

**THE EFFECT OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF
SENIOR MANAGERS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CASE OF GREATER
GIYANI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

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MASTER OF ADMINISTRATION

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Looksharp Amukelani Makaringi (Student Number: 23020908), hereby declare that the dissertation entitled ***“The effect of Political Interference on the performance of Senior Managers in local government: a case of the Greater Giyani Local Municipality”*** hereby submitted by me for the degree of Master of Administration in the Department of Public and Development Administration at the University of Venda has not been previously submitted for any degree at this institution or any other university. It is original in design and in execution, and all reference material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Student



Date

17 April 2025

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my children, Kateka and Kaylin Makaringi. This is for them to realize that one is never too young or old to learn and it shall therefore serve as a reminder that they can academically achieve way more than I did.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to evaluate the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government with special reference to the Greater Giyani Local Municipality. *Section 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* provides for a government that is constituted of national, provincial, and local spheres. The local sphere is the one closer to the people and tasked with the provision of basic services to members of the local communities within its jurisdiction. The structure of municipalities is such that it provides for politicians and senior managers to work together to address challenges facing local communities in relation to service delivery. This set up often creates challenges of political interference in administrative issues, and this give rise to tensions between politicians and senior managers. This study therefore, sought to assess the extent to which political interference affect senior management adversely in the performance of their duties. Previous studies on political interference, politics and administrative interface, and politics-administration dichotomy have proven that these are challenges still worth exploring in a quest to further expand knowledge on strategies to be used to navigate through the politics and administration relationships and still be administratively and/or politically competent. The study employed a mixed research methodology in which both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were instrumental. Non-probability sampling, in particular the purposive sampling method was utilised to select participants for this study. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used as data collection methods. The analysis thereof was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.0.1 for data collected through questionnaire and using thematic analysis for data collected through interviews. The findings of the study were presented in pie chart format, frequencies, and percentages and in narrative form, in a manner that is responsive to the research questions; and the recommendations were provided to aid municipal senior management in dealing with challenges of political interference. The major findings and recommendations are as follows:

The Municipality's workforce is not representative of the population's demographics and promotes speculation about disregard for merit-based assessment when making administrative appointments; there is an overlap of roles between political

and administrative officials; political interference compromises organisational expertise and accountability and reduces trust between politicians and managers; and lastly, politicians and managers play an important part in ensuring that legislative requirements and municipal policies are complied with. The recommendation is that the demographics of the Municipality's workforce should be representative of all community members regardless of their political affiliation; the political and managerial roles should be plainly defined to eliminate elements of ambiguity; the Municipality should develop policies that ensure the protection of administrative officials who disregard political interference and remain administratively competent; and finally, the Municipality should promote collaboration between politicians and managers through training workshops.

Key words: political interference, politicisation, political interface, administration, local government, performance.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANC	: African National Congress
CDE	: Centre for Development Enterprise
CDS	: Cadre Deployment Strategy
CoGHSTA	: Co-operative Governance, Human Settlement & Traditional Affairs
CoGTA	: Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs
DHA	: Department of Home Affairs
GGLM	: Greater Giyani Local Municipality
IDP	: Integrated Development Plan
LGSETA	: Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority
LPREC	: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee
MC	: Municipal Councillors
MDM	: Mopani District Municipality
MEC	: Member of Executive Council
MFMA	: Municipal Finance Management Act
MM	: Municipal Manager
MMC	: Member of the Mayoral Committee
MSA	: Municipal Structures Act
MSA	: Municipal Systems Act
MSAA	: Municipal Systems Amendment Act
NC	: National Commissioner
NP	: National Party
NPC	: National Planning Commission
NSC	: National Senior Certificate
NT	: National Treasury
PMS	: Performance Management System
PMS	: Performance Measurement System
PSC	: Public Service Commission
RDP	: Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSA	: Republic of South Africa
SALGA	: South African Local Government Association
SAMWU	: South African Municipal Workers Union
SAPS	: South African Police Service

SASSA : South African Social Security Agency
SM : Senior Manager
SMS : Senior Management Service
SOE : State Owned Enterprise
SPSS : Statistical Package for Social Sciences

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focused on the evaluation of the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government with special focus to Greater Giyani Local Municipality within Mopani District Municipality of Limpopo Province. The *Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution, Section 40 (1) and (2)* allows for a governmental system that is divided into three tiers of government, the national, provincial, and local tiers, which are interrelated, interdependent, and distinctive. Sebola (2015:9) mentions that the municipal government is the only tier that is not part of the public service. Only the national and provincial government spheres are part of the public service with their employees and activities governed by the national legislative frameworks. The local tier of government operates based on its own legislative frameworks differing from the public service ones (Sebola, 2015:9). The administrative aspect of the municipality operates within bureaucratic structures closely linked to the political officials and the electorate within a political environment, yet still expected to remain administratively competent.

This chapter provides the introduction and background of the conducted study, the problem statement, the study's aim and objectives, research questions, the study's significance, the study's delimitation, the definition of operational concepts used in the study, and the study's structure.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to Masuku and Jili (2019:5) the presence of local government has been justified as it plays a crucial role in the democratisation process and enhances mass participation in decision-making. Municipal government is constitutionally mandated to deliver services to communities and ensure that citizens are represented in identifying local needs and determining the appropriate methods for addressing these needs. Therefore, the services provided by municipalities must be representative of the interests of the local communities.

Municipal administration is part of public administration but operates at the local tier of government and has a more distinctive importance in that it operates in a political field and within the context of democratic notions of an open, responsive, and accountable government institution (Bekink, 2006:63). According to the *Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000), Section 51*, municipalities are afforded with an opportunity to organise and establish their government, within their financial and administrative capability, in a way that would qualify them to:

- be responsive to local community needs,
- ensure that the municipality's integrated development plan's objectives and priorities are reflected in the duties and responsibilities of its political formations, political office holders and managers, and other employees.
- create unambiguous relationships and make it easier for its political office holders, administration, and local community to facilitate communication, co-ordination, and co-operation, and.
- organise its administration, political officials, and political structures in a way that would be responsive to changing circumstances and priorities.

Thornhill (2020:11) points out that it has been argued that political office-bearers, because of a lack of time and expertise, have to trust the advice and views of the municipal officials in their departments. The political sensitivity of appointed officials at the managerial level and their relationship with political office-bearers also have significance. Officials depend on the attention and cooperation of the political officials for the endorsement and support of the policy. This type of dependence is a motivational factor for officials in the sense that the wishes and preferences of the political office-bearer serve as guidelines for the work.

Maphunye (2001:320) contends that South Africa's senior civil servants face the challenge of understanding the application of the "twin mandates" as part of their roles in the government departments. Thornhill (2020:15) further asserts that the conclusion that effective management of municipal administration requires a team effort between politicians and top officials implies that scope must exist for both types of participants in this process: politicians are needed to provide primarily legitimacy and political guidance and supervision, while the wholehearted

assistance of bureaucrats in this policy making and implementation process is necessary for the continuity and experience which they can provide in certain policy fields.

The politics-administration dichotomy model, according to Mafunisa (2003:87), contends that political meddling in management would reduce the potential for managerial effectiveness, that government policy-making and administrative duties should be kept entirely distinct, and that before administrators could start creating a well-structured administrative system, they needed a clear set of goals. Moreover, Nkuna (2013:252) is of the view that even politicians from the other spheres of government exert influence in local municipalities through the political seniority they have within the ruling party.

Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Finance in Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, Nkululeko Dunga, has been criticised by the ANC in the city for having meetings with service providers as they deemed these acts as interference in administration (Eyewitness News: 2023). Political officials should not be seen or perceived to be interfering in administration in order to enforce good governance and curb the existence of corruption in municipalities. Similarly, the former City of Johannesburg MMC for Economic Development Nkululeko Mbundu found himself in hot water for allegedly interfering in tender processes (Daily Maverick: 2022). These practices often erode administrative efficiency and effectiveness among senior managers in the sense that they no longer perform their tasks expertly, but rather go to great lengths to please their political masters at the expense of professional and politically undiluted government. According to Andrews (2019:296), the environment in which these officials perform their activities has a bearing on their ability to achieve governmental goals and objectives. Therefore, the environment that gets created in municipalities because of political interference in administrative activities has a significant bearing on the performance of senior officials and that is contrary to the objects of local government as provided for in *Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*.

It is against this background that the researcher saw it appropriate to conduct a study on “the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers

in local government in the Greater Giyani Local Municipality”. This study will indicate clearly to what extent senior managers act on political decisions and/or mandates on their day-to-day work which may be contrary to their administrative expertise as Greater Giyani Local Municipality is not exempt from challenges presented by political interference on administration facing other municipalities in the country. It is also to be determined as to what extent politicians (elected office bearers) intervene in administrative processes; and the degree to which senior managers have the liberty to advise politicians on policy matters amidst political interference. The study will be confined to the Greater Giyani Local Municipality though reference will be made to the broader South African government, be it national, provincial, or local sphere.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

South African government administration, as catered for in the *Republic of South Africa’s Section 40 of the Constitution of 1996*, is structured as national, provincial, and local government tiers which is characterised by high levels of political interference on administrative issues or decisions; with expertise of senior managers overlooked at times to advance the political agenda of the political head (Madumo, 2016:83). This is because of a bureaucratic system of government adopted in South African government administration where politics and administration operate in the same environment and administrative incumbents are often politically sensitive while performing their administrative duties. To that effect, Fernandez and Madumo (2024:153) acknowledge that the local government’s human resource management is becoming politicised as surveys of local government employees divulge alarming levels of political interference in personnel decisions, including selection, compensation, and promotion of politically aligned officials.

Political meddling in South African local government presents solemn challenges as the interface between political and administrative officials presents significant administrative inconsistencies for service delivery (Mamokhere, 2022:14). These inconsistencies are informed by the different needs of politicians that often supersede those of the local community because they are catered for without due

consideration to the applicable prescripts. Political meddling in South African municipalities can harm service delivery, leading to its weakening over time (Davids, Houston, Steyn Kotze, Sausi, Sanchez Betancourt, Pienaar, & Fokou. 2022:7). Service delivery challenges that are currently facing municipalities are exacerbated by the incomprehensibility of the roles of politicians by the incumbents which lead to unwarranted interference in administrative decisions, and in turn, destroys the administrative and political relationship. This weakens municipalities' ability to equitably provide services. Matyana and Mthethwa, (2022:132) are of the view that political interference is largely associated with political-administrative conflict, and it affects and delays service delivery adversely to the citizens. Therefore, circumventing political meddling in the managerial functions of the municipality promotes positive outcomes in service provision.

South Africa is a state which is characterised by a decentralized system of government which makes it easier for members of the community to access services through the municipal offices in the local sphere; however, the responsibility which is to be borne by political leaders often dictates how senior managers are to perform their duties in line with the promises made by political leaders to the communities. Mbandlwa, Dorasamy and Fagbadebo (2020:1643) perceive the local government as a politically contested territory by various political parties. Hence politicians feel the need to be administratively involved in municipal operations to safeguard their interests and those of the political party they represent. It has become evident over the years; particularly after the 1994 elections; that senior managers should have a sound relationship with political leaders to ensure that they explicitly comprehend the expectations of their political superiors.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers at local government and recommend strategies to be used by senior managers to thrive amidst political interference in municipal administrative decisions.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Wilson (2020) points out that the objectives of the research project should be understood as a specific and precise goal that the research should achieve within specific circumstances that will prevail during the research process. The study's objectives are mentioned below:

- To establish an overview of the state of political interference in Greater Giyani Local Municipality.
- To identify challenges experienced by senior managers in the performance of functions because of political interference.
- To evaluate the effect of the challenges on the performance of senior managers within the Greater Giyani Local Municipality.
- To recommend strategies to be used by senior managers to thrive in their duties amidst political interference.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions that the study sought to answer:

- What is the state of political interference in Greater Giyani Local Municipality?
- What are the challenges experienced by senior managers because of political interference?
- To what extent do the challenges of political interference affect the performance of senior managers in Greater Giyani Local Municipality?
- What are the strategies to be used by senior managers to thrive in the performance of their duties despite political interference?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study will help the Municipality to develop strategies that can be used by senior managers to thrive in the performance of their duties despite political

interference. The study will benefit Municipal Councillors, Senior Managers and Municipal officials to understand the level of political interference in administration and how it affects the performance of officials at managerial level in the municipality. The study will provide an explicit distinction of the roles of political officials and senior managers as well as acknowledging that some roles may overlap and interfere with the normal functioning of senior managers; however, there has to be a way in which these overlapping roles are carried out without undermining the professional expertise of senior managers. The study will further serve as an entry point for future research in political interference, politicisation of administration, and politics and administrative interface in the implementation of South Africa's senior managers' roles in municipalities.

1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focused on the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in South African Local Government. The focus area where the study was conducted is the Greater Giyani Local Municipality, which is located in the Mopani District Municipality. The Greater Giyani Local Municipality is one of the five local municipalities found in the Mopani District Municipality. The other four local municipalities are Greater Tzaneen, Greater Letaba, BaPhalaborwa and Maruleng. The Greater Giyani Municipality is positioned in a rural setting and its constituency is based in a rural area; however, the challenges of political interference are inherent in the way municipalities are structured.

1.9 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

This section provides definitions of operational concepts that are used in the study as follows:

1.9.1 Politics

Politics according to Modebadze (2010:41) can be defined as the study of the government's collection of officers who make, interpret, and enforce rules for the whole community. Whereas Heywood (2007:4) highlights that politics is the practice of applying the means through which the general rules are made, preserved, and

amended by the people. Moreover, Heywood (2017:58) categorizes the practice of politics when it comes to governance as public affairs; consensus and compromise; the art of government; resources distribution and power thereof.

On the other hand, Rahman (2015:28) sees politics as a power game in which political officials are the primary participants or actors. Rahman (2015:28) went on to say that politics is about governance, with politicians wielding state power over how the people are ruled, as well as administering and regulating the state's business. Furthermore, Thomson (2022) refer to politics as the desire or maintenance of authority over a region and its citizens by groups of individuals or individuals, which entails the confident distribution of values to control or resolve disputes within the concerned community.

According to Pretorius (2017:31), politics is described as the sharing of values through policy produced by elected officials and political parties, and management as the delivery of goods and services to the public by executing the policies expressed only through political processes. From the above definitions, it can be deduced that politics can be viewed as a method for gaining power and influence from the community to control and allocate municipal resources necessary for delivering services to local areas.

1.9.2 Interference

Pretorius (2017:31) defines the term interference as the intentional involvement in a situation in order to influence its outcome, even if you have no right to do so. Interference is referred to as unnecessary or unwanted involvement in something (Online Collins Dictionary, 2023). In this study, interference can be defined as the constant and unwanted involvement on administrative issues by elected office bearers.

1.9.3 Political Interference

Political interference happens when political officials interfere with decision-making in municipal administrative issues such as staffing, organising, planning, directing, reporting, coordinating, and budgeting, as well as the distribution and use of municipal finances. (Mfuru, Sarwatt & Kanire, 2018:22). Salim and Usang (2015:112)

define political interference as influences wielded by higher tier of government or politicians on the administration of local governments. These influences limit local administrative initiative and focus and generate suboptimal decisions that affect overall performance, including the promotion of a negative relationship that exists between local government performance and political interference.

Pretorius (2017:31) defines political interference as the effect of political formation on bureaucrats' official and personal decisions, as well as the consequences thereof. Trautman (2003:2) indicates that political intervention is occasionally fostered by deliberate self-centred political inspiration in which an official obtains a hidden gain. In this study, political interference refers to unwelcomed excessive influences by political officials on administrative decisions which are to be taken by senior managers in the municipality. Political meddling in the municipality reveals itself in the inability of senior managers to have a sound and focused administrative system meant to provide quality services to communities.

1.9.4 Performance

Salim and Usang (2015:112) define performance as an organisation's ability to attain set goals and how set standards were applied to ensure the attainment of these goals. According to Mayne and Zapico-Goni (2007:5), performance can be described as a service that provides, in the most cost-effective manner, intended results and benefits that continue to be relevant, without causing undue unintended effects. In this study, performance refers to the ability of the municipality to provide quality services to the community as indicated in the Greater Giyani Local Municipality's Integrated Development Plan.

1.9.5 Administration

Beluchi and Inienger (2020:60) define administration as a group's joint endeavour to achieve a shared goal. Administration is a widespread process that occurs in various institutional settings. Whereas Marume (2016:15) describes administration as a controlled action taken in search of a conscious purpose. It is the orderly organisation of activities and the planned usage of resources with the goal of making the things we want to happen while instantaneously avoiding developments that do not align with our intentions.

Macias (2013:21) defines administration as the process or activity of running a business, organisation, etc. Fatile (2007:98) is of the view that administration is outside the proper political realm and that an administrative challenge is not a political challenge. In the same breath, the online Cambridge Dictionary (2023) provides a more management-inclined definition of administration and places the term as the arrangements and tasks needed to control the operation of a plan or organisation. Therefore, it can be concluded that administration refers to the holistic application of the generic administrative processes such as planning, organising, staffing, decision-making, financing, work methods and procedures which brings about positive results in line with the approved IDP.

1.9.6 Politics Administration interface

Cameron (2003:53) believes that this is the focal point of public administration practice, with the goal of strengthening relationships between administrators and political leaders, and communities. The interface is converse to the dichotomy, encouraging a complementary approach in which politicians and administrators collaborate. Afegbua (2016:179) defines the politics-administration interface as the connection between politicians and municipal officials which lies at the heart of municipal administration while Nwasike (2013:78) views the politics-administration interface as a functional relationship between administrators and politicians. From the aforementioned definitions, the politics-administration interface can be viewed as the professional relationship between the municipal manager and the mayor with the view to implement municipal policies for the betterment of the local communities.

1.9.7 Local Government

According to Bekink (2006:63) local government refers to the local political institution which has been given executive and statutory powers and functions. It refers to the local government sphere which is established in terms of *Chapter 7 of the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution*, which is closer to the people, and it is constitutionally delegated to deliver services to the communities. Koma (2010:113) accentuates that it is a government sphere positioned within communities and well-placed to be fittingly responsive to local interests, expectations, and needs of communities.

Hill (2024:13) defines local government as that portion of a state's or nation's government that is managed by authorities secondary to the state power but independently elected by the state power, by qualified bureaucrats, or by individuals with property in specific localities, which localities were moulded by communities with mutual interests and history. Moreover, Adisa (2024:5) regards local government as the tier/level of government that is instrumental in promoting the general well-being of the citizens in a country through the collective organisation of communities. While clarifying the concept of local government, Roux and Nyamukachi (2005:693) highlight the need to note that it is referred to as a level of government, and not as an individualistic municipality.

In this study, local government is referred to as the Greater Giyani Local Municipality which is one of the 257 South African municipalities which make up the collective sphere known as local government. These municipalities were established for the entire South Africa in terms of *Section 151 of 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* to render essential services to communities within their specific geographical jurisdiction/locality/areas.

1.9.8 Politicisation

Madumo (2016:83) asserts that politicisation could be regarded as a means through which government leaders interfere with the administration of a specific public institution on the instruction of a political party to which they are directly or indirectly related. On the other hand, Rouban (2012:384) contends that the politicisation of administration refers to the government activities where appointment and career development of those in the service are subjected to the political will. Moreover, Peters and Pierre (2004:2) describe politicisation of the administration as the substitution of merit-based principles for political criteria in the promotion, rewards, retention, selection, and disciplining of members of the municipal administration. Politicisation, according to Ban (2014:3) produces poor quality and poor performing local government; it also promotes municipal distortion and micro-management by politicians or political parties.

Politicisation exists because of the influential interest groups or the government of the day assuming that for the effective operation of government and the application

of policies; It requires a civil service that is compassionate to the policies of the interest group or government, or a civil service that is a member of the interest group and enthusiastically supports the government (Svara, 2021). Gherghina and Kopecky (2016:408) conclude that the goal of recruiting party officials is to reward members for their political support, as well as to gain control over program implementation in municipalities.

In this study, politicisation refers to the political inclination of the administrative processes of the municipality to a point where the municipal administrative sphere cannot perform its tasks expertly but suffers constant political meddling.

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The research is organised into five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and background of the study- This chapter provides the study's introduction and background, statement of the problem, aim of the study, objectives of the study, research questions that the study sought to answer, the significance of the study, delimitations of the study, clarification of operational concepts that are used in the study, and how the study is organised.

Chapter 2: Literature review- This chapter contains the literature on the topic under investigation and the subjects covered include the theoretical framework within which the study is located, legislative frameworks applicable to the South African local government, the context of local government, politicisation of administration in local government, local government politics-administrative interface, roles and responsibilities of both elected and appointed officials in municipalities, local government administrative reform, contextualizing political interference, politics-administration models, and competencies of senior management. The relationship between politicians and administrators, cadre deployment and municipal performance, cadre deployment and governance, forms of accountability, managing political-administrative interface within local government for effective service delivery, performance management within the politics-administrative interface, politics-administration relations and role distinction, and

challenges associated with political interference in administration are also among the issues discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Research methodology- This chapter describes the research design and methodology that was used during the research. The chapter further provides study area, research methods, sampling method, sampling size, population of the study, data collection, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. In a nutshell, this chapter provides a holistic approach to the research.

Chapter 4: Data presentation, analysis, and interpretation- This chapter contains the information gathered through questionnaires and interviews. The chapter goes on to present, analyse, and interpret acquired data by discussing answers from the sampled population to provide an understanding of the nature of study findings on the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government.

Chapter 5: Findings, recommendations, and conclusions- This chapter provides research findings, recommendations, and conclusions. In this chapter, discussions on study findings are presented as well as recommendations aligned to the findings. The prospects for future research are also provided based on the findings as well as the limitations the study has been faced with. The chapter will conclude with the provision of the general conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a review of literature which provides an in-depth understanding of the literature already provided by various scholars in relation to the topic under investigation. The availability of literature is evident enough that this is not a new area of research and has been previously researched by various aspiring scholars. The work done by various scholars was studied to provide a concise conceptual background of political interference in administration in local government.

The theoretical framework within which the study is located and the applicable legislative framework in local government that serves as guiding tools for averting undue political interference will be discussed in this chapter. The context of local government, issues relating to the politicisation of administration in local government, the politics-administrative interface, and the politics-administrative dichotomy will be discussed in detail. The chapter further discusses the roles and responsibilities of appointed and elected officials in municipalities, local government administrative reform, and an in-depth conceptualisation of political interference in local government. The models of political administration relationships, political administration models, competencies of senior management, as well as forms of accountability in municipalities will be discussed in this chapter.

The chapter further discusses the relationship between administrators and politicians in local government, the effects of cadre deployment on municipal performance and governance, and the management of the political-administrative interface in local government which compromises the effectiveness of service delivery. Moreover, performance management within politics-administrative interface, politics-administration relations and role distinction in local government, as well as the challenges associated with political interference in administration will be discussed.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Kivunja (2018:44) defines a theoretical framework as a structure that guides research by relying on a recognized theory, constructed using established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships. On the basis of the above definition, Grant and Osanloo (2014:13) assert that a theoretical framework is the blueprint for the entire study, serving as a guide for building and supporting the research while also providing the structure to define how the researcher will approach the dissertation methodologically, epistemologically, analytically, and philosophically.

Grant and Osanloo (2014:16) further contend that a theoretical framework is derived from an existing theory (theories) in the literature that has already been tested and validated by others and is considered a generally acceptable theory in the scholarly literature. This research is set within the framework of bureaucratic politics theory. Afegbua (2016:180) highlights that the bureaucratic politics theory has typically rejected the politics-administration dichotomy as it sought to breach the orthodox divide between politics and administration.

2.1.1 Bureaucratic Politics Theory

The bureaucratic politics hypothesis examines the political interaction between bureaucrats and members of the executive branch of government. According to the theory, most bureaucracies have several individuals, each of whom has competing and divergent interests. Bureaucratic consensus-seeking is the term used to describe the bureaucratic politics theory (Afegbua, 2016:181). This assertion sought to highlight the importance of bureaucrats and local politicians having a consensus in matters of service delivery in local municipality. According to Gilad, Alon-Barkat, and Weiss (2019:371) bureaucratic politics theory relates to opening the black box of the policymaking process where decision-making is characterised by conflict, bargaining, and compromise. The bureaucratic politics theory identified two key organisational dimensions: the first dealt with the behaviour and ethics of the bureaucrats, and the second dealt with institutional structure and distribution of powers (Afegbua, 2016:181). This relates to how the municipality is structured and

how political and administrative powers are distributed among role players in local government in a quest to ensure effective service provision to local communities.

Hart and Wille (2012:370) are of the opinion that the bureaucratic politics theory suggests that non-elected bureaucrats driven by divergent views and interests play a pivotal role in the process of policy making and that the policy choices emanate from opaque interaction and bargaining among multiple executive actors more so than from deliberation in democratically elected bodies. Bach (2021:2) highlights that bureaucratic politics theory explicitly questions the possibility of separating politics and administration by underlining that bureaucratic organisations are political actors in their own right with distinct preferences and resources.

The bureaucratic politics theory is appropriate in this study because it rules out the possibility of separating politics from administration but rather advocates for complementary roles of politicians and administrators in service delivery. The consensus of the municipal and political officials in matters of service delivery curtails undue political meddling in administrative matters and promotes the professional relationship between the two.

2.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK IN SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

To serve the people of the country, the *Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution's Section 151* established the local level of government. This sphere is closer to the community and makes it possible for community involvement in service delivery. Legislative frameworks were established to give effect to the objects of local government and provide for the structure of the municipalities, composition of municipal councils and staffing, as well as guidelines for proper financial management. Below are some of the legislative frameworks applicable in local government:

2.3.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996

Section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 provides for the establishment of a local tier of government which comprises municipalities that are categorised in the following manner:

- a) **Category A:** A municipality that has sole municipal executive and legislative authority in its jurisdiction. These are referred to as metropolitan municipalities.
- b) **Category B:** A municipality that shares local legislative and executive authority with a category C municipality that it borders falls. These are referred to as local municipalities. The municipality focused on in this study (Greater Giyani Local Municipality) falls in this category of municipality.
- c) **Category C:** A municipality with executive and legislative authority in a region that comprises more than one municipality. These are referred to as district municipalities.

Sections 152, 153, 156, 157, 158, and 163 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 further provide for the objects of local government, powers and functions of municipalities, election and composition of municipal councils, municipal councils' membership, developmental local government, and organised local government amongst others.

2.3.2 The White Paper on Local Government, 1998

The White Paper on Local Government is an expression of the belief that decentralisation can work within the context of South Africa. South Africa has developed a unique form of decentralisation in the context of the creation of three spheres which are required to govern in a cooperative manner. The White Paper further provides that local government must endorse the Bill of Rights, as provided for in *Sections 9, 10, 26, and 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*, which reflect the nation's values about freedom, equality, and human dignity. It further establishes the basis for a system of developmental local government, which is devoted to working collaboratively with communities, citizens,

and groups to produce maintainable human settlements which provide a decent quality of life and meet the material, social, and economic needs of communities holistically.

2.3.3 Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998)

The types and classifications of municipalities are outlined in *Section 155 of the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution*, and formation of municipalities in compliance with these rules is permitted by the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998)*. The Act lays out the criteria for determining which kind of municipality should be formed in a particular area, describes the kinds of municipalities that fall under each category, permits an appropriate allocation of power and responsibility among the different types of municipalities, and regulates internal systems, organizational structures, and municipal office-bearers.

2.3.4 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)

The *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* seeks to create the processes, structures, and core principles needed to permit cities to progressively promote the social and economic advancement of their local communities and ensure that everyone has access to basic services at affordable prices. Additionally, it states that the local community within a municipality's borders, working with its political and administrative institutions, is a part of its local character.

By establishing a framework for service provision, municipal service districts, and service delivery agreements, the Act also aims to enable the poor and ensure that cities implement service tariffs and credit control policies that take into account their needs. These goals are in addition to providing a straightforward and enabling framework for the fundamental processes of resource mobilization, planning, organizational change, and performance management that support the idea of developmental local government.

2.3.5 Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003)

The *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003)* aims to create treasury rules and guidelines for the local government as well as to offer municipalities and other municipal organisations with sound and sustainable financial administration. The *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* requires that the municipal manager is accountable for the establishment and development of an efficient, effective, economical, and answerable administration as well as the management of the municipality's overall administration, including the implementation of the municipality's Integrated Development Plan. Supporting frameworks like *Section 55* of the Act provide for comprehensive financial management in municipalities and encourage accountability and transparency in municipal finances, but this can only be realized when *Schedule 1 (2) and (11) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* and *Section 49 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998)* provide for the code of conduct of councillors and the powers and functions of mayors which helps in managing relationships between politicians and administrators if observed accordingly.

2.3.6 Local Government: Municipal Systems Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 3 of 2022)

The *Local Government: Municipal Systems Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 3 of 2022)* intends to amend the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* so as to cater among others, for the following to professionalise the local government:

- To make further provision for the employment of municipal managers and managers accountable directly to municipal managers.
- To prohibit municipal managers and those directly accountable to them from having political positions in political parties.

- To provide for the minister to make regulations relating to the tasks, compensation, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions of municipal managers and managers who report directly to municipal managers.
- To enable the minister to prescribe frameworks to regulate personnel management systems for local government and mandates for organised local government.

The amendment seeks to professionalise local government by ensuring that municipalities are managed by officials possessing the correct skills and attributes as opposed to party loyalists being deployed to key municipal positions. The current recruitment processes in municipalities are reflective of the successes in terms of implementation of this legislative framework as the appointment of managers is based on merit considering the level of qualifications and experience required when posts are advertised. It is for this reason that parts of the amendment are seen to be yielding positive results, however, *section 71 (b) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 3 of 2022)* which relates to the prohibition of municipal workers to hold party political offices is not welcomed by all stakeholders as the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) challenged its constitutionality by taking the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) to court.

2.4 THE CONTEXT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government is a system comprising community administration and management (Hill, 2024:13). It incorporates the bureaucratic and political institutions and processes that govern and promote communal activities (Sebola. 2015:4). According to Levine (2018:280) local government can be defined as the level of government that is closest to its citizens and provides a wide range of services that have a significant impact on the lives of those who live within its jurisdiction. Sebola (2015:4) further asserts that in the South African context, the local sphere of government comprises municipalities. It is in the local sphere that practical policy implementation of the state in general takes place.

Local government is the level of government closer to the citizens and it is central to providing effective basic services to local citizens. Ndevu and Muller (2018:182) state that municipalities are at the front line of municipal service delivery and are the first point of contact between a community member and an institution of government. Therefore, effective and efficient service delivery is dependent on the ability of both administrative and political officials to respect the structures and systems put in place to ensure service provision to communities.

Local governments in South Africa have a legislative mandate to serve the interests of the community through equitable service provision. Gildenhuys (1997:2) indicates that the presence of a municipal office in a defined area is not only to keep councillors and public officials on the government's payroll, but rather to deliver services to the community. *Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* sets out the objects of local government as follows:

- To ensure the delivery of services to citizens in a sustainable manner.
- To encourage a safe and healthy environment.
- To provide accountable and democratic government for local citizens.
- To encourage the participation of citizens and community organisations in matters of local government, and
- To promote economic and social development.

It can therefore be presumed that the South African local government is tasked with the delivery of services to local citizens. Similarly, Ngcobo (2012:20) mentions that the key directive of local government through municipalities is the provision of a decent quality of life and restore communities' economic and social aspirations: this is the foundation for building an integrated, non-racial, prosperous, and democratic society. The established legislative framework in local government is meant to capacitate municipalities to accomplish their objectives as provided for in *Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*. Political interference in municipal administration should not be allowed to disengage municipal administrative officials from their duties of service provision to the public, but rather invoke their management competencies to thrive in challenging environments.

2.5 POLITICISATION OF ADMINISTRATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

According to Peters and Pierre (2004:288), the border between apolitical and political has moved towards the political, and more posts that were formerly off-limits to political manipulation are now obviously subjected to political influences and nominations. In as much as this assertion is made with a specific focus on the national government, the practice also applies in local government and the consequences are vivid in how service delivery to communities happens. Cameron (2010:20) points out that growing politicisation is a major cause of skills deficiency in government. This is rife in local government as the political authority seeks to ensure that the administrative layer of the municipality is comprised of members with the same ideology as that of the political head, hence the growing level of politicisation.

According to Akpan and Ekanem (2013:195) politicisation in local government develops because of the interference by the political leaders in the administrative and managerial affairs of the local government. A recent study conducted by Masiya, Davids and Mangai (2021:105) indicates that political interference in municipalities is visible in that the politics of the day, the encroachment of politicians on officials' sphere of responsibility is unavoidable and also officials who are members of a political party always put the interests of the political party ahead of those of the community. The study further reported that there is limited space for politicians and officials to engage with each other on key issues in a constructive manner.

The study of Mngomezulu (2020:42) is supported by that of Masiya, Davids and Mangai (2021:105) in that it highlights that the municipal administration is directed by the municipal manager since he is an accounting officer faced with the challenges of political interference in his duties where he is being forced to favour the governing party even when such an act is unconstitutional. Vilakazi and Adetiba (2020:48) emphasize that differentiation of administrative and political roles at the local government level has proved to be a serious concern when considering the operational system of municipalities. According to Vilakazi and Adetiba (2020:49) the administrative and political spheres in municipalities are inseparable because

the political will in municipalities will always prevail over the jurisdiction of the administration.

To guarantee that the administrative and political leadership have a common political philosophy and vision to support policies and service delivery, Reddy (2016:338) contends that ruling parties politicised the bureaucracy. Nonetheless, the problem of the politicization of bureaucracy has drawn criticism and been connected to several local government failures (Cameron, 2003:51). Thus, the steadily deteriorating contact between the ruling party, political leadership, and administrative management is one of the complaints against the politicization of bureaucracy (Muhdiarta, Haning, & Ahmad. 2017:794). It is therefore palpable that the local government in South Africa is politicised in that the current setup allows for municipal councils to be the appointing structure of municipal managers and the former will often appoint a candidate who is likely going to advance the interests of the party in majority, hence the constant meddling by political heads.

2.6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLITICS-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE

According to Ndudula (2013:24), the National Party hired its largely white comrades between 1948 and 1994, especially at the top government level who had government support and loyalty. To reduce political sabotage and make sure that those in prominent positions were transparent and would always support the implementation of government policies, the ruling party hired individuals who shared its views. Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:20) political systems throughout the world tend to be based on the principle that legislation and the State rules, and that regulations assign politicians the role of policy-making, while the effective and efficient implementation of government policies remains the task of the administration section of all layers of government.

Section 157 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 provides for the composition and election of municipal councils and designates them with the executive powers. De Visser (2010:94) points out that legislation wanted to detach municipal council from the administration component to some extent. *Section 56 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* and the

municipal council is obligated by *Section 82 (1)(a) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No 117 of 1998)* to appoint senior management, which includes the municipal manager and managers who directly report to him or her. The administrative branch of the municipality is accountable for making other appointments. Council members are prohibited from interfering with the municipality's management under *Schedule 1, item 11 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)*. By prohibiting council members from participating in procurement procedures, *Section 117 of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No 56 of 2003)* fervently promotes the separation of politics from governance. This is one of the many provisions that seek to detach the council from the administration.

Most municipalities' weakest point is the political-administrative interface, claims De Visser (2010:94). Authorities, members of municipal executives, and council members are having difficulty defining their own positions. Political parties' excessive political meddling exacerbates this. The political-administrative interaction is where the rubber hits the road, according to Thornhill (2005:182). Politics must be separated from management and administration in this grey area. Additionally, it should be noted that to somewhat separate the political and administrative functions, it is necessary to assume that there are sufficient numbers of highly qualified individuals available to fill both positions (Cameron, 2003:58).

According to Thornhill (2005:183) the relationship at the municipal level is far more intricate than at the other two levels of government. This is primarily because the problems raised in municipalities touch the immediate and everyday lives of populations in clearly defined boundaries. Lack of service provision is precisely noticeable and often leads to direct calls to the municipal councillor. The councillor, in turn, tends to communicate directly with the manager or, worse, the specific municipal official involved. This *modus operandi* tends to blur the boundary between the two functions. It also leads to communication breakdown in the management system and detrimentally affects the lines of authority inside the system. (Thornhill, 2005:183). In terms of *Section 53(5) (a) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* A municipality must define the roles and

responsibilities of the municipal manager and political office-bearers in terms of accountability and collaboration.

Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:19) indicate that the political/administrative conundrum has been a matter of serious debate amongst a wide variety of academics and researchers because of its significance in governance. According to Vilakazi and Adetiba (2020:50) the conceptualisation of political and administrative dichotomy as a theory describes the differentiation and the relationship of both administrative and political fields in municipal governance. The separation of powers through the implementation of the dichotomy model has been victimised by the political authority that hovers over administrative issues. Since the political authority holds much power in terms of appointments in key municipal positions that tends to disrupt the proper operations of the administrative domain (Vilakazi & Adetiba, 2020:51).

Masuku and Jili (2019:2) assert that the political bureaucratic paradigm suggests that elected officials have the mandate to manage and regulate municipal administration. Meaning there is no difference between administration and politics and between municipality and the political party. On the same note, Madumo (2016:84) is quoted as having contended that in local government, administrative sections should be free from politicisation because municipal services should be equitably provided, and not provided only to citizens who have a partisan interest.

Furthermore, the dichotomy model holds that political influence in municipal administration is improper, eroding administrative efficiency and jeopardising municipal officials' administrative neutrality. The dichotomy model upholds that there is a comprehensive distinction of responsibility between municipal officials and politicians. The dichotomy model necessitates the separation of administrative functions from those of policy makers (Masuku & Jili, 2019:3). Various authors have tackled the issue of politics/administrative interface and have observed that the relationship between administrators and politicians is not on the same level as there are those who perceive themselves superior and often negate the expertise of the other. It can be concluded that politics/administrative interface should be a mutual relationship that respect the roles, skills, and expertise of both administrators and politicians in service provision.

2.7 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF APPOINTED OFFICIALS

According to *Section 55 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)*, the municipal manager serves as the municipality's accounting officer and oversees the following duties:

- The monitoring of local government in compliance with the laws that apply to the municipality.
- The implementation of the municipal integrated development plan and the tracking of its implementation progress
- Overseeing the equitable and sustainable provision of services to the local populace; and
- Controlling correspondence between the municipal government and its political office-bearers and structures

2.8 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

According to *Schedule 1 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No 32 of 2000)*, the most obvious responsibilities of municipal council members are to:

- represent residents on municipal councils
- guarantee that communities have organized systems of accountability to local communities
- to meet communities' top priorities by delivering services in a way that is efficient, equitable, and sustainable while staying within the municipality's means.

Municipalities are held to some degree of accountability thanks to the duties and responsibilities of officials and council members. A municipality should have an organizational structure that specifies the responsibilities assigned to politicians and municipal authorities, according to Ngqobe, Fourie, and Tshiyoyo (2021:116). The objective of establishing such tasks is to establish accountability levels, including the types of accountabilities expected of each group of officials and politicians.

2.9 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

According to Madumo and Koma (2019:581), a municipality is a fundamental governmental entity tasked with offering its residents essential services. Municipalities play a crucial role in raising residents' standard of living. A municipality should be viewed as a fundamental branch of government with the obligation of promoting a link between the government and its citizens while guaranteeing the provision of services within its jurisdiction, according to Madumo (2017:55). Madumo and Koma (2019:581) further point out that the 1994 introduction of democratization resulted in extraordinary constitutional status and legal order for the local government realm. The *Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution, Section 151*, acknowledges local government as one of the three branches of government that consists of municipalities.

Thornhill (2008:504) highlights the following administrative and managerial matters of municipalities relevant to the reformed local government system:

- *Section 55 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* addresses human resources by requiring a municipal council to hire a municipal manager to serve as both the accounting officer and the head of administration.
- As stipulated in *Section 80 of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003)*, municipalities are expected to set up a budget and treasury office, which is composed of the chief financial officer and contractual staff.
- By compelling the administration to respond to community requests and cultivate a culture of municipal service and accountability among its staff, the redesigned local government system facilitates performance management.
- Municipalities are required to operate according to strictly defined financial processes and practices.
- Control over the local government sphere is exercised by the provincial government through *Section 139 of the Constitution of the Republic of South*

Africa of 1996 which assigns an interventionist role to the provincial government.

- The most complex challenge in local government is the interface between administration and politics. In addressing this complex challenge, *Section 53 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* specifies that the different functions and obligations of each political office bearer and political structure, as well as the head of administration, must be stated in exact terms in writing and recognised and implemented in accordance with policy statements, instructions, procedures, and the rules.

Madumo and Koma (2019:589) point out that the *Municipal Systems Amendment Act, 2011 (Act No. 7 of 2011)* would aid in resolving the perpetual governance problem caused by the politico-administrative connection between political office-holders who happen to hold political office for the ruling party and senior municipal officials in the context of a municipality that regularly borders on meddling in the day-to-day management of municipal operations. According to Park (2021:25) the problems of democratic governance inherent to politics-administration relationships, both political and bureaucratic dysfunctions contribute to policy failure. Mubangizi and Tshishonga (2013:308) have their views rooted in the separation of administration and politics; however, they also approve on complementary roles of both politicians and administrators. The process of decision-making in a political atmosphere is diverse because it repeatedly addresses specific interests rather than meeting the broad demands of communities (Reimer, 2006:320). It can therefore be deduced that local government reform sought to bring a system that responds to the demands of the local citizenry through the promulgation of legislative frameworks necessary for the smooth running of municipalities; however, the politics-administration conundrum remains a serious stumbling block in municipal service delivery. Poor financial performance, poor governance, and poor political leadership in municipalities are attributed to political meddling and disregard of legislative frameworks and policies approved to ensure the smooth running of municipalities.

2.10 CONTEXTUALIZING POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Masoud (2023:159) understands political interference as actions by politicians, especially the appointed or elected ones, to influence or enact their will in violation of suitably recognised administrative and project processes and notion of property. According to Selepe and Mehlahe (2023:507) the quality of the policy making, the consistency between policy intent and the impact of policies when implemented, and the effectiveness, equity, and efficiency of the administrative process can all be affected by the nature of the interaction and relative influence of politicians and administration. Moreover, Myeza, Nkhi and Maroun (2021:739) observe that political interference has an impact on public procurement violations in South Africa and prevents the procuring entities from achieving their intended goals. Selepe and Mehlahe (2023:513) further denotes that inappropriate political interference in administrative affairs also influences contradictory mandates between political officials and municipal officials. Political interference may lead to demotivation of municipal officials as they no longer have the room to perform their administrative duties professionally due to politicians breathing down their necks and often dictate how administration should be run.

Masuku and Jili (2019:2) claim that service delivery frustrations and protests have occurred in various localities as a result of the South African government's unfulfilled promises and tardiness in providing basic services. Politicians meddling with public managers' duties is the main reason for the slow process of delivering services to the public. According to Ncalane (2018:33), difficulties within the political-administrative interface have also been caused by the absence of formal consultation and a clear role differentiation between politicians and municipal administrators. Since appointments are made by the local council, political participation impairs the effectiveness of municipal authorities inside municipalities. The entire municipal council appoints municipal managers, and they even suggest the name, which is chosen by the political party in power in the municipality (Masuku and Jili, 2019:2).

Madumo (2016:84) is of the view that the administrative arm of the municipality should be free from political interference, because municipal services should be equitably distributed and not provided only to persons who have a biased interest. Madumo's view advocates for a local government that portrays high levels of professionalism in all aspects of municipal administration in order to correctly implement municipal policies. Moreover, Munzhedzi (2020:102) provides recommendations aimed at addressing challenges related to policy implementation and points out that municipalities should recruit and appoint qualified and experienced officials who possess the necessary skills and capacity to implement municipal policies. Munzhedzi (2020:102) further recommends that all senior officials of the municipalities should at least have a postgraduate qualification in the relevant field, including but not limited to, Municipal Administration, Engineering and Accountancy. This recommendation would assist municipalities to thrive in service delivery if municipal administration were to run their affairs without undue political interference.

2.11 MODELS OF POLITICS–ADMINISTRATION RELATIONSHIPS

Cameron (2003:59-60) identifies five different models of local government politics-administration relationships which are: the neutral model, the minimalist appointment model, the medium patronage model, the comprehensive patronage model, and the fused party state model. These models explain the politics-administration relationships in relation to appointments in local government, particularly at the end and start of a new term of office. Any attempt to introduce a policy based on a strict politics-administration divide would be conceptually flawed, idealistically assume that officials have no political function, and may eventually pose issues for politicians. Nevertheless, bureaucratic corruption and poor management would result from any attempt to combine politics and administration through a fully politicized administration. Then, the challenge was to try to strike a compromise between these two viewpoints. Thus, the models are discussed next.

2.11.1 The neutral model.

This is an example of the simulated politics-administration dichotomy, which assumes that top officials are not involved in policymaking and are impartial. One example of this approach is the conventional British local government model, which is slowly being undermined. At both the national and municipal levels, leading professionals are appointed by the government (Cameron, 2003:59).

2.11.2 The minimalist appointment model

The appointment of senior staff by the mayor or council is supported by this paradigm. Senior officials who were too closely linked to the previous council may be viewed by a new council as needing to be replaced by trustworthy officials. Many Western European nations, including France, Germany, the United States, and even Britain, typically use this paradigm (Cameron, 2003:59).

2.11.3 The medium patronage model

Both middle- and senior-level employees can be appointed by the mayor or council under this approach. This is the Latin American model, where the new council replaces not just senior officials but also intermediate management, including heads of divisions. A significant portion of the entire staff establishment may be involved in the council appointment of senior and middle-management officials, in contrast to the minimalist council appointment model that would normally require the replacement of six to twelve senior officials. According to the author, this approach entails a lot of preferential treatment (Cameron, 2003:60).

2.11.4 The comprehensive patronage model

This model states that when there is a change of administration, organisational restructuring occurs from the highest to the lowest levels. An example of this was the powers that directly elected United States mayors in the 1920s and 1930s to dispense large-scale patronage by firing officials of the old administration and replacing them with their employees (Cameron, 2003:60).

2.11.5 The fused party–state model

Under this arrangement, the political party and the local government have the same interests. In one-party republics like the Soviet Union and a number of third-world nations, this was evident, and it typically meant that many officials would only be employed or advanced if they supported the party's goals. Local government officials were appointed by the party itself (Cameron, 2003:60). The patronage model is based on clientelism and personal networks, which is the sole difference between it and this strategy. The fused party-state model prioritizes state loyalty and ideological coherence over individual allegiance to a particular mayor. One may argue that during the last years of Soviet rule, the combined party-state mirrored the all-encompassing patronage model through a network of powerful mayors. These two models can still be conceptually distinguished from one another (Cameron, 2003:60).

It can be concluded that the aforesaid models are not all aligned with the South African municipal administration. The neutral model depicts a completely depoliticised administration due to the fact that senior officials are appointed by municipal councils and the term of office is often aligned to that of the political head. The minimalist appointment model resonates well with the South African local government structure and promotes the appointment of senior officials on a contract basis aligned to that of the political head. The model allows for continuity in terms of municipal services without disruption as the majority of managers are appointed on a permanent basis and still remain in the employ of the municipality regardless of the term of office of politicians.

2.12 POLITICS-ADMINISTRATION MODELS

The politics-administration theory has been around for many centuries; with various scholars contributing to the development of the theory. There have been attempts over the years to provide concise literature on politics and administration in practice. This section discusses the various politics-administration models that seek to provide clarity on the practice of the two and their interconnectedness. As opposed to the models discussed above, these models focus on the level of politicisation

holistically and how politicians and administrators conduct themselves in each level of politicisation, and these are exercised in all three spheres of government. Pretorius (2017:76) emphasises that each model strikes a compromise between administrative judgement and political oversight. The models are described in detail below:

2.12.1 The Dichotomy / Depoliticised Bureaucracy Model

The dichotomy model holds that political interference in public administration is undesirable and will weaken administrative competence while compromising the administrative impartiality of municipal officials (Sebola 2014:210). According to the paradigm, the responsibilities of public officials and politicians are entirely distinct. According to Masuku and Jili (2019:3), the dichotomy model maintains that political interference in governance is wrong since it compromises administrative neutrality and administrative efficiency. Politicians and municipal officials have completely different roles, according to this concept (Masuku and Jili, 2019:3). The purpose of politics is to give the administration political orientation, claim Demir and Nyhan (2008:81). Municipal administration, on the other hand, is a tool for using specific knowledge and skills to turn established policies into observable outcomes.

Vilakazi and Adetiba (2020:49) highlight that although municipalities have uniform goals that are directed to benefit local communities, political and administrative functions and powers must remain different. The political and administrative dichotomy is a guide towards the two spheres in a municipality to focus on their own spaces of functionality and powers while trying to eliminate mischievous acts such as corruption (Naidoo, 2017:75). According to Selepe and Mehlahe (2023:510) the politics-administration dichotomy stands as the oldest among this type of models and is a particular conceptualisation of politics-administration relationship resting on the assumption that each function works best as an independent variable, and it may be improved in isolation without jeopardising or interfering with the other side. This implies that any political strategy must embrace public administration throughout the policy processes, including planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, or policy review (Masuku and Jili, 2019:3).

According to Mlambo, Zubane and Thusi (2022:12) the politics-administration dichotomy theory argues that for an effective and efficient public service, there is a need for administrative decisions to be free of political interference and such decisions need to reflect the needs of society rather than those of political parties. In essence, while political parties may voice their opinions regarding governance issues, their opinions should not automatically lead to administrative decisions being taken in support of their opinions. This model advocates for the complete separation of politics from administration. It seeks to afford administration space to function without political interference and this results in the professionalisation of the municipal administration as municipal officials are appointed based on merit and not political loyalty.

2.12.2 The Politicised Bureaucracy Model

This approach argues that party structures dominate administrative decisions and that politics and administration are one and the same (Mafunisa, 2003:88). According to Ngamlana-Guwa (2010:1), the pre-1994 political activism culture and ideals, in which the majority of people hold political patronage or partisanship, are one of the reasons why politics and administration at the local government level are not distinguished. Sebola (2014:209) believes that the political and administrative spheres are not separated; rather, there is continuity between them, save in the case of shielding administrative staff from partisan political intervention. Joensuu and Niiranen (2018:26) highlight that the attempt to maintain a distance between the roles of political leaders and administration is a phenomenon as old as separating politics and administration. Sebola (2014:210) further contends that despite the back and forth of techniques for separating party politics from municipal administration, it is difficult to separate the two in actual municipal administration practice.

The separation of politics from administration exists in ideal situations and such opinions can only be sustained theoretically. However, in an ideal setting, municipal administration is perceived as an independent entity with clear distinct activities isolated from politics. In the actual political and municipal administration environment, people are supposed to accept the circumstances and merely develop ways and ideas for handling the political reality (Sebola, 2014:210). According to

Riggs (2019:817), hiring politicians into high-level bureaucratic positions like general management and senior management is seen as a way to control the civil service and bureaucrats. Furthermore, the politicized bureaucratic model gives politicians the ability to affect how government bureaucracies function, according to Masuku and Jili (2019:2). According to the politicized bureaucratic paradigm, politicians control and direct the government. Since incumbents in important posts are picked for their political allegiance rather than their qualifications, this model may have an impact on administrative effectiveness. As a result, party faithful may see these appointments as rewards.

2.12.3 The Complementary Model

According to Overeem (2021:12) the complementarity of administration and politics maintains that the relationship between administrators and elected officials is characterised by interdependency, collaboration, different but overlapping roles, and political authority and administrative subordination coexisting with reciprocity of influence in both policymaking and administration. According to Masuku and Jili (2019:3), the complementary approach is founded on the idea that political and administrative officials can collaborate to promote good governance. The paradigm is regarded as providing a positive method to investigating the various contributions of political officeholders and administrators to the democratic process. Masuku & Jili (2019:3) further imply that this model is well established historically and provides a useful technique to assess the different contributions of political office-holders and public officials to the democratic process. Svava (2002: 10) denotes that the complementarity model nearly amounts to an ethical code of value commitment and desired interactions as it combines a high degree of control by elected officials with a high level of independent for administrators.

Masuku and Jili (2019:3) observe that Maphunye (2011:617) in the study conducted about the structure and the roles in post 1994 departments have expressed support of the complementary model and emphasised that both appointed officials and elected political officials conceded that there is no overlap between the world of the municipal officials and the work of politicians. He recommended that the two groups should work collaboratively to deliver services to the community. The theory

acknowledges the distinct roles and obligations of each but sees the need for collaboration and interconnection as an option to the dichotomy model. Masuku and Jili (2019:3) are explicit in pledging support to Maphunye's sentiments that politicians and municipal officials should collaborate based on their individual tasks and responsibilities, and no one should interfere with what the other is intended to perform. Equally, Uwizeyimana (2013:171) is convinced that there is ample evidence to show that the politics-administration dichotomy envisaged by Wilson and his supporters is neither practical nor possible in a real organisation (both government and private). Selepe and Mehlahe (2023:510) appear to be in support of Uwizeyimana's sentiments by stating that politics cannot be divorced from the policy implementation process since policies are developed and implemented by political institutions. Uwizeyimana (2013:171) further holds that the way forward is to strike a balance between the two equally important and inseparable aspects of any organisation and of government.

According to Selepe and Mehlahe (2023:512) complementarity emphasises interdependence and various roles; compliance and independence; respect for political authority and dedication to shaping and implementing policy in ways that serve community interests. reverence to elected authorities coupled with loyalty to the law and support of legitimate electoral competition; and appreciation of politics along with support for professional ethics. Ndudula (2013:17) maintains that the complementary model denotes that politics and administration exist as independent and distinct aspects but recognises the function each can play in the overall organisational structure. Ndudula (2013:47) further alludes that elected officials and administrators communicate extensively, and there is a developing complementarity between them. The complementarity model recognizes the existence of the political and administrative components with their interactive roles and provides an alternative for them to co-exist. The model acknowledges that if the relationship between the roles of the two actors are not properly managed, they may negatively affect service delivery to communities.

2.12.4 The Dichotomy-Duality Model

Ndudula (2013:17) asserts that the Dichotomy-Duality Model is predicated on the idea that political and administrative leaders, as well as all other pertinent stakeholders, may cooperate in the pursuit of good governance. According to Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh (2019:74), the Dichotomy-Duality Model supports the idea that elected and administrative officials, as well as other stakeholders, have overlapping roles and influence over administration and policy. As a result, the model encourages municipal administrators to be more interested in the policy-making process. Furthermore, Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh (2019:74) point out that the Dichotomy-Duality Model provides a constructive approach to analysing the unique contributions made by municipal administrators and political office holders to the democratic process; as a result, elected officials retain their rights about formal policymaking and mission design, two essential political functions.

By being elected by the people, having the power to enact laws, and having firsthand knowledge of the needs and desires of the populace, elected officials can play a vital role in assisting municipal management with administration (Demir and Reddick, 2012:528). They also bring legitimacy and accountability. They also serve to bridge the gap between policy design and implementation, create politically viable solutions, clarify legislative objectives and expectations, and improve the overall efficacy of policy execution. Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh, (2019:74) further denote that this interconnectedness and inter-dependency are depicted by high-level politicians who depend on administrators to provide expert advice on policymaking, and this is also prevalent in local government. Furthermore, politicians think they must provide direct and administrative control to guarantee that execution does not compromise their political party's policy objectives.

2.12.5 The British Permanent Model

According to Mafunisa (2003:91) the British civil service is characterised by its adherence to specific key precepts. It is a permanent service in the sense that it remains in place on a change of government. Ministers are normally expected to work with the civil servants who have served the previous administration. Closely

associated with the concept of permanency is neutrality, and by virtue of the fact that administrators are supposed to serve ministers of any political party, therefore senior officials must be meticulously neutral (Mogashoa, 2006:28). Mafunisa (2003:91) states that British civil servants remain non-political in the sense that they normally receive their appointment independently of ministers; that they are not allowed an overt political allegiance; and that they are not required to perform politically on the floor of either House of Parliament.

2.12.6 The American Hybrid Model

The term "civil service" in American public administration refers to a wide range of government workers who are enrolled in the career service. Civil servants have job security, are promoted based on efficiency ratings, are hired and recruited based on merit, and are regularly evaluated for job performance (Mafunisa, 2003:92). The United States civil service system was intended to forever abandon the practice of political patronage – the so-called “spoils” system for all, but a few senior positions. The intention was to promote continuity, but more importantly, it was meant to ensure that the public officials had the skills and abilities required to administer complex federal programmes. Thus, the system places great value on neutral competence in service of the “government of the day” and upon selection on merit, the most central characteristics of the civil service (Mafunisa, 2003:93).

These models describe how politics and administration interact with each other in government. The depoliticised bureaucracy model sees politics and administration as two separate components independent of each other. However, their separation seems impossible in practice as there is constant interaction between the two, and at times often difficult to identify one independently of the other. This difficult individual identification prompts the complementarity and the dichotomy-duality models which foster collaboration between politics and administration. These models recognize the co-existence of politics and administration and require the highest level of professionalism from administrators and politicians. These models are paramount for ensuring that South Africa has a highly professionalized municipal administration.

2.13 COMPETENCIES OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT

According to Mitra, Bangia, and Mitra (2008:71), competency includes four essential fundamentals: a set of abilities, knowledge, and attitudes that influence job performance, correlate with job performance, can be tested against acceptable criteria, and can be improved through training and development. Makauki (2017:12) contends that the concept of competency is inextricably linked to the organization's need for high-performing employees. To give effect to the above definitions, managers are required to demonstrate core competencies consisting of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to perform the managerial tasks and fulfil their managerial responsibilities (Kekamam, Liang, Janati, Arab-Zozani, Mohaghegh & Gholizadeh (2020:7). Effective municipal service delivery is closely related to managerial competency and institutional capacity, according to van der Walddt, Fourie, and van Dijk (2021: 16). It is common practice to use capacity development through workshops, formal training, and on-the-job training to ensure that managers in local government possess or learn the necessary skills to carry out their duties. Rossouw (2004:9) opines that competence refers to the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to perform functions successfully. Bhatt (2001:195) holds that competence is the term used to identify someone who is efficient and effective, or who has the ability to perform to a particular standard. On the same breath, Winterton (2002:27) holds a different view which refers to competence as aspects of the job that an individual can perform.

According to Khandwalla (2004:15) the manager's job is far broader than managing subordinates. The manager has to operate within the constraints imposed by the nature of the organisation's business, the phase the organisation is in, the power structure of the organisation, its culture, its objectives and priorities, authority and resources available. This requires high orders of navigational and communications skills, problem solving skills, toughness, persistence, resourcefulness, and flexibility. Vazirani (2010:123) mentions that there is a specific set of skills that all managers should possess. These proficiencies are related to traits, motives, values, knowledge, and skills. The above authors are in agreement with the manner in which the South African local government is structured and the competencies they mention

are a fit for an administrative official to thrive in a highly politicised environment such as the South African municipalities.

The study conducted by the University of Pretoria, for Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) in 2020 confirmed that the underlying denominator is that competence refers to ability, and developing that ability is what maintains businesses on the front lines and competitive in a global labour market. Organisations are recognising that having employees who are not only technically skilled, but also able to learn fast, adapt to change easily, communicate well and have supportive interpersonal relationships to provide them with the advantage to produce effective goods and services to their clients or communities (Enterprise University of Pretoria. 2020:20). The same goes for South African municipalities. Highly skilled officials will be able to stabilize the political and administrative tensions that have the potential of undermining service delivery in a municipality.

Schwella and Rossouw (2005:770) point out that the senior manager should be able to listen and be empathetic and sensitive to the needs of others. The competencies needed are team building, participative decision-making, and conflict management. In the local government system, the head of administration, known as the municipal manager, is responsible for the general management of the municipality. *Section 55 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* recognises the municipal manager as the accounting officer of the municipality, and this individual is required to possess a particular set of expertise that will enable the performance of duties accordingly. Maserumule (2008:441) holds the view that the municipality's political and administrative entities should have skills, abilities, and knowledge that are appropriate for a local government development system.

The Senior Management Service Handbook (2003) provides the Competency Framework for senior management to enhance performance, and the following are key competencies viewed as being critical for high performance in the senior manager's role:

- Problem Solving and Analysis
- Financial Management

- People Empowerment and Management
- Communication
- Honesty and Integrity
- Service Delivery Innovation
- Project and Programme Management
- Knowledge Management
- Strategic Leadership and Capability
- Change Management
- Customer Focus and Client Orientation

Scholars and practice seem to agree that competencies are a set of attributes, attitudes, knowledge, and skills appropriate to the workplace, possessed by individuals and used to the benefit of a specific group. Thus, the categorisation of senior management competencies includes a specific set of skills, knowledge, and attitudes, complying with the code of conduct for Senior Management Service (SMS) members, relevant to government institutions, with the specific aim of providing excellent service to all citizens in order to make a better life for everyone (University of Pretoria, 2020:19).

2.14 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICIANS AND ADMINISTRATORS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Pretorius (2017:1) states that this is inclusive of the relationships between political officials and administrative officials in making and executing local decisions. Hence the connection between political officials and municipal administrators becomes a critical aspect to be managed. In providing context to the relationship between the two actors, Miller and McTavish (2009:56) deem it crucial to provide meaning to the political-administrative interface as “the intersection of leadership roles within a tradition of a dichotomous relationship between political and administrative realms”. According to Overeem (2008:36), the nature of the connection between politics and administration is the most crucial factor to consider when considering municipal administration. Furthermore, Overeem (2008:36) explains that the nature of the interactions between politics and administration is not just important for scholarly theory. The everyday functioning of government is more important than the

conceptualization, justification, and interrelationships of politics and administration. Even though this definition suggests that the roles of professional bureaucrats and elected and appointed politicians are traditionally different, this distinction is getting more and more blurred since the roles sometimes overlap in real life. The connection between politics and administration is also referred to as the politics-administration interface (Shazi 2016:1). This link should also assist politicians when providing political accountability as they will be able to have technical knowledge with regards to the programs they were entrusted to run by their constituencies because of their relationship with administrators.

According to Selepe (2023:171) politics and administration are inextricably linked in government and dealing with the interface between politico-administrative poses significant challenges for South African local government. Selepe (2023:171) further points out that political interference in administrative matters and the tense relations between essential administrative and political officials in municipalities seems to be the norm. This is mainly aggravated by the fact that administrators, as officials appointed based on merit, often opt to remain professional and offer expert advice which may contradict the political official's party objectives. Sikhakane and Reddy (2011:97) claim that the increasing power of political office holders to influence municipal administration has called into question the political neutrality of municipal officials. Nealer (2007:180) adds that political considerations and politicians' inclinations increasingly influence decisions about hiring, firing, and retiring high-ranking officials. Senior municipal officials who are influenced by political office holders tend to be more devoted to their political leaders while disregarding their administrative responsibilities to the local community. Generally speaking, the relationship between administrators and politicians is supported by an ambiguous set of beliefs, norms, and principles that both parties must adhere to (Surty, 2010:33).

Therefore, the values and norms related to the tasks and responsibilities of the incumbents may work as guidance in situations where the relationship between politics and administration is ambiguous with regard to particular areas of activity. The apartheid era appears to be the source of the uneasy interdependence between the political and administrative domains in the South African Public Service, in

general, and local government service delivery, in particular (Reddy 2016:5). According to Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh (2019:77), the post-apartheid administration has unfortunately, albeit unintentionally, promoted the same ideas in an effort to overcome historical prejudices. The ANC's Cadre Deployment Policy, which aimed to assign party supporters to key positions in government, was used to accomplish this elevation.

Fatima (2010:21) contends that there is an existence of a relationship between administration and politics, in particular, between municipal managers and the mayor by indicating that while the mayor is responsible for the management of the processes, the municipal manager is answerable for the implementation and monitoring of progress with the implementation of the Integrated Development Plan. Olumuyiwa (2015:17) is of the view that the politics and administration interface does not always produce negative outcomes and consequences. If the interactions between politics and administration are better managed, they would likely lead to efficient and effective policy development in government (Selepe & Mehlape, 2023:513).

2.15 CADRE DEPLOYMENT AND MUNICIPAL PERFORMANCE

According to Swanepoel (2021:449) cadre deployment refers to the appointment by the government, at the behest of the governing party, of a party-political loyalist to an institution or body, independent or otherwise, as a means of circumventing public reporting lines and bringing that institution under the control of the party, as opposed to the state. Swanepoel (2021:449) further provides a definition of cadre employment as economic patronage bestowed to individuals, agencies, and companies, by the government, not on merit, but on the premise that they have some party-political link to the ruling party. Mlambo *et al.* (2022:12) on the other hand define cadre deployment as the placement of a cadre to a post within a government organisation to circumvent the bureaucracy and put the organisation under the party's control. From the aforementioned definitions, politicisation of administration becomes the order of the day as the incumbents will always feel obliged to advance the objectives of the party that ensured their appointment at the expense of the local community's needs. These appointments often compromise

the administrative expertise of the senior municipal officials. In their study conducted in 2018, Shava and Chamisa (2018:4) confirmed that cadre deployment aggravated challenges connected to wasteful expenditure, corruption, poor supply chain management systems, and the weakening state of local government.

Twala (2014:159) relays that the cadre deployment forms part of the official policy of the ruling ANC government and its tripartite alliance. Shava and Chamisa (2018:2) admit that there can be little doubt that the ANC adopted the cadre deployment policy in a bid to transform the racially skewed public administration of South Africa, where black Africans constituted the bulk of public servants in lower posts, with a few middle and upper level officials in the homeland governments. The policy has become the object of severe criticism by many South Africans due to its contribution towards corruption. This is also supported by the South African state President; Cyril Ramaphosa in his letter to the ruling party in 2020 where he indicated that based on the evidence before the Zondo Commission, there was a disturbing level of grand corruption, where individuals were placed in various institutions to manipulate procurement and other processes to siphon off massive amounts of funds for a network of politicians, public servants, and businesspeople. Mlambo *et al.* (2022:14) argue that considerable criticisms levelled against the ANC's deployment policy have been premised on the notion that it compromises the credibility of municipal administration, eliminates room for transparency and accountability and consolidates party loyalty over governance, and creates room for politics to influence decisions taken in the municipal administration.

South Africans are aware that politically connected people frequently occupy high-level posts in government agencies and local governments, even though they are not qualified to run their offices, according to the Centre for Development Enterprise (CDE) (2009:24). According to Shava and Chamisa (2018:5), politicians and other unscrupulous office-bearers have severely misused the program by making the amassing of personal riches their major purpose, which contradicts the policy's fundamental intentions. Hwok-Aun (2016:513) contends that cadre deployment in government has become a path to advancement, and the criticism of the policy is bolstered by the fact that no formal qualifications are considered when recruiting government officials, and no assessments are made to determine an individual's

capacity or suitability for holding a public office. The South African government is doing poorly as a direct result of the ANC's cadre deployment policy, claim Ndevu and Muller (2017:16). According to Ndevu and Muller (2017:17), performance management is crucial for providing improved services, and it is expected that performance management will guarantee that goals are met. This is founded on the fundamental idea that management structures should rely on their own ability to connect disparate individuals inside organisations and encourage them to collaborate as a team to achieve goals and collective aims.

2.16 CADRE DEPLOYMENT AND GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

According to Thebe (2017:126), strong governance should be viewed in terms of making sure that the proper people are hired to perform the correct tasks using the right policies and procedures. Nabatchi (2018:62) states that good governance ensures that economic, social, and political priorities align with public management and constitutional values. Thebe (2017:129) goes on to say that political education and training are necessary for successful governance, which is linked to knowing how competence, accountability, responsiveness, and moral behavior affect service delivery in any democratic government.

Mlambo *et al* (2022:13) attest that the continued politicisation of the municipal administration through cadre deployment in many respects undermines good governance practices for service delivery in the country. According to Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh (2019:75) the degradation of the sector of local government has been seen as a direct result of nepotism, cronyism, favouritism, and cadre deployment by the ANC. Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh further point out that effective municipal governance requires a good political-administrative relationship within local government. Shava and Chamisa (2018:4) identified several service delivery and governance encounters that result from the implementation of cadre deployment policies that adversely affect the performance of government departments and municipalities. These encounters include financial mismanagement, fraud, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, and generally poor performance. This means that under the auspices of cadre deployment, where more qualified

officials are often neglected, the ANC's party loyalists tend to be appointed as a result of impeding service delivery in South Africa (Mlambo *et al*, 2022:13).

Reddy (2016:3) asserts that politicizing every topic has the drawback of undermining local governments' capacity to deliver effective services. Critics feel justified in calling for a revision to the ANC's cadre deployment policy as a result. Municipal management is depicted as dire by Shava and Chamisa (2018:10), who claim that the growing number of politically connected people serving in local government has a significant effect on the degree of corruption in the system. They add that reports of corruption have surfaced in a number of ways since the cadre deployment policy's inception, including inadequate community development and financial malfeasance. Ambe and Badenhorst-Weiss (2012:11004) claim that supply chain management systems exhibit irregularities as a result of corruption brought on by cadre deployment, making local governments susceptible to unnecessary spending. The ability of local municipalities to offer products and services to communities is based on supply chain management; nevertheless, dishonest officials have taken control of the systems and manipulated them to authorize inflated payments to service providers (Moeti, 2014:47).

2.17 FORMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN MUNICIPALITIES

Accountability entails that the municipal manager and the municipal council have a responsibility to be answerable to the community for the performance of their duties (Chitimira, Sethunyane & Magau, 2023:67). The National School of Government (2022:18) defines accountability as the obligation of bureaucrats or an organisation to account for their operations, disclose information about actions and decisions, clarify and justify decisions, as well as exercise discretion, accept responsibility for these activities, transparently disclose the results, be liable for their actions, and understand that there are consequences when obligations are not honoured. According to Thornhill (2015:77) accountability is understood as an essential requirement for preserving democratic and accountable government, and the concept of accountability requires that the government entity provides explanations to the electorate for their actions or inactions and allows the community to express an opinion on their governing competence. Rogers (2007:36) suggests that

accountability from a democratic perspective offers the actors democratic legitimate possibilities to control policy, organisations, and administration. According to Romzek (2000:15) accountability is defined as the simplest requirement to offer an account on how the responsibility conferred has been carried by an institution or fulfilled by a person delegated to do so. Below are forms of accountability applicable in municipal administration:

2.17.1 Political accountability

Thornhill (2015:78) highlights that political accountability compels political officeholders, such as the President, ministries, local councils, and other political leaders, to account to constituents for how they gave effect to the duties assigned to them. The municipal council oversees electing the mayor to exercise administrative authority and the council speaker to preside over council sessions, as noted by Ngqobe et al. (2021:116). Additionally, Ngqobe et al. (2021:116) note that the mayoral committee is appointed by the mayor to assist in the municipality's daily political operations. Politically, the executive mayor is answerable to the council on behalf of the administration and the mayoral committees. In addition, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998) mandates the creation of section 79 committees to act as an executive and administrative committee monitoring body (Kraai, Hlotzhausen, & Malan, 2017:64).

Community involvement in municipal decision-making procedures for programs like the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is essential, claim Maimela and Mathebula (2015:143). At community meetings, council members have a way to answer to their constituents thanks to the establishment of local structures. Since council members serve as the protectors of their communities by promoting their developmental needs, this kind of accountability is crucial for their elections. Moreover, Armstrong (2005:79) relates the nature of this form of accountability to that of the elected officials who are accountable to policies emanating from political role players in a democratic society in South African municipal institutions. This accountability is where the ultimate accountability for all facets of government activities rests. It is therefore imperative that councillors account for the programmes of the municipality to their constituencies so that they are informed and know how their developmental

needs progress. This form of accountability is essential to avert service delivery protests.

2.17.2 Financial accountability

Sebola (2015:127) maintains that the *Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003* (Act No. 56 of 2003) provides grounds for municipalities to account financially and Sections 121 and 171 of the Act specify financial responsibility procedures and penalties for municipal financial malfeasance. On the same note, Bothoko (2017:33) says that to maintain financial transparency, municipalities must be willing to account for the distribution and usage of approved funds by local councils. Financial accountability for municipalities strives to augment financial control mechanisms and eliminate fraud and corruption, which are endemic in South African municipalities (Ngqobe *et al*, 2021:117). As part of reinforcing financial accountability, the MFMA recommends that municipalities' budgets must be clear, dependable, and consistent throughout the municipality (Ngqobe *et al*, 2021:118). Municipal financial accountability ensures that local communities are serviced as per the approved IDP as funds would not be mismanaged based on the control measures established in terms of the MFMA.

2.17.3 Legal accountability

According to Ngqobe *et al*. (2021:118), legal accountability is linked to conformity with legislation that governs municipalities' roles and functions. It is also linked to other types of accountabilities such as financial, hierarchical, and political accountability, according to regulatory constraints. Ngqobe *et al*, (2021:118) further highlight that section 47 and 48 of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000* (Act No. 32 of 2000) provide for further legal by requiring members of the executive council (MEC) and the minister responsible for local government to give Parliament with the state of municipalities' performance reports. According to Sikhakane and Reddy (2011:88) there are set performance requirements like constitutional and legislative provisions which have to be adhered to in the case of legal accountability relationships.

Municipalities are required to abide by a few National Treasury circulars, guidelines, and statutory frameworks. Municipalities are required by law to answer to several departments, including the Presidency, the Office of the Premier, the Provincial Treasury, and Co-operative Government and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA). In addition to carrying out an oversight function, these government agencies are meant to assist towns wherever feasible without getting in the way of their local government operations (Ngqobe et al., 2021:118). The *Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution*, the *Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No 56 of 2003)*, the *Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No 117 of 1998)*, and the *Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No 32 of 2000)* are among the performance mandates that South African local government must adhere to in order to maintain legal compliance in the performance of its duties (Sikhakane and Reddy, 2011:89).

2.17.4 Hierarchical accountability

Sikhakane and Reddy (2011:86) highlight that a municipality is made up of political and administrative entities, as well as the community. According to Sikhakane and Reddy (2011:86), the administration is comprised of the city manager and departmental heads, with managers overseeing the various sections/divisions. As a result, the administrative organisation has hierarchical accountability linkages. According to Caker, Siverbo and Akesson (2022:869) hierarchical accountability is the process of exchanging accounts inside organisational hierarchies and it often relies on management control systems such as Performance Management Systems (PMS), which can be used to create order and visibility and to distribute demands and accounts. Ngqobe et al. (2021:119) contend that municipalities must adopt a delegation system to better their operational and administrative efficiency. Municipal councils are required to select managers who will report directly to the municipal manager and lead different departments or divisions or be entrusted with supporting the execution of council plans, according to Pretorius (2017:120). In addition to approving the hiring of employees within the municipality, municipal managers are in charge of establishing an effective, accountable, and successful administration.

The municipal manager's strategic involvement in establishing performance agreements with senior managers who report directly to them for carrying out their separate functional areas of responsibility is highlighted by Tshishonga (2015:71), who defines hierarchical accountability as a form of accountability. Under hierarchical accountability, managers are answerable to the municipal manager for fulfilling the deliverables of the performance agreement. The Performance Management System, which was implemented in local government to improve internal responsibility among employees, is described in *Section 38 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)*. The assignment and delegation of authority, the coordination of functional activities, the setup of communication channels that are created to keep all parties involved informed of all actions, and the implementation of control mechanisms at all levels to achieve the desired results are the key processes that Sikhakane and Reddy (2011:87) identify as being essential to accountability relationships.

2.17.5 Professional accountability

According to Sikhakane and Reddy (2011:87), professional responsibility is demonstrated by work arrangements that give employees a high degree of autonomy and base their decisions on internalized standards of appropriate behaviour, including values and norms, rather than political responsiveness. Romzek (2000:26), people must respond to queries about whether their performance aligns with standards that come from work experience, organizational customs, professional socialization, or personal convictions. Performance standards are established by professional norms, accepted protocols and prevailing practices of one's work group or peer. The behavioral expectation is that discretion will be exercised responsibly in a manner that is consistent with accepted norms of responsible practice (Romzek, 2000:26). Professional accountability in the municipal sector, according to Sikhakane and Reddy (2011:88), guarantees that municipal officials carry out their responsibilities by ethical norms and standards, the breach of which leads to disciplinary action against them.

Professional accountability, according to Nealer (2007:176), gives people a great deal of autonomy and is therefore influenced by the standards and values of their

profession rather than political responsiveness. However, in reality, this is not always the case, as officials occasionally find themselves torn between upholding their internalized standards and values and caving in to political pressure while carrying out their duties. According to Schroeder (2004:30), the phrase "professional accountability" suggests that this accountability reflects qualities of specialized knowledge and skill.

From the above perspectives on various forms of accountability, it can be deduced that systems are put in place to ensure municipal performance. These forms of accountability help to ensure that municipal incumbents at all levels account for their actions or lack thereof in a quest for just administrative action as contained in *section 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*. Political officials and administrators should ensure that these forms of accountability are adhered to for effective performance of municipalities and the elimination of service delivery protests as community members would be informed of the progress or lack thereof, of their developmental needs. These forms of accountability also assist in managing the political-administrative interface as roles would be clarified for accountability purposes.

2.18 MANAGING POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

According to Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh (2019:78), the existing framework of statutory law in the level of local government allows for a degree of separation between the statutory and administrative authorities of the municipal government. In practice, municipalities are left to handle the potentially complex relationship. Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh (2019:83) further state that a successful political-administrative interface within the municipal administration lies at the centre of effective municipal governance. According to Kathyola (2010:18), properly handled political-administrative conflicts may increase output and foster a more professional attitude in the provision of services. Municipal personnel experience conflict and frustration as a result of administrators and politicians interfering with each other's jobs and responsibilities. This is the main challenge in municipalities. While administrative officials faithfully implement the policy decisions made by the local

council, politicians should refrain from meddling in administrative tasks (Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh, 2019:83).

Reddy (2016:1) affirms that political power struggle and other conflicts between the political and managerial components in South African municipalities have had a negative effect on municipal service delivery. Politics assigns tasks to the administrative component of any government, including municipal government (Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh, 2019:80). This premise provides room for interference by politicians as they would want to ascertain that the administrative component of the municipality understands and is able to deliver on the priorities set out by the political component. This therefore propels the political head in charge to configure the municipal administration by appointing a more trusted cadre who will enhance the programs of the ruling party without questions. Motebang (2021:260) attests to this kind of instability as one caused by the political leadership's failure to accept and trust the administrative leadership that is in place, more especially if they did not appoint these staff themselves.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) (2014:68) has recommended the following interventions and solutions for managing relationships at the political-administrative interface:

- Clarify the functions and responsibilities of senior management and politicians through prescripts and guidelines.
- Ensure that functions and responsibilities are discussed and agreed upon with both parties through orientation and induction and other learning and exchange opportunities for political heads and administrators.
- Ensure that both parties agree on goals and interventions in relation to the government's strategic objectives and priorities.
- Ensure that both parties agree on planned interventions to build productive and trusting relationships. This should include agreed communication channels, regular briefing and information-sharing meetings, a monitoring and evaluation system, and a code of conduct.
- Put in place a system to mediate differences of opinion, conflict, and crisis.

These recommendations will help municipalities to manage the pressures that exist between municipal officials and politicians to ensure that service provision is not compromised because of unhealthy working relations.

2.19 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN POLITICS-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE

The White Paper on Local Government, issued in 1998, states that performance management is essential in local government to ensure that plans are executed, have the expected progress impact, and consume resources economically. Following the publication of the White Paper on Local Government in 1998, a reform known as the Performance Management System (PMS) was implemented to enhance municipal performance and service delivery. Performance standards for municipal managers and managers who report directly to municipal managers are established by the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)*, as well as the *Municipal Regulations for Municipal Managers and Managers immediately accountable to Municipal Managers, 2006*. The regulations outline the terms and conditions of employment for these workers as well as the planning, assessment, and improvement of the performance of municipal managers and their direct reports. If applied impartially, these rules may prevent excessive political meddling with the municipality's administrative branch.

Performance management is clarified by Aguinis, Joo and Gottfrdson (2012:385) as a recurrent process whereby individual and team performance is identified, measured, and developed, as well as aligned with the organization's strategic goals. Sahoo and Mishra (2012:3) appear to be in agreement with the aforementioned authors and opine that performance management is a systematic procedure that improves an organization's overall performance through the performance of individuals within a team framework. However, Nkuna (2013:68) brings a different view and contends that there is no universal conceptualisation of performance management, given the various situations of municipalities within the local government system in South Africa. As performance management may not be performed uniformly across the sphere, it is often misunderstood with performance measurement. It can therefore be deduced that performance management in local

government includes the management of a range of factors such as the communities' expectations, politics-administrative interface, training, and development of municipal officials as well as the proper application of the generic administrative processes.

According to Notshikila and Govender (2014:6), assessing municipal performance is essential since if people do not know how their actions affect the organization's objectives and if they are on track to meet those objectives, resources may be wasted. Therefore, to become front-line developmental agencies aiming for high-quality service delivery, municipalities have found that performance management is an essential tool (Nkuna, 2013:68). By encouraging officials to perform at their best so they can receive the appropriate rewards, the local government performance management system can help municipalities respond to the requirements of their communities.

Ikeanyibe, Obiorji, Osadebe, and Ugwu (2020:38) remark that performance management as a matter of priority deals with the context of politics that constrains the task of state building and policy direction as much as focus on reforming administrative institutions. Ikeanyibe *et al.* (2020:38) further pronounce that the politics-administration relationship debate has mostly been regarding whether or not politics can be detached from public administration and what fundamental elements influence the relationship between these two intervening fields. The authors acknowledge the lack of focus among scholars on the performance of the political class in this relationship as the norm has usually been to focus attention on reforming the bureaucracy with its attendant dysfunctions and negative attributes or the whole of government perspective. When the focus of performance management is largely on the administrators and administrative agencies, the politicians appear to become self-righteous and impeccable (Ikeanyibe *et al.*, 2020:40).

2.20 POLITICS-ADMINISTRATION RELATIONS AND ROLE DISTINCTION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

According to Pal, Ungaya and Odhiambo (2023:3) the interaction between politicians and bureaucrats is a longstanding issue of governance and

administration that remains one core of organisational structure and has remained a key question in public administration and political science with respect to their structural interaction. Memoire (2014:3) is of the view that administrative and political connections remain the most challenging challenges to overcome in administrative reforms in Africa and elsewhere. According to Schedler and Eicher (2013: 370) relations between administration and politics are often described in the context of the political process. Schedler and Eicher (2013:371) further highlight that classical approaches assume that administration has a pure function of policy implementation, meaning that independently from administration, politics prescribes the goals which the administration will have to attain in purely technical terms. Demir and Reddick (2012:529) contend that the well-founded technical knowledge of the administration has an essential influence at the stage of policymaking by commenting on political initiatives, playing the leading part in the drafting of legal texts, and exerting influence on the preparation of the annual budget bill. Schedler and Eicher (2013:373) denote that relations between administration and politics are viewed in a differentiated light in that they are characterised by various structural factors wherein two distinguishing features for relations between political officials and administrative officials are identified as:

- Degree of integration: this indicates the strength of the integration of the political officials' and administrative officials' careers.
- Degree of politicisation: this indicates the strength of the politicisation of leading administrative decisions.

The perception of administration as being separated from politics came through a vigorous effort made to give existence to public administration discipline, and clearly distinguish roles in government despite obvious integration and overlap. (Ikeanyibe *et al.*, 2020:39). Svava (2002:244) views relations between politicians and administration employees as an interplay between the two structural variables of political control and professional independence. Relations between politics and administration are usually based on a certain measure of complementarity and that administration and politics provide each other with mutual support and complementary elements (Schedler & Eicher, 2013:375). Mehlape (2018:328) also supports the co-existence of politics and administration in that they are

complimentary in the sense that they promote togetherness and mutual respect. According to Memoire (2014:6) the nature of the politics-administration connection changes not only in a given policy sector, but also throughout time and owing to changes in the prevailing political philosophy of the moment, or changes in political leadership. Mehlape (2018:327) acknowledges that many policy variables influence the type of relations between the administrative and political sectors, including a country's political-administrative culture and sector-specific qualities.

Whatever the theoretical perception of the nature of the relationship between administration and politics (separation, interaction, instrumental principal-agent or otherwise), the common denominator has been the acknowledgement that the political class is the senior partner in the politics-administration relations and has the responsibility to structure, lead and control the administrative system (Ikeanyibe and associates (2020:40). One of the executive mayor's responsibilities, as stipulated in *Section 56 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998)*, is to oversee the administration of the municipality, which includes controlling its administrative branch. According to Panday (2017: 2), political control is achievable because bureaucracies are established by elected institutions, who build the organisation in a way that promotes their control. Panday (2017:2) further states that politicians always remain cautious about the operations of bureaucrats to ensure that information is not altered.

Vilakazi and Adetiba (2020:48) attest that differentiation of political and administrative roles at local government level has proved to be a serious concern when considering the operational system of municipalities. Each municipality's executive is led by a municipal manager and staffed by qualified personnel who carry out local government duties (Shah, 2006:63). As the head of the executive, a municipal manager is empowered by *Section 6 of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* to implement and develop an efficient, effective, cost-effective, and answerable administration that is ready to operationalise the IDP, operates within the performance management system of the municipality, and attends to the local community needs. As instructed by the political head, an administrator's job is to support the creation and execution of policy (Olumuyiwa 2015:15). As a result, the relationship between administration and politics is inherently based on the

municipal manager's obligation to serve the community in an ethical manner by offering the mayor professional advice regarding the creation of policies that will further the municipal administration's attempts to address community needs.

The mayor's responsibilities include chairing executive committee meetings and performing ceremonial tasks as approved by the council or executive committee, according to Fatima (2010:16). According to *Section 52 of the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003)*, the mayor of a municipality is required to provide general political direction regarding the financial matters of the municipality. This suggests that in order to make sure that money is used legally and for the intended purposes in relation to the IDP, the mayor must have political control over the municipality's financial administration. According to Venter, Van der Walt, Phutiagae, Khalo, and Nieker (2007:63), the mayor is responsible for ensuring that the Act's provisions are followed and for exercising political control over the council's financial operations. Mehlape (2018:330) states that the mayor is responsible for providing political leadership and direction to the council. This includes offering strategic advice, ensuring that the council is properly informed of new developments, and providing counsel to the council of the municipality on the performance, exercise, and discharge of its powers, duties, and functions as outlined in *Sections 152 and 153 of the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution*. Additionally, the mayor must provide political supervision in the municipality's financial concerns.

The PSC (2014:66) clarifies that the relative ambiguity between the roles of political appointees and administrators has created the space in some cases for a high level of interaction and cooperation between them in policy development and management. On the other hand, such ambiguity has, in certain instances, led to role confusion, role conflict, and over-extension of roles. This has been especially the case where elected officials feel that administrators do not satisfactorily carry out their mandate, where personal tensions exist, or where the competency of administrators has been called into question. At the same time, administrative officials have frequently complained about what they see as inappropriate levels of political interference in their day-to-day work (PSC, 2014:66).

2.21 CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN ADMINISTRATION

According to Ndudula (2013:29) the emergence of a freshly elected government led by the ANC necessitated the implementation of policies aimed at transforming and reshaping the government institution, with a clear mandate to correct historical inequalities and meet the ever-increasing demands of communities. The Cadre Deployment Strategy is one of the policies that were aimed at restructuring public institutions to ensure the representativity of the majority, however, the policy was hijacked to benefit the party more than it does the state. Ndudula (2013:30) adds that the cadre policy has only brought about political loyalty and has led to a lack of clarity regarding the functions and responsibilities of political office holders and their administrative officials. As a result, tensions have arisen between administrators and politicians, especially in the local level of government.

According to Mafunisa (2012:556), tensions in local governance can be ascribed to the following:

- Municipal Managers and Executive Mayor may belong to different political parties or have similar political ideologies.
- The mayor's interference in procurement processes is an example of undue political influence.
- The Executive Mayor and Municipal Manager are both senior members of the same political party, potentially causing leadership conflicts.
- The Executive Mayor perceives the municipal manager's compensation as higher than their own.
- Administrators maintain confidentiality by withholding information and delaying decisions.
- The Municipal Manager is senior to the Executive Mayor under political party structures.
- Elected representatives allegedly interfered in administrative matters.

The politics-administration interface within the South African local government should shift the focus from addressing the legacy of apartheid but focus on addressing potential conflicts between politicians and municipal administration to better serve citizens in their locality.

A Diagnostic Report by the National Planning Commission (NPC), (2011:23) revealed that many of the government's best-performing institutions are characterised by the stability of their leadership and policy approach, but the level of political influence over the daily operations of the Public Service often serves to undermine this stability. Government employees are employees of the state and accountable to elected leaders. The report further highlights that the nature of this accountability should be managed in such a way that it does not blur the distinction between political party mandates and professional, non-partisan obligations of bureaucracy. It is critical for government officials to forge a collective professional identity and loyalty to the values of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* rather than any political party. Political leaders such as mayors, members of the executive council, and ministers will often have a short tenure in office before moving on to their next portfolio, but these changes are likely to be less disruptive if the government is able to retain a degree of continuity (NPC, 2011:23).

The report attributes the poor performance of government institutions to a lack of administrative and political stability as the tenure of the political head is often less than five years and this translates to the appointment of the administrative head whose tenure often resembles that of the political head. These constant changes, particularly for administrative heads disrupt administrative stability and often, contributes to poor performance.

2.22 CONCLUSION

The literature that addressed the connection between local government politics and administration was the main subject of the literature review chapter. This information was gathered from a variety of scientific publications, books that have been published, research reports written by different academics, and legislative frameworks that serve as the foundation for local government administration and

politics. To provide services to local populations, the administration and political practices of local government were contextualized.

The study's theoretical framework, the local government's legislative framework, and the politicized local government environment—which frequently results in political meddling in administration and the persistent encroachment of political appointees on administrative space were all covered in detail. A thorough explanation of the politics-administrative dichotomy and the politics-administrative interface in local administration has been given. The chapter provided clarification on the roles and obligations of elected and appointed officials in towns, helping to ensure that officials continue to be held accountable for their actions—or lack thereof—while carrying out their administrative or political tasks. There has been discussion of the following topics: public administration models, political administration relationship models, the contextualization of political involvement, local government administrative reform, and senior management abilities.

To guarantee that the municipality responds to community needs, the various forms of accountability in municipalities which ensure that the actions of politicians and administrators are within the confines of local government prescripts have been discussed. Politicians and administrators should have sound relationships to collaborate towards addressing community challenges. The cadre deployment strategy of the ANC, with how it affects municipal performance and governance, has been clarified, as well as the management of the political-administrative interface for effective service delivery in local government has also been discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of performance management within politics-administrative interface, politics-administration relations, and role distinction in local government, as well as the challenges associated with political interference in administration.

From the aforesaid, local government politics are hugely confined to the municipality as this is the sphere of government that is closely connected to the community and any promise made by the political heads is likely to be delivered by municipalities, hence the constant political interference in municipal administration.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided literature review of the study; therefore, this chapter aims to provide concise information on the research methodology that was used in the study on the effects of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government. Research is defined by Kabir (2016:2) as a scientific approach to answering a research question, solving a problem, or generating new knowledge through a systematic and orderly collection, organisation, and analysis of information with the ultimate goal of making the research useful in decision-making. Kothari (2004:1) on the other hand defines research as a methodical and systematic search for relevant facts on a certain issue, to discover solutions to problems using scientific methods.

The methodologies and research approach that the researcher has employed are covered in this chapter. Additionally covered in this chapter is the study's demographic, study site, sample size and methodology, data gathering strategies, data analysis, and ethical issues.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Research paradigms are defined by Ugwu, Ekere, and Onoh (2021:117) as the researcher's way of thinking, philosophical orientation, or perspective that shapes what should be investigated, how it should be explored, and how the study's conclusions should be evaluated. However, according to Littlejohn and Foss (2010:78), a research paradigm is a set of beliefs that prescribes how things should be done or, in more formal terms, offers a set of tasks. A paradigm, then, is a method, approach, or plan that a researcher employs when carrying out research.

Ugwu *et al* (2021:119) argue that different scholars such as Scotland (2012:10-13), Shah and Al-Bargi (2013:254), and Saunders *et al* (2019:144-151) provided either

three, four or five classifications of research paradigm; these are: Positivism, Post-Positivism, Interpretivism / Constructivism, Critical Theory, and Pragmatism. These classifications are grounded in their own approaches to research and are often applied distinctly; however, the pragmatic paradigm as highlighted by Ugwu *et al* (2021:121), advocates for a mixed methodologies approach, which is a blend of quantitative and qualitative research methods. This research study has followed the pragmatism classification of the research paradigm due to the inclusivity of the approaches.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Akhtar (2016:68), research design is defined as the process of establishing parameters for data collecting and analysis that strike a balance between method, economy, and relevance to the study's goal. According to Huysamen (1996:5), research design is the strategy that outlines how study participants will be recruited and what will be done to them to draw conclusions about the research problem. Additionally, Durrheim (2010:29) defines research design as a strategic structure for engagement that connects research questions to the implementation of research strategy. According to McMillan and Schumacher, study design is a process for selecting study participants, study settings, and data gathering techniques to answer the research question (2010:166). Contextual, exploratory, correlational, and descriptive research designs are among the different types of study designs that are available in the social sciences.

For the purposes of this study, only the descriptive research design is discussed further:

3.3.1 Descriptive Research Design

According to Ansari, Rahim, Bhoje, and Bhasole (2022:1133) descriptive research design aims to obtain information to systematically describe an object, situation, or population. Burns and Grove (2013:201) appear to be in support of the aforesaid statement by highlighting that descriptive research design is a research design that provides a representation of a situation as it genuinely occurs. On the other hand,

the main objective of descriptive research designs, according to Polit and Hungler (2013:72), is to accurately portray the descriptions of people, circumstances, or groups. Since the descriptive research design provides answers to the questions of what, who, where, how, and when, the researcher believed it was the most appropriate for this study and was used. Akhtar (2016:75) goes on to say that current events are studied using the descriptive research design.

3.4 RESEARCH METHOD

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:12), research methodology is the researcher's overarching plan for completing the study. According to Kothari (2004:7), research methods can be broadly defined as any of the approaches or strategies employed in research. Researchers employ these methodologies when conducting research activities (Kothari, 2004:8). As previously said, the pragmatic research paradigm has been employed in this study due to its inclusivity; as a result, a mixed approach has been employed, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

3.4.1 Mixed methods

A mixed-methods approach, as noted by Dawadi, Shrestha, and Giri (2021:27), is a research methodology in and of itself that incorporates philosophical presumptions to offer guidance for the gathering and examination of data from several sources in a single study. Because it is likely to yield more awareness into research phenomena that cannot be fully comprehensible by using either qualitative or quantitative techniques, combining two methodologies may be preferable to utilizing just one (Uman 2011:57). Multiple data sources can be combined and synthesized using a mixed-methods approach, which can help in the research of complex subjects. (Dawadi & colleagues, 2021:27). Since the mixture of quantitative and qualitative methodologies leads to a better perception of research difficulties than either, the mixed method is thought to be the fundamental tenet.

The study used both the quantitative and qualitative methods and the complementarity approach was used in employing the mixed methods.

Complementarity approach according to Uman (2011:57) refers to ways in which two different methods to conducting a research synthesis can provide a more complete unified explanation of a phenomenon than either single approach. According to Roomaney and Coetzee (2018:4) complementarity approach is useful when the results of direct observations or interviews are used to complement the findings of a survey. The complementarity approach has shed more light on the effects that political interference has on the performance of senior managers in the Greater Giyani Municipality because it allowed for a more detailed analysis of data collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods.

3.4.2 Quantitative method

Bryman (2012:35) defines quantitative research as an approach to study that accentuates quantification in the gathering and interpretation of data. Additionally, it approaches the relationship between theory and research inferentially, emphasizing theory testing. Research methodology, according to Apuke (2017:41), is the comprehensive process a researcher does while starting a project. In order to respond to inquiries like who, what, where, and how, statistical data must be gathered and analysed using specialized statistical techniques.

According to Bryman (2012:36), quantitative research has combined the methods and traditions of positivism, a natural scientific worldview that views social reality as an objective, external reality. According to Kumar (2014:14), the quantitative research technique was born out of the rationalism worldview and uses a specific set of techniques to measure the degree of variation in events. Furthermore, according to Mouton (1983:128), the objective of quantitative research is the same as that of analytical research: to arrive at a general conclusion.

3.4.3 Qualitative method

According to Bryman (2012:36), qualitative research emphasizes an inductive approach to the relationship between research and theory, where the focus is on the development of theories, and places greater emphasis on language than on quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Creswell (2014:4) defines

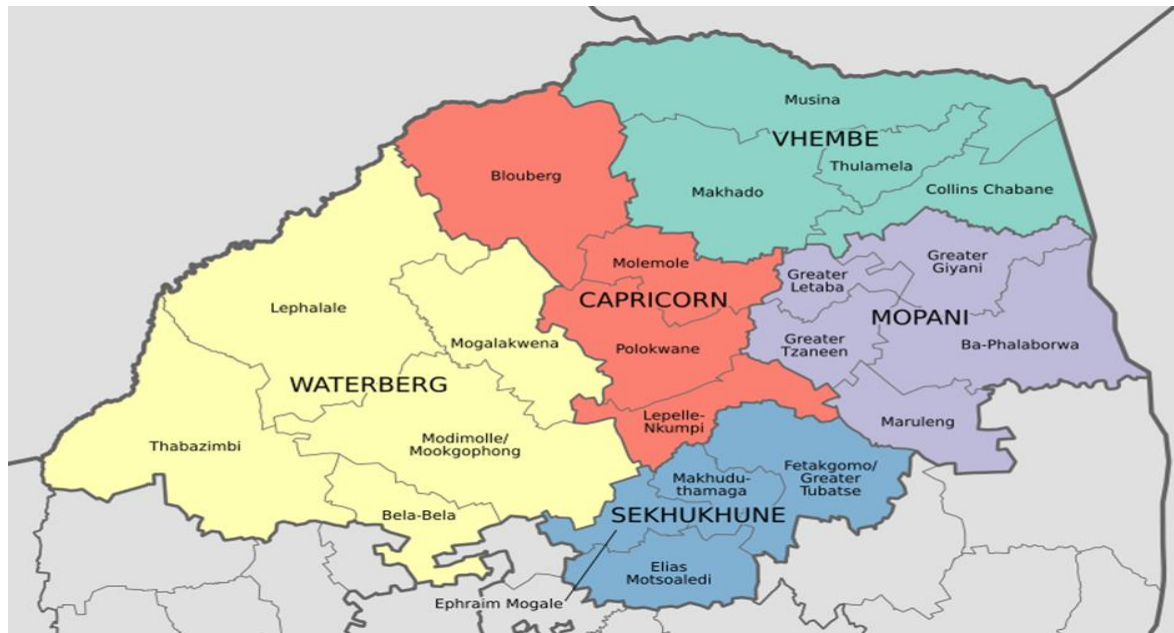
qualitative research as a technique for identifying and understanding the meaning that people or groups ascribe to a social or human issue.

Inductively developing from specific to general themes, establishing questions and procedures, gathering data in the participant's surroundings, and evaluating the findings' applicability are all part of this study (Creswell, 2014:4). Additionally, qualitative research is defined by Akyildiz and Ahmed (2021:6) as a study that produces descriptive data, usually from people's spoken or written words. Phenomenology is the central theme of qualitative research, and the pragmatic starting point is the actor's perspective. It is centred on people's actual experiences. Creswell (2014:14) went on to list the following traits of a qualitative approach: audio-visual data, data observation, data from interviews, open-ended questions, new techniques, and document data.

3.5 STUDY AREA

The Greater Giyani Municipality is where the study will be carried out. In the province of Limpopo, the Mopani District Municipality is made up of five (5) local municipalities, including the Greater Giyani Municipality. The Municipality is located +/- 185km from Polokwane, +/-100km from Thohoyandou and +/- 550km from Tshwane. The Municipality covers approximately 2967, 27km² areas with only one semi-urban area being Giyani. The Municipality is demarcated into 31 wards and has 62 councillors. It has 12 traditional authority areas comprising of +97 villages. Giyani town is the largest centre of population concentration, employment opportunities, shopping, and recreational facilities (Mopani District Municipality: Integrated Development Plan Review, 2020/ 2021: 01).

Figure 3.5 Map of Limpopo Province with shaded districts and named municipalities.



(Source: Mopani District Municipality: Integrated Development Plan Review, 2020/ 2021: 01)

3.6 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population, which comprises organizations, groups, persons, events, human products, and the circumstances to which they are subjected, is the study object, claim Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2005:52). According to Pretorius (2017:16), a population is the whole of events from which a sample is drawn; it is a group of possible participants to whom the researcher hopes to extrapolate the findings of the study. Furthermore, Robbins (2009:84) is of the view that population is the group of interest to which the study's findings will be generalised. The Greater Giyani Local Municipality has a total population of about 256 300 with a total number of 70 537 households and 31 wards. The population of the study has therefore been drawn from that of the Greater Giyani Local Municipality.

3.7 SAMPLING

Casteel and Bridier (2021:339) defines sampling as a process of selecting participants for a research project while a sample is a portion of the elements in a population. Robbins (2009:84) defines a sample as a representative subset of the

population's units, whereas sampling is the process of selecting items from the sampling frame. The practice of selecting a sample from a big population or an individual for a particular research goal is known as sampling (Bhardwaj, 2019:158). Participants who work for the Greater Giyani Municipality, ward council members, community members, and traditional leaders within the Municipality made up the sample.

3.8 SAMPLING METHOD

A non-probability sampling method which Young (2016:172) classifies as being used by most students at the postgraduate level has been used in this study. Kim (2022:617) defines non-probability sampling as a sampling, not a probability sampling which occurs if either the sample is not selected randomly, or the inclusion probability of unit is unknown even under random sampling; examples of which are quota sampling, judgment sampling, and volunteer sampling. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has used two forms of non-probability sampling: namely purposive sampling and snowball sampling.

Young (2016:173) contends that snowball sampling is where a researcher contacts a small number of people who are in the interest group for the project in the first instance. As well as surveying this initial group, the researcher also uses them as a source for other participants, by, perhaps, asking these respondents to supply the researcher with friends' contact details, or asking them to encourage their friends to complete the survey. It does, however, share the advantage of being a quick, cheap, and convenient way of accessing participants, and given the nature of most student research, this is of vital importance.

Purposive sampling is the process of selecting participants based on the researcher's evaluation of which ones will be most representative of the greater population (Babbie, 2010:179). Johnson and Clark (2010:109) argue that purposeful sampling is a strategy in which settings, individuals, or events are deliberately selected to offer crucial information that cannot be obtained through other means. Purposive sampling was also used in this investigation.

3.9 SAMPLING SIZE

The study's sample size consisted of 80 respondents, who were categorized as follows: One municipal manager, five managers, one spokesperson, six traditional leaders, fifteen municipal employees from various units, fifteen ward council members, and thirty-seven community members.

3.10 DATA COLLECTION

According to Kabir (2016:202), data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest using a recognized systematic technique in order to answer research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate results. According to Taderhoost (2021:10), data collection is the process of obtaining information in order to learn more about the research. Therefore, the process of gathering information in order to create an opinion on a certain topic can be regarded as data collection. Interviews and questionnaires have been used to gather data for this project.

According to Taderhoost (2021:14) a questionnaire is one of the common instruments for collecting information. It is therefore a form or instrument with a set of questions that require secure answers that respondents from a specific population fill to give the researcher information needed for the study. Roopa and Rani (2012:273) define a questionnaire as the means of collecting quantitative primary data and it enables quantitative data to be collected in a standardized way so that the data is internally consistent and coherent for analysis. A questionnaire consisting of the Five Likert scale which comprises of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree, and Strongly Agree has been used in this research.

Fox (2009:4) points out that interviews are an important data-gathering technique which involves oral communication between the researcher and the participant. They are generally used in survey designs and in exploratory and descriptive studies. Rubin (2011:65) defines an interview as an organised strategy to talking and listening to people, as well as another method of getting data from individuals via

discussions. This study included open-ended interview questions to allow participants to provide descriptive comments.

3.11 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis process can be seen as a series of processes that lead from planning to data collecting to well-informed conclusions based on the data that is obtained, as Peck, Olsen, and Devore (2008:8) point out. Data analysis is the scientific process of characterizing, illustrating, summarizing, recapitulating, and assessing data using statistical and logical approaches, according to Kantardzic (2011:15). For the quantitative data in this study, statistical analysis has been used, and for the qualitative data, thematic analysis.

According to Stevens (2012:145), statistical analysis is a tool used to identify whether differences seen between sets being researched are real or just coincidental. Data collected through questionnaires was analysed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.0.1 as it is believed to be the most powerful tool used in the analysis of biographical data of respondents.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research analysis technique that researchers employ to methodically arrange and examine large, complicated data sets, claims Dawadi (2020:62). Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2012:57), is a scientific technique for identifying, organizing, and shedding light on meaningful patterns (themes) in a collection of data. The six-phase technique to thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2012:60–69), was used in this study to analyse data obtained through interviews.

- **Phase 1: Familiarizing yourself with the data**

This phase requires the researcher's interest in familiarising themselves with the data. It involves immersing yourself in the data by reading and reviewing textual data (transcripts of interviews and responses to qualitative surveys). In this phase, note-taking as data is being read is essential to ensure that reading the words is done actively, analytically, and critically, and starting to think about the meaning of the data.

- **Phase 2: Generating initial codes**

Phase 2 begins the systematic analysis of data using coding. Codes identify and label a property of the data that may be important to the research question. Codes can also go beyond the participants' meanings to provide an understanding of the data content. This stage concludes when the data has been completely coded and the information related to each code has been organised.

- **Phase 3: Searching for themes**

The attention moves from codes to themes during this phase, which is when the analysis starts to take shape. A theme encapsulates a significant aspect of the data pertaining to the research topic and denotes a degree of recurring response or significance in the dataset. Rereading the coded data is part of this phase in order to find coding overlap and similarity.

- **Phase 4: Reviewing potential themes**

This step entails a recursive process in which the emerging themes are evaluated in connection to the coded data and the overall data set. In this stage, quality checking is crucial. Themes are checked against the organised extracts of data to discover whether the theme works in relation to the data.

- **Phase 5: Defining and naming themes**

This phase entails the extensive analytic labour required for thematic analysis at the fine-grained level. This step also includes picking samples to show and analyse, as well as organising the tale of each subject around these extracts. This is the stage where themes are named and such names should be informative, concise, and catchy.

- **Phase 6: Producing the report**

The final phase of the analysis is to write down the report of the findings. The report of a thematic analysis must convince the readers of the merit and validity of the analysis. The purpose of the report is to provide a convincing story about the data based on the analysis.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Akaranga and Makau (2016:1) ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the conduct of people and guides the norms or standards of behaviour of people and relationships with each other. Creswell (2014:198) believes that the researcher has a responsibility to respect the informants' rights, values, and interests. Ethics according to Robbins (2009:39) is a system of moral principles recognized by particular groups or individuals. Below are the ethical concerns of this study that has been adhered to:

3.12.1 Informed Consent

Rani and Sharma (2012:46) are of the opinion that informed consent means that participants have adequate information regarding the research and have the power of free choice, enabling them to consent to or decline participation voluntarily. In this study, participants were informed in detail of the research in question and the importance thereof, their role in the study as well as the rationale for the research topic so that they are well informed of the study they are consenting to be part of.

3.12.2 Voluntary Participation

Hart (2013:187) defines voluntary participation as a human study participant using their own free will to choose whether or not to take part in a research activity. Participants were made aware that their involvement in the study is completely voluntary and that they are free to leave at any time if they so choose.

3.12.3 Anonymity, Confidentiality, and Privacy

Akaranga and Makau (2016:9) indicate that anonymity means not identifying respondents' racial or cultural backgrounds, not referring to them by their names, or revealing any other sensitive data about a participant. The researcher must agree to keep the information provided by the respondent confidential.

3.12.4 Avoidance of harm

The researcher ensured that the participants are not in a position where they are exposed to harm due to their participation in the study. Through strict adherence to

the aforementioned ethical considerations, participants' possibilities of being exposed to harm were non-existent.

3.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the research design used in the study, providing a comprehensive approach to the subject matter. The descriptive research design was chosen by the researcher to be used in this investigation. The researcher also mentioned that the pragmatism research paradigm was thought to be inclusive and suitable for a mixed methods research methodology that includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. The sensitivity of the research topic was taken into consideration when choosing these methodologies, and a detailed explanation of them was given.

The Greater Giyani Local Municipality serves as the study area, which is further provided in this chapter. The Greater Giyani Local Municipality employees, traditional leaders, ward council members, and community representatives are also included in the study's population, sampling, sampling technique, and sampling size. These individuals would have been purposefully sampled because of their familiarity with the research topic. Questionnaires and interview questions are also recognized as the data collection methods employed in this study. The chapter ends by outlining the ethical guidelines followed during the investigation and offers further data analysis methods.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides data on the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government: a case of the Greater Giyani Local Municipality. Data on the effect of political meddling were gathered using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The researcher gathered information using questionnaires and an interview schedule. The replies to the questionnaire items are shown as pie charts with numbers and percentages, followed by a brief summary of the findings. In contrast, responses to the interview schedule are provided narratively, followed by a brief explanation of the findings.

4.2 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH QUESTIONNAIRE

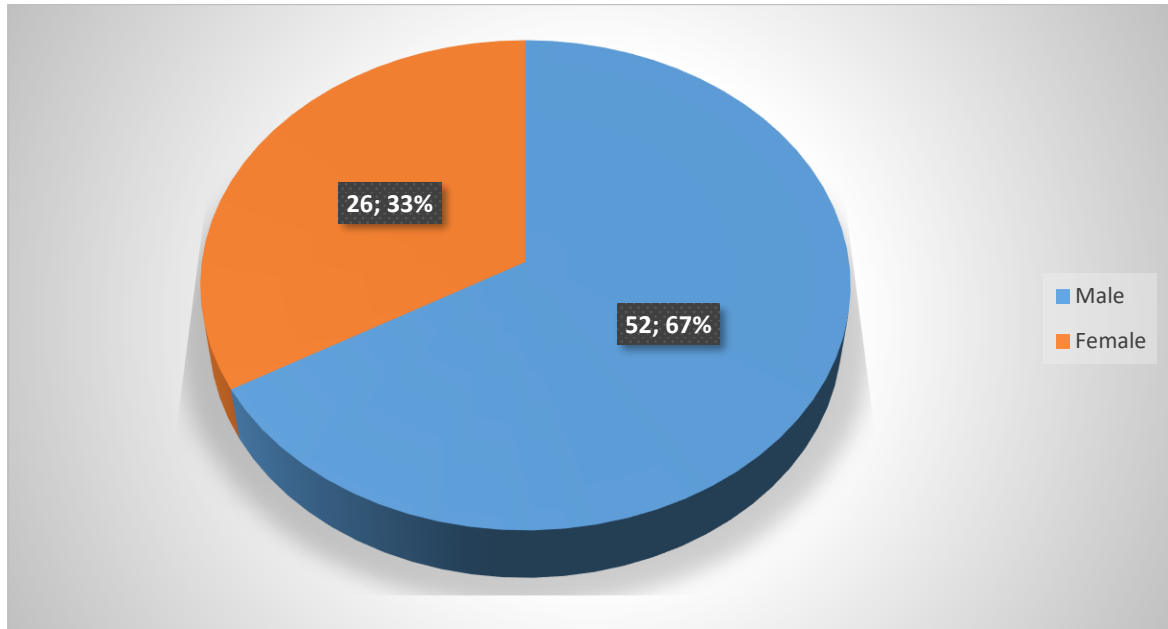
This section presents, analyses, and interprets data amassed through questionnaires and is comprised of two parts, which are: part A and B. Part A of the section presents the demographic information of the respondents. In the second part, the researcher presents data acquired from the questionnaire items delivered and gathered from respondents. The sample for the study was 80 respondents, however, 2 of the questionnaires were not returned which led to a total sampling of 78 respondents. From the 78 respondents, 63 completed the questionnaires and 15 completed the interview schedule. As expected, the respondents took long to complete the questionnaire, nevertheless patience was exercised by the researcher until all surveys are returned. The researcher presented data using pie charts with numbers and percentages. Each pie chart is accompanied by a brief explanation of the findings.

4.2.1 Part A: Demographic information of the respondents

Part A consists of questions designed to determine the demographic information of the respondents. This information is crucial to the study's ability to identify the types

of respondents based on their gender, age, category or position, and level of qualification.

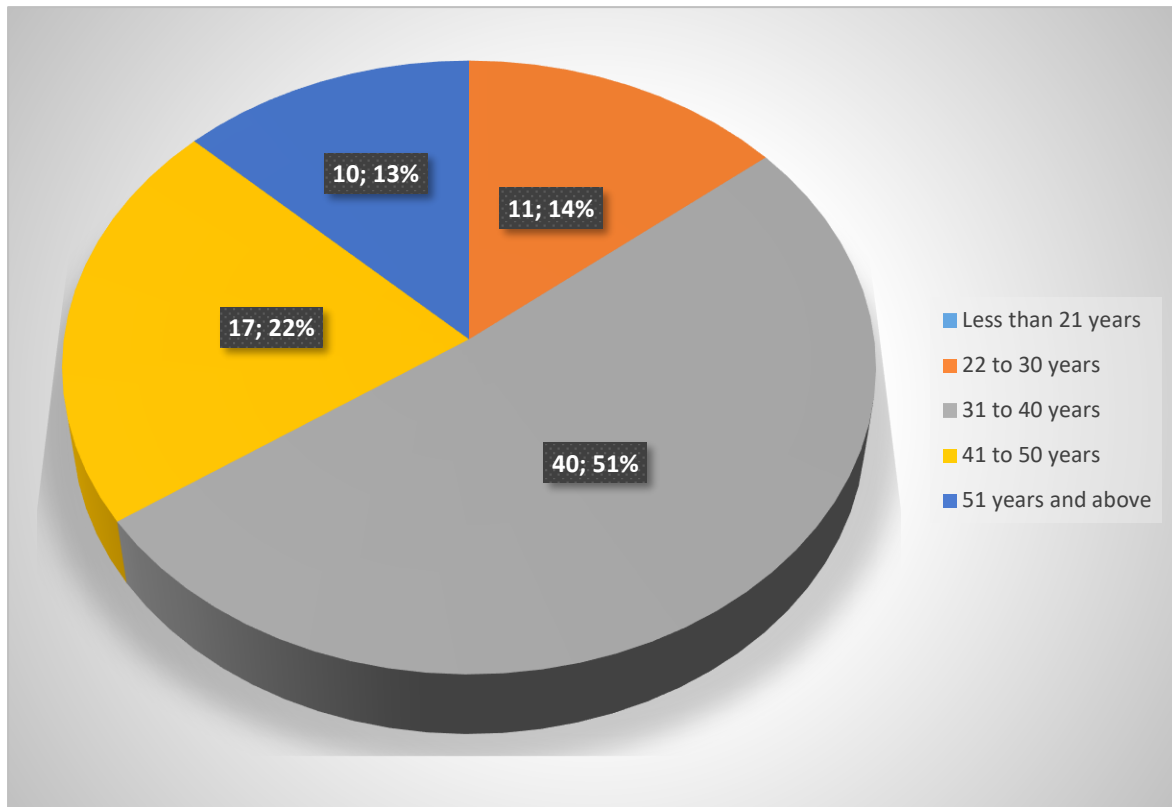
Figure 4.2 Gender of the respondents



Source: Researcher's analysis

The above pie chart indicates the respondents' biographical data in relation to gender. The gender formulation consisted of 78 participants of which 26 (33%) were females and 52 (67%) were males. This indicates that even after 30 years of a democratic system, South African municipalities are still faced with the challenge of gender inequality. This is also supported by the high percentage of men that participated in this study while women were in the minority.

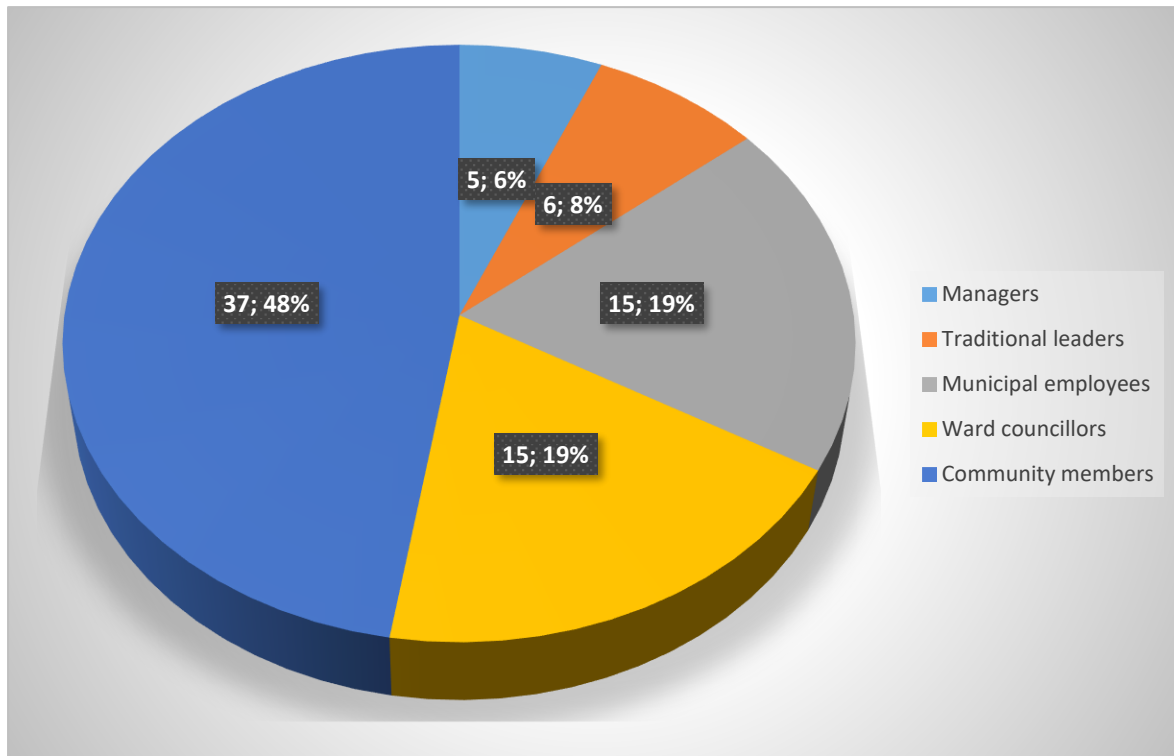
Figure 4.2: Age of the respondents



Source: Researcher's analysis

The pie chart above depicts the age of the respondents who participated in this research. It was found that there were no respondents less than the age of 21, while 11 (14%) of the respondents were aged between 22 – 30 years, 40 (51%) which is the median age comprised of ages between 31 - 40 years, while 17 (22 %) is built up with ages between 41 - 50 years, and lastly 10 (13%) comprises of participants between 51 years and above. This implies that the municipality's age group is highly populated by young adults between 31 - 40-year-olds. It can be concluded that in this study participation of young adults was higher than that of adults and older adults. This could be prompted by the fact that young people are more active in politics and also hold prominent positions in different organisations.

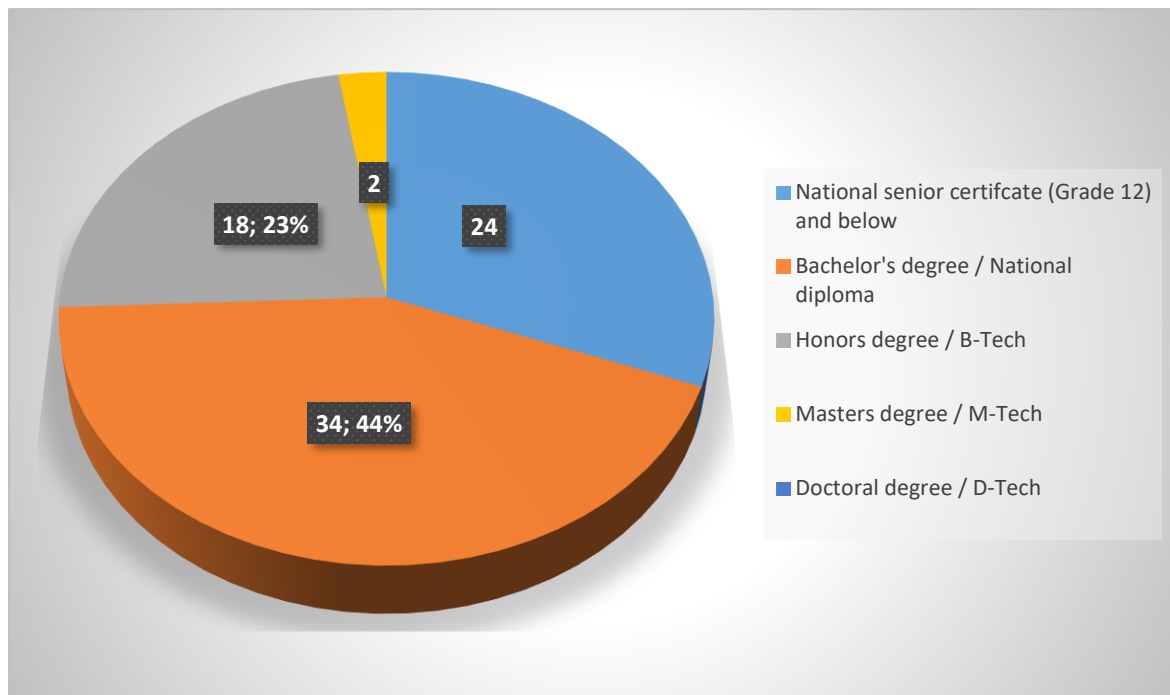
Figure 4.3: Category of the respondents



Source: Researcher's analysis

The category of respondents as depicted by the pie chart above indicates a total of 78 respondents, 37 (48%) of whom are community members that participated in this research, followed by 15 (19%) municipal employees and 15 (19%) ward councillors, while traditional leaders were 6 (8%) and 5 (6%) senior managers. This portrays that community members who partook in the research are in the majority and followed by municipal employees and ward councillors respectively. Traditional leaders and senior managers were the least of the respondents.

Figure 4.4: Qualification of the respondents



Source: Researcher's analysis

The above pie chart shows the level of qualification of the respondents with those having a National Senior Certificate (NSC) at 24 (30%). Those who hold a bachelor's degree or national diploma were in the majority with 34 (44%), followed by the respondents who hold the honours degree or B-Tech degree at 18 (23%) and Masters or M-Tech degree holders at 2 (3%). No respondents with a PhD or D-Tech degree participated in this study. From those described above, it can be concluded that most of the Greater Giyani Local Municipality officials and community members hold a bachelor's degree or national diploma and the National Senior Certificate as the highest level of qualification or education.

4.2.2 Part B: The effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government

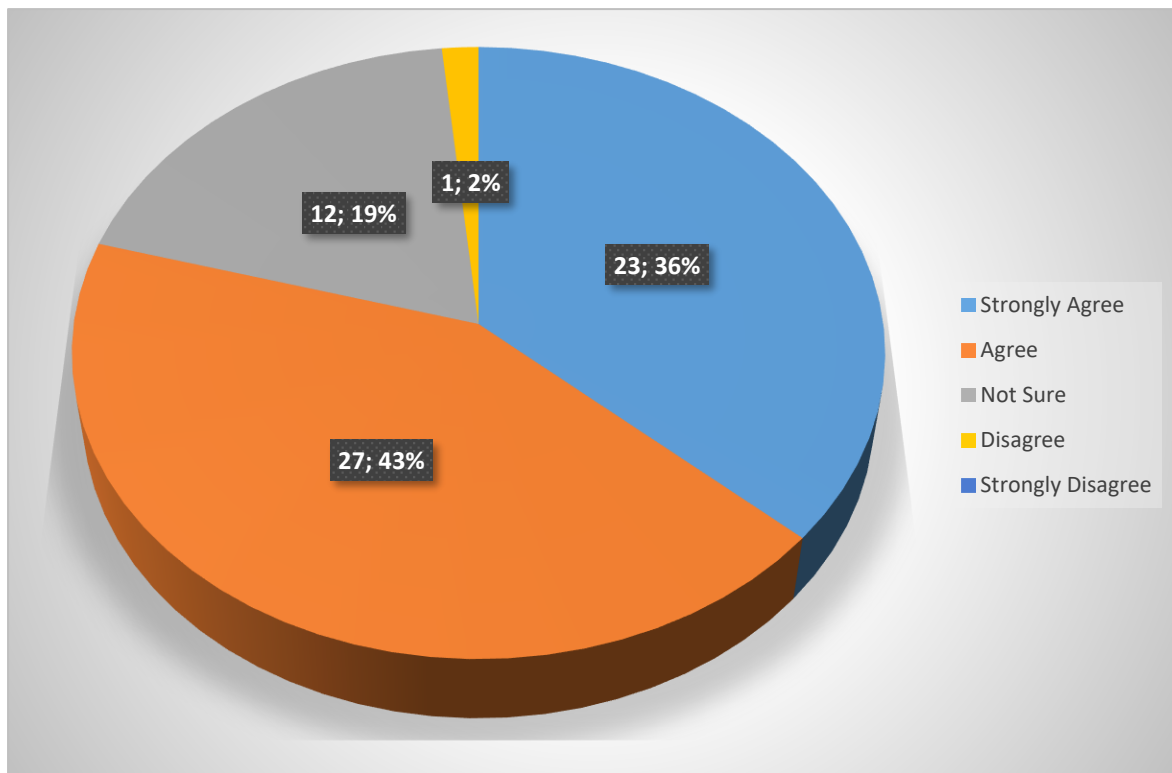
In this part, participants data is presented, analysed, and interpreted using a pie chart format derived from questionnaire items. The segment will be divided into four units which cover the research questions under investigation, and these are: the status of political interference in the Municipality; challenges experienced by managers in the performance of their functions because of political interference; the

effects of the challenges on the performance of managers within the Municipality; and the strategies to enhance management performance amidst political interference.

4.2.1.1 The status of political interference in the Municipality

The first unit presents data concerning the status of political interference in the Municipality. The data is presented in pie charts followed by a concise interpretation of the findings.

Figure 4.5: The awareness of the political and administrative functionality in the Municipality

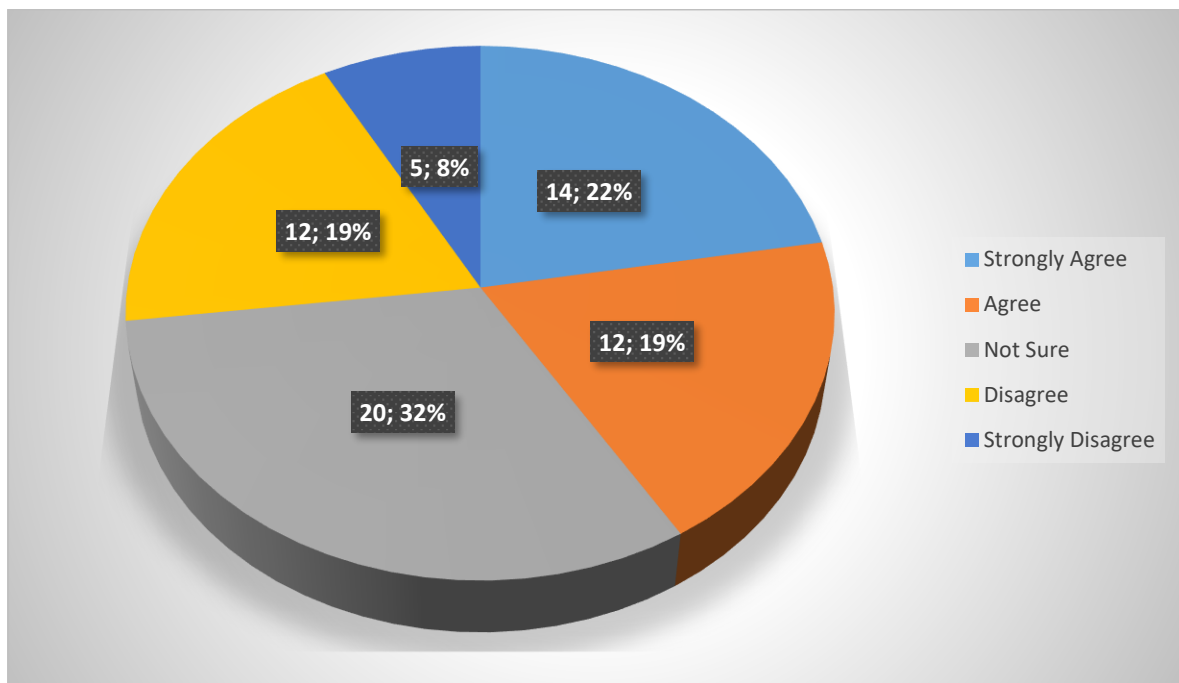


Source: Researcher's analysis

The respondents were enquired of their knowledge of administrative and political functionality in the Municipality. The pie chart above indicates the level of awareness of administrative and political functionality in the Municipality. The pie chart shows that 23 (36%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement and confirmed their awareness of political and administrative functionality in the Municipality, most

of the respondents at 27 (43%) agreed, while 12 (19%) were not sure, and 01 (2%) disagreed with the statement. None of the respondents strongly disagreed. A conclusion can be drawn from the above that most respondents were aware of political and administrative functionality in the Municipality which confirms that they were the correct sample for the study. The Municipality should continue to implement programmes that enlighten the community about the functioning of the Municipality.

Figure 4.6: The current political leadership and administration have established a fully functional governance system that leaves no room for political interference in administration.

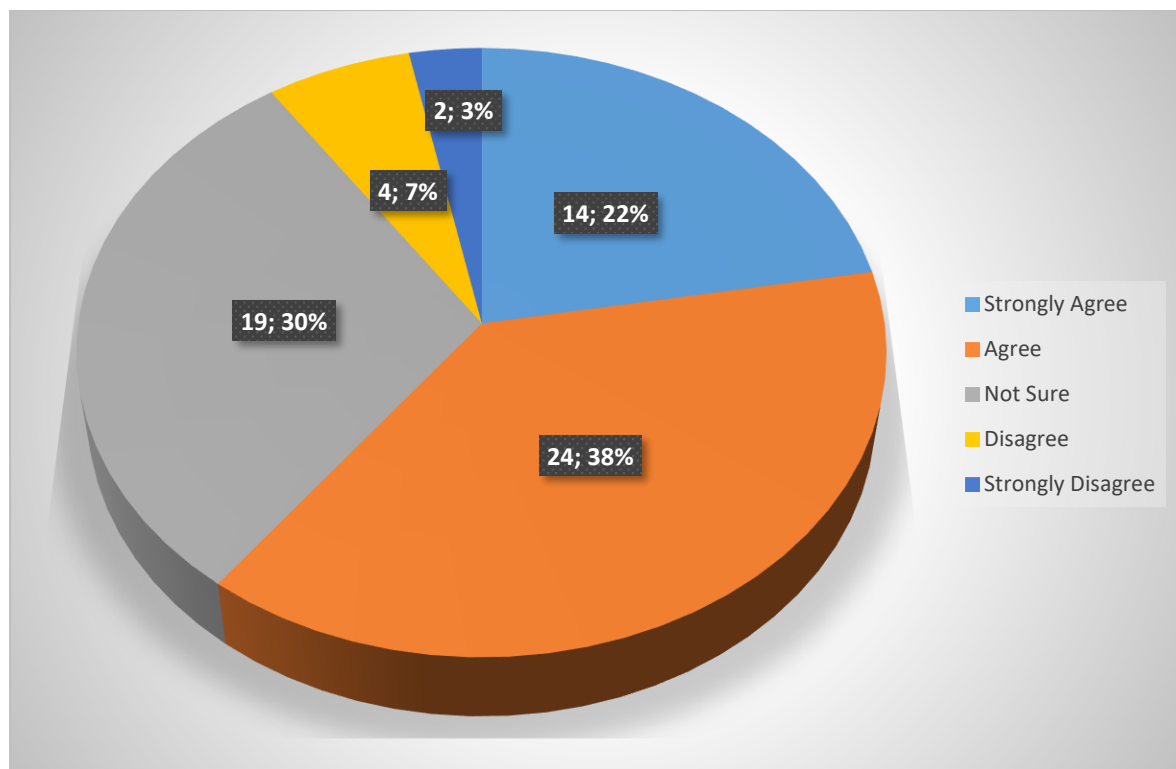


Source: Researcher's analysis

The participants were probed if the current political leadership and administration built a completely effective governance system that leaves no room for political interference in administration. The above pie chart indicates that 14 (22%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, and 12 (19%) agreed, while the majority of the respondents at 20 (32%) were not sure. However, 12 (19 %) of the respondents disagreed and 5 (8%) strongly disagreed that the Municipality has a governance system that ensures that there is no room for political-administrative interference. It can be concluded that the Municipality has a governance system in

place to deal with or curb inappropriate political-administrative interference, however, the system needs to be strengthened to ensure that the relationship between politicians and administrators runs smoothly for the benefit of the Municipality.

Figure 4.7: There are proper political and administrative relations in the Municipality which enhance the performance of managers.

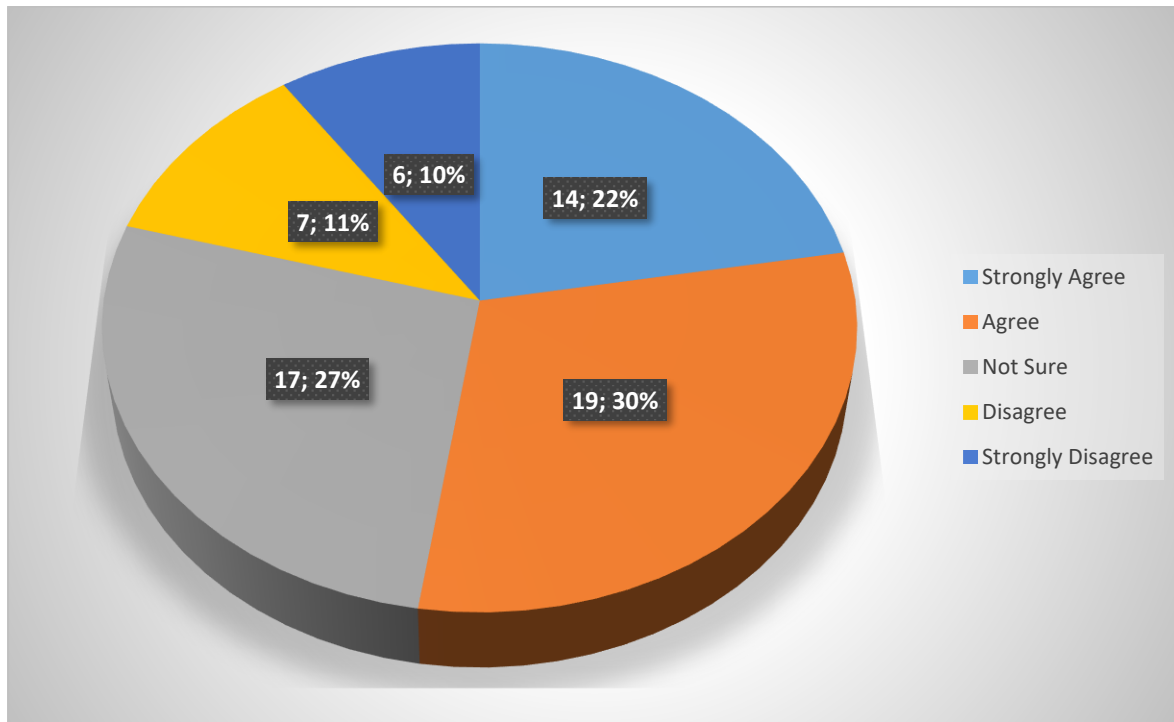


Source: Researcher's analysis

Investigations were conducted on the respondents' opinions regarding whether the Municipality's political and administrative relationships improve senior managers' performance. According to the data, 14 respondents, or 22% of the total, strongly agreed with the statement. Of the respondents, 24 (38%) believed that the relationships between administrators and politicians improve senior managers' performance, while 19 (30%) were not sure. Four respondents (7%) disagreed, while two respondents (3%) disagreed vehemently. Therefore, the relationship between the Municipality's administrators and politicians fosters management effectiveness and helps ensure that local residents receive services in an efficient manner. This implies that positive relationships between administrators and

politicians lead to improved collaboration for the benefit of the communities they serve.

Figure 4.8: There is a clear separation between political and administrative roles in the Municipality

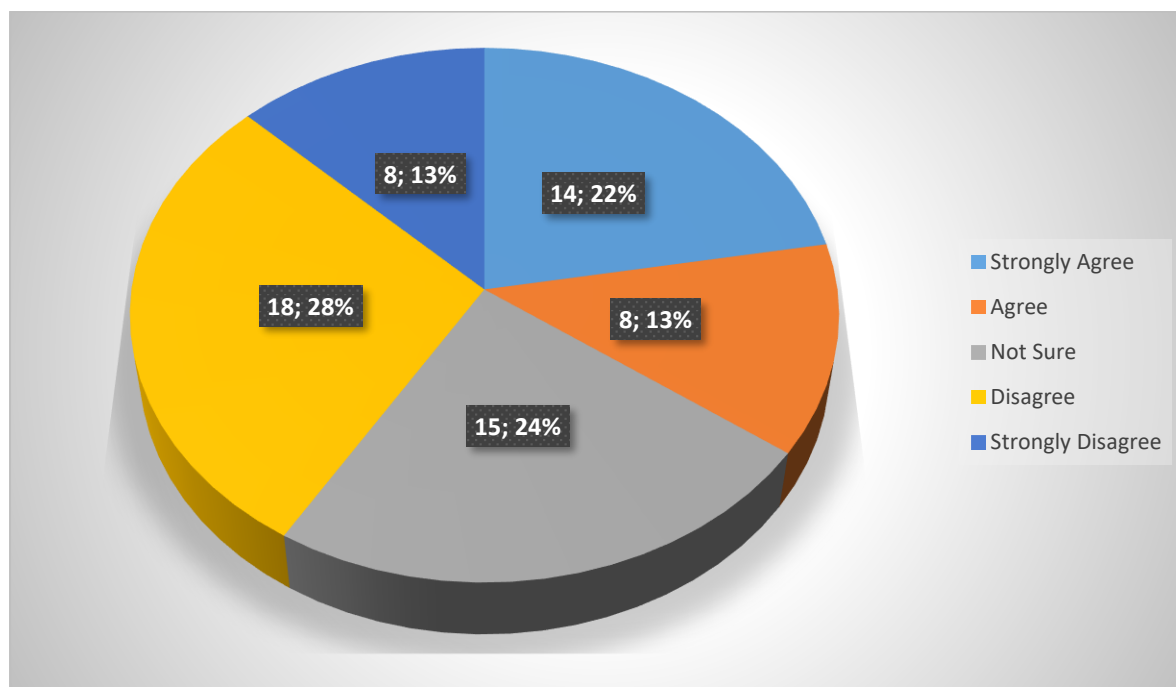


Source: Researcher's analysis

The respondents were questioned about how they perceived and understood the distinction between the Municipality's political and administrative functions. According to data, many respondents at 19 (30%) agreed that there is a clear distinction between political and administrative functions in the Municipality, while 14 (22%) strongly agreed. Seven respondents (11%) disagreed with the statement, six respondents (10%) strongly disagreed, and seventeen respondents (27%) were not sure, according to the pie chart. The majority of respondents concurred that the Municipality's political and administrative functions are clearly distinct from one another. This shows that there are control systems in place to guard against political interference through role distinction between political and administrative officials. This is further endorsed by *Section 55 and Schedule 1 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* as well as *Section 52 and Section 61 of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56*

of 2003) which provides for the functions and responsibilities of appointed and elected municipal officials.

Figure 4.9: Administrative appointments are purely based on merit and not political affiliations.



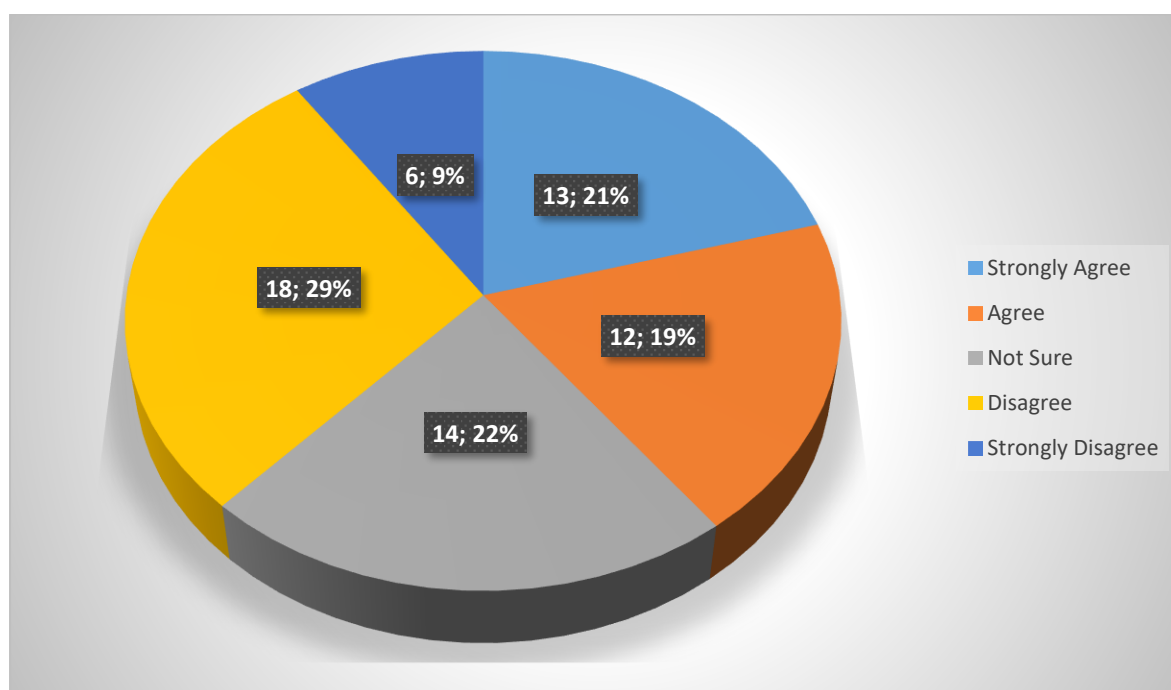
Source: Researcher's analysis

The respondents' opinions regarding whether administrative appointments in the Municipality are made solely based on merit and not political affiliations are represented in the pie chart above. According to Figure 4.9, 8 (13%) agreed and 14 (22%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while 15 (24%) were unsure. Eight respondents (13%) strongly disagreed with the statement, whereas most respondents at 18 (28%) disagreed. Thus, it is feasible to conclude that most respondents do not think administrative appointments are made solely based on merit rather than politics. This implies that the Municipality's personnel should reflect the demographics of the entire community, irrespective of political party affiliation.

4.2.1.2 Challenges experienced by senior managers on the performance of their functions because of political interference.

The second unit seeks to understand the challenges that senior managers face while performing their functions because of political interference. Data is presented in pie charts which is followed by a brief interpretation.

Figure 4.10: Political appointments have no bearing on the programs and functioning of the Municipality.

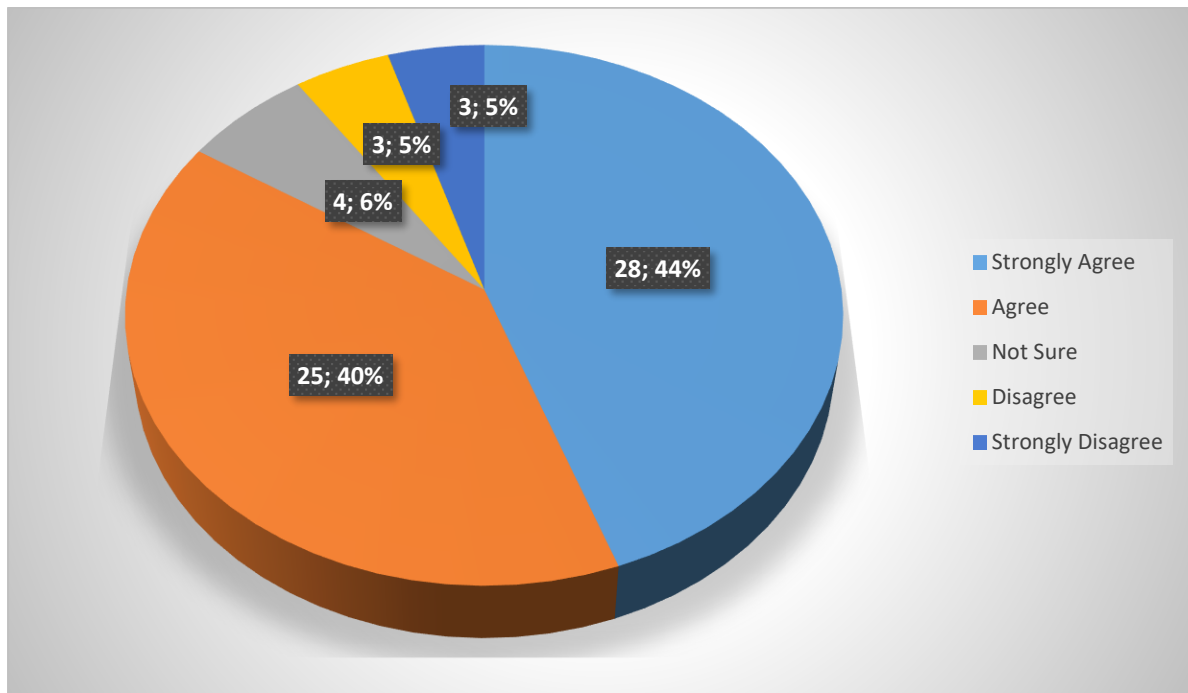


Source: Researcher's analysis

The respondents were asked to state their views on whether political appointments have no influence on the programs and functioning of the Municipality. The above pie chart shows that 13 (21%) of the respondents strongly agreed, and 12 (19%) agreed that political appointments have no bearing on the programs and functioning of the Municipality, while 14 (22%) of the respondents were not sure. Most of the respondents at 18 (29%) disagreed, and 6 (9%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Statistics reveal that the majority of respondents agreed that political appointments have no bearing on the programs and functioning of the Municipality. This suggests that the Municipality has systems in place to ensure continuity of municipal programs even with new political appointments. This has the potential to

strengthen the community's trust in the Municipality to provide services. However, consideration should also be given to respondents who disagreed with tightening handover processes for a smooth transition.

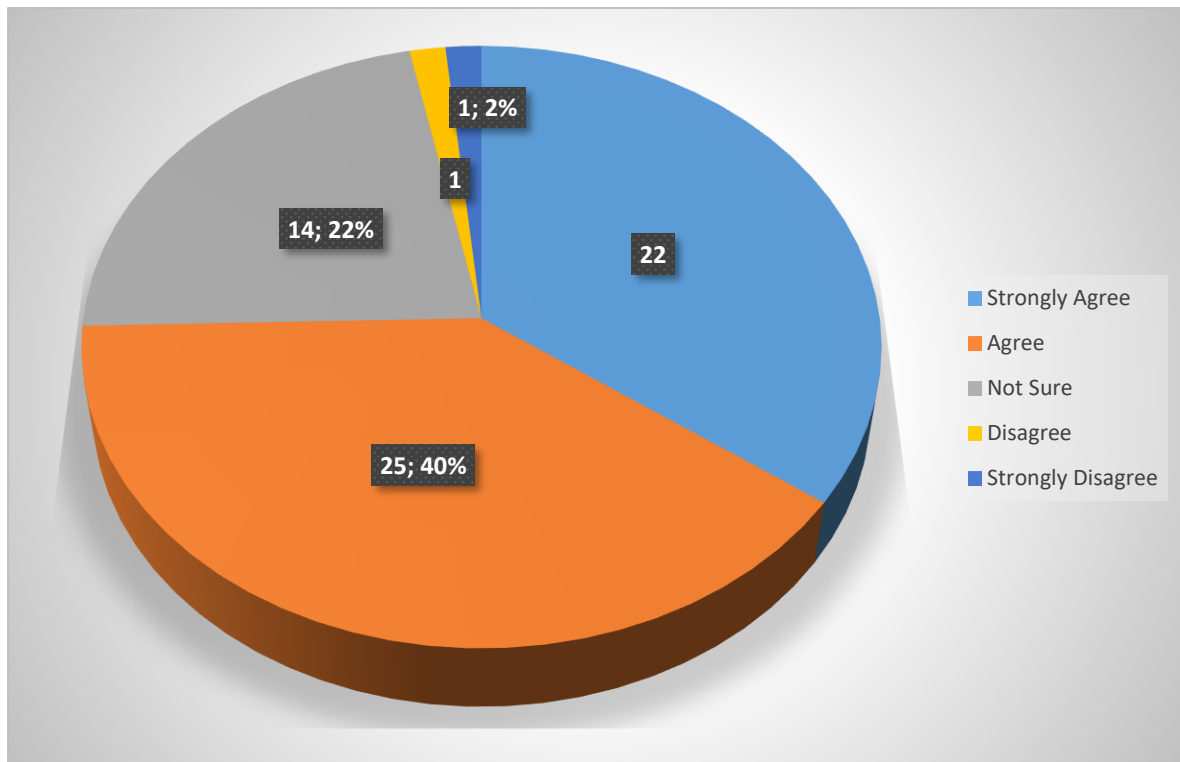
Figure 4.11: Political interference disrupts the normal functioning of the Municipality.



Source: Researcher's analysis

The aforementioned pie chart shows that a large percentage of respondents 28, or 44% strongly agreed and 25 (or 40%) agreed that political meddling interferes with the Municipality's ability to operate normally. Conversely, 4 (6%) expressed uncertainty, 3 (5%) disagreed, and 3 (5%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Therefore, the majority of respondents (53,84%) felt that political intervention interferes with the Municipality's ability to operate normally. This means that for the Municipality to function optimally, undue political interference should be addressed properly in line with the functions and responsibilities of political officials as provided for in *section 52 of the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003)*. Therefore, the absence of undue political interference in the Municipality promotes the normal functioning of the Municipality in the delivery of basic services to the local communities.

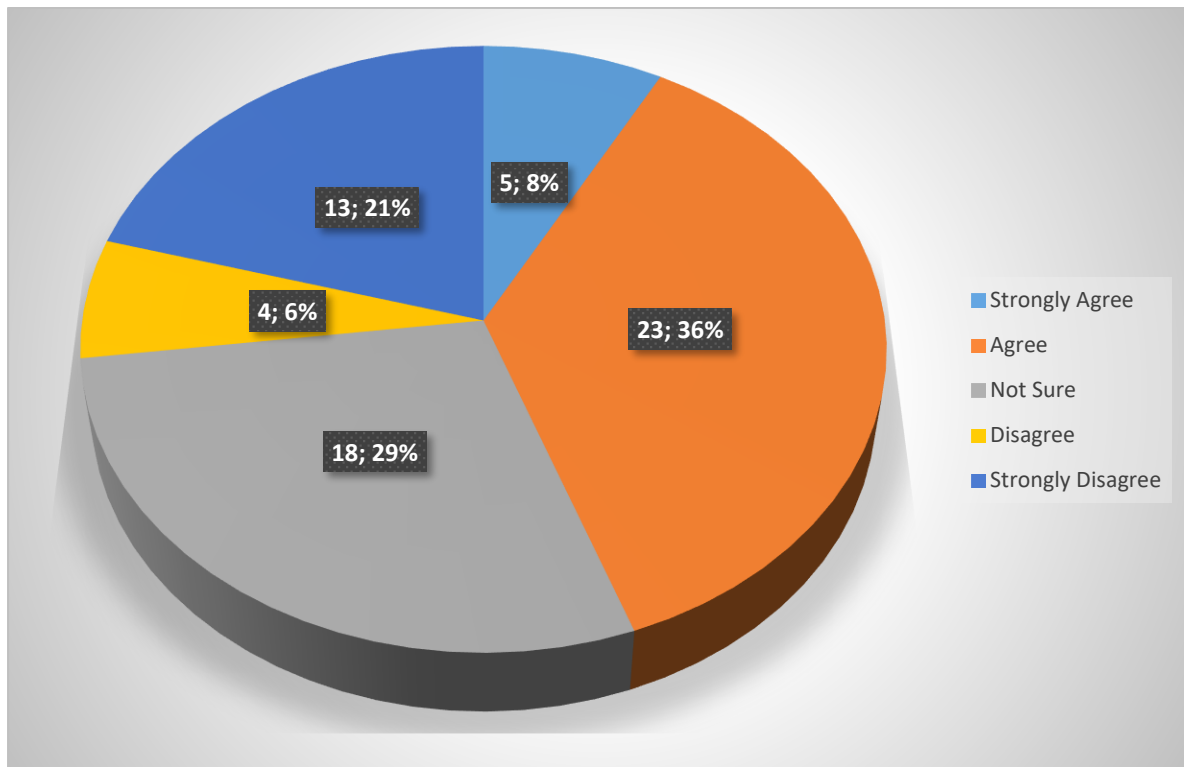
Figure 4.12: The separation of roles between politicians and managers are designed to enhance the performance of managers.



Source: Researcher's analysis

Regarding the claim that managers' performance is intended to be improved by the division of responsibilities between politicians and managers, the pie chart indicates that 22 (34%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 25 (40%) agreed and 14 (22%) were unsure. One (2%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. It is safe to presume that a large number of respondents concurred that the Municipality's management performance is intended to be improved by the division of responsibilities between managers and politicians. This highlights the necessity of comprehending and maintaining the two role participants' well-defined positions.

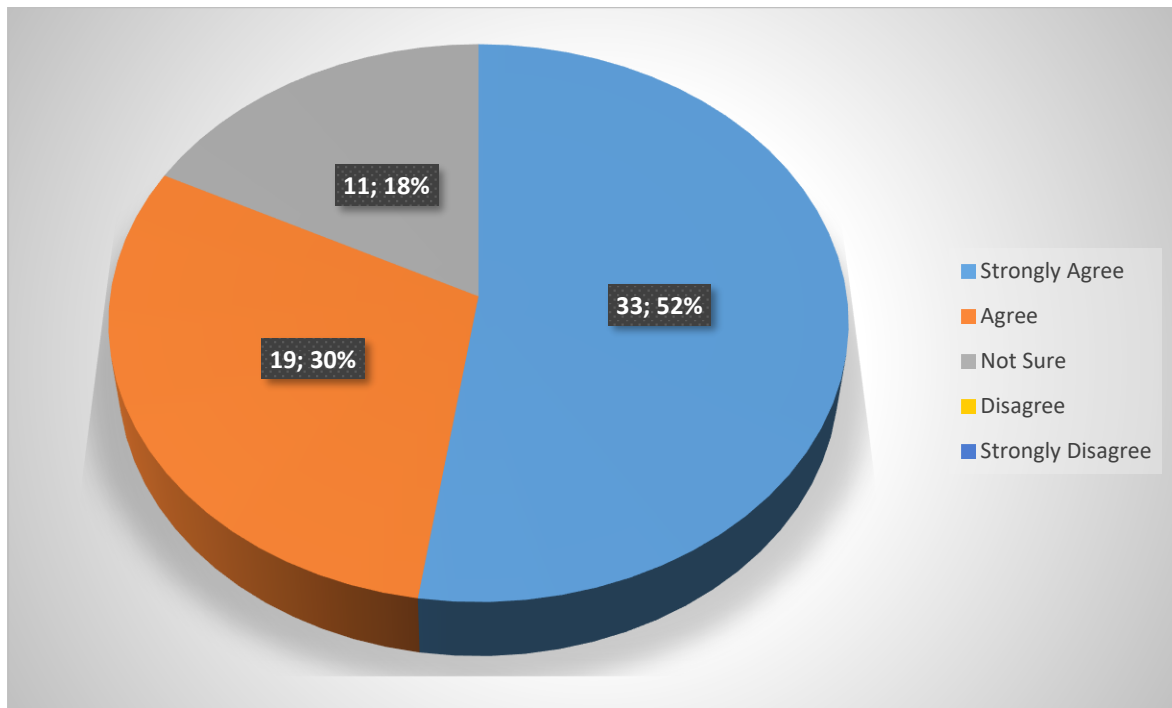
Figure 4.13: There is an overlap of roles between politicians and administration in the Municipality.



Source: Researcher's analysis

Five respondents, (8%) strongly agreed that the functions of politicians and administrators in the municipality overlap, as seen in the pie chart above, whereas the majority of respondents (23, or 36%) agreed. 18 (29%) were unsure, 4 (6%) disagreed, and 13 (21%) strongly disagreed with the statement, according to the pie chart. Most respondents, it appears, believe that there is a thin border between political and administrative responsibilities, which results in excessive political meddling. Given the overlap in responsibilities between politicians and administrators, the data gathered depicts an administration that frequently faces political meddling.

Figure 4.14: Political interference is centered around individual enrichment rather than community enrichment.



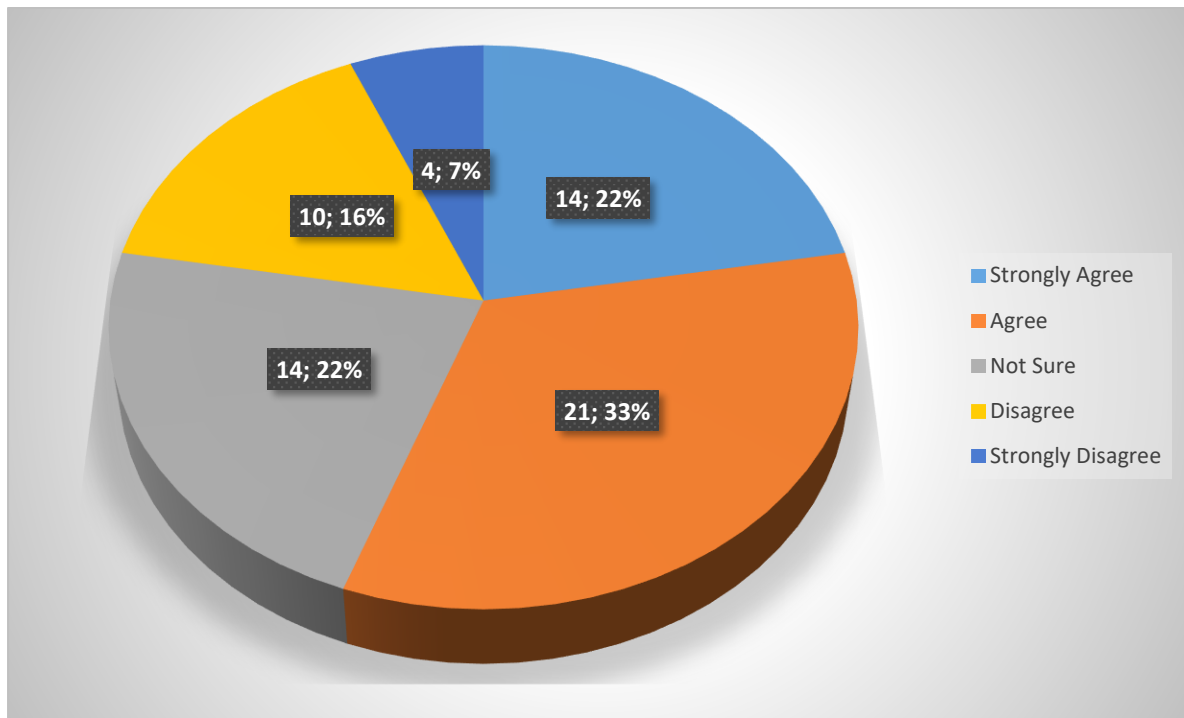
Source: Researcher's analysis

The respondents were enquired about whether political interference is centred around individual enrichment rather than community enrichment. Most of the respondents at 33 (52%) strongly agreed, and 19 (30%) agreed with the statement, whereas 11 (18%) were not sure. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. These statistics portray without doubt that political interference happens solely for individual enrichment and does not happen for the upliftment of the community. This further suggests that political interference seeks to disrupt the programs of the Municipality in terms of service delivery and focus on the personalised aspirations of the politician.

4.2.1.3 The effect of the challenges on the performance of senior managers within the Municipality.

This unit presents data collected through questionnaires on the effects of the challenges on the performance of senior managers within the Municipality. The data is presented in pie charts and a short interpretation of the findings.

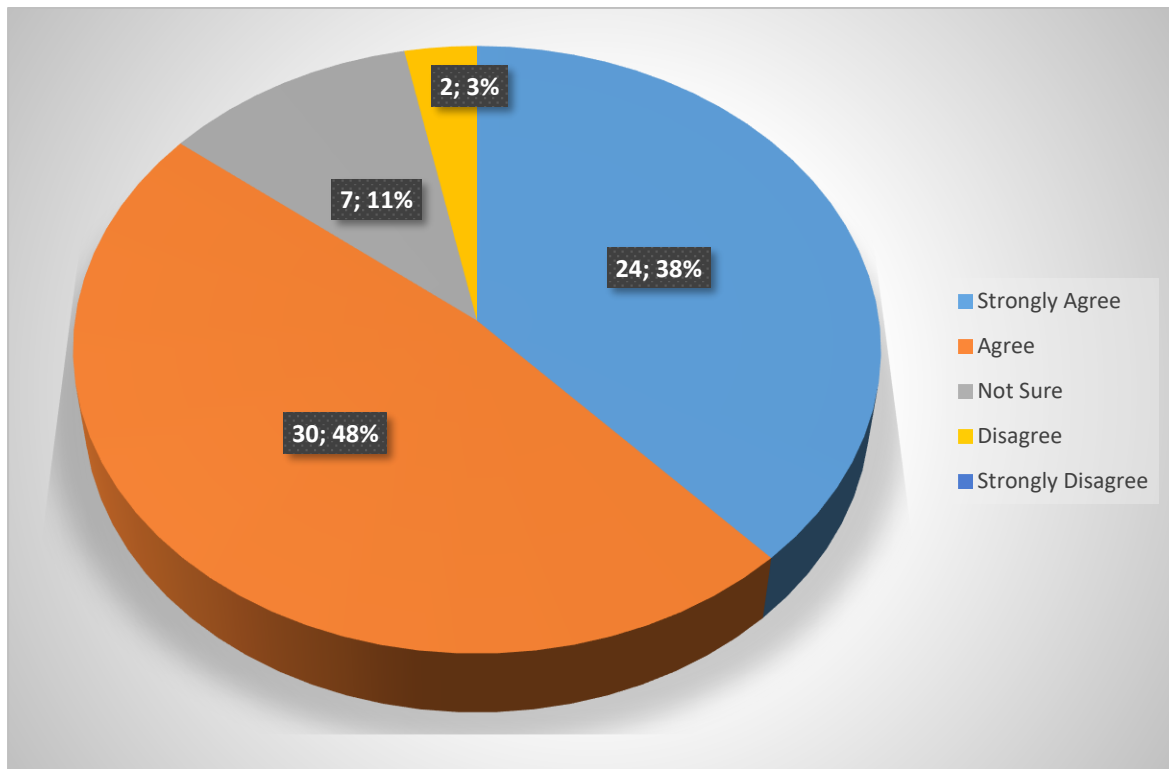
Figure 4.15: Local government officials base their decisions on technical criteria rather than on political criteria.



Source: Researcher's analysis

The pie chart above shows the data collected, which shows that 14 respondents (22%) strongly agreed that local government officials base their decisions on technical criteria rather than political ones. The majority of respondents (21, 33%) agreed with the statement, while 14 respondents (22%) were unsure, 10 respondents (16%) disagreed, and 4 respondents (7%) strongly disagreed. According to the majority of respondents, local government representatives make decisions based more on technical than on political factors. This indicates that respondents think local government representatives may make technically sound decisions without considering political factors when making administrative choices.

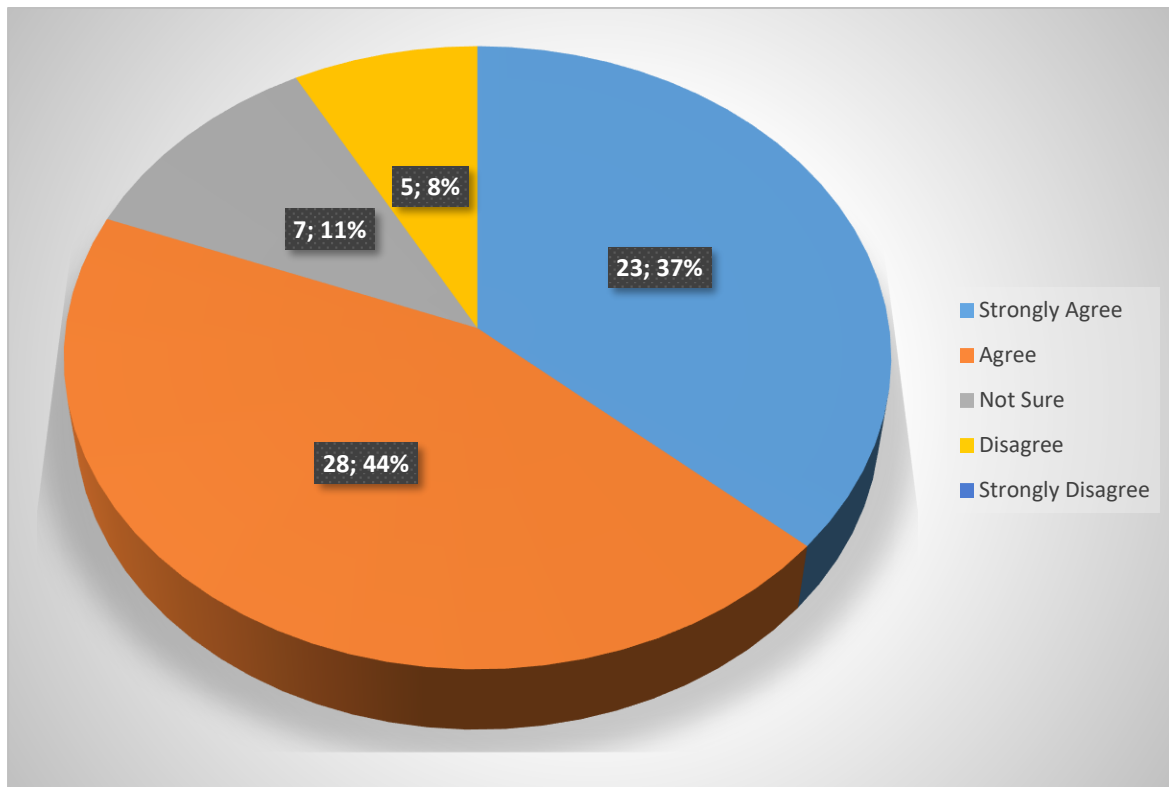
Figure 4.16: Political interference undermines legislative frameworks applicable to local government.



Source: Researcher's analysis

The information in the pie chart above shows that 24 (38%) of the respondents strongly agreed that political meddling compromises local government's applicable legislative frameworks. Most respondents (30) agreed with the statement, whereas 7 (11%) were unsure and 2 (3%) disagreed. Political meddling compromises the applicability of local government relevant legislative frameworks, according to most respondents. As a result, it can be said that most respondents (54, or 86%) agreed that political meddling weakens legislative frameworks because no statute supports it. Accordingly, elected officials and those hoping to hold political office in municipalities should be able to enforce local laws and permit the administration to operate without interference from unwarranted political officials.

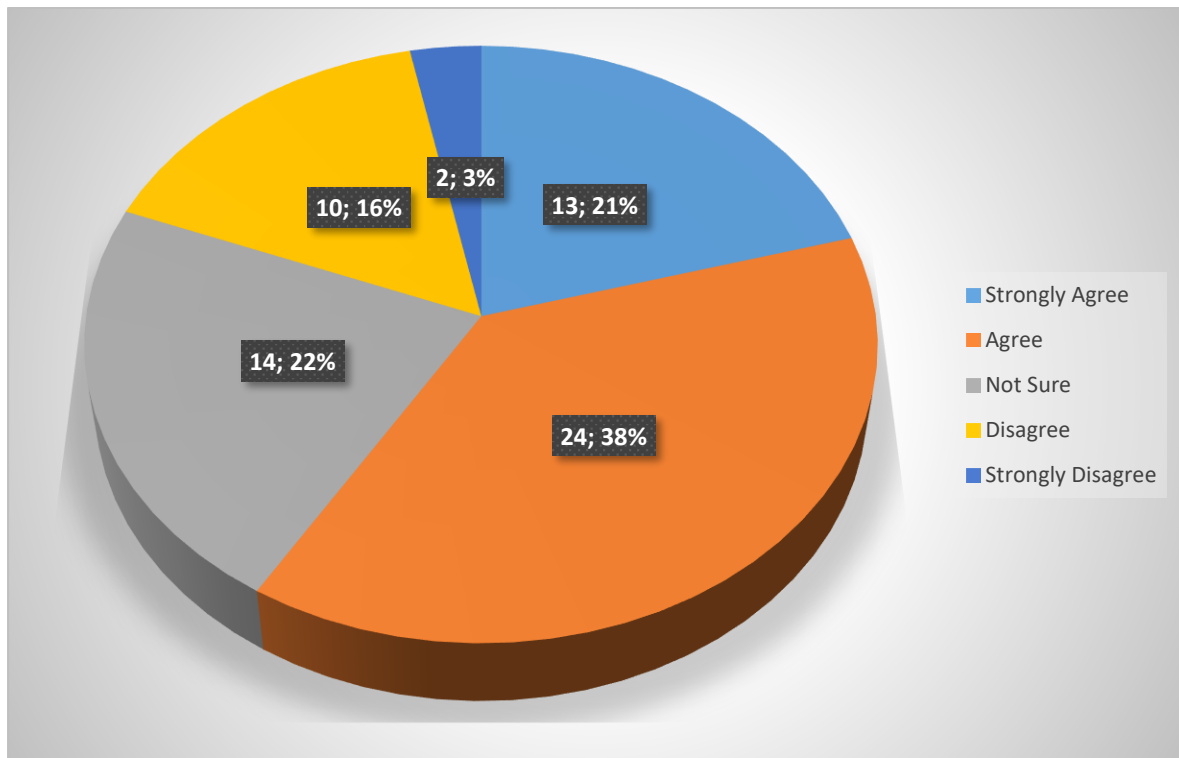
Figure 4.17: Political interference compromises administrative expertise and accountability.



Source: Researcher's analysis

According to the data, 23 (37%) of the respondents strongly agreed that political meddling jeopardises administrative skill and accountability; 28 (44%) agreed with the statement, while 7 (11%) were unsure and 5 (8%) disagreed. According to the pie chart above, the remark was not strongly disagreed with by any responders. It is possible to conclude that the majority of respondents concurred that political meddling compromises administrative accountability and expertise. This implies that in a setting where political meddling is common, administrative officers lack the freedom to use their administrative knowledge and responsibility.

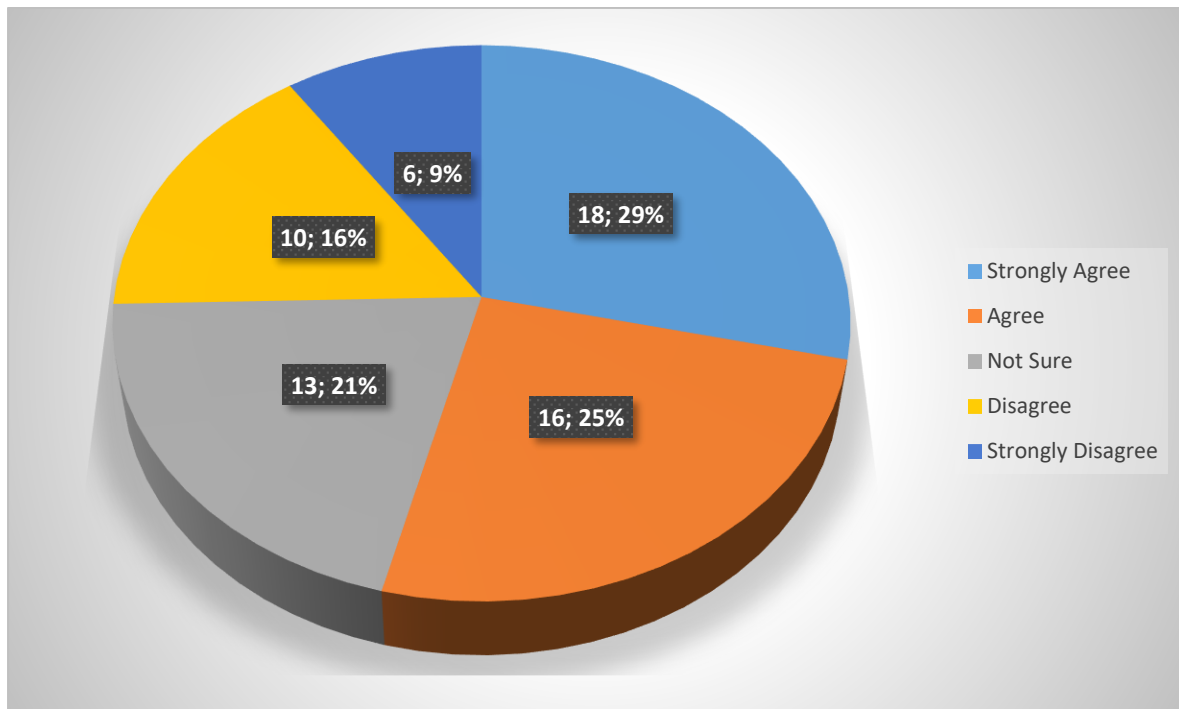
Figure 4.18: Local government officials are free to raise issues that are prompted by the prevalent political interference.



Source: Researcher's analysis

According to the pie chart above, 13 (21%) of the respondents strongly agreed that local government officials have the right to bring up issues that are sparked by the widespread political meddling; 24 (38%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 14 (22%) were unsure, 10 (16%) disagreed, and 2 (3%) strongly disagreed. It is possible to draw the conclusion that most respondents felt local government representatives had the right to voice concerns that arise from widespread political meddling. This implies that the atmosphere permits administrative officials to bring up problems that arise due to political meddling without worrying about being singled out.

Figure 4.19: Local government officials are free to criticize politicians who would like to hijack municipal programs for their own.



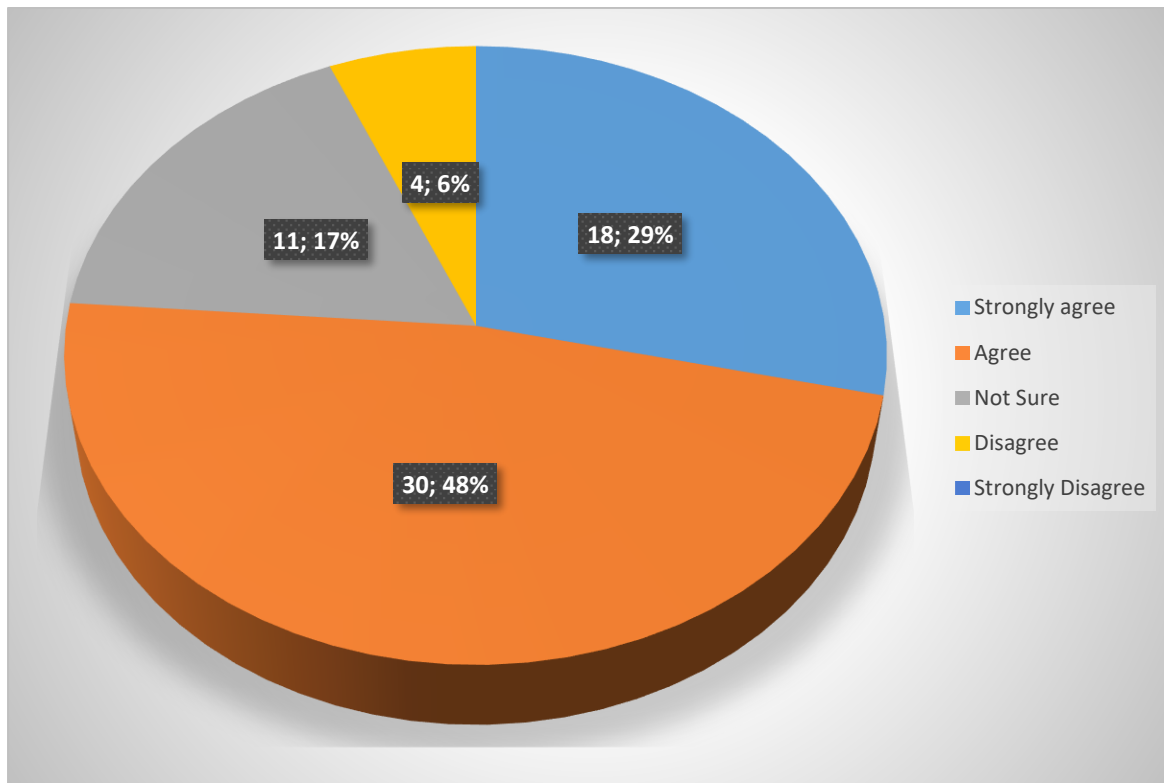
Source: Researcher's analysis

From the pie chart above, respondents were probed whether local government officials are free to criticize politicians who would like to hijack municipal programs for their own; the majority at 18 (29%) strongly agreed; 16 (25%) agreed with the statement; while 13 (21%) were not sure; 10 (16%) disagreed and 6 (9%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The data shows that most respondents agreed that local government officials are free to criticize politicians who would like to hijack municipal programs for their own. This suggests that the Municipality is intolerant to politicians who would like to hijack municipal programs for their own by creating a free environment for reporting undue political influence.

4.2.1.4 Strategies to enhance management performance amidst political interference.

This section presents data collected through questionnaires on strategies to enhance management performance amidst political interference. The data is presented in pie charts with a concise interpretation.

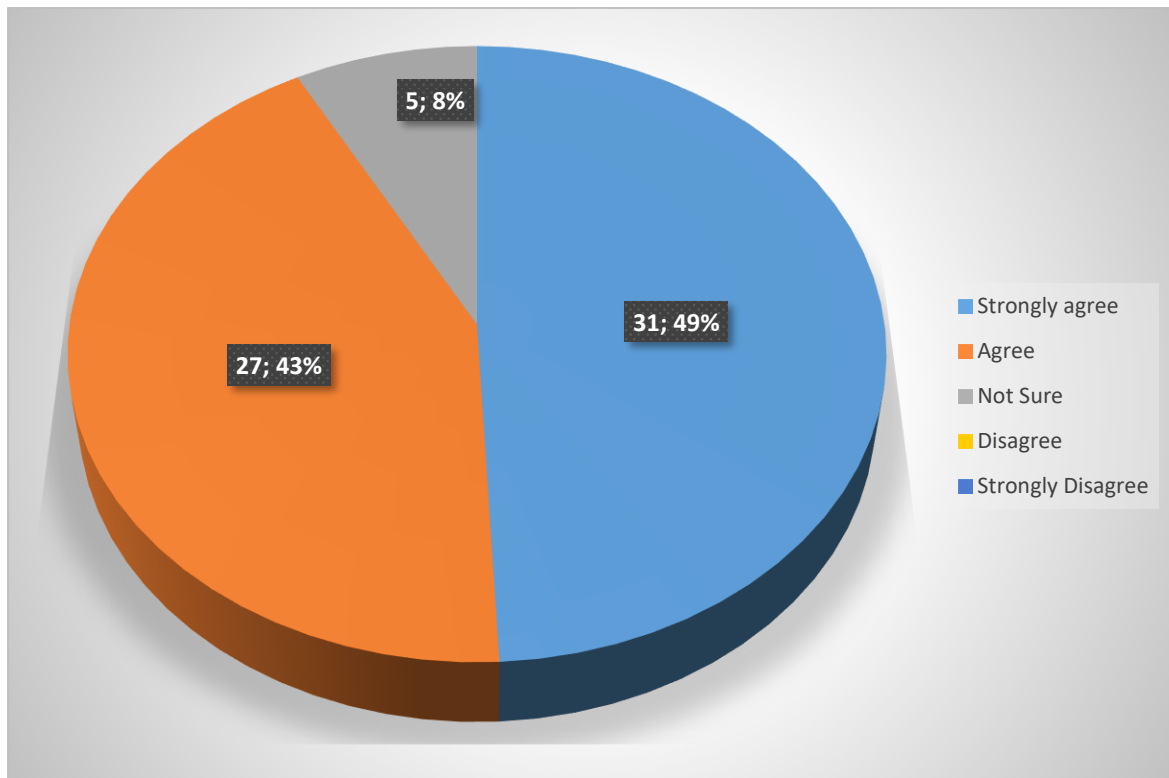
Figure 4.20: The Municipality has policies and strategies in place to address political interference.



Source: Researcher's analysis

Eighteen (29%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the Municipality had policies and strategies in place to address political interference, according to the data shown in the pie chart above. The majority, 30 (48%), agreed with the statement, while 11 (17%) were unsure and 4 (6%) disagreed. The assertion was not strongly disputed with by any of the responders. According to the data above, the majority of respondents concurred that the Municipality has procedures and policies in place to deal with political meddling. This demonstrates that respondents think the Municipality has policies and methods in place to deal with political meddling.

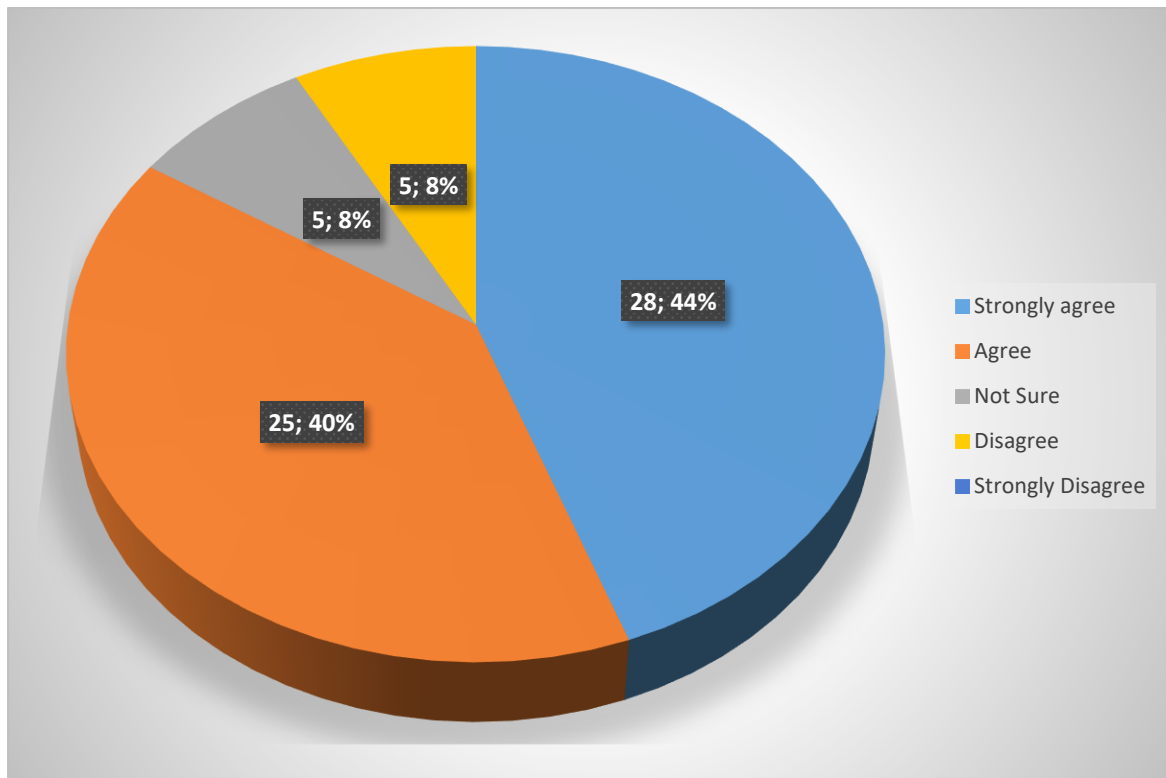
Figure 4.21: Managers should have strategies to manage perceived political interference in administration.



Source: Researcher's analysis

According to the pie chart above, 27 (43%) and 31 (49%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively with the assertion that managers should have measures to manage perceived political involvement in administration, while 5 (8%) were unsure. The statement received no disagreement or strong disagreement from any of the responders. The data reveals that 58 (92%) of those surveyed concurred that management have to have plans in place to deal with alleged political meddling in governance. Because they would know how to handle excessive political meddling and yet be able to deliver the desired outcomes, managers would be able to continue operating at their best even in the face of it (political interference).

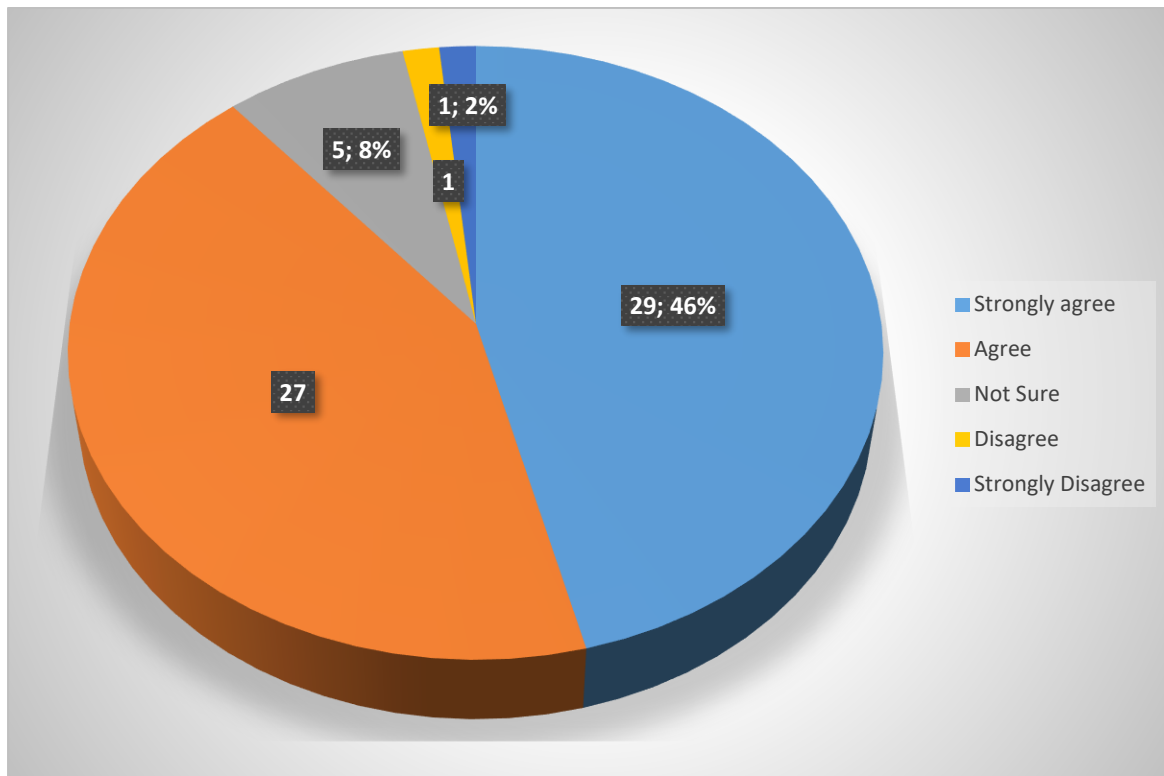
Figure 4.22: Managers should maintain political neutrality when dealing with the programs of the Municipality.



Source: Researcher's analysis

The respondents were probed if managers should maintain political neutrality when dealing with the programs of the Municipality; 28 (44%) strongly agreed with the statement, 25 (40%) agreed, and 5 (8%) were not sure. On the contrary, 5 (8%) disagreed with the statement, and none of the respondents strongly disagreed. Managers in the Municipality are regarded as professionals who should be able to deliver on municipal programs despite their political affiliations as they are expected to be politically neutral while performing their duties. This is affirmed by 53 (84%) of the respondents who agreed that managers should maintain political neutrality when dealing with the programs of the Municipality. It can be concluded that political neutrality should be regarded as one of the attributes of management in municipalities as they operate in an environment where political interference is inevitable.

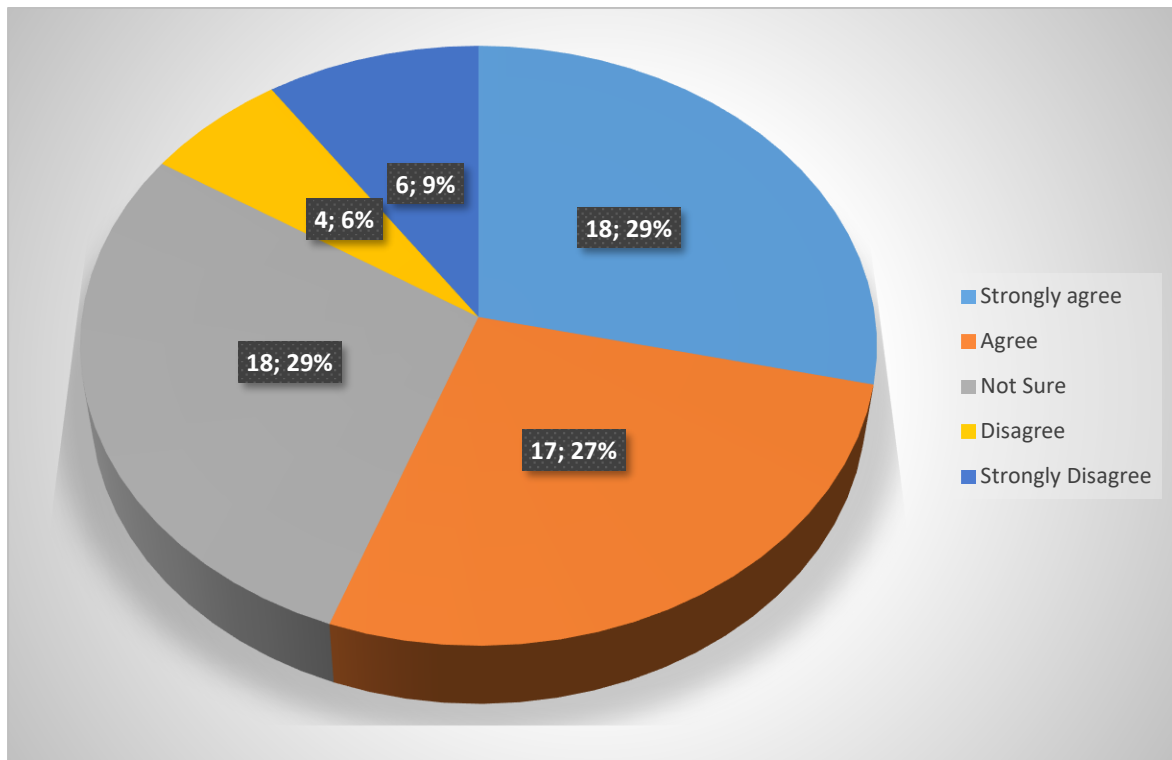
Figure 4.23: The political leadership should be kept updated of the progress on municipal programs to avoid undue political interference.



Source: Researcher's analysis

The respondents were asked if political leadership should be kept updated on municipal programs to avoid undue political interference. Those who disagreed and strongly disagreed split the spoils of 01 (2%) apiece, with the majority at 29 (46%) strongly agreeing and 27 (42%) agreeing with the statement, while 5 (8%) were unsure, as seen in the pie chart above. The aforementioned leads to the conclusion that, in order to prevent excessive political meddling, the majority of respondents (56, or 88%) agreed that political leadership should be informed of the status of municipal programs. This also shows that a lack of accurate information about local programs must be addressed in order to prevent excessive political meddling.

Figure 4.24: There is openness and transparency in the Municipality on issues that may be seen as political interference.



Source: Researcher's analysis

According to the above pie chart, 18 (29%) of the respondents highly agreed that the Municipality is open and transparent about matters that could be interpreted as political meddling; 17 (27%) agreed, 18 (29%) were unsure, 4 (6%) disagreed, and 6 (9%) severely disagreed. Based on the data presented above, it can be inferred that most respondents thought the Municipality was open and honest about matters that can be interpreted as political meddling. In order to keep the atmosphere favorable for the Municipality to fulfill its constitutional role, managers are permitted to voice their concerns about excessive political meddling.

4.3 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS

The following section presents data gathered through interviews where participants had to write down their responses to the questions on the interview schedule. The study was carried out in order to answer the following research questions regarding

the impact of political interference on senior managers' performance: what is political interference in administration, how does it affect managers' performance, whether or not politicians should be involved in municipal administration matters, how much of an impact should politicians have on administration matters, how to manage the relationship between politicians and managers to improve management performance, any other issues that needed to be addressed regarding political interference, and strategies that managers can employ to succeed in an environment where political interference is rampant. After a narrative presentation of the gathered data, a condensed synthesis is provided.

Question 1: What is your understanding of political interference in administration?

The first question sought to gain an insight into the understanding of political interference in administration within the Municipality. In this question, participants provided a description of what constitutes political interference and below is the presentation of the expression of views by the participants:

Participant A:

Influencing administrative decisions of the institution such as forwarding a service provider to be appointed through a procurement process, or any other decision which have been legislatively delegated to administration.

Participant B:

Political interference occurs when political leaders intervene in municipal administrative decisions such as personnel functions and the use of public finances.

Participant C:

Political interference is when political leaders from the ruling party or opposition destabilise the day-to-day running of a municipality or department. The interference could be for personal gains and for the political parties involved.

Participant D:

Political interference in administration refers to any form of interference, be it in daily municipal administration activities, financial administration, human resource management aspect, or any other interference that can be of a political or economic nature.

Participant E:

Political interference is where the mayor gives instruction mostly to the supply chain managers to appoint in certain tenders or appoint employees.

Participant F:

It is an interference in the administration activities of an organisation by politicians to gain administrative powers/control. The aim is to control the financial part of the organisation to gain advantage or take control of the whole administration.

Participant G:

Political interference in administration refers to the inappropriate involvement of politicians in the day-to-day operations and decision-making processes. The interference can take many forms, such as pressuring administrators to make decisions based on political considerations rather than merit. To prevent political interference in administration, it is important to establish clear guidelines and procedures for decision-making and ensuring transparency and accountability.

Participant H:

It is the unwanted involvement of politicians in administration. It involves politicians giving instructions to managers on decisions that should only be taken by managers. This practice diminishes the expertise of managers since they cannot make decisions independently.

Participant I:

Political interference is when politicians interfere in administration and such interference is not welcome. If their involvement is welcomed by managers, it must not be seen as political interference.

Participant J:

Political interference in administration is when politicians meddle in administrative issues of the Municipality. It is when politicians want to be involved in the day-to-day running of the Municipality.

Participant K:

Is when politicians get involved in governance of the municipality. For example, informing the tender committee who to appoint for tenders or who to appoint for administrative positions.

Participant L:

It undermines service delivery to communities as it keeps politicians and managers fighting instead of attending to local community needs.

Participant M:

Is the involvement of politicians (councillors and mayors) in recruitment processes of the municipality such as appointing comrades without doing interviews.

Participant N:

It is the involvement of political leaders in administration when they are not wanted.

Participant O:

It is when politicians intervene on admin issues of the municipality such as recruitment of employees in the municipality.

Participants A, E and K indicated that political interference involves influencing administrative decisions in terms of the appointment of service providers through the tender committee, instructing the supply chain managers who to appoint in certain tenders, or influencing any other decision that has been legislatively delegated to administration. Participants M and O indicated that it is the involvement of councilors and mayors in the recruitment of employees in the Municipality by forwarding comrades for appointment without due processes being followed. Participant D pointed out that political interference can take many forms including interference in daily municipal administration activities, financial administration, and

human resource management. Participants B and F highlighted that political interference aims to gain administrative powers and controlling the financial part of the Municipality.

Participants C, G and J indicated that political interference is meant to destabilise the daily operations of the Municipality for personal gains or to advance political party interests. Participant G further stated that the interference can take many forms, such as pressuring administrators to make decisions based on political considerations rather than merit. Participant L indicated that political interference undermines service delivery to communities as it keeps politicians and managers fighting instead of attending to local community needs. Participants H, I and N indicated that it is the unwanted involvement of politicians in administration. Participant I further indicated that if the involvement is welcomed by managers, it cannot be considered political interference. Participant H revealed that the practice of political interference diminishes the expertise of managers since they cannot make decisions independently.

From the above information, a conclusion can be made that political interference happens to serve politicians and not the community. It reduces managers to officials who are incapable of making administrative decisions and whose expertise is only validated by politicians. It was found that political interference happens mainly to gain control over tender administration, recruitment, and financial administration.

Question 2: In your view, how does political interference affect the performance of managers?

The second question sought to solicit the challenges faced by managers in the performance of their functions due to political interference and participants responded as follows:

Participant A:

In certain instances, political interference results in managers not following legislation and regulations leading to non-compliance as well as unwanted expenditures (unauthorised, fruitless, wasteful and irregular).

Participant B:

It causes negative audit outcomes and misuse of funds.

Participant C:

It undermines decisions made by managers. Managers are unable to procure goods and services under stipulated timeframes due to delays from politics.

Participant D:

Political interference prohibits line managers from making informed decisions that would benefit the entire community and the Municipality. It has a negative influence on issues of service delivery.

Participant E:

It has a huge negative impact on the performance of the Municipality as unqualified personnel are hired.

Participant F:

Political interference affects the performance of managers in the sense that they cannot make their own independent decisions. Since they cannot make their own decisions, the administration of the Municipality becomes corrupted.

Participant G:

Political interference pressures managers to make decisions that are not based on the best interest of the community. This undermines the effectiveness of management processes. It is important for the Municipality to establish clear boundaries between politics and administration to promote professionalism.

Participant H:

Managers are no longer able to design systems that would work better for the Municipality because of political overreach in administration. This practice often labels managers as corrupt officials because of the role they play in tender administration.

Participant I:

It is in two ways: 1. If the interference is welcomed it enhances performance based on the relationship established between politicians and managers; 2. If the interference is not welcomed it destroys the morale of managers and tempers with performance.

Participant J:

It affects the performance of managers if they are not experienced in such issues. Experienced managers often have ways to perform even with political interference.

Participant K:

It affects management decisions as they cannot follow policies while being pressured by politicians. These political pressures often affect management judgement.

Participant L:

It kills the morale of managers and tempers with management performance which in turn results in service delivery backlogs.

Participant M:

It makes managers look incompetent if they cannot make decisions without considering the views of councillors.

Participant N:

It affects their performance positively because they work under the pressure of politicians, and they want to impress them.

Participant O:

It affects the performance of managers because they must always try to please politicians in terms of the decisions they make. Decisions are often influenced by political pressures rather than management expertise.

Regarding the effect of political interference on the performance of managers, participants D, F, G and H indicated that managers are no longer able to make

informed decisions due to political pressures and this makes them appear as corrupt officials who do not have the interest of the community at heart in terms of service delivery. Participant G further indicated that decisions are politically influenced and not based on merit which undermines the effectiveness of management processes and promotes unprofessionalism. Moreover, participant H further pointed out that political overreach in tender administration portrays managers as corrupt officials. Participant C showed that political interference undermines management decisions and influences the procurement of goods and services in ways that do not benefit the Municipality.

Participants E and L revealed that the effect of political interference is contrary to the objects of local government as unqualified personnel are hired which results in service delivery backlogs. Participants A, B, K and O indicated that there is non-compliance with legislative requirements and municipal policies due to political interference which leads to unauthorised, fruitless, wasteful and irregular expenditure resulting in negative audit outcomes and misuse of funds. They further highlighted that political interference often renders municipal policies and applicable guidelines useless as managers make decisions to please political leaders at the expense of following proper administrative processes. On the contrary, participants I, J and N indicated that political interference enhances performance based on the established relationship between politicians and managers, and experienced managers often have ways of performing even with political interference. Participant N indicated that political interference positively affects management performance because they work under pressure and want to impress politicians.

Participant M showed that managers look incompetent if they cannot make decisions without considering the views of councillors. The above information suggests that political interference has dire effects on the performance of managers which results in non-compliance with applicable prescripts and negates service delivery to the community.

Question 3: Do you think politicians should be involved in administration matters of the Municipality? Please support your answer.

The third question sought to get the views of the participants on the identified challenges faced by managers in the performance of their duties. Participants responded as follows:

Participant A:

No. Politicians are not trained in specific fields, administrative matters should be dealt with by professionals who are appointed at the administrative level based on their expertise.

Participant B:

No. They are not supposed to be involved as it will result in instability.

Participant C:

No. Politicians should not be involved in administration matters. There should be a separation of power. Politicians should have limits on what they can do in the Municipality such as maintaining relations with communities. The administration should be concerned about service delivery without interference.

Participant D:

No. In terms of the MFMA politicians are not regarded as administrators and they are not allowed to participate in administrative matters since their functions are political in nature. Administration is for qualified administrators, not politicians; and many municipalities have encountered problems because of political interference.

Participant E:

No, because they were elected on a 5-year term. Theirs is to give political direction to the Municipality.

Participant F:

No. Politicians should continue to advocate for political change in the Municipality. They cannot wear two hats in the Municipality. They need to control the masses or

followers for political change not in administration because the administration is for administrators, not politicians.

Participant G:

Politicians have a role to play in setting policies and priorities for the Municipality, but they should not be involved in the daily administration matters. In terms of accountability, if something goes wrong, it may be unclear who is ultimately responsible for the decision. By allowing managers to make operational decisions accountability can be more clearly established. Therefore, separation of power helps to ensure professionalism and public trust in municipal governance.

Participant H:

No. Their only involvement should be in relation to goal setting and provision of political direction for the Municipality. Politicians should also ensure that municipal policies assist in goal attainment. This should eliminate the need for politicians to interfere with administration.

Participant I:

Yes, but they need to be clever about it. If the involvement is welcome, they should harness it and ensure that they build trust for service delivery improvement, if not welcome, they must change the involvement strategy to gain management trust.

Participant J:

Not always. Only in instances where administration is failing to discharge its duties professionally, politicians should be involved only when the administrative direction is contrary to the political direction. Administrative decisions should always support political direction.

Participant K:

Not at all. Administration should be for qualified administrators, not politicians.

Participant L:

No. They deprive communities of service delivery by being too involved in administrative issues.

Participant M:

Councillors must not be involved in the administration of the Municipality because it does not reflect the true expertise of managers.

Participant N:

Yes, they must be involved so that managers can perform better under the pressure of politicians.

Participant O:

No. Politicians should only focus on political matters of the Municipality such as mayoral imbizos.

Participants E, F, H and O were aligned in their thinking and indicated that politicians must not be involved in administration matters of the Municipality because they are elected for a 5-year term and their focus should be on goal setting and the provision of political direction as well as mayoral imbizos in advocating for political change. Participant F further stated that they cannot wear two hats in the Municipality, and Participant H highlighted that politicians should ensure that municipal policies assist in municipal goal attainment to eliminate the need for politicians to interfere with administration. Participants A, D, G and K emphasized the need for having qualified personnel in administrative positions to be able to deal with administrative issues professionally based on the level of expertise required. Participant D further alluded that in terms of the MFMA politicians are not regarded as administrators and they are not allowed to participate in administrative matters. Moreover, Participant G indicated that politicians have a role to play in setting policies and priorities for the Municipality but not be involved in the daily operations of the administration. For accountability purposes, managers must be the ones who make administrative decisions without influence from politicians so that they account for their administrative acts.

Participants B and L indicated that politicians are not supposed to be involved as it will result in instability and deprive communities of service delivery by being too involved in administrative issues. Participant M showed that councillors must not be involved as it does not reflect the true expertise of managers. Participant C indicated

that politicians should have a limit on what they can do in the Municipality and maintain relationships with local communities while ensuring separation of powers between politics and administration. However, Participants I, J and N had opposing observations and indicated that politicians must be involved in administration so that managers can perform better under the pressure of politicians. Participant I further indicated that politicians should be clever about their involvement strategy to ensure that they build trust for service delivery improvement. Participant J further stated that politicians should be involved in instances where administration is failing to discharge its duties professionally and the administrative direction is contrary to the political direction.

From the aforesaid, it can be concluded that the challenges that are brought by political interference in administration are broad and limit the expertise of managers which leads to a corrupt administrative arm whose focus is to serve the interests of politicians, not the community. In as much as some of the participants support the involvement of politicians in administration, it would be unwise to disregard the observations of the majority who indicated the negative effects brought by political interference on the performance of managers.

Question 4: To what extent should politicians be involved in matters of administration of the Municipality?

The fourth question sought to understand the level of involvement of politicians in matters of administration and to evaluate the effect of their involvement and / or over-involvement.

Participant A:

Policy formulation and approval, oversight on policy implementation, IDP development and budget approval.

Participant B:

They must provide oversight through council committees.

Participant C:

Politicians should only be involved when it comes to IDP budget inputs and entrust the administration to implement the IDP.

Participant D:

On the approval part where submissions require the approval of the delegated body such as the mayor or chairperson of a particular mayoral committee. In lower-level activities like recruitment and selection, politicians should play far from these as they are administrative in nature.

Participant E:

They should not be involved.

Participant F:

At a high level where the senior manager is not delegated to make decisions or where the senior manager fails to make decisions and the matter is escalated to the politician for decision-making, that's where a politician can act on administrative matters.

Participant G:

Politicians should have a role in setting the overall direction and priorities for the administration of the Municipality, but they should not be involved in micromanaging daily operations. Politicians should work collaboratively with administrators to develop policies and make decisions that benefit the community. Collaboration and communication between politicians and administrators are important to ensuring effective governance and decision-making.

Participant H:

Goal setting and political direction. Politicians should allow managers to focus on administrative issues such as recruitment and selection and the awarding of tenders, and they only sign off on those appointments.

Participant I:

Politicians should only be involved with senior managers and be able to provide advice to managers so that the Municipality does not go off-course in terms of political programs and administrative activities.

Participant J:

To ensure that administrative decisions support the political direction of the Municipality. Both the administrative and political spheres of the Municipality should work towards the same goal.

Participant K:

They should not be involved at all.

Participant L:

Only when they have to approve the budget. Other than that, they should focus on political issues and leave administrative issues to managers.

Participant M:

Councillors must refrain from interfering in the recruitment of the Municipality. They must only attend council committee meetings and leave administration to managers.

Participant N:

They must only be involved with senior managers and ensure that there is performance of municipal activities.

Participant O:

They should only be involved when they receive administrative reports.

Participants A, B, C, L and M indicated that politicians should be involved in terms of policy formulation and approval, oversight on policy implementation, IDP development, budget approval, and provision of oversight through council committees. Participants D, H and J mentioned that politicians should only be involved in terms of goal setting and political direction and ensuring that both political and administrative sphere of the Municipality are working towards the same

direction. Politicians should also be involved when they must approve submissions and sign-off on appointments of service providers and personnel as decided upon by the administration.

Participants I and N pointed out that politicians should be involved with senior managers and be able to provide advice to managers so that the Municipality does not go off-course in terms of political programmes and administrative activities. They must ensure that there is performance of municipal activities from the management level. Participant O was of the view that the involvement should only happen when politicians receive the report on administrative performance. Furthermore, participants F and G indicated that involvement should happen at a high level where managers fail to take decisions and matters get referred to the politician. Participant G further stated that politicians should work collaboratively with administrators to develop policies and make decisions that benefit local communities. Participant G continued to state that collaboration and communication between politicians and administrators are important to ensuring effective governance and decision-making. However, participants E and K indicated that politicians should not be involved in matters of administration at all.

From the above statements, it is clear that the Municipality needs the collaboration of both administrators and politicians and respect for each other's roles. A conclusion can be drawn that there may be a thin line between politics and administration considering the fact that politicians must sign off on some of the decisions taken by administrators in relation to tender administration and recruitment to mention but a few, mutual respect should still be maintained.

Question 5: In your view, how should the relationship between politicians and managers be managed in order to enhance management performance?

The fifth question sought to understand the views of the participants regarding the relationship between politicians and managers which is key to enhancing management performance and ultimately improving service delivery. Below are the responses offered by participants:

Participant A:

Yes, there should be a clear line between administration and political principals.

Participant B:

Sections 53 - 58 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998) clearly give the guidelines on the relationship and their duties. This will benefit the Municipality by obtaining a better audit outcome.

Participant C:

Politicians need to understand their role in the Municipality, respect boundaries and allow managers to do their duties as they have been employed based on expertise. Politicians need to show support and have faith in management for better service delivery.

Participant D:

- (i) Training: Enough training on an annual basis to address operations management issues.
- (ii) Workshops: In-house workshops to improve knowledge, skills and understanding of issues relating to leadership.
- (iii) Relationship building: Building of relationships between politicians and managers to avoid workplace tensions.
- (iv) Engagement: Regular engagement sessions are necessary for leadership.

Participant E:

Their relationship should only focus on running the Municipality.

Participant F:

- (i) Communication: there should be proper communication between politicians and administrators for service delivery reasons.
- (ii) Consultation: both administrators and politicians should be consulted on any matter that affects service delivery.

- (iii) Participation: administrators must participate in decision-making, and politicians should not take decisions alone.

Participant G:

The relationship between politicians and managers should be characterised by open communication, respect for one another and cooperation. Politicians should provide managers with clear goals and objectives, while managers should have the autonomy and resources to achieve those goals. A healthy relationship is essential for enhancing management performance.

Participant H:

Their relationship should be managed in terms of the relevant prescripts and the respect of each other's duties. There should be mutual respect between politicians and managers, and that should be a barrier enough for politicians to impose their ideas on administrative decisions.

Participant I:

Regular workshops between politicians and managers emphasise the common goal of serving local communities. This will ensure that they are working towards a common goal and foster relations between them.

Participant J:

Politicians must provide political direction and managers must manage administrative decisions that support political direction.

Participant K:

Regular workshops for politicians and managers, such as relationship-building workshops, role clarification workshops, and customer-centered approach workshops in order to create a degree of respect for each other's roles.

Participant L:

Clear distinction of roles would help enhance management performance.

Participant M:

The relationship should be managed by providing reports to councillors so that they know what is happening on the side of administration, but they must not get involved.

Participant N:

Yes, the relationship should be managed to enhance performance. They must work closely so that all municipal programmes are implemented.

Participant O:

Politicians should focus on their political roles and leave administrative issues to managers.

Regarding the management of relationships between politicians and managers to enhance management performance, participants F, G and M indicated that open communication should be at the centre of their relationship to maintain respect for their roles and responsibilities. Regular reports and consultations in decision-making processes encourage cooperation and strengthen working relations which help facilitate relationship management and ultimately enhance management performance and service delivery. Participants D, I, K and L suggested that regular workshops on relationship building, leadership, operations management, role clarification, and customer-centred approach should be organised for both politicians and managers. These will also promote regular engagements on leadership and issues of common interest: service delivery to local communities.

Participants A, C, E, J and O emphasised the need for a strict separation of roles between politicians and administration; and participants E, J and O further indicated that politicians should focus on their own political duties of the Municipality and leave administrative functions to administrators. Moreover, participant C stated the need for politicians to understand their roles, respect the boundaries established in terms of roles and responsibilities and allow managers to perform their duties as they were employed based on their expertise. However, participant N advocated for a collaborative work relationship where both politicians and managers should work closely with each other in the delivery of basic services.

Participants B and H were more inclined to the provisions of relevant prescripts that provide guidelines on the management of relationships between politicians and administrators. Participant H indicated that there should be mutual respect between politicians and managers and that should be a barrier enough for politicians to impose their ideas on administrative decisions. Participant B highlighted that *sections 53 - 58 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998)* provide guidelines on the relationship between politicians and administrators and their duties. It can be concluded that the relationship between politicians and administrators is imperative for the normal functioning of the Municipality hence this is also legislated. This means that even the relevant prescripts foresaw the tensions that might arise between politicians and managers in municipalities and ensured that these are catered for in legislation. It can also be pointed out that if politicians and managers have good working relationships their municipality is likely to perform better than the ones characterised by constant tension between politicians and managers.

Question 6: Do you have any other issues which you think need addressing in terms of political interference in municipalities?

The second last question sought to establish any other issues caused by political interference which warrant addressing and the participants responded as follows:

Participant A:

Political deployment in administration weakens the work of administration, and the attainment of objectives and reduces public trust.

Participant B:

Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) and SALGA to provide training to politicians on a regular basis. Disciplinary measures are to be instituted for politicians who interfere with administration.

Participant C:

Establishing an independent board for municipalities which will monitor progress on each of the municipal projects mentioned in the IDP. The board should have power to improve consequence management for poor performance.

Participant D:

Supply chain management (tendering), recruitment and selection, issuing of RDP houses, cadre deployment, and corruption in general (maladministration).

Participant E:

Yes, councillors should be trained to separate between government and political parties that deployed them, they must ensure that administrators and councillors have good working relationships.

Participant F:

Cadre deployment should be done away with. Service delivery should be improved. Corruption should be addressed for the purpose of rural development. Nepotism is a problem for the Municipality and should be addressed.

Participant G:

The impact that political interference has on professional staff and their ability to perform their jobs effectively.

Participant H:

Yes. Politicians should allow managers to exercise their duties expertly without intervention. If political interference is not addressed, it will only affect the delivery of services to local citizens.

Participant I:

Yes, an open-minded approach by both politicians and managers when it relates to interference so that it is not only seen as a bad thing, but rather a mechanism to enhance management performance.

Participant J:

Yes, managers must have a little bit of political background to properly manage municipal projects.

Participant K:

There should be mutual respect between politicians and managers.

Participant L:

No other issues.

Participant M:

The unions in the Municipality must also leave administration issues to management and only focus on improving working conditions.

Participant N:

Managers and politicians must understand that they need to work together to enhance municipal performance.

Participant O:

Yes, managers should be able to stand their ground and not be influenced by politicians when performing administrative duties such as tender appointments.

Participants I, J, K and M highlighted the essence of mutual respect, working together, and understanding each other's functions and responsibilities to work together for the betterment of local communities. Participant I wrote that an open-minded approach must be used by both politicians and managers and consider political interference as a mechanism to enhance management performance. Participants B and E showed that politicians must receive regular training to avoid meddling in administrative issues. Participant B further stated that disciplinary processes should be instituted against politicians who interfere with administration. Participant C highlighted the need for the formation of an independent body that will monitor the progress of municipal projects identified in the IDP. The board should have the power to improve consequence management for poor performance.

Moreover, participant M mentioned that labour unions in the Municipality must also leave administration issues to management and focus on improving working conditions. Participants G, H and O pointed out that politicians should allow managers to exercise their duties expertly without interference. Participant A observed that cadre deployment in administration is still a challenge that weakens administrative expertise and reduces public trust. Participants D and F indicated that supply chain management (tendering process), recruitment and selection

(nepotism), issuing of RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) houses, and corruption in general (maladministration) are issues that needs addressing in the Municipality.

Participants indicated the need for continuous training of politicians to better understand their roles and avoid undue political interference as it results in unwanted outcomes. A conclusion can be drawn that undue political interference leads to several issues that may portray the Municipality as one that does not follow policies. These issues should not be overlooked, and they include cadre deployment, tender administration, recruitment and selection processes, allocation of municipal houses (this also relates to the criteria used for the identification of beneficiaries) and maladministration.

Question 7: What are the strategies that can be used by managers to thrive in an environment where political interference is rife?

The question required participants to highlight strategies that may be used by managers to perform better even in an environment where political interference is rife. Below are the responses:

Participant A:

Ensuring that legislative requirements are always followed and promoting an ethical environment. Prevent administrative staff from holding political office or actively participating in political organisations.

Participant B:

Political interference should be reported to CoGHSTA and the National Treasury.

Participant C:

Managers should apply relevant policies such as the MFMA as these will defend them against political interference.

Participant D:

There should be enough consultation on matters that affect everybody. All stakeholders should be engaged in decision-making. All affected members should participate in matters of the municipality.

Participant E:

Employees must always show respect to the councillors.

Participant F:

Stakeholder engagement, communication, relationship management, strategic management, and conflict management.

Participant G:

Focus on transparency and accountability – being transparent in decision-making processes and communicating openly. Stay neutral and objective – maintain a professional and impartial stance in interactions with politicians and stakeholders.

Participant H:

Managers need strict policy implementation skills without compromise. Managers need to understand their role in managing administration. Managers need to have constant training on management skills and policy implementation.

Participant I:

Open-minded approach towards political interference and view it as an opportunity to engage on service delivery issues. Management of the relationship between politicians and managers.

Participant J:

Managers must understand their role as administrative managers and ensure that they are for the attainment and support of political direction.

Participant K:

Having a thorough understanding of the roles of politicians to avoid being forced to do unethical and corrupt activities.

Participant L:

Proper coordination of imbizos so that politicians have something to do while managers focus more on administration matters.

Participant M:

Managers must always submit reports on time to councilors so that they do not see the need to interfere with administration.

Participant N:

Embracing political interference and view it as a way of collectively delivering on municipal programmes.

Participant O:

Thorough understanding of municipal legislations and policies and operate based on those.

Participants A, C and O suggested that both administrators and politicians have a role to play in ensuring that legislative requirements and municipal policies are always followed to promote an ethical environment in the Municipality. Participant A further suggested that administrative members should be prohibited from holding political office or actively participating in political party structures. Participant B suggested that political interference should be reported to CoGHSTA and the National Treasury. Participants D and F suggested that stakeholder engagement, regular communication between politicians and administrators, relationship management, conflict management, and consultation should be at the forefront of the skills set required for managers so that they can proactively minimize undue political interference.

Participant G suggested that managers should focus on transparency and accountability by being transparent in decision-making processes and communicating openly, establishing clear accountability mechanisms to demonstrate that decisions are made fairly. Managers should also stay neutral and objective, thereby maintaining a professional and impartial stance in interactions with politicians. Participant G further stated that by employing these strategies good

governance will be promoted in the Municipality. Participant H suggested that managers need strict policy implementation skills without compromise and to have regular training on management skills and policy implementation. Participants I and J think that managers should have an open-minded approach towards political interference and view it as an opportunity to engage on service delivery issues and ensure that they understand their role of supporting political direction.

Participants K and L are of the view that managers should have a thorough understanding of the roles of politicians to avoid being forced to do unethical and corrupt activities and ensure that there is proper coordination of imbizos for politicians to run with. Participants M and N suggested that managers must always submit reports on time to councillors so that they do not see the need to interfere with administration and they need to embrace political interference and view it as a way of collectively delivering on municipal programmes. A conclusion can be drawn that managers have the instruments to address political interference, and these include municipal legislation. They need to ensure that there is compliance with the law in exercising their duties as managers. Political interference is as a result of the disregard of the relevant prescripts that guide the relationship between management and politicians.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Chapter Four presented and discussed data gathered through questionnaires and interview schedules. Analysis, interpretation, and discussion were all included in the data presentation. This was accomplished by using the study participants' comments to gain insight into how political meddling affects senior managers' performance in local government. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques, such as questionnaires and interview schedules, were used to gather the data. To ensure that they gave thorough answers, when necessary, the respondents were given enough time to finish the questionnaires and interview schedules. Pie charts and narratives were used to present, analyse, and interpret the respondents' data to shed light on how political participation affected senior managers' performance in local government.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher presented, examined, and assessed the data in the previous chapter to ascertain how political meddling affected the effectiveness of top managers in local government. An overview, a discussion of the study's findings, recommendations regarding the impact of political meddling on local government senior managers' performance, suggestions for further research on related subjects, the study's limitations, and, lastly, the study's conclusions are all included in this chapter.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The Greater Giyani Local Municipality was the study's specific subject, which looked at how political meddling affected senior managers' performance in local government. Research questions about the impact of political interference on senior managers' performance in local government, the level of political interference in Greater Giyani Local Municipality, the difficulties senior managers face as a result of political interference, the extent of the difficulties political interference has on senior managers' performance in the Municipality, and tactics senior managers can employ to succeed in carrying out their responsibilities despite political interference were all addressed in this study. The researcher looked at pertinent literature regarding how political meddling affects senior managers' performance in local government.

The researcher used a mixed methodology approach which involved the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The study aimed to investigate the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers at local government and recommend strategies that senior managers can use to thrive amidst political interference in municipal administrative decisions" The researcher employed purposive sampling and snowball sampling, the two types of non-probability sampling. A questionnaire and interview schedule were employed in this

study to collect data, which were then analyzed using theme analysis and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was presented in a narrative format with a succinct analysis, as well as pie charts with figures and percentages to show the respondents' perceptions.

The research objectives were:

- To establish an overview of the state of political interference in Greater Giyani Local Municipality.
- To identify challenges experienced by senior managers in the performance of functions because of political interference.
- To evaluate the effect of the challenges on the performance of senior managers within the Greater Giyani Local Municipality.
- To recommend strategies that can be used by senior managers to thrive in their duties amidst political interference.

5.3 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.3.1 Findings on the status of political interference in Greater Giyani Local Municipality

According to the study, most participants, 50 (79%) acknowledged that they were aware of the Municipality's political and administrative operations. This shows that people in the neighborhood are aware of how the Municipality runs both politically and administratively. The Municipality should keep running initiatives that educate the public about how the Municipality operates. According to the poll, 26 (41%) of the participants thought that the current political leadership and administration had established an entirely efficient governance structure that forbids political meddling in day-to-day operations. The researcher also found that most of the respondents at 38 (60%) agreed that there are proper political and administrative relations in the Municipality which enhance the performance of managers. This implies that when administrators and politicians get along well, they work together more effectively for the good of the communities they represent. Additionally, the results demonstrated that 33 (52%) of the participants agreed with the assertion that the Municipality

clearly distinguishes between political and administrative functions. The guidelines for differentiating between appointed and elected municipal officials are found in Sections 55 and *Schedule 1 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)* and Sections 52 and 61 of the *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003)*. The survey also found that 26 out of the respondents (41%) disagreed with the claim that administrative appointments are made solely on the basis of merit rather than political connection. This shows that the Municipality's hiring and selection procedures are opaque and give rise to conjecture that administrative appointments are made without consideration for merit-based evaluations.

An interview was done to determine the status of political interference in the Municipality, it was discovered found that participants believed that influencing administrative decisions, such as forwarding a service provider to be appointed through procurement processes or any other decision which is legislatively delegated to administration constitute political interference. The study revealed that political interference involves councillors interfering with decision-making in municipal administrative matters, such as the use of municipal funds. The study further showed that political interference in administration encompasses the inappropriate involvement of politicians in the daily operations and decision-making methods of the Municipality, which can be prevented with the establishment of clear guidelines and procedures for decision-making and ensuring transparency and accountability.

The researcher noted the concurrence of participants that the practice of political interference diminishes the expertise of managers since they cannot make decisions independently. The findings showed that political interference undermines service delivery to communities as it keeps politicians and managers fighting instead to attending to local community needs. Lastly, the researcher concluded that political interference reduces managers to officials who are incapable of making administrative decisions, and whose expertise is validated by politicians, and this practice happens to control tender administration, recruitment and selection, and financial administration.

5.3.2 Findings on the challenges experienced by senior managers on the performance of functions because of political interference.

The second study objective was to identify challenges experienced by senior managers in the performance of their functions because of political interference. According to the survey, 25 (40%) of the respondents said that political appointments had little impact on the Municipality's operations or programs. In spite of changing political appointments, this demonstrates that the Municipality has established mechanisms to guarantee the continuation of municipal activities. According to the findings, the majority of respondents (53, or 84%) agreed that political meddling interferes with the Municipality's ability to operate normally. The study further found that 47 (74%) of the respondents believed that the role distinction between politicians and managers is designed to improve the performance of managers. This suggests the need for understanding and upholding the clearly defined roles between municipal councillors and administrators in the Municipality. Despite the understanding of roles between politicians and managers, respondents at 28 (44%) held the belief that there is an overlay of functions between administrators and politicians in the Municipality. The study showed that most respondents at 52 (82%) agreed that political interference is centred around individual enrichment rather than community development. This suggests that political interference seeks to disrupt municipal programs as it is often personalised and does not happen for the benefit of the Municipality.

From the data collected through interviews on the challenges experienced by senior managers on the performance of functions because of political interference, it was found that managers no longer make informed decisions due to political pressures. Administrative decisions are often politically influenced undermine the effectiveness of management processes and promote unprofessionalism. The study found that political interference mainly targets procurement processes which leads to non-compliance with relevant financial management prescripts. The study also found that political interference renders municipal policies and applicable guidelines useless as managers make decisions to please political leaders at the expense of following proper administrative processes.

The researcher found that politicians should not be involved in administrative matters as it will result in instability. Participants believed that the term politicians does not allow them to meddle in administrative issues and that they should only focus on providing political direction. The researcher also found that politicians only have a duty to set and clarify policies and priorities of the Municipality and should allow managers to manage administrative matters. The study findings confirmed that political interference deprives communities of service delivery and undermines management expertise within the Municipality. Finally, the study concluded that the challenges that are brought by political interference in administration are broad and limit management expertise which leads to a corrupt administrative arm whose focus turns to serve the interests of politicians at the expense of the community.

5.3.3 Findings on the effect of the challenges on the performance of senior managers within the Municipality

A large majority of the respondents, 35 (55%) agreed that municipal officials base their decisions more on technical than political criteria. This was the third study objective, which assessed the impact of the challenges on the performance of senior managers within the Municipality. Additionally, the researcher discovered that the majority of 54 respondents (86%) said that political meddling, which is unsupported by any statute, compromises the legislative frameworks that apply to local government. It was also revealed that the majority of respondents at 51 (81%) agreed that administrative skills and accountability are compromised by political meddling. This finding affirms that administrative officials are not free to make administrative decisions using their expert judgment in a highly politicised environment. The research also found that 37 (59%) of the respondents believed that local government officials are free to raise issues that are prompted by political interference; however, the Municipality has a duty to ensure that its internal reporting systems are free from political influence. Data collected found that 34 (54%) of the respondents concurred that there is a free environment for local government officials to criticize politicians who would like to hijack municipal programs for personal benefit.

From the data gathered through interviews on the third objective of the study, it was found that politicians should only be involved in terms of policy formulation and approval, and oversight of policy implementation. However, oversight should not be translated to daily administrative matters so that managers still maintain their professional expertise. The study found that politicians need to understand their role in the Municipality, respect boundaries and allow managers to perform their tasks as they have been employed based on expertise. The study also found that political interference reduces the level of trust between politicians and managers, and often creates an environment where management decisions are affected by workplace tensions, hence the need for relationship-building workshops between politicians and managers. The data further showed that the relationship between politicians and managers should be characterised by open communication and respect for one another as this will give managers room to make administrative decisions without fear and such decisions would be made for the benefit of the communities they serve, not politicians.

5.3.4 Findings on the strategies that can be used by senior managers to thrive in their duties amidst political interference.

The fourth and final objective of the study was to recommend strategies that can be used by senior managers to thrive in their duties amidst political interference, the findings showed that 48 (77%) of the respondents believed that the Municipality has policies and strategies in place to address political interference. The study found that most of the respondents at 58 (92%) were in agreement with the statement that managers should have strategies to manage perceived political interference in administration. This means that managers should still be able to perform despite political interference and still produce expected results. It was also found that 53 (84%) of the respondents agreed that managers should maintain political neutrality when dealing with the programs of the Municipality. This suggests that municipal programs would be implemented in line with the approved IDP as their implementation would not be politically biased. The study revealed that most respondents at 56 (88%) agreed that political leadership should be regularly updated about the progress of municipal programs to avoid undue political interference. This regular reporting would minimize the need for politicians to

meddle in administration as they would be aware of how municipal programs are progressing. The researcher also found that 35 (56%) of the respondents believed that the Municipality is open and transparent on issues that may be seen as political interference.

From the data collected through interviews, it was found that cadre deployment weakens the work of administration, and attainment of objectives, and reduces public trust. Participants indicated the need for continuous training of politicians to better understand their roles and avoid undue political interference as it results in unwanted outcomes. The study found that there are a number of issues to be addressed as they are always at the centre of political interference, and these include amongst others: cadre deployment, tender administration, recruitment and selection processes, allocation of municipal houses, and maladministration. The study found that administrative staff should be prevented from holding political office or actively participating in political party structures.

It was also found that an open-minded approach towards political interference should be adopted and viewed as an opportunity to engage on service delivery issues. The researcher found that both administrators and politicians have a role to play in ensuring that legislative requirements and municipal policies are always followed to encourage ethical environment in the Municipality. The study also found that managers should have a firm focus on transparency and accountability by being transparent in decision-making processes, communicating openly, and establishing clear accountability mechanisms to demonstrate that decisions are made in a fair manner. It was also found that managers should have a thorough understanding of the roles of politicians to avoid being forced to do unethical and corrupt activities. Finally, the study also found that politicians and managers should not disregard relevant prescripts that guide their relationship in order to maintain a political interference-free administration.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study's conclusions regarding the level of political interference in Greater Giyani Local Municipality, the difficulties senior managers face in carrying out their responsibilities due to political interference, the impact of these difficulties on senior managers' performance within the Municipality, and the tactics senior managers can employ to succeed in their roles in the face of political interference are all included in this section. These suggestions may still be used in other organizations that face similar difficulties, but they are intended to address the impact of political meddling on the performance of senior managers in local government.

5.4.1 Recommendation on the status of political interference in Greater Giyani Local Municipality

The researcher suggests that the Municipality keep up its initiatives to educate the public about how the Municipality operates. These initiatives include imbizos, which are organized by the mayor's office and bring together different ministries, including the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), and the South African Police Service (SAPS), to offer services to communities. This helps raise community members' understanding and, to a certain degree, explains the function of municipal political office holders. In order to help prevent political meddling, it is also advised that the Municipality's governance be improved by adhering to local laws and regulations.

The study recommends that the Municipality should organise regular training workshops between politicians and senior managers in order to improve their professionalism and promote collaborative engagements. The study recommends that politicians should receive an extensive induction when they assume office, where their roles will be central to the discussions. The study further recommends that the demographics of the Municipality's workforce should be representative of all community members regardless of their political affiliation. Through this recommendation, the researcher implores the Municipality to ensure compliance with recruitment and selection policies by recruiting staff based on qualifications,

experience, skills, and expertise rather than appointment on the basis of political affiliation.

5.4.2 Recommendation on the challenges experienced by senior managers in the performance of their functions because of political interference.

It is recommended that the Municipality have a smooth handover process to ensure a smooth transition from one politician to the other to avoid disruptions in terms of municipal programs that are already in the implementation stage. To avoid excessive political meddling and to support the regular operation of the Municipality in the delivery of essential services, political officials are advised to fulfill their duties and responsibilities as outlined in section 52 of the *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003)*. The study suggests that the Municipality set clear rules and procedures for decision-making and guaranteeing answerability and openness to avoid political meddling in administration. It is acknowledged that politicians may not feel the need to meddle in the operations of government if they are kept informed about the advancements and progress of municipal projects.

The study recommends that the functions between politicians and managers should be distinctly defined to eliminate all elements of ambiguity, as well as ensure that these roles are complementary, instead of contradictory since politicians and managers will continue to operate within the same environment for the foreseeable future. The study further recommends that politicians should uphold the provisions of the MFMA and Municipal Systems Act in terms of the roles assigned to politicians and ensure that no overlap tempers with management expertise. Politicians should always be cautious and avoid political overreach when collaborating with administrators. The researcher recommends that politicians should consider providing political direction to the Municipality and let the administration be run by qualified personnel without undue interference. The researcher further endorses that the Municipality should have a policy in place that allows managers to conduct lifestyle audits for politicians and senior officials to ensure that there are no kickbacks that councillors and senior officials receive through tender administration processes since political interference is centred around individual enrichment.

5.4.3 Recommendation on the effect of the challenges on the performance of senior managers within the Municipality.

It is recommended in this study that the Municipality tighten the recruitment and selection process for senior managers so that they are able to stand firm and make decisions that are technically sound even with undue political interference. This will assist the Municipality in delivering on programs approved by the IDP and avoid unnecessary financial misconduct that happens due to decisions that favour politicians instead of the electorate. The study recommends that the Municipality establish anonymous reporting channels for managers to report politicians who disregard municipal legislative frameworks and unduly interfere with administrative decisions for their own benefit. Reported politicians should be subjected to disciplinary processes and be barred from actively participating in politics as they use their political power to enrich themselves instead of the community they serve. This should send a message to other elected officials and those aspiring to occupy political positions in municipalities that they should be able to uphold local government legislations and allow the administration to function independently of improper political interference.

The study recommends that the Municipality develops policies that ensure the protection of administrative officials who boldly make decisions that represent management expertise and disregard political influence that is not for the benefit of the Municipality. It is recommended in this study that municipal officials be protected and encouraged to raise issues that are prompted by the prevalent political interference. This should be done with the view to uprooting undue political interference in the Municipality and ensuring that political officials only collaborate with administrative officials instead of interfering with how the administration is run.

5.4.4 Recommendation on strategies that can be used by senior managers to thrive in their duties amidst political interference.

The study recommends that the Municipality should promote collaboration between politicians and managers through workshops on relationship building and role clarification to avoid tensions that become hindrances to service delivery. The study

further recommends that managers should consider training workshops on emotional intelligence and management courses that will capacitate them to know how to deal with undue political interference without compromising the capability of the Municipality to deliver services. The Municipality should have enforceable policies that prevent political officials from improperly influencing administrative decisions for individual and political party benefit.

The study recommends that administrative officials be appointed only based on expertise so that they can maintain political neutrality when performing administrative functions. The researcher also recommends that managers should provide extensive periodic reports to political officials so that they have first-hand information regarding the progress of municipal projects in order to provide oversight without interference in administration. It is also recommended that managers should be transparent on how decisions are made, such as decisions to appoint a service provider through tender administration and be able to account in instances where decisions taken do not yield results as expected. The study recommends that the Municipality should be intolerant of political interference as it breeds corruption. The Municipality should impose disciplinary measures on political and administrative officials who are found to be enablers of political interference.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The study aimed to investigate the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government and recommend strategies that senior managers can use to thrive amidst political interference in municipal administrative decisions. The study only focused on the Greater Giyani Local Municipality of Mopani District in Limpopo province, South Africa. However, the challenge of political interference is a widespread phenomenon that requires further research across all South African municipalities to have a more standardized approach to ensure management performance. The researcher suggests that similar studies be conducted in all South African municipalities, as well as in the national and provincial governments and State Owned Enterprises (SOE), in order to identify issues and difficulties brought on by political meddling in senior managers' performance. Municipalities, the provincial and federal governments, and state-owned enterprises

will benefit from the results of the studies that will be carried out in order to enhance the manner in which top management and politicians work together to provide services. The red tape involved in granting permission to conduct research utilizing their institutions as case studies should be streamlined by municipalities. The confidentiality of research participants must be protected by future researchers.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was faced with a few limitations that required the researcher's patience to ensure that the aim of the study was realised. These include multiple approvals that the researcher had to obtain before collecting data, such as applying for ethical clearance from the Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) of the office of the premier and approval to collect data from the Municipality. These approval requests caused significant delays to the timelines of the research study. The other challenge was the distribution of questionnaires to municipal employees and councillors as the Training and Development unit of the Municipality wanted to coordinate the process and was not time-sensitive. However, the researcher made use of contacts already at the employ of the Municipality to assist in facilitating the distribution and collection of questionnaires to avoid unnecessary delays.

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

This study was about the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government: a case of the Greater Giyani Local Municipality. The first chapter of the study presented the introduction and background, problem statement, study's aim, study objectives, research questions that had to be answered, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, and definition of operational concepts as well as the organisation of the study. The objectives of the study were to establish an overview of the state of political interference in Greater Giyani Local Municipality; to identify challenges experienced by senior managers in the performance of functions because of political interference; to evaluate the effect of the challenges on the performance of senior managers within the Municipality; and to recommend strategies that senior managers can use to thrive in their duties amidst political interference. The study was conducted to assist senior managers

with strategies to ensure continuous performance even with pressures from political officials. This would mean that municipal programs would continue uninterrupted despite political pressures and changes in municipal political office bearers.

In the second chapter, the researcher discussed a literature review on the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government. The researcher discussed the theoretical framework and adopted the bureaucratic politics theory which was also discussed with reasons for its adoption. As part of the reviewed literature, the researcher discussed legislative frameworks applicable to the South African local government; the context of local government; politicisation of administration in local government; local government politics-administrative interface; roles and responsibilities of appointed officials; roles and responsibilities of elected officials; local government administrative reform; contextualizing political interference in local government; models of politics-administration relationships; politics-administration models; competencies of senior managers; the connection between politicians and management in local government; cadre deployment and municipal performance; cadre deployment and governance in local government; forms of accountability in municipalities; managing political-administrative interface within local government for effective service delivery; performance management within politics-administrative interface; politics-administration relations and role distinction in local government; and challenges associated with political interference in administration.

The third chapter discussed the research paradigm, and the researcher applied the pragmatic research paradigm as it allowed the use of a mixed methods approach. The researcher presented the research methodology that was used in the study wherein a mixed methods approach was used through the integration of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The researcher used a complementarity approach in employing a mixed methods approach due to its usefulness when using direct observations or interviews to complement the findings from the questionnaire. The researcher used the Greater Giyani Local Municipality as a case study and selected participants who, by their position, would have information about the topic under investigation. Participants were chosen for this study using non-probability sampling in its two variations, purposive sampling and

snowball sampling. Two ways of gathering data were employed by the researcher: questionnaires and interviews. In this study, two approaches of data analysis were employed: theme analysis for qualitative data and statistical analysis for quantitative data. Informed consent, voluntary involvement, anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy are among the ethical issues that were taken into account in this study. The researcher also had to make sure that contributors were protected by adhering to ethical principles to obtain their consent to participate.

A purposive sample of community residents, ward council members, traditional leaders, and Municipality employees who understood the research topic comprised the study's sample. In Chapter 3, the researcher described the descriptive research design, research methodology, study region, study population, sampling, data collecting, analysis, and ethical considerations that needed to be made in order to ensure the safety of volunteers.

Chapter four presented, interpreted, and analysed data collected from the sampled participants focusing on their responses on the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government. The researcher provided an analysis that made collected data comprehensible by presenting quantitative data using pie charts with a brief synthesis that depicts the number of respondents and their percentages from the total sample to get an understanding of a more conclusive finding on the objectives of the study. Qualitative data was presented in narrative form using participants' exact words to portray the authenticity of data followed by a synthesis of the findings of qualitative data that complement the findings of quantitative data. Chapter four was divided into two parts, namely, the analysis of data collected through a questionnaire consisting of two sub-parts, which are demographic data of the respondents and responses to the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government and the analysis of data gathered through interviews.

Chapter Five, the study's last chapter, included findings, suggestions, and conclusions. The study's findings stem from its goals, which included providing an overview of the level of political interference in the Greater Giyani Local Municipality, identifying the difficulties senior managers face in carrying out their duties due to

political interference, assessing the impact of these difficulties on senior managers' performance, and suggesting tactics that senior managers can employ to succeed in their roles in the face of political interference. The study's recommendations were given for each goal to help address the present issues caused by political meddling in senior managers' performance. The researcher concluded the study on the impact of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government and offered suggestions for further research in the final chapter, as this study does not cover all potential issues arising from political meddling in local government.

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Annexure A

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30 January 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

Subject: Confirmation of Editing Services for Mr. A.L. Makaringe's Dissertation

I am writing to formally confirm that I have provided professional editing services for Mr. A.L. Makaringe's dissertation titled: **The Effect of Political Interference on the Performance of Senior Managers in Local Government: a case of Greater Giyani Local Municipality**. The editing process was comprehensive and rigorous, ensuring the document met high academic and technical standards.

The editing services included the following:

- a) **Technical Editing**
- b) **Language and Grammar Editing**
- c) **Proofreading**

Throughout the editing process, I maintained the original meaning and intent of Mr. Makaringe's work while ensuring the dissertation adhered to the highest standards of academic writing.

If you require any further information or clarification regarding the editing process, please do not hesitate to contact me at nbmakhuvele@yahoo.com or 078 219 6008.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



N.B. Makhuvele

A member of the Professional Editor's Guild

Annexure B



University of Venda

OFFICE OF THE DVC: RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

TO : MR/MS L.A MAKARINGI
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT, COMMERCE AND LAW

FROM: PROF. N.N FEZA
DVC: RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

DATE : 08 OCTOBER 2024

DECISIONS TAKEN BY UHDC OF 08TH OCTOBER 2024

Application for approval of Masters Proposal Evaluation Report in the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law: L.A Makaringi (23020908)

Topic: "The Effect of Political Interference on the Performance of Senior Managers in Local Government: A Case of the Greater Giyani Local Municipality."

Supervisor
Co-Supervisor

UNIVEN
UNIVEN

Dr. M.M Nekhavhame
Dr. S.T Matloga

UHDC approved the Masters Proposal



PROF. N.N FEZA
DVC: RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

FMCL/24/PDN/03

Annexure C

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mr LA Makaringi

STUDENT NO:
23020908

PROJECT TITLE: The effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government: A case of the greater Giyani Local Municipality.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: FMCL/24/PDN/03/1403

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr MM Nekhavhambe	UNIVEN, Public and development administration	Supervisor
Dr ST Malloga	UNIVEN, Public and development administration	Co-supervisor
Mr LA Makaringi	UNIVEN, Public and development administration	Investigator – Student

Type: **Masters Research**

Risk: **Minimal risk to humans, animals, or environment (Category 2)**

Approval Period: **March 2024 – March 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 deviation 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: March 2024

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

Signature




CONFIDENTIAL



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

Office of the Premier

Research and Development Directorate

Private Bag X9483, Polokwane, 0700, South Africa

Tel: (015) 230 9910, Email: mokobij@premier.limpopo.gov.za

**LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

Review Date: 26 June 2024

Project Number: LPREC/42/2024: PG

**Subject: The Effects of Political Interference on the Performance of Senior Managers in
Local Government: A case of Greater Giyani Local Municipality**

Researcher: Makaringi LA

Chairperson: Prof I Swarts



Date: 04 July 2024

Chairperson: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee

The Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) is registered with National Health Research Council (NHREC) Registration Number **REC-111513-038**.

Note:

- i. This study is categorized as a Low Risk Level in accordance with risk level descriptors as enshrined in LPREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- ii. Should there be any amendment to the approved research proposal; the researcher(s) must re-submit the proposal to the ethics committee for review prior data collection.
- iii. The researcher(s) must provide annual reporting to the committee as well as the relevant department and also provide the department with the final report/thesis.
- iv. The ethical clearance certificate is valid for 12 months. Should the need to extend the period for data collection arise then the researcher should renew the certificate through LPREC secretariat. PLEASE QUOTE THE PROJECT NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.



GREATER GIYANI MUNICIPALITY

Tel: 015 811 5500
Fax: 015 812 2068

P/Bag X 9559
Giyani
0826

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER

Ref : 4/4/2/3
Enq : Baloyi Y.N
Date : 16/07/2024

Makaringi L.A
2962 Risinga View
Giyani
0826

**SUBJECT: REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN GREATER GIYANI MUNICIPALITY:
YOURSELF**

1. The above matter refers.
2. With reference to the approval to your request to conduct research by the Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC).
3. Kindly be informed that your request for go-ahead with the collection of data has been granted.
4. Further note that you will report to office No 56, 2nd Floor Human Resources Development, Municipal offices on the 19th of July 2024, 07H00.

Regards,



**MR KHOZA V.D
MUNICIPAL MANAGER**

Annexure F

LETTER TO THE RESPONDENTS

Enquiry: Makaringi LA

Cell : 0783786174

Email : looksharpkateka@gmail.com

2962 Risinga View

Giyani 0826

10 April 2024

Dear Sir or Madam

I, Makaringi Looksharp Amukelani, am a student at the University of Venda, registered for Master of Administration (MADMIN), Department of Public and Development Administration, Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law. I am conducting research on *“The effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government: a case of the Greater Giyani Local Municipality”*.

I humbly request that you be part of the study by providing your understanding of the research topic as written above. The information that you will provide will be used solely for the purpose of this study. Through your participation I hope to analyse how political interference affect the performance of senior managers in municipal administrative decisions. Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this research project.

It should take you about 10 - 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. I hope you will take the time to complete the questionnaire.

Sincerely



Makaringi LA (Researcher)
Student Number: 23020908

This page is to be retained by participant.

Annexure G

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT, COMMERCE AND LAW
Department of Public and Development Administration

Master of Administration Research Project

Researcher: LA Makaringi (078 378 6174)

Supervisor: Dr MM Nekhavhambe (072 993 4665)

Research Office: Ms V Khoza (015 962 9058)

CONSENT

I _____ (full names of participant)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project,
and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw
from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of Participant

Date

This page is to be retained by researcher.

Annexure H

INSTRUMENT – QUESTIONNAIRE

THE EFFECT OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR MANAGERS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CASE OF THE GREATER GIYANI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

This study focuses on the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government: a case of the Greater Giyani Local Municipality. I humbly request you to be part of the study by providing your perspective on the topic under investigation. Note that there is no right or wrong answer. Please put a cross where you feel it is appropriate.

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION OF RESPONDENT

1. Gender of respondent

Male	1
Female	2

2. Age of respondent

Less than 21 years	1
22 to 30 years	2
31 to 40 years	3
41 to 50 years	4
51 years and above	5

3. Category of respondent

Municipal Manager	1
Spokesperson	2
Managers	3
Traditional leaders	4
Municipal employees	5
Ward councillors	6
Community members	7

4. Level of qualification of respondent

National senior certificate (Grade 12) and below	1
Bachelor's degree / National diploma	2
Honors degree / B-Tech	3
Master's degree / M-Tech	4
Doctoral degree / D-Tech	5

SECTION B: THE EFFECT OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The following statements reflect perceptions regarding the involvement of political leaders/ councillors in administrative issues in a local municipality. To what extent would you agree or disagree with these statements.

Item No. 1	The status of political interference in Greater Giyani Local Municipality	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.	I am aware of the political and administrative functionality in my municipality	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The current political leadership and administration have established a fully functional governance system that leaves no room for political interference in administration	1	2	3	4	5
7.	There is proper political and administrative relations in the municipality which enhance the performance of managers	1	2	3	4	5
8.	There is a clear separation between political and administrative roles in the municipality	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Administrative appointments are purely based on merit and not political affiliation	1	2	3	4	5

Item No. 2	Challenges experienced by managers in the performance of their functions because of political interference	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.	Political appointments have no bearing on the programs and functioning of the municipality	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Political interference disrupts the normal functioning of the municipality	1	2	3	4	5
12.	The separation of roles between politicians and managers is designed to enhance the performance of managers	1	2	3	4	5
13.	There is an overlap of roles between politicians and administration in the municipality	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Political interference is centered around individual enrichment rather than community enrichment	1	2	3	4	5

Item No. 3	The effects of the challenges in the performance of managers within the Municipality	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15.	Local government officials base their decisions on technical criteria rather than on political criteria	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Political interference undermines legislative frameworks applicable to local government	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Political interference compromises administrative expertise and accountability	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Local government officials are free to raise issues that are prompted by the prevalent political interference	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Local government officials are free to criticize politicians who would like to hijack municipal programs for their own	1	2	3	4	5

Item No. 4	Strategies to enhance management performance amidst political interference	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20.	The municipality has policies and strategies in place to address political interference	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Managers should have strategies to manage perceived political interference in administration	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Managers should maintain political neutrality when dealing with the programs of the municipality	1	2	3	4	5
23.	The political leadership should be kept updated on the progress of municipal programs to avoid undue political interference	1	2	3	4	5
24.	There is openness and transparency in the municipality on issues that may be seen as political interference	1	2	3	4	5

“Thank you for your participation”.

Annexure I

INSTRUMENT – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

THE EFFECT OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR MANAGERS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CASE OF THE GREATER GIYANI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

This study focuses on the effect of political interference on the performance of senior managers in local government: a case of the Greater Giyani Local Municipality. I humbly request you to be part of the study by providing your perspective on the topic under investigation. Note that there is no right or wrong answer. Please put a cross where you feel it is appropriate and answer the questions that follow:

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANT

1. Gender of participant

Male	1
Female	2

2. Age of participant

Less than 21 years	1
22 to 30 years	2
31 to 40 years	3
41 to 50 years	4
51 years and above	5

3. Category of participant

Municipal Manager	1
Spokesperson	2
Managers	3
Traditional leaders	4
Municipal employees	5
Ward councillors	6
Community members	7

4. Level of qualification of participant

National senior certificate (Grade 12) and below	1
Bachelor's degree / National diploma	2
Honors degree / B-Tech	3
Master's degree / M-Tech	4
Doctoral degree / D-Tech	5

SECTION B: THE EFFECT OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

5. What is your understanding of political interference in administration?

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6. In your view, how does political interference affect the performance of managers?

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7. Do you think politicians should be involved in administration matters of the municipality?
Please support your answer.

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8. To what extent should politicians be involved in matters of administration of the municipality?

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9. In your view, how should the relationship between politicians and managers be managed to enhance management performance?

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10. Do you have any other issues that you think need addressing in terms of political interference in municipalities?

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11. What are the strategies that can be used by managers to thrive in an environment where political interference is rife?

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“Thank you for your contribution”.

Annexure J

