RECONFIGURATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CASE OF CITY OF JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

By

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DECLARATION

I, **NDIVHAISAFHI MAWELA**, Student Number: 17023779, hereby declare that this research proposal titled "*Reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government: A case of City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality"* is hereby submitted by me for the degree of Doctor of Administration at the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law in the University of Venda has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other university, and that it is my work in design and execution, and that all reference material contained, therein, has been duly acknowledged.



2025-02-06

…… **……**

NDIVHAISAFHI MAWELA **DATE**

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my late grandfather, Matamela Wilson Mawela, who could not witness this success and historical moment in the clan of the Ndou's. I hope I have made him proud, and may his soul continue to rest in peace.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to start by thanking God, who made all this possible. I would also like to acknowledge my father, Mr Thinavhuyo Thomas Mawela, who has always pushed me to reach for the sky, this would have not been possible if it was not for his endless encouragement.

A special gratitude to my mother, Mrs Elelwani Ruth Mawela, who has always supported me in everything I do. Her love kept me going.

To my daughter, Zwavhudi Mawela, may this achievement of mine be a good example of how you can achieve whatever you set your mind on, the world is your oyster.

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ABSTRACT

Accountability denotes answers to be provided for actions taken by those in power. It is crucial to ensure that decisions taken are lawful and best represent the community at large. The failure to effectively implement accountability has negatively impacted developmental local government. The reports by oversight bodies have demonstrated the lack of accountability within developmental local government, which has cemented a way to increase mismanagement. This study focuses on the redesigning of accountability in developmental local government in the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng Province. A pragmatic research approach was followed where mixed method research was adopted, as it permitted to cover issues in greater depth. The study was descriptive in nature. The sample methods were purposively drawn from the identified population. Interviews and questionnaires were utilised as instruments for collecting data. Collected data was analysed utilising both statistical and thematic techniques. The Principal-Agent Theory was selected as the theory that underpins the study.

The key findings of the study are the ineffectiveness of current mechanisms for accountability, the cadre deployment policy being identified as one of the hindering elements of accountability, the lack of consequence management and the inadequate protection of whistle-blowers. The study recommends revising the current mechanisms for accountability, especially those for performance assessment, which plays a critical role in promoting performance accountability. The study also recommends that the cadre deployment policy be adjusted to ensure that the deployment only speaks to members who have formal qualifications relevant to the deployed portfolio. There is a need for a consultative approach with the private sector to determine how and why accountability in that environment is effective. The study further developed a framework as a means to reconfigure accountability, wherein various role players who enforce accountability should display strong stewardship.

KEYWORDS: Accountability, Corruption, Development, Developmental local government, Local government, Reconfiguration, Transparency.

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ACRONYMS

ACDP	United Christian Democratic Party
AGSA	Auditor-General of South Africa
ANC	African National Congress
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, China & South Africa
CBD	Central Business District
COGTA	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
COJ	City of Johannesburg
COPE	Congress of the People
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CSRC	China Securities Regulatory Commission
CVC	Central Vigilance Commission
DA	Democratic Alliance
DPCI	Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighter
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
IDP	Integrated Developmental Plan
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
KPA	Key Performance Area
LED	Local Economic Development
LGTAS	Local Government Turn Around Strategy

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M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
MMR	Mixed Method Research
MPAC	Municipal Public Accounts Committee
NDP	National Development Plan
NFIU	National Financial Intelligent Unit
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PAT	Principal-Agent Theory
PCOFs	Parliamentary Committees on Finance
POPI	Protection of Personal Information Act
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPSA	Public Protector of South Africa
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SIU	Special Investigating Unit
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UK	United Kingdoms

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION i
DEDICATION ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT iii
ABSTRACT iv
ACRONYMS v
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY 1
1.1 INTRODUCTION 1
1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY 2
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT 3
1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY 6
1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY 7
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS 7
1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY 7
1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY 8
1.9 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS 8
1.9.1 Accountability 8
1.9.2 Corruption 9
1.9.3 Development 9
1.9.4 Developmental local government 9
1.9.5 Local government 10
1.9.6 Reconfiguration 10
1.9.7 Transparency 10
1.10 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS 11
1.10 CONCLUSION 12

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CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW **13**

2.1 INTRODUCTION 13

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS 13

2.2.1 The relevance of Principal-Agent Theory in the study 14

2.3 BACKGROUND TO DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 16

2.4 THE IMPROTANCE OF DEMOCRATISING ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 19

2.5 ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 20

2.6 STATE OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN CITY OF JOHANNESBURG 22

2.7 IMPERATIVE ELEMENT IN PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 22

2.7.1 Transparency 22

2.7.2 Ethics 25

2.7.3 Integrity 26

2.7.4 Good governance 27

2.8 BENEFITS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 29

2.8.1 Improves management of public finances 29

2.8.2 Enhances service delivery process 30

2.8.3 Promotes good governance 31

2.8.4 Reduces corruption 32

2.8.5 Improves public trust 33

2.9 CONCEPTUALISATION OF EXTERNAL OVERSIGHT BODIES IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 34

2.9.1 The Public Protector of South Africa 35

2.9.2 Auditor-General of South Africa 36

2.9.3 Special Investigating Units 38

2.9.4 Other important oversight bodies 40

2.10 INTERNAL CONTROLS WITHIN DEVELOPMENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY 41

2.10.1 Municipal manager 42

2.10.2 Municipal Chief Financial Officer 43

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2.10.3 Municipal internal audit 44
2.10.4 Municipal Audit committee 45
2.10.5 Municipal Public Accounts Committees 46
2.10.6 Sections 79 and 80 Committees 48
2.10.7 Municipal council 49
2.11 SUMMATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OVERSIGHT BODIES 51
2.12 THE ROE OF NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 52
2.13 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA AS A WATCHDOG IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 53
2.14 COMMUNITY MEMBERS' ROLE IN PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY 56
2.15 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AS A TOOL TO PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY 59
2.16 MONITORING AND EVALUATION AS AN IMPERATIVE ELEMENT IN ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY 62
2.17 EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AS A MECHANISM TO INFLUENCE ACCOUNTABILITY 64
2.18 CHALLENGES OF OVERSIGHT BODIES IN PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY 67
2.19 CURRENT STATE OF THE PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT 70
2.20 ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITIES 76
2.21 IDP AS MECHANISM FOR DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 77
2.22 ELECTIONS AS A MEANS TO HOLD OFFICIALS ACCOUNTABLE 80
2.23 E-GOVERNANCE AS A TOOL TO PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE 81
2.24 THE IMPORTANCE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & BUDGETING WITHIN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 82
2.25 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UTILISATION OF MUNICIPAL RESOURCES 85
2.26 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 87

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2.27 CRUCIAL FORMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 88
2.28 EXPLORING ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE 89
2.28.1 Brazil 89
2.28.2 China 90
2.28.3 Ghana 91
2.28.4 Nigeria 91
2.29 BENCHMARKING OF ACCOUNTABILITY 93
2.30 CONCLUSION 94
CHAPTER THREE: REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND POLICIES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA 95
3.1 INTRODUCTION 95
3.2 IMPERATIVE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK UNDERPINNING DEVELOPMENTAL LOCALGOVERNMENT SPHERE IN SOUTH AFRICA 95
3.2.1 The constitution of the republic of South Africa, 1996 96
3.2.2 Local Government Municipal Act (Act 32 of 2000) 97
3.2.3 Municipal Financial Management Act (act 56 2003) 98
3.2.4 Local Government Structure Act (Act 117 of 1998) 98
3.3 THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN FACILITATING ACCOUNTABILITY 99
3.4 INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 101
3.5 CONCLUSION 103
CHAPTER FOUR: CHALLENGES OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM 104
4.1 INTRODUCTION 104
4.2 SHORTCOMINGS IN IMPLEMENTING ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 105
4.2.1 The lack of protection for whistle-blower 105
4.2.2 The lack of consequence management 106
4.2.3 Cadre deployment 109
4.2.4 Political instability 111
4.2.5 Overregulated and tense bureaucratic environment 113
4.2.6 Power struggle and political interference 115

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4.2.7 Lack of trust due to political appointments 118
4.2.8 Lack of expertise in developmental local government 119
4.2.9 Increasing levels of corruption 121
4.2.10 Absence of a culture of excellence 124
4.2.11 Poor oversight mechanisms 126
4.2.12 The ineffective procurement system 128
4.2.13 The disregard of statutes by municipal officials 130
4.2.14 Lack of professionalism 133
4.2.15 Ineffective ward committees 134
4.2.16 Lack of community participation 135
4.2.17 Inadequate human capacitation 137
4.3 LACK OF POLITICAL WILL TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES WITHIN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 138
4.4 EFFECTS OF LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY ON SERVICE DELIVERY 140
4.5 DEMOCRACY AT RISK WITHIN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 142
4.6 COALITION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 143
4.7 RECONFIGURATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY 145
4.8 CONCLUSION 147
CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 149
5.1 INTRODUCTION 149
5.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM 149
5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN 150
5.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY 151
5.4.1 Mixed method Research 151
5.4.2 Qualitative research 151
5.4.3 Quantitative research 152
5.5 STUDY AREA 152
5.6 POPULATION OF THE STUDY 153
5.7 SAMPLING 154

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5.7.1 Sample methods 154

5.7.2 Sample size 154

5.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES 156

5.8.1 Interviews 156

5.8.2 Questionnaires 156

5.9 DATA ANALYSIS 157

5.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION 158

5.10.1 Permission to conduct the research study 158
5.10.2 Informed consent 158
5.10.3 Voluntary participation 158
5.10.4 Confidentiality and anonymity 159
5.10.5 Respect for the participants 159
5.10.6 No harm to participants 159
5.11 CONCLUSION 159
CHAPTER SIX: DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS 160
6.1 INTRODUCTION 160
6.2 ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH QUESTIONNAIRES 160
6.2.1 Biographic information of respondent 160
6.2.2 Reconfiguration of accountability in COJ 161
6.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS 181
6.4 SUMMATION OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS 199
6.4 CONCLUSION 200
CHAPTER SEVEN: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION 201
7.1 INTRODUCTION 201
7.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS 201
7.3 SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS 205
7.4 RECOMMENDATION OF THE STUDY 207
7.5 ESTABLISHMENT OF FRAMEWORK TO RECONFIGURE ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT 211
7.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES 213
7.7 CONCLUSION 214

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LIST OF REFERENCES **216**

LIST OF ANNEXURES 272

Annexure A: Ethics 272

Annexure B: UHDC Approval 273

Annexure C: Permission to Collect Data 274

Annexure D: Informed Consent Form 275

Annexure E: Letter to Respondents 281

Annexure F: Research Instrument – Questionnaire 282

Annexure G: Research Instrument – Interview Questions 285

Annexure H: Editorial Letter 288

Annexure I: Turnitin Report 289

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African government is a democratic government, which is governed through the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which requires mechanisms to be in place to hold officials accountable in terms of their conduct. For this reason, local government has mechanisms designed to promote accountability and uphold the Constitutional mandate. Those mechanisms should be created to promote the successful implementation of accountability. Section 153 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 makes provision that local government should provide service delivery and developmental duties. Those services should be provided fairly to promote community members' general welfare. It is now challenging for local government to meet the needs of the citizens due to a lack of accountability, which has opened grounds for corruption and maladministration (Shava & Mazenda, 2021:306). The inability of the local government to meet its objectives has a huge impact on public perception (Nyawo, 2017:60).

According to Kamara (2021:27), accountability is the process by which decision-makers are expected to account for their deeds and misdeeds. This implies that municipal officials should provide reasons for the actions taken relating to local government issues. Prinsloo (2012:9-10) ascertains that accountability supports democracy and good governance allows the government to guard against inaccuracy and misallocating funds, and reduces corruption. As South Africa is a democratic country, accountability should be at the centre of all functions performed by the government to strengthen democracy and build trust with citizens. Tshishonga (2019:161) argues that corruption is common in local government and that the adverse effect on municipal services delivery is not a surprise as financial resources are utilised for personal gain and not for development. The challenge of lack of accountability has produced poor performance, leading to deteriorating quality of municipal service delivery (Shava & Chamisa, 2018:4). It is not a surprise that municipalities are battling, given that municipal functionaries do not consider accountability as an imperative element of governance. The corruption, which was further exacerbated by the cases of more corruption associated with efforts to curb the pandemic, has crippled

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government public funds (Mlambo & Masuku, 2020:557). This will have a negative impact on the process of ensuring effective service delivery.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

The government has created other plans, such as the National Developmental Plan (NDP) Vision 2030, which has demonstrated the commitment of the government in improving the lives of the people. Building and transforming local government through various adoption of developmental policies requires collective efforts (Tshishonga, 2019:157). Outcome 9 of the National Developmental Plan (NDP) relates to the realisation of a responsive, accountable, and effective, and efficient local government system (NDP, 2012:20). The realisation of this outcome requires a mechanism to be in place. According to Mbandlwa, Dorasamy and Fagbadebo (2020:1644), after six democratic elections, many communities still live under substandard conditions. This is apparent in the cumulative number of protests due to the poor living conditions and service delivery across South Africa, which has resulted in the loss of trust from community members. Gabriel, Antonio, Ramos, and Marasigan (2019:35) in support of the above further allude that accountability cultivates trust, which in turn improves the quality of municipal services, and that lack of accountability will lead to the collapse of the government institution.

A study conducted by Botes (2018:246) revealed that the protests are largely prevalent because of the growing unresponsiveness of the government and lack of accountability by those in power. Governance principles are important. However, accountability is viewed to have greater prominence in ensuring responsive government in developmental local government, which successfully applies public resources for the greater benefit of citizens (Moyo, 2016:29). Accountability is a constitutional mandate that local government is required to apply in executing its functions as stipulated in Section 152 (1) (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. According to Kluvers and Tippet (2010:46), accountability and responsibility are interrelated, as both demand municipal officials to provide answers for their decisions and behaviour. The concept of accountability has gained popularity in the past years as stated by (Timoshenko, 2018:2). The establishment of independent institutions such as the Special Investigating Unit, which is partly tasked

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to deal with corruption, is indicative of a lack of accountability within the government institutions (Maseko, 2021:127).

Koma (2012:55) states that the process of development occurred during the period 1993 to 2000. This process allowed citizens to be at the forefront of shaping legislation and giving effect to participatory government. The developmental local government was introduced as a mechanism to address past imbalances and ensure collaboration between the local government and its citizens; however, a question remains as to how transformed this sphere of government is (Madumo, 2015:154). Ramodula and Govender (2021:61) opine that the vision of a developmental government is yet to be realised. It is crucial to review accountability mechanisms to ensure their effectiveness towards the realisation of a government centred on development. According to Rana, Ali, Riaz, and Irfan (2019:7), lack of accountability poses a threat to ensuring that the government delivers on its commitment towards a developmental government.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The South African government made certain improvements in an attempt to address some of the challenges associated with effectiveness and efficiency relating to delivering municipal services. However, given the increasing level of corruption, more is still required to be done (Madumo, 2015:163). The growing level of corruption undermines the elements of accountability and renders it ineffective. Brusca, Rossi, and Aversano (2017:498) state that countries with achievable accountability systems, which are effective, have lower levels of corruption and thus result in effective management of public resources. Mabeba (2021:164) states that resources that are meant for ensuring effective service delivery are looted by municipal officials thus affecting the livelihood of households including taxpayers by causing a decline in service delivery. This has influenced the quality of services provided and undermined the democratic governance. Accountability was established as one of the elements of efficacious governance (Kamara, 2021:32). This implies that the lack thereof may result in the failure of good governance. This statement is supported by the Media Release Report by the Auditor General South Africa (AGSA) (2019:1), which highlighted the absence of accountability as the highest contributor to poor management in local government. Kamara (2021:32) further ascertains that some of the mechanisms in place to promote accountability such as Sections 79 and 80 Committees are not effective. These committees are in place to ensure effective

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running of the municipality and the adherence to the law thereof. They also administer the finance and governance. A study by Fourie and Van der Waldt (2023:1) revealed that these committees are relatively ill-prepared to conduct their oversight responsibilities, although adequate statutory prescripts and oversight mechanisms and structures are in place. According to Mokgari & Pwaka (2018:51) these committees may call on municipal officials to account for their performance in terms of their function, appear before them and produce any document required for perusal and further recommendation. According to Mabunda, Mvunabandi, and Chonco (2024:648) failure to achieve clean audit outcomes demonstrate the failure and lack of commitment by the council to exercise effective oversight and to implement recommendations by combined assurance including ensuring financial control techniques for effectively using taxpayer's money. One may conclude that these committees have not yielded positive results in ensuring accountability through their oversight role. A study conducted by Ngqobe, Fourie and Tshiyoyo (2021:125) revealed that the ineffectiveness of such committees is a result of challenges of capacity to perform oversight work as well as other multifaceted reports submitted by the municipal officials. This is evident from scandals within local government, which have portrayed the worsening behaviour of public representatives disregarding the law.

Nyawo (2017:62) is of the view that accountability is essential in the effective utilisation of municipal resources. Akotey and Boateng (2021:35) agree with the statement and further argue that accountability limits the abuse of power, thereby assisting in the fight against corruption by those vested with powers to make decisions. The non-existent accountability is exposed through a high number of corruption cases recorded by local government in the past years. Ndebele and Mdlalose (2021:545) state that corruption has been embedded in the functioning of municipalities, and this was evident in the call by President Cyril Ramaphosa to direct the Special Investigating Unit to look into allegations of corruption involving government spending in the fight against Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Corruption decreases the quality of municipal services and loss of trust in local government, which has negatively affected developmental initiatives (Ardigó, 2019:2). Fombad (2013:21) cites that the South African government has forged ahead in implementing steps to combat and prevent corruption through its various anti-corruption activities, however, given the

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high level of corruption, one may conclude that more requires to be done. There is a genuine demand for local government to strengthen accountability to protect public resources and enhance municipal performance.

A Report by the AGSA (2020:4) state that billions of rand in funds assigned to municipalities were handled against the set standards and norms. This indicates the disregard of measures in place to ensure effective management of municipal funds. The AGSA Report 2014/15 identified a lack of accountability as a contributing factor in the sub-standard of performance of municipalities. This is also exacerbated by the nonexistence of consequences for transgressing municipal policies and transcripts. The General Report by AGSA (2020-21:50) indicates that the absence of consequences remains one of the key root causes of municipalities' poor audit outcomes. It can be deduced that the lack of repercussions for non-compliance sets a precedent for wrongdoing by municipal officials.

According to Madumo (2015:163), unethical practices by public servants have worsened the financial capabilities of most municipalities and the lack of accountability has exacerbated the situation. Kalonda and Govender (2021:8-9) argue that the lack of accountability systems increases fraud, corruption, and misuse of municipal funds. Accountability mechanisms are at the risk of becoming ends in themselves, as some instruments are ineffective (Ardigó, 2019:5). Those instruments that are ineffective require re-engineering to ensure effective implementation. The lack of accountability has been identified as the main cause hindering the government from rendering effective municipal services (Mlambo & Masuku, 2020:557). The lack of accountability has an adverse impact on developmental local government. The problem that led the researcher to this investigation is the deteriorating lack of accountability, which has hampered the progress toward a developmental local government; this is supported by Ndevu and Muller (2018:188), who cite that the nonexistence of accountability has resulted in poor performance within local government. In addition, a Media Release Report by the AGSA (2019:3) further indicates that local government accountability for financial and performance management is a concern, and the lack of implementation of recommendations by the AGSA has exacerbated the situation. Accountability improves transparency, builds trust, improves service delivery, and reduces corruption. However, the municipality is still faced with an increased level of corruption and loss of trust by community members. As demonstrated by the various reports from

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AGSA, it is evident that the benefits of accountability have not been realized, hence the intention to reconfigure accountability to address the increasing level of corruption and maladministration and improve service delivery.

Mawere, Matoane and Khalo (2022:279) state that City of Johannesburg (hereforth referred to as COJ) failed to meet people's expectations as outlined by the AGSA reports as well as media reports demonstrating dysfunctional status leading to poor service delivery. A study conducted by Kemp and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020:4) revealed the challenges that residents of Protea Glen in Region D are faced with of recurring leaks of sewage drains, with the inability of the municipality to find permanent solutions exacerbated by the lack of effective communication. Kemp and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020:6) argue that accountability can only be effective when there is open communication of accurate and timely information. Rana *et al.,* (2019:7) explain that accountability intends to strengthen the voice of citizens to demand greater accountability and responsiveness directly from municipal officials and service providers. Sibanda, Zindi, and Maramura (2020:8) allude that accountability depends on proper control systems and thus demands effective, efficient, and vigorous control systems. A Report by Corruption Watch (2021:6) revealed the COJ as the highest contributor of corruption cases in Gauteng Province which is as a result of lack of accountability within the municipality. The officials within COJ have demonstrated failure to uphold the legitimacy of municipalities and to implement accountability thus deepen democracy (Mabunda *et al.,* 2023:643). The Problem statement of the study is the deteriorating lack of accountability, which has hampered the progress towards a developmental local government.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate the feasibility of reconfiguring accountability to improve the state of service delivery in developmental local government with the purpose of developing a framework. The study proposed a municipal accountability framework for developmental local government. The realisation of this will ensure that the local government can sustain municipal service delivery.

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1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objectives of the study are as follows:

- To examine the state of accountability in COJ and to assess the role of oversight bodies in promoting accountability.
- To examine regulatory framework and policies designed to promote accountability.
- To determine the challenges encountered in implementing accountability within developmental local government.
- To propose a municipal accountability framework for developmental local government

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Mattick, Johnston and De la Croix (2018:104-105) state that research questions are questions that a project sets out to answer with the intention of providing new insight. The questions that the study seeks to answer are as follows:

- What is the state of accountability in City of Johannesburg and role of oversight bodies?
- What are the legislative frameworks and policies designed to promote accountability.
- What are the challenges associated with accountability for developmental local government?
- Which accountability framework can be proposed for developmental local government?

The above research questions were aligned with the objectives to ensure consistency throughout the study.

1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The study investigated accountability in developmental local government to facilitate the process of reconfiguration of accountability. The reason for the reconfiguration is a result of the lack as well as the ineffectiveness of mechanisms of accountability within developmental local government. The COJ has a vision of creating a responsive, transparent, and corruption-free government; this study will contribute

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towards the realization of the vision through recommendations on how to reconfigure accountability to assist in reducing corruption and addressing other challenges to improve the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the municipality. The study will, therefore, provide growth within the existing knowledge relating to accountability within developmental local government.

1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is based on the reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government in COJ, Gauteng Province. The study will be delimited to the boundaries of COJ. The Municipality is one of the three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng, South Africa. The Municipality services a vast range of areas from Region A to Region G and as a result, the study will focus on Regions A, B, C and D. Region A covers areas such as Fourways Gardens, Bloubosrand, Cedar Lakes, Dainfern and Diepsloot, Region B includes Randburg and Rosebank while Region C covers areas such as Braamfischerville, Cosmo City, Florida, Region D included areas in Soweto. The data will be drawn from the participants from the aforementioned regions. In addition, the study will not consider issues around the coalitions of political parties within COJ.

1.9 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The operational terms that were deemed crucial throughout the study were identified. The definitions provided a clear understanding of the operational terms.

1.9.1 Accountability

Khotami (2017:30) defines accountability as a form of liability that refers to who is accountable, which is done through the obligation to report all activities of responsibility. Nyawo (2017:63) defines accountability as how the municipality provides answers and feedback relating to progress towards developmental programmes. It may be summarised that accountability is concerned with ensuring that detailed information and explanation is provided in relation to activities within the sphere of responsibility to determine the lawfulness of decisions taken and tasks executed in delivering municipal services. In this study, accountability is defined as a process in which municipal officials give account for their action or lack of action in relation to municipal affairs and institute consequences against officials responsible for non-compliance.

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1.9.2 Corruption

Fombad (2013: 915) describes corruption as the misuse of power delegated to municipal officials for private gain at the expense of the public interest. Liu (2016:172) supports the above statement and further states that corruption is associated with the misuse of municipal resources for private benefit. Ibodullaevich and Abdukamolovich (2020:69) define corruption as a criminal offense related to the use of official positions for personal gain. Based on the above definitions, corruption involves the execution of illegal activities utilising municipal resources to benefits their interest and for self-enrichment, which has a negative impact on the capabilities of the government to effectively fulfil its mandate to guarantee effective and efficient delivery of municipal services. In the context of this study, corruption is regarded as any form of looting financial resources for personnel use at the expense of community members, which also compromises the quality of municipal services.

1.9.3 Development

According to Coccia (2019:1), development is a process of disproportionate growth of systems. On the other hand, Islam (2017:3) describes development as a practice of improving the well-being of the people. Abuiyada (2018:117) ascertains that development has long been viewed as enhancing the capacity of the grassroots level of people to control their future for the better. The definition above suggests that development is a process that involves creating measures to progress the well-being of citizens as well as to ensure that resource allocation is effectively distributed to enhance the development of local government. This study defines development as initiatives taken by the municipality in partnership with community members to advance the level of quality of services provided and ultimately improve the standard of living.

1.9.4 Developmental local government

According to the White Paper on Local Government of 1998, developmental local government is a local government with dedicated efforts to working with citizens and groups within the community to discover sustainable ways to meet social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of lives. Ramodula and Govender (2021:48) indicate that developmental local government encompasses visible

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leadership toward a rapid transformation both economically and socially through active, intense and effective interventions. Developmental local government is concerned with placing efforts in a manner that is effective, efficient and economical way to progress the lives of community members within the municipality citizens. In this study, developmental local government is a government that is entitled to municipality and community members working together to warrant that services provided address the actual needs of the community members, thus enhancing the effectiveness and efficient use of municipal resources.

1.9.5 Local government

According to Thapa (2020:3), a government body voted by the people that have administrative, legislative, and executive functions under their jurisdiction is known as local government. Madumo (2015:160) believes that local government is a sphere bestowed with the responsibility of driving the agenda of ensuring the general well-being of its inhabitants. Since the sphere is closest to the people, it makes it feasible to interact with community members and effectively drive initiatives of development. The study defines local government as an authoritative body of government, accessible by community members because of its closeness as well as the functions it renders.

1.9.6 Reconfiguration

According to Kar and Singh (2015:16), reconfiguration allows adding, removing or modifying specific process capabilities and controls to effectively respond to the changing environment. The reconfiguration process is realised through adding, modifying, or removing existing elements (Stambolov & Batchkova, 2011:163). In this study, reconfiguration is defined as a process wherein certain elements or processes of accountability will be added, adjusted, and modified so as to ensure effectiveness.

1.9.7 Transparency

Albu and Flyverbom (2016:1) state that transparency is associated with the sharing of information and the quality of the information shared. Ngatikoh, Kumorotomo and Retnandari (2020:181) are of the view that transparency involves providing accurate, clear and relevant information to promote an open government to gain public trust. It can, therefore, be deduced that transparency is viewed as the process that permits

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the government to share information relating to activities that are relevant and accurate which the community members utilise to hold municipal officials accountable to positively influence the progress towards developmental local government. For the purpose of this study, transparency encompasses elements of sharing information with community members and structures to ensure accountability within developmental local government.

1.10 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The study will be divided into seven chapters. Those chapters are detailed below to provide a detailed description for each chapter.

Chapter One: Introduction and background of the study - The chapter focuses on the introduction and background of the study, problem statement, the aim of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, justification of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definitions as well as the structure of the thesis. This chapter will assist in building a firm foundation for the investigation into the reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government.

Chapter Two: The state of accountability in City of Johannesburg and to assess the role of oversight bodies in promoting accountability - Accountability can potentially improve good government within the municipality. The development of local government is challenging in the absence of accountability. Therefore, it is fundamental to ensure that accountability is promoted and that effective mechanisms are in place. This chapter assessed the role of oversight bodies and their effectiveness in accountability within developmental local government as well as other elements that have an influence on oversight functions.

Chapter three: Examine legislative frameworks and policies designed to promote accountability - This chapter examines the legislative frameworks and policies that are in place to promote accountability. This will assist to determine if the municipality is operating within the jurisdiction of the law.

Chapter four: the challenges encountered in implementing accountability within developmental local government - The effectiveness of accountability largely depends on those implementing it. The current state of municipalities within South Africa has demonstrated that accountability has been less effective in enhancing

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performance and addressing some of the challenges within developmental local government. The challenges experienced with the implementation of accountability within developmental local government were described in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Research design and methodology- The chapter provides a detailed research approach selected for the thesis and clear guidelines on how data will be collected and analysed. As ethics are considered to be one of the cornerstones of research, this chapter will further detail how ethics will be applied to ensure that participants are conformable and that their rights are protected and respected. The chapter will also contain the population, sample, sample size, and research paradigms.

Chapter Six: Data presentation, interpretations and analysis– Data collected through interviews and questionnaires will have to be presented and analysed. The chapter therefore, made provision for the results and interpretation. The data was presented in a narrative form as well as graphically, with interpretation of those graphs to read well.

Chapter Seven: Outline findings, recommendations, and conclusions - After the data is analysed and interpreted, findings were therefore provided in this chapter. The study aims to propose the reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government; this chapter made provision for the recommendation on how to reconfigure accountability to ensure effective implementation.

1.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced and provided a background of accountability in developmental local government. Most of the municipalities in South Africa are faced with many challenges that have affected their efficient running. Laws and regulations are in place to provide guidelines on how to manage government affairs. The disregard for those laws and the lack of consequence has fuel the increase in misconduct by municipal officials. It is, therefore, important to ensure the effective implementation of elements that are considered the cornerstone of democracy and good governance. The chapter to follow examined the state of accountability and assessed the role of oversight bodies in promoting accountability.

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CHAPTER TWO
EXAMINING THE STATE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE ROLE OF OVERSIGHT BODIES IN PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the introduction, background aim and objectives as well as the motivation for the study. Literature review intends to educate on the area of study and to shape an argument or justification (O'Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015:31). According to Kraai, Holtzhausen and Malan (2017:62), oversight seeks to ensure the realisation of the objective of local government as stipulated in Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, to foster a democratic and accountable government. According to Ile and Makiva (2017:13), oversight entails the ability to monitor implementing institutions to ensure that programmes/projects are aligned with government objectives. Ampri and Adhariani (2017:30) define combined assurance as an integrative approach to mix the functions of governance, risk management, and compliance into one comprehensive framework. The government must demonstrate how state resources are employed to satisfy the citizenry (Quampah, Salia, Fusheini & Adoboe-Mensah, 2021:257). The South African government has sound legislation. However, it is apparent that there is a deep-rooted problem with unethical behaviour by municipal officials (Baloyi, 2020:180).

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research literature is guided by a theory, and Van der Waldt (2021:4) states that theory aims to describe and explain phenomena and it is experiential since it stimulates and guides the further development of knowledge. Van der Waldt (2021:4) further narrates that research theory is often used to imply the contextual literature in an area of investigation, and it consists of concepts, definitions, assumptions, and generalisations. The Principal-Agent Theory (PAT) is the theory underpinning the study of accountability in the public sector, which was the reasoning behind the selection of this theory.

Braun and Guston (2003:303) referred to the relationship between policymakers as the principal and those responsible for implementing the policy as the agent. Bernhold and Wiesweg (2021:117) posit that the main objective of PAT is to develop contractual

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relationships between the principal and the agent as optimally as possible. Ejue and Madumelu (2014:105) cite that the PAT assumes that actors are motivated by rational self-interest and that in order to match their interests with the institution's, the agent must act on behalf of the principals.

2.2.1 The relevance of Principal-Agent Theory in the study

Gailmard (2012:20) states that PAT has proven to be a flexible and useful approach for understanding the effects of institutional arrangements on the accountability of public decisions and policymakers. According to Leruth and Paul (2007:3), PAT specifies a set of actors, and actions, and how they evaluate the implications of those actions. Roach (2016:29) defines a principal as any individual, party, or body that acts consistently or cohesively, whereas the agent is a person recruited by the principal to accomplish certain goals and objectives. It may be concluded that the principal shapes the behaviour of the agent by means of prescripts, laws and structure put in place to ensure consistency and cohesive behaviour. This relates to the study because municipalities have used rules, regulations, and guidelines to mould the conduct of municipal officials. However, there seems to be a disconnect between what is expected from agents by the principal within developmental local government. PTA emphasis is on the responsiveness of the agent's decisions to the principal's goals (Gailmard, 2012:1). Challenges facing local government are largely influenced by corruption, which is worsened by the inability of municipal officials (the agents) to behave in the manner set out by the municipality (the principal). Panda and Leepsa (2017:77) support the above statement and further state that in PTA, the agents might use organisational property for their own end, which will create conflict between the principals and agents.

Han (2019:931) points out that PAT is useful in explaining a clear hierarchical system between the principal and the agent such as a relationship between a bureaucratic central control centre and its agencies. South African government is categorised by a hierarchy of power, which, using this theory, will be explained by relating how and to whom municipal officials should be accountable. The theory states that the agent has a duty to demonstrate how they manage public resources entrusted to them by the principal and citizens (Machinjike, Bongaand & Hundi, 2021:5). This process will enhance accountability and ensure that development is no longer a vision but a reality.

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According to Gailmard (2012:1), the PAT provides clarity on issues listed below, which will be addressed by this study:

- What the agent(s) can do and how this affects the principal(s)?;
- What the principal(s) can do and how this affects the agent(s)?; and
- Who the principal(s) and the agent(s) are?.

The theory outlines actions that are appropriate and evaluate the consequences thereafter. Municipal officials lack the knowledge to act effectively in the best interest of the institution as well as community members. The study by Masiya, Davids and Mangai (2021:109) suggests that municipal officials often work in an unsupportive institutional environment characterised by institutional and bureaucratic rules and regulations, which has an adverse impact on performance and job satisfaction. This is attributed to the fact that some of the policies are not clearly articulated, and the municipality does not confer with municipal officials on a regular basis to ascertain the level of compliance with regulations as well as the satisfaction level of officials. This study suggests that the principal is the municipality as well as members of the community who have appointed and elected municipal officials, on the other hand, the agent is the appointed and elected municipal officials. Gabriel, Antonio, Ramos and Marasigan (2019:30) are of the view that the government is created to serve the interest and protect the welfare of its people, maintain peace and order and defend through delivering services. The government then appoints people who are responsible for ensuring that those services are rendered, hence municipal officials should account to the municipality as well as citizens as the receiver of such services. The theory was selected as it is relevant to the study, in that municipal officials are expected to account through clear hierarchical structures on managing and utilising municipal resources to citizens. Additionally, the theory will enable the researcher to describe the relationship between the principal and the agent. The theory facilitates the implementing mechanisms to control and shape the agents' actions to achieve the institution's goal (Panda & Leepsa, 2017:76). The theory allows for the reconfiguration of accountability within developmental local government. Hausken (2019:106-107) states that PAT can be either non-mathematical or technical; the study only takes into consideration the non-mathematical aspects of the theory.

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The PAT denotes that the agents carry out activities on behalf of the principal, however sometimes, the agent resorts to pursue their self-interest, which might not be in the mind of the principal (Mofolo & Adonis, 2021:2). Ndlovu and Mutambara (2022:256) opine that PAT suggest that corruption happens in instances where municipal officials lack accountability. The accountability and oversight relationship between the elected public representatives and the bureaucracy is explained through the principal-agent relationship (Khaile, Davids & Khaile, 2021:171). Igbokwe-Ibeto (2019:9) accountability means that the stakeholders set clear objectives, put out strategies, and monitor and report on what has been done. The theory chosen suggests that, oversight is part of the efforts by the principal (government) to reduce and shape the moral behaviour of the agent (municipal official) (Abdullah, Reza, Junita & Meutia, 2020:300).

2.3 BACKGROUND TO DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Hungwe and Mukonza (2023:59) cite that section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, requires local government to provide effective, transparent, efficient, and accountable governance for the well-being of the people and the progressive realisation of their constitutional rights. Kaywood (2021:43) states that historically, local government had a system that perpetuated prejudices along racial lines in service delivery with a notably skewed allocation of resources that favoured white local authorities over black authorities. Abdullahi and Chikaji (2017:1) indicate that local government, as the sphere closest to the people, is in the best position to facilitate development at the grassroots. Hlongwane and Nzimakwe (2018:1) is of the view that local government plays a critical role in the developmental effort in South Africa. South Africa has aspired to be more development-focused to address weak local community management (Ngumbela, 2023:358). Every developmental state is driven by the mandate to direct reforms aimed at enhancing economic efficiency, and this is the same for the South African government (Kgobe & Chauke, 2021:45).

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Hanabe, Taylor and Raga (2018:170) state that the 1994 transition to a democratic government brought many challenges in South Africa. This meant that initiatives had to be taken to address challenges before 1994 and challenges brought by the democratic government. Madumo (2015:159) defines development local government as a government, which deploys both administrative and political resources for economic development. According to Abugu (2014:134), local government can act as a catalyst for tracking and fast-tracking the commitment towards a developed government. This is the reason why local government was steered toward development. This is the rationale behind the local government's focus on developmental growth. Municipalities are equipped with tools to assist towards a developmental local government, such as Integrated Development Planning (IDP), performance management, and active community participation in municipal affairs (Ramodula & Govender, 2020:61). Thebe (2017:124-125) alludes that the prime objectives of the IDP are for planning, budgeting, management and decision-making through a participatory process to achieve developmental local government.

Ramodula and Govender (2022:52) cite that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 advocates for a local government that is developmental and sustainable so as to improve the lives of community members. The democratic and developmental nature of local government in South Africa government is strongly underpinned by the participatory requirement (Thusi, Mayisela & Matyana, 2023:365), which failure of this may result in the inability to realise the developmental local government. A sustainable development requires competency and honest financial management to ensure good service delivery (Muzekenyi, Nyika & Hoque, 2022:52). Miggels and Rulashe (2022:516) opine that developmental local governance has four qualities, which are explored in further depth below:

- “Maximising social development and economic growth;
- Integrating and coordinating;
- Democratising development, empowering, and redistributing; and
- Leading and learning”.

Khambule (2021:509) argues that corruption has been increasingly associated with the governing party because of the inadequacy of practical consequences and an accountability framework. The ability of municipalities to render effective service is

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impeded by various factors such as corruption and the inability to plan and implement developmental policies; these have had a direct impact on the response to developmental local government (Khambule, 2021:509). According to Makoti and Odeku (2018:73), the South African Government acknowledged the challenges of the lack of good working relationships between spheres of government, hence the intervention such as the District Developmental Model (DDM). The DDM is embedded in the idea of creating institutional links between the three spheres of government to ensure enhanced coordination in responding to developmental challenges (Khambule, 2021:515). The DDM aims to ensure that subnational institutions can deliver their developmental outcomes to promote effective development.

The main objective of DDM is the enhanced coordination and placement of state actions through a district-wide plan for the municipal area (Nel & Minnie, 2022:44). The DDM intends to improve intergovernmental relations, performance, and accountability by shifting from alignment to joint planning and capacity building Nel and Minnie (2022:44). According to Yende (2023:204), local governments need to welcome community participation as a key that enhances democratisation in the development process. There is a need for developmental local government to invest in developing its talent and retaining it to address the challenges faced (Mathonsi, Ndlovu, Thusi, Mlambo & Mkhize, 2022:329). If developmental local government is to be realised, it is imperative for both the political and administrative leadership to reconsider accountability (Mahmud, Hossan & Alom, 2024:283).

Mbandlwa, Dorasamy and Fagbadebo (2020:1649) believe that local government is faced with numerous challenges coupled with the failure to improve development in the communities under which the municipalities serve. These challenges pose a risk to the realisation of a developmental local government. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that interventions are devised to address challenges that may hinder the realisation of developmental local government. Gumede (2021:3) viewed political will, long-term vision and determination among the governing elite to relentlessly drive a developmental project core pillar of a developmental local government. Sustainable development requires effective management of municipal finances, which in turn will positively influence transparency and accountability (Adekoya, 2023:2935). The absence of capacity building contributes to the failure of developmental local government (Durokifa *et al.,* 2023:491). According to Thobejane and Ngoepe-Ntsoane

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(2022:222), one of the weaknesses of municipalities is their incapability to be development-oriented to draw investors. Developmental local government is under enormous strain because of poor financial management and absence of accountability with adverse impact on service delivery (Thusi & Mashabela, 2023:175). South Africa has the utmost level of inequality and difference between the haves and have not; thus, the provision of essential services is a solution to bridge the gap and inequality (Thusi *et al.,* 2023:175). Failure to provide those services will negatively impact the developmental state and ultimately worsen inequality.

According to Yende and Yende (2022:146), the developmental process came to a halt as a result of corruption. Adonis (2021:289) further alludes that not only corruption impacted the developmental process but also the lack of accountability hinders the progress towards a developmental local government and the realisation of socio-economic development in municipalities. Khambule (2021:1) argues that the South African government has long pushed the idea of becoming a developmental state as the country's ultimate response to rising unemployment, poverty and inequality.

2.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRATISING DEVELOPMENT AS A MECHANISM TO TRANSFORM LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Ibrahim Onochie and Bibi (2021:4) define democratisation as the process of moving or transitioning from an authoritarian system to a democratic political system. As South Africa is a democratic country, it is understood that the development should also be democratised. Koma (2012:57) indicates that democratising development is aligned with ensuring the involvement of local communities in the affairs of local government. The involvement of local communities in affairs of local government is mandated by section 152 (i) (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996. A democratic system is based on the principles of participatory, representative, accountability and transparency (Ramodula & Govender, 2022:54).

According to Kamara (2021:23), the municipality should take advantage of collaborative-led developmental interventions to improve service delivery and create a space that enhances and facilitates participation in development matters of the municipalities. This implies that developmental government requires the involvement of community members. Madumo (2015:161) indicates that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996, serves as an instrument utilised to transform South

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African society. Madumo (2015:161) further states that the South African government have developed policies to support the notion of developmental government, such as the National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP), the White Paper on Local Government of 1998, the Integrated Developmental Plan (IDP) and National Developmental Plan: Vision 2030. The National Developmental Plan (NDP) was developed as a strategic plan to building a democratic state, committed to a skilled labour force and economic development, which promotes a form of state that is developmental in character (Ramodula & Govender, 2020:50). According to findings by Kamara (2021:33), the provision of authentic reporting and continuous engagement with role-players is an effective mechanics for enhancing accountability. This process also influenced democracy positively as it advocated for participation in government affairs.

2.5 ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mutereko and Shava (2024:50) state that one of the roles of local municipalities is to ensure a developmental role for their local communities. Ng'eni (2016:46) indicates that local government authorities have an obligation to provide essential services to the local communities. Durokifa, Johnson, Ramlachan, Mdhluli and Magqirana (2023:492) state that municipalities play a critical role, as the government sphere is most accessible by the communities in realising the national objective of the developmental state. The provision of such services largely depends on the collection of revenue and allocation from the National Treasury. Of all three spheres of government, local government is the only arm that generates its own revenue to sustain its legislative mandate (Mbulawa, 2019:2). According to the AGSA Report (2022/2023:6), municipalities lost revenue as a result of failure to bill and collect revenue, and due to water and electricity losses as a result of infrastructure neglect. It is, however, to be noted that most municipalities have failed to collect revenue resulting in inadequate service delivery, and the prevalence of corruption harms municipal revenue collection leading to adverse impact on service delivery, upholding accountability in revenue collection may thus earn community (Shava, 2020:400). This has demonstrated the failure execute the mandate set out by the legislation.

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Metropolitan municipality also collects a sizable chunk through other sources within their jurisdiction. Ng'eni (2016:46) further states that proper mechanism to safeguard municipal resources is through accountability. Madumo (2015:163) states that some municipalities have failed to institute proper mechanisms in place to ensure effective, efficient and economical running of the municipalities. Han (2016:18) indicates that when accountability is not required and implemented effectively, municipal officials would do whatever they choose leading to a dysfunctional institution. Further to this, performance of local government is judged by the ability to deliver goods and services and as well as the implementation of accountability (Tsheletsane & Fourie, 2014: 43).

Accountability is required in order to foster improvement and development of the country's economy and guarantee actual and efficient utilisation of resources (Osho & Afolab, 2014:47). The challenge of corruption remains consistent at the forefront of development and requires more effort to end it in order to improve municipal performance (Masuku & Jili, 2019:2). A study conducted by Ndlovu and Mutambara (2022:256) revealed that accountability helps municipal officials to be disciplined, fights corruption and helps officials to be aware of the consequences of corruption such as being fired. Selepe (2023:344) defines accountability as demonstrating responsible to a community member for their actions. Accountability can be effective if there is information provided, reasons provided for the decisions taken and also consequences implemented for the non-attainment of set goals/targets and unethical behaviour. According to Gabriel, Antonio, Ramos and Marasigan (2019:32), transparency as a concept is a precondition for accountability. When there is more transparency, accountability will be apparent and assist in a more responsive and open municipality, which will, in turn, prevent service delivery protests (Thebe, 2017:124). Dimant and Tosato (2017:7) are of the view that increased transparency is associated with lower levels of corruption, improves probability of detecting wrongdoing and enforces accountability. The poor background of municipal officials has created a perception that local government is a source of making quick money to self-enrich. Corruption is centred on secrecy, which requires one to always cover up, deceit, lie, cheat and betray the trust of the principals (Schirrmacher & Schirrmacher, 2019:23). Zondi, Nzimakwe and Mbili (2017:635) ascertain that when municipal officials are held to account, service delivery performance has the potential of improving. The development of any country is mostly reliant significantly on the

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availability of good governance and a well-functioning local government (Mlambo, Simangele & Mpanza, 2023:1).

2.6 THE STATE OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

According to McKenzie and Marx (2025:1), South African municipalities have been plagued by financial distress for decades and COJ is not exempted from this. The financial distress has resulted in service interruption for example restricted supply of water. The municipality is currently under a coalition partnership in terms of the management. The formed collation within COJ has resulted in undermining the urgency of effective and sustainable public service delivery and thus accountability (Thusi & Ndebele, 2024:261). This is due to the different objectives and agenda by the different political parties. These political conflicts have also impact on the financial accountability and mismanagement of resources (Mabunda *et al.,* 2023:648). The various political parties have a tendency of accusing each other on issue of poor performance which has made the coalition difficult to sustain (Mawere, *et al.,*2022:277)

Molobela (2024:42) states that accountability play a vital role in instilling and maintaining government legitimacy and public trust. There are mechanisms for accountability, however, the implementation is a challenge (Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022:12). The various scandals within COJ has demonstrated a failure in the implementation of those mechanisms. According to Adams and Ama (2024:1) COJ has shown to have poor service delivery attributable to the absence of accountability. The failure is also coupled by incompetency of councillors who receives report and simply note them as ‘compliance’ without interrogating them, which negatively impact accountability (Fourie & Van der Waldt, 2023:9). Financial mismanagement, financial constraints and corruption have been highlighted as the issues impacting local government which are further worsened by the lack of accountability (Mabunda *et al.,* 2023:640).

2.7 IMPERATIVE ELEMENTS IN PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

According to Jadara and Al-Wadi (2021:287), the concept of accountability is broader and wider to comprehend. The important role of professionalism of municipal officials in executing functions in a transparent and accountable manner is of great importance

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in enhancing accountability (Shava & Mazenda, 2021:309). The following are imperative elements in promoting accountability in developmental local government:

2.7.1 Transparency

Codreanu (2019:272) indicates that transparency concerns the supply of complete and usable information. Sofyani, Riyadh and Fahlevi (2020:9) argue that accountability will lead to a more transparent local government. It is, however, important to grasp that transparency needs to occur first before accountability can flourish. This is because as transparency promotes the availability of information, it is the very same proof that will be utilised to hold municipal officials accountable. Dimant and Tosato (2017:7) support the above authors and further argue that transparency is associated with lower levels of corruption due to the openness of functions executed. Jadara and Al-Wadi (2021:296) state that transparency is an essential step before the stage of accountability. It is critical for citizens to scrutinise government deliberations and actions, and this can only be possible if there is a system of openness by local government (Koenane & Mangena, 2017:63).

Transparency is essential as it enables the community members to hold municipal officials responsible for their performance and minimize corruption and improve municipal service delivery (Kessy, 2020:194). Accountability is most effective when there is transparency; the lack thereof makes it difficult to identify municipal officials to be held accountable. Kamara (2021:24) is of the view that the government has experienced a shifted in the previous three decades in the way in which decisions are taken towards an inclusive and participatory process. The participatory process thus creates an opportunity for effective transparency. This process requires one to be honest and open to allow accountability. The practice of inclusive and participatory process should, therefore, not be done as a compliance process as it will not contribute toward transparency or accountability. Masiya and Lubinga (2023:43) argue that governments can only promote transparency by providing community members with all the dealings and allowing access so as to monitor and evaluate municipal activities. While transparency is a necessary input, it is also important to consider how to share information, and with whom to best facilitate accountability (Vian, 2021:2).

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In light of the above, it can be argued that even with full transparency, there is certain information that community members will not have the privilege of knowing. However, information required to influence accountability should be shared as well as that which is meant for the development of the community as a whole. Transparency commands that community members are made aware of relevant decisions and processes of developmental local government (Mthethwa, Ndebele & Thusi 2023:271). Therefore, the information must be provided in a manner that permits community members to comprehend and process it. The concept of transparency is multi-faceted and often interacts with the rule of law, impartiality, ethics, and accountability (Ariyo-Edu, Rahji & Subair, 2023:57).

Nokele and Shopola (2021:223) argue that without transparency, it is likely for municipal officials to use resources acquired to enrich themselves. Given the level of corruption, one can conclude that this is already existing in local government. Mechanisms available for preventing corruption are found to be insufficient as a result of poor governance as well as the weakness and gaps in legislation and lack of transparency (Ndlovu, Maramura & Enaifoghe, 2020:23). Bekele and Ago (2020:101) believe that transparency provides a platform wherein community members know exactly what is going on and the rationale of the decisions taken by the government, or its functionaries at different levels towards development. The absence of transparency and accountability makes the government vulnerable to critique and corruption (Matshabaphala & Rington, 2022:715). Transparency is viewed as a central element of accountability and good governance (Masiya & Lubinga, 2023:43). Mabillard and Zumofen (2016:19) identified two types of transparency as follows:

- ‘’Active transparency, which involves the voluntary dissemination of information; and
- Passive transparency which refers to the constrained release of information, usually following a request submitted by community members’’.

The provision of accurate, clear, and relevant information is of paramount importance for achieving an open government and rebuilding public trust (Mhlauli, Zitha & Mogane, 2021:308). Transparency in local government is pivotal as it enables local communities to monitor the delivery of municipal services and hold municipal officials accountable (Ndebele & Mdlalose, 2021:539). Moti (2019:9) argues that transparency

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is closely connected to accountability and that it is a prerequisite for accountable government thus, transparency can also be seen as an ethical imperative. Transparency as a concept is a precondition for accountability (Gabriel, Antonio, Ramos & Marasigan, 2019:32). Rulashe and Ijeoma (2022:12) share the same sentiment and further state that the concept of accountability and transparency cannot be separated from each. Jadara and Al-Wadi (2021:285) are of the view that to detect corruption, it is imperative to establish the foundations of transparency based on the principle of creating an environment in which information regarding decisions is available to promote accountability systems.

Transparency can be exercised through community participation, consultation, and strategies on local development planning and spatial development planning, where targets can be collectively set (Thobejane & Ngoepe-Ntsoane, 2022:223). It is, therefore, imperative to ensure that community participation is promoted at all levels of the municipality. Matloga, Mahole and Nekhavhambe (2024:5) cite that the lack of transparency in municipalities tends to influence municipal officials to engage in corrupt activities as well as mismanagement. Mlambo *et al.,* (2023:1) opine that the lack of transparency and accountability within developmental local government has consolidated corruption and impunity. The above demonstrates how important transparency is in promoting accountability. According to Yende (2023:204), transparency improves service delivery.

2.7.2 Ethics

Hallunovi, Osmani and Bashi (2014:204) define ethics as the practical application of the moral standards in governance. It is critical for local government to ensure that there are guidelines and principles set to shape the acceptable behaviour of municipal officials. Matsiliza and Zonke (2017:75) is of the view that ethical codes and honesty are foundations of public administration and are recognised as principles that can enhance integrity for good governance. Where there is good governance, principles that underpin this concept will be prevalent, such as accountability. Ethics and accountability are interconnected and thus can be placed together (Siyal, 2020:4). Unethical behaviour or incompetent behaviour leads to low confidence and create hidden agenda and interpersonal conflict and defensive (Kroukamp, 2016:106).

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Osho and Afolab (2014:46) elucidate that accountability is a concept in ethics and government with several synonymously meanings such as responsibility, answerability, blame worthiness, liability and other terms associated with the expectation of account giving. Shava and Mazenda (2021:308) argues that the government is campaigning to uphold ethics because politicians and municipal officials struggle to demonstrate ethical behaviour. Shava and Mazenda (2021:309) further argue that ethics holds municipal officials accountable for the decisions taken as the violation of ethical principles is against the code of conduct. Local government is in disorder as a result of unethical behaviour by local authorities obsessed with political party rivalries and a refusal to hold those responsible for corruption accountable (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:527).

For someone to be regarded as ethical, they must display attributes or behaviours consistent with what is universally accepted as right (Baloyi, 2022:393). In most instances, that which is universally accepted will be detailed in the various policies of the institutions, such as the code of conduct. Sibanda and Van Rooyen (2023:114) cite that an organisation that disregards ethical values creates an unethical organisational culture, which breeds unethical behaviour. Ethics may influence municipal officials to align their behaviour to the code of conduct, which is regarded as right and virtuous (Siyal, 2020:1). However, Matshabaphala and Ringson (2022:708) opine that local government continues to struggle with unethical conduct and the disregard of the practices of good governance. Lekubu and Sibanda (2021:1) cite that there seem to be low levels of ethics and morality in municipalities.

2.7.3 Integrity

Matsiliza and Zonke (2017:75) cites that integrity is an inherent principle serving as a foundation for municipal officials to uphold and adhere to when serving the public. Huberts (2018:3) views integrity as the quality of acting in accordance with relevant moral values, norms, and rules. Integrity has, in many ways, addressed the consistency of municipal official in their commitment to executing their function. According to Codreanu (2019:271), integrity is part of a value-based framework. This implies that integrity encompasses various elements that can be used to identify and shape the culture of the municipality. Individuals occupying political office and those in the public sector are expected to be answerable for their conduct (Govender, Jahed

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& Auriacombe, 2023:151). This will portray a level of integrity from those in power. The culture of the municipality plays a crucial element as it is used to determine the capabilities of the municipality. Huberts (2018:4) further states that consistency cannot be the only element in judging the integrity of municipal officials, as corrupt officials may also apply consistency. Integrity can be judged through behaviours constituting the set standards and principles of the municipalities. The standards are set by the municipality in a bid to shape the desired behaviours for all municipal officials. These standards are set in alignment with existing legislature within developmental local government. Human Resource Management can act as a strategic promoter in ensuring the recruitment of skilled and capable officials and officials with a high level of integrity (Codreanu, 2019:273). It will, however, not be easy to determine the integrity of municipal officials through the recruitment process, but it will assist the municipality in putting effort into ensuring that this element is integrated into the recruitment process.

2.7.4 Good governance

Aisedion and Uwa (2021:1948) posit that governance entails the efficient management of state institutions where issues of accountability, transparency, rule of law, and public sector management are of great concern. According to Laila and Ermawat (2021:35), good governance is related to governance that is transparent, accountable, fair, effective and efficient. Good governance recommends ideal administrative behaviour and rejects unethical or questionable behaviour by municipal officials (Sambo & Kanyane, 2020:27). According to Bekele and Ago (2020:98), the existing emphasis on good governance is because of the widespread belief that it is the key to improving development outcomes. With local government being geared toward development, it is necessary to ensure good governance. According to Khouya and Benabdelhadi (2020:49), good governance implies a particular conception of the disclosure of the collective interests, the areas of public action, and their coordination to carry out effective and efficient municipal policies. It is to be noted that municipal policies can only be effective if and when community members are involved in the developmental stages. There are imperative principles necessary to ensure that accountability takes place. Transparency ensure that information is shared and provided which may be used to hold municipal officials accountable. When accountability exists it promote good governance and guarantees that municipal finances are utilised effectively.

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Integrity assists the municipality in creating a culture that promotes good professionalism within the municipality.

Public engagement is a necessary component of good governance, which can result in effective, reliable, and solid public institutions (Rulashe & Dyan, 2022:59). To gain the public's trust, the government must ensure good governance as one of its measures (Prasetya, 2021:360). Community participation and proper delivery of service are imperative elements of good governance, which also controls corruption (Mudzusi, Munzhedzi & Mahole, 2024:3). According to Mhlauli *et al.,* (2021:307), accountability is a requirement of good governance. Thus, the promotion of accountability is crucial to achieving good governance. Good governance's objective is to encourage better service delivery and accountability in local government by setting good governance standards (Mamokhere, 2022:9).

There are certain factors that are considered to be imperative in terms of ensuring good governance, such as transparency. Transparency is regarded as an essential component of good government and a need for any democracy (Mabillard & Zumofen, 2016:03). Providing local citizens with open access to information is a foundation of good governance (Kessy, 2020:194). The provision of information is a form of promoting transparency. Ragolane and Malatji (2024:82) cite that good governance and clean audits are of paramount importance to the quality-of-service delivery within developmental local government. Tsako (2020:9) argues that good governance is associated with the governing party’s disciplined knowledge and understanding of the societal values of responsiveness, accountability, professionalism, and ethical conduct. This implies that whatever is occurring in the ruling party will have a direct impact on the running of municipalities and subsequently service delivery.

Meyer (2022:02) states that governance and human development are inseparable; thus governance cannot be sound unless it sustains human development. The above suggest that the absence of human development is not in existence in developmental local government, so good governance will be compromised. Good governance embraces elements such as of accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equitable and inclusive and effective and efficient utilisation of financial resources (Msughter, Maradun & Liman, 2021:5). Mlambo, Makgoba and Mphurpi (2023:42) contend that corruption deteriorates the municipal administration discourse and

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sabotages elements of good governance. The study by Sekatle and Selepe (2023:130) revealed that municipalities lack elements of governance and are characterised by maladministration, corruption, fraud, political interference and nepotism. Sambo and Kanyane (2020:27) are of the view that ethics and accountability are regarded as important pillars of governance.

2.8 BENEFITS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Municipal officials are expected to be accountable because their work has many aspects, which can lead to the abuse of the public interest and corruption if not guarded (Hallunovi *et al.,* 2014:215). Accountability mechanisms must be observed to remain relevant and applicable to the ever-changing environment in the local sphere of government (Shava & Mazenda, 2021:309). The continuous observation of those mechanisms will afford the municipality a continued enjoyment of the benefits of accountability, provided that they are effective. Ijeoma and Sambumbu (2013:289-291) listed the benefits of accountability:

2.8.1 Improving management of municipal finances

According to Mbatha and Mutereko (2021:129), financial management in local government intends to promote financial accountability and judicious use of financial revenue for the benefit of community members. Fourie (2015:875) states that financial management entails the effective management of the collection and expenditure of funds by the municipality. Municipal finances are a crucial element in facilitating effective services to the local communities. Municipalities collect a substantial chunk of money through other sources within their jurisdiction. It is, therefore, imperative to have a system that controls and manages municipal funds. Cheruiyot, Oketch, Namusonge, and Sakwa (2017: 212) state that municipal financial management is a complex field with many new initiatives and relatively few successes to date. Cheruiyot *et al.,* (2017: 212) further state that people tend to demonstrate greater trust in the government if there is strong financial stewardship, accountability and transparency.

Ijeoma and Sambumbu (2013:296) indicate that the local government has the responsibility of educating community members on compliance measures so that in case there is a breach, appropriate initiatives are taken to record the misuse or misconduct of municipal officials to relevant Authoritative institutions. The process may

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be done by means of sharing accurate information. The community elects leaders on the assumption that they would uphold their campaign pledges and promote their interests and when this is not the case, mistrust results (O'Doherty, 2022:1). It has been evident in local government that the distrust is also emanating from the failure to uphold the promises that politicians make during elections period and when they are in power or take office.

Due to limited funding, the local government faces challenges in meeting all of the needs of the community; hence it is essential to ensure effective provision and management of financial resources (Saputra, 2021:34). In light of the corruption cases reported within the local sphere of government, the looting of the limited financial resources has exacerbated the inability of the municipality to meet the basic need of community members. Zweni and Yan (2022:39) opine that one of the most common issues facing municipalities in recent years is the complete lack of effective and appropriate financial management and controls. The promotion of accountability will ensure the realisation of sound financial management.

2.8.2 Enhancing the municipal service delivery process

South Africa has a long-standing problem with poverty, which remains a significant challenge to the development and social cohesion of the nation (Zindi & Ndhlovu 2023:415). Local government has the responsibility of assisting the government in ensuring the social change and status of community members through effective service delivery. Efficient service delivery has been a top priority of the new democratic government in South Africa since 1994 (Zindi & Ndhlovu 2023:415). Ijeoma and Sambumbu (2013:295) ascertain that there is a direct relationship between improving accountability and improving municipal service delivery and overall administration of municipal finances. This is because accountability creates an environment that allows openness in the management of funds. Pretorius and Schurink (2007:15) state that municipal service delivery is not viewed as an advantage enjoyed by the privileged selected community members, but it is a legitimate right for all community members. The enhancement of service delivery, according to Khotami (2017:32), is the practice of process accountability, which uses processes, procedures, and measures in carrying out the specified activities. It has become evident that sustainable services can only be offered when resources and revenue are managed efficiently and fairly at

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a reasonable cost (Zwane & Matsiliza 2023:3). It is therefore not a surprise that service delivery is compromised due to mismanagement of municipal funds.

There have been some attempts to improve service delivery by means of utilising emerging technologies, but much more still needs to be done (Joseph & Williams, 2022:70). Municipality have to move from rendering services the old traditional way an incorporated technology in this regard. Nel-Sanders and Malomane (2022:1) defines e-municipality as the municipality delivering public services online and realising new technologies. The COJ has an electronic platform where community members can upload their meter readings to fast-track the payment process, thus improving service delivery. This process has the potential to improve accountability as information will be stored electronically and can always be accessed for any inquiries. According to Molobela (2023:70), an e-municipality comprises a collection of multiple operations made accessible through the application and usage of an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) interface to invoke a service.

2.8.3 Promotion of good governance

The municipal potential to flourish largely depends on its capacity for effective and sound governance (Mlambo *et al*., 2023:1). Ukwandu and Jarbandhan (2016:25) define good governance as the effective utilisation of the state's assets and power. The efficient use of such resources should be evident in the improved lives of the beneficiaries. Prabakaran (2011:97) states that transparency is a key to good governance as it reinforces accountability. Transparency permits the public to be able to access information, which may be utilised to hold public servants accountable. Koenane and Mangena (2017:68) state that good governance cannot be discussed without introducing the ethical principle of accountability. This implies that where there is accountability, good governance will manifest. Good governance has the potential of providing citizens assurance that local government is capable of providing municipal service delivery and also addressing problems in developmental local government. According to Thusi and Selepe (2023:690), the goal of good governance is to encourage improved provision of service as well as accountability in local government by creating a standard of good governance.

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An inadequate internal control environment, improper executive nominations, inadequate scrutiny by municipal leadership, volatility in executive leadership, and financial mismanagement are all consequences of weak governance (Nzama, Moloi & Marx, 2023:4). This has been witnessed with COJ through the vote of no confidence of prominent leaders such as the executive mayor. The essential requirement is a must for ethical oversight to enhance the principles of effective governance (Masenya & Mthombeni, 2023:40). Zwane and Matsiliza (2023:4) cite that municipalities need to have internal controls supported by vigorous control mechanisms based on good governance and 'Batho Pele' principles to effectively improve governance and organizational arrangements. This implies that good governance depends on various elements, such as internal control and 'Batho Pele' principles, to be effective. Thusi and Selepe (2023:245) view the anger of community members as a result of bad governance and inefficiency. The promotion of accountability may have a positive impact in reducing anger as it may be viewed as the government trying to rectify the wrong inefficacy. According to Marawu, Utete, and Zhou (2023:73), effective governance encompasses not only the qualities of policies implemented by the government but also the manner in which the government engages with diverse segments of the private sector. Respecting sound governance practices can help local government become more accountable and efficient, which will benefit local communities by establishing a trustworthy and dependable service delivery system (Shava, 2023:204). The increase in cases of corruption and reveals the gross lack of governance and within local government (Matshabaphala & Rington, 2022:722).

2.8.4 Reduction of corruption

Masenya and Mthombeni (2023:40) argue that corruption is a global issue that impedes progress and advancement by taking funds away from initiatives for development. This was demonstrated by the looting of funds allocated for COVID-19 pandemic. According to Mbandlwa *et al., (*2020:1649), corruption within local government reverses the gains of a democratic government and diverts the focus from improving public services. Mlambo *et al.,* (2023:10) reported that the primary reason for corruption in South Africa is the lack of transparency and accountability in government organisations and public offices. Thusi and Selepe (2023:243) report that municipal officials are often found guilty of money laundering, fraud, and corruption, making it harder to get public goods and services to the people who need them. Fraud

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and corruption are generally seen as the biggest threats to South Africa's democracy (Lethoko, Musandiwa & Njoko, 2018:707). Aranha (2017:2) cites that improving democratic control of corruption often falls upon changes in accountability. It can therefore be deducted that accountability has a direct link with the reduction of corruption. Manyaka and Nkuna (2014: 1578) believe that enhancing the mechanism of accountability could play a crucial role in reducing opportunities for corruption. This is because corruption thrives where there is no accountability.

2.8.5 Improved public trust

Mpembyemungu (2019:28) is of the view that bringing power closer to the people yields meaningful results when elected leaders and voters have a good relationship. This has the potential to build trust between municipal officials and the local communities. Active participation in decision-making and interactive dialogue between citizens and government representatives influences public trust positively (Tanny & Al-Hossienie, 2019:1). Beshi and Kaur (2019:337) are of the believe that the expecttions of community members is for government to be accountable for all they do, to take full responsibility for their actions, and to see to it that their demands are met. Trust is categories by various elements, which are used to determine the level of trust that is in existence. Beshi and Kaur (2019:340) further cite that it is believed that trust in the government is essential to the efficient operation of a democratic system. Kgobe, Bayat, and Karriem (2020:6) argue that a transparent municipality, which is viewed as fair, ensures accountability and builds trust among stakeholders.

According to Mpembyemungu (2019:26), there is a need to design an instrument that permits community members to hold municipal officials accountable. The effectiveness of such mechanism may have the potential of increasing public trust. When municipal officials involve the members of the local communities in the development of the municipal policies and programmes, it gives them a sense of belonging and trust. According to Khotami (2017:32), the practice of this process results in policy accountability. The confidence of community members will also be boosted by this process, as they will feel that their contributions matter and have made a difference. The non-existence of trust due to inadequate provisioning of services coupled by ineffective financial mismanagement is high and has led to service delivery protests as well as utilisation of private service providers (Maseko, Robbetze &

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Masungini, 2020:2). Molobela and Hlatshwayo (2023:54) assert that public trust can be established and maintained through accountability as well as a healthy government-citizen's relationship. Therefore, community participation is imperative in this regard. The lack of trust among community members leads to loss of confidence and dissatisfaction (Mantzaris & Pillay, 2017:66).

2.9 CONCEPTUALISATION OF EXTERNAL ROLE PLAYERS IN ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

According to Van Niekerk and Sebakamotse (2020:275), the vital function of oversight is to safeguard against unethical behaviour, maladministration, and misuse of power. Muchwa (2023:1) believes that external oversight bodies have an imperative role in supervising internal oversight to determine whether there is proper management and control of public resources. Oversight is essential in enhancing transparency and accountability as these two concepts are at the centre of improving governance within developmental local government (Makhado, 2016:2-3). Oversight bodies therefore have the responsibility of ensuring that justification and explanation is provided for the spending of public resources. Various institutions, policies and legislation have been developed and enacted to facilitate and perform oversight functions as a means to ensure accountability. Evaluating the effectiveness of those external functions relating to oversight is imperative. Consistent oversight must be implemented as a form of checks and balances to flag any corrupt activities that may compromise service delivery (Mutereko & Shava, 2024:50). Mechanisms for accountability are intended to hold the ruling government and municipal officials accountable for their actions (Kgobe & Mamokhere, 2021:1).

Napier (2018:183) argues that for an oversight committee to be effective, there is a need for a clear and purposeful delegation of authority. This can only be successful if there are qualified and capable individuals with knowledge on how to scrutinise legislation to determine the relevancy and practicality of such legislation. The external oversight bodies are entrusted with the responsibility of auditing the three spheres of government. This process should allow for early detection of wrongdoing as a preventative measure for corruption. Oversight is critical for ensuring that the executive is operating in a regulatory manner that applies the principles of good governance (Moji, Nhede & Masiya, 2022:2). According to Ile and Makiva (2017:15),

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accountability and oversight are inseparable concepts, especially when put into context. The external oversight bodies are listed and discussed below as bodies to ensure accountability within developmental local government.

2.9.1 The Public Protector of South Africa (PPSA)

The main role of the Public Protector is to (a) investigate any conduct in state affairs, or in the public administration in any sphere of government, that is alleged or suspected to be improper or to result in any impropriety or prejudice; (b) to report on that conduct; and (c) to take appropriate remedial action. According to Bazana and Reddy (2020:2), the Public Protector of South Africa is an independent institution and subject only to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996, as well as the law. Further to this, it must be impartial and exercise its powers and perform the functions without fear, favour or bias. The establishment and functions of the PPSA are mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The PPSA oversight role extends to all organs of state and government agencies operating in all three spheres of government (PPSA, 2020/2021). The Public Protector is appointed on a non-renewable contract for a period of seven years as articulated in section 182 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Thornhill, 2016:129). This means that the process of appointing a new public protector commences before the current contract ends. The contract of PPSA runs for a period of 5 years and the year 2023 marked the end of the contract and the new appointment thereof. As this is a critical post in the country as a whole, the interview process was made live of the various news channels, which made it possible for community members to have their opinions of the candidates. The documentation of the process promotes transparency, and in an effort to comply, the minutes as well as video and audio files are uploaded onto the Parliamentary Monitoring Group page (Bazana & Reddy, 2021:10).

Banana and Reddy (2020:2) cite that the PPSA was created to ensure that officials conduct themselves in accordance with the law and discharge their duties as expected. One may question that if one of the duties of the PPSA is to ensure ethical behaviour of municipal officials, why is there a rise in unethical behaviour from those officials. This suggests that more is still required to be done to strengthen the capabilities of PPSA in performing its constitutional mandate. It is understood that the public has a role to play in ensuring the investigation of wrongdoing in local

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government. Given the above, the public needs to be educated on how to lodge complaints to the office of the PPSA to investigate any suspected wrongdoing. This process requires to be done anonymously, as the protection of whistle-blower in South Africa is still questionable, as they become victims of unwelcomed behaviour, undue criticism, isolation, and exclusion in the society (Mojapelo & Faku, 2019:59). Thornhill (2016:132) state that investigating an allegation does not automatically imply that there has been wrongdoing, it, however, ensures that no wrongful action or corrupt action has occurred and ensures the delivery of services. As reported in the PPSA (2020/2021), the PPSA investigated a case at an informal settlement in Roodepoort, which resulted in the securing of dignified accommodation for those residents, something that COJ was unsuccessful in executing. This demonstrates the importance of the PPSA in ensuring that municipalities carry out their mandate in delivering service to community members. Kgobe and Mamokhere (2021:8) cite that community members can report unethical behaviour of municipal officials and politicians to the office of the public protector.

According to Fagbadebo and Dorasamy (2022:136), the PPSA is a vital instrument to make its constitutional obligation effective as a facilitator of good governance. It is, therefore. Important to ensure that the public protector is someone with no political ties to any institution or organisation, as this may hinder the effectiveness of the office of the Public Protector. Political affiliated leaders have demonstrated their loyalties to the party at the expense of the general public.

2.9.2 Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA)

Ogochukwu and Prosper (2014:36) state that the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) is the supreme audit institution of the Republic of South Africa and plays an imperative oversight role in encouraging financial accountability in government. Auditor General is one of the Chapter 9 institutions responsible for auditing the performance of government entities in all three spheres of government (Mamokhere, Musitha & Netshidzivhani, 2021:2). The office of AGSA has the responsibility of fostering accountability through its functions of auditing report to ensure compliance to policies, as well as prescripts guidelines (Munzhedzi, 2021). According to Matlala and Uwizeyimana (2020:3), auditing supports the governance roles of oversight, insight, and foresight. It is based on the above that the AGSA is in a position to gain

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an accurate and deep comprehension of something and be able to predict what might happen in the future and try to prevent it. Section 188 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, lays out the functions of the AGSA as follows:

- "The Auditor-General must audit and report on the accounts, financial statements, and financial management of— (a) all national and provincial state departments and administrations; (b) all municipalities; and (c) any other institution or accounting entity required by national or provincial legislation to be audited by the Auditor-General;
- In addition to the duties prescribed in subsection (1), and subject to any legislation, the Auditor-General may audit and report on the accounts, financial statements, and financial management of—(a) any institution funded by the National Revenue Fund or a Provincial Revenue Fund or by a municipality; or (b) any institution that is authorised in terms of any law to receive money for a public purpose;
- The Auditor-General must submit audit reports to any legislature directly interested in the audit and to any other authority prescribed by national legislation. All reports must be made public; and
- The Auditor-General has the additional powers and functions prescribed by national legislation".

A Report by the Auditor General (2020:4) revealed that municipalities that performed best had a stable leadership that was committed to a strong control environment, effective governance, and continuous monitoring of audit action plans in order to timeously address any audit findings. This best practice should be cascaded to other municipalities that are facing the same challenges. Machinjike *et al.,* (2021:3) are of the view that accountability is dependent on the success with which the elected members and oversight are able to enforce accountability on those who have the responsibility of handling public funds. The AGSA has called for all role players of the government accountability ecosystem to consistently play their part in ensuring accountability for government spending to improve service delivery and quality of life for South Africa's citizens AGSA (2022:1).

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Ngqobe *et al*., (2021:108) are of the view that the audit reports by the AGSA are tools used as measures of accountability to measure the tasks executed by municipalities. However, the question remains as to what extent those audit reports can be utilized to institute consequence management. Various types of audit reports are issued after each audit. The one audit report to avoid is the unqualified report. Khasodi, Mahlala, and Hofisi (2023:344) argue that unqualified audit outcomes within municipalities are symptoms of a weak culture of accountability, poor control systems, and poor municipal financial reporting. The AGSA has also flagged the lack of implementation of recommendations provided after audits were conducted. This raises again the important elements of employing officials who are capable of interpreting and understanding reports provided by assurance providers. If local government continues in the state where it is, there is a possibility of total collapse of the sphere in terms of its financial capabilities. Matlala and Uwizeyimana (2020:2) share the same sentiment and further state that implementation of the AGSA's recommendations seems to be a major problem in the local government.

According to a Report by AGSA (2022:10), since the start of the current sixth administration, COJ submitted poor performance reports. This could be, according to Thusi and Selepe (2023:531), attributed to the lack of municipalities to enforce conclusions of the AGSA investigations to hold officials accountable for violating the Municipal Financial Management Act (MFMA). This is concerning as it brings up questions such as how long the municipality will manage to deliver services to the community. It further demonstrates that there is a need to reconfigure accountability to ensure that performance improves. It is to be noted that the AGSA has, in the past, only provided recommendations with no further action. The AGSA has since been mandated to submit any findings to further investigations by means of opening cases at law enforcement agencies.

2.9.3 Special Investigating Unit (SIU)

According to Mlambo *et al., (2023:45),* the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) is tasked with investigating the severe allegations of corruption and maladministration in the administration of state institutions, including municipalities. Budhram and Geldenhuys (2018:31) opine that the SIU functions are to investigate serious maladministration within state institutions and expenditure of public money and property. Chetty and

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Pillay (2017:111) cite that the SIU's powers to investigate and prosecute corruption are wide-ranging and diversified as they encompass both investigative and civil litigation powers; the agency, however, lacks powers of arrest and prosecutorial powers. It can, therefore, be deduced that the functions performed by the SIU may have a direct impact on influencing accountability in developmental local government, given effective investigation. As per the Annual Report (2020/2021:5), the SIU uses stakeholder engagements to connect, collaborate, educate, and inform existing stakeholders, including the South African public, on the work and processes of the Unit. This process also ensures that one of “Batho Pele” principles is adhered to, which is transparency. This process again ensures the confidence as well as trust of the public. The “Batho Pele” principles are critical in service delivery as they reinforce the values and principles of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Mofolo, 2018:105).

The Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, in his foreword of the SIU Annual Report (2021/2022:07), states that the doors of accountability are opening wider as the SIU uncovers those who are robbing the state of its funds. This was demonstrated by the various cases that were discovered of fraud and corruption during the Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) world pandemic within all spheres of government, as stated in chapter one of the study. Even though it is said that the SIU lacks the power to arrest, the evidence acquired through investigation may be used to arrest those delinquents. With all the good that the SIU is doing, there is still a need for those found guilty to be prosecuted to send a message to those contemplating committing the same crime. The SIU investigated various alleged cases of COVID-19 and found that the former minister of the Department of Health was guilty of “a distinct lack of oversight” over the contract to fight the world pandemic (Mhlauli *et al.,* 2021:302). This demonstrated the powers and capabilities of this unit in ensuring that corruption will be investigated and brought to light regarding who is behind it. The recent case of the former speaker of parliament being investigated by this institution also demonstrated its effectiveness in investigating cases of corruption. It is to be noted that there is a need to ensure that the investigation of those in power is done in such a manner that leaves no room for any influence or special treatment.

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2.9.4 Other important oversight bodies

Maganoe (2023:6) alludes that when parliament fails to hold the executive accountable, then the judiciary is required to intervene as the custodian of democracy. Parliamentarians require reliable evidence to scrutinise how governments implement policy effectively and to safeguard the intent of parliament as expressed in legislation (Khumalo, Morkel, Mapitsa, Engel & Ali, 2022:132). Parliament has the authority to expel persons from office through the power of impeachment (Maganoe, 2023:6). This can only be achieved by means of receiving accurate and reliable evidence against the perpetrator. According to Peté (2021:2903), when a democratic government is confronted by existential crisis that threatens the foundations of the democracy, it will often appoint a high-level judicial commission of inquiry as part of its response to the crisis. Takalani and Mudau (2024:52) concur with the above statement and further state that the reasons for the establishment of commissions of inquiry as an ad hoc institutional arrangement is to probe, uncover, and legally analyse the crises to arrive at conclusions and recommendations thereof.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 requires a single national prosecuting authority, structured in terms of an Act of Parliament which is to be headed by National Director of Public Prosecutions (Dyani-Mhango, 2020:2). According to Kohn (2022:1) the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) is a special constitutional body that exercises significant public powers in South Africa's democracy but does not fit comfortably within either the judicial or the executive branch of state. The investigation and prosecution of corruption is the responsibility of various role players within the Criminal Justice System while the NPA is responsible for the prosecution (Budhram & Geldenhuys 2018:28). This implies that the NPA is regardied as the last agency in ensuring the prosecutions of those suspected of any illegal conduct.

The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI) was established as part of the South African Police Service (SAPS), with the intention that the government could oversee it and not use it for nefarious political purposes. Mhlauli *et al.,* (2021:308) opine that accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law. Such institutions have the mandate to provide transparency in the dealings of municipal affairs through effective investigations.

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2.10 INTERNAL CONTROLS WITHIN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY

Mothupi, Musvoto, and Lekunze (2022:79) posit that internal control denotes processes to safeguard reliable and authentic reporting of financial activities as well as compliance with relevant regulations and laws. Winarna, Muhtar, Sutaryo, and Amidjaya (2021:90) state that the internal control system is a manifestation of the government's commitment to promoting accountability. According to Oyetunji, Lawal, Yinus, Akodu, and Lawal (2021:42), a well-developed internal control system is expected to expose how comprehensively the government manages its affairs and makes use of its available public resources. Eton, Mwosi and Ogwel (2022:360) state that internal control concerns preventive, detective and corrective activities. Winarna *et al*., (2021:90) are of the same view and further state that an effective and efficient internal control system ensures the realization of accountable and transparent local government.

Internal control seeks to detect errors, frauds and irregularities to safeguard asserts through restricted access to authorised persons only (Idris & Babangida, 2021:116). The rising cases of fraud and irregularities in local governments suggest that internal control measures are not as effective as they should be. Shava and Mazenda (2021:315) argue that the weakness of internal controls has led to corruption, which has had an adverse effect on the quality of service being rendered. Any system within an organisation or institution is as good as its employees. It is crucial for the municipality to boost the morale of employees and make sure of the effective and efficient application of internal control mechanisms (Osho & Afolabi, 2014:49). This is imperative, as internal controls can only be made effective by those in control of them. Weak oversight structures create opportunities for corruption and manipulation of municipal management systems, which may impede service delivery (Shava, 2023:204).

According to Oyetunji *et al.,* (2021:45), internal control exists to achieve objectives such as efficient conduct of business, safeguarding assets, prevention, and detection of fraud and other unlawful acts, completeness, and accuracy of financial records, and ensuring the timeous preparation of financial statements. Ncgobo and Malefane

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(2017:77-78) identify various elements of internal controls, namely, control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information, communication, and monitoring activities. Internal controls within local government face challenges of lack of accountability coupled with ineffective measures in implementing disciplinary measures for misconduct (Oyetunji, Lawal, Yinus, Akodu & Lawal, 2021:42). Internal oversight is regarded as one of the internal controls to ensure compliance. Oversight within developmental local government ensures compliance to regulations. Muchwa (2023:1) argues that internal oversight assists by advising on internal control and management practices based on a systematic and independent review of the institutional command and control. The inadequate and ineffective internal controls have been attributed to the failure of financial management (McKenzie & Marx, 2023:7). The weaknesses in internal controls are key root causes of most of the challenges within developmental local government (Mnguni & Subban, 2022:161). Therefore, internal controls should be designed in such a manner that effectively supports the oversight function (Sambo, 2022:16). Although accountability may be realised through the performance of an oversight, the effectiveness of that oversight is of paramount importance (Mutereko & Shava, 2024:49). The various internal role players within developmental local government to ensure oversight functions are discussed below:

2.10.1 Municipal manager

Ngumbela (2022:5) states that the municipal manager is the head of administration and the accounting officer. It is in light of the above that the municipal manager should take charge of the performance of the municipality. Chitimira, Sethunyane, and Magau (2022:8) concur with the above and further, as the municipal manager is the accounting officer of the municipality and should be aware or made aware of all activities of the municipalities. Van Niekerk and Sebakamotse (2020:281) maintain that the municipal manager is responsible and accountable for the municipality's revenue, expenditure, asset management, discharging of all liabilities, and ensuring compliance with all legislative, especially financial policies such as the MFMA. Hence is crucial to ensure that the municipal management is equipped with skills to be able to effectively perform financial duties. This is because finances are one resource that ensures the operation of the municipality. Clean audits and sustainable good performance are influenced by a number of factors, such as sound financial

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management, frequent skills empowerment, good governance, and the ability to apply appropriate corrective measures and compliance (Ngqwala & Ballard, 2020:121). The municipal manager should ensure sound financial management so as to produce a clean audit and this can only be achieved by ensuring suitable and qualified appointments. Municipal managers must be financially accountable which Enwereji and Uwizeyimana (2019:148) defined as accountability that entails the responsibility of being answerable in the general measures by which public financial resources are utilized.

According to Fourie and Malan (2020:8), the MFMA ensures that local government finances are handled in a manner that will ensure that service delivery is sustainable. The responsibilities of the municipal manager are that of an advisor on compliance with this Act to the political structures and officials of the municipality (Khaile, Davids & Khaile, 2021:169). It is to be noted that the municipal manager can only be effective in the absence of political interference, which in most cases is done to gain favour for personal enrichment. According to Sebakamotse and Van Niekerk (2021:23), the municipal manager should be held accountable for the misuse of funds or assets because of any deficiency in the administrative municipality, and further state that failure to uphold the mandate should result in the removal of the municipal manager from office. The municipal manager must report any criminal activities to the Municipal Public Accounts Committees, which will do investigations (Rulashe & Dyan, 2022:60). Thus, failure to report any criminal activities should also be regarded as a criminal offense by the municipality. Thusi and Selepe (2023:531) concur with the above sentiments and further state that in order to strengthen financial management and avert any fraud, municipal managers need to take greater steps to prevent and detect anomalous expenditure, as well as to look into it when it happens and make sure that the appropriate measures are taken. The mayor oversees the political side, while the municipal manager is in charge of the administrative side (Mohangi & Nyika, 2023:483).

2.10.2 Municipal Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

As per the view of Van Niekerk and Sebakamotse (2020:283), the municipal Chief Financial Officer (CFO) reports to the municipal manager for the assigned functions and is vested with powers of financial management of the budgetary process,

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accounting, analysis, financial reporting, cash management, debt management, and other review functions. The importance of this portfolio cannot be overemphasized. Mbatha and Mutereko (2022:286) indicate that good financial management in local government mandatory enhances municipal service delivery. The Office of the CFO is entrusted with the responsibility of managing municipal funds, and any mismanagement of such funds would result in a severely adverse effect on all aspects of municipal service delivery and on social and economic development (Fourie & Malan, 2020:13). Given the high level of financial mismanagement one is left with the question of how effective the CFO in the execution of its function is.

Zindi and Ndhlovu (2023:426) state that accounting officers, through the CFOs, should implement strong controls and oversight mechanisms to prevent irregular expenditure, fruitless expenditure, and non-compliance with finance management. Nzama (2019:1521) defines irregular expenditure as expenditure incurred in contravention of the MFMA and is not condoned in terms of section 170. It is evident that those mechanisms created are not effective as the local government continues to report fruitless expenditure as well as irregular expenditure. Municipalities are struggling with regulating irregular, unauthorised, fruitless, and wasteful expenditures and there has been no progress made by municipalities about this matter due to no compliance and lack of public accountability negatively affecting service delivery (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:523). Municipal councils and MPAC need to improve their effectiveness by means of enforcing adequate consequence management for poor service delivery (AGSA, 2022/2023:115).

Local municipalities in South Africa would perform excellently in the provision of service if the municipal role-players would ensure sound financial accountability in their respective projects (Enwereji & Uwizeyimana, 2019:144) and the CFO has that mandate of ensuring sound financial accountability within the municipality.

2.10.3 Municipal Internal Audit

Internal audit systems are paramount to achieve the objectives of the municipality and ensure checks and balances (Baloyi & Beyers 2019:28). Internal audit, as defined by Idris and Babangida (2021:116) is the process to check if due process and procedures have been followed. AbuTabar (2016:1) cites that internal audit functions are used to control the financial as well as employees' actions. Quampah *et al.,* (2021:257) define

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internal audit as a body within local government establishments that can independently appraise management activities and determine whether controls instituted are adequate and working as expected. Dzikrullah, Harymawan, and Ratri (2020:1) state that the internal audit function is important to minimize the occurrence of fraudulent financial statements and provide assurance and independent consultation for decision-making.

This study defines internal audit as the process of evaluating the effectiveness of local government in delivering municipal services, which is considered a crucial element in ensuring accountability (Kontogeorgis, 2018:109). The internal audit process ensures that financial reporting exists. The quality of financial reporting plays a crucial role in enhancing financial accountability through financial reports provided and audited (Eton *et al.,* 2022:360). Mabunda, Mvunabandi, and Chonco (2023:643) cite that internal and external auditors are required for a municipality to function effectively and comply with all legislative frameworks. According to Mbewu and Barac (217:17), the effectiveness of an internal audit is determined through compliance with the relevant guidelines, such as Section 165(2) (vii) of the MFMA. Compliance with such guidelines will positively influence accountability. Internal auditing performs several roles within developmental local government, and among those roles is to ensure compliance with prescripts as well as taking the role of advisory agent on the process of the institutions (Moodley, Ackers, & Odendaal, 2021:711).

Mamaile (2019:192) is of the view that internal audits have many roles, such as oversight, detection, insight, and deterrence. All these roles are meant to contribute to the reduction of transgression to ensure the effective functioning of developmental local government. According to Msindwana and Ngwakwe (2023:86), internal auditors must develop effectiveness in a way that focuses on their independence, organisational performance and efficiency, asset security, fraud detection and prevention, risk management, reliable financial statements, and compliance with legislation and regulations. Additionally, Fourie and Malan (2020:16) believe that auditees should be able to implement consequences against officials who fail to comply with the recommendations provided. A study by Moodley Moodley *et al.,* (2021:719) revealed that auditors often fail to see the department's bigger strategic picture and its essential service delivery imperatives. The above has the potential to render audit services ineffective.

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2.10.4 Municipal Audit Committee

According to Molobela and Hlatshwayo (2023:62), the municipal audit committee reports to the municipal council on matters highlighted by the AGSA and other additional regulations that the National Treasury may make. Mbatha and Mutereko (2022:289) cite that the audit committee is authorised to evaluate several risks to ascertain the probability of occurrence and its procedures. Mello (2018:4) ascertains that the scope of the audit committee relates to the advisory role and includes, amongst others, performance management and evaluation, risk management, good governance, as well as matters pertaining to financial control and internal audits. The audit committee is one of the committees established by the municipal council to assist in holding the executive accountable for the manner in which municipal financial resources are managed (Khaile & Davids, 2020:66). Msindwana and Ngwakwe, (2023:93) state that financial discipline, transparency and openness ensures that municipal funds are utilised economically, efficiently and effectively. This should be the primary focus of the audit committee as the municipality's efficacy is reliant on the utilisation of financial resources.

According to Moji *et al.,* (2022:4), audit committees do not have the authority to subpoena municipality administrations for non-performance or not submitting required financials on time. It is essential to understand that failure to enforce the recommendations by oversight bodies renders the municipality a mere loudhailer with no powers or enforceable mandates (Mlambo *et al.,* 2023:48). If one limits the role and responsibility of audit committees to its statutory role and responsibility, as prescribed in Section 166 of the MFMA, it would simply be that of advisor to the municipal (Krishnan & Subban, 2022:148). Establishing these committees was a good initiative, but yet again, it appears that so e of the functions performed are the same as those of other role players explained above. This then raises the question of whether local government has bodies that are duplicating functions, yet there is no improvement in their performance.

2.10.5 Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPACs)

The Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) exercises oversight over the executive, chaired by the mayor and portfolio committees of the council (Krishnan & Subban, 2022:146). According to Mofolo and Adonis (2021:1), MPAC was introduced

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as a response to the culture of lack of accountability in local government. The MPAC is established by the Council aligned to Section 79 of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 with the purpose of performing an oversight function on behalf of the Council over the executive functionaries of the Council with terms of reference to:

- "Consider and evaluate the Municipality's Annual Report and make recommendations to the Council;
- To make recommendations to the council when it adopts the oversight report on the annual report;
- Review and follow up on past recommendations on the Annual Report;
- Advise Council in respect of unauthorized, irregular or fruitless and wasteful expenditure in terms of Section 32 of the MFMA as and when so requested by the council, the executive mayor or municipal manager;
- Perform its functions taking due care to distinguish between oversight and interference in administration, as envisaged by Section 173 (4) and (5) of the MFMA and item 11 of Schedule 1 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (Code of Conduct for councillors);
- To perform any other oversight function as may be requested by the council from time to time; and
- Report to council at the first council meeting following the MPAC meeting".

As per the view of Makhado (2016:5), the MPAC serve as the overseer and protector of public funds. According to Mello (2018:4), these committees charged with executive responsibilities. The MPAC is responsible for promoting governance and accountability; lack of support affects their effectiveness, particularly support from political officials (Rulashe & Dyan, 2022:60). The performance of local government is often questioned against alleged financial irregularities, maladministration, corruption, and mismanagement (Kroukamp, 2016:106). Van Niekerk (2020:284) indicates that the main purpose of the MPAC is to execute oversight and to support the municipal council in holding the municipal administration to account for and safeguard the effective and efficient utilisation of municipal resources. The MPAC perform oversight functions on behalf of the Council over the executive functionaries of the Council to the extent set out herein (Mothupi *et al.,* 2022:80). The MPAC is facing challenges in executing its oversight functions. The lack of commitment is one of the challenges

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faced by MPAC members, which has led to the non-attendance of meetings, which negatively influences the oversight role (Rulashe & Dyan, 2022:61).

Despite the establishment of the MPAC, municipalities continue to attain clean audit reports (Enwereji & Uwizeyimana, 2019:145). The political deployment and contestation in municipalities have rendered the oversight capabilities of some MPACs ineffective (Mofolo & Adonis, 2021:2). It is therefore not a surprise that accountability is not as effective as it should be given that the oversight functions of this committee are undermined. The MPAC is tasked with monitoring municipal finances and tracking the performance of municipalities thereof (Shongwe & Meyer, 2023:144). The effectiveness of the MPAC is yet to be realised as the condition of municipal finances continues to worsen. Rulashe and Dyan (2023:59) state that the MPAC faces challenges such as limited-to-capacity constraints, budgetary constraints, lack of power, exclusion of citizens, integrity over financial matters and partisan. The MPAC has the oversight function of holding the executive accountable for public expenditure (Mbatha & Mutereko, 2022:287).

Adonis (2021:294) is of the view that as the MPAC has the responsibility of bringing to the attention of the council the findings and recommendations, it should also be legally authorised to prosecute and investigate on behalf of the council, where such actions are required, without delay. This will provide more power and improve the effectiveness of the MPAC. Mofolo and Adonis (2021:1) argue that the political deployment in municipalities has undermined the capabilities of the MPACs as an oversight structure. This is due to party loyalty by members at the expense of the rules and laws of the municipality, thus undermining such structure. Most municipalities have established MPAC, but most are under-resourced or under-capacitated (Links & Draai, 2023:1087).

2.10.6 Sections 79 and 80 Committees

Section 80 and Section 79 committees in terms of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, are significant structures to promote oversight over the municipal administration. Section 80 committees' reports and are accountable to the mayoral committee, while Section 79 committees account to the municipal council (Sebakamotse & Van Niekerk, 2021:7). Mokgari and Pwaka (2018:48) state that the COJ has separated the powers of the executive arm of the council from the legislative arm of Council. At COJ, Section

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79 committees are custodians of the oversight function on behalf of the Council (Mokgari & Pwaka 2018:48). Ngqobe, Fourie and Tshiyoyo (2021:125) state that these committees are facing challenges such as the capacity of committees to perform their oversight work. Capacity should not just be understood as the number of members but also the ability that those members have to construe the financial report of the municipality.

The COJ Section 79 committees are custodians of the oversight function on behalf of the council (Mokgari & Pwaka, 2018:51). According to Mokgari and Pwaka (2018:52-53), the COJ approved and introduced oversight in order to ensure accountability by the executive, however, there has been no evaluation of the efficacy and effectiveness of the model. The effectiveness of the committees must, therefore, be assessed in order to offer suggestions for improvement. Evolution is a process that plays an imperative role in ensuring not only effective implementation but also the success thereof. Shava and Mubangizi (2019:76) are of the view that Sections 79 and 80 serve different purposes, and they report differently to different entities.

2.10.7 Municipal council

Matyana and Mthethwa (2022:132) allude that a municipal council encompasses councillors from all wards of the municipality, presided over by the speaker. According to Rington and Matshabaphala (2022:35), municipal councils were adopted in 2000 to this new local government system. The core function of the municipal council is the political oversight of the municipality's functions, programmes and the management of the administration. The municipal council is empowered to ensure legislative oversight; Molobela and Hlatshwayo (2023:61) state that the municipality council must exercise its oversight role in the usage of resources within the context of which such resources were delegated for and in the best interest of the community. Municipal, councillors must operate democratically, which includes the passing of by-laws, budgets and community participation (Pietersen, 2021:495). Fourie and Van der Waldt (2023:1) argue that a municipal council has a statutory and moral obligation to perform an oversight function over all municipal functions and to ensure that suitable corrective measures are taken to deepen local democracy. It, however, still remains a question as to how effective municipal councillors are in executing their oversight functions.

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Section 19 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 provides further clarity in that the local councillors, as part of the local municipality council, can ensure such oversight by directly holding the mayor accountable. A municipal council is the governing body responsible for energising its constituents and addressing their concerns and hopes (Chili, Akbar, Nyika & Mbonye 2023:39). In light of the above, municipal councils have not been effective in their mandate of legislative oversight to eliminate possibilities of any wrongdoing and detect such in this regard. Shongwe and Mayer (2023:142) are in support of the above and further cite that the ineffective of the municipal council is also caused by the involvement of political parties, which creates challenges for the administration of the municipality. Municipal councillors have a mandate to deliver a democratic and accountable local government by rendering quality and effective services to community members (Nel & Patience, 2022:10).

Legislative oversight is crucial to the realisation of the core objective of the state (Fagbadebo & Dorasamy 2022:137). Maganoe (2023:4) defines legislative oversight as the authority of the legislature to oversee the governmental activities of the executive. Egobueze and Anthony (2020:54) further state that the imperatives of legislative oversight are to ensure that executive officials are accountable for the implementation of delegated authority. According to Kizito and Aminu (2013:2), legislative oversight refers to the review, monitoring, and supervision of the executive arm of government and has the duty to implement the existing programmes in such a manner that is efficient, effective and consistent with legislative intent. The municipal council's role should encourage a culture of governance that promotes accountability, openness and transparency (Khaile & Davids, 2020:73). Moji *et al.,* (2022:1) indicate that the challenges of the oversight role *are* the inability of management to enforce consequences. Municipal councils execute legislative and executive or administrative functions (Mokgari & Pwaka 2018:51). Egobueze and Anthony (2020:49) is of the view that in democratic societies, the legislature is the watchdog over other organs of government and the society. The term oversight is used to define an array of activities applied by legislatures to check executive action (Egobueze & Anthony, 2020:50). Maseko, Robbetze and Masungini (2020:3) state that municipal councils oversee making sure that high-quality, reasonably priced and easily accessible services are provided, according to the White Paper on Local Government (1998). According to

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Khomo, Farisani and Mashau (2023:3), municipal councils are faced with the challenge of the capacity to perform roles assigned to them due to inherent poor educational qualifications, making it challenging to interpret crucial reports to facilitate effective oversight roles. The municipal council plays a crucial role in the adoption of the IDP and oversight of the administration. However, their capabilities have been questioned due to a lack of education to execute oversight functions (Matyana & Mthethwa, 2022:133).

Fourie and Van der Waldt (2023:19) state that oversight committee members should have access to a permanent researcher and permanent legal advisor to foster oversight, enabling councillors to meet their obligations. This is a good initiative; however, given the financial state of most of the municipalities in the country, it would not be financially plausible to employ members to perform a function that councillors should already be equipped with when appointed/ elected. It is argued by Auriacombe and Waldt (2020:3) that even those few councillors that might be capable are captured due to corrupt activities council members frequently receive enormous sums of money in exchange for swaying the outcome in their favour. The municipal council is vested with the authority to decide on the appointment of municipal leaders for structures or positions (Matyana & Mthethwa, 2022:131). This process is sometimes influenced by the political dynamics within developmental local government. Ouwencamp and van der Waldt (2024:2) cite that municipal councils are not adequately responsive to the needs and concerns of community members. Local executives, as led by the mayor elected from the council, are required to ensure the provision of services as provided for by the constitution (Mabunda *et al.,* 2023:640). Council members are important individuals in local authorities, and thus, efforts should be made to provide training so that they are effective in their respective portfolios (Manaf, Mohameda & Harve, 2022:9).

2.11 SUMMATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OVERSIGHT BODIES

The oversight bodies have to safeguard municipal resources by making sure that there is accountability by the executives (Fourie & Van der Waldt, 2023:20). Reports from the AGSA have been revealing a downward spiral of local government financial management (Moji *et al.,* 2022:1). This implies that those oversight bodies responsible for ensuring effective financial management are not as effective. According to

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Moolman and Van der Waldt (2022:23), the effectiveness of the oversight bodies is questionable, resulting in inadequate utilisation of municipal funds and resources. This implies that those oversight bodies with the mandate of ensuring the effective utilisation of municipal funds are failing in their constitutional mandate. Based on the above, it may be concluded that the role-players have demonstrated little effectiveness in ensuring accountability. This is a result of cases reported above for lack of holding the municipal executives accountable as per AGSA findings. A study by Mbatha and Mutereko (2004:303) revealed that oversight bodies need to be staffed with people who have the skills and competency to carry out the oversight functions.

2.12 THE ROLE OF NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

National and provincial government plays a role in ensuring the effective functioning of developmental local government. National and Provincial spheres of government are mandated to ensure that municipalities execute functions in accordance with Schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Furthermore, National and provincial governments have a constitutional mandate, as alluded to in Section 154(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, to strengthen their capacities and provide support to municipalities in managing their financial activities and performing their functions. Makoti and Odeku (2018:68) allude that when municipal government fails to discharge its constitutional mandate, the provincial government is allowed by the law to intervene in terms of section 139 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Sebakamotse and Van Niekerk (2021:5) state that a provincial government may issue instructions to a municipal council to take a particular action, or it may dissolve the municipal council and appoint an administrator. A study conducted by Masiya, Davids and Mangai (2021:108) revealed that the dysfunctionality in some municipalities is exacerbated by poor oversight by national or provincial departments which have responsibility for local government. Another study by Van Niekerk and Sebakamotse (2020:286) suggests that the relevant provincial governments fail to intervene and fail to take the required steps when municipalities do not fulfil their financial obligations. As a response to the rising corruption in South African local government, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs is now charged with the monitoring and facilitation of the Anti-corruption strategy (Enaifoghe, 2023:476). According to Makoti and Odeku

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(2021:44-45), provincial and national governments have a constitutional responsibility to always render assistance that will enable municipalities to focus on and continue to render sustainable basic services to the people through municipal infrastructure that has been put in place to encourage good governance, transparency and accountability.

Khaile (2023:1) cites that provincial governments may invoke Section 139 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which is commonly referred to as placing a municipality under administration in response to the imminent collapse of dysfunctional municipalities. This has also been evident in that a number of municipalities were placed under administration as a result of failure to manage finances. In most cases, this is done to promote financial accountability. National and Provincial governments must monitor the performance of local government, more specifically the financial performance, to eliminate misappropriation of funds and resources (Edoun, Rameetse & Pooe, 2023:113). According to Thusi *et al., (2023:365), the* national government has taken some informed steps through the initiation of a variety of pieces of legislation, methods and mechanisms that guide the establishment of structures intended to represent communities in municipal affairs. The provincial government have variously invoked Section 139 of the Constitution, which is commonly referred to as placing a municipality under administration as a means to deal with the collapse and dysfunctional municipalities (Khaile, 2023:1). This process allows the provincial government to strategically manage the finances of the municipality and ensure that the debts are paid and ultimately services provided to community members. Mangaung Metropolitan municipality has demonstrated weak governance, and political and administrative leadership, which led to the implementation of Section 139 interventions from 201- to 2020 (Khaile, 2023:8).

2.13 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA AS A WATCHDOG IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Khalid, Ahmed and Mufti (2017:47) define media as a collective means of communication by which communities are kept informed about issues that affect their well-being. According to Damulak and Ejiga (2019:259), the media is one of the most powerful institutions in society, capable of quizzing, scrutinising, exposing, demanding and holding the government and its officials accountable to the people. Anyanwu,

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Awaeze and Etumnu (2022:173) cite that the role of the media is to serve the social, political, economic and cultural systems by gathering, structuring and disseminating accurate and comprehensive information on matters of public interest. Agbo and Chukwuma (2020:128) state that the watchdog function of the press is essential in holding the government accountable, including in the local sphere of government. Ashraf (2014:42) opines that the media plays an important role in promoting transparency, accountability, and public scrutiny of decision-makers by highlighting policy failures, maladministration by public officials, corruption in the judiciary, and scandals in the affairs of the government. The media frequently portrays the failing and dysfunctional functions of the municipality (Thusi & Matyana, 2024:492). This process allows community members to be abreast with issues that the municipalities are failing to execute, thus trying to hold them accountable. Jakoet-Salie (2020:3) concurs with the above and further alludes that the internet is changing the way people live, making them rely on the internet for information.

It is the view of Gainaka, Alsagoff and Ghazali (2020:481) that the media sets the agenda and shapes public opinions by providing the public with in-depth and relevant information they require to make informed decisions as well as exposing wrongdoings, corruption and other malfeasance in government. The media speaks for the people, represents the interests of society, and serves as a check on the government. This process holds the government accountable and brings to light what it is doing so that people can judge. Through this function of watchdog, the media aids in ensuring good governance in a democratic system (Ashraf, 2014:41). Masiya and Lubinga (2023:42) allude that social media platforms provide a space in which society can communicate "freely" and at relatively low cost, articulating often divergent views. The COJ have established a WhatsApp group in which community members can communicate with their councillors for issues affecting their wards. This has made the reporting of issues easier as community members do not necessarily have to travel to the physical buildings of the municipality for their problems to be known and addressed.

Wasserman (2020:451) states that South African media plays an imperative role as a watchdog role to keep political power to account through investigative reporting into corruption and malfeasance. Investigative journalists are entrusted with the task of ensuring that reporting is of profound, honest, and accurate standards (Mkhize & Nel, 2018:46). The media has assisted in reporting cases of scandals involving municipal

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officials, which, if it was not for the media, would have gone undetected (Enaifoghe, 2023:477). The media has an important watchdog function of holding the government and those in official authority accountable to the people (Damulak & Ejiga, 2019:260). Thus, it is imperative to ensure that the information being shared is accurate to avoid misrepresentation, which may end up in court and lead to the community losing trust in information provided by the media. The media in democratic South Africa publish almost daily new instances of the abuse of entrusted power for private benefit (Masenya & Mthombeni, 2023:40). Several media houses have played a pivotal role in repeatedly reporting the distressing state of local government in South Africa (Khaile, 2023:002). The media assist in keeping community members informed of municipal issues.

Mlambo *et al., (2023:12) are* of the opinion that the media need to promote good governance and shape opinions about the standard of governance at the local government. The media, especially in terms of social media, has an influence in shaping the beliefs of community members; the above necessitates that the reporting should be accurate so it does not mislead. Although social media platforms are good at providing information, it also is difficult to ascertain the validity of information provided as individuals may manipulate information (Reisach, 2021:910). Masiya and Lubinga (2023:47) are of the belief that social media has demonstrated an increase in accountability of municipal officials by providing real-time information. This process, therefore, allows community members to provide their views and opinions, thus holding municipal officials accountable.

Transparency and accountability in local government may also be improved by the influential power of the media as it publishes information that may compel municipal officials to provide answers to what is published. (Msughter *et al.,* 2021:1). By doing this, municipal officials will be accountable as many authors define accountability as providing information on decisions and activities taken by those in power. Mamokhere, Kgobe and Netshidzivhani (2021:49) argue that media has the potential to influence public opinion; hence, it is imperative to publish accurate information. The media has played a critical role in reporting corruption among politicians, tender rigging, abuse of state resources and relationships between wealthy business people and politicians (Mlambo, Mubecua & Mlambo, 2023:193). Khaile (2023:2) opines that several media houses have repeatedly echoed the distressing state of municipalities in South Africa.

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This information would have most probably gone undetected if it was not for investigative journalism from the various media houses.

The media serves as a vital mechanism in in exposing corruption, mobilizing public pressure and driving systemic change within the municipality (Alomgir, Hossan & Alom, 2024:278). The purpose of exposing corruption is to ensure that it grains the attention of the community members but, most importantly, those institutions responsible for investigating corruption and ultimately convicting the perpetrators. Mahmud, Hossan, & Huda (2024:212) argue that the media act as watchdogs, which monitor government activities by exposing misconduct, corruption and malpractice, thus advocating for accountability measures. Ohamadike (2022:38) argues that accountability often thrives in political systems where the media is not controlled by or biased towards any political party or municipal official, thus allowing all improper activities to be reported.

2.14 COMMUNITY MEMBER'S ROLE IN PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY

Manaf *et al.,* (2022:1) argue that the role of society has expanded beyond citizens merely being the receivers of services to expecting higher levels of accountability and responsibility from local government. Habibov, Fan and Auchynnikava (2019:736) cite that community members are most likely to support their government if they view its performance as satisfactory. Makole (2022:32) alludes that accountability is about community members empowered with the knowledge to ask difficult questions and receive answers about whether municipal officials are executing their duties in a manner that is acceptable and in line with the legislative mandate. The more community members are involved in the affairs of the municipality the more accountable the municipality will become. This is due to the fact that the community members will have information which may be utilised to hold those in power accountable. Community participation further builds on trust, which is a fundamental element in ensuring effective service delivery. According to Selepe (2023:343), the community is the primary stakeholder of the municipality; the issues of service delivery cannot be addressed without the presence of those who are receiving the services.

Kinyata, Abiodun and Abiodun (2020:5) state that the failure of many government initiatives may be attributed to the lack of the element of community participation. The community members are the best people to come up with solutions for issues affecting

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them. It is for this reason that the municipality should involve community members in municipal affairs. Breakfast, Bradshaw and Nomarwayi (2019:111) cite that community members should play an integral part in decision-making in all activities within the municipality. One of the other ways of making decisions is by means of voting during general elections and ensuring that political accountability takes place. Siyal (2020:5) defines political accountability as a process in which community members demand answers from politicians regarding the affairs of the municipality. Community members need to be agents of change in their communities to promote political stability and ultimately influence service delivery (Ragolane & Malatji, 2024:378). This change can be made by ensuring that corruption or abuse of any kind occurring within developmental local government is reported to the relevant institutions (Mahmud *et al.,* 2024:286).

Sibanda and Lues (2021:2) allude that whilst community participation is consistent with democratic citizenship, much of what governments do is complex and requires technical competency and expertise to make policy decisions, this should, however, not prevent the municipality from creating a platform to afford the community an opportunity to participate. Benefits of participation by the community in policymaking minimise conflicts and improve decision-making (Umoh, 2022:11). According to Enaifoghe and Adetiba (2018:21), it is necessary that the community participate in the basic leadership process to guarantee that the communities benefit from the process. Numerous strategies have been devised to make public policies align with citizen's social demands, increase participation, and enhance their capacity for engagement in public affairs (Umoh, 2022:17). According to Selepe (2023:348), one of the strategies utilised to engage and strengthens participation is through community meetings. Pavlycheva (2017:1) defines community hearing as a form of democracy and ensures the participation of people in the solving of important social issues. Kamara (2021:24) is of the view that the process of decision-making in development matters at the local government level in South Africa has moved over the past three decades toward a more inclusive and participatory process involving multiple stakeholders, specifically in this context, municipality, private and civil society. It is imperative for community members to realise that they can hold politicians accountable for the promises they make during election campaigns (Nel & Patience, 2022:11). In communities, there are members who are selected to be representatives. According to Zantsi (2022:11),

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community leaders are known to sometimes strike deals with councillors to benefit either their communities or themselves as individuals. The result of the above is that community members will lose trust in the process of the municipalities.

Ouwencamp and van der Waldt (2024:2) opine that community members feel removed from local development planning processes and that it is indicative of negative audit reports and violent protests in local government. When community members are included in the process of the municipality, their attitude towards the municipality improves for the better (Mutereko & Shava, 2024:50). This will also give community members the confidence to report any illegal conduct by municipal officials. The government has enacted laws that give community members the right to access information held by public authorities and mandate proactive disclosure of certain categories of information. Thus, community members should make use of this privilege (Mahmud et. *al.,* 2024:208). Sambo and Kanyane (2020:27) posit that accountability calls for municipalities to account to community members for the way municipal financial resources are utilised.

Community members have a duty to pay their fees, levies, property rates, and other taxes imposed by municipalities as a means to ensure that municipalities function effectively and efficiently (Mabunda et al., 2023:641). However, it is also crucial for the municipality to be transparent in how the collected monies are spent. Disclosure of information has the potential to improve decision-making, and this is not only one of "Batho Pele" principles but also a principle that posits the essence of the fruits of democracy in upholding the administration to account (Sebake and Modau, 2020:496). Mabunda *et al.,* (2023:643) allude that community members are not participating in municipal structures to hold municipal officials accountable for failing to deliver on promises. This implies that social accountability is not in existence. Social accountability is viewed as a democratic factor that encourages participation (Kanyane, Mutema & Zikhali, 2020:1). With social media taking over, community members should make use of this opportunity to engage with the municipality. Social media plays a significant role in ensuring accountability by providing a platform for community members to make their concerns known, hold municipal officials and institutions accountable, and facilitate transparency in governance (Mahmud et *al.,* 2024:213).

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Developmental local government must make sure that confidence between it and community members is maintained as community members are the ones who bestowed trust on the government by electing them to power (Mchunu & Dlamini,2020:77). Community members tend to have no faith in the government administration once municipal officials lack accountability (Mlambo & Maserumule, 2024:10). A study by Hungwe and Mukonza (2023:64) revealed that some community members default on paying rate and levies as a result of poor service delivery which is again worsened by inability to set up adequate systems to ensure that they collect their revenues appropriately. The community members will be a crucial element in addressing issues facing the municipality that have a dire impact on the lives of community members (Raile, Raile & Post, 2018:1).

A study conducted by Matyana and Mthethwa (2022:133) revealed that community members feel that municipal officials manipulate their minds for their own selfish need and that the nonexistence of transparency and accountability enable them to continue with the practice. Thus, it is important for community members to be agents of change by involving themselves in the affairs of the municipality to eliminate such practices. Kanyane *et al. (2020:2)* are of the opinion that for accountability to be effective, a bottom-up process that gives power to community members and civic organizations to check the activities of service providers should be prioritized. In an ideal setting, local governments carry the dual function of ensuring top-down and bottom-up accountability (Manaf *et al.,* 2022:2).

2.15 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AS AN OVERSIGHT TOOL TO PROMOTE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Kumar, Nirmala, and Mekoth (2015:2) define performance management as a constant process of identifying, assessing, and developing human performance within an institution. Abane and Phinaitrup (2017:189) refer to performance management as a holistic approach to people management towards improving employee performance to assist municipalities in achieving human resource outcomes such as competence, commitment, congruence, and cost-effectiveness. On the other hand, Hlatshwayo (2023:354) defines performance management as a process that aims to make sure that an organization achieves its goals effectively and efficiently through a set of activities and outputs. Finally, Links and Draai (2023:1079) define performance

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management as the holistic assessment of progress, leading to output and the impact of an outcome derived from implementation. It can be deduced that performance management is the process used by the municipalities to ascertain whether set targets are achieved so as to allow for redress where needed and improve the performance of individuals and, thus, of the organization.

Abane and Phinaitrup (2017:188) state that one of the benefits of performance management is value for money and facilitates a more responsive and accountable municipality. In essence, performance management is concerned with managing the institution to make sure that public funds are utilized effectively, efficiently, and economically and manage expectations (Özcan, 2021:7). The goal of performance management in South Africa's municipalities is to better serve public (Mohangi & Nyika, 2023:484).

Hlatshwayo (2023:354) states that a performance management system was introduced to track and redress performance, train and develop underperforming employees, promote accountability among staff, and manage instances of underperformance. In terms of Section 44(3) and 56(3) of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, the executive committee or the executive mayor is responsible for the development of the performance management system as well as the development of evaluation criteria and key performance indicators. Sebakamotse and Van Niekerk (2021:5) state that the municipal manager is responsible for implementing and managing the performance management reporting system and providing advice to the municipal council regarding the reporting system that must be adopted. In terms of Section 57(5) of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, the performance objectives and performance targets must be measurable, practical and based on the key performance indicators provided in the municipality's IDP. Performance management system plays an imperative role in evaluating activities carried out by municipal officials and providing feedback and recommendations to assist in making informed decisions (Laila & Ermawat, 2021:35), thus improving accountability. This statement is also supported by Radebe, Vyas-Doorgapersad, and Grobler (2015:94), who cite that a performance management system has the potential to improve accountability between the community and municipal officials. Kariuki and Reddy (2019:106) also cite that a performance management system provides a mechanism to manage expectations and enhances the municipality's accountability to local citizens. The

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expectations are managed through detailed plans, which are made available to the community members such as the IDP. The IDP outlines the vision and objectives of the municipality as well as informing the budget that determines how revenue should be raised in terms of the expenditure plan (Ngqobe *et al.,* 2022:116).

When performance management system is not effectively implemented, it becomes a compliance exercise that adds no value to the employee and the performance of the municipality (Govender & Bussin, 2020:3). Performance management system does not effectively affect the lives of community members as they are not fully involved in performance management (Ngubane, 2022:32). Modipane, Botha and Blom (2019:1) is of the view that the effectiveness of the performance management system depends upon employees' perceived accuracy and fairness of the system. It is essential to motivate employees, as municipal performances system is also associated with an employees' sense of intelligence to unite their work and their various activities, as well as their general sense of humanity and well-being (Sattar, Khaliq & Butt, 2018:21). According to Radebe, Vyas-Doorgapersad and Grobler (2015:93), COJ introduced the performance management system in 2001. Ngqobe *et al.,* (2021:112) cite that the COJ's performance review system provides for four accountability structures that are responsible for the performance review: the performance audit committee, the performance evaluation panel, the mayoral committee, and the council.

According to Nzimakwe and Ntshakala (2016:118), the performance management system is accompanied by performance contracts or agreements for municipal officials, which is one way of ensuring that services are provided with the aim in such a manner that gives value for money. A performance agreement is a contract in the form of a document that encompasses leadership assignments to employees to carry out programs, activities, and projects that are accompanied by performance indicators (Sulistiani & Faozanudin, 2020:141). Accountability is important for effective performance in the public sector because both elected and non-elected officials need to show the public that they are performing their responsibilities in the best possible way and using the resources provided to them effectively and efficiently (Oloruntoba & Gbemigun, 2019:222).

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According to Mishi, Mbaleki, and Mushonga (2022:3), municipal performance is assessed through five Key Performance Areas (KPAs), namely municipal transformation, organizational transformation, Local Economic Development (LED), basic service delivery and good governance and public participation. The effectiveness of performance management is yet to be determined; Gumede (2021:16) cites that municipal dismissals and suspensions are often politicized rather than for issues related to their performance. In light of the above, it may be summarised that the performance assessment of the municipality barely has an impact on the dismissal of municipal officials, yet the performance keeps on deteriorating. Jarbandhan (2022:35) proposed that more efforts be dedicated to aligning performance management to accountability; the research is in support of the suggestion that this will improve and sustain service delivery and skills-related salary structure. A democracy that embraces collective and transparent decision-making is imperative in improving the performance of the municipality (Bless, 2023:232).

2.16 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE AS IMPERATIVE ELEMENTS IN ENSURING PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Monitoring and evaluation are two separate elements with different processes; they however, complement each other (Kabonga, 2018:6). Ngumbela (2024:5) also cites that monitoring and evaluation are two separate components, however, they are two components that best work when combined and are essential management tool that explains why activities were carried out. Callistus and Clinton (2018:576) define monitoring as the process that provides evidence of the degree to which targets and outcomes are achieved with the primary intent of addressing issues of causality. Within local government, the Integrated Developmental Plan takes center stage in terms of the strategic direction of municipalities; the IDP should be monitored and evaluated so to gauge the process toward the desired outcome as outlined in the plan. The monitoring of the IDP may be done through quarterly reports to be presented during the quarterly review sessions. Masilo *et al.,* (2021:7) state that monitoring and evaluation have been observed in the public sector since 2004 as a mechanism to strengthen governance.

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Wessels, Potgieter, and Naidoo (2021:329) cite that monitoring and evaluation have recently been identified as an important management and planning instrument for the South African government. The need for monitoring and evaluation of public activities originates from the fact that government activities require strong institutions for accountability (Eton *et al*., 2022:364), and the monitoring and evaluation process may improve accountability. Masenya, Mokoele and Makalela (2018:106) argue that accountability can be promoted through effective and continuous monitoring and evaluation of various plans. The correct implementation of M&E allows for funds to be effectively utilised resulting in improved performance, more accountability, better and informed decision-making (Masilo *et al.,* 2021:8). Winarna *et al.,* (2021:93) coincide with the statement above and further state that monitoring positively affects local government administration performance. The performance of local government in recent years has been deteriorating, hence the lack of accountability. Winarna, *et al.,* (2021:90) is of the view that performance is one of the critical aspects of accountability. Eton *et al.,* (2022:364) have attributed the failure of accountability in developmental local government to weak monitoring activities. Nzimakwe and Ntshakala (2016:114) define monitoring as the continuous measuring of performance and providing ongoing feedback to officials on the progress toward reaching their goals. The above definition suggests that the municipality's performance should be monitored regularly to allow for redress when required.

According to Kabonga (2018:3), there are different types of monitoring. Situation monitoring measures change in a condition or set of conditions or the absence of change, while performance monitoring seeks to measure progress in achieving specific objectives of an implementation plan. Performance monitoring is the type of monitoring that should be utilized to measure the success of the IDP within local government as well as another strategic plan. The reason for this type of monitoring is deteriorating performance. A study conducted by Sibanda *et al*., (2020:9) revealed that there is a need for metropolitan municipalities to regularly review monitoring and evaluation tools to detect timeously irregularities and risks in their expenditure against real deliverables in terms of service delivery. However, the effectiveness of monitoring systems within local government depends on the willingness of those implementing them.

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Kimaro, Fourie, and Tshiyoyo (2018:104) argue that M&E aims at realizing a performance management procedure that affects to the provision of quality services by means of increased accountability, transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency. A continuous process of evaluation and monitoring will facilitate employee's development and improve their own opportunities for career growth (Govender & Bussin, 2020:5). Evaluation seeks to answer the effectiveness, efficiency, impact, efficacy, relevance, and sustainability of a development intervention (Kabonga, 2018:3). Ntshangase and Msosa (2022:134) cite that many project managers do not appreciate the importance and use of monitoring and evaluation for project within local government, hence the failure of some of the project. The process of evaluating accountability of municipal officials ensures they are responsible for their work and providing value for money in the provision of municipal services (Manafa *et al.,* 2022:1). The failure by local government to implement monitoring and evaluation has led to the abuse of finances resources thus impacting in service delivery negatively (Mutereko & Shava, 2024:50). Mlambo and Maserumule (2024:9) are of the view that there is ineffective financial planning, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which has compromised the effectively running of its operations. Ngumbela (2024:4) cites that monitoring and evaluation should be viewed as a management tool that provided explanation on why particular operations are carried out as well as the success thereof.

2.17 EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AS MECHANISM TO INFLUENCE ACCOUNTABILITY

According to Aisedion and Uwa (2021:1950), leadership is the ability to inspire, direct, motivate, and encourage others to achieve a stated goal. Leadership quality is crucial to the promotion of good and accountable governance (Fagbadebo & Dorasamy, 2021:43). According to Melo, Pereira, and Martins (2020:3), effective leadership has a crucial role in promoting better performance and the sustainable development of nations. Leadership can also be understood as a response to transparency and accountability issues that are an important concern in the area of public administration (Melo *et al.*, 2020:3). Mbandlwa *et al,.* (2020:24986) state that ethical leadership is a very important component of government, so as to safeguard effective service delivery. Effective Leadership has the potential to influence accountability positively, transparency as well as ethical behaviour (Melo et al., 2020:1).

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Leadership is regarded as effective when those chosen to lead are competent to achieve organizational goals and this is also evident in the performance of the municipality (Enaifoghe, 2023:471-472). Municipalities need to have effective leaders who are educated and continue training to develop leadership capacities (Thebe, 2017:128). According to Adetunji and Alers (2022:81), leadership is often regarded as the single most critical factor in the success or failure of institutions and has been said to influence people towards achieving goals. When municipal officials conduct themselves with integrity, competence, responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency, then there are demonstrating ethical leadership (Lekubu & Sibanda, 2021:5). The importance of leadership cannot be overemphasised this is because the leaders shape the strategic direction of the municipality, which will be either effective or ineffective. Thusi and Mashamaite (2023:77) argue that the current political leadership has no accountability. The evidence of this is in the poor performance of municipalities nationwide. Given that Gasela (2022:1) opines that leadership exists to solve problems, it is clear that the leadership within local government has not been effective, as most problems are left unresolved. There are many benefits to effective as well as ethical leadership. Ethical leadership possesses the potential to develop competencies and direct towards the achievement of the goals and to increase the performance of the municipality (Ndlovu & Mutambara, 2023:84). The municipality should establish an environment that is conducive to ethical leadership through a culture that embraces accountability, transparency as well as integrity. The structures and processes within municipalities could impede the establishment of leadership and organizational culture, making the local government administration perform sub-optimally in service delivery organizations (Ringson & Matshabaphala, 2022:44). This may also be exacerbated by the interference of external individuals, especially political office bearers.

Community members are more likely to trust leaders whose qualities would assist in directing the society for the realization and accomplishment of their collective will (Fagbadebo & Dorasamy, 2021:30). Ngqwala and Ballard (2020:120) indicate that there has to be a strong relationship between local government leadership and the communities to promote sustainable local development. Ngqwala and Ballard (2020:121) further indicate that services in local government are meaningless without the role of good leadership, which encourages good principles. This implies that the

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measures taken to develop communities will be in vain if there is a lack of effective leadership. There is a need for leaders who will lead by example and demonstrate moral actions, integrity, accountability, and transparency, and build healthy relationships with the communities they serve leadership (Ngqwala & Ballard, 2020:123). This will also ensure the effective oversight of leaders within the development of local government. Effective leadership requires effective communication. Ndaba and Ngcobo (2023:301) agree with the above and further state that leadership with effective communication strategy within developmental local government has the potential to provide good service delivery. This will result from being aware of the needs and wants of community members through effective communication.

Thusi and Selepe (2023:689) cite that ineffective leadership and lack of accountability are some of the factors that contribute to governance failure. This implies that those ineffective leaders will not be able to positively influence accountability though through oversight of functions of municipal officials. Ndlovu and Mutambara (2023:84) believe that ethical leadership could assist in combating corruption in public sector organisations; on the other hand, leaders need to reinforce and keep landing the message with employees that their role within the organisation is key to its success and that their contribution is valued (Govender & Bussin, 2020:6). According to Atiku, Kurana and Ganiyu (2023:1), weak leadership results in poor governance and is often characterised by weak rule of law, corruption, nepotism, lack of accountability, lack of transparency inadequate service delivery. Leadership in local government lacks what is called “Ubuntu,” which Nicolaides and Duho (2019:1716) refer to as caring for others and upholding moral integrity, and it is only through others that a person can be considered to be a human being. Mbandlwa and Mishi (2020:4) cite that a leader is a person with the power to make decisions for people and show the direction that has to be followed. Baloyi (2020:180) argues that effective accountability requires, among others, individual morals, education, training, the culture of the municipality, and a legislative framework of accountability. In other words, municipal officials who already possess individual’s morals that are aligned with doing things the right way will find it easy to follow the correct process, thus giving an effective the legislative framework. On the contrary, municipal officials who lack individual morals may end up doing the opposite, thus rendering the legislative framework ineffective.

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Van Niekerk and Sebakamotse (2020:286) further state that the lack of political and administrative leadership in municipalities leads to continued deterioration of financial performance. The lack of commitment shown by politicians in leadership roles has raised the question of whether community members can rely on the government (Thusi & Jili, 2023:137). Leadership within developmental local government needs to adopt relevant practices based on what have become neglected African cultural traditions (Nicolaides & Duho, 2019:1715). The leadership profile in a country is strongly influenced by its cultural values, which are currently being compromised, such as the culture of “Ubuntu”. The politicians, as well as municipal administration, have become machine leaders with machine minds and machines disregarding the notion of “Ubuntu” especially towards the previously disadvantaged groups (Yende & Yende, 2022:153).

Ndaba and Ngcobo (2023:302) are of the view that leaders who are guided by “Ubuntu” principles tend to show consciousness of the importance of their constituency through whom they gained the position of power bestowed upon them. Mokhutso (2022:1) contends that Ubuntu is an African philosophy that has held together communities, especially African communities, for a millennium, and its ethics ensures that law and order are maintained across. It can, therefore, be deduced that Ubuntu within developmental local government is non-existence, given the disregard of the law by municipal officials as well as the lack of empathy for community members. Unethical behaviour by municipal officials is typically caused by a lack of cultural value thus resulting in ineffective leadership, which in most cases results in poor financial management thus negatively affecting service delivery (Mabunda *et al.,* 2023:643). Ngoepe-Ntsoane (2021:17) opines that ethical leaders are guided by principles and display fairness in their decision-making processes.

2.18 CHALLENGES OF OVERSIGHT FUNCTIONS IN PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY

Oversight plays a significant role in making sure that the executive is accountable to the people through their elected representatives in government (Maganoe, 2023:2). Van Niekerk and Dalton-Brits (2016:118) are of view that accountability and oversight result in improved good governance and effective management of municipal finances and the promotion of effective municipal service delivery. Moji, Nhede, and Masiya (2022:5) allude to the lack of leadership having a negative impact on municipal

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governance and oversight. Further to this, those in power have no culture of excellence to support oversight and ultimately support high-quality service delivery (Masiya *et al.,* 2021:107). Agbedi, Allen, and Ukachikara (2020:198) posit that one of the challenges in executing oversight functions is the incompetency of some members. Mofolo and Adonis (2021:6) place emphasis on the fact that the effectiveness of the oversight role may be guaranteed by its level of autonomy and independence and freedom from influence and undue political pressure. It is crucial for committee members to be familiar with the role and understand the municipal process to effectively execute the oversight function (Khaile & Davids, 2020:69).

The failure to appoint competent members will have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the oversight function. Schoeman and Chakwizira (2022:1) declare that there is a lack of role and scope that are clearly defined relating to oversight. According to Jahed and Kithatu-Kiwekete (2020:99), the oversight role requires capacity and resources to interrogate how executive policies, including fiscal policy, are implemented in relation to overall government development objectives. Glasser and Wright (2020:415) state that the poor oversight of municipalities, both external and internal, has been identified as the underlying reason for poor performance. The lack of municipal financial oversight and accountability encourages unethical behavior of municipal functionaries which subsequently leads to a culture of limited or no consequences, which harms public trust within local government (Van Niekerk & Sebakamotse, 2020:285).

Another challenge that is faced by members of oversight bodies is aligned with ethics. According to Van Niekerk and Sebakamotse (2020:273), ethics in the context of the South African local government involves the execution of ethical principles and standards in the performance of responsibilities. In most cases, these standards and principles are outlined in the various policies of the municipality, such as the code of conduct. Moti (2019:3) states that ethics is concerned with the character, conduct, and morals of human beings. According to Nicolaides and Duho (2019:1714), ethics is a series of laws and principles that individuals should try to follow. The above definitions have one thing in common, which is that ethics involves a set of principles to be demonstrated in the execution of functions. Given the state of the local government, one can conclude ethical principles are not practices. The South African Government has adopted numerous pieces of legislation to encourage professional

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practices (Kgobe & Chauke, 2021:42). However, one can conclude that legislation requires to be amended to be effective as unethical conduct has been recorded within developmental local government numerous times. Baloyi (2020:179) shares the same sentiment and further states that it is evident that the government is aware of the burden of unethical conduct, as this is apparent by the various legislation in place to support ethical conduct.

Shava and Mazenda (2021:306) postulate that disreputable and corrupt behaviour manifests among municipal officials, and this renders the efforts of the government useless. This has created a platform, which makes the functions of oversight difficult. Baloyi (2020:181) shares the same sentiment and further argues that if the current surge of corruption and unethical practices persists, the country could reach a point of legislative ineffectiveness. Jarbandhan (2022:35) further declares that services are held above self-interest where there is sound ethical practice, with a high level of accountability; however, if the need to hold municipal officials to account is nonexistent, unethical behavior will remain unpunished, and a sense of exemption will prevail. It has been observed that in the absence of an ethical culture, the likelihood of corruption and maladministration is considerable (Enaifoghe, 2023:476). Mbandlwa *et al., (*2020: 24988) cite that ethics in government leadership is the key component of good governance, and ethical leaders contribute to effective public service delivery. Shava and Mazenda (2021:316) posit that although the MFMA sanctions unethical conduct and corruption in Section 2, gaps in terms of government expenditure still exist.

It is crucial to establish an ethics-based management to promote good governance and combat corruption (Maile & Doorgapersad, 2022:80). The other challenges that oversight custodians face are overlapping duties. Kraai, Holtzhausen, and Malan (2017:70) state that it is crucial to ascertain whether part-time councilors who serve on oversight committees can become full-time councilors. A direct consequence of serving two master's is that these councilors cannot balance their two jobs, and they end up not attending some council meetings if the full-time job salary is higher (Mello, 2018:4). For a municipality to be able to address challenges faced, there is a need for comprehension of policies and processes meant for ensuring adherence with particular laws and regulations, as well as fundamental internal control (Enaifoghe, 2023:480). Shava (2023:204) believes that weak oversight structures create

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opportunities for corrupt trends and manipulation, which has impeded institutional integrity and service delivery in general.

The municipality needs transformational leadership, which Rington and Matshabaphala (2023:68) define as leaders who lead by utilizing changing people's attitudes to focus on the work at hand. This type of leadership is crucial in the modern world, where things are continuously changing. The inability of municipalities to adapt to the changing environment may be detrimental to their performance. Mlambo (2019:215) alluded that there is a need for solid oversight of the justice system, which is driven by core values and accountability as mechanisms to fight corruption have bearer minimum results. Adonis (2021:294) contends that the effectiveness of any structure entrusted with an oversight role or monitors and evaluates performance depends largely on the level of autonomy and independence, free from influence and undue political pressure. Unsurprisingly, most oversight bodies are failing to execute their mandate as there is a lot of political interference in this regard.

2.19 CURRENT STATE OF THE PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government is a multifaceted environment characterised by many challenges in its quest to meet its service delivery mandate (Links & Draai, 2023:1078). Khambule (2020:168) argues that the constitutional obligation for local government is to deliver welfare services such as water, electricity, housing, and infrastructure. In South Africa, the establishment of local government and democracy came about thirty years ago (Rington & Matshabaphala, 2022:33). Service delivery is important as it satisfies different human needs (Ragolane & Malatji, 2024:74). The goal of local government should be to transform itself to fulfill its responsibilities after consulting with those who stand to benefit from its efforts (Rykleif & Tengeh, 2022:643). One of the most important spheres of government in the nation's growth processes is the local government (Ouwencamp & van der Waldt, 2024:2). On the other hand, Matloga *et al.,* (2024:3) argue that the role of the local government is to work with community members to develop sustainable ways to meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life. The above notion has been questionable as the government has been struggling to deliver services due to, amongst other things, mismanagement of public funds. Despite policy pledges and legislative measures, local government performance leaves less to be desired (Mlambo & Thusi, 2023:2).

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The effectiveness of governance at a local level is based on the delivery of essential services and the management of public affairs (Edoun *et al.,* 2023:111). Therefore, the failure to deliver services reflects poor governance, and community members will judge the municipality based on this. Zwane and Mamabolo (2023:5) are of the believer of believe that governance and ineffective service delivery remain a devastating challenge in most local governments. Performance is the output or outcome of activities/programs that achieve or are to be achieved in relation to the use of quantifiable quantity and quality budget (Muttaqin & Mulyasari, 2018:210). This implies that for the municipality's performance to improve, there should be a sufficient budget supporting the goal set for the year in terms of the various strategic plans. A sufficient budget must also be accompanied by efforts by municipal officials to manage the budget effectively and ensure that utilisation is for what it is intended for. Local government's poor performance is intertwined with the history of racial segregation (Bless, 2023:231). As the ruling party has been in power for decades, there should have by now been able to sustainable service delivery. Unfortunately, this is not the case in most of the municipalities. This is attributed to situations wherein municipal officials who desire to meet their demands and interests do so by providing services without regard for planning considerations so as to manipulate the process (Rachekhu & Kgobe, 2024:63). The number of corruption and self-enrichment scandals within developmental local government suggests that municipal officials do have the ethical and moral fortitude to serve the needs of the community over their interest (Lekubu & Sibanda, 2021:4).

South Africa is classified as a developing country faced with high levels of inequality, unemployment, and inequality. As a result, more community members depend on municipal service delivery for basic survival services. These problems call for the government to address the high unemployment level, as this will directly impact revenue collection, enabling the municipality to provide services. The developmental nature of South Africa is one wherein community members depend increasingly on local government services; hence, there are rapid protests due to government failure (Mamokhere & Kgobe, 2023:49). Municipalities are meant to provide those essential services to communities to ensure the socio-economic stability and welfare of community members; hence the local government is entrusted with the developmental agenda as it is closest to the people (Nzama, 2019:1514). According to Ruwanika and

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Maramura (2024:3), service delivery is the provision of benefits, satisfactions, or municipal activities.

The aim of service delivery should be to improve the lives of community members (Nel & Patience, 2022:2). In light of the above, one can conclude that the lives of community members are not improving. The high level of poverty as well as unemployment has led to many community members being unable to pay for basic services, yet they need them. The creation of employment will not only positively affect the unemployment rate but also place community members in a position where they are able to contribute to the development of the municipality through the payment of services received (Mthethwa *et al.,* 2023:273). Local government is facing a service delivery crisis and political instability, which has been exacerbated by the looting of the COVID-19 package funds, resulting in the inability of municipalities to provide essential services (Mokhutso, Marumo & Motswaledi, 2022:5).

It is to be noted that even before COVID-19, there was mismanagement of municipal finances and that the pandemic only demonstrated the extent of the problem and worsening it. Again, this demonstrated the lack of empathy by those in power as they even looted funds that were meant to heal the sick and protect others from contracting the virus. Ethical leadership is essential for the government to ensure adequate public service delivery (Rington & Matshabaphala, 2023:74). Over the past decade; community members have participated in violent protests as a result of poor service delivery (Chili *et al.,* 2023: 36). Dywili and Draai (2019:257) post that local government has failed in meeting the basic needs of clean water, sanitation, electricity and general infrastructure maintenance effectively and efficiently, hence the increasing level of protest, which most often turn to be violent and also results in the infrastructure being vandalised. Various structures and policy initiatives were created to enhance service delivery in local government (Breed, Jones, Pillay & Zondi, 2023:33), yet not much change has been noticed. According to Mlambo and Maserumule (2023:11), poor service delivery is a result of failure by municipalities to comply with the Constitution mandate and other local government legislations. Additionally, corruption has also played a role in the current state of performance at developmental local government. According to Yende and Yende (2022:146), the impact of corruption on the performance of municipalities cannot be underestimated, as it is the main contributor to inadequate development.

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Mudzusi *et al.,* (2024:2) debate that municipalities are constantly battling with the challenge of service delivery. The evidence of this is seen through the continued and sometimes violent protests in the development of local government. Poor service delivery is attributed to corruption, political patronage, and skills deficits at local government (Zerihun & Mashingo, 2022:1). It can, therefore, be resolved that the addressing of the above issues should result in improved service delivery as well as greater accountability. Baloyi (2022:394) is also of the view that when resources meant to provide relief to community members are misappropriated and looted, the most vulnerable members are affected, both immediately and in the long term. The inabilityThe inability to uphold the roles stipulated in the Constitution, 1996 and other local government legislations cascaded into lack or poor service delivery (Tshishonga, 2021:32). Mamokhere (2023:1) is of the view that the underlying causes of subpar service delivery are intricate and varied, even with the nation's advanced legal and constitutional frameworks. The municipality derives most of its financial resources primarily from public-derived taxes thus making them accountable to community members (Sambo, 2022:6). Municipalities are using consultants, at a huge cost to taxpayers to try to get their books in order retrospectively, instead of implementing regular controls (Mamokhere, 2022:195). This approach is adopted due to inadequate expertise within the municipality. The disadvantage of this approach is that it is financially stretching the limited financial resources of the municipality. A study by Links and Draai (2023:1082) suggests that consultants compile reports that are not comprehensible, thus resulting in interventions that are not effective. Again, this is another disadvantage of utilising consultants.

The possible solution for this is to appoint people with those skills on a permanent basis. In some developing countries, infrastructural decay, poverty, stagnation, insecurity, and high rates of unemployment are among the challenges faced within developmental local government, and this has been attributed, amongst other things, to unethical budgeting, which affects grassroots sustainable development and, ultimately, the development of the nation (Adekoya, 2022:2683). Matshabaphala and Ringson (2022:714) assert that responsiveness is a critical aspect in maintaining good governance. Motsoeneng (2022:186) argues that it may appear that municipalities have made noticeable progress in terms of the provision of services. However, a closer look paints a different picture. The municipality has recently been facing challenges in

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providing clean and safe water to community members. The increasing levels of protest is another indicator of the ineffectiveness of municipalities in the provision of essential services. The increasing protest in local government is a result of financial irregularities, poor administration, and corruption frequently, which has an adverse impact on the provision of services (Thusi & Mashamaite, 2023:79). There is a serious need for local government to develop new strategies to deal with the above-mentioned challenges.

Developmental local government is founded with the express intent of serving the local constituency and ending the legacy of apartheid in South Africa (Mokhutso *et al.,* 2022:6). Dywili and Draai (2019:257) posit that local government is plagued by rampant corruption and maladministration. Considering the above, it can be concluded that local failure is also attributed to maladministration. Kalonda and Govender (2021:8-9) cite that inadequate community participation, ineffective leadership, inadequate service delivery skills, financial difficulties, corruption, and ineffective strategic management are amongst the factors that have attributed to poor provision of services. Despite a series of interventions and strategies, municipalities continue to struggle to provide basic services to community members (Reddy, 2016:5). Local government has a mandate to try and correct the imbalance caused by the apartheid regime. The inability to meaningfully address the high levels of inequality by local government is due to insufficient attention to how power reproduces inequality (Francis & Webster 2019:788). The municipalities' failure to uphold their obligations as outlined in the various legislation has resulted in poor service delivery (Mlambo & Maserumule, 2023:10). This has also been further worsened by the poor oversight of municipalities either external or internal, resulting in poor performance (Glasser & Wright, 2020:415).

Lethoko *et al.,* (2018:707-708) allude to the South African government running out of money to offer services due to the alarming increase levels of corruption. The progress of service delivery in local government will require drastic measures to be put in place. One of those measures would be the effective auditing of performance. Performance auditing in local government has the potential to improve service delivery in terms of competency, efficiency, and quality, but most importantly, it has the potential to increase government transparency and accountability (Khasodi *et al.,* 2023:341). Despite the essential role of providing community members with basic services and enacting legislation, communities in South Africa are often disappointed with the state

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of service delivery (Ragolane & Malatji, 2024:78). The current state of local government requires more work to be done to raise the bar for capacity building so that services are provided in a way that not only makes sense but also improves the lives of community members especially those previously disadvantaged by the apartheid regime (Mlambo & Maserumule, 2024:5). This may be accomplished by appointing competent officials.

Mlambo, Zubane, and Thusi (2022:15) argue that the delivery of effective and efficient services is reliant on competent, professional as well as skilled municipal officials. The importance of skilled and qualified municipal officials cannot be overemphasized. If the South African government is to realise a developmental local government fully, then efforts must be made to invest in technological development and be able to provide the best services to the communities remotely (Mthethwa *et al.,* 2023:273). The failure to implement recommendations made by any oversight structure renders the municipality a mere loudhailer with no powers or enforceable mandates (Mlambo *et al.,* 2023:48). This undermines the constitutional powers vested in all those oversight bodies such as AGSA and PPSA.

There are many factors that have contributed to the disappointment such as financial mismanagement by municipal officials as well as political issues. Tsako (2020:9) opines that political issues do indeed influence the delivery of services and other goals, such as environmental sustainability, within municipalities. The continuous infighting amongst some political leaders has led to situations whereby a municipality struggles to perform and execute legislative mandates (Molobela, 2023:170). Mlambo and Thusi (2023:4) opine that municipal officials have been found awarding contracts to relatives and friends, which has rendered the current government illegitimate and renders the nation-state itself illegitimate. This has had an adverse impact on the delivery of services to community members. Mathonsi *et al.,* (2022:330) cite that municipal officials must be taught and developed for them to be efficient and successful in carrying out their responsibilities. According to Pietersen (2021:495), municipalities in South Africa are deemed to be struggling to achieve constitutional mandates. Even after 1994, South Africa continues to experience sustained service delivery blockages that consequently affect the ability of the poor as their needs are not being met (Mdlalose, Ntini, Ndebele & Yende 2024:58).

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The transformation and the alternate ways of providing services to community members is critical and requires drastic measures (Jakoet-Salie, 2020:3). The alternatives way of providing not only services but also information is as a result of the ever-changing environment which is more geared towards technological advances. The poor performance of municipalities is also attributed to the ineffective strategic leadership to drive organisational change (Links & Draai, 2023:1082).

2.20 ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Olivier and Martins (2018:1), metropolitan municipalities are categorised as local governments in South Africa. Kumar and Reddy (2019:26) states that metropolitan municipalities are crucial to the country's economy. Mlambo *et al.,* (2023:39) define municipal service delivery as internal or external services rendered to community members under its legal authority and mandates as outlined in the various legislative frameworks. Municipal service delivery is essential in satisfying different human needs (Ragolane & Malatji, 2024:371). Access to essential services is a Constitutional right and vital for the well-being of communities (Ragolane & Malatji, 2024:376). According to Ntshangase and Msosa (2022:127), the deterioration of municipal infrastructure is among the myriad challenges that local governments have to overcome, and cities' infrastructure is in dire need of immediate repair, restoration, or replacement. The poor municipal infrastructure negatively impacts service delivery progress (Enaifoghe, 2022:116). This situation is also evident in COJ through the so-called hijacked buildings as well as the sewer that is flowing into the public roads. Metropolitan municipalities design and deliver all local services in the metro region, whereas local and district municipalities share these responsibilities and, in some cases, the legislative and executive authority (Nzama *et al.,* 2023:4).

Factors such as low skill levels and high unemployment rates contribute to an endless poverty cycle within disadvantaged communities (Maloba & Auriacombe, 2019:164). According to Pietersen (2021:503), COJ performed poorly because of managed councils with party political interests rather than service delivery objectives. A study by Mamokhere (2022:195) suggests that there are several unfished projects wherein municipal officials responsible did not account for the incompleteness of those projects. Community members recognise good performance in terms of support for the

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actions and policies of the government (Linde & Peters, 2020:293). Govender and Reddy (2019:2) argue that municipal governance is impacted by rapid technological advancements, which will ultimately influence service delivery as well as human resource skills, which will be required to engage with new technologies. The municipality's performance is also attached to the effectiveness of policy implementation. The failure to implement policies in developmental local government can be attributed to many challenges, including the lack of skills and adequate capacity (Uwizeyimana & Munzhedzi, 2022:i).

2.21 INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENTAL PLAN AS A MECHANISM FOR DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Municipal Systems Act 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) requires municipalities in South Africa to prepare IDPs for their area of jurisdiction. The IDP provides a strategic vision for municipalities (Durokifa *et al.,* 2023:495). Miggels and Rulashe (2022:525) allude that the IDP provides a strategic framework that facilitates five-year planning and budgeting to accommodate for a democratic and accountable developmental local government. According to Dlamini & Reddy (2018:2), IDP is a management tool utilised to align scarce resources to defined policy objectives in the broader framework of developmental local government. Mathebula (2018; 563) believes that IDP is a strategic plan to bring about balances in the provision of services caused by the apartheid regime to address service delivery imbalances of the pre-democratic dispensation. The rectification of the past imbalance due to a pre-democratic era, which oppressed people of color. Molobela and Hlatshwayo (2023:58) allude that accountability is primarily interrelated with the IDP that normally circles the municipal budget to determine the needs to be achieved (service delivery) in a certain period. Municipalities are expected to draft an IDP each year, and COJ has also been drafting and publishing the IDP on its website for the community members to peruse. The question, however, still remains as to what extent the IDP influences service delivery and whether it can also be used to hold municipal officials accountable.

Municipalities are facing the challenge of failure to effectively implement the IDP, leading to poor provision of services (Asha & Makalela, 2020:1). Mathebula (2018: 569) shares the same view and further states that municipalities experience gaps in the IDP and its implementation in realizing the set objectives. It may also be deduced

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that IDP may be considered a wish list as most of the outlined activities do not pass. According to Majam and Uwizeyimana (2018:139), the IDP should be aligned with the budget and should be participated by community members. COJ has a platform on their official website wherein they invite written submissions on the following for the 2024/25 financial year:

- Draft IDP;
- Draft Medium-Term Budget, draft Rates Policy;
- Draft Rates By-laws;
- Proposed Rates Tariffs; and
- Proposed Evaluation Tariffs.

The above are means by which the municipalities ensure participation and inclusiveness of all interested parties. The IDP acts as a participatory planning tool that ensures that community members are involved in making decisions on services and projects implemented in their communities (Teti, Nzewi & Lungisa, 2023:4). Mamokhere and Meyer (2022:29) cite lack of lack of interest or knowledge of community members as a negative element during the planning phase of the IDP. The COJ drat IDP (2024–2024) highlights the following as the city's strategic priorities:

- Financial Sustainability;
- Energy Mix;
- Sustainable Service Delivery;
- Job Opportunity and Creation;
- Good Governance;
- Infrastructure Development;
- Safer City;
- Active and Engaged Citizenry;
- Sustained Economic Growth;
- Green Economy; and
- Smart City.

It is of utmost importance to motivate community members to fully participate in the processes of the IDP to ensure its effectiveness (Selepe, 2023:343). It is pleasing to notice that COJ is placing active and engaged citizenry as one of its objectives, as this will enable the municipality to comprehend the challenges faced by community members. Dywili and Draai (2019:256) is of the view that societal views and

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aspirations inform integrated development planning that leads to development and service delivery for a quality of life. This notion demonstrates how vital community participation is in ensuring effective IDP. The IDP, according to Enaifoghe (2022:109), is the primary strategic planning for the municipality, which provides guidance and informs all planning, development, and management actions and decisions for a given period. According to Ouwencamp and van der Waldt (2024:3), the IDP cycle progresses goes through five main phases as illustrated in the pyramid below:

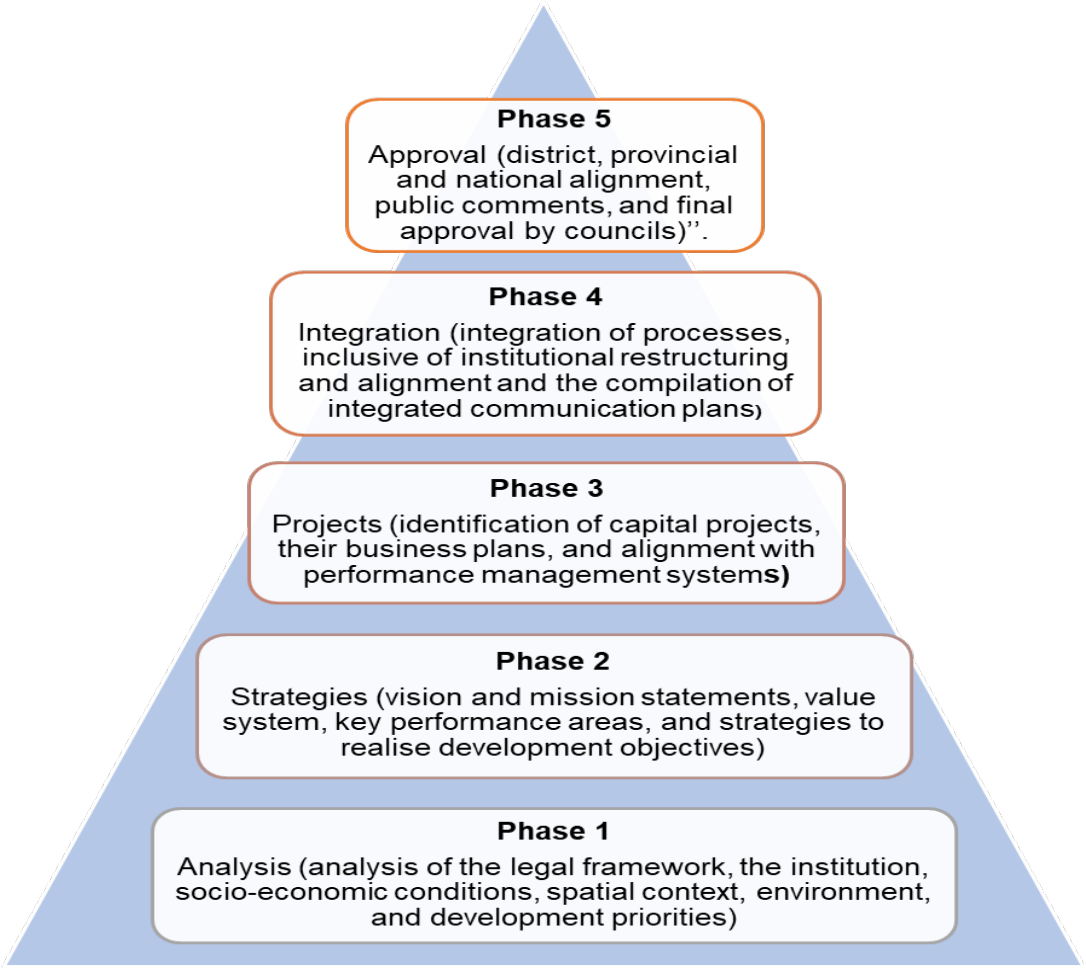


Figure: pyramid on the IDP cycle phases

(Source: Ouwencamp and van der Waldt, 2024:3)

Selepe (2023:344) states that community participation should be promoted to positively influence integrated development planning. Mubangizi (2022:40) agrees with the above and further states that consultations with community members are crucial in ensuring effective IDP. Ngubane (2022:35) states that the IDP should be resourced and budgeted for; therefore, the IDP is always approved by the Council.

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2.22 ELECTIONS AS A MEANS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Mokgosi, Shai, and Ogunnubi (2017:45) argue that the local government conducts elections every five years. Tirivangasi, Mugambiwa, Mutyenyoka, and Rankoana (2017:05) indicate that local government elections are considered a critical platform where community members elect candidates to serve as councillors whilst others serve as mayors. One of the fundamental components of democracy is the election process, which selects candidates for elective offices and allows them to represent and take part in the governance of the nation and the electorate (Onimisi, 2022:4). The implementation of community member's rights to vote and stand for public office has arguably gained momentum (Rudman & Fokala, 2019:01). Elections are about the political plan to drive people-centered aspiration, which is then utilised as a basis for political parties to develop a manifesto to embrace electioneering (Sebake, 2021:209). It is crucial for community members to understand and comprehend the role they play in electing representatives through elections. Community members must ensure that political accountability is practice. Siyal (2020:5) cites that representational accountability occurs when community members hold their elected politicians accountable for several concerns, which were promised before the time of elections. Mamokhere (2022:13) argues that corruption, as well as empty promises, are among the contributing factors with adverse effects on the provision of basic services. The non-delivery of promises by political leaders when in government may have a direct impact on how community members vote. Local governments that act responsive are rewarded with support and trust from community members, and the support may also be demonstrated during election cycles (Linde & Peters, 2020:293).

Molobela (2023:168) asserts that political parties or certain candidates compete during electoral campaigns to gain power, as this system is currently in place for the South African government. Mlambo and Maserumule (2024:6) opine that the general elections which were held on 29 May 2024 permitted South Africans to reflect on how the progress made thus far for the 30 years of democratic rule and on the degree to which constitutional ideas have been translated into reality. The manifestos for the various parties may be used to demand accountability from those individuals who will take office after the elections. Accountability also ensures the community members that the transfer of power through elections to authorities is legitimate and will not be abused in the future (Ariyo-Edu *et al.,* 2023:55). In light of the above, the transfer of

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power by community members within local government has been to authorities that have abused power through unethical conduct and the disregard of the legislature. Ettang and Opasina (2017:101) allude that democracy allows community members to vote and align themselves with any political party. Community members have been empowered with a legislative to be more aware of municipal affairs (Mamokhere, 2022:12). Community members vote for the political party of their choice; however, political representatives are chosen from a party, and community members have little or no power to remove these people from office once they are in it (Ngumbela, 2023:366). After elections, the political parties should have an obligation to transform manifestos into actions and to prioritise the needs of the communities (Hlongwane & Nzimakwe, 2018:3). Masenya (2017:147) cites that voting is not an effective accountability mechanism as power is given to wealthy and/or powerful politicians and weaken political opposition and thereby limit voter choices at election time.

2.23 E-GOVERNANCE AS A TOOL TO PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY

Mhlauli *et al.,* (2021:307) propose the introduction of E-governance to promote and improve transparency in municipal service delivery and reduce corruption. Enaifoghe, Dlamini Jili and Mthethwa (2023:493) opine that electronic government, also known as E-government, is regarded as a tool to improve the efficiency of public service delivery in developmental local government. Mukonavanhu (2024:1) believes that E-governance's objective is to provide transparent, efficient, and coherent services to the public. Metropolitan municipalities are recognising the technology revolution, which embraces smart services delivery through various Informtion & Communication Technology (ICT) and advances the idea of E-governance (Shava & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023:26). Municipal officials lack the necessary skills and capacity to effectively utilise digital tools and platforms for governance purposes (Zindi, 2024:358).

The main objectives of E-government are to serve and to build long-term relationships by being an open, transparent, and transformational government through social media, policy, and services, thus also promoting accountability (Jakoet-Salie, 2020:5). Municipalities must ensure that municipal officials are committed to delivering efficient and effective services using innovative strategies to give effect to E-governance (Govender *et al*., 2023:154). Organisational change signifies a core part of the

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organisation's ability to adapt and transform without compromising the functioning and attainment of the strategic objectives of the organisation (Miggels & Rulashe, 2022:525).

2.24 THE IMPORTANCE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGETING WITHIN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Financial management within local government is a legal mandate. A budget is a financial document used to estimate expenditures and serves as a guiding document for services to be delivered because without a budget it is impossible to deliver services (Molepo & Maleka, 2018:761). Sambo (2022:4) posit that public finance is the cornerstone of any government, as public finances permit the municipality to provide goods and services to community members. Budgetary control is a management tool for keeping track of actual performances against budgeted projections (Adekoya, 2022:2683). This process permits the municipality to monitor the spending of funds relating to activities within the municipality. In this way, irregular and wasteful expenditures are prevented. However, Khasodi *et al., (2023:339)* believe municipalities cannot keep track of their actual income and expenditure, which has led to irregular financial reporting and improper corrective measures. Enaifoghe (2022:110) cites that budget is the instrument that reasonably allocates realistically anticipated resources toward achieving targets as identified in the adopted IDP. In South Africa, municipalities must adhere to the constitutional rules of planning and budgeting as per section 153 of the 1996 Constitution mandates that municipalities carry out their developmental responsibilities. Adekoya (2022:2689) states the following benefits of participatory budgeting:

- “It assists in achieving public ownership of projects;
- It aids solution to social-cultural problems with attention and focus towards priorities matters or projects;
- It ensures accountability and transparency in budget implementation;
- It enhances improvement in service delivery using new innovation or technology;
- It reduces corruption in governance and makes projects cost cheaper and better through competitive bidding and legislative oversight functions;

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- It strengthens decentralised and democratic governance through citizens' participation; and
- It broadens the relationship between the government and citizens through political participation".

Various legislations govern the financial resources of the local government. This means that there should be financial accountability for the utilisation of those financial resources. Thusi and Mashabela (2023:177) define financial accountability as being held accountable for utilisation of municipal financial resources. Eton *et al.,* (2022:359) cite that transparency within the financial environment detects the disclosure of financial and non-financial information, thus promoting financial accountability. According to Hlongwane and Nzimakwe (2018:2), municipalities have two sources of revenue to fulfill their constitutional mandate: their own revenue, property rate, and intergovernmental fiscal transfers. The municipality still has a responsibility to be accountable for the utilization of the aforementioned funds.

Municipal Finance Management Act 56 was promulgated in 2003 to secure a sound and sustainable management of the fiscal and financial affairs of municipalities (Nzama, 2019:1515). According to Adekoya (2022:2684), budgets are managerial tools to plan, control, and coordinate organization resources and activities for effective and efficient decision-making. Mazibuko (2020:1) cites that financial control is facilitated by effective reporting, and auditing is imperative for accountability in the local government. Mazibuko (2020:1) lists the following as pillars of municipal financial management:

- Budgeting;
- Accounting;
- Financial reporting and
- Auditing.

The poor financial management and a lack of accountability have placed developmental local government under enormous strain with adverse impact on service delivery (Thusi & Mashabela 2023:175). Baloyi and Beyers (2019:28) cite it as imperative to ensure that municipal officials are equipped with skills through training

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and awareness programmes to promote effective financial management. Matyana and Mthethwa (2022:132) cite that municipalities should collect the revenues to upkeep the delivery of services to the constituents of their jurisdiction through asset management, metre readings, credit and data collection, user charges and tariff management. Transparency is one of the pillars of public financial management as well as accountability and public participation (Abdullah *et al.,* 2020:300). The weak municipal financial management accountability and oversight institutions in local government do not bring sustenance to municipal administration (Mazibuko, 2020:7). Inadequite of skills in financial position is one of the key factors in the ineffectiveness of municipal financial within developmental local government (Motsitsi & Hendriks, 2023:117). Poor financial management has worsened the provision of service delivery in local government (Breakfast *et al.,* 2019:108). All actors in the budget and other municipal processes must take responsibility for these processes in to enhance accountability (Nel & Patience, 2022:11). This ownership can also be enforced by ensuring the participation of community members. Inviting community members to partake in the budgeting process empowers them to keep local governments accountable and assures responsive and accountable decision-makers (*Kraai et al.,* 2023:81).

Promoting transparency and accountability in the utilisation of municipal financial resources may lead to improved service delivery outcomes (Zwane & Mamabolo, 2023:1). Kessy (2020:201) believe that financial transactions need to be open to public scrutiny to allow community members to know how much of the money they pay through various taxes is being spent by their municipal officials. Transparency can be promoted by involving community members in the budgetary process. Mabunda *et al. (*2023:640) are of the opinion that financial mismanagement, financial constraints, lack of accountability, and corruption are major issues impacting local governments. The strengthening of municipal financial management and leadership through education, training, and development will also lead to professionalising local government (Mathonsi *et al.,* 2022:329). In light of the current financial status of most municipalities, it may be concluded that there is a lack of monitoring of financial resources, hence the inability or delays in detecting financial mismanagement. Eton *et al.,* 2022:364) argue that the monitoring and evaluation of financial activities strengths financial accountability. According to Adonis (2021:288), unauthorised

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irregular, fruitless, and wasteful expenditure has increased with no consequences management instituted to correct the illegal situation. This is due to ineffective financial planning and management. Mnguni and Subban (2022:160) argue that there is a serious need for stricter financial oversight measures to be initiated. This suggestion is because the management of municipal finances will change for the better. According to Mkhize, Dorasamy, and Anwana (2022:1329), a large portion of the government budget is used towards procuring goods, services, and infrastructure. Thus, effective management is of paramount importance.

2.25 THE EFFECTIVE UTILISATION OF MUNICIPAL RESOURCES

Municipalities should seek to optimise their resources and focus on gaining a competitive advantage to satisfy the service delivery objective, thus improving the lives of community members (Ntoyanto-Tyatyantsi, Amandi-Echendu & Mmako, 2022:3). Thusi and Mashamaite (2023:77) posit that when public resources are used, public bodies must answer for the allocation, use, and consequences of such resources. Municipal resources are scarce, and as a result, they must be utilized effectively and methodically (Munzhedzi, 2021:6). The looting of local government has comprised the utilization of municipal resources, which has negatively affected the provision of services. According to Mthethwa *et al., (2023:272),* municipalities generate *a* large partition of revenue through property tax and services charges. To accomplish the goals and objectives of the organisation, managers must possess the capacity to manage the variety of resources available to them strategically (Enwereji & Uwizeyimana, 2019:13834). The utilisation of municipal resources largely dependsdepends on the financial budgeting as well as the revenue collected from recipients of services beingrendered. The utilisation of resources is linked to financial accountability, which is the most important type of accountability as it holds the foundation for improving service delivery within the municipal context (Molobela & Hlatshwayo, 2023:54). The state of affairs in local government depicts poor management of resources (Mokhutso *et al.,* 2023:12). The infrastructure in most of the municipality is in bad condition, which again depicts the misuse of resources meant to uplift the lives of community members. The continuing hijacking of buildings within the Central Business District (CBD) also demonstrated the dire state in which the governance of COJ is in and leaves less to desires. Mokgethi and van der Waldt

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(2020:127) opine that the bulk of municipal infrastructure requires urgent maintenance, refurbishment, or replacement.

The COJ is also facing the challenge of hijacked buildings, which has resulted in putting the lives of community members in danger. The latest incident of a building catching fire is another example that has demonstrated a lack of accountability as community members and interested individuals are still in need of answers. Municipal infrastructure and maintenance are critical for municipalities to provide basic services to community members (2021:1). Municipalities are facing the challenges of infrastructure backlogs, which is worsened by the lack of skills (Ruwanika & Maramura, 2024:4). It is therefore crucial to prioritise these skills as it has been portrayed of what will continue to happen to the infrastructure and the lives of community members if this is not resolved and dealt with. Effective mechanisms for oversight ensure that municipal resources are not abused and are utilised efficiently to render municipal services (Mutereko & Shava, 2024:49). It is no secret that most of the problems within local government are as a result of corruption. Corruption distorts resource allocation and municipal performance as resources are wasted (Mhlauli *et al.,* 2021:299). Effective resource management facilitates sustainable service delivery (Enaifoghe, Maramura, & Mahlala, 2024:5437).

The lack of accountability on budget spending, corruption, and political inducement has dampened the efforts to improve the standard of living, derailed economic growth, and hindered sustainable development (Adekoya, 2022:2683). The developmental local government is under pressure with increasingly scarce resources (Ndebele & Enaifoghe, 2023:114). According to Mbatha and Mutereko (2022:285), accountability exists to ensure that the municipality runs smoothly and safeguards municipal resources. It is crucial that municipal officials responsible for translating resources into service delivery execute their duties effectively and efficiently as this will minimise wasteful and unauthorised expenditure (Matshabaphala & Ringson, 2022:715).

Accountability stresses that those who are entrusted municipal resources have an obligation to be completely accountable for how those resources are utilised (Ariyo-Edu, Rahji, & Subair, 2023:55). Municipal financial resources are deliberately and wilfully mismanaged and used for personal and selfish interests, which has resulted in the non-availability of those funds for effective service delivery (Ikeke, 2024:31).

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For municipalities to be able to continue to deliver services to community members, it is crucial to ensure the payment of those services. The non-payment of services by community members undermines the quality of service delivery as well as the developmental process to improve the livelihood of community members (Seopetsa, 2020:149). Municipalities should, therefore, ensure that mechanisms are in place to ensure the payments are effective and, most importantly, that the financial resources are utilised in such a manner that will motivate community members to continue to make those payments. Poor internal monitoring and control mechanisms have contributed to the failure of effective utilisation of municipal resources (Ngoepe-ntsoane, 2021:6). This internal mechanism has also impacted the payment by service receivers. A study by Hungwe & Mukonza (2023:64) allude to municipalities not having adequate resources to fully execute developmental mandates given the levels of corruption. In other words, municipal resources should be managed to give value to money.

2.26 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Enwereji and Uwizeyimana (2019:13829) define strategic as the practice of how management transforms an organisation to cope with challenges. Johnsen (2016:333) is of the view that strategic planning and management was introduced in the public sector more than three decades ago and has become a core component in many new public management reforms. Performance data is utilised to inform policy and management decisions, track progress on key objectives, and improve service quality and efficiency (Ammons & Roenigk, 2015:518). Zaei, Yarahmadzehi, and Abtin (2013:739) strategic management has been touted as one of the effective management tools for strengthening organisational performance through effective decision-making and systematic strategic formulation and implementation. Sibiya and Subban (2023:167) cite that efficiency is achieved by linking the policymaking process with the resources needed to make the policy a reality. Strategies that have been introduced in local government, such as the Turnaround Strategies and the Back to Basic Initiative, and yet little has been achieved (Breed *et al*., 2023:26). Therefore, drastic measures need to be taken. Lack of proper planning tools within municipalities

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weakens the internal systems and processes in place to improve accountability and ultimately enhance development (Rachekhu & Kgobe, 2024:67). A study by Baloyi and Beyers (2019:28) suggested that ineffective planning and the mismanagement of finances are identified as factors that impede service delivery.

2.27 CRUCIAL FORMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Matshabaphala and Ringson (2022:715) allude that the principle of accountability is founded on three important features, viz., Financial accountability, Political accountability, and Administrative accountability. Financial accountability relates to systems' compliance in revenue collection, resource allocation, and reporting mechanisms (Eton *et al.,* 2022:359). Nkechi, Princewill, and Chris (2024:3) contend that administrative accountability is crucial in preventing the misuse of power by municipal officials, thus guaranteeing that power is used to achieve openness, efficiency, and efficacy in service delivery. According to Mahmud *et al.,* (2024:278), administrative accountability is the foundation of effective governance and is also an imperative mechanism for ensuring transparency, integrity, and responsiveness in developmental local government. Mahmud *et al.,* (2024:281) further state that administrative accountability ensures checks and balances are in place. Administrative accountability is twofold: internal accountability refers to the mechanisms and processes within an organization that ensure transparency and responsibility for decisions and actions, while external accountability refers to the monitoring and auditing of administrative actions by external bodies such as AGSA Mahmud *et al.,* (2024:282). Political accountability refers to holding elected municipal officials and government agencies accountable for their actions and decisions; this form of accountability ensures that those in power are accountable to the public (Mahmud *et al.,* 2024:282). Politicians can be investigated and held accountable for actions that have not contravened the law or resulted in personal enrichment or breach of common morals, but be held accountable for some bad political choices (Usman, Bashir & Bello, 2020:4).

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2.28 EXPLORING ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

According to Vian (2021:2), accountability refers to the obligation of those in power to explain, make understandable, and take responsibility for their decisions, actions, and performance. There are certain countries that have given effect to this definition. Other countries have implemented accountability effectively and this may be utilised as best practice by the South African Government.

2.28.1 BRAZIL

Marenco (2019:1) states that Brazil is a federation with a presidential government, a bicameral and multiparty legislative branch, and an independent judiciary with the prerogative of constitutional review. According to Marenco (2019:6), the composition of public service in Brazilian local administrations shows an increased professionalization trend, with a predominance of statutory employees that enter by civil service exam and acquire job stability after 3 years of activity. This process allows the employee to be performance oriented to gain stability in employment. The government of Brazil has adopted a bottom-up accountability approach (Freire Galdino & Mignozzetti, 2020:1). According to Marchisotti, Filho, Franca, Domingos, Junior, Toledo, Alves, Castro and Putnik (2022:599), accountability is critical for an organisation to be considered trustworthy. It is crucial to bridge the information gap by empowering citizens to understand the discussion and reports to make informed decisions (Gonçalvesa, Bilhimb, Rezende & Gonçalves, 2021:4). Brazil is among federal states that have given prominence to the role of local government in their development agenda (Marenco, 2019:104). This implies that most of the country's resources are geared towards this level of government.

The Federal Court of Accounts is the main institution responsible for monitoring public spending in Brazil, and in a case where irregularities are identified, a person who engages in corruption may receive one of the three punishments, including administrative, civil, and criminal. (Aranha, 2017:7-8). Aranha (2017:8) further states that their central task is to provide an independent review of government expenditures and to confirm their legality, accuracy, and reliability (Aranha, 2017:8). The government-appointed district monitoring officers (mostly retired army officials) to monitor and report on the presence of doctors in the village-level public health

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facilities; lately, the government opted for direct citizens' feedback in Punjab through mobile phone messages – called the citizen feedback model (Fox, 2018:67). Sambo and Kanyane (2020:32) cite that Brazil is considered as one of the countries that are doing well when it comes to democratic accountability.

2.28.2 CHINA

Bai and Liu (2020:65) state that China has become the world's second-largest economy, and this suggests that the reforms implemented have achieved great success. Li (2020:8) states that China can be described as a learning state, which has adapted to changing conditions and frequently turned outward for lessons. However, just like other countries, China is also faced with corruption, which has led to leadership conducting a major anti-corruption campaign (Wu & Christensen, 2021:1383). The Chinese government hasdifferent methods to influence accountability. According to Shi and Ni (2017:11), there are two methods implemented to influence accountability; the first is the process-oriented mechanism, which is implemented when monitoring is observable or cooperation is valued over competition; the second method is the outcome-oriented mechanism, which can be divided into absolute-performance and relative-performance evaluations. Another way of ensuring accountability, according to Wu and Christensen (2021:1388), is by ensuring that those engaging in corruption are punished to set a precedent.

According to Kanyane and Sambo (2021:205), the Chinese government has commission known as the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC), which both enhances accountabilities and is a useful way of enhancing the governance and optimal functionality of an organization. It is argued that in China, the government steers, guides, and serves society rather than controls society (Guo & Jiang, 2017:339). This approach has the potential to build the confidence of community members as they will feel in control of their development. This will also increase the level of trust among community members, which is a critical element within local government. China also has what is referred to as social governance. Guo and Jiang (2017:328) state that the goal of social governance in China is to construct a governance mechanism through the cooperation of government and people in the conduct of public affairs, encourage and trust in the people, and motivate their sense of responsibility for society and public affairs. In this manner, accountability also shifts

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from just government officials but also to community members. Social governance embraces participatory government. Fewsmith and Gao (2014:171) believe that the political system in China is that which has developed a strong mix of capable leadership at the centre of building a developmental state in local government. Given the developmental progress that China has demonstrated, one can conclude that there are many things other countries can learn.

2.28.3 GHANA

As per the view of Maama and Marimuthu (2020:475), the Ghana Audit Service was established under the Audit Service Act 584 of, 2000 to ensure proper accountability among government-controlled institutions. The Ghanaian government also has an auditor general who substantially operates functionally independently. Within this government, the core of accountability is auditing (Maama & Marimuthu, 2020:477). According to Maama and Marimuthu (2020:477), effective and independent external auditing can contribute to the effective discharge of accountability in the public sector. One form of ensuring financial accountability is carried out by means of quarterly auditing of all financial activities to be submitted to the presiding member of the assembly (Akotey & Boateng, 2021:38). There is a local government inspection unit responsible for providing monthly analysis of the trial balances of the Assembly and submit to the RCC. The government further has an audit report implementation committee, which oversees the effective implementation of recommendations made by the auditors (Akotey & Boateng 2021:39). This is something that South Africa can adopt and implement to improve performance. Vian (2021:12) states that full implementation of internal audit regulations and laws and assurance of the independence of the internal audit function can help fight administrative corruption.

2.28.4 NIGERIA

Adekoya (2022:2683) states that Nigeria is a sovereign and democratic nation and operates federally political systems of government with Central/Federal, 36 State and Federal Capital Territory (FCT), and 774 Local Governments. The legislature is the watchdog over other organs of government and society, and it is considered one of the main instruments of entrenching accountability (Egobueze & Anthony, 2020:49). In Nigeria, the Local Government Legislative Council ensures accountability in the local government system through:

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- "Legislative oversight: Legislative oversight is achieved effectively through committees, and the committee system is an effective tool for accountability;
- The power of appropriation: public finance, it is a rule that public money cannot be raised or spent without the legislature's sanction or approval;
- Power to conduct the investigation;
- Legislative veto: legislative veto allows the legislature to nullify certain actions of the executive by majority vote;
- Impeachment: This is essentially the "ultimate check on the executive branch, known as removal power." even more importantly, this removal power is exclusive to the legislature and
- Review of the report of the Auditor General of Local Government".

According to Egobueze and Anthony (2020:54), legislative oversight is very important in ensuring accountability and good governance. According to Gberevbie, Nchekwube, and Oyeyemi (2014:82), the concept of accountability is crucial to development to the extent that without it, society would perpetually remain underdeveloped. Just like in South Africa, the local government council is the third tier of the Nigerian federal system of government (Onimisi, 2022:3). Local government system in Nigeria has undergone a series of transformations depending on the regime in power, either military or civilian administration (Adeyemi, 2019:164). In Nigeria, the legislature is one of the accountability institutions in a liberal democracy that is vested with a mandate for checks and balances with threefold functions of law-making, representation, and oversight (Basiru, 2018:133). The Nigerian government has established an Anti-graft Agencies Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission to prosecute and prescribe punishments for corrupt practices and other related offences (Adekoya, 2022:2687). National Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) is the Nigerian arm of global financial intelligence units meant to comply with international standards on combating money laundering and financing terrorism and proliferation (Adekoya, 2020:348). Msughter *et al.,* (2021:5) state that in Nigeria, the media promotes good governance by educating voters, promoting tolerance among various social groups, and ensuring a transparent and accountable government.

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2.29 BENCHMARKING OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Benchmarking is relevant and significant for assessing the relative historical performance of public organisations (Zwane & Matsiliza, 2023:4). Benchmarking is an essential tool used by role-players in an organisation to determine its success and make amendments where necessary (Enwereji & Uwizeyimana, 2019:152). Mbatha and Mutereko (2022:291) cite that benchmarking encompasses three main dimensions, which are consistency, cost, and time. Ariyo-Edu *et al.,* (2023:56) argue that accountability refers to an organization's capacity to defend its decisions and control how they affect the external environment. It is to be noted that accountability is not just about defending but also providing regular feedback on how activities were executed. Links and Draai (2023:1081) state that benchmarking can also be made possible through performance monitoring as it enables a process of tracking and problem-solving supported by evidence. Japan's democratic developmental state was built on a partnership between the governing party, opposition parties, and a strong government-business coalition. Japan also had a strong parliamentary system and robust civil society and media (Gumede 2021:3).

Despite the legislature's attempts to ensure accountability, South Africa lags behind with respect of accountability compared to peers, such as the United States and the United Kingdom (Masiya & Lubinga, 2023:44). Molobela and Hlatshwayo (2023:50) cite that in Seychelles, the government also undertook a comprehensive step towards the development of new institutional and economic reforms to decisively tackle the issue of service delivery and improve public accountability. In the UK, public organisations that provide public services adhere to basic financial management principles Enwereji (2022:31). The Government Accountability Office in the United States is more effective compared to its United Kingdom counterpart because of the fact that it derives its legitimacy and powers from the constitution, whilst in England, there is no equivalent document defining the relationship between the state and the citizenry (Gasela, 2023:04). Khambule (2020:161) opine that a developmental local government is not only for the South African government as it is implemented in countries such as China and India.

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2.30 CONCLUSION

It cannot be denied that, based on the literature above, accountability is regarded as one of the critical elements in ensuring effective governance of local development. Even though accountability is a constitutional mandate, it should also be considered a human principle that every municipal official should be able to apply without being forced. Various players are ensuring effective oversight, yet the issues relating to the mismanagement of municipal resources are still persistent. From the literature above, it is evident that when oversight functions of ensuring accountability are effectively performed, a need for reconfiguring accountability would not exist. The literature also highlighted the benefits of accountability and principles of accountability as a way to demonstrate the importance of it. The dare state in which local government finds itself is of great concern as it can potentially reach a point of no return and total collapse. Oversight bodies with numerous challenges. However, this should not deter those in power to implement and ensure accountability exists to reduce challenges such as fraud and corruption. The next chapter to follow explores the legislative framework for accountability in developmental local government.

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CHAPTER THREE
REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND POLICIES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the current state of affairs in COJ as well as the roles and functions of oversight bodies as the custodians of accountability within developmental local government. Analysis and evaluation of accountability require a description of who is supposed to be accountable, to whom, and for what (Ile & Makiva, 2017:14). According to Kgobe and Mamokhere (2021:1), accountability mechanisms are intended to force municipal officials to be accountable for their actions or lack of action. According to Shava and Mazenda (2021:312), public officials are crucial in realising a developmental institution. Oversight means supervision and a general review of institutional performance with particular attention to failures to carry out mandates, preserve discipline, and avoid inefficiency and poor productivity (Muchwa, 2023:1). There are laws and policies regulating accountability within developmental local government.

3.2 IMPERATIVE REGULATORYFRAMEWORK UNDERPINNING DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SPHERE IN SOUTH AFRICA

There are legal and policy instruments mandating developmental local government to execute service delivery (Enaifoghe, 2022:109). The legal frameworks aim to encourage openness, responsibility, and efficient governance; however, their impact is frequently hindered by problems such as insufficient oversight, accountability or lack thereof, and execution at the local level (Nkoana, Selelo & Mashamaite, 2024:88). Compliance with legislation is crucial for achieving the mandate of local government (Zungu, Chonco & Madwe, 2024:136). According to Mchunu and Dlamini (2020:63), legislation has been enacted to ensure the sound functioning of local government. Several laws govern the functioning municipalities in South Africa, meaning that all actions and tasks should be executed within the legal and policy frameworks (Ntoyanto-Tyatyantsi, Amandi-Echendu & Mmako, 2022:7). Those laws are discussed below:

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3.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) is the supreme law of the country that provides the legal basis relating to how municipalities are structured, demarcated, and categorised (Thobejane & Ngoepe-Ntsoane, 2022:220). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996, is the country's supreme law, with all the other legislations subordinate to the above act. It is imperative to note that legislation should be drafted in a manner that does not contradict the Constitution, as it is the supreme law with all other laws in support and expansion of the Constitution.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, prescribes in section 152 the objects of local government as to provide a democratic and accountable government for local communities. In light of the above, a developmental local government is a constitutional mandate that requires it again, which implies that accountability is a constitutional mandate that the lack, therefore, should result in consequence management. According to Section 153 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, in 1996, municipalities have both basic service delivery and developmental duties. Section 151(1e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 commands that municipalities must encourage the participation of communities in local government decision-making. There have been studies by various authors demonstrating the failure of community participation and mechanisms in place in this regard. Some studies demonstrated that the lack of interest by community members has worsened the situation, resulting in less participation by community members in matters that require their views. It is imperative to ensure the effective and efficient utilisation of municipal resources. Chapter 10, Section 195(1) stipulates that resources must be used in a manner that is efficient, effective, and economical, public administration must be development-orientated, services must be done in a manner that is impartial, fair, equitable, and without bias and the needs of citizens must be responded to.

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

According to Nkoana *et al.,* (2024:87), the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) seeks to establish the fundamental ideas, procedures, and systems required by municipalities to advance the social and economic development of their local communities. Mlambo, Makgoba and Mphurpi (2023:44) opine that the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) encourages community participation, thus ensuring transparency and disciplinary procedures for consequence management and accountability. One may ask, if there is such a policy to ensure participation and transparency, why are issues of lack of transparency still prevalent in local government? Section 53 of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) outlines the roles and responsibilities of politicians, political structures, and municipal managers. This section addresses the separation of power, yet politicians still infer from the administrative functions of the municipality. There is, therefore, a need to enforce the functions outlined in section 53 of the act to limit the confusion between the functions of politicians and administrators. The Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 is crucial in establishing a governance system inside a municipality and clarifying and separating the roles of mayors, councilors, officials, as well as the transparency and oversight mechanisms (Nzama *et al.,* 2023:4).

The Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) also governs Service delivery in South African municipalities. Section 11 of the Municipal Systems Act 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) states that municipal councils make all decisions for the municipality. This paragraph portrays the importance of the municipal council, and it may be deduced that a municipality's effectiveness depends on the council's effectiveness and willingness. Section 16 of the act requires that a municipality develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a participatory governance system (Ndebele & Lavhelani, 2017:342). The representation should be of all the different races, religions, and cultures.

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

According to Mlambo *et al.,* (2023:43), Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 2003, (henceforth referred to as MFMA, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) (henceforth referred to as MFMA) seeks to regulate and ensure sustainable management of financial affairs at the local government level. The Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 governs municipal financial management. In this regard, the financial affairs of the municipality should be aligned the stipulations of the said act. The MFMA aims to modernise budget, accounting, and financial management practices by placing local government finances on a sustainable footing to maximise other municipality's capacity to deliver services to communities (Mlambo & Maserumule, 2023:13). The MFMA is concerned with ensuring sound and sustainable financial management of municipalities using providing a process to follow in managing municipal funds.

Mnguni and Subban (2022:152) state that the MFMA requires all municipalities to prepare and submit financial statements that are a true reflection of financial transaction transactions and that provide a fair view in accordance with the Generally Recognised Accounting Practice. The AGSA has reported that financial management within local government is not done per MFMA, which is a concern and a contributing factor to poor service delivery. The act requires some municipal officials to declare their financial interests as a mechanism to prevent prejudice or corruption in financial transactions (Nkoana *et al.,* 2024:86). Political interference is rendering the implementation of this act ineffective. According to Links and Draai (2023:1080), the Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003, instructs financial accountability and stresses the importance of monitoring and evaluation of performance management as it leads to improved service delivery.

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

Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh (2019:76) state that the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 1998) focuses on clarifying and strengthening the role of political and administrative leadership. Section 56(2) of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 provides that the executive mayor is responsible for recommending strategies, programs, and services to the municipal council. Thus, it is important that

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the roles are clearly defined and do not overlap. Section 72 (3) Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 1998) outlines the objective of a ward committee as enhancing participatory democracy in local government. In light of the above, the failure of ward committees is also attributed to the failure to comply with this act. Shava and Mubangizi (2019:76) allude that the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 1998) requires a municipality to establish committees when there is a need or signs that it will be efficient and the powers of that committee are delegated by the municipal council to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the powers and functions.

3.3 THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN FACILITATING ACCOUNTABILITY

The constitutions stipulate Parliament to ensure accountability and openness in government actions (Adetiba & Asuelime, 2018:111). The cabinet of South Africa, which is constituted of the President, Deputy President as well as the national ministers, represent the executive arm at the national sphere (Munzhedzi, 2017:82). It is important to ensure that the goals of the minister and executive council member are clearly defined to aid in combating corruption as well as strengthening the oversight function of the Parliament (Mlambo *et al.,* 2023:11). According to Mahmud, *et al.,* (2024:283), strong accountability encourages ministers and municipal officials to be more responsible and responsive. The Parliament bears the responsibility of upholding accountability in line with the legal framework of South Africa (Sefara & Odeku 2023:456).

The country applies the rule of majority rules, and the ANC, with majority votes, is currently the ruling party. Thusi and Mashamaite (2023:74) argue that the ANC poses a danger to democracy due to its inability to be held responsible and accountable. Parliamentary oversight is realised through monitoring of the budget process, public financial accounting management and specialised audit processes within all public expenditure units (Gwiza, Vain Jarbandhan & Tambaoga, 2023:50). South Africa established Parliamentary Committees on Finance (PCOFs) as a means to improve and strengthen the role of Parliament in the budget process (Gwiza, Vain Jarbandhan & Tambaoga, 2023:50). In democratic politics, parliaments are required to preserve responsibility in their actions by referring to their mandates as outlined in state constitutions (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:245). Molobela and Hlatshwayo (2023:54) state

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that parliament plays the oversight role of the executive branch of government, and cabinet ministers may be summoned to account to Parliament based on their actions, behaviour and decisions. According to Abdullah *et al., (2023:298),* parliamentary oversight is supposed to ensure that the government is responsible for using resources derived from taxes to avoid waste by applying the 3E's principle, efficiency*, economy,* and effectiveness. The parliament scrutinizes the executive's actions through various mechanisms such as question sessions, debates, and parliamentary committees (Mahmud *et al.,* 2024:208). According to Adetiba and Asuelime (2018:112), the lack of parliamentary accountability has been a leading cause of democratic failure in most developing countries, with South Africa now seeming inclusive. This may be caused by the system, which has seen the ruling party members protecting each other's interests at the expense of disregarding principles of accountability. According to Khambule, Nomdob, Siswanaband, and Fokou (2019:25), the ruling party undermined parliamentary oversight structures through majoritarianism to evade accountability by the Legislature and Executive.

The difficulties caused by corruption in management flow down the ranks throughout the public sector (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:242). The above has been proven to be true, given the recent corruption of the former speaker of parliament. This is evident as this institution is supposed to be the highest institution ensuring oversight in the country. It is, however, to be noted that the system does somehow allow for parliament members to get away with wrongdoing based on the majority ruling. Parliament utilised various mechanisms such as convening house plenaries and holding various committee meetings for deliberations on the performance of departments and their entities (Zantsi, 2020:2). The fifth democratically elected parliament is faced with inadequate parliamentary supervision, escalating corruption, state takeover, and misuse of authority (Thusi & Mashamaite, 2023:78). Parliamentarians themselves must be accountable, as this will serve as a precedence for official within developmental local government. If members of the parliament are found lacking in this regard, then it becomes challenging for effective accountability (Abdullah *et al.,* 2020:301).

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According to Yende and Yende (2022:156), the poor governance in South Africa resulted in bureaucratic corruption and poor development. It is to be noted that the parliament members' conduct set a president for the other spheres of government. Thus, if accountability is not effective in this structure, it becomes difficult to disseminate it to other government institutions. Municipalities suffer from poor governance, which has led to high levels of corruption, mismanagement, and lack of accountability (Mamokhere, 2022:7). The Parliament, therefore, is responsible for ensuring that the above-mentioned factors are eliminated or reduced. According to Glasser and Wright (2020:417), some of the hindering factors of financial distress are beyond the municipality's control but are within the control of the Parliament, and thus, parliament intervention is required. Cabinet Ministers must avoid the interference of administrative duties assigned to municipal officials unless matters of accountability and responsibilities are requested for the overall performance of developmental local government (Molobela, 2023:163).

3.4 INTERVENTION TO IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY IN SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPALITIES

Teti *et al.,* (2023:2) allude that the Back to Basics strategy sought to strengthen the processes of active monitoring and accountability measures in municipalities. The Back to Basics intervention initiative aims to force municipalities to maintain good relations with community members by providing efficient services (Ngumbela, 2021:3). Adonis (2021:288) opines that the state of local government in South Africa warrants some form of intervention to reconfigure accountability and a sense of responsibility from municipal officials. According to Hlongwane and Nzimakwe (2018:2), municipalities need to be transformed to meet the needs of community members. This process will require vigorous strategies to turn things around for the better. It is vital to maintain stringent accountability measures to curb the trend of maladministration or any other illegal practice that might have a negative impact on service delivery (Sefara & Odeku, 2023:455).

Quarterly review sessions are paramount as a form of intervention to improve performance management. Performance measurement is needed to generate information that can help managers monitor the achievement of a program (Telabah & Handajani, 2018:89). Manafe & Akbar (2014:47), the basic reason is accountability

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for and accountability to be part of the integrative process. Direct accountability in local government to the people is formally substituted by their accountability to politicians as public representatives in parliament (Manafe & Akbar, 2014:60). It is expected of the local government to execute its duties in the most transparent and accountable way (Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022:3). The COGTA was established with the specific mandate to oversee and support municipalities thus improve their performance. The most effective way to ensure accountability is to allow citizens to hold government administrators accountable through participation laws and reforms (Nkoana *et al.,* 2024:94).

Miggels and Rulashe (2022:523) state that the Local Government Turn Around Strategy (LGTAS) aims to enhance municipal organizational and political performance and service delivery. The government of South Africa introduced the various anti-corruption strategies to address corruption. The different anti-corruption laws exist so that municipal officials do not place themselves in compromising positions that would blur their judgments and, as such, contravene the laws (Sefara & Odeku, 2023:446). South Africa has various anti-corruption laws, commissions, and agencies that seek to curb transgression, misuse of state resources, looting, and using state resources for personal gain, but even with this in place; there has been an increase in looting state resources (Masenya, 2017:146). This suggests that there is a serious need to review those mechanisms to ascertain the failure and thus allow for redress.

The National Skills Development Strategy III was developed as a strategy that aims to reverse structural inequality and increase access to training and skills development opportunities (Cloete, 2023:2). The question still remains as to what extent this has improved the skills of municipal officials to deliver on their mandate. Links and Draai (2023:1082) believe that training interventions within developmental local government are often not directed at the problem areas. Hence, skill and capacity challenges remain evident and persistent. The District Development Model (DDM) is one of the government interventions to attempt to arrest the governance collapse of municipalities, which is a plan built on a set of guiding principles (Cloete, 2023:3). Again, it is to be noted that the effectiveness of this strategy is yet to be determined. A study by Mle and Ngumbela (2020:3) revealed that some institutions responsible for upholding the rule of law have demonstrated defects in upholding the responsibility for booking. The significance of Izimbizo lies in the fact that community members have an

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opportunity to interact with municipal officials about the nature and strategy of service delivery in their communities (Shava & Mubangizi, 2019:77). This platform may be utilized as a mechanism for ensuring accountability for service delivery.

Another intervention at developmental local government to improve performance is using consultants. This is normally done in areas where the municipality lacks the expertise to execute the mandate effectively. Consultants are appointed to bridge the skills deficit to assist with financial planning and reporting and address other strategic skills gaps created by long-term vacancies. However, the effectiveness of consultants has been questioned as, in certain instances, they have not yielded the required outcome (Links & Draai, 2023:1082).

3.5 CONCLUSION

The government has made legislative provisions for local government to be governed under. The ineffectiveness of financial management within developmental local government points out the PFMA's non-compliance. Strategic planning plays a huge role in setting out the goals and objectives of the institution. Hence, it is imperative to implement the planning process effectively to ensure clear and defined key actions. The implementation of accountability also has its challenges. Hence, the chapter to follow will discuss those challenges in detail. This is done to provide solutions to those challenges and ensure that accountability serves its intended purpose. The next chapter discusses the challenges encountered in ensuring accountability in developmental local government.

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CHAPTER FOUR
CHALLENGES OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The prior chapter discussed the regulatory framework underpinning accountability in developmental local government. Accountability is imperative in a democratic state thus South Africa has legislation that ensures that municipal officials and political office-bearers are held accountable for their actions (Mkhize & Nel, 2018:42). Mlambo *et al.,* (2022:15) state that holding municipal officials responsible for public and legislative entities in South Africa is important for activating democracy. Mofolo and Adonis (2021:4) argue that one of the basic values and principles governing public administration is that it must be accountable, and it is for this reason that the President Cyril Ramaphosa has been giving emphasis on the need to implement accountability within all spheres of government. Accountability remains a challenge within the South African government, and local government is not exempted from this. Kanyane *et al*., (2020:2) posit that accountability is a remedy for corruption and promotes servant leadership, public trust, efficiency, and responsiveness.

This chapter discusses the limitations in implementing accountability within developmental local government. Accountability is only effective when municipal officials are answerable for their decisions (Matshabaphala & Ringson, 2022:715). Mamokhere (2022:5) believes that if municipal officials are not accounting, it creates a space wherein corruption thrives. Ragolane and Malatji (2024:374) argue that municipal officials must be held accountable for how they execute their functions. Mahmud *et al,.* (2024:279) state that accountability is the same as answerability, culpability, liability, and the responsibility to explain in the context of ethics and governance. This chapter outlines the challenges faced in ensuring liability and responsibility (accountability) as well as the effects it has on the performance of local government.

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4.2 SHORTCOMINGS IN IMPLEMENTING ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Developmental local government is under enormous strain due to a lack of accountability, adversely impacting service delivery (Thusi & Mashabela 2023:175). It is noticeable that accountability in South African municipalities continues to decline, and Mofolo and Adonis (2021:5) cite that the continual scandal reported in the media makes the situation worse. The COJ has witnessed a spike in the number of protests due to dissatisfaction with service delivery or the lack thereof. Zerihun and Mashingo (2020:7) state that one of the reasons behind frequent protests is that communities feel that politicians merely use them to get votes and do not deliver on their promises. As a result, residents get angry and resort to protests. Thusi and Selepe (2023:688) cite that local government is evidenced by accountability and service delivery shortcomings, inadequate governance, insufficient institutional capacity, and instability. The shortcomings of ineffective accountability are discussed as follows:

4.2.1 The lack of protection for whistle-blowers

Diale (2016:419) cites that the recognition of whistleblowing has become one of the important key features of accountability with the potential to advocate for organisational integrity. Nortje (2018:201) defines whistleblowing as an act of revealing information in the public interest. The information disclosed should indicate the wrongdoings by those in power to probe the investigation. Mmakwena and Moses (2022:991) believe that whistle-blowers must be appreciated and applauded for their contributions to society instead of demonised and treated as deviants. This is because the job they do not only saves the government money but also ensures the development of the local government and improved service delivery. The whistle-blowers are vital components in ensuring a democratic country. Radulović (2023:62) alluded to the role that whistle-blowers played in bringing to the fore the state capture because of the disclosures of wrongdoing to parties that were able to effect action. Radulović (2023:62) alludes to the role that whistle-blowers played in bringing to the fore the state capture because of the disclosures of wrongdoing to parties that were able to effect action. Calitz (2023:829) argues that whistle-blowers have a crucial role in the public sector to expose corruption, criminal activities, infringement of human rights, and conduct threatening democracy. Kenny and Fotaki (2021:341) indicate that

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whistle-blowers are a vital means of protecting society because they provide information about serious wrongdoing. However, those whistle-blowers have experienced a form of judgment with their safety at risk. Whist Lim, Zhang, Hussain, and Ho (2017:1) share the same sentiment and further state that whistle-blowing often leads to negative consequences, which may compromise their safety. The murders of whistle-blowers, which have been reported, call for urgent measures to be implemented to ensure the physical safety of whistle-blowers (Calitz, 2023:828).

According to Nortje (2018:201), whistleblowing may be utilised as a tool to promote and increase integrity and accountability, which makes it important to ensure the safety of those who disclose information of wrongdoing. Whistle-blowers risk much when they speak out, yet there are few resources available to help them, and a poor understanding of the risk they incur (Kenny & Fotaki, 2021:342). According to Vian (2021:11), protection for whistle-blowers is essential. Thus, the government should prioritize the protection of whistle-blowers. In the context of stories that have been witnessed in various media channels, it is understandable why most people would have a fear of disclosing information. Radulović (2023:67) states that the two whistle-blowers of the state capture feared disclosing to law enforcement agencies as they did not trust the process. Sebake and Modau (2020:490) cite that whistleblowing remains an important mechanism for fighting corruption within developmental local government. However, it is imperative to ensure that their safety is guaranteed.

4.2.2 Lack of consequence management

The South African government lacks consequence management and poor service delivery at the expense of community members (Thusi, Matyana & Jili, 2023:138). A study by Mmakwena and Moses (2022:989) revealed that law enforcement agencies have not acted against those who are responsible for looting government funds. This hurts addressing corruption as it sets a precedent to promote wrongdoing. The limited or no consequence for wrongdoing has led to a culture of unethical conduct, failure of oversight, and accountable structures and mechanisms (Van Niekerk and Sebakamotse, 2020:282). Thusi and Selepe (2023:689) are of the same belief and further state that the absence of consequences for poor performance in municipal administration perpetuates unethical conduct. The non-existence of consequence management allows municipal officials to compromise the bounds of ethics relating to

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municipal service (Jarbandhan, 2022:34-35). According to Fourie and Malan (2020:17), no or very few consequences for wrongdoing will result in non-compliance becoming the norm in the culture and institutionalize an environment that perpetuates wrongdoing, fraud, and corruption. Those who engage in acts of corruption do so with little understanding of how significant the damage is (Mlambo *et al.,* 2023:49), and the lack of punishment for such behaviour sets precedence. Maganoe (2023:6) states that the lack of consequence management has led members of opposition politics to seek intervention from the courts. The lack of consequence management has become a culture in local government where corrupt and unethical practices are perceived as normal (Makole, 2022:25).

Enwereji (2022:19) is also of the view that there has been an inability to apply legal actions against defaulters who misuse municipal financial resources. Accountability denotes municipal officials being held responsible and, more crucially, facing penalties when obligations and promises are not fulfilled (Lebotsa, 2022:125). This is wherein consequence management should play a vital role in ensuring those penalties. The difficulty in consequence management may be due to political party affiliation (Munzhedzi, 2021). Mantzaris and Pillay (2017:72) support the preceding statement by citing that some municipal officials have avoided the might of the law because of their affiliation to the African National Congress as the previous ruling political party. The absence of consequences for noncompliance with legislation has led to the deterioration of accountability for financial and performance management (Mamokhere, 2022:195). The need for consequences is imperative in the political-bureaucratic relationship for accountability and oversight as an instrument to enforce compliance and prevent and sanction non-compliance (Khaile, Davids & Khaile, 2021:174).

It may be argued that the lack of consequence management is also a result of the political structure, as it is difficult to punish one of your own (political members) who might have been pushing agendas of the political party. A study by Mothupi *et al.,* (2022:82) revealed that the failure of consequence management in municipalities promotes poor financial accountability, thus leading to poor service delivery. This is evident from the unsatisfactory audits, as suggested by AGSA Reports. Additionally, the financial resources are not effectively utilised, hence the lack of certain services, such as water supply. According to Ramodula and Govender (2021:62), a wide range

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of corrupt activities and a lack of consequence management lead to a wide range of corrupt activities. Moreover, the lack of a substantial consequence management system weakens the institutional capacity of the municipalities. Mokgolo and Dikotla (2021:1) argue that for the performance of a municipality to increase, disciplinary actions should be promoted as a progressive method to correct unwanted behavior and foster desired behavior in an employee in a fair, reasonable, transparent, and consistent manner. This will set a precedent, thus promoting a culture of professionalism. Based on the definitions provided above, one may conclude that COJ has failed to develop and enforce effective consequence management mechanisms to investigate and curb corruption. The increase in the number of transgressions suggests a weak or intolerant culture for consequence management within (Sibanda & Van Rooyen, 2023:113). In light of this, municipal officials will continue to engage in unethical behaviour due to lack of punishment, thus creating a culture that promotes misconduct.

It can be said that it is human nature for people to continue doing something if they know they can get away with it without any aftermath. Lungisa, Nzewi, and Sikhosana (2023:39) opine that most members are not accountable, negatively impacting consequence management. The inadequate or lack of corrective action has resulted in the reoccurrences of wrongdoing by municipal officials continuously (Gasela, 2022:3). The lack of consequences management has been a huge contributor to continuing corruption as those accused are seldom punished with many getting away without being prosecuted (Mlambo *et al.,* 2023:194). The absence of consequence management nurtures an environment that perpetuates corruption (Thusi & Mashabela, 2023:177). The failure to address this will continue to pave and create more opportunities for the looting of municipal funds. According to Lungisa and Nzewi (2023:53), consequence management remains a conceptually and practically ambiguous subject in developmental local government and has received limited attention. The lack of punishment has become the norm in developmental local government (Thusi & Matyana, 2024:500). It is not surprising that efforts are not directed to consequence management as it may result in the creation of an environment that will not permit corruption and any other wrongdoings.

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4.2.3 Cadres Deployment Policy

Cadre deployment is a policy that was introduced and practised by the ruling political party African National Congress (ANC), and its tripartite alliance (Swanepoel, 2021:442). Cadre deployment is the appointment by the governing party of a loyalist member(s) in an organisation and bringing that institution under the party's control rather than the state (Mlambo, 2023:6). It may be concluded that this policy was adopted to try to rectify the imbalances caused by the apartheid regime. Zulu, Yalezo, and Mutambara (2022:2) define cadre deployment as appointing members loyal to a political party or party's aims and objectives. This implies that those cadre appointees remain loyal to their political party even at the expense of the community members. Mlambo *et al.,* (2022:12) suggest that cadre deployment breeds corruption and the abuse of power and the failure to separate politics from administrative decisions, and this deteriorates the poor levels of accountability. There is a serious need to separate the functions of political office-bearers and administrative officials. Cadre deployment has resulted in appointing incompetent and unqualified individuals who failed to deliver efficient and effective service. Thusi and Selepe (2023:692) support the statement above and add that cadre deployment negatively impacts service delivery, as people in key positions are appointed based on political influence rather than qualifications and skills for the posts. The cadre deployment policy has received negative feedback as it has been seen as a mechanism to reward comrades, and it has led to the discouragement of talented and qualified individuals (Mlambo *et al.,* 2023:193).

Makole (2022:21) argues that there is nothing wrong with deploying professional, knowledgeable, and astute cadres with high ethical morality to drive levers of executive authority; however, unfortunately, it is currently the opposite case in the South African local government. Masiya, Davids, and Mangai (2021:112) create a notion that municipalities need to depoliticize local government and promote the non-partisan appointment of municipal officials. This process will ensure that the deployment is based on merit, thus improving accountability. The employment of nonskilled persons is in contrast to good governance (Jarbandhan, 2022:44). The politically motivated hiring, patronage, and nepotism promote and contribute to the quality of the bureaucracy (Bester & Dobovšek, 2021:76). The developmental local government is experiencing upsurges in poor service delivery as a result of officials

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being loyal to their political parties at the expense of community members (Yende & Yende, 2022:147).

A study by Shava and Chamisa (2018:1) revealed that cadre deployment worsens corruption, poor procurement systems, wasteful expenditure, and the deteriorating state of local government, thus hindering the initiatives for development. Cadre deployment is marked by issues such as a lack of transparency and accountability, misappropriation of funds, fraud, corruption, and overall poor performance (Thusi *et al.,* 2022:135); thus the political power has made it challenging to hold those officials to account. According to Mlambo *et al.,* (2022:15), cadre deployment in South Africa undermines principles of accountability. Thebe (2017:124) posits cadre deployment in the South African government needs a thorough reconsideration. This may be attributed to the fact that those cadres tend to be loyal to the political party at the expense of community members. An observation by Jarbandhan (2022:43) suggests that comrades are deployed into positions of power without qualifications. In the context of municipalities, cadre deployment policy is used to appoint municipal administrators such as municipal managers, chief financial officers, and other senior managers, which often compromises accountability based on this structure (Molobela & Hlatshwayo 2023:59).

Molobela (2023:170) opines that COJ has experienced rapid changes in municipal officials in the recent past. Tsako (2020:9) opines that the political deployment of cadres has evidently been interconnected to laxity in service delivery as a result of unused funds, lack of capacity, improper planning, and absence of community participation. Cadre deployment of political leadership in local government should be based on expertise regarding how to run the affairs of the municipalities, as the absence of this may compromise the delivery of basic services (Sheetal, Dasarath, John, Nolwazi, & Jos, 2024:123). The above has not necessarily been the case in developmental local government, and Mlambo et al. (2022:12) argue that even though the ANC has defended the cadre policy, from a public point of view, the policy breeds corruption and abuse of power. This conclusion is based on the conduct of those members who were deployed as a result of this policy and were found to be entangled in corruption cases. The practice of cadre deployment presented many challenges, thereby questioning the professionalism of the municipalities in the eyes of community members (Mathonsi *et al.,* 2022:334). Makole (2022:26) believes municipal officials

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should transform themselves from being political cadres of a party to being professional cadres guided by constitutional values of morality, accountability, and selflessness.

4.2.4 Political instability

Solomon, Olabanji, and Ogo (2020:156) define political instability as the potential for sudden and significant change in the leadership policies or conditions of a country. This situation has been the case in South Africa across all spheres of government and was quite evident during former President Jacob Zama's tenure. Thornhill (2016:144) cites that improving service delivery requires political stability. On the other hand, Maqoko and Asmah-Andoh (2019:70) argue that conflicts arise between elected representatives, politicians, and appointed administrators where there are overlapping functions or ill-defined roles, which has led to political instability. This also makes it challenging to exercise accountability, as there are no well-defined functions and responsibilities. Xolani *et al., (2022:136)* argue that political instability leads to issues such as loss of reputation, refusal of investors, communities opposing service delivery, maladministration, and unexpected leadership changes. The above-identified issues have been evident in developmental local government. Political-administrative interference may weaken accountability mechanisms within municipalities (Munzhedzi, 2021; Mamokhere, 2022:15). The unexpected change in leadership causes instability and disruption in the management and delivery of services as well as the strategic direction of the municipality.

Good political management ensures developmental local governance (Enaifoghe, 2023:472). The efficient functioning of mature political parties is, therefore, central to democratization and development (Mbandlwa & Dorasamy, 2021:6877). Ngumbela (2022:1) alludes that poor leadership at political and administrative levels has resulted in a lack of monitoring and responsibility, which has been abused for self-interest and negatively impacted municipal service delivery. Political instability affects the coherent provision of services to the community by the three spheres of government and leads to poor provision of such services (Tsako, 2020:13). Political instability diverts the attention of leaders from the main issues facing developmental local government to address issues of political squabble. The poor service delivery at local government is attributed to political rifts in the ruling party as well as the rifts with coalition parties

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(Mamokhere, 2022:16). Political instability has dare consequences for the effectiveness and performance of local government (Tsagae, 2023:432).

Makoti and Odeku (2021:45) state that elected politicians are embroiled in vicious fights and personal attacks, forgetting their role in ensuring accountability and delivering effective services to the community. This practice has been witnessed in the legislature, where political leaders even engage in physical altercations. The infighting among leaders has led to ineffective leadership, which has hindered development and negatively impacted service delivery (Mamokhere & Kgobe, 2023:55). The political space has been characterized by favoritism, nepotism, and frequent change in management, which leads to unstable government (Solomon *et al.,* 2020:154). This has been apparent in COJ, as in the year, the municipality has had mayoral change from the various political parties. This has caused instability and loss of trust in the communities, as well as creating confusion. Niekerk and Sebakamotse (2020:286) further state that political and administrative leadership is lacking in promoting oversight and accountability in municipalities, which further promotes the deterioration of financial performance influenced by the instability within local government.

Zindi and Ndhlovu (2023:421) cite that political rivalry and related conflicts between the management and political branches of local government have hurt the provision of municipal services. The political instability is also caused by the lack of clear roles both administrative and political role. Gumede (2021:12) is of the same view and further opines that the lack of role clarity is another source of instability in many municipalities. The politicisation of the executive and administrative positions and political interference are major causes of unresolved issues in local government (Takalani & Lavhelani, 2024:5).

The squabbling between politicians has rendered political instability, which has seen a number of votes of no confidence to the mayoral position (Shongwe & Mayer, 2023:143). The continuation of this squabble will eventually render the municipality completely ineffective. Political infighting and between the political and management components in local government has adversely affected municipal service delivery (Reddy, 2016:1). Breakfast (2020:77) cites that COJ is one of the largest metropolitan municipalities in the country and as a result, it has become a hotly contested political terrain, thus the continued political fights. According to Ramodula and Govender

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(2022:53), political stability may motivate local investment as a support form. Mdlalose *et al.,* (2024:56) declare that most municipalities governed through coalitions have experienced challenges due to politics of power dynamics and political infighting. Political stability plays a crucial role in good governance, and leaders should prioritize sustaining service delivery (Ragolane & Malatji, 2024:376).

4.2.5 Over-regulated and tense bureaucratic environment

Worku (2016:12) cites that the lack of efficient services, too much bureaucracy, over-regulation, and lack of good governance constitute key obstacles to the growth and development of government. The rigid, traditional, highly structured bureaucratic systems endorse corruption (Nicolaides & Duho, 2019:1728). Igbokwe-Ibeto (2019:5) is of the view that the absence of a system of authority makes giving orders difficult. Thus, chaos may be the inevitable outcome of bureaucratic operations. The tense and politicised bureaucratic model corrodes administrative efficiency and confuses the distinction between politicians and public officials, whereas the depoliticised bureaucratic model is neutral. This model requires the separation of administrative functions from those of policymakers (Masuku & Jili, 2019:3). According to Vilakazi and Adetiba (2020:52), municipalities consist of two internal domains, which are the political and administrative domains that purely govern the entire municipal setting. Therefore, a clear separation of power is of vital importance to avoid abuse of power as well as creating unnecessary conflicts.

The government has introduced legislation to effectively discharge obligations and responsibilities; however, even with such measures and initiatives, accountability remains a slogan and is certainly not taken seriously, particularly by municipal officials (Mamokhere, Mabeba & Kgobe, 2022:63). The wrongdoings at local government take place under the watchful eye of governance structures, which have the legislated responsibility of, amongst other things, ensuring internal accountability (Mofolo & Adonis, 2021:2). According to Nokele and Shopola (2021:221), the available legal instruments are deliberately ignored. Thusi and Selepe (2023:691) state that there are methods and mechanisms for preventing corruption, stopping power misuse, and guaranteeing accountability, but they are rarely used. Mlambo *et al.,* (2023:45) indicate that municipalities continue to see maladministration and financial indecency in the face of a unit such as the SIU. The weakness of the Municipal Financial Management

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Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) to adequately address financial accountability gaps has led to persistent unclean audits by local municipalities across South Africa (Mothupi *et al.,* 2022:75). The above act is not the only one available for ensuring accountability in local government. Even with all these acts, accountability still remains a slogan that has had less impact on performance at local government. This brings the question of "Is the local government over-regulated?" it becomes difficult to keep up with all these laws. Municipal officials often work in an unsupportive institutional environment characterized by onerous institutional and bureaucratic rules and regulations, which negatively impact their performance and job satisfaction (Masiya *et al.,* 2021:109). Gumede (2021:12) indicates that legislative and administrative responsibilities are frequently conflated, and a clear definition and separation is necessitated.

According to Links and Draai (2023:1084), misalignment between the political and administrative interface can be minimised by providing clearly defined competency of senior managers. Delivering municipal services through a bureaucratic local government structure has no doubt been fraught with significant challenges in post-apartheid local government system in South Africa (Mubangizi, 2022:40). Accountability is far more difficult to achieve in a highly politicised local government (Thusi and Mashamaite, 2023:77). Sibiya and Subban (2023:166) allude that there is a need to shift from bureaucratic rule-driven systems to an outcomes-based approach to promote effective service delivery within developmental local government. Bureaucratic institutionalism has frustrated visionaries for almost three decades of South African democracy (Breed et al., 2023:26). This system also has a tendency to promote political corruption. Political corruption occurs when those in positions of power exploit their authority to manipulate laws, organizations, and processes for personal gain (Mamokhere & Mabunda, 2023:357).

The politics and bureaucrats divide are pervasive in local governments (Mabunda *et al.,* 2023:649). Politicisation of local government and administration promotes political interference, and this negatively affects municipalities from effectively providing services to their communities (Tsako, 2020:14). The bureaucratic systems have had a negative impact on effective whistleblowing in that the reports are handled by the top leadership who normally victimise the whistle-blower by those powers vested in them (Sebake & Modau, 2020:496-497). This system must be relooked at to ensure that the whistle-blower process is safe and free of manipulation and intimidation. The high level

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of corruption is also attributed to the systems, structures, and processes that do not promote accountability nor transparency within the organisation's architecture framework (Ringson & Matshabaphala, 2022:45). Makole (2022:32) opine that public bureaucracy should be depoliticised and insulated from political gerrymandering and manipulation by political elites so that it can be allowed space to improve its professional craft and image.

4.2.6 Power struggles and political interference

The politics of local government may be argued to be one of the most detrimental threats to its existence (Nzewi & Sibanda, 2023:2). Political environment refers to issues such as the political situation, nature of political parties and society (Khaile & Davids, 2020:68). The internal municipal environment is primarily one of the negative power struggles between the political and the administrative spheres (Masiya *et al.,* 2021:105). This power struggle is a result of politicians pushing their individual interests or those of the political party affiliated to at the expense of community members. The lack of clearly defined functions worsens the situation as everyone will want to be in power and push their own agenda. Molobela (2023:161) believes that politicians should not find themselves entangled in the affairs solely assigned to municipal administrators, as this has the potential to hinder municipal capacity to provide services effectively and efficiently.

Matyana and Mthethwa (2022:131) highlight that the political-administrative theory shapes the significance of the separation of powers between the political and the administrative staff to provide impetus in the provision of services. Yet, there is still confusion in this regard. Failure to separate politics from administrative decisions has had a negative effect on the effective operation of the municipality and has seen increase cronyism, impunity as well as poor levels of accountability (Mlambo *et al.,* 2022:12). Political interference expresses itself through pressure that some political leaders to act against the mandates and legislature governing local government and those unethical behaviour involves amongst others, issuing illegal directives to subordinates (Makole, 2022:33-34). Political figures are accepted in administration practices; hence, they do not have enough capacity and skills to practice such duties however, it they have been found to interfere with the administrative duties of the municipalities, which has caused the conflict (Thusi & Matyana, 2024:500). According

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to Ntoyanto-Tyatyantsi *et al.,* (2022:6), municipalities have partial political leadership and therefore could not escape the political element. It is, however, to be noted that the political leaders within the municipality seem to overtake the administrative structure, which has created confusion amongst administrative officials and political leaders.

Thusi and Mashabela (2023:176) define political interference as the meddling of politicians in administrative matters for reasons advantageous to them or their political party. Munzhedzi and Phago (2020:189) define political interference as the meddling in the administrative affairs by politicians to benefit them or their political party, and that has a negative outcome. Hence, it is against the municipal policies. The issue of political interference in the administration of service delivery is of concern, which has resulted in inadequate service delivery (Mngomezulu, 2020:44). Masuku and Jili (2019:4) cite that the political administration interface has become a weak and vulnerable trait of many municipalities. The political-administrative interference compromises instruments of accountability as administrators may feel pressured to prioritise political objectives, compromising transparency and accountability in decision-making processes (Mamokhere, 2023:15). This, in turn, has resulted in administrators appearing as though they are working for political leaders and not the municipality as an employment entity. Lebotsa (2022:127) asserts that political interference in local government management discourages citizens from demanding social accountability.

Political or administrative leadership is failing in municipalities (Mohangi & Nyika, 2023:485). This may be attributed to a power struggle between the administration and the political structure within developmental local government. Power struggles make it challenging for accountability to be realised (Selepe, 2023:345). Mlambo *et al.,* (2023:40) is of the view that the overlapping administration and political leadership reduces organisational honesty, integrity, ethical behaviour or accountability. It can, therefore, be concluded that the continuation of this power struggle will render accountability non-existent in developmental local government.

This is evident in the continuous change in the appointment of leaders within COJ. Leadership changes in local government affect the public service delivery and control of local government resources. Fighting corruption often necessitates determined

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efforts to overcome vested interests, which require transparency and open governance, something which becomes difficult as a result of political interference as those people protect the interest of the party and promote a culture of secrecy (Mlambo *et al.,* 2023:49). The culture of secrecy thus means that whatever decision was taken should not be made public thus impacting transparency and accountability negatively. The power struggles between the municipal administrative and political leadership have hampered the working environment, which in turn has negatively impacted service delivery (Masiya *et al.,* 2021:98). It is, therefore, imperative that municipal stakeholders do not violate power to the extent that such power limits the growth of municipalities and advancement of the people's lives (Vilakazi & Adetiba, 2020:53).

There is political power that is controlled by elected politicians and administrative power that belongs to the professionals' sphere in the municipality (Vilakazi & Adetiba 2020:53). The two should be distinctively separated, Ngubane, (2022:34) argue that local government should discharge its powers in a manner that gives effect to social development of local communities. The power being exercised by municipal officials is questionable as it has not had a major impact in changing the lives of community members. Municipalities are faced with the challenge of having the political sphere enforce itself over the functions of the administration (Vilakazi & Adetiba, 2020:55). Thus, there is a need for a clear separation of power.

According to Vilakazi and Adetiba (2020:55), municipalities are vulnerable to the political willpower that controls the municipal operative. Power can bring many benefits to those who have it, such as access to valuable resources or decision autonomy; it can on the other hand corrupt, especially if it is used negatively for self-enrichment (Giurgea, Van Dijkeb, Zheng, De & Cremer, 2019:1). Powers such as the appointment of administrative personnel belong to the head of administrative but in some instances the political sphere forces that there be cadre deployments in some positions due to the loyalty of those people to the political party in power (Vilakazi & Adetiba, 2020:55-57). Van Niekerk (2020:286) argues that political interference hampers the effective management of the municipality's financial resources. A study by Masoud (2023:165) revealed that political interference has a negative impact on the financial performance of the municipality. The poor performance may be attributed to administrative officials feeling demotivated and confused at the change in leadership that comes with a change in strategic direction, as well as the constant political interference, which

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sometimes compromises municipal laws and regulations. Masuku and Jili (2019:2) state that political influence deteriorates the performance of municipal officials.

A key priority to improve the effectiveness of South Africa's local government sphere is to depoliticise it (Gumede, 2021:17). This will promote clear spheres of responsibility that are not blurred. On the other hand, Chili *et al*., (2023:44) is of believe that the issue of political interference at the managerial level of the council is rather challenging to end as municipal leaders are positioned to represent party interests. It cannot be argued that political interference has an adverse impact on service delivery. Political interference may result in the redirection of resources from the government institution to political parties towards political projects or personal gain, leaving service delivery in disarray (Mamokhere, 2023:15). The avoidance of political interference has the potential to accelerate service delivery (Matyana & Mthethwa, 2022:132). Intra-political infighting has a negative impact on service delivery (Tsako, 2020:12). Mabunda et al., (2023:640) in support of the above statement and cite that, indeed, political infighting has a negative impact on decision-making and has led to protests over poor service delivery. The lack of political will is a major obstacle to municipal performance and the realisation of development goals (Mhlauli, *et al.,* 2021:309). It is imperative to note that the lack of concerted effort will continue to hinder the performance of developmental local government.

4.2.7 Lack of trust due to political appointments

The appointment of municipal officials should be intellectual, academic, and ethical training and political preparation (Ngumbela, 2021:97). According to Ashraf (2017:211), appointment processes are integral to the performance of an organisation and its staff, with competent people needing to be appointed and to have their performance valued and assessed appropriately. The appointment of politicians within the local government administrative component poses a risk as, in most cases, they do not involve a merit system in the selection of employment (Masuku & Jili, 2019:5). The fight against favouritism as well as a political appointment in government institutions can be reduced if the government employs skilled and effective leaders (Mbandlwa *et al.,* 2020:1650). During elections, municipal politicians frequently lie and misrepresent their constituents' views on policy alternatives to fix social problems

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(Enaifoghe, 2023:476). Community members also expect their government to be responsible for all their works (Beshi & Kaur, 2019:337).

According to Pillay (2017: 33), political trust is based on good governance exist on ethical codes, and accountability mechanisms in all spheres of human life. Accountability is considered the main influential factor in determining community trust in local government, especially when municipal officials are irresponsible in their decisions (Beshi & Kaur, 2019:338). It has been determined that in certain instances, municipal councils often consider political expediency when making a decision on the appointment of an accounting officer (Madumo & Koma, 2019:588). This is a challenge as it makes it difficult to decide based on the information obtained. In most instances, municipal officials, particularly those in higher positions, use secrecy as an opportunity to cover up their unethical conduct, especially in tendering systems (Munzhedzi, 2016; Nokele & Shopola, 2021:225). Maganoe's (2023:2) loyalism to political parties blurs the line of accountability. The ongoing cases of corruption open a greater public scrutiny for the political appointment (Jarbandhan, 2022:33).

4.2.8 Lack of expertise in the development of local government

Municipal officials are essential for the execution of service delivery in their respective municipalities (Mamokhere *et al.,* 2021:1). This implies that municipal official plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of service delivery. Skilled officials are a crucial resource and municipality should attract and retain talented and qualified employees (Zweni, Mahlala, Yan & Ndevu, 2023:117). It is crucial to ensure consistent training as this will assist the officials to stay relevant to the ever-changing environment. Fagbadebo and Dorasamy (2021:30) believe that leadership is crucially important in the governing of any society. Frail administrative together with unskilled staff is a contributing factor to municipalities' failure to deliver services (Tshishonga, 2021:32). Ngqwala and Ballard (2020:121) ascertain that municipalities have a tendency to appoint inexperienced, non-skilled officials resulting in the absence of effective performance management frameworks and coordination. Matyana and Mthethwa (2022:131) cite that skill scarcity in local government is one of the reasons the government fails to manage the challenges associated with South African constituents. According to Fourie and Malan (2020:13), the challenges of unqualified officials weaken the capacity and capability of the municipality. The lack of

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knowledge relating to financial statements and reporting has resulted in municipalities employing consultants year after year without guaranteeing that the skills are transferred to municipal staff (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:690). This process of consultative approach hampers the municipality in terms of finances as it is done on tendering terms. The lack of d problem-solving skills and expertise among municipal managers remains a concern, which will continue to hamper service delivery (Zerihun & Mashigo, 2022:51). The culture of the municipal is often bureaucratic, hierarchical, and risk-averse, which hinders the implementation of innovative practices and is often characterized by slow decision-making processes due to hierarchical structure (Ndebele & Enaifoghe (2023:119).

The benefit of having competent municipal officials, according to Mbatha and Mutereko (2022:303), is the ability to comply with laws and regulations, especially those for sound financial management. Unqualified individuals cannot deliver services efficiently and effectively (Mathonsi *et al.,* 2022:334). The management of developmental local government needs to be innovative and find new ways of training and development that would promote effectiveness and efficiency among employees, as this would ultimately improve the organisation's output (Rykleif & Tengeh, 2022:646). The electoral system in South Africa is that which allows community members to vote for a political party in power; the adverse of this system is that community members do not have an influence on the individuals deployed (Mbandlwa & Mishi, 2020:4). Hence certain positions end up being filled by inexperience people. Ntoyanto-Tyatyantsi *et al.,* (2022:4) cite that qualified people do not properly manage critical positions in municipalities. Mlambo and Maserumule (2024:2) assert that comrades have been employed in local government, and most do not have formal education, skills, and technical competencies. Therefore, certain positions are occupied based on party affiliation and not necessarily the capabilities, knowledges, and qualifications of those individuals.

The municipalities need to promote development skills and performance-oriented needs to be effective by means of offering bursary schemes to both employees and students within the jurisdiction (Mishi et al., 2022:4). Municipalities must retrain and reskill officials to enable them to stay up-to-date with demographic changes in their communities if they are to be aware of the dynamics inside a community (Fourie & Van der Waldt, 2023:19). Mathonsi *et al.,* (2022:329) alluded to the local government

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having to make significant investments in nurturing and keeping talent if it is to meet the problems facing the public sector. According to Munzhedzi and Phago (2020:191), municipalities lack the skills that are necessary for the realization of a development agenda, and in the absence of these skills, the developmental government becomes nothing but a dream. Thusi and Selepe (2022:529) support the atop and additionally cite that most South African municipalities' annual financial reports continue to lack credibility since the experts in charge of municipal finances lack operational and management experience. Mle and Ngumbela (2020:3) allude to a lack of technical skills and failures in execution as the contributing factors to capacity deficiencies at the local government.

Thusi and Mashamaite (2023:80) concur and further suggests that more municipal administrators lack the necessary qualifications for their positions, which is contributing to the collapse of local government. Even with qualification local government must continue to provide the necessary training in the field for officials to comprehend what is happening in communities (Nel & Patience, 2022:10). Municipalities are utilising financial reporting consultants at a higher cost to the municipality (Breed *et al.,* 2023:29). The cause of this is as a result of lack of expertise within local government to execute such function. Mabunda *et al., (*2023:644) cite that there is a lack of competent and effective human resource staff, and this is worsened by further hiring of employees with no skills to perform tasks. Van der Waldt (2020:1) asserts that there is a need for developmental local government to conduct skills audits to ascertain the skill level of officials to increase performance. The skills audit will assist the municipality in identifying gaps and developing training for those officials who are less competent in the execution of the mandate. Educated, professional, and skilled office-bearers form the cornerstone of a well-functioning developmental local government, and thus, it is crucial to appoint individuals based on educational qualifications (Maloba & Auriacombe, 2019:168). Most municipality in South Africa lacks scarce skills in the technical fields (Hungwe & Mukonza, 2023:64).

4.2.9 Increasing level of corruption

There are several definitions provided for corruption. Mkhize and Nel (2018:41) define corruption as the abuse of a public position or office for direct or indirect personal gain. Mlambo *et al.,* (2023:11) define corruption as the misuse of power for personal gain

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or advantage, particularly the misuse of public office or resources. Corruption by municipal officials weakens accountability structures (Maseko, 2021:137). According to Habibov *et al.,* (2019:736), one of the most important factors affecting satisfaction with government performance is corruption. Shava and Chamisa (2018:11) state that wherever corruption thrives, accountability and transparency disappear. Mabeba (2021:168) is of the view that corruption contributes to the slow delivery of services to community members. This is as a result of municipal resources intended for service delivery deviating to the enrichment of both political office bearers as well as appointed municipal officials. Tshishonga (2021:32) is of the same view and further states that corruption is rife in local government, hence the inability to deliver services as funds are diverted for personal use and not for development.

A study conducted by Khomo *et al., (*2023:6) discovered that political party needs are put ahead of service delivery and local community needs. This has evidently led to corruption. Municipal officials are said to be corrupt, who enrich themselves or who aid or abet political appointees in malfeasance and corruption (Jarbandhan, 2022:33). Mlambo (2023:15) is of the opinion that increasing corruption levels at municipalities have hampered the ability of municipalities to function and implement accountability. Mokhutso *et al., (*2022:14) concur with the above authors and additionally state that corruption is another challenge facing municipalities in South Africa, hampering effective service delivery and financial collapse in most of the municipalities. It is widely acknowledged that corruption has not only hampered the country's socioeconomic progress but has also destroyed public faith in the government (Mlambo & Thusi, 2023:9). The lack of accountability and transparency is one of the essential factors surrounding corruption as the absence of these two factors perpetuates corruption (Rachmawati, 2023: 2170).

Over the years, local government has made many strides in designing and implementing development-driven policies to stimulate government services for the local population (Mlambo *et al.,* (2023:40). However, developmental local government is faced with a pervasive challenge where municipal officials have elevated their personal interest above building a developmental and capable local government (Makole, 2022:25). Ndlovu and Mutambara (2022:256) state that there is a need for the government to capacitated agencies that are meant to fight corruption. It is imperative to have clear and implementable corruption policies to tighten the means

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to deal with reported cases without vanishing, thus setting an example of the consequences of corruption (Mlambo *et al.,* 2023:49). Zweni and Yan (2022:38) state that although there are several legislative frameworks established to combat corruption, it continues to worsen in local government. When politicians prioritise their own goals that will benefit them instead of the community, this often leads to looting and wasteful expenditures (Mishi, Mbaleki & Mushonga, 2022:4). Commissions such as Zondo and Mokgoro, for example, have demonstrated that the public administration of South Africa is facing challenges because public office holders frequently act in an unethical and corrupt manner (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:243).

Gumede (2021:17) states that it is becoming more and more common to view winning a local government council election or administrative post as a means of enrichment, giving one access to lucrative government contracts, tenders, and staff appointment authority. This is also evident in the number of political parties that are being formed that question their authenticity. Mlambo *et al.,* (2023:1) cite that corruption and impunity have become entrenched in the public sector due to a lack of accountability within the governing process. Ngoepe-ntsoane (2021:4) concurs that corruption could be attributed to, amongst other things, poor management and a lack of accountability. One may ponder questions such as if there is legislation to prevent corruption, yet corruption levels are skyrocketing, and who is supposed to enforce these legislations?

According to Mlambo *et al,.* (2023:38), the adverse effects of corruption are considered more evident and even more harmful at the local government level. The local governments have taken poor action to address corruption. Hence the increase (Ikeke, 2024:30). The poor service delivery and the number of corruption cases reported have rendered accountability ineffective. Mlambo (2019:209) cites that corruption, coupled with a lack of accountability, has, over the last decade, brought with it unprecedented service delivery protests. The fact that corruption has become a common practice in municipalities is of great concern, as it will take years to reverse the implications caused by this phenomenon. According to Edoun *et al.,* (2023:113), the main drivers of corruption in the developmental local government are abuse of power and resources and leaders looking after personal and private interests. Yuan (2024:32) believes that corruption deters investors and impedes the development process. A study by Sefara and Odeku (2023:452) reports that they are ghost employees, which include retired, deceased, or non-existent staff, where they continually draw monthly salaries.

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However, these salaries are directed to officials, thus constituting corruption. This has also been grounds for placing a municipality under administration. It is, therefore, imperative to enhance anti-corruption education to minimize corruption within developmental local government (Rachmawati, 2023: 2174).

4.2.10 Absence of a culture of excellence

Organisational culture shapes the behaviour of officials by defining primary goals, work techniques as well as how to manage personal relationships (Miggels & Rulashe, 2022:525). Carvalho, Sampaio, Rebentisch, McManus, Carvalho, and Saraiva (2023:1) state that the quest to improve performance continuously requires a culture of excellence. Ntoyanto-Tyatyantsi *et al,.* (2022:7) argue that developmental local government must strive to create a culture of performance and a willingness to take risks in pursuit of excellence and new opportunities. Culture is a major factor that influences performance (Mutandwa & Hendriks, 2022:124). According to Xolani *et al.,* (2022:137), the lack of ethical leaders in the public sector has developed a culture of fraud and corruption, where openness and accountability are discouraged rather than promoted. This has led to municipal officials not having a sense of providing the services in an excellent manner. When the culture of the organisation is one of support, engagement, development, and continuous improvement, it allows employees to want to be a part of the organisation; they are proud of it, they will defend it, and they want to be part of its success (Govender & Bussin, 2020:7).

Srirejekia (2023:7) is of the view that cultural control is considered a means to shape shared norms, beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of behaving in an organisation. According to Rahman, Voon, and Abdullah (2021:86), the culture of excellence has emerged as one of the key issues to organisational performance. Pavlova (2023:52) opines that culture has been stronger than any strategy and more influential than any individual member of the company as it reflects the common behaviour of the organisation. Instead of creating a culture of excellence, local government seems to be creating a culture of non-compliance (Khaile, Davids & Khaile, 2021:165). Ndlovu, Maramura, and Enaifoghe (2020:29) share the same sentiments and further state that any form of unethical misconduct sets a platform for subordinates to be influenced into unethical behaviors, thus promoting a culture of non-compliance. When municipal officials value a culture of excellence, they can make educated decisions, thus

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increasing performance (Ly, 2019:8). Khaile *et al*., (2021:167) believe that a legal framework is necessary to institutionalize and enforce a culture of municipal financial accountability and oversight. However, if it is difficult to enforce the legal framework that is in existence the creation of a new one will serve no purpose. It is crucial to ascertain the failure of the current legal framework.

Thusi and Selepe (2023:247) are of the opinion that municipalities must promote a culture of public service as government officials and representatives rather than a culture of self-enrichment at the expense of citizens across the country. The self-enrichment is something that has dominated local government, hence the increasing levels of corruption and the poor quality of services rendered. A good organisational culture demonstrates positive traits that lead to improved performance; on the other hand, a dysfunctional organisational culture brings out qualities that can hinder even the most successful organisations (Ringson & Matshabaphala, 2022:41). A municipality that promotes a culture of ethics and ethical leadership has the potential of promoting integrity, transparency, and accountability (Nzama *et al.,* 2023:1). Local government must create a culture of performance supported by competence, skills and the availability of resources to implement programmes and projects leading to positive change (Links & Draai, 2023:1079). The above will assist in attracting investors.

Organizational culture is inseparably linked to the leadership style (Rington & Matshabaphala, 2022:40). This implies that the leadership has the power to determine the kind of culture of the municipality. Based on the literature review, it may be concluded that the type of leadership within local government has little to be desired based on the unwanted culture of the municipality. Sibanda and Van Rooyen (2023:114) posit that enforcing an ethical culture would create tolerance for consequence management as municipal officials would regard the importance of punishment and rewards for behaviour. This approach will promote accountability as municipal officials will be acting responsible for their actions. Organisational culture is an important key factor of ethical behaviour in an organisation (Sibiya & Subban 2023:178). The culture of moral conduct amongst municipal officials may be fostered through ethical leadership (Khasodi *et al.,* 2023:344).

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Lungisa and Nzewi (2023:52) are of the same view as above and further cite that it is crucial for municipalities to inculcate ethical culture in order to achieve the constitutional mandate of improving the well-being of community members through the efficient and effective provision of basic services. Ndebele and Enaifoghe (2023:119) argue that the culture within local government is often resistant to change and also reluctant to adopt innovative practices. This will continue to be the downfall for developmental local government as the world is changing to new ways of doing things, which is geared more toward technological advancement. The local government has a responsibility of transforming the mindset and attitudes of community members to promote a culture of self-development and rebuild the confidence of community members (Yende, 2023:204). The culture of resistance to change will make this process impossible. The culture of self-enrichment has replaced a culture of Ubuntu, which requires municipal officials to be servants of the people (Makole, 2022:27). Mahmud *et al*., (2024:214) posit that municipalities have created a culture of impunity wherein municipal officials are responsible for corruption and malfeasance often go unpunished or receive lenient sanctions. In light of the above, the culture of impunity will persist as long as the municipality continues to be lenient when addressing issues of fraud, corruption as well as bribery.

4.2.11 Poor oversight mechanisms

Shava and Mubangizi (2019:76) cite that oversight committees play a pivotal role in supervising municipal officials' activities so as to circumvent abuse of the powers given to them, and they exercise transparency and accountability when executing municipal duties. According to Maganoe (2023:4), oversight is concerned with holding the executive accountable by overseeing its exercise of public power. Nokele and Shopola (2021:225) cite that mechanisms that are put in place to curb unethical conduct and promote accountability in public service are in vain. Oversight is primarily about demanding and enforcing compliance (Khaile, Davids & Khaile, 2021:172). The reliability and integrity of accountability mechanisms are of great importance in determining how effectively municipal officials represent public interests (Maganoe, 2023:7). Local government systems must be accountable and effective (Schoeman & Chakwizira, 2022:2). Madumo and Koma (2019:587) attribute some of the municipal challenges to ineffective municipal councils in terms of exercising oversight role over the executive mayors. An article by Khaile, Davids, and Khaile (2021:165) put across

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the notion that non-compliance in local government is attributable to the lack of an effective oversight mechanism, which in turn has rendered accountability ineffective, especially in municipal finance management processes.

One of the challenges of oversight bodies, as stated by Van Niekerk and Sebakamotse (2020:286), is political interference, which hampers the effective management of municipalities' financial resources as well as oversight functions. Mamokhere (2022:10) places accountability as a key principle of public administration and governance in South Africa. This implies that oversight mechanisms should be improved to ensure the realisation of this principle of good governance. According to Mamokhere and Mabunda (2023:360), the implementation of oversight and watchdog mechanisms is crucial as these mechanisms can help detect and deter corrupt practices, ensuring transparency, good governance, and accountability. The structural and operational independence of oversight bodies are very important because they safeguard the integrity of municipal institutions (Sefara & Odeku, 2023:448). The call to strengthen these mechanisms is because of increasing levels of corruption.

The appointment of municipal officials who are incompetent in senior management positions is also a challenge in ensuring effective functions of oversight (Moji *et al.,* 2022:7). The weak internal controls have been linked to ineffective leadership, which lacks managerial and technical competence in managing the municipality (Eton, *et al.,* 2022:363). This is majorly influenced by the fact that those political officials tend to overlook processes and procedures at the expense of the community members. Ilse and Chakwizira (2023:1) cite that there are no defined roles and responsibilities for oversight concerning performance management. One can also conclude that the political appointment has also worsen the gap in terms of clearly defined functions relating to oversight. Research conducted by Shava (2023:197) revealed that municipalities have weak internal controls for oversight, which are detrimental to public service delivery. The weakness of those internal controls is often caused by non-compliance and disregard of systematic processes.

Chitimira *et al.,* (2022:15) argue that the lack of robust monitoring and oversight measures has given rise to poor internal audit and monitoring processes. Manaf *et al.,* (2022:2) posit that strengthening accountability requires some modifications in local government as well as council oversight. There is a need for rigorous oversight to

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ensure effective accountability within developmental local government (Muzekenyi *et al.,* 2022:52). The ineffectiveness of some of the oversight bodies is that they do not have binding powers akin to the powers of a court of law (2021:189). The lack of internal accountability, as well as the failure to prosecute violators, has had a negative impact on the way the municipality delivers services (Sekatle & Selepe, 2023:132). Hungwe and Mukonza (2023:60) opine that municipalities must be people-centered, accountable, and democratic as they are given the mandate to offer services to communities in an economical way. In other words, the promotion of accountability will pave the way for a democratic government that is people-oriented.

4.2.12 The Ineffective Procurement System

According to Mashilo and Kgobe (2021:479), the public procurement procedure involves governments, departments, ministries, and agencies purchasing goods and services from the private sector under specific rules and policies. Masoud (2023:158) cites that public procurement is a prominent function for any government, and it is concerned with the acquisition of goods, works, or services that organizations require. Nokele and Shopola (2021:221) argue that public procurement is one of the most vulnerable government activities when it comes to corruption. The above statement is also supported by (Gumede, 2021:16), who cites that the procurement systems of many municipalities are often vulnerable to manipulation, hence the increased levels of corruption. Fourie and Malan (2020:6-7) state that there are five pillars underpinning the procurement in local government, namely, value for money, open and effective competition, ethics and fair dealing, accountability and reporting as well as equity, yet when it comes to accountability, it is still not applied. Maramura and Ruwanika (2023:2) concur with the above and further suggest that accountability is regarded as one of the pillars in the process of procurement of goods and services in local government.

The government requires municipalities to ensure that their procurement processes are transparent in every possible way (Mthethwa *et al.,* 2023:271). One may conclude that municipalities have failed to ensure the transparency of the procurement process as some of the tenders are known only at the awarding stages. It again supports the notion that where there is a lack of transparency, then accountability will not flourish. According to Nzama *et al.,* (2023:7), irregular practices occur because of manipulating

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the systems. It is easier for municipal officials to manipulate the systems because of the powers they have are being abused. Ndlovu and Mutambara (2023:83) allude that there are legislative requirements that the procurement process must be fair, equal, transparent, competitive, and cost-effective. One may conclude that this is not the case in developmental local government, as cases have been reported where the procurement processes were not fair nor transparent. Nzama *et al.,* (2023:2) allude that certain critical committees in municipalities, such as bid committees that are meant to strengthen procurement and contract processes are capacitated with members who lack appropriate skills and competencies thus rendering such committees ineffective.

Ndebele and Mdlalose (2021:540) opine that municipal procurement decisions are particularly vulnerable to corruption and maladministration due to the interference of political officebearers in the procurement decision. Mfanafuthi, Brink, and Sijekula (2022:50) agree and further state that even with numerous policy frameworks and systems to ensure that the administration of the public procurement processes are fair, equitable, transparent, and cost-effective, the public procurement management practice remains vulnerable to mismanagement. The procurement process of local government is often manipulated, which has resulted in a high level of corruption (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:691). According to Xolani *et al.,* (2022:133), corruption is occurring in local government because of the procurement procedures. This means that the attempts of the government to regulate operational and organisational imperatives and guidelines on accountability have largely been unsuccessful (Pillay & Mantzaris, 2021:323). Ngumbela (2021:96) also believes that corruption is prevalent when awarding tenders and appointing employees.

The Coronavirus Disease of 2019 was a typical example of the extent to which procurement procedures may be manipulated. Glasser and Wright (2020:436) state that corruption has allegedly been present in efforts to respond to the impact of the COVID-19, especially in procuring essential Personal Protective Equipment. This demonstrated the extent to which corruption has worsened within developmental local government. A study by Benlahcene and Meddour (2020:310) flagged ineffective rules enforcement, lack of control mechanisms, lack of transparency and access to information, and positive reinforcement as the underlying precursors of unethical

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leadership behaviour. The accuracy of supply chain processes is compromised by the influence of politicians (Hungwe & Mukonza, 2023:66).

The tendering process should enable local government to select the right service provider offering the right price, credible and robust implementation plan, and right quality standards. In this regard, evaluation of the tendering process is a necessity for public sector institutions to ensure transparency, accountability, reliability, and fairness in the use of public funds (Machirori & Pande, 2022:2). Supply Chain Management is considered an important factor for the efficiency of a government as it is the main component of public service delivery (Maramura & Ruwanika, 2023:1). The lack of transparency allows municipal officials to manipulate the process and ignore policies in awarding tenders.

4.2.13 The disregard of statutes by municipal officials

Gasela (2021:2) opines that all South African public entities should comply with applicable laws and regulations. Municipalities as a public entity are not exempted from this. Enaifoghe, Maramura, and Mahlala (2024:5438) assert that there has been a failure to adhere to municipal laws. According to Zweni and Yan (2022:35), municipal officials disregard statutes as a norm rather than an exception, thus putting municipalities under enormous financial pressure. Shava (2023:196) cites that the audit reports from the Auditor General South Africa, in the past five years, have shown repeated transgressions and non-compliance with legislation intended to safeguard municipal resources. Adetunji and Alers (2022:77) cite that municipal officials are employed to serve members of their communities and not their personal interests; however, non-compliance to rules and legislation has had an adverse impact in this regard. Accountability entails the obligation of public officials to take responsibility for their actions, decisions, and the use of public funds (Amalia, 2023:161). With the demonstration above of municipal officials discarding laws, it is no surprise that no responsibilities are taken for the state in which the municipality is currently in.

The lack of disciplinary management has worsened the situation. Adonis (2021:289) contends that the failure to ensure accountability in local government creates an opportunity for negligence and a disregard for the rule of law. The rule of law guarantees that municipal administration operates within the bounds of the law and offers a framework for accountability (Mahmud *et al.,* 2024:282). Legislation that

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governs financial administration within local government is being disregarded (Baloyi & Beyers 2019:23). According to Ntoyanto-Tyatyantsi *et al.,* (2022:7), failure to adhere to legislative and policy imperatives should result in dismissal or censure. This will send a clear message of the importance of adhering to the legislative framework.

A significant amount of unauthorised spending as well as irregular expenditure are in the rise, where money is carelessly spent without a budget that has been approved and also done in contravention of the applicable legislation (Chitimira *et al.,* 2022:11). This is set against a typical example of the disregard of legislation, which in this case is the MFMA. Despite several legislative frameworks and laws established to guard against improper behaviour and promote accountability, municipal officials and politicians are found opposite those legislative frameworks (Shongwe & Meyer, 2023:144). The developmental local government is governed by several legislations such as the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004, the Protected Disclosures Act 26 of 2000, the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 and the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003, the level of noncompliance is alarming and renders the above legislation ineffectiveness and useless (Mlambo *et al.,* 2023:193). Municipal officials, according to Mabunda *et al.,* (2023:643), have failed to uphold the legitimacy of municipalities, resulting in community members losing trust. This has also resulted in financial loss. Most of the irregular expenditures within local government are a result of failure to comply with legislative mandates (Mnguni & Subban, 2022:158). Zungu *et al.,* (2024:147) suggest that failure to hold municipal officials may create the perception that flouting legislated processes and procedures is tolerated.

Accountability can only exist where transparency and the rule of law are promoted. Hence, the continued disregard of the law will forever negatively impact accountability and transparency (Mhlauli *et al.,* 2021:308). Municipal officials are found to disregard municipal policies and legislation, which, as per Enwereji and Uwizeyimana (2019:150), refers to the body of rules that guide the conduct of municipal employees. Shava (2020:197) believes that prescripts such as the Municipal Finance Management Act exist to direct the proper management of municipal finances, yet the local government is in a state of disarray, which calls for municipal transformation (2023:203). The arrogance displayed by municipal officials is harmful in that it leads to the disregard of legislation and, moreover, reduces accountability (Matyana &

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Mthethwa, 2022:132). The political office bearers disrespect and disregard laws as well as community members due to the believe that they will always be in power and control South African politics (Thusi & Mashamaite, 2023:80). Mlambo and Maserumule (2023:1) are of the opinion that municipalities should make sure that actions and conducts comply with the statutes and regulatory documents to local government. The result of the above statement will be municipal officials realising that they will not be in power forever and that their actions will have consequences. The disregard of the legislative framework has resulted in some leaders governing according to a separate set of ideas that are not in line with providing development initiatives for some community members (Mlambo & Thusi, 2023:10).

Abdullah *et al.,* (2020:301) argue that accountability includes elected officials who carry out their duties in accordance with applicable regulations. In other words, accountability embraces a form of compliance with regulation, which is something that is not practiced fully in local government. Local government has failed to comply with the principle of good corporate governance as well as adopt best practices as far as financial management is concerned (Moolman & Van der Waldt, 2022:2). It is therefore not a surprise that local government is financially suffering and this could be attributed to the above statement amongst other things. Thobejane and Ngoepe-Ntsoane (2022:224) state that the failure to implement regulations according to the provisions as stipulated has led to the naming and shaming of the government. Additionally, this has created a loophole for municipal officials to manipulate processes for their own personal gain. Lethoko *et al*., (2018:712) argue that the various legislation alone is not enough to address the challenges faced; rather, they articulate that there is a greater need for compliance by municipal officials. Mhlauli *et al.,* (2021:304) cite that despite having the above anti-corruption legislative framework, South Africa still faces a number of corruption cases every year. Even with the established laws to improve service delivery, South Africa still struggles with challenges in this area, affecting millions of underprivileged people (Nkoana *et al.,* 2024:80).

The government introduced initiatives such as Batho Pele aimed at, amongst other things, improving the integrity of public administration through monitoring of municipal officials, compliance with ethical procedures, and performance (Mlambo, 2019:210). In light of the current situation in the local government of unethical behaviour by

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municipal officials, the initiative did not bear the intended objectives. There is a need for radical transformation in applying progressive policies and removing or modifying policies seen as unsatisfactory (Mathonsi *et al.,* 2022:333). Enforcement of policies and regulations should not be viewed as punishment but as a way of demonstrating patriotism and defending the hard gains of our democracy (Mlambo *et al.,* 2023:49). It is high time that municipalities take this seriously to set an example and address the dire stated of services as well as financial affairs. The disregard of laws within developmental local government is influenced by many factors, such as lack of punishment. Thusi and Matyana (2024:501) support the above and argue that the lack of consequence management undermined the legislative mandate in place to ensure effective functioning of developmental local government. Due non-compliance with the legislative framework creates complexities regarding community participation (Sekatle & Selepe, 2023:130).

4.2.14 Lack of professionalism

Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 advocates for a high standard of professional ethics by all public officials. Professionalisation is associated with specialist knowledge and competence (Thusi & Matyana, 2024:493). One may conclude that specialized knowledge and competencies are missing in developmental local government, as demonstrated by the many challenges being faced, such as financial mismanagement. Marawu *et al.,* (2023:72) cite that municipal officials should behave professionally and ethically so that they can perform their duties with accountability and thus increase the level of trust of community members. Mamokhere *et al., (*2021:2) allude that municipal officials should take personal responsibility for delivering services to the community. However, the lack of professionalism has led to municipal official not taking responsibility for their action or behaviour. According to Nkoana *et al.,* (2024:86), municipal officials who uphold professional ethics would refrain from acting in a manner that links them to nepotism and corruption.

Professionalism within local government has the potential to strengthen municipal financial management and leadership through education, training, and development (Mathonsi *et al.,* 2022:329). The ‘’Batho Pele’’ principles were introduced not only to hold municipal officials to account but also to professionalise local government

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(Jarbandhan, 2022:27). Even with this introduction, municipal officials still demonstrate a lack of professionalism. There have been cases reported wherein community members complain of the reception they receive in the hands of municipal officials. A professional civil service is the foundation of a well-functioning public sector by means of improving public financial management and leadership via education, training, and development (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:531). The inability to deliver essential services to communities can also be attributed to the lack of top-performing leaders in municipalities (Edoun *et al.,* 2023:113). A study by Molobela (2023:180) suggests that there is a need to professionalise the local government as it serves multiple communities that put their trust in these municipalities. Professional competency for municipal officials will require them to demonstrate fundamental management functions of planning, organising, implementing, monitoring and evaluation (Makole, 2022:31). Thusi and Matyana (2024:502) state that the Auditor General of South Africa recommend for the encouragement of local government to become more professional in accordance with the recently approved professionalization framework. Professional responsibility relates to individuals in particular professions or professions and their adherence to professional codes of conduct and ethical standards; in the case of the municipality, officials will have to adhere to the code of conduct as well as all other legal frameworks within the municipality (Mahmud *et al.,* 2024:282).

3.2.15 Ineffective ward committees

Zantsi (2022:2) alludes that ward committees are standing committees that are elected by the ward community to be in office for five years. Sheetal *et al., (*2024:119) posit that municipal ward committees are legally mandated structures that encourage participatory governance and allow the community to be consulted about municipal affairs. Selepe (2023:348) cites that ward committees were established to function as representative structures of community members. Vries and Ile (2021:100) concur with the above and cite that ward committees were established to facilitate community participation and manage relations between the municipality and community members. Whilst Munzhedzi (2020:89) is of the view that ward committees are one of the mechanisms within municipalities which are utilised to identify the needs of community members, Maloba and Auriacombe (2019:170) state that ward committees were introduced to give effect to democratic governance. Democracy denotes the involvement of community members in the affairs of developmental local government.

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Gumede (2021:14) argues that ward committees have an advisory role, is chaired by a ward councilor, and the municipal council can delegate powers to them, these have failed due to, other lack of attendance by ward councilors. Insufficient community consultation has exacerbated problems with service delivery even with mechanisms such as ward committees (Chili *et al., .*2023:37). The ineffectiveness of ward committees can be attributed to the politicisation of structure and the failure of ward committees to prioritise the need of community members (Zantsi, 2022:7). There is a need to develop the competence of ward committees (Kraai, Ndevu & Matsiliza, 2023:80). Ward committees are participatory forums for community involvement in local government, is expected to improve the representation of citizens, especially of the poor, and marginalised (Sheetal *et al.,* 2024:119). Ward committee members serve as the communication link between the municipal council through the ward councillor and the community (Selepe, 2023:347). Phago and Molosi-France (2018:748) assert that the purpose of ward committees in is to promote community participation affairs of the municipal. Ward councilors have a crucial role to play in bridging the gap between community members and the municipality and thus building trust (Naidoo, 2021:42).

3.2.16 Lack of community participation

Community participation derives from Section 152(1)(e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, which mandates municipalities to promote the participation of communities and community organisations in local government matters. Stuurman (2019:325) cites that community participation is an essential tool is utilized to facilitate good governance, accountability, and transparency that inevitably leads to better and more efficient service delivery. Selepe (2023:343) defines community participation as the process through which the community members influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions, and resources that affect them. The involvement of community members is of paramount importance in monitoring government performance, strengthening public accountability and improving service delivery (Matloga *et al.,* 2024:3).

The role of community participation in enhancing development is vital as it strengthens accountability and transparency, creating trust between municipal leaders and community members (Mokoena & Molepo, 2024:1). Community participation in local

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government decision making is believed to support democracy, good governance and facilitation of bottom-up development interventions (Phago & Molosi-France, 2018:743). Meaningful community participation is viewed as a prerequisite for the establishment of trust between community members and municipal officials (Msenge & Nzewi 2021:1). Additionally, Matshabaphala and Ringson (2022:716) allude that for local government to make effective decisions, community members must be consulted. Mamokhere (2022:5) concurs with the authors and cites that involving the community members in the decision-making process ensures that the needs and concerns of community members are considered and that municipal officials account for their actions.

Community participation may be an effective mechanism that may be utilised to resolve disputes and conflicts within local government and positively impact the delivery of highly needed services such as clean water supply (2018:105). Kgobe and Mamokhere (2021:20) argue that the IDP of a municipality is a substantial tool to accomplish community participation. Rykleif and Tengeh (2022:642) state that it is alarming that even after two and a half decades of democracy, a shift towards a more citizen-centric approach to service delivery is still needed rather than talking about its success. The inadequate community participation has also exacerbated the persistent backlog in service delivery, leaving them frustrated and dissatisfied and resorting to protests (Mamokhere & Kgobe, 2023:54). Phago and Molosi-France (2018:746) opine that the reason for community participation is to ensure that their needs relating to municipal services are addressed.

Active community participation is an essential tool for achieving transparency and accountability in developmental local government (Yende, 2023:197). Inadequate community participation has given birth to service delivery protests and service delivery backlogs within developmental local government (Mamokhere, 2022:9). According to Rachekhu and Kgobe (2024:67), inadequate community participation in municipal service delivery is a significant issue. This issue has had an adverse impact on the decision-making, which has manifested in poor service delivery. Communities feel excluded from municipal processes due to corruption, nepotism, and an unresponsive government, leading to violent protests (Ragolane & Malatji, 2024:378). Tauté (2021:4) argues that community members have the right to be assured that programmes and projects have a clear purpose and are being run efficiently and

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effectively. Community participation is important for enhancing democracy in South Africa. However, several positive and negative factors affect community participation (Mokoena & Molepo, 2024:4). Prasetya (2021:361) opines that when community members lack faith in the government, they tend to abstain from engaging in government-led developmental initiatives, hence the decline in levels of community participation. Stuurman (2019:326) listed the following as some of the essential aims of community participation:

- "Local citizens are in a better position to critically evaluate the way they are governed;
- Essential laws and policies for good governance and people's welfare accomplish "true" legitimacy, resulting in more engagement by the people;
- Community participation promotes accountability transparency, and
- Ordinary citizens, therefore, generate a balance of powers in the sphere of local government".

Community participation is a constitutional right; however, not all participate as they view the government as not taking their view into consideration (Sekatle & Selepe 2023:115). Hungwe & Mukonza (2023:61) cite that developmental local government refers to a local government that is dedicated to collaborating with communities to develop long-term solutions to their social and economic to enhance the quality of their lives. This means that community participation thus plays a critical role in realising a developmental local government. Community members can engage in various forms of participation to evoke debate, dialogue, and accountability at a greater level through communication between municipalities and their residents (Maseko, 2023:1115).

4.2.17 Inadequate human capacitation

Building municipal capacity in South Africa aims to create successful, efficient municipalities that deliver timely, essential services to residents across the entire nation (Durokifa *et al.,* 2023:503). It is crucial for municipalities to adequately capacitate critical areas of their performance, such as governance, financial management and reporting, supply chain management, and asset management, as this may lead to improved and sustainable service delivery (Nzama *et al.,* 2023:2). Capacity building supports the development and strengthening of local government institutions (Durokifa *et al.,* 2023:499). For municipalities to realise a developmental government, a need exists to capacitate local government with competent and

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committed employees complemented by effective political oversight (Cloete, 2022:3). According to Rachekhu and Kgobe (2024:67), inadequate personnel capability is a critical factor in poor delivery of services coupled with lack of skills to effectively manage financial resources. One may also conclude that the lack of inadequate personnel capability coupled with the lack of relevant skills within developmental local government has been evident in the financial collapse of most of the municipalities. The inadequate capacitation is also caused by cadre deployment wherein cadre with no knowledge is occupying positions of power, that require specialized skills.

Thusi and Matyana (2024:499) state that it had been ascertained that some municipalities disregard the minimum-entry requirement and experience determined by the minister of COGTA for appointment as political parties want to appoint party loyalists to big positions for control. According to Matyana and Mthethwa (2022:131), skills scarcity is one of the reasons for the failure of municipalities to manage challenges effectively and efficiently, and the avoidance of the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) outlines will further deteriorate the provision of services. Tauté (2021:9) states that municipalities are most likely to improve their performance if they focus on building their capacity. A study by Hungwe and Mukonza (2023:65) suggests that the lack of capacity and knowledge by the municipal officials to execute procurement processes has resulted in bad governance. Cloete (2023:1) is of the opinion that the effective management of human resources is required for the sustainability of municipalities. In other words, human resources are one of the most important tools in ensuring effective service delivery. Without human resources, it makes it challenging to deliver services to community members. The inadequate human capacitation will, therefore, negatively affect the sustainability of municipalities.

4.3 LACK OF POLITICAL WILL TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES WITHIN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The maintenance of good political will is of utmost importance to ensure better provision of services and leadership capable of addressing complex governance issues effectively (Thusi & Matyana, 2024:501). The lack of political will to address corruption has been a major contributing factor, which has perpetuated the high level of misconduct in local government (Yuan, 2024:31). The municipal leaders lack the

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political will to address challenges faced by municipalities (Raile *et al.,* 2018:1). The lack of political will is one of the main challenges for the realisation of anti-corruption reform and where there is lack of political will corruption thrives (Grimes, Huss & Ivanyshyn, 2021:1), and will potentially render anti-corruptions strategies ineffective. It is crucial to set an example by ensuring that municipal officials who engage in corrupt activities be prosecuted so that community members and other municipal officials know that no one is immune to justice (Maduku & Enaifoghe, 2018:9). This will demonstrate the willingness and commitment of political leader to address corruption as well as any other unethical conduct.

Politicians are voted into power with the hope that they will make public needs a priority; however, this is not the case, as politicians are more concerned about staying in power at any cost (Thusi & Ndebele, 2024:261). It can, therefore, be summarised that politicians try to maintain power at all costs, knowing that the possibility to engage in events that are for self-enrichment will be available. It should not be a surprise that politicians may not enthusiastically implement strategies to curb corruption within developmental local government. Mlambo *et al., (*2023:48) cite that there is a lack of political will to fight against corruption, as politicians are more interested in self-enrichment, thus creating a culture of nonchalance. According to Mle and Ngumbela (2020:1), South Africa faces shortcomings in capability and systemic stasis because of weak political management. The issue is further worsened by the political appointment of unqualified individuals.

Lack of political will is among the detrimental effects on service delivery in municipalities (Thusi & Matyana, 2024:501). Politicians are not committed in addressing certain challenges as those challenges were created by them to allow for misconduct to enrich themselves. As much as politicians have the responsibility of addressing challenges within developmental local government, municipal officials also have the same mandate, and it has been ascertained by a study conducted by Matyana and Mthethwa (2022:132) that lack of commitment by municipal officials is one of the contributing factors to render ineffective service delivery. Despite commitments and efforts to combat corruption and promote accountability, political will and leadership remain inconsistent and often lacking (Mahmud, *et al.,* 2024:214). Nel and Minnie (2022:51) contend that the absence of political will, constant action against corruption, and the reluctance to pay municipal accounts will, therefore, become

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challenging for another set of plans to solve the fundamental problems of local government. Municipality officials must be dedicated to community members' needs and be knowledgeable on how to go about meeting them (Tauté, 2021:11). Linde and Peters (2020:293) posit that community members tend to evaluate the political system positively when it produces policies that match their needs. The political will to solve municipal challenges will, therefore, place community members in a position to possibly evaluate the municipality's performance positively.

4.4 EFFECTS OF LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY ON SERVICE DELIVERY

South African municipalities are mandated to optimally provide basic municipal services to their residents; however, the massive influx of people to the metropolitan municipality makes this constitutional mandate challenging to achieve (Zerihun & Mashigo, 2022:44). Mkhatshwa-Ngwenya and Khumalo (2020:268) posit that local government is expected to deliver quality sustainable services required by the society to maintain and improve its welfare. In South Africa, poor service delivery is a huge problem in many municipalities, partly due to corruption, political patronage, and skills deficits at local administrative levels (Zerihun & Mashigo, 2022:1), further exacerbated by a lack of accountability. The service delivery system has been perceived as one of the most important ways of reducing poverty through developmental programs (Masuku & Jili, 2019:1). The challenges faced by municipalities have posed threats to ensuring the reduction of poverty through developmental programs.

According to Masuku and Jili (2019:2), poor communication and accountability have negatively affected governance and the provision of basic services. Mbandlwa *et al.,* (2020:1645) indicate that the lack of consequences for wrongdoing and inadequate and weak internal controls, especially in procurement, do motivate communities to breach the law in the process of their demand for accountability. The lack of transparency further worsens the situation. The absence of transparency creates a vacuum making it difficult for community members to comprehend government activities (Tsagae, 2023:435).

The lack of accountability has been a challenge for a couple of years, and there are no clear strategies to address it. The world COVID-19 pandemic exposed the culture of corruption which the government has failed the fight of this pandemic (Mlambo & Masuku, 2020:549). The President of South Africa reiterated that allocation of funds

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will require intense monitoring by oversight bodies to prevent looting; however, even with those measures in place, the prevention of such was not successful, as allegations of corruption were recorded. This has limited the local government's meaningful contribution to promoting a good standard of living for the citizens through service delivery (Ejue & Madumelu, 2014:98). Lack of accountability to mitigate checks and balances in the local sphere of government leads to poor service delivery and financial management challenges including corruption (Nokele & Shopola, 2021:223). The poor service delivery within developmental local government has led to increased public protest.

According to Mamokhere (2023:62), service protests may force government officials to improve service delivery as they also receive media attention, thus improving accountability. Ngumbela (2022:5) accountability leads to better governance and efficient service delivery. The lack of accountability has caused many communities within COJ to protest against the poor service delivery. The community of Diepsloot has embarked on a march to the mayor's office as they believe that the community has been forgotten with no improvement in their lives.

Mamokhere and Kgobe (2023:49) assert that despite many legislations emphasising the provision of service delivery to community members, sustainable service delivery remains a challenge within developmental local government. Service delivery mechanisms introduced to circumvent service delivery challenges have been ineffective (Barbier & Tengeh, 2022:26). Hence, there is a call for reviewing those mechanisms to improve accountability. Rachekhu and Kgobe (2024:66) attribute a lack of openness and accountability as a major factor contributing to poor public service delivery. This calls for a high level of commitment from municipal officials to address issues within developmental local government (Rachmawati, 2023: 2175).

The South African government has recognised the increasingly critical role of information technology as a facilitator of public service delivery (Enaifoghe, Dlamini, Jili and Mthethwa, 2023:495). This recognition should be coupled with vigorous initiatives to ensure the incorporation of technological elements in the delivery of services. The municipal officials appointed due to their affiliation with political parties result in them accounting to their own boss, thus rendering municipal internal structures for accountability ineffective (Nkoana *et al.,* 2024:87).

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4.5 DEMOCRACY AT RISK WITHIN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Hossan, Islam and Khatun (2024:9) define democracy as a form of government in which the people have power over the state, where fundamental freedoms and human rights are respected, and they can freely express their will. South Africa's transition to democracy in the early 1990s ushered in an era of tremendous hope for racial reconciliation in state and society (Naidoo, 2021:40). The new democratic government led by the ANC was ushered in1994, which inherited an unequal society created by the apartheid regime (Ngcamu, 2019:4). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 facilitated the foundation for the establishment of the fundamental principles of democracy (Masipa, 2018:1). The ANC was elected as the ruling party since the democratic election in 1994 and has over time cemented itself as the most significant political force in South Africa as it has ruled since 1994 (Radulović, 2023:66). The South Africa government became democratic country categorised by one-party dominance (Khambule *et al.,* 2019:1).

Masipa (2018:2) cite that the fundamental principles of democracy include amongst others, community participation, equality, tolerance, accountability, transparency, regular, free and fair elections, controlling and preventing the abuse of power, human rights, multiparty system, and the rule of law. In light of the above, it may be concluded that democracy is at risk as some of the democratic principles are disregarded, such as controlling and preventing the abuse of power. According to Seopetsa (2020:142), the legitimacy of a democratic government is based on the concept of constitutionalism, where all people, representatives of the people, and institutions would be subject to the Constitution of the country. It is, however, to be noted that there have been cases reported, as demonstrated above, where municipal officials have acted against the constitutional mandate, hence the question of whether democracy is at risk. According to Mdlalose, Ntini, Ndebele, and Yende (2024:66), democracy requires that political and dissenting voices be heard and tolerated. It is of concern that community members are utilising protests as a means to get their voices heard, yet there are more effective mechanisms created for such things. Ettang and Opasina (2017:96) cite that many democratic experiences on the African continent demonstrate a significant failure. This is because certain elements that are crucial to realise democracy are compromises such as good governance, transparency, political

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stability and accountability. The disregard of such elements will render democracy at risk of just being a paper aspiration without effective implementation. Political parties play a critical role in a democratic state and thus, it is important to maintain stability to ensure that democratic governance is realised (Adetiba & Asuelime, 2018:114). It is not surprising that there are questions about the state of democracy in South Africa, given that there is no political stability in all spheres of local government.

Events such as corruption and abuse of power threatened the country's constitutional democracy and principles of an accountable government (Khambule *et al.,* 2019:1), which these principles are enshrined in the Constitution of the country. Corruption undermines principles of democracy, denying equal rights and impeding sustainable development efforts (Mamokhere & Mabunda, 2023:360). Governance that is responsive, accountable, and transparent has the potential to enjoy the benefits of a democratic government (Prasetya, 2021:360). The local government will witness less protest if they become more proactive rather than reactive to the challenges of the municipality, and this will also decrease the levels of protest by dissatisfied community members. The South African government had to develop mechanisms that not only promote participation but also promote democracy. Stuurman (2019:326) is of the view that the core purpose of ward committees is to strengthen democracy by permitting communities to actively participate in the local government's decision-making processes.

4.6 COALITION IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Netswera and Khumalo (2021:104) define a coalition as a temporary partnership formed between political parties with the aim of gaining more influence or power than the individual parties. The coalition governments are formed to improve service delivery, good administration, and economic development (Mawere, *et al.,* 2022:273). Munzhedzi and Shopola (2024:24) cite that coalition governments are often formed due to the absence of an absolute winner during municipal elections. The above statements by the various authors suggest that coalitions are formed due to voters voting for different political parties, leaving no party with an outright majority, thus forcing them to form a partnership referred to as a coalition government. Coalition governments are constitutionally supported and are further anchored by a proportional representation system of elections (Pietersen, 2021:488).

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Thusi and Ndebele (2024:264) define a coalition government as a government wherein power is divided between two or more political parties. In most cases, a coalition government depends, as it is between two or more political parties, involves compromises, and depends on those parties in order to reach a consensus and form a government of majority. According to Munzhedzi and Shopola (2024:27), the 2016 local government election marked an era in which there was no outright winner, thus resulting in a coalition government. During the 2021 local government elections, the ANC lost electoral power to opposition political parties to govern Johannesburg (Mawere *et al.,* 2022:272). This mandated a coalition government. Pietersen (2021:497) states that the DA, COPE, ACDP, Freedom Front Plus, and UDM, in cooperation with the IFP and EFF, formed the first coalition government in Johannesburg.

Munzhedzi and Shopola (2024:27) contend that it is of paramount importance that political parties forming a coalition government must develop a plan of intent on how to execute their obligations in a manner that gives support to their given mandate. If political parties and community members are in the dark of the coalition structure, it may be difficult to hold any of the coalition parties accountable (Mawere, *et al.,* 2022:280). Considering the above, it may be concluded that in certain instances, it may be difficult to identify municipal officials to be held accountable in coalition.

Coalition has also affected service delivery. This statement is supported by Mdlalose, Ntini, Ndebele, and Yende (2024:63), who allude that hung municipalities and the coalition government have negatively affected the provision of services in many communities. On the other hand, Bradshaw and Breakfast (2022:126) believe that power-sharing has the potential to protect the interests of vulnerable social categories. Thusi and Ndebele (2024:261) contend that the failure of the formed coalition to govern local municipalities undermines the urgency of effective and sustainable municipal service delivery. This statement has been evident in COJ with the infighting that is occurring because of the coalition, resulting in a shift of focus from service delivery. According to Makole, Ntshangase, and Adewumi (2022:28), coalition governance can be utilised as a mechanism to reinforce accountability by means of strengthening checks and balances in the electoral system. Coalition government provides a space for meshing the ideologies of the various political parties (Mokgosi et al., 2017:50). The coalitions at the local government have given power to smaller

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parties as they are also key decision-makers by means of giving power to the majority (Mnguni, 2023:372).

The coalition government in COJ has seen many conflicts, which have resulted in a change of management often than desired. There is a serious need for political party members to learn how to effectively deal with conflict. It is necessary to create procedures for resolving disagreements and conflicts among coalition members as this will ensure that the focus is always directed into improving performance (Kikasu & Pillay, 2024:36). Bradshaw and Breakfast (2022:124) state that conflict management is key to coalition and should include collaborating, compromising and avoiding attacks by promoting diplomacy to make a stable and successful coalition government. According to Khambule (2022:1), the coalition governance of COJ municipalities faced instabilities because of different ideologies and interests within coalition partners. Mlambo, Buys, and Saul (2024:52) argue that coalition government would have a positive impact on service delivery if it was motivated by a sincere aspiration for effective governance. A coalition government comes with the sharing of power among multiple parties. Thus, it can be difficult to assign accountability for government actions or failures (Kikasu & Pillay, 2024:38). The above has been evident in COJ due to changes in mayorship.

4.7 RECONFIGURATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Nel and Minnie (2022:39) state that local government is facing challenges such as a lack of capacity and resources, poor governance, and limited intergovernmental and intra-municipal coordination, to name a few. This calls for a vigorous approach to solving problems within developmental local government. Ikeke (2024:30) cites that the mandate of developmental local government is to ensure that the lives of community members are improved for the better; however, local government has failed in doing so, as demonstrated by various authors above. Developmental local government is entrusted with the responsibility of changing the lives of community members for the better; especially those previously disadvantaged (Mofolo & Adonis, 2021:1).

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The state of local government in South Africa calls for intervention to reconfigure accountability and a sense of responsibility on the part of municipal officials (Adonis, 2021:288). The negative elements which has affected development within local government occur in the watchful eye of all the internal structures, such as the MPAC, who have an oversight role of ensuring accountability, which is of high concern (Mofolo & Adonis, 2021:1). Considering the above, there is a serious need to restructure the bodies that are responsible for ensuring accountability to limits challenges faced by developmental local government. The coalition government within developmental local govern calls for effective conflict management to minimise the infight and disagreement among the various political party members, which in certain cases has been physical. Makole *et al*., (2022:28) allude that coalition governance has the potential to reconfigure the governance landscape to minimize corrupt practices in a single dominant-party government. This is because the single dominant party will not enjoy the majority, thus enforcing consultations for decision-making through a transparent process to those political parties in the coalition.

Adonis (2021:293) argues that the reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government will require an overhaul and reengineering of structures responsible for ensuring accountability as well as the revisit of policies governing those structures. This implies that structures such as the internal audit and MPAC will have to be restructured. This may be done by selecting individuals who are capable of comprehending complex and technical information for the purpose of ensuring compliance and, subsequently, accountability. Adonis (2021:294) further states that the effectiveness of any structure vested with an oversight role may be assured by its level of autonomy and independence, free from influence and undue political pressure. Even with the repetitive non-compliance to audit findings, local governments continue to ignore recommendations intended to improve audit outcomes and accountability. The non-compliance with recommendations needs to be legalized to ensure compliance 2024:136).

The non-compliance, as stated by (Zungu *et al.,* 2024:143), is the absence of consequences for non-compliance. Local government has a huge challenge with non-compliance with the legislative frameworks governing public procurement and contract administration at a high cost to the government and the community as taxpayers (Mkhize *et al.,* 2022:1328). Effective leadership with a culture of honesty, ethical

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business practices, and strong governance is needed to improve and sustain service delivery (Thusi & Matyana, 2024:141). An effective developing municipality requires strategic utilisation of resources to satisfy fundamental needs and accomplish (Miggels & Rulashe, 2022:516). Sefara and Odeku (2023:448) cite that the appointment of individuals without the requisite skills and competencies required to execute the job is an irregular.

Transparency refers to the ability of decision-makers to present information in a clear, accessible, and timely way, which is critical for accountability (Tsagae, 2023:437). This implies that to reconfigure accountability, structures for transparency should be enhanced to fully implement accountability. Hussein (2023:20) alluded that there is no single organization that is capable of completely eradicating unethical behaviour and corruption. However, efforts should continue to be placed on the reduction thereof. Ethics and accountability require appropriate systems and structures, which are to be reviewed periodically in order to remain effective (Sambo & Kanyane, 2020:31).

4.8 CONCLUSION

Developmental local government requires major changes for things to turn around. There are numerous challenges highlighted in the literature for implementing accountability. However, are most prevalent and require urgent intervention, such as reducing corruption and political interference. Once there is less interference by political leaders, the administrative officials will be able to execute their mandate. Thus, there is a need to comply with the separation of power. The cadre deployment has been highlighted as a policy that is hindering accountability and the effective running of municipalities. The procurement process within developmental local government should be revised, as this platform is breeding corruption. If the above challenges do not receive the necessary attention, then service delivery will continue to weaken. There is a need to transform local government to effectively implement accountability.

There are countries that have demonstrated that accountability can be implemented and improve performance within local government. The chapter to follow will look at accountability of other countries. This is done so as to recommend best practices of other countries in demanding to perfect accountability. The disregard of statutes by municipal officials is of a high concern as policies, regulations, and laws are drafted to

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deal with challenges within the institutions as well as social challenges. When municipal officials disregard such, then there is little hope to address most of the challenges that are faced by local government. The next chapter focuses research methodology adopted

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CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored accountability from other countries to ascertain the differences and the practices implemented. This chapter provides a detailed research design and methodology, which is the foundation for any research. The section presents the research design, research paradigm, study area, population of the study, sampling, data collection procedures, and data analysis, as well as ethical considerations. The study adopted a mixed research approach. Data was primarily collected through research interviews and questionnairesin COJ. The primary data was supported by reviewing the literature available, which is related to the study.

5.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Park, Konge, and Artino (2020:690), research paradigms guide scientific discoveries through their assumptions and principles. Khatri (2020:1435) defines a research paradigm as a theoretical or philosophical ground for the research work; it is regarded as a research philosophy. For this study, pragmatism has been adopted to evaluate the mechanisms in existence to prompt a government that is accountable and enhances developmental local government. Kelly and Cordeiro (2020:3) define the pragmatic research paradigm as the philosophical and epistemological framework for interrogating and evaluating ideas and beliefs regarding their practical functioning. The positivism paradigm has been added to support and assist in developing a meaningful understanding of the reality within developmental local government. The aforementioned research paradigm was selected as it will permit the researcher to seek and find ideal solutions to the problem by contributing useful and actionable knowledge. According to Kaushik, Walsh, and Lai (2019:4), a major underpinning of pragmatist epistemology is that knowledge is always based on experience. As stated by Dawadi, Shrestha, and Giri (2021:27), pragmatism allows for the pluralistic stance of gathering all sorts of data to answer the research questions best, hence the selection of this type of research design to apply triangulation methods. Gichuru (2017:1) states that interpretivism focuses on understanding phenomena through the

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meanings that people assign to them through social contextualisation. These approaches broaden the focus, thus providing in-depth information relating to research variables.

5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Akhtar (2016:68) states that research design is the structure of research that holds all the elements of the research. Kapur (2018:22) alludes that research design refers to advanced planning of the methods to be implemented for collecting the relevant data and the techniques to be used in their analysis thereof. Hammond and Wellington (2021:164) define research design as a process of turning a research question, a hypothesis, or even a hunch into a manageable project. Piccioli (2019:430) defines convergent parallel design as a method that comprises the simultaneous usage of the quantitative and qualitative methods, which is considered equi-detectable and two parallel lines of research. The convergent parallel design is utilised as there is completeness for achieving a holistic view of the research problem by combining findings from both qualitative and qualitative methods. Choosing a convergent parallel design allowed the researcher to collect two sets of data (qualitative and quantitative) that will be analysed separately and then compared to achieve the study's objectives. Interviews were conducted with the participants, and the other respondents were handed questionnaires to complete, which was done simultaneously since the study used two different sample sizes to collect data.

A descriptive research design was utilized for the purpose of this investigation. Kabir (2016:124) indicates that descriptive research assists in obtaining information relating the phenomena to describe that which is in existence with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2016:154), descriptive research examines a situation as it is and does not involve changing or modifying the situation under investigation, nor is it intended to determine cause-and-effect relationships. For the purpose of this study, questions such as what accountability is, who should account, how should they account, and when should they account were answered through this method.

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5.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY

Hammond and Wellington (2021:128) define methodology as the foundation that the researcher puts forward for applying particular research techniques. Research methodology is described as the science of studying how research is done scientifically to solve a research problem (Patel & Patel, 2019:48). Dawadi, Shrestha, and Giri (2021:5) assert that Mixed-Method Research (MMR) is a principled complementary research method to the traditional quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The study used the MMR because the research objectives required the use of two methods. The study utilised MMR to demonstrate broader and general perspectives of respondents on the redesigning of accountability in developmental local government to acquire findings that are grounded in respondents' experience.

5.4.1 Mixed-Method Research

An MMR combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches based on the purpose of the study and the research question to provide a better understanding of the subject (Taherdoost, 2022:55). According to Hafsa (2019:45), mixed methods research design involves integrating qualitative and quantitative research and data in a single study. Creswell and Creswell (2018:17) define MMR as the adoption of both qualitative and quantitative data sequentially in the design. The selection of the method was made to allow the researcher to integrate the benefits of qualitative and quantitative approaches. This approach allowed the researcher to gain insightful information based on the experience of the experts within the spheres of responsibility relating to accountability and developmental local government, as well as permitted the researcher to provide a comprehensive view of the research questions. A study by McKim (2017:203) revealed that MMR adds value by increasing validity in the findings, informing the collection of the second data source, and assisting with knowledge creation. This further influenced the researcher to opt for this method.

5.4.2 Qualitative research

Chai, Gao, Chen, Duangthip, Lo and Chu (2021:1) state that qualitative research collects non-numerical data that explores human behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, and personality characteristics through intensive studies of particular cases in natural settings. In the view of Aspers and Corte (2019:142), qualitative research involves

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studying things in their natural settings, and attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. The selection of the methods was done as it allowed the researcher to study the behaviour of municipal officials as well as to determine whether such behaviour is aligned with the desired standard. The methods permitted the researcher to establish mechanisms for accountability that are ineffective and need to be revised. Quantitative data was collected by means of interviews conducted with participants.

5.4.3 Quantitative research

Ahmad, Wasim, Irfan, Gogoi, Srivastava, and Farheen (2019:2828) define quantitative research as a set of strategies, techniques, and assumptions used to study psychological, social, and economic processes through the gathering of numeric patterns or data. Stockemer (2019:8) defines quantitative research as a research method that works with statistics or numbers that permit the researchers to quantify the world. This method permitted the research to use statistical figures to ascertain the level of compliance to prescripts, guidelines, and laws relating to accountability, as well as the opinions of community members on the level of compliance to accountability frameworks within developmental local government. Quantitative data was collected by means of questionnaires handed to participants.

5.5 STUDY AREA

The area of study is the part of the geographical element in which a researcher chooses to place their interest (Vukovic & Kochetkov, 2017:79). Study areas is a place-based and characterised by elements of population density, social and economic organisation (Weeks, 2010:34). The study was conducted in City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality in Gauteng province. COJ falls within Category A as described in Section 155(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996, and it is one of the three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng, hosing about +/- 5.8 million people (COJ, IDP: 2020/2021). According to COJ, IDP (2018/2019), the Municipality is the biggest metropolitan in terms of population, size, and diverse culture in the country. The COJ is divided into seven regions, from Region A to Region G. The regions take on a role as contractors to the central government to maximise efficiency. The study was limited to 4 regions (from region A to region D).

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Figure 5.1: City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality



(Source: City of Johannesburg GIS: extracted from: https://ags.joburg.org.za/cgismobi/)

The map above provides areas of Gauteng that are within the responsibility of COJ in terms of providing services. COJ, as portrayed in the map above, services twelve (12) areas, which are clustered into seven (7) regions (Maseko, 2023:1117).

5.6 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Latpate, Kshirsagar, Gupta, and Chandra (2021:1) define the population of the study as a group of units defined according to the objective of the study. Shukla (2020:2) defines a population as a set or group of all the units on which the findings of the research are to be applied. The research made generalisations based on the group or individuals selected for the study. The population of this study was officials within COJ and community members that are within Regions A, B, C and D. The researcher selected the population of individuals and groups who are directly or indirectly linked to ensuring accountability within the municipality. The estimated population of the study is +/- 13 354 employees. However, the study only focused on employees and residences within the 4 regions of the study (COJ, Draft Annual Report, 2020/2021:450).

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5.7 SAMPLING

Sampling is the process of selecting a sample from an individual or a large group of the population for research purposes (Bhardwa, 2019:158). Osuagwu (2020:50) states that sampling is the process of drawing a subset from a population. Rahman, Tabash, Salamzadeh, Abduli and Rahaman (2022:45) define sampling as the act, process, or technique of selecting a representative sample of a population to observe and analyse the characteristics of the entire population. In this study, sampling is defined as the process wherein the researcher selects potential participants in the process of data collection through interviews, questionnaires, or observation. According to Majid (2018:3), a good sample is a representation of the population of interest, which leads to answering the research question. The sampled group of the study consisted of the city manager, executive mayor, mayoral committee members, municipal council, financial manager, LED manager and officials, IDP manager and officials, internal audit manager and officials, human resource manager and officials, anti-fraud & and corruption officials, supply chain management manager and officials as well as selected community members.

5.7.1 Sampling methods

For this study, a probability sampling method was utilised. Adwok (2015:95) states that probability sampling stipulates that each segment of a known population is represented in the sample. According to Bhardwa (2019:158), in probability sampling, there is a known probability of each participant of the population being selected in the sample. Noor, Tajik, and Golzar (2022:78) state that in simple random sampling, all the participants have an equal opportunity to participate in the study where the selection process is entirely based on luck. Noor *et al*., (2022:78) are of the view that the methods ensure unbiased, representative, and equal probability of the population. The respondents were selected based on their experience and knowledge of working within developmental local government.

5.7.2 Sample size

Sample size refers to the number of participants to be included in a study (Adam, 2020:90). It can be deduced that sample size refers to the number of participants identified from the population. The table below depicts the number and portfolio of

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municipal officials that formed part of the study and the number of community members.

Table 5.1: Sampling size

Category	Number
City Manager	1
Executive Mayor	1
Mayoral committee members	5
Ward councillors	3
Financial Management and officials	2
LED manager and officials	2
IDP Managers and officials	2
Internal Audit managers and officials	2
HRM and officials	2
Anti-Fraud and Corruption staff and officials	2
SCM manager and officials	2
Community members	200
Total	**224**

(Source: Own Design, 2022).

The table above depicts the breakdown of the sample size for the study. The study was centred on the four regions of COJ, 50 community members were drawn from each region. The questionnaires were distributed to 200 respondents out of the above sample of 224. Interviews were conducted with 08 officials from the Municipality as it was challenging to schedule appointment with other intended participants. It is to be noted that the initial number for interview was supposed to be 10 participants, which was difficult to get hold of those participants.

5.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Data collection is the process of obtaining information about the study, where the researcher relies on the reports of participants to reconstruct and draw conclusions (Seixas, Smith & Mitton, 2017:780). On the other hand, Kabir (2016:202) defines data collection as the process of gathering information in an established systematic fashion

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that provides answers to the research questions and evaluates outcomes. The researcher used interviews and questionnaires as instruments to collect data. To strengthen and validate the information provided, documents such as government laws, reports, books, journal articles, conference reports papers on relevant literature, and numerous websites were consulted.

5.8.1 Interviews

According to Stuckey (2018:56), an interview is a primary way of collecting data research to direct the participant in responding to a specific research question. Sahoo (2022:3) states that an interview is a purposeful interaction in which one person obtains information from one or more individuals. In the context of this study, the interview is defined as a process used in research to gain insight into the subject being studied from selected participants. The study adopted an open-ended interview. Popping (2015:2) defines an open-ended interview as a question in which possible answers are not suggested, and the respondent answers in their own words. Bordens and Abbott (2018:268) indicate that the advantage of an open-ended question is that the information obtained may be more complete and accurate than the information obtained with a restricted item. The selection of open-ended interviews was chosen as it will allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions to the respondents. In addition, the researcher obtained answers based on the participant's experience and knowledge. A total number of 08 participants from the different work environment within the municipality as outlined in the sampling size table were interviewed. Appointments with selected participants were made prior to conducting the interviews, where dates and type of platform to be utilised were detailed.

5.8.2 Questionnaires

Kabir (2016:209) defines a questionnaire as a research instrument comprising a series of questions to gather information from participants. Mukherjee (2020:76) cites that the questionnaire can be closed-ended, which refers to asking the respondent to tick one among the response categories indicated in the questionnaire. Roopa and Rani (2012:273) define questionnaires as a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically valuable information about a given topic. A structured research questionnaire was utilised for the study. The series of questions for the questionnaire was designed to provide new insight into the subject study. According to Leavy

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(2017:105), the Likert scale provides a statement with responses that indicate the level of agreement and asks respondents to select a single response. The questionnaire consists of 5 Likert Scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree). A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed manually to participants across the various regions.

5.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Once the data is collected, it is required to be analysed to interpret and draw conclusions and provide recommendations. Data analysis describes in detail the strategies used to analyse and interpret data sets, including using computer software programs Leavy (2017:187). According to Tracy (2020:212), data analysis is the process of reading and re-reading the data, recording analytic reflections, and transcribing or reviewing transcriptions of interviews. The data collected was analysed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques to determine the feasibility of redesigning accountability in developmental local government. Both descriptive and thematic data analysis were used.

Kaur, Stoltzfus and Yellapu (2018:60) define descriptive statistics as a technique used to summarise data in an organised manner by describing the relationship between variables in a sample or population. Data was analysed through International Business Machine: Statistical Package for the Social Science (IBM: SPSS 27.0). The statistical data was presented in charts to accurately capture the information in a meaningful and useful manner; in addition, a summative interpretation of the charts was provided to describe relationships between the research variables.

Kampira (2021:5) describes thematic analysis as an analysis procedure that is on the identification, description, explanation, substantiation, and linkages of themes. According to Lochmiller (2021:2030), thematic analysis involves the identification of recurring patterns that are presented by researchers as overarching statements or themes. Data collected through interviews was presented in a narrative form and grounded into themes, and conclusions were drawn in relation to the reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government. Thematic analysis is underpinned by coding supported by repetitive data to identify content that is of interest in answering the research question (Kampira, 2021:8). The study used Atlas.Ti to analyse thematic data. The study followed Braun and Clarke's (2020:1393) steps

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when analysing data: familiarizing yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

5.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Rana, Dilshad and Ahsan (2021:1-2) define research ethics as genres that researchers follow to protect the rights in developing research strategies and building a trusted relationship with study participants. According to Bless, Higson-Smith, and Sithole (2013:28), ethics in research prevents abuse and permits the researcher to comprehend the responsibilities bestowed as ethical scholars. The ethical guidelines that underpinned the study are as follows:

5.10.1 Permission to conduct the research study

The University of Venda has granted an ethics certificate to enable the researcher to collect data. COJ granted permission to collect data, a clearance certificate from the university to authenticate the intentions of the study accompanying the application.

5.10.2 Informed consent

Tracy (2020:102) states that informed consent is the process by which researchers advise potential participants about risks, benefits, and what else is involved in agreeing to participate in a study before they decide to do it of their own free will. Informed consent affords participants the opportunity to know and understand what the research is about and the risks involved. The research was explained to the participants from COJ as well as selected community members so that they understand what is expected from them and that their participation is voluntary.

5.10.3 Voluntary participation

Stukas, Snyder, and Clary (2014:2) define volunteerism as a form of behavior that involves a freely chosen decision to commit time and effort to do something. Clarity was given to the respondents regarding the fact that participation in the research is voluntary and that they should not feel threatened or coerced to participate. In addition, participants were made aware that they may, at any given point, withdraw with or without providing any explanation.

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5.10.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

Bos (2020:153) indicates that confidentiality refers to any information that is considered to be private of a person that they wish not to share with others. The information provided will be kept confidential to guard against victimisation and possible reprisal of participants. The protection of information will also be done to give effect to the Protection of Personal Information Act, (POPI), 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013). In addition, Bos (2020:156) believes that a researcher who offers anonymity does not record any identifying information. The participants will be anonymous to protect their identity. The legal and human rights of all participates was respected not only to prevent violation but also give effect to the constitutional right.

5.10.5 Respect for the participants

Researchers have an obligation to do their best to show respect for the participants during the collection of data (Marceta, 2019:178). The participants were treated with the utmost respect throughout the research process. This was done to ensure that participants were comfortable and free to express their views and opinions on the topic of interest.

5.10.6 No harm to participants

It was crucial to indicate to participants that no harm be caused by participating in the study (Petrova, Dewing & Camilleri, 2014:4). Participants were reassured that no harm would be caused by participating in this study and that if they at any point feel that they are not safe they can withdraw from participating in the study.

5.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter elaborated on the research methodology adopted and the rationale behind selecting such a method. A well-structured research depends on various research elements, with methodology being the most essential. As a mixed approach was adopted, it was crucial to define the two concepts and indicate which methods will take dominance over the other. The ethical consideration was detailed to provide comfort and a sense of safety for participants. The structure of the thesis was detailed in this section to provide a clear indication of what each chapter encompasses. The following chapter provides the presentation, interpretations, and analysis of the data collected.

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CHAPTER SIX
DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATIONS AND ANALYSIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter detailed how data was collected and also explained how it will be interpreted. The data collected by means of questionnaires and interviews was analysed and interpreted. This was done in the form of a pie chart for questionnaires and the interviews were narrated based on the opinions of the interviewees.

6.2 ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRES

The interpretation of the responses was extracted from the feedback received from 200 community members through the questionnaires distributed. The community members comprised of members residing within the boundaries of the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. The questionnaires were handed over to 200 community members, residing within the selected regions. Community members were selected as the recipients of services delivered by the COJ. The respondents for the questionnaires were divided into age groups as well as the gender.

6.2.1 Biographic information of respondent

This section outlined the biographic information of the participants. The information was presented in a table and pie chart and interpreted thereafter.

Table 6.1: Gender of participants

No	Response	Number of participants	Percentage
1	Male	107	53.5%
2	Female	93	46.5%
Total		**200**	**100%**

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The table above represents the information on the gender of the respondents of the study, which is 53.055% male and 46.05% female. The questionnaire was distributed randomly. The above percentages suggested that males are more involved in municipal affairs.

Table 6.2: Age of participants

No	Age	Number of participants	Percentage
1	18-30 years	46	23%
2	31-40 years	61	30.05%
3	41-50 years	46	23%
4	51-60	30	15%
5	61+	17	8.05%
Total		**200**	**100%**

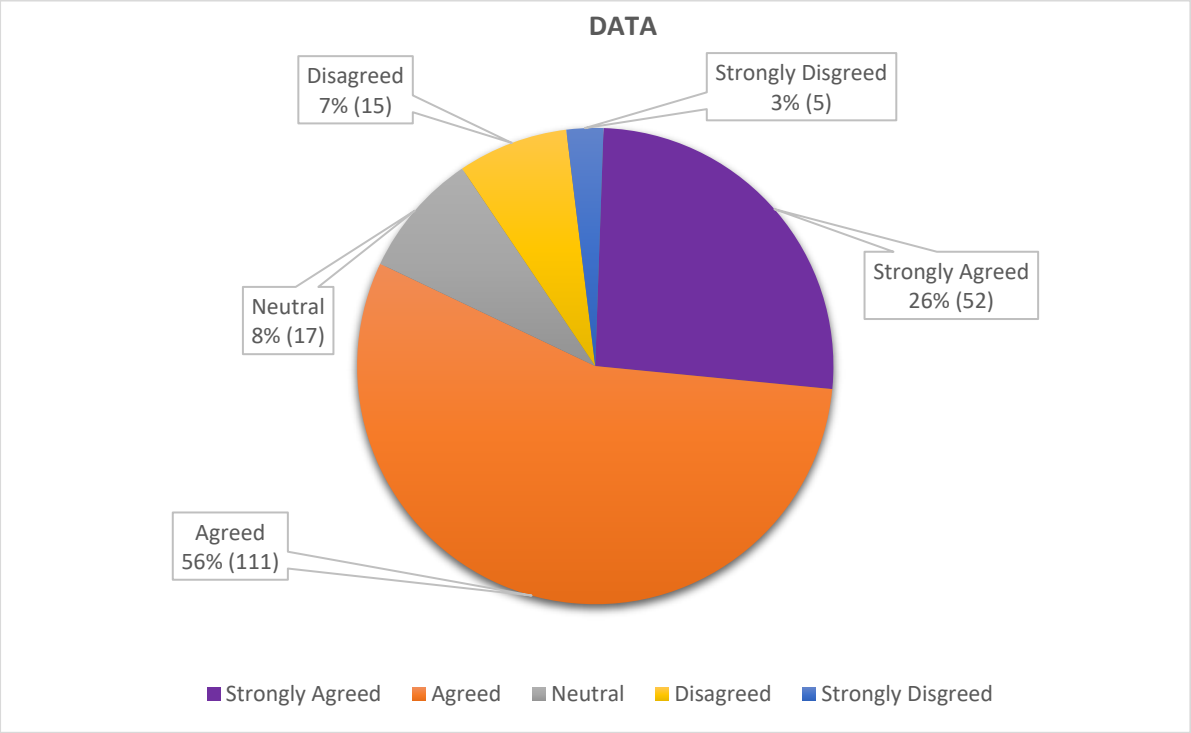
The table above demonstrates the age group of the respondents to the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents were between 31 and 40 years of age, which is represented at 30.05%. As depicted in the table above, the age group 18-30 years is represented at 23%, as well as 41-50 years. The age group from 51-60 years is at 15%. The group age that is less represented is 61+ years at 8.05%. The distribution of questionnaires was done randomly, and it was suggested that the youth are also interested in the affairs of the municipality. Youth participation in the affairs of the municipality is important. However, the views and opinions of elderly community members should be sought based on their experiences. It may also be concluded that, as presented in the table, the elders appear to be less interested in the affairs of the municipality.

6.2.2 Reconfiguration of accountability in COJ

The data collected was analysed and interpreted in this section. The aim of collecting data was to determine the need to reconfigure accountability and ascertain challenges faced by the municipality in this regard. The results of the questionnaires were presented as follows:

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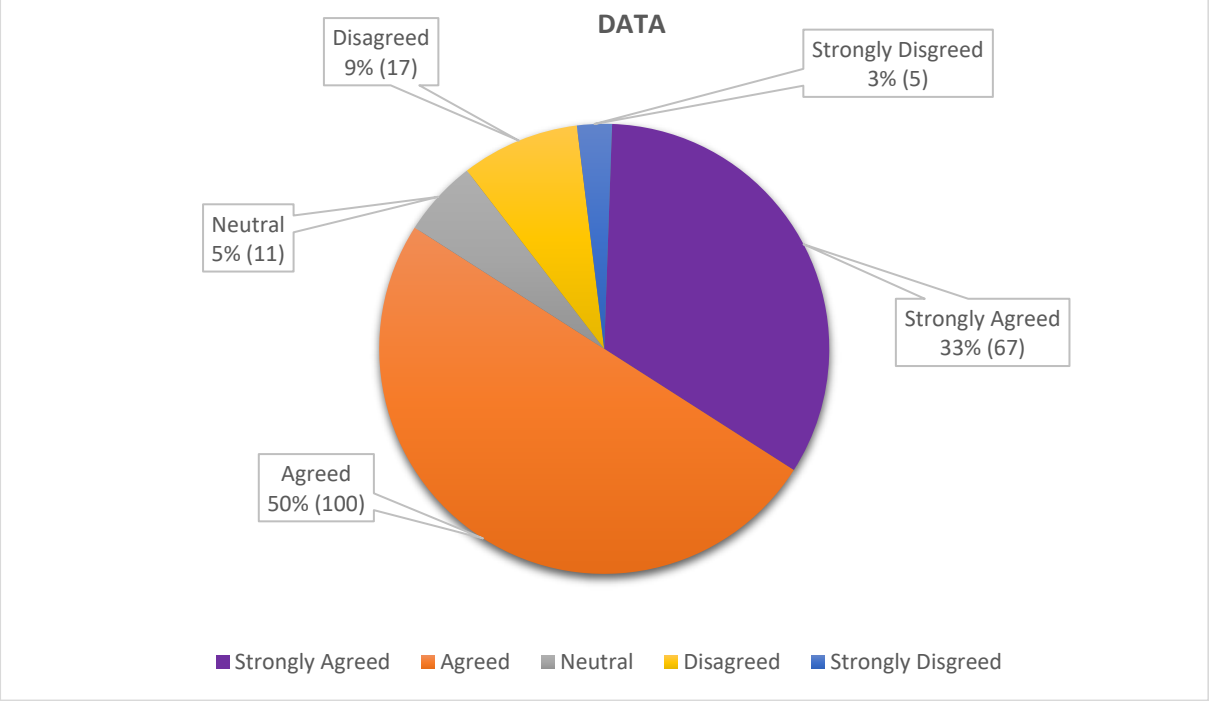
Figure 6.1: Understanding accountability relating to holding municipal officials to account



Most respondents 56% (111) agreed that accountability is aligned with holding municipal officials responsible for their actions or inaction, whilst 7% (15) of the respondents were in disagreement with the statement above. There were 5 (3%) participants who strongly disagreed with the statement above. Whilst 52 (26%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement above. The information provided in chapter two of the study suggests that accountability is aligned with holding municipal officials responsible for their actions. The above information demonstrates that which was outlined in the literature review. The literature review in chapter 2, paragraph 2.7 demonstrated that when municipal officials are not providing an explanation for their actions, then accountability becomes ineffective.

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Figure 6.2: Transparency is an imperative factor for accountability

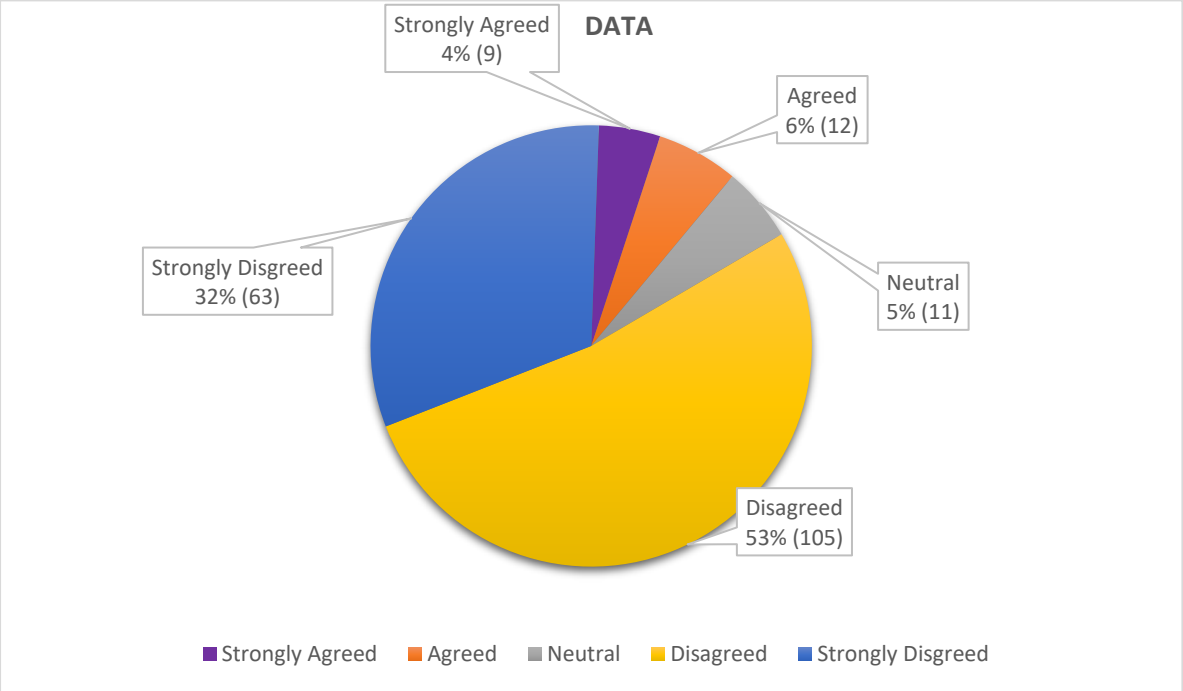


The literature review demonstrated that transparency is one of the imperative factors of accountability. Hundred (50%) of respondents agreed with the statement, with only 17 (9%) respondents, with only 17 (9%) respondents who disagreed that transparent. There were 67 (33%) respondents who strongly agreed with the statement, whilst 5 (3%) strongly disagreed with the top. The conclusion is that transparency is an imperative factor in ensuring accountability. As depicted on the pie chart above, 11 (5%) respondents were neutral in this regard.

The literature in Chapter Two, paragraph 2.6.1, supports the assertion of the respondents that transparency is an imperative element in ensuring accountability. Transparency involves the provision of accessible information to the public, enabling them to scrutinize government activities and financial transactions (Amalia, 2023:161). Transparency denotes that the municipality should be open to decision-making and the spending of financial resources. Accountability cannot flourish without transparency is non-existence. When local community members and those responsible for oversight functions have access to information, accountability becomes easier to implement. In light of the above, municipalities must promote transparency to facilitate effective accountability.

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Figure 6.3: Municipality effectiveness in holding municipal officials accountable



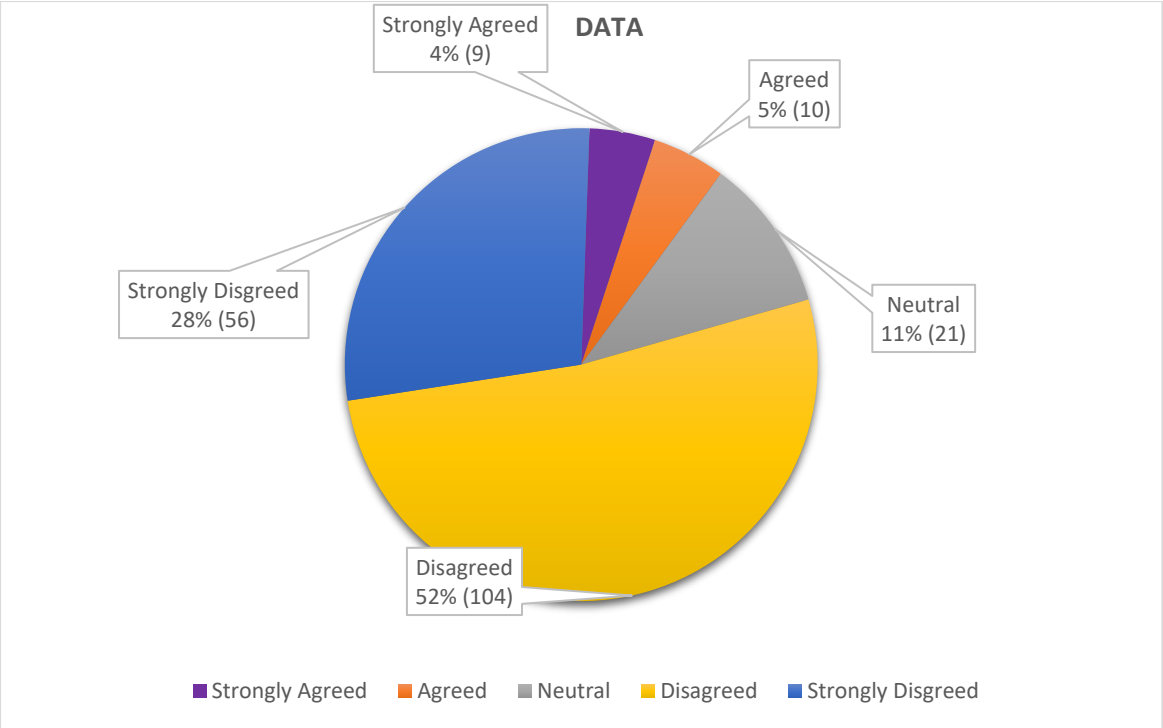
The respondents disagreed with the notion that the municipality is effective in holding municipal officials accountable 53% (105), and 32% (63) respondents are of the strong view that the Municipality has failed to hold municipal officials accountable. The 6% (12) of the respondents agreed with the above statement in that they have confidence that the Municipality has been effective in this regard. Chapter two of the study, in paragraph 2.7.4, demonstrated that accountability reduces the levels of corruption. Given the increasing levels of registered corruption cases as demonstrated in paragraph 1.3 of chapter one, one is to agree with the majority that the municipality has failed in holding municipal officials accountable. The inability to hold municipal officials accountable has resulted in the continuation of disregarding the legislative framework. The neutral respondents were at 5% (11).

The Auditor-General South Africa, in chapter two, paragraph 2.8.2, indicated that lack of accountability is a contributing factor in the maladministration of municipalities, hence the ineffectiveservice delivery. This implies that if the municipality is to succeed, there is a greater need to place recognizable efforts to ensure accountability. As pointed out in paragraph 3.2 of chapter three there are a couple of factors that have made holding municipal officials accountable difficult, political appointment and political instability being the most prevalent. The public fights between the various political parties have rendered certain administrative processes ineffective, hence

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making it difficult to hold those politicians accountable. The political instability has created a system wherein politicians within developmental local government are a law to themselves.

Figure 6.4: Effectiveness of accountability mechanisms

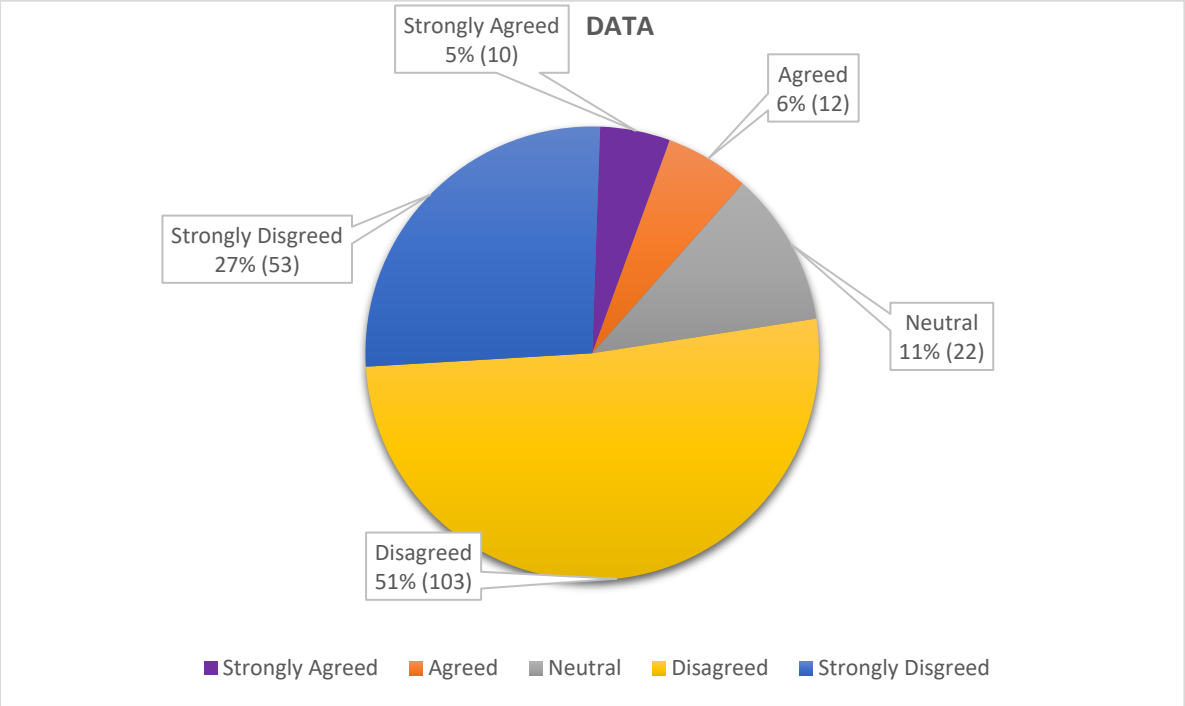


The effectiveness of accountability is reliant on the mechanisms available to facilitate it. It was crucial to then ascertain the effectiveness of those mechanisms and 104 (52%) disagreed with the notion that accountability mechanisms are effective. There were 56 (28%) respondents who strongly disagreed and believed that the current mechanisms for accountability are not effective. The neutral respondents were represented at 11% (21). Of the 200 respondents, 4% (9) strongly agreed that the mechanisms are effective. Based on the majority of the respondents, mechanisms that are meant to facilitate accountability are not effective. This statement is also supported by paragraph 1.3 in chapter one of the study, wherein it was stated that AGSA has seen a decline in the levels of accountability, which is attributed to the ineffectiveness of those mechanisms. AGSA has made recommendations in terms of how to improve accountability, yet the situation continues to deteriorate. This also brings the question of to what extent the AGSA impacts ensuring that those recommendations are implemented and if there are any aftermath for failure to implement.

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For example, the municipal council is an oversight body with members who are incapable of perusing and analyzing financial reports to promote accountability. The municipality again has weak internal mechanisms that are unable to prevent or detect any wrongdoings by both political office bearers and municipal officials to influence accountability. The question, however, remains as to whether those mechanisms are weak, or if the weakness is in the implementation.

Figure 6.5: Performance of municipal officials regarding accountability



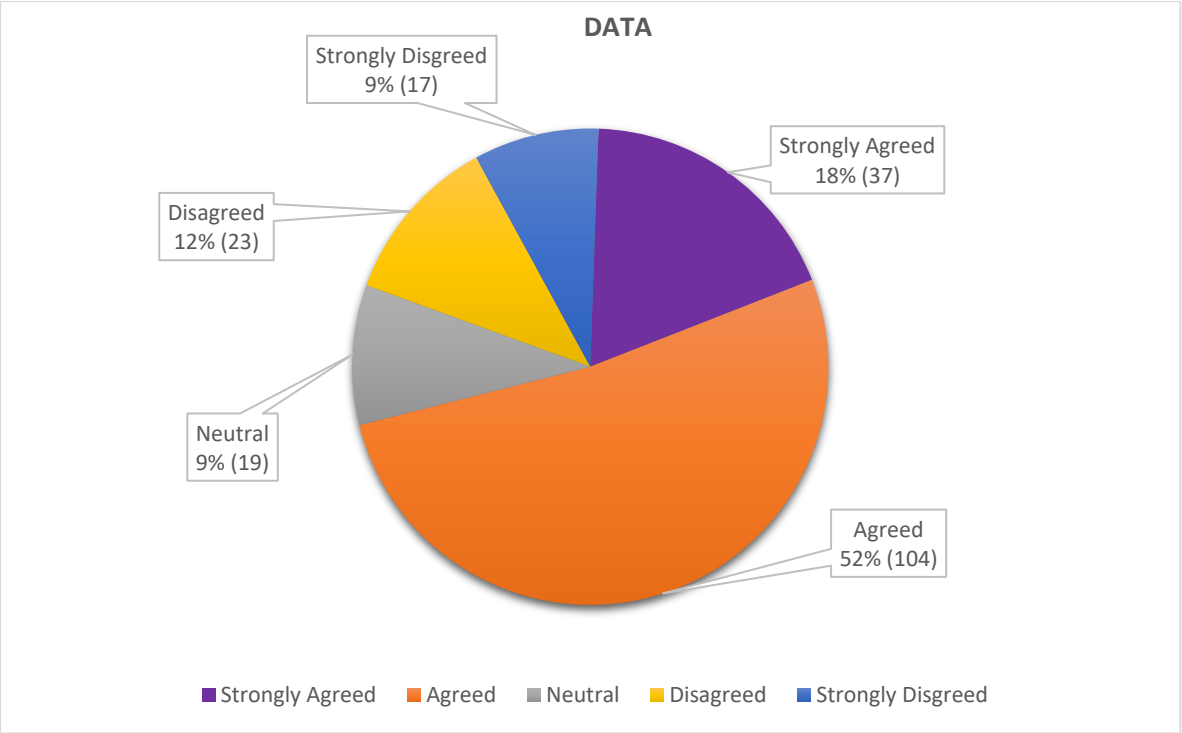
Municipal officials have the mandate of ensuring that the basic needs of the people are met through performing their duties to the best of their abilities. It is alarming that 103 (51%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that municipal officials are performing their duties effectively. It is, however, not surprising that respondents are of this view given the condition in which the services are rendered. Only 6% (12) of the respondents agreed that municipal officials are performing their duties to the best of their ability. There were 22 (11%) respondents who were found to be neutral. The theory selected for this study suggests that public officials should act in the best way to accomplish the goals and objectives of the principal; the above statistics suggest otherwise. The statistics above demonstrate that the agent is not acting in the best interest of the principal. Given that the agent, who in this case is the municipal officials,

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is not acting according to the objectives set out by the principal, who in this case is the Municipality, then the principal needs to take decisive actions against the agent.

Municipal officials are presented with performance agreements as a way of ensuring that they deliver on their mandate. The pie chart above demonstrates that the performance agreement may just be a paper signed with no intention of ensuring better and more effective performance. The main aim of facilitating training in an organization is to improve the mental capacity of employees in order to develop them to undertake specific tasks (Enwereji & Uwizeyimana, 2019:153). Employee training and development in an organisation cannot be overstated because organisational effectiveness depends on individuals' competence, skills, and capabilities to carry out their jobs diligently (Zweni *et al*., 2023:118). In light of the above, it is therefore crucial for the Municipality to make sure that training is provided to officials to ensure improved performance.

Figure 6.6: Execution of duties by municipal officials



The previous question demonstrated that municipal officials are viewed to be ineffective in the execution of their duties. It was important to ascertain if respondents viewed qualification as bearing any effect in the execution of duties by municipal officials. There were 104 respondents, 52%, who agreed that qualified municipal

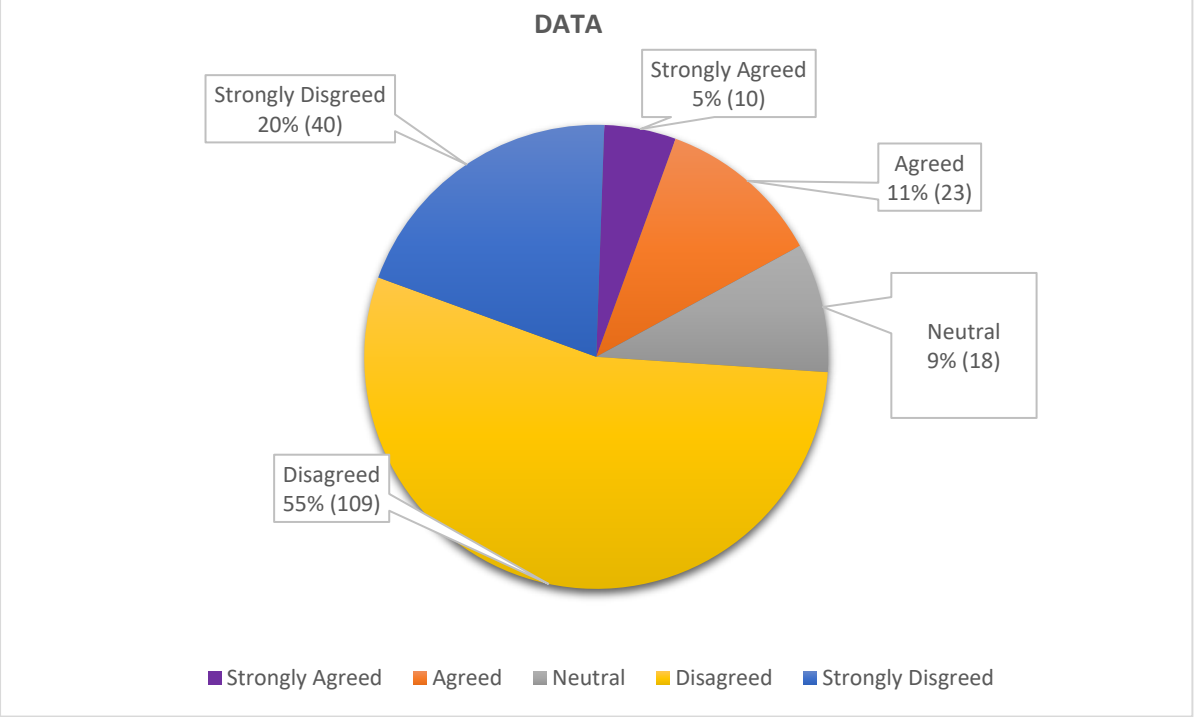
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officials are most likely to excel in the execution of their duties, whilst 17 respondents, 9%, disagreed with the statement above and were supported by 17 (9%) respondents who strongly disagreed with the aforementioned. The table above demonstrates that qualification plays a significant role in increasing the ability of municipal officials to perform effectively in their duties. Gumede (2021:19) also suggest also suggests that the improvement of local government performance will require a merit-based appointment in both political and administrative roles that balance gender, race, and class will be essential.

Chapter two of the study, in paragraph 2.16, revealed that failure of oversight functions is also attributed to lack and inadequate qualifications by the municipal council. This has led to the ineffectiveness of the structure. It was also demonstrated in chapter three, paragraph 3.2.3, that political officials occupy executive positions with no qualifications but on the basis of cadre deployment, hence the continued bad condition of the municipality. The above is supported by Mamokhere (2023:15), who cites that hiring less qualified personnel hinders the smooth operation of municipal services. Unqualified municipal officials have had an adverse impact on service delivery since people in key positions are only politically influential with no qualifications, backgrounds, or intellectual achievements (Thusi & Selepe, 2023:692). The inability of municipal officials to perform their duties goes against the Principal Agent Theory as they are not doing what the principal (government/community members) have appointed them to do. Govender *et al,.* (2023:168) argue that municipal officials with knowledge and tertiary qualifications are most likely to excel in their work.

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Figure 6.7: Engagement between municipal officials and local communities

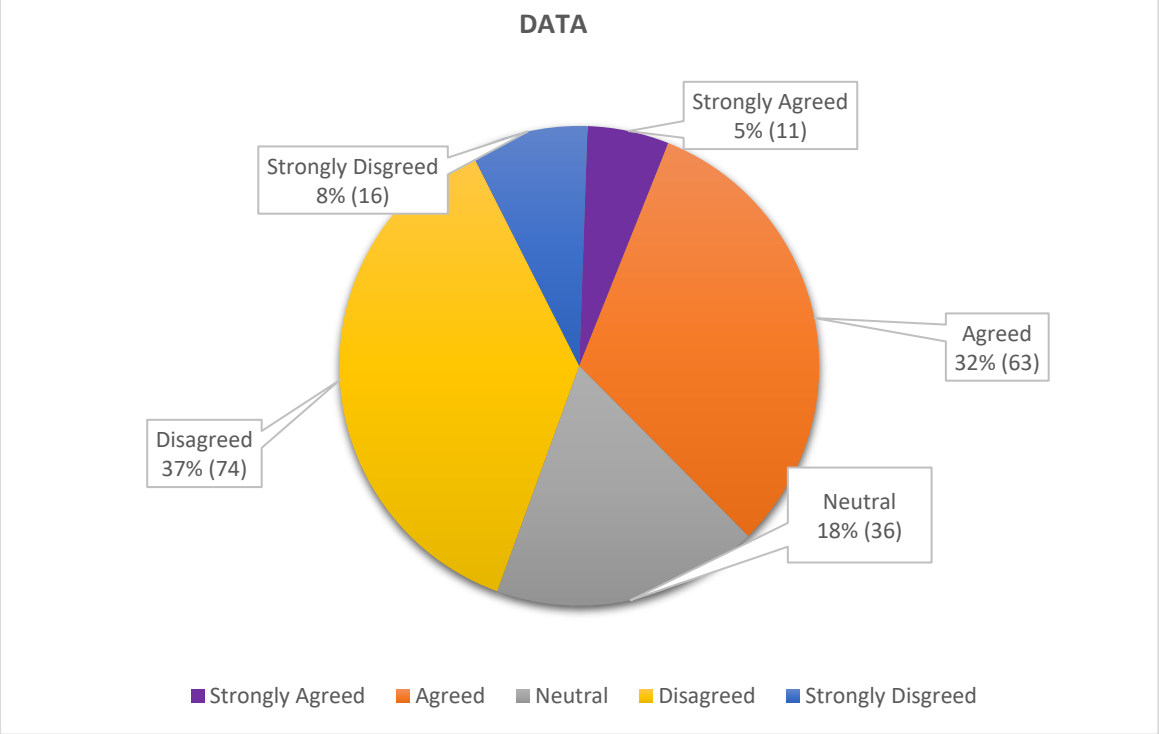


The only way that the municipality may be able to meet the needs of the community is through constant engagement with community members to ascertain their needs. This engagement will ensure that the services being rendered are tailor-made for those needs. It is of concern that respondents at 55% (109) disagreed with the above statement, whilst 20% (40) respondents strongly disagreed. The respondents who agree that there is engagement between the municipality and community members were at 11% (23).

There were 18 respondents, at 9%, who were neutral. The information provided above suggests that the municipality is not engaging with community members in the affairs of the municipality. This will have an adverse impact on the provision of service delivery. Community engagement is a constitutional mandate and plays a vital role in ensuring that the needs of community members are met. The inability of the municipality to engage community members in relation to affairs of the municipality will result in a close-up institution that does not embrace the principles of “Batho Pele”. The inability to involve community members in municipal affairs also goes against the developmental local government and does not enhance democracy.

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Figure 6.8: Oversight bodies and enforcing accountability



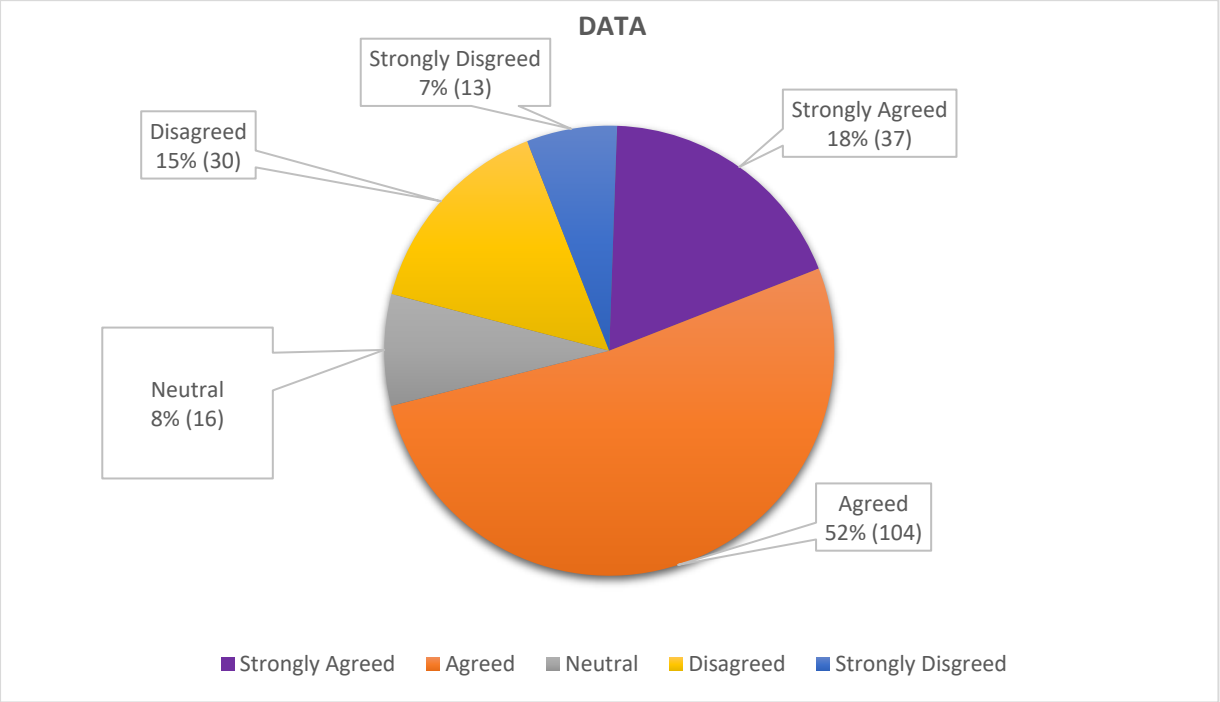
Oversight bodies, including the Public Protector, as demonstrated in the literature review in paragraph 2.8.1 of chapter two, are mandated to ensure the effectiveness of accountability. These oversight bodies are mandated to make sure that municipal officials' activities are accounted for. The pie chart above illustrates that 74 (37%) of respondents disagreed with the statement above, with 16 (8%) respondents strongly disagreeing. Respondents who agreed that oversight bodies are enforcing accountability were at 32% (63), whilst those who strongly agreed were at 5% (11). Respondents who were found to be neutral were at 18% (36). It can, therefore, be concluded that the functions of the oversight bodies required to be revised to promote effectiveness.

There are a couple of inhibiting factors for the effective functioning of oversight bodies. Political interference is one of those inhibiting factors which makes it difficult for those members to ensure effective functioning. This is due to the protection of interest of members affiliated with a certain political party. Chapter two, paragraph 2.9 of the study highlighted the various oversight bodies responsible for ensuring accountability. It was found that most of those oversight bodies are not effective, and the causes of such ineffective were highlighted, such as inadequate skills to scrutinize financial

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reports. It is therefore not surprising that majority of the participants are of the view that oversight bodies are failing in ensuring accountability.

Figure 6.9: Effective accountability and corruption



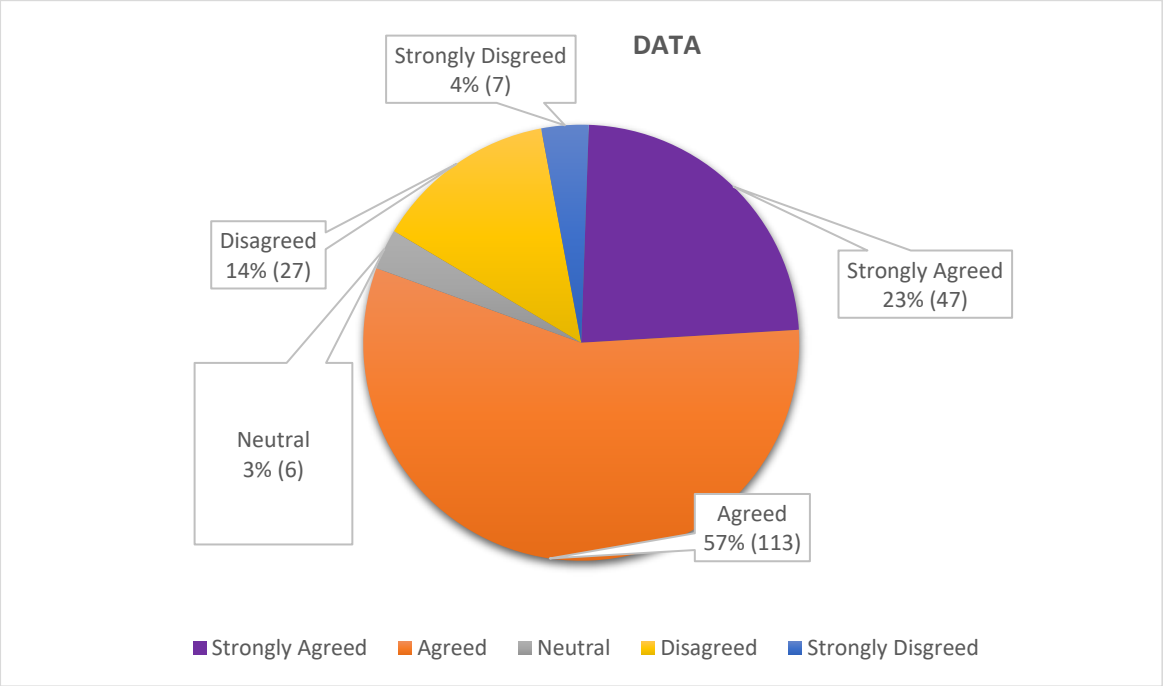
There have been many cases of corruption reported in the past years, and COJ is no exception, as illustrated in chapter one, paragraph 1.9 of the study under the motivation and background for the study. Chapter 2, paragraph 3.2.9 of the study also revealed that where there is no accountability corruption flourishes. Out of the 200 respondents, 104 52% agreed with the statement above with 18% (37) respondents strongly agreed with the statement. There were 30 (15%) respondents who disagreed with the statement whilst 13 (7%) respondents strongly disagreed that effective accountability reduces the possibility of corruption. It is safe to state that it will take years to eradicate corruption. However, accountability has the potential to reduce the possibility of corruption. It is to be noted that the PAT requires the agent to perform according to set rules and standards of the organisation Thus, the above behaviour is against the theory.

Many authors throughout the study have indicated that corruption is the main factor, which is crippling municipalities. Chapter 3, paragraph 3.2.12 of the study highlighted that the procurement system in local government is a platform for breeding corruption through the issuing of tenders. The South African government has placed efforts into

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creating institutions that will investigate cases of corruption such as the Special Investigation Unit. However, such institutions do not prevent corruption cases but investigate, meaning that its effectiveness is after the fact. This should, however, not take away from the stride that this institution has made and continues to make.

Figure 6.10: Reconfiguration of accountability within developmental local government



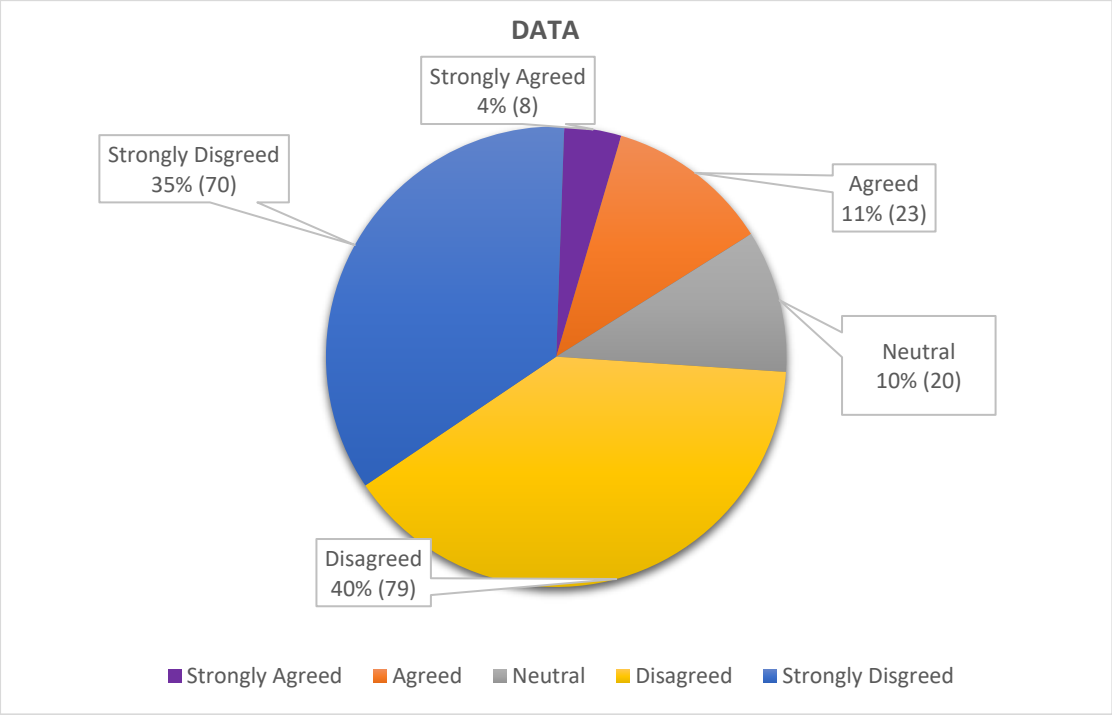
The respondents agreed that there is a need for the reconfiguration of accountability within developmental local government at 57%(113) and 23% (47) strongly agreed with the need to reconfigure accountability. Only 4% (7) strongly disagreed and believed that there is no need in this regard and were also supported by 14% (27) of the respondents who disagreed with the statement above. The pie chart illustrated that there is a need to reconfigure accountability based on the combined number of those who agreed with the statement. The need may be a result of dissatisfaction with service delivery as well as a high level of corruption within developmental local government.

The previous three questions highlighted that accountability is not effective. Hence, it is not alarming that the majority are of the belief that there is a need to reconfigure accountability. The reconfiguration of accountability will be done to promote its effectiveness. The lack of accountability within local government has also contributed to the increasing number of protests. The reconfiguration will, therefore, ensure that

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both internal as well as external mechanisms of accountability are revised and restructured.

Figure 6.11: Decision-making in the municipality



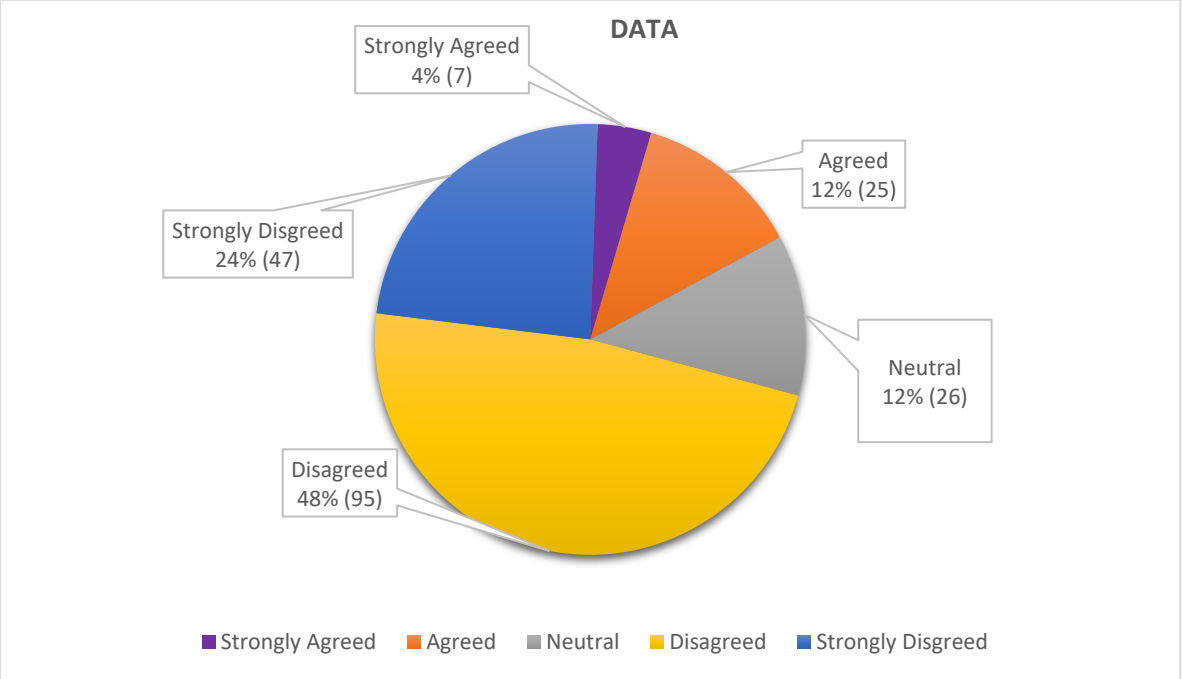
Of the respondents, 40% (79) disagreed with the notion that they are involved in the decision-making of the municipality supported by 70 respondents 35% who strongly disagreed with the statement above. Engaging community members in decision-making is imperative as those decisions will affect their livelihood. There were only 23 respondents at 11% who agreed with the statement above whilst 20 (10%) respondents were found to be neutral.

It will be difficult and challenging for the municipality to identify and address the challenges of community members in the absence of their involvement as they are the receipts of the decisions taken. Mamokhere (2023:9) alludes that the absence of community participation in municipalities can have a detrimental impact on municipal service delivery. This will be because the municipality will not be in a place to fully understand the needs as well as challenges of community members. Additionally, community members should be involved in the affairs of the municipality through mechanisms that are available to facilitate such. Social media is also one of the

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mechanisms that community members can utilize to ensure that their voice is heard in terms of all activities geared toward development.

Figure 6.12: Achieving basic needs by the municipality

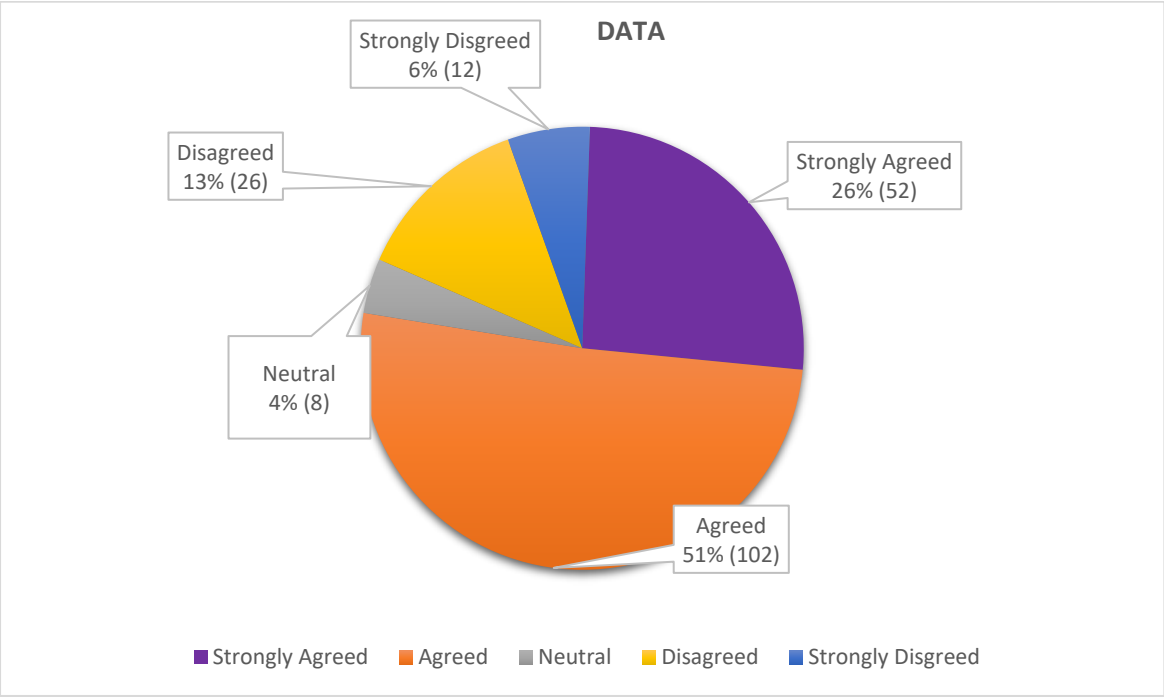


Municipalities should provide services to community members. The study revealed that only 4% (7) respondents strongly agreed that their needs are met through the services provided by the municipality, with 12% (25) who agreed with the top. It is alarming that 95 (48%) respondents disagreed with the statement while supported by 47 (24%) respondents who strongly disagreed. This is of concern because it demonstrates that the municipality is failing to execute one of its core mandates.

Prior to 1994, the apartheid government of South Africa oversaw local government administration, this regime was distinguished by an authoritarian political culture founded on white supremacy (Ndasana & Umejesi, 2023:1). After 1994, there was a need to develop a structure that will assist in rectifying the past imbalances, hence the introduction of local government. Their mandate was to ensure the development of community members through the provision of essential services; it is alarming to see that the majority of the respondents believe that local government is unable to deliver on its mandate of delivering services. In light of the previous question, it is evident why the municipality is failing to meet the basic needs of community members. The municipality is found to be failing more, especially in the provision of clean water, as covered in the various news channels.

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Figure 6.13: Corruption attributed to lack of accountability



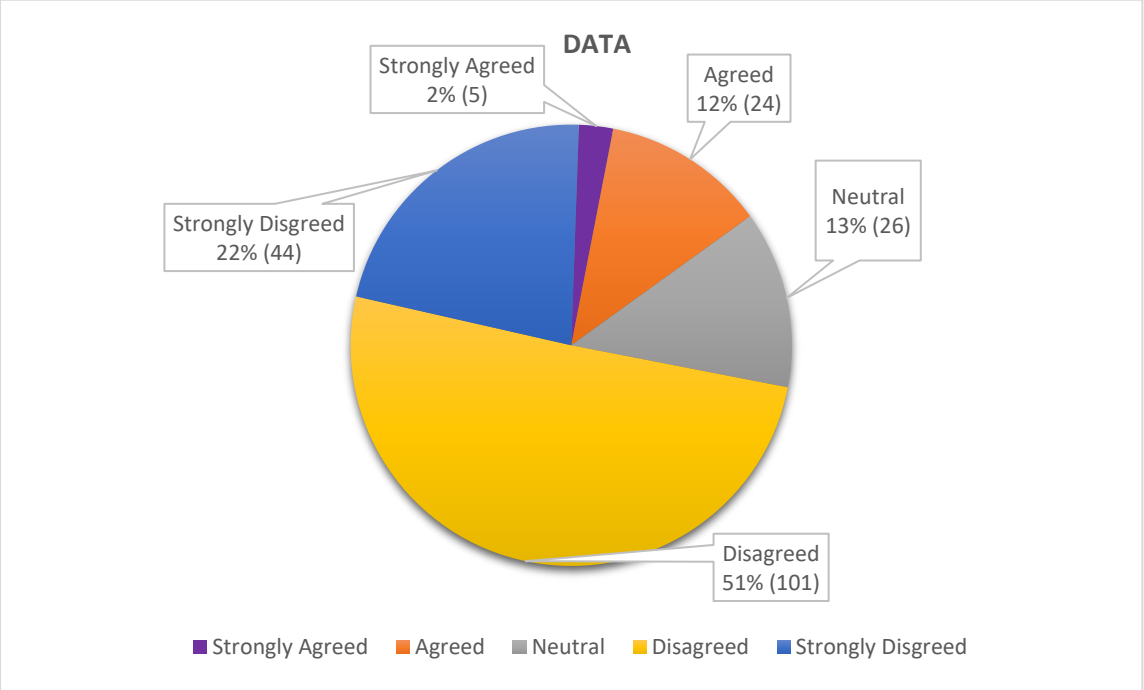
Chapter three, paragraph 3.2.9 of the study revealed that one of the contributing factors of corruption is a result of lack of accountability; it was deemed necessary to therefore establish if the respondents are of the same view. There were 52 (26%) respondents who strongly agreed while 51% (102) respondents concur with the statement above. Even though there had been high levels of corruption cases (as outlined in chapter one, paragraph 1.3, 12 (6%) respondents strongly disagreed that high levels of corruption are attributed to lack of accountability, and 26 (13%) disagreed with the statement. Only 8 (4%) respondents were found to be neutral. The statistics suggest that a high level of corruption is a result of a lack of accountability. The selected theory has demonstrated how the actions of the agent impact the objectives of the principals.

Local government is characterized by corruption, non-responsiveness, and to some extent, unprofessionalism (Mathonsi *et al.,* 2022:329). This was portrayed during the world pandemic; it was demonstrated that municipal officials will stop at nothing to promote their own interests. There were people who were dying, yet some municipal officials found the opportunity to loot funds at the expense of the health of community members. The fact that there was no consequence management instituted makes the

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situation worse. It is, therefore, not surprising that 102 out of 200 respondents believe that lack of accountability is a contributing factor to high levels of corruption.

Figure 6.14: Regular feedback on affairs of the municipality

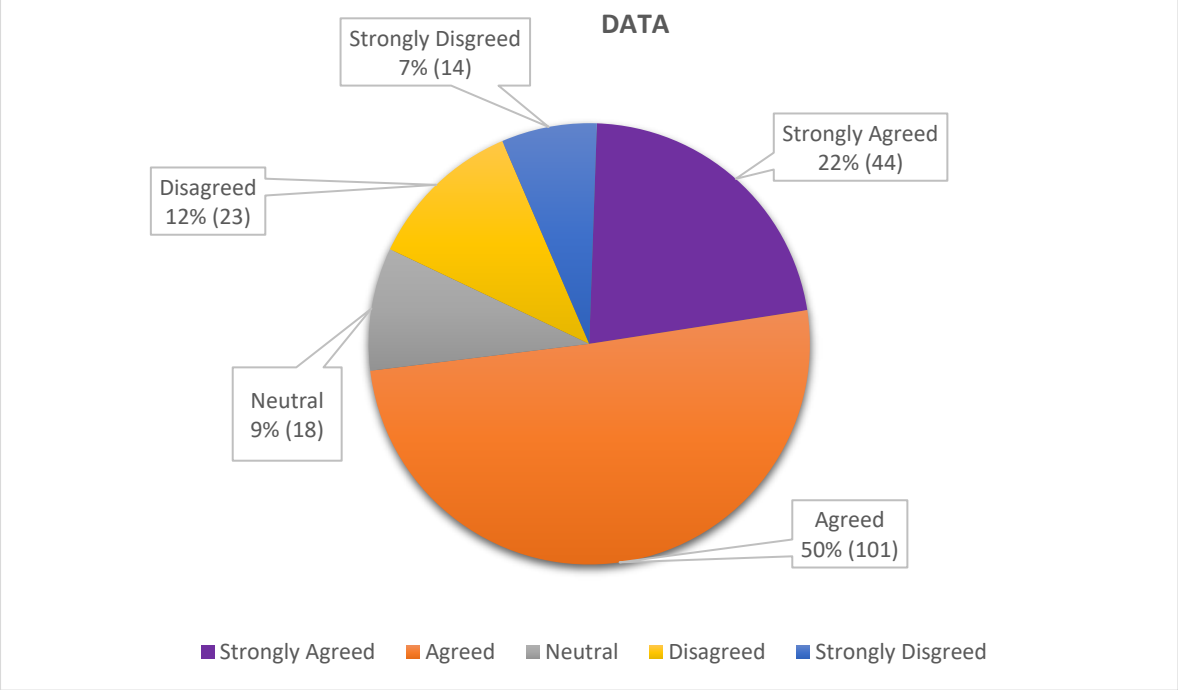


The majority of the respondents 51% (101) disagreed and were supported by 22% (44) of the respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement above. With regard to the provision of feedback by the municipality, 24 (12%) respondents agreed that feedback is provided, while 2% (5) strongly agreed. The results have suggested that the municipality still needs to improve in terms of reaching the majority of community members in providing information.

Information plays a vital role in the successful running of municipalities. The importance was also recognised by the government, hence the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act 2 of 2000) (PAIA) which provides mechanisms for individuals to request and obtain information from public and private bodies (Mamokhere, 2023:12). The fact that municipality is not providing information to community members is of high concern as it does not promote the above act. Information should be easily accessible by community members as this will allow them to understand and comprehend the functions and roles of the various political office bearers and administrators, thus promoting accountability. The exclusion of citizens in decision-making triggers poor provision of basic services (Shava, 2023:197).

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Figure 6.15: Effect of political instability on municipal service delivery



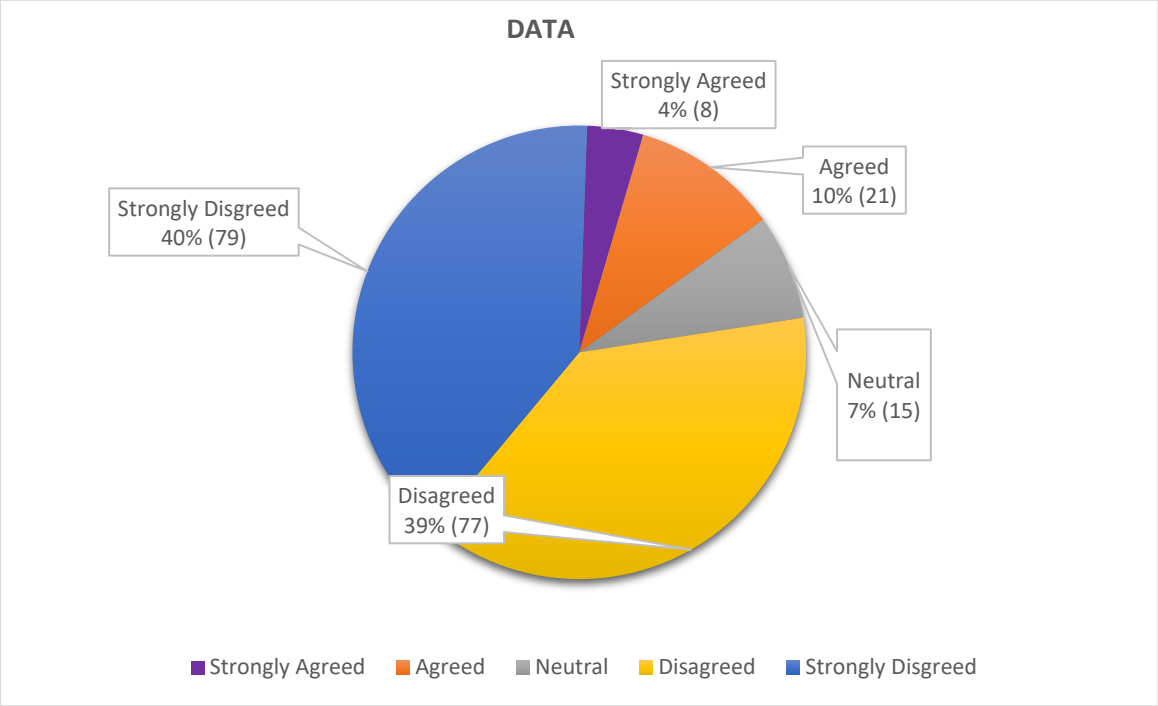
The disputes of the coalition parties within COJ have resulted in political instability like the contestant change of mayors. There were 101 (50%) respondents who agreed, supported by 44 (22%) who strongly agreed with the statement above. The neutral respondents was at 9% (18). There were 7% (14) respondents who strongly disagreed, and 12% (23) disagreed with the top statement. Based on the information detailed above, it is concluded that the consistent change in the mayor with COJ has an adverse impact in the delivery of service. Change may be viewed as a good thing. However, constant change can have a negative impact on the performance of the municipality. Moreover, the change is often done in a negative and forceful manner. The dispute between the political parties has been the most reason for the change of COJ mayor and not necessarily based on the performance of the municipality. Chapter three of the study, paragraph 3.2.4, indicated that political instability has a negative impact on ensuring accountability as the interest of political parties becomes the centre of attention at the expense of those of community members. The removal or change of mayor in most instances, is done through the vote of no-confidence.

Rubabshi-Shitrit and Hasson (2021:1) define a vote of no-confidence as the process that affords the opportunity to terminate a contract based on dissatisfaction with the government's actions or policies. It is to be noted that the vote of no confidence in certain instances is not necessarily motivated by dissatisfaction with performance but

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by political differences between the various political parties, especially in coalition partnerships. Nzama (2019:1521) is of the view that the mayor of a municipality is responsible for perusing and analysing the financial report of the municipality to ensure compliance with MFMA. The constant change made it rather challenging for the mayor to analyse financial reports and provide findings and recommendations in this regard.

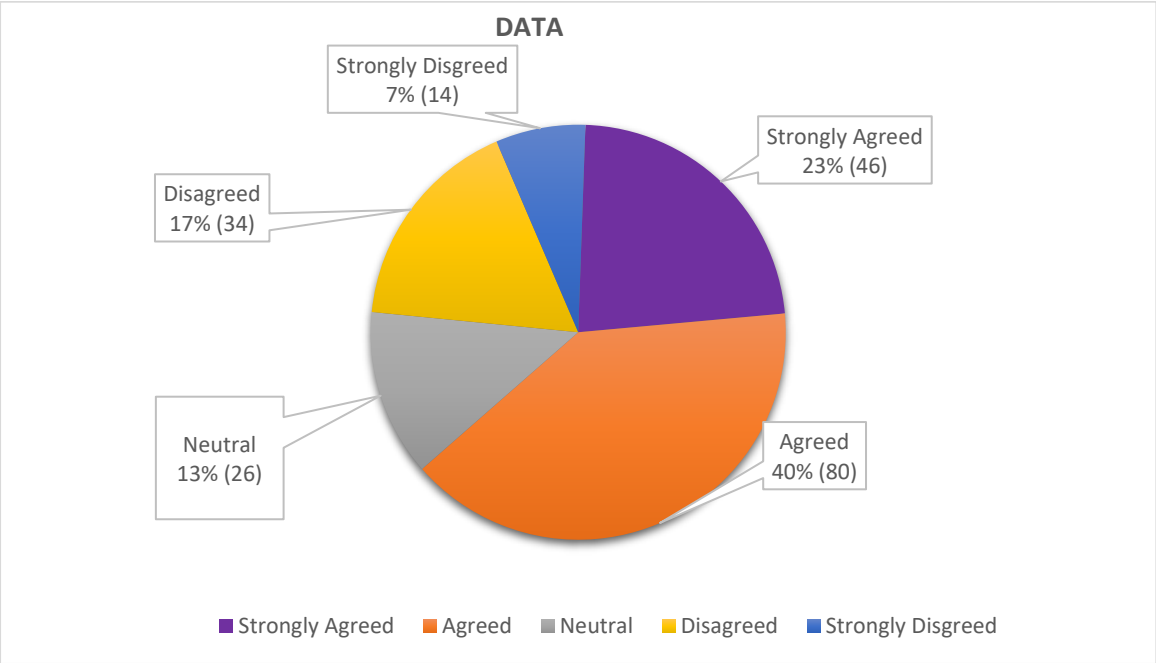
Figure 6.16: The use of public funds by municipal officials



The effectiveness of service delivery depends on the utilization of public funds. There were 79 (40%) respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement, while 4%(8) strongly agreed with the statement. There have been cases wherein municipal officials were found to have utilised public funds for their own gains, which impacted service delivery negatively. Respondents 39% (77) disagreed that public funds are utilised effectively while 10% (21) agreed with the statement. Effective management of financial resources is of paramount importance in providing services to community members. Chapter one of the study paragraph 1.3 confirmed that during the COVID-19 world pandemic municipal funds were looted for personal gain by those in power. It is, therefore, not surprising a large number of the respondents are of the view that municipal funds are not utilised effectively. There are various legislative frameworks developed to ensure the effective management of municipal funds, such as the MFMA, yet those funds are being looted and wasted.

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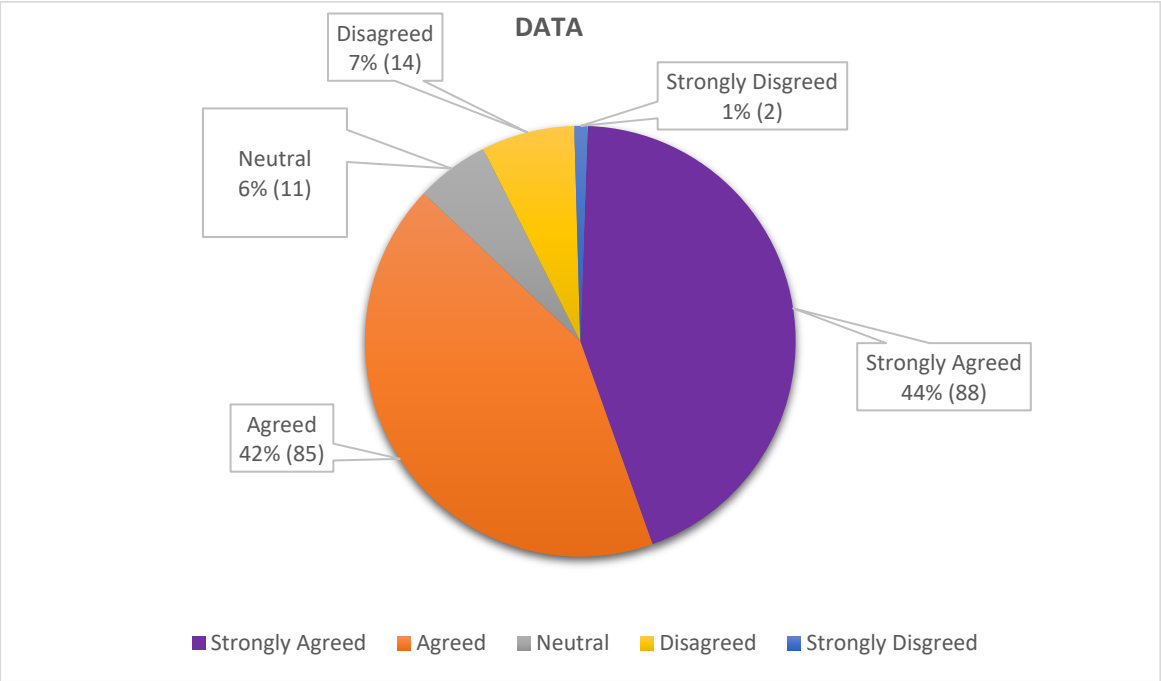
Figure 6.17: Code of conduct on ensuring accountability



A large number of the respondents at 40% (80) agreed that code of conduct has a bearing in ensuring accountability, on the other hand, 17% (34) disagreed with the statement. The code of conduct is meant to provide guidelines on how municipal officials should conduct themselves; 23% (46) respondents strongly disagreed and believed that the code of conduct plays no role in ensuring accountability; in contrast, 7% (34) respondents strongly disagreed. The code of conduct is said to have been developed as a means to shape the conduct of municipal officials, yet the behaviours of such officials are undesirable; Srirejekia (2023:12) cite that the number of unethical behaviours suggests that the code of conduct is not as effective as intended. The development of a code of conduct is in line with the selected theory, which is part of the principle set out desired behaviour from the agent. It is thus the responsibility of the agent to ensure that they conduct themselves as per the code of conduct. However, the question remains as to whether the code of conduct has produced the desired professional behaviour.

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Figure 6.18: Instruments for accountability



The statistics collected and analysed in question 6.4 revealed that the mechanisms currently available for accountability are not effective. The majority of the respondents 44% (88) strongly agreed whilst 1% (2) strongly disagreed with the statement above. There were 42% (85) respondents who agreed while those in contrast with the statement above were at 7% (14). It can, therefore, be concluded that there is a need for a new instrument of accountability based on the response of the majority. This then gives support to the aim of the study, which is to investigate the feasibility of reconfiguring accountability in developmental local government. Shave and Mazenda (2021:215) are of the view that accountability is one of the backbones of any successful government organisation.in this light, accountability should be promoted to realise what the author has stated. This further implies that the lack of accountability will render the municipality ineffective, which is very much evident in local governments across the country.

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6.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

The table below depicts the demographic profile of the participants interviewed.

Participant	Gender	Age	Position	Level of qualification
A	M	18-30	Lower	Diploma
B	F	41-50	Middle	Postgraduate
C	F	18-30	Lower	Grade 12
D	M	31-40	Lower	Undergraduate
E	M	51+	Top	Undergraduate
F	M	41-50	Middle	Diploma
G	F	18-30	Midlle	Diploma
H	M	31-40	Lower	Grade 12

The interviews were conducted with eight officials within COJ. The members interviewed were from various environments, as indicated in Chapter 5 of the study under paragraph 5.7.2. The interviewed members have a role to play in ensuring that accountability is in existence within the Municipality. The male participants interviewed were 5 and the female participants were 3. The age groups as demonstrated above ranged from 18 up to 50+, 3 of the participants were under the category of 18-30, 1 participant was above 51, 2 participants were between 31-40 and 2 were between 41-50. Most of the participants were within the lower level of management, this was represented by 4 participants. There were 3 participants from the middle level of management. Only 1 participant was from the top management. This was due to the unavailability of most of the members within the top management sphere. There was only 1 participant with a grade 12 certificate, the undergraduate was represented by 3 participants as well as a diploma. There was only 1 participant with a postgraduate certificate. It is to be noted that some of the intended participants were not interviewed as it was a challenge to set an appointment. Some of the interviews were done telephonically whilst some were done face to face.

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6.3.1 Question 1: What do you understand about accountability?

The questions seek to determine the level of understanding of the concept of accountability from participants who are employees of the Municipality.

Participant A

The participant is of the view that accountability is a legal element linked with ensuring that activities and functions are executed within the legal prescripts.

Participant B

The participant stated that accountability is a form of ensuring that municipal officials conduct themselves within the legal framework of the municipality and that they provide reasons or decisions.

Participant C

The participant views accountability as relating to municipal officials providing detailed explanations of activities within the municipality, especially those that involve the finances of the municipality, thus impacting service delivery.

Participant D

According to the participant, accountability has to do with municipal officials being responsible for the management of funds of the municipality to ensure that service delivery is done in such a manner that gives value for money.

Participant E

In answering the above question, the participant states that accountability is taking responsibility for one's actions. The participant further stated that accountability is also a constitutional mandate that must be applied to all municipal officials.

Participant F

According to the participant, accountability is a form of ensuring that activities and functions of municipal officials are monitored and that actions for any wrongdoing are, therefore, detected and addressed.

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Participant G

The participant alludes to accountability as an essential element in ensuring good governance, and it relates to taking responsibility for decisions taken and implemented. This implies that municipal officials should take responsibility for the actions they take, especially those that have a direct impact on the livelihood of community members.

Participant H

In responding to the above question, the participants attached accountability to taking the blame for activities of the municipality that are not done according to regulations.

Based on the above responses by the participants, accountability is linked to responsibility and municipal officials providing explanations for all activities, especially those that involve municipal funds. Accountability is one of the elements that is a constitutional mandate. Municipal officials are mandated to perform their duties in an accountable manner, meaning that they must consult community members in the decisions that they make.

6.3.2 Question 2: What are the important factors perceived to positively as well as negatively affect accountability?

The second question intends to probe what factors may contribute positively to ensuring effective accountability. Additionally, the negative factors should also be revealed to determine what to avoid to ensure effective accountability.

Participant A

The participant stated that factors that have a positive effect on accountability are integrity as well as honesty. The participant further stated that when municipal officials have more interest in self-enrichment, it tends to negatively impact accountability. This is because those municipal officials tend to operate in an illegal manner.

Participant B

The participant states that cadre deployment, even though it is a policy that is meant to do good, has made it challenging to and hold officials accountable for their actions. Additionally, those officials tend to be more loyal to their political party, neglecting the needs of community members, thus impacting service delivery negatively. The

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participant stated that the openness of municipal affairs is crucial in ensuring accountability.

Participant C

The participant indicated that continuous monitoring of performance is imperative and has a positive impact on accountability. The participants indicated that political appointments have an element of making accountability difficult as those individuals tend to represent the interest of their political party over the general well-being of community members.

Participant D

The participant is of the view that the performance system plays a huge role in ensuring accountability as it measures the performance of officials to ascertain their effectiveness against set targets or standards. The negative factor that influences accountability, as stated by the participant, is political interference in the administrative affairs of the municipality.

Participant E

The participant stated that community participation is an important factor for accountability. The participant believes that the lack of effective consequence management negatively impacts accountability.

Participant F

Participants stated that good governance is regarded as a positive influencer of accountability and further stated that transparency also has a positive impact on accountability. The participant further stated that accountability cannot exist without transparency, thus the absence of this will negatively impact accountability.

Participant G

The participant responded by indicating that patriotic officials have a positive role that they play in ensuring accountability as their loyalty lies with the betterment of the municipality, and the opposite of this will have an adverse effect on accountability.

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Participant H

The participant listed the following as positive factors for accountability, transparency, ethics as well as integrity. The negative factors, as explained by the participants, are lack of consequence management, cadre deployment, and political interference.

It can be summarized, as indicated by participants A and H, that integrity is considered an important element in ensuring accountability. Chapter three, paragraph 3.2.6, supports the notion that political inference has a negative impact on accountability, as also stated by participants D and H.

6.3.3 Question 3: What mechanisms are used to enact accountability?

It was crucial to ascertain the knowledge of participants in the availability of mechanisms for ensuring accountability. The above questions sought to do that.

Participant A

The participant stated that there are a number of mechanisms available to ensure accountability such as municipal council and ward committees. The participant further stated that the effectiveness of the ward committees still needs to be determined.

Participant B

The participant is of the understanding that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, and the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (as amended by Act 3 of 2022) ensure that accountability exists. Additionally, there are other mechanisms, such as the Auditor-General of South Africa, which is mandated to ensure that municipal officials are accountable.

Participant C

The participant stated that a performance agreement is one form to ensure accountability as municipal officials are expected to sign as a means of commitment, and the bridge of this should, therefore, result in consequence management. The internal audit office is also one of the mechanisms utilised by the municipality to ensure accountability.

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Participant D

The participant stated that the internal mechanisms within the municipality responsible for accountability are internal audit committees, integrity committees, 79 and 80 committees, and that the external mechanisms include, amongst others, AGSA as well as the Public Protector.

Participant E

In responding to the above question, the participant alluded to internal and external mechanisms for ensuring accountability. Those internal mechanisms, according to the participant, include, amongst others, internal audit, municipal council, the municipal manager, and the external mechanisms include the Auditor-General of South Africa as well as the public protector.

Participant F

The participant is of the understanding that ward committees are one of the mechanisms for ensuring accountability. The participant further stated that there are structures that are responsible for ensuring accountability, such as the municipal council and its committees, which ensure that the performance is tracked and monitored to improve service delivery.

Participant G

The participant alluded that there are officials within the municipality who are vested with the responsibility of ensuring accountability, such as the municipal manager, the Chief Financial Officer, as well as the office of internal audit.

Participant H

The participant's understanding is that the office of the Auditor-General as well as the Public Protector are there to investigate the municipal activities and thus enforce accountability. It is noted that there are a number of internal as well as external mechanisms for accountability. However, the question remains as to why is it that there is still a lack of accountability. One can conclude that these mechanisms are not effective and require to be reconfigured to ensure effectiveness.

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6.3.3 Question 4: Would you say those mechanisms are effective?

The fourth question was a linkage and continuation of question three as a means to determine if several identified mechanisms listed above are effective.

Participant A

The participant indicated that some of those mechanisms are effective. However, it is imperative to review some of them to ensure that they continue being effective.

Participant B

In response to the above question, the participant is of the view that some of the mechanisms are effective and that some have failed in ensuring accountability. The performance management system has produced little to ensure performance accountability.

Participant C

The participant is of the view that the mechanisms for accountability within local government are not effective and that this is demonstrated by the number of illegal activities that have been recorded in the past years.

Participant D

The participant indicated that given the reports that have been published by institutions such as the Public Protector as well as Auditor-General South Africa, the accountability is compromised, and this implies that the current mechanisms are not as effective as they were meant to be.

Participant E

The participant is of the view that mechanisms for accountability lack a form of enforcement on the part of municipal officials, and this has been the case as most illegal activities have gone unaccounted. The participant further stated that there is a need to review those mechanisms to ensure that they are effective.

Participant F

The participant stated that mechanisms for accountability are not effective.

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Participant G

The participant is of the view that mechanisms for accountability are effective and that there is no need to review them as they are bearing the desired outcome.

Participant H

The participant believes that the mechanisms for accountability are not as effective as they should be and that they require to be reviewed.

Participants B, C, E, F, and H are of the view that mechanisms for accountability within developmental local government are not effective. The above was also supported by paragraph 2.10 of the study under summative of the effectiveness of mechanisms for accountability.

6.3.4 Question 5: What mechanisms are in place to prevent corruption thus ensuring accountability?

The fifth question was posed to determine if there are any measures to prevent corruption given the high levels of reported cases as demonstrated in the literature review.

Participant A

The participant indicated that there are various mechanisms that are in place to detect corruption, with the Anti-corruption strategy being the most prevalent. The participant further indicated that the South African Auditor General has a constitutional mandate to ensure accountability for all government institutions. Hence, they also play a role in detecting corruption within the municipality.

Participant B

The participant is of the view that the code of conduct plays a vital role in preventing corruption as it shapes the acceptable behaviour of municipal officials.

Participant C

The participant indicated that whistleblowing is also a form of preventing and detecting corruption. However, the protection around whistleblowing needs to increase.

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Participant D

The participant is of the view that the procurement environment within the Municipality is where most corruption is occurring. Thus, various mechanisms within the procurement space are meant to prevent corruption. These mechanisms, amongst others, include the creation of a database, which is utilized to ensure the circulation of suppliers and credibility. The participant further stated that there are policies which are in place to ensure that the tendering process within local government is fair. These policies include, amongst others, the Municipal Financial Management Act and Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000, which regulate the procurement process of all the spheres of government.

Participant E

In responding to the question, the participant believes that the South African government has a more reactive approach to things, and that is the reason they have institutions such as the SIU, which investigates cases that have occurred already. The participant strongly believes that the mechanisms to detect corruption, such as the Anti-corruption strategy, have not produced the desired outcome as they have not prevented corruption.

Participant F

The participant is of the view that delegation of power in terms of procurement powers is one of the mechanisms to prevent corruption, as power is not vested with only one individual.

Participant G

The participant believes that corruption is a persistent problem within the Municipality and the country as a whole and that it will continue to be a problem unless robust discussions and drastic measures are taken to tackle this issue, as current mechanisms are not effective.

Participant H

With regard to the question above, the participant stated that the mechanisms to detect corruption within the Municipality should be to promote transparency and accountability.

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It may be summarised that even with the mechanisms to prevent corruption, the level of corruption, as demonstrated in paragraph 3.2 of the literature review, suggests that the above-mentioned mechanisms to prevent and detect corruption are not effective. There are a number of institutions responsible for preventing as well as detecting corruption, such as HAWKS and Public Protector. Those institutions have shown successes in certain instances; however, more still needs to be done.

6.3.5 Question 6: Does the municipality have a digital platform to ensure accountability? If yes, how effective are they?

The world is adopting technological ways of doing things. It is therefore crucial for developmental local government to adopt the same. This question sought to ascertain if the municipality has digital platforms that may have an influence on ensuring accountability by municipal officials.

Participant A

The participant indicated that there is a digital platform in which community members receive information regarding meetings/ hearings as well as Imbizos at various regions through SMS to the phones of community members.

Participant B

The participant indicated that the municipality is moving into digital platforms with billing, so community members may view the statement in time, thus increasing the responsibility of members.

Participant C

The participant indicated that there is a platform in which contact details of ward councilors are shared so that community members have access to them and hold them directly accountable for issues within their area.

Participant D

The participant stated that the municipality created platforms that allowed community members to communicate through digital means; for instance, community members can now upload their meter reading on the website, which also assists in not only fast-tracking the billing process but also ensuring accurate billing as well as virtual meetings that are conducted with community members.

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Participant E

The participant is of the view that the Municipality is slowly but surely moving into a more technological way of doing things and that these technologies have the potential to save cost and increase service accessibility.

Participant F

In responding to the question, the participant indicated that given the world moving to a more technological space, it is vital that the Municipality does the same. The participant indicated that the Municipality has digital platforms that make it easy for community members to receive services and communicate with municipal officials, such as various WhatsApp groups created.

Participant G

The participant indicated that there are digital platforms that community members may utilize to acquire services offered by the municipality. However, there is no guarantee that that platform influences accountability positively.

Participant H

The participant stated that the Municipality has shown improvement in trying to move into a digital world. The participant added that there is still more that needs to be done to ensure that even those that cannot afford to utilise digital platforms are considered

Chandra (2021:245) states that E-governance entails utilising ICT and embraces, among other principles, transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in the public policy process. From the above information provided it is clear that the municipality is putting efforts towards E-governance, which is commendable.

6.3.6 Question 7: Would you say performance assessment measures have an influence in promoting accountability?

Monitoring and evaluating performance is crucial to determine the effectiveness of municipal service delivery. The above question was posed to participants to understand the role that performance assessment has on accountability.

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Participant A

The participant is of the view that performance assessment assists in ensuring accountability. However, municipal officials are aware that the performance assessment may influence their salaries, so they tend to focus more on those performance indicators so as to receive a satisfying assessment.

Participant B

The participant indicated that the performance assessment does play a role in ensuring accountability but only for performance indicators listed on the performance agreement and nothing outside of that.

Participant C

The participant is of the view that performance assessment does not necessarily influence accountability as it is more influenced by what the individual decides on and that poor performance has no consequences.

Participant D

The participant views performance assessment as a good tool that the municipality may utilise to ensure performance accountability. The non-performance of municipal officials should result in some sort of consequences, as per the participant's view.

Participant E

The participant stated that performance assessment promot es performance accountability within the municipality.

Participant F

The participant indicated that performance assessment has the potential of promoting accountability if it is done in a fair and transparent manner. The challenge with performance assessment is that, in most cases, it is done in a manner that does not reflect the true performance of an individual.

Participant G

The participant stated that performance assessment is essential in ensuring performance accountability as it helps municipal officials take ownership of their executed tasks.

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Participant H

The participant is of the view that performance assessment does have a role in ensuring accountability; however, as it is motivated by momentary reward, the results tend to be average even if the municipal officials are not performing.

According to Ndevu and Muller (2018:10), it is important in performance management to first ensure that employees understand what is expected of them in the workplace. It may be concluded that performance assessment has the potential to positively influence accountability.

6.3.7 Question 8: What has been the biggest influencer in the high levels of corruption and the lack of accountability thereof?

The eighth question sought to understand the linkage between corruption and lack of accountability.

Participant A

The participant is of the view that the biggest influencer of corruption has been the cadre deployment, as it does not require any vetting process to take place. The participant further stated that it is to be noted that in certain instances, this policy has deployed officials who were skilled and capable; however, in most instances, the policy has left less to be desired.

Participant B

The participant indicated that the disregard for prescripts, laws, and regulations governing the process of tendering is a major contributor to the high le vel of corruption within the Municipality, also coupled with political interferences by those in power.

Participant C

The participant indicated that the lack of consequence management has also had an adverse impact on the levels of corruption.

Participant D

The participant states that political involvement has had a negative impact on the running of the municipality and that this has led to confusion between politically elected officials and appointed officials.

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Participant E

In response to the question, the participant indicated that the biggest influencer of corruption is attributed to the tendering process, which can be easily manipulated by those with interest; the participant indicated that there is a need for the tending process to be more transparent so as to promote accountability.

Participant F

The participant is of the view that the cadre deployment has also played a huge role in the increasing level of corruption as politicians are more interested in pushing their agenda over those of the community at large.

Participant G

The participant is of the view that lack of transparency and accountability are behind most illegal activities within the Municipality. Municipal officials are well aware that there is a possibility of getting away with any wrongdoing on their part.

Participant H

The participant indicated that some municipal officials have information regarding activities that may constitute corruption; however, due to the lack of protection of whistle-blowers, such information is never disclosed, hence the increased level of corruption.

The factors listed above align with what the literature review in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.2 demonstrated. It is of great importance for the municipality to ensure that consequence management is implemented for any detected and proven wrongdoing as lack of this sets a precedent. In light of the above, it may be summarised that the lack of consequence management for any wrongdoing has set a precedent in this regard.

6.3.8 Question 9: What role do oversight bodies play and have they been effective in those roles?

Oversight bodies are said to play a crucial role in ensuring accountability, the above question was posed to participants to determine the oversight bodies within the Municipality.

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Participant A

The participant viewed oversight bodies as having a significant role in ensuring that municipal officials are held accountable for their actions by means of reviewing financial statements and other relevant documentation.

Participant B

The participant indicated that the oversight bodies play a role in ensuring that actions and activities are conducted in line with the law. The participant further stated that the recommendations made by oversight bodies should be taken seriously and implemented as the lack of doing so renders them ineffective.

Participant C

The participant stated that the role of the oversight bodies is to detect any wrongdoing by political and municipal officials. The oversight bodies have the responsibility of reporting activities that are not in alignment with the legal framework for further investigations as well as consequence management.

Participant D

The participant is of the view that the role of oversight bodies includes, amongst others, the political, administrative, financial, ethical, and legal role within all activities of the municipality. The oversight bodies, such as the Auditor-General, ensure that activities conducted within the Municipality are above board, and if not, remedial actions are suggested, which must be implemented.

Participant E

The participant stated it is of vital importance to ensure that there is a level of monitoring of the performance of the municipality to ensure the keeping of municipal resources, which includes finances as well, and that oversight bodies thus play that role.

Participant F

The participant is of the view that oversight bodies have different roles that they plan within the municipality. However, the common role is ensuring the effective running of

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the municipality. Some oversight bodies have a responsibility of verifying the financial statement of the municipality as a means to ensure that each money is accounted for.

Participant G

The participant responded by saying that the role is to ensure that there is good governance, transparency as well as accountability. The participant further stated that the effectiveness of the oversight body's role is yet to be determined due to a number of recorded misconduct by municipal officials.

Participant H

The participant alluded that the functions of oversight bodies are to uphold democracy and ensure that municipal officials account for their actions. The oversight functions are conducted by various means, such as conducting interviews with municipal officials, and perusing financial statements as well as other documents of the municipality.

It may be deduced based on the above views that the oversight committee's role is to ensure that the municipal officials are accountable and ensure that services are delivered to the people. It is, however, to be noted that the effectiveness of these oversight bodies is questionable based on the lack of accountability within developmental local government. It is, therefore, imperative to review the role and effectiveness of the oversight bodies in ensuring accountability.

6.3.10 Question 10: What is your role as a municipal official in ensuring accountability?

All municipal officials have a role to play in promoting accountability. The 10th question probed to understand the role that municipal officials play in promoting accountability.

Participant A

The participant is of the view that their role in ensuring accountability is by ensuring that prescripts and policies are been are being followed by municipal officials and reporting any discrepancies thereof.

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Participant B

The participants are of the view that they have little role to play in ensuring accountability as they are not part of the management within the Municipality.

Participant C

In response to the above question, the participant believes that the role they have in promoting accountability is by means of performing within the legal framework of the Municipality.

Participant D

The participant is of the view that they do not necessarily have a role to ensure accountability as they do not form part of those that are responsible for making decisions within the Municipality.

Participant E

The participant indicated that their role in ensuring accountability is performing their functions as outlined in the performance agreement.

Participant F

The participant stated that the role in ensuring accountability is to ensure that decisions taken are implemented within the legal framework of the Municipality.

Participant G

The participant is of the view that officials who should account are those who are in the management position as they are the ones making all the decisions that ultimately affect community members.

Participant H

The participant is of the view that accountability is to be practiced by decision-makers within the Municipality and that the only form of accountability that affects them is performance accountability, which is measured through their performance assessment.

From the above it is clear that some municipal officials who are not part of the management are of the view that they do not have a role to play in ensuring

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accountability. The participants who are of this view were participants B, C, D, and G. This nation needs to be changed, as accountability applies to all municipal officials regardless of their position.

6.3.11 Question 11: Would you say there is a need for new ways of implementing accountability?

The last question was posed to participants to determine if there is a need to reconfigure accountability within developmental local government.

Participant A

The participant indicated that given the increased reported cases of corruption and wrongdoing by municipal officials, one is tempted to agree with the above. However, the current mechanism requires an effective implementation to function properly.

Participant B

The participant is of the view the municipality should work toward a more digital way of doing things to align with the 4th Industrial Revolution, so yes, there is a need to do things differently.

Participant C

The participant stated that the Municipality is faced with numerous challenges and some of those challenges emanate from the lack of transparency and accountability. Therefore, there is a need to revise the ways in which municipal officials are to account for their actions.

Participant D

The participant cites that accountability, as flagged by the Auditor-General of South Africa, is lacking in most of the municipalities across the country. The same can be said about COJ in this regard. The participant believes that accountability needs to be reviewed and ensure that community members are more involved in tasks and activities of the municipality to promote accountability.

Participant E

The participant answered that in the past years, the Municipality recorded cases of corruption and fraud, which is a clear indication that there is a need to relook the

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regulations. Some factors influence accountability positively, and those need to be strengthened, such as transparency and community participation.

Participant F

The participant is of the view that accountability within the Municipality has been effective and that it is not necessary to change how things are currently being done.

Participant G

The participant is of a strong view that accountability needs to be changed as currently it is not bearing any fruits. The participant believes that municipal officials are evading to account, and the current mechanisms allow them to do so.

Participant H

According to the participant, accountability is one tool that the municipality may utilise to ensure the effective running of the municipality. Given that there are a number of structures that are responsible for ensuring accountability and yet there are reports that accountability is lacking in local government. This demonstrates that, indeed, there is a need to look at new ways of implementing accountability.

6.4 SUMMATION OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS

The data collected by means of interviews indicate that members from the Municipality understand the word accountability and also how it should be exercised. The interviewees are also familiar with some of the policies that are in place to ensure that accountability exists within the Municipality. The South African government established various institutions that are responsible for ensuring that accountability is practiced through tut all government institutions and developmental local government is not exempted from this. Based on the information collected through interviews, it is clear that the members of the Municipality understand the crucial role that oversight bodies play in ensuring accountability. It will also be of great value if the members also assist the oversight bodies by reporting any suspected behaviour of municipal officials in executing their duties.

A principal delegates a task to an agent, and the goal of the agents should be to execute the task to the best of their abilities (Mhlauli *et al*., 2021:300). One may conclude that this is not the case in developmental local government. The data

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collected from interviewees supports the above statement as they indicated that there is a need to reconfigure accountability based on the fact that it is not as effective.

6.5 CONCLUSION

The study made use of a mixed methodology, which requires data to be collected by means of questionnaires as well as interviews. The chapter analysed data collected through the above-mentioned methods. The data collected through the questionnaire was analysed and interpreted in a pie chart. This permitted the information to be reader-friendly. The data collated in this method suggests that there is a need to reconfigure accountability in developmental local government. It further revealed that lack of accountability is one of the contributing factors for high levels of corruption. The interviews conducted with municipal officials suggest that even though accountability is in existence, there is still a need to review current mechanisms to ensure effective accountability. The next chapter presents discussions of the findings and recommendations for developmental local government.

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CHAPTER SEVEN
FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter six of the study presented the data collected through questionnaires and interviews. The data was interpreted, and a summation was provided in this regard. This chapter presents an overview of the study with special emphasis on the aim and objectives of the study. Based on the analysis of the research findings, recommendations were made to assist the municipality in reconfiguring accountability.

7.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The data collected by means of documentary analysis, questionnaires, and interviews allowed the researcher to draw findings. Those findings are listed below:

7.2.1 The ineffectiveness of current mechanisms for accountability

There are various mechanisms for accountability, however majority of the respondents 104 (52%), have demonstrated that those mechanisms are not effective. The internal audit committee is one of the mechanisms that ensure accountability exists. However, the committee has been found lacking in this regard. The councils within the municipalities have a duty to ensure effective accountability. The inadequate level of competency of council members has played a huge role in its ineffectiveness. Hence, the study also recommends that the appointment of such members be done on a merit basis. The qualified members are most likely to execute their mandate in a professional and ethical manner. Therefore, it suggests that there is a need for those mechanisms to be revisited to either amend or change them to facilitate more effective accountability.

7.2.2 Oversight bodies in enforcing accountability

According to Kraai, Holtzhausen, and Malan (2017:62), oversight seeks to ensure the realisation of the objective of local government as stipulated in Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, to foster a democratic and accountable government. The data collected suggested that the role of oversight bodies is not effective. The study also found that external role players such as the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) have limited powers in terms of ensuring the

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implementation of the recommendations made, which renders accountability ineffective. One of the factors affecting the ineffectiveness of the municipal council committee trusted with ensuring accountability is the lack of skilled and capable individuals.

7.2.3 The cadre deployment policy is identified as one of the hindering elements of accountability.

The cadre deployment policy was a good initiative. However, it has proven to be a hindering factor to accountability in the past years as those in power tend to be loyal to their political parties at the expense of the general public. The municipality has appointed officials based on the affiliation of a political party and not necessarily on the qualifications that the individuals have. A study by Masiya, Davids, and Mangai (2021:112) suggests that municipalities need to depoliticize local government and promote the non-partisan appointments of municipal officials. Recently, opposition political parties have requested a review of this policy and total disregard for the policy. The researcher is in agreement with the review of the policy and not the disregard of the policy, as there are some benefits attached to it. Reviewing this policy will create a culture of excellence, thus improving accountability. The study also revealed that the individuals deployed through the above policy tend to be loyal to their respective political parties and completely neglect the needs of the community members.

7.2.4 The lack of consequence management as a negative element associated with ineffective accountability

Generally, when people are aware that there is no aftermath for wrongdoing, they tend to capitalise on that and continue with such behaviour. Chapter 3 paragraph 3.8 of the study demonstrated that lack of consequence management further creates opportunism for unethical behaviour. Jarbandhan (2022:34-35) states that the lack of consequence management allows municipal officials to stretch the bounds of ethics when it comes to public service and further perpetuates it. There have been fewer cases wherein punishment was instituted compared to the number of cases being reported. It is, however, noteworthy to mention that the fewer cases where the law was implemented providea glimmer of hope for the future. In the same breath, more still needs to be done to ensure that there are mechanisms in place that will detect and facilitate the process of the law to take place. The developmental local

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government needs to set a precedent for instituting some form of consequence management for municipal officials.

7.2.5 The inadequate protection of whistle-blowers

The prevention of corruption via the use of whistleblowing will require adequate legislative provisions to enable the effective protection of whistle-blowers (Radulović, 2023:71). The study revealed that the lack of adequate legislative provision for the whistle-blowers has left many in fear of coming forth with information that may be utilised to reduce corruption and bring those individuals to justice. It has been identified that the current legislation available to protect whistle-blowers has loopholes which are being manipulated. The alleged cases of whistle-blowers being killed over the disclosure of certain information have led to individuals holding back the information that may assist in detecting unethical conduct. The organisations which are responsible for ensuring the safety of whistle-blowers need to be enhanced.

7.2.6 Power struggles negatively influencing accountability

The power struggle within the municipality has been evident in the constant change of executives and other positions within the municipality. The constant change does not allow for plans to be driven to their full potential as the drivers are changed, thus also making it difficult to identify municipal officials to be held accountable. The process of creating public policy to address social issues is at the centre of democratic politics, and the constant change in municipal leaders has a negative impact on this process. The power struggle is also evident between politicians and municipal administrators as both parties ignore the separation of powers. Political infight is done at the expense of the needs of the community members as precious time is spent on trying to resolve those infight rather than discussing social issues to develop and draft public policy.

7.2.7 Lack of transparency to influence accountability.

Based on the majority of the participants represented by 50%, it was evident that transparency is indeed an imperative element of accountability. This means that accountability is dependent on transparency, amongst other factors, to be effective. When the municipality is not open about its activities and projects, it becomes challenging for accountability to be effective. Transparency not only facilitates effective accountability but also ensures good governance, which is one of the elements of

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democracy. Thus, the promotion of transparency not only positively affects transparency but also influences democracy. The literature review also demonstrated that transparency is one of the critical elements towards accountability that is meaningful.

7.2.8 High levels of corruption are attributed to lack of accountability

Van Niekerk and Sebakamotse (2020:286) state that the deteriorating performance of municipalities is a result of a lack of accountability. Municipal officials take advantage of the fact that accountability is overlooked as well as consequence management. This has led to a rise in corrupt activities. Some municipal officials don't even provide an explanation of activities meant for community development. The lack of consequence management, as demonstrated in chapter 3, paragraph 3.2.2 of the study, creates an opportunity for continual corruption. The study revealed that high levels of corruption are indeed attributed to the lack of accountability. It may be summarised that the lack of institute consequence management and legal actions against those committing corruption will be viewed as a way that one can get away with corruption and thus create a culture of unethical behaviour.

7.2.9 Benchmarking as a good practice within developmental local government.

It is crucial to ensure that the municipality's performance is regularly monitored to ascertain its effectiveness in rendering services. Challenges will always be encountered and will require torequire redial actions. Benchmarking is important as it has the potential of saving cost as adopting the practice is already tested for success. The study revealed that countries such as the United States have structures that have proven to be effective in ensuring accountability by government officials. The other country is the United Kingdom, which also has structures that appear to be functioning effectively in ensuring accountability.

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7.2.10 Effective accountability reduces the possibility of corruption

Zerihun and Mashigo, 2022:1 articulates that in South Africa, poor service delivery has been a major problem in many municipalities and this is attributed amongst other things, corruption. The COJ has also recorded cases of corruption in the past years, which one may conclude that has had a negative impact on service delivery. The above statements were also supported by the majority of the respondents, who viewed corruption as a hindering factor in service delivery. When there is effective accountability it becomes challenging to engage in corrupt activities, as transparency will exist. Municipal officials tend to conduct themselves unethically when it is done in secret with no possibility of it being revealed. Hence openness is of paramount importance to reduce corruption.

7.2.11 Qualified municipal officials are more likely to excel in the execution of duties

Local government has been covered with allegations of hiring officials who are not qualified. Chapter 3 of the study, paragraph 3.2.3, outlines the cadre policy, in which employment is based on affiliation to a certain political party and not necessarily qualifications possessed. The municipality also has appointed individuals who do not possess the required qualifications or the skills to perform the mandate. There are also cases where individuals with bogus qualifications were hired, which suggests that the process of verification of qualifications is not effective and requires to be reviewed for possible solutions. It was proven by most of the respondent that qualified municipal official are mostly likely to perform well in the execution of their official duties.

7.3 SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Below are the research findings from the data that was collected through the questionnaire:

- Transparency plays a crucial role in ensuring accountability.
- The Municipality is found lacking in terms of holding municipal officials accountable.
- There is a general understanding of what accountability entails.
- The mechanisms for accountability are not effectives.
- Community participation is lacking in the affairs of the municipality.

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- The performance of municipal officials is sub-standard, which has had an adverse impact on accountability.
- The functions of oversight bodies were found to be lacking in terms of their effectiveness.
- Accountability reduces the possibility and opportunity for corruption, and further to this, it was ascertained that high levels of corruption are attributed to lack of accountability.
- There is inadequate feedback provided to community members by the Municipality, which makes it difficult for community members to identify officials who are to be held responsible for the failure of certain activities.
- The Municipality is faced with instability regarding its management, which makes it difficult to have accountability as the responsibility are shifted from one individual to the other.
- There is ineffective utilisation of municipal funds, attributed to a lack of accountability and deliberated disregard for the regulatory framework.
- Code of conduct plays a crucial role in ensuring accountability.

Below are the research findings from the data that was collected through interviews conducted with municipal officials:

- There is a fair understanding of accountability and how it should be exercised.
- Elements such as integrity, ethics, honesty, good governance and transparency were identified as positive influencers of accountability.
- Mechanisms currently available for accountability are not effective.
- Corruption is high as a result of a lack of accountability, and mechanisms to detect corruption are not effective. The ineffectiveness of oversight bodies also influences this.
- There is a huge need for the Municipality to improve on the digitalisation of services rendered.
- Performance management systems have a role in ensuring municipal officials' performance accountability.
- There is a need to find new ways of implementing accountability.
- Municipal officials are not clear about the role they play in ensuring accountability. Institutions and structures such as the Auditor General South

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Africa, the Public Protector, the Municipal Pubic Account Committee, the Special Investigative Unit, and the Municipal Council are some of the institutions for ensuring accountability however their effectiveness is yet to be determined.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

There has been literature demonstrating that accountability in the country is deteriorating, and the development of local government is not exempted from this. The study suggests the following recommendations:

7.4.1 Recommendation of the study to the ineffectiveness of current mechanisms

Municipal official's behaviour must be strictly supervised, and any abnormal behaviour on the part of the offending party must be brought to the attention of the law without fear of retaliation. Institutions that deal with unethical behaviour should be prioritised and fully capacitated to give effects to their mandate. This will ensure that the mechanisms for accountability become effective and also set a precedent for all within the developmental local government. In addition, as part of a revised system to support accountability, the municipality is advised to develop more meaningful performance assessments that will ensure that the process is done in a manner to promote accountability.

7.4.2 Recommendation of the study oversight bodies are not effective in enforcing accountability

The municipality has control over internal oversight bodies; thus, the improvement and the effective functioning are within their ambit. Even though it might be seen as overreaching, it is important to involve community members in reviewing the conduct of municipal officials to ascertain whether it is ethical or not. The qualification of members executing the function of oversight is an element that should be taken into consideration. The municipality should change the criteria for oversight committee members to at least have an undergraduate degree that is relevant to executing those functions as a minimum requirement. Oversight members should also be members who, in their other profession, are responsible for ensuring compliance, as this will make it easy to perform the municipality oversight function. It is crucial to implement recommendations made by oversight bodies, and failure to do so should result in some

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sort of legal action. The South African government should ensure the capacitation of oversight bodies to ensure effective functioning.

7.4.3 Recommendations of the study on cadre deployment policy is hindering accountability.

The literature review in chapter three, paragraph 3.2.3 demonstrated the failure of the cadre deployment policy. The failure is mostly associated with the fact that those deployed lack the skills and competency to effectively execute functions assigned to them. It is to be noted that the intention behind this policy is great as it aims to rectify the injustices done by the old regime of colonialism and apartheid. The challenge with this policy is how the implementation was done and not necessarily the policy itself; thus, the policy should not be cancelled altogether but rather be relooked. The study, therefore, recommends that the policy be adjusted to ensure that the deployment only speaks to members who have formal/tertiary qualifications and are also relevant to the deployed portfolio. Requisite technical experience is of great importance.

7.4.4 Recommendation of the study Lack of expertise in developmental local government

The employment of members based on their political affiliation, favouritism, and nepotism should be annulled as this may not necessarily ensure that required expertise is employed. It is also advisable for the municipality to provide relevant and adequate training for current members to ensure that the expertise is given to those employees. The employment of expertise on a permanent basis will ensure the ready availability of those services, thus improving service delivery. The relevant custodian of passing legislature should, therefore, make it a point for the amendment of policies to ensure the employment of individuals with expertise and required skills to execute the work.

7.4.5 Recommendation to lack of protection of whistle-blowers

There is a need to review the current policy in existence to protect those that come forth with information that may be utilised in ensuring that law and order is maintained. The current situations were in whistle-blowers are allegedly been targeted so as they don’t provide information is of concerns and will prevent others from providing information to curb corruption.

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7.4.6 Recommendation of the study for improving transparency

The data collected through questionnaires demonstrated that transparency is an imperative element of accountability. The literature review in chapter two of the study also pointed out that accountability is more evident when there is transparency. It is therefore recommended that the municipality develops prescripts that will ensure that transparency is promoted. This could be done by utilising digital platforms to keep their community members apprised of development and responsible municipal officials. Introduce policy prescripts that will enforce transparency for municipal officials to increase levels of accountability. The Municipality should conduct quarterly review sessions of their performance wherein community members are present as this will promote transparency and thus improve accountability. This process will also ensure that trust is improved and influence the confidence of community members.

7.4.7 Recommendation of the study to decrease corruption

In Chapter 4 of the study, it was demonstrated how China has an awareness in terms of issues of the government, so the municipality should introduce a vigilance awareness program to promote ethical behavior. It is recommended that this approach be utilised within developmental local government. The Municipality should enhance and fully implement consequence management as this will demonstrate that there is an aftermath for engaging in corruption. The municipality should develop an internal training course based on integrity and promotion of ethical behaviour, and municipal officials who are found guilty and have attended such a course should receive the full mighty of the law. The literature review in chapter three demonstrated that the tendering system within developmental local government is the playground for corruption. In view of the fact that corruption is thriving in this area, the municipality needs to change the tendering procedure by making it more transparent to allow the flow of information.

7.4.8 Recommendation of the study on benchmarking

South Africa can adopt a few best practices to ensure that accountability is implemented effectively. Given that South Africa is part of Brazil, Russia, China, and South Africa (BRICS), it then makes it easy to benchmark with these countries that have shown progress in their performance and reduced corruption. The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) from India may also be adopted as this commission

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conducts an awareness programme around issues that have to do with ethical conduct, which is soothing and can also be implemented with South Africa's developmental local government.

7.4.9 Recommendation of the study to reconfigure accountability within developmental local government

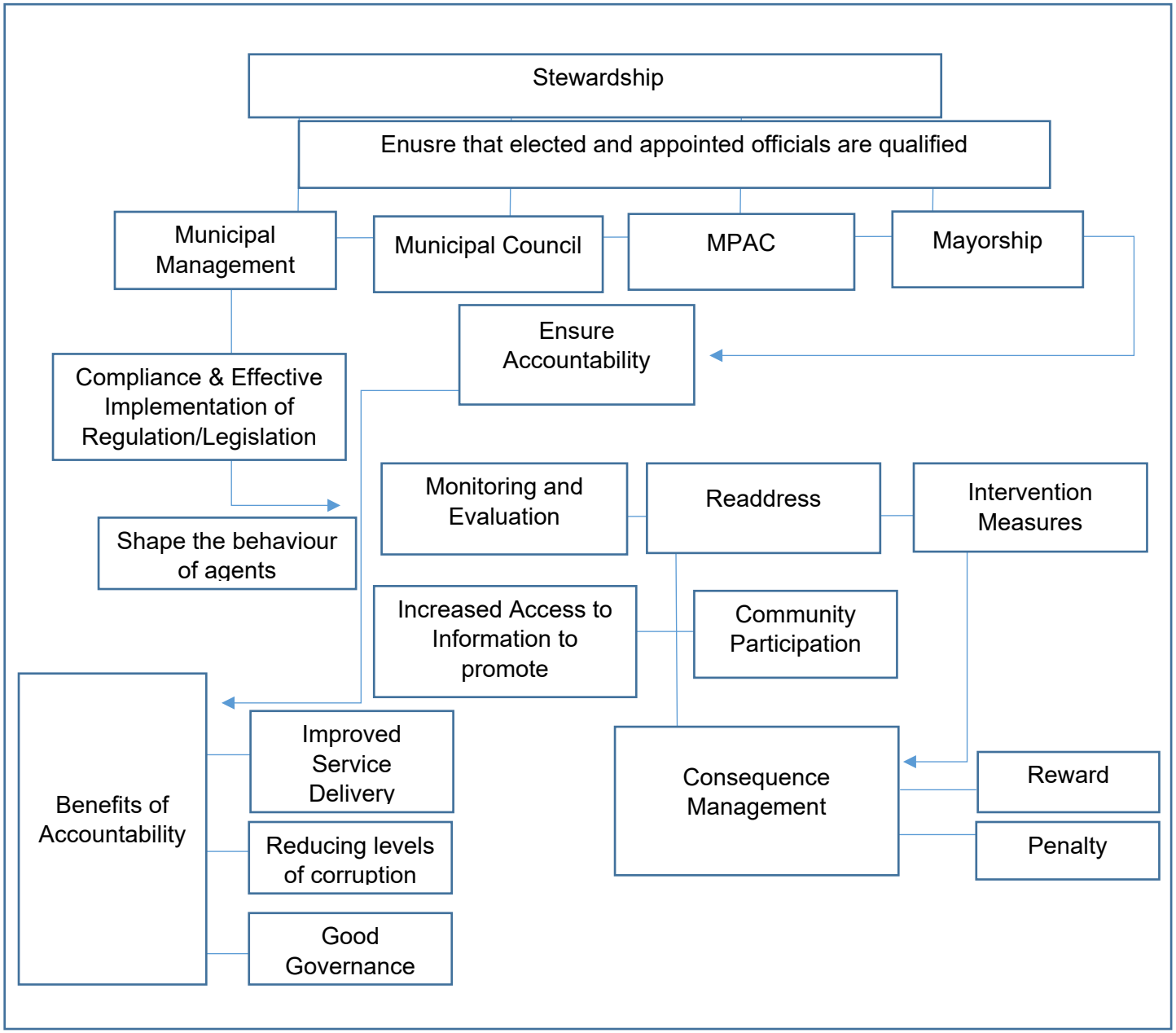
The study was based on the reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government. Based on the feedback from the questionnaires, it was determined that there is indeed a need to reconfigure accountability. The starting point of the reconfiguration should be to review the mechanisms that are currently available to facilitate accountability. The information provided in Chapter Five also suggests that accountability mechanisms are not effective. Members that are appointed to execute the oversight functions should not affiliated with any political party as it has been demonstrated by the literature review that those individuals tend to be loyal to the party at the expense of the municipality. A consultative approach with the private sector is needed to determine how and why accountability in that environment works.

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7.5 ESTABLISHMENT OF FRAMEWORK TO RECONFIGURE ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The framework developed to achieve a successful implementation of accountability within developmental local government is captured below:

Figure 7.1: Framework to reconfigure accountability in developmental local government



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Municipal management, municipal council, MPAC, and mayors are role players who are entrusted with ensuring accountability and thus have been categorised under stewardship. Chapter two, under paragraph 2.9 of the study emphasises the role of each of the listed above role players. These role players, as demonstrated above, have the responsibility of ensuring compliance and effective implementation of regulations and legislation. This may be accomplished by monitoring and evaluating the activities and performance of the municipality. Chapter two of the study, in paragraph 2.15, discussed the benefits of monitoring and evaluation, and one of those benefits is that it promotes accountability. The process of monitoring and evaluations allows the custodian to ensure accountability to identify discrepancies, thus allowing for readdressing, after which intervention measures may be applied. The current framework work lacks stewardship as the leaders are not committed to ensuring accountability. Further to this there is a need to appoint officials that are qualified to execute the tasks assigned to their respective portfolio, which currently is something that is not existing

Community participation plays a huge role in ensuring accountability. However, this can only be effective if there is information available regarding the affairs of the municipality. The study has linked increased access to information with increased community participation. Again, this was demonstrated in the diagram above linked to monitoring and evaluation done by community members. There is a need to conduct quarterly review sessions that are opened to the community members to so as to other municipal expenditure.

Chapter three of the study, under paragraph 3.2.2, states that the lack of consequence management has resulted in poor service delivery and continued misconduct by municipal officials. Van Staden, Fourie, and Holtzhausen (2022:82) state that discipline and reward are both methods of dealing with consequences. The study recommends that municipal officials who are performing and accounting for their actions should be appreciated, and failure to perform should, therefore, be punished.

The study suggests that if all the above diagram is implemented, the municipality will be able to enjoy the benefits of accountability, as also outlined in chapter two under paragraph 2.7 of the study. Corruption has the potential to financially cripple the municipality. Accountability, if implemented effectively, has the potential to reduce the

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levels of corruption. Good governance is required to ensure the effective running of the municipality, as demonstrated in paragraph 2.7 sub-paragraph 2.7.3.

7.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Most scholars have alluded to corruption being the root course of many of the challenges faced in developmental local government. Corruption is an issue which is facing most countries in the world and has had a negative impact not only on the performance of the governments but the economy of the countries as well. The South African Government has developed various mechanisms as a means to combat corruption, yet there are increasing levels of corruption. The researcher is of the view that there is a need for further studies on the effectiveness of mechanisms to combat corruption within local government.

The lack of consequences management in developmental local government has worsened the performance of municipalities. The enhancement of consequence management may positively influence the performance of the municipalities. When municipal officials know their actions will have consequences, they will most likely adhere to all laws governing developmental local government. Recommendations are hereby made for research to determine the reasons behind the lack of consequence management.

The importance of whistle-blowers cannot be overemphasized. Some of the illegal conduct of municipal officials was disclosed by whistle-blowers, as reported in chapter three. One may conclude that without their involvement, those illegal activities would have gone undetected. Protecting whistle-blowers is of great importance to improving the performance of developmental local government. This study recommends that research be conducted on how legislation around the protection of whistle-blowers can be amended to ensure its effectiveness. This will assist in ensuring that other individuals feel free and safe to disclose information.

Most municipalities hire consultants for expertise, especially in the financial environment. The reason for this is that municipalities have not recruited personnel with financial skills to be able to execute these tasks. Future studies are required into the employment of consultants and their impact on service delivery.

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7.7 CONCLUSION

It is crucial at this stage to provide an overview of all the chapters of the research report. The research report consists of seven (7) chapters. Chapter One embraces the introduction, background, and objectives of the study. The state of affairs in COJ was given as a background with a high level of registered corruption cases, which was flagged to be due to a lack of accountability. This chapter also detailed the aim of the study, which was to reconfigure accountability in developmental local government. This topic was selected as there have been reports on the deteriorating practice of accountability in most government institutions, which has been evident in the high level of corruption. The objectives, research questions, and study delimitations were covered.

Chapter two of the study provided the roles and functions of the oversight bodies. The internal and external role players for this function were outlined and explained in detail. It was ascertained that the internal oversight bodies are not functioning effectively and that there is a need for them to be reviewed. To ascertain the non-effectiveness of the oversight bodies, challenges encountered in this regard were discussed. Chapter three focuses on the inhibiting factor in ensuring accountability in developmental local government. Numerous factors were discussed, such as cadre deployment policy and lack of consequences management, which has had a dire impact on the ineffectiveness of accountability, as demonstrated through the literature review. The lack of expertise by the developmental local government has forced the implementation of a consultative approach, which has financial implications. The political instability within COJ has resulted in the change of management, which has had a negative impact as the strategic direction changes all the time, causing instability in the developmental process.

Benchmarking has been viewed as a best practice in ensuring performance improvement. It was crucial for the researcher to investigate countries that have shown improvement in managing government issues to recommend those best practices. The toptopic was discussed in detail in chapter four of the research report. It is to be noted that some of the problems faced by South Africa are not only unique to South Africa but also to other countries. A good example of this is corruption, which will require concerted efforts from the world to reduce it, as eliminating it may be difficult.

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The research methodology was discussed in chapter five of the research report. The qualitative research assisted in aligning with the theory selected by answering questions such as why municipal officials should account, how they should account, and why they should account. The qualitative approach assisted in obtaining the views of the community members in the questions that were asked, allowing the researcher to conclude based on those views. The chapter further made provision for research design, study area, sampling methods, size, population, data collection procedure, data analysis, research paradigms, as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter six concentrated on presenting, analysis and interpreting data collected through questionnaires as well as interviews. The researcher's views in this chapter were based on the views and opinions of the participants. Chapter 7 of the research report presents the findings and recommendations. The research concluded that accountability has deteriorated in developmental local government at an unbailable rate. Accountability is a constitutional requirement that should be promoted in developmental local government, yet the disregard for this continues.

The study also found that there is a level of dependency between accountability and transparency. This implies that the lack of one of the two will result in the ineffectiveness of the other. The study also found that corruption thrives where there is no accountability and transparency and also where consequence management is not implemented effectively, hence the high level of reports of corruption cases. The study strongly recommends the reconfiguration of accountability if developmental local government is to be realised. The study also revealed that community members, as well as the media, have a crucial role to play in ensuring accountability.

The media must continue to report and expose illegal activities conducted by municipal officials. However, this should be done with integrity and ensurethat the information published is accurate. It has been reported that the media could sometimes be used to perpetuate wrong information; this should be stopped to increase the integrity of the information

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LIST OF ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Ethical Clearance

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Ms N Mawela

STUDENT NO:
17023779

PROJECT TITLE: **Reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government: a case of City of Johannesburg Metropolitan municipality in Gauteng province.**

ETHICAL CLEARENCE NO: **FMCL/23/PDN/06/0707**

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr E Mahole	UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration	Supervisor
Dr PH Munzhedzi	UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration	Co-Supervisor
Ms N Mawela	UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration	Investigator – Student

Type: Masters' Research
Risk: Straightforward research without ethical problems (Category 1)
Approval Period: July 2023 – July 2024

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

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

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
  - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project.
  - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
  - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
  - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
  - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further clarification 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: June 2023

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

Signature

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
2023 -07- 07
Private Bag X5050
Thohoyandou 0950

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Annexure B: UHDC Report

University of Venda

OFFICE OF THE DVC: RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

TO : MR/MS N. MAWELA

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT, COMMERCE AND LAW

FROM: PROF. N.N FEZA

DVC: RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

DATE : 11 OCTOBER 2023

DECISIONS TAKEN BY UHDC OF 11th OCTOBER 2023

Application for approval of Thesis Proposal Report in the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law: **N. Mawela (17023779)**

Topic: "Reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government: A case of City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality in Gauteng Province."

Supervisor	UNIVEN	Dr. E. Mahole
Co-Supervisor	UNIVEN	Dr. H. Munzhedzi

UHDC approved of Thesis Proposal

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

FMCL/32/PDN/06

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Annexure C: Permission to Collect Data

City of Johannesburg
Department of Corporate & Shared Services
Office of the Group Head: Group Human Capital Management

6th Floor, B Block
Metropolitan Centre
158 Civic Boulevard
Braamfontein

PO Box 1049
Johannesburg
South Africa
2000

Tel +27(0) 11 407 6926
Fax +27(0) 11 339 1878

www.joburg.org.za

05 November 2023
Ndivhaisafhi Mawela
Student no: 17023779
Master's: Public and Development Administration
University of Venda

Ref: Permission to conduct research study

This letter serves to acknowledge receiving the letter requesting permission to conduct research in the City of Johannesburg under the title: **"RECONFIGURATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CASE OF CITY OF JOHHANESBURG METROPOLITAIN MUNICIPALITY IN GAUTENG PROVINCE."** I am aware that the study entails the collection of information from the City, city officials and participants from communities through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, observation participation and other fora of the city.

The research study is promoted by the City of Johannesburg because it helps both students and practitioners to gain an understanding of the sociology of the City, as it evolves and contributes towards the building of developmental local government.

I, Tersia Johanna Groenewald, as delegated authority of the City of Johannesburg Municipality (the City), hereby give permission to the primary researcher, Ndivhaisafhi Mawela, the following:

To collect and publish information about the City is publically not available, for the research project titled: **"RECONFIGURATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CASE OF CITY OF JOHHANESBURG METROPOLITAIN MUNICIPALITY IN GAUTENG PROVINCE."**

- This authorisation is based on mutual understanding that the City's name can be revealed in her/his project; and
- The researcher contacts the relevant department for arrangements pertaining to the research; and
- The information provided by the employees or any other means (such as company's archived documents or reports) of the City is purely for academic purposes and cannot be used for any other purpose.

Please note that on completion of the study, a copy of the research report should be submitted to the City of Johannesburg in honour of your commitment.

I urge you to present this letter of permission whenever you come across officials and participants in the research study. I thank you for choosing the City of Johannesburg to conduct the study.

Kind Regards

Ntombozuko Lufungo (on behalf of Tersia Groenewald)
Acting Manager: Human Resource Development
Tel: (011) 407- 6064
Email: NtombozukoL@joburg.org.za

Page 1 of 1

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Annexure D: Informed Consent

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

UNIVEN Informed Consent

Appendix D

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study :Reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government: a case of City of Johannesburg Metropolitan municipality in Gauteng province.

Principal Investigator/s/ researcher :(Ndivhaisafhi Mawela, Masters in Administration Bachelor of Administration Honours; Bachelor of Administration.

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s :(Dr. E Mahole, BADMIN; BADHON; MPAD; DADMIN)
(Dr. Munzhedzi BADMIN; BADHON; MPAD; DADMIN))

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

I am Ndivhaisafhi Mawela, a student for qualification Doctor of Administration candidate in the Department of Public and Development Administration at University of Venda, conducting research about Reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government: a case of City of Johannesburg Metropolitan municipality in Gauteng province .The study is supervised by Dr. E Mahole and the Co-supervisor is Dr Munzhedzi. A summary of the study has been provided below for an informed decision relating to your participation.

The aim of the study is to investigate the reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government in the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng Province. The study will propose mechanisms to facilitate for accountability within developmental local government. The realisation of this will ensure that local government is able to sustain municipal service delivery. The research will assist in ensuring that Outcome 9 of the NDP

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which relates to the realisation of a responsive, accountable, and effective and efficiency local government system is achieved. Further to this service delivery will be improved as greater accountability will be realised.

Effective accountability within COJ will assist in the reduction of corruption which has a negative impact in the quality as well as consistency of services being rendered. Effective accountability will place the municipality at a position where there is stability and increased trust from the community members. The findings of the study will greatly contribute towards creating a responsive, transparent and corruption-free government through recommendations on how to reconfiguration r accountability to assist in reducing corruption and addressing other challenges to improve performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the municipality.

Outline of the Procedures : (Responsibilities of the participant, consultation/interview/survey details, venue details, inclusion/exclusion criteria, explanation of tools and measurement outcomes, any follow-ups, any placebo or no treatment, how much time required of participant, what is expected of participants, randomization/ group allocation)

a. Procedure

As one of the possible participants of the study, the researcher hereby seeks your permission. Kindly note that:

i. Participation in this study is voluntary, you have the choice to discontinue with the interview at any stage should you feel uncomfortable without providing any reason.

ii. You have the right to choose the place of the interview within the area of City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality where confidentiality will be possible

iii. With your permission, the interview will take 30-45 minutes.

iv. Participants are allowed to give their own views and opinions in their own words.

v. The interview will be audio-recorded.

Vi participant may also chose to conduct interviews using virtual platform.

b. Confidentiality

All information, including your identity and responses in this interview, will be kept confidential and only used for research. All audio-recorded materials, transcripts of the interview and completed interview schedules will be safely stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office and in a computer which is pass word protected. The

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individual interviews will be conducted in a quiet place to avoid interruptions. The researcher will maintain anonymity as far as possible during the research process.

c. Deception of respondents

You as the participant will be briefed about the aim of the research and no information will be withheld from you in order to allow you to make an informed decision regarding your participation in the research and to ensure no deception.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: No risks identified on this research that may cause human harm

Benefits: The findings of the study will greatly contribute towards creating a responsive, transparent and corruption-free government by means of reconfiguring accountability.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study: Participants have right to withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. No adverse consequences for the participant should they choose to withdraw

Remuneration :You will receive no payment or remuneration for your participation as it is voluntarily. You are welcome to ask the researcher any questions before you decide to give your consent. You are also welcome to contact me or my study leader if you have any further questions concerning your participation in the study.

Costs of the Study :There will be no cost to you as a result of your participation in this study.

Confidentiality : All information, including your identity and responses in this interview, will be kept confidential and only used for research. All audio-recorded materials, transcripts of the interview and completed interview schedules will be safely stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office and in a computer which is

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	pass word protected. The individual interviews will be conducted in a quiet place to avoid interruptions. The respondents real names will not be mentioned in the study and the information they provided will only be used for research or study purposes. The researcher will maintain anonymity as far as possible during the research process.
Research-related Injury	:The researcher will guarantee all respondents that they will be no research-related injury or adverse reaction, however in case of unforeseen injury or adverse reaction there is no compensation.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

(Supervisor: Dr. E Mahole and details tel no: 073 644 6301/2) Please contact the researcher (Cell no.076 926 1933), my Co-supervisor: Dr. PH Munzhedzi (tel no. 072 656 7026) or the University Research Ethics Committee Secretariat on 015 962 9058. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Innovation, Prof GE Ekosse on 015 962 8313 or Georges Ivo.Ekosse@univen.ac.za

General:

Potential participants must be assured that participation is voluntary and the approximate number of participants to be included should be disclosed. A copy of the information letter should be issued to participants. The information letter and consent form must be translated and provided in the primary spoken language of the research population

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CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

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

Full Name of Participant Date Time Signature

I, …… …… ……

(**Ndivhaisafhi Mawela**) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully

Informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

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Full Name of Researcher

Ndivhaisafhi Mawela Date**:** Signature**.** 

Full Name of Witness (If applicable)

..... Date **.....**

Signature**.....**

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)

..... Date**.....**

Signature**.....**

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Annexure E: Letter to responndents

Dear participant

My name is Ndivhaisafhi Mawela, a student at the University of Venda in the School of Management Sciences. The topic for my research project is The *reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government: A case of City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality in Gauteng Province*. I would like to collect data for my research project. Therefore, I am inviting you to participate by answering a few questions on the above topic. Your participation will not take much of your time and will be highly appreciated.



Ms Ndivhaisafhi Mawela

Date

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Annexure F: Research Instrument: Questionnaire

Please note that your participation in this research is of great importance. However, participation in this research is voluntary, and the participant may withdraw at any point of the process at their own will. The information provided will be handled with privacy. Hence, no names or any other means of identification of participants will be revealed, so be open and honest in the answers you provide.

Please mark the applicable box with an X:

Gender

Male ◯ Female ◯

Age group

18-30		31-40		41-50		51-60		60+	

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

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Please mark the applicable box with an X:

No	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
1	Is accountability definition relation to holding public officials for their action or inaction					
2	Transparency is an imperative factor for accountability					
3	Have the municipality been effective in holding public officials accountable					
4	Current mechanisms for accountability are effective					
5	Are public officials performing their duties to the best of their abilities					
6	Qualified public officials are more likely to excel in their execution of duties					
7	public officials engages with the community on a regular basis					
8	Oversight bodies are effective in enforcing accountability					
9	Effective accountability reduces the possibility of corruption					
10	There is a need reconfigure accountability within developmental local government					
11	Are you involved in the decision making of the municipality					
12	Are your basis needs been met by the services provided by the municipality					
13	High level of corruption are attributed to lack of accountability					
14	Feedback is regularly provided relating to affairs of the municipality					

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No	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
15	The consistent change in the mayor of the municipality has a negative impact on service delivery					
16	Public funds are utilised effectively by municipal officials					
17	Code of conduct plays a big role in ensuring accountability					
18	New instrument for accountability are required					

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Annexure G: Research Instrument: Interview Questions

Dear participants

Please note that the aim of this research is to investigate the reconfiguration of accountability in developmental local government in the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng Province. The information required is for academic purposes and will only be utilised for that purpose.

The research ethic of the University of Venda stipulates that respondents are not obliged to identify themselves to give effect to principles of anonymity and confidentiality of the process.

Your participation in this research is of great importance, however, the participation in this research is voluntary and participant may withdraw art any point of the process at their own will. The information provided will be handled with privacy, hence no names or any other means of identification of participants will be revealed, so be open and honest in the answers you provide.

Demographical profile

Gender	**Mark applicable box**
Male	
Female	

Age	**Mark applicable box**
18 -30 years	
31-40 years	
41-50 years	
51+	

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Position in the Municipality	Mark applicable box
Top management	
Middle management	
Lower management	

What is your highest qualification	Mark applicable box
Postgraduate degree	
Undergraduate degree	
Diploma/higher certificate	
Grade 12	
Lower than grade 12	

What do you understand about accountability?

……
……

What are the important factors perceived to positively as well as negatively affect accountability?

……
……

What mechanisms are used in enact accountability?

……
……

Would you say those mechanisms are effective?

……
……

What mechanisms are in place to prevent corruption in ensure accountability?

……
……

Does the municipality have a digital platform to ensure accountability? If yes, how effective are they?

……
……

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Would you say performance assessment measures have an influence in promoting accountability?

……
……

What has been the biggest influencer in the high levels of corruption and the lack of accountability thereof?

……
……

What role do oversight committees play, and have they been effective in those roles?

……
……

What is your role as a municipal official in ensuring accountability?

……
……

Would you say there is a need for new ways of enacting accountability?

……

……

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Annexure H: Editorial Letter

Editorial letter

This serves to confirm that I, Dr. TE Sikitime, attached to the University of Venda, Department of English Media Studies and Linguistics, have proofread a proposal titled: **RECONFIGURATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CASE OF CITY OF JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY IN GAUTENG PROVINCE**

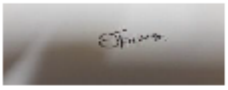
BY

NDIVHAISAFHI MAWELA

STUDENT NO: 17023779

Editorial work focused mainly on technical precision and common errors relating to syntax, diction, word order, and formulation of ideas. Corrections and suggestions were made for the student to effect before submission.

Signature **Date 04/January 2025**



Ext: 015 962 8262

Mobile: 0832561666

Email: Emmanuel.sikitime@univen.ac.za

BA (ed), BA (Hons) English, Univen, BA Communication Science UNISA, MA (SLS) Stellenbosch University, PhD (English) Univen

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Annexure I: Turnitin Report

turnitin

Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

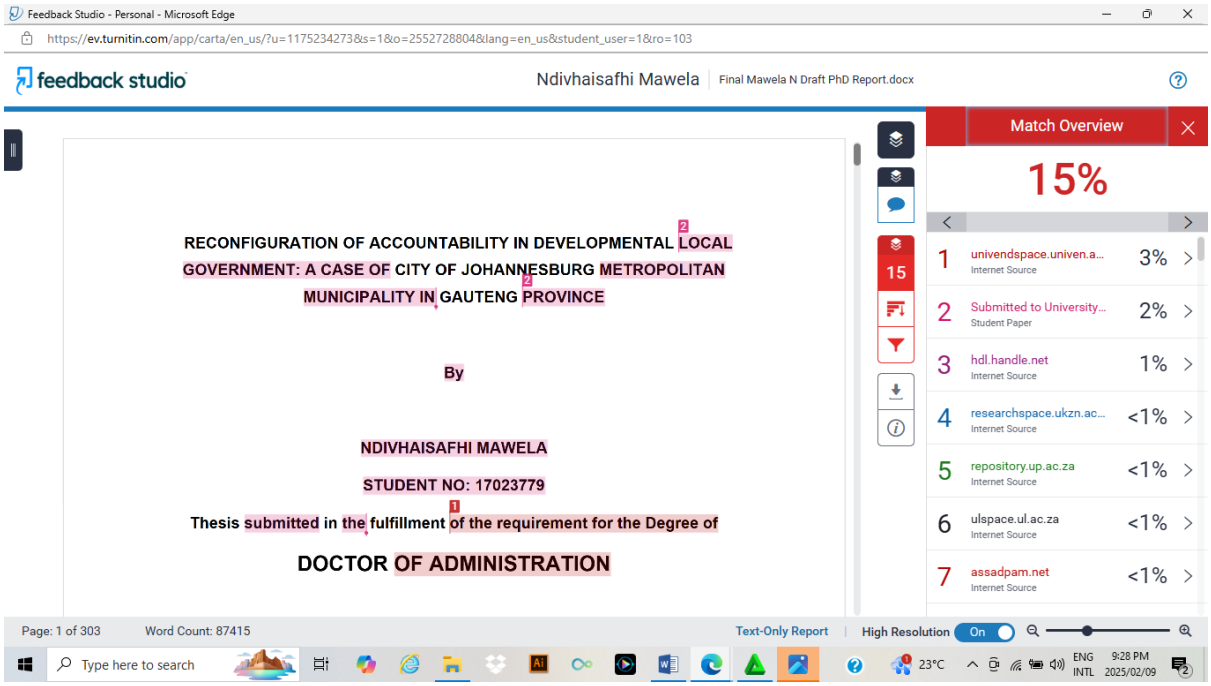
Submission author:	Ndivhaisafhi Mawela
Assignment title:	The impact of digital innovation on municipal service deliver...
Submission title:	Final Mawela N Draft PhD Report.docx
File name:	Final_Mawela_N_Draft_PhD_Report.docx
File size:	2.1M
Page count:	303
Word count:	87,415
Character count:	522,494
Submission date:	18-Jan-2025 05:57PM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID:	2552728804



DOCTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

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