THE ROLE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY: A CASE OF THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Phalanndwa Ndamulelo of student No: 20008009, declare that this dissertation entitled "*The Role of Good Governance in Promoting Effective Municipal Service Delivery: A Case of Thulamela Local Municipality"* has not been previously submitted for any degree at this University or any other University and it is my own work in design and execution, and all reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

Phalanndwa N ***22/01/2025***

……... **……**

DATE

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my beloved parents, Mukuni Ndidzulafhi Doris and Phalanndwa Nnditsheni Breyan, whose unwavering support and encouragement have guided my academic journey. In the face of challenges and obstacles, your love and belief in me have been a constant source of strength.

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ABSTRACT

Good governance has become a focal point in academic discourse due to its critical role in enhancing living standards and fostering societal development. Ever since the present South African government acquired power in 1994, the government prioritised improved governance and service delivery, further making promises to transform the quality of citizens' livelihood through effective and efficient service delivery. However, South African local municipalities experience critical service delivery problems due to poor governance and administration within their jurisdiction. The study aimed to investigate the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery and develop a framework that will be used to improve good governance and service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. The study adopted a mixed-method approach for data collection to achieve the study's objectives. The convergent parallel mixed method approach was used. The reason for using the convergent parallel mixed method was to enable the researcher to merge or converge qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. A total of 120 respondents were sampled. The sampling technique that was used to sample the study population is non-probability sampling with its sub-type purposive sampling technique. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data was analysed using statistical analysis through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 29.0. The data was presented in the form of tables, frequencies, and percentages. Qualitative data was analysed using NVivo version 14. The data was analysed using thematic analysis, whereby data collected through interviews were grouped into themes and presented in a narrative form. The findings of this study inform the strategies for enhancing good governance practices to improve municipal service delivery, potentially benefiting the broader community and similar municipalities.

The Major findings of the study are:

- There is a relationship between good governance practices and effective municipal service delivery.
- Thulamela Local Municipality faces challenges such as the lack of public participation, poor infrastructure maintenance and poor responsiveness.
- The Municipality has several initiatives, such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Mayor-*Mahosi* and *Imbizos*, to promote effective municipal service delivery.
- Involving the communities in decision-making enhances governance and municipal service delivery.

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The following recommendations are therefore made based on the findings of the study:

- The study recommends that the Municipality implement stronger transparency measures, ensuring that all stakeholders have access to information regarding budget allocations, project timelines, and service delivery updates.
- The Municipality should improve the implementation of the IDP by involving the community more actively in the formulation and review processes.
- The study recommends that the Municipality encourages public participation through E-Participation so that community members can participate at the comfort of their homes.
- The Municipality should strengthen the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to improve service delivery.

Keywords: Good governance, Service delivery, Effectiveness, Local government, Thulamela Local Municipality.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents **Pages**

DECLARATION i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii
DEDICATION iii
ABSTRACT iv
LIST OF TABLES ix
LIST OF ACRONYMS xi
CHAPTER 1: 1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY 1
1.1 INTRODUCTION 1
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY 2
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT 4
1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY 5
1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY 6
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS 6
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 6
1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 7
1.9 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS 7
1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY 9
1.11 CONCLUSION 10
CHAPTER 2: 11
LITERATURE REVIEW 11
2.1 INTRODUCTION 11
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 11
2.3 CONCEPTUALISATION AND CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE TERM GOVERNANCE 12
2.4 THE CONCEPT GOOD GOVERNANCE 13
2.4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE 15
2.5 THE CONCEPT EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 20
2.6 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 23
2.7 GOOD GOVERNANCE AND MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY 25
2.8 CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 27
2.9 INITIATIVES FOR PROMOTING EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 34

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2.10 THE IMPACT OF POOR GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 36
2.11 PUBLIC TRUST IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A NOTION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE 38
2.12 UNETHICAL CONDUCT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY 40
2.13 *BATHO-PELE* PRINCIPLES: A FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 42
2.14 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS UNDERPINNING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY 45
2.15 STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 49
2.16 CONCLUSION 58
CHAPTER 3: 59
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 59
3.1 INTRODUCTION 59
3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM 59
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN 60
3.4 RESEARCH METHOD 61
3.5 STUDY AREA 62
3.6 STUDY POPULATION 63
3.7 SAMPLING 64
3.8 SAMPLING METHODS 64
3.9 SAMPLE SIZE 65
3.10 DATA COLLECTION METHODS 65
3.11 DATA ANALYSIS 67
3.12 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY 69
3.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS 69
3.14 CONCLUSION 71
CHAPTER 4: 72
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION 72
4.1 INTRODUCTION 72
4.2 PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA COLLECTED USING QUESTIONNAIRES 72
4.3 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA COLLECTED USING THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 90
4.4 CONCLUSION 103
CHAPTER 5: 104
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 104

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5.1 INTRODUCTION 104
5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY 104
5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY 105
5.3 SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS 111
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY 114
5.5 A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY 116
5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTRATION 119
5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUTURE STUDIES 120
5.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 121
5.9 CONCLUSION 121
REFERENCES 123
ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE 153
ANNEXURE B: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT 154
ANNEXURE D: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT-QUESTIONNAIRE 156
ANNEXURE E: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT- INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 163
ANNEXURE F: LETTER OF LANGUAGE EDITING 167
ANNEXURE G: LETTER OF PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA 168
ANNEXURE H: TURNITIN REPORT 169

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Gender of the respondents……..72

Table 4.2: Age of the respondents……..…72

Table 4.3: Category of the respondents…..……...73

Table 4.4: Educational qualifications of the respondents……..74

Table 4.5: Employment status……..…74

Table 4.6: Governance practices in Thulamela Local Municipality contribute to effective service delivery……75

Table 4.7: Transparency in the decision-making process enhances the quality of municipal services……..……75

Table 4.8: The Municipality encourages citizen involvement in the decision-making process to enhance effective service delivery……..……76

Table 4.9: Accountability mechanisms are effectively implemented in Thulamela Local Municipality to Improve service delivery……..….76

Table 4.10: The Municipality adheres to legal frameworks and regulations that support effective service delivery……77

Table 4.11: Inadequate training and capacity building for municipal officials hinder effective service delivery……78

Table 4.12: Poor or lack of community involvement in the decision-making process affects the provision of municipal service in Thulamela Local Municipality……..……78

Table 4.13: Lack of compliance with the legislative and regulatory framework affects the provision of municipal services……...79

Table 4.14: Political Interference and the lack of a proper communication strategy between political office bearers, administrative officials and the community within the Municipality affect the provision of municipal services……..……..80

Table 4.15: Lack of infrastructure maintenance has negatively impacted the provision of effective service delivery within Thulamela Local Municipality……..……81

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Table 4.16: Community engagement programs are actively used to improve service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality……..……..……..…81

Table 4.17: The provision of municipal services through private entities/private partnerships enhances service delivery……..…82

Table 4.18: The municipality has implemented an effective performance management system to enhance service delivery……...83

Table 4.19: There are clear policies and procedures in place to guide effective service delivery……..……..…83

Table 4.20: Regular evaluations are conducted to assess municipal service delivery effectiveness within the communities……..……..…84

Table 4.21: Involving communities in the decision-making process enhances governance and service delivery effectiveness……..……..85

Table 4.22: Implementing comprehensive staff training programs will address issues in service delivery……..……....85

Table 4.23: Strengthening accountability mechanisms would improve good governance and service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality……..86

Table 4.24: Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism will significantly improve service delivery outcomes in Thulamela Local Municipality……...87

Table 4.25: Improving transparency in municipal operations leads to better governance and service delivery outcomes……87

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGGN	: African Good Governance Network
AGSA	: Auditor General of South Africa
ANC	: African National Congress
CBOs	: Community-Based Organisations
CDWs	: Community Development Workers
CFO	: Chief Financial Officer
CIPFA	: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting
COGTA	: Cooperate Governance and Traditional Affairs
IDASA	: Institute for Democratic Alternative In South Africa
IDP	: Integrated Development Plan
IFA	: International Federation of Accountants
IGEM	: Integrated Governance Enhancement Model
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
LED	: Local Economic Development
MCPs	: Municipal Community Partnerships
MDGs	: Millennium Development Goals
MFMA	: Municipal Finance Management Act
MPAC	: Municipal Public Accounts Committee
MSPs	: Municipal Service Partnerships
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	: Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OHCHR	: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAIA	: Promotion of Access to Information Act
PDA	: Protected Disclosure Act

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PMS	: Performance Management System
PP	: Public Protector
PSC	: Public Service Commission
SANCO	: South African National Civic Organisation
SDGs	: Sustainable Development Goals
SIU	: Special Investigating Unit
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TLM	: Thulamela Local Municipality
UNDP	: United Nations Development Program

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery within Thulamela Local Municipality. Local government plays a vital role in the development and serves as the epicentre of effective service delivery (Lekala, 2019). According to Selepe and Thusi (2023:690), “good governance is the process of making and implementing those decisions.” Rahman (2023:204) asserts that good governance means an ideal governing system aimed at enhancing citizen welfare, economic growth, and political stability. Similarly, Uddin (2010) posits that good governance aims to contribute to the overall development of a country. In this regard, public institutions provide public services, manage public resources, and guarantee the realisation of fundamental human rights. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of corruption and with due regard for the rule of law. Bratton and Rothchild (2012) highlight that good governance has drawn public awareness of the functioning of public institutions. The World Bank (2003) asserts that good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad societal consensus and that the marginalised and the most vulnerable voices are heard in decision-making over resource allocation.

Masuku (2019:118) states that effective governance is essential in ensuring appropriate public service delivery and administration. Fischer (2019) indicates that governance systems are responsible for setting strategies and ensuring the effective and efficient use of public resources. According to Mutahaba (2012), effective governance in the public sector encourages better decision-making and efficient use of public resources and strengthens accountability for the stewardship of resources. Selepe and Thusi (2023:690) posit that the goal of good governance is to encourage improved service delivery and accountability in the public sector by establishing a standard of good governance. Ali (2017:1) alludes that the principles of good governance, such as participation, the rule of law, transparency, accountability, fairness, and efficiency, enable officials to be more effective and transparent in providing high-quality services. Poor governance compromises the provision of service delivery to the communities. Effective governance is crucial and ultimately results in the competent and effective functioning of South Africa’s public sector organisations (Masuku, 2019:118). To ensure effective governance in the local sphere of government, it is essential to reduce corruption and promote citizen engagement (Uddin, 2010).

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Munzhedzi and Makwembere (2019) posit that public participation, a consensus orientation, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, equity, and inclusion are qualities of good governance. Good governance practices are essential for effective service delivery to the communities. Section 153 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996*, sets out a precise governance and administrative framework within which municipalities should operate. This framework is designed to help municipalities develop institutional mechanisms, structures, and systems and to allocate enough resources to provide responsive public administration to the local communities they serve within their jurisdictions. The South African local municipalities must demonstrate good governance to achieve the constitutional mandate of social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Malemane & Nel-Sanders, 2021:2). Maramura (2022) states that good governance practices contribute to public service execution and quality-of-service delivery.

Mudzusi, Munzhedzi and Mahole (2024:2) are of the view that "to maximise the success of good governance, local government should integrate the principles such as accountability and responsiveness and recognise that good governance is not just about meeting compliance requirements with regulations, legislation and code of practice." This study critically evaluates the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery in local government, particularly in the Thulamela Local Municipality. This chapter presents the introduction, the background of the study, the problem statement, the aim of the study, the research questions, the research objectives, the study's significance, delimitations, operational definitions, and the organisation of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Good governance has become a focal point in academic discourse due to its critical role in enhancing living standards and fostering societal development. According to the International Federation of Accountants (IFA) (2013), good governance is characterised by solid oversight, which puts pressure on the public sector to enhance performance and tackle misconduct. It also improves management, leading to more effective implementation of the chosen interventions, better service delivery and better outcomes. McLennan (2009) asserts that ever since the present South African government acquired power in 1994, the government prioritised improved governance and service delivery, further making promises to transform the quality of citizens' livelihood through effective and efficient service delivery. However, Rakate (2005) noted that when South Africa gained independence in 1994, apartheid continued in the current government, characterised by a fragmented population, poor governance and administration, which affected the smooth distribution of goods and services to meet the demands of the people.

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There are three different spheres of government in South Africa, namely, the National, provincial and local spheres of government. According to Mudzusi *et al.* (2024:2), through the established municipalities, local governments render services to the local communities on behalf of the state. In terms of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*, municipalities must provide essential municipal services such as water, sanitation, refuse removal, electricity, municipal health services, municipal roads, and storm water drainage to local communities in their area. In doing this, local government must be transparent, responsible, accountable, and served by prudent officials to maximise good governance. Good governance practice has become a popular discourse as it plays a vital role in improving the functioning of the public sector, particularly local municipalities. The principles of good governance, such as participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, fairness and efficiency, enable officials in local government to be more effective and transparent in providing high-quality services. It also protects them from the tendency towards misconduct, which impedes good governance (Alaaraj, 2014).

South Africa's local government experiences critical service delivery problems due to poor governance structures and administration within its jurisdiction. Bassett (2016:78) posits that the citizens have waited too long for improved service delivery, raising questions about the municipalities' capabilities. Dlalisa (2009:1) stresses that poor governance impelled a crisis of confidence and service delivery problems in South African local government. Dlalisa (2009) further maintains that people no longer believe their local governments will keep their service delivery promises. Dentilinger (2018:22) states that service delivery protests have become prone in local municipalities due to inequalities and poor governance. These protests are primarily influenced by a shortage of resources and the prevailing incapacity of municipalities to deliver goods and services to their people (Maramura, 2022). Rahman (2023) posits that poor quality service provision is due to a lack of good governance and accountability of municipal officials. On the other hand, Thusi and Selepe (2023:688) maintain that the Lack of accountability and consequence management has a negative impact on good governance in the local sphere of government, putting the provision of basic services at risk. Sikhakane and Reddy (2009) point out that service delivery in municipalities needs restructuring and transformation to meet the needs of the communities. Van der Waldt (2017:97) states that the local sphere of government is ideally placed to address local needs and concerns.

Section 156 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* states that municipalities are mandated to deliver essential services efficiently and effectively to the communities in their jurisdiction. However, Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 sets out the fundamental values and principles which govern public administration. The principles

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apply to every sphere of the government. Section 195(1) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996* obliges public institutions to be effective and efficient in using resources, and they ought to be accountable. In addition, the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* encourages institutions to be transparent when making decisions and provide the public with timely, accessible and accurate information. In addressing the challenges that the municipalities face, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) (2016:57) emphasises the need to strengthen the developmental state of municipalities and good governance to move local governments forward.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996,* together with the *Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2000)*, *Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act No.3 of 2000)*, *Protected Disclosure Act (Act No.26 of 2000)*, *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No.56 of 2003)*, *Local government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000)*, and The *White paper on Transforming Public service delivery,1997,* which is aimed at improving the functionality and administration of municipalities in terms of service delivery, underpins good governance in the South African public sector. Section 152(1)(a) and (b) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, makes provision for the responsible and democratic local sphere of government as well as adequate service provision to the local communities. According to Section 152(1) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996*, the local government is mandated to:

- Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities.
- Ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner.
- Promote social and economic development.
- Promote a safe and healthy environment.
- Encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in local government matters.

The fundamental values of effective governance are also determined by Section 195 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996*. The *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery of 1997*, also known as "*Batho-Pele* White Paper", provides the foundation for effective and good governance by outlining the principles such as access, service standards, consulting, openness, and transparency, providing information, redress, courtesy, and value for money.

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Despite the constitutional and legislative provisions aimed at improving local government functionality, Local municipalities in South Africa, including Thulamela Local Municipality, continue to face governance challenges that hinder effective service delivery. This includes the challenge of poor responsiveness, lack of accountability, misuse of public resources, poor implementation of policies and programmes, inadequate infrastructure maintenance, and lack of public participation. Mudzusi *et al.* (2024:2) stress that municipalities in South Africa have continuously battled the challenge of service delivery. According to Munzhedzi (2013), local municipalities cannot utilise the allocated funds, leading to incomplete projects that have been budgeted for. Ramjee and Van Dock (2011) assert that local government in South Africa is faced with problems of fiscal reserves, poor management, service delivery backlogs, and community protests. Malemane and Nel-Saunders (2021:2) postulate that "local communities' resort to violent protests as a way to express their disillusionment and dissatisfaction when they face unfulfilled promises, deteriorating living standards, and municipal officials who lack the political will to serve the interest of the poor."

Thusi and Selepe (2023:689) stress that local municipalities in South Africa have identified several recurrent service delivery challenges over the years, including governance concerns and backlogs. Humby (2019) believes that services in municipalities are affected by poor integration and coordination within local government structures and the lack of capacity of municipal officials to implement projects that cater to the needs of the communities. According to Dlalisa (2009:1), majority of the people are faced with adequate health services, unclean water, poor educational facilities, poorly maintained infrastructure, and adequate housing because the state institutions have become paralysed by poor governance in such a way that they are unable to deliver their promises to the public. The study focused on the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery within Thulamela Local Municipality. This study was conducted to address the challenges mentioned above from the problem statement.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality and recommend strategies that can be used to enhance governance in the municipal sphere of government. The study also intends to develop a framework that will be used to improve good governance and service delivery in the municipal sphere of government.

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1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives of the study will realise the aim of the study:

- To determine the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality
- To identify challenges faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective service delivery.
- To describe initiatives in place to promote effective service delivery in the Thulamela Local Municipality
- To recommend strategies that can be used to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions which emanated from the objectives of this study are as follows:

- What is the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality?
- What are the challenges faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective service delivery?
- What are the initiatives in place to promote effective service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality?
- What are the strategies that can be recommended to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to knowledge and inform policy and practice on the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery. The findings of this study may lead to enhanced good governance, resulting in adequate service provision within the Thulamela Local Municipality. This study holds significant implications for the field of public administration by shedding light on the crucial role of good governance within the local government context. The study twill benefit researchers, academics, and students in the field of public administration. The study will create awareness among officials in local government to adopt good governance practices. Policymakers can use the insight from this study to develop targeted measures to enhance good governance, thus promoting effective service delivery. The study will also have an entry point for future research into the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery in the local sphere of government.

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1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is about the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery in local government, focusing on Thulamela, a Local Municipality. The study was conducted at Thulamela Local Municipality, located in Thohoyandou. Thulamela Local Municipality, which is the focus of the study, is a Category B Municipality situated within the Vhembe District Municipality in the far north of the Limpopo province. The Thulamela Local Municipality is one of the four municipalities in Vhembe District Municipality. The other three municipalities are Makhado, Collins Chabane, and Musina Local Municipality. Municipalities within the Vhembe District are experiencing good governance challenges that are affecting effective municipal service delivery. however, the study will only focus on Thulamela local municipality.

1.9 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

This section provides the definitions of the operational concept used in the study. To ensure the clarity and consistency of this study, the following key terms are operationally defined.

1.9.1 Role

According to Stringer (2013:5), a role is a set of connected behaviours, rights, obligations, beliefs, and norms conceptualised by people in a social situation. On the other hand, Tuner (2006) defines a role as a cluster of behaviours and attitudes that helps to organise social behaviour at both individual and collective levels. In this study, the term “role” refers to the set of responsibilities, duties and functions assigned to individuals and delineates the expected behaviours of municipal officials towards the municipality’s objectives and delivery of services to the community.

1.9.2 Good Governance

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2021) defines good governance as the process whereby governmental institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources, and facilitate the realisation of human rights in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law. According to Chirlesan (2015:67), “good governance involves the use of procedures and organisations to produce results meeting the societal needs while using resources at their disposal wisely”. Regarding the above definitions, good governance can be viewed as an effective, transparent, accountable, and participatory management and administration of public affairs.

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1.9.3 Governance

According to Farazmand and Pinkowski (2007:313), governance is a value-laden, normative concept that refers to how effectively governments govern and whether they serve their citizens well. On the other hand, Olowu and Sako (2002:37) define governance as a system of principles, policies and institutions through which a society administers its economic, political and social affairs through interaction within and between the state, civil society and private sector. Governance in the context of this study encompasses processes and mechanisms through which authority is exercised, decisions are made, and actions are implemented.

1.9.4 Effectiveness

Mandl, Dierx and Ilzkovitz (2008:3) explain that “effectiveness relates the input or the output to the final objectives to be achieved, that is, the outcome”. Jones and Pendlebury (1996:10) define effectiveness as success in achieving objectives. In other words, it relates to goal achievement, whether the goals and objectives were achieved within the limitations of allocated resources.

1.5.5 Service

According to Grabbort and Hogg (1998:21), service refers to an activity or series of tangible activities that typically occur during the interaction between a customer and the service provider. Fox and Meyer (1995:118) define service as the provision of both tangible goods and intangible services. Regarding the above definitions, service can be defined as a set of activities performed by a service provider to fulfil the demands of customers. This involves tangible elements, such as physical goods, or intangible elements, such as expertise support and integration.

1.9.6 Service Delivery

According to Reddy (2016:2), Service delivery in the context of local government is the provision of municipal goods, benefits, activities, and satisfactions that are deemed public to enhance the quality of life in local jurisdictions. Bayat and Meyer (1994:73) define “service delivery” as meeting citizens' needs, which members of the public request. Regarding the above definitions, service delivery is the provision of a product or service by a government to the community.

1.9.7 Local Government

According to Chandler (2001:1), the term “local government” refers to the authorities and dependent agencies established by parliament to provide a range of specialised services and represent the general interests of a specific area under the direction of a locally elected council. However, Sidgwick (2012) defines local government as the sphere of government closest to the people, which is aimed at ensuring that services reach the local community in time. Regarding the above definitions, Local government denotes a tier of government responsible for managing

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and overseeing public affairs and services at the regional or municipal level. It is typically responsible for addressing local needs, infrastructure development, law enforcement, and community services within its jurisdiction.

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The structure of this study is meticulously organised into a series of chapters; each chapter serves as the distinct cornerstone to unravel the intricate aspects of this research. This study is structured into the following chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

This chapter presented the introduction and background of the study. It also provided the problem statement, aim of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, delimitations, operational definitions, and organisation of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 of this study outlined the theoretical review and in-depth understanding of good governance and effective service delivery. Moreover, it justified the appropriate theoretical framework that supports the study. Furthermore, it explained statutory provisions regarding good governance and service delivery in the South African local government. It further examined the conceptual perspective of good governance. It again scrutinised measures and ways that can nurture good governance.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher delved into the methodology followed when conducting the research. It provided the discussion and justifications for the research methods adopted. The chapter outlined the research paradigm, research designs, methodology, study area, population, sample size, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Analysis and interpretation of the findings

In Chapter 4 of this study, the researcher presented the findings of the data collected using an interview schedule and open-ended interview questions from the respondents. The chapter presented the findings for both quantitative and qualitative data. Moreover, the chapter was divided into two sections: an analysis of the data collected from the interview schedule and an analysis of the data collected using questionnaires.

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Chapter 5: **Conclusion and Recommendations.**

Chapter 5 presented conclusions and recommendations based on the study's findings. The study also linked the findings with the objectives and questions of the research. It also further provided suggestions for future research.

1.11 CONCLUSION

The study focused on the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery within Thulamela Local Municipality. This chapter presented the introduction and background of the study, the problem statement, and the aim of the study, which is to investigate the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery. Moreover, this chapter presented the study's objective. Additionally, the chapter outlined the research questions that emanated from the study's objectives. The study's significance, delimitations, operational definitions, and organisation of the study were presented in this chapter. Chapter two of this study will focus on the literature review.

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CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a comprehensive literature review of the study, focusing on good governance and service delivery in local government. The literature review delves into the multifaceted dimensions of governance practices within local government. It employs the study's theoretical framework to comprehend and address the phenomena, thereby conceptualising and contextualising the term governance. Furthermore, this chapter outlines the concept of good governance and its characteristics, the significance of good governance in local government, effective service delivery, public trust in local government, and challenges impeding adequate service provision in local government. Moreover, the chapter presents the concept of *Batho-Pele* principles, which guide public service delivery in South Africa, as the foundation for effective service delivery in local government. In addition, it discusses the policy and legislative framework underpinning good governance in the South African local sphere of government and delineates the strategies to enhance good governance.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework provides the foundation for understanding good governance's role in service delivery. It explores the key theory that informs the study, offering insights into how governance practices can influence the effectiveness of service provision. The study is predicated on the stakeholders' theory for authenticity.

2.2.1 The Stakeholders Theory

According to Maibeki, Chatiza, Chisango and Chirisi (2022:991), the stakeholder theory is one of the theories of good governance. This school of thought posits that institutions do not operate in a vacuum but in the communities and the society; therefore, they must be responsible to the stakeholders affected by their actions (Sifile, Mabvure, Manuere, & Morries, 2018:14). The stakeholder's theory emphasises the importance of balancing diverse interest to achieve effective governance (Maibeki *et al.,* 2022:991). In the context of local government, the stakeholder's theory highlights the need for transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the community's needs. Local governments, being closest to the people, are mandated to provide equitable access services and be accountable for their actions. According to this theory, good governance involves engaging with stakeholders, understanding their needs and expectations, and making decisions that reflect a balance of interest.

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2.2.2.1 The Relevance of the Stakeholders Theory

The relevance of Stakeholder theory to this study lies in its focus on accountability and community engagement. Effective service delivery in local municipalities, such as Thulamela, depends on the government's ability to interact with and respond to the community it serves. By adopting good governance practices grounded in stakeholders' theory, local governments can enhance service delivery and foster trust and cooperation with their communities. Overall, the stakeholder theory suggests that by addressing all the stakeholders' interests and needs, governance can be more equitable and inclusive, thereby improving service provision.

2.3 CONCEPTUALISATION AND CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE TERM GOVERNANCE

Governance is not a recently coined term. Governance is broadly defined as the process, structures, and institutions used to manage public resources, make decisions, and implement policies. According to Ukwandu (2019:12), governance encapsulates how government, civil society, and the private sector work harmoniously towards well-defined development goals. It illuminates how specific governments function, and which department is in charge of what sector in the policy process and formulation (Ukwandu, 2019:12). The World Bank (1992:21) defines governance as "the exercise of political power to manage nations' affairs." However, the United Nations (UN) (2007) defines governance as the formal and informal arrangements that determine how public decisions are made and public actions are carried out while maintaining a country's constitutional values. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (1997:12), governance involves promoting and creating strong, open, equitable, and accessible economic and political institutions.

Ghirmai (2011:3995) states that governance is the exercise of power or authority, political, economic, administrative or otherwise, to manage a country's resources and affairs. Governance comprises institutions, procedures, and mechanisms through which people air their views, arbitrate their alterations, meet their obligations, and exercise their legal rights (Mulugeta, Genanew & Degu, 2020:335). Zun (2010) alludes that governance encompasses the state's institutional and structural bodies at national, provincial, and local levels dealing with decision-making processes, implementation capacity, interaction, and relationships between government and citizens. According to Rahman (2023:210), governance is the way power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development in a transparent and efficient manner. In the context of local government, governance refers to how municipalities manage their resources, engage with communities and deliver services.

According to Kgobe and Mamokhere (2023:138), governance is a comprehensive concept encompassing how the state and society interact to guarantee respect for human rights,

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participation and voice, effective and efficient administration, and the ability to provide services. Weiss (2000:795) views governance as exercising economic and administrative authority to manage the country's affairs at all levels. This is consistent with Hewitt de Alcantara (2008:105), who posits that governance is a term used to exercise authority within a given sphere. Graham, Plumptre and Amos (2003:1) state that governance is a process through which societies or institutions make significant decisions, decide who is involved in the process, and determine how they are held accountable. Governance refers to the way power is exercised in the management of a country's economic, political and social resources for long-term development (Rahman, 2023:204).

According to Fukuyama (2013:350), governance is the government's ability to make and enforce rules and to deliver services regardless of whether the government is democratic or not. However, Hyden, Court and Mearse (2004:16) regard governance as the formation and stewardship of formal and informal rules that regulate the public realm. Nambalirwa and Sindane (2012:14) postulate that governance encompasses the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage the affairs of a country on all levels, by which means states promote social cohesion and integration and guarantee the welfare of the population. Overall, governance can be viewed as a complex mechanism where citizens and civil society groups articulate their interests' using processes at government institutions (Hyden *et al.,* 2004:16). Governance is not only a contested concept but an adaptable one in that it refers to the state and the external environment in which it operates (Beunen, Van Assche & Gruezmacher, 2022:2).

2.4 THE CONCEPT GOOD GOVERNANCE

Governance is a multi-dimensional concept that covers all aspects of the exercise of authority through formal and informal institutions in the management of the resource endowment of a state (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2005:130). According to the African Good Governance Network (AGGN) (2010:5), good governance is emerging as a principle of international law, and African countries and their agencies are expected to adhere to such principle. From a political perspective, governance in the contemporary African context is viewed as "good" when there is a sound relationship between municipal officials and community members (AGGN, 2010). Such a relationship promotes cooperation between those who govern and the governed (Zadek & Radovich, 2006). In this regard, essential services can be delivered, and sustainable social and economic development is promoted (AGGN, 2010:7). Kakumba (2009:6) asserts that good governance has become popular worldwide. In addition, Kakumba (2009) highlights that even when the concept of good governance has become a familiar and frequently used concept, it varies depending on the context.

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According to Kelbessa (2021:9), good governance emerged mainly because of poor governance characterised by corruption, unaccountable governments, and a lack of respect for human rights. Good governance is an essential component of development (Ukwandu, 2019:7). Bett and Tibbs (2017) allude that good governance is about the government's ability to achieve its end of the social contract, empowerment. Good governance refers to any form of government strategy that can be used to ensure the well-being of the people (Ullah & Rahman, 2021:202). Naidoo (2011:32) alludes that a good governance system requires the decision-making process and public policy formulation to be accountable and transparent. Good governance has lately been referred to as the ideal type of governance to correct societal ills, founded on structural attributes such as the rule of law, transparency, citizen participation, efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability, especially in a manner free from corruption (Matembe, 2010).

Grindle (2004) points out that adding the adjective good to governance implies the possibility of ineffective use of the concept of governance in terms of outputs and outcomes. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2013), good governance can be explained as participation, transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and equity promoting the rule of law. Good governance refers to the actions of government institutions driven by the welfare of the people and adherence to established norms to achieve the state's ideals (Bevir, 2011). It involves the exercise of power by the people, regulated at different levels of state governance, encompassing social, cultural, political, and economic aspects (UNDP, 1997:130). The term “good” in good governance signifies adherence to specific rules that align with the fundamental principles of good governance (Mansoor, 2021). Kaufmann and Dessop (2006:250) state that in the public sector context, good governance comprises the processes that determine and achieve the aims of public politics in social, economic, and other spheres, where power, influence and governance are managed. It is where precise policy formulation, with a professional ethos for the public interest, is developed, and it is the responsible work of the authority.

There is no unanimously agreed-upon definition of good governance; rather, there are characteristics that help us understand what good governance entails (Mutangabende, 2016). Downer (2000:27) defines good governance as a process whereby public institutions carry out public activities and competent management of public resources and matters in a transparent, equitable, answerable and approachable way to meet people's needs. Speer (2012:2379) claims that good governance improves service delivery, empowers citizens, and deepens democracy. As noted by Ellahi, Ihsant and Yausaf (2016:201), a good form of governance is to respond to the problems of citizens collectively and to be able to fulfil their needs appropriately and acceptably. The expectation is that good governance practices make local government more

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responsive by strengthening deliberative forms of participation that enable citizens to influence, direct, control and own decision-making processes (Mchunu & Theron, 2014:43).

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2005:56) suggests that good governance should ensure that the rules of law are observed, improve the effectiveness and accountability of the public sector, and perform well in the fight against corruption. Rahman (2023:204) states that good governance requires an accountable government, an independent judicial system, freedom of thought and expression, predictable policymaking, a people-oriented bureaucracy, rule of law and desirable state affairs. Van der Waldt (2007:5) argues that good governance implies the inclusion and representation of all societal groups, and that local government must uphold accountability, integrity, and transparency in pursuing its goals. Farrington (2009:63) asserts that good governance emphasises the need for democracy, successful citizen participation, and transparent public agency activities.

Good local governance entails mechanisms and processes of local governance that promote equality, local democracy, citizen participation and inclusive decision-making processes (Malemane & Nel-Saunders, 2021:3). According to the UNDP (2009:174), good local governance systems require engaged and empowered local communities capable of articulating their needs and participating in setting priorities, making decisions and monitoring and implementing programs. In short, good local governance is achieved when municipal officials create an enabling environment that allows citizens to participate in decision-making processes on matters that affect their lives (Tau, 2013:153). Good local governance creates opportunities for citizen empowerment and participation in public affairs (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999). Kakumba (2009:66) states that good governance aims to achieve various objectives such as enhancement of the welfare of its citizens, promotion of economic growth, political stability of its citizens, ensuring that democracy prevails and ensuring overall accountability for actions, as well as monitoring of government actions in society. Sebudubudu (2010:259) postulates that good governance helps any nation strive to realise national development goals and objectives.

2.4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

According to Chien and Thanh (2022:1), good governance has eight fundamental characteristics: participation, consensus orientation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and the rule of law. The characteristics of good governance are briefly discussed below.

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2.4.1.1 Participation

Participation is one of the critical elements of good governance. Kelbessa (2021:13) views participation as the extent to which actors are involved in decision-making. Participation is regarded as the core principle upon which good governance is formed and thus plays a critical role in service delivery (Maphazi, 2012:12). Nambalirwa and Sindane (2012:16) assert that participation can be considered vital to solving service delivery issues, given that it acknowledges societal differences, regardless of how it is measured. Participation could be direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representation (Nzimakwe, 2009:99). Thus, good governance requires civil society to participate in formulating development strategies that directly affect communities (Gisselquist, 2012). Citizens should be able to participate in designing and implementing programs and projects (Molepo, Maleko & Khalo, 2015:345).

Public participation can contribute positively to municipalities, where the public can participate in the decision-making processes of municipalities through community consultation, focus groups, community gatherings, and meetings (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004:55). More importantly, the citizens directly participate in the development processes within their municipalities through project identification with the stakeholders and the municipalities and discussions on the benefits of these projects in their areas (Majekodunmi, 2015). Community members ought to be involved in all planning and decision-making processes within the municipality (Kanyane, 2014:6). All interested parties or anyone affected by local government decisions should be able to participate in the decision-making process through public participation processes (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004:55). When community members are provided with information, asked for their opinions, and allowed to make recommendations, this can lead to better decision-making.

2.4.1.2 Rule of Law

The Implementation of good governance in services must also be based on the rule of law (Guntur & Aslinda, 2017:117). The establishment of the rule of law through impartial enforcement of laws is an essential precondition for good governance (Rahman, 2023:210). According to Narayan (2003:11), the rule of law refers to a legal system where laws are acknowledged, clear in meaning, applied equally without attributions, and adhered to by society. Jeffrey, Christopher and Nnamdi (2019:120) indicate that good governance requires fair legal frameworks enforced impartially. It is a broader political consensus that the rule of law is a necessary foundation for efforts to achieve good governance (Johnston, 2006). Mbaku (2020) argues that good governance requires complete protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. According to Sharma (2007), good governance, democracy, and the protection of human rights can only be achieved if an independent and effective judiciary system, along with skilled human resources, lawmakers, judges, and police forces, is put in place. Chaskin and Greenberg (2015),

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concurred by stating that the rule of law is the foundation of any legitimate democracy, guaranteeing that no one is above the law and all citizens are guaranteed essential human rights. So, it is understandable that the prevalence of the rule of law at the local level plays a significant role in promoting good governance (Jeffrey *et al.,* 2019:120).

Shivute (2008:213) describes the rule of law as an intrinsic value that denotes that the government's and state's authority can only be legally exercised within the parameters of appropriate laws and set procedures. In addition, Shivute (2008:213) indicates that in a democracy, the hallmarks of abiding by the rule of law are considered and encouraged division of authority that circumvents undue influence. Geingob (2004) The rule of law prevents maladministration, dishonesty, and corruption among state institutions. In this regard, the rule of law is more important than the rule of the will of the people (Geingob, 2004:118). One of the best ways of promoting adherence to the rule of law is when government institutions comply with good governance practices and respect legal frameworks (Kolawole, 2013:131). Mle and Maclean (2011:1364) state that municipal officials should set the highest standards, including integrity, honesty, ethics, and good political and administrative behaviour. In this regard, constant governance and respect for the rule of law must be maintained at all levels to guarantee good governance practices and improved service delivery in local government (Lekala, 2019:26).

2.4.1.3 Transparency

Transparency means that decisions are made, and their enforcement is made following the rules and regulations (Kelbessa, 2021:14). Transparency ensures the availability of free information and access by those affected by certain decisions and how they are enforced (Rahman, 2023: 210). Maramura (2022:8) asserts that transparency in municipalities eliminates corruption and improves service delivery. Eke, Onyemaechi and Charles (2018) state that transparency involves openness and respect for due processes. Kelbessa (2021:14) maintains that the government encourages transparency and accountability by providing the public with complete and accurate information about its missions, activities, and finances. According to Williams (2009:30), the decision-making process at councils should make it possible for people to follow and understand. This can allow communities to see clearly how those decisions were made. When citizens are adequately informed and able to monitor the actions of government officials, they can actively engage with governmental institutions to facilitate a constructive dialogue regarding social and economic development issues (Eke *et al.,* 2018).

As Ladi (2008:29) discussed, to realise transparency in public service, good institutional arrangements are needed, openness and honesty should be promoted, and functional internal and external control measures must be instituted and correctly applied. Furthermore, Ladi

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(2008:29) acknowledges that adequate information and technology sharing and usage at all levels of public service are regarded as imperative for realising transparency. Cheema (2007:32) notes that transparency promotes openness of the democratic process through reporting and feedback, transparent processes and procedures, and the conduct and actions of those holding decision-making authority.

2.4.1.4 Responsiveness

Good governance requires institutions and processes to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable time frame (Rahman, 2023:210). Thus, to ensure good governance, local government should always try to serve the entire community's needs while balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner (Jeffrey *et al.,* 2019:120). Kakumba (2010:172) indicates that responsiveness has to do with the ability of local government to give due concern to the needs and interests of its constituents. South African municipalities should always serve the community's needs appropriately and responsively. Responsiveness must be equitable and inclusive for all groups, including the vulnerable (Williams, 2009:36).

2.4.1.5 Consensus Oriented

The society consists of different stakeholders. It is the responsibility of the local government to make consensus decisions (Ali, 2015). Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus on what is in the general public's best interest and how this can be achieved (Jeffrey *et al.,* 2019:120). When making decisions or policies, different interests, inputs, and arguments of various stakeholders must be considered before making concrete decisions to have a broad consensus of what is best for all citizens and how it can be accomplished in a prudent and sustainable human development fashion (Chukwunonso, 2014).

2.4.1.6 Equity and Inclusiveness

Good governance involves guaranteeing the right of all individuals to opportunities to improve and maintain their well-being in an equitable and inclusive manner (Ali, 2015). To a greater extent, inclusiveness and equity can be achieved through participation by various stakeholders within society. This sets in motion a process of empowerment that goes far beyond the provision of essential services towards enabling the poor to become agents of their development, in turn leading to better service delivery (Nambalirwa & Sindane, 2012:17). Jeffrey *et al.* (2019:121) assert that a society's well-being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable, to have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being (Rahman, 2023:211). Kelbessa (2021:35) states that there is a need to develop more strategies

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and measures to address inequity and inclusion in local government so that every citizen can benefit from government resources.

2.4.1.7 Efficiency and Effectiveness

Good governance involves the efficient and effective use of public resources. This principle demands that processes, institutions, and stakeholders produce results that meet the needs of the people, utilising minimum use of the resources at their disposal without unnecessary waste or delay (Matembe, 2010:9). Making the best use of resources, sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment are prerequisites for good governance (Rahman, 2023:210). Municipal officials must have a broad and long-term vision of how to better the process of governance to ensure continued economic and social development. Good governance requires that processes must be in place to ensure the most productive use of public resources (Ali, 2015).

2.4.1.8 Accountability

Accountability is one of the keystones of good governance, which denotes the responsibility of the government towards the governed and the mechanism through which people can exercise their influence over the government. According to Nambalirwa and Sindane (2012:17), accountability is the extent to which service providers are answerable to the public and institutional stakeholders for their actions and how awareness is manifested. Good governance requires that institutions and officials are accountable for all decisions that affect the public (Brinkerhof, 2001). Eke *et al.* (2018) assert that accountability means that municipal officers are responsible for their choices and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office. Mbaku (2020) characterises accountability as the obligation to give an account or explanation for one's actions to whom one is answerable.

According to Androniceanu (2021), municipal officials must maintain accountability to citizens, particularly concerning development initiatives and allocating public financial resources. Jephias and Tendai (2020) argue that accountability applies not just to political institutions but also to the corporate sector and civil society organisations, which must be accountable to the public and institutional stakeholders. Therefore, accountability is a fundamental requirement for good governance. As local government officials represent the community, explaining a decision is a prerequisite and an answer to the consequences (Williams 2009:22). Accountability ensures that the actions and decisions of municipal officials are closely monitored to ensure that government initiatives achieve stated goals and meet community needs (Makalela, 2023:221).

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2.5 THE CONCEPT EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

According to Reddy (2016), local government is a part of government closer to citizens, and it is mandated to develop and provide municipal goods and services to the benefit and satisfaction of the public and to improve their quality of life. Kanyane (2010:85) alludes that the municipality is the relevant institution of the sphere of government that directly interacts with communities as it has direct access to the local community's everyday affairs. Local government is among the three governmental spheres, including the provincial and national governments. It is responsible for the local administration of municipal services (Madumo, 2015). According to Naidoo and Ramphal (2018), local municipalities are close to the needs and demands of the citizens. Sipuka (2021:16) indicates that local governments are there to provide adequate and sustainable service delivery to their residents. Taylor, Draai and Salie (2020:1) state that post-1994, access to municipal services in South Africa was no longer regarded as a privilege meted out to communities based on race but as the right of all residents. Thus, extending such services to previously excluded citizens became paramount.

Local government is mandated to render essential services within defined geographical areas that aim to enrich the community conditions of life (Davids, Theron & Maphunye, 2005:59). Section 152 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* outlines the responsibilities of municipalities. It states that municipalities must provide services to communities in a sustainable manner. However, Koma (2010:112) alludes that the performance of numerous municipalities across the country has thus far demonstrated huge deficiencies in fulfilling their constitutional and legislative obligations. The *Municipal Systems Amendment Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000)* regulates the responsibilities of all municipalities. These include prioritising local citizens' needs, enhancing local communities' growth and guaranteeing that all local citizens can access the minimum primary services.

According to Ndevu and Muller (2018:1), local government forms the part of the public sector closest to citizens. It is, therefore, indispensable in providing essential goods and services and developing the local area (Ndevu & Muller, 2018:1). Maseko (2018:27) indicates that service delivery refers to government or government entity delivering goods or services to a group of people or community in a way that was promised to or demanded by that community. Reddy (2016:2) articulates that service delivery in the context of local government is the provision of municipal goods, benefits, activities and satisfactions deemed public to enhance the quality of life in local jurisdictions. Service delivery encompasses the government's commitment to providing reliable, predictable, quality community services (Reddy, 2016). Chigwata and Visser (2018) posit that quality service delivery describes the distribution of basic resources citizens depend on services, such as water, electricity, sanitation, infrastructure, and housing. Therefore,

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service delivery in local government entails the activities of municipal officials to establish exactly what the public wants and how best to fulfil their needs (Chigwata & Visser, 2018). Lack of service provision and infrastructure affects the citizens' quality of life (Helao, 2015:34). Against this background, effective service delivery is considered a democratic right of the people.

Masuku and Jili (2019) state that an effective public service delivery system is one of the most significant ways to reduce poverty through poverty programs. Masuku and Jili (2019:1) further claim that Local governments and relevant stakeholders must integrate their processes and services to guarantee effective and efficient service delivery. Smit and Govender (2015) allude that local authorities play a vigorous role in being an effective and responsive driver of local demands and should work towards improving the residents' well-being and living conditions. Access to municipal services significantly improves the quality of life for citizens, enabling the less fortunate to rise above poverty (Thebe, 2017). Efficient public service is vital to a well-functioning country that maximises its developmental potential and the welfare of its citizens (Kroukamp, 2011).

According to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996,* a municipality has the right to govern, on its initiative, the local government affairs of its community, subject to national and provincial legislation. Masuku (2019:121) argues that municipalities must be a driving force for delivering basic services to people across various communities. Local government is regarded as the sphere that should provide the immediate necessary intervention for providing services because it is closer to the community (Masuku & Jill, 2019:1). Given that local government is the sphere closest to the people, it has an important social function in providing basic services to the community (Ndevu & Muller, 2017:13). However, most local municipalities within the Republic of South Africa are tainted and perceived as ineffective in enhancing the quality-of-service delivery (Shongwe & Meyer, 2023:136).

The local government sphere is autonomous and entitled to regulate matters relating to local affairs (Shongwe & Meyer, 2023:139). Mabizela and Matsiliza (2020:1-5) state that the responsibility of municipalities is to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of basic and essential services to communities, such as water, electricity, housing and proper sanitation. According to Kanyane (2010), it is the mandate of government institutions such as municipalities to ensure efficient service delivery that enhances the welfare of the community members under its watch. A municipal service deemed basic is necessary for an acceptable and reasonable quality of life and, if not provided, would endanger public health, safety, or the environment (Reddy & Naidu, 2012:94). Being the government closest to the people, it is to be expected that

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a core function of municipalities is the rendering of a variety of basic but essential services to the community within its jurisdiction (Roux, 2005:69).

Efficient and effective service delivery is imperative for local communities in South Africa due to high poverty and lack of job opportunities (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:688). Municipal service delivery is described by Mfene (2009) as an all-encompassing activity intended to promote the community's overall welfare. According to Bachman and MacCleery (2006:1), high-quality municipal service delivery ensures the economic development of municipalities. In contrast, poor levels of service delivery create interruptions and other problems, undermining the quality of life in communities. According to Duduzile (2015:17), effective service delivery has an immediate and direct effect on the quality of life of the people in the community. Sefala (2009:31) maintains that the effective delivery of basic services means setting up strategies and plans that a government institution like a municipality will implement. Service delivery can be effectively addressed if accountability and ethical leadership are the driving forces for municipal officials (Mbandlwa, 2018:21). Hernandez (2006) stresses that effective service delivery is a crucial aspect of the poverty reduction strategy and enhances the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), now succeeded by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As stipulated by the South African government, service delivery is a constitutional obligation directed to be provisioned in a manner that underscores equality and fairness, among other values (Ndebele & Lavhelani, 2017). According to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*, equitable delivery of essential amenities to the people is a social mandate of the South African public sector. This implies that the public sector must fulfil its legal, political, and socioeconomic obligations (Mamokhere, 2020). Based on this backdrop, public service delivery must be viewed as a mechanism or way for the public sector to achieve its constitutional mandates to the public as directed by the law (Maloba, 2015). According to Eke *et al.* (2018), local governments worldwide must provide for and cater to the community's needs. Akinboade, Mokwena and Kinfack (2014) argue that adequate access to local government services, including roads, housing, water supply, and waste management, promotes public health and environmental sustainability and enhances development.

According to Thornhill (2008), effective service delivery is characterised by the timely, efficient, and equitable provision of services that meet the needs of the community. According to Mbandlwa (2018:17), providing quality essential services to the people should be at the forefront of local government to uplift the dignity of the poor and previously disadvantaged groups affected by the apartheid system. Most communities have insurmountable challenges accessing water, electricity, sanitation, and housing (Tsheola & Sebola, 2012). Shai (2017) stresses that the poor

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service delivery by the local government has frustrated communities, resulting in frequent protests about the standard and quality of service delivery, leadership, and lack of good governance. Matloga, Mahole and Nekhavhambe (2024:2) argue that “to deliver basic services effectively, municipalities must encourage public participation and consider the diverse needs, values and aspirations of the public they serve.”

2.6 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Ndevu and Muller (2018) highlighted the importance of local authorities, given that local government is the sphere of government closest to the people; it has an essential social function in providing basic services to the community. Van der Waldt (2006:142) asserts that local government is at the coalface of public service delivery. This view is also articulated by Thornhill (2008:492), who states that local government is often the first point of contact between an individual and a government institution. Local government plays an important role and functions that differ entirely from those in the provincial and national spheres of government (Shongwe & Meyer, 2023:139-140). However, the similarity between the three spheres of government is that of ensuring that services are delivered to the people without discrimination (Kanyane, 2010:16). According to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) (2007:1), good governance has a significant role to play in effective service delivery in public institutions. Good governance is a solid foundation for improving service delivery and sustainable growth (Makalela, 2023:219).

Mudzusi *et al.* (2024:3) maintain that good governance is essential in a democratic country like South Africa. Sipuka (2021:17) posits that good governance practices improve municipal service delivery. According to Mudzusi *et al.* (2024:3), the importance of good governance in local government includes broader public participation, greater access to democracy, proper delivery of service and control of corruption. This is consistent with the UN (2007:9), which posits that good governance encourages public participation in government, inclusion in lawmaking and policymaking, and accountability of elected and appointed officials. Good governance enables the community to become actively involved in public policymaking and leads to a broad representation of societal interests in decision-making (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Similarly, Malemane and Nel-Saunders (2021:3) posit that good local government creates opportunities for citizens' empowerment and participation in local government affairs. Tapela (2015:14) states that good public sector governance encourages improved service delivery and accountability standards. Mbaku (2020:18) indicates that good governance in local government strengthens the municipality's operations regarding service delivery. Notably, effective governance structures and administration in local government encourage improved decision-making, effective resource use, and strengthened accountability to resources (Gilchrist, 2019).

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According to Kuhlmann and Wollmann (2019:41), proper governance is accompanied by robust scrutiny, providing necessary pressures to enhance public sector performance and track wrongdoings. Sipuka (2017:17) posits that the principles of good governance provide opportunities for citizens to obtain accountability from municipal officials. Moreover, good governance enables service provision to be centred on a tolerable governance framework and the participation of more prominent citizens (Grindle, 2004). Makhura and Mabuza (2019) state that effective governance requires good management and coordinated governance with accountability systems in place. Effective service delivery requires control systems ensuring collaborative work between private and public entities (Matibane, 2010). According to Sipuka (2021:18), forming structures that ensure good governance practices at the local level is vital for service delivery. Furthermore, Sipuka (2021:18) maintains that such structures enable the citizens to be involved in the decision-making process to implement government policies and programs smoothly. Effective governance practices in local government ensure efficient and effective distribution of goods and services (Holtzhausen & Naidoo, 2011).

Good governance promotes transparency, accountability, and participation, all of which are critical for effective service delivery (UNDP, 1997:4). Without good governance, municipalities are more likely to suffer from inefficiencies, corruption, and a lack of public trust. Erasmus (2010:98) posits that good governance forces the local government to carry out its duties or engage in its activities to achieve and uphold transparency, predictability, a culture of justification of state action, and assurance. Thusi and Selepe (2023:690) maintain that the goal of good governance is to encourage improved service delivery and accountability in the public sector by establishing a standard of good governance. Maramura (2022:3) postulates that sound governance principles allow citizens to obtain accountability from municipal officials. According to Agere (2000), good governance in the public sector is vital to encourage better service delivery and accountability by establishing the benchmark for good governance in public institutions. Good governance in the public sector encourages better decision-making and the efficient use of resources and strengthens accountability for the stewardship of resources (Van Helden & Reichard, 2013).

According to Grindle (2007), effective governance can improve management, leading to more effective implementation of the chosen interventions, better service delivery, and, ultimately, better outcomes. Murimoga and Musingafi (2014) assert that municipalities should be built on a solid foundation of stimulating local development by providing quality services to their citizens. Good governance is concerned with the application of democratic principles to facilitate an acceptable process of governance and service delivery (Dlalisa, 2009). In addition, it implies proper mechanisms to carry out what the country's laws, policies, rules and regulations that guide

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public institutions require one to do to deliver public goods and services. Good governance is particularly crucial in the local sphere of government, as it provides significant benefits and is vital for effective administration (Frey, 2008). Munzhedzi (2021) posits that it is only unfortunate that many of the municipalities in South Africa do not fully apply good governance principles.

2.7 GOOD GOVERNANCE AND MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY

In this era, good governance has drawn public awareness of the operations of public institutions. Public institutions are institutions backed by public funds and controlled by the state to provide services to the community (OECD, 2013). Good governance has also become an important factor in the consideration of a nation's ability to adhere to universally acceptable democratic standards (Bratton & Rothchild, 2012). According to the World Bank (2003), it ensures that political, social, and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making regarding the allocation of development resources. Good governance in the public sector aims to encourage better service delivery and improved accountability by establishing a standard for good governance in the public sector (IFA, 2013). According to Mutahaba (2012), good governance in the public sector encourages better decisions and efficient use of resources and strengthens accountability for the stewardship of resources. The IFA (2013) indicates that good governance practices have been established to encourage public service delivery good services and to improve transparency and accountability in the public sector. However, (Sebola, 2018:58) alludes that service delivery to South African society remains a bone of contestation. For service to be delivered adequately, there must be a responsive governance system to the needs of the people (Mutangabende, 2016:22).

Local government services are of fundamental importance to a municipality's growth, development and stability and are aimed at satisfying the community's needs (Craythorne 2006:153). Van der Waldt (2007:5) argues that good governance implies the inclusion and representation of all societal groups, and that local government must uphold accountability, integrity and transparency in pursuing its goals. According to Maphazi (2012), good governance practices require public institutions to create a favourable environment for service delivery and public participation. Naidoo (2017:79) alludes that good governance enables efficient service delivery to the communities by speeding up the distribution of goods and services within government structures. According to IFA (2013), good governance is characterised by solid inspection, which puts pressure on the public sector to enhance performance and tackle misconduct. It also improves management, leading to more effective implementation of the chosen interventions, better service delivery and better outcomes (IFA, 2013).

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According to Rahman (2023:204), good governance usually requires an accountable government, an independent judicial system, freedom of thought and expression, predictable policy-making, a people-oriented bureaucracy, rule of law and desirable state affairs. Alaaraj (2014) argues that the principles of good governance, such as participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, fairness and efficiency, enable officials to be more effective and transparent in providing high-quality services. Sebudubudu (2010:251) points out that good governance exists where there is responsiveness, equity and consistency regarding how public goods are distributed and shared among members of the society to the needy. Good governance provides the foundation for effective service delivery by ensuring that government institutions are transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of their constituents (UNDP, 1997:4).

Thusi and Selepe (2023:690) maintain that the goal of good governance is to encourage improved service delivery and accountability in the public sector by establishing a standard of good governance. According to Grindle (2004), municipalities that adhere to the principles of good governance are better positioned to allocate resources efficiently and provide services that meet the needs of their communities. Fukuyama (2013) argues that good governance fosters public trust, which is essential for promoting civic engagement and encouraging citizens to participate in local governance processes. Additionally, Siddle and Koelble (2016) note that municipalities with strong governance structures are more likely to deliver services equitably and avoid the mismanagement of public funds. Transparency International (2018:15) emphasises that effective governance reduces corruption, which is a significant barrier to service delivery in many developing countries.

Du Toit (2002:82) asserts that it is the responsibility of the public service to provide services to society. Vivier and Wentzel (2013:240) maintain that enabling the public service to deliver efficient services to society depends on leadership and governance. Naidoo (2004:69) notes that leaders in public service should have the necessary skills and knowledge about the specialised functions of public administration to ensure that the institutional goals of service delivery can be achieved meaningfully. To improve public service delivery, Naidoo (2004:99) suggests that different role players must be consulted about the quality of services they are about to receive. According to Naidoo (2004), good governance requires participation and adherence to the rule of law. Good governance is integral to ensuring that municipalities can effectively deliver services to their communities (Holtzhausen & Naidoo, 2011). Grindle (2004) argues that municipalities adhering to the principles of good governance are better equipped to allocate resources efficiently, address community needs, and improve the quality of life for their citizens. This study argues that good governance practices and approaches contribute to effective service delivery, particularly in local areas where most communities need services and amenities.

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A municipality needs competent, knowledgeable leaders and administrative capacity to deliver services effectively and efficiently (Maphanga, 2022). Moreover, Institutions like the Auditor-General Office and the Public Protector Office should effectively support accountable administration while averting public resource mismanagement (Lewis, Ricard & Kleijn, 2018:290).

2.8 CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

According to Maramura (2022), local government is closer to the citizens and is responsible for initiating community development. Wagner (2018:300) argues that the South African Constitution, 1996 specifies that local government structures are purposed to promote socio-economic growth throughout the country. However, Sipuka (2021:19) indicates that local municipalities fail to deliver services to residents, thus raising questions about municipal efficiency. According to Mphehle (2012:125), various challenges faced by local government in essential service delivery remain a reality and often lead to service delivery protests in different parts of the country. The birth of autonomous privileges in 1994 saw the South African government pledge to provide complimentary basic amenities to previously disadvantaged, predominantly black populace (Sithole & Mathonsi, 2015). This move made significant strides towards improved equality in service delivery to previously marginalised communities. However, it is important to mention that serious governance and service delivery challenges in local government still exist and are arguably increasing despite these efforts (Sithole & Mathonsi, 2015). This has been evidenced by the significant increase in protests. Kgobe and Makalela (2018:124) stress that service delivery is still an alarming issue affecting almost all South African local municipalities.

The current debate on the developmental role of local government shows that the system has failed to deliver services to communities (Madzivhandila & Asha, 2012:376). Van der Walt (2007) points out that many of the larger municipalities have worked hard to improve the provision of potable water, electricity, roads and waste management, as well as other infrastructural services in their areas of jurisdiction. However, the reality is that many local municipalities in South Africa are still struggling to implement their developmental mandate effectively. According to Molinyane (2012:3), South Africa has a massive service delivery backlog. Molinyane (2012:3) further claims that this problem is not unique to South Africa as many other African countries are experiencing similar issues. Poor governance and service delivery are significant challenges in South Africa (Masuku, Mlambo & Ndlovu, 2022:98). Service delivery is not being addressed at the pace that is needed in South Africa to redress service backlogs (Naidoo & Kuye, 2005). Local government experiences a lot of challenges, stretching from skills shortages that facilitate the increase of poverty due to financial misconduct, fraud, corruption, political interference, and nepotism (Crocker, 2019).

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Governance and poor service delivery remain a devastating challenge in most local governments (Kalonda & Govender 2021:5). Abakose and Abagojam (2021) maintain that public service delivery in many African countries is riddled with bureaucracy, corruption, selfishness, and favouritism that tend to benefit the privileged few at the expense of the impoverished many. According to Hopper (2018:54), the inability of municipalities to render effective services causes severe hardships amongst citizens and further inhibits municipal development. This argument is supported by Molaba (2016:27), who believes that municipalities ought to exert as much effort in executing their duties as mandated by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.* According to Ambe and Badenhorst-Weiss (2012), the lack of qualitative service in South Africa cannot be separated from the challenge of poor governance, political interference, poor maintenance culture and the high incidence of corrupt practices at the local level of governance. Financial irregularities, corruption, and maladministration negatively affect service delivery in South Africa (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:689).

Thornhill (2015:97) posits that the problem of corruption and maladministration is widespread in the South African public service. This is consistent with Munzhedzi (2020:95-97), who stresses that municipalities are characterised by their engagement in corrupt activities and maladministration. Surprisingly, those who violate legislative frameworks in municipalities are not held accountable and continue their malpractice unscathed (Shongwe & Meyer, 2023). The challenge undermines the effectiveness of public institutions and directly contradicts the principles underlying the spirit of *Batho-Pele* (Thornhill, 2015:97). Municipal managers, administrators, and politicians affiliated with the municipalities frequently engage in misconduct despite the existence of numerous legislative frameworks and laws intended to ensure accountability and uphold the rule of law (Kubheka, 2018). This ongoing issue raises concerns regarding the effectiveness of these regulations in curbing inappropriate behaviour within local government.

Mashamaite (2014:12) identifies what appears to be an avoidance of the principle of the separation of powers between politicians and municipal administrators in many municipalities across the country as a constraint to effective municipal service delivery. This situation often leads to political interference, where decisions are driven by political motives rather than the genuine needs of the community. According to Mafunisa (2001:12), South African municipalities experience serious challenges dealing with the interface between politicians and officials. Mabizela and Matsiliza (2020:5) assert that political interference is another major contributor to service delivery constraints in local government. According to Mngomezulu (2020:39), political interference in most municipalities creates conflicts about how the municipalities are governed. Beyers and Shongwe (2023:142) state that political parties involve themselves in issues of the

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municipal council and the municipality's administration, which creates problems for the smooth implementation of programmes for local and economic development policies and integrated development planning. Such clashes are prevalent in municipal projects and tenders where politicians typically show their interests (Ndudula, 2013). Politicians want to force municipalities to employ their cadres despite not having the relevant qualifications, which means the people who deserve to be employed are overlooked (Mngomezulu, 2020).

Munzhedzi (2020:94) argues that political interference largely affects service delivery because the employment of underqualified people creates problems for the functioning of the municipality, leading to poor service delivery. Insufficient service delivery can be attributed to political transformation, cadre deployment, incompetence of the municipal officials, and political-administrative interface, among others (Reddy, 2016:85). According to Mngomezulu (2020:42), political interference affects service delivery precisely because when an incompetent person is employed, they may fail to execute their duties satisfactorily. Political infighting and related clashes between the political and management components in local government in South Africa have also adversely affected municipal service delivery (Reddy 2016:1). Mafunisa (2003) emphasised that political interference in the administration would erode the opportunity for efficient administration; hence policymaking activities ought to be wholly separated from administration functions and that administrators had to have explicit objectives before they could begin to develop an efficient administrative function. South African municipalities continue to experience challenges with addressing political meddling in the affairs of the municipal administration, creating tension and squabbling between politicians and municipal administrators (Mafunisa, 2003).

Service delivery challenges all over South Africa have become severe, and this is epitomised by the rise of service delivery protests in various parts of the country, year after year (Ngcqoyiya 2018:31). Thebe (2017:131) found that in South Africa, poor customer service in the public sector is triggered by disorganised management and accountability by the public service workforce. Accountability is linked with ethical leadership. The lack of moral leadership in local government hinders the effective delivery of essential services due to corruption in local government departments (Shai, 2017). Corruption poses a threat to democracy and the rule of law because it represents a lack of ethical leadership and a collapse of institutions meant to enforce good governance practices (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:691). According to Shai (2017), South African municipalities must make aggressive efforts or measures to combat corruption in all its forms. Shai (2017) further states that if such measures are implemented successfully, municipalities can save enough money from theft to provide quality services to their people. Fatile (2013) stresses that corruption is the absolute opposite of good governance. Government institutions that

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experience high levels of corruption face significant challenges in achieving the principles of good governance (Fatile, 2013). According to Thusi and Selepe (2023:691), there have been consistent allegations of corruption in all three branches of the South African government.

Matloga *et al.* (2023) stress that the lack of transparency in municipalities tends to influence officials to get involved in corruption and mismanagement. Maemu (2023) points out that corruption in South African public administration causes various problems in service delivery. Ntliziywana (2017:17) has identified the following challenges that affect service delivery in municipalities.

- Poor accountability by municipal officials.
- Lack of communication with residents.
- Political interference in the administration.
- Political instability.
- Fraud and corruption.
- Poor budget and financial management.
- Lack of skilled employees.

The challenges mentioned above are major reasons South Africa has seen numerous violent protests and insufficient service delivery.

Municipalities do not only have a duty to render services to the citizens, but they must also ensure that they improve the living standards of the citizens (Molefe, 2015:1). According to Thebe (2017:56), local government encounters various service delivery problems, as many who lack indispensable services have questioned the efficiency of municipal officials. Scholars have alluded to the capacity of municipalities, which is a prerequisite for service provision in local government (Shongwe & Meyer, 2023:141). Shongwe and Meyer (2023:141) stress that many municipalities nationwide lack adequate capacity to provide essential services to communities. Regarding the lack of capacity, Makanyeza, Kwandayi and Ikobe (2013:5) identified the lack of training and skills as a key downfall of local government. According to Mabizela and Matsiliza (2020:6), municipalities are experiencing various challenges that hinder service delivery, such as inadequate technical skills, knowledge, leadership and management skills. The lack of capacity or skills in local government affects how local municipalities are run and, therefore, their ability to deliver on their mandate (Ndevu & Muller, 2018:188). Lack of capacity, particularly human resources in the public sector, significantly affects how public institutions are run and, by extension, their capacity to deliver services as mandated.

Human resources skills inadequacy in the public sector is one of the most significant contributors to poor service delivery (Munzhedzi, 2016). Poor efficiency in local government due to incapacity

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is one of the challenges affecting adequate service provision. Mudzusi *et al*. (2024) state that poor efficiency in receiving services in South African municipalities is a significant challenge. The prolonged waiting time reduces the quality of the service and the absence of good governance (Mudzusi *et al.,* 2024). According to the Institute for Democratic Alternative in South Africa (IDASA) (2010:9), municipal officials must gain the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver services to communities effectively. Local government authorities must devise strategies for acquiring human and financial resources to improve the lives of community members (Mabizela & Matsiliza, 2020:5). According to Isaacs (2016), well-trained and competent employees who can deliver services effectively and efficiently are important to ensure integrity, objectivity, transparency and responsiveness to the requirements of ordinary people. Capacity building and skills development are essential in these institutions for employees and management to become more innovative in the delivery of services (Kalonda & Govender, 2021:9).

According to Shongwe and Meyer (2023:140), several challenges within local municipalities continue to hinder providing basic services to communities, such as some municipalities struggling to draw up an adequate budget to address community service delivery issues. The failure of municipalities to draft budgets makes it difficult to sustain themselves financially and operate effectively, ultimately leading to their failure to provide effective municipal services (Beyers, 2016). According to Chili, Akba, Nyika & Mbonye (2023), South Africa's municipal governments have struggled to provide adequate services because of human resource shortages, budgetary constraints, and corruption. A report by IDASA (2010:6) outlines that municipalities face considerable challenges in financial mismanagement, corruption and non-compliance with financial legislation for local government. According to Beyers and Shongwe (2023:142), the failure of most municipalities in the country to control their finances determines those municipalities' success and failure to sustain themselves and provide services to communities. Despite the national government having injected significant financial resources to promote social and economic development by providing basic infrastructure and services, many municipalities have failed to adequately address the basic needs of their communities (Jakoet-Salie, 2018:15). The lack of financial management primarily contributes to a great degree of failure in local economic development, infrastructure development, strategic growth, and service delivery (Beyers & Shongwe, 2023:142).

Chili *et al.* (2016:37) stress that public service in South Africa faces various challenges, including public money wastage, low revenue collections and unmotivated public servants, poor accountability, and generally poor performance on service delivery. Abakose and Abagojam (2021) argue that major setbacks to poor public service delivery include a lack of transparency and community participation, poor accountability, and inadequate service provider skills.

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Munzhedzi and Phago (2020) state that municipal officials do not respond to queries on time. Mabizela and Matsiliza (2020:4) state that service delivery challenges result from several issues, including corruption, lack of capacity within municipalities, lack of effective oversight and inadequate budget from the national and provincial government provided to municipalities. Masehela, Mamogale and Makhado (2012) affirm that local government has poor accountability. Manyaka and Sebola (2015) note that it can be argued that the inadequate service delivery in most South African municipalities is compounded by the fact that holistic mechanisms for monitoring the performance of officials are inadequate, and considering this view, officials in South African municipalities are not adequately held accountable for their performance.

According to the Public Service Commission (PSC) (2010:14), the following reasons can be seen as contributing factors towards inefficient and non-responsive service delivery in the public service:

- the appointment of incompetent people to various positions.
- Low capacity, where the government suffers from weak personnel and system capacities due to insufficient skill bases, low compensation, and poor human resource and operational policies.
- lack of coordination and integration of governmental activities.
- poor management systems coupled with organisational centralisation and top-down governance.
- the state is overambitious because its objectives exceed its capacities.
- Service monopolies are where public entities in the developing world are seen as uncompetitive and use inefficient processes, leaving no incentives to operate otherwise.
- a vulnerable political context is not conducive to an efficient system.
- social insulation, low transparency, and poor participation. The social explosion is based on the process and normal professionalism, which is internally biased and has non-responsive incentive structures.
- poor organisational evaluation and accountability mechanisms.
- a lack of communication with citizens.

According to Tshiyoyo and Koma (2011:25), the South African local government system is saddled with critical problems and challenges in delivering sustainable service. An assessment report commissioned by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) in 2009 revealed significant findings on governance, service delivery, financial management and policy implementation aspects of nationwide municipalities (Tshiyoyo & Koma, 2011:25). Some of the identified problems related to huge service delivery and backlog

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challenges, poor communication and accountability relationships with communities, problems with the political/administrative interface, corruption and fraud, poor financial management, several violent service delivery protests, weak civil society formations and insufficient municipal capacity due to lack of scarce skills (COGTA Report, 2009). According to Madzivhandila and Asha (2012:374), the lack of community participation, corruption and poor service delivery have been accounted for as an issue of lack of technical skills and properly trained personnel in the local sphere of government.

Budhram (2018) posits that South Africa is perceived as one of the African countries lacking effective governance and that the public has lost confidence in the public sector. Shongwe and Meyer (2023:141) argue that the current state of local government in rural areas shows that most rural municipalities still have backlogs for basic service delivery. The White Paper on Local Government of 1998 delineates the responsibilities of municipalities to effectively address service delivery issues, including infrastructure development and housing backlog, among other essential services that citizens need (Gegane & Phahlane, 2024:1). However, most municipalities struggle to provide adequate services to ensure that there is a level of effectiveness and efficiency (Shongwe & Mayer, 2023). Moreover, Shongwe and Meyer (2023) allude that municipalities need help to conduct effective oversight, contributing to the growing concern about the lack of services in communities. Monitoring and evaluation systems are not adequately administered, contributing to a lack of accountability (Mabizela & Matsiliza, 2020:2). Asha and Makalela (2019:2-3) mentioned in their study that service delivery challenges remain unresolved. Accordingly, most communities in the country have expressed unhappiness with the government and municipalities' failure to provide adequate essential services (Beyers & Shongwe, 2023:144).

Beyers (2016) asserts that most South Africans have lost confidence in the government's ability to govern efficiently, particularly in local government. Democracy in local government is imperative as the local sphere provides an environment that enables interaction between the government and the people (Madumo, 2015:155). According to Mafunisa, Sebola and Tsheola (2012:221), service delivery challenges can be addressed if municipalities can strengthen community participation in the integrated Development Program (IDP) process. Madzivhandila and Asha (2012:378) affirm that the challenges faced by local municipalities are complex and diverse. Madzivhandila and Asha (2012) further claim that the ability to cope with these challenges depends on the unique political, socio-economic and institutional situation of a given local municipality. Local government should promote their developmental role to overcome the centralised and fragmented planning practices of the apartheid era (Shongwe & Meyer, 2023:144).

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2.9 INITIATIVES FOR PROMOTING EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The local sphere of government makes up the component of the South African public sector that is closest to the citizens and is, therefore, indispensable in providing essential goods and services and developing the local areas (Ndevu & Muller, 2017:13). Local government is confronted with a high level of complexity and has many challenges that must be addressed and need to be met (Taute, 2021:1). Folz (2004:198) indicates that there are many services that municipalities provide; however, the most important ones are water supply and sanitation, refuse removal, electricity and gas supply, municipal health services, municipal roads and stormwater drainage, street lighting, municipal parks, and recreation. Nevertheless, local government employs various initiatives to deliver municipal services effectively within its jurisdiction, including contracting with for-profit businesses, non-profit organisations, and other spheres of government (Dau, 2010:26). In the last few decades, there has been a significant increase in the voluntary sector being involved in a range of service delivery (Morison, 2000:8). The Municipal Service Partnerships (MSPs) option is not an end, but simply one of the means available to municipalities to address the municipal infrastructure and service backlog (Mogale, 2001:153). Furthermore, Mogale (2001:153) indicates that MSPs are intended to provide municipal councils greater flexibility in addressing service delivery needs.

Mogale (2001:187) states that a municipality can outsource services, meaning it can choose or hire entities to deliver the service. At the same time, it remains its responsibility to make sure that the entities deliver services properly (Maemu, 2021:25). Folz (2004:198) indicates that another way a municipality can provide services is to enter Municipal-public partnerships. Cole (2006:632) postulates that a municipality can enter public-private partnerships to provide sustainable services to its communities. However, Maemu (2021:25) believes that public-private partnerships have great potential but do not provide the final solution to all the infrastructure delivery problems facing local governments. Public-private partnerships also carry potential risks that should be carefully considered when local governments decide on the one that is best suited for them (Maemu, 2021). Partnering with a private organisation requires a shared commitment from both the private organisation and public institution to reach a particular outcome (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011:3). Mogale (2001) maintains that private sector involvement should primarily aim to achieve improved and greater levels of services and leverage additional capacity and investment. Examples of public-private partnerships that can be entered into are service contracts, leases and concessions (Dau, 2010:25).

E-participation is another crucial initiative to promote effective service delivery in local government (Kim & Lee, 2012). According to Porwol, Garcia Pereira and Dumas (2022), E-

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participation is a technology-mediated conversation between citizens and decision-makers that guarantees dynamic interaction and introduces current, innovative methods for the public to participate. Silal and Saha (2021) argue that the use of electronic participation by governments in involving citizens results in a greater degree of development and improved performance, both directly and indirectly, through the reduction of corruption. There have been several government programs to advance service delivery and institutional support, and during the last decade, significant progress has been made in delivering basic services to the people; however, significant backlogs remain, and more needs to be done and it needs to be done differently (Kroukamp, 2011:23).

According to Dau (2010), municipal-community partnerships can also be entered as an alternative way of providing public services in South Africa. This partnership is promoted and helps local governments provide quality facilities and services in an equitable, efficient, and effective way for the benefit of all residents. Municipal–community partnerships are an example of one institutional strategy that can help meet development needs at the local level (Maemu, 2021). They should not be seen as vehicles purely for community participation or panaceas for extending infrastructure services to poor people. They are service delivery and governance vehicles, which, in the context of meeting the developmental needs of poor people with respect to all municipal functions, sometimes demonstrate a competitive advantage over other approaches (Dau, 2010:25). The municipal-community partnerships (MCPs), therefore, can be significantly considered an option for effective service delivery as shared values that further assist municipalities working with local communities to provide services in equitable, efficient, and effective ways for their benefit (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2009:93).

In the South African context, an integrated development plan (IDP) could be regarded as a blueprint used by local governments to deliver services to communities effectively (Thebe, 2016). According to Mathebula, Nkuna and Sebola (2016:70), one of the tools municipalities use to deliver services is the IDP. Municipalities are required to have an integrated development plan (IDP) developed every five years (Maphazi, Raga, Taylor & Mayekiso, 2013:64). The IDP is a service delivery implementation tool that guides municipal officials on how to prioritise and deliver services to communities (Sebola, Tsheola, Phango & Balkaran, 2013:7). When the IDP is inadequately implemented by municipalities, services cannot be delivered effectively to the communities, thus leading to services delivery protests when the communities are not getting services as mandated by the constitution (Mathebula *et al.,* 2016:70). Effective consultation, formulation and implementation of the IDP will contribute immensely to effectively delivering various community services (Brynard, 2012:6). The IDP further seeks to ensure that municipal planning meets the aspirations of communities (Mle & Maclean, 2011:1369). According to

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Madzivhandila and Asha (2012:371), the IDP plays a crucial role in service delivery as it is a tool that promotes and enhances public participation; this is where community members voice their demands in a formal setting during public meetings.

2.10 THE IMPACT OF POOR GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Masuku *et al.* (2022:99) state that poor governance has unbearable consequences for poor citizens and economically underprivileged communities who survive and depend on the daily economy. According to Mbai (2003:113), poor governance is a major contributor to poor service delivery in Africa. The South African local government has seen numerous service delivery protests due to community dissatisfaction (Ragolane, 2024). The lack of good governance in the local government sphere puts the provision of basic services at risk (Lekala, 2019). When a local municipality cannot provide basic services to communities, residents' trust in the municipality diminishes, creating the conditions for violent service delivery protests (Kgobe, 2020). Many developing countries face service delivery challenges, which have exacerbated a lot of violent service delivery protests that result in the loss of life and damage to property (Shongwe & Mayer, 2023:144).

Due to its closeness to communities, the local sphere is seen as part of the government in charge of providing amenities like water, electricity, and sanitation (Reddy, 2016). However, as seen by violent protests over service delivery throughout the nation and unfavourable audit findings, this domain struggles to carry out its constitutionally required tasks due to unethical conduct, lack of integrity, and poor governance (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:689). In South Africa, various municipalities have been hit by persistent service delivery protests because of lack of transparency and participation which ultimately affects accountability (Mutangabende, 2016:11). Interestingly, not only has the number of protests increased, but these protests are more violent (Taylor *et al.,* 2020:2). Masuku and Jilli (2019:1) state that over the years, a host of persistent service delivery difficulties, such as poor governance and service backlogs, have been found in South African municipalities. According to Akinboade, Mokwena and Kinfack (2014), service delivery protests have been escalating in recent years due to poor governance in service delivery.

Shongwe and Meyer (2023:144) stress that several municipalities in South Africa have also experienced, and some are still experiencing, service delivery protests accompanied by extreme violence and the destruction of property. Scholars have argued that such protests are mainly a result of the failure of municipalities to own up to their promise of providing citizens with basic quality services. The countrywide protests and demonstrations about poor service delivery result from poor housing quality, lack of water and sanitation services, failure by municipalities to address unemployment and the lack of electricity in many households (Shaidi, Taylor & Raga,

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2014). Violent service delivery protests are caused by the local government's high inefficiency and incompetence levels (Kroukamp & Cloete, 2018). According to Taylor *et al.* (2020:1), the delivery of services often remains inadequate, eliciting increasing protests throughout the country. Protests, which are often the last resort by communities, are indicative of declining levels of trust in local government (Taylor *et al.,* 2020:1). Communities who are recipients of municipal services remain unsatisfied with insufficient service delivery (Mathebula, 2014:133). Service delivery protests in South Africa are not immune only to poor services, but they are also imbued with issues such as a lack of democracy and the unaccountability of political office-bearers (Ndevu & Muller, 2017).

According to Transparency International (2018:18), poor governance is often characterised by corruption, mismanagement of resources, and a lack of accountability, all of which undermine the ability of municipalities to deliver services. Ayee (2001) argues that corruption is particularly detrimental to service delivery, as it diverts resources away from critical infrastructure projects and public services, leading to service delivery failures. Fukuyama (2013) argues that poor governance also erodes public trust, which is essential for the effective functioning of local governments. When citizens perceive that their government is corrupt or unaccountable, they are less likely to participate in governance processes, which further undermines the legitimacy of local governments (Gaventa, 2004:20). Meijer (2009:261) highlights that a lack of transparency in governance exacerbates the problem, as it prevents citizens from holding their leaders accountable for mismanagement and corruption. This creates a vicious cycle in which poor governance leads to poor service delivery, which in turn leads to greater public dissatisfaction and further governance failures (Grindle, 2004:529).

Akinboade *et al.* (2014:1) state that local government faced a significant number of service delivery protests because of water supply and housing issues, which are attributed to poor governance. Such problems commonly emanate from a lack of accountability, transparency and public participation in government affairs nationwide (Mutangabende, 2016). Williams (2006), as cited in Mbecke (2014:267), points out that service delivery protests in South Africa reflect very little opportunity for community participation and poor governance. Shongwe and Meyer (2023:144) posit that the IDP is the municipality's blueprint for encouraging community participation whereby community members raise their needs, demands and concerns so that a municipality can address them; however, municipalities are facing challenges in effectively implementing the requirements outlined in the IDP. Against this background, the importance of improving municipal service delivery is evident (Makale, 2015:2).

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2.11 PUBLIC TRUST IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A NOTION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Kulmie, Mohamud and Ibrahim (2024:60) state that good governance is crucial in fostering public confidence and trust in government, as it provides a practical framework for building a society where citizens feel empowered, engaged, and secure. The interaction between citizens and the state is a crucial factor impacting trust in government (Christensen & Laegreid, 2005). Feldheim and Wang (2014:63) state that public trust is an essential goal of governmental institutions. It provides legitimacy for governmental decision-making and operation (Fledheim & Wang, 2020). Abidin (2020:87) maintains that local government as a service provider that deals directly with the public is a relevant testing ground for loyalty and public trust. Modise and Modise (2023) state that public trust is an equally significant by-product of governance, just as it plays a role as an input to governance by aiding or impeding policy implementation. According to Beshi and Kaur (2020), trust reflects how people view their government and public institutions and what they hope for from them. Wang and Wart (2007) postulate that trust can encourage government spending on difficult reforms and programs that lead to greater results. Trust is not gained spontaneously, but it is developed over repeated interaction and persists after some time (Wang & Wart, 2007). Draai and Raga (2012) indicate that levels of trust in public services are defined by their perceptions of the willingness and expedience with which the government responds to issues that citizens deem critical.

According to Porumbescu (2015:210), public trust in government is essential as it speaks to the quality of the relationship between citizens and their government. Public trust is considered a precondition for and a result of good governance (Popovski, 2010). Trust in government is considered indispensable for the effective functioning of a democratic government (Blind, 2007). Juang and Sea (2012) maintain that trust in government is also necessary for public institutions' fair and effective functioning. Moreover, Jung and Sea (2012) continue to say that public trust in government is a crucial factor determining the government’s competitiveness. Public trust in government is vital as it speaks to the quality of the relationship between citizens and their government (Porumbescu, 2015). Matsiliza (2013:108) maintains that municipal service protests are a source of conflict when local government officials allegedly fail to discharge their duties and abuse public trust. Diamond (2007) suggests that the government must be more vigilant in building public trust, especially regarding law and the public interest. In confirmation of this, Cheema (2010) states that building trust is both the result and the determinant of inclusive governance. Cheema (2010:8) argues that citizens are more likely to trust municipal officials, politicians, and political institutions when governance is more effective and democratic. Ndevu and Muller (2017) stress that there is a lack of public trust in the local government, as demonstrated by the service delivery protests.

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Draai and Raga (2012) state that a minimum level of trust is important for the maintenance of, and aspiration to, levels of good governance, as good governance is directly determined by the levels of trust held by citizens in both the areas of political authority and public service, as well as in terms of officials' accountability and citizen interaction with government. Choudhury (2008) alludes that the condition of trust is based on moral or ethical conduct or disposition. According to Abidin, Saidon and Salamat (2022:90), the public trust towards the government and the organisation within the government is based on the generalised trust realised through social interactions and experiences. Public trust scrutiny concerns whether municipal officials do their work correctly (Abidin *et al.,* 2022:89-90). Moreover, Abidin *et al.* (2022) state that public trust is essential in practising good governance in any local government. Trust in government refers to the degree of confidence that citizens have in their government to act appropriately, honestly, and in the public's best interest (Barnes & Gill, 2000). Sharma (2023:97) states that ethical conduct is the cornerstone of building and maintaining public trust. Once trust is increased, it leads to increased cooperation, effective policy implementation, and social cohesion. On the other hand, a lack of ethics erodes public trust (Salminen & Ikola-Norrbacka, 2010). Raharjanto (2021:357) argues that there is a reciprocal relationship between good governance and public trust. According to Taylor (2020:2), restoring trust and confidence in communities by enhancing the co-production of services is fundamentally important, as consistently poor service delivery diminishes trust in local government.

According to Fukuyama (2013), trust in government institutions is essential for promoting civic engagement and encouraging citizens to participate in governance processes. In local government, public trust is particularly important because municipalities are responsible for delivering essential services that directly impact the quality of life of residents (World Bank, 2000:46). Ayee (2001:37) argues that public trust is built through transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, all of which are key principles of good governance. Gaventa (2004) highlights that public trust is closely linked to the perception of fairness in service delivery. When citizens perceive that services are distributed equitably and that government officials are acting in the public interest, they are more likely to trust their local government and engage in governance processes (Gaventa, 2004:21). Transparency in decision-making is essential for building public trust, as it allows citizens to see how decisions are made and hold their leaders accountable for their actions (Meijer, 2009: 262). Piotrowski and Van Ryzin (2007:313) argue that public participation also plays a key role in fostering trust, as it provides citizens with a direct role in governance and empowers them to influence decision-making processes.

As a foundation for good governance, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in the local sphere of government are prerequisites to strengthening public trust (Sari, 2023). A study

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by Beshi and Kaur (2020) found that responsiveness significantly affects public trust in local government. Yousaf, Ihasan and Ellahi (2016) maintain that responsiveness is crucial in building public trust. According to Da Cruiz, Tavares, Marques, Jorge and Sausa (2015), transparency and open government initiatives have become vehicles to increase legitimacy and public trust in government. Moore (2017) maintains that the more the government reveals information to the public, the more the citizens will trust the government. Accountability is the building block of public trust in local government (Maropo, 2018). Amstrong (2005) maintains that accountability is significant in promoting public trust in government. When the government practices accountability in their decision-making process and implementation, it tends to give citizens the feeling that the government is responsible for its deeds (Beshi & Kaur, 2020:347).

Transparency International (2018) notes that in many countries, including South Africa, citizens perceive local governments as corrupt and unaccountable, which leads to a decline in public trust and civic engagement. According to Grindle (2004), restoring public trust requires strong leadership and a commitment to the principles of good governance, particularly transparency and accountability. Thornhill (2008:468) argues that municipalities must prioritise public engagement and ensure that citizens have a voice in governance processes to rebuild trust and promote sustainable development. The local sphere of government is expected to govern with transparency, as without transparency, there cannot be trust (Cucciniello & Nasi, 2014). Trust and transparency are the glue for effective partnerships, citizen compliance, and willingness to behave in a public-spirited manner (Masuku *et al.,* 2022:100). In fostering and restoring public trust in government, it is paramount that the stakeholders work together to create a transparent, accountable, and responsive local government (Beshi & Kaur, 2020).

2.12 UNETHICAL CONDUCT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Webb (2008:596) alludes that corruption impedes service delivery and results in severe consequences. Local government officials play a crucial role in delivering essential services, such as municipal health services, public transportation, electricity, water and sanitation, parks, and more, under the oversight of national and provincial governments (Makhoabane, 2006). According to Adetunji (2022:78), municipalities should emphasise the need for integrity and ethics in ensuring that these services are provided efficiently and effectively. Bowman, West, Beck(2010) maintain that those responsible for rendering services must acquire management skills, including resource management, to deliver services efficiently and effectively.

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Muganwa (2002:2) argues that failure to uphold ethical obligations hampers service efficiency and erodes public trust in the government. Thozamile (2012:27) asserts that municipal authorities have a constitutional obligation to provide fundamental services to the community. However, efficient service delivery becomes unlikely if personnel lack moral and ethical conduct (Kure, 2018). A study by Chene (2012) revealed a disturbing trend in the South African local government, where officials engage in fraud, corruption, and money laundering, significantly impacting service provision. Unethical behaviours, such as bribery, misallocation of funds, corruption, nepotism, fraud and conflicts of interest, impact service delivery (Tabu, 2009). Makungo (2023) states that the Modimole-Mookgophong Local Municipality in Limpopo has opened criminal cases against four officials implicated in fraud and corruption relating to tender irregularities. Makungo (2023) further stresses that the officials allegedly made an unauthorised payment of more than R4 Million to a contract appointed on various projects, including roads, electrification, and water.

Ayee (2001) notes that when municipal officials engage in unethical practices, such as awarding contracts to unqualified individuals or companies in exchange for bribes, the quality of services provided to the community deteriorates. This not only undermines public trust but also exacerbates inequalities, as the most vulnerable populations are often the ones most affected by service delivery failures (Gaventa, 2004:22). Thornhill (2008) highlights that ethical governance is essential for promoting accountability, as it ensures that municipal officials act in the public interest and are held responsible for their decisions. Unethical conduct also has financial implications for municipalities. According to Siddle and Koelble (2016:96), corruption and mismanagement often result in significant financial losses, as funds intended for service delivery are diverted for personal gain. This reduces the resources available for critical infrastructure projects, such as the maintenance of water and sanitation systems, leading to frequent service disruptions.

Dayimani (2022) claims that four former senior employees at the ANC-run Alfred Nzo District municipality are facing fraud charges after the municipality allegedly paid R38 Million to a company tender to install water meters in 2012, even though the devices were already installed. Misallocating funds can lead to inadequate infrastructure, poor service delivery, and limited access to essential services like healthcare, education, and sanitation (Makworo & Onsomu, 2017). According to Agu, Nkwo and Eneiga (2024), engaging communities and enforcing anti-corruption laws are crucial to restoring public trust and improving service delivery. Local governments must take proactive measures to address these ethical challenges and ensure the efficient provision of essential services to their communities (Adeyemi, 2016).

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2.13 *BATHO-PELE* PRINCIPLES: A FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery of 1997* introduced the eight *Batho-Pele* principles to improve service delivery in South Africa by promoting a people-first approach to governance. The *Batho-Pele* comprises eight principles: consultation, establishing service standards, enhancing access, assuring courtesy, giving information, openness and transparency, redress, and offering value for money. *Batho-Pele* aims to provide the foundation for effective and good governance (Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997).

2.13.1 Consultation

One of the principles of *Batho-Pele* is that municipalities should strive to consult members of the public in all matters that affect them (Matloga *et al.,* 2024). This principle requires that local government establish a more active local democracy in which decisional responsibilities will be shared with the community rather than making decisions on their behalf. In terms of the *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery of 1997*, consultation allows citizens to influence decisions about public services by providing objective evidence that will determine service delivery priorities. According to this principle, communities should be consulted about the quality and kind of services they should receive.

Du Toit, Knipe, Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt and Doyle (2002) state that consultation must occur between officials and citizens about the level and quality of services the public receives. Du Toit *et al.* (2002) further state that citizens must have a say regarding the services delivered to them. According to the *White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery, 1997*, consultation allows citizens to influence decisions on public service by providing objective evidence to determine service delivery priorities. Consultation also helps to foster a more participatory and cooperative relationship between citizens and service providers. Citizens should be consulted in the early stages of strategic planning so that services respond more to their needs and expectations (Ralane, 2011:32).

2.13.2 Service Standards

Setting clear service standards establishes benchmarks for the quality and timeliness of the service provided. The South African local government must adhere to the service standards, which is crucial for building trust and demonstrating a commitment to high-quality service delivery. Thulamela Local Municipality can benefit from clearly defined and communicated service standards to enhance efficiency and reliability. Service standards mean that the citizens must be informed about the level and quality of the service they will receive to know what to expect. This

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principle emphasises that citizens have a right to complain when public institutions do not deliver the quality of services they said they would (Matloga, 2024).

2.13.3 Access

Access ensures that all citizens have equal access to public services regardless of socioeconomic status. This principle is fundamental in addressing historical inequalities and ensuring that marginalised communities are not left behind. Access can be created by implementing services and establishing satellite service points within the institutions. It is encouraged that such services be monitored as a means of promoting access to government services. Access to services equips citizens to understand better the accessible government avenues that seek to implement government policies effectively (Thornhill, 2006). Thus, it should be noted that all citizens are entitled to access services equally regardless of their different political affiliations and race.

2.13.4 Courtesy

The principle of courtesy in public service emphasises the respect and consideration that citizens deserve. Municipal officials must remember that they are employed and elected to assist citizens and ensure they have access to the services that are their rights. Therefore, officials should treat citizens with politeness and respect (Matloga, 2024). This means listening actively to citizens' concerns, responding thoughtfully to their inquiries, and ensuring that they feel valued and heard. By fostering an environment of courtesy, municipal officials can enhance public trust and cooperation, ultimately leading to a more efficient and responsive government that meets the needs of its constituents.

2.13.5 Information

Implementing the *Batho-Pele* principles requires a complete transformation of communication with the public. One of the important prerequisites for the maintenance of democracy is access to information concerning the activities of government and all state organs (Thornhill, 2006:327). This principle demands that citizens be given accurate information about the service they are entitled to receive. Government institutions must provide full, accurate and up-to-date information about their activities. According to Gildenhuys (2004:390), information is one of the most powerful tools for the public to exercise its right to good service delivery. According to this principle, information must be provided in a manner most suited to the needs of the customers and at intervals most convenient and useful to these customers.

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2.13.6 Openness and Transparency

The *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997*, states that openness and transparency are the hallmarks of a democratic government and are fundamental to the public service transformation process. Citizens should be informed about the daily activities of public institutions to promote openness. According to Crous (2004:582), transparency in the public service helps keep the public service clean, effective, and free from nepotism and corruption. Transparency is achieved when citizens have access to information and decision-making forums so that the public knows what is happening and can judge whether it is appropriate.

2.13.7 Redress and handling of complaints

This principle requires an entirely new approach to handling complaints. Redress means that municipal officials must apologise to the citizens when they do not deliver the promised standard of service and undertake to remedy the situation immediately. Local government should have specific mechanisms to record and handle public dissatisfactions quickly and efficiently. It is the right of citizens to receive feedback on the outcomes of the complaints. According to this principle, community members should be entitled to apologies, explanations, and speedy and effective remedies if they do not receive the promised services. Crous (2004:583) refers to redress as a principle of remedying mistakes and failures, which he also calls recovery. Recovery implies acknowledging that the institution made a mistake, apologising, rectifying the mistake, and doing more than is required or expected.

2.13.8 Value for money

Services should be provided economically and efficiently to provide citizens with the principle of best value for money. Municipal services should be delivered efficiently, effectively, and economically to give the public the best value for money. Municipal officials should not waste the government's limited resources and should provide basic services as cost-effectively and efficiently as possible. They are tasked with ensuring and informing management of any resource waste and looking for ways to save time and money without sacrificing the quality of the services provided to the people (White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997). Municipal officials must utilise the government's limited resources to ensure cost-effectiveness and efficiency in municipal service delivery.

The eight *Batho-Pele* principles to be obeyed targeted at fostering people first and setting the framework for the kind of service quality that citizens can anticipate (Zitha, Sebola & Mamabolo, 2016). All in all, the principles of *Batho-Pele* are applicable to every government institution in the Republic of South Africa.

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2.14 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS UNDERPINNING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY

The South African government has introduced some progressive pieces of good governance legislation, but implementation remains a significant problem and concern. Malemane and Nel-Saunders (2021:1) assert that the legislative frameworks and policies are aimed at transforming South African municipalities into viable and effective entities. The policy and legislative frameworks underpinning good governance are briefly discussed below.

2.14.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, is the supreme law of South African democracy. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996* provides the broad legislative basis for effective governance in the public sector, including the municipal sphere government. The administrative arm of the local government must comply with all the constitutional provisions. The legislative framework serves as the foundation that establishes the minimum required standards and norms of conduct for all municipal officials. Sections 152 and 153 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* decree that municipalities should deliver basic needs to the communities in their areas of jurisdiction. Basic services in this regard include health, sanitation, electricity supply and waste collection. Ndebele and Lavhelani (2017:343) assert that "the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* mandates local government to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities, which should include community involvement and the promotion of social and economic development." This developmental mandate calls for local government to prioritise the community's basic needs, have a development orientation, be responsive to people's needs and encourage people to participate in policymaking (Mpofu & Hlatswayo, 2015).

Section 195 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996,* makes provisions for good governance through a set of good public administration guidelines. These principles are:

- A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.
- Efficient, economical, and effective use of resources must be promoted.
- Public administration must be development-oriented.
- Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.
- People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policymaking.

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- Public administration must be accountable.
- Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible, accurate information.
- Good human resource management and career development practices must be cultivated to maximise human potential.
- Public administration must broadly represent the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress past imbalances to achieve broad representation.

Section 195 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* states that these principles must apply to the administration in every sphere of government, organs of state and public enterprises. These stipulations entrust all spheres of government with the responsibility for efficient and effective service delivery (Draai, 2020:132). In summary, these principles collectively aim to establish a framework for an accountable, transparent, and responsive public administration that serves the interests of the South African people while fostering trust in government institutions.

2.14.2 Municipal System Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000)

This Act establishes the legal framework for the South African local sphere of government. The *Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000)* establishes the fundamental principles, mechanisms, and processes required for municipalities to progress toward local communities' economic and social upliftment while ensuring access to essential and affordable services. It establishes the principles and values that govern municipal officials' conduct, such as ethical behaviour, integrity, and the promotion of good governance. Section 6(2) of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000)* prescribes local government administration to be answerable for the entire community and citizens' necessities and to enable a habit of rendering service publicly by answerable and responsible officials. Sections 16, 17, 18 and 19 of the *Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000)* require local municipalities to encourage and create conditions for the local community to participate in the municipality's affairs, thus enabling transparency, openness, and accountable administration.

Section 51 of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000)* proclaims the municipal manager should be held accountable for the administration's overall performance and to maximise the efficiency of communication and decision-making within the administration. (Maropo, 2014:74) Section 55 of the *Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000)* holds the municipal manager accountable for administering personnel discipline. It also provides

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information on how municipal powers and functions are exercised and performed. It further provides for the building of local government into an efficient development agency for the overall social and economic upliftment of communities. To achieve these objectives, the Act sets out a code of conduct for councillors and municipal staff members (Mle & Maclean, 2011:1367). According to Karaai, Holzhausen and Malan (2017:64), the municipal council must create a system of delegation that will improve its administrative and operational efficiency and deliver satisfactory checks and balances. Section 73 of the Act requires a municipality to give priority to the basic needs of the local community, promote the development of the local community and ensure that all members of the local community have access to at least the minimum level of basic municipal services (Ndebele & Lavhelani, 2017:345). Chapter 4 of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems,2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* emphasises the need for participatory governance.

2.14.3 Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2000)

The *Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (PAIA) (Act No.2 of 2000)* was enacted to ensure that individuals have the right to access information held by government institutions or any information held by other persons, especially when necessary for the protection or exercise of rights. Armstrong (2005:95) states that, unfortunately, many public institutions seem to hamper access to information, either due to the failure of internal systems or as a result of the incompetence of the information officers to whom a request has been made. The *Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2000)* also Influences Section 32(1) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* and encourages accountability and openness in government institutions, ensuring the right of access to information. This Act allows people to access information whenever needed. The *Promotion of Access to Information, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2000)* promotes democracy, where individuals are given the constitutional right to access any information to scrutinise the government's activities against the set standards critically. The public can monitor and evaluate government activities by accessing information and promoting accountability and transparency. The *Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2002)* empowers citizens to comment and express their suggestions regarding services rendered by the government, thus promoting good governance.

2.14.4 Protected Disclosures Act, 2000 (Act No.26 of 2000)

The *Protected Disclosure Act, 2000 (PDA) (Act No.26 of 2000)* was enacted to promote transparency and prevent corruption in the public sector by protecting whistle-blowers. This Act establishes measures and procedures through which employees in the public sector may disclose information about their employers' irregular or unlawful behaviour. According to Auriacombe (2005), the enactment of this legislation demonstrates that the South African

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Government is serious about mitigating corrupt governance without putting those who bring it to the attention of authorities at risk. Holtzhausen (2007:101) maintains that whistleblowing involves unveiling information concerning the organisation's unethical or unacceptable practices by those in power. When municipal officials know that whistle-blowers exist and may be exposed and reported for all wrongdoings, they may be discouraged from engaging in corrupt activities.

Truelson (1993:287) argues that the essential concept of whistleblowing involves employees exposing some wrongdoings by employers that encourage reprisal. If managed effectively, it is essential to promote reporting of unethical and corrupt activities in an organisation. Blowing the whistle carries risks, and those who choose to do so should be aware that they may lose their lives and jobs, jeopardise their chances of promotion, and become retaliation targets (Hoffman & Frederick, 1995:284). Holtzhausen (2007:01) stresses that one of the barriers to combating corruption is that without legal protection, individuals are often too afraid to speak out or blow the whistle. According to Disoloane (2012:107), the PDA prohibits employers from subjecting employees to an occupational detriment because of making a protected disclosure, and it puts an end to escalating instances of retaliation for whistleblowing. This Act aims to maintain government transparency and accountability.

2.14.5 Municipal Finance Management, 2003 (Act No.56 of 2003)

The *Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (MFMA) (Act No.56 of 2003)* is one of the most important pieces of local government legislation in ensuring good governance, especially in financial management matters. The *Local Government: Municipal Financial Management Act, 2003 (Act No.56 of 2003)* was promulgated to ensure that municipalities in South Africa must provide for financial matters of all local authorities, are being managed sustainably, and are in good, sound, and secure well. It was implemented to bring about transparent and effective financial management in municipalities.

The *Local Government: Municipal Financial Management Act, 2003 (Act No.56 of 2003)* outlines ways in which the community may be informed of the financial situation of a municipality. It is one of the most crucial duties of any municipal council to manage its financial matters effectively. This means drawing up a budget, protecting the income, capital and assets such as money in the municipal bank account, monitoring the actual income and expenditure, comparing this with the budget through regular financial reporting, and correcting matters when necessary. The *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 (Act No.56 of 2003)* prescribes that audits are to be done regularly and that financial statements be reported to all stakeholders, including the broader communities, by developing a comprehensive system that clarifies and separates the responsibilities of mayors, councillors, and officials (Maropo, 2014:79).

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2.14.6 The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997

The White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service, also known as the *Batho-Pele* Policy, was introduced in 1997 to provide a policy framework and practical implementation strategies for transforming public service delivery (Kgobe, 2020:58). The *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997* was introduced with the aim of changing the overall public service institution and service delivery (Zitha *et al.,* 2016:64). Ndebele and Lavhelani (2017:343) maintains that the *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997* proposes creating a framework for delivery of public services, which treats citizens more like customers and enables citizens to hold officials accountable for their actions. It aims to improve government institutions, including municipalities' functionality and administration regarding their services, to promote transparency, accountability and public participation in the public sector.

The policy strongly requires government institutions to adopt a citizen-oriented approach to service delivery, informed by the eight principles of consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money (Kgobe, 2020). In line with constitutional principles, the *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service, 1997*, provides a framework that enables government institutions to develop strategies promoting good public administration. Chapter 11 of the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service,1997*, requires government institutions, among other things, to improve practices that promote good governance.

2.15 STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Good governance and effective service delivery are crucial for fostering trust and ensuring municipal services meet the community's needs. A range of strategies can be employed to ensure effectiveness, promote transparency, and ensure accountability. This section explores strategies for strengthening good governance and effective municipal service delivery. The section is divided into three sub-headings, namely formal, internal, constitutional, and statutory strategies for enhancing good governance and service delivery in the local sphere of government.

2.15.1 FORMAL STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Public Participation, accountability, and transparency in municipal governance could be regarded as formal strategies for enhancing good governance because they are the glue that keeps the municipal governance systems together. Failure to be transparent and accountable would harm the entire municipal system of governance, which aims to strengthen local democracy.

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2.15.1.1 Public Participation

Public participation in governance has been widely accepted as one of the critical strategies for enhancing good governance and service delivery. To promote good governance, local governments should strengthen citizens' involvement (Mafunisa, 2004:995). Public participation is an essential element of good governance and an effective tool for the public to voice their opinion on local government issues (Matloga *et al.,* 2023:1). Sebola (2016:25) affirms that public participation is a way to ensure that the people who make decisions are responsible for making decisions that affect the life of the public can communicate with the public before making those decisions. Ababio (2004:273) postulates that, on the one hand, it could describe the relationship between local government and the community. McEwan (2003) stresses that South Africa lacks a strong representative civil society structure that can be an engine for mobilising community and community organisations. This implies that the existing structures may be limited in achieving genuine participation.

Sebola (2016) posits that public participation is synonymous with community, citizen, and civic engagement. Draai & Taylor (2009) argue that public participation is essential for enhanced and effective, accountable governance, which encourages public accountability and confidence in local government. Thus, public participation is assumed to be a ticket to effective service delivery for local municipalities (Nembambula, 2014:149). Madumo (2014:132) believes that public participation enables individuals within local communities to contribute positively to the general good. However, Creighton (2005:7) indicates that public participation is systematic in that it has two-way communication and collaborative activity through which the public concerns, needs and values are acknowledged. Vivier and Wentzel (2013:240) posit that participation in governance is a core value required in a democracy. Vivier and Wentzel (2013) additionally assert that formal engagement channels between communities and government are essential to ensure efficient and responsive government. According to Govender, Reddy and Pillay (2011:197), participation in the decision-making process brings commitment, that is, greater effort in ensuring that outcomes are achieved successfully. Madumo (2012:44) alludes that public participation leads to a situation where the local sphere of government receives a worthwhile contribution from the communities, and this will assist in determining the quality and quantity of public services delivered. Tufte (2017:143) argues that public participation not only has a positive impact on service delivery but also increases accountability and inhibits corruption and mismanagement.

Public participation in governance is a significant strategy for enhancing effective service delivery. Booysen (2009:2) alludes that public participation in policymaking could be considered a cornerstone of society. This is supported by Nzimakwe (2008:44), who articulates that public participation in government is not just a moral obligation but also a constitutional one.

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Participation enhances a sense of identity and belonging on the part of citizens (Kanyane, 2010:79). Phago (2008:248) postulates that the primary objective of involving the community in municipal affairs is to ever-improve service delivery approaches, thus enhancing municipal services. According to Meyer and Theron (2000:1), public participation includes people's involvement in decision–making processes, programme implementation, and efforts to evaluate such programmes. Participation is not a once-off thing, but rather, it is a process by which different stakeholders such as civil society, Human Rights Groups, the private sector, Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and members of the general public converge to air out their views, opinions, suggestions to influence and share control over resource allocations, setting priorities, policy-making, and implement programmes (Apaza, 2015).

According to Maela and Selepe (2023:243), public participation is considered a way for local authorities to obtain facts on the local needs, conditions, attitudes, and desires of the community to collect information vital in promoting resolutions. Public participation is also known as a component of good governance, and it promotes and maintains accountability and efficiency in public institutions (Maela & Selepe, 2023:243). According to Sibanda and Lues (2019), public participation needs to be an open and accountable process through which communities can exchange opinions and have the power to influence agenda-setting and decision-making. Madumo (2014:144) maintains that the local government system, including ward committees, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations, has a collective responsibility to accomplish the mandate of encouraging the involvement of the communities in issues pertinent to local government. According to Maphazi *et al.* (2013:57), the public participation process permits the voices of diverse participants facing real challenges to be heard and considered in decision-making. Failure to effectively involve the community distances the citizens and causes undesirable effects through poor information (Doyle, 2015:1).

Maphazi *et al.* (2013:61) posit that public participation is essential for good governance in any democratic country. According to the *Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000)*, an effective public participation process allows local people to influence development agendas and contribute to policy imperatives impacting municipal government. This could also help ensure that the government is accountable to the governed. According to Hyden (2004:19), Public participation is also a component of good governance, and it promotes and maintains accountability and efficiency in public institutions. Local municipalities play a crucial role in fostering democratic governance, and one of the ways to achieve this is through enhancing and promoting community participation. As indicated by Madumo (2014:132), the active involvement of community members in decision-making is essential for ensuring that the needs and priorities

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of the local population are effectively addressed. This participation not only empowers citizens but also strengthens the legitimacy and accountability of local governments. By engaging with the community, municipalities can gain valuable insights and foster a sense of ownership among residents, leading to more sustainable and effective local policies and initiatives. Therefore, it is imperative for local authorities to implement strategies that encourage and facilitate comprehensive community engagement. Community members should be involved in all planning and decision-making processes within the municipality, as this will positively impact effective service delivery (Kanyane, 2014:6).

Creighton (2005:19) argues that community members are more likely to accept a policy or legislation they have significantly contributed to throughout its establishment. Brynard (1996:41) suggests that participation can be made effective by allowing community members to provide input in decision-making, thereby improving the quality of decisions and ensuring that ambiguity is cleared in terms of the required needs and services. According to Maphazi *et al.* (2013:56), to enhance public participation, local government must build strong platforms and mechanisms to enable citizens to get involved. This process involves consultation in different forms but, at the end of the day, gives feedback to the government on what their citizens need regarding services (Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022). Local government must work with its citizens to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate services with each party transparently, each of which holds the other accountable (Davids, 2005:5). This could help to enhance governance, thus achieving successful service delivery outcomes. Therefore, community involvement could play an important developmental role by ensuring that municipalities regard citizens as the focal point of local development initiatives (Taylor *et al.,* 2020).

2.15.1.2 Accountability

Accountability is a crucial element of good governance, just as it is in many other areas of business and culture (Maemu, 2023:112). Khalo (2013:581) asserts that accountability is an obligation to expose, explain and justify action. To an increasing extent, public accountability is becoming one of the main requirements of good governance in all spheres of government (van Niekerk & Dalton-Brits, 2016:117). Mutangabende (2016:11) alludes that accountability entails the process by which those who use the power vested in them, whether as elected representatives, must be able to illustrate that they have implemented their power and fulfil their mandates in a transparent manner and account to the citizens. Bovens (2007) indicates that accountability means that individuals in positions of power are responsible for justifying their decisions and actions to the people who are impacted by them. Ijeoma and Sambumbu (2013:282) maintain that effective accountability and oversight result in improved good governance, effective management of public finances and effective service delivery. According to

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Litvak (2010:78), accountability is an obligation, in its broadest sense, to explain and justify actions taken by municipal officials. Even though municipal officials are certainly and directly accountable to their administrative expertise and executive authority for their actions and undertakings, they must make sure that they are also answerable to the citizens who are the users of the services they provide and to whom they draw the authority to govern (Matangabende, 2016:36).

Khalo (2013) asserts that accountability and oversight are the constitutional prerequisites in all three levels of government. Accountability encourages municipal officials to openly debate and justify their actions, which empowers legislative institutions to oversee public resources on behalf of the citizens (Maropo, 2018:03). According to Kuye and Mafunisa (2003:426), there is external and internal accountability. External accountability refers to holding municipal officials liable to the citizens. In contrast, internal accountability is a practice that requires municipal officials to be accountable to their immediate superiors, such as department heads or elected officials, their subordinates, and their actions or inactions (Kuye & Mafunisa, 2003:426). This form of accountability ensures that municipal officials are answerable to those within the government structure, not just to the public.

According to Thornhill (2015:80), accountability in local government requires municipal officials to provide the reasons for their actions or inactions and allows the community to express their opinion on their governance ability. Thornhill (2015:77) affirms that it is crucial that municipal officials understand the need for accountability in governance because their behaviour directly affects the provision of services. The importance of accountability in local government is to evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of municipal officials by citizens to make sure that they are executing their duties and using resources in an answerable, clear, hands-on manner, thus giving value for money in the delivery of municipal services and restoring the confidence of citizens in the government (Mutangabende, 2016:40). Municipal officials must be accountable to the citizens they serve and be subject to oversight to enhance governance and municipal service delivery.

Accountability is also reinforced through citizen engagement. Gaventa (2004) highlights that participatory governance mechanisms, such as community meetings and consultations, allow citizens to hold municipal leaders accountable for their decisions and actions. Additionally, the Public Protector and the Auditor-General in South Africa serve as key oversight bodies, ensuring that municipalities adhere to governance standards and take corrective action when necessary (Ayee, 2001:37). However, challenges remain in implementing effective accountability mechanisms. Thornhill (2008) notes that weak enforcement of audit findings and a lack of political will often undermine accountability efforts. Meijer (2009) adds that the absence of strong

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leadership and ethical governance frameworks can create a culture of impunity, where public officials are not held responsible for their actions. Strengthening accountability, therefore, requires a combination of institutional reforms, capacity-building initiatives, and increased citizen involvement in governance processes.

2.15.1.3 Transparency

Transparency in local government requires municipal officials to operate openly and honestly with citizens (Stiglitz, 2002). This is fundamental to abolishing corruption in municipal institutions because corruption threatens good governance. The term transparency means that information must be accurate, accessible, available, understandable, usable and updated for the public regarding the decisions and actions of institutions and officials (Briones, 2014:3). Tanaka (2007:141) posits that strengthening transparency and openness in local government can help promote accountability and restore public confidence in overall government. According to Meijer (2009), transparency enables public oversight by allowing citizens to scrutinise government decisions and ensure that resources are allocated fairly and efficiently. Dossing, Mokeki, and Weiderman (2014:4) emphasise that transparency is a fundamental principle that requires public affairs to be conducted openly and accessible to the public. This openness fosters accountability and trust between the government and the citizens it serves.

Cross (1995:67) points out that transparency in the municipal sphere of governance provides the needed checks and balances against corruption and misuse of government resources. Transparency is a vital initial step towards holding local government accountable for utilising public funds (Tanaka, 2007). This enables citizens to judge whether municipal officials are good stewards of public funds and whether they are using them for the intended purpose of service delivery for the benefit of all. Edwards and McGee (2014:49) claim that transparency in local government enables citizens to access information and helps them understand the decision-making processes. Transparency involves clear and public disclosure of information, processes and actions by government institutions (Dossing *et al.,* 2011:4). Local government must ensure that all its activities are transparent, who is involved and what informs decisions made (Mutangabende, 2016:41).

2.15.2 INTERNAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING GOOD GOVERNMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY

In terms of local government legal frameworks, the strategies in this section must exercise accountability and oversight over municipal officials for municipalities to meet their constitutional obligation to provide democratic and accountable government to local communities within their jurisdiction.

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2.15.2.1 Municipal Audit Committee

According to Section 166 of the *Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA), 2000 (Act No.56 of 2003),* every municipality is required to establish an audit committee that serves as an independent advisory body. This section outlines that the municipal audit committee must provide guidance to the municipal council, political office bearers, and the accounting officer on various matters, including internal financial controls, internal audits, risk management, accounting policies, financial reporting, performance management, and effective governance to ensure compliance with the MFMA. Additionally, the audit committee must report to the municipal council regarding any issues raised by the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) and conduct investigations into the financial affairs of the municipality or any municipal entity (Fourie & Opperman, 2011). Van der Waldt (2015) asserts that the audit committee assist the council in providing oversight over municipal projects, which enables the council to probe questions and hold the administration accountable for failures to perform or in the event of financial misconduct (Van der Waldt, 2015:59). In order for the audit committee to add value, it needs to function in an enabling environment, without interference from administration or the municipal council. Section 165(2)(b) of the MFMA provides for the establishment of an independent audit committee consisting of at least three persons with appropriate experience, the majority of whom should not be employed by the municipality (Van Der Waldt, 2015:59).

2.15.2.2 Municipal Public Accounts Committee

The Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) was established to assist the municipal council in holding both the executive and municipal administrations accountable and to ensure the effective and efficient use of municipal resources. The committee examines municipalities' financial statements and audit reports, considers areas for improvement, and ensures the implementation of recommendations from the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) and audit committees. According to Van der Walt (2015:60), the MPAC oversees all functioning associated with the municipality projects. MPAC must also liaise with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to determine whether the funds allocated to projects are spent according to specifications (Van der Waldt, 2015). The primary function of this committee is to provide scrutiny and oversight over the executive (Kraai, 2017:64).

The MPAC was established in accordance with Section 79 of the *Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No.117 of 1998)* (Van der Waldt, 2015:60). Its functions include:

- Analysis of annual reports of the municipality
- Exercises oversight over the executive functionaries of the council and ensures good governance within the municipality.

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- Submission of the oversight report on the annual report with recommendations to council
- Once the report has been considered and approved by the council, the report must be published according to MFMA requirements and as guidance.

While the above mechanisms involve external expertise, both the Municipal Audit Committee and the Municipal Account Committee are structured as internal governance mechanisms under local government legislation. Their role is pivotal in strengthening transparency, accountability and compliance within the local sphere of government.

2.15.3 CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* has established various institutions that are the custodians of good governance. These institutional structures aim to promote and encourage good governance in the public service by making government institutions transparent and accountable. To promote and maintain good governance, the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996* provides the Auditor General and the Public Protector, also known as Chapter 9 institutions, along with the Public Service Commission, which is established under Chapter 10. The constitutional strategies to enhance good governance are briefly discussed below.

2.15.3.1 Auditor General

The Auditor-General is one of the strategies for enhancing good governance in the public sector. Van Niekerk and Dalton-Brits (2016:121) state that the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) is a constitutional body and an important strategy to promote accountability in all spheres of government. The president of the Republic appoints this office. In terms of section 3(5)(b)(iii) of the *Auditor-General Act, 1995 (Act No.12 of 1995)*, the Auditor-General has the right to investigate and inquire into any matter. This includes the efficiency and efficacy of internal control and management procedures relating to expenditure and revenue (Van der Waldt, Van Niekerk, Doyle, Knipe & Du Toit, 2002:273).

Section 188 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* describes the primary function of the AG as to investigate and audit all accounts and financial statements of all government departments and entities financed entirely or partly by a public resource. The AG allows parliament to have access to the financial statements of government departments and entities. This is done to ensure that public funds are spent in the interest of society and to minimise fruitless and wasteful expenditures. In terms of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*, the AG is appointed on a fixed, non-renewable term of five to ten years. The AG is accountable to the National Assembly. Like the Public Protector and Public Service Commission, the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996* stipulates that the AG should

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be independent and impartial. It must be borne in mind that the AG has unrestricted powers to obtain any document and may question any person who provides information relevant to the audit purpose. Overall, the AG aims to ensure that government officials account for their actions or inactions.

2.15.3.2 Public Protector

The government of the Republic of South Africa has established the office of the Public Protector to check the government departments and enhance ethical conduct among government officials (Raphasha, 2019:26). The Public Protector (PP) was established in terms of Chapter 9 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. In terms of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, the PP must be independent and impartial, perform its functions without fear, favour or prejudice, and be subjected only to the Constitution and the law. In other words, the PP must be free of any political influence. According to Section 182 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996*, the Public Protector has the power, as regulated by national legislation, to investigate any conduct in state affairs or public administration in any sphere of government that is alleged or suspected to be improper or to result in impropriety or prejudice.

The public protector's office works independently and aims to strengthen constitutional democracy (Raphasha, 2019:26). The aim behind the public protector's office includes identifying problem areas, providing recommendations, eliminating unlawful conduct such as maladministration and abuse of the public office (Pienaar, 2000). Zikhali (2005:139) maintains that the public protector is responsible for rectifying serious administrative shortcomings such as corruption. The Public Protector has the right to question and interrogate the appropriateness of the information and the lawfulness of that conduct, as well as adjudicate using findings and remedy prejudice and impropriety of that conduct (Mthethwa, 2013:14).

2.15.3.3 Public Service Commission

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is considered a custodian of good governance in the South African public service. According to Mafunisa (2007), the Public Service Commission (PSC) ensures effectiveness and contributes to conformity in the total system of governance. Sections 195 and 196 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, mandate the PSC to promote fundamental values and principles governing public administration as outlined in Chapter 10. In promoting, monitoring, and evaluating the constitutional values and principles of public administration, the PSC makes a critical contribution to deepening democracy in the country. Furthermore, the constitutional mandate of the PSC is to propose measures, give direction, advise, promote, investigate, monitor, and evaluate the performance of the South African public service. In simple terms, the PSC is constitutionally mandated to monitor public

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service delivery in South Africa. With this mandate, the PSC has established the National Anti-Corruption Forum to guide the behaviour of public officials when offering public services.

Based on the above discussion, the Auditor-General and the Public Protector were established in Chapter 9 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*, while the PSC was established under Chapter 10 to strengthen constitutional democracy and enhance good governance in the public service. It was necessary to analyse the core functions of these institutions in terms of governance and acknowledge them as critical players in strengthening governance in the local sphere of government.

2.15.3.4 Special Investigating Unit (SIU)

The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) can be regarded as a statutory provision aimed at enhancing good governance in the South African public sector, including the local sphere of government. The SIU was established in terms of the *Special Investigating Unit and Special Tribunals Act,1996 (Act No.74 of 1996)*. Under section 2(1), the matters set out in this schedule regarding the municipality to be investigated by a Special Investigation Unit shall include as follows: Serious maladministration concerning municipal matters; Improper or illegal behaviour by councillors, officials, or municipal personnel; unlawful use or expenditure of public funds or property; unlawful, irregular, or unapproved acquisition act, transaction, measure, or practise affecting State property; intentional or negligent loss of public money or harm to public property. Although the SIU is not a constitutional provision, sections 206 and 239 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* influence the provision of mechanisms such as the SIU to enhance public accountability and upload the rule of law.

While the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996*, provides the institutions or strategies to promote good governance through accountability, the SIU was specifically established under the *Special Investigating Unit and Special Tribunals Act,1996 (Act No.74 of 1996)* as a statutory mechanism.

2.16 CONCLUSION

Good governance is critical in ensuring that local municipalities deliver their mandate. In a nutshell, there is a need for a transformative local government that embodies the principles of good governance. This includes implementing accountability measures so that citizens hold municipal officials accountable for their actions or inactions. By promoting transparency and fostering public involvement in decision-making, local government can effectively address the needs of all citizens and improve service delivery within their communities. The following chapter will focus on the research methodology employed to conduct the study on the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery.

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CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter discussed the literature review on good governance and effective municipal service delivery. Therefore, this chapter details the methods and procedures for conducting the study on the role of good governance in promoting adequate service provision in the municipal sphere of government. The chapter describes how the study was conducted in terms of the research design and methodology. Moreover, the chapter covers the research paradigm and discusses the research design adopted to achieve the research objectives. The chapter also discusses the research methods adopted to investigate the phenomenon. Furthermore, it describes the study area and study population. The chapter also delineates how the sample size was drawn. The sampling strategies used to select the participants were explained and justified. Moreover, the chapter discussed the data collection instruments used to collect qualitative and quantitative data. The chapter further describes how the data collected from the participants were analysed. Lastly, this chapter covers the ethical considerations that were followed by the researcher when conducting the study.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Johnson and Christensen (2014:79), a research paradigm is a world or perspective a community of researchers holds based on shared assumptions, concepts, values, and practices. However, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) define research paradigm as the general assumptions or beliefs concerning the chosen inquiry, which explains how the study will be conducted. Various research paradigms in scientific research can be classified into epistemology, axiology, pragmatism, and ontology. However, the study adopted a pragmatism research paradigm.

3.2.1 Pragmatism Research Paradigm

Denzin (2012:103) defines pragmatism as a paradigm emphasising the practical application of research methods to address complex research questions. On the other hand, Feilzer (2010:8) define the pragmatism paradigm as a paradigm that suggests the use of mixed research methods. According to Kelly and Cordeiro (2020), pragmatism philosophy allows an investigator to go beyond objectivist conceptualisations to explore and better understand the connections between knowledge and action in context. The pragmatism research paradigm was chosen in

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this study because of its emphasis on practical problem-solving aligning with the goals of mixed-method research, which often seeks to address complex, real-world issues. Moreover, the Pragmatism paradigm supports this integration, enabling researchers to utilise diverse methods to capture a more complete picture of the phenomenon studied. Overall, Pragmatism was chosen as the most appropriate research philosophy because it helped to integrate qualitative and quantitative findings into one study to answer the research questions regarding good governance practices and service provision within Thulamela Local Municipality.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Kothari and Garg (2019), a research design is an arrangement of conditions for collecting and analysing data to combine their relevance to the research objective. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) define a research design as a structure that outlines how a research study will be conducted. It includes the methods and procedures used to collect and analyse data. There are various types of research design, including descriptive, exploratory, explanatory, experimental, case study and contextual research design. However, the study adopted descriptive, exploratory, and contextual research designs.

3.3.1 Descriptive Research Design

Polit and Hungler (2013) define descriptive research design as a study that precisely describes the characteristics of persons, situations, or groups as its primary aim. Descriptive research is primarily concerned with the description of the characteristics of the population (Singh, 2014). The study used a descriptive approach, considering that it allows accurate data collection and provides a clear picture of the phenomenon under investigation. This type of research design can be helpful when a researcher wants to gather basic information or describe a situation or specific phenomenon.

3.3.2 Exploratory Research Design

According to Polit and Hungler (2013:19), the exploratory research design is a type of research design that is undertaken when a new area is being investigated or little is known about the area of interest. On the other hand, Rahi (2017) argues that an exploratory study is intended to discover new insights about what is happening. In terms of exploratory, the researcher aims to assess phenomena in a new light. The exploratory study was carried out because the researcher had a limited understanding of the subject being investigated. Therefore, the researcher gained more insight into the research phenomenon by properly carrying out the examining method.

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3.3.2 Contextual Research Design

According to Burns and Grove (2010:32), a contextual study focuses on a particular event in field settings, often naturalistic settings. Contextual research design is also defined by Holtzblatt and Beyer (2017) as a research design that allows the researcher to visit the research participants in their day-to-day working environment. The researcher adopted this research design as the study was conducted in Thulamela, a Local Municipality. An interview schedule was administered to the officials of Thulamela Local Municipality. This type of research design was used to understand governance practices within Thulamela Local Municipality. Contextual research design was relevant for the study because it provided depth, richness, relevance, and a nuanced understanding of the context. In addition, it also provided valuable insights by immersing the researcher in a natural environment.

3.4 RESEARCH METHOD

According to Silverman (2013), the research methodology is a choice researchers make to select relevant models, case studies, methods of collecting data, and forms of database analysis that they will be required to carry out as part of their research projects. On the other hand, Leedy and Ormrod (2010:12) define research methodology as “the general approach a researcher uses to carry out the research project”. This is the process, design, and method of obtaining empirical results in research. The study used a mixed-method approach. The mixed method approach that was used in this study is the convergent parallel mixed method approach. The convergent parallel mixed method is a form of mixed methods approach in which the researcher converges or merges qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2014).

According to Cresswell and Plano Clark (2018), “the basic idea of using the convergent parallel mixed method is to compare the two results with the intent of obtaining a complete understanding of a problem, to validate one set of findings with the other or to determine if participants respond in a similar way if they check quantitative predetermined scales and if they are asked open-ended qualitative questions”. According to Cresswell (2014), a mixed methodological approach is a combination of methods used to conduct research in which quantitative and qualitative studies are collected, analysed, or integrated as part of the same study. Halcomb and Hickman (2015) define a mixed method as a methodology that involves collecting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. Therefore, the researcher used a mixed method to enhance the validity and reliability of the study findings through triangulations. Combining the two approaches provided a rich and more holistic interpretation of the research subject.

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3.4.1 Quantitative Research

According to Abosede and Onanuga (2016:114), quantitative research examines the relationships between and among variables and the numeric description of trends of data to provide answers to the research questions and hypotheses. Creswell (2014) describes quantitative research as the representation and interpretation of observations in a numerical way to describe and explain phenomena reflecting these observations. In this study, the questionnaires were administered to the municipal officials and selected community members within the Thulamela Local Municipality. This assisted the researcher in soliciting data about the role of good governance in promoting effective service provision in the Thulamela Local Municipality. The quantitative method enabled the researcher to collect data reflecting the studied phenomenon.

3.4.2 Qualitative Research

According to Kumar (2014:133), qualitative research is a type of study that provides rich data obtained from interviewees' written or spoken thoughts. Qualitative research explores subjective experiences, opinions, and attitudes through observation and interviews (McLeod, 2023). Qualitative research focuses on securing rich descriptions of data (Denzin & Lincon, 2005:10). Qualitative approaches offer some advantages to researchers because they require one-on-one interaction with the participants or a focus group setting that allows for an extensive understanding of the research topic and in terms of content and variety of information that may be collected from them. Qualitative investigation is aimed at producing a detailed and precise description of the phenomenon being studied, as well as to gain new insights and understandings (Williamson & Johanson, 2013:13). The qualitative method is commonly employed to gain insight into people's experiences and articulate their perspectives (Johnson & Christensen 2014:82). An interview schedule was administered to ten municipal officials to gain insights regarding governance practices that affect service provision in Thulamela Local Municipality.

3.5 STUDY AREA

According to Du Plessis and Van Niekerk (2014:12), the study area refers to a geographical location where data is analysed in a report. The study area is also defined by Jonson, Beck, Asghar and Broussard (2018:9) as the place where researchers conduct research appropriately. The study is conducted at the Thulamela Local Municipality in the northern part of the Limpopo province in South Africa. Thulamela Local Municipality is one of the four local municipalities that constitute the Vhembe District Municipality. It is a Category B Municipality within the Vhembe

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District, far north of the Limpopo Province. The Kruger National Park forms the boundary in the east while sharing the border with Makhado in the south and southwest. Moreover, it is the smallest Municipality of four in the district, making up 10% of its geographical area. It is the largest Municipality in the province in terms of population. (https://municipalities.co.za/overview/1135/thulamela-local-municipality).[Accessed on 17/05/2024]. The area was selected based on its relevance to the research topic and the availability of data and participants.

Figure 3.1 A map showing the geographical location of Thulamela Local Municipality.



Source : (https://municipalities.co.za/overview/1135/thulamela-local-municipality)

3.6 STUDY POPULATION

McLeod (2023) defines the target population as an overall group of people who may be included in the sample by the researcher. According to Leavy (2017:76), the study population is the group of elements from which the researcher draws a sample. The total population for this study were 120 respondents. This was done on the basis that the sample could be manageable. The target population of this study included municipal officials, Traditional Leaders, and selected Community members within Thulamela Local Municipality. The selected municipal officials include the Municipal Manager, Integrated Development Plan (IDP) officials, Local Economic Development (LED) officials, the Executive Mayor, the Communication Manager, the Chief Financial Officer, Ward Councillors, Proportional Representative (PR) Councillors, Community Development

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Workers, Members of South African National Civic Organisations (SANCO) and Ward Committee members. Municipal officials were used in the study, considering that they are the ones who are supposed to ensure effective service provision within the Municipality. They could also have helpful information concerning the governance practices within the Municipality. Community members were included as the population of the study, considering that they are affected by the decision-making and service provision within the Municipality.

3.7 SAMPLING

Leavy (2017:76) defines sampling as the process by which the researcher selects a number of individual cases from a larger population. Sampling involves choosing a portion or a unit of the whole population (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Kothari and Garg (2019) stress that "a sample should be small enough to make data collection convenient and large enough to be a true representative of the selected population".

3.8 SAMPLING METHODS

According to McLeod (2023), "sampling is the process of selecting a representative group from the population under study". This is the process of choosing a subset of individuals, items, or elements from a larger population to conduct research or draw conclusions about the population (Creswell, 2013). Sampling is essential in research to ensure that the findings and conclusions drawn from the sample can be generalised or applied to the larger population with a certain degree of confidence. In most cases, it is impossible to study an entire population due to time, resource constraints, or logistical reasons. The sampling technique that was used in this study is non-probability sampling with its sub-type purposive sampling.

3.8.1 Non-Probability Sampling

Vehovar, Toepoel and Steinmetz (2016) define non-probability sampling as a technique in which not all population members have an equal opportunity to participate in the study. Collis and Hussey (2013) define non-probability as a sampling technique that allows the researchers to use their own judgment to select the study participants. The section below discussed the purposive sampling technique.

3.8.1.1 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, is a non-probability sampling technique in which researchers intentionally select specific individuals or elements from the population for inclusion

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in the sample based on specific predetermined criteria or their judgment about who can provide the most relevant and valuable information for the research study (Taherdoost 2016:22). Sekaran and Bougie (2016) indicate that purposive sampling selects participants based on their understanding of the phenomenon.

In this research, the researcher employed purposive sampling as the primary sampling technique to select all respondents for the study. Given the specific nature of the research topic, which centres on exploring good governance practices and service delivery within Thulamela Local Municipality, it was essential to include individuals who possess first-hand knowledge, experiences, and insights into the governance practices within this context. This method allowed for the selection of individuals who could provide rich and relevant information for the study. Under the purposive sampling approach, respondents were selected based on predetermined criteria, including occupation, knowledge, and experience, which was beneficial in examining good governance practices in Thulamela's Local Municipality. The researcher targeted municipal officials and community members within Thulamela Local Municipality. This helped to generate insights into the dimensions of governance and its impact on effective service delivery.

3.9 SAMPLE SIZE

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), sample size consists of a list of all units in the population from which the research sample will be selected. The sample size of this study consisted of 120 respondents, which were categorised as follows: 01 Municipal Manager, 06 IDP officials, 05 Proportional Representative Councillors, 06 LED officials, 01 the Executive Mayor, 01 the Speaker, 01 Chief Financial Officer, 08 ward councillors, 05 Community Development Workers, 05 members of SANCO, 02 Traditional Leaders, 72 selected community members, and 06 Ward Committee members. The researcher sampled 120 respondents on the basis that the data could be manageable and exercise strict control over the validity of the results.

3.10 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Creswell (2017:201) defines data collection as “the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes.” According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016:156), data collection is the process of collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to the research problem. It is a critical phase in any research project, as the quality and reliability of the collected data directly impact the validity of research

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findings and the ability to draw meaningful conclusions. In the collection of data, the researcher used both questionnaires and interviews as a method of collecting data from respondents.

3.10.1 Questionnaire

Sekaran and Bougie (2016:197) allude that a questionnaire is a pre-formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives. According to Cresswell (2017), a questionnaire is a research tool or survey instrument consisting of a set of questions designed to gather data, information, or opinions from individuals or groups. Using questionnaires to collect data could minimise the bias of interviews as they present structured and uniform questions to all participants. Structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from the respondents. A total of 120 structured questionnaires were distributed to all the respondents across different wards within Thulamela Local Municipality the questionnaires were made of five (5) Likert-scale responses, which are strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree and strongly disagree. The researcher made an appointment before collecting data. Data collected from the respondents using the questionnaires were presented in the form of frequency tables.

3.10.2 Interview

Alshengeeti (2014) defines an interview as the face-to-face dialogue between the researcher and participants, where the researcher probes the participants for specific answers based on a particular subject matter. On the other hand, an interview is defined by Fink (2012:374) as the process that involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversations and asks questions, and an interviewee, who responds to those questions. This could greatly help in soliciting important information from the interviewees. The interview method was used to collect qualitative data with the guidance of an interview schedule. An appointment was made to interview the participants. The researcher developed an interview schedule and conducted interviews with ten (10) municipal officials because they are directly involved in policy-making, governance practices and service delivery implementation. They include the Municipal Manager (MM), Executive Mayor, Communication Manager, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), IDP and LED officials, Community Development worker, Ward councillor, Ward committee member and Proportional Representative Councillor. They were selected on the basis that they could provide rich and nuanced insights regarding governance practices within the Municipality. In collecting data at Thulamela Local Municipality, an open-ended interview was conducted with ten municipal officials. The purpose of using this method is to obtain more detailed information from respondents.

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3.11 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process whereby the collected research data is broken down into its constituent parts for discussion in relation to the problem being investigated in the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2011). Gerring (2012) defines data analysis as a method of dividing large amounts of data into smaller proportions to make the data relevant. Different analysis techniques were used to analyse the data collected using interviews and questionnaires. In this study, the quantitative data was analysed using a statistical package for social sciences (IBM: SPSS), the latest version, 29.0. Participants were expected to indicate the extent to which they agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and strongly agree with the statement. The researcher used statistical analysis to analyse quantitative data. The data was presented in the form of tables, frequencies, and percentages.

Qualitative data was analysed using NVivo, version 14. The researcher used thematic analysis to analyse qualitative data. The data was presented in a narrative form. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), thematic analysis is the identification of themes in the research findings. Batmanabane and Kfouri (2017) maintain that thematic analysis aims to establish, analyse, and report data sequences. Data collected through interviews were grouped into themes. Themes were coded in relation to the research questions and objectives. Thematic analysis was employed because it enables researchers to identify and organise themes that emerged from the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Creswell (2013), different steps are used to analyse data. The researcher used the following steps.

3.11.1 Organise and prepare the data for analysis.

This involves transcribing interviews, optically scanning material, typing up field notes, or sorting and arranging the data into different types depending on the sources of information (Creswell 2013:172). The researcher initiates the analysis process by gathering and organising the data, addressing data cleaning, and structuring issues to facilitate subsequent analysis.

3.11.2 Read through all data.

This has to do with obtaining a general sense of the information and reflecting on its overall meaning (Creswell, 2013). Before delving into analysis, the researcher comprehensively reviews the entire dataset. This phase establishes familiarity with the data's content, context, and potential patterns. Researchers write notes in margins or start recording general thoughts about the data at this stage (Creswell 2013:172).

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3.11.3 Begin Detailed Analysis with Coding Process

The researcher systematically employs the coding process to assign labels or codes to specific data points or segments. According to Creswell (2013:173), coding involves taking data or pictures gathered during data collection and segmenting sentences or paragraphs. This coding facilitates the categorisation and structuring of the data for further analysis. Coding can be done manually or with the help of software.

3.11.4 Generate a Description and Theme

The fourth step of data analysis involves using a coding process to generate a description of the setting or people and categorising themes for analysis (Creswell, 2013). Following the coding process, the researcher identifies emerging themes within the data. These themes represent central concepts or ideas, and the researcher generates descriptive accounts to elucidate them.

3.11.5 Interrelate Themes

The researcher explores the relationships among identified themes, seeking connections, contradictions, or overlaps. This step contributes to a more nuanced and interconnected understanding of the data.

3.11.6 Searching for Alternative Explanations

The researcher critically examines findings by actively considering alternative explanations for observed patterns. This critical evaluation avoids premature conclusions and fosters a more robust analysis (Fife, 2020).

3.11.7 Testing Emergent Understanding

Interpretations are validated through additional data review, further analysis, or seeking input from external sources. This iterative process aims to refine and strengthen the researcher's understanding.

3.11.8 Interpretation

A final step in data analysis involves interpreting or defining the meaning of the data (Creswell 2013:176). In the final phase, the researcher interprets the data within the context of the research questions or objectives. Conclusions are drawn, and insights are provided based on the analysis and the identified themes.

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3.12 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

According to Kumar (2014), validity refers to the extent to which the research measures what it is expected to measure. Wagner, Kawulich, and Garner (2012:80) state that reliability refers to the trustworthiness of the measurement of the phenomenon. To ensure trustworthiness the concept of validity and reliability were considered throughout the research process. The questionnaires were developed based on relevant literature, policy documents, and previous studies. The instruments were also reviewed by academic peers and the research supervisor to assess whether the questions appeared to measure what they intended to measure. In this study, reliability was achieved by constructing simple, short, and non-boring questionnaires using simple language.

3.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout the research process. Ethical consideration refers to the principles and guidelines that govern the ethical treatment of individuals, groups, or entities involved in a research study (Babbie, 2016:63). According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), research ethics are set principles developed to assist researchers in conducting ethical studies. This concerns the professionalism of conducting a study by maintaining the integrity and credibility of the research process. Ethical considerations encompass a range of aspects, including permission to conduct the study, informed consent, voluntary participation, no harm to participants, confidentiality and anonymity. They are briefly discussed below.

3.13.1 Permission to conduct research

Obtaining permission to conduct a study is a vital ethical requirement for a scientific study to be conducted successfully. An ethical clearance certificate and permission were obtained from the University of Venda to conduct the study. A letter requesting permission to conduct the study was submitted to the Thulamela Local Municipality to grant permission to collect data. After that, a letter of authorisation to collect the data was obtained from Thulamela's Local Municipality. The permission letter and ethical clearance certificate were attached as annexures at the end of the study.

3.13.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

According to Davis (2017:1), anonymity means that the researcher will not reveal the identity of the participants in the study. On the other hand, Jonhson and Christensen (2014) define anonymity as keeping the participant's identity from everyone. Davies and Hughes (2014) define

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confidentiality as avoiding disclosing information beyond the agreed limit. According to Davis (2017:1), confidentiality means that the respondent's identity is known to the investigator but protected from public exposure. Anonymity and confidentiality are equally paramount in this study. The research was conducted responsibly to maintain confidentiality, with no confidential data being recorded or disclosed. No one had access to the information provided by the participants apart from the participants and the researcher. The researcher concealed the respondents' identities. In addition, confidentiality was maintained by ensuring that information provided by study participants was solely used for academic purposes.

3.13.3 Voluntary participation

According to De Vos, Fouche and Delport (2011:187), voluntary participation is participating freely without being coerced to participate in an activity. Voluntary participation is a requirement in ethical research where participants have the right to withdraw or decline from participation in a study. Participants were advised to participate voluntarily and informed that no remuneration or incentive would be offered to any participants. The participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, refuse to give more information, or ask for clarifications about the purpose of the study.

3.13.4 Informed Consent

Wiles (2013) describes informed consent as a fundamental and critical concept in ethical research that guides the ethical conduct of the researcher during the study. According to Davies and Hughes (2014:44), informed consent is permission granted in full knowledge of the possible consequences that may occur during the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The researcher informed the participants of the reasons for conducting this study and its purpose.

3.13.5 No harm to participants

According to Leavy (2017:32), no harm is the primary principle governing the protection of research participants. No harm to participants means to maintain the welfare of human research participants by doing no harm to them. This includes physical harm that may be associated with qualitative research studies, as well as emotional and psychological harm. In this study, all potential harmful factors were avoided, and participants were protected from any possible harm that may occur. In addition, participants' lives were not exposed to any danger because they were participating in this study.

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3.14 CONCLUSION

An overview of the research methodology that was used for the study was presented in this chapter. A pragmatism research paradigm was employed in the study; the chosen research design is descriptive, exploratory, and contextual. Moreover, the study will employ a mixed method (Quantitative and qualitative) that will enable the researcher to validate the research findings. Additionally, this chapter outlined the study area, study population, sampling techniques, data collection practices, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations. The following chapter will discuss the data presentation, analysis, and interpretation.

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CHAPTER 4:

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the procedures and methods used for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. In this chapter, the focus shifts to presenting, analysing, and interpreting the findings from the collected data. The collected data has to do with governance practices within Thulamela's Local Municipality. The data was collected using structured questionnaires and interview schedules from municipal officials and community members within Thulamela Local Municipality. The questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data, whereas the qualitative data were collected using an interview schedule from the respondents. The study's primary aim was to investigate the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery and recommend strategies for enhancing service delivery within the municipal sphere of government. The findings presented in this chapter include findings on the personal attributes of respondents of the study.

4.2 PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA COLLECTED USING QUESTIONNAIRES

This section presents data collected through questionnaires from the study's participants. The researcher used a graphical tabular format, frequencies, and percentages to present the data collected through the structured questionnaires. A brief discussion of the results will follow each table.

4.2.1 Section A: Bibliographical data of respondents

This section presents the demographic data of the study participants. The section outlines the respondents' biographical information about their age, gender, category, educational qualifications and employment status.

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Table 4.1: Gender of the respondents

	Gender of participants	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	66	55%
2	Female	54	45%
3	Other	00	00%
	TOTAL	**120**	**100%**

The above table presents the respondents' demographic details, outlining the gender, which includes 66 (55%) males and 54 (45%) females. In this study, males constituted the highest percentage compared to the female participants. The selected respondents completed the questionnaires and interview schedule.

Table 4.2: Age of the respondents

	Age of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
1	Less than 21	09	7.5%
2	22 to 30 years	22	18.3%
3	31 to 40 years	30	25%
4	41 to 50 years	35	29.2%
5	51 and above	24	20%
	TOTAL	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.2 presents the age of the study's respondents within Thulamela Local Municipality. Regarding the age of the participants, the data indicate that 09 (7.5%) of the respondents were less than 21 years old. In addition, 22 (18.3%) of the respondents were aged between 22 and 30. Twenty-four (20%) of the study's respondents were 51 and above. Moreover, 30 (25%) respondents were between 31 and 40. Lastly, 35 (29.2%) of the respondents were aged between 41 to 50 years. As shown by the data in Table 4.1, the majority of 35 (29.2%) of the study respondents were aged between 41 and 50 years. The reason could be that this demographic represents a significant portion of those actively engaged in or affected by municipal governance processes within the study area.

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Table 4.3: Category of the respondents

	Respondents	Frequencies	Percentage
3.1	Municipal Manager	01	0.8%
3.2	Executive mayor	01	0.8%
3.3	Communication Manager	01	0.8%
3.4	Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	01	0.8%
3.5	Integrated Development Plan (IDP) official	06	05%
3.6	Local Economic Development (LED) official	06	05%
3.7	Community Development Worker (CDW)	06	05%
3.8	Traditional Leader	02	1.7%
3.9	Ward Councillor	08	6.7%
3.10	Proportional representative (PR) councillor	05	4.2%
3.11	Member of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO)	05	4.2%
3.12	Ward Committee Member	06	05%
3.13	Selected Community Member	72	60%
	TOTAL	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.3 presents the category of the study's respondents. The total number of respondents was 120. The data shows that majority of the respondents, 72 (60%), were selected community members within Thulamela Local Municipality. This was because members of the community are the ones affected by the Municipality's decision-making processes. The Data also indicates that only 01 (0,8%) was the municipal manager, 01 (0,8%) was the executive Mayor, 01 (0,8%) communication Manager, 01(0,8%) was the Chief Financial Officer, 06 (05%) were the Integrated Development Officials, 06 (05%) were the Local Economic Development Officials, 06 (5%) were the Community Development Workers, 02 (1.7%) were the Traditional Leaders while 08 (6.7%) were Ward Councillors, 05 (4.2%) were Proportional Representative Councillors, 05 (4.2%) were members of SANCO, and 06 (5%) were ward committee members. From the data regarding the category of the respondents, it can be concluded that most of the respondents were community members, constituting 72 (60%) of the total respondents.

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Table 4.4: Educational qualifications of the respondents

	Education Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1	Grade 12 and below	24	20%
2	Bachelor's Degree/ National Diploma	48	40%
3	Honours degree/B-Tech	24	20%
4	Master's degree/M-Tech	18	15%
5	Doctoral Degree/D-Tech	06	05%
	TOTAL	**120**	**100%**

In the case of the educational qualifications of the respondents, the findings in Table 4.4 indicate that 48 (40%) of the study's respondents had Bachelor/ National diplomas, whereas 24 (20%) had Honours/B-Tech qualifications. Twenty-four (20%) of the respondents had a National Senior Certificate (grade 12) and below, while 18 (15%) of the study respondents had a Master's degree/M-Tech. Lastly, 06 (5%) of the respondents had a Doctoral degree/D-Tech. Educational qualifications significantly impact the awareness of governance practices within the Municipality. According to the findings, the majority 48, representing 40% of the study respondents, had Bachelor's degrees/ National diplomas.

Table 4.5: Employment status

	Employment status	Frequency	Percentage
1	Unemployed	30	25%
2	Employed	78	65%
3	Self Employed	12	10%
	TOTAL	**120**	**100%**

Regarding the employment status of the respondents, Table 4.5 shows that 78 (65%) of the respondents are employed, 30 (25%) of the respondents are unemployed, and 12 (25%) of the study's respondents are employed. From the findings regarding the employment status, it can be concluded that most of the study's respondents are employed, constituting 65% of the sample size.

4.2.2 Section B: Determining the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery.

In this section, the researcher presents the data collected using a questionnaire from 120 respondents. The data is presented in tabular format with frequencies and percentages followed by a brief synthesis.

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Table 4.6: Governance practices in Thulamela Local Municipality contribute to effective service delivery.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	30	25%
2	Agree	69	57.5%
3	Not Sure	18	15%
4	Disagree	02	1.7%
5	Strongly Disagree	01	0.8%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.6 presents the data collected regarding governance practices in effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Municipality. The data shows that majority at 69 (57.5%) of the respondents, agreed that good governance practices in Thulamela contribute to effective service delivery. However, 30 (25%) strongly agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, 18 (15%) were not sure. Moreover, 02 (1.7%) disagreed, while only 01 (0.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It can, therefore, be concluded that the majority, 69 (57.5%) of the respondents, agreed that good governance practices in Thulamela Local Municipality positively impact effective service delivery. Based on the above, it can be suggested that the Municipality adhere to all the principles of good governance to enhance municipal service delivery.

Table 4.7: Transparency in the decision-making process enhances the quality of municipal services.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	44	36.7%
2	Agree	60	50%
3	Not Sure	13	10.8%
4	Disagree	02	1.7%
5	Strongly Disagree	01	0.8%
	Total	**120**	**100**

Table 4.7 presents the data on the statement that says transparency in the decision-making process enhances the quality of municipal services. The data shows that 60 (50%) of the respondents agreed, while on the other hand, 44 (36.7%) strongly agreed with the statement. Thirteen (10.8%) were not sure about the statement, while 02 which constitutes (1.7%) disagreed. Lastly, only 01 (0.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be concluded that 60 (50%) of the respondents agreed that transparency in the decision-making process

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enhances the quality of municipal services. This implies that the Municipality should maintain transparency with the public regarding all its operations.

Table 4.8: The Municipality encourages citizen involvement in the decision-making process to enhance effective service delivery.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	26	21.7%
2	Agree	28	23.3%
3	Not Sure	30	25%
4	Disagree	24	20%
5	Strongly Disagree	12	10%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.8 presents the data collected from the statement that the Municipality encourages citizens' involvement in the decision-making process to enhance effective service delivery. The data indicates that majority at 30 (25%) of the respondents were not sure about the statement, while 28 (23.3%) agreed that the Municipality encourages citizen engagement. In addition, 26 (21.7%) strongly agreed with the statement that the Municipality encourages citizen involvement in the decision-making process. Furthermore, 24 (20%) respondents disagreed, while 12 (10%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be concluded that the majority, 30 (25%) of the respondents, were not sure that the Municipality encourages citizen involvement in the decision-making process to enhance municipal service delivery. Strengthening communication and fostering genuine engagement initiatives could lead to more effective service delivery and increased citizen trust and satisfaction.

Table 4.9: Accountability mechanisms are effectively implemented in Thulamela Local Municipality to Improve service delivery.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	24	20%
2	Agree	28	23.3%
3	Not Sure	18	15%
4	Disagree	38	31.7%
5	Strongly Disagree	12	10%
	Total	**120**	**100**

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Table 4.9 presents the data on the statement that accountability mechanisms are effectively implemented in Thulamela's Local Municipality to improve service delivery. The data indicate that the majority, 38 (31.7%), disagreed, while 12 (10%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Twenty-eight (23.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, whereas Twenty-four (20%) strongly agreed. Lastly, 18 (15%) were not sure. It can be concluded that the majority, 38 (31.7%), disagreed that accountability mechanisms are effectively implemented in Thulamela Local Municipality to enhance service delivery. This shows that the lack of accountability in local government affects the provision of municipal services. Therefore, it is critical for local authorities to evaluate and strengthen accountability measures to foster trust and improve service delivery in the community.

Table 4.10: The Municipality adheres to legal frameworks and regulations that support effective service delivery.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	28	22.5%
2	Agree	39	32.5%
3	Not Sure	24	20%
4	Disagree	16	13.3%
5	Strongly Disagree	14	11.7%
	Total	**120**	**100**

Table 4.10 presents the data collected on the statement that the Municipality adheres to legal frameworks and regulations that support effective service delivery. The majority at 39 (32.5%) agreed with the statement, while 27 (22.5%) strongly agreed. Twenty-four (14.5%) were not sure. In addition, 16 (13.3%) disagreed with the statement. Moreover, 14 (11.7%) strongly disagreed that the Municipality adheres to the legal framework and regulations that support effective service delivery. It can be concluded that the majority, 39 (32.5%) of the respondents, agreed that the Municipality adheres to legal frameworks and regulations that support effective service delivery. This indicates that the policies and legislative frameworks in the local sphere of government are of paramount importance to supporting effective municipal service delivery. This suggests that while most respondents believe the Municipality adheres to legal frameworks, the significant uncertainty and disagreement indicate a need for improved transparency and communication to strengthen public trust. It was revealed in the literature review by Jeffrey *et al.,* (2019) that the prevalence of legal frameworks in local government plays an importance role in promoting good governance.

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4.2.2.1 Challenges in promoting effective Municipal service delivery.

Table 4.11: Inadequate training and capacity building for municipal officials hinder effective service delivery.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	42	35%
2	Agree	54	45%
3	Not Sure	12	10%
4	Disagree	09	7.5%
5	Strongly Disagree	03	2.5%
	Total	**120**	**100**

Table 4.11 presents the data on the statement that says inadequate training and capacity building for municipal officials hinder effective service delivery. Most respondents, 54 (45%), agreed, while another 42 (35%) strongly agreed. Furthermore, 10 (25%) were not sure, whereas 9 (7.5%) disagreed with the statement. Moreover, 03 (2.5%) strongly disagreed. It can be concluded that the majority at 54 (45%) of the respondents agreed that inadequate training and capacity building for municipal officials hinders effective service delivery. The study suggests that addressing municipal officials' training and capacity-building needs is crucial for improving service delivery. Enhancing the skills and knowledge of these officials could lead to more effective governance and better outcomes for the communities they serve. The data correlate with the literature review where Makanyeza *et al.,* (2013) identified the lack of training and skills as a barrier to effective governance.

Table 4.12: Poor or lack of community involvement in the decision-making process affects the provision of municipal service in Thulamela Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	54	45%
2	Agree	42	35%
3	Not Sure	15	12.5%
4	Disagree	06	05%
5	Strongly Disagree	03	2.5%
	Total	**120**	**100**

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The data presented in Table 4.12 were collected on the statement that poor or lack of community involvement in the decision-making process affects the provision of municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. The data indicate that majority at 54 (45%) of the respondents strongly agreed, while 42 (35%) agreed with the statement. Fifteen (12.5%) were not sure. On the other hand, 06 (05%) disagreed, while 03 (2.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement. From the data above, it can be concluded that the majority, 54 (45%) of the respondents, strongly agreed that poor or lack of community involvement in the decision-making process affects the provision of services in Thulamela Local Municipality. This shows that the Municipality faces the challenge of poor public participation, which affects the provision of municipal services. However, it was revealed in the literature of this study by Madumo (2014:132) that public participation enables individuals within local communities to contribute positively to the general good.

Table 4.13: Lack of compliance with the legislative and regulatory framework affects the provision of municipal services.

	Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	Strongly Agree	36	30%
2	Agree	66	55%
3	Not Sure	15	12.5%
4	Disagree	02	1.7%
5	Strongly Disagree	01	0.8%
	Total	**120**	**100**

Table 4.13 presents the data on the statement that lack of compliance with the legislative and regulatory framework affects the provision of municipal services. The data shows that the majority, 66 (55%) of the respondents, agreed that poor compliance with the legislative and regulative framework affects the provision of municipality services. Thirty-six 36 (30%) strongly agreed with the statement. Furthermore, 15 (12.5%) were not sure. On the other hand, 02 (1.7%) disagreed. Lastly, only 01 (0.8%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be concluded that the majority, 66 (55%), agreed that poor compliance with the legislative framework affects the provision of municipal services. This indicates when a municipality faces a significant challenge with poor compliance with legislative and regulatory frameworks, it adversely affects the provision of municipal services.

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Table 4.14: Political Interference and the lack of a proper communication strategy between political office bearers, administrative officials and the community within the Municipality affect the provision of municipal services.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	42	35%
2	Agree	34	28.3%
3	Not Sure	32	26.7%
4	Disagree	06	05%
5	Strongly Disagree	06	05%
	Total	**120**	**100**

Table 4.14 presents the data on the statement that political Interference and the lack of a proper communication strategy between political office bearers, administrative officials and the community within the Municipality affect the provision of municipal services. The data indicate that the majority, 42 (35%), strongly agreed that political interference and the lack of proper communication strategy affect the provision of municipal services. Additionally, 34 (28.3%) agreed with the statement. Thirty-two (26.7%) of the respondents were not sure, while 06 (05%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Lastly, 06 (05%) disagreed that political Interference and the lack of a proper communication strategy between political office bearers, administrative officials and the community within the Municipality affect the provision of municipal services. It can be concluded that the majority, 42 (35%) of the respondents, strongly agreed that political Interference and the lack of a proper communication strategy between political office bearers, administrative officials and the community within the Municipality affect the provision of municipal services. The data underscores the need for improved communication strategies and political accountability within the Municipality. This would likely enhance service provision and foster greater community trust in local governance. Addressing these issues could ultimately lead to more effective and responsive municipal services catering to the community's needs.

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Table 4.15: Lack of infrastructure maintenance has negatively impacted the provision of effective service delivery within Thulamela Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	42	35%
2	Agree	66	55%
3	Not Sure	07	5.8%
4	Disagree	03	2.5%
5	Strongly Disagree	02	1.7%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.15 presents the data on the statement that the lack of infrastructure maintenance has negatively impacted the provision of effective service delivery within Thulamela Local Municipality. The data in Table 4.17 shows that majority of the respondents at (66) (55%) agreed with the statement. Additionally, 42, which constitute (35%), strongly agreed, while 07 (5.8%) were not sure. Moreover, 03 (2.5%) disagreed that lack of infrastructure maintenance has negatively impacted the provision of municipal services. Lastly, 02 (1.7%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority, 66 (55%) of the respondents, agreed that the lack of infrastructure maintenance has negatively impacted the provision of effective service delivery within the Municipality. This shows that Thulamela Municipality faces the challenges of poor infrastructure maintenance.

4.2.2.2 Initiatives in place to promote effective service delivery.

Table 4.16: Community engagement programs are actively used to improve service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	26	21.7%
2	Agree	28	23.3%
3	Not Sure	18	15%
4	Disagree	32	26.7%
5	Strongly Disagree	16	13.3%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

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Table 4.16 shows responses to the statement that community engagement programs are actively used to improve service delivery. The data shows that the Majority, 31 (26.7%) of the respondents, disagreed, while 28 (23.3%) agreed with the statement. Additionally, 26 (21.7%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 18 (15%) were not sure. Lastly, 16 (13.3%) strongly disagreed. From the data above, it can be concluded that the majority, 32 (26.7%) of the respondents disagreed that community engagement programs are actively used to improve service delivery. This indicates that the Municipality should ensure that all the initiatives are adequately used to improve service delivery within Thulamela Local Municipality.

Table 4.17: The provision of municipal services through private entities/private partnerships enhances service delivery.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	32	26.7%
2	Agree	52	43.3%
3	Not Sure	18	15%
4	Disagree	12	10%
5	Strongly Disagree	06	05%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.17 shows responses to the statement that the provision of municipal services through private entities/partnerships enhances service delivery. The data indicate that the majority, 52 (43.3%) of the respondents agreed, while 32 (26.7%) strongly agreed with the statement. On the other hand, 18 (15%) were not sure. Twelve (10%) disagreed with the statement, while 06 (05%) strongly disagreed. From the data above, it can be concluded that the majority, 52 (43.3%) of the respondents agreed that providing municipal services through private entities/partnerships enhances service delivery. This indicates that the Thulamela Local Municipality partners with private entities, which enhances the provision of municipal services.

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Table 4.18: The Municipality has implemented an effective performance management system to enhance service delivery.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	28	23.3%
2	Agree	36	30%
3	Not Sure	26	21.7%
4	Disagree	18	15%
5	Strongly Disagree	12	10%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.18 shows responses to the statement that the Municipality has implemented an effective performance management system to enhance service delivery. The data shows that the majority, 36 (30%), agreed that the Municipality has implemented an effective management system to enhance service delivery, while 28 (23.3%) strongly agreed. Furthermore, 26 (21.7%) were not sure. Eighteen (15%) of the respondents disagreed, while 12 (10%) strongly disagreed. From the above data, it can be concluded that the majority, 36 (30%), of the respondents agreed that the Municipality had implemented an effective performance management system to enhance service delivery. To improve service delivery, the Municipality should also review and strengthen its performance management system, addressing areas of concern to ensure that it is more effective and aligned with community needs.

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Table 4.19: There are clear policies and procedures in place to guide effective service delivery.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	42	35%
2	Agree	62	51.7%
3	Not Sure	12	10%
4	Disagree	03	2.5%
5	Strongly Disagree	01	0.8%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.19 shows the responses to the statement that there are clear policies and procedures in place to guide effective service delivery. The data indicate that the majority, 62 (51.7%) of the respondents, agreed that the Municipality has clear policies and procedures in place to guide effective service delivery, while 42 (35%) strongly agreed with the statement. Furthermore, 12 (20%) of the respondents were not sure. Moreover, 03 (2.5%) disagreed with the statement. Lastly, only 01 (0.8%) strongly disagreed that the Municipality has clear policies and procedures in place to guide effective service delivery. From the above data, it can be concluded that the majority of 62 (51.7%) of the respondents agreed that the Municipality has clear policies and procedures in place to guide effective service delivery. This shows that municipalities should ensure that these policies are consistently communicated, understood, and effectively implemented to enhance service delivery and address any concerns raised by the minority.

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Table 4.20: Regular evaluations are conducted to assess municipal service delivery effectiveness within the communities.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	24	20%
2	Agree	33	27.5%
3	Not Sure	16	13.3%
4	Disagree	39	32.5%
5	Strongly Disagree	08	6.7%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.20 shows responses to the statement that regular evaluations are conducted to assess municipal service delivery effectiveness within the communities. The data in Table 4.23 indicates that the majority, 39 (32.5%), disagreed with the statement, while 33 (27.5%) of the respondents agreed. Twenty-four (20%%) strongly agreed that regular evaluations are conducted to assess municipal service delivery within the communities. Moreover, 16 (13.3%) were not sure, while 08 (6.7%) strongly disagreed with the statement. From the above table, it can be concluded that the majority, 39 (32.5%) of the respondents disagreed that regular evaluations are conducted to assess municipal service delivery effectiveness. This suggests a significant gap in the Municipality's approach to monitoring service delivery. To address this issue, the Municipality should implement regular evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of service delivery and make adjustments based on community feedback and performance results.

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4.2.2.3 Strategies to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery.

Table 4.21: Involving communities in the decision-making process enhances governance and service delivery effectiveness.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	72	60%
2	Agree	42	35%
3	Not Sure	03	2.5%
4	Disagree	02	1.7%
5	Strongly Disagree	01	0.8%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.21 shows responses to the statement that involving or increasing community involvement in the decision-making process can enhance good governance and service delivery effectiveness. The data indicate that the majority, 72 (60%) of the respondents, strongly agreed, while 42 (35%) agreed. Furthermore, 03 (2.5%) were not sure, while 02 (1.7%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Lastly, 01 (0.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. From the data above, it can be concluded that the majority, 72 (60%) of the respondents, strongly agreed that involving the community in the decision-making process enhances good governance and service delivery effectiveness. This highlights the importance of adopting participatory governance practices to ensure that community voices are integrated into municipal decisions, ultimately leading to more responsive and efficient service delivery.

Table 4.22: Implementing comprehensive staff training programs will address issues in service delivery.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	48	40%
2	Agree	57	47.5%
3	Not Sure	08	6.7%
4	Disagree	06	05%
5	Strongly Disagree	01	0.8%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

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Table 4.22 shows the data on the statement that implementing comprehensive staff training programs will address issues in municipal service delivery. The data indicate that the majority, 57 (47.5%) agreed with the statement, while 48 (40%) strongly agreed. Eight (6.7%) of the respondents were not sure. Furthermore, 06 (05%) disagreed with the statement, whereas only 01 (0.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. From the data above, it can be concluded that the majority, 57 (47.5%) of the respondents, agreed that implementing comprehensive staff training programs will address issues in service delivery. This suggests that investing in regular and targeted training for staff could enhance their skills and improve service efficiency, ultimately benefiting the community.

Table 4.23: Strengthening accountability mechanisms would improve good governance and service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	67	55.8%
2	Agree	38	31.7%
3	Not Sure	12	10%
4	Disagree	02	1.7%
5	Strongly Disagree	01	0.8%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.23 shows the responses to the statement that strengthening the accountability mechanism would improve good governance and service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. The data indicate that the majority, 67 (55.8%) of the respondents, strongly agreed, while 38 (31.7%) agreed with the statement. Moreover, 12 (10%) of the respondents were not sure. Two (1.7%) strongly disagreed, while only 01(0.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. From the data above, it can be concluded that the majority, 67 (55.8%) of the respondents, strongly agreed that strengthening accountability mechanisms would improve good governance and service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. This underscores the need for robust accountability frameworks to ensure transparency, hold officials responsible for their actions, and enhance the overall effectiveness of municipal service delivery. The data correlate with the literature review where Androniceanu (2021) posits that municipal officials must maintain accountability to citizens particularly with regard to development initiatives and the allocation of public resources.

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Table 4.24: Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism will significantly improve service delivery outcomes in Thulamela Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	42	35%
2	Agree	52	43.3%
3	Not Sure	18	15%
4	Disagree	06	05%
5	Strongly Disagree	02	1.7%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 4.24 presents the data on the statement that implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism will significantly improve service delivery outcomes in Thulamela Municipality. The data indicate that the majority, 52 (43.3%) agreed with the statement, whereas 42 (35%) strongly agreed. Furthermore, 18 (15%) were not sure. Moreover, 06 (05%) of the respondents disagreed, while 02 (1.7%) strongly disagreed with the statement. From the data above, it can be concluded that the majority of 52 (43.3%) of the respondents agreed that implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism will significantly improve service delivery outcomes in Thulamela Local Municipality. This highlights the need for the Municipality to establish and maintain strong monitoring and evaluation systems to track performance, identify inefficiencies, and ensure continuous improvement in service delivery.

Table 4.25: Improving transparency in municipal operations leads to better governance and service delivery outcomes.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	63	52.3%
2	Agree	39	32.5%
3	Not Sure	13	10.8%
4	Disagree	01	0.8%
5	Strongly Disagree	02	1,7%
	Total	**120**	**100%**

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The data in Table 4.25 shows responses to the statement that improving transparency in municipal operations leads to better governance and service delivery outcomes. The data indicate that the majority, 63 (52.3%) of the respondents, strongly agreed that improving transparency in municipal operations leads to better governance and service delivery outcomes, while 39(32.5%) agreed. Thirteen (10.8%) of the respondents were not sure about the statement. Two (1.7% strongly disagreed, while only 01(0.8%) disagreed. From the data in Table 4.25, it can be concluded that the majority, 63(52.3%) of the respondents, strongly agreed that improving transparency in municipal operations leads to better governance and service delivery outcomes. This underscores the importance of adopting transparent practices, such as clear communication, accessible information, and open decision-making processes, to foster trust and improve municipal effectiveness.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA COLLECTED USING THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.

This section presents the data that was collected through the interview schedule. The section aims to present responses to the research questions that emanated from the research objectives, which are to determine the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality and to identify challenges faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective service delivery. To describe the initiatives in place to promote effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality and to recommend strategies that can be used to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. The findings presented in this section assisted the researcher in developing a framework that may be used to enhance governance and improve service provision in the municipal sphere of government. The data is presented in narrative form.

4.3.1 QUESTION 1: What is the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery in Thulamela Municipality?

The first research question of the study sought to investigate the relationship between good governance and effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. The following are responses to the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery.

Participant A:

Regarding the first question on the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery, participant A indicated that good governance ensures transparency, accountability, and effective decision-making, which are all key roles in delivering services efficiently within the Municipality. The participant added that without good, proper governance,

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resources are often mismanaged, leading to service failures.

Participant B:

In response to the first question, participant B indicated that the role of good governance is crucial because it builds trust between the Municipality and the community. When governance processes are transparent and inclusive, citizens feel that their concerns are heard, and this leads to improved participation in governance processes. The participant added that with higher citizen engagement, services are more targeted and effective, addressing real community needs.

Participant C:

In response to the first question, participant C indicated that good governance ensures transparency and equity in service provision.

Participant D:

Responding to the first question, participant D stated that good governance is the foundation for fair and effective service delivery. The participant added that it ensures accountability and transparency in the provision of municipal services.

Participant E:

In response to the first question, the participant stated that through governance, the Municipality promotes ethical standards, ensuring that officials act in the community's best interests. This builds trust, leading to more active community participation in service delivery.

Participant F:

Responding to the first question, the participant outlined that good governance ensures that service delivery is done in a transparent and inclusive manner. The participant added that this means that community members have a voice in how services are provided, making the Municipality more responsive to their needs.

Participant G:

Regarding the first question, the participant indicated that governance establishes transparency and fairness in how services are delivered.

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Participant H:

In response to the first question, the participant stated that good governance establishes a system of checks and balances that holds municipal officials accountable for their performance, which directly impacts service quality. The participant indicated that when governance structures are robust, service delivery is more efficient.

Participant I:

With regard to the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery, the participant indicated that good governance ensures adherence to the legal frameworks and transparency in how resources are allocated and managed. The participant stated that it plays a vital role in creating a framework for decision-making that prevents the misuse of municipal resources.

Participant J:

In response to the first question, the participant indicated that governance encourages accountability and transparency, which are crucial for the provision of effective service delivery to marginalised communities.

The data show that participants recognise the importance of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery. Participants A, B, D, and J emphasised that good governance ensures transparency and accountability, which are essential for delivering effective municipal service to and ensuring public trust. Participant B also indicated that good governance builds trust between the Municipality and the community, leading to improved participation in governance processes. Participant C Highlighted that good governance ensures transparency and equity in service provision. Participant E stressed that ethical leadership, which is implied in good governance, helps to prevent the misuse of resources and supports effective service delivery by ensuring that officials act in the best interest of the community, thus building trust and leading to more active community participation. The participant indicated that Participant F noted good governance ensures that service delivery is done in a transparent and inclusive manner. The participant added that this means that community members have a voice in how services are provided, making the Municipality more responsive to their needs. Participant G emphasised that good government establishes transparency and fairness in how services are delivered. Participant H highlighted that good governance establishes a system of checks and balances that holds municipal officials accountable for their performance, which directly impacts service quality. Participant I indicated that good governance ensures adherence to the legal frameworks and transparency in how resources are allocated and managed. The participant emphasised that it plays a vital role in creating a framework for decision-making that prevents

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the misuse of municipal resources.

4.3.2 QUESTION 2: What are the Challenges faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective service delivery?

The second question of the study aimed to identify the challenges faced by Thulamela's Local Municipality in promoting effective municipal service delivery. The participants shared the following insights.

Participant A:

Responding to the second question, participant A indicated that poor public participation has affected the provision of effective service delivery.

Participant B:

Responding to the second question, participant B stated that one of the challenges is the lack of adequate funding and budget. The participant added that the Municipality struggles with revenue collection, as many residents are unable to pay for municipal services.

Participant C:

With regard to the second question, the participant indicated that a key challenge is a lack of responsiveness from the Municipality when the community reports issues.

Participant D:

With regard to the second question, the participant indicated that a major issue we face is that community members are not taking part in the consultation process. The participant added that in efforts to engage with the public, there is little participation from the community, which affects how well the Municipality can align services with their needs.

Participant E:

In responding to the second question, the participant identified two challenges impacting the Municipality to deliver effective services. The participant stated that the Municipality faces issues related to the mismanagement of resources, including financial misallocations and inefficiencies that hinder service delivery initiatives. The participant added that corruption further exacerbates this challenge by diverting funds away from essential services, leading to substandard infrastructure and limited municipal service reach across communities. The participant also indicated that there is a lack of effective communication and community engagement.

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Participant F:

In response to the second question, the participant indicated that poor involvement is a challenge, largely because residents themselves do not engage themselves with the Municipality. The participant stated that many people don't attend public meetings or provide feedback on proposed projects, which leaves the Municipality to make decisions without sufficient community input.

Participant G:

Responding to the second question, the participant stated that training for municipal officials is inadequate, which affects their ability to provide services efficiently. Many of the employees are not well-vested in the latest technologies, which leads to delays.

Participant H:

In response to the second question, the participant indicated that corruption remains a significant issue. The participant indicated that the resources meant for service delivery are often misused, which leads to inadequate services.

Participant I:

Responding to the second question about the challenge faced in promoting effective service delivery, the participant indicated that one significant challenge is the lack of active participation from community members. The participant indicated that even though there are platforms for engagement, many residents do not attend meetings or provide input, which results in a disconnect between what the Municipality plans and what the community truly needs.

Participant J:

In response to the second question, the participant indicated that political interference continues to be a challenge. The participant indicated that decisions regarding service delivery are often delayed due to the involvement of political figures and negatively impact the Municipality's ability to provide timely services.

Regarding the challenges faced in promoting effective municipal service delivery. The findings show that there is a challenge affecting service delivery within Thulamela Local Municipality. Participants A, D, F, and I indicated a challenge of poor and lack of public participation within Thulamela Local Municipality. Participant B also stresses that there is a lack of adequate funding and budget. The participant added that the Municipality struggles with revenue collection, as many residents are unable to pay for municipal services. Participant C Indicated a challenge of

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poor responsiveness from the Municipality to issues of the communities. Participant D emphasised that community members are not taking part in the consultation process. The participant stressed that in efforts to engage with the public, there is little participation from the community, which affects how well the Municipality can align services with their needs. Participant E stresses that corruption and mismanagement of resources hinder service delivery within the Municipality. Participant E also identified the challenge of lack of effective communication and community engagement.

Participant F emphasised that poor involvement is a challenge, largely because residents themselves do not engage themselves with the Municipality. The participant stated that many people don't attend public meetings or provide feedback on proposed projects, which leaves the Municipality to make decisions without sufficient community input. Participant G indicated that there is a challenge of inadequate training for municipal officials, which affects their ability to provide services efficiently. Participant H stresses that corruption remains a significant effect on municipal service delivery because resources meant for service delivery are often misused, which leads to inadequate services. Participant J indicated that the Municipality faces the challenge of political interference in the decision-making process. The challenges provided by the participants in the study include poor public participation, inadequate funding, poor responsiveness, corruption and mismanagement of resources, incapacity, and political interference in the decision-making process.

4.3.2.1 What are the causes of challenges faced by TLM in promoting effective municipal service delivery?

In the second question of the study, the researcher developed a follow-up question that sought to explore the causes of the challenges facing Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective municipal service delivery. The following were the responses regarding the causes of the challenges facing Thulamela in promoting effective municipal service delivery.

Participant A:

Participant A indicated that the cause of poor public participation could be linked to the lack of awareness among community members about the importance of their involvement in municipal processes.

Participant B:

In response to the follow-up question, the participant indicated that poor revenue collection and outstanding debts remain a significant root cause of the challenges faced in promoting effective municipal service delivery.

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Participant C:

Responding to the follow-up question, the participant answered by saying that the Lack of responsiveness stems from poor internal communication and coordination within the Municipality.

Participant D:

In response to the challenges facing the Municipality in promoting effective municipal service delivery, the participant indicated that limited awareness campaigns about public consultations and a history of ineffective previous consultations led to apathy. The participant added that residents feel their input will not be taken seriously, which causes them to disengage.

Participant E:

Responding to the follow-up question, the participant indicated that the cause is cadre deployment and shortage of skilled professionals in administration. The participant also highlighted procurement challenges of hiring incompetent service providers as a cause of poor service delivery.

Participant F:

In response to the causes of the challenges faced in promoting effective municipal delivery, the participant indicated that the cause is a lack of trust between the community and the Municipality, stemming from years of unmet promises. The participant added that residents feel their participation will not lead to meaningful changes, which results in disengagement.

Participant G:

The participant said that the cause is insufficient investment in capacity-building programs and a lack of structured training modules that focus on modern technologies and service delivery skills. The participant added that ward councillors still use hand-delivery letters as a form of communication to report service delivery issues.

Participant H:

The participant indicated that the root cause is the lack of transparency and effective accountability measures in the municipality.

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Participant I:

Regarding the challenges faced in promoting effective municipal service delivery, the participant indicated that the cause of the challenge can be attributed to a lack of awareness and time constraints. Many community members face personal time imitations due to work commitments and other daily activities which prevent them from attending municipal meetings such as *imbizos*.

Participant J:

In response to the follow-up question, the participant indicated that the cause is the blurred line between administrative and political functions within the Municipality. Political leaders sometimes prioritise personal or party interests over service delivery, which creates delays and affects the Municipality's decision-making processes.

Regarding the causes of challenges faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective service delivery, participants A and I indicated that a lack of public awareness about municipal processes and the importance of community involvement contributes to poor public participation. Participants A and D further emphasised that insufficient awareness campaigns and previous ineffective consultations have led to community disengagement. Participants B and E pointed out that financial constraints are a major cause of service delivery challenges. Participant B noted that poor revenue collection and outstanding debts remain significant root causes of the challenges faced in promoting effective municipal service delivery, while Participant E highlighted that cadre deployment and a shortage of skilled professionals as major challenges causing service delivery inefficiencies. Participants C and G identified poor internal communication and a lack of capacity-building programs as key contributors to the Municipality's inefficiency.

Participant C indicated that the lack of responsiveness to community issues stems from poor coordination within departments, while Participant G added that insufficient training in modern technologies affects service delivery efficiency. Participants F and D discussed mistrust between the community and the Municipality as a significant cause of disengagement in public participation. Participant F emphasised that years of unmet promises have eroded trust, causing the community to believe their participation will not lead to meaningful changes. Similarly, Participant D mentioned that residents often feel their input is not valued, which has led to public apathy. Participant H stated that the challenge of corruption is a result of a lack of transparency and effective measures of accountability. Participant J noted that political leaders often prioritise personal or party interests over municipal service delivery, which causes delays and affects decision-making processes.

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4.3.3 QUESTION 3: What are the initiatives in place to promote effective service delivery?

The third question of the study sought to describe the initiatives in place to promote effective service delivery. The following were the responses from ten municipal officials.

Participant A:

In response to the third question on the initiatives in place to promote effective service delivery, participant A stated that the Municipality has implemented a performance management system that tracks the progress of service delivery projects. The participant added that it helps to ensure that municipal officials are held accountable for their performance and that projects are completed on time.

Participant B:

Responding to the third question, the participant indicated that the Municipality has community engagement programs that allow residents to voice their concerns and participate in the decision-making process. The participant added that the programs are aimed at ensuring that service delivery is aligned with the actual needs of the people. However, participation remains a significant problem.

Participant C:

In response to the second question, the participant answered by saying that public-private partnerships have been introduced to improve municipal service delivery. The participant added that by partnering with private companies, the Municipality is able to leverage additional resources and expertise to enhance the quality of municipal services.

Participant D:

With regard to the third question, the participant answered by saying that the Municipality has a performance management system that enables it to monitor the effectiveness of its service and identify the areas where improvement is needed.

Participant E:

Responding to the third question, the participant indicated that the Municipality has community engagement programs aimed at allowing the community to provide input on service delivery issues and help the Municipality respond to their needs. The participant added that the Municipality had established the Mayor-*Mahosi* forum to mediate issues that affect service delivery.

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Participant F:

In response to the third question, the participant indicated that the Municipality has public participation programs that allow the community to be involved in the Municipality's affairs to ensure that the community's needs are aligned with the service delivery goals. The participant indicated that the Municipality also partners with the community to enhance service delivery.

Participant G:

In response to the third question, the participant indicated that public-private partnerships have been established to improve infrastructures. The participant added that the partnerships allow the Municipality to leverage external resources and expertise, which has been particularly beneficial in areas like road maintenance.

Participant H:

In response to the third question, the participant stated that the Municipality has adopted the integrated development plan (IDP), Which outlines the key priorities and objectives for service delivery. The participant indicated that the IDP is a crucial initiative in Thulamela, and it allows the Municipality to identify the most pressing issues and direct resources to those areas, ensuring that services are delivered where they are most needed. The participant also stated that the Municipality enables community participation through *imbizos*. The participant further indicated that the Municipality partners with NGOs and Private partnerships to enhance municipal service delivery.

Participant I:

Responding to the third question, the participant answered that they have prioritised public consultations and feedback through ward committees.

Participant J:

In response to the second question, the participant answered by saying that the Municipality has implemented several initiatives, such as the Integrated development plan, to ensure community participation and align our development projects with the needs of the people.

Regarding the initiatives in place to promote effective service delivery, participants A and D indicated that the Municipality has a performance management system to enhance service delivery effectiveness. The participants emphasised that it helps to ensure that municipal officials are accountable, monitor the effectiveness of municipal service and identify areas for improvement. The findings show that Participant B propounded that the Municipality has

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community engagement programs that allow the communities to voice their concerns and participate in the decision-making process. However, participant B noted that although there are community engagement programs, participation remains a significant problem. Participants C and G indicated that the participant stated that public-private partnerships had been established to improve infrastructures, such as road maintenance. Participant C further emphasised that private partnership enables the Municipality to leverage additional resources and expertise to enhance the quality of municipal services.

Participant E highlighted that the Municipality had established community engagement programs which are aimed at allowing the community to provide input on service delivery matters and assist the Municipality in responding to their needs. The participant specified that the Municipality has established the Mayoral-*Mahosi* forum to mediate service delivery issues. Participant F indicated that the Municipality has public participation programs and partnerships with members of the communities to enhance municipal service delivery. Participants H and J Indicated that the Municipality has adopted the integrated development plan (IDP), Which outlines the key priorities and objectives for service delivery by allowing the Municipality to identify the most pressing issues and direct resources to those areas, ensuring that services are delivered where they are needed the most. Participant H also outlined that the Municipality enables public participation through *imbizos* to enhance service delivery. The participant additionally identified partnerships with NGOs and private entities. Participant I propounded that the Municipality prioritises public consultations and feedback through ward committees.

4.3.4 QUESTION 4: What are the strategies that can be recommended to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery?

The last question of the research aimed to identify strategies that could be suggested to improve good governance and efficient municipal service delivery, and the participants indicated the following.

Participant A:

Responding to the last question, participant A stated that strengthening internal controls and ensuring more regular training for officials will enhance governance. The participant added that there is also a need to improve community engagement so that services provided are more aligned with their needs.

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Participant B:

In response to the fourth question about the strategies for enhancing good governance and effective service delivery, the participant stated that promoting participatory governance, where citizens are more involved in the decision-making process, can improve service delivery outcomes.

Participant C:

Regarding the fourth question, the participant indicated that implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism would help the Municipality track progress on service delivery projects and ensure that the challenges are addressed promptly.

Participant D:

With regard to the fourth question, the participant indicated that transparency and accountability need to be improved. The participant added that the Municipality should make all its processes more open to the public, and officials should be held accountable for any failures in service delivery.

Participant E:

Responding to the fourth question, the participant indicated that one crucial strategy is to provide valuable training for municipal officials. Proper training will ensure that officials are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet service delivery demands. The participant indicated that training should be ongoing, covering technical skills, governance principles, and ethics.

Participant F:

In response to the last question regarding the strategies for enhancing good governance, the participant stated that increasing public participation is the key to strengthening governance and service delivery. The participant added that when the community is actively involved in governance, it leads to better decision-making and more effective service delivery. Therefore, the Municipality should hold regular consultations with the public.

Participant G:

With regard to the fourth question, the participant answered that to enhance good governance and an effective municipal service delivery system, the Municipality should strengthen participatory governance by establishing more platforms for public engagement. The participant indicated that active participation and the provision of municipal strategic workshops would

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ensure that services align more with community expectations and needs.

Participant H:

In response to the fourth question, the participant indicated that improving transparency and accountability is crucial. The participant indicated that the Municipality should regularly publish reports on service delivery performance, and officials must be accountable for any inefficiencies or corruption.

Participant I:

With regard to the fourth question, the participant stated that the Municipality should foster more collaboration with the community. The participant added that participatory governance can help to address the gap between what the Municipality delivers and what it is supposed to deliver.

Participant J:

Responding to the last question, the participant indicated that a key strategy would be establishing a feedback mechanism where citizens can report issues or concerns regarding service delivery. This will help the Municipality address problems more quickly and improve the quality-of-service provision.

The findings reveal that most study participants indicated that enhancing public participation could go a long way in promoting governance and service delivery within the Municipality. Participants A, B, F, G, and I emphasised the need for participatory governance, where citizens are more involved in the decision-making process, which can improve service delivery outcomes. From the above, the researcher can conclude that the participants believe that enhancing participatory governance can enhance good governance and service delivery in local government. Participant C Proposed that implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism would help the Municipality track progress on service delivery projects and promptly address the challenges. Participants D and H highlighted the importance of improving transparency and accountability to enhance governance and effective municipal service delivery. Participant E suggested that practical and valuable training for municipal officials is crucial to enhancing their capacity to deliver services efficiently. Finally, establishing a feedback mechanism where citizens can report issues or concerns regarding service delivery, as propounded by Participant J, could assist the Municipality in addressing service delivery problems. When implemented collectively, these strategies can enhance governance in local government, leading to improved service provision.

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4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the data collected through both questionnaires and interviews. It was structured into two sections: The analysis of data collected using structured questionnaires and an interview schedule. The structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from all the participants. The collected data was analysed using statistical analysis, and the results were presented in tables, frequencies, and percentages. The researcher also used an interview schedule to collect qualitative data from the participants. Ten municipal officials responded to the interview questions to provide insight into governance practices and dynamics within the Municipality. The data were presented in a narrative form. The following chapter will focus on conclusions drawn from the findings and provide recommendations based on the study's outcomes.

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CHAPTER 5:

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter was about analysing, presenting, and interpreting the study's data obtained through the questionnaires and interview schedule. Therefore, this chapter will present the findings, conclusions, and recommendations that emerged from the data analysis, building upon the insights gathered in the preceding data analysis chapter. This chapter serves as the culmination of the study, where it outlines the key findings related to governance practices within the Thulamela Local Municipality. The researcher also draws conclusions based on these findings and offers recommendations for good governance and service delivery in this context. Additionally, the study identifies potential areas for future research that may further contribute to the understanding of good governance and service delivery in the municipal sphere of government.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study focused on investigating the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery. The discussion of the findings provides more information on the study from each objective. The findings of this study revealed the challenges faced regarding promoting effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela. They include political interference in the decision-making process, corruption and mismanagement of resources, poor responsiveness, poor public participation, incapacity, and inadequate budget and funding. This study aimed to investigate the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery and recommend strategies that will be used to enhance good governance and effective service delivery in the local sphere of government. The presentation in this chapter is organised thematically based on the following objectives of the study.

- To determine the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality.
- To identify challenges faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective service delivery.
- To describe the initiatives in place to promote effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality.
- To recommend strategies that can be used to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality.

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The study also attempted to answer the following questions that emanated from the research objectives.

- What is the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality?
- What are the challenges faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective service delivery?
- What are the initiatives in place to promote effective service delivery municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality?
- What are the strategies that can be recommended to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery?

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings arose from the specific objectives of the study. The following specific objectives benchmarked the realisation of the aim of the study: To determine the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela's Local Municipality. To identify challenges faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective service delivery. To describe the initiatives in place to promote effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. To recommend strategies that can be used to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. From the second research question, the researcher developed a follow-up question to find the root cause of the challenges faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective municipal service delivery.

5.2.1 Major findings on the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery.

The objective intended to determine the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. The study found that the majority, 69 (57.5%) of the respondents, agreed that governance practices in Thulamela Local Municipality contribute to effective service delivery. The findings indicate that governance practices positively impact the delivery of services in the municipal sphere of government. This highlights the need for ongoing efforts to strengthen governance structures. The study also found that 60(50%) agreed that transparency in decision-making enhances the quality of municipal services. The positive response regarding transparency suggests that enhancing these practices can lead to improved service delivery. Therefore, initiatives aimed at increasing transparency in the decision-making process should be prioritised.

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The study also revealed that 30(25%) were not sure that the Municipality encourages citizen involvement in the decision-making process to enhance municipal service delivery. The uncertainty among respondents about citizen involvement underscores the necessity of fostering active participation. Therefore, the findings underscore the need for Thulamela Local Municipality to increase transparency, actively promote avenues for citizen engagement and ensure that citizens engage meaningfully and contribute to decision-making. It is imperative that the Municipality develop a clear communication strategy that informs citizens about opportunities for involvement in the decision-making process. The study also found that 38(31.7%) respondents disagreed that accountability mechanisms are effectively implemented in Thulamela Local Municipality. The findings that accountability mechanisms are not effectively implemented is concerning. It is crucial for the Municipality to establish and enforce these mechanisms to build trust among citizens and ensure that officials are held accountable for their actions.

The findings of the study also revealed that 39(32.5%) of the respondents agreed that the Municipality adheres to legal frameworks and regulations that support effective service delivery. The relatively low agreement on adherence to legal frameworks indicates a potential area for improvement. The Municipality should take steps to ensure compliance with regulations and standards that support effective service delivery. The findings show that there is a relationship between good governance practices and effective municipal service delivery. In summary, the findings highlight both strengths and areas for improvement within the Thulamela Local Municipality. By enhancing governance practices, promoting transparency, encouraging citizen engagement, implementing effective accountability mechanisms, and ensuring adherence to legal frameworks, the Municipality can significantly improve service delivery and strengthen public trust.

From the interviews that were carried out, the study's findings revealed varying degrees of the role of the role of good governance in municipal service delivery. It is evident that there is a relationship between good governance practices and effective municipal service delivery. The researcher discovered that governance practices such as transparency and effective decision-making are vital in ensuring that resources are utilised for the benefit of the communities. The findings also reveal that good governance practices build trust within local communities, which enables them to take part in local government affairs. It was discovered that good governance ensures transparency in the provision of municipal services. The researcher discovered that good governance promotes ethical standards that enable officials to act in the best interest of the citizens. The study found that governance promotes equity and inclusion in the decision-making process. This can lead to more tailored and effective solutions that truly meet the needs of diverse populations. The findings of the study revealed that good governance establishes a

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system of checks and balances that holds municipal officials accountable for their actions, thus enhancing municipal service delivery. The establishment of checks and balances is a vital aspect of good governance. It ensures that municipal officials are held accountable for their actions, which is fundamental for improving service delivery and reinforcing public confidence in local government. Together, the findings indicate that good governance, through transparency, accountability measures, community inclusiveness, and equitable resource allocation, is central to promoting effective municipal service delivery and building trust between the Municipality and the community. The researcher concludes that good governance practices are critical in enhancing municipal service delivery.

Overall, these findings point to a clear pathway for municipalities. By adopting and reinforcing good governance practices, they can enhance not only the quality of municipal service delivery but also the relationship with their communities.

5.2.2 Major findings on the challenges faced in promoting effective municipal service delivery.

The second objective of the study was to find the challenges facing Thulamela's Local Municipality in promoting effective municipal service delivery. The study found that majority at 54 (45%) of the respondents, agreed that inadequate training and capacity building for municipal officials hinders effective service delivery. The findings underscore a need for the Municipality to implement a robust training program for municipal officials to enhance their skills. By investing in training, the Municipality can improve service delivery and ultimately benefit the community. 54% of the respondents, who constituted 45%, strongly agreed that poor or lack of community involvement in the decision-making process affects the provision of municipal service in Thulamela Local Municipality. This shows that Thulamela's Local Municipality is faced with the challenge of poor community engagement in the affairs of local government. The findings are consistent with a study conducted by Masia, Davids and Mazenda (2019), who identified a similar issue of poor community involvement in local government affairs as a challenge affecting effective municipal service delivery. These findings also corroborate the findings from the interview schedule that poor public participation could be linked to the lack of awareness among community members about the importance of their involvement in municipal affairs. This lack of meaningful engagement contributes to a trust deficit and hampers service delivery.

The study also found that lack of compliance with the legislative and regulatory framework affects the provision of municipal services. The majority, 66(55%), supported the statement. These findings show that policies and legislative frameworks in local government are of paramount importance to enhance governance and effective municipal service delivery. The findings revealed that 42 respondents, who constituted 35%, indicated that political interference

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and the lack of a proper communication strategy between political office bearers, administrative officials, and the community within the Municipality affects the provision of municipal services. The study also found that poor maintenance of infrastructures has negatively affected the provision of effective service delivery within the Municipality.

From the interview schedule that was used to examine the challenges, the findings show that one of the challenges facing the municipality with regard to promoting effective municipal service delivery is poor public participation by the communities in the affairs of the Municipality. The data collected in response to the question regarding the challenges reveals several significant issues. As noted by multiple respondents, a common theme is the lack of public participation. This challenge could be linked to poor consultation or lack of effective communication and the lack of trust by the communities within Thulamela's Local Municipality. Additionally, inadequate budget and funding remain a significant issue. The study also revealed poor responsiveness to issues pertaining to municipal service delivery as a major challenge facing the Municipality. These findings corroborate the findings in a study conducted by Mudzusi *et al.* (2024), which found that poor service delivery in local government is a result of poor responsiveness. Mismanagement of resources coupled with corruption poses further challenges in promoting effective municipal service delivery. Inadequate training for municipal officials is another key issue, potentially resulting in poor performance regarding municipal service delivery. Lastly, political interference underscores a need for improved accountability mechanisms. These findings suggest that the Thulamela Local Municipality should consider addressing these challenges to improve governance and effective municipal service delivery to the local communities.

The sub-themes emerged from the follow-up question that sought to identify the root cause of the challenges facing the Municipality in promoting effective municipal service delivery. The study found that the challenge of poor public participation in Thulamela Local Municipality is a result of a lack of awareness among the communities about the importance of their involvement in decision-making. This shows that within the Municipality, there is a notable challenge of low public engagement. The findings underscore the need for awareness campaigns to educate the community on the importance of public participation in decision-making. The researcher found that inadequate budget and funding are a result of low revenue collection and the Municipality's outstanding debts. The findings highlight the necessity of improving revenue collection and managing outstanding debts to secure adequate funding for municipal services. A challenge of poor responsiveness could be linked to poor communication and coordination within the Municipality. The findings also revealed that a challenge of poor participation is a result of a lack of awareness campaigns regarding public participation and a history of ineffective consultations. The root cause of issues affecting the Municipality is cadre deployment, which also affects

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procurement challenges of hiring incompetent service providers. Establishing transparent procurement processes and ensuring accountability can help mitigate the root cause of the challenges faced in promoting effective municipal service delivery. The findings show that corruption within the Municipality is the result of the lack of transparency and effective measures of accountability. The researcher found that the lack of public trust is also one of the constraints to effective public participation in Thulamela Local Municipality.

5.2.3 Major findings on the initiatives in place to promote effective municipal service delivery.

The third objective of the study was to describe the initiatives to promote effective municipal service delivery. The findings of the study reveal that the majority at, 32(26.7%) of the respondents, disagreed that community engagement programs are actively used to improve service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. This indicates a potential gap in communication or involvement between the Municipality and the community, suggesting that the Municipality must make efforts to engage with the residents. Fifty-two of the respondents, who constituted 43.3%, agreed that the provision of municipal services through private entities/private partnerships enhances service delivery. The findings also reveal that the Municipality has implemented an effective performance management system to improve municipal service delivery. This was supported by 36 respondents, who constituted (30%).

The study also found that the majority, 62(51.7%) of the respondents, agreed that there are policies and procedures in place to guide effective municipal service delivery. The findings also reveal that 39(32,5%) of the respondents disagreed that regular evaluations are conducted to assess municipal service delivery effectiveness within the communities. It is concerning that 51.7% agreed that policies and procedures exist to guide municipal service delivery, yet a notable 32.5% disagreed that regular evaluations are conducted to assess effectiveness. This inconsistency raises questions about how well those policies are being implemented and monitored. Overall, while there are positive indicators of initiatives in place to enhance effective municipal service delivery, significant concerns remain, particularly in community engagement and evaluation processes, which may hinder the overall improvement of municipal service delivery. Addressing these issues could lead to a more proactive and responsive service delivery model that can reflect the needs of the community.

From the interview that was carried out regarding the initiatives in place to promote effective municipal service delivery. The findings revealed that the Municipality has a performance management system to enhance service delivery. The presence of the performance management system (PMS) indicates that the Municipality is committed to improved service delivery. It is evident that the Municipality has community engagement programs that allow the

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citizens to voice out their concerns and participate in the decision-making process. However, participation remains a significant problem. Specifically, respondents highlighted that the Municipality had established the mayoral-*mahosi* forum and *imbizos* to mediate service delivery issues. The establishment of community engagement programs is commendable, as they empower citizens to voice their concerns. However, the noted challenge of low participation suggests a need for outreach strategies to encourage broader community involvement. The researcher also found that the Municipality partners with the community and non-governmental organisations to enhance service delivery. The study also revealed that there is a private partnership to enhance service delivery. Fostering and expanding these relationships could lead to better resource utilisation and innovative solutions. Another crucial initiative that was identified is the IDP, which enables the public to participate in service delivery matters. Developing clear and engaging communication about the IDP's processes may help to increase public interest and involvement.

5.2.4 Major findings on strategies that can be recommended to enhance good governance and effective municipal delivery.

The fourth objective intended to recommend strategies that can be used to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery. The study found that involving the communities in the decision-making process enhances governance and service delivery effectiveness. Seventy-two respondents, 60% of the total, supported the statement. The strong support for involving communities in the decision-making process highlights the importance of participatory governance. By actively engaging citizens, this can ensure that service delivery aligns more closely with the actual needs and preferences of the community. The findings reveal that the majority, 57(47.5%), agreed that implementing comprehensive staff programs will address issues in service delivery. This indicates that training, development and support for municipal officials can lead to improved service provision.

The findings also reveal that strengthening accountability mechanisms would improve good governance and service delivery in the Thulamela Local Municipality. Strengthening these mechanisms can help to build trust within the community and ensure that municipal officials are held responsible for their performance. 52(43.3%) agreed that implementing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will significantly improve service delivery outcomes in Thulamela Local Municipality. This suggests the recognition of the need for transparency and continuous improvement. The study revealed that improving transparency in municipal operations leads to better governance and service delivery outcomes. This was supported by 63 respondents, who constituted 52.3%. By openly sharing information, the Municipality can cultivate public trust and encourage public participation.

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From the interview schedule, the findings about the strategies that can be recommended to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery reveal a comprehensive set of approaches. The findings revealed a comprehensive array of mechanisms and strategies that can be implemented to enhance governance, ultimately improving service provision. Foremost, the findings emphasised enhancing participatory governance as vital in promoting good governance. This approach will not only empower citizens but also foster a sense of ownership and accountability within the community. Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of strengthening internal controls and providing training for municipal officials. By enhancing these systems, municipalities can reduce the risks of corruption and inefficiency, ultimately leading to better service delivery. Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism emerged as another crucial element, with the findings showcasing its significance in tracking the progress of service delivery projects and addressing the challenges. This can ensure that resources are utilised for the benefit of the community.

Accountability and transparency were also emphasised in the data, underlining the need for municipal officials to be open and answerable for their actions to the communities in which they serve. These strategies were perceived as paramount in addressing good governance issues and municipal service delivery. Effective and valuable training was found to be vital in enhancing the capacity of municipal officials to deliver services efficiently. Investing in their professional development will equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively, thereby improving the overall quality of services provided. Lastly, establishing a feedback mechanism where citizens can report issues could assist the Municipality in addressing municipal service delivery. This two-way communication channel can allow citizens to report issues and provide the Municipality with valuable insights to improve service delivery. In summary, these findings offer a multifaceted approach to strengthening good governance and effective municipal service delivery.

5.3 SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section presents the synthesis of the study findings on the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery. The following are the key findings from the data collected using the questionnaire.

- Good governance practices positively impact the delivery of services in the municipal sphere of government.
- Transparency in the decision-making enhances the quality of municipal services.
- Most of the respondents were not sure that the Municipality encourages citizen involvement in the decision-making process to enhance service delivery.
- Accountability mechanisms are not effectively implemented in Thulamela Local

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- The Municipality adheres to legal frameworks and regulations that support effective service delivery.
- Inadequate training and capacity building for municipal officials hinders effective municipal service delivery.
- Poor or lack of community involvement in the decision-making process in Thulamela Local Municipality affects the provision of municipal services.
- Poor compliance with the legislative and regulatory framework affects the provision of municipal services.
- Political interference and the lack of a proper communication strategy between municipal officials and the community within Thulamela Local Municipality affects the provision of municipal services.
- Community engagement programs are not actively used to improve municipal service delivery.
- The provision of municipal service delivery through private partnerships enhances service delivery.
- The Municipality has implemented an effective performance management system to enhance municipal service delivery.
- The Municipality has policies and procedures in place to guide effective municipal service delivery.
- Regular evaluations are not conducted to assess municipal service delivery effectiveness within the communities.
- Involving the communities in the decision-making process enhances good governance and effective municipal service delivery.
- Implementing comprehensive staff programs will address issues in service delivery.
- Strengthening accountability mechanisms would improve good governance and service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality.
- Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will significantly improve service delivery outcomes in Thulamela Local Municipality.
- Improving transparency in municipal operations leads to better governance and service delivery outcomes.

From the data collected through the interview schedule, the following is the synthesis of the study.

- Good governance ensures transparency and accountability, which are essential for delivering effective municipal service delivery and ensuring public trust.
- Good governance fosters community engagement, which is critical in addressing

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the actual needs of the community.

- Good governance is linked with responsiveness, and it ensures that services align with the community's needs.
- Thulamela Local Municipality is faced with a challenge of poor or lack of public participation.
- There is a challenge of funding and adequate budget to promote effective municipal service delivery.
- There is poor responsiveness from the Municipality to issues of the communities.
- The Municipality is faced with the challenges of corruption and mismanagement of resources.
- There is inadequate training for municipal officials.
- The Municipality faces the challenge of political interference in the decision-making process.
- Lack of awareness regarding the importance of participation in local government contributes to poor public participation in Thulamela Local Municipality.
- Previous ineffective consultations have led to a decline in members of the communities involved in public participation programs.
- Inadequate budget and finance affect the Municipality in the provision of services.
- Cadre deployment and a shortage of skilled professionals are major challenges causing service delivery inefficiencies.
- The lack of transparency and effective accountability measures result in corruption
- Poor communication is another root cause of service delivery challenges in Thulamela Local Municipality.
- The Municipality has a performance management system to enhance service delivery effectiveness.
- The Municipality has community engagement programs such as *imbizos* and the Mayor-*Mahosi* forums to enhance municipal service delivery.
- The Municipality has an integrated development plan (IDP), which outlines the priorities and objectives for service delivery.
- The Municipality partners with NGOs, private entities and community members to enhance service provision.
- There is a need to enhance public participation in the decision-making process to enhance municipal service delivery.
- Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism would help the Municipality track progress on service delivery projects and promptly address the challenges.
- There is a need for effective training for municipal officials to enhance their capacity to

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deliver services efficiently.

- Establishing a feedback mechanism where citizens can report concerns or service delivery issues could assist the Municipality in addressing service delivery problems.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Considering the critical insights garnered from the study's major findings, several key recommendations emerge, each designed to address specific challenges and enhance governance practices within Thulamela Local Municipality. These recommendations are aligned with the study's objectives, aiming to address specific governance challenges, promote effective implementation of governance initiatives, and develop strategies that will enhance good governance practices.

5.4.1 Recommendations on good governance and effective municipal service delivery

The findings indicate that good governance plays a crucial role in enhancing service delivery by fostering transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness. However, there are notable gaps in governance practices that need to be addressed. To address these issues, it is recommended that the Municipality invest in comprehensive governance training programs. These training initiatives should cover key aspects of good governance, including decision-making, ethical conduct, and transparency. By embedding governance principles in daily operations, officials can better align their activities with the goals of effective service delivery. Moreover, the Municipality should implement stronger transparency measures, ensuring that all stakeholders have access to information regarding budget allocations, project timelines, and service delivery updates. This will foster a culture of openness and increase public trust in municipal operations. Additionally, the establishment of enhanced accountability mechanisms is essential. This may include a performance management system that assesses officials based on key performance indicators aligned with service delivery objectives. Such a system would reinforce accountability, ensuring that municipal operations are consistently oriented towards achieving effective service delivery.

5.4.2 Recommendations on the challenges faced in promoting effective municipal service delivery

The findings of the study highlight several challenges facing Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective municipal service delivery. To address these challenges, it is recommended that the Municipality implement comprehensive training and capacity-building programs for municipal officials. Such programs should focus on improving governance, public participation, and resource management skills. It is also recommended that the Municipality allocate sufficient resources towards infrastructure development and maintenance. Prioritising these allocations

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will allow the Municipality to repair and upgrade essential services, enhancing the quality-of-service delivery. Furthermore, to combat issues related to cadre deployment, the Municipality should develop transparent hiring and promotion policies that emphasise qualifications and professional competencies. By instituting a fair and merit-based recruitment process, the Municipality can ensure that officials are chosen based on their ability to perform rather than political affiliations, thereby enhancing service efficiency. Fostering accountability and reducing political interference are vital for effective governance. This can be achieved by enhancing independent governance structures and separating administrative functions from political influence.

Regular policy reviews and the establishment of strict accountability mechanisms can minimise corruption and promote adherence to regulations. Communication and responsiveness within the Municipality must also be improved by developing a clear communication strategy that fosters better coordination between political office bearers, administrative officials, and the community. Transparent procurement processes should be implemented to mitigate corruption and ensure that competent service providers are engaged, thus improving the efficiency of service delivery. To improve community engagement, the Municipality should also consider conducting awareness campaigns that inform residents of their role in local governance. Establishing regular community forums, feedback sessions, and surveys will facilitate a two-way communication channel, empowering residents to voice their concerns and participate actively in decision-making processes. This approach will not only address the challenge of low community involvement but also foster a collaborative environment conducive to effective governance. By adopting these recommendations, Thulamela Local Municipality can address the identified challenges and improve its capacity to deliver effective services to the community.

5.4.3 Recommendations on the initiatives in place to promote effective municipal service delivery

In response to findings regarding existing initiatives, such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and performance management systems, it is recommended that these initiatives be enhanced to maximise their impact on service delivery. The Municipality should improve the implementation of the IDP by involving the community more actively in the formulation and review processes. Regular consultations with community members will ensure that the IDP is aligned with local needs and priorities, thereby increasing its effectiveness in addressing service delivery challenges. Additionally, the Municipality should expand its performance management system to provide a more structured approach to assessing the effectiveness of municipal projects. Setting clear objectives for each initiative and regularly monitoring their progress will provide a systematic framework for evaluating outcomes and making necessary adjustments.

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This approach will enable the Municipality to better align its activities with service delivery goals and address any emerging challenges. Private and community partnerships also play a significant role in promoting effective service delivery. It is recommended that the Municipality strengthen collaborations with private entities and local organisations to leverage additional resources and expertise. This collaborative approach will not only alleviate resource constraints but also foster a sustainable model for service delivery that benefits both the Municipality and the community.

5.4.4 Recommendations on the strategies for enhancing good governance and effective municipal service delivery.

To fortify governance and effective service delivery within Thulamela Local Municipality, a comprehensive set of recommendations emerges from the study's findings on the strategies that were recommended. Firstly, to strengthen the governance, the Municipality should implement comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategies. This includes developing partnerships with civil society organisations and the private sector. These partnerships can help mobilise resources, expertise, and innovative solutions that can benefit the community. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will allow the Municipality to assess the impact of its initiatives continuously. Regular assessment alignment aligned with predefined service delivery objectives will provide insights into areas for improvement, ensuring that governance practices remain responsive to emerging needs. The study also recommends that the Municipality should encourage public participation through E-participation, whereby the public can be involved in local government matters through online platforms. By actively involving the public in governance, the Municipality can foster a sense of shared responsibility and build a more inclusive and accountable government. Lastly, the Municipality should implement effective transparent and accountable mechanisms to ensure that municipal officials are held accountable for their actions to the public. These recommendations collectively form a robust strategy aiming to enhance good governance and municipal service delivery in the local sphere of government.

5.5 A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY

The following framework was developed to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery. The framework is made up of three pillars: transparency, accountability, and responsiveness.

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5.5.1 Integrated Governance Enhancement Model (IGEM)

The Integrated Governance Enhancement Model (IGEM) is designed to improve the governance framework within municipalities, focusing on three core pillars: Accountability, Transparency, and Responsiveness. These pillars work together to strengthen good governance and ensure that service delivery within local governments is both effective and sustainable. The model emphasises a holistic approach that integrates these principles into all aspects of municipal functioning, creating a dynamic governance system where decisions are informed by the values of openness, responsibility, and the ability to adapt to the needs of the community. By incorporating these elements, the model seeks to enhance municipal performance, fostering trust between local government and citizens while addressing the most pressing service delivery challenges.

IGEM centres on public accountability, which ensures that municipal officials and local government institutions are held responsible for their actions and decisions. Accountability in local governance is fundamental to building trust and ensuring that public resources are used effectively. This pillar encourages both internal and external mechanisms that keep municipal officials answerable to the public. Internally, municipalities must establish clear roles and responsibilities, conduct regular audits, and implement performance evaluations to ensure officials meet expected standards. Externally, municipalities should provide platforms like public consultations, citizen advisory boards, and independent oversight bodies to ensure their actions are visible and subject to scrutiny. The goal of this pillar is to reinforce the idea that those in positions of power must be answerable to the public, promoting better governance and service delivery outcomes.

Transparency is the second core pillar of the IGEM, emphasising the importance of openness in decision-making and the accessibility of information to the public. When local governments are transparent, citizens have access to vital information about how decisions are made, how resources are allocated, and the progress of ongoing projects. Transparency empowers the public, allowing them to engage in the decision-making process and hold officials accountable for their actions. For transparency to be effective, municipalities must make critical documents, such as budgets, service delivery reports, and project updates, available to the public through online platforms and local offices. Furthermore, clear communication between the government and citizens is essential to ensure that everyone understands the decisions being made and the reasons behind them. This openness builds public trust and allows citizens to participate more actively in governance.

The third pillar, responsiveness, focuses on local governments' ability to promptly and effectively meet the community's needs and concerns. This principle is about ensuring that municipal

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authorities are not only receptive to citizens' issues but also proactive in addressing them. Responsiveness can be achieved through various mechanisms, such as creating platforms for regular citizen feedback, engaging in town hall meetings, and establishing clear channels for reporting service delivery problems. It also involves ensuring that citizens receive timely responses and action on reported issues, such as infrastructure maintenance or service interruptions. This pillar emphasises that an effective government should be agile, able to respond quickly to the public's needs and maintain an ongoing dialogue with the community to understand and address their concerns.

The application of IGEM requires strong leadership commitment, institutional capacity, and active community engagement. Leaders within the Municipality, such as the executive mayor and municipal managers, must lead by example, adhering to the principles of accountability, transparency, and responsiveness. Their commitment to these values is essential for the successful implementation of the model. Furthermore, municipalities must invest in building institutisonal capacity, ensuring that local government staff are well-trained and equipped to handle the responsibilities that come with these governance pillars. This may involve providing training on ethics, governance best practices, and customer service. The model also stresses the importance of involving the community in governance processes. Strengthening public participation through mechanisms like ward committees and public forums ensures that the needs and priorities of the community are reflected in municipal decisions.

For IGEM to be successful, regular monitoring and evaluation are critical. Municipalities should establish systems to continually assess the effectiveness of their governance practices. This includes tracking service delivery outcomes, evaluating public participation levels, and ensuring that feedback loops are in place to adjust policies as needed. The model also calls for the creation of corrective action frameworks to address any failures in governance or service delivery. By regularly reviewing performance, municipalities can ensure that they are continually improving service delivery and maintaining good governance standards.

Overall, the Integrated Governance Enhancement Model seeks to create a governance system where accountability, transparency, and responsiveness are not just ideals but are actively embedded in local government practices. By strengthening these principles, municipalities can improve service delivery, increase public trust, and ensure more sustainable and equitable development. The model provides a structured approach that municipalities can adopt and tailor to their specific contexts, ensuring that governance improvements are practical and effective. Through the integrated approach of IGEM, local governments can build stronger relationships with their citizens, resulting in better governance outcomes and enhanced public satisfaction.

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5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTRATION

This section provides recommendations on the principles of administration based on the findings related to good governance and effective service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. The recommendations aim to address governance and operational challenges while promoting service delivery improvements through policy development, organisational structuring, financial management, personnel administration, efficient work procedures, and control mechanisms.

5.6.1 Recommendation on Policy and Policy Making

The study recommends that Thulamela Local Municipality adopt robust, transparent policies focusing on community inclusiveness and public accountability. Policies should be developed with community input to address residents' specific service delivery needs effectively. Furthermore, the Municipality must enforce stringent anti-corruption policies to prevent misuse of public funds. Officials found guilty of misconduct or resource mismanagement should face appropriate disciplinary actions. Such measures will support a governance structure that is financially accountable and dedicated to achieving service delivery objectives.

5.6.2 Recommendation on Organising

Thulamela Local Municipality should focus on an organised structure that aligns roles with expertise to improve service delivery. The study recommends assigning officials roles based on qualifications, experience, and relevant skills. Grouping functions according to service delivery priorities can foster efficiency and accountability within departments. Establishing clear communication channels across departments can ensure that all officials and stakeholders are informed of goals and achievements, fostering coordination and focus on service delivery targets.

5.6.3 Recommendation on Financing

The Municipality’s financial strategy should be aligned with service delivery needs to ensure sustainable financing. The study recommends that Thulamela Local Municipality develop annual budgets that prioritise service delivery while exploring partnerships with non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders to secure additional resources. Engaging community members on the importance of paying for municipal services can improve revenue streams. Outsourcing financial resources and effective budget management can further support service delivery goals.

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5.6.4 Recommendation on Personnel Administration

Personnel administration is crucial for effective governance and service delivery. The study recommends that Thulamela Local Municipality employ a merit-based recruitment system that emphasises qualifications, experience, and skills aligned with service delivery goals. Clear job requirements should be defined for each role, and promotions should be awarded based on merit and contributions to municipal goals. Continuous professional development should also be offered to build capacity among municipal staff and support a commitment to quality service delivery.

5.6.5 Recommendation on Work Methods and Procedures

Efficient work methods and procedures are essential for optimal service delivery. The study recommends that Thulamela Local Municipality implement best practices from the public and private sectors to streamline operations. Procedures should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they align with current governance and service delivery standards. This adaptability can help officials avoid routine approaches and encourage innovative solutions to meet the community's changing needs.

5.6.6 Recommendation on Control

Effective control mechanisms are necessary to promote accountability and maintain service standards. The study recommends that Thulamela Local Municipality establish clear performance standards and benchmarks for each department, ensuring that objectives align with governance and service delivery goals. Regular performance assessments can help identify areas where adjustments are needed. Additionally, the Municipality should implement a monitoring and evaluation system that tracks the effectiveness of service delivery initiatives, ensuring responsiveness to governance objectives and community needs

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUTURE STUDIES

In contemplating future studies, it is essential to build upon the findings of this study to deepen the understanding of good governance and its influence on municipal service delivery in the local sphere of government. Future research could examine the long-term effects of implementing governance reforms, such as accountability mechanisms, transparency initiatives, and public participation programs, by tracking changes in service delivery efficiency, public trust, and citizen satisfaction over time. Such longitudinal studies would provide valuable insights into the sustained impact of these reforms and help refine governance strategies to address evolving community needs. Moreover, a comparative analysis between Thulamela and other municipalities with similar socioeconomic conditions could reveal best practices and shared

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challenges in good governance implementation. This approach would allow for the identification of governance models that are adaptable and effective across various contexts, offering Thulamela Local Municipality evidence-based strategies for improvement. Further research could also explore the role of digital platforms in governance, assessing how they might reduce barriers to public participation and enhance transparency in the municipal spheres of government. Understanding the influence of community trust on public participation is another promising area for future inquiry. Researchers could investigate how trust-building efforts, such as consistent communication and effective public accountability, affect citizen engagement in governance processes.

5.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While the study provides valuable insights into the governance landscape within Thulamela Local Municipality, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations inherent in the research. Firstly, the qualitative findings are based on self-reported data from municipal officials, which may be susceptible to social desirability bias, potentially leading respondents to provide answers that align with perceived expectations rather than reflecting their true experiences. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships or capture dynamic changes over time. The sample size, though representative of the Municipality's workforce and community members, might limit the generalisability of the findings to broader municipal contexts. Furthermore, the study primarily focuses on perceptions and may not fully capture the complexity of good governance in practice. Recognising these limitations is crucial for interpreting the study's findings and underscores the need for cautious generalisation and consideration of these factors in future research endeavours.

5.9 CONCLUSION

The study was about the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery. This chapter was all about the findings, recommendations, and conclusion. The findings and recommendations were made on the following: good governance and effective municipal service delivery, challenges faced in promoting effective municipal service delivery, initiatives in place to promote effective municipal service delivery, and strategies that can be recommended to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery. The main aim of the study was to develop a framework that will be used to enhance good governance and effective service delivery in the municipal sphere of government. The study had four specific objectives: to determine the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery and to identify challenges faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective service delivery. To describe the initiatives in place to promote effective municipal service delivery and recommend strategies for enhancing good governance and effective municipal service delivery. To achieve

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these objectives, the study adopted a mixed-method approach for data collection. In a nutshell, this study has provided a nuanced examination of the governance landscape within Thulamela Local Municipality, shedding light on the relationship between good governance and effective municipal service delivery and the challenges in promoting effective municipal service delivery.

The study was conducted at Thulamela Local Municipality, a category B within the Vhembe District Municipality. The area was selected based on the relevance of the research topic and the availability of data and participants. The research was organised in a series of chapters. Chapter one focused on the introduction and background of the study. Chapter two of the study discussed the literature on governance and service delivery in the municipal sphere of government. The researcher empirically reviewed various aspects of good governance and service delivery. Chapter three of the study detailed the methodology followed when conducting the study. A pragmatism research paradigm was used because it emphasises practical problem-solving and integrates both qualitative and quantitative findings in a single study. Descriptive, exploratory and contextual research designs were utilised. The convergent parallel mixed method was used to converge or merge the qualitative and quantitative data to comprehensively analyse the research problem and validate the research findings. One hundred twenty participants were sampled through non-probability sampling and its sub-type, purposive sampling. The researcher used questionnaires and interview schedules to collect the data from the respondents. The study adhered to all the ethical considerations of the research process.

Chapter Five presented the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The study recommended each objective and the principles of administration. The primary aim was to investigate the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery. The secondary aim of the study was achieved through a proposed framework for governance and service delivery in the local sphere of government. The developed model seeks to ensure accountability, responsiveness, and transparency in decision-making to ensure effective municipal service delivery.

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ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mr N Phalanndwa

STUDENT NO:
20008009

PROJECT TITLE: The role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery: a case of Thulamela Local Municipality.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: FMCL/24/PDN/33/0210

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr E Mammu	UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration	Supervisor
Prof NJ Vermaak	UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration	Co-supervisor
Mr N Phalanndwa	UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration	Investigator-Students

Type: **Masters Research**
Risk: ***Straightforward research without ethical problems (Category 1)***
Approval Period: **September 2024 – September 2025**

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions
While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following.

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
  - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project.
  - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
  - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
  - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project,
  - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
  - withdraw or postpone approval if:
  - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
  - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
  - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately.
  - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions A it necessary

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Date Considered: September 2024

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof TS Mashau

Signature

UNIVERS OF VEND
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
2024 -10- 02
Private Bag X5050
Thohoyandou 0950

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ANNEXURE B: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

I, Ndamulelo Phalanndwa, a student at the University of Venda, registered for Masters in the Department of Public and Development Administration, Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law. I am conducting a study Entitled 'The Role of Good Governance *in Promoting Effective Municipal Service Delivery: A Case of Thulamela Local Municipality.* I humbly request you to participate in this study by responding to the questions in the subsequent sections of the Interview Schedule. The identity of respondents will be kept confidential during and after the research study. Respondents have the right to remain anonymous. Participants' names and all identifiable background information will not be disclosed to anyone. The information provided by the respondents will only be used for the study.

Participation is voluntary, and respondents may withdraw at any time without penalty. All interview questions will be handled with confidentiality by the researcher. In addition, participants can refuse to answer specific questions if they feel uncomfortable during the data collection process. Furthermore, respondents will not be exposed to harmful situations where their well-being could be compromised. The respondents will also not be exposed to physical threats during the data collection process. The information that will be provided by the respondents will not be used for any other purpose except to help the researcher to meet the academic requirements. Any questions or any further clarifications concerning the study can be directed to my supervisor at emmanuel.maemu@univen.ac.za

…….. ……

PHALANNDWA N. (Mr.) **DATE**

Cell: 0824831265

Email: phalanndwandamulelo@gmail.com

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ANNEXURE C: **LETTER FROM THE STUDENT**

Enquiry: Phalanndwa N

Cell :082 4831 265

Email: phalanndwandamulelo@gmail.com

P O BOX 270

TSHAULU

0987

07 October 2024

Dear Sir or Madam.

I, **Phalanndwa Ndamulelo,** am a student at the University of Venda, registered for the Master of Administration (MSMMA) under the Department of Public and Development Administration in the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law. I am required to conduct a study to complete my study. My research topic is The Role of Good Governance in Promoting Effective Municipal Service Delivery: A Case of Thulamela Local Municipality.

I humbly request you to be part of the study by participating in my research by providing me with information regarding the above research topic. The information you provide will be solely used for the study.

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours Sincerely,

……. **…….**

PHALANNDWA N. (Mr) **DATE**

STUDENT NUMBER:20008009

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ANNEXURE D: **RESEARCH INSTRUMENT-QUESTIONNAIRE**

THE ROLE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY: A CASE OF THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery and recommend strategies that will be used to enhance good governance and effective service delivery in the municipal sphere of government. I humbly request you to take part in this study by participating in providing responses to the questions posed in the subsequent sections of the questionnaire. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers. In section A, please fill by putting a cross (**X**) where you feel it is appropriate on the below statements and in section B, please answer the questions:

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS

1. **Gender of the respondents**

		Put a cross (X)
1.1	Male	1
1.2	Female	2
1.3	Other (specify)	3

2. **Age of Respondents**

		Put a cross (X)
2.1	Less than 21 years	1
2.2	22 to 30 years	2
2.3	31 to 40 years	3
2.4	41 to 50 years	4
2.5	51 years and above	5

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3. Category of Respondents

		Put a cross (X)
3.1	Municipal Manager	1
3.2	Executive mayor	2
3.3	Communication Manager	3
3.4	Chief Financial Officer	4
3.5	Integrated Development Plan (IDP) official	5
3.6	Local Economic Development (LED) official	6
3.7	Community Development Worker (CDW)	7
3.8	Traditional Leader	8
3.9	Ward Councillor	9
3.10	Proportional representative (PR) councillor	10
3.11	Member of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO)	11
3.12	Ward Committee Member	12
3.13	Selected Community Member	13

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4. Educational qualifications of the respondents

		Put a cross (X)
4.1	National Senior Certificate (Grade 12) and below	**1**
4.2	Bachelor's Degree/National Diploma	**2**
4.3	Honours degree/B-Tech	**3**
4.4	Master's degree/M-Tech	**4**
4.5	Doctoral Degree/D-Tech	**5**

5. Occupation of Respondents

		Put a cross (X)
5.1	Unemployed	**1**
5.2	Employed	**2**
5.3	Self-employed	**3**

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SECTION B: INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Item No.	Determining the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery	Place an (X) in the box that applies to you.				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.	Good governance practices in Thulamela Local Municipality contribute to effective service delivery.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Transparency in the decision-making process enhances the quality of municipal services in Thulamela Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	The Municipality encourages citizen involvement in the decision-making process to enhance effective service delivery.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Accountability mechanisms are effectively implemented in Thulamela Local Municipality to Improve service delivery.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	The Municipality adhere to legal frameworks and regulations that support effective service delivery.	1	2	3	4	5

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Item No.	Challenges in promoting effective Municipal service delivery	Place an (X) in the box that applies to you				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.	Inadequate Training and Capacity Building for Municipal officials hinder effective service delivery.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Poor or lack of community involvement in the decision-making process affects the provision of municipal service in Thulamela Local Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Lack of compliance with the legislative and regulatory framework affects the provision of municipal services.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Political Interference and the lack of a proper communication strategy between political office bearers, administrative officials and the community within the Municipality affect the provision of municipal services.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Lack of infrastructure maintenance has negatively impacted the provision of effective service delivery within Thulamela Local Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5

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Item No.	INITIATIVES IN PLACE TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY	Place an (X) in the box that applies to you.				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17.	Community Engagement programs are actively used to improve service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality	1	2	3	4	5
18.	The provision of Municipal services through private entities/private partnerships enhances service delivery.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	The Municipality has implemented an effective performance management system to enhance service delivery	1	2	3	4	5
21.	There are clear policies and procedures in place to guide effective service delivery	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Regular evaluations are conducted to assess municipal service delivery effectiveness in the municipality.					

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Item No.	STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY	Place an (X) in the box that applies to you.				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16.	Involving communities in the decision-making process can enhance governance and service delivery Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Implementing comprehensive Staff training programs will address issues in service delivery	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Strengthening accountability Mechanisms would improve good governance and service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Implementing a robust Monitoring Evaluation mechanism will significantly improve service delivery outcomes in Thulamela Local Municipality	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Improving transparency in Municipal operations will lead to better governance and service delivery outcomes	1	2	3	4	5

"THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION"

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***ANNEXURE E**: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT- INTERVIEW SCHEDULE*

THE ROLE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY: A CASE OF THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of good governance in promoting effective municipal service delivery and recommend strategies that will be used to enhance good governance and effective service delivery in the municipal sphere of government. I humbly request you to take part in this study by participating in providing responses to the questions posed in the subsequent sections of the Interview Schedule. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers. In section A, please fill by putting a cross (**X**) where you feel it is appropriate on the below statements and in section B, please answer the questions:

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS OF PARTICIPANT

1. **Gender of the respondents**

		Put a cross (X)
1.1	Male	**1**
1.2	Female	**2**
1.3	Other (specify)	**3**

2. **Age of Respondents**

		Put a cross (X)
2.1	Less than 21 years	**1**
2.2	22 to 30 years	**2**
2.3	31 to 40 years	**3**
2.4	41 to 50 years	**4**
2.5	51 years and above	**5**

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3. Category of Respondents

		Put a cross (X)
3.1	Municipal Manager	1
3.2	Executive mayor	2
3.3	Communication Manager	3
3.4	Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	4
3.5	Integrated Development Plan (IDP) official	5
3.6	Local Economic Development (LED) official	6
3.7	Community Development Worker (CDW)	7
3.8	Traditional Leader	8
3.9	Ward Councillor	9
3.10	Proportional representative (PR) councillor	10
3.11	Member of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO)	11
3.12	Ward Committee Member	12
3.13	Selected Community Member	13

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4. Educational qualifications of the respondents

		Put a cross (X)
4.1	National Senior Certificate (Grade 12) and below	**1**
4.2	Bachelor's Degree/National Diploma	**2**
4.3	Honours degree/B-Tech	**3**
4.4	Master's degree/M-Tech	**4**
4.5	Doctoral Degree/D-Tech	**5**

5. Occupation of Respondents

		Put a cross (X)
5.1	Employed	**1**
5.2	Unemployed	**2**
5.3	Self Employed	**3**

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SECTION B: THE ROLE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY.

6. What is the role of good governance in promoting effective service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality?

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7. What are the challenges faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in promoting effective service delivery?

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7.1 What are the causes of challenges faced by TLM in promoting effective service delivery?

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8. What are the initiatives in place to promote effective service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality?

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9. What are the strategies that can be recommended to enhance good governance and effective municipal service delivery?

……
……
……
……

"THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION"

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ANNEXURE F: LETTER OF LANGUAGE EDITING

DR SHUMANI ERIC MADIMA
PO Box 519, SIBASA, 0970
Cell: 082 073 8313
Eric.Madima@univen.ac.za/ericmadima@gmail.com

17 December 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that I, Dr SE Madima, edited a dissertation titled "The Role of Good Governance in Promoting Effective Municipal Service Delivery: A Case of Thulamela Local Municipality" by Phalanndwa Ndamulelo.



.....
Dr SE Madima (PhD)
Senior Lecturer (Linguistics Section Coordinator)
Department of English, Media Studies and Linguistics
Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences a
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

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Creating Future Leaders

ANNEXURE G: LETTER OF PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

Private Bag X5066
Thohoyandou
0950
Limpopo Province
Tel: 015 962 7500
Fax: 015 962 4020

Department Of Corporate Services

THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY

Ref : 4/3/4/1
Enquiries : Mabasa N.H
Tel : 015 962 7514
Fax : 015 962 4020

To : Mr. Phalanndwa Ndamulelo
From : THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY
Date : 07 October 2024

Subject : REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY

1. The above matter refers.
2. Kindly note that the permission to conduct research has been granted.
3. For more information please contact Human Resource Section.
4. Hoping that this will meet your favourable considerations.

MUNICIPAL MANAGER: MAKUMULE M.T.

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ANNEXURE H: TURNITIN REPORT

PHALANNDWA NDAMULELO:THE ROLE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY

ORIGINALITY REPORT

17%	13%	9%	6%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

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6	Shai, Lucas Kgashana. "Leadership and Governance in Service Delivery at the Greater Tubatse Municipality Limpopo Province in South Africa", University of Pretoria (South Africa), 2023 Publication	<1%
7	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1%

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