



**ASIAN TIGERS MODEL AS A STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE IN
SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE OF THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

BY

MULAUDZI WITNES

STUDENT NUMBER: 20019619

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UNIVERSITY OF VENDA**

Supervisor: Dr. E. Maemu

Co-Supervisor: Dr. H.E. Zitha

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DECLARATION

I, Mulaudzi Witnes of student number. 20019619, declare that this dissertation 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 submitted previously for any degree at this or another university. It is original in design and execution, and all reference material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

MULAUDZI W

DATE 23/01/2025

STUDENT NUMBER: 20019619

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Mr. Ntavhanyeni Michael Khorombi, who passed away on March 5, 2024. His love and dedication to hard work will always inspire me. I also dedicate this work to my entire family for their care and support throughout my journey. This achievement honors my father and expresses my gratitude to my family for always believing in me.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to evaluate the Asian Tigers Model as a strategy to achieve a developmental state in South Africa, with specific reference to Thulamela Local Municipality. The term "Asian Tigers" refers to East Asian countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, China, and Singapore, which achieved rapid economic growth and industrialization from the 1960s onwards. These nations implemented key elements of the Asian Tigers Model, including export-oriented industrialization, strong government intervention, investment in education and technology, and strategic trade policies. By examining the historical context and unique challenges facing South Africa, this study aimed to evaluate the applicability of the Asian Tigers Model to South Africa's development trajectory. The analysis considered the potential benefits, challenges, and adaptations necessary for successful implementation, highlighting lessons learned and policy implications for fostering sustainable economic development in South Africa. In this study, the researcher employed a mixed research methodology, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The motive behind using the mixed method was to enhance validity by providing deeper understanding through qualitative insights and broader coverage via quantitative data, resulting in more comprehensive and reliable conclusions. To achieve the study's objectives, non-probability sampling and its sub-type, purposive sampling, were used by the researcher to select samples. For data collection, two methods were employed: a structured questionnaire and interviews. The data collected through the structured questionnaire were analysed and presented in graphical tabular form, frequencies, and percentages, while the data collected via interviews were analysed and presented in a narrative form. This study aimed to offer a nuanced understanding of how the Asian Tigers Model can be adapted and applied to promote sustainable economic development in South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality.

The major findings of the study are:

- Key principles of a developmental state include export-oriented industrialization, investment in education, public-private collaboration, and government intervention.
- Key factors for adopting the Asian Tigers model in Thulamela Local Municipality include strong governance, political stability, human capital, social cohesion, and inclusivity.
- The study found that Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution to a developmental state is affected by local government capacity and economic inequality.

- The collaboration between Thulamela Local Municipality's governance and developmental state imperatives includes strategic planning, human capital development, public-private partnerships, and social cohesion.
- Thulamela Local Municipality's development depends on aligning education with economic needs, enhancing governance, and ensuring sustainable and inclusive initiatives.

Recommendations of the study are:

- The study recommends the Adaptive Growth Framework model, emphasizing centralized governance, strategic infrastructure development, and strong public-private partnerships, with a focus on environmental sustainability.
- It is recommended that Thulamela Local Municipality prioritize strong governance, political stability, human capital, social cohesion, and inclusivity to effectively adapt the Asian Tigers model for sustainable development.
- The study recommends that South Africa must empower the national government to meet developmental state criteria.
- Thulamela Local Municipality should enhance collaboration through effective governance, public-private partnerships, and strategic planning to achieve developmental state goals.
- The study recommends that Thulamela Local Municipality prioritize aligning education with economic needs, enhance governance, and implement sustainable development initiatives.

Keywords: Asian Tigers Model, Development, State, Developmental State, South Africa, Municipality

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGF	Adaptative Growth Framework
ANC	African National Congress
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CDW	Community Development Workers
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
EDP	Economic Development Board
EOI	Export-Oriented Industrialization
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
IPAP	Industrial Policy Action Plan
KAIST	Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology
LED	Local Economic Development
MICI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
NDP	National Development Plan
NEDLAC	National Economic and Development Labour Council
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
R&D	Research and Development
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SMMEs	Small, Medium, and micro enterprises
SANCO	South African National Civic Organization
SEZs	Special Economic Zones
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the Asian Tigers Model as a strategy to achieve a developmental state in South Africa. The concept of 'Asian Tigers' refers to countries such as China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. Gumede (2018: 130) asserts that these Asian Tigers have stood as exemplary models of developmental states, orchestrating remarkable economic growth over recent years. However, the development pattern of these states is not entirely unique. According to Gumede (2019: 5), China's economy was the first to undergo industrialization with the development of the textile industry in the 1950s. Singapore's independence from Malaysia led to the formulation and implementation of national economic strategies aimed at promoting the country's manufacturing sector. This attracted foreign investments. Meanwhile, South Korea and Taiwan began industrializing in the mid-1960s, with strong government intervention through initiatives and policies (Gumede, 2019: 7).

The perspective of the developmental state has stirred considerable controversy, with Marxist critiques of the capitalist model being a prominent source of contention. According to Marxist theory, the developmental state is perceived as favouring the capitalist while neglecting the interests of the lower class. In contrast, Kelecha (2023: 4) posits that the developmental state can be understood through two key factors: ideological and structural. The ideological aspect emphasizes the state's focus on predetermined developmental goals and objectives, aimed at fostering economic growth and stability. Meanwhile, the structural dimension highlights the state's capacity for adaptability allowing growth and development. As Kelecha (2023: 4) asserts, a developmental state is expected to align with its inherent nature of promoting and achieving development.

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The developmental state idea first appeared in East Asia in the latter half of the 20th century, specifically in the 1960s and 1970s, as noted by Dassah (2011: 590). Molokwane, Mokoloba, and Motshegwa (2020: 231) argue that nations like South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Singapore made significant strides by implementing focused industrial policies, distributing state resources strategically, and encouraging close cooperation between the public and private sectors. Gumede (2019) contends that the four Asian Tigers are the ideal illustration of a developing state. According to Signh and Ovadia (2018: 1033), these countries were seen as developing nations in the 1960s. They further mention that a new international peace following World War II and the Korean War made it possible for globalization to take off.

Advances in technology, such as communications and air transport, facilitated a surge in international trade. The conditions were perfect for these nations to seize new opportunities for economic expansion and advancement. A period of extraordinary prosperity was made possible by investments in industry, tax breaks, and high-quality education, all of which had their advantages and disadvantages (Singh & Ovadia, 2018: 1034). Wade (2018: 519–535) indicates that the average GDP of these nations increased gradually between 1960 and 1995, achieving nearly 6% annual growth. This sustained growth rate was the foundation for each nation's success in becoming newly industrialized economies and, eventually, fully developed nations.

Mathebula (2016:48) states that a state is considered developmental when it channels administrative and political resources towards economic advancement. Chalmers Johnson first proposed the concept of a developmental state in 1982, where states influence the pace and direction of development (Mathebula, 2016: 49). Gumede (2019) emphasizes that development should involve the people seeking it, who should have the power to drive development aligned with their needs and demands. Gumede (2019: 9) also notes that developmental states prioritize long-term vision, investing in education, research, and infrastructure to drive innovation and technological advancement. Additionally, some countries leverage international trade to fuel economic expansion and address social inequalities through welfare programs and equitable development policies (Gumede, 2019: 10). This export-oriented growth strategy helps countries achieve sustainable prosperity, resilience against external shocks, and promotes social cohesion. Consequently, many countries aspire to adopt a developmental approach to economic growth, underscoring the enduring relevance of this model in contemporary global economic discourse.

The Thulamela Local Municipality in South Africa serves as the focal point of this study, which seeks to address and understand the challenges associated with implementing the Asian Tigers' developmental state model. Chauke (2021: 10) notes that South Africa's history is complex, characterized by periods of apartheid, political transitions, and ongoing efforts towards economic development and social equity. Moji, Nhede, and Masiya (2022) assert that when the ANC government inherited the country, it was plagued by inequality, widespread poverty, and scarce employment opportunities. Over the years, the Asian Tigers have been globally acknowledged for their remarkable economic transformations, strategically employing a developmental state model characterized by strong government intervention in economic affairs, strategic industrial policies, and a focus on export-led growth.

Tshishonga and de Vries (2011: 62) mention that South Africa needs careful consideration in adopting the Asian Tigers Model, as its adaptability must align with the unique characteristics of the country. Historically, Taylor (2023) asserts that South Africa has encountered challenges in infrastructure development, access to education, healthcare, and economic inequalities among its communities. These issues impact the search for strategies that can be suitable for the country's economic growth and social progress. As South Africa explores the Asian Tigers' developmental state model, it is vital to assess how this internationally renowned model can be successfully aligned with the local needs, values, and challenges inherent to South Africa.

This study seeks to evaluate the Asian Tigers Model as a strategy to achieve a developmental state in South Africa, with specific reference to Thulamela Local Municipality. The Asian Tigers refers to East Asian countries (South Korea, Taiwan, China, & Singapore) that achieved rapid economic growth and industrialization from the 1960s onwards. The study will explore key elements of this model, including export-oriented industrialization, strong government intervention, investment in education and technology, and strategic trade policies. By examining the historical context and unique challenges facing South Africa, the study will evaluate the applicability of this model to South Africa's development trajectory. The analysis will consider the potential benefits, challenges, and adaptations necessary for successful implementation, highlighting lessons learned and policy implications for fostering sustainable economic development in South Africa

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The classification of South Africa as a developmental state is a topic of considerable debate within academic, policy, and public spheres, as noted by Gumede (2019). Scholars hold divergent views on the matter: some argue that South Africa fully qualifies as a developmental state, others believe it only partially aligns with such a model, while many disputes the classification altogether. This controversy arises from numerous factors, including institutional weaknesses, policy inconsistencies, and ongoing socio-economic challenges. According to Mohale (2019), the absence of consensus regarding South Africa's developmental state status undermines the country's ability to implement effective policies, thereby impeding its progress toward sustainable economic growth and social development. Addressing this issue requires a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between historical legacies, political dynamics, and economic imperatives.

Although South Africa has made economic strides over the years, it continues to face major development challenges, especially in rural municipalities like Thulamela. Persistent issues

such as inequality, unemployment, and inadequate infrastructure obstruct sustainable growth and socio-economic advancement in these areas. Therefore, a targeted and effective development strategy tailored specifically to the needs of Thulamela Local Municipality is essential. Vilakazi and Moore (2023) point out that the Asian Tigers Model, marked by rapid industrialization, export-led growth, and strategic state intervention, has been instrumental in transforming East Asian economies into developmental states. However, its applicability and adaptability to the South African context, particularly within the Thulamela Local Municipality, remain underexplored. This gap in the literature highlights a critical area for investigation.

This study aims to explore strategies that can support the realization of a developmental state in South Africa by drawing lessons from the Asian Tigers Model. By evaluating the model's relevance, feasibility, and implications in relation to local conditions, the research seeks to address the specific development challenges of Thulamela Local Municipality. This approach will help bridge the existing knowledge gap by offering insights into how a successful developmental model can be adapted to local realities, thus contributing meaningfully to the broader discourse on South Africa's developmental state trajectory.

1.4. AIM OF THE STUDY

The study aims to evaluate the Asian Tigers model as a strategy for achieving a developmental state in South Africa and to recommend mechanisms tailored to South Africa's circumstances to meet the criteria of a developmental state. The study intends to empirically establish the framework that can assist in the development of all-inclusive strategies to achieve a developmental state in South Africa with specific reference to the Thulamela Local Municipality.

1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In this section, the study outlines its objectives, which aim is to measure its primary goal.

- To analyse the key principles employed by the Asian Tigers (such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, & China) in their successful transition to a developmental state.
- To assess the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality.
- To evaluate factors that may affect the implementation of an Asian Tigers Model-inspired developmental state in South Africa.
- To examine the synergy between the governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and that of the Asian Tigers Model.

- To propose recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government.

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this section, the study outlines the research questions it seeks to answer.

- What are the key principles employed by the Asian Tigers (such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, & China) in their successful transition to a developmental state?
- What factors need to be considered to determine the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state in Thulamela Local Municipality within South Africa's context?
- What are the factors that may affect the implementation of an Asian Tigers Model-inspired developmental state in South Africa?
- What synergies exist between the governance structure of Thulamela Local Municipality and the governance model of the Asian Tigers?
- What are the proposed recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government?

1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The outcomes of this study are poised to play a pivotal role in propelling South Africa towards achieving a developmental state by 2030. By meticulously examining the obstacles impeding the country's progress, the research aims to uncover key challenges hindering South Africa's developmental trajectory. Moreover, it seeks to offer crucial insights into viable strategies that can be employed to overcome these obstacles. The study's significance is underscored by its exploration of successful economic and developmental models from the Asian Tigers. By adapting and implementing proven approaches, South Africa stands to benefit from sustainable growth, robust infrastructure development, and substantial socio-economic progress.

This research not only identifies the hurdles but also presents a roadmap for transformative change, positioning South Africa on a trajectory towards becoming a developmental state by the targeted year of 2030. Studying the Asian Tigers model's applicability to South Africa's developmental goals holds crucial significance in Public Administration. It offers a platform for comparative analysis, enabling insights into effective governance structures and policies. Studying the Asian Tigers model's relevance to South Africa's development goals is crucial in the field of Public Administration. This model provides a basis for comparative analysis, which

helps to gain insights into effective governance structures and policies. The study contributes to understanding the mechanisms of policy transfer and offers practical guidance for policymakers. Additionally, it supports capacity-building efforts within South Africa's public sector. Overall, this research helps South Africa to refine its strategies, improve public administration, and advance its developmental agenda.

The rationale for this study is grounded in the recognition of the remarkable economic and developmental achievements of the Asian Tigers, encompassing rapid industrialization, technological advancements, and overall socio-economic progress. South Africa faces its own set of encounters and prospects in the pursuit of development. By examining the Asian Tigers models, the research seeks to pinpoint key elements such as effective governance structures, investment strategies, educational policies, and innovation ecosystems that have contributed to the success of these nations. Understanding these features may be vital in providing valuable insights into how the South can adapt and implement strategies tailored to its unique circumstances.

1.8. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study strategically narrows its focus to the Thulamela Local Municipality within the Vhembe District Municipality as a microcosm for investigating the applicability of the Asian Tigers' model in achieving a developmental state in South Africa. The Thulamela Municipality, situated within the broader Vhembe District Municipality, serves as the primary research setting due to its unique characteristics and developmental context. The Vhembe District Municipality, comprising four distinct local municipalities—Thulamela, Collins Chabane, Makhado, and Musina—provides a diverse landscape for comprehensive analysis. However, this study intentionally confines its scope to the Thulamela Local Municipality to ensure a focused examination and in-depth understanding of the challenges and opportunities specific to this locale. By delimiting the study to Thulamela, Local Municipality the research aims to derive context-specific insights that can inform targeted strategies for development. This approach ensures a nuanced exploration of the Asian Tigers' model within the confines of a specific geographic and administrative unit, contributing to a more detailed and actionable outcome.

1.9. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

This subsection provides the definitions of operational terms derived from the study topic.

1.9.1. Asian Tigers

According to Sithole (2023), Asian Tigers refers to four East Asian economies known for their rapid industrialization and economic growth in the late 20th century. Asian Tigers can also be

defined as the regions that exhibit significant political influence, military strength, and technological prowess on the global stage (Craig, 2017). The study understands Asian Tigers as four countries in East Asia—China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan—that experienced very fast economic growth starting from the 1960s. They became very wealthy and powerful in a relatively short time, like tigers who are strong and quick. This growth was because they focused on making and selling goods to other countries, invested in education and technology, and had smart economic rules.

1.9.2. Development

Development, as outlined by Abuiyada (2018: 115), is a systematic process aimed at achieving fair social and economic transformation within society. This transformation relies on the establishment of institutionalized social structures and the cultivation of positive attitudes among individuals, all geared towards accelerating growth and eliminating poverty. According to Sharma (2022), the concept of development entails a multifaceted process involving the comprehensive restructuring and reorientation of the entire economic and social system. It is characterized by two fundamental dimensions: balanced development and sustainable development. The researcher conceptualizes development as the enhancement of people's lives, empowerment, attainment of financial freedom, and the reduction of economic disparities.

1.9.3. State

As defined by Ringson (2023: 32), a state refers to a nation or territory considered a political community organized under a single government while Martin and Solomon (2016) define a state as the actions of individuals or groups in the public and private sectors, influencing the formation of laws, regulations, decrees, and other government policies to their advantage. The researcher understands a state as a typically organized body of people living within a defined territory, often with its government and sovereignty.

1.9.4. Developmental State

A developmental state is defined by Bressa-Pereira (2017: 07), as a state characterized by a mixed economy. The developmental state, as conceptualized by Ricks (2020), is a term that encapsulates the intricate network of political, bureaucratic, and financial influences that intricately weave through the economic landscape of capitalist Northeast Asia. The study defines a developmental state as a government actively involved in guiding and influencing its nation's economic development through strategic interventions, long-term planning, and collaboration between the public and private sectors.

1.10. ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This research will be divided into six chapters which are as follows:

1.10.1. Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

This chapter presents the introduction, background of the study, problem statement, aim of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, rationale of the study, delimitation of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the study.

1.10.2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the Asian Tigers models, a comparison with other developmental state strategies, relevant literature on development strategies in South Africa, and gaps in existing research.

1.10.3. Chapter 3: Asian Tigers model and its implications on the context of SA government

This chapter provides a discussion of the theories guiding this research, the application of the Asian Tigers model to the developmental state concept, and the theoretical underpinnings for the case study approach.

1.10.4. Chapter 4: Research Methodology

This chapter provides research paradigms, design, methodology, population of the study, sampling, data collection methods, ethical considerations, and data analysis method.

1.10.5. Chapter 5: Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents, analyses, and interprets collected data.

1.10.6. Chapter 6: Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusion

This chapter provides the major findings of the study, recommendations on the Asian Tigers Models as a strategy to achieve a developmental state in South Africa, and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the study introduced the background and objectives of the research. The objectives include analysing the key principles used by the Asian Tigers (such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, & China) in their successful transition to a developmental state. It also aims to assess the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, focusing on Thulamela Local Municipality. Furthermore, the study seeks to evaluate factors that may affect the implementation of an Asian Tigers Model-inspired developmental state in South Africa, examine the synergy between the governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and the Asian Tigers Model, and propose recommendations to enhance Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government. This chapter focuses on the concept of a developmental state. It begins with an introduction to the concept, outlining the necessary conditions for its success. It discusses the key features and characteristics of a developmental state and explores its application in the South African context. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the challenges and opportunities facing South Africa in its pursuit of a developmental state.

Gumede (2019: 2) asserts that the concept of a developmental state has been crucial to the rapid economic growth observed in several East Asian countries, known as the Asian Tigers. These countries include South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and China which—exhibited remarkable economic performance during the latter half of the 20th century, largely attributed to the effective implementation of developmental state policies. This study aims to extract lessons applicable to South Africa's developmental trajectory by examining the strategies employed by the Asian Tigers. Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 2) mention that one of the primary conditions for the success of a developmental state is the presence of a competent and autonomous bureaucracy that can effectively implement policies. In the case of the Asian Tigers, strong institutions played a pivotal role in facilitating industrialization and economic growth. Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 2-3) further mention that these countries heavily invested in education and skill development, ensuring a steady supply of skilled labour to meet the demands of a growing economy. Replicating this aspect in South Africa would require significant reforms in its educational sector, alongside measures to strengthen institutional frameworks and reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies.

Mulaudzi (2024: 82) asserts that another crucial feature of a developmental state is the establishment of a close and synergistic relationship between the state and the private sector. According to Day (2021: 56), the Asian Tigers exemplified this through strategic government interventions that supported key industries, promoted exports, and fostered innovation. In South Africa, fostering such a relationship would necessitate policies that encourage public-private partnerships, reduce regulatory burdens on businesses, and provide targeted support to emerging industries (Ukwandu, 2019: 43). The government's role in facilitating access to finance, technology, and markets would be instrumental in driving economic transformation. Gumede (2018: 123) indicates that the pursuit of a developmental state in South Africa presents unique challenges and opportunities. On one hand, the country faces issues such as high unemployment rates, economic inequality, and social unrest, which could impede the successful implementation of developmental state policies. On the other hand, South Africa possesses significant natural resources, a relatively diversified economy, and a young population, which could serve as catalysts for growth (Mulaudzi, 2024: 80-92). By leveraging these strengths and addressing the underlying challenges, South Africa has the potential to achieve sustained economic development.

2.2. INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

According to Gumede (2019: 2), the perception of a developmental state commonly arises from the East Asian states' experiences of rapid transitions from poverty and economic backwardness to modernized, technologically advanced industrial economies. Particularly noteworthy are China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, commonly known as the Asian Tigers, sometimes referred to as the Asian Dragons. Gumede (2019: 3) further mentions that these states have been celebrated and used as examples in discussions of developmental states due to their effective utilization of state power to overcome developmental challenges and ensure the achievement of human development goals. It is also argued that the notion of a developmental state has been dominating development dissertations (Gumede, 2018: 124). Mathebula (2016: 51) argues that a state is considered developmental when its socio-political foundations are oriented towards development and when it actively channels administrative and political resources towards economic advancement.

Mathebula (2016: 52) mentions that the notion of the developmental state was proposed by Chalmers Johnson in 1982. According to Johnson (1982), a developmental state refers to a situation where states can influence the pace, direction, and developmental goals, rather than solely relying on uncoordinated market forces to allocate resources within the economy. Furthermore, Gumede (2015) argues that the concept of the developmental state is very complex, as there may not be an agreed-upon definition of this term. Gumede (2019: 9)

emphasizes that it is of paramount importance for development to always involve the people seeking it. People themselves should have the power and means to drive the development they desire, and such development should align with their needs and demands.

Gumede (2018: 16) mentions that in the African context, development often encompasses improvements in the well-being of people. According to Gumede (2019: 11), the developmental state exhibits multiple features, including ideological, institutional, cultural, and socio-economic attributes. The accepted logic, however, is that the concept of the "developmental state" sharply contrasts with neoclassical economics, which has long argued that "state interference" hinders economic growth by disrupting market equilibrium with devastating consequences. Gumede (2019: 21) conclude by stating that although there is no single agreed-upon definition of the developmental state, there is consensus on the conditions necessary for its success, as well as key features and characteristics. Some of these aspects include:

2.2.1. CONDITIONS FOR DEVELOPMENTAL STATE SUCCESS

In most cases, Asian Tigers serve as a guide to other countries on what a developmental state entails. However, several conditions are necessary for successful development:

- **Development-oriented leadership and a clear state development vision.**

Development-oriented leadership and a clear state development vision, according to Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 2), allude to the critical role that leadership plays in advancing a country's developmental agenda. Leaders in a successful developmental state are dedicated to making social advancement, economic growth, and general development their top priorities. Weiss and Thurbon (2020: 13) assert that stated differently, the government assigns priority and accountability to development. For example, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) in Japan and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MICI) in South Korea are state ministries that directly contribute to development. The importance of such planning at a higher level has been reinforced by conglomerates' successful outcomes (Weiss & Thurbon 2020, 14).

According to Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 4), leaders who prioritize development inspire confidence and trust among stakeholders, investors, and residents, creating a favourable atmosphere for social and economic advancement. They give government agencies, commercial businesses, and civil society organizations direction, advice, and support so they can collaborate to achieve shared developmental objectives. Moreover, these leaders exhibit proactivity in adjusting to dynamic global economic circumstances, technical breakthroughs, and societal demands, guaranteeing that the developmental vision stays pertinent and flexible

in response to altering obstacles and prospects (Riczy, 2018: 35). Ukwandu (2019: 48) mentions that all things considered, the cornerstone and direction of a prosperous developmental state must be laid by development-oriented leadership with a distinct state development vision.

Kim (2021: 46) states that the leadership focused on development and a clear vision for state development in the Asian Tigers (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and China) have been crucial to their success in achieving rapid industrialization and economic growth. Kim (2021: 47) further mentions that these countries implemented long-term economic plans that emphasized export-driven growth and were supported by strong governance and collaboration between the public and private sectors. For instance, South Korea's Five-Year Economic Plans played a key role in guiding industrial policy and infrastructure development, ensuring that government actions were aligned with economic objectives.

In contrast, Thulamela Local Municipality in South Africa is encountering numerous developmental challenges, including poor governance, corruption, and the lack of a clear long-term vision (Mudzusi, Munzhedzi, & Mahole, 2024: 1-10). Afful and Mudzanani (2016: 47) mention that despite having considerable potential, especially in sectors like agriculture and tourism, Thulamela has not fully capitalized on these opportunities. According to Mashabela (2023: 233), human capital development is also lacking, with the education system struggling to produce the necessary skills to propel local economic growth. To replicate the success of the Asian Tigers, Thulamela needs to enhance governance by improving transparency and accountability, and by formulating a clear and unified development vision. The municipality must also invest in human capital through education and skills development and promote public-private partnerships to boost economic activity in sectors like agriculture and manufacturing. These measures will help create an environment conducive to sustainable development.

- **An autonomous, efficient, and effective bureaucracy.**

According to SaKong and Koh (2010: 11), the government must have the resources and ability to carry out its programs, yet developmentalism requires that resources be paired with some degree of autonomy. Riczy (2018: 33) indicates that an autonomous bureaucracy functions without undue influence or intervention, especially from special interests or political pressure. With autonomy, bureaucrats can decide not just what is politically expedient but also what is meritorious, knowledgeable, and in the public interest. This protects the bureaucracy from whims of the moment politics by guaranteeing consistency and stability in the implementation of policies (Riczy, 2018 :35). It is also important to remember that not all nations are

bureaucratically capable; yet Chang (2015: 40) asserts that with the correct policies regarding training and education, bureaucratic talents of a high calibre can be developed.

Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 2) state that, both directly and indirectly, economic development depends critically on education, if not demand immediate attention. This is because, whereas education directly boosts human resources and advances technology, it also indirectly promotes social cohesiveness, institution-building, and improved social mobility for all socioeconomic groups. To establish a developmental state with an autonomous, efficient, and effective bureaucracy, South Africa can take inspiration from the success of the Asian Tigers—South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and China. These countries developed bureaucratic systems that operated independently from political influence, enabling long-term planning and the implementation of industrial policies (Day, 2021: 55). Bresser-Pereira (2017: 681) asserts that the state implemented a merit-based system for civil service recruitment, ensuring that efficiency and competence were the driving forces behind bureaucratic operations. By focusing on efficiency and government intervention in crucial sectors, these nations were able to rapidly industrialize and sustain high economic growth (Leftwich, 1996).

In contrast, municipalities like Thulamela in South Africa encounter significant obstacles in achieving these goals. Matloga, Mahole and Nekhavhambe (2024: 5) assert that political interference, patronage systems, and a lack of institutional capacity often impede service delivery. According to Mashabela (2023: 233-239), the effectiveness of South Africa's local governments is frequently undermined by corruption, misallocation of resources, and a shortage of skilled personnel. Unlike the Asian Tigers, where bureaucratic autonomy was crucial, South African municipalities struggled to establish this independence, making it difficult to effectively implement development policies (DNA Economics, 2020).

To achieve an autonomous, efficient, and effective bureaucracy, South Africa should focus on implementing reforms that prioritize merit-based recruitment and promotions, enhance transparency, and build bureaucratic capacity. South Africa could also benefit from adopting elements of social pacts between the state and civil society, which were crucial to the success of the Asian Tigers in promoting national development (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2020). These measures would help reduce political interference, promote accountability, and align public administration with national development objectives.

- **Strong Partnership with Private Sector**

O'neil (2022:5) remarks that for a developmental state to be successful, a solid alliance with the private sector is essential. According to Wade (2018: 521), governments can access additional financial resources necessary for funding ambitious development objectives by promoting collaboration with private firms. Wade (2018: 522) further mentions that private businesses contribute a plethora of creativity, knowledge, and technology that may be used to advance a variety of industries. This collaboration addresses issues with unemployment by acting as a catalyst for job creation in addition to promoting economic growth. According to Kelecha (2023), the integration of market-driven principles into government programs and services through private-sector engagement leads to additional improvements in efficiency and productivity. Furthermore, public-private partnerships that share risks lessen the financial load on the government, especially when it comes to large-scale infrastructure projects. Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 5-6) posit that collaborations with the private sector foster an environment that supports sustainable development and good corporate citizenship by promoting market access, distribution networks, and regulatory changes. To optimize the advantages of these kinds of collaborations for society at large, governments must, however, guarantee openness, responsibility, and conformity with national development objectives.

According to Chavula (2022: 775), the Asian Tigers—South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and China—achieved their economic success largely through strong partnerships between the public and private sectors. Harrell and Haddad (2021: 11) indicate that governments played an active role in fostering these relationships by providing incentives such as subsidies, tax breaks, and investments in infrastructure, which encouraged private companies to drive industrialization. For example, Singapore established agencies like the Economic Development Board (EDB) to attract foreign investment and coordinate public-private partnerships. These partnerships allowed private firms to grow in an environment conducive to innovation and development. At the same time, the state provided regulatory support and ensured that the private sector aligned with national economic goals (SAXA Fund, 2024).

Thulamela Local Municipality has recognized the importance of partnering with the private sector to enhance service delivery and economic growth. One notable example is the Makhado SEZ in Limpopo, near Thulamela, which has been created to focus on sectors like agro-processing, logistics, and renewable energy (MUSINA MAKHADO SEZ SOC. 2022: 1-27). The partnership between Thulamela Local Municipality and Makhado SEZ highlights an opportunity to spur economic growth through private sector involvement in large-scale industrial projects. Such zones can attract both local and international investors, driving infrastructure development and improving the overall economic landscape of the region

(Limpopo Economic Development Agency, 2023). Thulamela can further enhance its SEZ partnerships by improving regulatory frameworks and infrastructure to make it more attractive to investors. Lessons from SEZs in the Asian Tigers show the importance of focusing on infrastructure, and governance and ensuring that SEZs align with broader economic development strategies (World Bank, 2023; OECD, 2024).

- **Executing industrial strategy and financing industrial development.**

According to Hayashi (2010: 47), a prosperous developmental state must be established with the efficient application of industrial strategy and the supply of sufficient finance for industrialization. Gumede (2019: 21) believes that industrialization is a key factor in promoting economic growth, structural transformation, and socio-economic development in the framework of a developmental state, which is defined by active government engagement in the economy to support development goals. According to Hayashi (2017: 53), first off, a well-written industrial policy offers a roadmap and strategic framework for directing the growth of important industries. Stiglitz, Lin and Patel (2013: 1) mention that the government's priorities, goals, and actions to support industrial growth, improve competitiveness, and encourage technical innovation are outlined in this policy. Kelecha (2023: 298) mentions that industrial strategy provides clarity and direction for investors, both domestic and foreign, by designating priority sectors and establishing specific targets. This draws the required capital and resources for industrial development.

Second, to promote the execution of industrial policy and ease the expansion of specific sectors, industrialization needs sufficient capital (Kelecha, 2023: 299). Stiglitz *et al.* (2013: 2) mention that various sources, such as government budgets, development finance organizations, foreign aid, and private sector investment, may provide this cash. Stiglitz *et al.* (2013:2) further mention that the development of infrastructure, research and development, skill development, and other vital areas that support industrialization initiatives must get adequate funding from governments. According to Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 5), governments can also overcome market imperfections and investment restrictions that might prevent the private sector from participating in industrial development by providing funds for industrialization. Public investment, for example, can lower operating costs and enhance the investment climate in infrastructure—such as energy systems, transportation networks, and industrial parks—attracting private sector capital and promoting industrial expansion (Hayashi, 2017: 54).

Moreover, Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 7) suggest that governments can support small and medium-sized businesses (SMMEs), which often form the backbone of industrial development

and employment creation, by providing financial assistance for industrialization. Mazzucato (2015:149) argues that providing funding, technical support, and business development services can help small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) overcome growth barriers and contribute to inclusive development. This, in turn, can expand economic opportunities and reduce poverty. In conclusion, the success of a progressive state hinges on the efficient application of industrial strategy and the availability of sufficient funds for industrialization (Matumba & Mondliwa, 2015: 56). According to Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 7), governments can promote inclusive development, structural transformation, and sustainable economic growth by creating industrial policies aligned with sector goals, raising financial resources, and fostering a conducive environment for industrial development. These actions will ultimately enhance citizens' lives and lead to long-term prosperity.

According to Weiss and Thurbon (2020: 18), the Asian Tigers—South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and China—achieved the status of a developmental state by implementing strategic industrial policies and effectively financing industrial development. Ricz (2018: 43) posits that these countries adopted export-oriented industrialization, positioning them as major global players in manufacturing and technology. For example, South Korea used state-directed financing to develop large conglomerates known as chaebols, ensuring that key industries such as electronics and automobiles received substantial government support (Chung, 2020: 103). According to Day (2021), Singapore's government also invested in infrastructure and human capital to attract foreign direct investment (FDI), promoting industrial growth and technological advancement. In both cases, the state played a proactive role in guiding and funding industries that aligned with broader development goals.

Sun (2015: 648) asserts that the Asian Tigers' success was heavily dependent on financing industrial development. Government interventions included targeted financial support, subsidies, and favourable loan conditions for strategic industries. For instance, Taiwan implemented a technology-driven industrial policy that provided financing to small and medium enterprises (SMMEs) in sectors such as electronics, propelling it to become a global leader in semiconductor manufacturing (Wong & Chen, 2021: 437). According to Sakong and Koh (2010), South Korea's strong partnership between the government and the private sector, particularly through the financial system, facilitated rapid industrialization and global competitiveness.

In his study, Mashabela (2023: 237) observes that South African Municipalities, including Thulamela Local Municipality, are encountering difficulties in implementing a unified industrial strategy and lack sufficient financial support mechanisms. Mashabela (2023: 237) further

notes that despite the municipality's identification of key growth areas such as tourism and agriculture, the execution of these strategies has been inconsistent. Institutional inefficiencies, limited capacity, and weak public-private coordination are impeding efforts to drive industrial growth (Masuku & Jili, 2019:35). Moreover, local businesses are faced with significant barriers in accessing finance, with many struggling to secure the necessary capital for expanding their operations (Nkwinika & Munzhedzi, 2016: 24). This stands in contrast to the approach of the Asian Tigers, where governments played a critical role in ensuring the availability of financial resources for key sectors (Chung, 2020: 106).

The Asian Tigers provide valuable lessons for Thulamela, suggesting that the municipality could benefit from a more proactive approach. This involves actively promoting industrial growth by focusing on key sectors and aligning local policies with national and global market trends. Additionally, it is essential to improve governance and institutional capacity to attract investment and encourage economic development. The experiences of the Asian Tigers emphasize the importance of a well-coordinated and well-financed industrial strategy, which is crucial for Thulamela to achieve its goal of becoming a developmental municipality.

- **Recognition and observation of the dynamics between old and new developmentalism**

In his work, Wylde (2018: 1116) explains that the new-era developmental state may not be as static or robust as the old developmentalism. The new developmental state is characterized by being export-led rather than protectionist and pessimistic. Unlike the old developmentalism, the new developmental state is not protectionist, as most countries in the global periphery are already past the infant industry stage and are now export-oriented (Bresser-Pereira 2009, 18). Evans (2014:222) aptly describes the shift, stating that the world is moving from the physical manipulation of materials to produce tangible goods, with global employment in manufacturing in the Global South shrinking. Another feature of the new developmental state is the changing global environment that emphasizes human rights, unity, and social cohesion. Changes in international and domestic political processes, such as expanded embeddedness and democratization, have become significant factors in modern societies. Furthermore, there are shifts in the interpretations of development and environmental issues, such as limits to pollution and constraints brought by climate change (Williams 2014).

The issue of capacity is also crucial in the new developmental state. While East Asian countries excelled in bureaucratic training and driving policies for economic development, the new developmentalism requires focusing on a knowledge economy and improved healthcare. Technological advances have led to a computerized global interaction, resulting in significant

changes as manufacturing, a hallmark of developmental industrialization, is shrinking in many parts of the world (Evans 2014). Additionally, the rise in financial globalization and the enduring effects of financial and economic crises will become more prominent, making the world prone to shock (Williams 2014). Ricz (2018: 32) mentions that despite the changes, there is continuity from the old developmentalism. Macroeconomic stability and a stable investment environment remain significant pillars for many economies. Furthermore, the reliance on active industrial policy from countries like Brazil and India is evidence that aspects of old developmentalism endure.

Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 3) assert that the Asian Tigers successfully transitioned from old developmentalism, marked by state-led industrialization and protectionism, to new developmentalism. In this new phase, they embraced global markets and innovation while still maintaining strategic state intervention. They achieved this shift by focusing on export-driven growth, technological advancement, and the development of competitive industries. For example, South Korea shifted from heavy reliance on domestic markets under state control to becoming a global player in electronics and automobiles, with the help of government-backed financial systems (Chung, 2020: 106).

The Thulamela Local Municipality has not fully taken advantage of the shift from old to new developmentalism. Although there are some initiatives to promote local industries like agriculture and tourism, these efforts are scattered and lack the strong state guidance and financial support seen in the Asian Tigers' model (Matodzi, 2023: 89). Moreover, Thulamela has not sufficiently connected to global value chains, which is a crucial aspect of new developmentalism. Mashabela (2023) mentions that the municipality's industries are mostly disconnected from international markets, which limits their growth potential.

To address these shortcomings, Thulamela Local Municipality could consider a more hybrid developmental approach, learning from the experiences of the Asian Tigers. The state should take a more active role in guiding industrial growth by promoting strategic industries and investing in innovation and technology. Additionally, the municipality needs to improve its institutional capacity to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and establish partnerships with the private sector to drive growth. By enhancing governance and aligning with broader global economic trends, Thulamela can move beyond fragmented local efforts toward a more integrated, developmental state model.

2.2.2. KEY FEATURES OF DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

This subsection delves into the key features of a developmental state, highlighting three critical aspects: strategic focus, integration, and technical proficiency.

- **Strategic Focus**

A state needs to have a strategic focus for development, based on the leadership's political will to fully commit to a developmental project (Netshitenzhe, 2015: 555). Edigheji (2010: 1) also notes that the African National Congress, South Africa's governing party, resolved in its National General Council of 2005, policy conference of 2007, and the national election manifesto of 2009 to construct a developmental state. This state would play a central and strategic role by directly investing in underdeveloped areas, directing private sector investment, and addressing the problems of high unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Evans (2011: 9) suggests the need to develop a theory of a developmental state that meets the challenges posed by reconceptualizing development as capability expansion. By aligning with Sen's ideas (Sen, 1999), he reconceptualizes the role of the developmental state as expanding capabilities such as education, health, infrastructure, and social services, rather than narrowly focusing on economic growth and industrialization. This reconceptualization has significant implications for the role of developmental states. According to Evans and Heller (2023: 7), industrial growth can be achieved by aligning with a narrow group and using familiar policy instruments such as subsidies, interest rates, and state procurement. Evans and Haller (2023: 8) further mention that it can be measured against hard indicators such as exports and manufacturing output. However, Hendrickse (2022: 291) mentions that it is argued that delivering high-quality services requires deeper and more socially and politically intrusive interventions than industrial policy. According to Mensah (2019: 21), capability enhancement involves removing unfreedoms and directly challenging traditional authority and organized power of clans, castes, patriarchs, and the political hegemony of capitalist elites. A state that can deliver such services must have significant infrastructural power—the power to reach into society and deliver things—as well as significant authoritative power—the power to get individuals and groups to willingly obey commands (Evans & Heller, 2013: 8).

- **Integration**

Hendrickse (2022: 292) asserts that the developmental state plays a crucial role in mobilizing society behind a common vision and programs aimed at achieving developmental objectives. According to Netshitenzhe (2015: 11), it is essential for the state to provide ideational leadership or hegemony to gain legitimacy for its developmental agenda. Naseemullah and Arnold (2014: 126) emphasize the inherently political nature of the developmental state concept, involving the management of diverse interests and conflicts over resource distribution

during rapid industrialization. According to Gumede (2019: 21), the effective management of these interests is vital as they can either empower or undermine the state's ability to achieve its developmental goals. Recently, there have been concerns about the South African government falling short in its leadership and coordination role (Mulaudzi, 2024: 82). Fine (2010) highlights that private capital interests have often taken precedence over developmental goals, hindering concerted efforts for industrial expansion and diversification. This is exacerbated by allegations of state capture, as reported by the South African media (Mail & Guardian, 2016).

Naseemullah and Arnold (2014: 129) caution that challenges to developmental state institutions, even after their establishment, can lead to an abrupt halt in self-sustaining industrial development. It is evident from examples such as Korea and Taiwan, where a consensus on industrialization led to successful commitments to industrial investment and upgrade, contrasting with the fragmentation of support in Pakistan and Turkey, causing obstacles to such upgrading. It is crucial to address these challenges to prevent narrow sectoral interests from paralyzing broader societal interests. Netshitenzhe (2015) advocates for breaking logjams in the interactions among various sectors of society to ensure that the state can effectively prevent such paralysis. According to Hendrickse (2022: 292), structures such as South Africa's National Economic and Development Labour Council (NEDLAC) were established to resolve critical issues among social partners. However, there are concerns that NEDLAC is not fully achieving its mandate due to frozen mandates, unionized representation, and technocratic interactions (Hendrickse 2022: 293).

- **Technical Proficiency**

The ability of the state to achieve its developmental goals is a crucial aspect of a developmental state. According to Netshitenzhe (2015), a central institution with strategic capacities, leverage, and authority to drive economic development policy and ensure its implementation is essential for a developmental state. However, Nwokorie, (2023) claims that the current South African state is weakened by the presence of multiple centres driving economic policy, including the Departments of Economic Development, Trade and Industry, National Treasury, and Public Enterprises. Similarly, Naasemullah and Arnold (2014: .124) recognize that developmental state institutions comprise bureaucratic and meritocratic state agencies, strong external ties to private businesses, and the state's capacity to discipline business and labor while recognizing their importance to industrialization. According to Edigheji (2010: 4), institutions play a significant role in determining a democratic developmental state's ability to formulate and implement its policies and programs. He adds that such a state must be able to establish and deploy the institutional framework within the state and mobilize society to achieve a developmental project. Bureaucratic competence is an

important quality of developmental states, and recruiting staff based on merit and long-term career rewards is a critical source of such competence (Edigheji, 2010: 7). According to Ringson and Raniga (2022: 320), bureaucratic agencies created to implement developmental policies and programs need to be shielded from sectional interests to prevent their dominance and ultimate capture. This insulation will enable the state to take a long-term view of national development and allow public agencies to act as coherent and collective entities (Edigheji, 2010: 7).

2.2.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

This subsection discusses the characteristics of a developmental state in more detail to measure if South Africa can be classified as a developmental state or not.

- **Strategic Economic Planning**

According to Bresser-Pereira (2019: 7), the developmental state model is centred on strategic economic planning, which is a proactive strategy for promoting economic expansion and societal progress. Ringson (2023: 35) mentions that the creation of long-term visions and goals is essential to this strategy since they act as compass points for stakeholders and policymakers alike. Developmental states assert substantial economic intervention through strategic planning and coordinating efforts across sectors and industries to attain desired results. Bresser-Pereira (2019: 9) further mentions that to achieve alignment and coherence in implementation, this calls for close collaboration between public and commercial sector organizations as well as civil society organizations. Nwokorie (2023: 5) highlights that developing states can effectively manage complicated difficulties and seize new opportunities by prioritizing key sectors and promoting adaptation to changing conditions through strategic economic planning. It also emphasizes how crucial it is to strengthen institutions' and individuals' capacity by giving them the resources and information they need to advance sustainable development. Sithole (2023: 7) asserts that strategic economic planning is essentially the embodiment of developmental governments' proactive and dynamic approach to directing their economic destinies and enhancing the welfare of their populace.

Sithole (2023: 11) added that strategic economic planning is a dynamic process that supports the broad goals of a progressive state rather than just being a bureaucratic exercise. Fundamentally, it involves carefully creating detailed plans that show the course of economic growth over an extended period. According to Nwokorie (2023: 6), these plans act as road maps, assisting decision-makers in the distribution of resources, establishment of goals, and execution of measures meant to promote equitable wealth distribution and sustainable growth. Bartholomew (2023: 351) asserts that developmental governments actively shape market

forces to conform to societal objectives and national interests by using strategic economic planning as an intervention tool.

Evans and Heller (2023) assert that this interventionist approach frequently includes the nurturing of strategic industries through subsidies, incentives, and regulatory frameworks, in addition to targeted investments in infrastructure, healthcare, and education. Additionally, strategic planning encourages cooperation and coordination among various stakeholders, resulting in the formation of a shared sense of purpose and accountability in achieving development goals (Sithole, 2023: 37). Bresser-Pereira (2017: 690) claims that developmental nations exhibit flexibility and vision in a constantly changing global environment by consistently adjusting their strategies in response to new opportunities and challenges. Sithole (2023) observes that these states enable their citizens to actively contribute to the attainment of shared goals by investing in human capital and implementing capacity-building initiatives. Strategic economic planning is essentially a catalyst for radical change and sustainable development, embodying the proactive and visionary attitude of developmental states.

The Asian Tigers—South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and China—are excellent examples of effective economic planning. According to Chavula (2022: 778), these countries implemented strong strategic planning frameworks that aligned both public and private sectors toward common development goals. They focused on industrialization, export-driven economies, and human capital development, guided by long-term plans such as South Korea's Five-Year Economic Development Plans (Chung, 2020: 110). This focused approach enabled them to achieve rapid economic growth and transform from agrarian to industrialized nations. In contrast, South Africa lacks a coherent, long-term strategic economic plan (Nwokorie, 2023: 11). Maemu, Munzhedzi, and Mathebula (2024: 595–603) suggest that while the country has initiatives such as the National Development Plan (NDP), it faces significant implementation challenges due to factors such as the impact of COVID-19, corruption, political instability, weak institutional capacity, and a lack of policy coherence.

To replicate the success of the Asian Tigers, South Africa needs to strengthen its institutions, promote a culture of accountability, and ensure effective coordination among the government, private sector, and civil society. Moreover, the government should adopt a more consistent, long-term vision, focusing on key sectors such as manufacturing, technology, and human capital development. Leadership commitment and the reduction of policy uncertainty are critical to achieving the characteristics of a developmental state

- **Government Intervention**

Kelecha (2023: 294) emphasizes that a key feature of developmental nations that sets them apart from laissez-faire or market-driven approaches to economic governance is government intervention. Gumede (2019: 11) indicates that governments actively and interventionistically shape economic outcomes in developmental nations to foster industrialization, growth, and social welfare. Kelecha (2023: 297) further mentions that this intervention can take many different forms, and it is usually directed by a strategic plan for economic growth. According to Mensah (2019: 11), a facet of governmental involvement entails the development and execution of industrial policies to foster critical industries considered indispensable for sustained economic prosperity. This could involve protectionist policies, subsidies, and specifically designed investment incentives to boost homegrown businesses and promote their expansion and competitiveness.

Furthermore, progressive nations frequently step in to fix market imperfections and deal with socioeconomic inequalities (Mensah, 2019: 12). Ovie (2019: 52) mentions that public goods and services like infrastructure, healthcare, and education may need to be provided, and markets may need to be regulated to maintain sustainable environmental practices, fair competition and consumer protection. Generally speaking, one of the main traits of developmental states is government intervention, which reflects a proactive approach to economic governance meant to promote sustainable and inclusive development (Wade, 2017).

Sithole (2023) emphasizes that one of the main features that sets progressive nations apart from laissez-faire or market-driven systems is government intervention, which represents a proactive approach to economic governance. In these states, as emphasized by Wade (2018) the government actively participates in determining economic results by implementing intentional policies and making interventions meant to direct the economy in the direction of desired developmental objectives. Wade (2018: 520) further mentions that a strategic vision for economic advancement, frequently expressed through long-term development plans or industrial strategies, serves as the foundation for this interventionist strategy.

According to Ringson (2023: 32), industrial policy development and implementation is a major component of government engagement in developing states. The purpose of these policies is to identify and support key industries that are important for the competitiveness and economic growth of the country. Sharma (2022) postulates that governments promote domestic industry

by offering targeted measures like subsidies, investment incentives, and priority access to resources. These measures encourage industry growth, innovation, and integration into global value chains. Bresser-Pereira (2019) mentions that governments strive to increase the nation's overall economic resilience, create jobs, and accelerate industrialization by carefully allocating resources and supporting the growth of critical industries. Moreover, developing nations use market intervention to correct market imperfections and lessen socioeconomic inequality (Ukwandu, 2019: 43).

Ringson (2023: 37) mentions that understanding that uncontrolled markets would not distribute resources effectively or fairly, governments step in to address these shortcomings and guarantee that economic expansion benefits all aspects of society. This can entail offering basic public goods and services like infrastructure, healthcare, and education, all of which are necessary for the growth of human capital and profitable economic activity. Mulaudzi (2024: 81) claims that governments also control markets to protect consumer rights, encourage fair competition, and maintain environmental standards. These actions create a climate that is favourable to business and sustainable economic growth. In addition, government involvement in developing states includes social and institutional spheres in addition to economic ones (Ukwandu, 2019: 47). According to Chung (2020: 107), governments endeavour to tackle fundamental socio-economic disparities and provide marginalized people with agency by implementing policies that prioritize poverty reduction, social welfare, and inclusive governance. Weiss and Thurbon (2020: 15) claim that governments work to improve human development outcomes and offer possibilities for upward mobility by funding social safety nets, healthcare programs, and education efforts. This promotes a more inclusive and equitable society.

The Asian Tigers demonstrate effective government intervention. For example, in South Korea, the government played a crucial role in promoting industrialization by providing targeted support for specific sectors like electronics and automobiles (Day, 2021: 55). Chung (2020: 110) mentions that this support included subsidies, tariffs, and technology transfer, leading to rapid economic growth and the development of globally competitive industries. In contrast, as emphasized by Mulaudzi (2024: 90) South Africa's approach to government intervention has been inconsistent, often hindered by bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and a lack of coherent policy frameworks. Vilkazi and Moore (2023: 7) argue that while initiatives like Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) aim to address socio-economic issues, they have faced implementation challenges and criticism regarding their effectiveness in achieving broad-based economic development.

Wade (2018: 520) suggests that to establish a strong framework for government intervention, South Africa needs to focus on building capable state institutions that can effectively design and implement economic policies. This involves fostering public-private partnerships that leverage private sector innovation and investment, while ensuring interventions are targeted, transparent, and accountable. The government should conduct a comprehensive analysis of market needs and potential growth sectors, leading to strategic investments in education, infrastructure, and technology aligned with long-term national objectives. By doing so, South Africa can utilize government intervention to drive economic growth and development, like the successes seen in the Asian Tigers.

- **Investment in Human Capital**

Hendrickse (2022: 294) asserts that within the framework of a developmental state, investment in human capital represents a deliberate commitment to long-term socio-economic success and serves as a fundamental component. Singh and Ovadia (2018: 1035) mention that the understanding that the creation of a trained and healthy labour force is crucial for long-term economic growth and societal advancement is at the heart of this strategy. Therefore, to guarantee that their inhabitants have the skills necessary to prosper in a world that is changing quickly, progressive governments place a high priority on allocating significant sums of money to education and skill development programs (Ukwandu, 2019: 43). These states enhance their competitiveness in the global arena by promoting a culture of perpetual learning and invention, which in turn creates an environment favourable to technical progress and economic diversity (Singh & Ovadia: 2018: 1033-1055).

Singh and Ovadia (2018) further mention that spending on healthcare services and infrastructure improves people's quality of life and makes workers more productive, which boosts the nation's GDP. Importantly, Mokhutso and Marumo (2023: 21) assert that developing governments work to reduce gaps in access to healthcare and education to promote greater social cohesion and inclusivity. As a result, these investments are supported by a commitment to social fairness. By doing this, they strengthen their societies' resilience and make it possible for them to overcome obstacles and take advantage of opportunities in a world economy that is becoming more complex (Mohale, 2019: 23). As a result, investing in human capital becomes essential to achieving these states' larger developmental objectives and securing growth and prosperity for future generations, rather than just a distinguishing feature (Gumede, 2019:11).

According to Haggard (2019: 23), the foundation of a developmental state's multipronged strategy to promote all-encompassing socioeconomic development is an investment in human capital. Elichi (2020: 77) mentions that these states do more than just acknowledge the potential of their population; they actively prioritize and devote significant resources to fostering that potential in a variety of ways. Victoria (2017) posits that developmental governments aim to build a highly educated and competent workforce that can propel innovation, entrepreneurship, and long-term economic success through significant investments in education. This dedication goes beyond elementary and secondary education to include postsecondary education, career training, and lifelong learning programs. This guarantees that people have the flexibility and knowledge required to prosper in a more dynamic global economy. Furthermore, developmental states see public health efforts, preventative care, and healthcare infrastructure investments as essential parts of their agenda for development because they understand the inextricable connection between healthcare and economic output (Weiss & Thurbon, 2020: 15). These states place a high priority on the health and welfare of their residents not only improve the general quality of life but also lessen the socio-economic consequences of disease, absenteeism, and decreased productivity (Victoria, 2017: 32).

Odeku (2021:3) claims that investments in healthcare also help societies become more resilient by giving them the tools they need to deal with health emergencies and pandemics, protecting both human capital and the stability of the economy. As asserted by Odeku (2021:4), developmental states strive to reduce gaps in access to economic, healthcare, and educational opportunities by viewing human capital investment through the prisms of social fairness and inclusivity. Ukwandu (2019) claims that through the implementation of focused interventions and affirmative action legislation, these states aim to strengthen the voices of underprivileged people, reduce socioeconomic gaps, and promote a more peaceful and cohesive community. By doing this, they advance equality and social justice while also utilizing the full potential of their diverse population to spur innovation, creativity, and advancement (Ovie, 2019: 52). Ringson and Raniga (2022: 322-336) postulate that investing in human capital is, therefore, much more than just a feature of governments that are still in the process of developing; it is a moral and strategic obligation to develop each person's full potential and to build a society in which everyone may prosper. Bartholomew (2023: 347) mentions that these states create the groundwork for long-term prosperity, resilience, and inclusive growth by making human capital a cornerstone of their development paradigm. This guarantees that the benefits of progress are distributed fairly among all members of society.

According to Chavula (2022: 777), the Asian Tigers excelled in prioritizing education and skills development as essential components of their economic strategies. For instance, South Korea heavily invested in universal education and vocational training, resulting in a highly skilled workforce capable of adapting to a rapidly changing economy (Day, 2021: 57). This emphasis on human capital not only drove industrialization but also spurred technological advancement and global competitiveness. In contrast, Ringson (2023: 37) claims that South Africa has not fully realized the potential of investing in human capital, leading to significant disparities in access to quality education and training. Despite initiatives like the National Development Plan's focus on improving education and skills development, systemic issues such as inadequate funding, infrastructure challenges, and high dropout rates persist Matyana and Thusi (2023: 214). These problems contribute to a workforce that often lacks the necessary skills for the evolving job market, ultimately impeding economic growth and social mobility.

Matyana and Thusi (2023: 216) recommend that to enhance its investment in human capital, South Africa must implement comprehensive reforms in its education system, aligning it with labour market needs and promoting equitable access to quality education for all citizens. This could involve expanding vocational training programs, fostering partnerships between educational institutions and industries, and investing in lifelong learning initiatives that enable individuals to adapt to changing economic conditions. By prioritizing human capital development, South Africa can create a skilled workforce capable of driving innovation and contributing to sustained economic growth, like the achievements of the Asian Tigers.

- **Infrastructure Development**

Nwokorie (2023: 5) emphasises that a progressive state's pursuit of sustained economic growth and societal progression is contingent upon the establishment of infrastructure development, which is a fundamental feature of such a state. According to Wade (2017: 532), the foundation for economic activity is established by developmental states through their investments in utilities, energy systems, transportation networks, and telecommunications. Wade (2018) claims that by lowering trade and commerce obstacles, these infrastructure improvements boost company productivity and ease the flow of people, products, and services. Furthermore, a robust infrastructure network is attractive to foreign and domestic investors because it represents stability and dependability to companies looking to start up or grow (Riczi: 38). Mensah (2019) mentions that linking previously underserved areas to hubs of economic activity, infrastructure development promotes regional integration and balanced development in addition to its economic benefits.

Bresser-Perreira (2019) posits that long-term economic prosperity is also fuelled by infrastructure investments in sectors like technology, healthcare, and education, which further enhance the state's ability for innovation and human capital development. In the end, infrastructure development is a crucial part of a developing state's agenda since it supports the larger goals of the state, such as raising living standards, lowering poverty, and fostering social inclusion (Gumede, 2019: 18). Evans and Haller (2023) mention that within the framework of a developmental state, infrastructure development is a crucial feature that embodies the state's commitment to promoting sustainable progress in the economic, social, and environmental spheres. Fundamentally, infrastructure provides the organisational and physical frameworks required for enterprises to succeed, acting as the lifeblood of economic activity (Maseremule, 2012: 190). According to Ringson (2023: 35), developmental governments provide for the smooth flow of people and commodities by investing in strong transportation networks that include ports, airports, railroads, and roadways. This lowers logistical barriers and improves market accessibility (Gumede, 2018: 4).

Simultaneously, Hayashi (2010: 48) mentions that deliberate investments in energy infrastructure guarantee a dependable power supply, supporting innovation and industrial production. Moreover, digital platforms and broadband networks, among other telecommunications infrastructure components, not only link people and companies but also stimulate the expansion of knowledge-based economies (Ricks, 2020: 5). According to Sithole (2023: 4), infrastructure investment has a crucial role not just in economic growth but also in promoting regional integration and mitigating development inequities. Ukwandu (2019: 5) avows that developmental governments foster inclusion and fair resource allocation by expanding infrastructure networks to remote and impoverished areas. Furthermore, infrastructure improvements frequently act as catalysts for the creation of jobs by boosting local economies and creating work opportunities (Hayashi, 2017: 33). Ukwandu (2019) further mentions that infrastructure development has a significant impact on environmental sustainability as well as societal well-being, in addition to its economic repercussions.

Odeku (2021) emphasises that enhancing public health outcomes, increasing access to critical services, and strengthening crisis preparedness are all achieved through investments in healthcare infrastructure, such as hospitals and clinics. Like this, investments in educational infrastructure, such as those in colleges and universities, provide people with the information and abilities needed to engage in the contemporary economy, promoting the growth of human capital and social mobility (Wong & Chen, 2021: 435). Furthermore, sustainable infrastructure becomes a key component of resilience strategies in developing governments as they manage the complexity of environmental deterioration and climate change (Molokwane & Molaloba,

2020: 235). Mazzucato (2015) claims that by giving priority to green infrastructure projects, like energy-efficient public transit networks, renewable energy installations, and sustainable urban design projects, these states reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, and protect the environment for coming generations. Essentially, the development of infrastructure represents the diverse strategies used by developing states to promote inclusive and comprehensive growth (Sun, 2015: 647). Sun (2015: 647) further mentions that by making calculated infrastructure expenditures, these states demonstrate their commitment to improving the general welfare of their residents and preserving the environment for future generations. They also establish the foundation for social growth, prosperity, and resilience (Shumunye, 2015: 92).

Sakong and Koh (2010: 33) suggest that the Asian Tigers understood the importance of strong infrastructure systems and invested heavily in transportation, energy, and telecommunications to support their rapid industrialization and economic growth. For example, South Korea's extensive highway and rail networks enabled efficient logistics and connectivity, while its advancements in information and communication technology positioned the country as a leader in the digital economy (Bloomenthal, 2021: 33). In contrast, South Africa particularly rural areas like Thulamela is grappling with significant infrastructure challenges that hinder economic growth and development (Makhathini, Mlambo and Mpanza, 2020: 41). Emily and Muyengwa (2021: 311) postulate that the country's infrastructure, especially in transport and energy, is often criticized for being inadequate, outdated, or poorly maintained. Issues such as frequent power outages, deteriorating roads, and limited public transport options hamper business operations and reduce overall economic efficiency. Additionally, unequal infrastructure access contributes to socio-economic disparities, particularly in rural and underserved urban areas (Makahathini *et al.*, 2020: 47).

To follow the developmental state model exemplified by the Asian Tigers, South Africa needs to prioritize strategic infrastructure investment and maintenance. This requires a clear, long-term vision and coordinated efforts between the government and the private sector to identify key infrastructure projects that address both economic and social needs. Day (2021) believes that investing in renewable energy sources, expanding transport networks, and improving digital infrastructure can enhance economic productivity and accessibility. Furthermore, fostering public-private partnerships can mobilize the necessary resources and expertise to effectively implement large-scale infrastructure projects (Mandiriza & Fourie 2022: 1-7). By focusing on infrastructure development, South Africa can create a more favourable environment for economic growth, attract investment, and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

- **Technological Innovation**

Ovie (2019: 51) states that developmental states are built on technological innovation, which propels societal advancement, competitiveness, and economic prosperity. Ziazi (2017) suggests that to boost economic diversification, improve productivity, and tackle urgent social issues, these states place a high priority on the development and use of new technologies. Bresser-Perreira (2019: 40) indicates developmental states create an environment that is favourable to innovation by making deliberate investments in education, infrastructure, and research and development (R&D). This encourages cooperation between the public and private sectors. Additionally, they implement laws and other incentives to encourage private sector investment in innovation, which sparks the growth of thriving ecosystems for entrepreneurs (Mandiriza & Fourie, 2022: 1-7). Elichi (2020: 77) asserts that a crucial facet of technological innovation in developing nations is the prioritization of domestic research and development skills. According to Sharma (2022), these states aim to increase their autonomy in critical strategic sectors and lessen their reliance on foreign technologies by developing domestic talent and encouraging a culture of scientific inquiry. This frequently entails the creation of innovation hubs, technology parks, and research institutes, which give entrepreneurs and researchers the tools and resources they need to turn concepts into commercially viable goods and services.

As alluded to by Fagbadelo (2019: 25), progressive governments use technology as a tool for inclusive development, looking for creative answers to major societal issues like environmental sustainability, healthcare, and education. According to Hayashi (2010), technological innovation is used to enhance the quality of life, provide access to necessary services, and advance social fairness in a variety of contexts. Examples include telemedicine programs, e-learning platforms, renewable energy technology, and smart city infrastructure (Williams, 2014: 13). Wade (2018: 530) suggests that developmental governments actively participate in technology transfer and international cooperation in addition to their domestic innovation initiatives. Mensah (2019) asserts that to take advantage of outside experience, get access to cutting-edge technologies, and take part in global innovation networks, they establish collaborations with international organizations, research institutes, and multinational enterprises. Developmental states establish themselves as major actors in the global innovation ecosystem through programs including cooperative research projects, technology licensing contracts, and international cooperation on standards and laws (Wade, 2018: 540).

Nwokorie (2023) suggests that all things considered, the core of developing states' attempts to establish inclusive communities and competitive, knowledge-based economies is technical

innovation. In a world that is becoming more linked and dynamic, these states promote resilience, open new opportunities, and drive progress by investing in innovation, developing local talent, and utilizing global alliances (Bartholomew, 2023: 345-352). Day (2021) asserts that the Asian Tigers used technological innovation to shift their economies from labour-intensive industries to knowledge-based ones. For example, the Asian Tigers heavily invested in research and development (R&D) and encouraged collaboration between the government, academia, and the private sector (Chung, 2020: 103). This led to technological and manufacturing advancements, enabling the country to produce high-value goods and services and solidify its position in global markets.

On the other hand, South Africa has experienced slower technological innovation due to challenges such as inadequate investment in R&D, limited access to cutting-edge technology, and a skills gap in the workforce (Matsonn, 2024: 06). Matsonn (2024) further note that while there are initiatives like the National System of Innovation, the country struggles to translate research into commercial applications or widespread technological adoption. The digital divide presents significant barriers, especially in rural areas with limited access to technology and internet connectivity. To foster technological innovation like the Asian Tigers, South Africa needs a multi-faceted approach prioritizing investment in R&D and enhancing collaboration between government, industry, and educational institutions (Dereli, & Salgar, 2019:345-360). This might involve increasing funding for technology-related research, creating incentives for private sector investment in innovation, and promoting entrepreneurship through incubators and support programs. According to Chingono (2018), improving access to technology and internet connectivity, particularly in underserved areas, can empower more individuals and businesses to participate in the digital economy. By cultivating a robust ecosystem for technological innovation, South Africa can enhance its competitiveness, drive economic growth, and improve the overall well-being of its citizens.

- **Social Cohesion and Equity**

According to Mohale (2018), social cohesion and equity are the foundational pillars of a developmental state. They are the bedrock of inclusive and harmonious societies where all individuals have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from economic and social progress. According to Enaifoghe and Dlamini (2021), sustainable development is impossible without social cohesion and equitable distribution of resources. That's why developmental states prioritize policies and programs aimed at promoting cohesion, reducing disparities, and empowering marginalized groups. Ntiliziynwana (2017) alludes that inclusive governance structures are essential for social cohesion within developmental states. A commitment to democratic principles, respect for human rights, and the rule of law is critical for fostering an

environment where citizens feel empowered to voice their concerns, participate in decision-making processes, and hold authorities accountable (Mkandawire, 2009: 140).

As emphasized by Gumede (2019), developmental states often implement affirmative action policies and mechanisms to address historical injustices and promote representation of marginalized communities in political institutions and public administration. Moreover, developmental states prioritize investments in social infrastructure and services aimed at enhancing the well-being and quality of life of their citizens (Bresser-Pereira, 2017: 693). This includes access to healthcare, education, housing, and social welfare programs designed to alleviate poverty, reduce inequality, and promote social mobility. Enaifoghe and Dlamini (2021: 219) mention that by ensuring universal access to essential services, developmental states mitigate social exclusion and create conditions for individuals to fulfil their potential and contribute meaningfully to society. According to Chauke (2021: 23), equally important is the emphasis on economic policies that promote equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities. According to Burger (2014), developmental states implement progressive taxation systems, minimum wage laws, and labour regulations aimed at reducing income inequality and ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are shared more equitably among all segments of society. Additionally, they prioritize job creation, skills development, and entrepreneurship support programs targeted at marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities, to enhance their economic participation and empowerment (Chavula, 2022: 778).

As emphasized by Sithole (2023: 7), developmental states prioritize social cohesion through investments in cultural preservation, intercultural dialogue, and community development initiatives. Sithole (2023: 11) indicates that by celebrating diversity and fostering social inclusion, these states cultivate a sense of belonging and solidarity among their citizens, thereby strengthening social cohesion and resilience in the face of external challenges. In summary, social cohesion and equity are central tenets of developmental states, guiding their policies and actions towards building cohesive, resilient, and inclusive societies (Dassah, 2011: 591). Harrell and Haddad (2021: 19) mention that by prioritizing inclusive governance, investments in social infrastructure, equitable economic development, and cultural integration, these states strive to create conditions where all individuals can thrive, contribute to progress, and share in the benefits of development.

Dercon (2022) mentions that in the context of the Asian Tigers, these countries implemented policies that promoted social equity while driving economic development. For example, South Korea's rapid industrialization was accompanied by efforts to reduce income inequality through progressive taxation and investment in social welfare programs (Harrell & Haddad, 2021: 17). Day (2021: 55) mentions that by ensuring that all segments of society had access

to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, the Asian Tigers created a stable social environment conducive to sustained growth and development.

In comparison, Moji *et al.* (2022) assert that South Africa grapples with profound social inequalities and divisions, largely rooted in its historical context of apartheid. The country faces significant disparities in wealth, education, and access to services, which hinder social cohesion and contribute to social unrest. While initiatives such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and various social grant systems aim to address these inequalities, challenges remain in effectively implementing policies that foster equity and social justice (Chivanga, 2023: 1-5). To achieve social cohesion and equity similar to the Asian Tigers, South Africa must prioritize inclusive policies that address historical injustices and promote equal opportunities for all citizens. This involves investing in quality education and skills training, enhancing access to healthcare, and creating job opportunities, particularly for marginalized communities. Additionally, fostering dialogue and collaboration among diverse groups can help bridge societal divides and promote understanding. By addressing systemic inequalities and prioritizing social cohesion, South Africa can build a more equitable society that supports sustainable economic growth and development, ultimately enhancing stability and resilience.

- **Political Stability and Governance**

Enaifoghe and Dlamini (2021) assert that political stability and effective governance are foundational principles of developmental states, essential for fostering an environment conducive to sustained economic growth, social cohesion, and overall progress. These states prioritize the establishment of robust institutions, adherence to the rule of law, and transparent, accountable governance mechanisms to maintain political stability and promote inclusive development (Day, 2021: 58). According to Baporikar (2022:13), one key characteristic of developmental states is the cultivation of strong and stable political institutions that ensure continuity and predictability in policymaking. Munzhedzi (2021) indicates that these states prioritize the rule of law, separation of powers, and respect for democratic principles, creating a conducive environment for political stability and peaceful transitions of power. By establishing mechanisms for conflict resolution, ensuring the protection of human rights, and upholding the integrity of electoral processes, developmental states bolster trust in the political system and reduce the risk of instability (Shai, 2017: 55).

As asserted by Takagi, Kanchoochat, and Sonobe (2019: 9) developmental states prioritize effective governance structures to enhance efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizens' needs. They invest in capacity building for public institutions, professionalization of the civil service, and implementation of transparent, merit-based recruitment and promotion

processes to ensure the delivery of high-quality public services (Vilakazi & Moore, 2023: 9). According to Takagi *et al.* (2019: 9), these states prioritize anti-corruption measures, enforce accountability mechanisms, and promote civic engagement and participation to foster a culture of transparency and integrity in governance. As emphasized by Chauke (2021: 25) developmental states often pursue policies aimed at promoting social inclusion and addressing grievances that may undermine political stability. They prioritize inclusive development strategies that reduce socioeconomic disparities, empower marginalized groups, and promote equal opportunities for all citizens. Gumede (2018) mentions that by addressing the root causes of social discontent, such as poverty, inequality, and exclusion, these states mitigate the risk of social unrest and promote social cohesion.

According to Mathebula (2016), developmental states actively engage in diplomacy and regional cooperation to safeguard political stability and promote peace within their borders and across their regions. They prioritize constructive dialogue, conflict resolution, and cooperation on common challenges, such as security threats, economic integration, and environmental sustainability, to foster a peaceful and stable geopolitical environment conducive to development. In summary, political stability and effective governance are central to the success of developmental states, providing the institutional framework and conducive environment necessary for sustained development (Mkandawire, 2001: 291). By prioritizing the rule of law, democratic principles, and inclusive governance mechanisms, these states foster trust in institutions, promote social cohesion, and lay the groundwork for long-term prosperity and progress (Chauke, 2021:26).

Ukwandu (2019) asserts that the Asian Tigers demonstrated strong governance structures that prioritized economic growth, maintained political stability, and ensured accountability. In South Korea, for example, the government established clear frameworks for decision-making and engaged in long-term planning aligned with national development goals (Chung, 2020: 109). Chung (2020) further mentions that the political leadership was committed to fostering economic progress and creating a stable and predictable environment for both domestic and foreign investors. On the other hand, South Africa faces significant challenges regarding political stability and governance (Matyna & Thusi, 2023: 217). Issues such as corruption, political infighting, and a lack of accountability have undermined public trust in government institutions and hindered effective policymaking. Wade (2018:519) asserts that while the country has established democratic governance frameworks, persistent challenges like service delivery protests, state capture, and bureaucratic inefficiencies create an unstable environment that deters investment and hampers economic growth.

Maela, Zitha, and Maemu (2024: 81) recommend that to achieve the political stability and governance characteristic of a developmental state, South Africa must focus on strengthening its institutions and ensuring accountability at all levels of government. This can involve implementing anti-corruption measures, enhancing transparency, and promoting public participation in governance processes. Additionally, fostering a culture of ethical leadership and prioritizing good governance practices will be essential in rebuilding trust with citizens and stakeholders. By addressing these governance challenges, South Africa can create a more stable political environment that supports sustainable economic development and enables effective policymaking, similar to the successes witnessed in the Asian Tigers.

- **Adaptive Capacity**

According to Nwokorie (2023:9), adaptive capacity is a crucial characteristic of developmental states, enabling them to navigate complex challenges, seize opportunities, and evolve in response to changing circumstances. Nwokorie (2023) further points out that these states recognize that resilience and flexibility are essential traits for sustainable development in an ever-changing global landscape, and they prioritize building adaptive capacity across various spheres of governance, economy, and society. According to Ringson and Ranninga (2022: 309), adaptive capacity within developmental states is the ability to formulate and implement forward-thinking policies and strategies that anticipate and respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. These states foster a culture of innovation and experimentation, encouraging the exploration of new ideas, technologies, and approaches to address evolving socio-economic, environmental, and geopolitical dynamics. By embracing change and learning from experience, developmental states enhance their ability to adapt to shifting circumstances and remain agile in the pursuit of their development objectives (Sun, 2015: 650).

As emphasized by Wylde (2018), developmental states prioritize investments in education, research, and skills development to build human capital and enhance adaptive capacity at the individual and institutional levels. They recognize that a well-educated and skilled workforce is better equipped to respond to technological advancements, market disruptions, and changing labour demands, thereby fostering resilience and competitiveness in the face of economic transformation (Sun, 2015: 653). Additionally, developmental states leverage technology and data-driven decision-making tools to enhance their adaptive capacity and improve policy outcomes (Ringson, 2023: 38). Sharma (2022) asserts that by harnessing the power of big data, artificial intelligence, and predictive analytics, these states gain insights into emerging trends, identify areas of vulnerability, and optimize resource allocation to maximize impact and efficiency.

Furthermore, they invest in information and communication technologies to enhance communication, coordination, and collaboration among government agencies, stakeholders, and citizens, facilitating agile responses to emerging challenges and crises (Ukwandu, 2019: 47). According to Gumede (2019: 15), developmental states prioritize building partnerships and networks at the national, regional, and international levels to enhance their adaptive capacity and leverage external expertise and resources. Wade (2018) mentions that they engage in knowledge sharing, South-South cooperation, and multilateral initiatives to exchange best practices, lessons learned, and innovative solutions to common challenges, thereby enhancing their resilience and collective capacity to address global issues such as climate change, pandemics, and economic volatility. In summary, Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 10) postulate that adaptive capacity is a fundamental characteristic of developmental states, enabling them to thrive in a rapidly changing world. By fostering innovation, investing in human capital, leveraging technology, and building partnerships, these states enhance their ability to anticipate and respond to emerging challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and sustainably advance their development agendas (Nwokorie, 2023).

Day (2021: 56) asserts that the Asian Tigers showed significant adaptive capacity by quickly adjusting their economic strategies in response to global market changes, technological advancements, and social needs. For example, during economic downturns, countries like South Korea were able to shift their focus towards emerging industries, invest in human capital, and adopt policies that fostered innovation and competitiveness (Day, 2021: 57). This flexibility allowed them to maintain steady growth and resilience in the face of external shocks. In contrast, South Africa often struggles with adaptive capacity due to systemic issues such as bureaucratic rigidity, policy inconsistency, and a lack of coordination among different levels of government (Mulaudzi, 2024: 89). Gumede (2015) mentions that these challenges can hinder the country's ability to respond effectively to economic shifts, social demands, and environmental pressures. For instance, South Africa's slow response to economic crises and its difficulties in implementing structural reforms have limited its ability to capitalize on new opportunities or address pressing socio-economic challenges (Mathebula, 2016: 53).

To enhance its adaptive capacity, South Africa needs to cultivate a more responsive and agile governance framework that allows for timely decision-making and policy adjustments. According to Asante (2018), this can be achieved through fostering collaboration between government, the private sector, and civil society to ensure that policies are informed by diverse perspectives and are adaptable to changing conditions. According to Day (2021), investing in data-driven decision-making and improving information-sharing mechanisms can also enhance the government's ability to anticipate and respond to challenges. By building a robust

adaptive capacity, South Africa can better navigate uncertainties, capitalize on new opportunities, and ultimately drive sustainable economic growth and development.

2.3. DEVELOPMENTAL STATE IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Maela *et al.* (2024: 79), there have been several controversies regarding whether South Africa can be considered a developmental state. Mkandawire (2001) argues that the idea of the developmental state approach not being applicable in Africa has been refuted as an impossibility theorem. However, Burger (2014: 2) contends that academic literature does not provide a consensus on the concept of a "Developmental State," its meaning, and its relevance to the current South African context. Burger (2014: 2) also emphasises that conflicting explanations of what a Developmental State is cause more confusion and opportunism. In contrast to all definitions of what a developmental state should be, South Africa is far from achieving those characteristics (Gumede, 2019: 13). Nwokorie (2023) mentions that the characteristics of a developmental state emphasise a balance between the economy and social compact, as well as the promotion of economic growth that benefits all citizens of the state. However, Sithole (2023) mentions that South Africa was strained by load-shedding, which has had a negative impact on the economy.

Vilakazi and Moore (2023) state that South Africa has been striving to become a developmental state by implementing measures such as land redistribution, prioritizing industrialization, and involving the state in directing and leading economic activities in the country. Vilakazi and Moore (2023) further note that these efforts by the South African government towards a developmental state path are evident in most policy documents and overarching policies presented by the government and the ruling party since 1994. Enaifoghe and Dlamini (2021: 215) posit that since the establishment of democracy, a considerable amount of effort by the state and other sectors of society has been devoted to creating policies and programs aimed at realizing noble ideals such as human dignity, equality, human rights, and freedom. According to Gumede (2019: 14), the public policies implemented since the dawn of democracy in 1994 can be viewed as intentional efforts to promote human progress and socio-economic justice. Maela *et al.* (2024) assert that South Africa's path to becoming a developmental state has been intricate and varied, marked by significant challenges and ambitious goals. Following the end of apartheid, the African National Congress (ANC) government sought to reshape the socio-economic landscape through policies emphasizing social equality, economic growth, and industrialization (Moji *et al.*, 2022: 78). Mutyambidzi, Mokhele, Ndinda and Hangoro (2020: 17) mention that the initial phase, known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in the mid-1990s, focused on addressing the extensive socio-economic disparities inherited from apartheid. However, the transition to

the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy in 1996 signified a shift towards more market-oriented policies, leading to debates about their impact on social development (Gasela, 2021: 601).

Mpofu and Maphunye (2018) argue that despite significant investment in infrastructure, education, and healthcare, South Africa continues to face challenges such as high unemployment, persistent inequality, and governance issues that have prevented it from becoming a fully developed developmental state. Maemu *et al* (2024) mention that the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 has established long-term goals to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality, demonstrating the country's ongoing commitment to developmental ideals. However, Matyana and Thusi (2023: 215) argue that achieving these objectives will require overcoming structural constraints, enhancing state capacity, and promoting inclusive economic growth. South Africa's development journey involves a delicate balance between ambitious socio-economic reforms and the practical challenges of implementation in a complex and dynamic environment (Gumede, 2019: 14).

2.4. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the South African context, the developmental state model presents challenges and opportunities.

2.4.1. Challenges

This sub-section addresses the difficulties preventing South Africa from achieving developmental state status.

- **Economic Inequality and Poverty**

Burger (2014: 5) mentions that South Africa faces significant challenges related to economic inequality and poverty, stemming from the historical context of apartheid and its enduring socio-economic disparities. Moji *et al.* (2022) mention that while progress has been made since the end of apartheid in 1994, there is still a concentration of wealth among a small segment of the population, mainly white South Africans, while many black South Africans experience high unemployment, limited access to quality education, and inadequate healthcare. Gumede (2019: 18) posits that it is crucial to address these issues by implementing comprehensive policies that foster inclusive growth, strengthen social protection, and ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities. Doing so can pave the way for a more just and prosperous society, promoting broad-based economic development, social cohesion, and political stability.

- **Unemployment**

According to Molobela (2023: 108), unemployment is a significant challenge in South Africa, with high rates that disproportionately affect young people and marginalized communities. This is due to structural issues, such as a mismatch between skills and job opportunities, as well as slow economic growth. Mseleku (2022) asserts that the legacy of apartheid has created a labour market where many black South Africans lack the education and skills needed to fully participate in the economy. Matyana and Thusi (2023: 213) mention that widespread joblessness contributes to poverty, economic inequality, and social unrest, and hinders efforts to build an inclusive society. Addressing unemployment requires a multifaceted approach, including educational reforms, vocational training, investment in small and medium enterprises, and policies that promote job creation in key sectors (O'Neil, 2022).

- **Corruption and Governance Issues**

Thusi and Selepe (2023:689) mention that corruption and governance issues pose significant challenges to South Africa's developmental state, severely limiting its capacity to deliver public services and promote equitable economic development. Vilakazi and Adetiba (2020) posit that widespread corruption, often involving high-level officials and collusion with the private sector, diverts resources away from critical areas such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. This misallocation exacerbates poverty and inequality, erodes public trust in government institutions, and impedes both foreign and domestic investment. In addition to these challenges, bureaucratic inefficiencies and a lack of accountability mechanisms further hinder effective governance. Mlambo, Simagele and Mpanza (2023: 22) claim that addressing these issues requires rigorous anti-corruption measures, transparent governance practices, and robust legal frameworks to hold wrongdoers accountable. Moreover, it demands a commitment to institutional reforms that enhance efficiency and foster public confidence in the state's developmental agenda (Mlambo *et al.*, 2023: 22).

- **Political Instability**

Mokhutso and Marumo (2023) mention that political instability presents a significant challenge for South Africa's developmental state, impacting its ability to drive sustained economic growth and social development. Chivanga (2023) posits that frequent political tensions and conflicts, often fueled by factionalism within the ruling party and dissatisfaction among the populace, disrupt governance and policy continuity. This instability can result in inconsistent economic policies, discourage investment, and erode public confidence in government institutions. Ringson (2023: 37) posits that social unrest, driven by high unemployment, inequality, and perceived government failures, further compounds the situation. Mokhutso and Marumo

(2023) suggest that addressing political instability requires promoting inclusive political processes, bolstering democratic institutions, and ensuring responsive governance that effectively addresses the needs and concerns of all citizens. Stability in the political landscape is crucial for creating an environment conducive to development and prosperity.

- **Education and Skills Development**

Ovie (2019: 53) mentions that education and skills development are major challenges for South Africa's developmental state, crucial for reducing inequality and promoting sustainable economic growth. Chauke (2021: 25) assert that despite efforts to reform the educational system since the end of apartheid, significant disparities persist in access to quality education, with under-resourced schools mainly serving black and rural communities. This educational inequity leads to a skills gap that limits employment opportunities for many South Africans, contributing to unemployment and economic inequality. As emphasized by Vilakazi and Moore (2023), the mismatch between the education system's outputs and the labour market's needs hinders the country's competitiveness and innovation potential. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive educational reforms, investment in teacher training, improved infrastructure, and a focus on vocational and technical education that meets market demands. Sithole (2023: 39) recommends that enhancing education and skills development is crucial for empowering individuals, promoting social mobility, and driving inclusive economic growth.

2.4.2. Opportunities

While there are several challenges hindering South Africa from becoming a developmental state, there are also several opportunities for South Africa to fully achieve the criteria of a developmental state. These opportunities are as follows:

- **National Resource Endowment**

Kwakwa, Dankwah, Boohen and Hammond (2023) mention that South Africa's abundant natural resources, including minerals, agricultural land, and energy sources, offer a significant opportunity for the country to become a developmental state. Kwakwa *et al.* (2023) further note that by effectively and sustainably utilizing these resources, South Africa can drive economic growth, generate revenue, and create jobs, leading to inclusive development. Makhathini *et al.* (2020: 33) mention that strategic management of resource extraction and investments in infrastructure, education, and technological innovation can enhance the country's industrial base, reduce reliance on raw material exports, and promote value-added industries. Vilakazi and Moore (2023) assert that transparent governance and fair distribution

of resources can help address socio-economic disparities, ensuring that the benefits of resource wealth contribute to comprehensive development and social upliftment.

- **Strategic Geographic Position**

Victoria (2017) asserts that South Africa's strategic geographic position presents a significant opportunity to establish itself as a developmental state by capitalizing on its location at the southern tip of Africa. This location serves as a gateway between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, facilitating international trade routes and enhancing connectivity with global markets. According to Hendrickse (2022: 292), South Africa's strategic positioning makes it a pivotal trade hub for the continent. Victoria (2017) further mentions that through the development of its port infrastructure and expansion of trade agreements, the country can undoubtedly increase exports, attract substantial foreign investment, and foster regional economic integration. Additionally, its proximity to emerging African markets firmly positions South Africa as a leader in promoting intra-African trade and investment, which will undoubtedly drive economic growth and regional development (Hendrickse 2022: 293). Bresser-Pereira (2016:14) believes that strengthening transport and logistics networks will further solidify South Africa's role as a critical nexus for commerce and development across the continent.

- **Industrial Policy and Innovation**

Ukwandu (2019) indicates that industrial policy and innovation play a crucial role in South Africa's path to becoming a developmental state. These strategies can help foster economic diversification and competitiveness. Qobo (2020) underscores that by implementing targeted industrial policies, the government can stimulate the growth of key sectors such as manufacturing, technology, and green industries, thereby reducing reliance on traditional resource-based industries. According to Chauke (2021), investing in research and development, and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship, can drive technological advancements and enhance productivity. Hendrickse (2022: 295) mentions that establishing innovation hubs and providing incentives for private sector involvement can attract talent and capital, creating high-value jobs and promoting sustainable industrial growth. Additionally, aligning industrial policies with educational reforms can ensure a skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of a dynamic, knowledge-based economy, ultimately leading to inclusive and resilient economic development (Bartholomew, 2023: 345-352).

- **Human Capital Development**

According to Ringson (2023), investing in education, skills training, and healthcare is crucial for South Africa to become a developmental state. Bartholomew (2023: 347) mentions that by improving the quality and accessibility of education from primary to tertiary levels, the population can gain the necessary knowledge and skills to drive economic growth and innovation. Molokwane (2020: 234) asserts that vocational training and continuous learning programs can also help address skills gaps and prepare the workforce for changing industry needs. Additionally, enhancing healthcare services will ensure a healthy and productive workforce, capable of making effective contributions to the economy (Mpofu & Maphunye, 2018). Mulaudzi (2024: 87) claims that prioritizing human capital development can lead to reduced unemployment, increased social mobility, and a more inclusive economy, ultimately laying a strong foundation for sustainable development in South Africa.

- **Public-Private Partnerships**

Monk, Levitt, Garvin, South, and Carallo (2019) claim that Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) offer a crucial opportunity for South Africa to establish a developmental state by harnessing the strengths of both the public and private sectors to promote infrastructure development, service delivery, and economic growth. Mandiriza and Fourie (2022: 5) mention that through collaboration with private enterprises, the government can access additional resources, expertise, and innovation, essential for large-scale projects such as transportation networks, energy production, and urban development. PPPs can also improve efficiency and effectiveness in public service provision, address infrastructure gaps, and enhance quality (Gasela, 2022: 601). As emphasized by Monk *et al* (2020), these partnerships can attract investment in key sectors, generate employment, and create a favourable environment for business expansion. Ensuring transparent and mutually beneficial agreements can maximize the benefits of PPPs, supporting inclusive development and strengthening the overall economic resilience of South Africa (Mandiriza & Fourie (2022: 1-7).

2.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explores the Asian Tigers Model as a strategy for achieving a developmental state in South Africa. It introduces the concept of a developmental state and outlines the conditions necessary for its success. The chapter identifies the key features and characteristics of a developmental state, emphasizing the importance of a competent and autonomous bureaucracy and a synergistic relationship between the state and the private sector. The analysis draws on the experiences of the Asian Tigers—South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and China—whose remarkable economic growth was driven by effective

developmental state policies. The aim is to extract lessons applicable to South Africa's developmental trajectory, emphasizing the importance of strong institutions, investment in education, and skill development. The chapter further discusses the need for strategic government interventions to support key industries, promote exports, and foster innovation, encouraging public-private partnerships, reducing regulatory burdens on businesses, and providing targeted support to emerging industries. The role of the government in facilitating access to finance, technology, and markets is highlighted as crucial for economic transformation.

The chapter addresses the unique challenges and opportunities within the South African context, acknowledging issues such as high unemployment, economic inequality, and social unrest, which could hinder the implementation of developmental state policies. However, it also recognizes South Africa's strengths, including its natural resources, diversified economy, and young population, which could serve as catalysts for growth. The chapter concludes by emphasizing the potential for South Africa to achieve sustained economic development through the application of insights derived from the Asian Tigers Model. The next chapter of this study focuses on the Asian Tigers Model and its implications for the South African government.

CHAPTER 3

ASIAN TIGERS MODEL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SA GOVERNMENT

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the Asian Tigers model, focusing on how China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan achieved impressive economic growth. This success can be attributed to strategies like strategic state intervention, export-oriented industrialization, high savings and investment rates, and a strong emphasis on education and human capital. The chapter is guided by both the Asian Tigers model and Sustainable Development Theory, exploring the theoretical foundations of these strategies. It considers how these approaches enabled the nations to rapidly industrialize and develop competitive, technology-driven industries. Additionally, the chapter examines how elements of the Asian Tigers' approach could inform South Africa's development path. It acknowledges that South Africa's unique socio-economic and historical context would require modifying these strategies rather than directly replicating them. The feasibility of South Africa adopting state-led industrial policies, focusing on education investments, and promoting export-oriented growth is critically assessed. The chapter also addresses critiques of the Asian Tigers model, such as concerns regarding the sustainability of export-led strategies and the risks associated with state intervention. By integrating lessons from the Asian Tigers with an emphasis on sustainable development, the chapter aims to offer a balanced perspective on whether and how South Africa could adapt these strategies to encourage its own economic growth and development.

3.2. THEORIES GUIDING THE RESEARCH

The term 'theory' is defined by Halvorson (2012) as a systematic groping of interdependent concepts (mental images of anything formed by generalization from a particular) and principles (generalizations or hypotheses that are tested for accuracy and appear to be true to reflect or explain reality) that give a framework to or tie together, a significant area of knowledge. There are many theories related to this study. However, the researcher finds Asian Tigers Models and sustainable developmental theories as the most suitable ones.

3.2.1. Asian Tigers theory

Vilakazi and Moore (2023) assert that the extremely prosperous economies of South Korea, Taiwan, China, and Singapore are referred to as the "Asian Tigers". Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 2) further mention that from the 1960s onward, these nations saw fast industrialization and economic growth, turning from agrarian economies to industrial superpowers in a comparatively short amount of time. Sign and Chen (2018) emphasize that the Asian Tigers'

model of industrial support relied on targeted assistance to firms and had punitive mechanisms to maintain fairness for the performance of economic actors. According to Craig (2017), the key principles of the Asian Tigers model include export-oriented industrialisation, government intervention, education and human capital development, infrastructure development, and openness to investments and technology transfer.

A few crucial strategies contributed to the Asian Tigers model's success. These strategies, according to Bresser-Pereira (2016: 14), comprise developing an export-oriented development strategy and concentrating on producing and exporting items to the international market. Second, to produce a workforce qualified for industrialization and technical innovation, these states made significant investments in human capital, particularly in education and skill development. Thirdly, the state was essential in directing economic growth and putting laws into place that aided in the development of specific industries, infrastructure, and technology. Fourth, to draw in foreign investment and maintain economic stability, these countries continued to implement stable macroeconomic policies, such as currency management and fiscal restraint (Weiss & Thurbon, 2020).

This theory is related to this study because it provides a developmental framework that emphasizes rapid industrialization, economic growth, and social reforms as pillars for achieving a developmental state. The Asian Tigers (South Korea, Taiwan, China, & Singapore) achieved remarkable economic success by implementing policies that are now associated with the "developmental state" model. These policies include prioritizing human capital investment, promoting public-private partnerships, fostering a strategic role for the state in guiding economic development, and tailoring education to align with industrial needs. This study seeks to understand how South Africa, particularly at the municipal level in Thulamela, can draw lessons from these strategies without directly replicating them but instead adapting them to fit the South African context.

The Asian Tigers Model is a concept that has been discussed extensively in the context of a developmental state. While Vilakazi and Moore (2023: 2) have found it to be a useful framework, Dassah (2011) argues that it may not apply to South Africa due to structural and contextual differences. South Africa's socio-economic landscape is distinct from that of the Asian Tigers, marked by a higher degree of income inequality, the legacy of apartheid, and significant challenges in governance, corruption, and social cohesion. Dassah (2011) suggests that the factors enabling the Asian Tigers' success, such as cohesive social policies, relatively homogeneous populations, and high levels of political stability, do not align with South Africa's realities. Mathebula (2016:50) has hypothesized that the Asian Tigers Model

may not be practical in the South African context due to the differences in the forms of developmental state. However, Mathebula (2016:50-51) has also pointed out that the developmental state is an ideology that can be adopted by any country with the right conditions such as political stability and strong state capacity. Bresser-Perreira (2019) has provided valuable insights into why the Asian Tigers Model may not be successfully adopted in South Africa. The scholar has identified two main reasons: firstly, the differences in diversity between Asian countries and South Africa make it difficult to replicate the same level of development; and secondly, the differences in political structures and levels of democracy make it challenging to impose the will of the state on the citizens. Despite these challenges, the concept of a developmental state is still relevant and can be achieved through the right policies and conditions.

To apply the "Asian Tigers Model" to South Africa, specifically within the context of the Thulamela Local Municipality, a comprehensive analysis of critical elements is required. This includes identifying key sectors with export potential, such as agriculture or manufacturing, to explore opportunities for export-oriented growth. It is also crucial to assess the state of education and technology infrastructure in Thulamela to understand the region's capacity for innovation and skill development. Additionally, evaluating the quality and adequacy of infrastructure, including transportation and utilities, is essential for facilitating economic activities. Examining the stability of government policies and the political environment can also provide insights into the potential for sustained growth and investment. Moreover, analysing the landscape for foreign direct investment (FDI) and entrepreneurship can highlight opportunities to attract external capital and stimulate local business development. To achieve economic advancement, South Africa and Thulamela Municipality can analyse the Asian Tigers Model and learn from the successful development trajectories observed in East Asian economies. This will help identify strategic pathways towards success and allow them to emulate the Asian Tigers' Model achievements.

3.2.2. Sustainable Development Theory

Luukkanen, Vehmas, and O'Mahony (2024: 2) define sustainable development theory as a conceptual framework that addresses the complex interplay between economic development, environmental preservation, and social equity. Luukkanen *et al.* (2024: 3) further mention that sustainable development theory emerged as a response to growing concerns about the negative impacts of traditional development approaches, which often prioritized economic growth at the expense of environmental degradation and social inequalities. The foundational idea of sustainable development is encapsulated in the 1987 Brundtland Report, which defined it as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability

of future generations to meet their own needs. This report by the World Commission on Environment and Development emphasized the interconnectedness of economic progress, environmental protection, and social well-being.

The roots of sustainable development theory can be traced back to pivotal events and intellectual contributions. The 1972 publication of "Limits to Growth," commissioned by the Club of Rome, highlighted the finite nature of Earth's resources and warned about the consequences of unchecked economic expansion. Concurrently, the rise of environmental movements in the 1960s and 1970s, exemplified by Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring," drew attention to pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss, shaping public discourse around environmental sustainability. These movements, alongside influential thinkers and economists, set the stage for the development of holistic theories that integrated ecological, economic, and social dimensions. Furthermore, sustainable development theory has been shaped by international conferences and agreements. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972 was a seminal event that brought environmental issues to the global stage. Subsequent gatherings, such as the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992) and the Paris Agreement (2015), further advanced the discourse on sustainable development and provided frameworks for international cooperation. These forums underscored the importance of collective action to address environmental challenges while promoting inclusive and equitable development.

In contemporary discourse, sustainable development theory encompasses a range of themes and principles aimed at achieving harmonious coexistence between human societies and the natural world. Mensah (2019: 3) mentions that key elements include resource conservation, renewable energy adoption, sustainable land use practices, equitable economic growth, and social justice. Mensah (2019: 3) further mentions that this multifaceted approach seeks to foster resilience and enhance the well-being of present and future generations. Sustainable development theory continues to inform policymaking and inspire initiatives at local, national, and global levels, reflecting a growing recognition of the imperative to transition towards more sustainable and inclusive forms of development.

Scholars, such as Ringson (2023: 38), offer valuable insights into the concept of a developmental state and its relevance in various contexts, particularly in achieving developmental goals similar to the Asian Tigers model within municipalities like Thulamela in South Africa. The Asian Tigers model is characterized by strong state intervention, export-oriented industrialization, and strategic investments in education and infrastructure, serving as a benchmark for rapid economic development (Nwokorie, 2023). In the context of Thulamela Local Municipality and South Africa as a whole, scholars underscore several critical

aspects. Firstly, they emphasize the vital role of state capacity and effective governance in driving developmental outcomes. Scholars such as Peter Evans and Chalmers Johnson stress that a capable state is essential for implementing policies, regulating economic activities, and steering development processes towards desired goals (Mathebula, 2016: 49).

Institutional frameworks that are transparent, accountable, and responsive to citizens' needs are of great importance, according to Ringson (2023). Strong institutions provide the foundation for effective policy implementation and sustained development outcomes. Emphasizing the experience of the Asian Tigers, strategic industrial policy is also advocated. Scholars like Ha-Joon Chang suggest targeted investments in key sectors, support for SMEs, and the nurturing of technological capabilities to promote economic diversification and competitiveness. Furthermore, Gumede (2019) highlights the significance of investing in human capital through education, skills development, and healthcare. Sithole (2023) mentions that the Asian Tigers' success was partly attributed to their prioritization of education and training, which contributed significantly to economic growth. When considering Thulamela Local Municipality, scholars may explore the role of local-level initiatives in driving development. Infrastructure projects, job creation programs, and community-based initiatives can be analyzed within the broader context of developmental strategies.

3.3. THE ASIAN TIGERS MODEL: AN OVERVIEW

This sub-section provides an overview of the Asian Tigers, including their economic strategies, policies, and key success factors.

3.3.1. Defining the Asian Tigers

Harrell and Haddad (2021: 3) state that the Four Asian Tigers—also called the Four Asian Dragons or Four Little Dragons—refer to the highly developed economies of China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. According to Mathebula (2016), these countries went through rapid industrialization and achieved high growth rates of over 7% per year from the early 1950s to the 1990s. Day (2021) notes that by the early 21st century, they had become high-income economies, each focusing on areas where they had a competitive advantage. China and Singapore became major international financial centres, while South Korea and Taiwan became leaders in producing electronic components and devices (Hendrickse, 2022: 293). Kelecha (2023: 302) explains that their success is largely due to their focus on exports, investment in education, and improved living standards. These countries moved from mainly farming-based economies in the 1960s to advanced industrial nations with strong financial and trading systems. The term "tiger economy" is now also used to describe other fast-growing small economies, such as the "Gulf Tiger" (Dubai), "Baltic Tigers" (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia), "Celtic Tiger" (Ireland), and Africa's "Lion Economies" (Gumede, 2019: 15).

3.3.2. Economic Strategies and Policies of Asian Tigers

This section examines the economic strategies and policies adopted by the Asian Tigers to establish a developmental state, highlighting how these strategies can be relevant in the South African context.

- **Export-oriented Industrialization**

Day (2021: 56) asserts that export-oriented industrialization (EOI) has been a key economic strategy used by the Asian Tigers in their journey to become successful developmental states. This approach focuses on producing goods for export to global markets, rather than relying primarily on domestic consumption. According to Haggard (2019: 53), the EOI model enabled rapid industrialization and economic growth, transforming these nations from developing countries to advanced economies within a few decades. Bloomenthal (2021) believes that the essence of EOI lies in leveraging comparative advantages, such as low labour costs and favourable geographic locations, to produce and export goods competitively on the international stage. Day (2021) mentions that the Asian Tigers adopted this strategy in the mid-20th century, amidst a changing global economic landscape. Post-World War II, these countries faced challenges such as poverty, lack of industrial base, and limited natural resources. EOI provided a pathway to overcome these hurdles by integrating their economies into the global market (Haggard, 2019: 56).

According to Sun (2015: 648), central to the success of EOI was the role of the state in orchestrating economic policies that supported export industries. Harrel and Haddad (2021: 17) asserts that the governments of the Asian Tigers actively intervened in the economy to create an environment conducive to export growth. They implemented a range of policies, including currency devaluation to make exports cheaper, establishing export processing zones (EPZs) to attract foreign direct investment (FDI), and offering subsidies and incentives to export-oriented firms. According to Fagbadebo (2019: 11), education and skill development also played a critical role. Recognizing that a well-educated workforce was essential for competitive industries, the Asian Tigers invested heavily in education and vocational training. This not only improved labour productivity but also attracted high-tech industries that required skilled labour, further enhancing their export capabilities (Taylor, 2016: 47).

As asserted by Kelecha (2023), the adoption of technological advancements and innovation was pivotal. Evans (2014) avows that the Asian Tigers did not just rely on low-cost production; they continuously moved up the value chain by investing in research and development (R&D). Elichi (2020: 77) mentions that trade liberalization and strategic trade policies also played a significant role. Elichi (2020:77) further note that the Asian Tigers gradually reduced trade barriers, signed bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, and participated actively in

international trade organizations. According to Day (2021: 57), the results of EOI were impressive, with high economic growth rates, rapid industrialization, significant improvements in living standards, and reductions in poverty levels. For example, South Korea's GDP per capita skyrocketed from around \$100 in the early 1960s to over \$30,000 by the 2010s. Similarly, Singapore transformed from a trading port into a global financial hub with a high-income economy (Abuiyada, 2018: 118). Overall, export-oriented industrialization was instrumental in the Asian Tigers' transition to developmental states (Bartholomew, 2023: 349). Bresser-Perreira (2017: 685) mentions that by fostering an environment that prioritized exports, supported by strategic state intervention, education, technology, and trade liberalization, these nations achieved rapid economic growth and development. Their experiences offer valuable lessons on the potential of EOI as a pathway to economic transformation and development.

South Africa can learn from the export-oriented industrialization (EOI) strategies of the Asian Tigers—China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. According to Bartholomew (2023: 349), these nations transformed their economies by producing goods for global markets, which boosted industrial growth. Key lessons for South Africa include prioritizing manufacturing and high-value exports, investing in innovation, and aligning the industrial base with international demand. Chavula (2022: 779) mentions that the Asian Tigers invested heavily in technology and skills training, creating a competitive workforce while maintaining stable macroeconomic policies and strong public-private partnerships. Nwokorie (2023) suggests that South Africa could focus on sectors with high export potential, such as agriculture, automotive, mining, and value-added manufacturing, to create jobs and increase foreign direct investment (FDI).

However, Emily and Muyengwa (2021: 317) mention that South Africa faces structural challenges, including reliance on raw material exports, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of skilled labour. To move toward an export-oriented model, South Africa should develop specialized economic zones, invest in vocational training, and encourage innovation. Maela *et al.* (2024) recommend that strengthening public-private partnerships and improving infrastructure, especially in transport and logistics, will enhance export capabilities. Additionally, establishing trade agreements and regional integration can provide essential markets for sustained industrial growth. By adapting these strategies, South Africa can build a diversified, export-driven economy and promote sustainable economic growth.

- **Government Intervention and Planning**

Ringson (2023: 31) mentions that the success of the Asian Tigers in meeting the criteria of a developmental state has been greatly influenced by government intervention and planning. Ashford and Hall (2019) posit that in the developmental state model, the government plays an active role in directing economic growth and development, rather than just acting as a regulator. Wong and Chen (2021: 437) mention that in the cases of China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, government intervention and planning included various key aspects that collectively facilitated rapid industrialization and economic transformation. According to Haggard (2018), one important form of government intervention was the creation and implementation of comprehensive economic plans. These plans outlined long-term goals and strategies for development, often spanning several decades. For instance, South Korea's Five-Year Economic Development Plans, which began in the 1960s, provided a structured roadmap for industrialization. They set specific targets for growth, investment, and sectoral development, ensuring a coordinated approach to economic management.

As emphasized by Hayashi (2017: 74), the governments of the Asian Tigers played a vital role in directing financial resources towards strategic industries. This involved establishing development banks and financial institutions that offered low-interest loans, subsidies, and tax incentives to priority sectors. For example, South Korea's government provided significant financial support to chaebols (large conglomerates), enabling them to make substantial investments in manufacturing and technology. Mulaudzi (2024: 89) mentions that this state-directed capital allocation ensured that resources were used efficiently to build industries with high growth potential and global competitiveness. According to Mathebula (2016), the governments of the Asian Tigers played a crucial role in fostering economic development through various interventions. They created favorable business environments by improving infrastructure, streamlining regulations, and reducing bureaucratic obstacles. For example, Singapore focused on building top-notch infrastructure and implementing business-friendly regulations to attract multinational corporations and foreign direct investment (FDI) (Hayashi, 2017: 78).

Haggard and Kaufman (2008) also added that governments also used industrial policies to promote specific industries considered vital for economic transformation. Taiwan, for instance, prioritized the development of the semiconductor industry through investments in research and development (R&D) and public-private partnerships, becoming a global leader in semiconductor manufacturing (Wade, 2018: 527). Kelecha (2023) mentions that the Asian Tigers heavily invested in education and vocational training to ensure a skilled workforce to support advanced industries. Hong (2019: 187) asserts that South Korea's emphasis on education reform and vocational training in the 1960s and 1970s laid the foundation for its technological advancements and economic growth. Gumede (2015) mentions that the

governments also demonstrated flexibility in economic management, adapting policies in response to changing global economic conditions and domestic needs. For instance, during the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s, affected countries swiftly implemented reforms to stabilize their economies and return to growth.

According to Cheng (2020: 110), the Asian Tigers successfully invested in research and development (R&D) and established innovation clusters to drive technological progress. For instance, Singapore focused on becoming a knowledge-based economy by investing in research institutions and technology parks, which fostered high-tech industries and innovation-driven enterprises (Bloomenthal, 2021: 11). Bresser-Pereira (2017) mentions that the proactive government intervention in these countries was crucial for achieving rapid industrialization and sustained economic growth, serving as a model for other nations. South Africa can learn from the Asian Tigers' approach to government intervention and economic planning. According to Chang (2015: 34), the success of countries like South Korea and Taiwan stemmed from carefully designed policies that supported emerging industries and incentivized private sector growth. Chavula (2022) posits that by prioritizing industries with high growth and export potential and providing structured funding, they created a favorable business environment. South Africa can adopt similar strategies by focusing on sectors that leverage its natural resources and available skills for long-term growth.

However, South Africa faces challenges in government intervention, including inconsistent policy implementation, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and limited departmental coordination (Mashabela, 2023: 237). Gasela (2022) mentions that corruption and mismanagement further strain public resources and gaps between policy formulation and implementation hinder effectiveness. Mandiriza and Fourie (2022:2), claim that limited collaboration with the private sector and a lack of focus on industrial development also restrict potential growth. To improve, South Africa should proactively identify strategic industries for support, incentivize investment, and foster cooperation with the private sector. Reducing bureaucratic hurdles and enhancing accountability among government departments is essential. Additionally, better infrastructure planning and expanded funding mechanisms can attract investment. With focused and transparent intervention, the South African government can drive industrial growth and tackle economic challenges, paving the way for sustained development.

- **Education and Human Capital Development**

According to Ricks (2020), education and human capital development have been crucial components of the strategy employed by the Asian Tigers (China, Singapore, South Korea & Taiwan) to achieve rapid economic growth and transition into advanced economies. Mulaudzi (2024: 83) mentions that these countries recognized the significance of having a well-educated and skilled workforce to drive industrialization and technological advancement. As a result, they made substantial investments in their education systems and implemented comprehensive policies to enhance human capital (Ukwandu, 2019: 48). They prioritized universal access to education, focusing on achieving widespread literacy and numeracy through compulsory primary and secondary education.

As emphasized by Day (2021), they made significant investments in higher education and vocational training tailored to meet the specific needs of emerging industries. According to Bolesta (2007: 106), governments worked closely with the private sector to align educational curricula with market demands, ensuring that graduates possessed relevant skills. Wong and Chen (2021) mention that there was a particular emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education, acknowledging its crucial role in driving innovation and industrial growth. Initiatives such as South Korea's establishment of the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) and Taiwan's focus on industry-academia collaborations facilitated technology transfer and skill development (Harrel & Haddad, 2021: 19).

Furthermore, these countries promoted lifelong learning and continuous skill development to keep the workforce adaptable to rapid technological changes and globalization (Haggard, 2019: 55). For instance, Singapore's Skills Future initiative provided citizens with opportunities for ongoing education and skill enhancement throughout their careers. This comprehensive approach to education and human capital development led to a highly skilled workforce, which played a key role in the rapid industrialization and global ascent of the Asian Tigers. According to Harrel and Haddad (2021: 1-20), the results are evident in the transformation of South Korea into a leader in the electronics and automotive industries, as well as Singapore's emergence as a global financial and technological hub. The strategic focus on education and human capital development not only supported immediate economic needs but also positioned these countries for sustained growth and competitiveness in the global economy, highlighting the profound impact of investing in human capital on national development (Day, 2021: 57).

South Africa can learn from the Asian Tigers, who successfully focused on education and human capital development as key drivers of economic growth. According to Gumede (2019: 13), these nations invested heavily in building a skilled workforce by prioritizing universal education, aligning curricula with industrial needs, and emphasizing STEM subjects. Ringson

(2023) further notes that they also implemented vocational training programs to prepare workers for emerging industries. Currently, South Africa faces challenges such as low education quality, high dropout rates, and unequal access to resources, particularly in disadvantaged communities (Thusi & Selepe, 2023: 690). According to Mseleku (2022: 335), many young South Africans enter the job market without the necessary skills, limiting their employability and hindering economic progress.

To improve this situation, South Africa could adopt the Asian Tigers' approach by investing in education reform that enhances quality and accessibility. This includes expanding vocational education, fostering partnerships between schools and industries, and providing scholarships and internships. By enhancing teacher training and promoting STEM education, South Africa can build a skilled workforce capable of driving innovation and competitiveness in a diversified, knowledge-driven economy.

3.3.3. Key Factors of Success of the Asian Tigers Model

This subsection examines the key factors that contributed to the success of the Asian Tigers. These factors include political stability, effective governance, foreign direct investment, and technology transfer. It also highlights how adopting these factors could help South Africa meet the criteria for becoming a developmental state.

- **Political Stability and Governance**

Dercon (2021) asserts that the success of the Asian Tigers can be attributed to their unwavering commitment to political stability and effective governance. These regions have consistently prioritized creating and maintaining stable political environments, which has been crucial for fostering investor confidence and ensuring sustained economic progress. Bolesta (2007: 109) mentions that in China and Singapore, political stability has been supported by strong, centralized governments that prioritize economic development and maintain robust legal frameworks. Hong Kong, under British colonial rule and later as a Special Administrative Region of China, benefited from a legal system that promoted free-market principles and protected property rights, attracting substantial foreign investment (Chang, 2015: 33). Similarly, Bloomenthal (2021) posits that Singapore's government, led by the People's Action Party since its independence, has implemented pragmatic policies aimed at creating a conducive business environment. This includes anti-corruption measures, efficient bureaucracy, and a focus on education and infrastructure development.

According to Maupeu (2021), South Korea and Taiwan's political landscapes also played pivotal roles in their economic ascent. Bresser-Pereira (2009: 21) mentions that despite

periods of authoritarian rule, both countries managed to achieve high levels of political stability, allowing for the implementation of long-term economic strategies. In South Korea as emphasized by Haggard (2018), the government's partnership with large conglomerates, known as chaebols, facilitated industrial growth and technological advancement. Taiwan's political stability, particularly post-1949 after the retreat of the Republic of China government to the island, enabled a focus on education, infrastructure, and technological innovation (Bolesta, 2007:106). Bartholomew (2023: 349) posits that the consistent governance provided by both countries allowed for significant state-led investments in strategic industries, spurring rapid industrialization and export-oriented growth. Moreover, the governance models of the Asian Tigers are characterized by their adaptability and responsiveness to global economic changes (Nwokorie, 2023: 6). Chavula (2022) claims that policymakers in these regions have shown a remarkable ability to implement necessary reforms and adjust strategies in response to evolving global economic conditions, which has been essential in maintaining their competitive edge. For instance, the shift from labour-intensive industries to high-tech and service-oriented sectors has been a common theme among the Asian Tigers, reflecting their governments' proactive and forward-thinking approaches (Chivanga, 2023: 7). In summary, Maela *et al.* (2024) mention that political stability and effective governance have been instrumental in the success of the Asian Tigers. Their governments have created stable environments that promote economic growth through sound policies, legal frameworks, and strategic partnerships (Gumede, 2019: 16). This stability has attracted foreign investment, facilitated industrialization, and enabled these economies to adapt to global economic shifts, thereby ensuring their continued prosperity and development.

South Africa can draw important lessons from the Asian Tigers, whose focus on political stability and effective governance has driven significant economic growth. According to Bloomenthal (2021), these nations achieved stability through strong governance structures, low corruption, and business-friendly policies, attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and building public trust. Bloomenthal (2021) further notes that they prioritized transparent institutions, the rule of law, and property rights, creating a favourable environment for business expansion. Improving political stability and governance is essential for South Africa to replicate this success. However, the country faces significant challenges, including corruption, political interference, and weak institutions, which undermine accountability and erode public trust (Mashabela, 2023: 238). Mokhutso and Marumo (2023: 18) claim that unrest stemming from service delivery issues and social inequality further complicates the investment climate. To enhance governance, South Africa should strengthen its institutions, enforce anti-corruption measures, and promote transparency and accountability. Establishing independent regulatory bodies, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and improving government efficiency can create a

more attractive investment environment. By addressing these challenges, South Africa can foster sustainable economic growth and build a more resilient, inclusive economy.

- **Foreign Direct Investment and Technological Transfer**

According to Day (2021: 58), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and technological transfer have played a crucial role in the economic success of the Asian Tigers, which include China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. Ashford and Hall (2019) posit that these regions strategically utilized FDI to drive industrial growth, enhance technological capabilities, and integrate into the global economy. Edigheji (2010) mentions that in the initial stages of development, FDI provided essential capital for industrialization. Hong Kong and Singapore, due to their strategic locations and business-friendly environments, became attractive destinations for multinational corporations (Harrell & Haddad 2021: 16). Evans (2014) claims that China's laissez-faire economic policies and Singapore's low taxes, efficient infrastructure, and transparent regulatory systems drew significant FDI, particularly in manufacturing and services. These investments not only brought capital but also managerial expertise, access to global markets, and advanced technologies, which were vital for economic modernization. Haggard (2019) claims that in South Korea and Taiwan, the influx of FDI was strategically managed by their governments. Haggard (2019) further notes that South Korea encouraged foreign investment in specific sectors to foster partnerships between local firms and foreign companies, facilitating the transfer of advanced technologies and industrial know-how. Similarly, Taiwan focused on attracting FDI in high-tech industries, becoming a global leader in semiconductor manufacturing. Technological transfer, closely linked with FDI, has been a critical factor in the success of the Asian Tigers (Chavula, 2022: 785).

According to Ovie (2019), the establishment of foreign enterprises often involves the transfer of cutting-edge technologies and management practices to local firms, particularly in the manufacturing and electronics sectors. For example, the collaboration between local firms and foreign tech giants in Taiwan led to significant advancements in semiconductor technologies, positioning Taiwan as a key player in the global tech supply chain. Ziai (2017) asserts that in South Korea, the government's policies aimed at fostering R&D and innovation were complemented by technological transfer from foreign firms, which helped South Korean companies such as Samsung and LG evolve into global technology leaders. Additionally, the Asian Tigers have invested heavily in education and skill development to ensure a highly skilled workforce capable of adopting and further developing advanced technologies (Hendrickse, 2022: 293). They have also established special economic zones and industrial parks to provide infrastructure and incentives, attracting high-tech industries and fostering innovation. To this end, FDI and technological transfer have been instrumental in the economic

rise of the Asian Tigers (Day, 2021: 54-61). Hendrickse (2021) mentions that through substantial foreign investment and the transfer of advanced technologies, these regions have rapidly industrialized, enhanced their technological capabilities, and effectively integrated into the global economy. According to Ringson (2023: 42), the strategic management of FDI and a focus on technology-driven development have enabled the Asian Tigers to achieve sustained economic growth and establish themselves as leaders in various high-tech industries.

South Africa can learn from the Asian Tigers' effective use of foreign direct investment (FDI) and technology transfer to bolster economic growth and industrialization. Singh and Ovadia (2018) mention that the Asian Tigers attracted FDI by creating business-friendly environments, offering tax incentives, and forming partnerships with multinational companies that fostered access to new technologies and management practices. According to Sharma (2022), their strategy included embedding conditions for knowledge and technology transfer, such as local partnerships and workforce training, which enabled their transition from low-cost manufacturing to advanced industries. South Africa should focus on attracting FDI in high-potential sectors like renewable energy, information technology, and manufacturing. However, Mulaudzi (2024: 84) mentions that South Africa's ability to attract FDI is currently hindered by policy uncertainty, corruption, and infrastructure issues. While it has abundant natural resources and a large market, concerns about political instability and bureaucratic inefficiencies deter investors. To enhance FDI and technology transfer, South Africa could implement targeted policies that incentivize investment in high-value sectors, strengthen intellectual property rights, and improve regulatory transparency. Additionally, establishing industry clusters for collaboration between local firms and multinationals could enhance technology diffusion and create a skilled workforce. By aligning FDI strategies with technological development goals, South Africa can foster an innovation-driven economy and improve its global competitiveness.

- **Infrastructure Development**

According to Sighn and Ovadia (2018), infrastructure development has been a crucial factor in the remarkable economic success of the Asian Tigers. Wade (2018: 527) posits that China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan made significant investments in building top-notch infrastructure, which played a critical role in their rapid industrialization, increased productivity, and global economic integration. In China, the development of advanced infrastructure has been integral to its status as a global financial hub and major port city (Ziai, 2017: 2550). Maseremule (2021) posits that the government prioritized the construction of efficient transport systems, including an extensive network of roads, railways, and one of the world's busiest and

most efficient airports, China International Airport. According to Bloomenthal (2021), the development of the Port of China facilitated the city's growth as a major international trading and logistics centre. These infrastructure investments ensured smooth connectivity, reduced transportation costs, and enhanced China's attractiveness to international businesses.

Breser-Pereira (2019) asserts that Singapore's infrastructure development strategy has been characterized by meticulous planning and execution. Chavula (2022: 774) mentions that the city-state invested in creating a world-class port and airport, which have become critical nodes in global trade and aviation. According to Yusuf (2001), the Port of Singapore, one of the busiest in the world, and Changi Airport, consistently ranked among the best globally, are prime examples of Singapore's infrastructure excellence. Additionally, Singapore's government has focused on urban planning, creating an efficient public transport system, state-of-the-art telecommunications, and sustainable urban development (Dassah, 2011: 592). These infrastructure initiatives have supported Singapore's growth as a major financial centre and a global hub for various industries. South Korea's infrastructure development has been instrumental in its transformation into a high-tech industrial powerhouse. Mabasa and Mqolomba (2016) assert that the government embarked on large-scale infrastructure projects, including the construction of highways, ports, and airports, to support its export-oriented growth strategy. According to Kim (2015), the development of Incheon International Airport and the expansion of major ports like Busan facilitated South Korea's integration into global supply chains. Moreover, South Korea invested significantly in digital infrastructure, leading to the widespread adoption of high-speed internet and advanced telecommunications, which has supported its burgeoning technology sector (Bortholomew, 2023: 348).

Bartholomew (2023) also notes that Taiwan prioritized infrastructure development to support its economic growth. According to Mcguire (2010), the government focused on building efficient transport networks, including highways, railways, and ports, to enhance connectivity and facilitate trade. The development of the Port of Kaohsiung, Chu (2016: 21) asserts that Taiwan's largest harbour, has been vital for its export-driven economy. Additionally, Taiwan has invested in technological infrastructure, including research parks and innovation hubs, to support its high-tech industries, particularly in semiconductor manufacturing (Chu, 2016: 1-25). Sithole (2023: 06) mentions that the comprehensive infrastructure development across the Asian Tigers has had several positive outcomes. It has significantly reduced logistics costs, improved the efficiency of production and distribution networks, and enhanced the overall business environment (Ukwandu, 2019: 47). These regions' commitment to building and maintaining high-quality infrastructure has attracted foreign investment, boosted domestic industries, and enabled them to become key players in the global economy.

South Africa can gain valuable insights from the Asian Tigers, who prioritized infrastructure development for their rapid economic growth. Asante (2018: 266) posits that by heavily investing in transportation, energy, and telecommunications, these nations created efficient logistics and improved market accessibility, attracting foreign investment and boosting their industrial sectors. South Africa could similarly enhance productivity and expand economic opportunities by focusing on infrastructure. Currently, South Africa struggles with ageing infrastructure, unreliable electricity, and inadequate transport networks, which stifle economic activity and deter investments (Sithole, 2023: 07). Taylor (2023) mentions that load shedding and insufficient facilities in rural areas further limit access to markets and jobs. Additionally, funding constraints and project delays have created an infrastructure backlog (Matyana & Thusi, 2023: 220). To address these issues, South Africa should focus investments on key areas like energy and transport, strengthen public-private partnerships, and seek foreign investment. Improving regulatory efficiency and prioritizing sustainable infrastructure can also help streamline projects. By developing modern infrastructure, South Africa can foster industrialization, enhance global competitiveness, and lay the groundwork for sustainable economic growth.

3.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

This subsection discusses the Asian Tigers Model implications for South Africa. This entails economic implications, social implications and lastly political implications.

3.4.1. Economic Implications

The "Asian Tigers" model, exemplified by the rapid economic growth and industrialization in Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, provides valuable insights into South Africa's economic development strategy. Ringson (2023) notes that these East Asian economies adopted an export-oriented industrialization (EOI) strategy, focusing on industries capable of competing in global markets. According to Ukwandu (2019: 52), they established Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) by offering incentives such as tax breaks and simplified regulations. Additionally, these countries made significant investments in infrastructure to support efficient production and export activities (Nwokorie, 2023: 08). For South Africa, implementing a similar EOI strategy could involve diversifying its export base beyond minerals and raw materials to include manufactured goods and services. Effectively implementing SEZs with attractive incentives for investors and improving logistics and transportation infrastructure could further stimulate industrial growth (Vilakazi & Moore, 2023). A notable example is the Makhado SEZ in Limpopo, strategically located to leverage its proximity to key export routes and abundant resources. By providing

targeted incentives and efficient infrastructure, the Makhado SEZ has the potential to attract significant investment, facilitate industrialization, and create job opportunities in the region, thereby aligning with the broader objectives of the Asian Tigers model.

Wade (2018) asserts that human capital development was another cornerstone of the Asian Tigers' success. They placed a strong emphasis on education and training, ensuring a highly skilled workforce. Day (2021) claims that investments in research and development (R&D) promoted technological advancements and innovation. For South Africa, investing in education, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields, is vital (Nwokorie, 2023). According to Wade (2018), vocational training and partnerships with industry could address skills mismatches. Additionally, promoting R&D and supporting start-ups and tech innovation hubs can foster a knowledge-based economy, which is crucial for sustained growth and competitiveness in the global market (Dereli and Salgar, 2019: 345-360). According to Kim (2015: 27), government intervention and sound macroeconomic policies were instrumental in the development of the Asian Tigers. Gumede (2015) mentions that governments played an active role in guiding economic development through subsidies, tariffs, and fostering key industries while ensuring fiscal discipline and a stable macroeconomic environment to attract investments. For South Africa, strategic industrial policies that identify and support key industries where the country has competitive advantages can stimulate growth (Mabasa and Mqolomba, 2016: 72). Bresser-Perreira (2017) posits that ensuring fiscal discipline and creating a stable macroeconomic environment to attract both domestic and international investors is essential for sustainable economic development.

Nwokorie (2023) notes that Socio-political stability and strong governance were also critical to the success of the Asian Tigers. According to Ringson (2023), effective governance and relatively low levels of corruption provided a stable environment for economic activities. Cooperative labour relations ensure social stability, preventing disruptions in production (Gumede, 2019: 18). In South Africa, strengthening institutions to reduce corruption and enhance transparency can improve the business environment (Gasela, 2022: 601). Ukwandu (2019: 47) mentions that developing cooperative labour relations and ensuring fair labour practices can reduce industrial actions and improve productivity, contributing to a more stable and conducive environment for economic growth. Nevertheless, Mutyambidzi *et al.* (2020: 17) mention that South Africa faces significant challenges and considerations, as the differences between its economy and those of the Asian Tigers require tailored approaches instead of simply transplanting existing models. According to Matyana and Thusi (2023), South Africa's heavy reliance on natural resources and high levels of inequality and unemployment present unique challenges. Netshidzivhe (2015) mentions that transitioning to a more diversified economy will require substantial policy shifts and investments, alongside inclusive growth

policies that address these socioeconomic issues. Moreover, South Africa faces stiff competition from other emerging markets, so identifying niches and leveraging unique strengths can provide competitive advantages (Ovie, 2019: 57). Mathebula (2016) concluded by stating that while the Asian Tigers model offers valuable insights, South Africa must adapt these strategies to its specific context to foster sustainable economic growth.

3.4.2. Social Implications

According to Gumede (2019), the economic strategies and rapid development experienced by the Asian Tigers had profound social implications, providing important lessons for South Africa. Bresser-Perreira (2009) mentions that one of the most notable outcomes was the substantial reduction in poverty and inequality. Ovie (2019: 52) claims that the aggressive pursuit of industrialization and job creation lifted large segments of their populations out of poverty. For South Africa, adopting similar strategies focused on job creation through industrialization, combined with inclusive growth policies, could help address its high levels of inequality and unemployment, reducing poverty and narrowing the wealth gap (Kelecha, 2023: 297). According to Sun (2015: 647), investments in education and healthcare were critical components of the Asian Tigers' success, resulting in a well-educated and healthy workforce. These investments supported economic growth and social stability. Nwokorie (2023) posits that South Africa can benefit by significantly increasing its investment in education and healthcare, particularly in underserved areas. Ukwandu (2019) mentions that improving the quality and accessibility of these services can enhance the overall well-being of the population and support long-term economic development.

Abuiyada (2018) posits that Urbanization, driven by rapid industrialization, significantly changed social structures in the Asian Tigers. Chivanga (2023: 3) asserts that large numbers of people moved from rural to urban areas in search of better employment opportunities, altering family dynamics and lifestyles. South Africa, already experiencing urbanization, can learn by planning for sustainable urban growth (Elichi, 2020: 77). According to Manirakiza (2014: 167), ensuring adequate housing, infrastructure, and services in urban areas can help manage social challenges like overcrowding and resource strain. Kim (2015) mentions that economic growth in the Asian Tigers facilitated significant social mobility, leading to the emergence of a strong middle class, which became a stabilizing force in society. For South Africa, promoting social mobility through access to quality education, fair labour practices, and opportunities for entrepreneurship is crucial (Chauke, 2021: 27). Building a robust middle class can enhance social cohesion and create a more stable society (Sithole, 2023).

According to Bresser-Perreira (2016: 14), gender equality and women's empowerment improved as the Asian Tigers modernized and expanded educational opportunities. Gumede

(2015) mentions that South Africa can similarly benefit by empowering women through education, healthcare, and equal employment opportunities. Kelecha (2023:294) posits that promoting gender equality is essential not only for social justice but also for economic growth, as it fully utilizes the talents and potentials of the entire population. According to Wong and Chen (2021), strong governance and effective institutions in the Asian Tigers contributed to social stability, essential for sustained economic growth. Tshishonga and de Vries (2011) posit that low levels of corruption and efficient public services created trust in government and social cohesion. Maela *et al.* (2024) suggest that South Africa can strengthen its institutions, reduce corruption, and enhance governance to build public trust. Transparent and accountable governance can lead to greater social stability and support for economic policies.

Yusuf (2001) argues that while the Asian Tigers achieved many positive social outcomes, they also faced challenges such as income disparities and the social costs of rapid urbanization. Vilakazi and Adetiba (2020) mention South Africa must be mindful of these potential pitfalls. According to Dercon (202: 57), comprehensive social policies addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, ensuring fair labour practices, and providing social safety nets are necessary to mitigate the negative impacts of rapid economic changes. Ukwandu (2019) mentions that by adapting the lessons from the Asian Tigers to the local context, South Africa can achieve not only economic growth but also substantial social progress, building a more inclusive, equitable, and stable society.

3.4.3. Political Implications

Chingono (2018: 43) claims that the rapid economic development of the Asian Tigers had significant political implications and offered important lessons for South Africa. Bresser-Perreira (2019) mentions that one critical implication was the establishment of strong and effective governance. Day (2021: 55) mentions that governments in these countries played an active role in guiding economic development through strategic policies, efficient administration, and a focus on long-term goals. For South Africa, this implies the need for a government that can implement and sustain coherent economic policies free from excessive political interference and corruption (Sithole, 2023: 09). According to Moji *et al* (2022), strengthening governance structures to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective service delivery is essential for creating a conducive environment for economic growth. Haggard (2019: 11) claims that another key factor in the success of the Asian Tigers was the robustness of their institutions. Haggard (2019) further notes that effective regulatory bodies, judicial systems, and public sector organizations operate with efficiency and transparency, supporting economic activities. South Africa can draw from this experience by prioritizing the strengthening of its institutions (Maela *et al.*, 2024: 83). Clear, consistent regulatory frameworks and a strong judicial system that upholds the rule of law and resolves disputes

impartially will boost investor confidence and facilitate business operations, contributing to overall economic stability (Gumede, 2019: 17).

Kelecha (2023) posits that consistent and long-term economic planning was a hallmark of the political approach of the Asian Tigers. Their governments maintained a clear vision and strategic direction over decades, allowing for sustained development and investment. South Africa can benefit from adopting a similar approach by focusing on long-term economic strategies that transcend political cycles and changes in government. According to Asante (2018: 262), developing comprehensive development plans with clear objectives, timelines, and measurable outcomes will ensure continuity and stability in economic policy, fostering a more predictable and stable investment environment. Wade (2018) mentions that a significant factor in the Asian Tigers' success was the relatively low level of corruption, ensuring that public resources were used effectively and equitably. Addressing corruption is paramount for South Africa. Mensah (2019) suggests that implementing stringent anti-corruption measures, promoting transparency in government dealings, and ensuring public officials are held accountable can restore public trust and create a more favourable environment for economic growth. Munzhedzi (2016: 1-7) mentions that strengthening anti-corruption institutions and fostering a culture of integrity in both the public and private sectors are critical steps towards achieving this goal. According to Mabasa and Mqolomba (2016: 74), the political stability of the Asian Tigers provided a foundation for economic growth. Mcguire (2010: 42) mentions that Stable political environments, characterized by effective governance, low levels of conflict, and strong social contracts, were instrumental in attracting investment and fostering development. South Africa can learn from this by working towards greater socio-political stability. Addressing social inequalities, promoting inclusive policies, and fostering national unity are essential (Bolesta, 2017: 108). Gumede (2015) mentions that reducing political polarization and ensuring that all citizens feel represented and heard in the political process will help create a stable environment conducive to economic progress.

Nwokorie (2023: 08) contends that the Asian Tigers effectively utilized public-private partnerships (PPPs) to drive economic development. According to Wade (2018), governments collaborated with the private sector to build infrastructure, develop industries, and promote innovation. South Africa can adopt a similar approach by encouraging PPPs in key sectors such as infrastructure, education, and technology. According to Monk *et al.* (2019), creating frameworks that facilitate collaboration between the government and private enterprises can leverage the strengths of both sectors, driving economic growth and development. Day (2021) mentions that decentralization played a role in the Asian Tigers' ability to implement policies effectively at local levels. Chang (2015) mentions empowering local governments to manage resources, implement policies, and address the specific needs of their communities enhanced

governance and development outcomes. For South Africa, decentralizing certain governance functions can improve efficiency and responsiveness (Munzhedzi, 2016: 1-7). According to Emily and Munyengwa (2021: 309-323), strengthening local governments, providing them with adequate resources, and enhancing their capacity to deliver services can foster more inclusive and localized development.

To this end, the political implications of the Asian Tigers' development model offer valuable lessons for South Africa. Gumede (2019) mentions that strong and effective governance, robust institutions, policy consistency, anti-corruption measures, socio-political stability, public-private partnerships, and decentralization are key areas where South Africa can draw insights to enhance its political and economic landscape. By adapting these lessons to its unique context, South Africa can build a more stable, transparent, and effective governance framework that supports sustained economic growth and social development.

3.5. ADAPTABILITY OF ASIAN TIGERS MODEL INTO THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

DPME (2017: 18) asserts that the way South Africa identifies itself as a developmental state is different from the approach taken by the Asian Tigers. Mathebula (2016) asserts that the Asian Tigers countries initially formulated their vision for development, implemented relevant policies, and were later recognized as developmental states by scholars such as Johnson in 1982. In contrast, South Africa has embraced the idea of being a developmental state first. It is now working to understand how it applies to the country and which policies would be suitable to achieve the desired outcomes (DPME, 2017: 18, Spector, 2013).

DPME (2017: 19) further emphasizes that the adaptability of the Asian Tigers' models to the South African context requires a nuanced approach, given the significant differences and unique challenges faced by South Africa. According to Chung (2020: 108), the Asian Tigers, specifically China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, have achieved remarkable economic growth through a combination of export-led growth, high levels of education, strong state intervention, and technological innovation. However, Moji *et al.* (2022: 94) assert that South Africa's historical, socio-economic, and political landscapes pose both opportunities and challenges in replicating these models. Firstly, the success of the Asian Tigers has been heavily reliant on a robust export-oriented strategy, which involved integrating into the global economy and focusing on manufacturing and high-tech industries (Mkandawire, 2010:74). South Africa, with its rich mineral resources, has traditionally been more resource-dependent (Day, 2017). To adapt this model, Khambule (2021: 172) suggests that South Africa would need to diversify its economy significantly, fostering manufacturing and technology sectors while reducing its reliance on mining. This would require substantial investment in

infrastructure and human capital to build a competitive industrial base capable of producing goods for international markets.

According to Day (2017), education and workforce development are pivotal components of the Asian Tigers' success. They invested heavily in education, leading to a highly skilled workforce that could support advanced manufacturing and technological industries. According to Enaifoghe and Dlamini (2021: 208), South Africa faces significant challenges in this regard, with persistent issues in its education system, including unequal access and varying quality of education. Enaifoghe and Dlamini (2021: 208) further note that adopting this aspect of the Asian model would necessitate a comprehensive overhaul of the education system, emphasizing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields to create a skilled workforce ready to participate in a diversified economy. Dercon (2022) mentions that the Asian Tigers benefited from strong, interventionist governments that guided economic development through strategic planning, industrial policies, and support for key industries. Mokhutso and Marumo (2023: 17) believe that South Africa, with its complex political landscape and legacy of apartheid, would need to navigate these dynamics carefully. According to Munzhedzi (2021), implementing similar state-led strategies would require effective governance, reduction of corruption, and fostering an environment where public policies are implemented efficiently and transparently. This could involve strengthening institutions, ensuring policy continuity, and enhancing public-private partnerships.

Social cohesion and inequality present additional challenges. Ukwandu (2019) mentions that the Asian Tigers, despite varying degrees of initial inequality, managed to achieve relatively high levels of social cohesion, which supported economic growth. According to Mulaudzi (2024:84), South Africa's high levels of inequality and social fragmentation pose significant obstacles. Matyana and Thusi (2023: 224) suggest that addressing these issues would require inclusive growth policies, focused on reducing poverty and inequality through job creation, social safety nets, and targeted economic opportunities for marginalized communities. This inclusive approach would help garner broader societal support for economic reforms. To this end, while the Asian Tigers' models offer valuable lessons, their direct application to South Africa necessitates significant adaptation (Mathebula, 2016: 52). Gumede (2019) mentions that key areas of focus should include economic diversification, substantial investment in education and workforce development, effective and transparent state intervention, and policies aimed at reducing inequality and fostering social cohesion. By tailoring these strategies to its unique context, South Africa can potentially harness the principles of the Asian Tigers to drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth (Mensah, 2019: 11).

3.6. CRITIQUES AND LIMITATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING ASIAN TIGERS MODELS INTO SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

There are numerous criticisms and limitations regarding the strategies utilized by the Asian Tigers that cannot simply be replicated in the South African context. However, Matisonn (2024) asserts that there are three main reasons given by both academics and politicians why the strategies employed by the Asian Tigers in their success as a developmental state cannot be replicated in South Africa and are as follow :

- The Asian Tiger states are homogeneous. Their populations are not as diverse as ours in terms of education levels, cultures, or economic expertise. Therefore, their development cannot be replicated in South Africa and Africa as a whole.
- South Africa cannot follow the Asian Tigers' route of cheap manufacturing of clothing, textiles, and electronic goods because South Africa's strong unions and their alliance with the ruling party have led to high wages, making it difficult to compete with the Asian Tigers' workers who have fewer rights.
- Asian countries are more authoritarian and less democratic than ours, and they can impose their will in a way that South Africa, as a democratic state, cannot.

Scholars such as Ringson (2023) have also made a comparison regarding the characteristics of the developmental state. They briefly explained the concept as far as the Asian Tigers are concerned and highlighted the implementation challenges in the South African context. The comparison is as follows:

- **A singular focus on economic growth**

Asian Tigers: In Asian countries, the economy and society prioritize economic growth as the primary focus, granting legitimacy to the system through development.

South Africa: The South African government does not have a singular focus on economic growth; instead, its stated intention is to reduce unemployment, poverty and inequality

- **State-led industrial policy**

Asian Tigers: A fundamental tenet of the developmental state model in Asian countries is a state-centric industrial policy, with the government actively supporting selected industries in the country.

South Africa: The government introduced the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) in 2007/8. An IPAP of this magnitude does not constitute a significant state-led industrial policy.

- **Capable professional bureaucracy**

Asian Tigers: Asian Tigers have a professional bureaucracy that is highly capable and well-connected to the industry.

South Africa: A competent civil service is crucial for the success of a developmental state, such as those in East Asia. However, South Africa differs from those states due to its challenges and lack of capacity in education, health, and local government service delivery.

- **An export-driven economy**

Asian Tigers: Asian countries have an export-driven economy based on the exportation of skills and education, which is controlled by the government.

South Africa: Despite the policy shift from the implementation of GEAR to the adoption of the NDP, South Africa has struggled to boost exports to drive economic growth. The high cost of labor in South Africa, surpassing that of China, India, Brazil, Russia, and Turkey, necessitates an increase in productivity for international competitiveness. Achieving this requires a focus on improving skills and education, which is currently a significant area of weakness.

The establishment of a developmental state must be understood in the context of a country's unique historical background and social structure, as argued by scholars like Evans (1995). According to Sithole (2023: 05), South Africa is facing numerous challenges that hinder its progress towards becoming a developmental state, especially when compared to the East Asian Tigers. Firstly, unlike the relatively homogeneous standards of living in the East Asian States at the beginning of their growth efforts, South Africa is characterized by extreme inequality, making it one of the most unequal societies globally (Molobela, 2023: 109). This significant poverty divide within the South African social context hinders the creation of social cohesion and widespread support for state policies and plans. Furthermore, South Africa is grappling with an identity crisis, with society fractured along racial lines and lacking a sense of common belonging or patriotism (Matisonn, 2024: 1-11). This fragmentation poses a challenge for the government in uniting different segments of society to work towards shared growth goals (Evans, 1995). Additionally, South Africa's democracy is still in its infancy, which places a dual demand on the state to deliver development in both the economic and democratic spheres (Gumede, 2009). Kelecha (2023) suggests that to move towards becoming a developmental state, South Africa must first address its severe inequality through redistributive measures. Without such measures, attempts at growth may only exacerbate the existing imbalances (Gumede, 2009). Creamer (2010) further argues that for South Africa to evolve into a developmental state, it must ensure greater access to basic services and physical infrastructure, as these are necessary preconditions for broad-based participation in economic processes. Creamer emphasizes that South Africa's macroeconomic policy must

address the country's 'legacy of dispossession' to enable inclusive growth (Creamer, 2010: 205; Edigheji, 2010). To this end, the implementation of the Asian Tigers' developmental model in South Africa faces significant obstacles due to deep-rooted inequality, social fragmentation, and the demands of a young democracy (Nwokorie, 2023: 05). Gumede (2015) mentions that these critiques highlight the need for a tailored approach that addresses South Africa's unique socio-economic challenges.

3.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the Asian Tigers Model and its potential implications for the South African government. The discussion begins with an exploration of the theories guiding the research: the Asian Tigers theory and the Sustainable Development theory. These theoretical frameworks offer a foundation for understanding the principles and strategies that have driven the rapid economic growth of the Asian Tigers—Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. An overview of the Asian Tigers Model is presented, highlighting the key elements that contributed to their success. These include robust government policies, export-oriented industrialization, investment in education and technology, and strong public-private partnerships.

In examining the implications for South Africa, the chapter discusses how the Asian Tigers Model could potentially be adapted to fit the South African context. This includes an analysis of the country's current socio-economic conditions, governmental structure, and existing development strategies. The adaptability of the Asian Tigers Model is scrutinized, considering the unique challenges and opportunities within South Africa. Critiques and limitations of implementing the Asian Tigers Model in South Africa are also discussed. The chapter acknowledges that while there are valuable lessons to be learned, there are also significant differences between the Asian Tigers and South Africa that may pose barriers to successful implementation. These include differences in political stability, economic infrastructure, and cultural context. Overall, the chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the Asian Tigers Model, its relevance to South Africa, and the critical factors that need to be considered in adapting such a model to achieve a developmental state in the South African context. The next chapter of this study discusses the research paradigms, design, and methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the research paradigms, design and methodology that were used in this study. Research refers to an orderly process of investigating a specific topic to gain new knowledge. It often includes collecting and analyzing data, reviewing the existing literature, and drawing meaningful conclusions. Furthermore, this chapter provides the study area, population, sampling, pilot study, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

4.2. RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Rehman and Alharthi (2018: 19) posit that research paradigms encompass a set of beliefs and principles that guide scientists within a specific discipline, shaping decisions on what subjects to investigate, the methodology employed in research, and the interpretation of results. Essentially, a paradigm reflects the philosophical stance of researchers regarding the essence of the subject, the boundaries of knowledge, and how understanding can be achieved (Alharti, 2018: 20).

The research paradigms include Positivism, Post positivism, Critical Theory and Constructivism. However, in this case, the researcher applied the pragmatism paradigm. Hamza (2015: 217) defines pragmatism as a philosophical paradigm that evaluates the meaning and truth of ideas based on their practical consequences and effectiveness in solving real-world problems. However, according to Denzin (2012: 103), Pragmatism can be defined as an epistemological stance that emphasizes the importance of experience, experimentation, and practical application in shaping knowledge and understanding, rejecting absolute or fixed truths in favour of ideas that prove useful in practice. This was because pragmatics allowed the researcher to integrate both qualitative and quantitative methods, acknowledging the practical aspects of implementing strategies inspired by the Asian Tigers model in the unique context of South Africa. It provides flexibility to address the diverse aspects of economic development, governance, and social dynamics within this study.

4.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Creswell (2014), the research design is a researcher's plan to answer questions or test the hypothesis's validity. Fink (2019) asserts that research design covers the entire research process, from identifying the research problem to collecting and analyzing data and

drawing conclusions. The types of research design that this study used include survey design, case study design, contextual design, exploratory design and comparative design.

Fink (2019) defines survey design as the systematic process of developing a survey instrument to gather data from a sample of individuals. It entails the selection of the survey type, defining the research question, developing questions and response options, testing the survey instrument, and selecting the sample. The survey design that the researcher used in this study includes structured questionnaires and interview schedules. This design was applied in this study to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected.

According to Fink (2019), case study design may be defined as the research approach that investigates a particular phenomenon within its real-life context, using a detailed and holistic examination of multiple cases. The researcher used this research design in this study to provide a rich and detailed description of the Asian Tigers Models as a strategy to achieve a developmental state in South Africa, using multiple data sources.

Contextual design is the third design that was used in this investigation. Contextual design, according to Burns and Grove (2010: 32), is a design that concentrates on events in realistic settings. On the other hand, Streubert and Carpenter (2011: 363) define contextual design as research conducted in a natural setting as an investigation conducted in an environment free from manipulation. This study's design considers the respondent's ethnic origin, physical characteristics, and cultural beliefs in addition to the fact that the event took place in an area where nature is allowed to run its course unhindered. Additionally, events were described and understood in the specific, natural context in which they occur using contextual study methodology.

Exploratory design is the fourth design that was used in this investigation. According to Polit and Hungler (2013: 19), exploratory research design entails adaptable, open-ended techniques that enable researchers to collect preliminary data and obtain first insights into a phenomenon. Compared to other research methods, this method is less structured and concentrates more on idea generation and hypothesis generation than on rigorous testing. Exploratory research design is a preliminary research technique used to study a topic that is little understood or needs further clarification, according to Burns and Grove (2010: 313). It is especially helpful when the researcher wants to get knowledgeable about the topic, find relevant factors, and develop research questions or hypotheses for additional investigation. Exploratory research design was chosen because of the limited understanding and complexity of the topic. This approach allows researchers to gather preliminary data, identify key variables, and generate hypotheses without preconceived notions. Through a mix of

qualitative and quantitative methods like interviews and surveys, the study aims to gain insights from stakeholders and experts. The findings from this exploratory research informed future studies and guided the development of more focused research questions and methodologies. Ultimately, the goal was to contribute to a deeper understanding of economic development strategies in South Africa and the applicability of the Asian Tigers Model within this specific context.

In this study, a comparative research design was employed, which involves a research approach focused on the examination of similarities and differences between two or more groups (Fink, 2019). Specifically, the Asian Tigers' developmental state was compared with the South African Developmental State as part of the investigative framework.

4.4. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method is the systematic and logical approach applied to conduct research. It entails researchers' methods and techniques to collect, analyse, and interpret data to answer research questions or test hypotheses (Burns & Groove, 2010: 581). The study used a convergent parallel mixed method approach. The convergent parallel mixed method is a research method where quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed simultaneously but independently, then merged to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This approach ensures that both numerical data and detailed contextual insights are integrated to enhance the overall analysis. This approach was applied in this study because it is ideal as it provides a balanced analysis, validates findings through triangulation, captures diverse perspectives, and saves time by allowing for real-time adjustments, thereby offering a robust examination of the Asian Tigers model's applicability and impact.

4.4.1. Qualitative Approach

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is an inquiry process aimed at understanding a social problem by constructing a complex and holistic picture through words. It involves reporting detailed perspectives from informants and is typically conducted in a natural setting. Busetto, Wick, and Gumbinger (2020: 1) define the qualitative approach as the study of the nature of phenomena, including their quality, various manifestations, and the context in which they can be perceived. However, it excludes considerations of their range, frequency, and place in an objectively determined chain of cause and effect. The primary rationale for employing the qualitative approach in this study was its ability to offer a rich and detailed understanding, providing valuable insights for future research. The qualitative data were collected using an interview schedule.

4.4.2. Quantitative Approach

Bryman (2016) characterizes the quantitative approach as a research process centred on the collection of numerical data that can be quantified. This methodology is particularly adept at investigating relationships between variables and discerning patterns and trends within extensive datasets. The decision to employ a quantitative approach in this research stems from two primary considerations: objectivity and reliability. In terms of objectivity, a quantitative approach proves advantageous as it concentrates on numerical data that lends itself to analysis through statistical methods. This emphasis on numerical precision helps mitigate the potential for bias in both the analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

Moreover, the second rationale for adopting a quantitative approach revolves around reliability. Quantitative research often involves the use of standardized measures and procedures, contributing to the study's efforts to ensure the trustworthiness of the accumulated data. The adherence to standardized methods enhances the consistency and replicability of the research findings, bolstering the overall reliability of the study's outcomes. In essence, the quantitative approach not only facilitates an objective exploration of numerical data but also enhances the reliability of the research through standardized methodologies.

4.5. STUDY AREA

Du Plessis and Van Niekerk (2014: 12) define a study area as the geographical area that is selected for a specific research project. This study was conducted in Thulamela Local Municipality which is located under Vhembe District Municipality in the Limpopo province

Figure 4.5.1. Map of Vhembe District Municipality



SOURCE: MUNICIPALITIES OF SOUTH AFRICA

4.6. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Population, as defined by De Vos (2014: 193), represents the entirety of individuals who meet the criteria for participation in a study. It constitutes the larger group from which a sample is selected, with the aim of generalizing study results to this broader population. Kumar (2011) emphasizes that the characteristics defining a study's population can span various factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, location, or any other relevant criteria. Populations may exhibit homogeneity, where all members share identical traits, or heterogeneity, indicating diverse characteristics among its members. In the case of Thulamela Local Municipality, the population is estimated at approximately 618,462 individuals residing in 130,321 households. According to Vhembe District Municipality 2023/2024 IDP REVIEW No, 80% of the population within Thulamela Municipality belongs to a distinct ethnic group known as Vhavenda. The categories comprising the population of this study include Municipal Manager, Integrated Development Plan (IDP) officials, Local Economic Development (LED) officials, Managers of communication, Community Development Workers (CDW), traditional leaders and headman/woman, ward councillors, members of SANCO, and community members.

4.7. SAMPLING

According to Bryman and Bell (2019: 210), sampling is the process of selecting a group of persons, cases, or data points from a larger population to be used in a research study". Sampling techniques and sampling size are necessary concerns when designing a research study. In this case, non-probability sampling was used with its subtype purposive sampling.

4.7.1. Non-Probability Sampling

According to Etikan and Alikassim (2016: 4), non-probability sampling is a method that involves selecting participants based on criteria other than random selection, which may include convenience sampling. The researcher opted for this technique due to its efficiency and cost-effectiveness in comparison to probability sampling methods. Non-probability sampling allows for a more targeted and practical approach to participant selection, aligning with the study's resource constraints and specific research objectives.

4.7.2. Purposive Sampling

Ekitan, Musa, and Alkassin (2016: 1) define purposive sampling as the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participants possess. It is a nonrandom technique that does

not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Purposive sampling, according to Johnson and Clark (2010: 109), is a technique in which individuals or events are specifically chosen to offer crucial information that cannot be found through other options. In this study, purposeful sampling was employed to enable the researcher to select individuals at random based on their distinct attributes, experiences, attitudes, or perceptions. To verify the criterion, purposeful sampling will also be used to choose sample participants.

4.8. SAMPLING SIZE

Rahman (2023) emphasizes that determining an appropriate sample size is contingent upon various factors, including the overall population size, the desired precision level, and the necessary statistical power for the study. The sampling size of the study was 120 respondents, which were categorized as follows: 01 Municipal Manager; 01 executive mayor, 03 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) officials; 03 Local Economic Development (LED) officials; 01 managers of communication; 10 Community Development Workers (CDW); 10 traditional leaders and headman/woman; 10 ward councillors; 10 members of SANCO; and 71 community members.

4.9. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

As per Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the data collection method is the systematic process of acquiring information from diverse sources. This critical step in research serves as a means for researchers to gather accurate and reliable information. A variety of methods can be employed for data collection, and for this study, the researcher has chosen to utilize structured questionnaires and interviews as the primary instruments for gathering data. These selected methods aim to ensure a comprehensive collection of information, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the research objectives.

4.9.1. Structured Questionnaire

A structured data questionnaire, as defined by Zohrabi (2014: 254), is a research tool comprising a predefined set of questions and corresponding response options. Tailored for the collection of quantitative data, this instrument is commonly employed in surveys and other research endeavours that necessitate a standardized approach to data collection. The rationale behind choosing this method for the current study lied in its effectiveness in reaching a diverse participant base. The structured questionnaire ensures a systematic and consistent means of gathering quantitative data, thereby facilitating a rigorous and reliable analysis of the information collected. The questionnaire consisted of Five (5) Likert scale, which is comprised of Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

4.9.2. Interviews

According to Fink (2012), interviews are a qualitative research data collection method involving direct verbal communication with individuals. In this approach, interviewers pose open-ended questions to elicit detailed information from participants. The researcher chose this method for its ability to encourage participants to share comprehensive insights and express their feelings on the subject matter. This approach fosters a deeper exploration of perspectives, contributing to a richer understanding of the qualitative aspects under investigation. The participants were interviewed face to face asking them open-ended questions.

4.10. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

According to Alem (2020), data analysis is the process of examining and interpreting data using statistical and logical methods to extract useful insights and knowledge. It involves identifying patterns, relationships, and trends within the data, and using this information to make informed decisions or predictions. Data analysis is an essential aspect of many fields, including business, finance, healthcare, and science. Creswell (2014) outlines the following seven (8) steps for conducting data analysis:

4.10.1. Organize and Prepare the Data for Analysis

The researcher began by organizing and preparing the data collected through structured and semi-structured questionnaires. For the quantitative data from the structured questionnaires, the researcher entered the responses into a statistical software program such as SPSS or Excel. For the qualitative data from the semi-structured questionnaires, the researcher transcribed the responses verbatim to ensure accuracy.

4.10.2. Read Through All the Data

Next, the researcher read through all the data to gain a comprehensive understanding. For the quantitative data, the researcher reviewed the numerical responses to identify general trends and patterns. For the qualitative data, the researchers immerse themselves in the transcripts to understand the participants' perspectives and experiences fully.

4.10.3. Code the Data

The researcher then proceeded to code the data. For the quantitative data, numerical codes were assigned to the responses for categorical variables and key variables were identified for analysis. For the qualitative data, a coding scheme was developed based on emerging

themes, using a combination of in vivo coding (utilizing participants' own words) and descriptive coding.

4.10. 4. Generate Themes or Categories

After coding the data, the researcher generated themes or categories. For the quantitative data, key themes were identified based on statistical relationships and patterns observed in the data. For the qualitative data, similar codes were grouped together to form broader themes that capture significant aspects of the participants' responses.

4.10.5. Themes and Categories

In this step, the researcher summarized the findings by presenting the identified themes and categories. For the quantitative data, charts, graphs, or tables were created to highlight key statistical relationships. For the qualitative data, detailed descriptions of each theme were written, incorporating direct quotes from participants to illustrate the points effectively.

4.10.6. Interpret the Meaning of Themes/Descriptions

The researcher then interpreted the meaning of the identified themes and descriptions. For the quantitative data, statistical results were interpreted within the context of the research questions and theoretical framework. For the qualitative data, an in-depth interpretation of the themes was provided, explaining their significance and how they relate to the research questions.

4.10.7. Validate the Accuracy of the Information

To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings, the researcher employed various validation techniques. For the quantitative data, reliability testing, validity checks, and triangulation were used. For the qualitative data, the findings were validated through member checking (sharing findings with participants for feedback), peer debriefing, and triangulation (comparing multiple data sources).

4.10.8. Report the Findings

Finally, the researcher reported the findings in a clear and concise manner. For the quantitative data, the results were presented using statistical tables, charts, and graphs. For the qualitative data, a rich, detailed narrative was provided that tells the story of the data,

supported by direct quotes and illustrative examples. This comprehensive reporting ensured that the findings of the study are effectively communicated.

By following these steps, the researcher systematically analysed both the quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring a thorough and credible analysis for the study on the "Asian Tigers Model as a Strategy to Achieve a Developmental State in South Africa: A Case of Thulamela Local Municipality."

4.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Bhandari (2023) defines ethical considerations as a set of principles that guide the study's research design and practices. It's of utmost importance for scientists and researchers to always adhere to a certain code of conduct when collecting data. Bhandari (2023) further mentions that the main purpose of conducting research often entails understanding real-life phenomena, studying effective treatments, investigating behaviours, and improving lives in other ways. What the study decides to research and how it is conducted entails key ethical considerations. The work of these ethical considerations is to protect the rights of research participants, enhance research validity, and maintain academic honesty. The succeeding ethics were observed:

4.11.1. Permission to Conduct a Study

The University of Venda provided the researcher with a letter requesting permission to carry out the study at the Thulamela Local Municipality. The University of Venda's letter authorizing the researcher to carry out the study at the Thulamela Local Municipality was subsequently submitted by the researcher. The letter requesting authorization from the University of Venda to gather data for the study is annexed by the researcher. As soon as the researcher received authorization from the Thulamela Local Municipality to perform the study, the letter of authorization was attached as an appendix.

4.11.2. Voluntary Participation

According to Bhandari (2023), voluntary participation can be defined as that all participants are free to choose to participate or not without being pressured. All participants may withdraw from participating without feeling an obligation to continue and they don't need to provide a reason for leaving the study. The researcher made it clear to the participants that there were no consequences to their denial to participate.

4.11.3. Informed Consent

Informed consent refers to a situation in which all potential participants receive and understand all the information and they need to decide whether they want to participate or not (Bhandari, 2023). The researcher informed participants regarding information such as the study's benefits, risks, funding and institutional approval.

4.11.4. Confidentiality

Confidentiality refers to that the researcher knows who the participants are, but all people identifying must be removed from the study's report. All participants have a right to privacy; hence the study should protect their data for as long as they are stored or used. Hence, the researcher hid the respondents' names and referred to them as participant A, participant B, participant C and so on when presenting, analysing and interpreting data of this study.

4.11.5. No Harm to Participants

During the data collection process, a researcher must ensure that participants are not harmed. Harm may take a various form such as psychological harm, social harm, physical harm, and legal harm. The researcher ensured that no participant was harmed during the data process.

4.12. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research paradigm in which the researcher employed a pragmatist approach. The chapter outlined the research design and its sub-divisions, which included survey research design, case studies, contextual research, and exploratory research design. It also described the research methodologies, highlighting the choice of a mixed methods approach for data collection and analysis. The researcher provided reasons for selecting mixed methods and introduced the study area, which focused on the Thulamela Local Municipality. The population for the study consisted of community members from Thulamela Local Municipality as well as municipal officials. The chapter detailed the sampling strategy used to select participants for the study, specifically opting for a probability sampling method, with purposive sampling as its subtype. Reasons for the choice of these sampling methods were also discussed, alongside the sample size. Furthermore, this chapter explained the data collection process, in which the researcher utilized both questionnaires and interview questions. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, including options such as Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The chapter also covered data analysis, which consisted of both statistical analysis and thematic analysis. Ethical considerations were highlighted, including the need for permission to conduct the study, informed consent from participants, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, and the commitment to ensuring no harm comes to participants. Therefore, the following chapter seeks to present, analyse, and interpret data collected through questionnaires and interviews.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

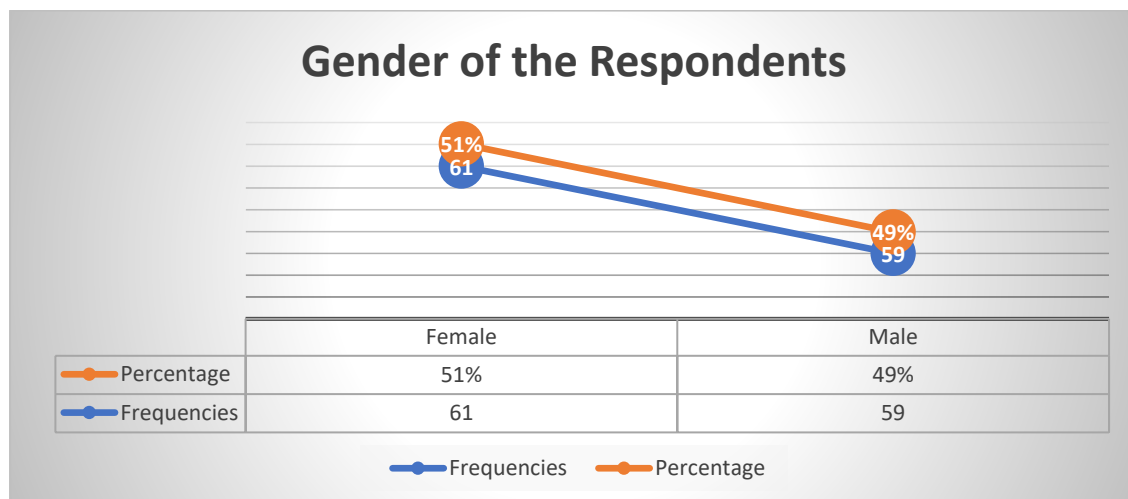
This chapter outlines perspectives on the Asian Tigers Model as a potential strategy for establishing a developmental state in South Africa. Data on the model's application were gathered using mixed research methods. Responses obtained through structured questionnaires are illustrated using various visual representations, such as pie charts, line graphs, and tables. In contrast, data from interviews are presented and analysed narratively.

5.2. QUESTIONNAIRE DATA ANALYSIS

This unit presents an interpretation and analysis of the data accumulated through questionnaires. It consists of two subsections (A and B). Section A presents the biological details of the respondents, while section B represents data collected through questionnaires. A sample of 120 respondents was targeted, and a 100% response rate was achieved. The researcher used various chart formats to present the data.

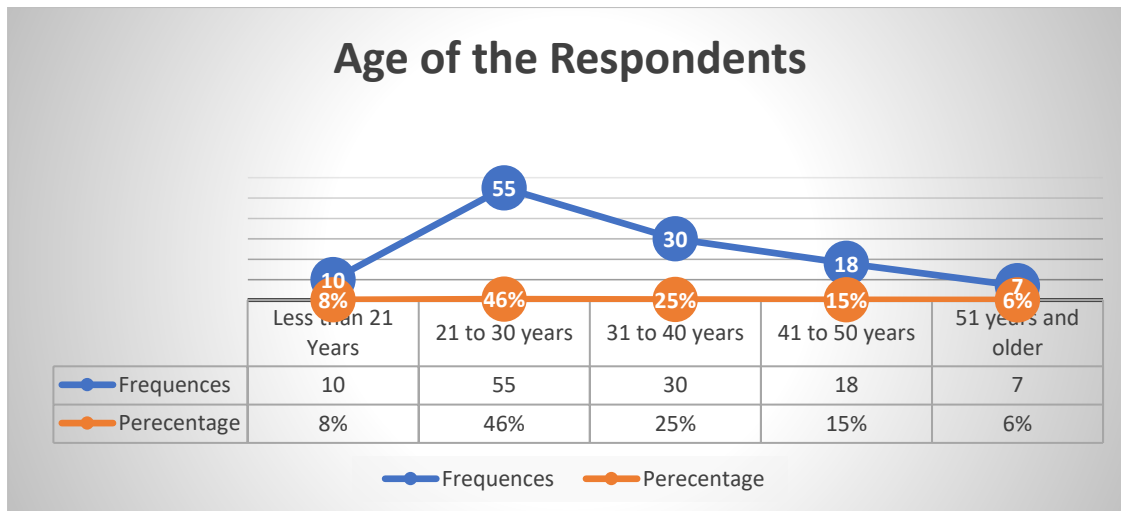
5.2.1. Section A: Respondent's biographical data

Figure 5.1: Gender of the respondents



A majority (50.8%) of the respondents were females, while males were the minority (49.2%).

Figure 5.2. Age of the respondents



In Table 5.2, the age distribution of the study participants is presented. The data collected shows that the majority of the respondents, 55 (46%), were aged 21-30 years. Additionally, the table indicates that 30 (25%) were aged 31-40 years, 18 (15%) were aged 41-50 years, 10 (8%) were less than 21 years old, and finally, 7 (6%) were 51 years and older.

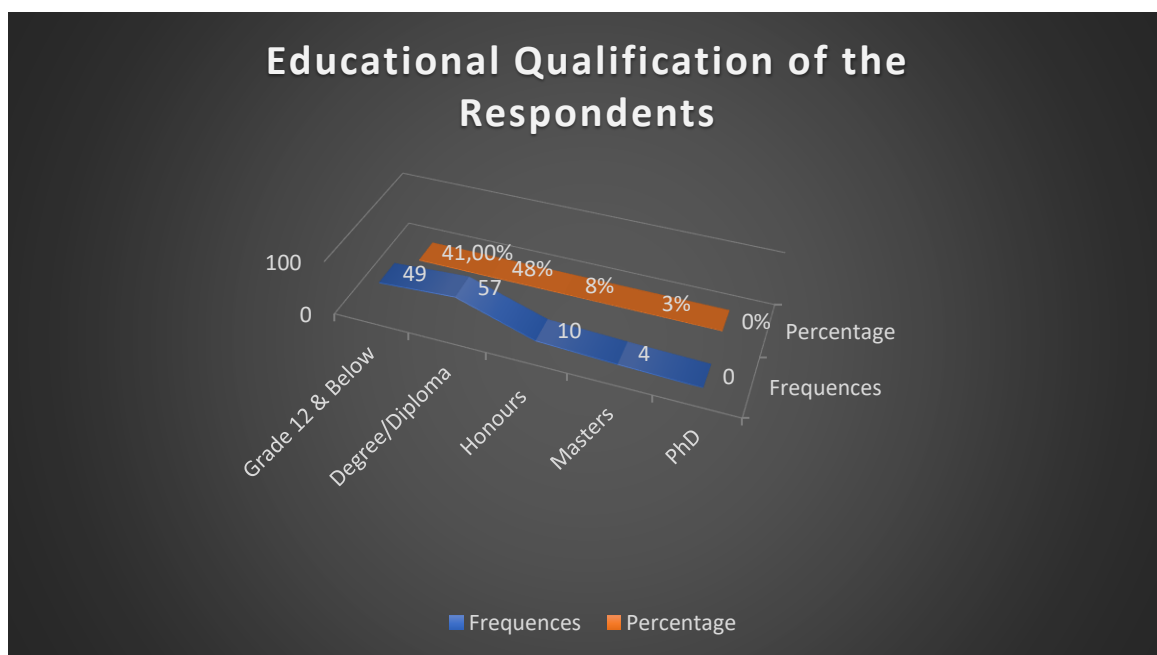
Figure 5.3. Category of the Respondents

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Executive Mayor	01	0.8%
2	Municipal Manager	01	0.8%
3	Integrated Development Plan officials	03	2.5%
4	Local Economic Development officials	03	2.5%
5	Communication Manager	01	0.8%
6	Community Development Workers	10	8.3%
7	Traditional Leaders	10	8.3%
8	Ward councilor	10	8.3%
9	Members of SANCO	10	8.3%
10	Selected community members	71	59.2%
	Total	120	100%

Figure 5.3 illustrates the categories of respondents who participated in this study by presenting data from the questionnaire. Out of the 120 respondents, the majority, 71 (59.2%), were community members. This reflects the goal of the developmental state to enhance the livelihoods of South African citizens. The data also reveals that among the targeted

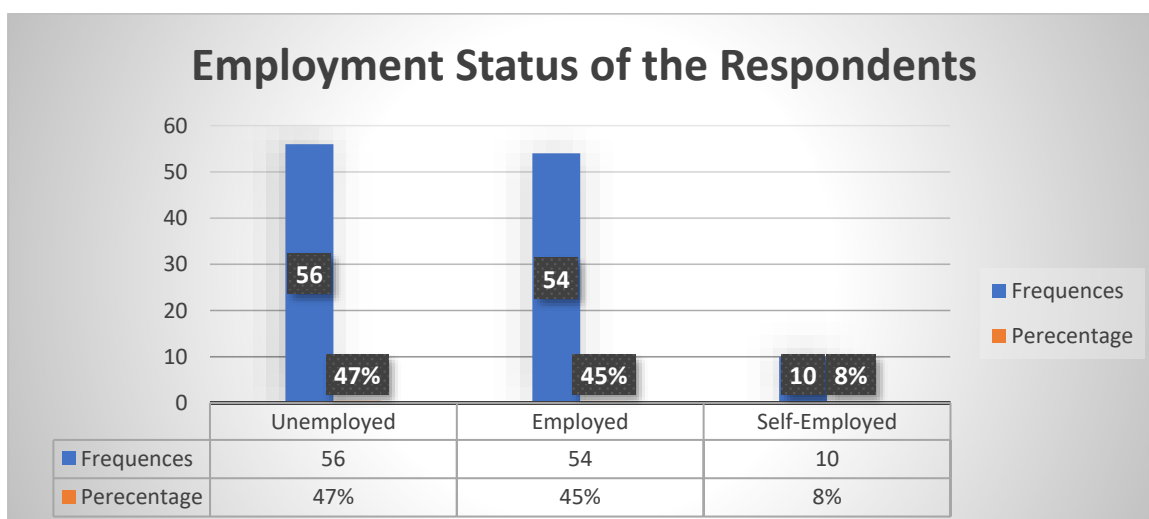
respondents, there was 1 (0.8%) Executive Mayor, 1 (0.8%) Municipal Manager, 3 (2.5%) Integrated Development Plan officials, 3 (2.5%) Local Economic Development Plan officials, 1 (0.8%) Manager of Communication, 10 (8.3%) Community Development Workers, 10 (8.3%) Traditional Leaders, 10 (8.3%) Ward Councillors, and 10 (8.3%) members of SANCO.

Figure 5.4. Educational Qualification of the Respondents



The chart provides an overview of the educational qualifications of the respondents. It indicates that 48% of the respondents have a degree or diploma, while 41% have completed Grade 12 or below. Additionally, 8% hold an Honours degree, and 3% have a master's degree. It's worth noting that none of the respondents have the highest qualification, a Doctorate (PhD).

Figure 5.5. Employment Status of the Respondents

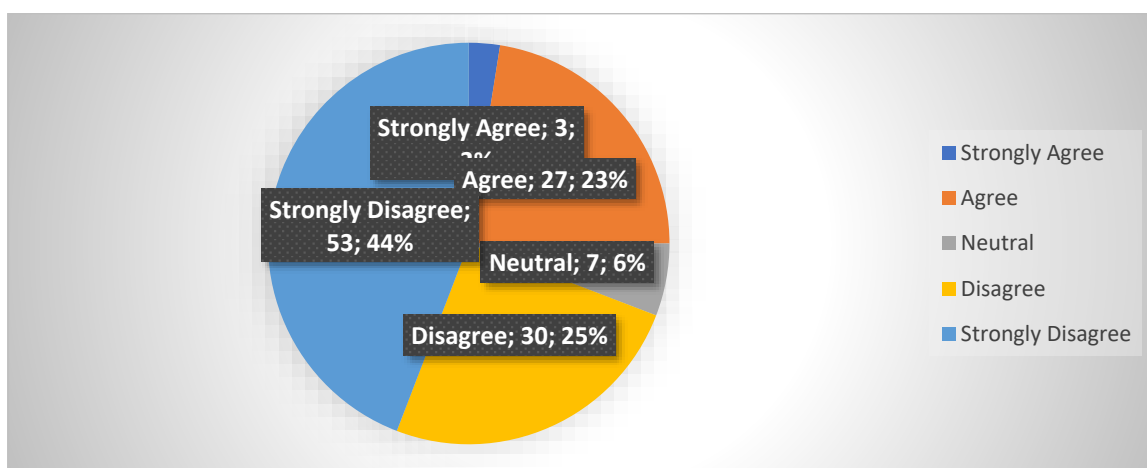


The chart shows the employment status of the respondents. It indicates that 56 (47%) of the respondents are unemployed, 54 (45%) are employed, and 10 (8%) are self-employed. This highlights the significant issue of unemployment in South Africa, particularly in Thulamela. It is a cause for concern and requires attention.

5.2.2. SECTION B: Asian Tigers Model as a Strategy to Achieve a Developmental State in South Africa

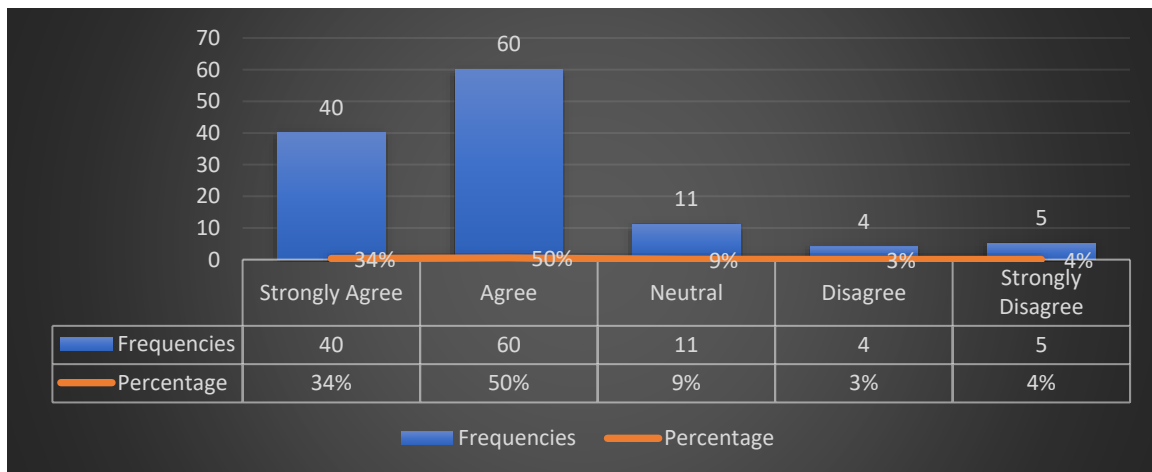
5.2.2.1. The key principles towards a developmental state

Figure 5.6. Thulamela Local Municipality policies significantly contribute to the rapid economic growth.



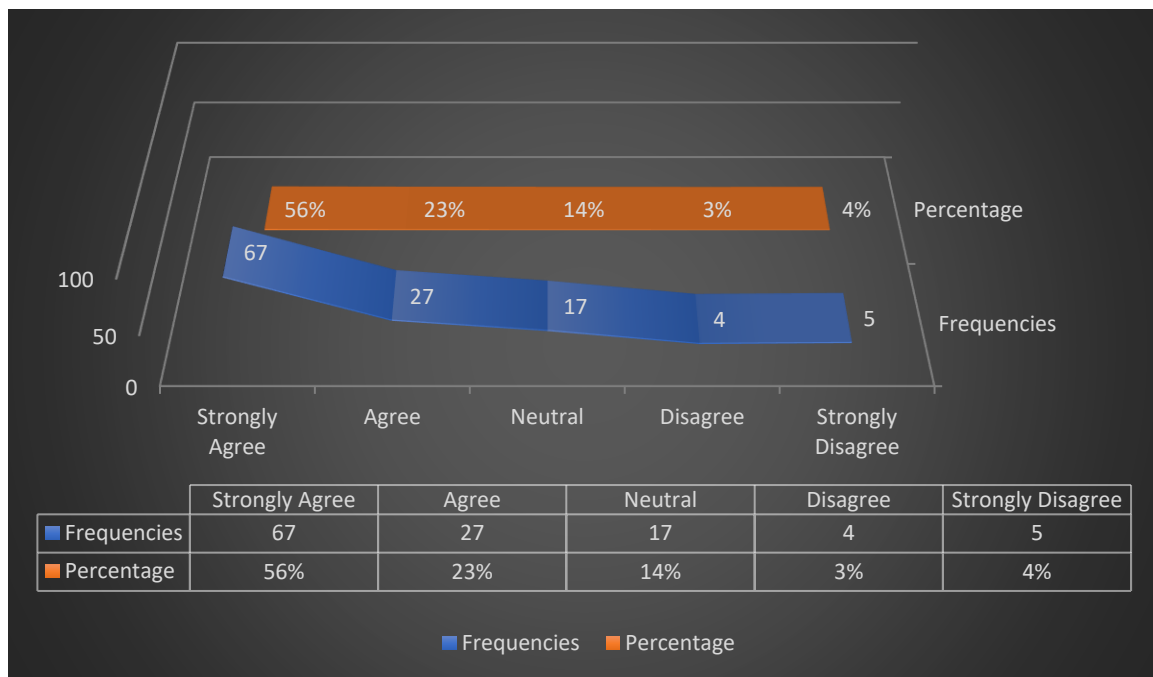
This pie chart illustrates that most respondents, 53 (44%), strongly disagreed with the statement, "Thulamela Local Municipality policies significantly contribute to the rapid economic growth." While 30 respondents (25%) disagreed, 27 (23%) agreed, 7 (6%) remained neutral, and 3 (2%) strongly disagreed. The findings reveal a significant level of dissatisfaction among respondents concerning the effectiveness of Thulamela Local Municipality's policies in promoting rapid economic growth. A total of 44% of respondents (53 individuals) strongly disagreed, and an additional 25% (30 individuals) disagreed, resulting in a combined 69% expressing a lack of confidence in the Municipality's policies as catalysts for economic growth. These findings are supported by Mudzusi *et al.* (2024) in the literature, wherein they state that the Thulamela Municipality is encountering several developmental challenges, including poor governance and a lack of a clear long-term vision, which hinder rapid economic growth. This suggests that the policies may be viewed as ineffective or not aligned with the community's economic aspirations.

Figure 5.7. Investment in education and human capital development is a critical factor in the economic success of Thulamela Local Municipality.



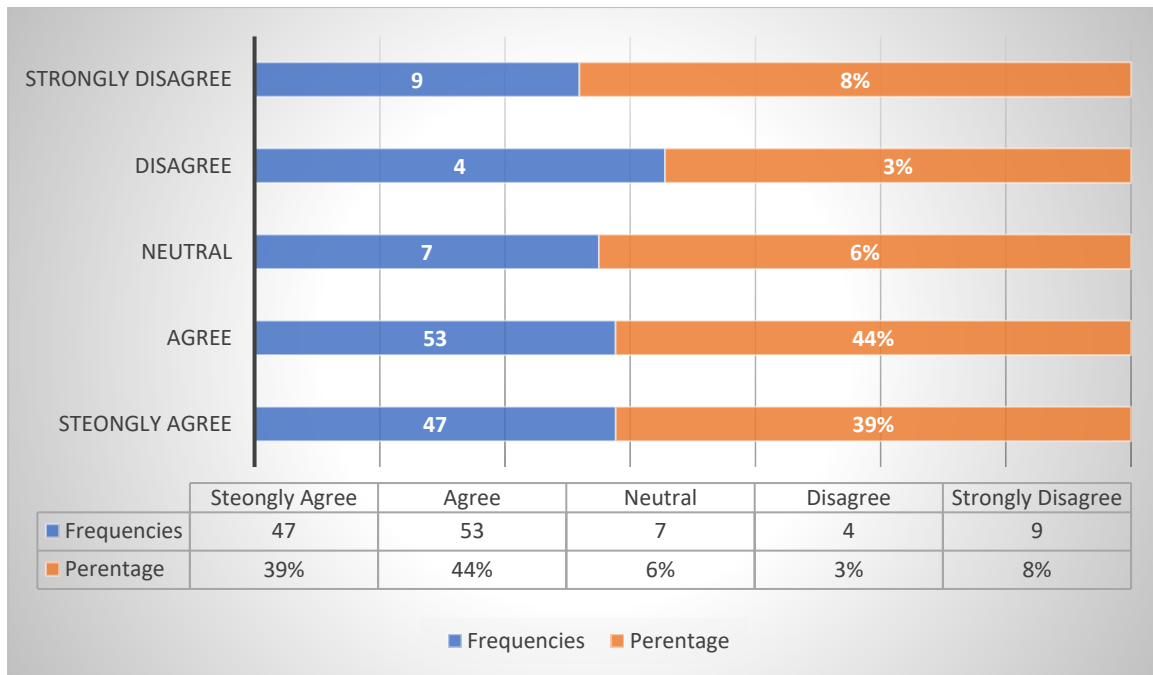
This graph shows that the majority of respondents, 60 (50%), agreed with the statement that investment in education and human capital development is a critical factor in the economic success of Thulamela Local Municipality, while 40 respondents (34%) strongly agreed. However, 11 respondents (9%) remained neutral, 5 (4%) strongly disagreed, and 4 (3%) disagreed. These results indicate a strong consensus among respondents on the importance of education and human capital development in the economic growth of these countries, with 84% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. The small percentage of respondents who disagreed or remained neutral suggests there may be alternative views on other factors that may contribute to the success of Thulamela Local Municipality, but overall, the role of education and human capital is widely acknowledged. The findings are supported by Chavula (2022), who highlights the widespread recognition that education and the development of human capital were critical for the economic success of the Asian Tigers. This recognition likely stems from their significant roles in enhancing workforce skills and promoting innovation. The existence of neutral or opposing views may indicate alternative perspectives that prioritize infrastructure development, governance, or technology investments. Nevertheless, the predominant agreement highlights the crucial importance of education and human capital in the economic development of Thulamela Local Municipality.

Figure 5.8. Export-oriented strategies are central to the development and global integration of economies



This line graph illustrates that the majority of respondents, 67 (56%), strongly agreed that export-oriented strategies are central to the development and global integration of economies, while 27 respondents (23%) agreed. Meanwhile, 17 respondents (14%) remained neutral, 5 (4%) strongly disagreed, and 4 (3%) disagreed. These results reflect a strong belief among respondents that export-oriented strategies play a key role in the development and global integration of economies. With 79% either strongly agreeing or agreeing, the data underscores the perceived importance of such strategies in driving the success of these economies. The small percentages of neutrality or disagreement suggest that while most respondents support this view, a minority may believe other factors were equally or more significant findings are supported by Day (2021: 57), who emphasized the importance of export-driven growth in promoting trade, attracting foreign investment, and integrating economies on a global scale. The small percentage of neutral and disagreeing responses suggests that some individuals may prefer alternative development models, such as strategies focused on domestic growth or innovation-led approaches. This highlights the diversity of perspectives on economic development.

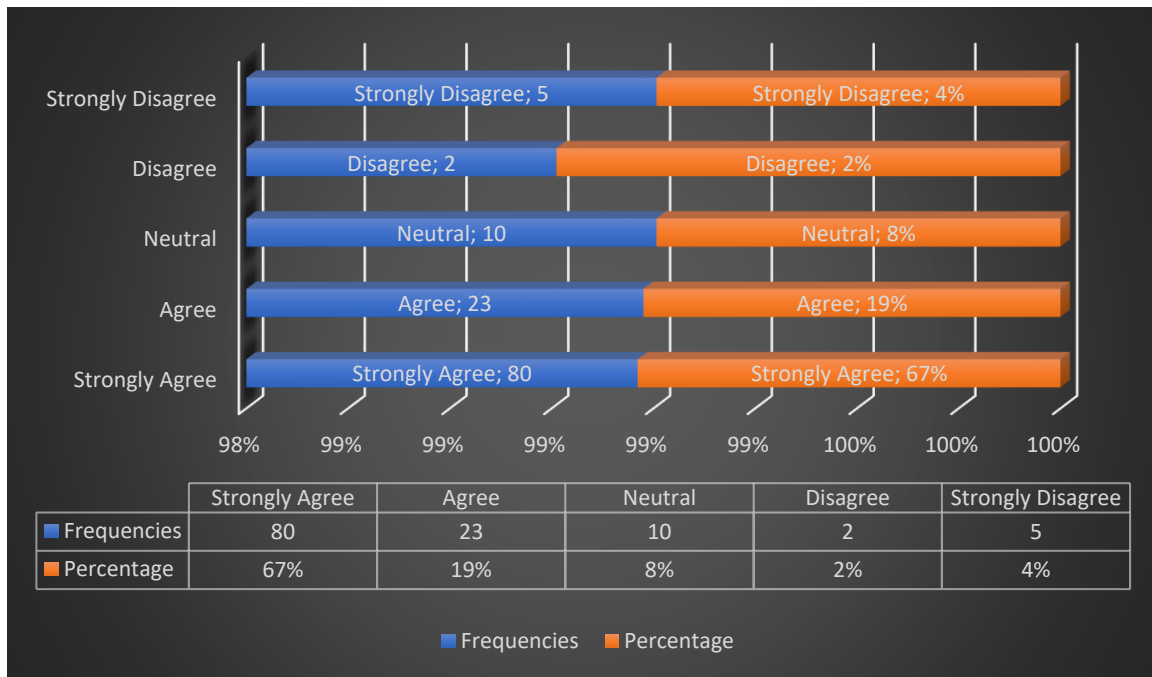
Figure 5.9. Strong and effective governance, including anti-corruption measures and efficient bureaucracies, played a vital role in the economic transformation of economic development.



The bar graph shows a strong consensus among respondents about the importance of good governance and anti-corruption measures in driving economic transformation. A combined total of 100 (83%) of respondents (44% agreeing and 39% strongly agreeing) believe that effective governance structures—characterized by transparency, anti-corruption efforts, and efficient bureaucratic processes—are vital for fostering economic development. This consensus indicates a shared understanding that accountable governance is essential for sustainable progress, which aligns with broader findings in developmental economics that highlight the importance of institutional integrity in economic growth.

Only a small percentage of respondents disagree (3%) or strongly disagree (8%), suggesting either scepticism about the actual implementation of these measures or different views on what should be prioritized for economic transformation. Additionally, the 6% who are neutral may reflect a lack of information or ambivalence about governance's role in economic outcomes. These findings are supported by the literature of Bloomenthal (2021), which states that for the Asian Tigers to meet the criteria of a developmental state, they achieved stability through strong governance, low corruption, and business-friendly policies. This approach attracted foreign direct investment (FDI) and helped build public trust. Overall, the data highlights a clear demand among respondents for stronger governance frameworks. It also indicates a belief that addressing corruption and improving bureaucratic efficiency could lead to significant economic advancements. This insight underscores the need for the Thulamela Local Municipality and similar institutions to prioritize transparent and accountable practices to align with public sentiment and drive effective developmental change.

Figure 5.10. Collaborative relationships between the state and private sector industries were essential to the technological advancements and industrial diversification of the Asian Tigers.

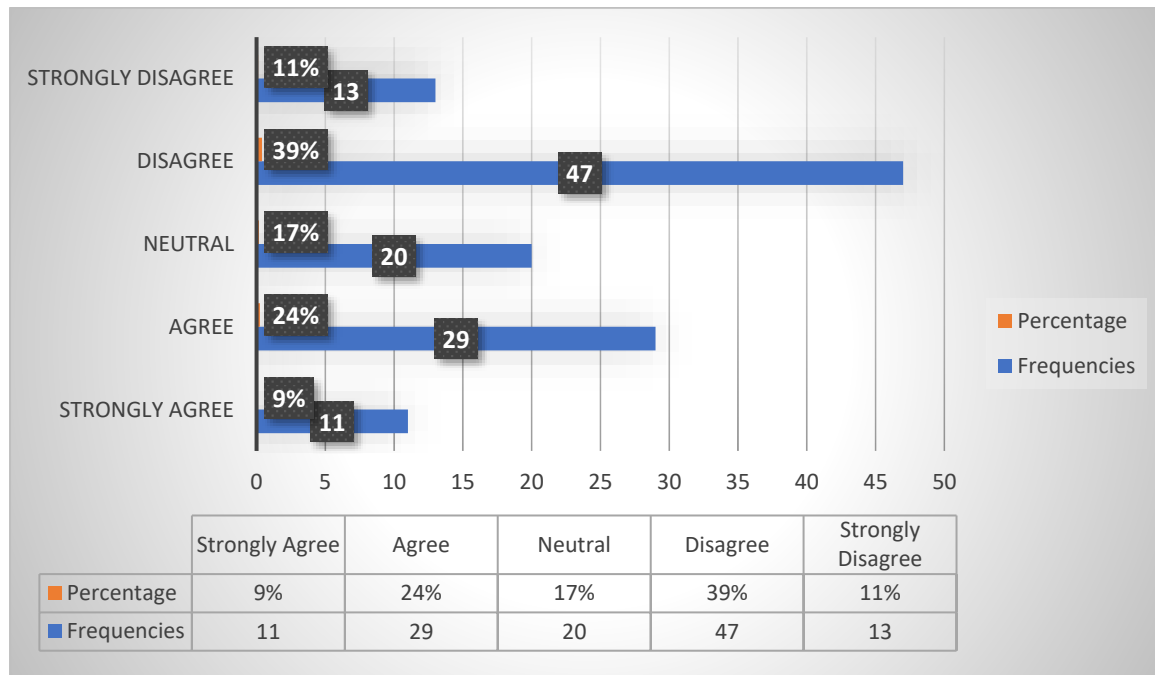


This chart demonstrates that the majority of respondents, 80 (67%), strongly agreed that collaborative relationships between the state and private sector industries were essential to the technological advancements and industrial diversification of the Asian Tigers, while 23 respondents (19%) agreed. Additionally, 10 respondents (8%) remained neutral, 5 (4%) strongly disagreed, and 2 (2%) disagreed. These results show a strong consensus among respondents, with 86% either strongly agreeing or agreeing that the partnership between the state and private sector was critical to the technological and industrial success of the Asian Tigers. The small percentage of neutral or dissenting views suggests that while the majority sees this collaboration as key, a minority may believe other factors contributed to these advancements or question the extent of its impact. These findings are supported by Chung (2022), who asserts that the collaboration between the public and private sectors in the Asian Tigers led to advancements in technology and manufacturing. This collaboration enabled them to produce high-value goods and services, solidifying their position in global markets. These results highlight the widely acknowledged importance of collaboration between the government and the private sector in promoting innovation, efficient resource utilization, and strategic industrial growth. The few neutral or dissenting opinions emphasize the need to

explore alternative factors contributing to the success of the Asian Tigers, as well as differing views on the role of government intervention.

5.2.2.2. The feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality

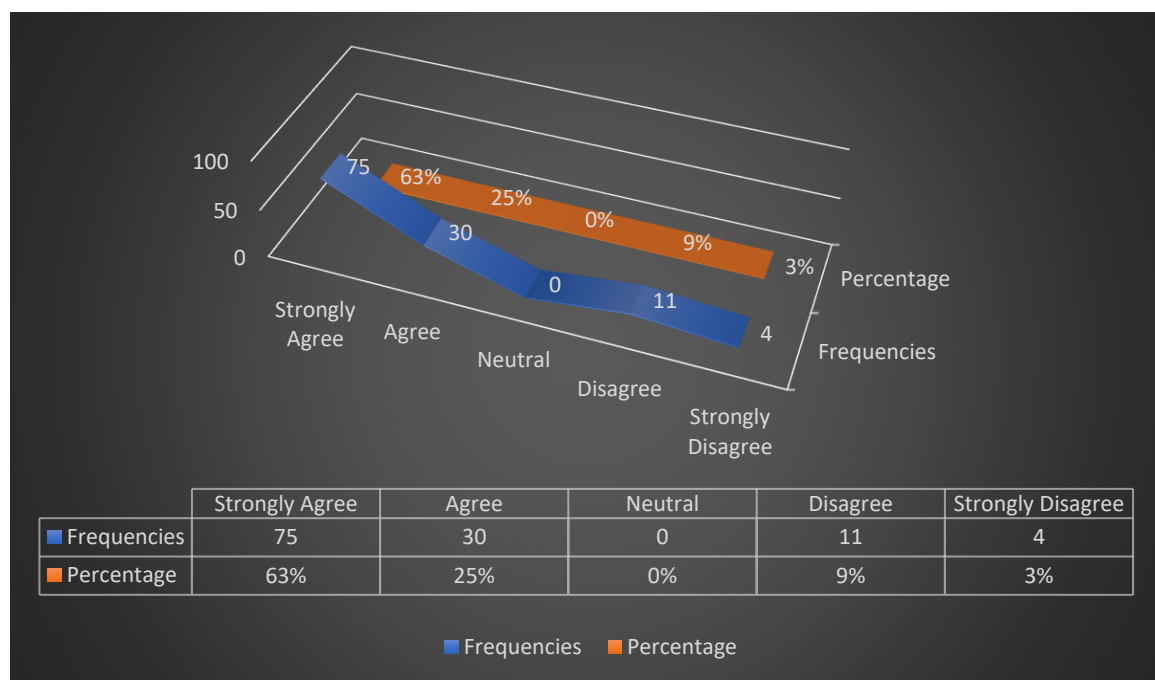
Figure 5.11. The implementation of government-led industrial policies similar to those used by the Asian Tigers is feasible in Thulamela Local Municipality.



The chart demonstrates that the majority of respondents, 47 (37%), disagreed that the implementation of government-led industrial policies similar to those used by the Asian Tigers is feasible in Thulamela Local Municipality. Meanwhile, 29 respondents (24%) agreed, 20 (17%) were neutral, 13 (11%) strongly agreed, and 11 (9%) strongly disagreed. The data shows a significant division of opinions regarding the feasibility of applying industrial policies from the Asian Tigers in Thulamela Local Municipality. With 37% of respondents disagreeing and only 24% agreeing, there appears to be a general scepticism about the applicability of such policies in the local context. The 17% neutral response rate suggests that a notable portion of the respondents may be uncertain or lack sufficient information to make a judgment. These findings are supported by Mathebula (2016) who emphasizes the discrepancy between the Asian Tigers and South Africa which is that the Asian Tigers used the national government to achieve the criteria of a developmental state while South Africa is trying to use local governments that have no capacity and enough resources. Therefore, government-led industrial policies similar to those used by the Asian Tigers are not feasible in Thulamela Local Municipality.

Interestingly, while 11% strongly agree, this minority indicates that there are respondents who firmly believe in the potential of these policies. On the other hand, the 9% who strongly disagreed reflect a similar level of strong opposition. The fact that 46% (strongly disagreeing & disagreeing combined) are sceptical indicates possible challenges in adapting the Asian Tigers' model, such as local economic, political, or infrastructural differences. This distribution suggests that further exploration is needed to understand why there is hesitation and whether there are specific barriers that could be addressed to make these policies more acceptable or feasible in Thulamela.

Figure 5.12. Investing in education and human capital development can significantly contribute to the economic growth of Thulamela Local Municipality.



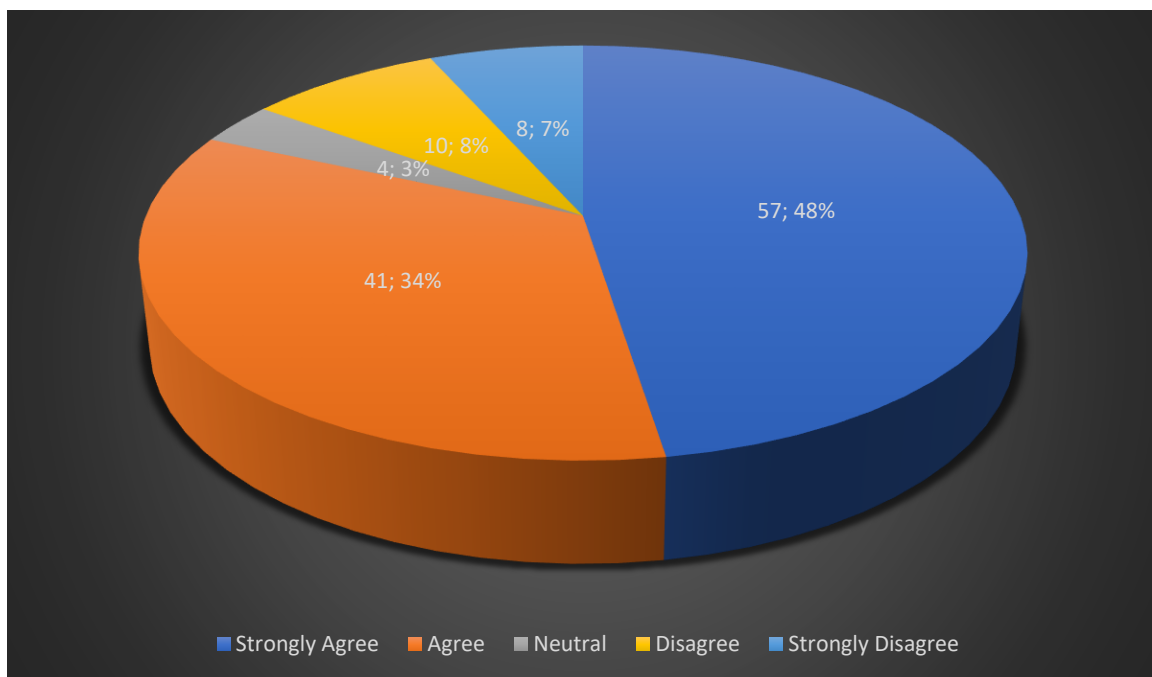
This data reveals that 75 respondents (63%) strongly agree that investing in education and human capital development can significantly contribute to the economic growth of Thulamela Local Municipality, while 30 respondents (25%) agree. Meanwhile, 11 respondents (9%) disagree, 4 respondents (3%) strongly disagree, and none (0%) opted to remain neutral. These outcomes are not surprising, as it is evident in the literature review. Scholars such as Ringson (2023) have emphasized that investing in education, skills training, and healthcare is of utmost importance for South Africa to meet the criteria of a developmental state.

The overwhelming support for investing in education and human capital development is clear, with a combined 88% of respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing. This suggests a broad consensus among respondents on the vital role of education and skills development in

driving economic growth for Thulamela Local Municipality. The data aligns with the literature, where scholars like Matyana and Thusi (2023) argue that a country's progress towards becoming a developmental state is strongly linked to its investment in education, healthcare, and skills training. The lack of neutral responses and the small percentage of disagreement (12%) further highlights the strong belief in the importance of human capital development. The dissenting opinions may stem from concerns about the implementation, current education system challenges, or other local factors affecting the perceived effectiveness of these investments.

In summary, this data points to a strong community belief in the potential of education to spur economic development, suggesting that policymakers should prioritize education and skills training as critical pillars of Thulamela's economic strategy.

Figure 5.13. Adopting an export-oriented economic strategy is a viable option for promoting growth and development in Thulamela Local Municipality.



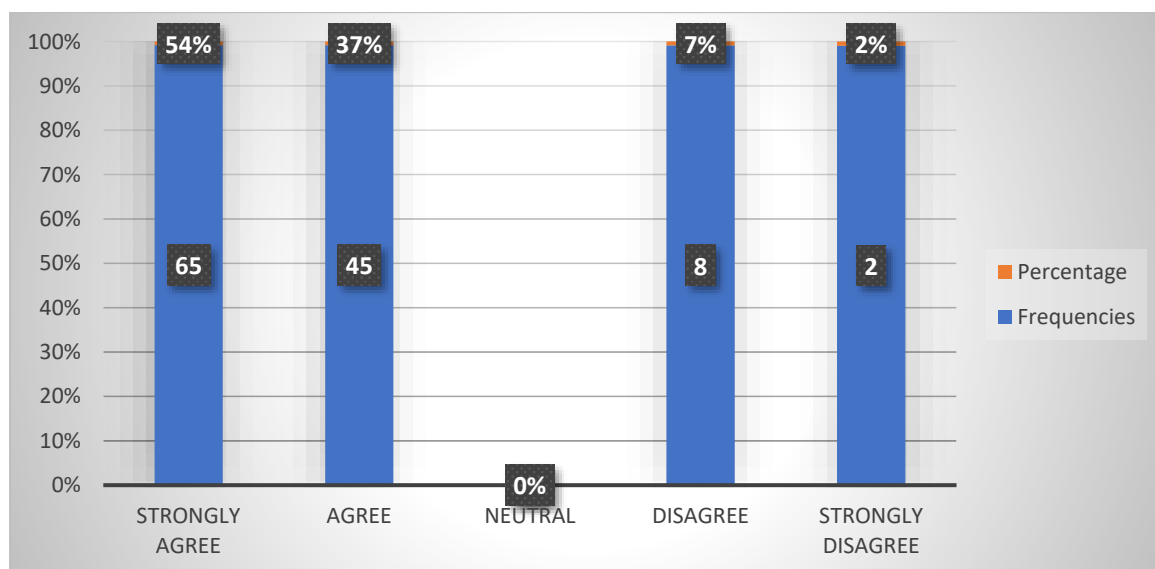
According to the pie chart, the majority of respondents, 57 (48%), strongly agree that adopting an export-oriented economic strategy is a viable option for promoting growth and development in Thulamela Local Municipality, while 41 respondents (34%) agree. Meanwhile, 10 respondents (8%) disagree, 8 respondents (7%) strongly disagree, and 4 respondents (3%) are neutral. The data shows that a significant portion of respondents (82% in total) either strongly agree or agree with the idea that an export-oriented economic strategy could effectively drive growth and development in Thulamela Local Municipality. This high level of

support suggests that respondents see export-driven policies as a potential means to stimulate local economic development, possibly by leveraging local industries to access broader markets. These findings align with the statement made by Haggard (2019), which emphasized that export-oriented industrialization has been a crucial economic strategy employed by the Asian Tigers in their transformation into developed states. Consequently, the majority of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

However, the presence of dissenting opinions—15% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing—indicates that some respondents may be sceptical about the feasibility or practicality of such a strategy in the local context. Their concerns may be related to issues such as infrastructure, capacity, or the availability of resources to support an export-driven approach.

The 3% neutral response indicates that only a small fraction of respondents is undecided, suggesting that most people hold a strong opinion on the subject. Overall, the data suggests broad support for exploring an export-oriented economic strategy as a means of promoting development in Thulamela, but it also points to the need for careful consideration of the challenges and limitations that could arise during implementation.

Figure 5.14. Establishing strong and effective governance, including anti-corruption measures and efficient bureaucracies, is essential for the successful adoption of the Asian Tigers Model in Thulamela Local Municipality.



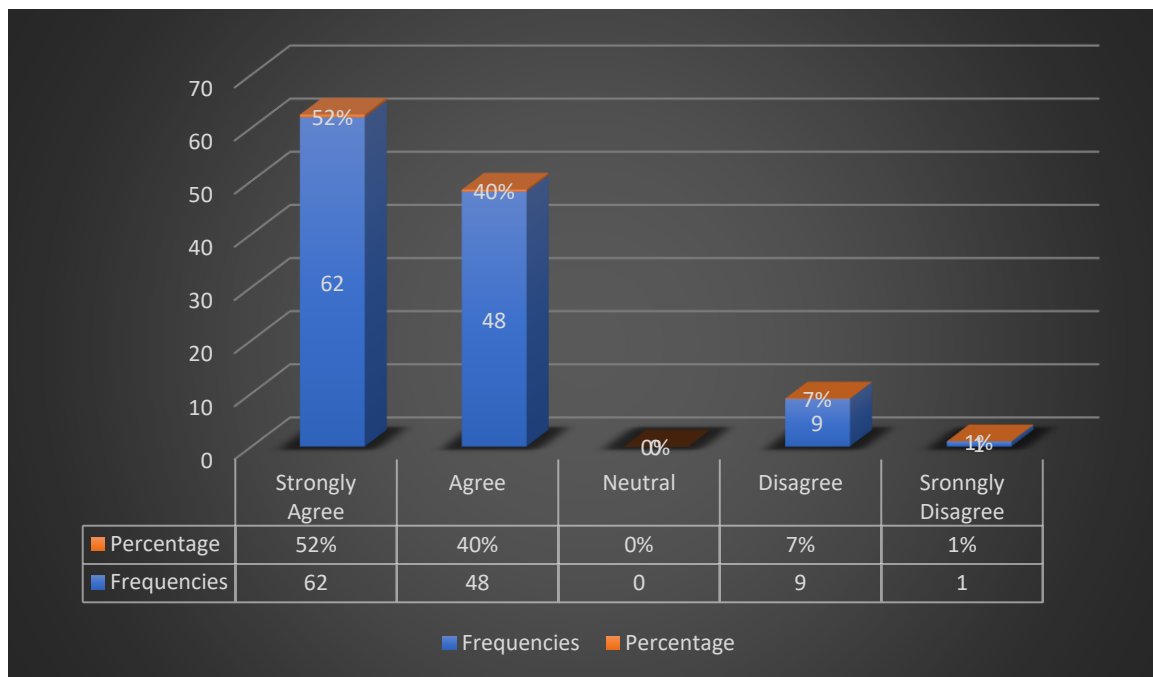
This graph illustrates that 65 respondents (54%) strongly agree that establishing strong and effective governance, including anti-corruption measures and efficient bureaucracies, is essential for the successful adoption of the Asian Tigers Model in Thulamela Local

Municipality, while 45 respondents (37%) agree. Meanwhile, 8 respondents (7%) disagree, 2 respondents (2%) strongly disagree, and none (0%) were neutral. These findings are supported by scholars such as Thusi and Selepe (2023), who highlighted in the literature review that corruption and governance issues are significant challenges to South Africa's development, severely limiting its capacity to deliver public services and promote equitable economic growth. This stands in contrast to the Asian Tigers, where effective governance, as asserted by Dercon (2021), played a key role in their economic success.

The data shows overwhelming support for the importance of strong governance and anti-corruption measures in the successful adoption of the Asian Tigers Model in Thulamela Local Municipality. With 91% of respondents (strongly agreeing & agreeing combined) recognizing the critical role of governance, respondents see the need for reforms in this area if Thulamela is to replicate the success of the Asian Tigers. The small percentage of respondents (9%) who disagree or strongly disagree may reflect differing views on the importance of governance compared to other factors, such as economic policy or infrastructure, or scepticism about the feasibility of implementing effective governance reforms in the local context.

The absence of neutral responses indicates that respondents hold strong views on this issue, either supporting or opposing the notion that good governance is crucial for economic development. These findings align with the literature, where governance failures, including corruption, are identified as key obstacles to development in South Africa. In contrast, the Asian Tigers are often praised for their strong, corruption-resistant governance structures, which were essential for their rapid economic growth. This suggests that if Thulamela seeks to follow a similar model, governance reform should be a top priority.

Figure 5.15. Fostering collaborative relationships between the government and private sector industries can drive technological advancements and industrial diversification in Thulamela Local Municipality.



This graph demonstrates that 62 respondents (52%) strongly agree that fostering collaborative relationships between the government and private sector industries can drive technological advancements and industrial diversification in Thulamela Local Municipality, while 48 respondents (40%) agree. Meanwhile, 9 respondents (7%) disagreed, 1 respondent (1%) strongly disagreed, and none (0%) of the respondents were neutral. This finding is supported by the literature review, where O'Neill (2022:5) stated that a strong partnership between the private and public sectors is essential for any state seeking to meet the criteria of a developmental state.

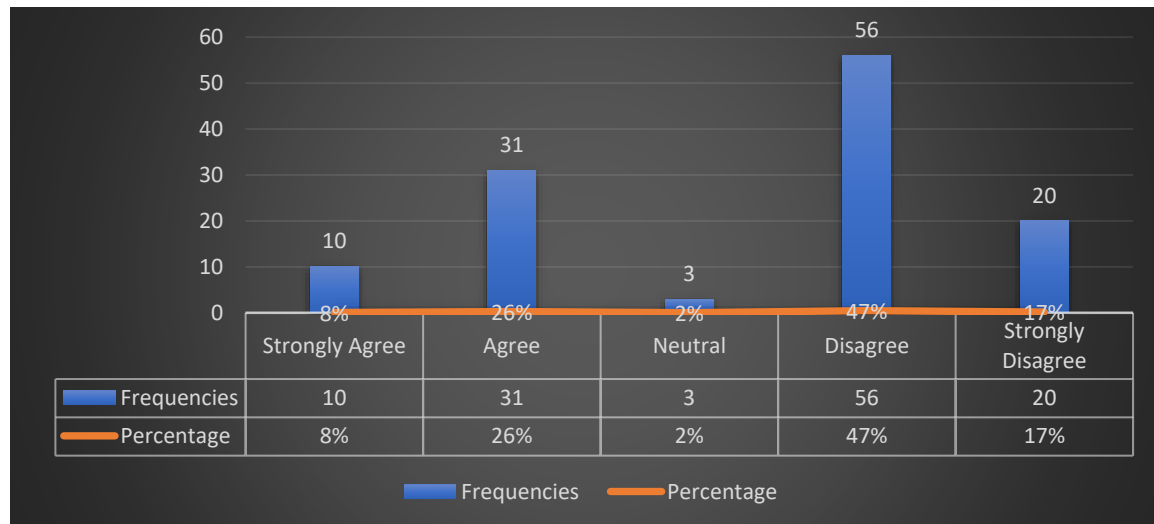
The data reveals broad support for the idea that collaboration between the government and private sector industries is crucial for promoting technological advancements and industrial diversification in Thulamela Local Municipality. With a combined 92% of respondents (strongly agreeing & agreeing) in favour of this collaborative approach, there is a clear consensus on the potential benefits of government-industry partnerships for local economic development. Only 8% of respondents (disagreeing & strongly disagreeing) express scepticism about this strategy, perhaps due to concerns about the practicality of implementing such partnerships in the local context or doubts about the government's capacity to effectively collaborate with private industries.

The absence of neutral responses suggests that respondents hold strong opinions on this topic, with most recognizing the importance of public-private cooperation for advancing technological innovation and diversification in the local economy. These findings align with O'Neill's (2022) assertion that strong partnerships between the public and private sectors are

essential for achieving the goals of a developmental state, suggesting that Thulamela should prioritize policies that foster such collaboration to drive long-term economic growth.

5.2.2.3. Factors that may affect Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state.

Figure 5.16. Access to funding and investment is a major barrier towards a developmental state in South Africa.

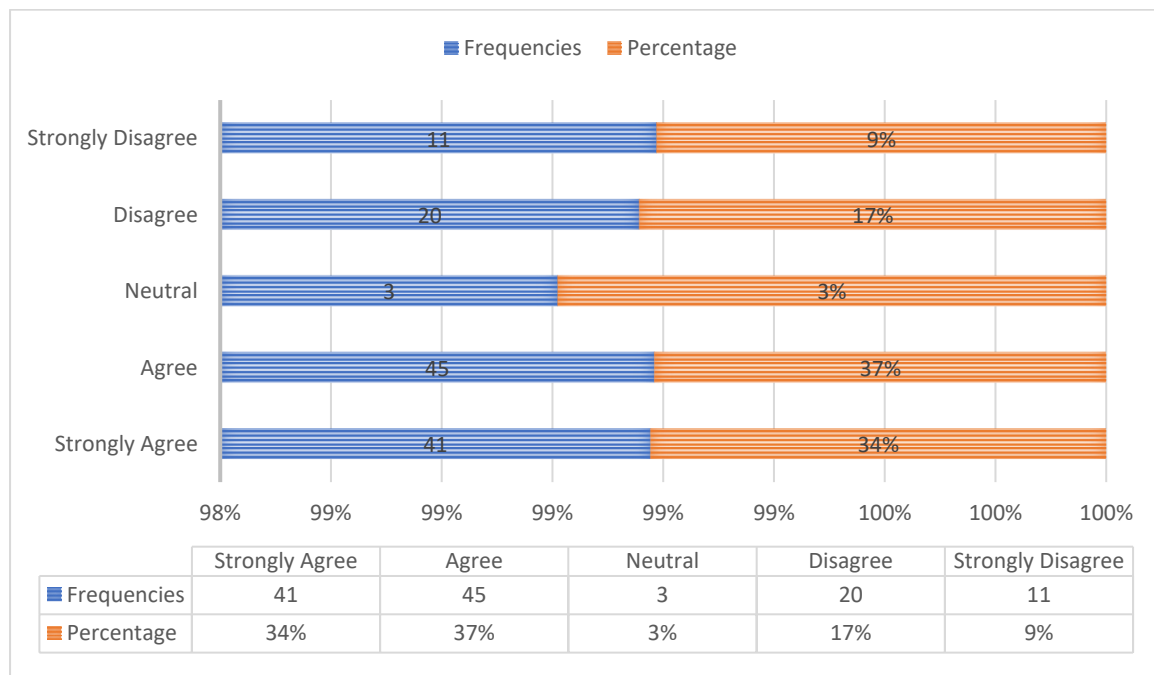


This chart illustrates that the majority of respondents, 56 (47%), disagree with the notion that access to funding and investment is a major barrier towards a developmental state in South Africa. Meanwhile, 20 (17%) strongly disagree 31 respondents (26%) agree, 10 (8%) strongly agree, and 3 (3%) remain neutral. The data reveals that a significant portion of respondents, 64% in total (47% disagreeing & 17% strongly disagreeing), do not perceive access to funding and investment as a primary barrier to establishing a developmental state in South Africa. This suggests that, according to these respondents, other structural or operational challenges—beyond capital access—might be viewed as more pressing issues for achieving developmental state objectives. The findings are supported by literature from Vikakazi and Adetiba (2020), who stated that corruption and governance issues are significant barriers hindering progress in South Africa. Mlambo *et al.* (2023) argue that while South Africa has sufficient funds, officials often use public funds for their personal interests.

Conversely, a smaller portion, 34% (26% agreeing & 8% strongly agreeing), does see funding access as a significant impediment. This indicates that while capital is indeed a concern for a substantial minority, it is not seen as the central barrier by the majority. The small percentage of respondents who remain neutral (3%) could reflect a lack of decisive opinion or detailed understanding of funding's impact relative to other barriers. This division in perception

suggests a need to examine the broader systemic factors that might impede South Africa's developmental goals. For instance, issues such as governance effectiveness, policy implementation, or structural inefficiencies could be perceived as more critical than funding alone. This insight could guide policymakers to address a spectrum of interrelated barriers, potentially focusing on regulatory, governance, or infrastructure improvements to create a more holistic developmental environment.

Figure 5.17. Corruption in South Africa poses a significant challenge in the positioning of municipalities towards a developmental state.

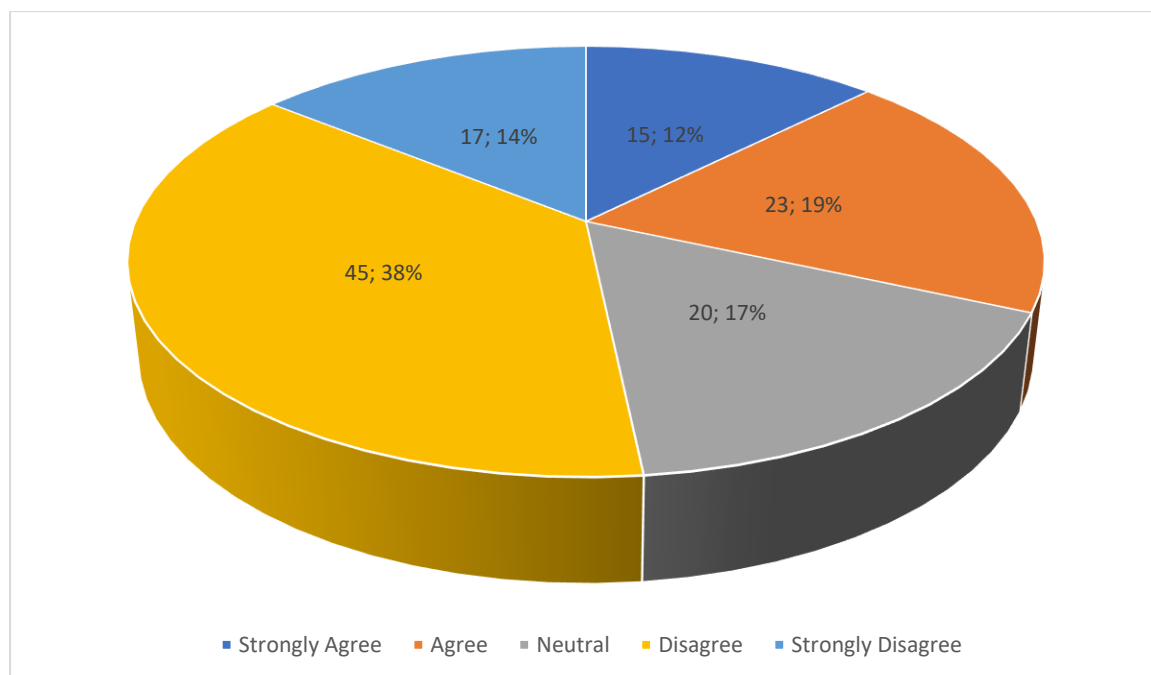


This data shows that the majority of respondents, 45 (37%), agreed that corruption in South Africa poses a significant challenge in the positioning of municipalities towards a developmental state, while 41 (34%) strongly agreed. On the other hand, 20 respondents (17%) disagreed, 11 (9%) strongly disagreed, and 3 (3%) remained neutral. These results are supported by Vilakazi and Adetiba (2020), who, in the literature review, stated that widespread corruption in South Africa, often involving high-level officials and collusion with the private sector, diverts resources away from critical areas such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

The data reveals a strong consensus among respondents that corruption is a significant impediment to implementing the Asian Tigers model in South Africa. With 71% (combining those who agree & strongly agree) expressing concern about corruption, it is clear that this issue is perceived as a major barrier to economic and social development. This aligns with Vilakazi and Adetiba's (2020) findings, which highlight how corruption, particularly involving

high-ranking officials and private-sector collusion, disrupts the allocation of essential resources. The smaller proportion of respondents who disagree (26%) or remain neutral (3%) suggests that while some may view corruption as less of a barrier, the overwhelming majority sees it as a critical issue that must be addressed to achieve developmental goals similar to those of the Asian Tigers.

Figure 5.18. The education system in South Africa is capable of supporting a skilled workforce.



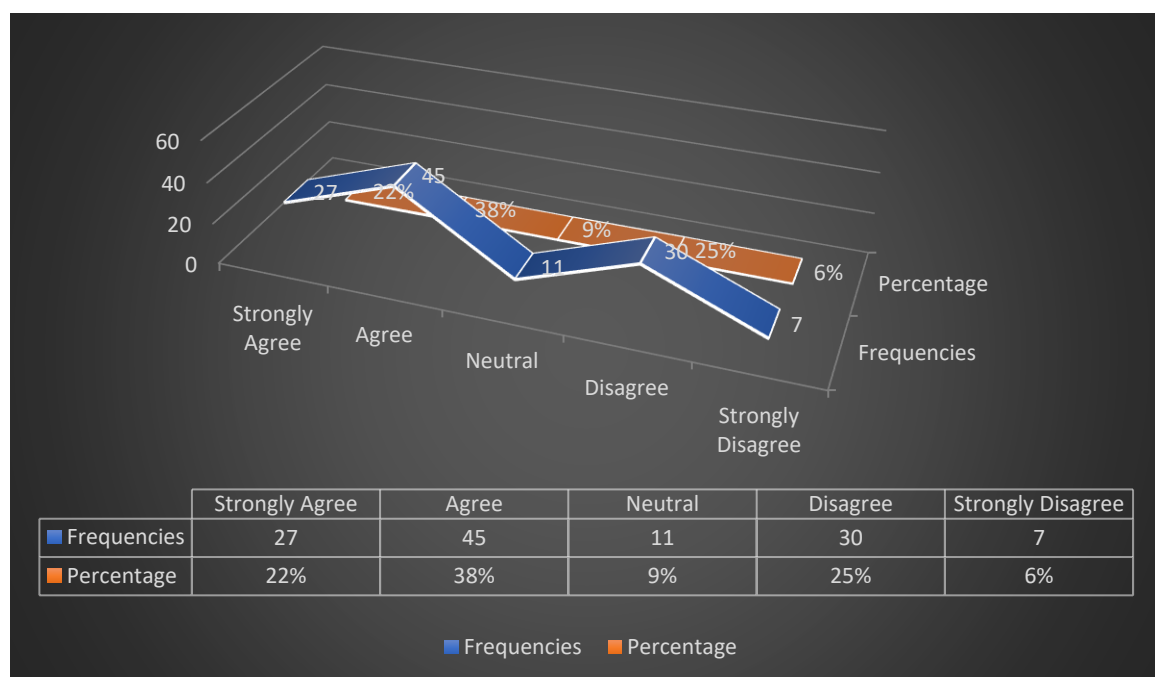
This pie chart reveals that the majority of respondents, 45 (38%), disagree that the South African education system is capable of supporting a skilled workforce similar to that of the Asian Tigers, while 17 (14%) strongly disagree. Additionally, 20 respondents (17%) chose to remain neutral, 23 (19%) agree, and 15 (12%) strongly agree. These findings align with Ovie's (2019: 53) assertion that the education provided in South Africa does not correspond to the skills demanded by employers and contemporary industries. Consequently, the South African education system requires revision.

Furthermore, the data indicates a significant level of scepticism about the South African education system's ability to produce a workforce comparable to the Asian Tigers. The combined percentage of respondents who either disagree or strongly disagree (52%) reflects a prevailing doubt. In contrast, only 31% (those who agree or strongly agree) have confidence in the system. The 17% neutrality could suggest uncertainty or a lack of sufficient knowledge on the subject. Overall, the majority of respondents lean towards a negative view, implying

that more may need to be done to align South Africa's education system with global benchmarks.

The findings indicate that South Africa's education system is largely viewed as underperforming, particularly in vocational training, alignment with industry requirements, and infrastructure quality. This outcome is likely due to various challenges, including unequal resource distribution, high dropout rates, and poor global rankings. However, the minority who express confidence may recognize the potential in recent reforms or specific instances of success. Overall, the data highlights the necessity for targeted improvements to align South Africa's education system with international standards and to develop a globally competitive workforce.

Figure 5.19. Social inequality in South Africa is a significant barrier towards a developmental state.

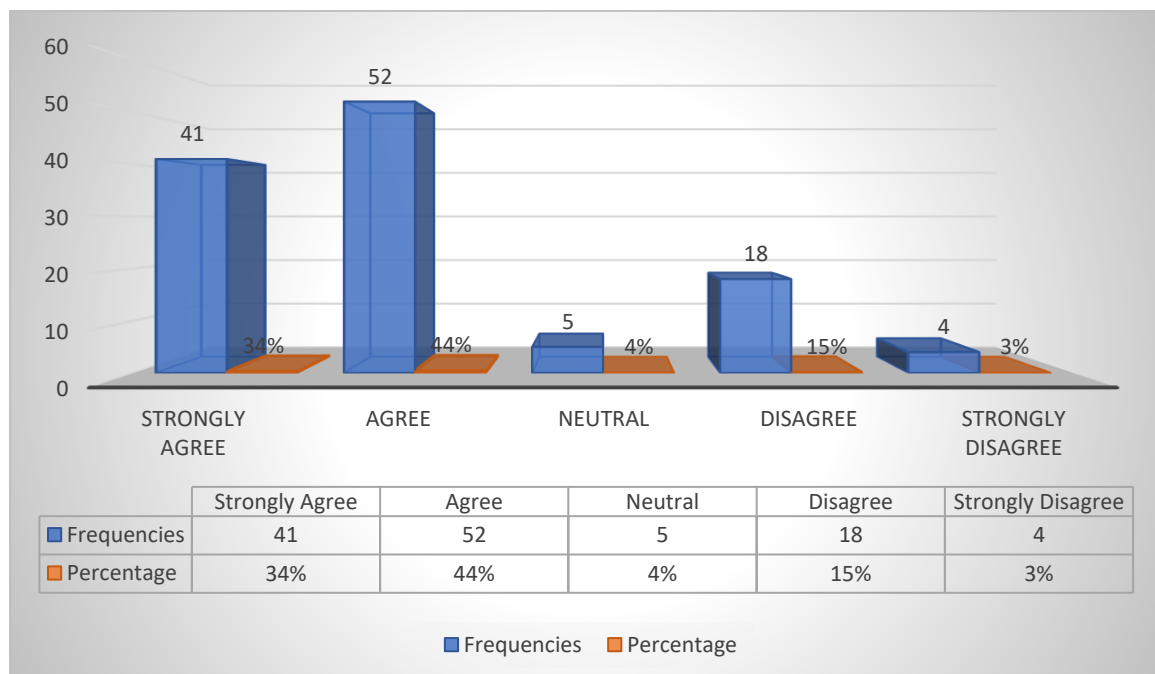


As illustrated by the chart, the majority of respondents, 45 (38%), agree that social inequality in South Africa is a significant barrier towards a developmental state. Additionally, 27 (22%) strongly agree, 11 (9%) are neutral, 30 respondents (25%) disagree and 7 (6%) strongly disagree. These findings are supported by Gumede (2019), who noted in the literature review of this study that South Africa continues to face the challenge of persistent inequality, which plays a role in preventing the country from achieving the criteria of a developmental state.

The data shows a clear consensus that social inequality is perceived as a major obstacle to adopting the Asian Tigers Model in South Africa. The 60% of respondents who either agree or strongly agree suggest that the majority view inequality as a critical issue. This aligns with Gumede's (2019) assertion that inequality hampers South Africa's ability to meet developmental state criteria. However, the 31% of respondents who either disagree or strongly disagree indicate a notable minority who might believe other factors are more pressing, or that inequality is not as substantial a barrier. The 9% neutrality may reflect ambivalence or lack of strong opinion on the subject.

These results highlight the common belief that social inequality hinders South Africa's efforts to adopt the developmental model of the Asian Tigers. To tackle this issue, targeted interventions are necessary to reduce inequality, including improvements in education, promoting fair access to resources, and enhancing social mobility. However, the opposing perspective emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive approach that takes into account other barriers to development in addition to inequality.

Figure 5.20. Institutional reforms are necessary for South Africa to achieve a developmental state.

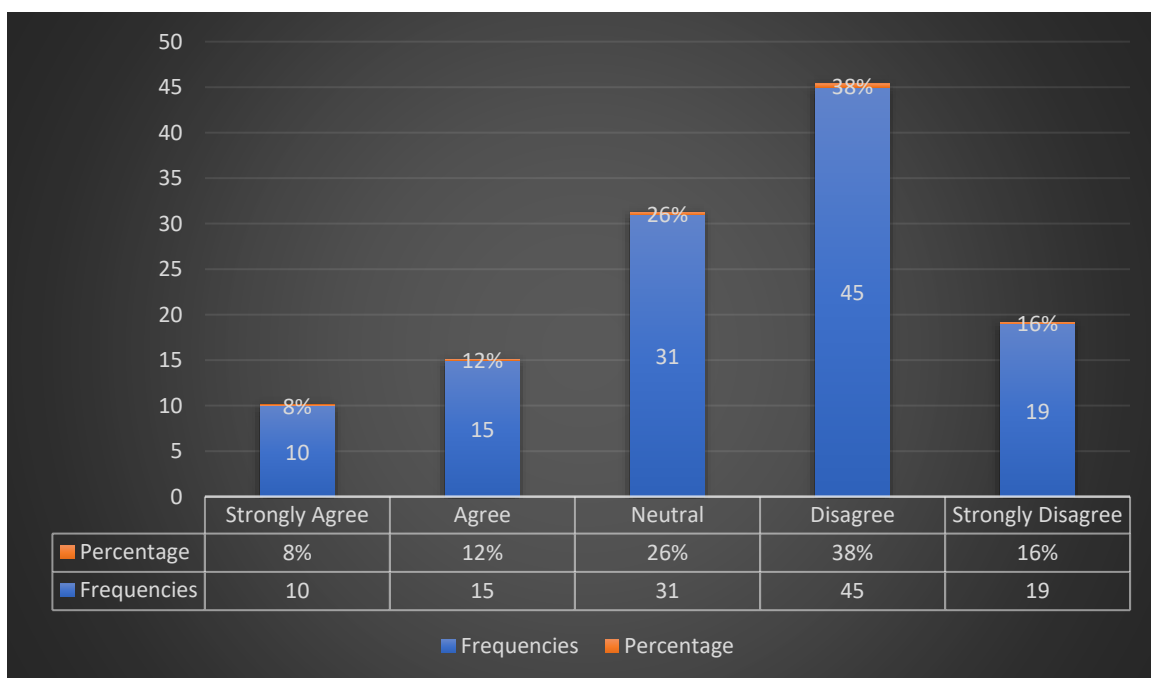


The graph indicates that the majority of respondents, 52 (44%), agree that institutional reforms are necessary for South Africa to achieve a developmental state, while 41 (34%) strongly agree. In contrast, 18 respondents (15%) disagree, 4 (3%) strongly disagree and 5 (4%) are neutral. The data reveals a strong consensus on the need for institutional reforms in South

Africa, with a combined 78% of respondents (those who agree & strongly agree) recognizing reforms as essential for adopting the Asian Tigers Model. These findings are supported by the National Development Plan 2030 (NDP) which provides insights into the need for institutional reforms and policy alignment to achieve a developmental state. Specifically, Chapter 13 of the NDP emphasizes building a capable and developmental state through institutional strengthening and structural reforms. This suggests that most participants believe structural changes are critical to fostering a developmental state. The smaller percentage of disagreement (18%) and strong disagreement (3%) may reflect either a belief in the adequacy of current institutions or scepticism about reform being the key solution. The 4% neutrality may indicate a lack of opinion or knowledge on the subject. Overall, the results highlight widespread support for reform as a pathway to economic transformation.

5.2.2.4. The synergy between governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and Developmental State Imperatives

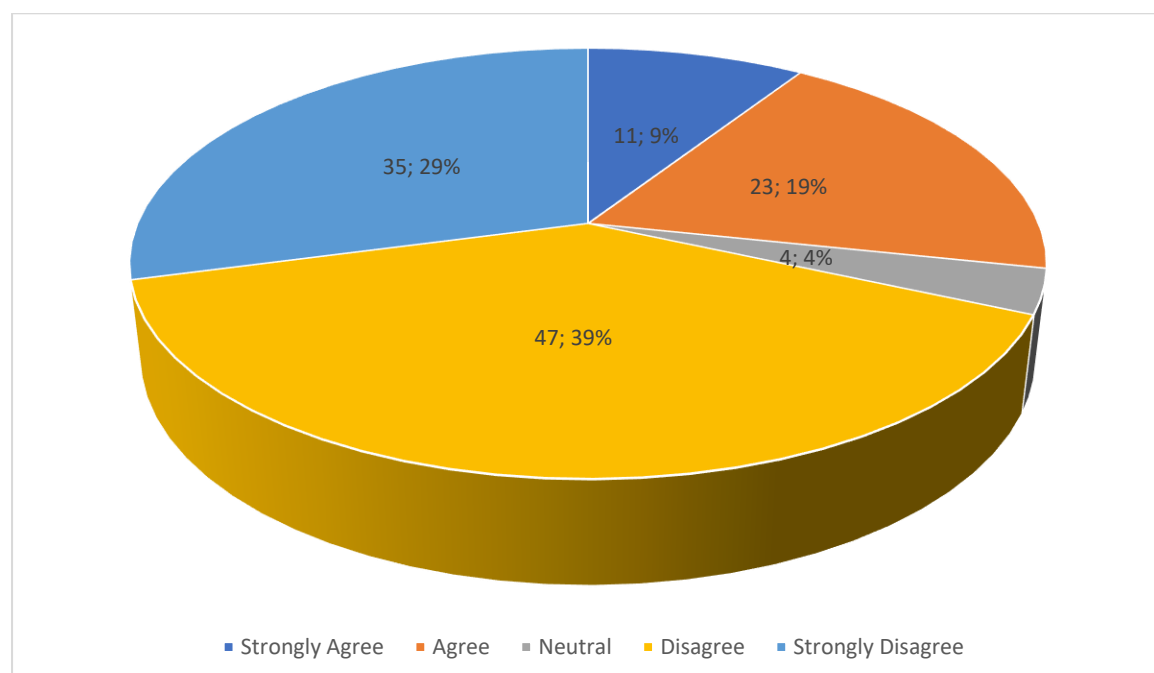
Figure 5.21. The governance structures in Thulamela Local Municipality align with the centralised, government-led approach of a developmental state.



The graph demonstrates that the majority of respondents, 45 (38%), disagree that the governance structures in Thulamela Local Municipality align with the centralized, government-led approach of a developmental state. Meanwhile, 31 respondents (26%) are neutral, 19 (16%) strongly disagree, 15 (12%) agree, and 10 (8%) strongly agree.

The data suggests a significant level of disagreement, with 54% of respondents (those who disagree and strongly disagree) expressing that the governance structures in Thulamela Local Municipality do not reflect the centralized and government-driven strategies typical of the Asian Tigers Model. This could indicate that local governance in Thulamela is perceived as decentralized or less effective in leading developmental policies. The high percentage of disagreement points to a potential gap between local governance practices and the more coordinated, top-down approach that is characteristic of the Asian Tigers' success. These findings are supported by Ukwandu (2019), who asserted that the Asian Tigers demonstrated strong governance structures prioritizing economic growth, maintaining political stability, and ensuring accountability. Conversely, Matyana and Thusi (2023) argue that South African municipalities face significant challenges related to political stability and governance. Consequently, the majority of respondents disagree that the governance structures in Thulamela Local Municipality align with the centralized, government-led approach of a developmental state. On the other hand, the 26% neutrality may reflect uncertainty or lack of awareness regarding the governance structures in the municipality. The relatively smaller percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree (20%) suggests that there is a minority who see some level of alignment between Thulamela's governance and the Asian Tigers' model. This divergence in opinions may indicate that while some elements of centralized governance might be present, there is still a widespread perception that more reforms or structural changes are needed to fully adopt the Asian Tigers' approach.

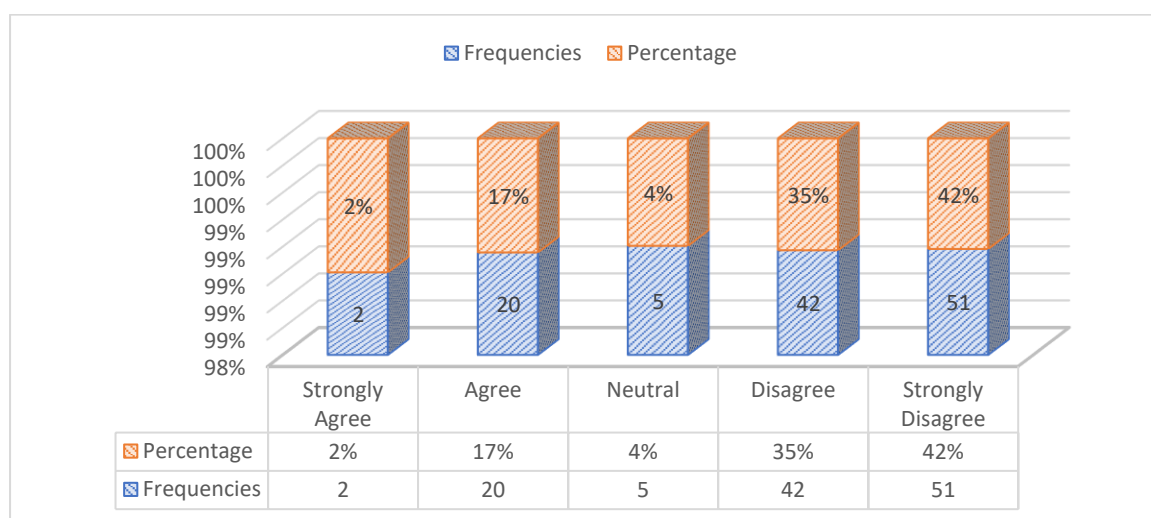
Figure 5.22. Thulamela Local Municipality's governance effectively supports industrial policy and strategic economic planning geared towards a developmental state.



According to the pie chart, the majority of respondents, 47 (39%), disagree that Thulamela Local Municipality's governance effectively supports industrial policy and strategic economic planning geared towards a developmental state. Additionally, 35 respondents (29%) strongly disagree, 23 (19%) agree, 11 (9%) strongly agree, and 4 (4%) are neutral. The data reveals a strong sentiment of dissatisfaction, with a combined 68% of respondents (those who disagree & strongly disagree) indicating that the governance structures in Thulamela Local Municipality are not effectively supporting industrial policy and strategic economic planning akin to that of the Asian Tigers. This overwhelming disagreement suggests that the municipality's current governance is perceived as inadequate for fostering the kind of rapid economic development seen in the Asian Tigers. These findings are supported by Mensah (2019), who noted that South Africa lacks coordinated efforts in industrialization and strategic planning at the local level, which is essential for fostering sustainable economic growth.

On the other hand, 28% of respondents (those who agree or strongly agree) believe that Thulamela's governance does, to some extent, support such policies. This minority view could point to isolated instances of strategic planning that are seen as positive or the perception that certain policies are beginning to move in the right direction. The small percentage of neutrality (4%) suggests that most respondents have formed a clear opinion, with little ambivalence about the municipality's role in industrial and economic planning. Overall, the data underscores the need for significant governance reforms to better align with the developmental strategies of the Asian Tigers.

Figure 5.23. Thulamela Local Municipality has effective anti-corruption measures and accountability mechanisms.



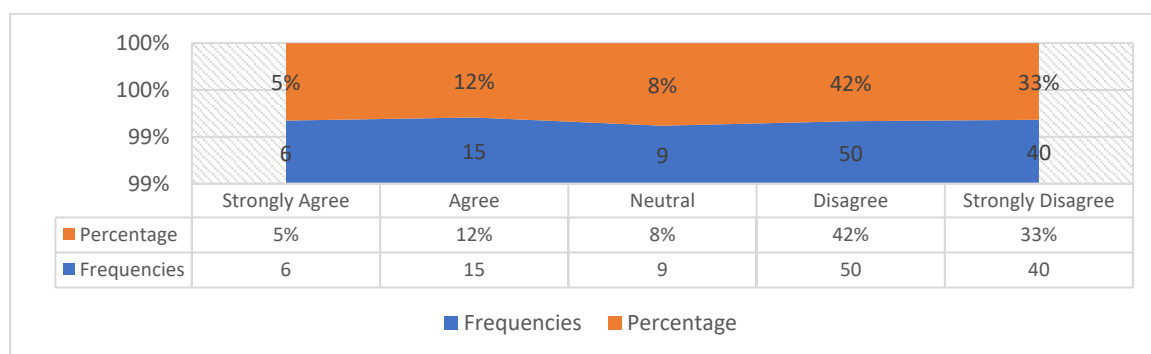
This data illustrates that the majority of respondents, 51 (42%), strongly disagree that Thulamela Local Municipality has effective anti-corruption measures and accountability

mechanisms. Additionally, 42 respondents (35%) disagree, 20 (17%) agree, 5 (4%) are neutral, and 2 (2%) strongly agree.

The data highlights a striking lack of confidence in the anti-corruption measures and accountability mechanisms within Thulamela Local Municipality, with a combined 77% of respondents (those who strongly disagree & disagree) expressing that these mechanisms fall short of the robust standards seen in the Asian Tigers. This strong opposition coincides with Mashabela (2023), who stated that corruption and weak governance are significant barriers to effective local development. The Asian Tigers are known for their stringent governance and zero-tolerance policies on corruption, which contributed greatly to their economic success. The results indicate that Thulamela may need substantial reforms in transparency and accountability to achieve similar outcomes.

In contrast, 19% of respondents (those who agree or strongly agree) believe that Thulamela's anti-corruption efforts are comparable to those of the Asian Tigers, implying a minority view that there are some mechanisms in place that mirror those successful models. The 4% neutrality could reflect uncertainty or insufficient knowledge about the local governance mechanisms. Overall, the data paints a picture of widespread dissatisfaction, suggesting that enhancing anti-corruption strategies and strengthening accountability measures should be key priorities for improving governance in the municipality.

Figure 5.24. Thulamela Local Municipality has established efficient bureaucratic processes that facilitate rapid economic decision-making and implementation.



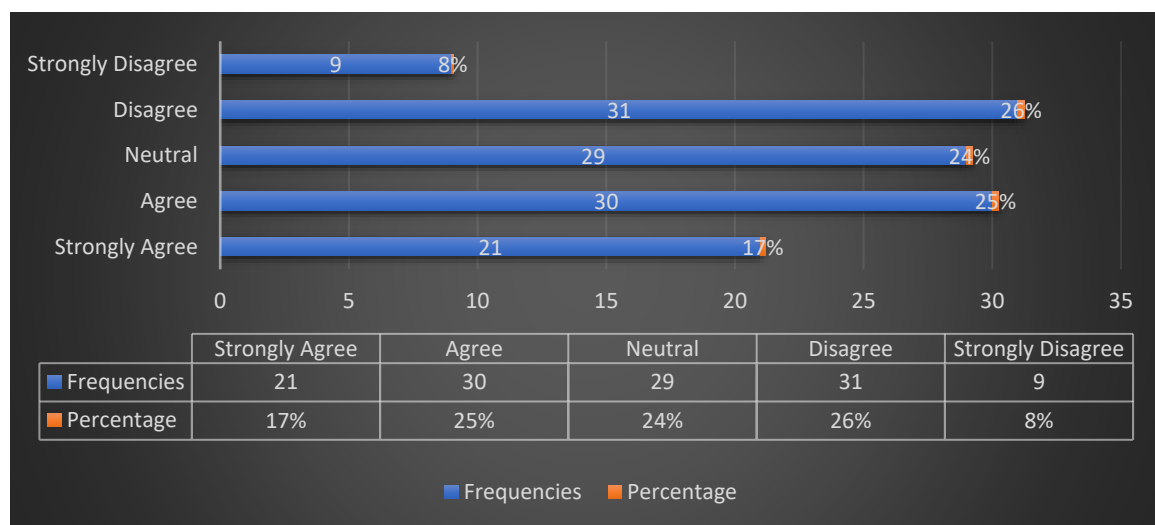
The chart illustrates that the majority of respondents, 50 (42%), disagree that Thulamela Local Municipality has established efficient bureaucratic processes that facilitate rapid economic decision-making and implementation. Additionally, 40 respondents (33%) strongly disagree, 15 (12%) agree, 6 (5%) strongly agree and 9 (8%) are neutral.

The data reveals a significant level of dissatisfaction with Thulamela Local Municipality's bureaucratic processes, as 75% of respondents (those who disagree & strongly disagree)

believe that these processes are not efficient enough to support rapid economic decision-making and implementation, as seen in the Asian Tigers. These findings are supported by Mashabela (2023) in the literature, who stated that local governance can be perceived as slow, overly complicated, or lacking the streamlined structures necessary for driving rapid economic growth. The success of the Asian Tigers was partly due to their ability to make and implement economic decisions quickly, supported by strong and efficient bureaucracies, which this data implies Thulamela is currently lacking.

On the other hand, 17% of respondents (those who agree & strongly agree) believe that Thulamela does have some efficient processes in place, indicating a minority view that recognizes areas of progress or potential. The 8% neutrality may suggest that a small portion of respondents either lack sufficient knowledge of the municipality's internal processes or do not feel strongly one way or the other. Overall, the data suggests that substantial reform may be necessary to improve the efficiency of the local bureaucracy in order to align more closely with the dynamic, proactive models of the Asian Tigers.

Figure 5.25. The governance in Thulamela Local Municipality encourages strong public-private sector collaboration, reflecting the synergistic relationships.



The bar graph demonstrates that the majority of respondents, 31 (26%), disagree that the governance in Thulamela Local Municipality encourages strong public-private sector collaboration, reflecting the synergistic relationships seen in the Asian Tigers Model. Meanwhile, 9 (8%) strongly disagree, 30 respondents (25%) agree, 21 (17%) strongly agree, and 29 (24%) are neutral.

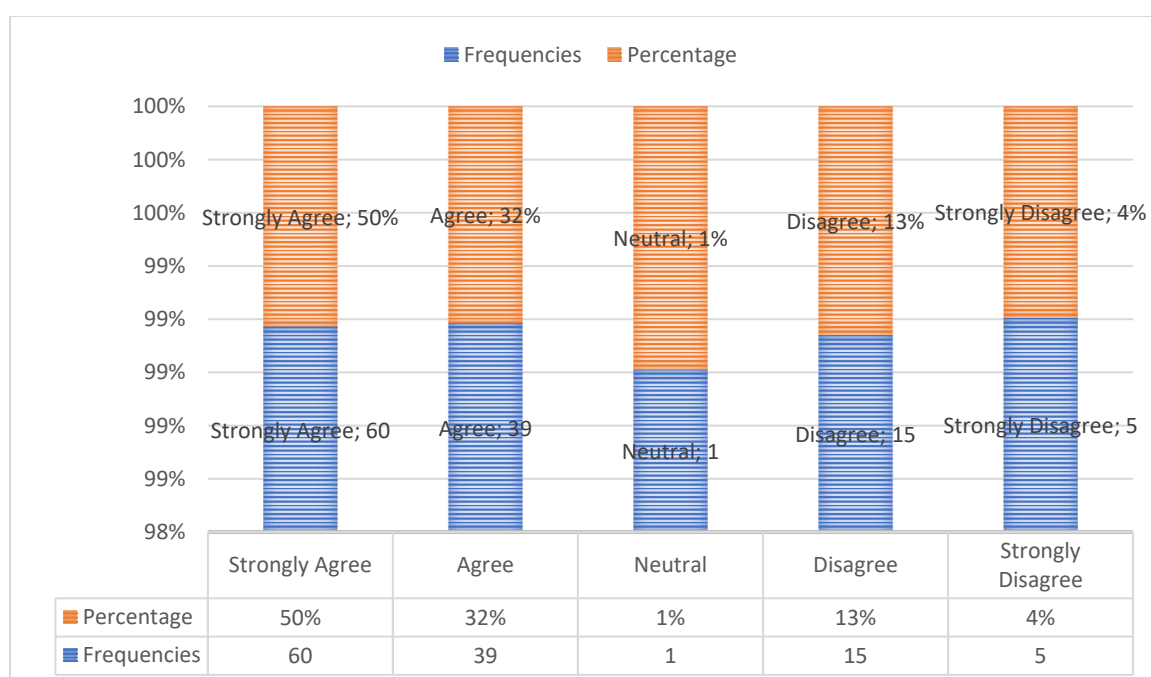
The data reflects a mixed perception among respondents regarding the effectiveness of Thulamela Local Municipality in fostering strong public-private sector collaboration, a key

component in the economic success of the Asian Tigers Model. With 26% of respondents disagreeing and 8% strongly disagreeing (a combined 34%), there is notable scepticism about the municipality's role in encouraging these collaborative relationships, which are crucial for economic synergy and growth. The fact that a quarter of respondents (25%) agree, and a smaller but significant 17% strongly agree, suggests that some respondents do see efforts toward collaboration. However, the 24% who are neutral may indicate a lack of visibility or awareness of these initiatives, or possibly uncertainty about their effectiveness. South Africa's NDP also underscores the need for PPPs to drive inclusive economic growth. Chapter 3 of the plan emphasizes creating enabling environments for partnerships, particularly at the municipal level, to bolster economic initiatives.

This distribution points to a potential gap between municipal intentions and public perception. If the Thulamela Local Municipality aspires to mirror the collaborative approach of the Asian Tigers, it might consider increasing the visibility of public-private partnerships and demonstrating tangible outcomes. By building trust and promoting successful collaborative efforts, the municipality could strengthen its perceived role in fostering economic growth. This insight highlights the need for more strategic communication and perhaps more structured, impactful collaboration efforts that align with the Asian Tigers' synergistic approach.

5.2.2.5. Recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government

Figure 5.26. Thulamela Local Municipality should adopt comprehensive industrial policies that target key sectors for economic growth and development.



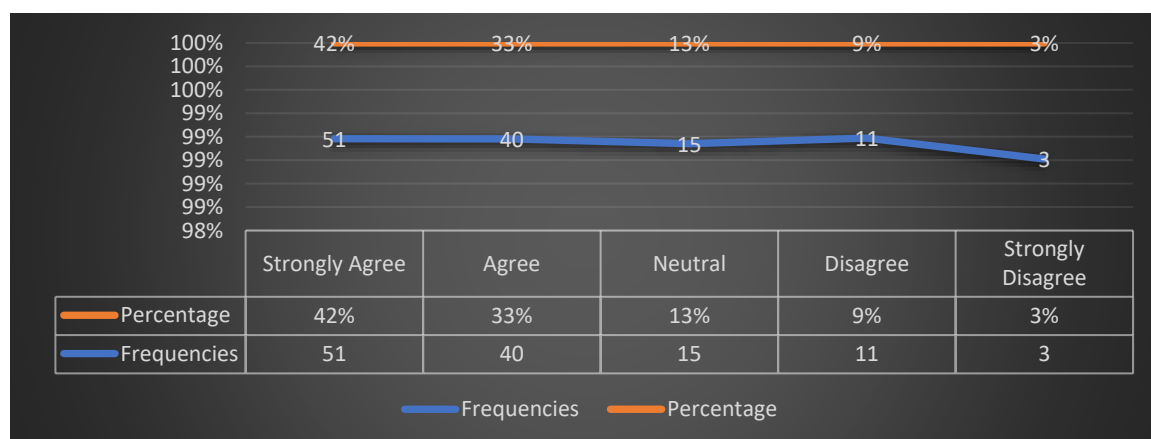
The graph demonstrates that the majority of respondents, 60 (50%), strongly agree that Thulamela Local Municipality should adopt comprehensive industrial policies targeting key sectors for economic growth and development. Additionally, 39 respondents (32%) agree, 15 (13%) disagree, 5 (4%) strongly disagree, and 1 respondent (1%) is neutral."

The data reveals overwhelming support for the adoption of comprehensive industrial policies in Thulamela Local Municipality, with a combined 82% of respondents (those who strongly agree and agree) advocating for targeted economic strategies. This strong endorsement suggests that the majority believe industrial policies are crucial for driving economic growth and development, particularly in key sectors. The consensus agrees with Wong and Chen (2020), stating that the Asian Tigers' approach involved strategic government intervention in specific industries, which significantly contributed to their rapid economic success.

In contrast, a smaller portion of respondents, 17% (those who disagree & strongly disagree), express scepticism or opposition to the need for such policies. This minority view could stem from concerns about the feasibility or effectiveness of implementing industrial policies at the local level, or a belief that other areas, such as governance or corruption, may require more immediate attention. These respondents might also feel that existing policies are sufficient or that further government intervention could have unintended negative consequences.

The 1% neutrality reflects almost universal engagement with this issue, as most respondents have a clear stance on whether Thulamela should adopt these policies. The overall data suggests that there is strong public pressure for the municipality to take an active role in shaping its economic future by implementing focused industrial policies, which are seen as essential to stimulating growth and development in key sectors.

Figure 5.27. Investing in education and vocational training programs is essential for improving the skills and employability of the local workforce in Thulamela.



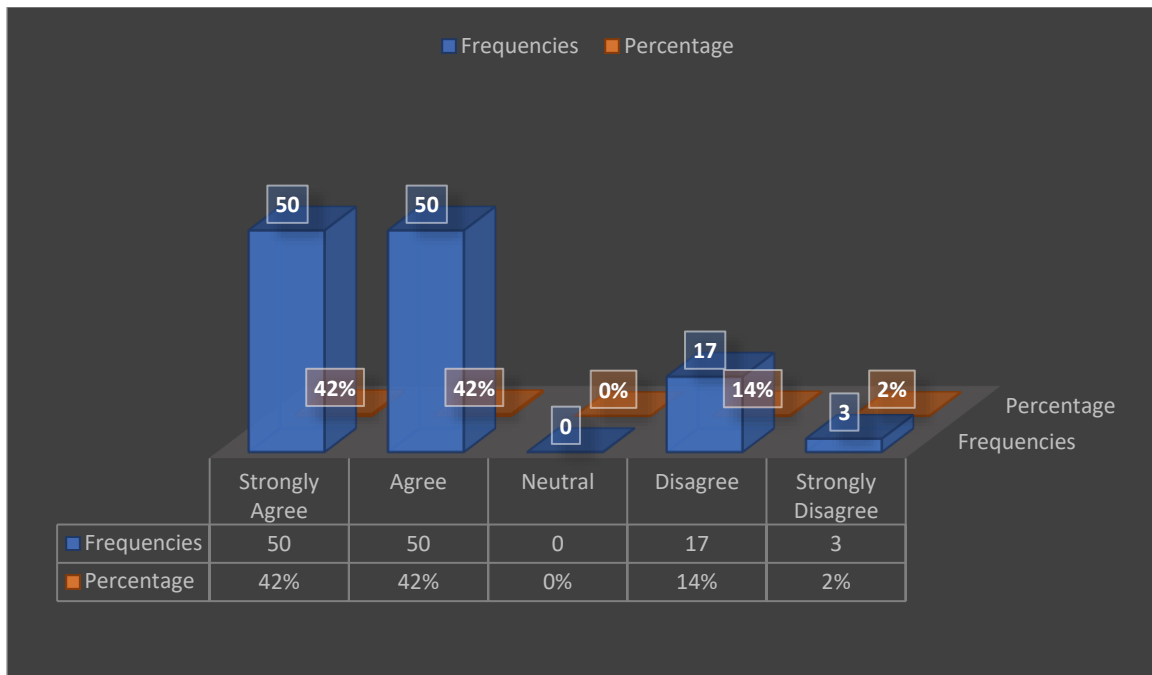
This line graph illustrates that the majority of respondents, 51 (42%), strongly agree that investing in education and vocational training programs is essential for improving the skills and employability of the local workforce in Thulamela. This is followed by 40 respondents (33%) who agree, 15 (13%) who are neutral, 11 (9%) who disagree, and 3 (3%) who strongly disagree. These results are supported by scholars such as Day (2021), who highlighted that the Asian Tigers made significant investments in education and vocational training tailored to meet the needs of emerging industries. Day (2021) further noted that in these countries, governments collaborated closely with the private sector to align educational curricula with market demands—unlike in South Africa, where a gap persists between the education provided and the skills required by companies or industries.

The data strongly suggests that there is widespread agreement among respondents (75% strongly agree & agree) on the importance of investing in education and vocational training programs to enhance the local workforce's skills and employability. This overwhelming consensus highlights a recognition that targeted educational initiatives are critical to driving economic growth and development in Thulamela. The alignment of this sentiment with the strategies employed by the Asian Tigers further supports the idea that strategic investments in human capital are essential for local economic transformation.

The 13% neutrality could reflect uncertainty or a lack of awareness among some respondents regarding the direct connection between education, vocational training, and employability. This group may feel that while education is important, other factors—such as governance, industrial policies, or infrastructure—are also key to economic improvement. On the other hand, the small percentage of respondents who disagree or strongly disagree (12%) may believe that the current educational system is sufficient, or that other priorities should take precedence in the local government's agenda.

The reference to Day's (2021) work underscores the critical role that tailored education and vocational training played in the success of the Asian Tigers. The collaboration between the government and the private sector to align education with market demands was a fundamental component of their rapid industrialization. In contrast, South Africa's gap between education and industry needs is identified as a barrier to similar progress. This suggests that Thulamela could benefit from adopting a more collaborative approach to ensure that educational programs are directly aligned with the local economy's needs, bridging the skills gap and enhancing employability.

Figure 5.28. Developing infrastructure and improving logistics within Thulamela Local Municipality is crucial for supporting an export-oriented economic strategy.



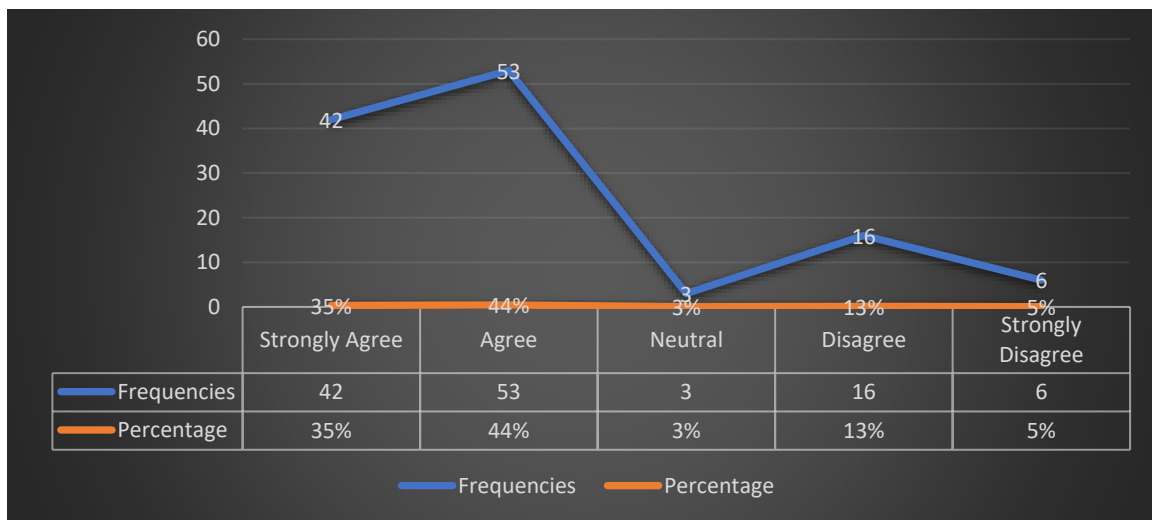
As shown in the graph, 50 respondents (42%) strongly agree, and another 50 respondents (42%) agree that developing infrastructure and improving logistics within Thulamela Local Municipality is crucial for supporting an export-oriented economic strategy. In contrast, 17 respondents (14%) disagree, 3 (2%) strongly disagree, and none (0%) of the respondents were neutral. These results are further supported by scholars such as Evans and Haller (2023), who noted in the literature of this study that developing infrastructure is a critical feature of a state's commitment to promoting sustainable progress across economic, social, and environmental spheres.

The data indicates a strong consensus among respondents regarding the necessity of developing infrastructure and logistics to facilitate an export-oriented economic strategy in Thulamela, with a total of 84% (strongly agree & agree) recognizing its importance. This overwhelming support underscores the belief that robust infrastructure is vital for enhancing connectivity, reducing transportation costs, and ultimately enabling local businesses to compete in international markets. The absence of neutral responses suggests that all participants have a clear opinion on the matter, reinforcing the urgency for action in this area.

The 16% of respondents who disagree or strongly disagree could indicate a minority that either perceives other issues as more pressing or is sceptical about the impact of infrastructure development on export-oriented growth. They might also feel that existing infrastructure already meets the current needs or that the focus should shift to other economic drivers. However, this perspective does not diminish the overall call for infrastructure improvements, as the majority view firmly supports strategic investments in this area.

The reference to Evans and Haller (2023) highlights the broader implications of infrastructure development, connecting it to sustainable progress across multiple dimensions. This perspective suggests that infrastructure improvements in Thulamela would not only bolster economic growth through enhanced exports but also contribute to social and environmental sustainability. By aligning infrastructure development with an export-oriented strategy, the municipality could position itself to attract investment and foster long-term economic resilience.

Figure 5.29. Implementing robust anti-corruption measures and enhancing transparency in governance will significantly contribute to the effective functioning of Thulamela Local Municipality.



According to the line graph, the majority of respondents, 53 (44%), agree that implementing robust anti-corruption measures and enhancing transparency in governance will significantly contribute to the effective functioning of Thulamela Local Municipality. Additionally, 42 respondents (35%) strongly agree with this assertion. In contrast, 16 respondents (13%) disagree, 6 (5%) strongly disagree, and 3 (3%) remain neutral.

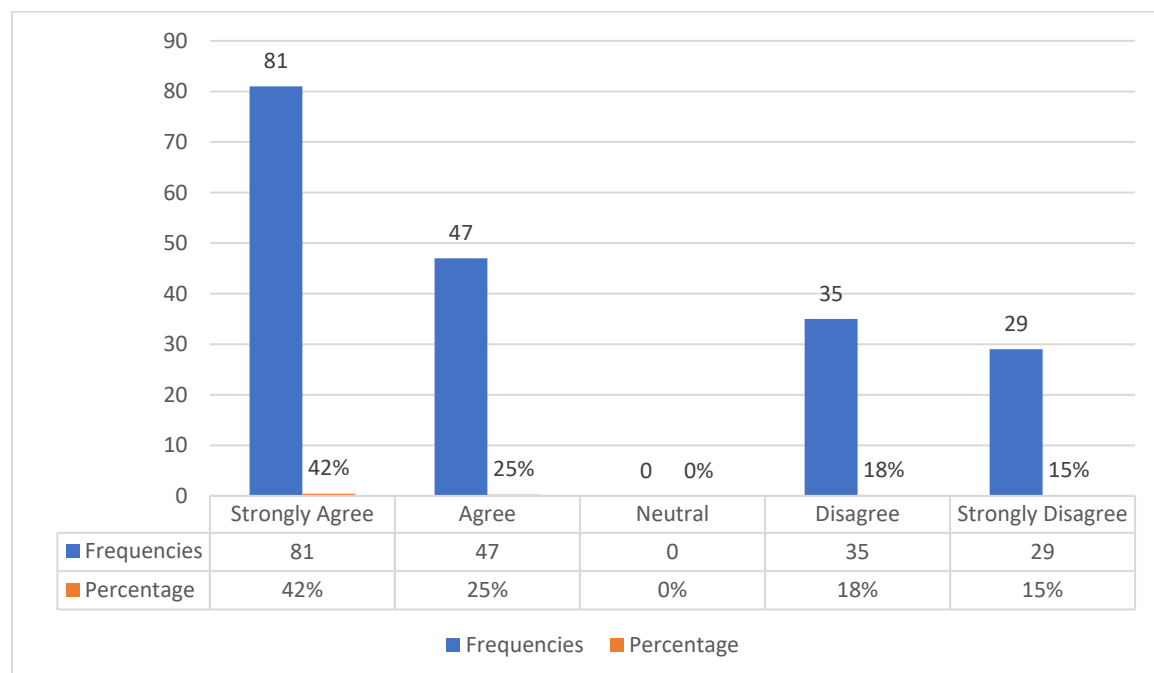
The data indicates a strong consensus among respondents regarding the importance of anti-corruption measures and transparency in governance for the effective functioning of Thulamela Local Municipality. With a combined total of 79% (44% agree & 35% strongly agree), the respondents recognize that addressing corruption is essential to building public trust and ensuring the integrity of local governance. This reflects a growing awareness of the negative impacts corruption can have on service delivery, resource allocation, and overall community well-being. These findings align with Maela *et al.* (2024) suggestion that South

Africa must focus on strengthening its institutions and ensuring accountability at all levels of the government if they are to achieve the criterion of a developmental state.

In contrast, the 18% of respondents who disagree or strongly disagree may have differing perspectives on the current state of governance in Thulamela. This group might feel that anti-corruption measures are either not necessary or that existing efforts are sufficient to maintain transparency and accountability. It is also possible that they believe other pressing issues require immediate attention rather than a focus on corruption. The relatively low percentage of neutral responses (3%) suggests that most respondents have a clear stance on the importance of these governance issues.

Overall, the findings underscore the critical need for Thulamela Local Municipality to prioritize anti-corruption initiatives and transparency measures to enhance its operational effectiveness. The strong support for these measures among the majority of respondents indicates a community ready to engage in governance reform. By addressing these concerns, Thulamela can improve public confidence in local authorities, foster better service delivery, and create a more conducive environment for economic growth and development.

Figure 5.30. Encouraging partnerships between the government and private sector can drive innovation, technological advancement, and industrial diversification in Thulamela Local Municipality.



This column demonstrates that the majority of respondents, 81 (42%), strongly agree that encouraging partnerships between the government and the private sector can drive innovation, technological advancement, and industrial diversification in Thulamela Local Municipality. Additionally, 47 respondents (25%) agree with this statement. In contrast, 35 respondents (18%) disagree, 29 (15%) strongly disagree, and none (0%) of the respondents remain neutral. These results are further supported by Vilakazi and Moore (2023:05), who stated that collaborations with the private sector foster an environment that promotes sustainable development and good corporate citizenship by enhancing market access, distribution networks, and regulatory changes.

The data indicates a strong belief among respondents in the importance of government-private sector partnerships for fostering innovation and industrial growth in Thulamela. With a combined total of 67% of respondents (42% strongly agree & 25% agree) recognizing the potential benefits of such collaborations, there is widespread support for initiatives aimed at enhancing synergies between these sectors. This support suggests that the community understands the critical role that the private sector can play in driving economic development and innovation, which are essential for the municipality's progress.

Conversely, the 33% of respondents who disagree or strongly disagree may have concerns regarding the effectiveness or practicality of such partnerships. They could feel that previous collaborations have not yielded the desired results or that there may be inherent challenges in aligning the interests of the government and the private sector. Their perspective highlights the need for a careful and strategic approach to partnership development, ensuring that any initiatives are designed to address potential barriers and foster trust between the two sectors.

The lack of neutral responses indicates that respondents have strong opinions on the matter, which emphasizes the urgency for Thulamela Local Municipality to actively pursue these partnerships. The support from Vilakazi and Moore (2023) reinforces the idea that effective collaboration can create a conducive environment for sustainable development and good corporate citizenship. By leveraging the strengths of both the government and the private sector, Thulamela can enhance its capacity for innovation, improve service delivery, and promote economic diversification, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being of its community.

5.2.3. SUMMATION OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES

The study was mainly comprised of 50.8% females and 49.2% males. The respondents were predominantly middle-aged and elderly, which is not surprising as these age groups tend to have a better understanding of the topic being investigated. The participants who were sampled for this study include the executive mayor, municipal manager, IDP officials, LED officials, communication manager, community development workers, traditional leaders, ward councillors, members of SANCO and community members. Furthermore, most of the respondents held either a degree or diploma. This choice was made because the researcher believed that educated individuals would provide more reliable information given the complexity of the topic. A large portion of the respondents were unemployed, indicating that out of the 71 community members selected, only 15 were employed. This highlights the pressing issue of unemployment in the Thulamela local municipality.

The majority of the respondents strongly disagreed that Thulamela Local Municipality policies significantly contribute to the rapid economic growth. Additionally, the study revealed that most respondents agreed that investment in education and human capital is a critical factor in the economic success of Thulamela Local Municipality. It was discovered that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that export-oriented strategies are central to the development and global integration of the economies. The study discovered that the majority of the respondents agreed that strong and effective governance, including anti-corruption measures and efficient bureaucracies, played a vital role in the economic transformation of economic development. It was also found that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that collaborative relationships between the state and private sector industries were essential to the technological advancements and industrial diversification of the Asian Tigers. The study found that the majority of the respondents disagreed that the implementation of government-led industrial policies similar to those used by the Asian Tigers is feasible in Thulamela Local Municipality. The study found that most of the respondents strongly agreed that investing in education and human capital development can significantly contribute to the economic growth of Thulamela Local Municipality.

The majority of the respondents strongly agree that adopting an export-oriented economic strategy is a viable option for promoting growth and development in Thulamela Local Municipality. The findings reveal that most respondents strongly agree that establishing strong and effective governance, including anti-corruption measures and efficient bureaucracies, is essential for the successful adoption of the Asian Tigers Model in Thulamela Local Municipality. Additionally, most respondents strongly agree that fostering collaborative relationships between the government and private sector industries can drive technological advancements and industrial diversification in Thulamela Local Municipality. However, most respondents disagree that access to funding and investment is a major barrier towards the

developmental state in South Africa. The study also found that the majority of respondents agreed that corruption in South Africa poses a significant challenge in the positioning of municipalities towards a developmental state.

The study found that most respondents disagree with the idea that the education system in South Africa can support a skilled workforce similar to that of the Asian Tigers. Additionally, most respondents agree that social inequality in South Africa is a significant barrier towards a developmental state. The majority of the respondents also agree that institutional reforms are necessary for South Africa to achieve a developmental state. Furthermore, the study discovered that most respondents disagreed with the statement that the governance structures in Thulamela Local Municipality align with the centralized, government-led approach of the developmental state. The majority of the respondents also disagreed with the idea that Thulamela Local Municipality's governance effectively supports industrial policy and strategic economic planning geared towards a developmental state. In addition, the study found that most respondents strongly disagree that Thulamela Local Municipality has effective anti-corruption measures and accountability mechanisms. Lastly, the study discovered that most respondents disagreed with the statement that Thulamela Local Municipality has established efficient bureaucratic processes that facilitate rapid economic decision-making and implementation.

The survey results indicate that most respondents disagreed with the notion that the governance in Thulamela Local Municipality promotes strong public-private sector collaboration similar to the synergistic relationships. On the other hand, the majority of respondents strongly agreed that the municipality should implement comprehensive industrial policies targeting key sectors for economic growth and development. Additionally, most respondents strongly agreed that investing in education and vocational training programs is essential for improving the skills and employability of the local workforce. The study also found that the majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that developing infrastructure and improving logistics within the municipality is crucial for supporting an export-oriented economic strategy. Furthermore, the study revealed that most respondents believe that implementing robust anti-corruption measures and enhancing transparency in governance will significantly contribute to the effective functioning of Thulamela Local Municipality. Lastly, most respondents agreed that fostering partnerships between the government and private sector can drive innovation, technological advancement, and industrial diversification in Thulamela Local Municipality.

.5.3. ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS

This section expresses data conducted through the interviews which were given by the researcher to the participants. The data was presented in a narrative form

5.3.1. What are the key principles of a developmental state?

Participant A:

"I think the key principles of a developmental include export-oriented industrialization and government intervention in the economy. The Asian Tigers focused on building strong manufacturing sectors aimed at global markets. The state played a direct role in guiding industries through subsidies, trade protection, and strategic investments, which accelerated their economic growth."

Participant B:

"One of the major principles is human capital development. Most countries that have achieved the criteria of a developmental state heavily invested in education and skills development, ensuring their workforce was highly skilled. This allowed them to compete internationally, particularly in technology and high-value industries, while driving innovation and productivity."

Participant C:

"From a business perspective, I would say they cultivated a competitive corporate environment. The Asian Tigers encouraged private enterprises but maintained a close relationship between businesses and the government. This collaboration helped businesses align with national development goals and made sure industries focused on long-term growth."

Participant D:

"Historically, Asian countries applied land reforms and reduced inequality in the early stages of their development. This helped create a more equitable society, where wealth was more evenly distributed, providing a stable base for economic take-off. Furthermore, they embraced technology transfer and were quick to adopt and adapt foreign innovations."

Participant E:

"From a societal viewpoint, one important principle is the establishment of a strong work ethic, influenced by Confucian values in some of the Asian countries. Discipline, a focus on

education, and social cohesion were promoted, creating a culture that was conducive to rapid development and the achievement of national goals.

Participant F:

"As someone working in economic development, I see that the success of the Asian Tigers is largely rooted in strong state intervention. Their governments took a hands-on approach to guiding industrial growth and ensuring that key sectors received support, similar to how our municipality needs to prioritize local industries. For instance, if we focus on developing our agriculture sector, the Thulamela Municipality can work closely with local farmers to create a more competitive value chain, promoting sustainable growth and export opportunities."

Participant G:

"As a business owner here, I can appreciate how the Asian Tigers leveraged public-private partnerships. If we look at how Singapore and Taiwan involved private businesses in their growth, we can apply the same approach by encouraging collaboration between the municipality and local businesses. We need more initiatives that make it easier for small businesses in Thulamela to access funding, markets, and better infrastructure. The government's role should be more than just oversight—it should actively support growth with practical incentives and connections."

Participant H:

"From a planning perspective, one of the key principles of the developmental state is the importance of long-term vision. Thulamela needs a clear roadmap like those nations had. This means that when we update our Integrated Development Plan (IDP), it should focus on sustainability, infrastructure, and the creation of jobs through strategic sectors like agriculture, eco-tourism, and local industries. The key is planning for the future while remaining adaptable to new economic opportunities."

Participant I:

"The focus the Asian countries placed on education and workforce development is something that could be mirrored here in Thulamela. By improving education, especially in technical and vocational fields, we can prepare our young people for employment in sectors that will drive our local economy forward. Look at how countries like South Korea invested in education—our municipality should also collaborate with local schools to offer practical skills training, and

perhaps even forge partnerships with tech companies to offer learning opportunities in emerging industries like IT and renewable energy."

Participant J:

"The lessons from the Asian Tigers' model emphasize the power of a government that can both guide and support its people. I see how this approach could transform Thulamela if the local government becomes more involved in key areas like infrastructure development and creating environments that are conducive to small business growth. But it's not just about economic growth—it's also about fostering social development. For instance, when the Asian Tigers focused on social stability, they ensured that growth was inclusive. We should ensure that our community projects, like housing and healthcare, are also prioritized alongside economic development."

The participants discussed the key principles of a developmental state and in most responses, the Asian Tigers were used as a reference, which can provide valuable lessons for the Thulamela Municipality. The discussion revealed a strong emphasis on state intervention and export-oriented industrialization as crucial factors for success. This was noted by Day (2021) in the literature, who asserted that export-oriented industrialization and government intervention and planning were crucial in the Asian Tigers' transition to becoming a developmental state. Participants A, F, and J highlighted how the governments of the Asian Tigers guided industrial growth through subsidies, trade protection, and strategic investments, ensuring support for key sectors. This hands-on approach provided a clear roadmap for long-term development, helping to boost industries and create a competitive environment. Applying a similar model to Thulamela would suggest that local governance should actively nurture industries like agriculture, eco-tourism, and manufacturing, aiming to build a sustainable and globally competitive economy.

The responses also highlight the significance of human capital development. Participants B and I emphasize how education and workforce training were crucial for the success of the Asian Tigers. Ricks (2020) stated that the Asian Tigers invested in higher education and vocational training to address the specific needs of emerging industries. The emphasis on developing a highly skilled workforce enabled these countries to excel in high-tech industries and maintain a competitive advantage globally. Thulamela can adopt a similar approach by investing in technical and vocational training to provide local youth with skills that meet the demands of emerging industries such as IT and renewable energy. Participant I's suggestion to establish partnerships with local schools and tech companies could facilitate innovation and prepare Thulamela's workforce for the future.

The discussion not only covers economic principles but also societal values and social stability. The Asian Tigers' strong work ethic, discipline, and social cohesion, often influenced by Confucian values, played a significant role in their rapid development. In Thulamela, fostering similar values through community engagement and social development projects—such as improved healthcare, housing, and education—could enhance social stability, ensuring that economic growth benefits all members of society. Therefore, economic and social development should be closely linked, as demonstrated by the Asian Tigers, to create a more inclusive and prosperous community.

5.3.2. What factors need to be considered to determine the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state in Thulamela Local Municipality within South Africa's context?

Participant A:

"One critical factor is governance. The Asian Tigers had strong, centralized leadership that coordinated long-term development plans. For Thulamela, we need to consider if local and national governments can align around a shared development vision. Political stability and the capacity to implement long-term policies will be key. Without this, it would be difficult to replicate the focused growth the Asian Tigers achieved."

Participant B:

"The structure of the economy is crucial. The Asian Tigers had a clear path to industrialization, focusing on manufacturing and exports. Thulamela's economy is different—it's more agricultural and service-based. We need to assess whether we can identify high-growth sectors, such as agri-business, eco-tourism, or even renewable energy, that can drive local economic transformation. We can't just copy-paste; it has to be tailored."

Participant C:

"From my perspective I think, infrastructure development is non-negotiable. The Asian Tigers invested heavily in infrastructure, and it paid off. Here in Thulamela, our roads, internet, and utilities need serious upgrading. Without improving these, businesses will struggle to grow, and investors won't see us as a viable opportunity. We need infrastructure projects that encourage investment and business expansion."

Participant D:

"Education and skills development were cornerstones of the Asian Tigers' success. They built world-class education systems and created a highly skilled workforce. Thulamela must do the same. We have to invest in education, from primary levels to vocational training and beyond. Our youth need to be ready to meet the demands of a modern, industrialized economy. Without this, we risk falling behind in the knowledge economy."

Participant E:

"We can't overlook the importance of cultural and social cohesion. The Asian Tigers had a strong work ethic and social unity, which helped push their development agendas forward. In Thulamela, we need to engage the community, ensure everyone benefits from development, and foster a collective sense of ownership. If the people aren't on board or feel excluded, no model will work, no matter how successful it was elsewhere."

Participant F:

"To determine the feasibility, we need to assess whether Thulamela has the institutional capacity to manage a developmental state model. In the Asian Tigers, the government was both efficient and strategic in directing resources. We need to ensure that our local government has the capability to lead, plan, and execute large-scale industrial policies. This includes having skilled leadership, sound financial systems, and administrative capacity to manage projects. Furthermore, we must evaluate whether there are viable sectors like agriculture and tourism that can be developed into competitive industries."

Participant G:

"Adopting this model also requires analysing the local economic landscape and the potential for business growth. The Asian Tigers focused on export-led growth, so we need to assess if Thulamela's small and medium-sized businesses can be scaled up to compete in international markets. Our infrastructure needs to be improved, including transport systems, energy supply, and internet connectivity. Furthermore, there must be a supportive environment for entrepreneurs, such as access to finance, mentorship, and markets. It's crucial to create an ecosystem where businesses can thrive."

Participant H:

"One of the key factors is ensuring that the municipality's long-term development plans align with the model. In Thulamela, we must prioritize infrastructure development but also take into account the current state of urban and rural planning. For the Asian Tigers' model to work

here, we need significant improvements in roads, transport, water supply, and energy. Additionally, we must consider how to foster public-private partnerships to drive these large-scale infrastructure projects, while ensuring that the municipality has the resources and capacity to manage and oversee them effectively."

Participant I:

"Education and skills development are critical in this context. The Asian Tigers invested heavily in education to produce a skilled workforce, but we need to evaluate if the current education system in Thulamela can meet this need. Are our schools and vocational training institutions preparing students for jobs in the industries that could drive local development? This would mean assessing not just the quality of education, but also how well it aligns with the skills needed by key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and technology."

Participant J:

"Another crucial factor is social inclusivity. The Asian Tigers developed socially cohesive societies, which helped them maintain stability during their rapid economic growth. Thulamela needs to ensure that the benefits of this developmental model are inclusive, reaching the rural areas and marginalized communities, so we don't end up creating greater inequality. We should look at models of economic inclusion, land reforms, and equitable distribution of resources. The model also requires careful attention to community involvement and the potential for political buy-in from all stakeholders to ensure its success."

The participants' responses focus on the feasibility of applying the Asian Tigers' developmental model to Thulamela. They emphasize key factors that must be considered for successful implementation. Participant A highlights the importance of governance, noting that strong, centralized leadership was a critical driver of the Asian Tigers' success. This is supported by Mulaudzi (2024), who asserts in the literature that the Asian Tigers entrusted power to their national governments to control all aspects of development. In contrast, in South Africa, power is vested in local governments, which are expected to lead the country in achieving the criteria of a developmental state (Mathebula, 2016). For Thulamela, achieving political stability and aligning both local and national governments around a shared development vision will be essential. Without this, long-term policies that promote sustained growth will be difficult to implement. This alignment is crucial for setting a clear path for economic transformation and ensuring the capacity to drive strategic development initiatives.

Participants B, C, and F underscore the need to tailor the Asian Tigers' model to Thulamela's unique economic structure. While the Tigers focused on manufacturing and exports, Thulamela's economy is more agriculture- and service-based, suggesting the need to identify high-growth sectors such as agri-business, eco-tourism, and renewable energy. Infrastructure development, as Participant C emphasizes, is non-negotiable. Without improving roads, utilities, and internet connectivity, business growth and investment will remain limited. This infrastructure, paired with an institutional capacity to manage resources and projects effectively, will create an environment where sectors like agriculture and tourism can flourish and become competitive on both local and international levels.

The participants also stress the importance of human capital, social cohesion, and inclusivity. Participant D and I emphasize that education and skills development, cornerstones of the Asian Tigers' success, must be prioritized to prepare Thulamela's youth for jobs in modern industries. This requires not only investment in education but also ensuring that training aligns with key sectors. Participant E and J point to the need for social cohesion and inclusivity, stressing that development must benefit all members of society. Thulamela must ensure that economic growth reaches rural areas and marginalized communities to avoid deepening inequality. The model's success will also depend on public-private partnerships, community involvement, and political buy-in from all stakeholders, ensuring that development is inclusive and equitable.

5.3.3. What are the factors that may affect the Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state?

Participant A:

"Political will and leadership are essential factors that could affect Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state. The Asian Tigers benefited from consistent leadership with a clear vision for development. In South Africa, frequent political changes, policy inconsistency, and fragmented leadership could hinder the execution of long-term development plans. Without political stability and strong leadership, it will be challenging to maintain the focus needed for sustained economic growth."

Participant B:

"Economic inequality is a significant factor. South Africa has one of the highest levels of inequality in the world and that is evident here in Thulamela, and this could pose challenges. The Asian Tigers were able to reduce inequality through early land reforms and wealth

redistribution. For South Africa, high levels of unemployment, poverty, and the wealth gap could create social tensions and slow down the development process. The state would need to focus on inclusive economic growth to ensure that the benefits reach all sectors of society."

Participant C:

"From a business perspective, the regulatory environment and red tape could stifle the contribution of Thulamela Local Municipality towards a developmental state. The Asian Tigers had business-friendly environments that fostered private sector growth. In South Africa, the bureaucracy and rigid labour laws could slow down investment and business development. For a developmental state to thrive here, we need to streamline regulations, make it easier for businesses to operate, and encourage entrepreneurship at all levels."

Participant D:

"One of the major factors that could affect implementation is labour relations. In the Asian Tigers, labour forces were disciplined and often worked in harmony with the state's development goals. South Africa, however, has a history of labour strikes and tensions between workers and employers. The state would need to ensure fair labour practices, job security, and improved working conditions. Otherwise, the tension between labour and industry could derail economic progress."

Participant E:

"Environmental sustainability is another key factor. The Asian Tigers prioritized rapid industrialization, sometimes at the cost of the environment. South Africa, given its rich biodiversity and commitment to sustainable development, cannot afford to ignore this. Any implementation of the Asian Tigers model must incorporate green energy, sustainable agricultural practices, and policies that address climate change. Without an environmentally conscious approach, we risk long-term damage that could outweigh short-term economic gains."

Participant F:

"One of the key factors is the capacity of the local government. While the Asian Tigers model relied heavily on state intervention and long-term planning, the effectiveness of the South African government, especially at the local level, may not yet be at the same level. The challenges with capacity, mismanagement, and corruption within the municipality can hamper the ability to implement such a model effectively. To replicate this model, we would need

strong leadership, competent municipal officials, and an accountable government structure to ensure that resources are properly allocated, and projects are delivered on time."

Participant G:

"Another major factor is the level of economic inequality and unemployment in South Africa. Unlike the Asian Tigers, which had relatively low inequality during their early development phases, South Africa faces high unemployment rates, particularly in rural areas like Thulamela. Implementing this model would require more than just creating industrial hubs; it would require massive job creation strategies, improving education and skills, and addressing poverty. Without this foundation, businesses may not be able to scale up, and we could risk further social unrest."

Participant H:

Infrastructure challenges are a major obstacle. South Africa, especially in rural municipalities like Thulamela, faces significant infrastructure deficits, including poor road networks, unreliable electricity supply, and inadequate water systems. For the Asian Tigers model to work, South Africa would need to invest heavily in infrastructure development, ensuring that regions like Thulamela have the necessary facilities to support economic activities. However, funding for such large-scale projects is often a challenge, and the municipality would need to explore partnerships with private enterprises or national development agencies."

Participant I:

"Education and skills development are another key challenge. The Asian Tigers invested significantly in their human capital, creating a skilled workforce that could meet the demands of industrialization. In South Africa, especially in rural areas like Thulamela, we face challenges such as high dropout rates, under-resourced schools, and insufficient vocational training centers. Without significant reforms in education, particularly in providing vocational and technical skills, we may not be able to create the workforce required to sustain industries. Education reforms must align with the needs of local businesses and the broader economy."

Participant J:

"One of the more subtle but equally important factors is social cohesion and political will. For the Asian Tigers model to work, there needs to be broad political consensus and social cohesion. In South Africa, we have a highly diverse population with complex social dynamics, and political infighting can sometimes hinder the implementation of large-scale national or

regional strategies. For a developmental state to succeed, we would need strong leadership at the local and national levels, where different stakeholders—government, businesses, and communities—work together towards common goals. Moreover, we need to consider the risks of social exclusion and inequality, ensuring that development benefits everyone in the community."

The participants have identified several critical factors that may affect the Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state. A recurring theme is the importance of political stability and leadership. Dercon (2021) noted that the success of Asian Tigers can be attributed to their unwavering commitment to political stability and effective governance. In contrast to South Africa, where frequent political tensions and conflicts arise—often due to factionalism within the ruling party and dissatisfaction among the population—governance and policy continuity are disrupted (Chivanga, 2023). Participant A emphasized that the success of the Asian Tigers was rooted in consistent leadership with clear, long-term visions for development. In contrast, South Africa's frequent political changes and fragmented leadership pose a challenge to sustaining focus on economic growth in Thulamela Local Municipality. Participant J added that achieving the criteria of a developmental state would require broad political consensus and social cohesion, highlighting the risks of political infighting and the necessity for various stakeholders—government, businesses, and communities—to work together.

Economic inequality is another major concern. Participants B and G stressed that South Africa's high levels of unemployment, poverty, and inequality could hinder development efforts. South Africa confronts significant challenges related to economic inequality and poverty, largely due to the historical context of apartheid and its lingering socio-economic disparities (Burger, 2014: 5). Moji et al. (2022) observed that although progress has been made since the end of apartheid in 1994, wealth remains concentrated among a small segment of the population, primarily white South Africans. In contrast, many black South Africans continue to face high unemployment rates, limited access to quality education, and inadequate healthcare. While the Asian Tigers reduced inequality early through land reforms and wealth redistribution, South Africa must focus on inclusive economic growth to avoid deepening social divisions. Participant G underscored the need for job creation strategies and improvements in education and skills development, particularly in rural areas like Thulamela, where unemployment rates are high. Participant I echoed this by calling for reforms in education and vocational training to prepare the workforce for industrialization, aligning education reforms with the needs of local businesses.

Infrastructure and governance capacity are additional challenges. Participant H pointed out that South Africa faces significant infrastructure deficits, particularly in rural areas like Thulamela, where poor road networks, unreliable electricity, and inadequate water systems limit economic activities. For the Asian Tigers model to succeed, substantial investments in infrastructure are required, possibly through partnerships with private enterprises. Participant F raised concerns about the capacity of local governments, noting that corruption and mismanagement could undermine the implementation of such a model. To replicate the success of the Asian Tigers, South Africa would need competent municipal officials, strong leadership, and an accountable government structure to ensure efficient resource allocation and timely project delivery.

5.3.4. What synergies exist between the governance structure of Thulamela Local Municipality and the developmental state imperatives?

Participant A:

"Both Thulamela Local Municipality and the development state imperatives have emphasized the role of government in driving development. In Thulamela, the local government is responsible for coordinating development projects and service delivery, much like how the Asian Tigers' governments played an active role in economic planning and industrial policy. This synergy in governance focus on development shows that Thulamela can potentially leverage its local governance system to foster growth."

Participant B:

"One clear synergy is the alignment between central and local governance structures. The developmental state imperatives have centralized, well-coordinated governance systems that ensure local governments implement national policies effectively. In Thulamela, local government operates within a framework set by provincial and national authorities, which means there is room for policy alignment and coherent strategies across government levels—essential for implementing developmental models."

Participant C:

"In both Thulamela and the imperatives of a developmental state," local governments have been seen as the engines of service delivery and community involvement. In Thulamela, governance is closely tied to community needs, similar to how the Asian Tigers ensured that local government responded quickly to local economic challenges. This community-centric

governance creates a synergy where local engagement can drive development efforts in both contexts."

Participant D:

"An important synergy is in the strategic planning mechanisms. The Asian Tigers used clear, long-term development plans, often with five-year plans that directed economic focus. Thulamela Local Municipality, as part of South Africa's governance framework, also relies on Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) to map out local development initiatives. Both governance models emphasize planning as a tool for sustainable development, showing that Thulamela can adopt a more focused, long-term approach, similar to the Asian Tigers."

Participant E:

"Another synergy lies in the emphasis on human capital development. The developmental state imperatives invest significantly in education and skills training. Thulamela's governance structure also prioritizes local education initiatives and skills programs, though on a smaller scale. If Thulamela can further develop this synergy by enhancing its focus on human capital, the local government could create a more skilled workforce, aligning with the Asian Tigers' model of economic growth through education."

Participant F:

"One synergy is that both Thulamela Municipality and the imperatives of a developmental state emphasize a centralized approach to governance. Developmental states are characterized by strong, coordinated governments that direct economic and social policies strategically. Similarly, Thulamela, as part of the South African governance system, operates under a local government structure overseen by municipal councillors and officials, providing a framework for alignment with national development objectives. This centralized governance can facilitate long-term planning and ensure that economic policies are synchronized with broader developmental goals. Thulamela, like a developmental state, has the potential to guide local development through structured, top-down directives. However, enhancing internal coordination would be necessary to achieve the effectiveness that defines successful developmental states."

Participant G:

"Another similarity is the role of public-private collaboration. In the imperatives of the developmental state, the government works closely with private businesses to drive economic

growth. Similarly, Thulamela Municipality is committed to fostering local economic development through collaborations with local businesses and investors. There is a synergy in the sense that the municipality encourages entrepreneurship and supports local business initiatives, which is a model that worked well for the Asian Tigers. However, more structured and formal partnerships, with clear incentives for the private sector, could help strengthen this synergy."

Participant H:

"Thulamela's development planning structure shares similarities with the planning frameworks used in the imperatives of a developmental state. Both emphasize strategic, long-term planning, with clear goals for infrastructure, social services, and economic development. Thulamela's IDP (Integrated Development Plan) can be likened to the economic development strategies of the Asian Tigers, which involved long-term planning and monitoring to track progress. The difference is in execution. While Thulamela's plans may exist on paper, translating them into large-scale outcomes requires improved governance capacity, much like the Asian Tigers' efficient bureaucracies. Strengthening our municipal planning office and ensuring proper monitoring and evaluation systems will help create synergies between the two models."

Participant I:

"Education and workforce development are areas where there is synergy between Thulamela's goals and the developmental state imperatives. Both models understand that education and human capital are central to long-term development. Thulamela's education system, despite challenges, is moving towards better alignment with employment needs, especially through initiatives such as skills development programs. The developmental states such as Asian Tigers focused heavily on improving education to create a skilled workforce, which contributed to their industrial success. Thulamela, while still facing challenges like overcrowded schools and limited resources, could benefit from more focused partnerships between education institutions and the municipality to address these gaps, just as the Asian Tigers did."

Participant J:

"Social cohesion is another area where Thulamela and the developmental state imperatives align. The governance of developmental states is characterized by strong social contracts between the government and the people. They prioritize inclusive development, which

promotes national unity and stability. Thulamela also seeks to promote social cohesion by improving community engagement and ensuring that development initiatives benefit all parts of the municipality, especially marginalized communities. However, we must further develop our local systems for inclusivity and community participation to mirror the cohesive approach seen in the Asian Tigers, ensuring that all residents feel the benefits of growth."

The participants' responses highlight several synergies between the developmental state imperatives and Thulamela Local Municipality, showing how governance, economic strategies, and social cohesion can serve as driving forces for growth. Participant A justifies the similarity in governance by noting that both Thulamela and the developmental state imperatives place a strong emphasis on the role of government in driving development. In the developmental States, the government plays an active role in economic planning, much like how Thulamela's local government is responsible for coordinating development projects and service delivery. This synergy suggests that Thulamela could leverage its governance system to drive growth, similar to how the Asian Tigers did.

Participant B also observes a synergy in governance, pointing out that both models benefit from well-coordinated structures between central and local governments. Weiss and Thurbon (2020) assert that the developmental state imperatives have centralized governance systems that effectively implement national policies at the local level. Similarly, Thulamela operates within a national framework, allowing for policy alignment across government levels. This alignment can help ensure that developmental goals are pursued coherently, offering a strong foundation for a developmental model like that of the Asian Tigers.

Additionally, both Participant D and Participant H highlight the importance of long-term planning in both contexts. The developmental state imperatives are driven by clear, long-term development plans, such as their five-year plans. Thulamela similarly uses Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) to map out local development initiatives. While the planning structures are aligned, Participant H stresses that the key difference lies in execution—Thulamela needs to strengthen its capacity to deliver on these plans, mirroring the efficiency of the Asian Tigers' bureaucracies. By improving governance capacity and ensuring proper monitoring and evaluation systems, Thulamela could further strengthen this synergy.

Several participants recognize the importance of human capital development as another key synergy between Thulamela and the developmental state imperatives. Participant E draws a connection between the emphasis both models place on education and skills training. According to Wade (2018), the Asian Tigers invested heavily in human capital, which played a crucial role in their economic growth. Thulamela also prioritizes local education initiatives

and skills programs, although on a smaller scale. This similarity suggests that further investment in education and human capital could help Thulamela develop a more skilled workforce, aligning with the Asian Tigers' model of economic growth through education. Participant I reinforce this point, noting that education and workforce development are central to both models. Thulamela's education system, despite its challenges, is moving toward aligning better with employment needs, similar to the Asian Tigers' approach.

Another key synergy identified by Participant G is the role of public-private collaboration. In the developmental state imperatives, the government work closely with private businesses to drive economic growth, fostering a business-friendly environment. Similarly, Thulamela is committed to fostering local economic development through collaborations with local businesses and investors. However, Participant G suggests that Thulamela could benefit from more structured partnerships, with clear incentives for the private sector to mirror the successful public-private collaborations of the Asian Tigers.

Lastly, Participant J notes that social cohesion is a crucial area where both models align. The developmental state imperatives prioritize inclusive development, fostering national unity and stability. Thulamela, too, seeks to promote social cohesion by improving community engagement and ensuring that development initiatives benefit all parts of the municipality, particularly marginalized communities. However, to fully realize this synergy, Thulamela would need to further develop its systems for inclusivity and community participation, ensuring that all residents feel the benefits of growth.

In summary, the participants' responses show that there are multiple areas of synergy between Thulamela's governance system and the developmental state imperatives. These include the role of government, strategic planning, human capital development, public-private collaboration, and social cohesion. By building on these similarities and addressing the areas where improvement is needed, Thulamela could adopt a tailored version of the Asian Tigers' model to foster local development and economic growth.

5.3.5. What are the propose recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government?

Participant A:

"My first recommendation would be to improve infrastructure development. Thulamela Local Municipality needs to focus on upgrading its roads, water supply, and electricity networks."

Reliable infrastructure is a cornerstone of any developmental state, and without it, local businesses and industries cannot thrive. Prioritizing public works projects will not only create jobs but also attract investment, which is essential for long-term growth."

Participant B:

"I would suggest implementing a local economic development (LED) strategy that focuses on specific sectors with high potential, like agriculture, tourism, and small-scale manufacturing. Thulamela should target sectors where it has a comparative advantage and support local businesses through incentives, access to finance, and skill development. Creating public-private partnerships can also help unlock new opportunities and boost local economic activity."

Participant C:

"My recommendation is to invest heavily in education and skills development. Thulamela can enhance its developmental strategy by aligning local education programs with the skills needed in high-growth sectors. This includes vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and digital literacy initiatives. By building a skilled workforce, Thulamela can create a foundation for innovation and sustainable economic growth, much like the Asian Tigers did."

Participant D:

"I would propose integrating environmental sustainability into all development strategies. Thulamela's development must be aligned with protecting biodiversity and promoting green energy. The municipality should invest in renewable energy projects, promote eco-tourism, and ensure that development projects comply with environmental regulations. This approach will not only ensure long-term sustainability but also attract environmentally conscious investors."

Participant E:

"To enhance its developmental strategy, Thulamela Local Municipality should focus on institutional capacity building. Strengthening local governance by improving transparency, accountability, and efficiency in service delivery is crucial. The municipality should invest in training public officials, streamlining administrative processes, and leveraging digital tools for better governance. This will ensure that development plans are implemented effectively and that the local government can respond proactively to emerging challenges".

Participant F:

"One of the core recommendations is to foster more formal and strategic partnerships between the municipality and local businesses, as well as external investors. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are crucial for driving economic growth and creating jobs in areas like tourism, agriculture, and manufacturing. Thulamela should introduce incentives for private companies to invest in local industries, and a dedicated office could be set up to streamline this collaboration. This would also improve the municipality's economic diversification, ensuring sustainable growth. Furthermore, infrastructure development should be prioritized, particularly in transportation, energy, and communication networks. Upgrading roads, improving the electricity supply, and ensuring reliable internet access is key to fostering a favorable business environment. Municipal investment in infrastructure can catalyze economic activities and improve service delivery."

Participant G:

"Thulamela needs to align its skills development programs with the demands of the local economy. We must invest more in vocational training centers and partnerships with businesses to ensure that young people in the community are ready for the jobs created by new industries. Education reform should emphasize not only academic success but also practical and technical skills needed in sectors like construction, IT, and agriculture. Businesses can also be incentivized to offer internships and apprenticeships to students. In addition, Thulamela should focus on nurturing SMEs, which form the backbone of the local economy. The municipality can offer support through low-interest loans, business mentorship programs, and capacity-building initiatives. This will increase local entrepreneurship, create jobs, and keep the economic benefits within the community."

Participant H:

"To achieve a developmental state, Thulamela's governance structure must be strengthened. We need to improve the effectiveness of our public administration through targeted training programs for officials and better monitoring systems. Ensuring that resources are used efficiently and that development projects are properly managed is crucial. More transparency and accountability can be achieved by creating a dedicated office for monitoring and evaluation, which will track the progress of development projects and ensure that they meet the needs of the community. One of the key aspects of a developmental government is its inclusiveness. Thulamela must enhance its citizen participation in planning and decision-making processes. The community should be actively involved in shaping the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and other development strategies. This would ensure that the strategies reflect the actual needs of the people, improving the quality of life for all residents."

Participant I:

"Education and industry should be more closely aligned. We need a development strategy that incorporates both formal education and workplace-based learning. Creating more partnerships between local schools, technical colleges, and businesses can help students gain practical, real-world experience. This approach will bridge the gap between the classroom and the job market, ensuring that our youth are better prepared for the demands of the economy. Sustainability should be integrated into all developmental strategies. Thulamela needs to focus on promoting green energy, sustainable farming, and eco-tourism. The municipality could support green businesses and encourage local entrepreneurs to explore sustainable business models, which would not only contribute to the economy but also address environmental concerns. A focus on sustainable development will ensure that we can provide for future generations while also creating employment."

Participant J:

"To create a truly developmental local government, we must ensure that all segments of the population benefit from development, including marginalized and rural communities. A more inclusive approach to development is critical. We need targeted social welfare programs that address poverty, particularly in the rural areas. Providing community-driven development projects, improving healthcare services, and promoting access to education and job opportunities for vulnerable groups are key to ensuring that no one is left behind. It's important to enhance civic education and empower citizens to take part in local governance. Thulamela could introduce programs aimed at educating the community about local government functions and how they can actively participate in shaping the municipality's future. Empowered citizens are more likely to hold the municipality accountable and contribute to the success of development initiatives."

The participants collectively emphasize key strategies for advancing Thulamela Local Municipality's development, drawing on infrastructure, local economic development, and education as crucial pillars. Participant A highlights the necessity of upgrading essential infrastructure, such as roads, water, and electricity networks, as the foundation for economic growth, which Participant F also supports, adding that improved transportation, energy, and communication networks are crucial for creating a favorable business environment. Infrastructure development is seen as a catalyst for local businesses, job creation, and investment, which are all essential for long-term growth. Infrastructure development has been a key factor in the impressive economic success of the Asian Tigers, as highlighted by Sighn and Ovadia (2018). According to Wade (2018: 527), China, Singapore, South Korea, and

Taiwan have made substantial investments in creating high-quality infrastructure. This investment has been instrumental in their rapid industrialization, enhanced productivity, and integration into the global economy. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are also recommended by Participants B and F, who see these collaborations as vital for unlocking economic opportunities in agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing.

Education and human capital development emerge as another central theme, with Participants C, G, and I stressing the importance of aligning local education programs with the needs of the economy. Vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and digital literacy initiatives are proposed to build a skilled workforce, similar to the Asian Tigers' model of economic growth through education. The participants agree that education must not only focus on academic success but also emphasize practical and technical skills needed in high-growth sectors. These recommendations advocate for more partnerships between schools, technical colleges, and businesses to provide students with real-world experience and prepare them for employment opportunities in new and growing industries within the municipality.

Lastly, governance, sustainability, and inclusivity are key elements that participants believe should underpin Thulamela's developmental strategy. Participants E, H, and J recommend strengthening institutional capacity by improving transparency, accountability, and service delivery efficiency. Governance structures must be inclusive, allowing for citizen participation in shaping development plans and integrating monitoring systems to track project progress. In addition, Participants D and I advocate for environmental sustainability through investments in renewable energy and eco-tourism, aligning development efforts with protecting natural resources. Ensuring that marginalized community's benefit from development initiatives is also highlighted, with a focus on community-driven projects and social welfare programs to reduce poverty and promote equitable growth across the municipality.

5.4. SUMMATION OF THE DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS

In summation, the study found that the key principles of a developmental state include industrial growth through subsidies, trade protection, and strategic investments, ensuring support for key sectors. The study revealed that education and workforce training were crucial factors for the success of the Asian Tigers. The study discovered the importance of human capital development in pursuing the criteria of a developmental state. Regarding factors that need to be considered to determine the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers model developmental state in Thulamela, the study discovered that centralized leadership was a crucial driver of the Asian Tigers' success. Therefore, achieving political stability and aligning

both local and national governments around a shared development vision is essential for Thulamela.

It was found that the Asian Tigers' model must be tailored to the unique circumstances of South Africa, particularly Thulamela. The study also revealed that education and skills development were the cornerstone of the Asian Tigers' success. Therefore, South Africa or Thulamela must follow the same routine. The study also revealed that the development must benefit all the members of the society. It was found that South Africa's frequent political changes and fragmented leadership pose a challenge to sustaining focus on economic growth. The study revealed that South Africa's high levels of unemployment, poverty, and inequality could hinder development efforts. The study revealed that there is a need for South Africa to come up with job creation strategies and improvements in education skills and development, particularly in rural areas like Thulamela. The study found the necessity of reforms in education and vocational training to bridge the gap between the education offered and the skills required by recruiters and modern industries. The study revealed that infrastructure and governance capacity are also a challenge in Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state. Furthermore, the study revealed concerns about the capacity of local governments, noting that corruption and mismanagement could undermine the implementation of such a developmental state model.

The study found that both developmental state imperatives and Thulamela place a strong emphasis on the role of government in driving development. The study further revealed that both models benefit from well-coordinated structures between central and local governments. It was also revealed that both models draw a similarity in terms of long-term planning. While developmental state imperatives' success is driven by clear, long-term, development plans, such as their five-year plans, Thulamela uses IDP to map out local development initiatives. The study also revealed that both Asian Tigers and Thulamela have invested in human capital because they both prioritize education and skills development though Thulamela does it in a smaller scale. It was found that the role of public-private collaboration is another key synergy between the two models.

5.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presents the data collected through a combination of questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire is divided into two sub-sections. The first sub-section provides the biographical details of the respondents, while the second sub-section includes data derived from the questionnaire items distributed to, and collected from, the respondents by the researcher. The researcher used graphical tables, frequencies, and percentages to effectively present the collected data. Each table is followed by a brief discussion of the

findings. Additionally, this chapter includes data gathered through interviews conducted by the researcher with participants. This data is presented in narrative form. A total of ten participants were interviewed using open-ended questions. The following chapter will discuss the findings and offer recommendations for implementing the Asian Tigers Model as a strategy to achieve a developmental state in South Africa.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the analysis and interpretation of data collected through questionnaires and interviews. Its main purpose was to analyse and interpret this data, focusing on the responses of the sampled population. This approach aimed to provide a better understanding of the research findings related to the Asian Tigers model as a strategy for achieving a developmental state in South Africa, specifically in the Thulamela Local Municipality in Limpopo Province. In this chapter, the researcher offers a synthesized discussion of the findings and provides recommendations regarding the Asian Tigers model as a strategy for realizing a developmental state in the Thulamela Local Municipality. Additionally, there are suggestions for future research on related topics. The conclusion of the study is also included.

6.2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study focused on the Asian Tigers model as a strategy to achieve a developmental state in South Africa. The study was conducted in the Thulamela Local Municipality, which is in the Limpopo province. The study was conducted to answer the research questions that arose from the key principles employed by the Asian Tigers (such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, & China) in their successful transition to a developmental state, the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality, factors that may affect the implementation of an Asian Tigers Model-inspired developmental state in South Africa, the synergy between the governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and that of the Asian Tigers Model, recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government. The researcher reviewed literature which is relevant to the Asian Tigers model as a strategy to achieve a developmental state in South Africa. The study applied mixed methods to acquire the data of this study, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study aimed to evaluate the Asian Tigers model as a strategy for achieving a developmental state in South Africa and to recommend mechanisms tailored to South Africa's circumstances to meet the criteria of a developmental state. The researcher used structured questionnaires and interview schedule to collect data from the respondents.

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyze the key principles employed by the Asian Tigers (such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, & China) in their successful transition to a developmental state.
- To assess the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality.
- To evaluate factors that may affect the implementation of an Asian Tigers Model-inspired developmental state in South Africa.
- To examine the synergy between the governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and that of the Asian Tigers Model.
- To propose recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government.

The study also had some critical research questions which were as follows:

- What are the key principles employed by the Asian Tigers (such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, & China) in their successful transition to a developmental state?
- What factors need to be considered to determine the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state in Thulamela Local Municipality within South Africa's context?
- What are the factors that may affect the implementation of an Asian Tigers Model-inspired developmental state in South Africa?
- What synergies exist between the governance structure of Thulamela Local Municipality and the governance model of the Asian Tigers?
- What are the propose recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government?

6.3. THE MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings arose from the specific objectives of the study. The following specific objectives benchmarked the realisation of the aim of the study, and they sought to comprehend; to analyze the key principles employed by the Asian Tigers (such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, & China) in their successful transition to a developmental state; to assess the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality; to evaluate factors that may affect the implementation of an Asian Tigers Model-inspired developmental state in South Africa; to examine the synergy between the governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and that of the Asian Tigers Model; and to propose recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government.

6.3.1. The major findings on the key principles towards a developmental state

The findings reveal a significant level of dissatisfaction (69%) with the Thulamela Municipality's policies regarding economic growth, indicating a need for policy adjustments to better align with community economic goals. Only a minority (23%) perceive value in the current approach. There is a strong consensus (84%) among respondents on the importance of investing in education and human capital for Thulamela's economic success, with little disagreement or neutrality. This underscores broad community support for prioritizing these areas in economic strategies. Additionally, the findings show substantial support (79%) for export-oriented strategies as crucial to economic development and global integration, with minimal opposition. This suggests a widely held belief that exports are key to economic success, although a small minority acknowledges the potential of other factors.

There is also strong support (83%) for good governance and anti-corruption as essential elements of economic transformation, highlighting a public demand for transparency and accountability. This consensus indicates that the Thulamela Municipality should prioritize these aspects to foster sustainable development and meet community expectations. Lastly, the findings highlight a strong consensus (86%) in favour of collaboration between the state and the private sector as vital for technological and industrial growth, reflecting the success of the Asian Tigers. The minimal disagreement suggests some openness to alternative influences, yet there remains a dominant belief in the critical role of this partnership.

The interview findings offer valuable insights into how the Thulamela Municipality can adopt the developmental state model exemplified by the Asian Tigers to drive economic growth and development. A significant emphasis emerged on the importance of state intervention and export-oriented industrialization as critical strategies for achieving success. Participants highlighted the role of proactive government engagement in guiding industrial growth through policies such as subsidies, trade protection, and strategic investments. This hands-on approach not only nurtures key industries but also creates a competitive environment that facilitates sustainable economic development. By implementing similar strategies, Thulamela could actively support sectors like agriculture, eco-tourism, and manufacturing, thereby positioning itself for long-term economic resilience and growth.

In discussing human capital development, participants B and I underscored the crucial role of education and workforce training in the success of the Asian Tigers. They pointed out that these nations excelled in high-tech industries largely due to their emphasis on developing a highly skilled workforce. For Thulamela, investing in education and vocational training

programs aligned with emerging industries—such as information technology and renewable energy—was identified as a vital strategy. By establishing partnerships with local schools, universities, and tech companies, Thulamela can create training opportunities that equip the youth with relevant skills. This not only prepares the workforce for future job markets but also fosters an environment of innovation that can drive local economic development.

The discussion also highlighted the significance of societal values and social stability in the context of economic growth. Participants noted that the rapid development experienced by the Asian Tigers was heavily influenced by a strong work ethic, discipline, and social cohesion, often rooted in cultural values like Confucianism. To replicate this success, it is essential for Thulamela to cultivate similar values through community engagement and social development initiatives. By improving access to healthcare, housing, and education, the local government can enhance social stability and ensure that economic growth benefits all members of the community. This interconnected approach underscores the idea that economic and social development are not separate endeavours but should be pursued together to create a more inclusive and prosperous society.

Furthermore, the findings advocate for a strategic focus on partnerships between the government and the private sector to foster innovation and industrial diversification. A notable percentage of respondents expressed strong support for such collaborations, recognizing the potential benefits of leveraging private sector expertise to enhance economic development. As articulated by Vilakazi and Moore (2023), effective collaborations can create an environment conducive to sustainable development and good corporate citizenship. By fostering synergies between government initiatives and private sector capabilities, Thulamela can enhance its capacity for innovation, improve service delivery, and promote economic diversification. This comprehensive approach can ultimately contribute to the overall well-being of the community, demonstrating a strong alignment with the lessons learned from the Asian Tigers' model of development.

6.3.2. The major findings on the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality

The findings reveal a significant divide in opinion on the feasibility of implementing Asian Tigers-style industrial policies in Thulamela. Specifically, 37% of respondents disagreed with the idea, while only 24% expressed agreement. This points to challenges related to local economic and infrastructural contexts, indicating a need for further investigation into the

barriers to policy adaptation. There is overwhelming support (88%) for investing in education and human capital development as essential for economic growth in Thulamela, with no neutral responses recorded. This strong consensus aligns with scholarly perspectives that underscore the critical role of education in advancing South Africa toward a developmental state, suggesting that policymakers should prioritize these investments. Support for adopting an export-oriented economic strategy in Thulamela is also high, with 82% of respondents in favour. This indicates a belief in the potential of such a strategy to stimulate local growth and development. However, 15% expressed dissent, reflecting concerns about the feasibility of implementation. This suggests that while the idea is popular, practical challenges must be addressed to ensure success.

Moreover, an overwhelming majority (91%) of respondents agree on the necessity of strong governance and anti-corruption measures for adopting the Asian Tigers Model in Thulamela. This consensus highlights the belief that governance reform is essential for achieving sustainable development, echoing challenges identified in the literature regarding South Africa's current governance issues. Finally, there is a strong consensus (92%) among respondents about the importance of fostering collaborative relationships between the government and the private sector to drive technological advancements and industrial diversification in Thulamela. The lack of neutral responses highlights a strong belief in the potential benefits of such partnerships; however, a small minority (8%) expresses doubt regarding their practicality or the government's capability to implement them effectively.

Based on the data collected from interviews, the participants demonstrated a strong interest in adapting the Asian Tigers' development model to the context of Thulamela. They emphasized several critical factors necessary for successful implementation. A prominent theme in the responses was the importance of governance. Participant A highlighted that strong, centralized leadership is a key driver of success in the Asian Tigers. For Thulamela, achieving political stability and fostering alignment between local and national governments around a shared vision for development are seen as essential. Without such alignment, implementing long-term policies that promote sustainable economic growth would be challenging. This governance structure is crucial for establishing a clear developmental path and ensuring that the municipality can effectively pursue strategic initiatives.

Participants stressed the need to tailor the Asian Tigers' model to Thulamela's unique economic landscape, which is primarily characterized by agriculture and services rather than manufacturing and exports. They argued that identifying high-growth sectors relevant to the local context—such as agribusiness, eco-tourism, and renewable energy—is vital for driving economic development. Participant C emphasized the importance of infrastructure

development, noting that without significant improvements in roads, utilities, and internet connectivity, the potential for business growth and investment remains severely limited. Therefore, enhancing infrastructure is seen as a non-negotiable prerequisite for creating an enabling environment where key sectors can thrive and compete both locally and internationally.

The development of human capital also emerged as a major theme in the discussions. Participants highlighted that prioritizing education, and skills development is essential to prepare Thulamela's youth for employment in modern industries. This requires not only increased investment in educational institutions but also a focus on aligning training programs with the needs of key economic sectors. Addressing educational disparities to ensure all community members have access to quality training is crucial for fostering a skilled workforce capable of supporting the municipality's development goals. Finally, the findings emphasized the significance of social cohesion, inclusivity, and the need for development to benefit all members of society. Participants pointed out that to prevent deepening inequality, economic growth initiatives must reach rural and marginalized communities. They argued that the success of the developmental model will depend on fostering public-private partnerships, ensuring community involvement, and securing political buy-in from all stakeholders. This inclusive approach is vital for creating equitable development outcomes and ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are distributed fairly across Thulamela, ultimately leading to a more cohesive and prosperous society.

6.3.3. The major findings on the factors that may affect Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state.

The findings indicate that 64% of respondents do not consider access to funding a primary barrier to achieving a developmental state in South Africa. This suggests that other structural challenges may be more pressing. Conversely, 34% believe that access to funding is a significant impediment, highlighting a minority concern that capital constraints still impact developmental progress. A strong consensus is evident, with 71% of respondents identifying corruption as a major barrier to achieving a developmental state in South Africa. This particularly affects resource allocation. This perception aligns with existing literature that cites corruption as a disruptor of essential services, emphasizing its critical role in developmental challenges. Additionally, 52% of respondents express doubts about the South African education system's ability to produce a workforce comparable to that of the Asian Tigers, indicating widespread skepticism. Only 31% express confidence, suggesting that significant improvements are necessary to meet global standards.

Furthermore, 60% of respondents view social inequality as a significant barrier to achieving a developmental state in South Africa, reflecting concerns raised in the literature. However, a notable minority (31%) disagrees, indicating differing opinions on whether inequality is the most pressing obstacle. The data shows strong support for institutional reforms, with 78% of respondents considering these reforms essential for South Africa's developmental progress. This majority suggests a belief that structural changes are crucial, while a small minority questions the necessity of reform.

The data collected through interview schedules indicates that the participants in the study identified several critical factors that could significantly impact Thulamela Local Municipality's ability to contribute to a developmental state. A recurring theme among the responses is the paramount importance of political stability and effective leadership. One of the participants noted that the success of the Asian Tigers was largely due to their consistent leadership and clear long-term visions for development. In contrast, the frequent political changes and fragmented leadership observed in South Africa present substantial challenges for sustaining economic growth initiatives within Thulamela. One of the participants further emphasized that achieving the criteria of a developmental state necessitates broad political consensus and social cohesion. This underscores the risks posed by political infighting and highlights the urgent need for collaboration among various stakeholders, including government, businesses, and local communities, to create a unified approach to development.

Economic inequality emerged as another significant concern in the discussions. Participants highlighted that South Africa's high levels of unemployment, poverty, and inequality could severely hinder development efforts in Thulamela. They drew parallels with the Asian Tigers, which successfully reduced inequality through land reforms and wealth redistribution early in their development journey. The participants argued that South Africa must focus on promoting inclusive economic growth to prevent further social divisions. One of the participants emphasized the urgent need for job creation strategies and improvements in education and skills development, particularly in rural areas like Thulamela, where unemployment rates remain high. One of the participants echoed this sentiment, advocating for reforms in education and vocational training to better prepare the local workforce for industrialization. Aligning educational initiatives with local business needs is crucial to ensuring that the population can effectively contribute to and benefit from economic development.

Infrastructure deficits and governance capacity were also identified as significant challenges facing Thulamela. Some participants pointed out that the municipality struggles with considerable infrastructure issues, particularly in rural areas where poor road networks, unreliable electricity supply, and inadequate water systems restrict economic activities. To

successfully replicate the model of the Asian Tigers, the study found that substantial investments in infrastructure will be essential. These investments may need to come from partnerships with private enterprises, as relying solely on public funding may not be sufficient. Furthermore, Participant F raised concerns about the governance capacity of local authorities, cautioning that issues of corruption and mismanagement could undermine the implementation of any developmental model. The participants emphasized that for South Africa to mirror the success of the Asian Tigers, there must be competent municipal officials, strong leadership, and an accountable government structure to ensure effective resource allocation and timely project delivery.

In summary, the interviews reveal a complex interplay of factors that will influence Thulamela's journey toward becoming a developmental state. The need for stable and visionary leadership, strategies to combat economic inequality, significant infrastructure investments, and enhanced governance capacity were all highlighted as vital components for success. The participants' insights indicate that without addressing these critical challenges, Thulamela may struggle to realize its developmental potential, thereby limiting its contributions to the broader goals of economic growth and social equity within South Africa. Overall, the findings underscore the necessity for a cohesive and strategic approach that involves collaboration among all stakeholders to facilitate sustainable development in the municipality.

6.3.4. The major findings on the synergy between governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and Developmental state imperatives

The findings indicate that 54% of respondents believe that the governance of Thulamela Local Municipality does not align with the centralized approach typical of a developmental state, suggesting a perceived need for structural reforms. A significant portion of respondents (26%) expressed neutrality, indicating possible uncertainty regarding local governance practices, while only 20% see a connection with the model of the Asian Tigers. Furthermore, 68% of respondents feel that the governance of Thulamela Local Municipality fails to effectively support industrial policy and strategic economic planning associated with a developmental state, highlighting considerable dissatisfaction. On the other hand, 28% of respondents show some level of support for the current governance, suggesting isolated positive perceptions within a broader call for reforms to align with the successful strategies seen in the Asian Tigers. The findings also reveal a substantial lack of confidence in Thulamela Local Municipality's anti-corruption measures, with 77% of respondents expressing dissatisfaction. This indicates that corruption is viewed as a major barrier to local development. In contrast, only 19% believe the municipality's efforts align with successful models like those of the Asian Tigers, underscoring the need for significant reforms in transparency and accountability.

Moreover, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the bureaucratic processes of Thulamela Local Municipality, with 75% of respondents believing these processes are not efficient enough for rapid economic decision-making. This reflects broader concerns about sluggish governance. Conversely, 17% of respondents perceive some areas of efficiency, indicating a minority view of potential progress. However, overall, substantial reforms are necessary to enhance bureaucratic effectiveness and align it with the successful models of the Asian Tigers. Finally, the data reveals mixed perceptions of Thulamela Local Municipality's ability to promote public-private sector collaboration. While 34% of respondents expressed scepticism about its effectiveness, a combined 42% saw some positive efforts. This suggests a gap between the municipality's intentions and public awareness, indicating a need for improved communication and more impactful collaborative initiatives to enhance economic synergy, similar to the Asian Tigers model.

The data collected from interviews indicates that there are significant synergies between the governance framework of Thulamela Local Municipality and the principles of a developmental state. A key area of similarity is the government's role in driving development. One of the participants noted that both Thulamela and developmental state models emphasize the importance of an active government in economic planning. Just as developmental states coordinate extensive development projects through their national governments, Thulamela's local government has similar responsibilities, focusing on project coordination and service delivery. This parallel suggests that Thulamela could effectively utilize its governance structure to stimulate economic growth, reflecting the proactive approaches seen in the Asian Tigers.

The responses emphasize the synergies in governance between Thulamela and the principles of developmental states. Some participants highlighted the advantages of strong coordination between central and local governments in both models. The centralized governance of developmental states aids in effectively implementing national policies at local levels. Thulamela operates under a national framework that supports policy alignment across different government tiers, enabling a coherent pursuit of developmental goals. This alignment creates a solid foundation for adopting a developmental model similar to that of the Asian Tigers, ensuring collaborative efforts between both levels of government toward shared objectives.

Participants pointed out the critical importance of long-term planning in both contexts. The Asian Tigers exemplify this through well-defined long-term development plans, such as five-year plans, which steer economic initiatives. Thulamela uses Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) to outline its local development efforts, reflecting this alignment. However, Participant H cautioned that the key difference lies in the execution of these plans. Thulamela needs to

improve its capacity to achieve its development objectives, aiming for the efficiency seen in the bureaucracies of the Asian Tigers. By enhancing governance capacity and establishing robust monitoring and evaluation systems, Thulamela could strengthen this synergy and more effectively realize its development goals.

Human capital development is another crucial area of synergy between Thulamela and the imperatives of developmental states. One of the participants noted that both models prioritize education and skills training as cornerstones of economic growth. The Asian Tigers made substantial investments in human capital, which significantly contributed to their success. Similarly, Thulamela is beginning to prioritize local education and skills initiatives, although on a smaller scale. This alignment suggests that Thulamela could enhance its economic growth by increasing investment in education and workforce development, mirroring the Asian Tigers' strategy of fostering a skilled labour force. Some participants emphasized that aligning Thulamela's education system with employment needs is vital for improving workforce readiness, echoing successful approaches used by the Asian Tigers.

Public-private collaboration is another important synergy identified by one of the participants. Strong partnerships between the government and the private sector are essential for driving economic growth and creating a conducive business environment in developmental states. Thulamela is also committed to promoting local economic development through partnerships with businesses and investors. However, participants suggested that Thulamela could be more effective by forming more structured partnerships with clearly defined incentives for the private sector. This would enable the municipality to emulate the successful public-private collaborations typical of the Asian Tigers.

Lastly, responses highlighted the significance of social cohesion as a mutual focus for both models. Some participants emphasized that developmental state imperatives prioritize inclusive development to foster national unity and stability. Thulamela similarly aims to enhance social cohesion by improving community engagement and ensuring that development initiatives benefit all areas of the municipality, especially marginalized communities. To fully leverage this synergy, Thulamela must further develop its systems for inclusivity and community participation, ensuring that all residents share in the benefits of economic growth.

In summary, the findings illustrate various areas of synergy between Thulamela's governance framework and the principles of a developmental state, including the role of government in economic planning, strategic long-term planning, human capital development, public-private collaboration, and social cohesion. By building on these similarities while addressing areas

that need improvement, Thulamela has the potential to implement a customized version of the Asian Tigers' model, effectively promoting local development and economic growth.

6.3.5. The major findings on the recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government

The data indicates strong public support for the Thulamela Local Municipality to adopt comprehensive industrial policies, with 82% of respondents advocating for targeted strategies to stimulate economic growth, similar to the successful approach of the Asian Tigers. Conversely, 17% express skepticism about the necessity or feasibility of such policies, highlighting a divide in opinion regarding the municipality's economic intervention strategies. There is also substantial support for investing in education and vocational training programs in Thulamela, with 75% of respondents recognizing their importance in improving local workforce skills and employability, following the successful strategies of the Asian Tigers. However, a notable 13% of respondents are neutral, and 12% dissent, indicating some uncertainty about the direct impact of education on economic improvement. This suggests a need for a collaborative approach to align educational initiatives with local industry demands.

Moreover, the data shows overwhelming support for developing infrastructure and improving logistics in Thulamela, with 84% of respondents acknowledging their critical role in facilitating an export-oriented economic strategy, as emphasized by Evans and Haller (2023). However, a minority of 16% disagrees, which may indicate differing priorities or skepticism about the immediate benefits of infrastructure improvements. Nonetheless, this does not diminish the strong consensus for strategic investments in this area. Additionally, there is a strong consensus among respondents, with 79% supporting the implementation of robust anti-corruption measures and enhanced transparency in governance to improve the effectiveness of the Thulamela Local Municipality. Conversely, 18% disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority view that either questions the necessity of such measures or believes that current efforts are sufficient. This underscores a critical opportunity for governance reform to build public trust and enhance service delivery. Finally, the data collected through structured questionnaires reveals strong support for government-private sector partnerships in Thulamela, with 67% of respondents believing that these collaborations can drive innovation and industrial diversification, highlighting their importance for local economic development. However, the 33% who disagree or strongly disagree express concerns about the effectiveness of previous partnerships, indicating a need for a strategic approach to ensure successful collaboration and alignment of interests.

The data collected from interviews indicate that participants in the study emphasize several key strategies for advancing the development of Thulamela Local Municipality, identifying

infrastructure, local economic development, and education as critical pillars for progress. One of the participants highlights the urgent need to upgrade essential infrastructure—specifically, roads, water supply, and electricity networks—viewing this as foundational for stimulating economic growth. One of the participants echoes this sentiment, elaborating that improved transportation, energy, and communication networks are vital for creating a favourable business environment. The participants collectively agree that infrastructure development acts as a catalyst for local businesses, fostering job creation and attracting investment, which is essential for sustained long-term growth.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) also emerge as a significant recommendation from participants, who argue that these collaborations are crucial for unlocking economic opportunities in sectors like agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing. By leveraging resources and expertise from both the public and private sectors, Thulamela can drive innovation and development, effectively enhancing its economic landscape. Another central theme from the participants' discussions is the importance of education and human capital development. Participants emphasize the necessity of aligning local education programs with the economic needs of the municipality. They advocate for implementing vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and digital literacy initiatives aimed at building a skilled workforce, akin to the strategies employed by the Asian Tigers. The participants agree that education must extend beyond traditional academic success to include practical and technical skills essential for high-growth sectors. They recommend fostering partnerships between schools, technical colleges, and local businesses to provide students with real-world experiences that prepare them for employment opportunities in emerging industries within Thulamela.

Governance, sustainability, and inclusivity are identified as key elements that should underpin Thulamela's developmental strategy. Participants call for strengthening institutional capacity through improved transparency, accountability, and efficiency in service delivery. They stress that governance structures must be inclusive, facilitating citizen participation in shaping development plans and integrating monitoring systems to assess project progress effectively. Additionally, Participants advocate for environmental sustainability by promoting investments in renewable energy and eco-tourism, aligning development efforts with the preservation of natural resources. Finally, the participants highlight the necessity for marginalized communities to benefit from development initiatives, emphasizing a focus on community-driven projects and social welfare programs designed to reduce poverty and promote equitable growth throughout the municipality. This inclusive approach aims to ensure that all residents, particularly those in disadvantaged positions, are empowered and can share in the benefits of Thulamela's development efforts.

In summary, the findings provide a comprehensive framework for Thulamela's development that integrates infrastructure improvement, education and human capital development, effective governance, and sustainability, while prioritizing inclusivity to foster equitable growth throughout the municipality. By addressing these interconnected areas, Thulamela can enhance its capacity for sustainable development and improve the overall quality of life for its residents.

6.4. SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The key points from the research questionnaire can be summarized as follows:

- The policies of Thulamela Local Municipality do not significantly contribute to rapid economic growth.
- Investment in education and human capital development is crucial for the economic success of Thulamela Local Municipality.
- Export-oriented strategies are central to the development and global integration of economies.
- Strong and effective governance, including anti-corruption measures and efficient bureaucracies, plays a vital role in the economic transformation of development.
- Collaborative relationships between the state and private sector industries are essential for technological advancements and industrial diversification, as demonstrated by the Asian Tigers.
- Respondents showed doubt about the viability of enacting government-led industrial policies akin to those utilized by the Asian Tigers in Thulamela Local Municipality.
- Investing in education and human capital development can significantly enhance the economic growth of Thulamela Local Municipality.
- Adopting an export-oriented economic strategy is a viable approach for promoting growth and development in Thulamela Local Municipality.
- Establishing strong and effective governance, including anti-corruption measures and efficient bureaucracies, is essential for successfully implementing the Asian Tigers Model in Thulamela Local Municipality.
- Fostering collaborative relationships between the government and private sector industries can drive technological advancements and industrial diversification in Thulamela Local Municipality.
- Respondents disagreed that access to funding and investment is a major barrier to developing a developmental state in South Africa.
- Corruption in South Africa presents a significant challenge for municipalities striving to become developmental states.

- The study found that the education system in South Africa is inadequate for supporting a skilled workforce.
- Social inequality in South Africa is a major barrier to establishing a developmental state.
- Institutional reforms are necessary for South Africa to attain a developmental state.
- The study revealed that the governance structures in Thulamela Local Municipality do not align with the centralized, government-led approach required for a developmental state.
- Respondents disagreed that the governance in Thulamela Local Municipality effectively supports industrial policy and strategic economic planning aimed at fostering a developmental state.
- Anti-corruption measures and accountability mechanisms in Thulamela Local Municipality are not effective.
- Respondents believed that Thulamela Local Municipality has not established efficient bureaucratic processes that facilitate rapid economic decision-making and implementation.
- Respondents disagreed that governance in Thulamela Local Municipality promotes strong collaboration between the public and private sectors, reflecting synergistic relationships.
- Thulamela Local Municipality should adopt comprehensive industrial policies that target key sectors for economic growth and development.
- Investing in education and vocational training programs is essential for improving the skills and employability of the local workforce in Thulamela.
- Developing infrastructure and improving logistics within Thulamela Local Municipality are crucial for supporting an export-oriented economic strategy.
- Implementing robust anti-corruption measures and enhancing transparency in governance will significantly improve the effective functioning of Thulamela Local Municipality.
- Encouraging partnerships between the government and private sector can drive innovation, technological advancement, and industrial diversification in Thulamela Local Municipality.

The key points from the research interview can be summarized as follows:

- The key principles of a developmental state include export-oriented industrialization, investment in education and human capital development, collaboration between public and private sectors, and government intervention.

- The factors that need to be considered to determine the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers model developmental state in Thulamela Local Municipality include strong governance, political stability, infrastructure development, human capital, social cohesion, and inclusivity.
- The study revealed that factors that may affect Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state entail, political instability, the capacity of the local government, economic inequality, and poor infrastructure.
- The synergy between the governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and Developmental state imperatives includes the role of government, strategic planning, human capital development, public-private collaboration, and social cohesion.
- The participants emphasize that advancing Thulamela Local Municipality's development hinges on upgrading infrastructure, aligning education with economic needs, fostering public-private partnerships, enhancing governance, and ensuring sustainability and inclusivity in development initiatives.

6.5. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

This section presents the recommendations of the study. These recommendations arose from the major findings on the key principles towards a developmental state; the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality; factors that may affect Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state; the synergy between governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and Developmental state imperatives; and recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government.

6.5.1. Recommendations on the key principles towards a developmental state

- The study recommends that there must be regular reviews of economic policies to ensure alignment with community needs and global trends.
- The study recommends investments in programs that enhance the skills of the local workforce and encourage lifelong learning.
- The study recommends focusing on improving infrastructure to support industrial growth and facilitate access to markets.
- The study recommends engaging community members in decision-making processes to enhance the relevance and acceptance of development strategies.

- The study also recommends recognising the interdependence of social and economic development and implementing programs that promote both simultaneously for a more inclusive and prosperous society.

6.5.2. Recommendations on the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality

- The study recommends prioritising funding for educational institutions and vocational training programs that align with local economic needs, particularly in agribusiness, eco-tourism, and renewable energy sectors.
- The study recommends developing practical action plans to address implementation challenges of export-oriented strategies, including support systems for local businesses to engage in exports and market access initiatives.
- The study recommends implementing governance reforms to enhance transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption measures, ensuring that policies are effectively executed, and public trust is restored.
- The study recommends establishing formal mechanisms for public-private partnerships that leverage private sector expertise for innovation, infrastructure development, and skill-building initiatives.
- The study recommends identifying and promoting high-growth sectors relevant to Thulamela's context, focusing on agribusiness, eco-tourism, and renewable energy as key drivers of economic development.
- The study also recommends prioritising infrastructure development projects, particularly in transportation, utilities, and internet connectivity, to create an enabling environment for local businesses.
- The study recommends investing in comprehensive training programs and partnerships with local educational institutions to ensure skills development is aligned with current and future job market demands.
- The study recommends ensuring that economic development initiatives specifically target rural and marginalized communities, incorporating community involvement and stakeholder buy-in to foster inclusive growth.
- The study recommends creating frameworks for effective collaboration between government, private sector, and community organizations, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and involved in the development process.

6.5.3. Recommendations on the factors that may affect Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state.

- The study recommends implementing robust anti-corruption measures and strengthening governance frameworks to ensure accountability and transparency in resource allocation. This includes establishing independent oversight bodies to monitor government spending and project implementation.
- The study recommends fostering political stability by encouraging collaboration among political parties, civil society, and local communities. Develop leadership training programs for municipal officials to enhance their capacity for long-term planning and visioning.
- The study recommends partnering with local businesses to create apprenticeship programs that provide practical training for youth in high-demand sectors.
- The study recommends developing inclusive economic policies that promote wealth redistribution and land reforms similar to those employed by the Asian Tigers. Implement job creation strategies focused on supporting small and medium enterprises (SMMEs) in Thulamela.
- The study recommends creating platforms for dialogue and cooperation between government, private sector, and community organizations to build a unified approach to development. Encourage stakeholder participation in decision-making processes to ensure diverse perspectives are considered.
- The study recommends establishing incentive programs for businesses that create jobs in Thulamela.
- The study recommends pursuing institutional reforms aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of local government. This includes training for municipal officials and adopting best practices from successful developmental states.
- The study recommends promoting programs that enhance social cohesion and community engagement, ensuring that all community members, particularly marginalized groups, have a voice in development initiatives. Facilitate community-led projects to empower residents and strengthen local ownership of development efforts.
- The study recommends establishing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of development strategies. Use data-driven insights to make informed adjustments to policies and programs as needed.

6.5.4. Recommendations on the synergy between governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and Developmental state imperatives

- The study recommends implementing structural reforms to align local governance with the centralized approach typical of developmental states.
- The study recommends enhancing transparency and accountability measures to build public trust and effectively combat corruption.

- The study recommends developing and enforcing robust anti-corruption policies to address the pervasive dissatisfaction regarding current measures.
- The study recommends establishing independent oversight bodies to monitor governance practices and hold officials accountable.
- The study recommends streamlining bureaucratic processes to facilitate rapid economic decision-making and improve service delivery.
- The study recommends investing in training for municipal staff to increase efficiency and responsiveness in governance.
- The study recommends fostering structured public-private partnerships with clearly defined incentives to stimulate local economic development.
- Facilitate better communication of collaboration efforts to raise awareness and encourage private sector involvement.
- The study recommends strengthening the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) to ensure they align with strategic national policies and reflect community needs.
- The study recommends establishing robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress and adjust plans as necessary.
- The study recommends increasing investments in local education and vocational training programs to develop a skilled workforce that meets local industry needs.
- The study recommends aligning educational curricula with the demands of the job market to improve workforce readiness and employability.
- The study recommends developing initiatives that promote community participation in local governance and development projects to enhance social cohesion.
- The study recommends ensuring that development benefits are distributed equitably, particularly to marginalized communities.
- The study recommends providing leadership training and capacity-building programs for municipal officials to strengthen governance capabilities.
- The study recommends fostering a culture of proactive governance that encourages innovation and long-term thinking.
- The study recommends prioritising infrastructure development to address deficits that hinder economic activity, particularly in rural areas.
- The study recommends exploring partnerships with private enterprises to leverage additional resources for infrastructure projects.
- The study recommends encouraging political consensus and collaboration among stakeholders to reduce political infighting and promote a unified approach to development.

- The study recommends creating platforms for dialogue between government, business, and local communities to build trust and facilitate cooperative efforts.

6.5.5. Recommendations on the recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government

- The study recommends developing targeted industrial strategies to stimulate economic growth, drawing inspiration from the successful approaches of the Asian Tigers.
- The study recommends engaging stakeholders to ensure these policies address local economic needs and realities.
- The study recommends implementing vocational training and entrepreneurship programs aligned with local industry demands to enhance workforce skills and employability.
- The study recommends fostering partnerships between educational institutions and local businesses to provide practical training opportunities for students.
- The study recommends prioritising upgrading essential infrastructure, including transportation, energy, and communication networks, to create a conducive business environment.
- The study recommends implementing a strategic plan for infrastructure investment that aligns with Thulamela's economic development goals.
- The study recommends implementing robust anti-corruption initiatives and enhancing transparency in governance to build public trust and improve service delivery.
- The study recommends establishing clear accountability mechanisms and involving citizens in oversight roles to ensure effective implementation of anti-corruption measures.
- The study recommends encouraging collaboration between the government and private sector to drive innovation and economic diversification, particularly in agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing.
- The study recommends creating structured partnerships with defined incentives to ensure alignment of interests and effective collaboration.
- The study recommends investing in renewable energy initiatives and eco-tourism projects that align with environmental sustainability goals.
- Integrate sustainability into all development plans to preserve natural resources while fostering economic growth.
- The study recommends strengthening governance structures to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency in service delivery.

- The study recommends developing systems for citizen participation in the planning and execution of development initiatives to ensure inclusive governance.
- The study recommends designing community-driven projects and social welfare programs aimed at reducing poverty and promoting equitable growth.
- The study recommends ensuring that marginalized community's benefit from development initiatives, fostering inclusivity in all aspects of economic planning and execution.

6.6. SOUTH AFRICA DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL: THE ADAPTIVE GROWTH FRAMEWORK (AGF)

In examining the developmental success of the Asian Tigers, it becomes evident that South Africa cannot simply replicate these strategies due to its unique socio-economic and institutional conditions. Instead, the Adaptive Growth Framework (AGF) provides a tailored approach, grounded in South African realities, aimed at achieving sustainable growth. This model emphasizes centralized governance, strategic infrastructure development, and strong public-private partnerships, all while maintaining an unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability.

6.6.1. KEY COMPONENTS OF THE ADAPTIVE GROWTH FRAMEWORK

6.6.1.1. Centralized National Vision with Local Integration

- **Objective:** To create a unified, strategic vision for national development managed by the national government, with supportive contributions from local governments.
- **Rationale:** Centralization at the national level allows for cohesive policy implementation, sufficient resource allocation, and streamlined governance. Local governments are critical in customizing and implementing initiatives within their jurisdictions, ensuring grassroots alignment with national objectives.
- **Implementation:** Establish a National Development Task Force within the national government, which coordinates with local governments. This Task Force will design, fund, and supervise major projects, ensuring that local governments contribute according to regional needs and capacities.

6.6.1.2. Infrastructure Development as a Pillar of Growth

- **Objective:** To catalyse economic productivity and quality of life through improved infrastructure in transportation, energy, digital connectivity, and housing.

- **Rationale:** Foundational infrastructure underpins all sectors of development, enabling access to markets, job creation, and connectivity. Infrastructure projects stimulate both immediate job growth and long-term economic resilience.
- **Implementation:** Government-led infrastructure initiatives, enhanced through public-private partnerships, will prioritize high-impact sectors. Financing models may include sustainable instruments like green bonds or concessional loans, ensuring economic and environmental responsibility.

6.6.1.3. Human Capital Development and Vocational Education Alignment

- **Objective:** To align workforce skills with industry requirements, enhancing employability and creating a skill base suited to evolving economic demands.
- **Rationale:** A strong focus on technical and vocational education, particularly in sectors with high employment potential, such as renewable energy and manufacturing, ensures that education investments translate directly to economic gains.
- **Implementation:** Expand vocational training programs nationwide, with structured partnerships between educational institutions and the private sector. Incentivize curriculum alignment with industry standards, emphasizing hands-on training and internships. Establish metrics for graduate employability to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.

6.6.1.4. Public-Private Partnerships and Investment Mobilization

- **Objective:** To leverage both public and private resources, expertise, and innovation in driving development.
- **Rationale:** Public-private partnerships (PPPs) provide the capital, innovation, and efficiencies necessary to accelerate development projects. Collaborations between the government and private entities enhance risk-sharing, increase accountability, and attract diverse investments.
- **Implementation:** Develop a national PPP framework, clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and risk-sharing mechanisms for partners. Offer tax incentives and streamlined regulations for private investors in priority sectors.

6.6.1.5. Environmental Sustainability as a Core Principle

- **Objective:** To ensure that growth initiatives respect and preserve natural resources, recognizing that economic development should be harmonized with environmental stewardship.
- **Rationale:** Sustainable development is critical to long-term prosperity and social welfare. Incorporating environmental awareness within developmental policies not only safeguards resources but also aligns South Africa with global climate commitments.
- **Implementation:** Integrate environmental sustainability standards into all national and local projects. Establish a 'Green Growth Council' within the government to oversee and assess the environmental impact of major projects, promoting renewable energy, waste management, and conservation efforts.

6.6.2. STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADAPTIVE GROWTH FRAMEWORK

- **Establish the National Developmental Council:** This council will be responsible for the strategic planning, resource mobilization, and monitoring of national projects. It will serve as the primary body for policy coordination and project implementation, working in partnership with local authorities to ensure that all development initiatives align with both regional needs and the national vision.
- **Launch the South African Skills and Industry Partnership Program (SASIPP):** The SASIPP will engage with industry stakeholders to design practical curricula, host skill-enhancing workshops, and foster on-the-job training opportunities. Metrics such as graduate employability and industry satisfaction will guide continuous improvements to align workforce development with market needs.
- **Green Financing Strategy for Sustainable Development:** A dedicated unit within the government will be established to coordinate green financing for eco-friendly projects. By securing international and local funding, such as green bonds and climate finance, this unit will ensure that all infrastructure development meets sustainability standards.
- **Annual Progress Reviews and Public Reporting:** Transparent reporting and regular progress assessments will facilitate accountability and adaptability. By evaluating progress against established milestones, the AGF model remains flexible and able to adjust to evolving economic and environmental conditions.

The Adaptive Growth Framework (AGF) is carefully designed to address South Africa's distinctive developmental challenges while drawing lessons from the Asian Tigers. Directly

replicating their strategies would overlook critical socio-economic, environmental, and institutional differences. Therefore, the AGF prioritizes a centralized national vision with local integration. By entrusting development authority to the national government, South Africa can ensure uniform strategic direction, resource allocation, and accountability, thus overcoming the resource and capacity limitations that local governments currently face. This centralized governance structure is key to maintaining a cohesive developmental strategy, while also empowering local authorities to apply these strategies regionally, ensuring that diverse provincial needs are met within a unified framework.

Infrastructure development under the AGF serves as a foundational pillar to stimulate broad economic growth and employment. Recognizing that inadequate infrastructure limits access to markets, healthcare, and education, the AGF proposes an ambitious infrastructure agenda that covers transportation, energy, digital connectivity, and housing. Unlike ad-hoc or isolated projects, this integrated infrastructure focus encourages a systemic impact across all sectors, laying a groundwork that facilitates growth and attracts further investments. By incorporating public-private partnerships (PPPs) into infrastructure projects, the AGF also introduces a collaborative model where public sector oversight and private sector expertise can coalesce to deliver projects efficiently. Sustainable financing models, like green bonds, will not only fund these initiatives but also adhere to South Africa's environmental goals.

In developing human capital, the AGF underscores the critical need for skills aligned with industry demands. The model's focus on vocational education acknowledges that a knowledge economy requires a workforce skilled in practical, industry-specific capabilities. By fostering partnerships between educational institutions and the private sector, the AGF ensures that vocational training is constantly aligned with market needs, thereby closing the skills gap and reducing unemployment. This practical approach to education, aimed at employability, guarantees that South Africa's workforce can respond to the demands of both established and emerging industries, which is essential for sustainable growth.

The emphasis on public-private partnerships within the AGF recognizes that effective collaboration with the private sector is crucial to achieving high-impact development. PPPs can mobilize resources, increase efficiency, and introduce innovative solutions that government entities may lack. Furthermore, structured incentives, like tax benefits and simplified regulations, will make South Africa an attractive investment environment, encouraging private entities to contribute actively to the nation's developmental goals. This collaborative approach not only distributes the risk of large projects but also brings diverse expertise into the public sector, bridging gaps in resources and capacity.

Environmental sustainability is embedded into every layer of the AGF to safeguard South Africa's natural resources and align with global climate responsibilities. Recognizing that economic growth should not come at the cost of environmental degradation, the AGF's inclusion of a Green Growth Council ensures that every project respect sustainable standard, from renewable energy initiatives to waste management systems. This council will oversee environmental impact assessments, guiding development projects to prioritize long-term ecological health. By incorporating sustainability as a core principle, the AGF positions South Africa's developmental agenda as a model of responsible, forward-thinking growth, making it resilient against environmental challenges and securing a future for generations to come.

Overall, the Adaptive Growth Framework is a robust, tailored approach that enables South Africa to pursue a developmental state model suited to its context. With its focus on centralized governance, foundational infrastructure, human capital alignment, collaborative partnerships, and environmental responsibility, the AGF offers a balanced and adaptable path toward sustainable economic growth. This model not only addresses current developmental challenges but also proactively prepares South Africa for emerging opportunities, setting a new standard for inclusive and sustainable development.

6.7. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study provides valuable insights by examining the application of the Asian Tigers model as a potential development strategy within the South African context, specifically focusing on the Thulamela Local Municipality. It identifies critical areas where South Africa's development needs differ from those of the Asian Tigers, advocating for a tailored approach that emphasizes localized adaptations rather than the direct adoption of foreign strategies. Key contributions of this research include the need for infrastructure development, targeted investments in human capital, and vocational education aligned with local industry requirements. Additionally, it highlights the importance of centralizing developmental power at the national government level to improve coordination and effectiveness. The study also emphasizes the role of public-private partnerships in driving sustainable development and promoting environmental awareness to ensure that economic progress does not compromise ecological integrity. Overall, this research enriches the discourse on developmental states by offering a nuanced, context-sensitive strategy that balances economic growth with sustainability, positioning itself as a valuable reference for policymakers and stakeholders dedicated to fostering South Africa's development

6.8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The study recommends the adoption of ethical and effective leadership to support the development of a robust developmental state within South African municipalities. Such leadership is essential for promoting developmental objectives through transparency, integrity, accountability, and inclusivity. By adhering to these principles, leaders can create an environment conducive to sustainable development, infrastructure growth, skill development, and public-private partnerships—factors that are critical for addressing South Africa's unique socio-economic challenges. The researcher suggests that similar studies should be carried out in all municipalities across South Africa to identify specific barriers that hinder the achievement of a developmental state. This would allow for the development of targeted and effective strategies. The findings from these studies could help municipalities pinpoint problem areas and implement necessary improvements. Active participation from community members and municipal officials will be crucial in providing accurate and comprehensive information, enabling future researchers to develop actionable recommendations. Moreover, future researchers must ensure the strict confidentiality of respondents' information to foster trust and encourage honest feedback. This will strengthen the quality and impact of their findings. Collectively, these efforts can contribute to a more cohesive and sustainable developmental framework for South Africa.

6.9. RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

This section presents the recommendation of the generic functions of Public Administration and such recommendation arose from the findings on the key principles towards a developmental state; the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality; factors that may affect Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state; the synergy between governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and Developmental state imperatives; and recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government.

6.9.1. Recommendation on policy and policy-making

The study recommends that Thulamela Municipality adopt stringent anti-corruption policies inspired by the Asian Tigers' governance models, emphasizing transparency and accountability. Policies should enforce strict punitive measures, including dismissal and legal action, for officials found misusing public funds or diverting resources for personal gain. This approach aims to ensure that municipal budgets are allocated exclusively towards achieving the criteria of a developmental state. Moreover, the Municipality should actively engage community members in policy formulation, promoting a participatory governance model that

reflects the interests and needs of local stakeholders. Policymakers must also remain cognizant of existing barriers to the developmental state's implementation in South Africa, formulating strategies that directly address these challenges. By centralizing developmental power and fostering public-private partnerships, Thulamela Municipality can establish a framework conducive to achieving a developmental state tailored to South Africa's unique socio-economic landscape.

6.9.2. Recommendation on organizing

The study highlights the critical role of organizing in establishing institutional frameworks that align with the developmental state imperatives. It recommends a systematic grouping and classification of functions within Thulamela Municipality, ensuring that these roles are allocated to officials based on their qualifications, experience, and expertise to facilitate the successful implementation of the developmental state imperatives. By adopting this structured approach, the municipality can mirror the organizational strategies of the Asian Tigers, which emphasize efficiency and competency. Furthermore, the researcher advocates for the establishment of clear and effective communication channels within the municipality. This will keep all functionaries informed about ongoing activities and progress toward the developmental state, fostering a collaborative environment that enhances accountability and engagement. Such measures are vital for promoting a cohesive effort toward realizing a developmental state that is responsive to the unique challenges faced by South Africa.

6.9.3. Recommendation on financing

The study underscores the necessity for Thulamela Municipality to establish a comprehensive annual financial budget dedicated to the successful implementation of the developmental state imperatives in South Africa. It is recommended that the municipality actively collaborate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to secure additional funding through donations, which can significantly bolster the financial resources available for the NDP's implementation. Inspired by the resource mobilization strategies of the Asian Tigers, the researcher emphasizes the importance of engaging municipal officials, particularly ward councillors and community development workers, in fostering a culture of accountability among community members. They should encourage residents who can afford municipal services to pay their dues, thereby generating supplementary income that can be reinvested into the developmental state initiatives. Additionally, the researcher advocates for the municipality to explore outsourcing financial resources, tapping into public-private partnerships to enhance its capacity to implement the developmental state model effectively. This multi-faceted financial strategy aims to create a sustainable funding environment that supports the realization of a developmental state tailored to the needs of Thulamela Municipality.

6.9.4. Recommendation on personnel administration

The study emphasizes the critical importance of employing qualified and skilled officials within Thulamela Municipality to ensure the effective implementation of the developmental state. It is recommended that the creation of posts clearly outline the required qualifications, ensuring that all successful candidates meet these criteria comprehensively. Reflecting the meritocratic principles observed in the governance frameworks of the Asian Tigers, the researcher advocates for promotions within the Municipality to be determined solely by merit and the demonstrated qualities of the officials. Moreover, to foster a dynamic and adaptable workforce, the Municipality should implement a policy of regularly transferring qualified candidates across different sections or divisions. This strategy will prevent stagnation and complacency, encouraging officials to continually develop their skills and maintain high-performance standards. Such practices are essential for cultivating a capable workforce that is responsive to the evolving demands of service delivery and aligned with the developmental state imperatives.

6.9.5. Recommendation on work method and procedure

The study highlights the necessity for Thulamela Municipality to establish clear and adaptive means and methods for achieving the criteria of developmental state. It is recommended that private entities be engaged to serve as strategic guides for municipal officials, offering insights and best practices on effective work methodologies that align with the developmental state imperatives. This partnership can draw upon the collaborative frameworks that have contributed to the success of the Asian Tigers, fostering innovation and efficiency in public service delivery. Furthermore, the researcher advocates for a continuous evolution of the methods and procedures used by officials in their roles. By regularly updating and diversifying these approaches, the Municipality can prevent complacency and promote a culture of learning and adaptability among its workforces. Such dynamic practices are crucial for ensuring that Thulamela Municipality remains responsive to the challenges of implementation and continues to progress toward its developmental goals.

6.9.6. Recommendation on control

The study underscores the critical responsibility of policymakers within Thulamela Municipality to ensure the effective implementation of the developmental state criteria. It is recommended that the Municipality establish robust mechanisms for measuring and correcting the performance of officials, thus facilitating the achievement of the developmental state. Drawing from the performance-driven approaches exemplified by the Asian Tigers, the researcher advocates for the development of clear standards that define the desired levels of performance. These standards should serve as benchmarks for comparing actual results

against the expected outcomes. By implementing such performance measurement frameworks, the Municipality can foster a culture of accountability and continuous improvement, ensuring that efforts are aligned with the key principles of the developmental state. This systematic approach will empower municipal officials to remain focused on delivering results that enhance the well-being of the community and contribute to the broader objectives of a developmental state.

6.10. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The complexity of the topic and the challenging nature of some of the questions posed significant difficulties for the researcher in obtaining accurate and comprehensive responses. The research, which focused on evaluating the applicability of the Asian Tigers model within the South African context specifically in the Thulamela Local Municipality, faced numerous obstacles during both the data collection and literature review phases. During fieldwork, several municipal officials delayed in submitting their questionnaires, while others were frequently unavailable in their offices, making it difficult to adhere to the planned data collection schedule. A number of officials outright declined to participate, citing overwhelming workloads and commitments to other pressing municipal duties. This reduction in participant pool may have affected the diversity and richness of perspectives that were initially anticipated.

Furthermore, the quality and clarity of several handwritten responses presented interpretation challenges. Illegible handwriting and ambiguous phrasing necessitated additional time for data cleaning and, in some instances, forced the researcher to omit certain responses to preserve the integrity and accuracy of the analysis. In addition to the logistical challenges encountered on the ground, the literature review was constrained by the limited availability of scholarly work and empirical studies directly related to the Asian Tigers model, especially within the South African or broader African developmental context. The scarcity of localised academic articles and policy documents on the adaptation of the Asian Tigers model posed significant hurdles in constructing a robust theoretical framework. Most available sources were either outdated or overly general, lacking the nuanced, context-specific insights necessary for a deep comparative analysis. Consequently, the researcher had to rely extensively on international literature, which, while valuable, may not fully capture the socio-political realities and institutional dynamics of South Africa.

Moreover, there exists a potential for bias in participant responses. Given the political and institutional environment in which municipal officials operate, some participants may have tailored their answers to align with perceived expectations or to protect institutional interests. Personal experiences, affiliations, and internal political dynamics might have further influenced

the objectivity of responses, thus impacting the reliability of some findings. Additionally, the researcher acknowledges the potential limitations introduced by their own positionality. As an emerging scholar from within the studied municipality, there is a risk of unconscious bias in both the framing of questions and the interpretation of responses, despite efforts to remain neutral and reflexive throughout the research process. Recognizing these limitations is essential to present a balanced, credible interpretation of the findings. Although these challenges posed significant constraints, the researcher persevered and successfully obtained a comprehensive set of responses. These limitations should not diminish the value of the study but rather highlight areas for further research and improvement in future scholarly inquiries on development strategy localization.

6.11. CONCLUSION

The study examined the Asian Tigers model as a strategy for achieving a developmental state in South Africa, specifically focusing on the Thulamela Local Municipality in Limpopo Province. This chapter discussed the findings, recommendations, and conclusions drawn from the research. The findings and recommendations were based on several key areas: the essential principles necessary for a developmental state, the feasibility of implementing the Asian Tigers Model within the context of South Africa, with an emphasis on Thulamela Local Municipality; the factors that may influence Thulamela's contribution to a developmental state; the interaction between the governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and the goals of a developmental state; and recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's strategies for developing a more effective local government. Additionally, suggestions for future studies were provided.

The first chapter presented the introduction and background of the study, the problem statement, the aim of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitation of the study, the definition of operational terms, and organization of the study. The objectives of the study were to comprehend the key principles towards a developmental state; the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality; factors that may affect Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state; the synergy between governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and Developmental state imperatives; and recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government. The study was conducted to benefit the South African citizens as well as Thulamela Local Municipality and the communities under Thulamela. The benefits among others include the strategies that can

be used to enhance Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government.

In Chapter Two, the study focused on the Asian Tigers Model as a strategy for achieving a developmental state in South Africa. It introduces the concept of a developmental state and outlines the conditions necessary for its success. The chapter identifies the key features and characteristics of a developmental state, emphasizing the importance of having a competent and autonomous bureaucracy, as well as a synergistic relationship between the state and the private sector. The analysis draws on the experiences of the Asian Tigers—South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and China—whose remarkable economic growth was driven by effective developmental state policies. The aim is to extract lessons that are applicable to South Africa's developmental trajectory, highlighting the significance of strong institutions, investment in education, and skill development. Additionally, the chapter discussed the need for strategic government interventions to support key industries, promote exports, and foster innovation. This includes encouraging public-private partnerships, reducing regulatory burdens on businesses, and providing targeted support to emerging industries.

Chapter 3 discussed the Asian Tigers Model and its relevance to South Africa, outlining the Asian Tigers and Sustainable Development theories. It highlights key success factors, including strong government policies, export-driven industrialization, and investments in education and technology. The chapter examines how South Africa might adapt these strategies, considering its unique socio-economic conditions and governance challenges. It addresses obstacles like political instability and inadequate infrastructure, while also acknowledging the limitations of directly applying the model. Overall, it analyses the potential implications of the Asian Tigers Model for achieving a developmental state in South Africa.

Chapter Four presented the research paradigm in which the researcher employed a pragmatist approach. The chapter outlined the research design and its sub-divisions, which included survey research design, case studies, contextual research, and exploratory research design. It also described the research methodologies, highlighting the choice of a mixed methods approach for data collection and analysis. The researcher provided reasons for selecting mixed methods and introduced the study area, which focused on the Thulamela Local Municipality. The population for the study consisted of community members from Thulamela Local Municipality as well as municipal officials. The chapter detailed the sampling strategy used to select participants for the study, specifically opting for a probability sampling method, with purposive sampling as its subtype. Reasons for the choice of these sampling methods were also discussed, alongside the sample size. Furthermore, this chapter explained the data collection process, in which the researcher utilized both questionnaires and interview

questions. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, including options such as Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The chapter also covered data analysis, which consisted of both statistical analysis and thematic analysis. Ethical considerations were highlighted, including the need for permission to conduct the study, informed consent from participants, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, and the commitment to ensuring no harm comes to participants.

Chapter five presented the data collected through a questionnaire and is divided into two sub-sections. In the first sub-section, the researcher provides the biographical details of the respondents. The second sub-section contains the results derived from the questionnaire items distributed to and gathered from the respondents by the researcher. The data is presented using graphical tables, along with frequencies and percentages. Each table is followed by a brief discussion of the findings. Additionally, this chapter includes data collected from interviews conducted by the researcher with the respondents. The interview data is presented in narrative form, and a total of ten participants were interviewed using open-ended questions.

The final chapter of the study presented the findings, recommendations and conclusion. The aim was to evaluate the Asian Tigers model as a strategy for achieving a developmental state in South Africa and to recommend mechanisms tailored to South Africa's circumstances to meet the criteria of a developmental state, wherein the objectives were to analyse the key principles employed by the Asian Tigers (such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, & China) in their successful transition to a developmental state; to assess the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality; to evaluate factors that may affect the implementation of an Asian Tigers Model-inspired developmental state in South Africa; to examine the synergy between the governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and that of the Asian Tigers Model; and to propose recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government. This chapter also presented recommendations for future studies, the contribution of the study, and limitations of the study. Lastly, the chapter concludes the study on the Asian Tigers Model as a strategy to achieve a developmental state in South Africa. In synthesizing these findings with the theoretical framework, the study concludes that although the Asian Tigers Model cannot be transplanted wholesale, elements of it can be recalibrated to suit South Africa's local realities. A hybrid approach, rooted in strong developmental planning, sustainability principles, and responsive governance, is imperative for Thulamela Local Municipality to contribute meaningfully to the national developmental state agenda.

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ANNEXURE A:

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mr W Mulaudzi

STUDENT NO:
20019619

PROJECT TITLE: **Asian tigers' model as a strategy to achieve a developmental state in South Africa: a case of Thulamela local Municipality.**

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: FMCL/24/PDN/46/1511

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr F Moema	UNIVEN, Public Development Administration	Supervisor
Dr HE Zitha	UNIVEN, Public Development Administration	Co-Supervisor
Mr W Mulaudzi	UNIVEN, Public Development Administration	Investigator - Student

Type: Masters Research

Risk: *Straightforward research without ethical problems (Category 1)*

Approval Period: November 2024 – November 2025

The Research Ethics Social Science 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 deem it necessary.

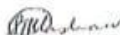
ISSUED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Considered: November 2024

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee Prof TS Mashau

Signature




UNIVERSITY OF VENDA
PRIVATE BAG X5050, THOHOYANDOU, 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA
TELEPHONE (015) 961 5044 FAX (015) 961 5050
"A quality driven, financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University"

ANNEXURE B:

LETTER FROM THE STUDENT

Query: Mulaudzi W

Cell: 0648366916

Email: Witnessmulaudzi815@gmail.com

P.O. Box 2147

Lwamondo

0985

08 October 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, **Mulaudzi Witnes**, am a student at the University of Venda, registered for Master of Administration, Department of Public and Development Administration, Faculty of Management, Commerce, and Law. I am conducting research on the 'Asian Tigers Model as a Strategy to Achieve a Developmental State in South Africa: A Case of Thulamela Local Municipality'.

I plead with you to be part of this study. Take it consideration that the information you will offer will only be used to complete this dissertation.

Thanks, in eagerness

Yours sincerely

Mulaudzi W

Student Number: 20019619

ANNEXURE C:**LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**

I, Mulaudzi Witnes, am a Master of Administration student at the University of Venda, conducting a study on the Asian Tigers Model as a strategy for achieving a developmental state in South Africa, focusing on Thulamela Local Municipality in Limpopo Province. The aim of this study is to evaluate the Asian Tigers Model and to recommend suitable mechanisms for South Africa. Your participation is requested through a questionnaire, and your identity will remain confidential.

Participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You can also refuse to answer any questions you find uncomfortable. Rest assured, no one will face harmful situations or physical threats during this study. The information collected will only be used for academic purposes. For any questions, please contact my supervisor at Emmanuel.Maemu@univen.ac.za. Thank you for considering participation in my research.

MW**08/10/2024**

.....

.....

MULAUDZI W (Mr)**Date****Cell: 0648366916****Email: witnessmulaudzi815@gmail.com**

ANNEXURE D

INSTRUMENT - QUESTIONNAIRE

ASIAN TIGERS MODEL AS A STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE OF THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

The study aims to evaluate the Asian Tigers model as a strategy, to achieve a developmental state in South Africa, and to recommend mechanisms to achieve a developmental state in South Africa with specific reference to the Thulamela Local Municipality. I humbly request you to be part of the study, by providing your perspective on the Asian Tigers Model as a Strategy to Achieve a Developmental State in South Africa. Note that there is no right or wrong answer. The responses provided will only be used for the purpose of this study. For any enquiries you may have, you can contact the researcher at 064 836 6916 or alternatively contact the supervisors at 0680602794/0796008634 Please put a cross (X) where you fill it is appropriate.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL 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

1	Executive Mayor	1
2	Municipal Manager	2
3	Integrated Development Plan (IDP) official	3
4	Local Economic Development (LED) official	4
5	Communication Manager	5
6	Community Development Worker (CDW)	6
7	Traditional leader	7

8	Ward councilor	8
9	SANCO Member	9
10	Selected community member	10

4. Educational qualification of the respondent

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

5. Employment Status of the respondents

Unemployed	1
Employed	2
Self-employed	3

SECTION B: The key principles employed by Asian Tigers in their successful transition to a developmental state

Item No. 1	The key principles towards a developmental state	Strong Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	Thulamela Local Municipality policies significantly contribute to the rapid economic growth.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Investment in education and human capital development is a critical factor in the economic success of Thulamela Local Municipality	1	2	3	4	5
8	Export-oriented strategies are central to the development and global integration of economies	1	2	3	4	5
9	Strong and effective governance, including anti-corruption measures and efficient bureaucracies,	1	2	3	4	5

	played a vital role in the economic transformation of economic development					
10	Collaborative relationships between the state and private sector industries are essential to the technological advancements and industrial diversification of the Asian Tigers.	1	2	3	4	5

Item No. 2	The feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state within the specific context of South Africa, with a focus on Thulamela Local Municipality	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	The implementation of government-led industrial policies similar to those used by the Asian Tigers is feasible in Thulamela Local Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Investing in education and human capital development can significantly contribute to the economic growth of Thulamela Local Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Adopting an export-oriented economic strategy is a viable option for promoting growth and development in Thulamela Local Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Establishing strong and effective governance, including anti-corruption measures and efficient bureaucracies, is essential for the successful adoption of the Asian Tigers Model in Thulamela Local Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Fostering collaborative relationships between the government and private sector industries can drive technological advancements and industrial diversification in Thulamela Local Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5

Item No. 3	Factors that may affect Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19	Access to funding and investment is a major barrier towards a developmental state in South Africa.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Corruption in South Africa poses a significant challenge in the positioning of municipalities towards a developmental state.	1	2	3	4	5
21	The education system in South Africa is capable of supporting a skilled workforce.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Social inequality in South Africa is a significant barrier towards a developmental state.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Institutional reforms are necessary for South Africa to achieve a developmental state.	1	2	3	4	5

Item No. 4	The synergy between the governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and Developmental State Imperatives	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24	The governance structures in Thulamela Local Municipality align with the centralised, government-led approach of the developmental state.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Thulamela Local Municipality's governance effectively supports industrial policy and strategic economic planning geared towards a developmental state.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Thulamela Local Municipality has effective anti-corruption measures and accountability mechanisms.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Thulamela Local Municipality has established efficient bureaucratic processes that facilitate rapid economic decision-making and implementation.	1	2	3	4	5

28	The governance in Thulamela Local Municipality encourages strong public-private sector collaboration, reflecting the synergistic relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
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Item No. 5	Recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29	Thulamela Local Municipality should adopt comprehensive industrial policies that target key sectors for economic growth and development.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Investing in education and vocational training programs is essential for improving the skills and employability of the local workforce in Thulamela.	1	2	3	4	5
31	Developing infrastructure and improving logistics within Thulamela Local Municipality is crucial for supporting an export-oriented economic strategy.	1	2	3	4	5
32	Implementing robust anti-corruption measures and enhancing transparency in governance will significantly contribute to the effective functioning of Thulamela Local Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5
33	Encouraging partnerships between the government and private sector can drive innovation, technological advancement, and industrial diversification in Thulamela Local Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5

“THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION”

ANNEXURE E

INSTRUMENT - INTERVIEW-SCHEDULE

ASIAN TIGERS MODEL AS A STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE OF THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

The study aims to evaluate the Asian Tigers model as a strategy, to achieve a developmental state in South Africa, and to recommend mechanisms to promote effective service delivery in Thulamela Local Municipality. Asian Tigers refers to four countries which are South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and China. I humbly request you to be part of the study, by providing your perspective on the Asian Tigers Model as a Strategy to Achieve a Developmental State in South Africa. Note that there is no right or wrong answer. Please put a cross (X) where you fill it is appropriate. Participation is entirely voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw at any time. Participant's names in this study will not be known by anyone except the researcher and they must not be afraid when providing information.

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

1	Executive Mayor	1
2	Municipal Manager	2
2	Integrated Development Plan (IDP) officials	3
3	Local Economic Development (LED) officials	4
4	Communication Manager	5
5	Community Development Workers-(CDW)	6

6	Traditional leaders	7
7	Ward councilors	8
8	SANCO Member	9
9	Selected community members	10

4. Qualification of the 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

5. Employment Status of the respondents

Unemployed	1
Employed	2
Self-employed	3

SECTION B: ASIAN TIGERS MODEL AS A STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE IN SOUTH AFRICA

6. What are the key principles of a developmental state?

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7. What factors need to be considered to determine the feasibility of adopting the Asian Tigers Model developmental state in Thulamela Local Municipality within South Africa's context?

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8. What are the factors that may affect the Thulamela Local Municipality's contribution towards a developmental state?

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9. What synergies exist between the governance structures of Thulamela Local Municipality and Developmental state imperatives?

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10. What are the propose recommendations aimed at enhancing Thulamela Local Municipality's developmental strategies towards a developmental local government?

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“THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION”



**Department Of
Corporate Services**

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

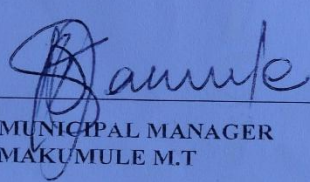
**THULAMELA
MUNICIPALITY**

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

To : MULAUDZI W
From : THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY
Date : 08 OCTOBER 2024

Subject : PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY

1. The above matter refers.
2. Kindly note that permission to conduct research has been granted.
3. Contact Human Resources Section for more information.
4. Hoping that this will meet your favourable considerations.


MUNICIPAL MANAGER
MAKUMULE M.T.



EDITORIAL LETTER

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

10 December 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that I, Dr SE Madima, edited a dissertation titled “Asian Tigers Model as a Strategy to Achieve a Developmental State in South Africa: A Case of Thulamela Local Municipality” by Mulaudzi Witnes



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

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

Mulaudzi Witness

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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