on public participation in South Africa. Currently, there is a gap in the literature on studies that explore the nature and role of public participation in municipal service delivery matters. The few existing studies document the channels through which communities can participate in local government matters, without exactly reporting on whether such available channels are being used effectively (Nzimakwe and Reddy 2008; Patel 2016). Therefore, this study seeks to bridge this gap.

1.6 Organisation of the study

The rest of this study is organised into four (4) chapters. Chapter 2 provides a review of theoretical and empirical literature on public participation and service delivery. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology used in the study. Chapter 4 discusses the data and reports on the findings of the study. Chapter 5 concludes the study and provides recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Public participation is a process by which municipalities consult with the people in matters of service delivery. This process mainly involves policy making discussions before authorities take any decisions. It comprises effective communication and collaborative problem-solving mechanisms, the intention of which is to achieve better and more acceptable decisions. Public participation, also referred to as public involvement is a parasol phrase that incorporates several platforms aimed at encouraging interaction between people with an intention to implement jointly agreed solutions (Hügel and Davies 2020). When communities are involved in the policy making process, they generally support government decisions, thus leading to desired and adequate service delivery. The literature contains various theories and studies that seek to explain the nexus between public participation and service delivery. This chapter presents a review of some of the theoretical and empirical literature related to service delivery and public participation. It also discusses the legislations and policies around these two phenomena in the South African context. The chapter is divided into six (6) main sections. Section 2 discusses the theoretical literature that underpins the link between public participation and service delivery. Section 3 discusses the empirical literature on public participation and service delivery. Section 4 discusses the legislations and policies on public participation and service delivery in South Africa. Section 5 provides a discussion of the policies on public participation and service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality. Section 6 concludes the chapter.

2.2 Theoretical literature

Various theories attempt to explain the issues of public participation and service delivery. These theories include the ladder of citizen participation theory (Arnstein

1969), the theory of service delivery (Shonkoff et al. 1992), the policy implementation theory (Matland 1995) and the theory of empowerment (Sadan 1997). These and many other theories in the literature attempt to explain public participation either separately from service delivery or jointly by explaining the link between the two phenomena. However, in this study, the focus will be on selected theories that explain the link between public participation and service delivery. Although a plethora of such theories exists, the ladder of citizen participation theory, the policy implementation theory, and the theory of empowerment underpin this study. These three theories are subsequently discussed in this subsection.

2.2.1 The ladder of citizen participation theory

Developed by Arnstein (1969), the theory explains the relationship between citizens and the government by using a participatory ladder as a mechanism to increase the power of citizens to partake in decision making. The theory suggests that citizen participation plays a crucial role in restoring power to the citizens. It identifies eight (8) steps in power restoration. These steps are further grouped into three (3) main categories, namely, non-participation, tokenism, and citizen power. Non-participation consists of two steps where government officials elicit support from the public for initiatives they already have decided on and that they deem best. This is deemed as public engagement under the pretence of effective participation. The second category of tokenism consists of three main steps which makes the middle of the ladder. Although engagement occurs at this level, there are no guarantees that change will take place as suggested by the public during the public engagement. The third and uppermost category called citizen power has three steps. In this category, citizens engage in negotiations with officials who are deemed power holders. Citizens are fully involved in government decision making. The ladder of citizen participation diagram is illustrated in Figure 2.1.
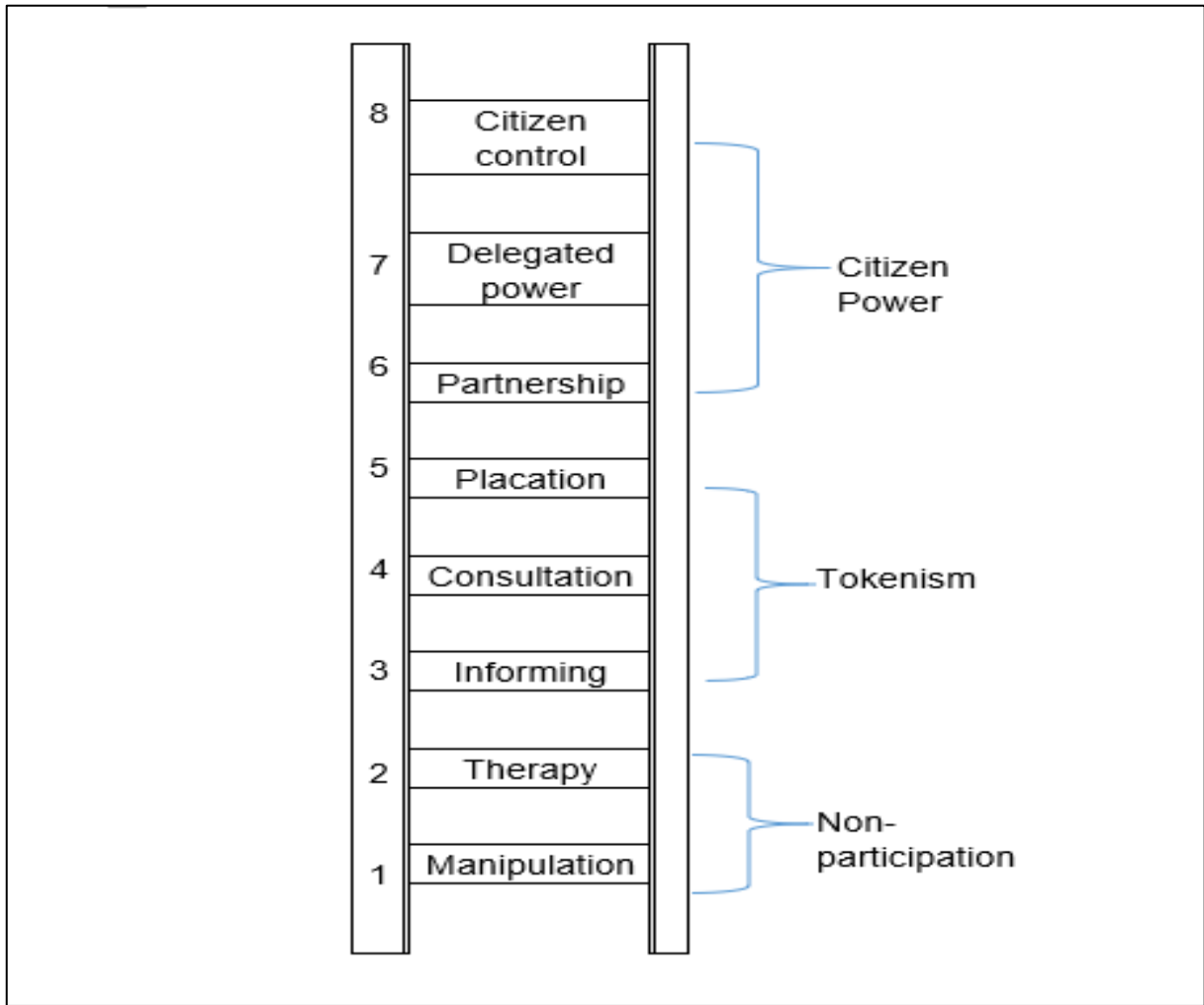
Figure 2.1: Ladder of citizen participation

Source: Arnstein (1969)

Arnstein's theory is applicable to this study as it categorises the level of citizen's involvement in public decision making. It informs authorities of the approach to use in the light of different public policy goals. If the goal of policy makers is to make citizens more active in decision making, authorities should then adopt the upper three steps of the ladder. Importantly, the theory shows the steps through which authorities should move, from nudging citizens until the point when citizens voluntarily participate in public decision making. Public participation is essential in this regard as it enhances service delivery and promotes continuous engagement between citizens and the authorities. It also positively impacts municipal accountability and constrains corruption, fraud and financial misconduct (Tufte 2017). Effective public participation can eventually lead to improved service delivery.

Numerous authors argued that there were several limitations to Arnstein's theory. Collins and Ison (2006) point out that the theory portrayed public participation as centred around citizen control and this assumption may not be accurate. In reality, citizens have varying reasons for engagement in decision making and these may not have anything to do with citizen control (Collins and Ison 2006). Furthermore, those in positions of power, often resist power re-distribution due to paternalism. Additionally, citizens' inability to find accountable and knowledgeable representation from their own community, renders a limitation to the theory. Whilst Arnstein's theory places more emphasis on shifting control of citizens' participation in the affairs of the government, this study among other things, seek to also focus on central balancing such control amongst citizens.

2.2.2 The policy implementation theory

Developed by Matland (1995), the theory explains the dynamics that characterise government institutions. It emphasises the commitment and capacity of state agencies, to implement specific categories of new participation policies. The original formulated theory suggests the ambiguous relationship between policies, decisions and the implementation of projects as the main policy implementation challenge. According to the theory, policy implementation is a challenge of collaboration that requires incentives to be offered in order to promote cooperation. The theory envisages that public participation policies encompass the synergies of numerous institutions in the course of implementation. Implementing managers and institutions sometimes lack the abilities and capacity required to work in line with formulated policies. Thus, implementation will fail when those tasked with implementing the policy have no capacity to articulate a well-defined policy outcome.

According to Klijn (1996), the incapability of government leaders to create dependable directions on anticipated actions impedes the implementation of policies at the community level. Policies that push for robust change and the inclusion of multiple voices are expected to stimulate a constructive reaction and be executed. In certain circumstances, authorities face various policy challenges as policy formulation

regularly includes the adaptation of opposing interests. Contemporary views reject the assumption that the policy implementation discourse can be scrutinised exclusive of the course of policy formulation. It is presumed that previous discussions and policy suggestions influence policy implementation because they affect how those who implement comprehend the policy challenge (Spillane et al. 2002).

Additionally, the inscribed substance of policies might only replicate objectives that are visibly expressible, whereas authorities are challenged with the requirement of executing goals that are not part of the obvious public agenda (Yanow 1995). The co-ordinated efforts of different participants, including the government, play an important role in executing policies, in order to attain optimum service delivery. The main challenge in policy implementation emanates from weak cooperative policymaking (Hudson et al. 2019). Matland's policy implementation theory outlines the effect of conflict and policy ambiguity on implementation. According to Govender and Reddy (2012), the challenge of the policy making process manifests itself during the implementation phase, resulting in poor public service delivery to communities.

Therefore, the thrust and assumptions of the policy implementation theory are essential in shaping the discussions in this study. Citizens' participatory processes in policy formulation are essential and important for the never-ending developments in governments' day to day operation (Molokwane and Lukamba 2018). In order to play part in the policy decision making, citizens must take part in government decision making, because they fully understand their essential needs. The significance of the theory in the study is the citizen's participation in the policy formulation and implementation for optimum public service provision. Policy formulation is entrenched in the output and effects that policy has in targeted public and/or government organisations (Molokwane and Lukamba 2018).

2.2.3 The theory of empowerment

Developed by Sadan (1997), the theory suggests that empowerment is a process of transition from a state of powerlessness to a state of relative control over one's life,

destiny, and environment. This transition can manifest itself in issues around the ability to control the direction in which government affairs are being driven. According to the theory, the empowerment process is conditioned by what already exists, for example, the social structure that enables or limits it. More precisely, governments that do not recognise the right of individuals to act but emphasise the duty of obedience, shape social processes in a very different way to democratic governments which permit the individuals' participation in public decisions. The theory of empowerment differentiates between disempowerment and empowerment, where the former is the first, albeit negative stage.

Disempowering social systems generate a feeling of helplessness, humiliation and prejudice among communities. A feeling of powerlessness diminishes people's self-esteem, leading to self-blame and indifferences towards government-initiated community programmes. On the other hand, empowerment entails changing from a passive state to an active state, where residents control government programmes for better service. The process of community empowerment leads to a feeling of accountability, obligation, and the ability to appreciate a collective existence, hence providing problem-solving proficiencies (Aguiar 2013). Fundamentally, public participation in service delivery issues is a tool to empower residents so that they can transform their living conditions. According to Aiyer et al. (2015), although personal empowerment generates a basis of community capacity, grassroots empowerment requires funds to be achieved. Most importantly, the empowerment process hinges on the social configuration that supports or restricts it. Therefore, the relevance of this theory to the study emanates from the assumption that public empowerment is an intercession variable between service delivery and public participation. Effective and efficient public participation form part of competence and control yet reducing exclusion.

2.3 Empirical literature

While several studies in the literature argue that policies are important for public participation in service delivery, there are several challenges inherent in ensuring

public participation within municipalities. Several studies investigate these challenges, with some attempting to explore the nexus between public participation and service delivery (Dube et al. 2021; Kaberia et al. 2021; Ramasamy 2021). This section discusses some of the empirical literature on the nature of public participation in municipal public service affairs. The discussion in this section is contextualised to the study in order to identify gaps and provide a rationale for further research. In doing this, the section is divided into two (2) subsections. First, the section discusses some empirical literature on municipal service delivery. Second, some empirical studies on public participation are discussed.

2.3.1 Municipal service delivery

In most developing and emerging countries, municipalities are generally mandated to provide essential and basic services to communities. These services are largely perceived as the foundation for an improved quality of lives of the members of the communities (Reddy 2016). According to Hunting et al. (2015), municipalities deliver a range of services to meet the basic needs of their communities. The basic services delivered by municipalities to communities within their jurisdiction include but are not limited to water services, sanitation, electricity, housing, transport, recreation, among others. These services are necessary for the well-being of communities, hence, when municipalities fail to provide these services, lives within communities are hugely affected. Equally, municipal failure to provide adequate public services may have an unfavourable effect on economic development (Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa or IDASA Annual Report 2010).

According to van Rooyen (2018), the provision of basic services can be an essential driver in the reduction of poverty and the strengthening of social capital. Most developing countries continuously face an increasing demand for basic services. This carries a very high degree of dependency on the government for the provision of basic services. Such dependency affects the economic performance of most developing countries. In South Africa during the apartheid era, public service was intended to serve the interest of a few South Africans (Koma and Tshiyoyo 2015). This is because

during the apartheid era, people were segregated, and services were provided based on racial categories of citizens. The attainment of democracy in South Africa ushered in a dispensation of non-exclusion in service delivery. This resulted in the various spheres of government having to deal with massive backlogs on service delivery. The national average backlog in household access to piped water services was 8.8% in 2017, while the backlog for sanitation was at 24.4%, and that for solid waste removal was at 30.1% in the same year (Statistics South Africa or Stats SA 2017). These figures are considerably high given South Africa's commitment to significantly reduce poverty and improve the standard of living. Municipalities cite different reasons for these backlogs. Common reasons include the high rates of poverty within households which hinders their ability to timeously and regularly pay for services rendered, as well as the inadequacy of infrastructure to serve rural and densely populated areas (Stats SA 2017). The increasing population and migration are equally important factors that are putting pressure on the financial state and sustainability of municipalities.

Although backlogs are frequently cited in poor service delivery, municipalities can improve on service delivery through efficiency and professionalism. According to Mpofu and Hlatshwayo (2015), employees for many municipalities are usually accused of poor performance, corruption and the lack of skills necessary to perform their duties. Using data collected from 150 municipal employees, Mpofu and Hlatshwayo (2015) examined the relationship between the quality of training and development of service delivery. Results from the study indicated the need for effective training and development systems and processes to achieve improved performance in South African municipalities. It emerged from the very large number of municipal employees examined in the study that the culture of putting people first does not exist. The effects or consequences of poor service delivery may result in many undesired outcomes. Morudu (2017) investigated the relationship between service delivery and protests in South African cities and revealed that protests occur in areas that are densely populated. The study also reports that protests have a strong negative correlation with water and sanitation services. This is a common phenomenon in most developing countries that are faced with the challenges of providing public services to highly populated urban areas.

The approaches used towards service delivery in most developing countries vary significantly from those used in developed countries. In most developed countries, there is significant innovation that promotes public independence. For example, Kim and Warner (2016) show that in the United States of America (USA) service provision levels and delivery methods are related to local stress and capacity. Alternative revenue sources and service delivery methods such as privatisation and cooperation are used to maintain services in the USA. It was also established that ethnically diverse suburbs are providing more services than other suburbs, acting more like metropolitan core cities. Thus, municipalities are aware of the variety of options they have and are using both privatisation and cooperation strategies.

Most studies in the literature on municipal services delivery in developed countries emphasise the importance of inter-municipal cooperation. Allers and de Greef (2018) show that inter-municipal cooperation is widely practised in Europe. This refers to the cooperation effort involving several municipalities in providing services to the public. Examples of countries that have adopted inter-municipal cooperation include Germany, Austria, France, Hungary, Macedonia, Spain, Bulgaria, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, and Romania (European Union Water Initiative Report 2012). Among the many advantages of inter-municipal cooperation is that neighbouring municipalities collectively provide services to the public, assume administrative functions and effectively contribute to the economic development of that country.

In the Netherlands, inter-municipal cooperation was adopted for efficient waste removal and tax collection (Allers and de Greef 2018; Niaounakis and Blank 2017). This resulted in increases in cost-efficiency in tax collection. However, in Denmark, results show that the implementation of inter-municipal cooperation yielded no major effects on the total municipal spending (Blom-Hansen et al. 2016). Across Europe, social innovation has been widespread as an avenue for efficient public service provision. In countries like Belgium, evidence exists of the influence of the local governance system on the use of social innovation as a service delivery tool (Biljohn and Voets 2016). In most of the countries that have adopted social innovation as a tool for improved service delivery, citizens are given prominent roles in the planning, design, delivery, evaluation and regulation of services. Using meta data, Bel and

Warner (2016) stress the importance of inter-municipal cooperation in public service delivery reform. The study reports that fiscal constraints, spatial and organisational factors are significant drivers of cooperation, thus the divergent results of service delivery in the empirical literature. However, the study recommends that more studies on these factors are needed in order to understand how they might affect inter-municipal cooperation. Most importantly, Bel and Warner (2016) suggest that future research should attend to spatial and organisational factors that drive cooperation, and how they differ across municipal structures and regions.

In yet another study that uses meta data, Pérez-López et al. (2016) analyse the efficiency in different ways of managing waste collection services, to determine which form is more appropriate. The study examines a large database of Spanish municipalities, each with a population of 1000–50000 people. Results obtained were compared with this approach against those of previous theories and suggested that in general, cooperation formulas are the most suitable for the waste collection service. Thus, inter-municipal cooperation performs best in smaller municipalities (up to 20 000 inhabitants). Numerous studies conducted in countries of different classes show that developed countries are more dependent on innovative ways of service delivery yet developing countries such as South Africa are more dependent on their municipalities for basic essential services. The dependency is mostly based on the historical events of apartheid and inequality which segregated citizens and provided differentiated services on the basis of race. The collaborative effort of different municipalities to provide service delivery to the communities is identified as one innovative method in the developed countries, which seeks to ensure adequate, efficient and effective service delivery to all communities. Such a model may address the issue of service delivery backlog and improve the delivery of essential and basic services.

2.3.2 The role of public participation in service delivery

Several studies in the literature attempt to explain the link between public participation and service delivery. A larger fraction of such studies pays attention to the successes of public participation in improving public service delivery. Interestingly, there is a

growing interest in investigating the role of public participation in service delivery in the context of developing and emerging countries. This subsection discusses some of the empirical literature on the link between the two phenomena. Municipalities are usually urged to involve internal and external stakeholders when making public service delivery decisions. Committing to stakeholder engagement is an essential culture that promotes cooperation between the government, private sector and community stakeholders (Hunt 2015). Such cooperation serves to determine the preferred future by facilitating shared decisions and joint actions which safeguard the quality of local governance and services delivery. The involvement of communities in service delivery is essential for the efficient provision of services (Bel and Warner 2016). Regardless of the notable benefits of public participation in service delivery, public participation is still a problem in most developing economies.

Literature provides evidence that developing countries with little public participation are characterised by poor service delivery. Brixi et al. (2015) explain how a lack of public participation resulted in poor services delivery in the Middle East and North Africa. Most of the countries in this region are dominated by authoritarian regimes, weak parliaments, low judicial independence, lack of accountability and information asymmetry which lead to the suppression of citizens' voices (Brixi et al. 2015). Consequentially, undermining public participation has also led to poor revenue collection in this region. Local council budgets in these areas are by far less than expected standards. In this region, freedom of information and public disclosure laws and practices that would allow citizens and intermediaries to monitor government activities are either lacking or not implemented. On the Global Integrity Index, the region ranks the lowest on public access to information.

The implementation of public participation is also lagging in many other African countries. Brinkerhoff and Watterberg (2016) establish the drivers of poor public participation in Rwanda and Guinea. The key amongst these drivers is the degree of decentralisation, unavailability of space for citizen engagement, lack of capacity for citizens and citizens' lack of motivation. These factors contribute to inadequate social accountability for service delivery and poor government performance. Some scholars argue that authorities may be to blame for citizens' lack of engagement and motivation.

In the context of South Africa, Mathebula (2018) points out that the interpretation, application and understanding of community participation in the local government discourse are obscured. Thus, creating a more simplistic and superficial meaning to be operational. Further evidence of the barriers to public participation is provided in Batley and Mcloughlin (2015) as well as Keefer and Khemani (2003). One major driver outstanding in most studies on the reasons for poor public participation is information asymmetry.

In the majority of cases, poor communities in many African countries are mostly not consulted on service delivery issues. This signifies the high inequality levels that characterise most developing economies. According to Patel (2016), the poor remain without a voice in service delivery due to marginalisation. In most cases, elected officials such as councillors end up making decisions on behalf of citizens with little or no input from those citizens. Instead of promoting the interest of the poor and marginalised communities, some elected officials often act to the contrary. This behaviour was also raised in Beall (2001). When elected officials decide for citizens, they are commonly accused of commandeering participation initiatives, to further their connections and maximise political gains at the expense of promoting active engagement with citizens, especially the marginalised. Evidence exists that corruption is harboured when elected officials decide for citizens (De Kadt and Lieberman 2017).

Although most African and other developing countries are lagging in public participation, the South African government is making some giant steps in promoting this phenomenon. To facilitate communication and increase community participation in developmental issues at local government levels, the South African government has been steadily amending its legislation on local government administration. Currently, legislation on the local government makes provision for the formation of sub-councils and ward committees (Mathebula 2018). Sub-councils are made up of ward councillors of adjoining wards along with proportional councillors representing political organisations. Ward committees, on the other hand, consist of the ward councillor plus a maximum of ten members of the local community. These committees are intended to be facilitators of interaction between municipalities and the communities, thus, increasing community participation. However, the establishment of ward committees

has taken a bit longer to establish in some municipalities. On the other hand, in some municipalities where these ward committees are already established, they are mostly dysfunctional. Research on the functioning of ward committees in areas where they exist shows that councillors use these committees as a source of political patronage (Patel 2016).

While public participation in service delivery issues is still an area of concern in many developing countries, a lot of municipalities in the developed world are focused on making public participation better and more effective. In Western Europe, authorities have since adopted technology and social media platforms to communicate with its citizens (Bonsón et al. 2015; Wehn et al. 2015). In these countries, local governments' preferences to different media and content types depend on the institutional context. Additionally, significant differences in engagement levels by citizens have also been found among media and content types. In a study conducted in three countries, namely, the UK, Netherlands and Italy, Wehn et al. (2015) provide evidence on the effectiveness of public participation through Information Communication Technology (ICT) enablers. Further evidence on the innovation adopted in public participation in developed nations is provided in Bovaird (2016) and Prout (2018). Summarily, the attention given to public participation in service delivery issues in both developed and developing countries proves that it is an essential matter.

2.4 South African legislation on public participation and service delivery

The formation of municipalities in South Africa complies with Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). While municipalities are legally mandated to provide basic services to the communities, section 151 of the Constitution gives them the duty to maintain public participation in decision-making processes. The Constitution is the supreme legislation for the efficient, consistent and equitable provision of public services, while various other Acts work to complement it. Notable Acts that guide South African municipalities include the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003, the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, the Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations

(2001), White Paper on Local Government (1998) and the Integrated Development Plan. This section provides a brief discussion of the tenets of some of these legislations.

The Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 was developed with the intention to promote good governance through the division of powers and functions between the various municipal categories. The Act regulates matters connected to local governance, its systems and structures. More precisely, the Municipal Structures Act deals extensively with the municipal councils' election, removal from office of councillors and internal proceedings in the dissolution of the council. According to the Act, the participation of citizens in municipal affairs must take place through ward committees. Section 19 of the Act provides that even though municipalities encourage citizens to actively participate, it remains the job of the municipality to ensure the community's involvement. In this regard, the Act sets out the duties of each municipality. Among other clear dictates of the Act is the need for municipalities to encourage the involvement of the local community in municipal issues, and the need for the municipality to provide the community with information about the available options for basic service delivery. Thus, continuous public consultation on the level, quality, range and impact of municipal services to the communities is enshrined in the Municipal Structures Act.

Another piece of legislation that is essential for the efficient management of municipal activities is the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. The Act provides that municipalities must advance a philosophy of control that balances formal democratic government through a structure of participatory governance. In doing so, municipalities should inspire and generate situations for communities to contribute to municipal activities. According to the Act, communities should participate in the preparation, implementation and review of municipal plans and budgets. Such participation by communities in the affairs of the municipality must take place through various structures. Equally, municipalities must consider the special needs of the illiterate, those with disabilities, women and other disadvantaged groups. Municipalities are required to allocate funds in their annual budget to facilitate and build capacity for community participation. Additionally, the Act stipulates that public notices regarding

time, venue and date of meetings should be made public. It directs municipalities to establish advisory committees which consist of people who are not councillors to advise the council. These committees are useful because they bring in expertise and experiences that may complement the council's expertise.

The Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003, or MFMA is another key municipal legislation in the context of public participation and efficient service delivery. MFMA stipulates that the municipal manager holds the primary legal accountability for financial management, and together with other senior managers, is responsible for implementation. These officials must act with fidelity, honesty, integrity, and in the best interests of the municipality at all times. Non-executive councillors, as elected representatives of the community, debate and approve the proposed policies and budgets, overseeing the performance of the municipality. Various sections of MFMA emphasise the need for public consultations and the provision of clear information on municipal financial matters. For example, section 22 contends that municipalities should publish annual budgets and invite communities to submit comments, while section 23 of the Act calls for consultations with the local community on the tabled budgets. After full consultations, the mayor must be allowed to respond to the submissions and, if necessary, revise the budget and table amendments for consideration by the council. These processes essentially boost morale in the community and result in the efficient provision of correct public services.

Apart from key legislations, the government also implemented radical policies to promote public participation and service delivery. One such policy is the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), legislated in the Municipal Systems Act. Developed in 2000, IDP enshrines the municipality's long-term vision for development, reflecting the most critical needs of communities, the financial plan for at least three years, the disaster management plan, and key performance indicators for service delivery. IDP is viewed as a service delivery instrument that assists municipalities to deliver and promote co-ordination between different levels of government. Its foundation is based on the promotion of public engagements to establish the needs and priorities of communities. Since its inception, various successes have been noted in South African municipalities. For example, municipal service delivery has improved across the country,

communities have been empowered, service delivery protests have been reduced, among other successes (Madonsela 2010; Mathebula 2018).

The Acts and policies discussed in this subsection are not exhaustive, various others that complement the Constitution and those discussed in this subsection exist. Those discussed were chosen because they provide a clear link between public participation and municipal service delivery. These legislations are the foundation of adequate service delivery to the communities and effective public participation of the stakeholders in the affairs of the municipality. The successful implementation of the main strategic plan (IDP), which outlines specific projects, enables municipalities to implement and achieve their constitutional obligation of providing adequate services to citizens through a consultative approach.

2.5 Service delivery and public participation in the eThekwini Municipality

2.5.1 Service delivery in the Municipality

Municipalities are constitutionally mandated to provide basic services to the communities. In that context, the eThekwini municipality provides services such as water, housing, sanitation, recreation, transport, solid waste removal, and electricity to more than 3.7 million residents. The municipality consists of suburbs where the middle class and rich residents live; townships and informal settlements where the majority who are poor residents live; and some rural areas. Although some significant milestones have been covered in the provision of municipal services, some service delivery backlogs still exist in the municipality, especially in the townships, informal settlements and rural areas. Backlogs in the municipality are due to a plethora of reasons which include population growth, the influx of people to the city, the legacy of the segregation laws of apartheid, municipal inefficiency and insufficient resources, among others (Koma and Tshiyoyo 2015; Morudu 2017; van Rooyen 2018). The municipal service delivery backlog is revealed in the statistical records that eThekwini Municipality has approximately 20 345 households without access to piped water services, 123 394 households without proper sanitation, while 385 000 backlogs on

proper housing facilities, and 220 432 households not connected to the electricity grid (eThekwini Municipality 2019).

Over the years, the eThekwini municipality has succeeded in providing public services to communities. Notable progress is observed in the provision of basic essential services such as piped water, electricity, refuse removal, sewage and sanitation. According to Stats SA (2013), about 61.3% of households in the municipality had access to flush toilets that are connected to a sewer while the municipality offered refuse removal to about 85.7%, 80.3% of the households were connected to the electricity grid and about 51.2% had access to piped water inside their dwellings in 2001. These statistics increased significantly by the time of the next census which was conducted in 2011. More precisely, the numbers increased to 63.4% for access to flush toilets, 82.6% for refuse removal, 81% for electricity connection, and 98.3% for piped water inside the dwelling (COGTA, 2020). Since the 2011 national census, periodic household surveys conducted give evidence that these figures further increased in the subsequent years. Equal to note is the large number of households receiving free basic services in the municipality. Approximately, 568 385 households receive free basic water services in the municipality, while about 174 687 households receive free basic electricity, about 391 283 households receive free basic refuse removal, and approximately 294 675 households receive free basic sanitation services.

The municipality's increased pace of service delivery requires adequate financial support. In the last three financial years, the municipality's annual budget increased significantly. More precisely, the municipal budget increased from R45 billion in 2017 to R50.8 billion in 2018; and subsequently to R52.3 billion in 2019 (eThekwini Municipality 2020). Over the years, the municipality has maintained a sound and healthy financial management and received clean audits in 2015 and the auditor general's unqualified audit opinions for both the years 2016 and 2018.

Regardless of all the successes recorded in the eThekwini municipality on service delivery, some key challenges are noted. Besides the challenge of service delivery backlogs, evidence exists on other drawbacks that impede service delivery. Key challenges include high rates of poverty, unemployment and low economic growth.

These challenges usually lead to communities resisting to pay for services and the theft of electricity and water in other circumstances. Another key challenge experienced by the municipality as a service provider is water and electricity infrastructure theft, which challenges the continuous provision of these services. For example, earlier in 2020, the municipality reported a major cable theft connected to give power to a reservoir pump in the north of Durban, leaving water taps dry for five days (Malinga 2020). Theft of electricity and its infrastructure has become not only an eThekwini Municipality challenge but a national challenge. During Eskom's (2016) media statement on electricity theft, it was recorded that the majority of citizens understood that electricity theft was wrong, despite this, 16% of citizens was aware that at some stage they will get caught from stealing electricity. Eskom reported a loss of R15.4 billion during the 2016 financial year.

Equally, the municipality is heavily challenged with population growth, which has shown drastic increases over the years. According to the World Urbanisation Prospects (2018), the municipality's population grew from 2.9 million in 2010 to 3 million in 2015. Currently, the population is at approximately 3.7 million and is expected to increase to 4.4 million by the year 2030. The increasing population in the municipality translates into a high demand for public services and competition for other scarce resources such as land. Regardless of these challenges in all their facets, many citizens are satisfied with municipal services and believe that the municipality is doing well. In a residents' satisfaction study conducted by the municipality in 2018, it emerged that dissatisfied residents, who believed that service delivery was poor were made up of 7.34% for very poor services and 5.45% for poor services. Most of the residents who took part in the study survey believed that service delivery by the municipality was satisfactory (eThekwini Municipality 2018).

In its endeavour to provide quality water supply, the municipality has also been ranked amongst the best water services providers for several years in terms of the Blue and Green Drop benchmarking initiatives (Department of Water and Sanitation 2016). According to this report, the Blue Drop is a programme designed to encourage excellence in drinking water service delivery to communities. The Blue Drop certification report records among other years of certification, eThekwini Municipality

achieved an average score of 96.73% between 2011 and 2014. Similarly, eThekwini Municipality received a Green Drop certification average score of 80% between 2009 and 2013. Unlike the Blue Drop, the Green Drop programme focuses on the measurement of performance of the municipality and its service providers on wastewater management through its regulations. These achievements confirm the municipality's good performance.

2.5.2 Public participation in the eThekwini Municipality

Public participation is legislated in Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act which compels municipalities to develop a culture of free community participation in the affairs of the government. Nzimakwe and Reddy (2008) note that the eThekwini Municipality has created an environment for active participation through ward committees. However, the active participation of residents in disadvantaged communities such as townships, informal settlements and rural areas is still problematic. Given that most of the developmental backlogs are in these areas, there is a need to promote the active involvement of residents in processes that address these backlogs. In addressing this, the eThekwini Water Services (EWS) unit realised the importance of investing in social measures such as education and improved public participation in sustainable infrastructure investments (Smith 2011). According to Smith (2011), the municipality should invest in building a relationship of trust with key stakeholders, educating the public on meaningful engagement and building layers of public accountability in order to protect its infrastructure.

To promote citizens' participation in the local budget, the municipality circulates the provisional budget to citizens for comments (eThekwini Municipality 2020). Part of the budgetary process includes public engagement wherein the municipality sets up numerous community meetings and allows communities to contribute to the financial affairs of the municipality (eThekwini Municipality 2018). The municipality forms part of these community meetings with the intention to receive representations and submissions from the communities and stakeholders. Such an initiative gives communities an opportunity to participate and decide in consultation with the local

ward councillor. According to Govender (2006), the significant feature of the eThekwini municipality's approach was the design of a single, cyclical and holistic process that moved from strategic and visionary statements of intent, through a process that combined planning for development, through to implementation and evaluation. This model separates strategic processes from operational planning processes.

Workshops are essential in ascertaining real needs which inform strategic processes that determine the way the municipality's budget would be allocated. Importantly, the workshops are conducted in a manner that reflects the rich culture and diverse social dynamics that the eThekwini municipality prides itself on (Smith 2011). As usual, some challenges are expected in the pursuit of public participation in municipal activities. Nkambule et al. (2016) explore the challenges faced by the eThekwini municipality in its bid to pursue effective public participation. Among other findings, the study reports limited awareness as a driver of the lack of community participation in projects led by the municipal council. Earlier, Nzimakwe and Reddy (2008) identified the lack of meaningful follow up on action plans by authorities as a key challenge to the implementation of public participation in the eThekwini municipality. This is also mentioned by Mkhize (2015) who argues that the municipality needs to put in place effective municipal capacity, co-ordination and feedback mechanisms. The argument given in these studies is that citizen participation policy in the municipality lacks concrete mechanisms to make it more meaningful to the public.

Another key challenge noted in the municipality is that community participation in issues of local governance was influenced by the political affiliation of community members (Lesia 2011; Mkhize 2015; Nzimakwe and Reddy 2008; Patel 2016). According to Lesia (2011), public participation should be detached from party politics for the development of communities in South Africa. This sentiment is also shared by Nzimakwe and Reddy (2008) who present the challenges inherent in the efforts to include multiple voices in public participation; and Patel (2016) who posits that local processes may sow conflict by propagating social tensions, around ethnic, xenophobic, and party-political contests. The negative impact of political interference within the local community is further detailed by Marks and Erwin (2016) who argue that frequent political interference narrows spaces for meaningful democratic practises

26

at a grass-roots level. However, in contrast, Clarke and Basset (2016) argue that local level cohesion and activists can provide a platform for challenging the domineering disposition by the elites. Thus, this study probes the extent to which shared norms within the local government and communities put pressure on broad-based participation. In doing this, the study closes that gap by scrutinising how conflict management mechanisms can be useful in ensuring that all residents participate in public affairs.

There is a relationship between efficient service delivery and constructive public participation. While the eThekwini municipality's current IDP is still ongoing (2017-2022), this study will test the implementation mechanisms with an intention to establish the level and extent of participation in the municipality. According to the eThekwini Municipality (2017), numerous programmes in support of effective public participation have been implemented. This includes programmes such as the Masakhane Campaign, the creation of stakeholder engagement forums, community-based planning, ward committees and Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS), among others. These participatory programmes are adopted in line with the municipality's public participation policy implemented in 2006. The policy document strengthens the commitment of the municipality to have meaningful engagement with citizens, deliver the required services and account for the municipal governance.

2.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the literature currently existing on public participation and municipal service delivery. The chapter identified and reviewed key theoretical literature on both public participation and service delivery. Three key theories identified as underpinning this study are the ladder of citizen participation theory, the policy implementation theory, and the theory of empowerment. These theories and how they link public participation and municipal service delivery were discussed. Subsequently, the chapter provided a comprehensive discussion of some empirical literature on the two phenomena. The empirical literature on municipal service delivery was discussed first, highlighting the key successes, challenges and consequences existing in

municipalities across the world and in South Africa. Thereafter, a discussion of the literature on the role of public participation in municipal service delivery was presented. The reviewed literature mostly revealed public participation as a key instrument in improved service delivery. Apart from theoretical and empirical literature, the chapter also discussed South African laws and policies that govern service delivery and public participation. Finally, a discussion of some key service delivery and public participation issues in the eThekwini Municipality was presented. Given this background, the next chapter provides details on the methodology used in this study to examine the nature and role of public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore the nature and role of public participation in municipal service delivery. To achieve this aim, the study addresses three main questions regarding the platforms available for public participation, the challenges in promoting effective public participation, and the impact of public participation on service delivery. This chapter describes the methodology used to achieve the outlined aim of the study. The chapter presents the key components of the scientific approach used to address the objectives of the study. More precisely, it gives detailed discussions on the research design, study site, population, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, data collection procedure as well as data analysis. Finally, this chapter is organised into fourteen sections which address and discuss ethical issues and how they are addressed.

3.2 Research design

A research design provides the structure of the research and links all elements of the research, thus allowing the researcher to plan and address the outlined objectives (Babbie and Mouton 2011). There are three common research designs in the literature, namely, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method research designs. Creswell (2009) provides a distinction between these three. A quantitative research design is one that uses statistical methods to determine and measure results, while a qualitative design uses data collected in the form of words or expressions in order to understand the views or experiences of respondents (Creswell 2009). On the other

hand, a mixed-method design entails the simultaneous use of both quantitative and qualitative designs to address the outlined research objectives.

While all three designs have their own merits, this study adopted a qualitative approach to explore the nature and role of public participation in municipal service delivery. A qualitative approach allows for the exploration of the behaviour, perspectives, experiences and frame of mind of participants (Silverman 2000; Welman et al. 2005). The ability of a qualitative research design to describe, decode, translate, and come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring social phenomena makes it more appealing. Further, a qualitative design's multifaceted nature which involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach enables the development of a holistic picture of the issue examined (Denzin and Lincoln 2005).

A qualitative research design became more appealing to this study for two main reasons. First, the study pertains to public participation which warranties communication between stakeholders and the expression of community members' feelings about service delivery in their areas. Thus, the qualitative approach enables an in-depth discussion and understanding of the subject matter, which may not be easily achieved if closed-ended quantitative design questions are to be used. More precisely, the qualitative approach is adopted to allow participants to share their views, thoughts and experiences without any limitations. Second, a qualitative design is adopted for its ability to generate more robust and detailed data on the subject matter. This is mainly because the researcher has an opportunity to pose questions of clarity on the participants' responses and to develop a robust conversation during data collection. Further, the researcher is also able to observe the gestures and expressions of participants as they present their views during data collection. Facial expressions and gestures are essential in reinforcing points made by participants. Given this background and the many advantages of a qualitative research design mentioned in the previous paragraph, this study adopts the qualitative research design as an approach to understanding the role and nature of public participation in service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality.

While the qualitative design was chosen as the ideal approach to investigate the subject matter in this study, it is important to acknowledge that the design involves

many data collection techniques. Researchers may use each of or a combination of these data collection techniques depending on the type of information required and the nature of the participants targeted. The most common techniques include the use of case studies, participant observation, unstructured in-depth interviews, focus groups (also called group in-depth interviews), and participatory research (Welman et al. 2005). These techniques can provide robust qualitative data essential for reliable practical inferences. To elicit information on public participation in municipal service delivery, this study uses semi-structured in-depth interviews as well as focus group discussions. The former is usually employed in explorative research to identify important variables, formulate penetrating questions, and generate hypotheses for further investigations (Welman et al. 2005). On the other hand, the latter involves a smaller number of participants drawn together for the purpose of expressing their opinions on a specific set of open questions. Interactions in focus groups can either be structured or unstructured (Welman et al. 2005).

In the context of this study, semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to elicit information from municipal employees, while focus group discussions are used to collect data from community members. The purpose of semi-structured interviews is to collect open-ended data whilst encouraging discussions with the participants. The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that questions are prepared in advance, thus preparing the researcher's readiness during the interview. Participants retain their freedom of expression while the researcher has an opportunity to explore their beliefs, feelings and thoughts on issues linked to the research (DeJonckheere and Vaughn 2019). The use of in-depth interviews to collect data from the employees at the eThekwini Municipality is ideal because the population is smaller, hence a smaller sample can be targeted and interviewed. On the other hand, focus group interviews have the advantage of cost containment in participatory research and offer comprehensive insights into issues of a social nature (Nyumba et al. 2018). Therefore, this study used focus group discussions to collect information on public participation and service delivery from communities in the eThekwini Municipality. These data collection techniques were adopted in order to contain costs and promote robust discussions which can deliver more comprehensive and robust data.

3.3 Study site and population

This study was conducted in the eThekwini Municipality. Located on the east coast of South Africa in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, the municipality is the only metropolitan in the province and based on population statistics is ranked as the third largest metropolitan in South Africa. The municipality spans an area of about 2 297 km² with an estimated population of 3.10 million people who live in 110 Wards (Stats SA 2019). About 74% of residents are Blacks, while nearly 18% are Indians, 6% are Whites, and 2% are Coloureds (Stats SA 2016). A large number of people in the municipality fall between poor and middle class with just a few in the high-income group. The municipality provides public services such as water services, solid waste collection, electricity and sanitation, among others to residents. Current statistics show that a large number of households have access to piped water, flush toilets, refuse collection, electricity and other advanced levels of public services.

The eThekwini Municipality was selected as an ideal study site because it has the characteristics of a typical South African municipality. Thus, it has both urban and rural areas, making it more representative of the common South African municipal heterogeneity. The urban segment is spatially divided into suburbs, townships and informal settlements. Middle- to high-income residents live in the suburbs where service delivery is relatively better compared to the services received in the townships, informal settlements and rural areas where low-income earners mostly live. The map of the eThekwini Municipality showing the population density per ward is given in Figure 3.1.
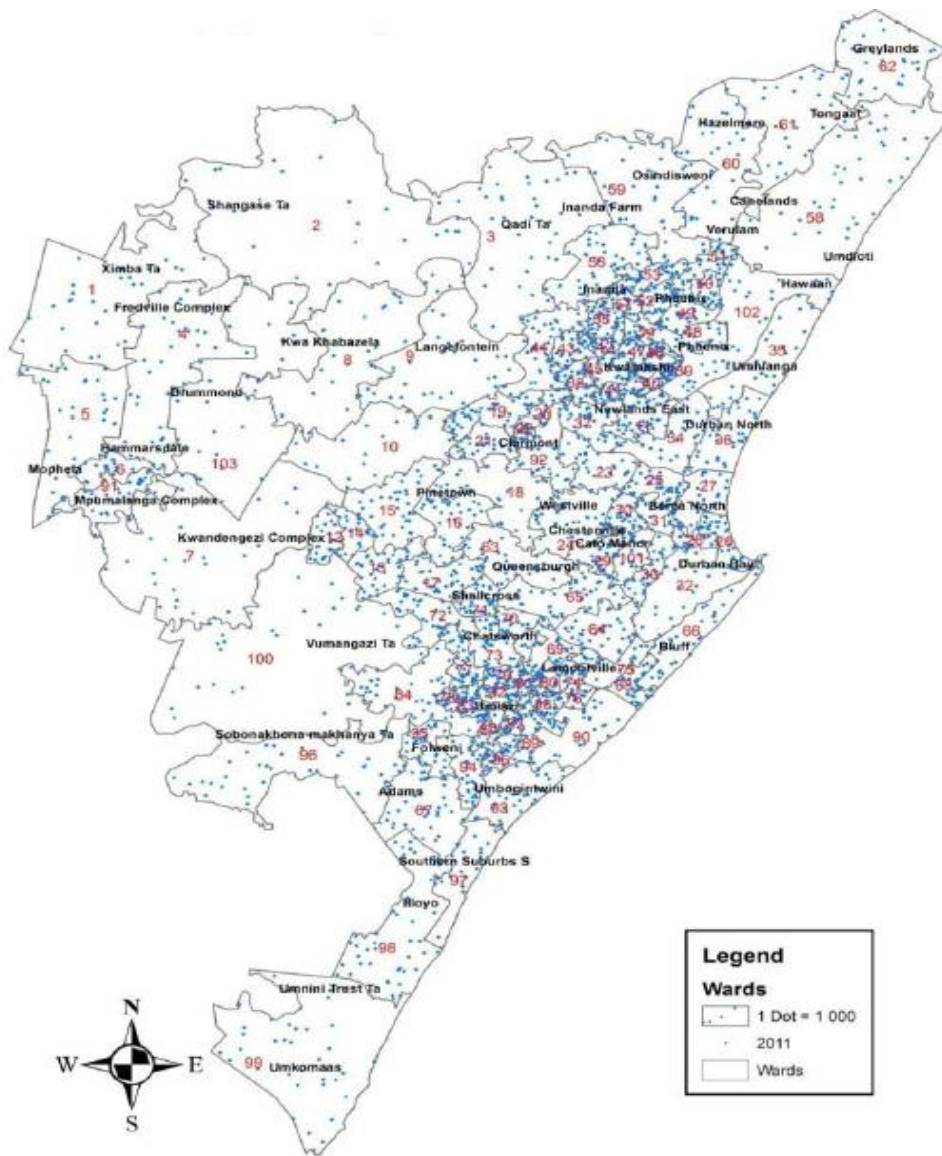
Figure 3.1: Map of eThekwini Municipality showing the population density per Ward
Source: eThekwini Municipality (2016)

The map in Figure 3.1 shows the major demarcations of the eThekwini Municipality and the population distribution across the municipality. Demarcations of the municipality's 110 wards and some of the areas that fall within each ward as well as the population density in each ward are shown on the map. It is clear from the map that there are high densities in areas such as KwaMashu, Newlands West, Inanda, Phoenix, Umlazi, Folweni, Lamontville, Clermont and KwaDabeka. These areas are

33

mostly townships where low-income residents live and are mostly dominated by the previously disadvantaged population.

In terms of this study, data was collected from three (3) wards, namely, Wards 22, 36 and 65. These wards were selected because they represent the varied socio-economic dynamics and spatial distributions within the municipality. The wards gave a good representation of the municipality in the sense that they have areas where middle- and high-income residents live (suburbs) and areas where mostly low-income residents live (townships, informal settlements and rural areas). Therefore, data collected from these wards was likely to depict a closer outlook of the dynamics in the municipality.

In particular, Ward 22 consists of areas such as Clermont, KwaDabeka and Umngeni, which are mostly townships with some informal settlements, and has a total population of about 30 114 people who are predominantly Blacks (Stats SA 2011). On the other hand, Ward 36 is mostly suburban and consists of areas such as Durban North, Broadway, Prospect Mall, Beachwood, Umgeni Park, Parkhill and Riverside. The total population of this ward is approximately 26 606 people who are predominantly Whites (Stats SA 2011). Finally, Ward 65 has a combination of low-, middle- and high-income residents and has a total population of about 40 198 people (Stats SA 2011). Areas under this Ward include Seaview, Hillary, Bellair, Kharwastan, Queensmead Industrial, Shallcross Extension 2 SP2, Malvern, Burlington Greenfields and Umhlathuzana. In this regard, the total population of the three targeted wards is approximately 96 918 people.

In addition to data collected from the three wards, data was also collected from municipal employees who work in the Community Participation and Action Unit. This unit is responsible for creating mechanisms, processes and procedures for citizens' participation in municipal developmental activities. The Unit has a Community Based Programme (CBP) which engages ward committees in the implementation of service delivery in each ward. The Regional Co-ordination Department of the Unit is responsible for mobilising the community, ward councillor and ward committees into scheduled participatory meetings within all the wards of the municipality. In total, the Unit has a complement of 70 employees in five (5) regions (West, North, South, North-Central and South-Central). These employees consist of a manager, five (5) Co-

ordinators, 39 Community Development Workers and 25 Community Mobilisers. A summary of the total population of both the municipal employees and communities' segments of the study site is given in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Population statistics of the study site

Community population		Community Participation and Action Unit	
Ward	Population	Position	Population
22	30 114	Manager	1
36	26 606	Coordinators	5
65	40 198	Community Development Workers	39
		Community Mobilisers	25
Total	**96 918**	**Total**	**70**

Source: Author's own table

Table 3.1 shows the study population for both the communities and municipal employees. The three Wards 22, 36 and 65 were chosen collectively because, they represent the characteristics of a municipality which is spatially distributed into low, middle and high-income residential areas. Municipal services received in these residential areas are differentiated, with low-income areas receiving relatively inferior services compared to middle- and high-income areas. The selected wards captured this diversity, thus the data collected from these areas closely mimicked data for most of the municipality. On the other hand, employees in the Community Participation and Action Unit were selected because they played an active role in the facilitation of public participation and the implementation of policies related to public participation in the eThekwini Municipality. These employees ranged from senior employees to middle and junior employees and could provide detailed information on the subject matter.

3.4 Study sample

A sample is a proportion of the total population that is selected for investigation (Etikan et al. 2016). It is the portion within the larger population from which data is collected

(Howe and Robinson 2018). Guidelines for determining a sufficient sample size in qualitative research are provided in the literature. The size of a sample with sufficient information power depends on factors like the study aim, sample specificity, established theory, dialogue quality, and the analysis strategy (Malterud et al. 2016; Vasileiou et al. 2018). According to Vasileiou et al. (2018), an insufficient sample size negatively affects the validity of study results. Literature provides that a sufficient sample size for qualitative research is determined through the concept of saturation, thus sampling continues until no new information is gained.

As highlighted earlier, this study used focus group discussions to collect data from community members, and semi-structured interviews to collect data from municipal employees. Since the study used a case study of three wards, a focus group was established in each ward to discuss issues around public participation and service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality. The study targeted 15 participants per ward, which yielded a total of 45 participants. These participants were community leaders, household heads and residents in the ward they participated in. Collecting information from the community leaders was essential because they are better placed to give feedback on services delivery since they are the recipients of public services. Separating the discussions into three groups, one discussion per ward was also intended to promote maximum participation from all the selected participants and also comply with government regulations on Covid-19. The participants were selected because they often held service delivery meetings with the community. They played a leading role in assisting communities to identify their needs and prioritise the identified needs. Therefore, the selected participants could provide reliable information that would address the objectives of the study.

Further, the second part of data collection was aimed at obtaining the views of the 10 municipal employees through interviews. These employees are employed at the Community Participation and Action Unit of the eThekwini Municipality, in the following positions; one manager, one co-ordinator, five community development workers, and three community mobilisers. Information collected from these employees is the key to providing insights on public participation and service delivery issues from the policy-implementer point of view. The selected employees ensure that policies and

programmes are implemented according to the goals of the eThekwini Municipality. Thus, the employees who participated in the study formed an essential part of the study, as their role involved the implementation of municipal policies and service delivery decisions. They provided evidence that will shed light on eThekwini Municipality's public participation activities, implementation of policies and service delivery decisions. Summaries of the number of participants targeted to take part in each segment of the survey are given in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Study sample statistics

Community Survey			Community Participation and Action Unit	
Ward	Role in community	Target	Position	Target
22	Ward Committee and community leaders	15	Manager	1
36	Ward Committee and community leaders	15	Coordinator	1
65	Ward Committee and community leaders	15	Community Development Workers	5
			Community mobilisers	3
Total		**45**		**10**

 Source: Author's own table

3.5 Sampling techniques

Literature defines sampling as the process of selecting a number of participants from the targeted population to an extent that the results can be fairly generalised to the same population (Coyne 1997; Etikan et al. 2016). Sampling techniques consist of two main categories, namely, probability and non-probability. Taherdoost (2016) describes probability sampling as a technique that gives each element of the population an equal chance of participating in the study. On the other hand, non-probability sampling is a technique in which not all members of the population have an equal chance of participating in the study (Taherdoost 2016). Non-probability sampling is usually adopted when it is deemed too complex to draw random probability sampling due to time or cost considerations. This type of sampling is common in qualitative studies

which collect data from very few participants compared to quantitative studies. Therefore, the non-probability sampling technique was adopted to select participants in this study. While the non-probability sampling technique is preferred for this study, it is important to note that the technique is further divided into five types. These are quota sampling, snowball sampling, convenience sampling, purposive or judgement sampling, and self-selection sampling.

To select participants to interview from the Community Participation and Action Unit, the study used the purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique entails that the researcher relies on their own judgment in choosing participants from the population. One of the advantages of adopting a purposive sampling technique is that it provides the researcher with the ability to generalise from the population being surveyed (Sharma 2017). In deciding on participants to interview (inclusion criteria), the guidelines of trustworthiness, uniformity, reliability and objectivity that are outlined in Garg (2016) were followed. Due to the nature of the study, the interviews inclusion criteria focused on officials employed in the Community Participation and Action Unit, officials who are specifically instrumental in policy implementation. Therefore, the study excluded any other officials in the municipality. The selected participants were regarded as those possessing expert knowledge of the subject and are presumed to be true and correct representatives of the population.

On the other hand, the convenience sampling technique was used to select participants for each focus group. This is a sampling technique where the sample is taken from a group of people that is easy to contact or to reach. Literature provides that there are no major criteria for the convenience sampling technique except that people are willing and able to participate (Etikan et al. 2016; Saunders et al. 2019). In using this technique, the researcher targeted people who were easily accessible due to geographic location and were both willing and able to take part in the study. Convenience sampling is associated with cost-efficiency, convenience and easy implementation yet providing quality data. Therefore, in the context of this study, household heads from each ward were conveniently selected to take part in the established focus groups. Inclusion in the focus group discussions was mostly based on the availability and willingness of the targeted household heads to participate in the

discussions while limiting the numbers to sizes that necessitate robust discussions. On this note, it is also important to emphasise that participants in each focus group were drawn from household heads in that respective ward. For example, participants in the focus group for Ward 22 were drawn from the residents of the same ward, while those who participated in Ward 36, were from that ward, and so forth.

3.6 Survey instruments

Survey instruments are the tools used to scientifically collect data from participants. This study used semi-structured interview schedules to collect data from participants. These interview schedules were developed to guide discussions during the data collection process. In compiling the interview schedules, guidance from the literature was relied on and applied to meet the focus and objectives of the study. The interview schedule in this study was compiled in English. For interviews with the municipal employees, the interview schedule comprised of six (6) predetermined open-ended questions, each with some probes to clarify the question and collect as much information.[1] For the focus group discussions with community members, an interview schedule with five (5) questions was developed to guide discussions. Although the developed schedule was aimed at guiding the discussions, focus group meetings were conducted using a more unstructured approach to allow maximum participation and avoid limiting participants' contributions.[2]

Prior to the actual data collection, a pilot study was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the interview schedules in collecting data that addressed the objectives of the study. Validity and reliability of the interview schedules are critical elements for scientific data collection. Validity in this case refers to the interview schedule's ability to collect data that addresses the intended objectives of the study (Mohajan 2017). On the other hand, reliability refers to consistency with which the research will produce the same results if repeated (Noble and Smith 2015). For both validity and reliability to

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[1] A copy of the interview schedule for municipal employees is given in Appendix 1.

[2] A copy of the interview schedule for focus group discussions is given Appendix 2.

be attained, the interview schedules should be scientifically designed to be consistent with instruments used for similar studies in the literature.

The pilot survey was conducted on five (5) employees of the municipality, who did not form part of the study population but worked in the Community Participation and Action Unit. The researcher opted for employees in this unit because they are perceived to have a good understanding of the subject matter and how the Unit operates. These employees' opinions on the adequacy, clarity and relevance of the questions asked in the interview schedule are considered when improving the final interview schedules. Questions prepared for the focus group discussions were also reviewed for adequacy, clarity and relevance by the same five employees, whose feedback was aimed at improving the quality of the final questions. Janghorban et al. (2014) define a pilot survey as a preliminary study conducted to pre-test the research instruments. In this study, a pilot study is essential to avoid embarking on a full study with inadequate knowledge of the proposed instrument, thus preventing shortcomings that could cost money and time. More precisely, conducting a pilot survey is meant to identify confusing variances. Lastly, it is important to emphasise that responses obtained from the pilot surveys are not included in the results of the main study, they are simply used for improving the questions on the interview schedules.

3.7 Data collection

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, various data collection techniques exist in qualitative research, with the most common techniques being case studies, participant observation, unstructured in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participatory research. In the context of this study, semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions are used to elicit information on the role and nature of public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality. These two techniques were adopted in the study because they were deemed the most cost-effective and convenient ways through which qualitative data could be collected. Equally, the chosen techniques allow participants to freely express their opinions on

the subject matter without being limited. Discussions on how these two techniques were applied in the context of this study are given in this section.

3.7.1 Focus group discussions with community members

A major aspect of the focus group relies on the discussion between the selected participants (Flynn et al. 2018). In conducting focus groups discussions, the researcher induces individual perceptions, beliefs, personal experiences and the attitudes of participants (Nyumba et al. 2018). Many authors suggest that a researcher should develop a guide that will consist of questions and allow participants to respond or comment (Evaluation Briefs 2018). The guide prepares the researcher and allows the flow of discussion without leaving out important aspects of the study. Nyumba et al. (2018) warn that when conducting focus group meetings, the duration of such meetings must be taken into consideration; long meetings should be avoided to prevent participants from suffering from fatigue.

Upon obtaining permission to conduct this study by collecting data from the focus group, the meetings[3] were held at the venue and date that was pre-arranged with the participants. This was aimed at encouraging continuous and active engagement and freedom of expression. Covid-19 guidelines and protocols were diligently followed in order to minimise any chance of spreading the virus, in case any of the participants had it. Discussions were conducted outdoors, in an open space and the number of participants were limited in each meeting. Prior to the meeting, each participant was asked if they had exhibited any of the common symptoms of Covid-19 in the past 24 hours. Each participant's temperature was taken and their hands sanitised. Subsequently, participants' seating was arranged in a circle with a distance of at least 1.5 metres apart. A bottle of hand sanitiser was placed in the centre of the circle at participants' disposal. Each participant must wear a mask, covering their mouth and nose throughout the meeting.

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[3] Appendix 3 gatekeeper's letter for focus group

At the commencement of the meeting, the researcher facilitated each meeting introduced herself, outlined the need to maintain Covid-19 safety guidelines and the purpose of the discussion. Further, participants were informed that they were under no obligation to participate, they could pull out at any time if they wished to, and their contributions would be treated as anonymous and confidential. Pre-determined questions were used to drive the discussion and were followed by follow-up questions. While participants were allowed to express themselves in isiZulu, discussions were mostly held in English. The discussions were recorded using both handwritten notes and audio recordings. Each session lasted for at most one hour and 30 minutes. The researcher maintained the recording notebook wherein all comments, expressions and behaviours were captured. The notebook, transcript and audio recordings were kept securely afterwards because this data was deemed confidential.

3.7.2 Semi-structured interviews with municipal employees

Subsequent to the approval by the Acting City Manager of the municipality to collect data by conducting focus group discussions[4] the participants also signed the informed consent form which meant that they are willing to take part in the study and are aware of the procedure followed during the study. The Acting City Manager further approved the researcher's interaction with the selected employees[5]. These employees formed part of the key individuals from the Community Participation and Action Unit to be interviewed. McGrath (2019) provides a guide on how interviews on qualitative research should be conducted. It is very important to carefully plan interviews for qualitative research. Effective planning is essential for obtaining accurate information that addresses the research objectives (McGrath 2019). Commonly, in qualitative research, interviews are semi-structured. The expectation is that a well-developed interview ensures that data is taken in key areas but also allow flexibility for participants to discuss their personal experiences and views.

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[4] Approval letter is presented in Appendix 3 as Gatekeeper's letter for focus groups

[5] Approval letter is presented in Appendix 4 as Gatekeeper's letter for municipal employees

After potential participants had voluntarily given consent, interviews were conducted. An opportunity was offered to those participants who opted for virtual meetings due to the prevalence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants who opted for virtual meetings, were requested to complete their informed consent form via email before the interview. Those who agreed to face to face interviews were met at their workplaces where the venues were properly ventilated, hand sanitisers provided, and face masks worn throughout the session. The researcher met one participant at a time and all Covid-19 safety protocols were observed in all the meetings. Participants were duly informed that the interviews were to be recorded, and their confidentiality would be observed. Participants who opted to meet at the venue of choice were also requested to complete the informed consent form which afforded them an opportunity to grant or refuse permission to participate in the study and to understand the terms to which such participation entails[6]. All interviews held with the participants were conducted without the assistance of a research assistant. Sutton and Austin (2015) argue that in any data collection technique, recording of collected data is important, and where audio or video recording data collection is used, such recordings should be transcribed verbatim prior to data analysis. Due to the amount of work associated with transcribing recordings, the interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes per participant. All interviews were conducted in English, while the participants had the freedom to also express themselves in isiZulu.

3.8 Data analysis

Marshall and Rossman (1999) define data analysis as the method of bringing order, logic and complete structure to the unstructured data collected from the population of interest. Data analysis signifies the application of reasonable and unreasonable judgement to the research (Best and Kahn 2006). A synopsis of the qualitative data analysis process given in Batmanabane and Kfouri (2017) is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

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[6] Appendix 5: Informed Consent form for participants' interviews
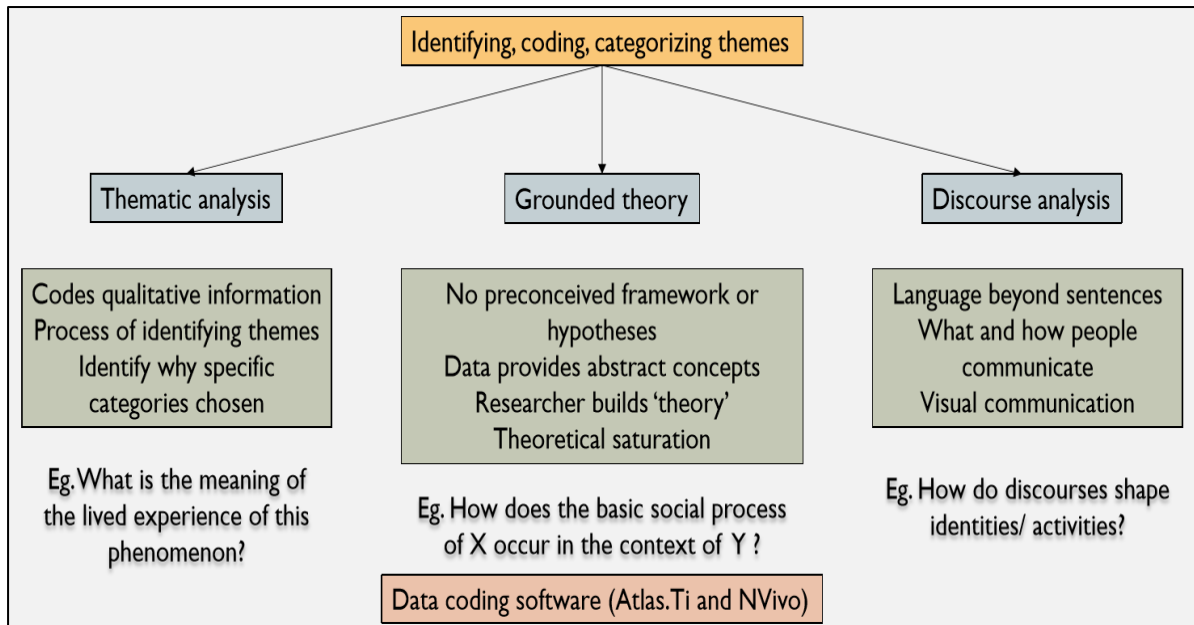
Figure 3.2: The qualitative data analysis process

Source: Batmanabane and Kfouri (2017)

The data analysis process illustrated in Figure 3.2 shows the steps associated with qualitative data analysis. Subsequent to data collection, the researcher is expected to analyse such data in an orderly manner. According to Batmanabane and Kfouri (2017), the researcher should identify the type of coding relevant to the study, create a code list and categorise themes before testing against new data. Coding marks units of data to the expressive and/or inferential data, which may be in the form of words, sentences or paragraphs to a specific setting. In qualitative data analysis, coding examines collected data in order to categorise it and give it meaning according to themes and presents an easier way to establish sequences for further investigation. Subsequently, the researchers should clearly identify the approach adopted in the study among thematic analysis, ground theory or discourse analysis. According to Batmanabane and Kfouri (2017), thematic analysis is aimed at establishing, analysing and reporting data sequences, while discourse analysis focuses on analysing language involving real text which may include vocal or sign language. After raw data is cleaned, a manual process of coding is adopted, then data is analysed. Manual data analysis involves collecting qualitative data and clearly classifying it in a table. According to Creswell (2015), coding simplifies text data by making it more sensible. In nutshell, data analysis

involves several steps (Mouton and Marais 2012). Details of the steps and how they are followed in this study are given in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Data analysis procedure used in the study

Step	Description
1. Familiarisation	The first step in data analysis is for the researchers to familiarise themselves with the data by reading and understanding the transcripts, audio records and interview notes. The research may record their reactions to the data analysed, highlight the key ideas and themes as identified. A large volume of data may result in selecting a representative data sample.
2. Identifying the thematic framework	The next step pertains to the listing of codes. The researcher develops a list of codes and organises data into different categories. The aim and the objectives of the study must be considered during the coding and categorising of data in order to avoid data that has no value towards the study.
3. Indexing	The codes are developed into a thematic index and applied in a systematic manner to data. This applies to all data by highlighting the passage and noting the code used in the margin. This is not a mechanical process and often requires the use of judgement to decide on the most appropriate code.
4. Charting	In the charting step, data is re-arranged into a sequence of charts that combines data with similar codes from all the data sources in one place. Charts are developed by utilising the framework of the thematic index which creates logic and sense to the aim and objectives of the study. Each chart will reflect a matrix in which each column is a particular code and each row a particular data source. The cells of the chart comprise the highlighted quotation of the point being made. Each cell should be traceable back to the original data source, page and line number.
5. Mapping and interpretation	The final step pertains to the mapping and interpretation of data. In this step, the researcher studies each chart and gives a clear interpretation of the data. As in the charting process, the researcher can easily determine the nature of the phenomenon of interest. When interpreting the data, the researcher should also focus on those views that deviate from the main findings. These deviant views may be an important source of information that could lead to further understanding of the phenomenon, therefore they should not be disregarded due to their inferior views.

Source: Author's own table using information from Mouton and Marais (2012)

3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are customs and morals of conduct that differentiate right from wrong (Bell and Bryman 2007). These customs and morals help to regulate the modification of accepted and unaccepted behaviour. When conducting research, ethical behaviour must be maintained throughout the research process (DeJonckheere and Vaughn 2019). The most common behaviour in qualitative research includes issues such as informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, reflexivity, and various forms of trustworthiness. This section briefly discusses these ethical issues and how they were maintained in this study.[7]

3.8.1 Informed consent

Wiles (2013) describes informed consent as a fundamental and key concept in ethical research which guides the ethical conduct of the researcher during the study. It provides participants with an opportunity to understand the study and independently decide before taking part. Although informed consent may be easier to obtain from participants, failure to communicate risks and advantages may compromise the credibility of the study. In this study, all interviewed participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the survey. To this end, every participant signed an informed consent form. An informed consent indicates that participants were offered an opportunity to voluntarily and freely participate in the survey and that the participants could opt out at any time during the study (Connelly 2014). The informed consent form presented to participants before the interviews stated that the participant could discontinue participating at any given time, should they feel uncomfortable during the interview.

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[7] Appendix 6: Ethical Clearance letter obtained from the University

3.8.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity entails the preservation of the participants' identity during data collection, analysis, and reporting. Protection of participants' identity includes the non-disclosure of any information that may expose the identity of participants (Allen 2017). In this study, participants' personal information such as names and identifying data were strictly kept a secret. Where participants needed to identify themselves, they did so using pseudonyms. On the other hand, confidentiality entails extricating or amending any personal and identifying information provided by participants, with the intention to protect their information from any third parties (Allen 2017). In this study, we obtained procedural ethics approval to conduct the study, sought informed consent from participants, and assured all participants that their information will be treated with confidence. During the discussions with participants, trust was built throughout the survey. After data was collected, it was ensured that all identifiers were removed to promote confidentiality.

3.8.3 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an on-going process of self-awareness of the perceptions, behaviour, beliefs of the participant that can have an impact on the analysis and interpretation of data (Parahoo 2006). It is important in data collection because it is directly linked to the underlying threat of the validity of qualitative research outcomes. The main purpose of reflexivity is to ensure that the credibility of results is maintained by minimising the risk of bias. Thus, it is a critical tool that allows the researcher to remain engaged in critical self-awareness throughout the research process. To address the concept of reflexivity in the study, the researcher maintained open dialogues and discussions with participants, kept a journal that captured key issues, and also reflected on the data collection process after each survey. These practices were necessary because the analysis of data collected could have a degree of subjectivity, and could be influenced by the researcher's beliefs, values and experience. Therefore, reflexivity practice improved the credibility of the data and the reported findings.

3.8.4 Trustworthiness

Data analysis should be accurate, comprehensive, reliable credible. Trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence placed in the data, its interpretation and procedure applied to ascertain quality (Pilot and Beck 2014). While the literature provides some guidelines on maintaining trustworthiness in qualitative research, there is a debate on the precise procedure of achieving trustworthiness and on what constitutes trustworthiness (Leung 2015). Nevertheless, the criteria which could be followed and accepted to achieve trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, conformability and dependability (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Credibility entails a relation between findings of the study and reality, and this could be achieved through triangulation. On the other hand, transferability refers to the evidence provided to the reader with an intention to avail findings of the study which could be applicable to a different context. Thus, it is the researcher's responsibility to provide a proper description for fair judgement on transferability (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Thirdly, confirmability pertains to the degree to which the findings of the study could be confirmed by other researchers. Confirmability is the last step after all other dimensions are attained (Tobin and Begley 2004). Finally, dependability refers to the trustworthiness and reliability of the study findings and the levels to which procedures are recorded sequentially (Polit et al. 2008). In this study, the researcher conformed to the levels of trustworthiness as provided in the literature.

3.9 Delimitation of the study

Delimitations describe the boundaries set for a study (Petersen et al. 2021) and they guide the study such that its objectives are attainable, and assumptions are accepted as true or at least plausible by other researchers (Theofanidis and Fountouki 2019). In the context of this study, findings should not be generalised to apply to all municipalities in South Africa. This is because several municipalities differ in terms of categories and other dynamics. Therefore, results from this study should be read and interpreted as applying to the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality, hence should be applied to other municipalities with caution.

3.10 Summary

A research methodology is a scientific aspect of the study that provides details on the study plan and outlines the steps to be followed to achieve the specified objectives of the study. The success of any study depends on the selection of the right methodology. A flawed and/or inappropriate methodology yields flawed results. This chapter provided a detailed discussion of the method adopted in the study. More precisely, a qualitative methodological approach was adopted to collect, manage and analyse data. Details on each step of the adopted research design as implemented in this study were presented in this chapter. Thus, the chapter discussed among other issues, the research design, study site and population, target sample, sampling techniques adopted, survey instruments used, data collection procedure, data analysis procedure, and ethical considerations. These aspects gave a clear perspective on how the outlined objectives were achieved in the study. The next chapter presents data analysis and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This study was set to achieve four main objectives that were discussed in the first chapter. To achieve the outlined objectives, qualitative data were collected first from municipal officials through interviews, and second from community members through focus group discussions. This chapter presents the results of the study. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section discusses findings from interviews conducted with municipal officials, while the second section discusses findings from the focus group discussions with community members. Each of these sections is made up of various subsections.

4.2 Findings from municipal employees

Interviews with municipal employees were conducted in December 2020 and January 2021. Ten (10) municipal employees attached to the Community Participation and Action Unit of the eThekwini Municipality were interviewed. The 10 interviewed employees were drawn from the different spatial regions of the Unit. The Unit divides the Municipality into five regions, namely, North, South, West, North-Central, and South-Central. Our sample included participants from all five regions. The selection of these participants was informed by the study objectives. Participants were selected because they were key implementers of processes and policies designed to improve efficiency in public participation.

Interviews were conducted using three main avenues, namely, telephone, virtual meetings and face to face. These data collection approaches were pursued due to Covid-19 regulations and safety protocols implemented by the Municipality. Telephone

and virtual interviews were the most convenient and safest approaches to collect data for both the participant and the researcher. However, only three participants requested to be interviewed face-to-face, and Covid-19 safety protocols were strictly observed throughout the interview sessions. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed of steps taken by the researcher to ensure confidentiality, anonymity and other key ethical considerations. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the interviews. This was done as a way of recognising each participant's rights and freedom to participate (Surmiak 2018). This section gives an in-depth discussion of the data and findings from municipal employees attached to the Community Participation and Action Unit. The section discusses the demographic profile of participants and the key findings from the interviews.

4.2.1 Demographic profiles of the participants

Demographic data consists of quantifiable statistical information of the participants (Vogt and Johnson 2011). Such information includes the level of education, gender, age, employment status, race, marital status, among others. In most qualitative studies, demographic profiling such as gender composition and age distribution of the participants is emphasised. According to Polster et al. (2010), the inclusion of demographic profiles is important because it provides an opportunity to compare such data across replications of researches. Demographic profiles provide much needed information for analysing data and research syntheses (Bein 2009).

In this study, data was collected from 10 participants whose real names were replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identity. Literature supports concealing the identities of participants as this would make them share their views, perceptions and experiences freely, knowing that their identity would be protected (Saunders et al. 2015). Therefore, this study used numbers (1 – 10) as pseudonyms for the interview participants. Table 4.1 presents the demographic profiles of employees who participated in the interviews.

Table 4.1: Demographic profiles of participants

Participant	Position	Age	Gender	Years in the Unit	Years in position	Region
1	Manager	47	Male	14	8	West
2	Co-ordinator	38	Male	8	6	North
3	Community Development Worker	29	Male	3	3	North-Central
4	Community Development Worker	33	Male	7	7	South
5	Community Development Worker	42	Female	13	11	West
6	Community Development Worker	49	Male	15	13	South-Central
7	Community Development Worker	35	Male	8	7	North
8	Community Mobiliser	47	Male	5	5	West
9	Community Mobiliser	32	Male	11	7	West
10	Community Mobiliser	-	Female	10	10	South

Source: Author's own table

Table 4.1 shows that the youngest participant interviewed was 29 years old, while the oldest was 49 years old and the average age for the sample was 39 years. Male participants were more than female participants at 80%, due to their dominance in the Unit in terms of existing statistical data relating to staff employed. The average experience in the Unit for the sample is approximately 9 years, where the participant with the least number of years in the Unit having served for 3 years, while the highest serving participant has been in the Unit for 14 years. This shows that participants in

the sample have vast experiences in the Unit which essentially is important to the quality of data collected as these participants are expected to be knowledgeable. The 10 participants include a manager, a co-ordinator, 5 community development workers and 3 community mobilisers. Cognisant of the view that these participants were drawn from the 5 spatial regions of the Unit (West, North, South, North-Central and South-Central), we consider this sample representative and reliable results and inferences can be expected. In addition to the information presented in Table 4.1, it is also worth noting that the racial category of all participant was African, and the average duration of the interviews was 46 minutes.

4.2.2 Presentation of findings from employee interviews

Results in this section are presented according to the objectives of the study. Each objective is used to represent the different themes of the study. The study follows Hill et al. (2005) who suggest presenting the cross-analysis of results through the frequency of occurrence in the sample. As such, this study presents each objective as a theme, followed by core ideas (subthemes) in each theme. Generally, core ideas attempt to categorise smaller nuances of information within the themes (Jalma 2008). Further, direct quotes which have been edited for grammatical clarity are used to highlight and personalise the collected data. Following Jalma (2008), the study categorises core ideas into four main classes, namely, Rare, Variant, Typical, and General. Core ideas raised by only one of the ten participants are labelled Rare, while those raised by two to four participants are labelled Variant. On the other hand, core ideas raised by five to seven participants are labelled Typical, while those raised by eight to ten participants are labelled General. Table 4.2 captures the thematic framework outlining the four key study themes and subsequent core ideas. The information summarised in Table 4.2 will be discussed in detail in subsequent subsections.

Table 4.2: Summary of municipal employee results

Theme		Core idea	Frequency	Class
1	Public participation platforms available to the Municipality	a) Masakhane Community Forum	100%	General
		b) Social media platforms	80%	General
		c) Ezasegagasini newspaper	30%	Variant
		d) Customer service roadshows	10%	Rare
2	Challenges in promoting public participation	a) Lack of participation and non-attendance	90%	General
		b) Communication barriers in	40%	Variant
		c) Budget constraints	100%	General
		d) Lack of trust	100%	General
3	Impact of public participation on service delivery	a) Improves accountability	90%	General
		b) Restores public trust	100%	General
		c) Service delivery priorities	100%	General
4	Recommendations for optimum public service delivery	a) Service delivery prioritisation	90%	General
		b) Community involvement	80%	General
		c) Budget prioritisation	100%	General

Source: Author's own table

4.2.2.1 Theme 1: Public participation platforms available to the Municipality

The first theme presented in this section focuses on the first objective of the study which sought to identify the participation platforms available to the public to contribute to improved municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality. To explore this theme, participants were probed to give a detailed account of their knowledge and experiences on existing public participation platforms as municipal employees. From the narratives given by the participants, various platforms were mentioned. Four (4) platforms were identified as key in enabling public participation in the municipalities. These platforms were the Masakhane community forum, social media, Ezasegagasini

newspaper, and customer service roadshows. A detailed discussion of each of these platforms is given below.

a) Masakhane community forum

The Masakhane community forum is one of the many platforms open to communities to participate in service delivery matters of the municipality. These are quarterly community visits which consist of service units of the municipality such as Water and Sanitation, Electricity, and Human Settlements The purpose of these visits is to identify and resolve service delivery issues as well as inform communities of projects that are underway. All participants (100%) in the study identified this platform as key to public participation in the municipality. One participant explained that "*The quarterly meetings held in each Ward were aimed at providing a communication platform to bridge the gap between the Municipality and its communities. This is a sign of a Municipality that is willing to listen to the needs of [the] public".* While the existence of the Masakhane community forums was acknowledged by all participants, it was revealed that the platform does not exist in all wards of the municipality. In the light of this, one participant stated that "*There was a perception created that Masakhane community forums are made to only accommodate previously disadvantaged communities. I concur with this perception as we do not have this platform in places like Umhlanga, where the rich reside*".

b) Social media platforms

Participants mentioned social media as one of the key platforms used by the municipality to promote public engagement. This platform was mentioned by 80% out of the participants of the study. The social media platforms that were commonly identified by participants were Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Short Message Service (SMS), WhatsApp and the municipal website. Participants agreed that the municipal website was closely monitored by the Municipality's Communications Unit, which retrieves all comments from social media accounts and directs them to the relevant units for responses. It is worth noting that the majority of participants agreed that social media platforms exclude residents who are illiterate and the majority from previously disadvantaged communities. It was noted from the participants that technological

platforms are used mostly by younger residents, the educated and those from elite communities.

c) Ezasegagasini newspaper

Ezasegagasini newspaper is the eThekwini Municipality fortnightly publication, which is published in isiZulu and English and distributed to the communities free of charge. The newspaper is printed and distributed every fortnight to several public areas including municipal libraries, customer service centres and convenient shops such as Pick n Pay, Shoprite, township spaza shops and many more. The aim of the newspaper is to communicate the activities of the municipality, to provide communities with a platform to raise their views and to receive responses from the Municipality on service delivery matters. Only 30% of the participants listed Ezasegagasini municipal newspaper as a key platform available to promote public participation. Thus, the municipal newspaper proved to be less mentioned by the participants and may be concluded that most participants did not view it as a platform that promotes public participation.

d) Customer service roadshows

Customer service roadshows are municipal initiatives held at different facilities located near communities, at least once a month. The intention is to educate communities about services offered by the municipality and assist and resolve customer related queries. These initiatives are conducted at community halls or nearby shopping malls, wherein services units from the municipalities avail themselves to respond to and address customer queries. For example, units such as Electricity, Water and Sanitation, Metropolitan Police bring their services to the communities. Out of the 100% participants, only 10% participant mentioned customer service roadshows as an available platform that promotes public participation. The participant described this platform as one of the effective platforms because customers directly interact with officials about the services they individually receive. The participant further elaborated that *"this platform offers an opportunity to explain to individual members of the community on projects, services planned for the Ward and allow questions of clarity to relevant officials".*

4.2.2.2   Theme 2: Challenges in promoting public participation

The second theme focuses on the second objective of the study which sought to identify the challenges to promoting public participation in the municipality. Participants shared their experiences and perceptions of these challenges and drew their own inferences. These challenges were discussed at length and four core ideas were identified, namely, lack of participation and non-attendance, communication barriers, budget constraints, and lack of trust. These subthemes are discussed in detail below.

a) Lack of participation and non-attendance

All except for 10% of participants identified the lack of public involvement in planned community forums as a key challenge to the effectiveness of public participation in the municipality. In some cases where many residents attend Masakhane community meetings, for example, very few are vocal in those meetings. One participant narrated an incident when the Masakhane community meeting was held at the sports ground and the municipality brought along a water tanker. *"Instead of attending the meeting, majority of community members fetched water with buckets from the water tanker. From that moment, the municipality decided to provide water tankers when conducting these Masakhane community meetings in that area".* It was also revealed that there were times when officials from service units would not attend these meetings, despite being invited by the Community Participation and Action Unit.

b) Communication barriers

There were 40% of participants who identified the language used in the communication platforms as one of the challenges in promoting effective public engagement. Participants mentioned that at times there was no better way to explain projects of technical nature. One participant recalled a Masakhane community meeting where the agenda involved relocating community members to a new area after it was discovered that the area they were currently residing was not fit for human dwelling. The participant explained that *"the meeting could not continue despite engineers explaining the dangers of living near a dump site that accumulates gas. In my understanding,*

municipal officials failed to reach to its audience because in explaining dangers, they used too much of technical language".

On the other hand, participants also explained that community members would use any available reasons to reject the municipality's effort to improve service delivery if their community leaders feel differently. In addition, one participant related an experience of a meeting held with a community that sought to clarify the reasons why a bridge crossing to a nearby school could not be constructed in an area identified by the community. The participant stated that "*due to environmental issues, municipal officials who were experts in the field, explained in the meeting that such construction was impossible, and conflict eroded due to lack of understanding*".

c) Budget constraints

All participants identified budget constraints as a key challenge to effective public participation. They shared their experiences on how communities react to budget constraints as reasons for poor service delivery. They identified a number of communities needs that were never fulfilled by the municipality and justified as unfunded. An example is one major water pipes maintenance project in the Western area of the municipality whose progress is very slow due to insufficient funds. The participants' perception was that communities find no interest in participating in municipal affairs because they are, in most cases, informed of budget constraints. It was further established that participants believed that communities did not take part in budget discussions because its tabling is always pre-determined, and their involvement did not matter. It also emerged that municipal employees mostly worked overtime through weekends in conducting community meetings, and this requires funds. Some of the meetings would not occur due to the unavailability of funds to pay employees for overtime worked. This hinders effective public participation from taking place.

d) Lack of trust

Lack of trust was identified by all participants as one of the major challenges to public participation. Participants pointed out the importance of trust and that the municipality

was fingered in several irregularities published by Auditor General and other investigative bodies such as Special Investigation Unit and the Hawks (a South African Police Services unit). Only 30% of the participants argued that on separate occasions, they experienced hostility and chaos ensued during community meetings. One participant stated that *"in another meeting, one community demanded to know how some of the municipal policies were approved and implemented without their input. When no satisfactory answer was obtained from officials who were present, the meeting descended to pandemonium and was subsequently closed".* In separate interviews, participants agreed that there was a degree of mistrust towards the municipality, and this resulted in challenges in promoting public participation on service delivery matters and policy decision-making.

4.2.2.3   Theme 3: Impact of public participation on service delivery

The third theme is which aligned to the third objective of the study sought to establish the impact of public participation on service delivery. Under this theme, three core ideas identified and classified based on responses received from participants. These core ideas were improving accountability, restores public trust, and service delivery prioritisation. A detailed discussion of these core ideas is given below.

a) Improves accountability

Accountability was described by one participant as *"taking full responsibility of one's action"*. During the interview discussions, the emphasis was on the importance of a government that is accountable to its citizen. The perception was that public participation promotes such accountability. The participants at 40% suggested that accountability was like a "watchdog" that compels officials to perform their work diligently knowing that they must explain their actions. Furthermore, 50% of the participants argued that when municipal officials know that they will be questioned by communities on decisions taken, they will procure goods and services that are worth value for money and provide quality public service.

b) Restores public trust

When promised services are not delivered, communities become impatient and may resort to violent protests (Mhlongo 2018 Morudu 2017, Madonsela 2010; Mathebula 2018). All the participants suggested that public participation would reduce the number of public protests because there is continuous engagement between the public and the municipality. One participant said that *"you can only have a good relationship with a person who listens to you and attend to your needs. Even if you tell them that you do not have money to do the things you promised, it will be understood. This is not a one-way street, the public should listen to us as well because as an official, I cannot listen to you if you throw stones at me and burn my assets".* The general perspective from the participants was that when both parties (municipality and the public) are in constant communication, trust is developed. Currently, the government has to work twice as hard to earn this trust due to a number of scandals pertaining to maladministration, abuse of power and public funds.

c) Service delivery prioritisation

The responsibility of the municipality is to deliver services to its communities as defined in the Constitution of South Africa. Such responsibility should be aligned with the provision in the Act that promotes public involvement. The participants' understanding and perception of such alignment were discussed in the interviews. All participants agreed that the municipality together with the communities should rank services and prioritise the provision of those deemed imminent. One participant said, *"Combined effort in identifying top priorities of service delivery needs will promote open channels of communication, thus leading to efficient and effective public involvement. Both parties (municipality and public) must work towards this effort. If this is successful, there will not be a situation where public demands services which are not within the Municipality's budget and priorities".* Other participants added that the identification of service delivery priorities and agreeing on how funds will be dispensed, create good reasons for the public to have confidence in their municipality. In such scenarios, accountability and transparency become the order of the day. On the other hand, some participants shared their disappointment in the way through which some of their meetings with the communities proceed with mistrust and blame games between

communities and the municipality. Such community meetings frequently result in chaos and become fruitless.

4.2.2.4   Theme 4: Recommendations for optimum public service delivery

The fourth theme is linked to the fourth objective of the study which sought possible recommendations to the identified challenges impeding public participation in the eThekwini Municipality. Participants were asked to recommend ways through which optimum public participation would be achieved. They shared their knowledge, experiences and perceptions on how the municipality can improve on the identified gaps. Based on the responses received from the participants, three core ideas were identified, namely, service delivery priorities, community involvement, and budget priorities. Details on these core ideas are discussed below.

a) Service delivery priorities

Priority-based service delivery was one of the core ideas recommended by participants to address the challenges encountered in public participation. All participants but 10% suggested that priority-based service delivery is a key solution to some of the challenges in the municipality. One participant said, "*Just as how lack of service delivery prioritisation was identified as a challenge, having this in place may remedy and strengthen the relationship between both the Municipality and the public*". When the public informs the municipality of their exact needs, the expectation is that those needs are fulfilled. Most participants agreed that this depends on the availability of funds, when funds are limited, the municipality fails to deliver. In some cases, the municipality fails to be transparent about the lack of financial resources. If priorities are not done, the Municipality may run a risk of providing services that are not required which may lead to service delivery protests. Therefore, continuous engagement on what is viewed as a priority would promote public participation and the efficient delivery of public services.

b) Community involvement

Municipal service delivery should meet community expectations. Knowing what services to deliver for which community relies on knowing what each community requires. All participants admitted that each ward of the municipality has different needs. Therefore, the process of providing these services should not be a one-size-fits-all, hence a very closer relationship with the community is recommended. Most of the participants argued that closer relationships between the municipality and communities can minimise the prevalence of public protests as trust between the two parties is promoted. Some participants admitted that there were bigger challenges in the current processes used to promote public participation. These challenges are believed to emanate from perceptions in the community that the municipality does not have the communities' best interest at heart. This is mainly because services are delivered without a proper need analysis and agreement with communities. Therefore, the need to strengthen current processes and the provision of public participation policies is warranted.

c) Budget priorities

Budget constraints were identified as one of the key challenges that hinders the promotion of public participation and effective service delivery. Without adequate funds, the completion of some key community projects may be delayed. The participants recommended that both the municipality and the communities must prioritise and agree on which essential services to be delivered at a specific financial year.

Although virtual interviews occurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic health and safety protocols, this method proved to be no different to the face-to-face interviews. The inclusion of participants' demographic profiles was conducted in order to follow other authors recommendations for its inclusion in the study. The existence of different public participation platforms identified by employees in the previous subsections brought about challenges that were listed and detailed. Recommendations for these challenges are the key to improved service delivery and accountability. The interviews conducted indicated a clear link between public participation, budget constraints and

service delivery. In employees' recommendations, it was specified that when the community participates in the affairs of the municipality, community projects towards service delivery are prioritised in accordance with the community needs, hence budget prioritised towards completing those projects. Accountability was pointed out to be the key element towards regaining public trust, created by public participation deficiencies.

4.3 Findings from community members

In addition to the data collected from municipal employees, data was also collected from community members using semi-structured focus group discussions. The focus group discussions were conducted during the months of January and February 2021. Three focus group discussions were separately conducted in three distinct wards of the municipality, namely, Wards 22, 36 and 65. Reasons for selecting these three wards were discussed in the previous chapter of this study. Participants in these focus groups were ward committee members of each ward. The targeted number of each focus group could not be reached. Ten ward committee members appointed to serve in Ward 22, however, only six were able to attend the discussions, giving a 60% participation rate. Equally, Ward 36 initially had ten ward committee members appointed to serve. However, three members resigned which meant the committee currently had seven members. Of the seven members, four attended the scheduled focus group discussion, thus a participation rate of about 57%. In Ward 65, only six of the 10 committee members attended the discussion, thus a participation rate of 60% had the same composition and members who attended the scheduled discussion. Since more than half of the ward committee members constituted each focus group discussion, the data collected was deemed representative and robust.

Covid-9 safety protocols were observed as outlined earlier in Chapter 3. All ethical considerations related to data collection were maintained. Participants were informed that their contributions will be treated as anonymous and confidential. They were further informed that they have the right to withdraw from the discussion at any time they feel the need to do so. Informed consent was obtained prior to the discussions. Upon receiving informed consent, the researcher who also acted as the moderator

introduced the key discussion points and participants freely took part. Findings from the discussions are presented in this section. Prior to the findings, the section presents the demographic profiles of the participants in each focus group.

4.3.1 Demographic profiles of the focus group participants

As indicated earlier, there was a focus group for each of the three Wards. The first focus group had six participants, the second had four and the third has six. To promote anonymity and confidentiality, participants are identified as Participant 1, Participant 2, and so forth. The demographic profiles of these participants are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Demographic profiles of focus group participants

	Participant	Ward	Age	Gender	Race
	1	22	47	Male	African
	2	22	39	Male	African
Focus group 1	3	22	32	Male	African
	4	22	44	Male	African
	5	22	51	Male	African
	6	22	42	Female	African
	1	36	56	Male	White
	2	36	62	Male	White
Focus group 2	3	36	48	Male	White
	4	36	53	Male	White
	1	65	45	Male	Indian
	2	65	39	Female	African
Focus group 3	3	65	59	Male	African
	4	65	35	Male	African
	5	65	63	Male	African
	6	65	57	Male	African

Source: Author's own table

The key demographic characteristics of participants in each focus group shown in Table 4.3 are age, gender and race. In the first focus group, the average age was about 43 years, while the average age was about 55 years in the second focus group

and 50 years in the third focus group. In all focus groups, there were more male participants than female participants, where about 88% of the participants were males. In terms of race, all participants in Ward 22 were Africans, while all participants in Ward 36 were Whites, whereas and in Ward 65 there was one Indian member among six participants who were predominantly Africans. These demographics are in line with the spatial dynamics in the municipalities and many cities across the country.

4.3.2 Presentation of findings from focus group discussions

The approach used in presenting findings from the focus group was similar to the used in the presentation of findings for employees' interviews. Each objective was classified as a theme and from these themes, core ideas were created. Direct quotes are used to personalise collected data and core ideas were categorised into Variant, Typical, and General. Core ideas raised by only one focus group will be categorised as Variant, core idea raised by two focus groups would be considered as Typical and core ideas raised by all three focus groups would be classified as General. Table 4.4 presents the thematic framework outlining the four key study themes and the core ideas in each theme.

Table 4.4: Summary of focus groups results

Theme	Core idea	Frequency	Class
Public participation platforms available to the Municipality	Masakhane community forum	3	General
	Social media platform	3	General
Challenges in promoting public participation	Failure to account	3	General
	Lack of trust	3	General
	Poor attendance in public meetings	3	General
Impact of public participation on service delivery	Improves service delivery	3	General
	Savings on public funds	2	Typical
	Minimised risk of public protests	3	General
Recommendations for optimum public service delivery	Improved communication	3	General
	Accountability	3	General
	Effective consequence management	3	General

Source: Author's own table

4.3.2.1   Theme 1: Public participation platforms available to the Municipality

This theme is linked to the first objective of the study. Participants were asked to share detailed accounts of their knowledge and experiences on existing public participation platforms in the municipality. Two main platforms were identified, namely, the Masakhane community forum and social media platforms. These identified platforms are discussed below.

a) Masakhane community forum

The Masakhane community forum was understood by the participants to be an opportunity where communities are able to interact with the municipality. However, participants argued that they were not informed of the frequency of these forums, and as a result, they could not plan ahead which issues they wish to be tabled. In most cases, the Masakhane meetings are poorly planned. One participant asked, *"how can you consult with the rest of the community in the Ward and obtain community's different views? At times, having these poorly planned meetings is a waste of time. Officials must plan ahead and rope us in".* It was also noted that while residents knew that the Masakhane community forums exist, the meetings do not take place in some wards. Participants argued that these meetings were designed to cater for poor communities, hence communities where high-income earners reside, preferred alternative platforms.

b) Social media

All three focus groups acknowledged that there were several social media platforms designed to promote communication between the municipality and the public. Facebook was identified as the most popular social media platform used to communicate with the municipality. However, it was noted that although the municipality has a Facebook account, the municipality rarely responds to comments. It was noted that although the Facebook account was for all good intents, its effectiveness as a public participation tool was not satisfactory due to non-responsiveness. Further, issues of data costs were noted, as social media was deemed costly and communities preferred community meetings.

4.3.2.2   Theme 2: Challenges in promoting public participation

Second, participants in all focus groups were asked to identify the common challenges in promoting public participation. Three main challenges were identified by all groups, namely, failure to account, lack of trust and poor attendance of meetings. Details on these challenges are discussed below.

a) Failure to account

All three focus groups revealed that the communities had less faith in municipal employees. This is due to the employees' failure to account for how resources of the municipality were used. Failure to account was perceived as a barrier towards progressive engagements on current and future community needs. A lack of proper and effective communication between the municipality and the communities creates the perception that participating in the affairs of the municipality was a waste of time. In one focus group, a participant said, "*why should we bother to participate, when we only receive promises and no feedback on the progress? We inform the Municipality of community needs and they promise, that is the end of the conversation. For example, Annual Budget allocation gets to be discussed with the community before approval by the Council. But where are the projects that were promised?*" Overall, failure by the Municipality to account creates hostility and a reduced desire for communities to take part in municipal affairs. This confirms findings in Mulgan (2019) where it is argued that the perception created on accountability was based on the expectation that there would be a relationship between parties, specifically between government and its citizens.

b) Lack of trust

The second core idea commonly identified during the discussions was that in the absence of accountability, communities did not fully trust the municipality. The participants felt that efforts made by the municipality to promote public participation was a mere "box-ticking exercise" that sought to comply with set regulations, legislations and Acts. Participants suggested that they closely monitor budgets and funds allocated to service delivery. However, their observation is that those funds are misused which results in several fraud and corruption cases reported to law

67

enforcement agencies. In one focus group, a participant said, *"after receiving unsatisfactory water services, we decided to dig further and discovered that some officials were defrauding the municipality by creating ghost plumbers and submitting invoices for payment. This is one of the reasons why projects were abandoned before completion. This matter was reported to law enforcement agencies and subsequently, the officials and contractors implicated were arrested"*. The culture of corruption among municipal officials is a key determinant of the lack of trust that community members have in the municipality.

c) Poor attendance at public meetings

Poor attendance at public meetings was identified as one of the key challenges hindering public participation. Participants stated that both communities and municipal officials did not religiously prioritise attendance of meetings that seek to discuss issues of service delivery, budget constraints, and policy decisions. All participants agreed that both the municipality and residents were, to some degree, not committed to ensuring maximum attendance in these meetings. Municipal officials would at times not pitch up citing reasons of unfunded overtime. It was also revealed that at times the issue of non-attendance was caused by the municipality when officials come to these meetings with refreshments and water tankers. Due to desperation, communities shift their focus into these refreshments or go to fetch water, thus creating chaos. One participant described how political squabbles contribute to non-attendance by stating that *"if there are two political factions in the Ward, meetings turn into fights of words. In one meeting, officials had to leave the meeting because other residents started throwing chairs and destroying even the hired sound system. Now every time we request for these meetings from the municipality, we do not get any positive response"*.

4.3.2.3 Theme 3: Impact of public participation on service delivery

Several studies in the literature prove that public participation has a direct impact on service delivery. Masiya et al. (2019) argue that improved accountability has a positive impact on public participation, while public awareness eliminates corruption and maladministration as employees understand they will have to account for their actions.

Participants' views on the impact of public participation on service delivery were sought. Three core ideas emerged, namely, improve service delivery, sav public funds, and minimise the risk of protest actions. These ideas are discussed below in detail.

a) Improve service delivery

All focus groups believed that public participation provides an opportunity for the community to point out the exact services required, how to provide them, and where to improve on those currently provided. Participants' felt that the communities did not have a voice in other matters of service delivery because the consultation was conducted when projects were implemented, thus creating the perception of a municipality with no public interest at heart. One participant mentioned that "*in one of the wards, the community needed a pedestrian walkway/sideway for pupils leading to a nearby schools in order to avoid car accidents. This was discussed in numerous meetings and became a priority to the community. Instead, the municipality installed jungle gyms in the park. The community was furious and resorted to destroying the infrastructure that was installed in the park*". This is a practical example of a disconnection between the municipality and people, where the municipality provides what it wants and not what the community needs.

b) Saves on public funds

Participants suggested that the public perception was that municipal officials spend municipal funds without due care. This was supported by a number of incidents witnessed by the community such as a municipal vehicle driven for private use, taking extended lunch breaks lunch time, failure to meet promised deadlines for service delivery and many more. Such abuse of resources increases because officials are not made to account for their actions. On the other hand, it was also mentioned that the communities themselves destroy municipal infrastructure when they are in protest of poor service delivery. In one incident, participants stated, *"residents in Lamontville were on a service delivery protest and burnt two municipal vehicles, the clinic and the hall. The Municipality was then expected to reconstruct these properties instead of focusing on other areas that required service delivery"*. The general perception is that

both Municipal officials and community members have a role to play in saving public funds. Public participation in decision making can be an effective tool to achieve this.

c) Minimise the risk of public protests

One of the major reasons for public protests was the conflict between the municipality and communities on the prioritisation of service delivery. The expectation is that when the municipality promises to deliver, this must be done and done on time. Communities fully understand how the municipality should function and its obligations towards service delivery. At times, community members are partly responsible for poor service delivery. Using an example of refuse collection at Umlazi, one participant stated that "*in the last financial year, officials could not exercise their responsibility due to community members who prevented this service. Officials are human beings too and it is upon us to protect them when criminals are hijacking the course. The biggest shame is that we watched and said nothing, yet we also had a responsibility to protect our Wards*". When public participation is effective, both parties understand their roles and work together towards achieving common goals.

4.3.2.4   Theme 4: Recommendations for optimum public service delivery

Participants were asked to share their views on possible solutions to challenges impeding public participation and service delivery in their communities. Three main solutions were put forward, namely, improved communication, accountability, and effective consequence management. Details of these recommendations are discussed below.

a) Improved communication

It emerged from the focus group discussions that acceptable public service delivery depends on the dynamic forces of communication and engagement between members of the public and the authorities. Engagement and communication result in assured competencies of officials, vigorous focus on the needs of communities, timeous dissemination of information on issues pertaining to service delivery needs, liberty to

express one's service delivery views on policy related matters. In the absence of these dynamic forces, adequate service delivery becomes negatively affected. Participants recommended that the municipality must be transparent on service delivery matters and provide feedback when required. Such transparency could be achieved by constant engagements.

b) Accountability

Albadry (2020) argues that there was a strong connection between accountability and corruption that takes place in public administration. The author further states that there was a significant increase in the incidents of corruption and all points to accountability system failure, which would mean ineffectiveness of its implementation. Participants suggested that accountability leads to clean government administration. In this instance, participants agreed that the implementation of policies relating to accountability would improve service delivery and root out those whose goals are to commit corruption. All participants recommended that the municipality should implement policies that seek to protect its reputation and enforce accountability for one's action.

c) Effective consequence management

Participants stated that in some cases, the Municipality protected those fingered in corruption because there was no effective consequence management. Public perception was that instead of punishing and removing such officials, these officials were rewarded with better salaries and other benefits. One focus group argued that issues pertaining to misconduct were swept under the carpet and the public was not informed about these issues. Therefore, participants recommended that the municipality must deal with corrupt officials and publish the outcomes of such cases for the communities to restore confidence in the municipality.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study for data collected from municipal employees and communities. The organisation of the chapter consisted of two sections. First, the chapter presented findings from interviews conducted with employees in the Community Participation and Action Unit of the eThekwini Municipality. Second, the chapter presented findings from three focus group discussions with community leaders. Key themes and subthemes (core ideas) in each of the two segments of the data were identified and discussed in detail. Key public participation platforms in the municipality were identified in this chapter. Further, challenges to effective public participation were identified and these include non-attendance in important meetings, lack of trust, budget constraints, failure to account and communication barriers. The chapter also presented results on the participants' views regarding the impact of public participation on service delivery. Possible solutions for the identified challenges suggested by participants were presented in this chapter. The next chapter concludes the study, giving recommendations and areas of possible future research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

The aim of this study was to explore the nature and role of public participation in the delivery of municipal services using a case study of the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. To achieve this aim, the study set out to fulfil four main objectives. The first objective was set to identify the participation platforms available to the public to effectively contribute to improved municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality. The second objective aimed to establish the challenges experienced in promoting effective public participation in the eThekwini Municipality. The third objective was set to establish the impact of public participation on service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality. Finally, the fourth objective was to recommend possible ways through which the eThekwini Municipality can implement public participation policies for optimum public service provision.

To achieve the outlined objectives, a qualitative methodological approach was adopted. This approach was implemented in two parts. The first part collected and analysed qualitative survey data from 10 municipal employees attached to the Community Participation and Action Unit of the eThekwini Municipality. Participants in this segment of the study were drawn from the various roles and designations in the Unit, and they were representative of the various spatial regions of the municipality. Data for this segment of the study was collected using semi-structured interviews. The second part of the study analysed data collected from community leaders. This data was collected through semi-structured focus group discussions. Three focus groups were set up in three different wards of the municipality. Data collected from both the first and second segments of the study were analysed using the thematic approach.

Four major findings were emerged from the study. These findings are presented according to each objective of the study.

In terms of the first objective of the study, participants identified four main public participation platforms designed to fulfil the constitutional mandate of ensuring public engagement on municipal affairs. The first platform identified was the Masakhane community forum which is a quarterly community visit by different municipal service units to resolve service delivery issues and inform communities of current projects. The second platform was social media pages created and managed by the municipality's Communications Unit. Through social media, the residents are able to engage with the municipality via Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Short Message Service (SMS), WhatsApp, and its website. Further, the Ezasegagasini newspaper, a fortnightly newspaper published by the municipality in both isiZulu and English and distributed to the communities free of charge was identified as another public participation platform. Finally, customer service roadshows which are held at least once a month with the intention to educate communities about services delivery and resolving customer related queries were another public participation platform that emerged in the study.

Although these public participation platforms exist in the municipality, their effectiveness is still questionable. Platforms like the Masakhane Community Forum which was identified as a key public participation platform is criticised for being poorly planned and for its design which predominantly caters for the less-affluent communities. On the other hand, the social media platform is considered elitist, favouring those who can read, write, afford data, and have compatible electronics. The unresponsiveness of the municipality on social media renders the platform less effective. In terms of the second objective, participants identified five main challenges experienced in promoting public participation in the municipality. Poor attendance of community meetings was a major challenge that emerged from the study. It emerged that when community members attend some meetings, they would focus more on refreshments provided than the actual business of the meeting. Further, social media platforms attracted less support from poor communities due to the high cost of data and connectivity challenges. Hence, social media platforms were perceived to be a

"box-ticking" exercise that was aimed at complying with the provisions of the legislation. Additionally, budget constraints, the community's lack of trust and the municipality's failure to account were identified amongst the common challenges to effective public participation. Communities have certain levels of expectations for service delivery and when the municipality fails to meet such expectations, it is expected that the municipality should account to the communities. Failure to account would then create a lack of trust, which in most cases leads to protest action by community members.

In terms of the third objective, participants acknowledged that if public participation is sincerely conducted, it would improve service delivery in the municipality. The expectation of the municipality borders along efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Participants conceded that effective engagements with communities allow the municipality to understand the services that communities needed, and the actual priority list. This is important for the municipality which would then be able to properly plan and prioritise services preferred by the communities when developing the budget. Engagements between the municipality and its communities are key in restoring public trust in the municipality. Equally, this enables municipal officials to account for how public funds are spent on different projects. It emerged from the study that a strong link exists between public participation and optimum service delivery.

Finally, participants raised six main points as recommendations to improve public participation in service delivery matters in the municipality. These main points include prioritisation on service delivery, community involvement, budget prioritisation, improved communication, accountability and effective consequence management. The municipality is required to consult with the communities in order to understand their urgent needs, as opposed to providing services that are not communities' top priorities. The availability of the budget aimed at funding community projects should be aligned in accordance with these community services.

This translated to transparency on issues pertaining to municipal spending on community projects and openness on action taken by the municipality against officials who fail to account on service delivery matters.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study findings reported in the preceding section, three recommendations are made. First, it is recommended that the municipality needs to regain community trust. This can be achieved by ensuring that public participation platforms are used to frequently inform communities on municipal service delivery affairs. Communities need constant information shared on new developments, budget availability, planned projects and reasons for any delays or failure to deliver promised services, among others. Equally, the public participation processes should be sufficiently communicated to the public and the importance of participating in municipal affairs emphasised. This is the right enshrined by the Constitution and other legislations that were discussed in the preceding chapters. Some of the functions performed by public participation platforms such as Masakhane community forum and customer services roadshows are overlapping, as both platforms attend to customer related queries. The functions of these platforms should be redesigned in order to streamline the budget allocated for these platforms. One platform should focus on discussing issues of progress on current projects, planned future projects, budget allocation and accountability on how funds are spent on service delivery. On the other hand, the other platform should continue focusing on service delivery queries.

Second, in areas where water collection turns to take priority over attending community forums, the municipality should examine and attend to the drivers of this challenge. Access to basic water services is a constitutional right. It should be concerning to the municipality when community members choose to focus on fetching water during times scheduled for important municipal meetings. Masakhane meetings are held quarterly, and it is inconceivable that communities would miss the opportunity to discuss issues of development because they are fetching water from municipal water trucks. Also, it is disheartening that communities would rely on water provided by the municipality

once in three months, this is a negative reflection for a municipality that claims to have service delivery at heart. Long lasting solutions to the challenges affecting residents should be implemented, especially the challenge of access to adequate and reliable water services. Involving communities in developing these lasting solutions and constantly accounting to the communities should influence the municipality to effectively address these challenges.

Third, communities should take centre stage in identifying services they require as per their priority need-analysis. The identified services should be communicated to the municipality and prioritised during budget allocation. The municipality should promote open communication with the communities by involving communities in the implementation of community projects and sincerely gather their views on these projects. Community involvement should be sincere and transparent, and not just a "box-ticking" exercise. This is extremely important especially on issues of public spending and budget allocation where the public should effectively and genuinely participate. There should be some reasonable consensus on service delivery priorities, which should be informed by community needs through extensive public engagements. When the progress of projects is negatively affected by budget constraints, municipal officials should inform communities in time and provide a detailed account of how funds were spent. This exercise should be sincere and done without arrogance but with a reasonable sense of servitude as expected from public servants. Equally, consequence management should be conducted in a transparent manner and its processes communicated to the public. This is important especially when municipal employees are implicated in subversion and fraud which derail service delivery. Information on the illicit behaviour of such employees and how they were dealt with should be available and clear to the communities. When transparency prevails, the municipality will regain the trust of community members.

5.3 Areas of future work

The study of the public participation platforms is available at the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. However, the effectiveness of these platforms could not be

explored further due to time constraints. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies should thoroughly investigate the effectiveness of the identified public participation platforms. This is important because it emerged from this study that some participants view these platforms merely as a "box-ticking" exercise to enable the municipality to comply with legislation. Equally, it is important to note that this study is delimited to the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality, and its results should be interpreted with caution if applied to municipalities other than the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. In this regard, it is recommended that future studies may focus on a comparative analysis of public participation platforms in South African metropolitan municipalities (and/or secondary cities). Such studies may even explore the effectiveness of the platforms in each municipality and benchmark these municipalities based on those results.

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Appendix 1: Interview questions scheduled for the municipal employees

Public participation in service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality

Interview schedule for municipal employees

My name is Ms Fikile Manqele (Student number 21649972), a student registered for the degree of Master of Management Sciences in Public Administration in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology. The title of my dissertation is *"Public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality"*. The study aims to explore the nature and role of public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. The study intends to provide evidence-based solutions that promote public participation in local government affairs and improve service delivery.

To achieve the outlined aim of the study, I would appreciate if you can the few answer questions below. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may withdraw from the process at any stage without any consequence. The information collected in this interview will be treated as confidential and your identity will remain anonymous. Please note that this interview will be recorded, and the recording will be securely stored to maintain your anonymity and confidentiality.

1. May you please tell me more about yourself?

    Probes:

    a) Your age (optional)

    b) Your position in the Community Participation and Action Unit;

    c) Your years of experience in that position;

    d) Your years of experience in the Unit;

    e) The geographical region you are responsible for in the Unit.

    (Please note this personal information is collected for statistical purposes only).

2. Please tell me about your role in the Community Participation and Action Unit.

    Probes:

    a) What are your daily activities in the Unit?

    b) Who do you report to?

    c) How many people report to you?

    d) What are the main duties of those who report to you, if any?

3. From your experience, what are the platforms available to the public to   contribute towards improving municipal service delivery?

    Probes:

    a) What are the opportunities available for citizens to take part in municipal service delivery decision making?

    b) How does the Municipality encourage citizen participation in those platforms?

    c) How are these platforms coordinated and who coordinate them?

    d) What are the main issues discussed in these platforms?

4. Are the available platforms achieving the intended goals of the municipality?

    Probes:

    a) Do you think the platforms are effective in promoting public participation?

b) Do they accommodate the views of most of the citizen in each residential area?

c) Does the municipality take action based on information collected from these platforms?

5. What are the main challenges experienced in these platforms?

   Probes:

   a) Does the majority of residents participate in these platforms?

   b) Are there challenges in managing diverse views during the meetings?

   c) Do residents consider the public participation platforms important?

6. What would be the possible solutions for effective public participation in service delivery matters?

   Probes:

   a) How can public participation be improved in communities across the municipality?

   b) How would the challenges identified earlier (in Q5) be addressed?

   c) Is the municipality committed to addressing challenges in public participation?

Thank you very much for taking time to participate in this survey.

Appendix 2: Interview questions scheduled for the focus group discussions

Public participation in service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality

Interview schedule for focus group participants

My name is Ms Fikile Manqele (Student number 21649972), a student registered for the degree of Master of Management Sciences in Public Administration in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology. The title of my dissertation is *"**Public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality**"*. The study aims to explore the nature and role of public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. The study intends to provide evidence-based solutions that promote public participation in local government affairs and improve service delivery.

To achieve the outlined aim of the study, I would appreciate if you can be engaged in the discussion on few questions below. Your participation in this discussion is voluntary and you may withdraw from the process at any stage without any consequence. The information collected in this interview will be treated as confidential and your identity will remain anonymous. Please note that this discussion will be recorded, and the recording will be securely stored to maintain your anonymity and confidentiality.

Biographic Information

1. May you tell me about yourself?

   Probes:

   a. Your name and age

   b. Your educational background and experience in public sector;

   c. Do you reside in this Ward?

   d. When was this community leadership elected?

   e. More about Ward composition, location and number of community leaders elected.

   f. As a community leader, what role do you play in your Ward?

   (Please note this personal information is collected for statistical purposes only).

2. From your experience, what are the platforms available to the public to contribute towards improving municipal service delivery?

   Probes:

   b. What are the opportunities available for citizens to take part in municipal service delivery decision making?

   c. Are there any programmes you are aware of, that are aimed at promoting citizen participation in those platforms?

   d. What are the main issues discussed in these platforms?

3. Do you think that public participation platforms achieve the intended goals of the municipality?

   Probes:

   a. Do you think the platforms are effective in promoting public participation?

   b. Do they accommodate the views of most of the citizen in this Ward?

   c. Does the municipality act based on information collected from these platforms?

4. What are the main challenges experienced in these platforms?

   Probes:

   a. Does the majority of residents participate in these platforms?
   b. When there are diverse views during meeting public participation, is Municipality able to manage such diversity?
   c. Do you consider the public participation platforms important?

5. What would be the possible solutions for effective public participation in service delivery matters?

   Probes:

   a) How can public participation be improved in communities across the municipality?
   b) How would the challenges identified earlier (in Q4) be addressed?
   c) Do you think the municipality is committed to addressing challenges in public participation?

Thank you very much for taking time to participate in this survey.

Appendix 3: Gatekeeper's letter for the focus group discussion

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

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www.durban.gov.za

11 January 2021

To whom it may concern

UNIVERSITY STUDY ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SERVICE DELIVERY

Ethekwini Municipality acknowledges that Ms Fikile Manqele (21649972), is a student registered for the degree of Master of Management Sciences in Public Administration in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology. Her dissertation is on ***"Public participation in service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality",*** a study aims to explore the nature and role of public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. The study intends to provide evidence-based solutions that promote public participation in local government affairs and improve service delivery.

To achieve the outlined aim of the study, the Municipality understands that Ms Manqele will collect data from different Ward Committee leaders, who represent communities and interest in municipal service delivery affairs. The participation of officials is voluntary, and the University has a responsibility to ensure that data collected is confidential and cannot be traced to any individual. Upon the completion of the study, the Municipality may request the final research report for its use.

We support and grant permission to conduct this research at eThekwini Municipality.

Sincerely

Mr Sipho Cele

Acting City Manager

Appendix 4: Gatekeeper's letter for the municipal employees

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

1st Floor, City Hall

Dr Pixley KaSeme Street, Durban, 4001

PO Box 1014, Durban, 4000 Tel: 0313112130, Fax: 0313112170

www.durban.gov.za

11 January 2021

To whom it may concern

UNIVERSITY STUDY ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SERVICE DELIVERY

Ethekwini Municipality acknowledges that Ms Fikile Manqele (21649972), is a student registered for the degree of Master of Management Sciences in Public Administration in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology. Her dissertation is on *"Public participation in service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality",* a study aims to explore the nature and role of public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. The study intends to provide evidence-based solutions that promote public participation in local government affairs and improve service delivery.

To achieve the outlined aim of the study, the Municipality understands that Ms Manqele will collect data from officials at the Community Participation and Action Unit, who are key implementers of the public participation processes. The participation of officials is voluntary, and the University has a responsibility to ensure that data collected is confidential and cannot be traced to any individual. Upon the completion of the study, the Municipality may request the final research report for its use.

We support and grant permission to conduct this research at eThekwini Municipality.

Sincerely

Mr Sipho Cele

Acting City Manager

Appendix 5: Informed Consent

CONSENT

Full Title of the Study: Public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality

Names of Researcher/s: Fikile Manqele

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Fikile Manqele, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study,

- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant	Date	Time	Signature / Right Thumbprint

I, Fikile Manqele, herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

_____ _____ _____

Full Name of Researcher   **Date**   **Signature**

_____ _____

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) **Date**   **Signature**

_____ _____

Full Name of Legal Guardian
 (If applicable)   **Date**   **Signature**

Appendix 6: Ethical clearance letter

MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (FREC)

27 November 2019

Student Name: **Ms F Manqele**

 Student No: 21649972

Dear Ms F Manqele

MASTER OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

TITLE: Public participation in service delivery in eThekwini Municipality

Please be advised that the FREC Committee has reviewed your proposal and the following decision was made: **Approved – Ethics Level 2**

Date of FRC Approval: 27 November 2019

Approval has been granted <u>for a period of two years</u> from the above FRC date, after which you are required to apply for safety monitoring and annual recertification. Please use the form located at the Faculty. This form must be submitted to the FREC at least 3 months before the ethics approval for the study expires.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the FREC according to the FREC SOP's. Please note that ANY amendments in the approved proposal require the approval of the FREC as outlined in the FREC SOP's.

Yours sincerely

Prof JP Govender

Chairperson: Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 7: Letter of information

Letter of information

Title of the Research Study: Public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality

Researcher: Fikile Manqele (21649972), Bachelor of Technology in Public   Management

Supervisor: Dr Genius Murwirapachena, PhD in Economics

Dear Participant

My name is Fikile Manqele, a student registered for the degree of Master of Management Sciences in Public Administration in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology. The purpose of this study is to explore the nature and role of public participation in municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. The study intends to provide evidence-based solutions that promote public participation in local government affairs and improve service delivery. To achieve the outlined aim of the study, views of participants are essential. Therefore, I would like to invite you to participate in this interview.

There are four objectives that underpin this study. The first objective aims at identifying the participation platforms available for the public to effectively contribute to improved municipal service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality. The second objective focuses on the challenges that may be experienced in promoting effective public participation in the eThekwini Municipality. The third objective is set to establish the impact of public participation on service delivery. Finally, the fourth objective is aimed at recommending possible ways through which

the Municipality can implement public participation policies for optimum public service provision.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, therefore, you may choose to withdraw from participating at any point or choose not to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable answering and no penalty will be attached to any of such actions. The information that will be gathered from this study will be used in my dissertation writing and may be published in the academic journals and presented in conferences. However, your identity will be protected at all times and will only be made known if you so wish. Participating in this study has no financial benefits, therefore no payment will be remunerated to you for taking part in the study. Likewise, no payment is expected to be paid by you for taking part in the study. This interview will be informal and semi-structured and will last for approximately 45 minutes but can be more or less, depending on your availability and willingness. These will be held at your workplace or anywhere you are comfortable.

All participants' anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained by ensuring that the identity of each participants' personal information such as names and identifying data is strictly kept a secret by using alias names. In this study, the University issued a procedural ethics approval to conduct the study. This assured all participants that their information will be treated with confidence. Only the University and I will have access to the data, and this will be kept confidential. The study results will remain the property of and may be available from the University. Data collected from participants will be stored for the duration of 5 years in accordance with the legislated archives provision.

Should you have any questions, you may contact me on Cell Number: 0616653927 or 21649972@dut4life.ac.za. My supervisor is Dr G. Murwirapachena, who can be contacted at 031-3735198 or GeniusM@dut.ac.za. or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 013-3732375. Complaints can be reported to the Director of Research and Postgraduate Support, Dr L. Linganiso at 031 3732577 or researchdirector@dut.ac.za.

Your participation in this study will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Ms Fikile Manqele (21649972)