



**ASSESSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE IN ACCELERATING
SERVICE DELIVERY AT DIKGATLONG MUNICIPALITY**

CHRISTIAN MOTSAMAI GOEIEMAN

**UFS Business School in the Faculty of Economic and
Management Sciences**

Master

In

Business Administration

at the

University of the Free State

Supervisor: Dr L Du Plessis

November 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At first, I would like to thank God for His blessings, the strength, and the knowledge He gave me to be able to go through this programme. My supervisor Dr Du Plessis, thank you for your guidance and the support. You were more than a supervisor. I really want to appreciate and thank you for giving me support when I was admitted at hospital and we ended up being marathon runners. Thank you Dr, for being patient, for taking my calls and for your encouragement. I hope we will still engage with one another, as our relationship has grown beyond being a supervisor to me. My ex-BML classmates thank you, for your support and making strong to believe that I can do this. Mr P D Musika, you are a pillar of strength, a motivator and a brother. Thank you so much and for taking my calls when I needed advice. Thank you for your patience. My family, especially Mr K Segone for the support both emotional and your prayers for me to succeed. It meant much to me. I would like to thank my colleagues at Northern Cape Provincial Treasury for the support. Ke leboga go menagane. Lastly, I would like to thank the employees of Dikgatlong Municipality for participating in this study. Without you ,this study would not have been a success.

Kea leboga

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the local government is to render basic services to the communities. These responsibilities are enshrined in the South African Constitution, 1996. To assist in this regard, parliament enacted various legislations that guides municipalities to deliver the required services to the communities. Pursuant to the various legislations passed by parliament, national and provincial government implemented various reforms that augments the operationalisation of the various legislations passed by parliament. One such reform relates to the need for municipalities to develop and implement a comprehensive performance management system. The process entails, among other things, signing of performance management agreements by senior officials at the municipality and having competent people employed by the municipality. Such measures should assist in enhancing accountability and ultimately service delivery. However, some municipalities have not implemented this reform. Dikgatlong Municipality is no exception to this challenge. The study provides insight into the importance of performance management and implementing performance management systems in local government. It also looks at their effect on service delivery. Results of the literature review have shown complementary views in this regard, although are not as direct and in a local government sphere. Most of studies identified several themes that are linked to this phenomenon. These themes include the importance of a positive working environment, monitoring and review of effective performance and the core components of good performance management. Some of these themes, such as conducive or positive working environment, has sub-themes which are all critical in this process. What was key in the research was that competencies, in any aspect, and working environment are key to the implementation of performance management systems and the delivery of services to the community. At the centre of these themes is leadership role played by Municipal

Managers. These matters were clear in the research findings. For Dikgatlong municipality, most of these elements were found to be lacking.

Keywords: performance management, performance management systems, competencies, conducive environment, leadership, service delivery

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
ABSTRACT.....	3
CHAPTER 1: SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY	8
1.1. INTRODUCTION	8
1.2. STUDY AREA.....	8
1.3. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....	9
1.3.1. Objects of local government	10
1.3.2. Status of Dikgatlong Local Municipality	11
1.4. PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	13
1.4.1. Importance of the study	14
1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS	15
1.6. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY OBJECTIVES.....	16
1.6.1. Primary Objective	16
1.6.2. Secondary Objectives	16
1.7. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	16
1.7.1. General Discussion	16
1.7.2. Thematic discussion	20
1.7.2.1. Importance of a positive working environment	20
1.7.2.2. Monitoring and review of the effective performance	21
1.7.2.3. Core components	21
1.7.3. Qualitative research methodology	23
1.7.3.1. Justification of the qualitative approach and a phenomenological study	23
1.7.4. Sampling strategy.....	24
1.7.4.1. Purposive sampling.....	24
1.7.4.2. Snowball sampling	24
1.7.5. Target population.....	25

1.7.6.	Sample size.....	25
1.7.7.	Data collection method	26
1.7.8.	Data analysis	26
1.7.9.	Data quality and control.....	27
1.7.10.	Ethical considerations	28
1.7.10.1.	Permission obtained	28
1.7.10.2.	Informed consent.....	28
1.7.10.3.	Voluntary participation.....	28
1.7.10.4.	Confidentiality and anonymity	29
1.7.10.5.	No harm.....	29
1.8.	LIMITATIONS OF STUDY.....	29
1.9.	OUTLINE OF THE STUDY.....	29
1.9.1.	CHAPTER LAYOUT OF STUDY	30
1.10.	CONCLUSION.....	31
	CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	32
2.1.	INTRODUCTION	32
2.2.	DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMINOLOGIES	32
2.3.	CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT	33
2.4.	CAPACITY KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	36
2.4.1.	Hiring an adequate workforce	37
2.4.2.	Hiring the right employees for the Job	37
2.4.3.	Managerial attributes.....	38
2.4.4.	Effective manager's performance and roles	40
2.5.	STRUCTURE, NATURE, AND TYPES OF COMPETENCY.....	41
2.5.1.	Structure of management competence.....	41
2.5.2.	Self-management competency.....	42
2.5.3.	The nature of management competence	43
2.5.4.	The four pillars of effective performance	45
2.5.5.	Differentiation by levels of management	47
2.5.6.	Differentiation by areas of management.....	48
2.5.7.	Managerial skills	48
2.5.8.	The nature of managerial work	49
2.6.	PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT	49

2.6.1.	Principle No. 1: The Functions of Management.....	49
2.6.2.	Principle No. 2: The Types and roles of managers within the organization.....	49
2.6.3.	Principle No. 3: Effective management of organizational resources	50
2.6.4.	Principle No. 4: Understanding and applying the Four Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) in Maximizing Human Potential.....	50
2.6.5.	Principle No. 5: Know the business	51
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....		53
3.1.	INTRODUCTION.....	53
3.2.	RESEARCH DESIGN	53
3.3.	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	55
3.3.1.	<i>Justification of the qualitative approach and a phenomenological study</i>	55
3.3.2.	<i>Sampling strategy</i>	56
3.3.3.	<i>Purposive sampling</i>	56
3.3.4.	<i>Snowball sampling</i>	56
3.3.5.	<i>Target population</i>	57
3.3.6.	<i>Sample size</i>	57
3.3.7.	<i>Data collection method.....</i>	59
3.3.8.	<i>Data analysis.....</i>	59
3.3.9.	<i>Data quality and control</i>	60
3.3.9.1.	<i>Trustworthiness</i>	60
3.3.9.2.	<i>Credibility.....</i>	61
3.3.9.3.	<i>Transferability</i>	61
3.3.9.4.	<i>Dependability</i>	62
3.3.9.5.	<i>Conformability.....</i>	62
3.3.9.6.	<i>Triangulation</i>	62
3.3.10.	<i>Ethical considerations</i>	63
3.3.10.1.	<i>Permission obtained</i>	63
3.3.10.2.	<i>Informed consent.....</i>	63
3.3.10.3.	<i>Voluntary participation</i>	63
3.3.10.4.	<i>Confidentiality and anonymity.....</i>	64
3.3.10.5.	<i>No harm.....</i>	64
3.4.	CONCLUSION	64

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	65
4.1. INTRODUCTION.....	65
4.2. HIGH-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS	65
4.3. PRESENTATION OF THE DATA	65
4.3.1. Failure to adequately implement the accountability cycle.	66
4.3.2. Lack of capacity to manage the process.	67
4.3.3. Poor Recruitment Practices	67
4.3.4. High vacancy rate at senior management	68
4.3.5. Good governance	68
4.3.6. Financial sustainability and performance.	69
4.3.7. Lack of effective and decisive leadership	69
4.4. SUMMARY	70
4.5. CONCLUSION	70
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	71
5.1. INTRODUCTION.....	71
5.2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	71
5.2.1. Primary Objective	71
5.2.2. Secondary Objective One	71
5.2.3. Secondary Objective Two.....	72
5.2.4. Secondary Objective Three	73
5.2.5. Secondary Objective Four	74
5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS	76
5.3.1. Signing and monitoring of performance agreements	76
5.3.2. Revenue collection and enhancement.....	76
5.3.3. Creation of a Conducive Environment.....	77
5.3.4. Effective and decisive leadership.....	78
5.3.5. Expenditure management, control, and containment.....	79
5.3.6. MTREF budgets.....	79
5.3.7. Skills competence capacity	80
5.4. CONCLUSION	80
5.5. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	82
REFERENCE LIST	83

CHAPTER 1: SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

According to the Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998), there are three categories of municipalities in South Africa, namely metropolitan, district, and local. Metropolitan municipalities exist in eight cities. Areas that fall outside the metros are divided into local and district municipalities. District municipalities are made up of several local municipalities. This sphere of government is called local government.

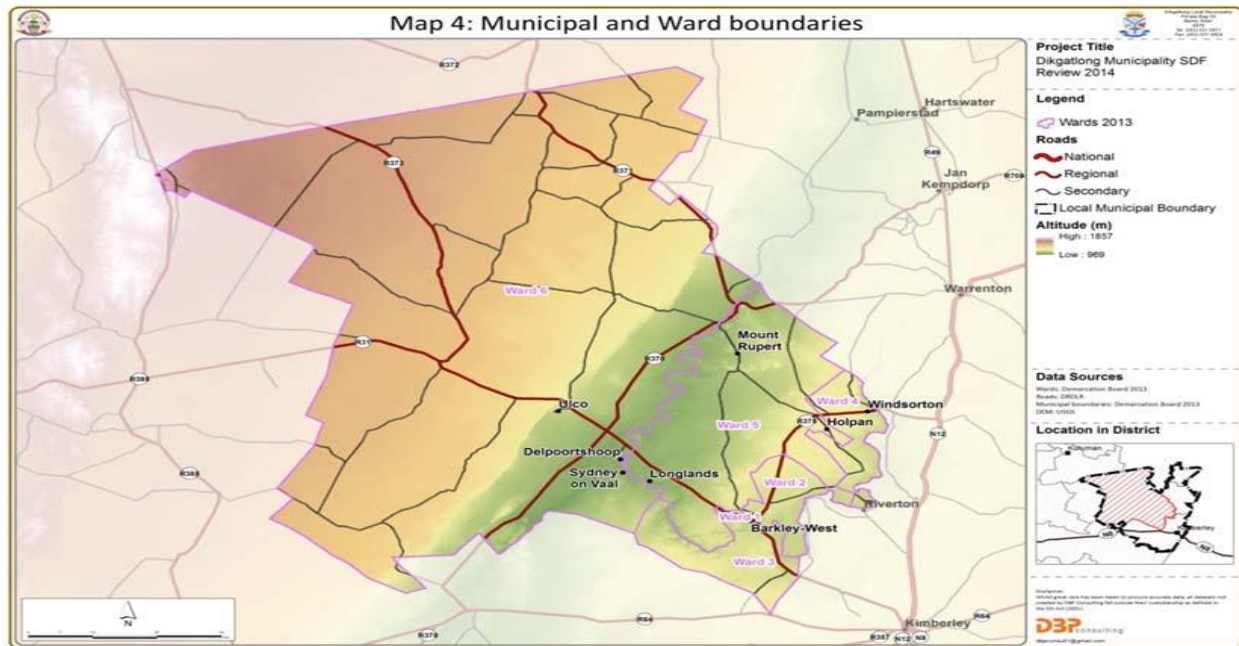
The key objective of local government is to render services to the community. There are several ways in which local government can render services to the community. One such way is the monitoring and measuring of the performance of the municipality's senior management.

The foregoing issues were some of the reasons why the researcher conducted this research. As such, this study will focus on assessing the performance of managers in Dikgatlong Local Municipality (hereinafter referred to as Dikgatlong Municipality).

1.2. STUDY AREA

Dikgatlong Municipality is located about 60 kilometers west of Kimberley, close to the confluence of the Harts and Vaal Rivers. It is situated in the Frances Baard District and is a Category C municipality. Figure 1.1 below shows the geographical jurisdiction of the municipality.

Dikgatlong Local Municipality Map



Source: Dikgatlong Local Municipality Integrated Development Plan (2018/2019)

1.3. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In terms of the Demarcation Act (Act 27 of 1998), there are 257 municipalities. This was a result of the amalgamation of some of the municipalities that existed pre-1994. According to Ncube and Monnakgotla (2016:82-83), the main reasons for municipal amalgamations in South Africa were to deracialize local government; achieve equity; create efficiencies and economies of scale; promote the integration of rural and urban municipalities and improve the financial and administrative capacity.

The amalgamation process was done through an extensive legislative process and the development of relevant policy frameworks for local government. For example, the government, through the National Parliament, introduced the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), the Municipal Finance Management Act (Act No 176 of 2004), and the

Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998). The development of these legislations was to ascertain that all municipalities adhere to and execute their constitutional obligation as stated in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No 108 of 1996 (hereinafter referred to as RSA Constitution, 1996).

The RSA Constitution, 1996 identifies three spheres of government, namely national, provincial, and local government. According to section 151 of the RSA Constitution, 1996, local government is a distinct sphere, co-dependent and consistent with the provincial and national spheres of government. In my considered view, this is a domain that is closest to the people.

1.3.1. Objects of local government

The RSA Constitution, 1996 details the objectives of local government. It also details the expectations and key principles that local government should abide by. The following are some of the key sections:

- Section 153(a) addresses what municipalities must do to offer the necessary service delivery;
- Section 152(1) (b) declares that one of the goals of local government is to guarantee that services are provided to communities in a sustainable way. It mandates that towns organize and run their planning, budgeting, and administrative procedures in a way that prioritizes the community's basic requirements. They ought to encourage the community's social and economic advancement as well;
- Section 151 emphasizes the necessity of local government capacity building and autonomy.
- Section 154(1) of the Act mandates that, by legislative and other means, the federal and provincial governments must support and strengthen the ability of municipalities to manage their affairs, exercise their powers, and carry out their functions; Section 151(4) of the Act states that a national or provincial government may not compromise or impede a municipality's ability or right to exercise its powers or perform its functions;

- Parliament was required by Section 155(3) and (4) to enact laws to support municipal administration. It mandates that the laws, among other things, provide for a proper division of authorities and responsibilities among municipalities, keeping in mind the requirement to deliver municipal services equitably and sustainably.

Following the 1996 RSA Constitution, the National Parliament enacted particular laws to regulate local government activities. Among other things, the various laws provide for community service delivery. As an illustration, Section 40 of Act 32 of 2000, Local Government: Municipal Systems Act seeks to:

- provide for the fundamental ideas, procedures, and systems required for municipalities to gradually advance the social and economic development of their local communities;
 - guarantee universal access to reasonably priced essential services; specify how municipal powers and duties are to be used;
 - allow for community involvement;
- Provide a clear and supportive framework for the fundamental planning, performance management, resource mobilization, and organizational change processes that support the idea of developmental local government and serve as a foundation for human resource development and local public administration.

1.3.2. Status of Dikgatlong Local Municipality

Section 51 of the Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 1998) clarifies the roles, responsibilities, and performance of Municipal Managers. Their roles and responsibilities include fostering a culture of commitment to serving the public and a collective sense of responsibility for performance in terms of the set standards and targets. This is one area where Dikgatlong Municipality is lacking. Reasons for this include the fact that they often go to work very late and some of the pay points open very late and close early. There is a need for a concerted effort for cultural change. This should start with strategic documents such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

An inclusive and strategic strategy for the municipality's future is known as an integrated development plan, or IDP. It synchronizes resources, connects, integrates, coordinates plans, and creates the foundation upon which yearly budgets must rest. Provincial and national strategies are also covered in the IDP. According to the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, Section 34: An Integrated Development Plan must be reviewed by the Municipal Council.

- Every year in line with an evaluation of its performance metrics
- To the degree that evolving circumstances require it; and
- Has the right to modify its IDP following the established procedure.

Dikgatlong Local Municipality does not have a functional IDP unit yet it is the core business of the operation of a municipality (Dikgatlong Integrated Development Plan, 2022/23). Further, the municipality does not hold strategic management meetings. Further, there are no reward and appraisal systems. Staff morals are likely to be low, which may lead to low performance.

Municipalities are expected to implement Development Priorities and Objectives. The priorities and objectives must be measured against the key performance indicators and targets. A review of Dikgatlong Local Municipality's Annual Report (2022) and other related documents shows that the municipality does not:

- (a) Keep an eye on managers' performance;
- (b) Evaluate and assess their performance at least once a year;
- (c) Improve performance about development priorities and objectives when performance targets are not reached; and
- (d) Establish procedures for regularly reporting on progress.

As mentioned earlier, the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) recognises that the municipality needs to be managed by Municipal Managers. The Municipal Manager is the accounting officer. The Municipal Manager should be assisted by other senior managers, termed section 56 managers. Dikgatlong Local Municipality has been without

a substantive Municipal Manager and most of the senior managers since 2017 (Dikgatlong Local Municipality Annual Report, 2022).

1.4. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Dikgatlong Local Municipality is faced with service delivery problems and poor governance. For the year ended 30 June 2020, the municipality received a disclaimer opinion (in their audit outcomes). This was the case for three years preceding 2020. Although the situation has improved in that the municipality has been receiving a qualified audit opinion since 30 June 2021, Auditor General South Africa continues to highlight challenges relating to a lack of leadership, governance, and accountability (Dikgatlong Local Municipality Audit Report, 2022). It can be reasonably inferred that most of the managers are not adhering to the Batho Pele practices and principles. While it is true that Batho Pele principles have historically been associated with National and Provincial Departments, the application of these principles is equally crucial at the local government level. The Batho Pele principles serve as a foundational framework for ensuring citizen-centric public services, a principle that is paramount at all levels of government, including local municipalities. The reference to Batho Pele underscores the need for ethical, responsive, and accountable governance within Dikgatlong Local Municipality.. This means that there is a lack of transparency and accountability by the municipality's management. Such challenges may lead to poor service delivery. This has been highlighted by Auditor General South Africa, in the municipality's Management Report for the year ended 30 June 2022. Lack of proper governance and underperformance of management is a factor that contributes to poor service delivery.

In addition to the foregoing, Dikgatlong Local Municipality is unable to deliver on its legislated responsibilities. The municipality is always updated by community protests, sewerage is running in the street, street lights are not functioning, and the provision of electricity is a challenge in most of the areas, as it got cut for weeks before it can be restored (DFA, 2022). The reporter further noted that the quality of water is poor, there are huge water losses due to burst pipes and poor workmanship. According to van Heerden (2022), when there are community protests the management of the

municipality is always not available. Other challenges noted are that there are huge discrepancies in the municipality accounts, abnormal billing of residents for their basic services, and the accounts of the indigent people are the same as the other residents (Dikgatlong Local Municipality Management Report, 2022). The central problem under investigation is the sustained inadequacy in service delivery and governance within Dikgatlong Local Municipality. This is evidenced by recurring challenges, including a history of adverse audit outcomes, persistent service delivery issues, and highlighted deficiencies in leadership, governance, and accountability. The focus of this research is to delve into the root causes of these problems and propose actionable solutions to enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the municipality's operations.

1.4.1. Importance of the study

Several researchers, such as Meyer and Kirsten (2005) have researched the effect of performance management on service delivery. A sizeable number of this research was done in the early 2000s. As such, this research will not only contribute to the existing body of knowledge about the possible linkages and effects of performance management to service delivery but also bring a relatively recent perspective of the situation. Several reforms and transformations have taken place in the local government environment, such as new guidelines issued by various stakeholders and the proliferation of ratepayers' associations. These changes and reforms warrant the need to conduct research covering some of the challenges highlighted by the community. According to Shajahan (2005) current studies of this nature significantly assist municipalities in solving various problems they are faced with, be they strategic, operational, or planning. Dikgatlong Local Municipality is no exception in this current debacle. The municipality's management can use the results of this research to turn around the situation.

This research will also encourage further longitudinal studies which will be aimed at exploring any other related matters. For example, of the studies conducted regarding the possible effect of performance management on service delivery, most of them looked at the SMART Principle approach and predetermined objectives. As such, the issue of other elements such as the core of this study (performance management contracts) has been underscored.

The absence of a well-documented, feasible, and comprehensive performance management system within the municipality raises concerns about its ability to effectively collect revenue. A robust performance management system plays a crucial role in instilling confidence among the community regarding the value of services provided. Without such a system in place, there is a risk that community members may become hesitant to pay for services. This assertion emphasizes the importance of establishing a sound performance management framework to foster trust, accountability, and, ultimately, sustainable revenue collection for the municipality. Secondly, the Dikgatlong Local Municipality will fail to pay their third parties such as Eskom, Water boards, and the Auditor General. When the municipality is unable to pay its debts, it means the municipality does not have cash flow to run the business of the municipality. These challenges will ultimately lead to the municipality not being able to provide basic services to their communities. The provincial government may be forced to intervene and dissolve the municipality. Such punitive measures may have detrimental effects on the municipality and community.

The recommendations in this study will also assist the municipality, policymakers, decision-makers, and other stakeholders to understand some of the consequences of the lack of adequate performance management systems on service delivery, especially in Dikgatlong Local Municipality. Lastly, the study helped:

- to determine whether the municipality's performance management systems demand that all significant players in the process adopt an all-inclusive approach;
- to comprehend some of the primary causes of the ongoing poor service delivery in local government and whether this situation can be changed going forward.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is performance management important in municipalities?
- 2 What are the factors leading to management challenges at Dikgatlong Local Municipality?
- 3 Does Dikgatlong Municipality have a well-established communication plan in its management strategy?

- 4 Is the performance management plan of the Municipality in place as prescribed by the Municipal Systems Act?

1.6. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

1.6.1. Primary Objective

To provide guidelines for promoting a conducive environment for management performance in Dikgatlong Municipality.

1.6.2. Secondary Objectives

- To provide an overview of the environmental requirements for optimal performance management in local government in South Africa
- To determine the challenges to optimal performance management at Dikgatlong Municipality
- To provide recommendations for creating a conducive environment for effective performance management.
- To determine how the management of Dikgatlong municipality can improve the existing level of compliance with the Municipal Systems Act.

1.7. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.7.1. General Discussion

In light of the objectives of local government, municipalities are expected to render services to the community. In my view various means can be used to achieve this, one of which is the performance management (which, for this research is the same as permanence management and the words will be used interchangeably). This is in line with The National Framework for Local Economic Development which calls on municipalities to foster the conditions that would allow for the growth of business enterprises, the achievement of economic equity, and the creation of jobs. Layman (2011) concurred with this view, albeit from a conducive environment perspective. He

identified three primary reasons or objectives that need clarification as to the variables that contribute towards such an environment. The three objectives are to:

- establish an objective basis to measure and assess the manager's performance;
- determine whether managers were performing their functions effectively;
- improve the political-administrative interface between politicians and senior management.

He further noted that the effective performance of managers is an intricate matter that is snatched within the government to ensure that the sector performs to the best of its ability. It is my considered view that effective performance of management cannot be ignored as one of the key catalysts of service delivery. Ohemeng (2008), Manyaka and Sebola (2012) concurred with this view. They noted that a key component of service delivery in public governance is the performance of managers. Effective performance systems assist in delivering quality service to the communities. They further noted that this concept has become an issue of central and critical concern to political leaders, and public and private sector managers.

According to DeNisi and Murphy (2017), clarity is key to performance management. They noted that for performance to be effective, there is need to eliminate ambiguity and confusion around goal setting. They noted that this can be achieved by having regular and future-focused conversations. In such circumstances, employees will be clear on everything they are supposed to be doing and what is expected of them. This was in line with the views of Folan and Browne (2005). The authors observed that there is ample proof that possessing a well-defined objective and the ability to track one's progress toward reaching it fosters an environment of excellence within organizations, ultimately leading to improved levels of organizational performance.

Hearn (2018) on the other hand, looked at this aspect from a different angle. He looked at it from an employee involvement position. He noted that continuous effective performance entails encouraging employees to be more involved, giving them the

autonomy to set goals relevant to them, their strengths, and organisational goals. The element of participation and making the process all-inclusive cannot be trivialised. When managers are involved in the process, they tend to take control and tend to mitigate any possible challenges quickly. This was concurred by DeNisi and Murphy (2017); and Hearn 2018. They emphasized this aspect by noting that:

- the level of ownership and motivation among employees can be invaluable to businesses and helps team members take control of their performance;
- the process of effective performance also ensures leaders are in touch with the work being delivered and able to identify when performance is dropping.

Klossner (2014) brought another aspect to the argument supporting the importance of the environment, which he termed “environmental performance”. He recognised the necessity of a long-term commitment. According to him, environmental performance happens gradually. A sustained dedication to environmental leadership is necessary for its success. This includes the following: (a) corporate culture and overall philosophy that is established and modelled by senior management; (b) a workforce that embraces and adheres to the corporate culture, governing principles, and policies; (c) unambiguous performance standards and operating procedures; and (d) technological resources and technologies qualified to meet challenges in a competitively advantageous way; well-educated and well-trained personnel at all levels; and (e) systems to measure and evaluate current performance, identify areas for continuous improvement, and incorporate these into new performance standards and goals.

For the creation of a conducive environment for effective performance, municipalities would require competent managers who will give effect to the provisions of the various legislations such as the Municipal Systems Act. Competent management encourages leadership development. According to Wolfe (1995), competent managers identify

potential future leaders and then prepare them for rendering services to the community, directly or indirectly. He further noted that some employees show the potential to take on management responsibilities in the short term and others may need to be encouraged to improve their skills so they can become leaders over time.

Creating a positive work environment motivates, encourages employees to perform better, and encourages retention within the organization. This is so because of the positive effects of job satisfaction. In such situations, employees will experience less workplace stress and be more inclined to share ideas for the municipality's success. This is consistent with Mackie's (2008) findings that an organisation's and its employees' success can be increased by efficient competence or skills management, which involves developing and overseeing organisational and job-specific competencies. He went on to say that clearly defined roles can create a more cohesive staff, strengthen company culture, and identify important points of differentiation in the marketplace. Additionally, they aid in maintaining uniform performance standards for staff members in the towns, which can support employee engagement and retention.

Another aspect worth noting in this regard is internal controls. For example, according to Mackie (2008: 2), "appropriate internal controls or measures to monitor the extent to which the organisation (and its sub-units) is achieving what it is supposed to achieve are critical". The aspect requires the organisational management to periodically review and evaluate performance standards attained and performance trajectories, taking corrective action as appropriate where deviations from the desired standards are detected. This is so because issues relating to internal controls are fluid, not static. This might require adjustments, especially when they relate to service delivery.

The municipality should be able to create a healthy and safe environment since this is one of their fundamental responsibilities. What municipalities are also supposed to do, is encourage community participation and the involvement of the community needs to be promoted. According to Goleman (2017), if the environment is conducive, it will in

turn, ensure that all the managers and individuals in the municipality are held accountable for their actions, which should bring about improved service delivery and value for money. The Municipal Systems Act guides in this regard. For example, in terms of Section 51 of the Systems Act (Act No 32 of 1998), a Council needs to appoint a Municipal Manager, who will then facilitate the processes of appointing the senior managers.

1.7.2. Thematic discussion

It should be noted that some researchers have addressed these issues using different themes or aspects. The following discussion shows some of the various themes used.

1.7.2.1. Importance of a positive working environment

Positive work environments offer numerous advantages to managers and employees alike. This is because such an environment can promote the success and satisfaction of employees on both a personal and professional level. In agreement with this viewpoint, Herrity (2020) listed four factors that make a positive work environment crucial in the workplace, which are as follows:

(a) Increases productivity

Enhancing your job output can be achieved by creating a favorable work atmosphere. You might be more productive and better able to finish your work quickly when you're happier. This can also assist a manager in developing more skilled workers.

(b) Improves morale

Employees are impacted by the attitudes and moods of their managers. A productive workplace can have a positive impact on individuals around it. Positive attitudes about one's work by bosses can affect how other employees perceive their duties. Promotions are another significant advantage that will have a positive impact on staff morale.

(c) Fosters growth

Employees are more likely to seek out prospects for career advancement when they have a strong drive to excel in their current roles. He pointed out that giving employees

positive reinforcement from their employer might help them feel like important members of the team. This could encourage them to keep up or get better at this behaviour.

(d) Promotes collaboration

Employees are more inclined to encourage and support others in the organization when they are personally driven. Additionally, this may result in their working relationships with their coworkers improving. The stronger the bonds are among coworkers, the more likely an organization is to succeed in both the short and long term. This is because an organization's success is frequently built on its teamwork.

1.7.2.2. Monitoring and review of the effective performance

According to Aguinis (2019), effective performance management is the continuous process of improving performance by setting individual and team goals. These goals should be aligned with the strategic goals of the organisation and include planning to achieve the goals, reviewing and assessing progress, and developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of people. According to section 40 of the Municipal Systems Act (Act No: 32 of 1998), Dikgatlong Municipality must establish mechanisms to monitor and review its performance management system. Compliance sections such as section 71 reports, section 72, and their Financial Recovery Plan reports are not submitted (LG Database mSCOA data strings, 2023). Another trend that was observed from the LG Database strings is that when Dikgatlong Municipality submitted the section 71 & 72 reports, they submitted them late and there were challenges with the reliability of the information.

1.7.2.3. Core components

Meyer and Kirsten (2005:62) suggest that municipalities would benefit from performance management if it tackled the following goals:

- Develop a culture of good performance by creating a supportive environment;
- Clearly define performance standards;

- Ensure the implementation of municipal development strategies;
- Provide performance feedback to employees;
- Encourage employee development through coaching, counseling, and training to realize job opportunities;
- Enhance career development by talking about municipal plans for career advancement and promotion;
- Enhance relationships and communication by setting shared goals and creating a framework for tying compensation to performance; and enhance the quality of services provided by municipalities.

Onyebuchi and Olakunle. (2021), on the other hand, noted that municipalities must adhere to the terms of their performance management system, which in most cases are by any regulations and guidelines that may be prescribed. Such guidelines must set:

- (a) appropriate key performance indicators as a yardstick for measuring performance, including outcomes and impact, about the municipality's development priorities and objectives set out in its integrated development plan. As indicated earlier the IDP has not been reviewed for a long time.
- (b) measurable performance targets for each of those development priorities and objectives. There should be a clear direction of what is that they would like to achieve or a plan. The SMART principle adequately addresses some of these elements.

1.8. Research Methodology

According to Wilkinson (2018), research methodology encompasses the precise steps or methods employed to discover, select, process, and analyze information on a given subject. The methodology section in a research paper allows the reader to assess the overall validity and reliability of a study by addressing two key questions: How was the data collected or generated, and how was it analyzed?

1.8.1.

De Vaus (2006) defines research methodology as the comprehensive plan chosen to integrate various study components logically, ensuring the successful addressing of the research topic. It serves as a guide for data collection, measurement, and analysis. Creswell (2012) supports this perspective, stating that research designs involve specific procedures in research, including data collection, analysis, and report writing.

There are three common types of research methodologies: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. According to Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler (2011), the choice between these methods is an epistemological concern guided by available knowledge on the subject.

1.7.3. Qualitative research methodology

This study used a qualitative method. The process entails following several processes from the inception of the research to the end. Further, the process entails various designs. These are case studies, ethnography, phenomenological studies, grounded theory, and content analysis. Based on the nature and main features of this research, the research objectives, and questions, the researcher used the phenomenological study. It was deemed as the most appropriate design to use.

1.7.3.1. Justification of the qualitative approach and a phenomenological study

The main reasons for the qualitative method are:

- it is applicable and relevant to research in the municipal environment as it addresses the “how” and “why” of the research questions;
- it enables a deeper understanding of experiences, phenomena, and context; and
- allows the researcher to ask questions that cannot be easily put into numbers to understand human experience. The researcher included participants who work for the municipality at a senior level. To better comprehend the status quo in Dikgatlong, Municipality the researcher examined in-depth aspects of the performance of senior

managers at the municipality. The researcher was then able to draw reliable conclusions about management performance and its difficulties.

1.7.4. Sampling strategy

A sampling strategy is a plan you put in place to make sure the sample you utilize for your research study represents the population from which you selected your sample, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000). Population, sample, sampling frame, eligibility requirements, inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, representativeness, sampling designs, bias, sampling error, power analysis, effect size, and attrition are some of the terminology related to sampling. Convenience, accidental, snowball, quota, purposive, simple random, and cluster sampling are some examples of sample types. The qualitative research approach and the subsequent sample strategies will be employed in this study:

1.7.4.1. Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling requires participants to be selected based on several key dimensions and that they possess the characteristics of an ideal group (Leedy and Ormrod., 2015). According to Blumberg (2011), this type of selection is based on judgment, mainly guided by the fact that the participant meets pre-set criteria or “firm criterion”. Sample bias was avoided in that measures were adopted to avoid the possibility of bias, such as intentionally choosing only residents within the same demographics.

1.7.4.2. Snowball sampling

According to Sadler, Lee, Lim & Fullerton (2010), this happens when the participants selected by the researcher, recruit other participants themselves. In other terms, this is a referral process. It helped the researcher to interview people who could have been omitted for various reasons, one of which would be not being aware of them and their possible value to the research processes. It should be noted that the snowball effect increased the study’s sample size. This was so because it was difficult to include these

people in the sample size. That information came during the interview process. The researcher received two (2) referrals.

1.7.5. Target population

A research population is usually a large collection of individuals or objects that are the main focus of a scientific study. The broader public benefits from research efforts. A clearly defined set of individuals or objects that are acknowledged to possess similar characteristics is frequently referred to as the "research population". Every member of a population usually possesses some common trait. (Explorable.com, 2009).

- The characteristic that binds the members of the population together usually matches the description of the population. The demographic "government officials" can be regarded as a well-defined group of individuals, since all of its members are, in fact, government officials. The authorities of the Dikgatlong Municipality made up the study's population. Which comprises of: the Municipal Manager;
- the CFO;
- six senior managers;
- six middle managers; and
- Eight assistant managers management.

1.7.6. Sample size

There is no agreement among academics about the minimum number of participants needed for qualitative research. Diverse perspectives are held by many researchers, including Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2004), Leedy and Ormrod (2015), Dworkin (2012), and Creswell (2014). For instance, the sample sizes recommended by Creswell (2014), Leedy and Ormrod (2015), and Dworkin (2012) ranged from five to fifty. In this context, Leedy and Ormrod (2015) offered more guidance. Instead of taking a prescriptive approach, the guidelines took a descriptive one when examining the sample size.

Information power is an idea they put out. According to their perspective, fewer participants are needed the more knowledgeable the sample is about the topic being studied. As such, it would be ideal for the sample size to be based on the following five factors: the objective of the study; the sample specificity; the use of recognised theory; the expected quality of dialogue; and the analysis strategy.

Researchers such as Merriam (2009) and Morse (2000) on the other hand set the minimum sample size rather than a range. He suggested “at least six”. This was contrary to Ritchie *et al.* (2004) who set an upper limit. They suggested that the sample size “lie under 50”.

This researcher considered all the foregoing factors and views and set a sample size of twenty-two Dikgatlong Municipality’s municipal officials, out of a staff establishment of 352.

1.7.7. Data collection method

To answer research questions, test hypotheses, and assess results, data collection, according to Kabir (2006), is the act of obtaining and measuring information on variables of interest in a systematic and established manner. Any discipline of study, including the humanities, business, social and physical sciences, etc., has a data collection component.

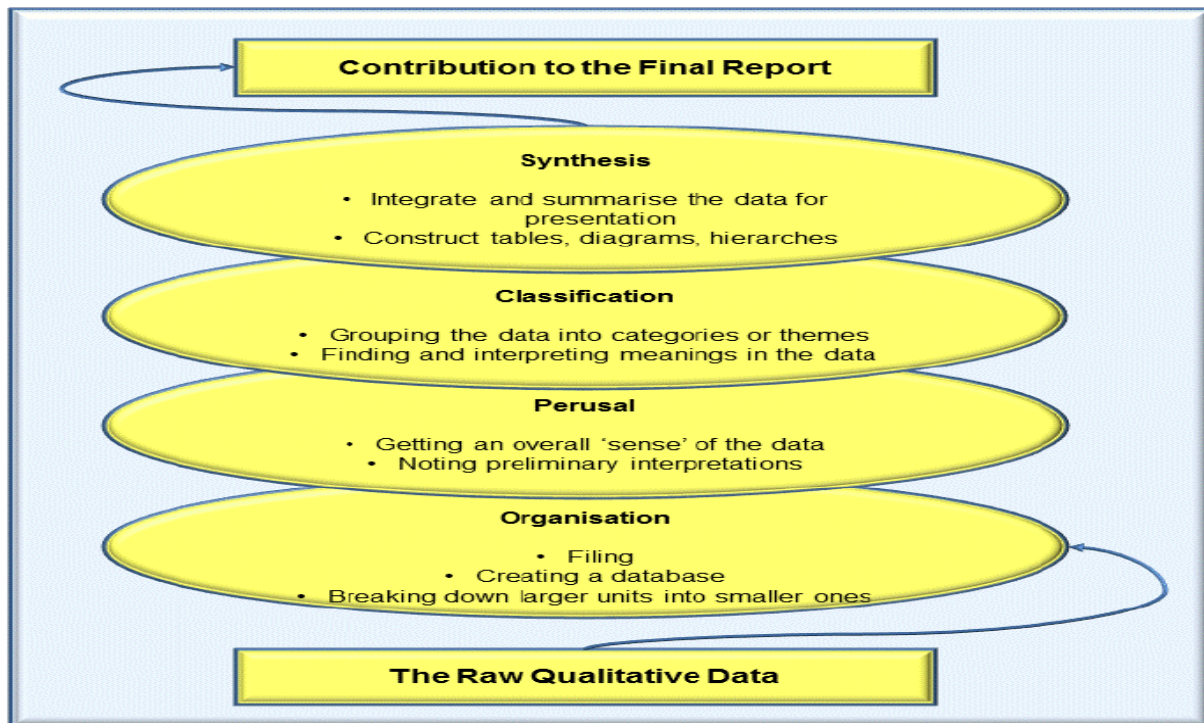
Semi-structured interview questions were utilized in this study as the data-gathering approach. All of the respondents participated in interactive interviews with the researcher, who followed up with questions to elucidate ideas, address specific concerns, and verify the accuracy of the data.

1.7.8. Data analysis

To analyse the qualitative data, the researcher primarily utilized Creswell's (2014) data spiral. This involved iteratively reviewing the data multiple times, aligning with the appropriate processes. The employed methodology, akin to thematic data analysis, guided the researcher through a systematic exploration of patterns, themes, and

insights. The data spiral, as depicted diagrammatically in the image below, facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the qualitative data.

Creswell's data analysis spiral



Source: Creswell (2014: 272)

1.7.9. Data quality and control

To achieve the key objectives of data collection in that it must be accurate, credible, and consistent in the dynamics and patterns they reflect, the researcher used the following principles:

- Trustworthiness;
- Credibility;
- Transferability;
- Transferability;
- Conformability;
- Authenticity;
- Triangulation.

1.7.10. Ethical considerations

Ethical consideration is one of the most important aspects of research. According to Brynman and Bell (2017), research may fail if ethical consideration is not taken into consideration. The research considered the following factors and respected the dignity of the research participants.

1.7.10.1. Permission obtained

According to white and Rayner (2016), obtaining permission for access to a specific population is when a researcher seeks and obtains approval from the relevant official. It therefore implies that the researcher needed to obtain permission to perform the research. Approval was obtained from the Municipal Manager.

1.7.10.2. Informed consent

In social research ethics, it is defined as a key principle. According to Bryman et al. (2018) informed consent implies that prospective research participants should be given as much information as might be needed to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in a study. The researcher informed and briefed the participants thoroughly about the topic and ensured that they understood the content of the research.

1.7.10.3. Voluntary participation

According to Brian and Rayner (2019), voluntary participation means the people answering questions have made a free choice to be involved in the gathering of information. Hence, the researcher ensured that the participants targeted participated willingly and were not coerced.

1.7.10.4. Confidentiality and anonymity

According to Bryman et al. (2018), this is the principle of not revealing publicly what another person does not want the researcher to reveal. Thus, the researcher took steps to protect the identity of the participants from being discovered by others. Furthermore, the researcher kept the anonymity of participants. As such, whenever necessary, pseudonyms were used to conceal the participants' confidential details.

1.7.10.5. No harm

According to Bryman (2018), the researcher should not harm, or do someone no harm, especially when researchers are recommending a course of action that they think is worthwhile, helpful, or useful. Therefore, the researcher explained to the participants the principle of 'no harm'. The participants must be considered by the researcher.

1.8. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The researcher noted two main limitations of the study. The limitations are as follows:

- Limited time: research of this nature always takes more time.
- Respondent's availability: generally, it is a challenge to balance the respondents' availability and the researcher's. Time scheduling with the participants is one of the key challenges. The researcher needs to ensure that he is available at the agreed times.

1.9. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The study falls under human resource management. Human resource management, according to McKenzie (2021), is a strategic approach to the effective and efficient management of people in a company or organization so that they contribute to the firm's ability to compete. It is made to maximize worker performance in support of a company's strategic goals.

1.9.1. CHAPTER LAYOUT OF STUDY

Chapter 1: Research Proposal

Chapter 1 of the research proposal highlighted several crucial elements, including the problem statement, the connection between managers' performance and their goals, the study's significance and limitations, the research methodology, the definition of key concepts, the literature review, the reference strategy, and the study's overall structure.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2, the Literature Review, will address the purpose and objectives of a literature review. Drawing insights from Western Sydney University Library (2016), it will emphasize that the goal of a literature review is to persuade the reader by presenting a coherent argument in response to a specific prompt or query, demonstrating credibility and reasonability. The chapter will focus on the researcher's ability to thoroughly investigate the subject, construct a compelling argument, and substantiate it with evidence derived from existing research.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

The chapter on research methodology discusses different research approaches and research procedures. This approach was used by the researcher to carry out the investigation.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

In any research project, data analysis is the most important component. Information acquired is condensed through data analysis, comprising the application of analytical and logical thinking to the study of collected data to identify patterns, correlations, and trends. This was established in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter analysed the outcomes of the findings from the data collected, and provided some answers to the research questions, as far as performance management

is concerned at Dikgatlong Municipality. It dealt with the impact of managers' performance versus literature.

1.10. CONCLUSION

The Municipal System Act expressly states that managers within municipalities must adhere to the aforementioned managerial performance to accomplish their duties or forward the goals of municipalities. Thus, the following chapter will deal with the impact of managers' performance using the literature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2017), a literature review is a complete evaluation of the available literature for any question of research. It is an assessment, summary, and study of the literature and a clarification of what research has already been performed for a particular research area. Several ideas are key in explaining the different terms, which are intended to be used to clarify their meaning and interpretation of research. The literature review also serves as a foundation to determine what type of questions one could potentially ask in the empirical component.

2.2. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMINOLOGIES

Definitions of some of the important terms utilized in this research study are provided below. Certain phrases may have a meaning that deviates from the norm in specific situations. They will refer to the following for this study to whom they are attributed:

- (a) Dikgatlong Local Municipality – refers to the Frances Baard District Municipality, Northern Cape Province, a local municipality with the number NC092. For most of the research, the municipality's name is reduced to Dikgatlong or Dikgatlong Municipality.
- (b) Local Municipality – is used to describe the most accessible level of government, as well as one of the three spheres of government. These municipalities are responsible for maintaining parks, recreation areas, water quality, sanitation, and service delivery;
- (c) Performance agreement – the executive's responsibility for particular municipal goals, which aids management in coordinating operations and elucidating how work unit activities contribute to the municipality's objectives. These are by the duties and job descriptions of the municipal official and are signed annually.
- (d) Performance information - reveals the policies and procedures that are effective as well as the extent to which a municipality is reaching its goals.

- (e) Performance management - a strategic approach to the municipality that can provide managers, employees, council members, and stakeholders at various levels with a set of tools and techniques to plan, monitor, and evaluate the municipality's performance regularly in terms of metrics and goals for impact, efficiency, and effectiveness (Goleman, 2017). Senior managers' signatures on performance agreements fall under this category. The phrase will be used interchangeably with performance management agreements or information for this study.
- (f) Performance management system or processes - a system that measures employee performance in an objective and consistent way. To make sure that everyone in the municipality is in line with and making a contribution to the strategic objectives of the municipality, a variety of technologies and approaches are utilized by the system. This covers factors that support excellent performance, such as the workplace culture, as well as other facets of human resources, like the retention and incentive of competent staff member (Kim & Jung, 2022).
- (g) Resident - a person who makes their home or resides in a specific location (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). Residents for this study would be defined as people, organizations, and government agencies that use properties under the Dikgatlong Local Municipality's authority and consequently get municipal services. This also covers the farming community, whether or not it receives municipal services, that is under the Dikgatlong Local Municipality's jurisdiction. This phrase was used to refer to the neighborhood or its residents interchangeably;
- (h) Services delivery – refers to the provision of clean water, electricity, proper infrastructure assets, and community assets/services such as parks, to the local community. (THE MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT, n.d.)

2.3. CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT

According to Nzimakwe and Ntshakala,(2016), the regulations aim to outline how municipal administrators' performance will be uniformly directed, monitored, and

enhanced. Both the employment contract between a municipal manager and managers who report directly to municipal managers and the performance agreement between a municipality, a municipal manager, and managers who report directly to municipal managers are covered by the legislation. This provides a foundation for local government performance and ongoing development. The employment contract specifies the terms of employment for managers who report directly to municipal managers as well as other managers. The performance agreement similarly reassures the municipal council about what may and should be expected from their municipal managers and managers who report directly to municipal managers.

The modern workplace requires managers who are adaptable and innovative. Such measures will ensure that municipalities comply with their constitutional mandates, which in essence is service delivery. Performance management has been recognized as a method for fostering accountability in the context of municipal government. The foundation for managing results in any area of government is performance measurement, together with strategic planning, benchmarking, and continual improvement. Making the best use of available data and knowledge is crucial for improving the execution of the municipality's mandate. Further, performance information is key to effective management as it facilitates effective accountability, enabling councillors, members of the public, and other interested parties to track progress, identify the scope for improvement, and better understand the issues involved (Menzel, 1998).

According to Anitha (2014), a wholesome workplace environment is the cornerstone when it comes to maintaining a positive outcome. The growth of any organization stems from the growth of its employees. She further noted that building a conducive work environment is essential for every organization as it ensures that employees use their work hours productively and effectively, something that creates a high-performing team culture. According to Raj (2021) and Sheep (2006), this can only happen when employees are recognized, rewarded, and valued for their efforts and contribution to the company. He added that the employees need to be consistently motivated and committed to work to their best potential. Although he looked at this from a trading

company's perspective, wherein he stated that this in turn benefits the company as it could lead to growth in sales, and business and have a huge impact on morale and employee performance, it is my considered view that this can be equated to the public sector. Establishing a supportive work culture with equally supportive management is the best way to build a long-term and healthy engagement in any establishment, which includes the public sector. What is key in both Raj's (2021) and Anita's (2014) conclusions is that employees need to be aware of what they are expected to do and should be motivated. In the case of Dikgatlong Municipality, awareness could be in the form of a signed performance agreement.

To achieve maximum results from the employees, the municipality needs to ensure that the environment is conducive to that. Mwanzi, Wamitu, and Kiama (2017) highlighted the importance of this when they acknowledged that creating an atmosphere enables people to take calculated risks, succeed, and even fail sometimes. This shows the commitment companies have in constructing an environment that nurtures and rewards high performers. The primary goals for that are to motivate every employee and treat them as partners in progress while providing them with an opportunity to participate in generating and sharing the wealth of the organization. Through these various efforts to create a constructive work culture, organizations can produce impactful partnerships that lead to successful consumer experiences while creating additional opportunities for the advancement of the entire ecosystem. A collaborative culture fosters inclusiveness, where all the members of the team contribute towards the company's collective success (Bhayani, 2023).

In terms of Section 38 of the Municipal Structure Act, a municipality must promote a culture of performance management among political structures, office bearers, and administration. A municipality must also administer its affairs in an economical, effective, efficient, and accountable manner. The Municipal Systems Act of 2000 and the Municipal Performance Regulations for Municipal Managers and Managers Directly Accountable to Municipal Managers (2006), provide for the establishment and implementation of performance management for every municipality in South Africa. Hence, according to Dharia (2021), the workplace environment is the cornerstone when

it comes to maintaining a positive outcome, as the growth of any organization stems from the growth of its employees. Dharia (2021) further noted that building a conducive work environment is essential for every organisation as it ensures that employees use their work hours productively and effectively. He added that when employees are recognised, rewarded, and valued for their efforts and contribution to the company, they are consistently motivated and committed to working to their best potential.

The South African government developed and adopted a comprehensive policy to give effect to the new constitutional vision of local government. This led to the adoption of the White Paper on Local Government by Cabinet in March 1998. The White Paper spelled out a framework and programme which would radically transform the existing local government system. The cornerstone of the White Paper was the notion of developmental local government, which was defined as a local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic, and material needs and improve the quality of their lives. The accomplishment of the aforementioned objectives is contingent upon the possession of appropriate skills and effective capacity within local government. However, it is important to note that these views will be further expounded upon in the recommendations section.

2.4. CAPACITY KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Ajala (2012) emphasizes that the key to success lies in recruiting and retaining the right talent. Additionally, a positive working environment plays a crucial role in distinguishing between satisfied and dissatisfied employees. Mzwanzu et al. (2017) support this notion, highlighting that career development today encompasses dimensions such as skill building, personal growth, and organizational responsibility aligned with the company's culture and values. Hellriegel et al. (2004) stress the significance of having talented individuals for business success, with Financial Mail (2022) identifying the ability to attract, develop, and retain talented people as a key factor in service improvement.

Approaching the concept of capacitation from a different angle, Raj (2021) underscores the importance of a well-planned job rotation program. Such a program exposes employees to various aspects of the organization, broadening skill sets, enriching networks, and preparing individuals for leadership roles by providing a comprehensive view.

Lazenby (2018) reaffirms the importance of capacitation, defining knowledge management as the application of collective workforce knowledge to achieve specific organizational goals. Effective managers, according to Hellriegel et al. (2004), understand the importance of motivating employees by identifying their needs and goals. Highly motivated employees, in my perspective, contribute significantly to the enhancement of service delivery in municipalities, especially given the current state of municipalities in our country.

Motivated employees, in my view, exhibit enthusiasm in their work, contributing to increased productivity. An effective manager recognizes the individuality of each employee, as noted by Schultz et al. (2003), directing their work to fulfil individual's needs and contribute to organizational goals. Effective managers are crucial to the overall success of any organization, whether a global giant or a small start-up enterprise.

Some of the themes that various researchers have concluded on are as follows:

2.4.1. Hiring an adequate workforce

Ajala (2012) emphasizes the importance of workforce forecasting to ensure a sufficient number of personnel to handle existing workloads, preventing burnout caused by employees performing tasks meant for multiple workers. This is particularly relevant in the context of most South African municipalities facing high vacancy rates.

2.4.2. Hiring the right employees for the Job

Ajala (2012) suggests that while a company may be tempted to hire inexperienced or uneducated individuals to save costs, this rarely leads to favorable outcomes. Hiring individuals with the right qualifications ensures higher productivity, contributing to a

conducive work environment. The correlation between productivity in the private sector and service delivery in the public sector is noteworthy.

2.4.3. Managerial attributes

Lazenby (2018), suggests that conventionally the term management denotes the process of organizing, planning, decision-making, motivation, leading, and controlling the human resource of the organisation so that the organization should be able to reach its objective or goals effectively or efficiently. Furthermore, a manager is a person who seeks to achieve the goals and vision of an organisation, through coordinating all the work activities of the employees. A manager should control and direct the allocations of human resources and organises the material of the organisation to achieve the organisation's goals.

In local government, the municipal manager is the Accounting Officer, and the other senior managers are commonly referred to as section 57 managers. Competent managers are critical for service delivery. According to Gardelliano (2015), Boyatzis (2006), Golman, & Rhee, 2000;) competency is the use of related knowledge, abilities, and skills required to successfully perform tasks and critical work functions in a defined work setting. Krapohl (2016) on the other hand, defined competency as a measure of both proven knowledge and proven skills. Nagarajan and Prabhu (2018) looked at competency from a production process. "They noted that competency is a production made possible at a maximum point, either as an individual or a group, and it can be accomplished within a given time, regardless of whether it is done as an individual or a group."

Gardelliano's (2015) application of competency models for recognizing and improving the talents of its managers is currently a key organizational strategy. His model looks at the aspect from a different angle. He looked at it from a historical perspective. This is equally important as it gives a clearer perspective of the transformational process and pitfalls to avoid. The key elements of what is termed his model are as follows:

- Only lately have the terms "competency" and "competence" entered the psychology lexicon; for a long time, only terms like aptitudes, talents, or capacities were employed.

- Changes in educational and training discourse at the end of the 20th century influenced an increase in interest in the constructs of competence and competency. They also influenced the building of relationships with knowledge application and skill development within education programs, resulting in knowledge application becoming a significant component of competence. Competence was defined in the 1980s as the ability/skill required to conduct a specific task by the requirements. To put it another way, competence is a personal trait that relates to a specific domain of action. It refers to a set of mutually and hierarchically related information, talents, skills, motivational dispositions, and attitudes that enable a person to do a specific task. (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2010).
- The structure of managers' professional competence becomes more complex, and manager performance is dependent on the integration of manager responsibilities and activities, as well as at the executive level
- In managerial positions, while acting, the manager assumes a variety of responsibilities, all of which rely heavily on his or her ability to communicate. A manager role is a collection of specified responsibilities that a manager is required to complete as a result of his or her position in a company.

Other researchers looked at competency from the perspective of being effective or ineffective. For example, Willemse (2016) noted that managerial competency is a trait that can be consistently measured to show a significant difference between effective and ineffective performance. This means competent people are flexible in such a way that they can execute tasks to the required extent and quality. This view was concurred to by Dorel (2013). Hellriegel, Jackson, & Slocum (2008) identified the key attributes of competence, namely knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Henderson (2016) on the hand did not agree with attitude. Instead, he replaced attitude with experience. Fundamentally, the issues are similar in nature.

2.4.4. Effective manager's performance and roles

It is clear from the foregoing that a manager's performance has many attributes and concepts. It is important to note that the distinction between science and art emerges, and corresponding perspectives are further explored, as the discussion unfolds. It possibly hinges on management's responsibilities. That is one of the reasons why managers, in the public sector are required to sign a performance agreement. Mintzberg (2017) concurred with this view. He, however, looked at the manager's responsibilities by grouping them into three main categories, namely interpersonal, informational, and decisional. These categories are defined as follows:

(a) Interpersonal roles

A municipality needs to appoint someone who has good interpersonal character. Managers take on interpersonal roles to provide guidance and supervision to individuals as well as the entire organization. The manager should be a figurehead, leader, and liaison officer. The person should be able to communicate the organization's mission and goals to employees and other stakeholders. The manager's role as a liaison officer is to coordinate the actions of people and groups, both inside and outside the company. He should build up a network of outside contacts and informants who provide him with favours and information (Staff, 2023).

(b) Informational roles

A manager seeks and receives a wide range of data to gain a full awareness of the business and its surroundings. A manager's role as a disseminator is to provide information to employees to impact their work attitudes and behavior. As a spokesperson, the manager promotes the organization such that people both inside and outside of it are positive about it. He informs outsiders about the organization's plans, policies, actions, and outcomes, among other things. The flow of information to the community is very important. Educating the community in terms of their responsibilities to pay for services, information about services that will be interrupted, etc. This attribute is ideal in any municipality (Municipal Service Delivery, n.d.)

(c) Decisional Roles.

A manager looks for opportunities in the organization and its surroundings. He generates fresh ideas, observes opportunities, and initiates new actions. He controls the unforeseen occurrence or crisis that threatens the organization as a disturbance handler, and he is in charge of taking corrective action. As a resource allocator, a manager is in charge of allocating all types of organizational resources. He must determine the most effective strategy to boost organizational performance by utilizing people and other resources. Managers negotiate with other managers of groups claiming first rights to resources, or with the organization and outside parties such as suppliers or customers (Tarabeih et al., 2022).

The concurrence by Robbins et al. (2020) noted that managers play each of these roles to affect the behaviour of individuals and groups both inside and outside the organisation (employees, shareholders, customers, suppliers, and the local community).

2.5. STRUCTURE, NATURE, AND TYPES OF COMPETENCY

2.5.1. Structure of management competence

Velu and Maxithara (2017) identify several manager competency models, one of which comprises six clusters, each containing various detailed managerial competencies. This structural framework aligns with the operational guidelines outlined for municipalities by the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000). The clusters are as follows:

- (a) Communication Competency: Involves both informal and formal communication, along with negotiation skills.
- (b) Planning and Administration Competency: Encompasses information gathering, analysis, and problem-solving.
- (c) Teamwork Competency: Involves designing teams and creating supportive environments, including managing team dynamics.

(d) Strategic Action Competency: Encompasses understanding the industry and the organization, leading to strategic actions.

(e) Global Awareness Competency: Involves maintaining integrity and ethical conduct, fostering a culture of openness and sensitivity.

(f) Self-Management Competency: Encompasses cultural knowledge and understanding, personal drive and resilience, self-awareness, and development.

It's noteworthy that Mintzberg (2017) has also developed four competency clusters—Communication, Planning and Administration, Global Awareness, and Self-Management. These clusters consolidate some of the clusters identified by Velu et al. (2017), essentially making the two models similar.

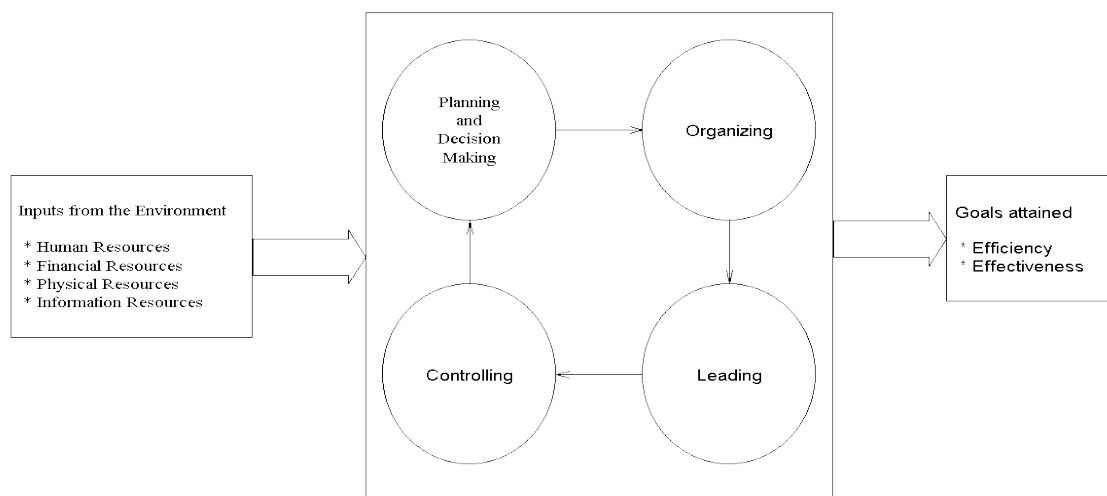
2.5.2. Self-management competency

- Considered the most crucial attribute in a manager competency model (Alsherhan and Al Shbail, 2020), self-management competency's relevance varies based on the management level. For instance:
- For senior managers, key competency elements include negotiation, creating a supportive environment, managing team dynamics, understanding the organization, and taking strategic action.
- For middle managers, relevant competency elements include informal communication, personal drive, resilience, self-awareness, and development.
- For first-line managers, pertinent competency elements include information gathering, analysis and problem-solving, budgeting, and financial management, understanding the industry, and cultural openness and sensitivity.
- Communication competence is universally deemed essential in management, playing a theoretical role, and is observable in the communication behaviours of managers. (Stern & Gold, 2021)

2.5.3. The nature of management competence

Triana, Gu, and Richard (2019) noted that an organization's resources (human, financial, physical, and information) are used in the management of the organization's activities (planning, decision-making, organizing, leading, and controlling). The main purpose of this is to achieve organizational goals effectively. Utilizing resources wisely and avoiding unnecessary waste is efficient and effective in what needs to be done correctly. According to Landis and Organ (2020), the purpose of a manager is to accomplish the management process. In particular, a manager is someone who plans and makes decisions, leads, organizes, and controls human, financial, physical, and information resources. This process is illustrated in the following diagram.

The management processes



The core elements of the management process are defined as follows:

Planning and decision-making

The goals of an organization are determined by the steps it takes to achieve them. This can be done through planning. To attain such objectives, the company must make judgments and make decisions on which course to follow (Planning, Organizing, Leading, and Controlling | Principles of Management, n.d.).

Upon initial examination of the foregoing processes, it appears that Dikgatlong Municipality may be deficient in several aspects, with a primary concern identified in the

planning process. Planning, a multifaceted component, encompasses the selection of missions, objectives, and the actions designed to achieve them. Additionally, it involves intricate decision-making, requiring the careful selection of future courses of action from among various alternatives. A comprehensive analysis in subsequent sections will provide a more nuanced understanding of the municipality's performance in these processes.

Organising

Organizing is a process by which the established plans are moved closer to realization (Goleman, 2015). When the municipality is organized properly and every person knows what they must do, it assists a lot. In terms of local government frameworks, municipal workers should be aware of what is expected of them. Resources are to be assembled and coordinated properly. According to Muizenberg (2108), organizing is part of managing, which involves establishing an intentional structure of roles for people to fill in the organization. It is my considered view that organizing might be lacking at Dikgatlong Municipality. This is against the background that if Dikgatlong Municipality was organized properly, there would not have been minimal leakages and the non-collection of refuse.

The foregoing aspect violates the aspect of good governance. A good manager helps an organization succeed. According to Muzenburg (2018), success means the following:

- An organization is **effective**: it accomplishes things that support the vision and mission.
- An organization is **efficient**: it is doing things in the best possible manner.
- An organization is **sustainable**: it is generating revenue to support its continued operation.

It is during the data analysis phase that a nuanced understanding of the situation at Dikgatlong Municipality emerges. The preliminary findings indicate a lack of effectiveness, posing sustainability challenges for the municipality (Financial Recovery Report, 2022). Additionally, the report highlights concerns about cash flow, suggesting a

potential need for financial support or intervention from the National Treasury. While Muizenburg (2018) suggests that to achieve better results, managers should collaborate with both their staff and the community, it's essential to recognize that this alone may not directly address financial issues. The effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability achieved through collaboration with people in the organization may not be synonymous with resolving financial challenges. It is crucial to distinguish between internal organizational dynamics ("people") and broader community engagement, and further analysis is required to ascertain the specific measures needed to address the financial concerns at Dikgatlong Municipality.

Leading (Managing staff)

When leading, various processes are used to get people to work together, to advance the organization's interests.

Controlling (Monitoring and evaluating activities)

Controlling, as a crucial element of management, goes beyond mere monitoring; it involves a comprehensive assessment of the organization's progress in pursuing its objectives. This rigorous evaluation ensures not only the meeting of the municipality's objectives but also the optimization of operational efficiency and effectiveness.

2.5.4. The four pillars of effective performance

Goleman (2015) asserts that the primary challenge lies not in identifying capabilities but in implementing a process that ensures buy-in from municipal managers. Management positions at the municipality necessitate the application of four distinct yet complementary pillars of managerial competency, including leading and managing

people, effective communication, comprehensive organizational understanding, and resource management.

Interestingly, Onyebuchi and Olakunle (2021) echo a similar perspective, identifying these same four pillars as the commonly accepted foundation for developing professional performance. While the terminology and nuances may vary, the core competencies outlined by Onyebuchi and Olakunle (2021) align with Goleman's (2015) pillars, suggesting a shared foundation for managerial competency development. This underscores the significance of these key competencies in effective municipal management. Their four pillars are as follows:

(a) Understanding the organization

The ability of management to have a thorough understanding of a company's operational processes and regulations to ensure that specific units are aligned and productive (efficient and effective). The pillar is concerned with competencies that are linked to a company's vision, mission, and strategic objectives.

(b) Managing resources

This entails a manager's capacity to apply tools and comprehend the manufacturing process to achieve certain objectives. The pillar is concerned with competencies connected to an organisation's project management and performance evaluation abilities.

(c) Effective communication

This is a managerial talent that allows for easy and enjoyable interactions with stakeholders. The pillar addresses skills relating to a firm's manager's capacity to listen, provide feedback, present effectively, and supervise textual communication.

(d) Leading and managing people

This necessitates the development of competence in offering feedback and direction to ensure customer and employee satisfaction. Initiative and problem-solving are aided by the capacity to create a collaborative environment. The pillar addresses skills connected to a company's team formation, customer relations, and performance evaluation.

All of the four pillars of managerial competencies assist management in providing a platform for people to enhance their skills. Individual employees can use the four managerial competency pillars to prepare for a promotion to management or to plan for professional advancement. Further, the pillars assist senior management in collecting input from subordinates on how successfully they are performing managerial tasks. Thus, the pillars help articulate the firm's managerial requirements.

2.5.5. Differentiation by levels of management

Top management plays a pivotal role in governing an organisation, responsible for establishing goals, formulating the overall strategy, and enforcing operating policies. Their decisions extend beyond selecting activities to engage in; they also make crucial determinations regarding the organisation's expansion. In many organisations, including municipalities, a significant number of middle managers operate within this hierarchical structure. Specifically within the South African context, these middle managers are officials who report to section 57 managers. These managers primarily implement the goals and strategies designed by the top managers. First-line managers, on the other hand, supervise and coordinate the activities of operating employees. They supervise their subordinates directly, most of the time.

2.5.6. Differentiation by areas of management

According to Onyebuchi and Olakunle (2021), managers assist in the development of strategies to encourage customers and clients to purchase the company's goods and services. In addressing its challenges, Dikgatlong Municipality may benefit from having an individual dedicated to encouraging community members to pay for services and promoting the municipality's services. However, it is essential to recognize that this suggestion is a prospective consideration rather than a finalized recommendation, pending a more thorough examination of the municipality's specific needs and circumstances. Further analysis and discussion in subsequent sections will provide a more informed basis for recommendations.. Furthermore, accounting, cash management, and investment functions are all handled by financial managers. Hence, the managers that need to be appointed at the municipality will need to have extensive knowledge of investment and plans on how to make the municipality have a healthy cash flow. Operations managers are in charge of developing and maintaining the systems that enable an organization's products and services to be created. Possessing the necessary skills is crucial for every staff member in the Dikgatlong Municipality, as effective systems play a pivotal role in revenue collection. These skills must be applicable across various platforms, ensuring compatibility with different web browsers, such as Internet Explorer. Production control, inventory control, quality control, and plant site selection and layout are all used to achieve their objectives.

2.5.7. Managerial skills

According to Newman, Allen, and Miao (2015), technical skills are the abilities required to do or comprehend tasks that are important to the organization. The ability to communicate with, understand, and motivate individuals and groups is referred to as interpersonal skills. Conceptual skills are the ability to think abstractly and the mental capacity to comprehend the big picture, or the organization's and its environment's overall operations. (Taylor & Taylor, 2024) deposits that, skills required by managers vary with their position in the organisation.

2.5.8. The nature of managerial work

Work in management is fast-paced, uncertain, and full of interruptions and fragmented operations (Fortis, 2019). A manager's daily responsibilities are varied and demanding. Managers who can make good decisions in a short amount of time, on the other hand, are quite happy in their work.

2.6. PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

For local governments to perform better and render services to the community, they need to adhere to several proven and effective management principles. All these principles should form part of performance management systems. One of the good models of effective principles of management was developed by Fortis. According to Fortis (2019), there are different principles of management. He identified five principles, all of which can be easily adopted in local government). Whilst these were developed from a private sector perspective, they apply to the public sector in general and more specifically to local government. The following is a description of the principles:

2.6.1. Principle No. 1: The Functions of Management

Many managers erroneously perceive their roles as task-oriented or supervisory. However, at its core, management is a discipline encompassing five fundamental functions: planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling. Understanding these functions is crucial for managers to direct their efforts toward productive activities. Fortis (2019) outlines the five functions of outstanding management as follows:

2.6.2. Principle No. 2: The Types and roles of managers within the organization

Organisational success is intricately tied to its structure and the effectiveness of managerial roles. In a typical organisational structure, the municipal manager and council hold positions above other senior staff, forming a hierarchical pyramid. This structure is essential for the effective distribution of responsibilities, decision-making

processes, and overall progress. As depicted in the pyramid model, higher levels in the hierarchy usually involve fewer managers, emphasizing the importance and complexity of their roles.

To support these insights, Mintzberg's framework is grounded in extensive research and observation of managerial behavior. Scholars such as Stewart (1999) and Quinn (1988) have further validated and expanded upon Mintzberg's roles, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of managerial functions within diverse organizational contexts.

2.6.3. Principle No. 3: Effective management of organizational resources

Operating the organisation's strategic strategy involves putting resources where they will have the biggest impact. Resources include merchandise, people, money, and time. Power (2015) states that a project has a goal in addition to a start and end date. Managers actively determine what needs to be done, when it should be done, and what resources are required to meet the plan's objectives. They also participate in operational and budget planning processes. It's critical to keep in mind that this is not a popularity competition. The strategic strategy and its particular goals may decide what is and is not important.

2.6.4. Principle No. 4: Understanding and applying the Four Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) in Maximizing Human Potential

Effective managers comprehend the environment and culture in leadership settings, claims Hamilton (2016). What makes these managers so successful? Their comprehension of emotional intelligence (EQ), or the abilities in each of its dimensions, is the basic cause of this.

Regarding this, he distinguished four aspects. These included excellent social skills, self-management, high levels of self-awareness, and social awareness. These are all valuable qualities that foster strong interpersonal relationships. Stronger and more efficient managerial performance is the result. According to (Sudbrink et al., 2022), EQ is a crucial element in becoming a successful supervisor. According to Hamilton (2015), a manager's responsibility is to figure out how to elevate a team member's skill and talent to a higher level of performance. This idea doesn't suggest manipulation at all. Instead, it is about maximizing human potential, one team member at a time.

2.6.5. Principle No. 5: Know the business

Because of their significant experience, the majority of competent managers possess a reasonable understanding of the sector and apply the fundamentals of outstanding management to their work in overseeing their subordinates. However, experience gained from prior employment may not be enough in certain organizations. Before everything else, managers and prospective managers need to understand the workings of the business and how its various components function as a whole (Jobs, 2019). This will help the manager, or the incoming manager, to align with the mission, values, and other aspects of the organisation. To boost job satisfaction and career success, a manager should align with the organization's vision, mission, strategies, leadership, systems, structure, and cultures, according to Hamilton (2015).

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review focused on the key concepts and terminologies relevant to the research. The review begins by defining the fundamental concept of a literature review as an evaluation and synthesis of existing research in a specific area. The definitions of key terminologies related to the research context, such as Dikgatlong Local Municipality, performance agreement, performance information, and resident, are clarified.

The section on a conducive environment emphasizes the importance of performance management in municipal settings, aligning goals with operational activities. The review stresses the need for a positive workplace culture to enhance employee engagement and, subsequently, service delivery. The legislative framework in South Africa, as outlined in the Municipal Systems Act and Municipal Performance Regulations, plays a pivotal role in shaping performance management practices in local government.

The discussion on capacity and knowledge management delves into the significance of recruiting and retaining skilled personnel, emphasizing the role of effective managers. Various perspectives on competencies, particularly in managerial roles, are explored, highlighting the importance of hiring the right workforce, managerial attributes, and the performance and roles of effective managers.

The exploration of competency models reveals the multi-faceted nature of managerial competence, encompassing communication, planning and administration, teamwork, strategic action, global awareness, and self-management. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the nature of management competence, emphasizing the efficient utilization of organizational resources to achieve goals.

Overall, this literature review lays the groundwork for the empirical component of the research, providing a solid foundation for understanding the complexities of performance management, conducive work environments, and the role of competencies in municipal settings. The insights gathered from existing literature will inform the subsequent chapters of the research, contributing to a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the context of Dikgatlong Local Municipality.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter provided a comprehensive literature review on performance management, delving into its crucial components and exploring its potential impact. Building on this foundation, the focus of the current study is to investigate the influence of managers' performance on the Dikgatlong Municipality. This chapter outlines key elements such as population and sample, research design, data collection and analysis, and the overall research methodology. Ethical considerations in the research process will also be discussed.

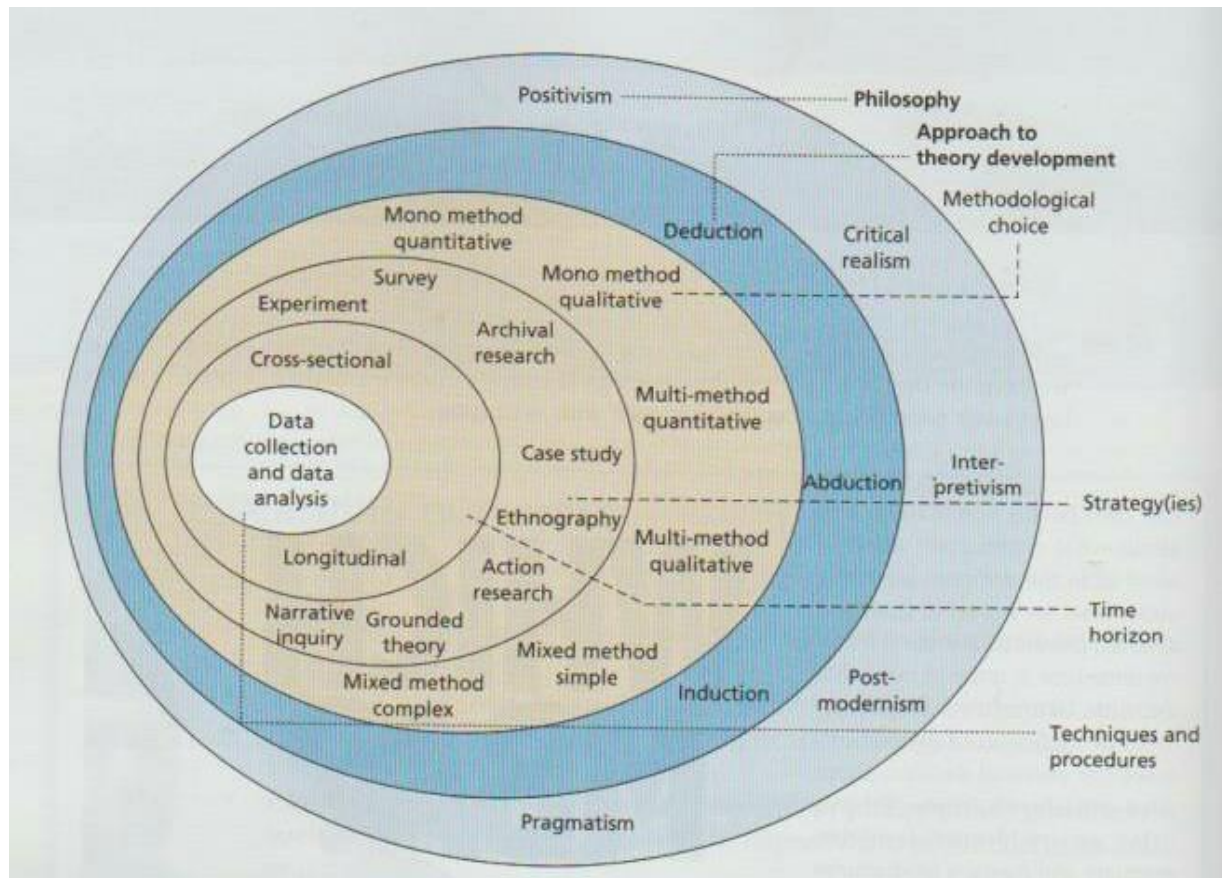
More information about the research technique is provided in this chapter. The reasons for using a qualitative research methodology in this study are given. The chapter examines methods for population size, sampling, data validation, and data collecting and analysis as they relate to the qualitative research approach. The final section of the chapter examines ethical considerations.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research technique, according to Wilkinson (2018), is the precise sequence of actions or procedures used to locate, select, organize, and evaluate data on a subject. A research paper's methodology section allows the reader to evaluate a study's dependability and general validity. It also answers two important questions: How was the data generated or collected, and how was it processed?

The procedures that will be employed to gather data are included in the process. As a result, Saunders et al.'s research onion techniques were used as part of the approach for this study (2009: 123). They explained how the layers of the research process are represented metaphorically, as seen in the following figure.

Research onion



Source: Saunders *et al.* (2009: 124)

The research onion summarises the entire and ideal research process, irrespective of the research methodology. As can be seen from the onion, it starts from thinking about research philosophies and approaches to theory development, until one gets to consider research strategies and choices, which are the central layers. The sixth layer consists of data collection and analysis, which are critical components of any research.

3.3. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher used the qualitative research method. To improve subject matters, researchers usually use research design that allows them to improve knowledge about the phenomenon.. It is therefore clear that research design focuses on the end-product. Research concentrates on the point of departure and the type of research problem or questions, on the logic of research. It further emphasizes the kind of evidence that is required to address the research questions sufficiently. In this case, one will be using the qualitative method, since this form of data will be able to provide a better understanding of the research problem.

Seale et al (2015) identified the qualitative method as being an incompletely defensive position. This was so because the method allows one to use semi-structured interview techniques, relevant to the institution chosen. Cohan (2014) added that qualitative involves personal experiences in each stage of qualitative research. This is different from quantitative research in that qualitative research investigates or inquires on real-life proceedings.

3.3.1. Justification of the qualitative approach and a phenomenological study

The main reason for the qualitative method is that:

- it is applicable and relevant to research in the municipal environment as it addresses the "how" and "why" research questions;
- it enables a deeper understanding of experiences, phenomena, and context; and
- allows the researcher to ask questions that cannot be easily put into numbers to understand human experience. The researcher will include participants who work for the municipality at a senior level. To better comprehend the status quo in Dikgatlong Municipality, the researcher will be able to examine in-depth aspects of the

performance of senior managers in municipalities. The researcher will then be able to draw reliable conclusions about management performance and its difficulties.

3.3.2. Sampling strategy

A sampling strategy is a plan you put in place to make sure the sample you utilize for your research study represents the population from which you selected your sample, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000). Population, sample, sampling frame, eligibility requirements, inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, representativeness, sampling designs, bias, sampling error, power analysis, effect size, and attrition are some of the terminology related to sampling. Convenience, accidental, snowball, quota, purposive, simple random, and cluster sampling are some examples of sample types. The following sample strategies will be used in conjunction with the qualitative research approach in this study.

3.3.3. Purposive sampling

A purposive sampling method, which falls under non-probability selection, was used in selecting participants in this municipality. This requires participants to be selected based on several key dimensions and that they possess the characteristics of an ideal group (Leedy and Ormrod. 2015: 183). According to Blumberg (2011), this type of selection is based on judgment, mainly guided by the fact that the participant meets pre-set criteria or “firm criterion”. Sample bias was avoided in that measures were adopted to avoid the possibility of bias, such as intentionally choosing only residents within the same demographics. Cooper and Schindler (2015) and Quinlan (2016) added that the researcher involves participants or spots who can best help to understand the topic at hand. This was concurred to by Creswell (2015). He noted that the researcher must include participants who can assist and who are informed about the research topic. These are some of the factors that lead to the selection of participants who are involved in the day-to-day running of the activities of the municipality.

3.3.4. Snowball sampling

According to Sadler, Lee, Lim & Fullerton (2010), this happens when the participants selected by the researcher, recruit other participants themselves. In other terms, this is

a referral process. It helped the researcher to interview people who could have been omitted for various reasons, one of which would be not being aware of them and their possible value to the research processes. It should be noted that the snowball effect increased the study's sample size. This was so because it was difficult to include these people in the sample size. That information came during the interview process. The researcher received two (2) referrals.

3.3.5. Target population

A research population is usually a large collection of individuals or objects that are the main focus of a scientific study. The broader public benefits from research efforts. A clearly defined set of individuals or objects that are acknowledged to possess similar characteristics is frequently referred to as the "research population". A population, according to Creswell (2012: 142), is a collection of people who have similar features. In qualitative research, the term "population" is further defined as a collection of people who share some defining traits that the study may identify and examine. A population, in the words of Babbie (1992: 198), is the collection of items from which the sample is drawn. It is clarified further as the population from which the researcher hopes to draw findings. Population is defined by Quinlan (2011: 206) as all individuals, objects, or units pertinent to the study, including people, groups, organizations, documents, campaigns, incidents, and so forth.

The characteristic that binds the members of the population together usually matches the description of the population. The demographic "government officials" can be regarded as a well-defined group of individuals, since all of its members are, in fact, government officials.

3.3.6. Sample size

Guetterman (2020) indicated that a sample size refers to how many participants or other units are needed to address research questions. According to Tuovila (2020), who

indicates that when a prearranged number of observations are taken from a particularly large population and analysis is done, this process is called sampling

There is no agreement among academics about the minimum number of participants needed for qualitative research. Diverse perspectives are held by many researchers, including Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2004), Leedy and Ormrod (2015), Dworkin (2012), and Creswell (2014). As an illustration, the sample sizes proposed by Creswell (2014: 239), Leedy and Ormrod (2015: 273), and Dworkin (2012: 1319) ranged from five to fifty. In this context, Leedy and Ormrod (2015: 273) offered further advice. Instead of taking a prescriptive approach, the guidelines took a descriptive one when examining the sample size. Information power is an idea they put out. According to their perspective, fewer participants are needed the more knowledgeable the sample is about the topic being studied. Therefore, it would be best if the sample size was determined by taking into account the following five factors: the study's goal, sample specificity, application of accepted theory, anticipated discussion quality, and analytic approach.

Researchers such as Merriam (2009:25) and Morse (2000: 3) on the other hand set the minimum sample size rather than a range. He suggested “at least six”. This was contrary to Ritchie *et al.* (2004: 82) who set an upper limit. They suggested that the sample size “lie under 50”.

This researcher considered all the foregoing factors and views and set a sample size of twenty-two Dikgatlong Municipality's municipal officials, out of a staff establishment of 352. The twenty-two (22) participants were composed of:

- the Municipal Manager;
- the CFO;
- six senior managers;
- six middle managers; and
- Eight assistant managers management.

According to Creswell (2015), when generalising for a target population, the subgroup of that population is a sample of that group that the researcher plans to study. Therefore, the reason for selecting the above members of the municipality population, was because they are the core runners of the institution and they deal with the day-to-day activities of the municipality

3.3.7. Data collection method

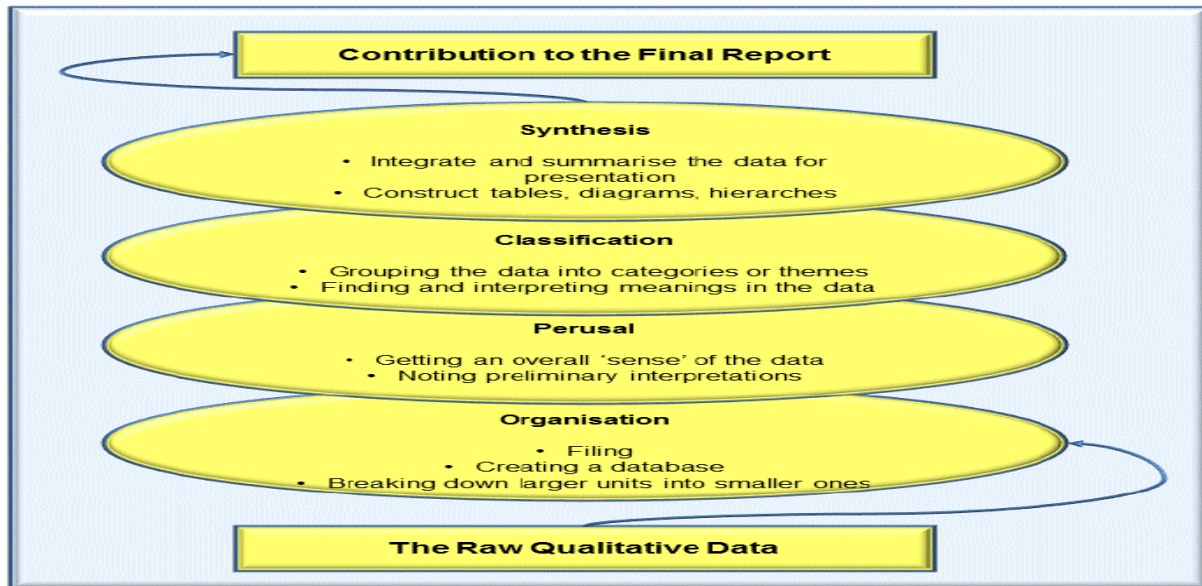
To answer research questions, test hypotheses, and assess results, data collection, according to Kabir (2006), is the act of obtaining and measuring information on variables of interest in a systematic and established manner. Any discipline of study, including the humanities, business, social and physical sciences, etc., has a data collection component.

Semi-structured interview questions were employed as the data-gathering technique in this investigation. All of the respondents participated in interactive interviews with the researcher, who followed up with questions to elucidate ideas, address specific concerns, and verify the accuracy of the data.

3.3.8. Data analysis

The researcher mainly used the data spiral, which was proposed by Creswell (2014), to analyse the qualitative data. The process included repetitive processes in that the researcher went through the data several times until the report was finalised. The figure below shows a diagrammatic presentation of the data spiral.

Creswell's data analysis spiral



Source: Creswell (2014)

3.3.9. Data quality and control

To achieve the key objectives of data collection in that it must be accurate, credible, and consistent in the dynamics and patterns they reflect, the researcher used the following principles:

3.3.9.1. Trustworthiness

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015: 336), trustworthiness is the degree to which the study's conclusions are seen by others as credible and trustworthy enough to be taken seriously. It is impossible to overlook the value of this construct. It was viewed by the research as a crucial and integrated component of all studies. It has a benefit in that it guarantees the caliber of both the study procedure and the findings. Guba's four criteria—credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability—for evaluating trustworthiness have garnered significant support from most academics, claims Shenton (2004: 63). However, it should be mentioned that Anney (2014: 273) and Lincoln and Guba (1985: 34) were not in agreement with Morse et al. (2002: 4). They argue that validity and reliability standards are still applicable to qualitative research. According to Creswell (2014: 251), there is some agreement with Morse et al. (2002) from Lincoln and Guba (1985: 112), O'Cathain (2010: 540), and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010: 2).

Qualitative research approach is validated by these researchers through the use of quality, credibility, trustworthiness, conformability, and interpretive rigor. Therefore, the majority of renowned scholars cannot agree on anything.

The researcher employed Anney's (2014) criterion of authenticity in addition to Guba's four criteria—credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability—for this investigation. Below is a more thorough explanation of these requirements.

3.3.9.2. Credibility

This has to do with an effort to show that the experience being investigated is accurately represented via presentation. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), a study's credibility is assessed by its ability to identify the experience when it is presented to readers or core searchers. Credibility, in the words of Tobin and Begley (2004), is concerned with how well respondents' opinions "fit" with how the researcher represents them. A variety of strategies were proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to deal with credibility. These strategies included prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation of data collecting, and researcher triangulation. In this investigation, the scholar:

- Performed peer debriefing to offer an outside evaluation of the research procedure, perhaps boosting credibility,
- Referential adequacy was investigated as a way to compare initial conclusions and interpretations with the unprocessed data.

The process of member checking, which involves testing the conclusions and interpretations with the participants, is another way to operationalise credibility.

3.3.9.3. Transferability

Transferability relates to the fact that the study's theoretical and analytical generalisation is applicable under certain considerations such as the study sample, similar situations, questions, and problems, and under different demographic characteristics. The

researcher provided relevant information so that readers could decide whether or not the findings were transferable to another environment or situation.

3.3.9.4. Dependability

Yilmaz (2013:319) states that qualitative researchers believe that if credibility has been demonstrated, it is not necessary to also and separately demonstrate dependability. Trustworthiness, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) is dependability. The researcher used qualitative research in which the researcher and the participants actively build their trust in the events as they unfold. The research conducted a peer debriefing or peer scrutiny for solid communication habits that create trust.

3.3.9.5. Conformability

The construct entails that the research findings should be free from personal interests and biases so that it creates and maintains data neutrality. The researcher eliminated interferences and influences when dealing with the respondents.

3.3.9.6. Triangulation

Several qualitative researchers have employed a technique known as triangulation to verify the precision and coherence of their findings, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2015: 278). They added that the procedure comprises gathering evidence from several sources in the hopes that they will all converge to support a specific theory or hypothesis (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015: 104). Tobin and Begley (2004: 392) assert that achieving a concept of crystallization can be facilitated by the appropriate and right use of various forms of triangulation or a "triangulation state of mind." The idea allows for an endless variety of methods.

This researcher evaluated the participants' answers to questions with related principles and follow-up questions to arrive at this principle.

3.3.10. Ethical considerations

Ethical consideration is one of the most important aspects of research. According to Brynman and Bell (2017), research may fail if ethical consideration is not taken into consideration. The research considered the following factors and respected the dignity of the research participants.

3.3.10.1. Permission obtained

According to white and Rayner (2016), obtaining permission for access to a specific population is when a researcher seeks and obtains approval from the relevant official. It therefore implies that the researcher needed to obtain permission to perform the research. Approval was obtained from the Municipal Manager.

3.3.10.2. Informed consent

In social research ethics, it is defined as a key principle. According to Bryman et al. (2018) informed consent implies that prospective research participants should be given as much information as might be needed to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in a study. The researcher informed and briefed the participants thoroughly about the topic and ensured that they understood the content of the research.

3.3.10.3. Voluntary participation

According to Brian and Rayner (2019), voluntary participation means the people answering questions have made a free choice to be involved in the gathering of information. Hence, the researcher ensured that the participants targeted participated willingly and were not coerced.

3.3.10.4. Confidentiality and anonymity

According to Bryman et al. (2018), this is the principle of not revealing publicly what another person does not want the researcher to reveal. Thus, the researcher took steps to protect the identity of the participants from being discovered by others. Furthermore, the researcher kept the anonymity of participants. As such, whenever necessary, pseudonyms were used to conceal the participants' confidential details.

3.3.10.5. No harm

According to Bryman (2018), the researcher should not harm, or do someone no harm, especially when researchers are recommending a course of action that they think is worthwhile, helpful, or useful. Therefore, the researcher explained to the participants the principle of 'no harm'. The participants must be considered by the researcher.

3.4. CONCLUSION

To run a municipality effectively the municipality should have competent managers. It should be managers that will comply and follow the required legislation and relevant policy documents and be skillful. Municipalities need to be managed effectively by competent managers for them to function effectively.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to present the research findings. As mentioned earlier, data was collected from selected municipal officials using semi-structured interview questions. The municipal officials interviewed formed part of the population. The findings are infused with some of the concepts described in the literature review.

4.2. HIGH-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The participants for the research were all municipal officials. All of the participants possessed reasonable knowledge and experience in their respective fields and provided more insight into the subject under study.

The semi-structured interview questions were shared with the participants on the day of the interviews. This was done to prevent the participants from preparing a rosy report, but rather to put the issues as they know them without preparing for possible 'correct answers. However, the interviews were not limited to the interview schedule; sub-questions and points of clarity were raised during interviews. This led to valuable information that was utilized as part of the content derived from the in-depth individual interviews.

4.3. PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Each interview topic was explained to the participants, and they were given some discretion in how they answered it. This included adding to or changing answers to earlier questions when the respondent was reminded of crucial details that were not expressed clearly. Five (5) themes were then discerned from the examination of the interview answers. The subjects were chosen according to how crucial they are to

comprehend the state of quality service delivery and the role that management performance plays in hastening service delivery.

The study's measurement construct had an impact on how the themes were clustered as well.

4.3.1. Failure to adequately implement the accountability cycle.

Most participants noted that the municipality failed to properly implement the accountability cycle. For example, instead of starting with the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which is a five-year document, at times the municipality starts from the budget processes backward. As such, some of the key projects in the IDP are not implemented. The other respondent noted that:

“... [at] the moment you deviate from the accountability cycle, that's where you cannot have, first of all, realistic targets and projections as well as delivery on those targets and projections”.

Participants universally observed that the existing accountability cycle poses a significant challenge for councillors to successfully navigate its completion. This challenge predominantly stems from a misalignment between the term length of councillors and the established accountability cycle. The term duration for councillors fails to synchronize with the full accountability cycle, creating a disruptive scenario.

The crux of the issue lies in the timing: just as the accountability cycle is underway, new councillors are appointed. This timing misalignment gives rise to conflicts within the accountability framework. Incoming councillors enter with their own set of projects mandated by their respective wards, causing a clash with ongoing initiatives initiated by their predecessors. Consequently, projects initiated by the outgoing councillors are often prematurely discarded or left incomplete, disrupting the continuity and effectiveness of community initiatives.

This misalignment not only hampers the seamless execution of the accountability cycle but also introduces a discontinuity in the implementation of projects, as the transition of councillors occurs mid-cycle. Addressing this issue requires a careful examination of the

councillor term duration and the alignment of these terms with the phases of the accountability cycle to ensure a more coherent and uninterrupted flow of community development efforts.

4.3.2. Lack of capacity to manage the process.

Eighty percent of the participants cited a lack of information, skilled personnel to manage legislative framework, and knowledge about policies to be implemented. They noted that all stakeholders should be aware of the policy and its new operational responsibilities. Key personnel such as front-line employees and managers should be trained to participate in policy implementation. Then these trained staff can become champions and trainers for others in their respective units.

The participants highlighted the importance of skills development, change management and consideration of the working successfully and efficiently discharge their responsibilities of service delivery to the community.

In this regard, one respondent stated that:

"The key thing that needs to be done in improving the accountability process is the continuous training of councillors/politicians for them to understand the role which they are supposed to play in this process. Involvement of the community, when the budget is taken to them for their further inputs (when going attending IDP process es), is of paramount importance".

The other participant boldly stated that:

"Capacity building and skills development are essential in this institution. This will maybe encourage employees and management to become more innovative in the delivery of services and create a conducive environment to operate in".

4.3.3. Poor Recruitment Practices

Half of the respondents identified poor recruitment practices as the main cause of lack of capacity in the local government sphere. The main reason for this is political interference. Management tends to override existing human resource processes aimed at recruiting and retaining qualified and competent staff.

The other half of the participants, effectively noted that while poor recruitment process may be a factor, the key issue is that when the officials are appointed, management does not provide training to the newly appointed officials. Further, management does not make any efforts to retain experienced staff.

4.3.4. High vacancy rate at senior management

All the participants stated that the issue of a high vacancy rate, especially in senior management positions tends to result in the municipality's failure to deliver service to the community. The council needs to fill the vacant positions with competent people. Because of this phenomenon, some officials end up holding two senior positions. The respondent noted that "there is nothing one can do and it's not possible for the official to perform miracles".

4.3.5. Good governance

All the participants stated most of the councillors who were elected to run the municipality do not have the required leadership and managerial experience to run, manage, and direct a public institution. As such, they cannot perform their roles effectively and efficiently. One clear example is that the council does not have all the prescribed council committees, which are supposed to assist in both oversight and the running of the municipality. This clearly shows that the governance structure is not working properly.

"Participant 4 and others highlighted a common sentiment: many elected councillors lack the necessary leadership and managerial skills to effectively run the municipality. An evident example is the absence of essential council

committees, crucial for oversight and municipal operations. This points to a governance structure that is not operating at its best."

4.3.6. Financial sustainability and performance.

The majority of the participants agreed that the municipality's financial constraints directly affect the municipality's performance and failure to deliver the required services to the community. The municipality has old infrastructure assets, and the community continues to grow yet the financial resources are not growing. If anything, the financial position of the municipality is deteriorating. There is therefore a disjuncture in this regard. One of the participants attributed this to the "high level of indigent people in the community". The other respondent attributed this to the fact that:

"We are a rural municipality, and we depend on grants from the National Treasury for funding. Hence, we are not able to cover everything, and our financial position is not sustainable."

The participants noted that this has a ripple effect on the performance of the municipality. Senior managers tend to spend their time on revenue collection rather than other aspects that have a direct but not immediate bearing on service delivery such as the signing of performance agreements. Further, accountability then ceases to be a priority.

4.3.7. Lack of effective and decisive leadership

Almost all the participants agreed that ineffective leadership within the Council is contributing to poor service delivery. It became apparent that infighting among the leaders and personal interests is hampering development and negatively affecting service delivery in Dikgatlong Municipality. Lack of vision and poor planning have negatively influenced councillors in decision-making processes. Because of this, councillors do not:

- Perform outreach programmes (due to poor planning and leadership). Consultations with the community and improved communication among workers and the community are critical, especially when led by Ward Councillors.
- Make the right decisions let alone take decisive actions. For example, some of the senior managers have been on suspension for over six years. This negatively affects municipality processes, as people in acting positions may not want to sign performance contracts on the understanding that they may not complete their term.

One participant noted that lack of effective and decisive leadership has led to some processes such as the approval of a disciplinary policy, a key component of human resources, not being performed.

4.4. SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the responses from all the participants. They noted that:

- the municipality does not have proper planning plan mechanisms in place;
- municipalities cannot financially sustain and fulfil their projected operations without grant funds;
- the municipality is faced with political interference, instability, and infighting by councillors;
- importance of capacity building and strategic sessions with councillors and management;
- employment of unqualified officials and officials who are not capacitated;
- Lack of capacity by councillors. They raise the importance of continuous capacitation of councillors and some management.

4.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter summarised all the participants' responses. All the participants were open-minded and participated without any pressure. As is expected in qualitative research,

participants differed on the some of the issues whilst they agreed on some of the matters. The next chapter presents the recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the research findings of the study. This is based on the results revealed in Chapter Four. For easy reference, the findings are discussed in line with the research objectives. The chapter will conclude with the recommendations, conclusions, and areas for future studies.

5.2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.2.1. Primary Objective

To provide guidelines for promoting a conducive environment for management performance in the Dikgatlong Municipality.

5.2.2. Secondary Objective One

To provide an overview of the environmental requirements for optimal management performance in local government in South Africa

Findings

The study established the conceptual framework based on previous literature, focusing on key elements that influence and impact service delivery. The researcher ineffective leadership, governance financial sustainability, and recruitment practices as imperative and crucial variables when analysing a conducive environment and service delivery. The variables cover and provide the basis and baseline for assessing and analysing the overall conceptual framework for the service delivery paradigm.

5.2.3. Secondary Objective Two

To determine the challenges to optimal management performance in the Dikgatlong Municipality.

Findings

The challenges that the municipality faces are varied. These range from a lack of effective and decisive leadership to, the capacity of both management and councillors. The most disturbing was the issue of interference by the councillors. They raised the importance of awareness by councillors, as they lack the capacity and ability to peruse the documents provided to them to provide constructive oversight on management actions. It was clear that that the municipality experiences challenges to hold council meetings according to the provision stipulated by the law. At times when the council sits every month, the process to ensure that the meeting is held is cumbersome and time-consuming.

The issue of vacant positions in the municipality was also prominent and proved to be a major point of concern. This phenomenon brings instability to the municipality and uncertainty for the people who are acting. This situation is dire as only one senior position is filled. These senior positions have been vacant for more than six years. Two

of the senior managers have been put on special leave for that period. This situation is not only prevalent at senior management level. At operational level, there are also several vacant positions.

The respondents of the municipality also revealed that the accountability cycle was not fully followed, as this does not coincide with the duration of the councillors. When the leadership of the municipality is about to grasp with legal framework, then new councillors are elected. This also applies to officials, who are not capacitated to be able to implement the accountability cycle. As such, they are unable to fulfil their mandate as the cycle is not fully utilized to assess service delivery impact and sustainability and are only used for compliance purposes when required by National Treasury. Furthermore, it became clear that the respondents of the municipality are aware of the negative impact it has on service delivery when they do not implement the accountability cycle. They are also aware that non-compliance leads to weak compliance with local legislative and regulatory structures, and this has a significant bearing on service delivery.

Most of the participants indicated that the budget of the municipality is not adequate to cover most of the pertinent service delivery issues in the municipality. Some units like the Local Economic Development (LED) unit, programmes are not even budgeted for. They depend on private donors for them to execute their programmes. If they do not receive donors for a financial year, they cannot report any progress and they cannot meet their projections.

Load shedding has contributed immensely to the provision of service delivery. For example, the generator that pumps water to the local dam is broken due to load shedding. When there is load, shedding, not enough water can be pumped from the dam, creating water shortages for the entire community. This can happen for several days.

5.2.4. Secondary Objective Three

To provide recommendations for creating a conducive environment for effective management performance.

Findings

It is believed that the provision of services is a crucial component that must be adequately done and grounded on reasonable estimates or forecasts. The literature evaluation placed a strong emphasis on applying thorough spending controls and efficient revenue management, as well as spending within available revenue and means. Future revenue estimates would likely not be credible if they were based on inaccurate previous data. People with the necessary credentials are needed for all of this. Because of this, the hiring procedure is crucial. One of the primary causes of subpar municipal performance is frequently identified as the absence of sufficient institutional capacity. It is still a major challenge even with the large investments made in municipal capacity building by the federal and provincial governments.

Participant's main concern was the lack of capacity both from management and leadership of the municipality. There is a clear indication that people who do not have the required qualifications have been employed. Councillors are not cognizant that by improving several skills, the municipality may be better able to deliver services effectively and efficiently from the inside.

Optimising financial planning can aid in determining the most efficient ways to allocate the available finances. Increased technical proficiency will enhance municipal service delivery. One of the tendencies that has been sustaining underfunded budgets along with overspending and wilful disregard for internal controls is the absence of trained personnel hired, which has resulted in growing budget deficits. This has been a major factor in MTREF budgets becoming unsustainable.

5.2.5. Secondary Objective Four

To determine how the management of Dikgatlong Municipality can improve the existing level of compliance with the Municipal Systems Act.

Findings

(a) Financial sustainability and performance.

Many aspects of service delivery and financial management capabilities, such as accountability, control procedures, capacity building, management, and political leadership, were looked at throughout the literature research. Therefore, it was concluded that the execution of solid financial management and efficient service delivery is hampered by deficiencies in administrative ability, financial and internal controls, and cohesive leadership. According to municipal legislation on required competency levels, it was determined that the municipality as a whole complies with the minimum competency criteria (Republic of South Africa, 2007). However, serious financial management violations were common even if the participants met the competency requirements. Unauthorized, irregular, wasteful, and pointless expenditures are among the infractions, and they typically amount to financial malfeasance. This results from a lack of staff.

It is reasonable to assume that officials with the requisite abilities will be able to carry out their financial management duties with effectiveness and efficiency. It was clear that Dikgatlong Municipality was not abiding by the relevant legislation and financial management controls. Furthermore, the municipality does not give financial ratios much thought to generate enough revenue for service delivery, which could be interpreted as a lack of financial management ability.

(b) Good governance and capacity

The standing committees of the municipality are not operating. The purpose of these committees is to oversee management. This may be one of the causes of the large number of open positions. This is a blatant sign that something is wrong with the municipality's governance mechanisms.

One important factor that affects the municipality's effectiveness is capacity. It addresses not only technical proficiency but also more sensitive matters, like the

capacity to cooperate and form bonds with people in the government and the larger community, as well as the flexibility to adjust to shifting conditions and surroundings. Problems include the shortage of qualified financial officers, particularly in smaller communities that could find it difficult to draw in qualified candidates and offer competitive compensation, and the filling of jobs based on political allegiance rather than qualifications. One of the issues facing Dikgatlong has been the hiring of staff; according to some responders, there is nepotism and council meddling. The "top" strategic managers typically benefit from higher staffing costs than the "middle" (skilled professionals, the 'doers').

The participant's did point out that there are obvious skill and capacity deficiencies in the municipality that need to be addressed, particularly at the middle management level. Notwithstanding the possibility of grants and transfers being returned to the fiscus due to insufficient financial competence.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The ensuing recommendations stem from the comprehensive findings and insights garnered through the research study:

5.3.1. Signing and monitoring of performance agreements

Council oversight should mandate the signing of performance agreements by all senior managers, even in acting capacities. Regular monitoring and evaluation of these agreements are imperative. Considering the recent regulatory changes requiring the issuance of performance management agreements to lower levels from July 1, 2023, senior management should ensure the cascading of this process to lower management levels.

Spacing?

5.3.2. Revenue collection and enhancement

- a) The municipality needs to prioritize the restoration and maintenance of deteriorating infrastructure to mitigate high distribution losses. This includes improving response times to pipe bursts, monitoring electricity theft, and holding offenders accountable.
- b) Municipalities should actively seek national government funding to modernize service provision infrastructure, incorporating smart metering technology for efficient detection of leaks, pipe bursts, meter tampering, and electricity theft.
- c) Exploring new revenue streams is essential to supplement declining revenue. A benchmarking expedition to similar municipalities can identify untapped revenue sources.
- d) Reviewing and adjusting existing tariffs, particularly for water and electricity, based on realistic cost assessments, is crucial for sustainable service provision.
- e) Initiating a comprehensive debt collection drive, coupled with a consumer awareness campaign, can underscore the importance of service payment for community well-being. This should align with stringent credit control and debt collection enforcement.
- f) Consideration should be given to reconfiguring prepaid electricity vendor systems to allocate a percentage to outstanding debt with each defaulting consumer purchase, reinforcing credit control and debt management.

5.3.3. Creation of a Conducive Environment

According to the study's findings, municipal officials frequently operate in an unfriendly institutional setting with onerous bureaucratic and institutional norms and regulations

that have a detrimental effect on their output and level of job satisfaction. Thus, more extensive and targeted help is required. If towns are to fulfil and accomplish the responsibilities outlined for them in the 1996 Constitution, and other national policy instruments, they must develop the capacities of their officials. As a result, Dikgatlong Municipality has to quickly fill all open positions, especially those for senior management. The development of local government skills is essential because it will set the stage for a more citizen-focused system and assess the capacity of local government to fulfil the needs of the populace for democracy, development, and reconstruction. More funding must be allocated to council members' and officials' capacity-building if local government is to function more effectively. In Chapter 13, the National Development Plan (NDP) emphasizes the importance of making careers in local government and public service a priority. South Africa should also prioritize developing the abilities and capabilities of public servants at all levels. Top-level recruitment and management should be based on experience and expertise, rather than political affiliation.

It is critical to reconsider and develop novel strategies to prevent administrative misconduct in local government. To fulfil its developmental mandate, municipalities in South Africa are under a great deal of pressure to manage their administrative and financial resources in an effective, economical, and efficient manner because of the transformation of local government. Consequently, to comply with the regulatory framework, municipalities must establish effective administrative and financial management procedures. To this end, they must choose competent individuals, such as chief financial officers and internal auditors with the necessary training. Municipal leaders must consider results in addition to budgetary expenditures. In addition to allocating more funds to local government, stronger mechanisms are required to ensure responsibility for the use of public funds.

5.3.4. Effective and decisive leadership

According to Reddy (2016), there is evidence to support the negative impact that political rivalry and related conflicts between the political and management branches of local government have on the provision of municipal services. According to Masiya et al.

(2019), there are times when conflicts arise between elected officials and management officials because politicians frequently intrude on the officials' purview while management officials are unable or unwilling to share decision-making authority with elected representatives. In related views, this pertains to the recruitment of party loyalists to public positions, ostensibly for the sake of improving public reporting channels and guaranteeing that the institution adheres to the party's mandate as approved by the electorate. Nonetheless, the performance of municipal authorities in South African towns is weakened by this policy and political influence in general. The political party in power frequently has a strong influence on decisions, and there is frequently a lack of political will to choose people who are sound beyond party devotion. Generally speaking, the politicization of local government has made this difficult as, at best, the requisite expertise is only somewhat available at the local level, and management and politics will need to act decisively and firmly, which they do not now do.

5.3.5. Expenditure management, control, and containment

- a) Aligning the salary bill with National Treasury norms and guidelines is essential for financial sustainability. Seeking exemptions from SALGA for conditions of service is advised.
- b) Strengthening internal controls to curb unauthorised, irregular, and wasteful expenditure is imperative.
- c) Customizing expenditure management standard operating procedures can address weaknesses in internal control systems.
- d) Developing and implementing creditors' payment plans with clear targets and timeframes is essential to prioritize payables disbursement within legislative timelines.

5.3.6. MTREF budgets

a) To improve budget estimates and guarantee that the MTREF budget figures are based on trustworthy and dependable facts and information, the sampled municipalities should look into baseline information.

b) To guarantee that service delivery deliverables are paid from a realistic MTREF budget and prevent overspending, the municipalities must not be unduly optimistic when developing IDP.

c) To guarantee that service delivery plans are founded on realistic budgets, municipalities are required to reconcile their annual budget with IDP. Service delivery strategic goals are destined to collapse soon and are vulnerable to cash-backed, realistic budgets.

d) To lower the operational deficit and eventually have a surplus, the municipalities need to create unfunded budget plans with realistic, conservative targets from that would take the budget from deficit to surplus or break-even (Stellenbosch University, 2022).

5.3.7. Skills competence capacity

Training on financial ratios should be provided to officials, even if minimum competency requirements are met, to enhance understanding of the impact and role of financial ratios in determining financial sustainability. Keeping officials abreast of existing and new finance reforms is crucial for enhanced financial management capacity performance. Seeking training support from the Provincial Treasury can be explored as a cost-effective alternative to consultant services.

These recommendations collectively address the multifaceted challenges identified in the research findings, providing a strategic roadmap for the municipality's improvement and sustainable development.

5.4. CONCLUSION

The fundamental role of government across states is to uphold the general welfare of its people. As the closest sphere to the populace, the local government assumes a pivotal

role in the daily execution of this task. Equipped with the necessary tools, municipal councils can attain their objectives. Municipal managers must possess the ability to inspire subordinates, ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in municipalities.

The discussion delineates critical challenges impacting municipal performance in the pursuit of policies advocating effective service delivery. The necessity for municipal leaders to possess requisite skills is underscored, emphasizing the need for a strategic vision in municipal governance. Leadership challenges, including political interference, financial constraints, lack of skilled human resources, inadequate planning, and commitment issues, are identified. Political interference, often arising from councillors encroaching on the municipal manager's role, hampers administrative functionality.

Development in municipalities hinges on capacity building; ensuring employees possess the necessary skills for effective and accountable governance. The White Paper on Local Government (1998:17) accentuates the importance of creating a developmental local government system, responsive to citizens' socio-economic needs. Municipal managers are urged to lead in formulating a strategic vision, fostering innovative leadership aligned with the municipal vision. Recruitment practices are highlighted, emphasizing the need to depoliticize appointments, and discouraging favouritism and tribalism.

The study scrutinizes key financial sustainability variables, offering substantive recommendations for municipalities to navigate challenges. However, limitations in sample size restrict generalization, necessitating further research to explore additional variables, including the dynamics of the political-administrative interface.

In conclusion, the study advocates for DE politicization and non-partisan appointment practices, urging greater support for municipal officials' skill enhancement. Targeted skills development plans, training, and capacity interventions are deemed essential for

efficient service delivery. Rigorous oversight and monitoring are imperative to address corruption and political interference, fostering effective municipal administration. This holistic approach aims to fortify municipal resilience, ensuring sustained fiscal health and paving the way for financial recovery.

5.5. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the participant's responses, the research has identified several areas where there was little or no information to conclude on a position or effect on some of these constructs. The following are some of the issues of concern:

- a) The assessment of the effect of capacity and knowledge management on the performance of municipalities. The research noted that there were some challenges regarding the lack of capacity in municipalities, which continue to experience service delivery challenges;
- b) The relationship between financial performance for municipalities and service delivery. This aspect should concentrate on the municipality's financial results and see if they are reflective of the extent and level of service delivery in local government;
- c) The lack of governance structures and decisive leadership was prominent in the research. There might be a need to assess this aspect in more detail.

Based on the foregoing, the researcher recommends that further research should be undertaken on the above-mentioned issues. The main reason for this is because these issues in shaping out local government and improve service delivery.

REFERENCE LIST

Aguinis, H., 2019. Performance management for dummies. John Wiley & Sons.

Aslan, M. (2016), Yönetici Yetkinlik Denetimi (Auditing Management Competency), According to Coherence with Managers' Personalities. Sustainability, 14(1), 170.

Bhayani, T. (2023, December 10). Understanding What a Collaborative Business Culture is Characterized By - AirMason Blog. AirMason Blog.
<https://blog.airmason.com/a-collaborative-business-culture-is-characterized-by/>

Bryman. , Bell., Hirschsohn., Dos Santos., Du toit., Masenge., Van Aarrdt., &Wagner. (2018). Research Methodology. Cape Town: Oxford University press.

Burritt, R. L., Herzig, C., Schaltegger, S., & Viere, T. (2019). Diffusion of environmental management accounting for cleaner production: Evidence from some case studies. Journal of Cleaner Production, 224, 479-491.

Bushe, B. (2019). The causes and impact of business failure among small to micro and medium enterprises in South Africa. Africa's public service delivery and performance review, 7(1), 1-26.

Boyatzis, R. E. (2011). Managerial and leadership competencies: A behavioral approach to emotional, social and cognitive intelligence. *Vision*, 15(2), 91-100.

Chouhan, V.S. and Srivastava, S., 2014. Understanding competencies and competency modeling—A literature survey. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 16(1), pp.14-22.

Chye L., Tat H., Osman M., and Rosli A. (2010), "Are managerial competencies a blessing to the performance of innovative SMEs in Malaysia?" *International Journal of Economics and Management*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 120-36.

Cripe, E., Cripe E.J., Mansfield, R.S., Mansfield, R.S. (2011), "The Value-Added Employee: 31 Competencies to Make Yourself Irresistible to Any Company", Routledge, New York, NY.

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) [online] Available from <http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/a108-96.pdf>.

Demarcation Act (Act 27 Of 1998) [online] Available from <http://www.info.gov.za/gazette/acts/1998/a27-98pdf>.

Coghlan, D., & Brydon-Miller, M. (Eds.). (2014). *The SAGE encyclopedia of action research*. Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.

DeNisi, A. S., & Murphy, K. R. (2017). Performance appraisal and performance management: 100 years of progress?. *Journal of applied psychology*, 102(3), 421.

Explorable.com (Nov 15, 2009). Research Population. Retrieved Jan 31, 2024 from Explorable.com: <https://explorable.com/research-population>

Gardelliano, S. (2018). UNIDO Competencies: Strengthening Organisational Core Values and Managerial Capabilities.

Freitas, P. F. P. D., & Odelius, C. C. (2018). Managerial competencies: an analysis of classifications in empirical studies. *Cadernos EBAPE. BR*, 16, 35-49.

Guess, C.D.; Donovan, S.J.; Naslund, D. (2015) Improving Dynamic Decision Making Through Training and Self-Reflection. Available online: https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/apsy_facpub (accessed on 13 September 2021).

Fortis, E. (2019). Manager's personality and their professional career. *Acta Educ. Gen*, 9, 20-38.

HBE - Harvard Business Essentials (2015), Yöneticinin El Kitabı (Manager's Handbook), 3rd Edition, Harvard Business Press – İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul

Hellrigriegel, D., Jackson, S. E., Slocum, J., staude, G., Amos, T., klopper, H.B., Louw. & Oosthuizen. (2015). *Management: Second Edition*; Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Hellriegel,D., Jackson, S.E., Slocum,J. staude,G., Amos,T., klopper,H.B., Louw,L., & Oosthuizen,T.(2016). *Management: Fourth Edition*; Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Hertle, C., Tisch, M., Kläs, H., Metternich, J. and Abele, E., 2016. Recording shop floor management competencies—a guideline for a systematic competency gap analysis. *Procedia Cirp*, 57, pp.625-630.

Kim, J., & Jung, H. S. (2022, April 7). The Effect of Employee Competency and Organizational Culture on Employees' Perceived Stress for Better Workplace. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19084428>

Klossner, D., (2014). Factors that Influence Firms? Environmental Performance: an Examination of Large Companies (Doctoral dissertation, Case Western Reserve University).

Koontz, H., & Weihrich, H. (2015) Management: Ninth Edition: McGraw-Hill: Singapore.

Krawczyk-Dembicka, E. (2017). Process of technology management in SMEs of the metal processing industry—the case study investigation. *Engineering Management in Production and Services*, 9(1).

Krapohl, j. (2015). Assessing management competencies in selected Southern Cape Municipalities. Port Elizabeth.

Lajcin, D., Slavikova, G., Frankovsky, M., & Birknerova, Z. (2014). Social intelligence as a significant predictor of managerial behavior. *EKONOMICKY CASOPIS*, 62(6), 646-660.

Landis, B. (2016). Personality and social networks in organizations: A review and future directions. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 37, S107-S121.

Liu, J., Liu, Y., & Yang, L. (2020). Uncovering the influence mechanism between top management support and green procurement: The effect of green training. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 251, 119674.

Marques, J.; Dhiman, S.(2018) Engaged leadership. In *Transforming through Future-Oriented Design Thinking*; Springer: Berlin/Heidelberg, Germany.

McKenzie, D. (2021). Small business training to improve management practices in developing countries: Re-assessing the evidence for training doesn't work. *Oxf. Rev. Econ. Pol.* 37, 276–301. [CrossRef]

McMillan, J.H., and Schumacher, S. (2016). *Research in Education*. 6th Edition. New York: Pearson Education.

Menzel, D. C. (1998, September). *www.ethics.gov: Issues and Challenges Facing Public Managers*. *Public Administration Review*, 58(5), 445.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/977553>

Mintzberg, H. (1973). *The Nature of Managerial Work*. Harper & Row.

Mkhize, M. V. (2017). Accounting firms' managers' and trainees' perceptions of managerial competencies required to manage diversity in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *South African journal of economic and management sciences*, 20(1), 1-11.

Mobolade, G. O., & Akinade, M. E. (2021). Team Building and Teamwork in organizations: implications to managers and employees in work places. *International journal of management, social sciences, peace and conflicts*, 4(1).

Mouton, J. (2017). *How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral studies: A South African guide and resource book*. 1st Edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik

Mufamadi, F. S. (2004). *Municipal Project Consolidate* [online]. Available from <http://www.info.gov.za/gazette/acts/1998/a27-98pdf>.

Municipal Service Delivery. (n.d.).
<https://www.etu.org.za/toolbox/docs/localgov/munservice.html>

Nagarajan, R., & Prabhu, R. (2015). Competence and capability: A new look. *International Journal of Management*, 6(6), 7-11.

Ncube, M. S., & Chimucheka, T. (2019). The effect of managerial competencies on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Makana Municipality, South Africa. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 8(5), 1-15.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills. *American Management Association Critical Skills Survey*. Survey, Tucson: P21, 2010.

Planning, Organizing, Leading, and Controlling | Principles of Management. (n.d.). <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-tc3-management/chapter/planning-organizing-leading-and-controlling/>

Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J.F., & Silverman. (2007). Qualitative Research Practice: concise paperback Edition. Britain

Staff, L. E. (2023, October 30). The Best Steps for Communicating Vision at Your Organization. CCL. <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/communicating-the-vision/>

Stern, L., & Gold, J. (2021, November 22). Stage Management. Routledge. http://books.google.ie/books?id=VpJFEAAAQBAJ&pg=PT32&dq=https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-principlesofmanagement/chapter/communication-in-the-management-function/&hl=&cd=1&source=gsb_api

Sudbrink, L., C., & C. (2022, April 14). Emotional Intelligence Is An Important Part of Strong Leadership. Business Leadership Today - the Resource for Leaders Working to Build and Sustain World-class Teams and Organizations in Today's Business Environment. <https://businessleadershiptoday.com/emotional-intelligence-is-an-important-part-of-strong-leadership/>

Newman, A., Allen, B., & Miao, Q. (2015). I can see clearly now: The moderating effects of role clarity on subordinate responses to ethical leadership. Personnel Review.

Schultz, H., Bagraim, J., Potgieter, T., Viedge, C., & Werner, A. (2016). Organisational Behaviour: A contemporary South African perspective. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Smit P.J., Cronje de G, J., Brevis, T., & Vrba, M.J. (2015) Management Principles; A contemporary Edition for Africa.4th Edition. Cape Town: South Africa.

Supratman, O.V.; Entang, M.; Tukiran, M. (2021). The relationship of charismatic leadership, employee personality, and employee performance: Evidence from PT. Karya Abadi Luhur. *Int. J Soc. Manag.* 2, 17–41.

Štefko, R., Fedorko, R., Svetozarovová, N., & Nastišin, L. (2021). Start-up Management and the Relationship between the Level of Awareness among Potential Young Entrepreneurs and the Motivation to Start Own Business. *Quality-Access to Success*, 22(183).

Sturgess, G. (2012), “Skills vs Competencies. What’s the Difference?”, Retrieved from <http://www.talentalign.com/skills-vs-competencies-whats-the-difference>.

Seate, B. M., Pooe, R. I., & Chinomona, R. (2016). The relative importance of managerial competencies for predicting the perceived job performance of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment verification practitioners. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(1), 1-11.

Stellenbosch University <https://scholar.sun.ac.za> 109

Patino CM, Ferreira JC. Internal and external validity: can you apply research study results to your patients? *J Bras Pneumol.* 2018 May-Jun;44(3):183. doi: 10.1590/S1806-37562018000000164. PMID: 30043882; PMCID: PMC6188693.

Rami, A.B.; Coghan, D. (2019). Action research in business and management: A reflection review. *Sage J. Appl. Behav. Sci.* 51,375–400.

Rogers, K. (2017). *Managers: Personality and Performance*; Routledge: Oxfordshire, UK.

Tarabeih, H., Gilad, S., & Sheffield, J. (2022, September). The Sakhnin/Misgav Land Dispute: Using 3-D Negotiation Strategies to Analyze Conflict Resolution in Israel. *Negotiation Journal*, 38(4), 537–572. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nejo.12417>

Taylor, L., & Taylor, L. (2024, January 30). 4 must-have General Management skills to get a successful career in 2023. IMD Business School for Management and Leadership Courses. <https://www.imd.org/reflections/general-management-skills/>

THE MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT. (n.d.).
<https://static.pmg.org.za/bills/municipalsystemsact.htm>

Triana, M. D. C., Gu, P., Chapa, O., Richard, O., & Colella, A. (2021). Sixty years of discrimination and diversity research in human resource management: A review with suggestions for future research directions. *Human Resource Management*, 60(1), 145-204.

Tarwirei, M. B. (2015). The impact of managerial competencies on the performance of SME in the Buffalo City Municipality.

Vehovar, V., Toepoel, V., & Steinmetz, S. (2016). Non-probability sampling (pp. 329-345). *The Sage handbook of survey methods*.

.

ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: THE IMPORTANCE OF A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE AT DIKGATLONG

The purpose of this interview is to discuss the requirements for effective and efficient management performance in local government and, for this study, specifically, within the Dikgatlong Local Municipality. The information that you share with the researcher will be treated confidentially. Upon request, it will be made available to you. Please further note that the information will be used for academic purposes solely.

1. Clarify your current position.
2. How long have you been in this managerial position?
3. how long have you been in local government, especially in municipalities?
4. What, in your view, is the significance of your position as manager concerning service delivery to the community?
5. What, in your opinion, are the requirements (personal and organisational) for you to fulfil your managerial role?
6. Is the municipality's resource framework providing you with enough support as a manager to execute your role? (I.e., Technical Resources, HR, and Finance, the researcher will probe into these after they have responded).

7. what is the nature of your interaction with council/councillors as political representatives in the execution of your managerial duties?
8. Do you deem this interaction appropriate and constructive concerning the execution of your duties?
9. Are the council's policy directives aligned regarding the resource framework and are they realistic?
10. Do these policies and frameworks enable you to deliver quality service to the community?
11. What are the main obstacles you face when performing your duties?
12. Do you have a capacitated team of subordinates to enable you to perform your duties?
13. What aspects in the municipality need to be amended or improved that will improve your ability to perform your role? (The researcher will probe on work ethics)



Reg No: 2009/104465/23

Head Office
21 Maluti Ave
Paulshof
Johannesburg
2191

Mafikeng Office
Office No 6.
Aldo Office Park
40 First St, Ind. Site
Mafikeng, 2745

Postal
P. O. Box 3974
Rivonia, Sandton
Johannesburg
2128

Tel: 011 234 9447, Cell: 073 244 6977, Fax: 086 554 6193, E-mail: pdmusika@pandellgroup.com

REF: C. M. GOEIEMAN/UFS/2015272269

Date: 26 November 2023

TO WHOMIT MAY CONCERN

**Language editing certificate for CHRISTIAN MOTSAMAI GOEIEMAN
(Assessing Management Performance in Accelerating Service Delivery at
Dikgatlong Municipality)**

This serves to confirm that the dissertation detailed above was language edited by a professional English language editing professional at Pandell Consulting (Pty) Ltd and delivered to our client, Mr C. M. Goeieman on 26 November 2023.

We did not change the content in any way.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Panganai Dell Musika', with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Panganai Dell Musika, CA(SA), Copy-Editing (UCT)

DIRECTOR