

**ENHANCING RISK MANAGEMENT SKILLS AT A MUNICIPALITY USING AN
ADULT EDUCATION APPROACH**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Mamokhosi Paulinah Choane, declare that the doctoral degree research thesis, **“Enhancing risk management skills at a municipality using and adult education approach”**, which I herewith submit for a doctoral degree qualification in Education at the University of the Free State, is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted for a qualification at another institution of higher education.

I declare that I am aware that the copyright is vested in the University of the Free State.

As a result of this, I declare that all royalties as regards intellectual property that is developed during and in connection with the study at the University of the Free State will accrue to the university.

.....

MP Choane

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my two handsome boys, Lehlohonolo and Itumeleng, especially my angel, the late Itumeleng, and my two lovely granddaughters, Oratile and Katlego. I hope this work will encourage and motivate Oratile and Katlego in education, as education is indeed the key to success.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to formulate a framework to enhance risk management skills at a municipality using an adult education approach. Risk management is a process whereby the risks in the organisation are identified, assessed and mitigated. It also involves monitoring projects and their finances towards sustainability. Adult education is a learning process that involves collaborative learning, prior knowledge and experience and self-directed learning. In this study, some challenges remain critical to effective teaching strategies for risk management, including the inability to promote collaborative problem-solving skills, a teacher-centred approach and ignorance of adult learners' experience, which affect an appropriate assessment of risks. Participatory action research was used as an approach to intervene and respond to these challenges. However, the adult education strategy needed for teaching risk management skills is contextually bound and complex. Therefore, the study adopted Ubuntu as a theoretical lens, mainly due to its values and commitment to promoting humanness and challenging the social oppression that frequently limits the potential growth of municipalities and municipal officials. In this study, Ubuntu has encouraged the researcher and co-researchers to use an integrated form of risk management education, as Ubuntu expresses humanity and advocates working together towards effective teaching strategies for risk management and employing solutions to these challenges that prevent social development. Using the Ubuntu approach, the study embraces multiple perspectives and negotiates meaning in formulating a strategy to respond to the identified challenges.

The study was guided by an epistemological stance that embraced the value of welcoming subjective views on knowledge production. Participatory action research created a platform for the participants, who later became co-researchers, to engage in knowledge production activities, equality and tolerance of contrasting views. Through adult teaching and learning workshops, working closely with a participatory action research methodology, a team of eight municipal officials, a youth community member, a post-graduate student and I, the researcher, worked together at the research sites. As a research team, we collectively identified challenges to the effective teaching of risk management and employed standard solutions to improve

the risk management skills of the municipal officials at one municipality. The generated data comprised photographs, video recordings, audio recordings, lesson plans and co-researchers' reflections. We used critical discourse analysis to analyse the data. To understand the deeper meaning of the personal and subjective accounts of the co-researchers' lived experiences of ineffective strategies for teaching risk management, the data were analysed and interpreted at three levels of critical discourse analysis, namely text, discursive practice and social structure. Through critical discourse analysis, the problems experienced by municipal officials in terms of effective teaching strategies for risk management were examined. The purpose was to propose possible solutions and components that could be adopted to address ineffective methods of teaching risk management to municipal officials.

In order to formulate the strategy to be sustainable in enhancing risk management skills during and beyond the duration of the research, the conducive conditions of the process were investigated and enacted. Furthermore, possible ways to circumvent threats and risks that could derail the successful implementation of the design were analysed and presented. The research was transformative, which created the opportunity to operationalise and evaluate the success of the strategy before it was considered for recommendation. In conclusion, the study findings are revealed, indicators of success are identified and recommendations are made. Some of the results were that officials worked in silos and their teamwork was ineffective. In the end, the knowledge gap regarding effective teaching strategies for risk management results in a learning dead end.

Keywords: Adult education, coordinated team, municipality, risk management, Ubuntu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xv
CHAPTER 1 : OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM	4
1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	4
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	4
1.5.1 Primary research question	4
1.5.2 Secondary research questions	4
1.5.3 Research aim and objectives	5
1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	5
1.7 DATA COLLECTION	6
1.8 DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND REPORTING	6
1.9 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH	6
1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	7
1.11 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS	7
1.12 CONCLUSION	7
CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW TOWARDS THE FORMULATION OF A FRAMEWORK FOR THE EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF RISK MANAGEMENT SKILLS AT A MUNICIPALITY	8
2.1 INTRODUCTION	8
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
2.2.1 The historical origins of the Ubuntu philosophy	8
2.2.2 Objectives of Ubuntu	10
2.2.1.1 Solidarity is related to the Ubuntu philosophy	11
2.2.1.2 Ubuntu inspires sharing with fellow human beings.....	12
2.2.1.3 Elements of the Ubuntu philosophy	12
2.2.1.4 Ubuntu cultivates a team work.....	13

2.2.1.5	Humanness is part of African Ubuntu philosophy.....	13
2.2.3	Formats of Ubuntu.....	14
2.2.4	Ontological stance of Ubuntu.....	16
2.2.5	Epistemological stance of Ubuntu.....	18
2.2.6	Axiological stance of Ubuntu.....	19
2.2.7	The role of the researcher and relationships with the participants.....	20
2.2.8	The relationship between the researcher and the participants	21
2.2.9	Rhetoric in the Ubuntu approach	22
2.3	DEFINITION AND DISCUSSION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS	23
2.3.1	Adult education.....	23
2.3.1.1	The historical background of adult education.....	24
2.3.1.2	Objectives of adult education.....	27
2.3.1.3	Formats of adult education	29
2.3.1.4	Ontological stance of adult education	32
2.3.1.5	Epistemological stance of adult education	33
2.3.2	Risk management skills at a municipality.....	35
2.3.2.1	Definition of risk management	35
2.3.2.2	Risk management history	35
2.3.2.3	Objectives of risk management.....	36
2.3.2.4	Ontological stance of risk management	36
2.3.2.5	Epistemological stance of risk management.....	37
2.4	RELATED LITERATURE	38
2.4.1	Challenges of risk management skills at a municipality to develop the framework for effective teaching strategies	38
2.4.1.1	Inability to promote independent and collaborative problem-solving learning	38
2.4.1.2	Lack of recognition of an adult learner's prior knowledge and experience	40
2.4.1.3	Failure to note self-directed learning as an approach in adult learning	42
2.4.1.4	Failure to promote transformative learning.....	44
2.4.2	The components of the strategy to respond to challenges to the effective teaching of risk management skills at a municipality	45
2.4.2.1	Collaborative problem-solving learning as a strategy.....	45
2.4.2.2	Adult learners' prior knowledge and experience as strategies.....	46
2.4.2.3	Self-directed learning as a strategy to enhance risk management skills..	47
2.4.2.4	Learner-centred approach as a strategy	47

2.4.2.5	Transformative learning as a strategy	48
2.4.3	Conditions conducive to the implementation of the practical teaching strategy for risk management skills	49
2.4.3.1	Integrated team	49
2.4.3.2	Formulation of a vision and mission for effectively teaching risk management	51
2.4.3.3	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for understanding the context	51
2.4.3.4	Friendly and informal climate for effectively teaching risk management	52
2.4.3.5	Self-direction as a conducive factor for successful conditions.....	53
2.4.4	Threats to the designing and implementation of the adult education approach	54
2.4.5	Indicators of success for the implementation of an effective adult education strategy	55
2.5	CONCLUSION.....	56
CHAPTER 3 : RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY		57
3.1	INTRODUCTION	57
3.2	THE APPROPRIATENESS OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AS A METHODOLOGY FOR THE FORMULATION OF A FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVELY TEACHING RISK MANAGEMENT SKILLS.....	58
3.3	DESIGN OF THE STUDY.....	62
3.3.1	Conceptualisation of the study: Step 1.....	62
3.3.2	Conceptualisation of the study: Step 2.....	62
3.4	THE HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH	64
3.4.1	Objectives of participatory action research	65
3.4.2	Components of participatory action research.....	67
3.4.3	Formats of participatory action research.....	67
3.4.3.1	Community-based participatory research.....	67
3.4.3.2	Feminist participatory action research	68
3.4.3.3	Participatory action research and youth education.....	70
3.4.3.4	Mutual inquiry	70
3.5	STEPS AND STAGES IN PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH	71
3.5.1	Beginning stage with planning and problem diagnosis.....	73
3.5.2	Action stage.....	75
3.5.3	Observation, measurement and evaluation stage	76
3.5.4	Reflection stage.....	76

3.6	AXIOLOGY, ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL STANCE OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH	77
3.6.1	Axiological stance.....	77
3.6.2	Ontological stance	77
3.6.3	Epistemological stance	78
3.7	THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER IN PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH	80
3.8	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCHER AND CO-RESEARCHERS.	81
3.9	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	82
3.10	RHETORIC IN PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH	82
3.11	APPROPRIATENESS OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH IN THE RESEARCH DESIGN	83
3.12	SUCSESSES OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH.....	83
3.13	CHALLENGES OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH.....	84
3.14	RESEARCH DESIGN AND ASSEMBLING THE COORDINATED TEAM	85
3.14.1	Assembling the coordinated team	85
3.14.2	Roles of the members of the research team.....	86
3.14.2.1	The study coordinator	86
3.14.2.2	Municipal officials	86
3.14.2.3	One member from political office	87
3.14.2.4	Post-graduate from SuRLEc.....	87
3.14.2.5	Community youth member.....	87
3.15	DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SITE	87
3.16	DATA COLLECTION.....	88
3.17	COMMON VISION AND MISSION	88
3.18	SWOT ANALYSIS.....	89
3.19	PRIORITISATION	89
3.20	STRATEGIC PLANNING	90
3.21	DATA ANALYSIS.....	92
3.21.1	Critical discourse analysis as analytical approach.....	92
3.21.2	Theoretical origin of critical discourse analysis.....	92
3.21.2.1	Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model.....	93
3.21.2.2	Wodak's discourse sociolinguistics	93
3.21.2.3	Fairclough's framework for analysis.....	94
3.21.2.4	Textual analysis.....	94
3.21.2.5	Text and discursive practice analysis.....	95
3.21.2.6	Social analysis.....	95

3.22	CONCLUSION	95
CHAPTER 4 : ANALYSIS OF DATA, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS		
4.1	INTRODUCTION	96
4.2	THE NEED TO FORMULATE COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGY TO ENHANCE RISK MANAGEMENT SKILLS USING ADULT EDUCATION	97
4.2.1	Non-existence of a coordinated, collaborative problem-solving team to enhance risk management skills	97
4.2.2	No recognition of prior experiential knowledge when teaching risk management	101
4.2.3	Inability to involve self-directed learning when teaching risk management skills	104
4.2.4	Non-implementation of a learner-centred approach when teaching risk management	106
4.3	ANALYSIS OF COMPONENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF RISK MANAGEMENT SKILLS.....	107
4.3.1	The establishment of a coordinated team	107
4.3.2	The recognition of prior knowledge and experience	109
4.3.3	Self-directed learning as an aspect of the strategy	111
4.3.4	Learner-centred teaching as an aspect of the strategy	112
4.4	CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY.	112
4.4.1	Factors supporting the integrated team.....	113
4.5	THREATS TOWARDS THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADULT EDUCATION APPROACH THROUGH AN INTEGRATED TEAM.....	113
4.6	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADULT EDUCATION APPROACH.....	114
4.6.1	Successful knowledge and skills to solve problems collaboratively.....	114
4.7	ANDRAGOGY AS A USEFUL TOOL IN RESEARCH.....	115
4.8	CONCLUSION.....	116
CHAPTER 5 : FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION		
5.1	INTRODUCTION	117
5.2	BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	117
5.3	PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	118
5.4	RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	118
5.4.1	Research question.....	118
5.4.2	Research aim	118

5.4.3	Objectives of the study	118
5.5	FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	119
5.5.1	The lack of a coordinated team to enhance effective teaching strategies for risk management skills at Xhariep District Municipality.....	119
5.5.1.1	Recommendation of strategies for the establishment of a coordinated team towards the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks	119
5.5.2	No recognition of prior experiential knowledge when teaching risk management.....	120
5.5.2.1	Recommendation of strategies for the recognition of prior experiential knowledge when teaching risk management.....	120
5.5.3	Failure to note self-directed learning as an approach in adult learning.....	120
5.5.3.1	Recommendation of strategies for self-directed learning in teaching risk management	121
5.5.4	Failure to promote transformative learning when teaching risk management skills	121
5.5.4.1	Recommendation of strategies for transformative learning when teaching risk management skills	121
5.5.4.2	Recommended conditions conducive to transformative learning when teaching risk management skills.....	122
5.5.4.3	Threats and risks to transformative learning when teaching risk management skills	122
5.5.5	Non-implementation of a learner-centred approach when teaching risk management skills	122
5.5.5.1	Recommendations for the encouragement of a learner-teacher approach when teaching risk management skills	123
5.5.5.2	Recommended conditions to support learner-centred teaching as an approach to teach risk management	123
5.5.5.3	Factors that could threaten the implementation of a learner-centred adult learning approach	123
5.6	CONCLUSION.....	124
	REFERENCES	125
	APPENDICES.....	157
	APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER.....	157
	APPENDIX B: LETTER TO XHARIEP DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH	158
	APPENDIX C: PERMISSION FROM XHARIEP DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH	160

APPENDIX D: LETTER FROM LANGAUGE EDITOR	161
APPENDIX E: TURN IT IN RECEIPT AND REPORT	162

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Plan of action	91
Table 4.1: Attendance register: discussion meetings	99

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Adult education approach (illustrated)	115
Figure 4.2: Andragogy as a useful research tool	115

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDA	critical discourse analysis
DoE	Department of Education
PAR	participatory action research
RM	risk management
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDL	self-directed learning
SuRLEc	Sustainable Rural Learning Ecologies
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER 1 :

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study was aimed at formulating a framework to enhance the risk management skills of municipal officials using an adult education approach. This chapter introduces this initiative with a brief background to contextualise the problem statement. It also provides a brief outline of the theoretical framework, study design, methodology and data analysis.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Risk management (RM) is the process whereby an organisation identifies, assesses and mitigates risks (Cagliano, Grimaldi & Rafele, 2015:232-234). It is also explained by Managa (2012:3) as a process that involves monitoring projects and their finances towards sustainability. Adult education is a learning process that involves active, independent, collaborative learning, prior knowledge and experience and self-directed, transformative learning (Merriam, 2001:8). According to Yoshimoto, Inenaga and Yamada (2007:75-76), adult education initiates learner-centred rather than teacher-centred approaches. Therefore, an adult education approach facilitates problem-solving skills, meaningful knowledge acquisition strategies, self-directed learning (SDL) and advanced information-gathering processes (South African Qualifications Authority [SAQA] 2012:8). Thus, an adult education framework entails an approach that teaches the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks through problem solving, knowledge acquisition and SDL (Zmeyov, 1998:103).

The literature tells us that there are challenges that are critical to effective teaching strategies for RM. Zou and Mickleborough (2015:49) and McDonald (2013:358) assert that the inability to promote collaborative problem-solving skills affects the effectiveness of risk assessment processes. Ajewole (2014:114-115), Meyer (2014:166), Storbjörk (2007:463) and Gitterman (2004:106-107) point out that some challenges are caused by the ignorance of adult learner experience, failure to note the learner's self-concepts and using a teacher-centred approach in the learning processes. There is also a lack of recognition of an adult learner's prior experiential

knowledge as a resource for the successful acquisition of identification skills and the mitigation of risks (Ajewole, 2014:114-115). Sometimes there would be negative attitudes towards a lack of awareness about the need to know or failure to inform adult learners about the negative consequences of not learning (Knowles, 1990:63). According to Gitterman (2004:106), adult learners “have the potential to be self-directed, particularly when their life and practice experience are utilised as vital resources”. Hence, the above-noted challenges result in a lack of awareness of adult learners’ different learning styles and failure to promote collaborative problem-solving skills.

In addressing the challenges mentioned above, many strategies have been initiated and employed. Jozwiak (2004:25) states that training and the ability to work in teams is an effective method towards the improvement of risk assessment. Ogawa (in Ajewole, 2014:115) encourages collaboration and teamwork from different departments as a solution for organisational problems. Some studies have used the learner-centred approach as an effective strategy and the SDL process as a framework to enhance RM skills (Merriam, 2001:9; Mezirow, 2000; Zmeyov, 1998:103; Knowles, 1984:12; Tough, 1967). Knowles (1984:10) also emphasises mutual dialogue as a strategy that could gear learning activities towards one’s life experiences (Olaye & Onajite 2015:35; Cooke, 2010:208; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007:325; Okezie 2003:117). Besides, Schraw and Moshman (in Kenner & Weinerman, 2011:89) identify three metacognitive frameworks that may be useful tools in an adult learning strategy for determining how adult learners learn. Therefore, an inference from the solution-seeking method mentioned above suggests implementing an adult education approach as an effective strategy for teaching officials RM skills.

Research identifies successful conditions for the implementation of an adult education approach. According to Hag and Karukanaran (2013:7-8), these involve the need to learn and contribution towards questions such as what, why and how adults will learn. The latter is done to bring in learning content and processes that have a meaningful relationship with past experiences. Hag and Karukanaran (2013) emphasise that experience is a rich resource for learning. Also, activities need to involve learning that relates optimally to the individual’s developmental changes and life tasks. These

activities should reflect the amount of autonomy exercised by the learner in learning processes, and create a learning environment that minimises anxiety and encourages freedom to experiment (Hag & Karunakaran, 2013:7-8). Furthermore, there is a need to promote exercises and content applied to real-life situations (Knowles 1983:10). The approach also emphasises collaborative skills such as sharing information, constructing a common ground and generating explanations correlated with problem solving (Zou & Mickleborough, 2015:157; Armitage *et al.*, 2013:5; Nokes-Malach, Meade & Morrow, 2012:38; Jones, 2006:486). Nonetheless, Knowles (1983:56) underscores that adults tend to resist learning activities, which are not in line with their self-concept as autonomous individuals. As a result, there is a need to establish satisfactory task conditions to enable a successful implementation of the adult education approach.

Various threats can hinder the successful implementation of the adult education approach, and these include adults' experiences that may become threats to new learning (Cranton, 1996:57; Brookfield, 1988:98). The literature also identifies other threats, such as negative attitudes towards learning, old ways of doing things, environmental conditions and developing particular mental habits, biases and presuppositions that hinder one to accept new ideas and alternative forms of thinking, (Green, 2002:16). Further threats include the inability to develop application strategies that can be used to solve typical problems outside the learning situation and the failure to empower learners to become knowledgeable (Green 2002:16; Knowles 1980:58). In addition, Brookfield (1988:98) outlines that learners can withdraw from a learning process if they feel that the activity or activities do not meet their needs, which can be a barrier to implementing the adult education strategy.

In the literature, the successful implementation of the adult education approach is evidenced by a desire for job satisfaction, self-esteem and confidence, and improved quality of life (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:255; Cranton, 1989:28). The literature further indicates that performance will be better as people will have the necessary knowledge and skills required to solve problems collaboratively, generate solutions thereto and demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed solutions (Laughlin *et al.*, in Nokes-Malach *et al.*, 2012:35).

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The literature points out some ineffective strategies to teach RM skills (Goddu, 2012:170; Gitterman, 2004:96). This is evidenced by the lack of awareness of the different learning styles of adult learners (Zou & Mickleborough, 2015:148), the lack of promotion of collaborative problem-solving skills (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011:90), the inability to tap adult learners' prior experiential knowledge, which serves as effective tool to their foundation of their self-identity (Cooper, 2011:41), and not perceiving adult learners as self-directing (Olaye & Onajite, 2015:39; Meyer, 2014:163; Olufunke & Adeyemo, 2013:23; Managa, 2012:13; Knowles, 1984:10).

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ubuntu is the theoretical framework that will guide the study. Ubuntu promotes humanness and the common of good society as an essential element of human growth, interdependence, communalism, sensitivity and caring towards others (Nkondo 2007:49). It also aims to redefine social relations and offers social cohesion and people-centred transformation and development (Nkondo, 2007:48).

Ubuntu as an appropriate approach for the study intends to promote an integrated form of education that expresses humanity (Van der Walt, 2010:253) and advocates collaboration in research (Murithi, 2009:8; Muwanga-Zake, 2009:413). Ubuntu as an approach is well-grounded in my life experience, which could critically assist the central role of the adult education approach (Waghid & Smeyers, 2012:19).

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 Primary research question

How can the RM skills of officials at a municipality be enhanced using the adult education approach?

1.5.2 Secondary research questions

- Why is there a need to teach RM skills using the adult education approach and what challenges are experienced in adult teaching with a special focus on risk management?

- How can the components of the strategy be formulated to respond to these challenges?
- What are the conducive conditions for the successful implementation of an adult education strategy?
- What are the threats to the designing and implementation of the strategy?
- What are the indicators of success for the implementation of an adult education strategy?

1.5.3 Research aim and objectives

The study aims to formulate a framework that will enhance the RM skills of municipal officials through an adult education approach.

The objectives of the study are:

- to determine the need and the challenges to effective teaching strategies for RM skills for municipal officials;
- to identify components of the strategy that respond to the challenges to effectively teaching RM skills;
- to explore conditions conducive to the successful implementation of the strategy;
- to explore threats in the designing and implementation of the strategy; and
- to understand the indicators of success of the implementation of the strategy for effectively teaching practical RM skills.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study used participatory action research (PAR) (MacDonald, 2012:37) as a practical intervention to enhance RM skills using the adult education approach. According to Jordan, Streit and Matiasak (2003:186), PAR is a research approach that works closely with subordinate or oppressed groups to improve their circumstances within society. PAR aims to shift the responsibility for the research process to the individuals and groups directly affected by these inequalities (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Jordan *et al.*, 2003:190). In this respect, PAR is used as a methodology that empowers the marginalised and promotes the interests of the poor (Jordan *et al.*, 2003:186). People or co-researchers themselves conduct substantive research based

on the practices that affect their lives, which, according to McTaggart (1997:26), distinguishes PAR from other approaches. PAR is, therefore, committed to the politics of equity and social transformation (Jordan *et al.*, 2003:190).

1.7 DATA COLLECTION

Data can be generated through meetings and discussions using video recording and voice recording with consent from the participants to ensure reliability (Caldwell & Atwal, 2005:42). In this study, a team comprising eight municipal officials from the Xhariep District Local Municipality, a post-graduate student from the Sustainable Rural Learning Ecologies (SuRLEc) research team, a youth community member and a researcher conducted the research. The core responsibility involved a discussion of the challenges experienced in teaching RM skills at a municipality and identifying the strengths, opportunities and threats of the process, resources needed, solutions to be implemented, activities they should engage in and the time spent. The team assigned responsibilities for the design of an effective teaching strategy for RM to ensure success. The process was monitored by all the parties involved.

1.8 DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND REPORTING

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to interpret the data gathered, with the technique revealing unspoken and unacknowledged aspects of human behaviour. CDA focuses on social problems, political issues and challenges as well as relations of power and dominance (Van Dijk, 1993:249-283). Thus, CDA constitutes the social identities of the relationships among people and groups of people (Weiss & Wodak, 2003:13). In analysing the data, text, discursive practices and social structure were employed to draw conclusions (see Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2002:69-85). I argue that CDA is relevant to the study because it stems from the problems of society that it seeks to redress. Furthermore, it regards discourse as a type of social practice.

1.9 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

The study intends to contribute to the municipality and the lives of municipal officials. It will further contribute to the Department of Education (DoE) in promoting the effective teaching of RM skills through the adult education approach. The study also enabled the co-researchers to understand the critical role of the adult education

approach in enhancing municipal officials' skills, knowledge and attitude towards adult learning and how the practice (through a PAR approach of engagement) benefits society.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I first sought permission from Xhariep District Municipality and all of the team members to conduct the research. The findings and results of the study will be made available to the community. The identities of the participants, who are referred to as “co-researchers” in the study, have been concealed and will remain confidential and anonymous. The process included ethical clearance by the University of the Free State. The purpose of the study was explained to the co-researchers, and they were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity throughout the process. All documents used would be safely stored. The co-researchers signed consent letters to indicate their willingness to participate in the study. During the research, the co-researchers were treated according to the values of Ubuntu, which include being treated with respect and without being caused any harm in terms of manifested aspects of domination or exploitation that negate the social ideals of justice and democracy.

1.11 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 provides the introduction to and background of the study. Chapter 2 contains the literature review and discusses the theoretical framework based on Ubuntu. The research design and methodology, focusing on strategy formulation, are presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents an analysis and interpretation of the data, using CDA of the text, discursive practices and social structure. Chapter 5 contains the findings, summary and recommendations of the study.

1.12 CONCLUSION

This study is aimed at formulating a framework to enhance RM skills at a municipality using the adult education approach. The first chapter presented a brief background to the study, contextualised the problem statement and discussed the study objectives. The theoretical framework, study design, methodology and data analysis of the research study explain the layout of the chapters of this report.

CHAPTER 2 :

LITERATURE REVIEW TOWARDS THE FORMULATION OF A FRAMEWORK FOR THE EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF RISK MANAGEMENT SKILLS AT A MUNICIPALITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to formulate a framework for the effective teaching of RM skills at a municipality through the adult education approach. Thus, this chapter presents the theoretical framework, namely the Ubuntu philosophy, that underpins the study concerning its aim. It reviews the literature on adult teaching and learning strategies to identify, define and discuss operational concepts such as adult education and RM skills at a municipality. The discussion of the operational concepts aims at ensuring that they are understood in the context of their role in the formulation of the framework. The related literature is further studied and organised, following the study objectives to explore the best practices from other countries, specifically in Africa and the Southern African Development Community to formulate a useful teaching strategy for RM skills in South African municipalities. The chapter concludes with a summary.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section focuses on Ubuntu as the appropriate theoretical framework for this study. It considers and argues for the choice of Ubuntu based on the historical background, objectives, formats, ontology, epistemology and axiological stance, and adaptation of Ubuntu principles as mechanisms for the formulation and operationalisation of the framework for effective adult teaching strategies, the relationship between the researcher and the participants, values and the language used by followers of Ubuntu. The study therefore follows and uses the principles of the Ubuntu philosophy as an appropriate lens to demonstrate the objective of the study to identify the components of the solutions to challenges experienced.

2.2.1 The historical origins of the Ubuntu philosophy

There has been a debate among scholars about whether African philosophies do or do not exist (Chukwu in Nafukho, 2016:49; Letseka, 2000). However, Nafukho

(2016:49) claims that African philosophies must exist, since, according to Letseka (2000:179), “all people have a philosophy that guides the way they live, their perceptions of others, and the decisions and choices they make about every aspect of their lives”.

Thus, African philosophies exist in both unrecorded and recorded forms. The unrecorded form of philosophy resides in the memories of the senior members of society (the aged). They bring it to the fore only when opportunities for doing so present themselves, such as at funerals and initiation ceremonies. This is reflected in the African communal way of life expressed in Ubuntu (the humanness inherent in people) (Nafukho, 2016:49).

Recorded forms of African philosophy, Ubuntu in particular, have appeared in writing since 1846. However, the first systematic written exposition thereof was found in the 1950s in the novels of Jordan Kush Ngubane (Lodge, 1999:99). Gade (2011:307) states that before 1980, Ubuntu as an African philosophy was most commonly described as “Human nature”, “Humanity,” or “Humanness”. This confirms that Ubuntu expresses integrated form of an African society which is further described as an “excellent African quality” (Davis, 1936:142). Thus, as a philosophy and a way of life, Ubuntu is associated with many African societies and certainly in Southern Africa (Nkondo, 2007:89). Ngubane (1979:113) also sees it as “the philosophy which the African experience translates into action”. Khoza (2006: xx-xxi) confirms that Ubuntu has its origins in the African conception of being, meaning that all of humanity has common background and ipso facto belongs together. Thus, Ubuntu creates a unity and cohesion that leads to transformation and development for humankind. The individual is absorbed into the collective, yet retains an identity as an empirical being. Hence, “I am because you are, and you are because we are”. This emphasise that Ubuntu as an approach that could critically assist the central role of collaborative adult learning and teaching. For instance, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person because of others) a common idiom which expresses humanity across African society. All these reflect a belief system of collectiveness and interdependence towards others (Nkondo, 2007:89-90).

Therefore, I found the Ubuntu approach relevant for designing and implementing the adult education framework that could effectively teach the assessment of risks through

problem-solving skills, because Karsten and Illa (2005:612) point out that Ubuntu is an approach, which could lay a good foundation in management. Moreover, McFarlin *et al.* (1999:71) write that African management philosophy can be accommodated in one word, which is Ubuntu. That is what characterise Afrocentric leadership as collectivism, which constitute common bond and ensuring collective integrated community (Shonhiwa, 2006:41). According to Nyerere (1968:27), all human beings are regarded as members of an extended family.

I further see Ubuntu as an appropriate lens because it corresponds with what the adult education approach seeks to achieve by encouraging collaborative learning as a good strategy for adult teaching and learning. In this sense, Ubuntu is a theoretical framework that promotes sharing in education, which affirms the importance of social connectedness, interdependence, communalism, sensitivity towards others and caring for others in the learning environment (Le Roux, 2000:43). I argue that by infusing Ubuntu philosophy in research, common goals can be enhanced and adult learning needs can be addressed. This could be accomplished by encouraging inclusivity and connectivity in learning activities and the accommodation of learners' prior experiential knowledge, which serves as a rich resource for their foundation of their self-identity (Cooper, 2011:41). That is why Khoza (1994:3) posits that Ubuntu expresses collectivism rather than individualism, meaning it promotes unity and rejects isolation in adult teaching and learning processes. Despite Ubuntu being subjected to colonial domination and European modernity, Chimuka (2015:71) emphasises that Ubuntu still has a place in ethics as it seeks to integrate members who were dissipated by history.

2.2.2 Objectives of Ubuntu

Below are the elements selected to analyse the essentials of Ubuntu to achieve the objectives of the study. These principles are characterised as dynamic processes that build on one another, interconnect and overlap, and inform the type of education at the workplace that could be used to promote collaborative problem solving for the enhancement of risk assessment. Furthermore, these Ubuntu objectives emphasise humanity in all aspects of teaching and learning processes, which shows connectedness or the integration of knowledge acquisition in RM.

2.2.1.1 Solidarity is related to the Ubuntu philosophy

The use of the Ubuntu philosophy in learning activities promote the indigenous setting in adult learning processes. Ubuntu believes in group solidarity, which is central to the survival of African communities (Mbigi & Maree 2005:75; Dia, 1992). An African is strongly capable as a person living within an organisation and not as an individual. In a hostile environment, it is only through such community solidarity that hunger, isolation, deprivation, and poverty can be survived because of the brotherly and sisterly embracement, which include cooperation, care and sharing of the community. Thus, utilising the African Ubuntu philosophy for the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks, can enhance the internal operations of an organisation that operates in an African environment.

Furthermore, Ubuntu aims to redefine social relations and offer social cohesion and people-centred transformation and development (Nkondo, 2007:48). So far, the focus is more on what Habermas (1970) calls “technically exploitable knowledge” without sufficient appreciation of the intimate relationship between education and transformation in general. On the other hand, Nkondo (2007:98) argues that the education system needs to play a more active role in the political, social and economic reordering of the state and society. He contends that education is needed to articulate a methodology for developing an Ubuntu social disposition. He believes that an Ubuntu-orientated framework could be the engine and elixir for transformation, mainly if a transparent method existed to integrate its principles into a national system of education and training (Nkondo, 2007:98). In this regard, Ubuntu principles are appropriate to be integrated into adult learning and practice towards improving risk assessment in municipalities (Jozwiak, 2004:25).

Furthermore, for the role of Ubuntu in education, it should be noted that the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* of the DoE (2001b:12) identifies ten fundamental values in the South African Constitution that pertain to education. These include amongst others democracy, social justice and equity, human dignity, respect and reconciliation (RSA DoE, 2001b:3).

2.2.1.2 *Ubuntu inspires sharing with fellow human beings*

As an indigenous cultural norm, Ubuntu has a positive commitment and contribution towards group of people and relations with each other. The holistic description of Ubuntu involves the concepts of “humanity towards others”, “I am because we are” and “a person becomes human through other persons”. It also implies that a person can survive with the help of other persons. As an approach, Ubuntu encourages a universal bond of sharing that connects all of humanity (Chimuka, 2015:58). Thus understood, Ubuntu promote social interdependence and deep rootedness in the community (Adonis in Letseka, 2012:48; Chachine, 2008). In other words, Ubuntu promotes relationships in research to achieve set learning goals. This makes it the centre of the teaching and learning transaction (Quan-Baffour, 2014:242).

2.2.1.3 *Elements of the Ubuntu philosophy*

Ubuntu as a philosophy portrays an African worldview of harmony, respect, caring and passion for fellow human beings, no matter where they come from. As humans, we lead gregarious lives where we are in one way or the other dependent on or connected to others. Affirmation thereof is the fact that one is a human being because of being with other human beings. Human life is defined in terms of one’s relationship with others; hence the need to love, respect, cooperate and share with, and have compassion for others (Quan-Baffour, 2014:240). Indeed, without others, one ceases to be human. Louw (2010) asserts that Ubuntu inspires us to expose ourselves to others, encounter the difference in their humanness and inform and enrich our own.

According to Letseka (2000:180), Ubuntu promotes moral norms and values such as “altruism, kindness, generosity, compassion, benevolence, courtesy, and respect and concern for others”. In other words, people living in communities that embrace Ubuntu treat others with a sense of *botho* or Ubuntu, justice and fairness (Letseka, 2012:48; 2000:180).

McKay, Herman, Franco, Zandra and De Necker (1998) assert that in its essence, cooperative or collaborative learning shares the Ubuntu philosophy that teaches that it is only through cooperation with others that the individual realises his or her potential. That is the essence of Ubuntu brotherhood or sisterhood, reflecting the values of Ubuntu where community members assist one another without any incentive or gain.

Thus, sharing resources, ideas and information is critical to real African identity and daily practice. That is why adult teaching and learning should provide learners with the opportunity to learn together cooperatively, which is for the benefit of the entire learning group. It means that by using a cooperative method of teaching and learning for RM skills, municipal officials could work in teams to share experience and support one another (Quan-Baffour, 2014:240).

2.2.1.4 *Ubuntu cultivates a team work*

African societies are cohesive and productive in tradition, especially when working together as one family in their social grouping. The latter is confirmed by the studies that have been done in Malawi and Tanzania that among the most outstanding values in African societies is the salience of the group (An Afro-centric Alliance, 2001:59-74). This traditional collective action could be so strong that Africans can view success and failure in the organisation as caused by group spirits. For example, before accepting any reasonable offers, such as a promotion, an employee may seek ideas of other members from the group before deciding or even turn down the development altogether for fear of the social consequences thereof. Any successful opportunities or weaknesses is taken as a group achievement that belongs to the entire community. For instance, in Eastern and Central Africa, the family remains and is likely to continue to be a centrepiece of collectivism. Thus, working as family is a viable option in managing motivation in the workplace (Carr, MacLachlan, Kachedwa & Kanyangale, 1997:906).

Thus, according to Bangura (2005:20), Ubuntu is an approach to adult learning and teaching that is informed by humanity and spirit of togetherness in the learning environment. Bangura (2005:20) further describes Ubuntu as an indigenous African educational paradigm that goes hand in hand with the term Ubuntugogy, which is defined as the art and science of teaching and learning that promote humanity towards others. Therefore, Ubuntugogy strengthen andragogy, which refers art and science of helping adult to learn.

2.2.1.5 *Humanness is part of African Ubuntu philosophy*

Ubuntu inspires us to expose ourselves to others, encounter the differences of their humanness and inform and enrich our own (Nkondo, 2007:48). The fact that adults

come to the learning environment with a wealth of experience either from economic or social lives indicates social beings' engagement in learning tasks as part of the whole community in things they do together (Quan-Baffour, 2014:240). Merriam and Bierema (2014:49) confirm that an adult who has accumulated life experiences is a "rich resource" for learning.

Thus, infusing Ubuntu in adult learning activities, especially at the workplace, will emphasise learning as teamwork and the need to practise Ubuntu in the family and the community at large. Letseka (2014:544) declares that there is no Ubuntu without community. Therefore, Ubuntu can contribute to the achievement of social cohesion in South Africa. Nkondo (2007 49) concurs that Ubuntu promotes the common good of society and humanness. These could lead to human growth, interdependence, and caring towards others. In other words, elements of Ubuntu contribute positively to social cohesion that lead to people-centred transformation and development (Nkondo, 2007:49). The argument is that Ubuntu philosophy is not only an approach that infuse humanity in adult teaching and learning but also promote ethics, values, morals and traditional African communal justice (Letseka, 2014:544).

Therefore, for this study, I find Ubuntu to be an appropriate approach, as it intends to promote an integrated form of education that expresses humanity (see Van der Walt, 2010:253) and advocates collaboration in research (see Murithi, 2009:8; Muwanga-Zake, 2009:413). The approach is also well-grounded in my life experience, and this could critically assist the central role of the adult education approach (see Waghid & Smeyers, 2012:19).

2.2.3 Formats of Ubuntu

There are multiple perspectives about Ubuntu as a philosophy and a way of life (Nkondo, 2007:90). These theories collectively emphasise emancipation and power relations in research and collective views that can help achieve the study objectives. These different perspectives will also contribute towards understanding that there are other ways of perceiving truth and reality, and that these may have implications for adult education. Of importance for these perspectives is whether the sociocultural theory, the critical social theory and postmodernism amplify the principles of Ubuntu.

The sociocultural theory of human learning is essential and relates to this study because it emphasises social interaction in learning (Vygotsky, 1978:57). Thus, through Ubuntu, the sociocultural theory can promote collaborative problem-solving learning to identify and assess risks. Letseka (2012:57) asserts that an adult learner that is guided by the educational policy framework of South Africa will act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice. In this regard, the adult education system is required to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate, multi-skilled and compassionate, and can participate in society as a critical and active citizen (RSA DoE, 2002).

The critical social theory is also perceived as a handy approach for this study. Its goal involves advancing the emancipatory function of knowledge. Through the critical social theory in adult education, learning environment discourse broadens learners' knowledge and humanity that could liberate them from the confines of their common sense (Leonardo, 2004:11). According to Carrington and Selva (2010:45), the critical social theory informs "the design of the reflection process as it enabled a move away from knowledge transmission toward knowledge transformation". Within the context of this study, the critical social theory encourages the production and application of theory as part of the key adult education development to support transformative knowledge. Furthermore, the critical social theory promotes critical thinking that complements critique in adult teaching and learning activities with less oppressive social arrangements. The critical social theory has brought about movement in education, especially adult education, and highlights the relationship between social systems and people, how they produce each other, and ultimately, the contribution thereof to the emancipation of both (Leonardo, 2004:11). Thus, under Ubuntu conditions, political thinking would involve the interpretation of shared understandings and meanings bearing on one's community (Letseka, 2012:56).

Postmodernism can also serve as an approach linked to Ubuntu because it emphasises power relationships in research (Duignan, 2014:68). Thus, postmodernism deconstructs individual narrative and advocates multiple narratives. In their analysis, they see truth as subjective and not objective (Mangena, 2016:70). It has even been observed that Ubuntu ethics through their moral imperative – the

common moral position – is a product of the collective wisdom of the elders and not the knowledge of one individual within a given society (Mangena, 2016:77). Moreover, in terms of character, Ubuntu ethics are relational, dialogical, consensual, spiritual, horizontal and vertical, as opposed to Western ethics that are individualistic, elitist and horizontal (Mangena, 2016:77).

I have found that using multiple theoretical lenses can help interpreting and understanding challenges and their solutions in the development of a framework for teaching and learning RM skills at a municipality. I further argue that Ubuntu plays an important part in helping us value ourselves through our relationship with a particular community. Thus, these perspectives concerning the position of Ubuntu could help define the attitude and relations of a researcher in the research process.

2.2.4 Ontological stance of Ubuntu

For Ubuntu, the community is the primary ontological reality that gives rise to the nature of human beings. In other words, the very nature for ubuntu is found through their being in a community (Forster, 2010:243). Thus, true identity reflects through interaction in the community. According to Forster (2010:243), “relationships are central to the formation, expression, and understanding of who a person is”. Nkondo (2007:90) confirms that the social ideal of Ubuntu depends on a notion that proposes a general theory about the ontological priority of society over the individual. Thus, the African statement that describes personal identity is *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through other persons) (Forster, 2010:245). In this regard, the concept of Ubuntu entails “humanity”, “humanness” and even “humaneness”. In short, to be accurate, “human” means being in a relationship with other persons who give form and substance to one’s true humanity (Foster, 2010:245). This affirms the identity that arises from intersubjective interactions among persons. In other words, the concept of Ubuntu centres on the relationships and connections among human beings (Keane, 2008:8). Therefore, the notion of identity is central to the African worldview.

Infusing Ubuntu into education, especially adult teaching and learning for risk assessment at the workplace, in which the emphasis is more on the values, attitudes, skills and knowledge, is needed for municipal officials to function as a team for the benefit of themselves and society. Bangura (2017:101) suggests that the provision of

education in Africa should employ Ubuntu pedagogy, which, according to him, refers to the art and science of teaching and learning undergirded by humanity towards others. This justifies that Ubuntu, or the communal ideal, emphasises that the need to experience our lives as bound up with the good of the particular community in which our identity has been constituted is twofold:

First, the communal ideal is consistent with the communal ontology. The idea that we are first social beings embodied agents in the world and engaged in realising a certain form of life represents a gain in understanding over the neo-liberal epistemology, which gives priority to a disengaged subject standing over an external world. (Nkondo, (2007:90)

According to Boon (in Keane 2008:8), the Ubuntu concept is centred on relationship and harmony. Therefore, African humanism recognises our most crucial need as that of human relationships. It follows that the “ultimate moral inadequacy” consists of a lack of feeling for others, revealing profound selfishness (Wiredu 2002:291). Reality self-realises in this affirmation of being, which pays concentrated attention to the being of all things, which is also an affirmation of the controversial and even disturbing aspects of our world (Robinson-Morris 2015:95). This constitutes an ontological awareness in its purely subjective and practical sense. It is realised in its recognition, all-embracing and no longer personal compassion (Asakura 2011:673-674).

Ubuntu encourages participants’ collaboration and cooperation, geared towards addressing their problems and needs (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:47; César & Santos, 2006:333-346). In this way, Ubuntu encourages a socially constructed reality of the affected people (Mertens, 2010:18). The people who are confronted with or by a social problem or need tend to be better positioned in defining such problems (their reality) from their actual daily experiences. For this reason, Ubuntu strongly recommends that those affected by a social problem should also be co-researchers in efforts and processes geared towards addressing their issues and needs (Biesta, 2012:39; Mahlomaholo, 2012). This means that Ubuntu accommodates diversity and gives a distinctly African meaning, and motivates learning in the working environment that encourage a positive attitude towards others (Bangura, 2017:101). As such, Ubuntu is geared towards engaging co-researchers’ diverse views, experiences and knowledge, which are based on the subjective character of reality (Mertens, 2010:18).

Besides, African ontology involves aspects such as respect for human beings, collective sharedness, humility, solidarity, caring and interdependence amongst others (Chimuka, 2015:67). Respect for persons and the community relates to attitudes towards others in which people are perceived as worthy beings (Nafukho, 2016:54). Ubuntu values give a radical reflection of humanity and appeal to the universe for the traditional community (Chimuka, 2015:67). As such, adult learners have to be viewed as individuals with worldviews that are related to those of the community.

As members of the community, adult learners have shared interests, hopes, practices and ideals, and as such, feeling belonging and loyalty. This is very much in line with African socialism and educating for *botho* or Ubuntu (humanness) as a primary concern of an African philosophy of education (Letseka, 2000:179). In this regard, the practical aspect of the Ubuntu approach supports the idea of capacity building at a municipality committed to equality, justice and mutual care (Hailey in Mugumbate & Nyanguru, 2013).

2.2.5 Epistemological stance of Ubuntu

Epistemology is derived from the Greek word *epistémé*, which means knowledge in the pure and certain sense. This is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the study of consciousness, what cognition is, the basis and problems thereof and the process of knowing (Chukwu in Nafukho, 2016:44).

It is evident from the ontological stance of Ubuntu (as expounded in Section 2.2.4) that the data generated and interpreted within specific contexts, including the backgrounds and experiences of the affected persons, presuppose that Ubuntu as a living theory improves practice and develops knowledge in the context of social communication (Whitehead 2008:104). The contexts within which a problem and a need are situated and rooted are central to determining the extent and nature of the issues experienced and the resultant processes and solutions. For instance, infusing the Ubuntu approach in teaching RM at a municipality is most likely to thrive and sustain the risk factors of the organisation.

Knowledge is conceived in this study as empowering and emancipatory because it leads to solving people's real-life problems through inclusive, collaborative, participatory and democratic processes (Rocha-Schmid 2010:344-345; Liasidou,

2008:486-487). On the other hand, the Ubuntu philosophy emphasises the importance of individual creativity. This contributing to improving practice and knowledge from within historical and cultural opportunities. Also adding value and constraints in the social context of the individual's life and work (Letseka, 2013:337; Whitehead 2008:103).

Thus, the most outstanding positive impact of Ubuntu on the adult teaching and learning processes of risk assessment is the value it puts on life and human dignity towards creating knowledge and context-driven reality, which is grounded in the principle that the researcher should be embedded in the area of the study (Mabovula, 2011:40; Mertens, 2010:19). This is the case with the formulation of a framework that enhances the RM skills of municipal officials.

2.2.6 Axiological stance of Ubuntu

The axiological framework means locating adult education within the moral ethics, beliefs and practices of indigenous African communities. From an ethical point of view, the main concern of adult education is what is good and right (Nafukho, 2016:52). Letseka (2013:337) contends that justice is perceived as Ubuntu fairness in South Africa, which constitute moral obligation in an indigenous African society. In this way, the traditional African community represents Ubuntu. Metz (2007:240) argues that Ubuntu is a theory that guides for the right action. He writes that “the most justified normative theory of right action that has an African pedigree is the requirement to produce harmony and reduce discord, where harmony is a matter of identity and solidarity” (Metz, 2007:240). Like the South African Constitution, Ubuntu accords “all human beings a moral status and considers everyone in principle to be potential members of an ideal family based on loving or friendly relationships” (Metz & Gaie, 2010:281). Moreover, Peters (in Nafukho, 2016:52) advises that the ethical issues that are of concern in African adult education relate to equality, worthwhile activities, consideration of interests, freedom and respect for persons and the community.

There is a need for a new discourse on adult teaching and learning, that is, a discourse located within the Ubuntu discourse, and not the one that tries to be “adopted” and “adapted” to the context. Indeed, the collective meaning of Ubuntu provides an ethical framework for the behaviour and attitudes of its members and a framework to

formulate a discourse about adult education (Mkabela, 2014:287). The latter does not underestimate the Western philosophy but shows respect to the local and traditional discussion and understanding of an adult teaching and learning approach. Ubuntu, in this context, entails, among other things, the holistic orientation, collective ethic and respect, which involves the notion of responsibility as a basis upon which social order is constructed.

2.2.7 The role of the researcher and relationships with the participants

A researcher engages in the conceptualisation of the study by participating in preparatory discussions and giving guidance or facilitating the co-researchers to take responsibility for their thinking, attitude and actions (Wood, Morar & Mostert, 2007:78), since shifts on a cognitive, affective and behavioural level are more likely to be sustained as they become part of the personal and professional identity of the participant (Batagiannis in Wood & Govender, 2013:178). As such, co-researchers are transformed through collaborative learning – their self-confidence, self-awareness and problem-solving ability are increased, and they develop the desire and capacity for lifelong learning (Zuber-Skerrit, 2011 in Wood & Govender, 2013:178).

The researcher and the co-researchers share experiences and knowledge that can help them facilitate and enrich the processes towards attaining their intentions. The researcher's role is to allow the co-researchers to make their thoughts, ideas and knowledge functional by enabling them to share experiences, having lived longer than the researcher on the research site and, therefore, having community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005:70). The process of making knowledge functional is preceded by critically examining the information provided by the co-researchers and the researcher, which is expected to facilitate discussions in an open way. The researcher works tirelessly to engender an environment that is imbued by mutual respect and trust (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:46-62). The positivist approach reduces persons to numbers and objects, as they mainly seek to quantify in order to generalise. Likewise, a researcher in the phenomenological terrain is to detach him- or herself from the situation so that reality should speak for itself. This assumption of a neutral stance is incomprehensible.

2.2.8 The relationship between the researcher and the participants

In non-positivist paradigms (see section 2.2.2 and 2.2.3), research process accommodates both researcher-participant as co-production of knowledge in which “the division between researcher and subject is blurred, and control over-representation is increasingly shared” (Gergen & Gergen, 2000:1035). Given the above, the relationship between the researcher and the participants is characterised by openness and willingness to share experiences, views and ideas towards achieving the common goal or aim and objectives of the study.

In essence, constructivist and critical approaches stress the importance of qualitative research as a paradigm that fosters a rebalancing of power in the researcher-participant relationship. It encourages marginalised opinions and recognise experiences (O’Connor & O’Neill, 2004:23). The relationship between the researcher and the participants is built on the understanding and acceptance of the principle of the “power of difference” – an acknowledgement that the diverse experiences, knowledge and cultures of people (contexts) make a difference (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010:140-141; Stein & Mankowski, 2004:21-35). It lies in their respective contributions to the ideas and resources towards attaining their common goal.

It is argued that defining what knowledge is to count in a concrete researcher-researched encounter is not necessarily the sole privilege of the researcher because co-researchers bring their agenda to the research situation (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessachf in Råheim *et al.*, 2016: Online). In a qualitative research process, the researcher and participants formulate a framework that is committed to power sharing (Karnieli-Miller *et al.*, 2009:282 cited in Raheim *et al.*, 2016: Online). In other words, in this study, all of the co-researchers acted in the interest of the whole, beginning in everyday realities as a mutual process of discovery by which the co-researchers and I contributed to the expansion of the other’s knowledge (see Ledwith, 2007:599). Participatory research with marginalised community has the potential to achieve meaningful change at both the individual and social levels (Littlechild, Tanner & Hall, 2015:18).

2.2.9 Rhetoric in the Ubuntu approach

The co-researchers in this research, which is couched within the Ubuntu approach, selected and used language that respects others as human beings. This language is considerate of the importance of building relationships of mutual trust, humility and care (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:40-45). So, the tendency to carry the connotations of reducing people to objects, subjects, figures, numbers and sub-humans was avoided as far as possible. The Ubuntu approach involves people who participate in the study as co-researchers instead of “subjects”, as is the case in positivism and phenomenology (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:4), where the annotation of “subjects” gives the impression that the researcher wields more power over the subjects (Mahlomaholo, 2009:225; Van Dijk, 2008:88).

In this research guided by Ubuntu, order and peace were maintained to avoid conflict. Therefore, I contend that through the Ubuntu approach, the co-researchers and I reasonably delivered “justice as fairness” in the research. Also, Ubuntu provided the foundation for national identify and integrated group of people that could deepen democracy and facilitate the achievement of humanity. It is for this reason that Nkondo (2007:88) and Mohale (2013:484) encourage the South African government to adopt Ubuntu principles and values in its national policy.

As the African people believe in the values of Ubuntu that involves human aspects like, willingness to share, justice and the priority of the community over the individual were considered (see Broodryk, 2006:4; Brummett, 2006:55). Rawls (in Letseka, 2014:550) emphasises a sense of justice whereby persons will be free, equal and treated fairly in research. The emphasis is on collaboration that is, listening to one another, respecting one another’s points of view – individuals contributing to collective education (Blankenberg, 1999:48). Thus, within the context of Ubuntu, participants constructs their knowledge and act humanely towards others.

This is also because Ubuntu emphasises justice for fairness “in terms of the proper relationships between a human person and the universe, between the person and nature, between the person and other persons” (Keevy, 2008:375). For active participation to occur there should be a commitment to freedom of expression; people will feel that they can speak out and represent their interests without fear of

repercussions, even if their voices are dissenting. Thus, the use of concepts and words that are inconsistent with Ubuntu values and principles is avoided because Ubuntu reflects shared beliefs and values (Keevy, 2009:67).

A relationship with others and respect for that relationship are the foundation of all information and knowledge. Participation is essential for human development; what one's neighbour offers in terms of experiences, education and ideas is critical to one's growth.

2.3 DEFINITION AND DISCUSSION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

This discussion serves to provide multiple meanings assigned to the operating concept of the framework for the effective teaching of RM through adult education. These concepts have been derived from the title of the thesis and are critical to the operationalisation of the study to assist in achieving its objectives. The two main ideas are adult education and RM skills at a municipality.

2.3.1 Adult education

The concept "adult education" is defined in several ways. Encyclopedia.com (2020: Online) defines adult education as a practice that involves a systematic way of engagement and learning activities that involves self-directed learning and positive attitudes towards learning. Simultaneously, the Oxford English Dictionary (2018) refers to adult education as an education for those over the usual school age, typically outside the standard educational system in day or evening classes. In line with these definitions, Manuel and Popov (2016:53) state that adult education is a way to provide adults with opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills.

However, for this study, the definition of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (1976:2) is regarded as the most appropriate:

Adult education as a concept denotes the entire body of organised educational processes, whatever the content, level, method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges, and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as an adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn in a new direction and bring about changes in their

attitudes or behavior in a twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

Thus, adult education refers to a concept that often emphasises cultural and societal development (Nilsson, 2014:615).

Okediran and Abidoeye (in Olufunke & Adeyemo, 2013:24) see adult education as a tool that frees people from poverty-ridden situations. By implication, this means that adult education can be observed as a tool for fighting ignorance and poverty. In other words, it is a means of raising awareness of the need to know what will help bringing about a prosperous nation (Olufunke & Adeyemo, 2013:23). Alase (2017:74) believes that the best way to change the paradigm of adult education is to encourage the expansion of community education in different communities so that local folks can take part in the educational activities of their communities. Community education is described as an educational process that aims to raise people's consciousness and provide the skills – human and material – needed to enhance and develop the economic, political and cultural development of the community (Alase, 2017:74).

As shown above, adult education has various definitions. Nevertheless, it should be regarded as a learning process for this study, which involves active, independent and collaborative learning; prior knowledge and experience, self-directed learning and transformative learning (see Merriam, 2001:8).

2.3.1.1 *The historical background of adult education*

This section focuses on adult education as a lens through which to analyse and operationalise the objectives of the study. Furthermore, in operationalising the goals of the study, discussing the different periods of adult education will help to gain an understanding of the challenges in the teaching of RM skills. The section also considers and argues in favour of the importance of adult education as an effective approach in the formulation of the framework based on its historical background, objectives, formats and the ontological and epistemological stance of adult education.

2.3.1.1.1 *Adult education in the 1950s*

The primary purpose of adult education in the 1950s was to train citizens to become democratic and civilized (Chang, 2013:63). Chang (2013:63) tells us that during this

period, the adult education approach was more concerned with practical issues and problems, and the body of adult education knowledge in the 1950s came mainly from reflecting the experience in practice. During this period, the research methods used were mostly descriptive and quantitative-based (Chang, 2013:64). Brunner, Wilder, Kirchner and Newberry (1959:6) state that works in the 1950s “are descriptive or narrative accounts of specific projects, programmes or agencies”. Thus, the quantitative research method dominated in adult education research.

2.3.1.1.2 Adult education in the 1960s

In the 1960s, adult education developed its body of knowledge through the following channels:

- (1) Experiences gained from coping with problems of practice lead to the formulation of principles or generalizations which provide guides for future practice ...
- (2) Knowledge which has been developed by other disciplines is borrowed and reformulated for use in adult education. (Jensen, Liveright & Hallenbeck, 1964:105)

Jensen *et al.* (1964:107) have noticed that, although the adult educator (in the 1960s) indirectly tests a theoretical system, his or her primary purpose is to deal with the problems that continuously arise and to gain more effective control of them. He or she thinks, firstly, of a network of ideas in terms of its usefulness for dealing with practice issues and only secondly of its empirical and logical validity.

The adult education approach focused more on practical and applied topics, such as training, and less on rising social problems (London, 1970:13). Decrow (in Chang, 2013:65) confirms that little was done about social issues. For instance, the role of adult education in America “developed somewhat chaotically in response to a great variety of special interests and needs rather than systematically in response to some overall plan and purpose” (Schroeder, 1970:33). London (1970:13) argues that adult education is “concerned with non-controversial topics and vocational training at the expense of learning for better citizenship”.

For this reason, in the 1960s, although both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in the adult education approach, quantitative research methods

such as experiments, tests, scales and questionnaires were still dominating (Chang, 2013:65).

2.3.1.1.3 *Adult education in the 1970s*

In the 1970s, adult education as a research approach started to transit from the narrative and positivist perspective to more theoretical and multiple philosophical perspectives (Long, Hiemstra & Associates in Chang, 2013:65). So, more sophisticated and more qualitative-based research was replacing descriptive and quantitative analyses in this period.

2.3.1.1.4 *Adult education in the 1980s*

In the 1980s, the adult education theory underwent a rapid change. The philosophical foundation of adult education and a variety of perspectives on the purposes of adult education were developed. Some strategies to enlarge the adult education research territory were pointed out. These strategies include generating theory unique to adult learning and development, building on the critical theory, testing theory through international comparative research and synthesising through meta-research (Deshler & Hagan in Chang, 2013:66).

Thus, in the previous decades, adult education focused on training civic citizens, distributing social justice and strengthening work-related competencies, whereas, in the 1980s, the advice was that the social functions of adult education should be stressed to a bigger picture of personal growth (Chang, 2013:66). For example, Courtney (in Chang, 2013:66) observed that there was a lack of the “big picture” that could link adult education to the dominant social, political and economic manifestations of society. Rubenson (in Chang, 2013:66) suggests that educators should question the extent to which educational activities could connect to a broader social and political struggle.

2.3.1.1.5 *Adult education from 1990 to the early 2000s*

During the previous periods, the field of adult education became more complex. The dominant scientific, rational and psychological perspectives in the research were attached and called for a sociological and a critical perspective (Cunningham in

Chang, 2013:67). Thus, critical reflection requires teachers of adult learners to examine “both the social function of adult education ... and the way their practice reproduces existing patterns of inequity” (Brookfield, 2000:33). Although this perspective influenced adult education, it was challenged by the rising postmodern philosophy, emphasising the local, the provisional and the changing of adult teaching approach (Brookfield, 2000:33). For this reason, quantitative research declined, and qualitative research increased dramatically. This means that sociological and critical perspectives in research were stressed, while historical research still made up a small proportion of the research methods. For example, Taylor (in Chang, 2013:67) conducted a content analysis of the adult education quarterly from 1989 to 1999 and pointed out that quantitative submissions had declined from 45,2% in 1989 to 34,1% in 1999, while qualitative research had increased dramatically from 8,6% to 34,1% in the same period.

In this study, the postmodern period enabled me, as a research facilitator, to use the adult education approach as an effective method to formulate a framework for teaching RM skills at a municipality. The period of adult education in the 1980s and 1990s to 2000s emerged further to address the domination of positivism on validity and reliability. Therefore, this period enabled me, as the research coordinator of this study, to ensure that work-related competencies improved and personal growth took place in the municipality. In this section, I draw on the work of Brookfield (2000:33), who explains that critical reflection requires teachers of adult learners to examine “both the social function of adult education ... and the way their practice reproduces existing patterns of inequity”. Consequently, I argue that adult education can be linked to the dominant social, political and economic manifestations of society.

2.3.1.2 Objectives of adult education

Adult education as an approach aims at contributing to personal and social development (Pastuović, 2016:7). Onyenemezu (2012:1) further states that adult education experts should address the socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental problems within their communities. Onyenemezu (2012:1) continues by saying that “adult education changes the social and psychological minds of adults more than any other profession, instils lost hope in them and liberates them from their prejudice of seeing themselves as not beings that are capable of learning”. Gabriel,

Mwangi, Lewis, Muasya and Vengi (2016:54) support the view that adult education aims to achieve the civic, social, moral and cultural attitudes and skills necessary to progress in every sphere of life. To accomplish this, adult education programmes should be consciously designed to meet specific learning needs (Gabriel *et al.*, 2016:54).

According to Modise and Oduaran (2009:273), “in many nations, adult education is being urgently asked to specify ways and means by which it seeks to enhance the total living, productive and competitive capacities of its target audience directly”. Reinforcing this position, Obasi (2014:27) argues that adult education as an approach “is indispensable in national development as its relevance cuts across all sectors”. Therefore, it is essential that enhancing RM skills through adult education justifies its position as a possible approach in economic, social and human development (Modise, 2015:82).

Adult learning and education is [sic] now more than ever emerging as an empowering tool capable of liberating and harnessing the creative forces of people, the potential of communities and the wealth of nations in a situation of global crisis. (Obasi, 2014:28)

Talabi (2014:105), who observes that the trend in academia for multi-disciplinary research is one that promises well for adult education as an academic enterprise, further underscores this. “By its theories, principles, and practice, the discipline is highly interdisciplinary, is gradually being recognised that it has something to offer in the economy and relevant to the societal human capital development” (Talabi 2014:105). In doing this, adult education can play a critical role in society and recognise its significance as a profession.

Adult education is therefore not to be neglected, as its primary goal is to pursue adult learning because through learning, there will be change of attitudes and behaviours that will contribute positively not only to individuals but also the nation (Gabriel *et al.*, 2016:53). In other words, adult education and continuing education are critical components of the educational practice of any community. This is because the key to the development of any nation lies in the quality of adults of the country. It is the adults who will transform society, not the children. Therefore, adult education must be a pacesetter to other professions in the developmental drive of any nation. There should

be a radical overhaul of adult education programmes committed to global trends (Gabriel *et al.*, 2016:56).

Further, the purpose of adult education is bringing about social transformation and reconstructing society to develop it to be modernised, productive, participative and value-orientated. In this study, adult education as a strategy for teaching RM seeks to increase individual municipal officials' quality of life and enable them to realise their potential for self-realisation. In this regard, Olufunke and Adeyemo (2013:23) argue that adult education serves to raise enlightened citizenry that will help bring about a prosperous nation.

In other words, this study needs to promote adult education as an approach that raises awareness and the standard of living of municipal officials' families, communities, societies and nations. This notion is supported by Brookfield (2000:31), who emphasises awareness of one's assumptions, upon which we base our lives, think and act. For Babajeva (2012:450), such assessment allows us to turn our narrow consciousness and takes us into the world of adults. That is why Olufunke and Adeyemo (2013:24), Ukwuaba (2015:248) and Feltsan (2017:69) maintain that adult education contributes to the promotion of peace and communal harmony in the multicultural global village and enhances the pace of development and welfare of the individual nations and the international community as a whole. Therefore, the adult education approach ensures a liberal government and citizenry whose insights and decisions are vital to the development of the nation and the individuals within it.

2.3.1.3 *Formats of adult education*

There are various forms of adult teaching and learning, but I have found the forms below most appropriate for this study.

2.3.1.3.1 *Self-directed learning*

SDL is one of the primary aims of education and is a more relaxed approach to adult teaching and learning processes. Cazan and Stan (2015:10) maintain that a learner's ability to become a self-directed learner implies the development of learners' metacognitive skills, the ability to monitor and evaluate their learning strategies and the ability to manage their interpersonal relationships, as being a self-directed learner

implies being a successful student. Thus, facilitating the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks through SDL will contribute to adult learners' development and enable them to engage in lifelong learning (Cazan & Stan, 2015:10).

2.3.1.3.2 Transformative learning

Another perceived handy approach in adult teaching and learning for RM is transformative learning. The implicit goal of transformative learning is advancing the emancipatory function of knowledge. Taylor (1998:9) argues that transformative learning is a learning process that makes meaning of one's experience. Transformative learning continues to be investigated in the field of adult education. Since the banking approach to adult education will not induce the oppressed to reflect critically on their reality (Taylor, 1998:17), a liberating knowledge couched in "acts of cognition, not in the transferal of information", "problem-posing" and dialogical methodology is proposed by Freire (1970:58, 67, 70).

Concerning transformative learning, Freire (1970:79-80) provides a clear picture of the teacher-learner relationship, in this instance, the concept of a teacher working on an equal basis with the learner. This learning relationship is built out of love, humility and faith, contributing to mutual trust. According to Taylor (1998:18), such a relationship offers a safe and educational atmosphere, where sharing ideas is essential and a visible setting for raising one's consciousness and facilitating an emancipatory transformation. Thus, transformational learning occurs "when one grasps with growing insight the way biography intersects with the social structure, and the privilege and the oppression of persons based on power" (Dirkx, Cunningham, Hart, Mezirow & Scott, 1993:358).

2.3.1.3.3 Experience and learning

Experience and learning are also critical for facilitating the identification and assessment of risks, and therefore, essential to understanding the role thereof in teaching and learning. Lindeman (as quoted by Merriam & Bierema, 2014:105) argues that experience is a rich resource in adult education. The experience also is crucial in self-directed and transformative learning as adult learning approaches (Merriam & Bierema, 2014:107). Lindeman (1961:7) and Knowles (1980:24) state that experience is the primary assumption of andragogy. According to Merriam and Bierema

(2014:107), an adult learner accumulates a growing of knowledge in self-directed learning processes and this serves as a precious resource for learning. However, Knowles (1980) warns that an adult learner's prior experiences can be a threat to implementing new education.

2.3.1.3.4 Collaborative learning

Learning takes place effectively when learners are in control of their learning activities, sharing ideas and working as a group in acquiring new knowledge for assessment of risks in the organisation (Khoo, 2016:388). Jozwiak (2004:25) insists that training and working in teams is an effective method for improving risk assessment. However, this learning approach requires due consideration of elements of the learners' personalities, the rules of the learning games and the community settings of the learning environment, all of which are crucial in determining the learners' engagement in a learning activity and active involvement in associated learning processes (Khoo, 2016:378).

According to Saha and Singh (2016:180), collaborative learning is the most efficient way to help learners attain and develop 21st-century collaboration skills. This is because modes and approaches of teaching are changing day by day according to learners' needs. Hence, collaborative learning can also occur in problem-solving activities. In this regard, collaborative learning through adult education aims to develop collaborative problem-solving skills while also maintaining adult learners' individuality. In the context of this study, collaborative learning fosters a shift from a teacher-learner approach to the role of a teamwork relationship, which implies a learner-centred approach towards teaching risk mitigation (see Saha & Singh, 2016:180).

Therefore, an adult education approach facilitates problem-solving skills, meaningful knowledge acquisition strategies, SDL and advanced information-gathering processes (SAQA, 2012:8). As an educational approach to adult teaching and learning, collaborative learning involves municipal officials working together to solve organisational problems or challenges.

2.3.1.4 *Ontological stance of adult education*

Grumet (1992:31) observes that “further depersonalisation and fragmentation of human experience” occur, with the effect of distorting our experience of the world and estranging us “not only from each other but from ourselves as well”. Concerning relational ontology, Stetsenko (2008:471) argues that collaborative purposeful transformation of the world is the core of human nature and the moral grounding for learning and development. Fenwick (2010:79) agrees that considering learning as a single object is critical because knowledge is enacted as multiple objects. Thus, learning needs to be appreciated as perhaps a series of different items patched together through some manufactured linkages (Fenwick, 2010:79).

Furthermore, Stetsenko (2008:471) reveals that an activist transformative stance suggests that people need to know themselves and their surroundings in the world as that could lead to humanity and ultimately contribute to the processes of collaboratively transforming the world, given their goals. This means that all human activities contribute to collaborative, transformative practices that are possible for the past and have the vision for the future. Therefore, all social actions are profoundly imbued with ideology, ethics and values (Stetsenko, 2008:471).

For the conception of development and learning, I argue that individuals and groups within the society should no longer be thought of as separate entities for adult teaching and learning. Instead, Stetsenko (2008:490) proposes that cities belong together and share one common fate and history. For a coordinated development of communities through self-development, Stetsenko (2008:490) suggests Vygotsky’s revolutionary project. The ontology of relations and actions is proposed as a foundation to conceptualise human development and learning processes. However, this process does not exclude the human subjectivity and individual uniqueness (Stetsenko, 2008:490).

For this reason, acting, being and knowing are all seen as rooted from a transformative activist stance in a derivative of and instrumental within a collaborative historical becoming. This stance cuts across and bridges the gaps, firstly, between individual and social and, secondly, among ontological, epistemological and moral-ethical (ideological) dimensions of activity (Stetsenko, 2008:490).

According to aspects of human development, Stetsenko (2008:474) alleges that the core aspects of human nature and development is when people transform the world collaboratively to achieve their goals and purposes. This is a process through which people come to know themselves and their world and ultimately come to be human (Stetsenko, 2008:474). Hence, this conception overcomes the narrowness of the individualist views of both the positivist and the humanist traditions. These schools of thought posit the primacy of an individual as some supreme entity existing before social practices, while the social reductionism “upwards” of unidirectional collectivist accounts tends to exclude individual processes and human subjectivity (Stetsenko, 2008:474).

The notion of transformative practice is linked to the ideals of social justice and emancipation as pursuits of common humanity. This is with emphasis on collaborative research with local communities (Stetsenko, 2008:474). The new transformative relation to the world establishes the centrality of social course in its unity of history, society and culture as a supreme ontological realm for development and learning (Stetsenko, 2008:483).

2.3.1.5 *Epistemological stance of adult education*

According to Vella (2000:7), epistemology refers to studying knowledge and the art of learning, that is, epistemology grounded in humanity. Similarly, McEachern (2016:87) believes that adult learners socially construct their educational environment utilising their prior experiential knowledge cultural values as a foundation for new learning. In addition, Samoilă (2010:n.p.) declares that experience in life and learning represents a source of knowledge, but it can also constitute a real epistemological obstacle in teaching and learning processes. According to Merriam and Bierema (2014:50), adults can become resistant to learning under conditions that are congruent with their self-concept and prior experience, as they see no need to learn something new.

Consequently, in this learning process, learners are observed as subjects, not objects in their learning (Vella, 2000:7). People make decisions for their own learning activities and in their lives (Vella, 2000:8). Indeed, men and women are subjects to their learning and their lives. Furthermore, Vella (2000:7) points out that being and acting as subjects

in research process enable the participants to share more than information; they share themselves as human beings.

As mentioned above, the participants in research express their transformation in terms of their cultural identity, self-esteem, confidence, professional skills and motivation (McEachern, 2016:87). Thus, it is a transformational journey that contribute meaningfully to the lives of their families and into their communities. According to Vella (2000:7), transformation is not grasping an external set of information, knowledge or skills, but changing into oneself, informed by the new knowledge and skills. Furthermore, every educational event is the movement towards *metanoia*, the passage of spirit from alienation into a deeper awareness of oneself (Vella, 2000:8-9). It is clear that new knowledge contributes to recreation of skills, which is a more profound realisation of one's meaning and purpose in the organisation. Vella (2000:9) argues that for an adult learner, missing the opportunity of gaining a more in-depth understanding through ignorance is a challenge that is difficult to regain. As a result, a training session can afford the opportunity for engaging learners to be involved in the active recreation of the risk assessment skill and attitude towards learning (Vella, 2000:10). This is simply because we are human.

Adedokun (in Olufunke & Adeyemo, 2013:24) expresses that adult and non-formal education aims to bring about social transformation and reconstructing society to make it modernised, productive, participative and value-orientated. This is why Onyenemezu (2012:1) argues that adult education “changes the social and psychological minds of adults more than any other profession, instills lost hope in them and liberates them from their prejudice of seeing themselves as not having the capacity to learn”. Onyenemezu (2012:1) declares that adult education helps break down stereotypical ideas and reduces prejudice, injustice, deprivation and oppression. The implication of this is that adult education assists its recipients to experience transformation and a change of circumstances, and so it is a source of providing opportunities for people at various levels.

Therefore, for this study, adult education as an approach entails providing municipal officials with opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills in RM. Within this framework, municipal officials can gain power and learn how to cope with social and economic challenges (see Manuel & Popov, 2016:53). The focus is to help them

continue learning because through learning, they could change their attitudes and behaviours. For this study, there is a hope that this process of change will positively affect not only individuals but also the nation (Olufunke & Adeyemo, 2013:23).

2.3.2 Risk management skills at a municipality

This section focuses on the discussion of RM as a skill at a municipality. The purpose of discussing this concept is to pursue the analyses and operationalisation of the study objectives. Furthermore, the section considers and argues for the importance of RM skills, based on its historical background, goals, formats and ontological and epistemological stance of adult education.

2.3.2.1 Definition of risk management

There are different definitions of risk management (RM). The Business Dictionary defines RM as “the identification, analysis, assessment, control, and avoidance, minimisation, or elimination of unacceptable risks”. Encyclopedia.com (2020: Online) refers to the concept of RM as the identification, assessment and prioritisation of risks, followed by a coordinated and economical application of resources to minimise, monitor and control the probability and impact of unfortunate events or to maximise the realisation of opportunities. On the other hand, Jacobsen (2011:32) describes RM as creating and evaluating activities or structures to prevent harm.

Within the context of this study, RM refers to skills at a municipality that not only pertain to the sole position of risk manager but, instead, to every employee who wishes to have a contingency plan for the mitigation of risks encountered in the organisation. It is essential to understand that RM skills take years of experience and work to obtain and master. In other words, RM is a continuous learning process. Thus, RM is a process whereby an organisation identifies, assesses and mitigates risks (Cagliano, Grimaldi & Rafele, 2015:232-234). Managa (2012:3) further clarifies that RM involves monitoring projects and their finances towards sustainability.

2.3.2.2 Risk management history

Modern RM originated after 1955. In the early 1970s, the concept of financial RM evolved. The management of risks was associated with market insurance to protect

individuals and companies from various losses. Risk mitigation is now being used to reduce some losses that an organisation may experience (Dionne, 2013:2).

This study will lead to the adoption of risk attitudes that affect every aspect of RM. Risk attitudes exist at individual, group, corporate and national levels. These can be assessed and described, allowing sources of bias to be diagnosed and exposing their influence on the risk process (Harvett, 2013:25; Hillson & Murray-Webster, 2005). “Group risk attitude has a significant influence on both the decision process and the outcome, and if it is left unmanaged, the consequences can be unpredictable” (Hillson & Murray-Webster in Harvett, 2013:61). The emphasis is on the importance of a people-centred approach for RM (Harvett, 2013:25).

2.3.2.3 Objectives of risk management

The objective of RM is to maximise organisational value through the reduction of costs associated with different risks (Dionne, 2013:18). The main costs that organisations incur are financial distress and financing future investment projects, among other things (Dionne, 2013:18). RM can also improve the capital structure of the organisation. This suggests that organisations in good financial health should use their advantage of information to establish strategies for RM (Dionne, 2013:18). Low levels of RM skills may have implications for productivity and sustainability in a municipality. Therefore, to improve productivity and monitoring projects and their finances towards sustainability in the city, municipal officials must be adequately trained in RM and financial management (Baliyan, Oitsile & Motlhabane, 2018:78).

2.3.2.4 Ontological stance of risk management

This section informs the ontological stance of RM. “Ontology” is a Greek word that refers to reality, its principles and that which exists. Shrader-Frechette (in Jacobsen, 2011:32) states that RM, with specific reference to risk assessment, has ontologically been categorised as naive positivism, cultural relativism and scientific proceduralism. Thus, risks are understood as real events that are pre-existing and can be assessed in an objective ontology without including the actor or the social actor. This perspective is described as naive positivism (Jacobsen, 2011:32).

However, the subjective ontological foundation of RM is termed “cultural relativism” (Jacobsen, 2011:32). Ontological foundations accordingly will influence how to assess risk and hold implications for RM (Jacobsen, 2011:35). Hence, in the psychometric paradigm, the actor’s critical attitude and perception are also part of this ontological foundation. Here, the actor’s perspective and knowledge are essential, and multivariate analysis techniques are used to produce quantitative representations or cognitive maps of the actor’s attitudes to and perceptions of risk (Jacobsen, 2011:32).

2.3.2.5 *Epistemological stance of risk management*

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge that reflects possibilities to present a real understanding of man and society (Fjørtoft & Lavik in Jacobsen, 2011:6). Jacobsen (2011:30) posits that risk perception appears to be less affected by the “individual actor” than by the “social actor” in a social system where the institutions make decisions. Thus, rational actions that are developed in social interaction constitute bounded rationality within the given social network, which influences the priorities surrounding risk. A social system possesses only a part of knowledge, and security decisions are made about the known (Jacobsen, 2011:30).

The actor is, therefore, not wholly free to choose but have to choose based on the available knowledge. To understand risk, one must consequently analyse the institutional framework related to the decisions made, including both actor and structure (Douglas & Wildavsky in Jacobsen, 2011:30). Cultures share beliefs and opinions that deal with both the moral and ethical elements of risk and affect acceptance limits (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983). Therefore, the likelihood of risk is negotiated in social and cultural contexts and will never amount to anything objectively. People have a dialectical relationship with their social world, as “socially” and “materially” can be perceived as an objective reality. Still, it is a reproduction of meaning and knowledge through social interaction (Jacobsen, 2011:31).

This socialisation rests on shared definitions, based on prior knowledge and discourses. No experience is value-neutral, and therefore the term “risk” is a dynamic concept in which a given social system negotiates the content of the idea and its established meaning (Lupton, 1999). Therefore, knowledge of risk is not a finished

product but a social phenomenon under construction (Douglas & Wildavsky in Jacobsen, 2011:31).

2.4 RELATED LITERATURE

This section reviews the literature on the challenges and strategies used in South Africa and other countries – internationally, African and in the Southern African Development Community – to determine lessons from best practices. The focus is to understand the contexts under which an adult education approach will respond to ineffective teaching of RM at a municipality and how it can be implemented successfully. Therefore, plausible threats to the technique are anticipated so that they can be avoided, and indicators of success or a lack of progress can be formulated concerning such a strategy.

2.4.1 Challenges of risk management skills at a municipality to develop the framework for effective teaching strategies

This section discusses challenges that are critical to effective teaching strategies for RM at the municipality.

2.4.1.1 *Inability to promote independent and collaborative problem-solving learning*

Goddu (2012:170) indicates that collaborative problem solving is a challenge facing teaching and learning RM skills at municipalities. In South Africa, Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel and Tlale (2013:1) declare that the development of sustainable collaborative learning remains a challenge facing inclusive education system. They have found that there is inadequate training for teachers to play an equal role with learners in collaborative learning processes. Zou and Mickleborough (2015:148) portray that a lack of awareness of adult learners' different learning styles is another challenge affecting the effectiveness of the methods of risk assessment. Furthermore, Cooper (2011:41) points out that the inability to recognise adult learners' prior experiential knowledge as a critical tool of their self-identity, also serves as a challenge in identifying risks. This is supported by Olaye and Onajite (2015:39), Meyer (2014:163), Olufunke and Adeyemo (2013:23), Managa (2012:13), and Knowles (1984:10), who

all maintain that not perceiving adult learning as self-directing may pose as a challenge, specifically in the mitigation of risks.

On the other hand, Fiore, Elias, Salas, Warner and Letsky (2017:2) assert that collaboration and problem solving are two different constructs involve in collaborative problem solving strategy. The assumption is that a group can work collaboratively in a task to solve a problem because some problem-solving tasks are too complex for an individual to work through, or collective capacities of a team could be a solution towards a problem. In other words, through collaborative learning, as an approach, a municipality may be able to mitigate risks as a team in a working environment; that is, it could be done in the process of sharing knowledge as co-workers (Kim, Park & Joo, 2014:76).

On the ability to solve problems, Zou and Mickleborough (2015:148-149) assert that people with diverse background produce solutions for the assessment of risks. For Zou and Mickleborough (2015:149), the forms of collaboration are often beyond the boundary of a team. For instance, in an organisation, collaboration among multiple teams from different departments is a requirement to produce solutions. Thus, the Programme for International Student Assessment (2017:4) has found that collaboration among team members is crucial to the success of not only groups but also families and organisation.

Furthermore, the process of working together usually involves aspects of collaboration, such as respect and trust, for both oneself and others (Dickerson, Jarvis & Stockwell, 2016:252-253). This prevails in specific training on collaborative processes for skills development. In conjunction with limited strategies for training or teaching risk assessment, collaboration is often suggested, as it improves group members' conceptual understanding. That is to say, the activities of collaboration are the explicit production of information for others and the co-construction of ideas (Andrews & Rapp, 2015:182). According to Khoo (2016:388), learning takes place effectively when learners control their learning activity. Thus, collaborative problem solving can, in this sense, be valid for pursuing common goals and the production of new knowledge.

More broadly, collaboration in adult learning and teaching increases patience, nurturance and time that reflect the desire for knowledge acquisition to assess risks (Dickerson, Jarvis & Stockwell, 2016:253). The collaborative learning approach encourages working together for the accomplishment of a common goal in the organisation. For practical assessment of risks, the involvement of multiple teams is more relevant and useful. Thus, collaborative groupwork sharpens existing skills for those who already hold professional positions.

2.4.1.2 Lack of recognition of an adult learner's prior knowledge and experience

Prior knowledge is a challenge for teaching and learning with regard to risk assessment. Hailikari, Katajavuori and Lindblom-Ylänne (2008:1) argue that prior knowledge is a rich resource for a successful knowledge acquisition and the capacity to apply higher-order cognitive problem-solving skills. For this reason, it is essential to formulate an adult education framework for the enhancement of RM skills. In other words, such blended learning can also promote or motivate collaborative learning in adult learning.

According to Moyo, Tiba and Madzima (2017:610), adult learner's experience and prior knowledge affect perceptions and attitude about teaching and learning RM. To achieve effective teaching in adult learning activities, it is necessary to be aware that such attitudes and opinions could negatively influence learning processes. If this is the case, it might be useful to design learning activities that influence adult learners' prior knowledge and skills. This will activate adult learner in RM learning processes (Moyo *et al.*, 2017:618).

Being in favour of the above arguments for this study, using prior knowledge as a tool to support the teaching and learning of RM, can enhance the mitigation of risks in the municipality. Thus, reconsideration of adult learners' experience in teaching and learning activities of risk assessment is essential. Yuksel (2012:1197) supports this view by saying that it is necessary to connect new knowledge to previous knowledge.

Mavunga and Cross (2017:303) point out that the recognition of adult learners' prior knowledge and experience (the culture of employee learning) is the missing link in the shortage of skills in South Africa. The argument is that there is a need to consider

employees' biographies, identities and subjectivities as well as the social interactions for learning and teaching in the workplace (Mavunga & Cross, 2017:303). Teaching risk assessment thus implies taking into consideration the historical background of workers. Such an emphasis becomes an awareness of the recognition of prior knowledge and experience as part of the learning culture of the workplace. For instance, Gunny and Viertel (2006:19) allude that in South-Eastern Europe, the learning culture of the past has been lost, and there is a low level of awareness of the value of adult learning, especially for economic development, employment and active citizenship. Hence, this is a problem regarding effective teaching and learning.

The culture of learning and the conceptualisation thereof, as put forward by Gunny and Viertel (2006:19), are dynamic and complex phenomena needed for human resource development. As such, the use of a teacher-centred approach method and ignorance of adult learners' experience could hinder the identification and mitigation of risks at a municipality (Moloi 2016:17; Ajewole, 2014:114-115).

Andrews and Rapp (2015:183) believe that prior knowledge could generate new awareness in working groups. The ideal is to demonstrate that advanced knowledge and skills in assessing risks are a fundamental requirement for individual construction of knowledge and acquisition of skills (Moyo *et al.*, 2016:610). Neglecting prior knowledge in teaching RM can negatively affect learning (Roschelle, 2015:1). That is to say, prior knowledge determines the role of experience in education. However, it can also affect learning negatively as it is characterised as conflicting with the learning process and suppressing, eradicating its influence (Roschelle, 2015:3). This is the way to determine the effectiveness of prior knowledge in adult learning processes.

Accordingly, adult learners could, in this sense, be self-directed, mainly when their life experiences are utilised as vital resources (Gitterman, 2004:106). For SDL, diverse methods such as, among other things, collaborative learning play a vital role (Sang-Hong, Nam-Hun & Kil-Hong, 2014:76). According to Knowles (1990:63), a lack of awareness about "the need to know" towards learning is another challenge facing the teaching of risk assessment processes. This includes inappropriate skills and negative attitudes towards learning (Managa, 2012:3). The argument is that extending one's awareness contributes to one's self-actualisation (Chene, 1983:41). The progressive principle of relating learning to experience, according to Chene (1983:45), can give

meaning to adult learners' way of learning. This implies that adult learners can learn very well in informal settings. In turn, this would mean that adult education as an approach stresses autonomy as a method for effective teaching in learning processes (Sang-Hong *et al.*, 2014:69).

2.4.1.3 Failure to note self-directed learning as an approach in adult learning

According to Gitterman (2004:106), adult learners “have the potential to be self-directed, particularly when their life and practice experience are utilised as vital resources”. Thus, not perceiving adult learners as self-directing in teaching and learning, especially in RM processes, could affect the assessment of risks at a municipality. Merriam (2001:9) believes that SDL develops the learner's capacity and promote emancipation in education. The argument is that some of the challenges critical to effective teaching strategies for RM are failing to note the learners' self-concepts (Ajewole 2014:114-115; Meyer 2014:166). According to Ajewole (2014:114-115) and Meyer (2014:166), a teacher-centred approach in the learning processes could be a problem.

For effective adult teaching, there is a need “to assist adults in learning in a way that enhances their capability to function as self-directed learners” (Mezirow, 1981:137). In other words, SDL also influences collaboration in learning processes and encourages personal reflections on weaknesses and strengths (Buitrago, 2018:139). This approach can, therefore, assist in the identification and mitigation of risks at a municipality. Vygotsky (1978:89) states that collaborative learning is a compelling approach in which individuals get together to build knowledge and achieve a common goal. That means RM training and the ability to collaboratively work in teams in a workplace could promote solving problems more accurately and more quickly (Buitrago, 2018:139). Thus, SDL is an approach that specifies the role of teamwork in skills development with specific reference to RM skills at a municipality.

Buitrago (2018:139) argues that there is a sharing of power between the researcher and co-researchers in SDL processes. Sharing power affords one way of limiting the potential abuse of power in research processes. This approach could boost self-awareness and self-reflection skills because the relation of power between the researcher and co-researcher is significantly modified. In other words, this approach

may further enhance abilities towards effective communication and collaborative teamwork for better production and effectiveness in the organisation (Buitrago, 2018:141). Thus, in research processes, co-researchers continuously resolve their learning process and adapt teaching methods that cultivate their SDL ability. In this study, the co-researchers found more opportunities to express their own opinions or experience and share the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their common team goals.

In South Africa, most adult teaching methods are traditional and mostly teacher-centred (Otukile-Mongwaketse, Mangope & Kuyini, 2016:11). This view is supported by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (2017:34), stating that the facilitation in adult education training is primarily a lecture method where the facilitators lead. Otukile-Mongwaketse *et al.* (2016:11) point out that the consequences of this approach are that learners are benefiting from it minimally. In this regard, the emphasis is on team training for knowledge acquisition and attitudes towards adult learning, meaning that an inclusive approach is vital to the success of adult teaching and learning and should be seen as a priority (Otukile-Mongwaketse *et al.*, 2016:11; Walton, Nel, Hugo & Muller 2009; RSA DoE, 2001b;). In this study, the promotion of the collaboration ability is the key (see Sang-Hong *et al.*, 2014:77).

Similarly, there is a lack of cross-curricular teaching in Botswana, both horizontally and vertically (UNESCO, 2008:19). Thus, the challenge facing education in Botswana is anti-dialogue, which prevents the potential of the learners' promotion to develop a critical perspective in their learning (UNESCO 2008:19). For Botswana, Otukile-Mongwaketse *et al.* (2016:11) suggest that inclusive education paves way to teachers' and learners' relationship in learning process. According to Otukile-Mongwaketse *et al.* (2016:12), the "domination of the teacher in the teaching and learning process gives chances of a student losing sight of their goals in construction of their knowledge". Du Plessis (2016:141) supports the view that instead of a teacher-centred approach, learner-centredness advocates active learning and guided discovery, as its focus is on understanding rather than memorisation. The emphasis here is on applying knowledge, alternative forms of assessment, self-assessment, reflection, and so forth.

In learner-centred teaching and learning processes, adult learners become active and take greater responsibility and autonomy towards their learning. This shows a greater

interdependence and equality between the researcher and co-researchers in research processes (Jordan *et al.* 2013:13). In learner-centred learning activities, McCabe and O'Connor (2014:351) and Andrews and Rapp (2015:182) emphasise competency skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and independent learning. Freire (in Jordan *et al.*, 2013:13) agrees by saying that there should be an exchange of ideas based on dialogue and the co-creation of knowledge in teaching and learning processes. In such studies, people gather in groups, which entails informal settings with knowledge acquisition. Thus, the researcher and the co-researcher share an ordinary object of awareness in the development of learning (Chene, 1983:44). In other words, the transformative learning approach in adult education emphasises SDL as an effective method.

2.4.1.4 Failure to promote transformative learning

Other factors are contributing to the complexity of RM knowledge with specific reference to the assessment of risks. These factors include, among other things, the breakdown in community-wide dialogue (Tirivanhu, 2016:255). Furthermore, Kovacs (2018:99) reports that one of the challenges facing the teaching of risk assessment is teacher-centred approach in the learning processes. This mode of teaching attitude contributes negatively to development programmes for adult learning. Tirivanhu (2016:255) states that transformative learning through dialogue enhances sustainable social change. This learning approach can be improved by creating positive energy and leveraging indigenous knowledge (Tirivanhu, 2016:255).

According to Newman (2014:352), the transformative learning approach is based on humanist and constructivist suppositions. Taylor and Cranton (2013:39) seem to agree that humans are autonomous and free when it comes to adult learning and have the potential for their own development and growth. This can be observed in transformative learning processes, where knowledge becomes reflective, inclusive and being able to change emotions (Kovacs, 2018:115-116).

Regarding the conditions for transformative learning for sustainable development, Boström *et al.* (2018:1) maintain that continued unsustainability in teaching RM monitoring projects and its finances towards sustainability requires redefined social relations and self-identity. Thus, there is a need for learning for transformation, not

only adaptation. Boström *et al.* (2018:1) agree that transformative learning is interactional and sustainable in the sense that it takes place within existing institutions and social practices, while also transcending them. Therefore, adult learning includes both cognitive and social, moral and affective components, and hence, most importantly, acknowledgement that social context, social relations and power conditions are integral to learning processes (Boström *et al.*, 2018:13). However, if transformative learning takes place in an organisation, it does not necessarily mean that it influences other fields in a society at large (Boström *et al.*, 2018:13). Adult learning implies a teaching and learning process of change for both organisations and individuals, not only about knowledge where one gets detailed information. Nevertheless, in adult learning process, Boström *et al.* (2018:140) warn that domination in adult teaching and learning activities may hinder change towards sustainability.

2.4.2 The components of the strategy to respond to challenges to the effective teaching of risk management skills at a municipality

This section briefly discusses the best practices in response to the identified challenges that are critical to effective teaching strategies for RM (see Section 2.4.1), among which are collaborative problem-solving learning, adult learners' prior knowledge and experience, adult learners' SDL process and transformative learning strategies.

2.4.2.1 Collaborative problem-solving learning as a strategy

Collaborative problem solving contributes significantly towards a common goal in an organisation (Yin, 2015:160). Collective lessons involve a few people in a group working together to achieve their objectives. As a team, group members identify a problem and solve it collaboratively using resources such as prior experience to find knowledge based on SDL (Yin, 2015:158). In countries such as South Africa, different policy documents (e.g. DBE, 2010; DoE, 2001b, 2008) and various researchers, such as Ainscow, Dyson, Goldrick and West (2012), Nel, Nel and Lebeloane (2013) and Chiner and Cardona (2013) emphasise collaboration as an equitable and fair strategy to ensure effective implementation of inclusive education (Nel *et al.*, 2013:11). Hence, in Singapore, the Ministry of Education (2008) has adopted the IT Masterplan as a tool

to equip learners with SDL and collaboration skills. Nouri, Åkerfeldt, Fors and Selander (2017:172) support this by saying that various aspects of learning concern social collaboration and the ability to communicate and negotiate to solve problems. Collaborative learning, therefore, provides learners with opportunities to enhance skills, improve their critical thinking and efficiently gain knowledge.

Furthermore, Yin (2015:158) asserts that the advantages of collaborative problem solving as a strategy involve building problem-solving skills, increasing SDL and lifelong learning and promoting a good relationship among group members. That is, group- or teamwork motivates learning and enhances the interaction between learners and the facilitator. Nouri *et al.* (2017:163) point out that collaborative problem solving is a critical component for adult education in the 21st-century. In other countries, such as Nigeria, it has been found that learners are motivated when they cooperatively solve problems in physics (Adolphus, Alamina & Aderonmu, 2013:95). In conclusion, a collaborative learning strategy emphasises learning and teaching.

2.4.2.2 *Adult learners' prior knowledge and experience as strategies*

Prior knowledge and experience as a resource for the successful identification and mitigation of risks can enhance RM learning activities (Ajewole, 2014:114-115). Carson McCall, Padron and Andrews (2018:41) explain that prior learning experience can be a useful tool for adult learning processes, which could, in turn, be a valuable strategy to address the needs of adult learners and develop their problem solving skills. Diverse backgrounds are essential for adult teaching and learning, as it creates the ability to identify and resolve problems by sharing understanding in a team. This could assist in developing strategies to address complex issues facing risk assessment (Mickleborough, 2013:148). Carson McCall *et al.* (2018:38) assert that there is a need to teach new learning experiences within the context of real-life conditions. This is because, according to Carson McCall *et al.* (2018:38), such learning experiences are well structured, practical and collaborative and lead to the best learning outcomes. Jarvis (2004:144) supports this view by indicating that adult learners bring rich previous knowledge and experience to the learning environment. However, the learning environment needs to be logically structured and give useful information to learners. Thus, adult learners participate in learning activities with a rich resource of prior knowledge and experience. They become motivated in learning

environment that involves sharing of ideas to build on existing knowledge and improves their expertise.

2.4.2.3 Self-directed learning as a strategy to enhance risk management skills

An SDL strategy could be used as a framework to strengthen RM knowledge and skills. Knowles (1975:18) asserts that SDL initiates own learning needs in learning process without expecting help from others. In this process learners set their own learning objectives, discover human and material learning resources, select and implement effective learning strategies for themselves and assess the results of their efforts to learn. SDL should develop SDL skills for the assessment of risks (Knowles, 1975:18). This strategy would contribute to the learners' success in their future careers and enable them to engage in lifelong learning.

Some SDL strategies have been adopted in South Korea. Jang and Pak (2017:63) argue that it is a significant mediating factor in the relationship between the adaptive functions of perfectionism, namely organisation and school adjustment. In this regard, Sahoo and Mishra (2017:166) explain that SDL is a tool geared as one of the educational innovations in higher education, including RM teaching. Most importantly, adult learners are motivated to learn if they control their learning activities. In addition, this platform enables learners to be active, contribute positively to the learning of their co-learners, and have some degree of independence in the learning process.

2.4.2.4 Learner-centred approach as a strategy

The learner-centred teaching approach treats knowledge as a social and relational process of meaning construction. This study empowers learners and pursues understanding based on their insights instead of the teacher's dictatorship in learning activities (see Mishkind, 2016:3). In learner-centred lessons, a hierarchy of experts is dissolved into a collaborative and democratic undertaking. Hence, a learner-centred strategy prioritises learner interaction, active engagement and ownership of one's learning (Mishkind, 2016:3).

Nelson (2013:23) states that in a learner-centred teaching approach, the learner assimilates new information, mostly when it adds to their existing knowledge instead of a teacher-centred approach that impose knowledge. In this regard, the learner-

centred approach integrates new knowledge in teaching and learning activities. Nelson (2013:23) argues that the advantage of a learner-centred approach is sharing a deeper pool of ideas and needs of a group, listens to individuals, shares the learning experience and follows the trainees' progress. In this study, a group of municipal officials with background experience in RM was involved. This was done to assess risks and achieve common objectives in the organisation.

For inclusive teaching and learning, education should reflect the culture and beliefs of the community or local people; for example, in Botswana, Otukile-Mongwaketse (2018:22) asserts that education should reflect the culture and beliefs of the Batswana. Thus, learners are encouraged to become members of the school community, not only visitors of classes (Otukile-Mongwaketse, 2018:22).

2.4.2.5 *Transformative learning as a strategy*

To solve the challenges discussed above (see Section 2.4.1.4), the argument is that transformative learning is a strategy that requires the process of critical reflection with specific reference to risk assessment. For adult education processes, Mezirow (2003:212) states that transformative thinking contributes to emancipatory and explores new way of learning from oneself and society. The literature also highlights the importance of creating space and giving voice to adult learners in adult teaching and learning environments (Kokkos, 2015:19). However, a model of the reflection process created by Boud, Keogh and Walker (2013) puts the role of feelings at the centre of transformative learning. The learners explore their feelings, which relate to the experience and positive elements, and transform the negative ones in adult learning activities (Kokkos, 2015:19). Nevertheless, Kokkos (2015:19) clarifies that negative emotions can sometimes disrupt the learning process, while positive emotions may increase learners' engagement in deep learning.

Consequently, teachers of adult learners should provide space for the expression of learners' emotions and the development of intersubjective processes of mutual respect, care and recognition. In this study, the learners acquired new knowledge, assessment and a change of attitude towards learning (see Kokkos, 2015:19). This could also increase employees' self-esteem, which would contribute positively to their lives and the production process of the organisation. Moreover, Mezirow (2000) sees

transformative learning as a process within which one critically assesses one's problematic assumptions.

Kokkos (2015:23) advises that the goal of training should not only be limited to offering new knowledge but also include a critical thinking of the adult learners. Thus, transformative thinking in adult education is emancipatory. According to Mezirow, (2003:212) emancipatory education is "an organised effort to help the learner challenge presuppositions, explore alternative perspectives, transform old ways of understanding, and act on new perspectives". This study recognises both informational and transformational learning as valuable tools in teaching and learning processes for risk assessment. As noted by Knowles (in Baumgartner, Lee, Birden & Flowers, 2003:13), the timing of learning activities is related to developmental tasks rather than merely acquiring knowledge. Therefore, it is always vital to diagnose adult learners' needs and interests and formulate learning objectives based on their needs. In this regard, teachers of adult learners should plan activities that are relevant and of interest to the learners (HSRC, 2017:15).

2.4.3 Conditions conducive to the implementation of the practical teaching strategy for risk management skills

This section considers the conditions that are helpful to the formulation of the framework to enhance the RM skills of municipal officials that are adult education-based. Furthermore, the section contextualises factors corresponding to the components of the strategy (see Section 2.4.2) to create awareness for designers and implementers of the possible areas that may affect the aim and objectives of the study. This, in turn, enhances the processes of monitoring and reflection.

2.4.3.1 *Integrated team*

Integrated teamwork for co-researchers to achieve a comprehensive, well-rounded, effective RM education is vital. For instance, in South Africa, for meaningful training, especially for the assessment and mitigation of risks in the learning of collaborative problem solving, Vella (1995:13) suggests dialogue as a conducive approach. Zohar (1997:136) calls exchange a tool for active adult learning. Zohar (1997:136) continues, praxis paves way for teamwork and nurtures the dialogue. This could be achieved through collaboration in which co-researchers can share information and construct a

common ground, which is correlated with problem solving (Zou & Mickleborough, 2015:157; Armitage *et al.*, 2013:5); in this case, it means working as a collective unit towards a common goal in a municipality. Knowles (1970:83) supports the view that adults have enough life experience to dialogue with researchers or facilitators, that is, for teams from different departments to collaborate as a means to produce solutions for organisational problems. Knowles (1970:84) believes that dialogue is a contributory factor that will also assist in learning new knowledge, attitudes or skills best with that life experience.

Furthermore, teamwork introduces various skills, such as time management, resource allocation, effective communication and collective effort that will be valuable for a municipality (Lisa, 2018). Hag and Karunakaran (2013:7-8) also propose a learning climate that minimises anxiety and encourages freedom to experiment. Knowles (1983:10) adds that exercises and content that are applied to real-life situations should be used. As a result, there is a need to establish satisfactory task conditions to enable the successful implementation of the adult education approach. However, Knowles (1983:56) underscores that adults are self-directed and tend to resist learning which is not parallel with their self-concept. In other words, the researcher becomes a facilitator rather than a transmitter of knowledge in teaching and learning for RM. Thus, retraining and adapting learning new RM skills would enable municipality workers to cope with the labour market change and new technologies (see Daniele, 2017:53).

An integrated team also provides leadership and management (Nye & Schramm, 1999:1-76), in the case of this study, to the co-researchers in the formulation of the framework. Leadership in teaching RM skills provides direction, planning, management and the development of a mission and vision (Bush, 2007:391-405). It generates data and information about the assets and opportunities of the community, thus developing a clear understanding of citizens' concerns and priorities to improve the vision and define the mission for an effective strategy for teaching RM (Zuber-Skerrit in Wood & Govender, 2013:178; Nye & Schramm 1999).

2.4.3.2 Formulation of a vision and mission for effectively teaching risk management

The literature reflects accessibility and effective teaching and learning of assessment and mitigation of risks as critical challenges that need to be addressed. The vision tends to embrace the principles of social justice (Fraser, 1999:25-52), equity and national cohesion, which have been observed as having the anticipation of threats and barriers that must be transcended by the participants through an extensive reach. In this study, it is interpreted as a comprehensive plan and referred to as a collaborative plan.

In Nigeria, for example, such a unifying vision and mission are described as “providing highly accessible and enhanced quality education anchored by social justice, equity, equality, and national cohesion through a comprehensive reach that transcends all barriers” (Ajadi, Salawu & Adeoye, 2008:63). As a result, the integrated team has to facilitate the processes that would lead to developing a vision and mission, which should be consistent with and clarify the nature of the common problems in an organisation (or municipality).

2.4.3.3 Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for understanding the context

A SWOT analysis is a process of exploring the internal and external environments of an organisation and extracting well-planned strategies based on its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Ghazinoory, Abdi & Azadegan-Mehr, 2011:24). Thus, the coordinated team used SWOT as a strategic evaluation tool in the pursuit of responses to the challenges the team was facing in the identification and assessment of risks. Adeleke, Bahaudin and Kamaruddeen (2016:1) affirm that a team that has ability to share a common goal is positively related to the construction of RM skills. This shows that at a municipality, where teams have appropriate skills and motivation to improve their competencies, there could be mitigation of the risks experienced by the organisation.

Hence, a SWOT analysis can be used as an information-gathering tool concerning the competencies of a team. Consequently, in this study, information is gathered through literature on resources needed to improve RM knowledge and skills at a municipality.

This is done by directing the strengths of the team to the opportunities identified. Furthermore, SWOT analysis is used to identify threats to improving municipal officials' RM skills and finding strategies to overcome these threats. SWOT is a logical approach on which every organisation should assess its external and internal environments to adapt its strategy. A SWOT analysis is located between scenario planning and resource-based approaches (Ghazinoory *et al.*, 2011:25).

The SWOT analysis process requires the engagement of many stakeholders and the participants, which makes it amenable to the impacts of a plethora of power relation struggles embedded in the process. Thus, a SWOT analysis focuses on the vision of the strategy, and the participants should treat one another with respect and humility (Gordon *et al.*, 2007:842). The intention should be to enhance open discussion among the participants so they can freely contribute their views. This makes SWOT a condition that is conducive to the prioritisation of the aspects that will be analysed.

2.4.3.4 *Friendly and informal climate for effectively teaching risk management*

Knowles (1950:125) points to a friendly and relaxed environment as a conducive condition in many adult learning situations; accordingly, adult learning should include a psychological climate favourable to learning. Also, Knowles (1950:125) has found that adults view an informal setting as conducive to education. This is because adults expect friendly learning environment that meet their own learning needs with opportunities to practise new skills. This involves learning process that is flexible and utilise the experience, enthusiasm and commitment of the co-researchers and the researcher. According to Knowles (1950:125), a team experience in learning activities provides the best opportunity to practise and refine what is learnt. As a result, the adult group or team becomes a pillar of democracy – a place where people may have the experience of learning to live cooperatively, that is, the formation of attitudes and opinions with which adults affiliate voluntarily. In this regard, teams are the foundation stones of democracy. Their goals contribute to the lives of society.

Effective teaching and learning require the active construction of meaning by the participants. This implies that the participants can construct meaning under several circumstances, such as sharing knowledge and skills with others, manipulating concrete materials to practise what they have learnt, sensing progress in what they

are learning and perceiving linkages between what they know and what they are still learning. In such a learning environment, an adult learner is respected, and learning occurs in an open and non-threatening environment (Ssentamu, 2013:128).

It is evident from the argument above that a friendly and informal climate is critical as a condition under which the design and implementation of the framework can thrive. However, the context should be analysed to enhance the understanding of the problem and needs.

2.4.3.5 Self-direction as a conducive factor for successful conditions

According to Knowles (1975:18), SDL is a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. Thus, SDL as a framework could motivate adult learners towards self-esteem. Knowles (1975:18) argues that there is convincing evidence that people who take the initiative in learning (proactive learners) learn more things and learn better than people who sit at the feet of their teachers, passively waiting to be taught (reactive learners). According to Knowles (1975:14), proactive learners enter into learning more purposefully and with greater motivation. They also tend to absorb what they have learnt better than reactive learners (Knowles, 1975:14).

With regard to SDL, Nigeria is utilising self-help development projects, such as constructing roads, schools and water supply as a contributory factor for self-direction in learning (Elebari Godwin, Mbadiwe-Woko, Oweda & Kosioma, 2014:11). Consequently, the development of rural communities needs to be corroborated by cooperative societies for sustainable development. Therefore, the slogan “train a man, build the city” can be achieved through adult education and community development programmes. This would bring about change and transform society in terms of people’s self-perception that could enable them to stimulate their potential to face the reality of their developmental needs (Elebari Godwin *et al.*, 2014:11).

Self-direction can also be seen as contributory factors in adult learning processes because it is more in tune with psychological development methods. For instance, in Sweden, the adult education approach is regarded as a contributory factor for

investment in social capital and human capital (Veeman, 2004:207). For Knowles (1975:15), an essential aspect of maturing is “developing the ability to take increasing responsibility for our own lives to become increasingly self-directed”. However, Knowles (1975:15) warns that learners who enter into SDL processes without having learnt self-directed inquiry skills will experience anxiety, frustration and often failure, and so will the researcher.

Consequently, in this study, designing and implementing a useful framework can develop and enhance RM skills and the skills of inquiry for both researchers and co-researchers. However, I find Knowles’s work on SDL significantly individualistic, as there is a lack of relations of power in the research process. As Merriam and Caffarella (1991:46) comment, SDL does not entail isolation but adults seek type of learning that accommodate friends or colleagues and gives space to create one’s own path.

2.4.4 Threats to the designing and implementation of the adult education approach

The previous section explored the conditions conducive to the implementation of the strategy. These conditions have to be considered in designing the framework of teaching RM skills using the adult education approach, as there could be possible threats that might derail the framework and they should be anticipated. This section presents a discussion of potential threats and gives an account of how to circumvent these risks factors for the framework to produce desirable results.

The use of SDL as a framework in the teaching of assessment and mitigation of risks intends to make adult teaching and learning, especially for RM, more autonomous and motivational to learners. The exciting part of using SDL as a framework is that motivation develops the basic human needs for competency, autonomy and relatedness to internal organisational factors (Rothes, Lemos & Gonçalves, 2017:4).

On the other hand, there is the anticipation that various threats could hinder the successful implementation of the adult education approach. These include, among other things, adults’ experience, which may become threats to new learning (Cranton, 1996:57; Brookfield 1988:98). Knowles (1980:43) acknowledges that there are situations where learners’ knowledge is of little value, including when they have no

previous experience in the subject matter. In this regard, readiness to learn is governed by one's maturity level when the learner is motivated by external pressure.

The literature also identifies other threats to the strategy, such as negative attitudes towards learning, clinging to old ways of doing things, environmental conditions and developing mental habits, biases and presuppositions that hinder people in accepting new ideas and alternative forms of thinking (Green, 2002:16). Furthermore, there are threats such as the inability to develop application strategies that can be used to solve typical problems outside the learning situation and the failure to empower learners to become knowledgeable (Green, 2002:16; Knowles, 1980:58). Moreover, Brookfield (1988:98) outlines that learners can withdraw from a learning process if they feel that the activity or activities do not meet their needs, which can be a barrier to implementing the adult education strategy.

In Uganda, for example, some threats have derailed learning in a workshop organised to strengthen teaching knowledge, skills and attitudes (Ssentamu, 2013:127). According to Ssentamu (2013:127), such threats are dependent on the degree of support from significant others and the content, methods and environment. In that case, the workshop attendees were more critical of the strengths and weaknesses of the facilitators, approaches and environment than of the content and themselves as learners (Ssentamu, 2013:127). Based on the findings of that study, Ssentamu (2013:127) recommends that higher education institutions should holistically focus on colleagues, facilitators, content, methods and the environment as basic constructs in enhancing adult learning on both strategic and operational levels.

2.4.5 Indicators of success for the implementation of an effective adult education strategy

Ssentamu (2013:128) highlights that the shared goals of training are improving skills, developing conceptions of adult teaching and learning, enhancing the ability to reflect and be self-improving, increasing self-confidence or self-efficacy and consequently, causing a change in learners' knowledge. For instance, higher education institutions in the United Kingdom, Norway and Sri Lanka are cited (Ssentamu, 2013:128) for establishing informal initial training, a trend on the rise in many other countries.

It has further been documented that the successful implementation of the adult education approach can be evidenced by a desire for job satisfaction, self-esteem, confidence and improved quality of life (Merriam & Caffarella 1991:255; Cranton, 1989:28). The literature further indicates that performance will be better, as people will have the essential knowledge and skills required to solve problems collaboratively, generate solutions and be ready to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed solutions (Laughlin *et al.*, in Nokes-Malach *et al.*, 2012:35). More importantly, the successful implementation of the adult education approach will transform people's lives and equip municipal officials as adult learners with the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their potential and participate fully in society and the economy. This view is supported by the Government of Ireland (2018:8), declaring that learning as a public good has a critical role in the development, cohesion and well-being of society. The Government of Ireland (2018:8) continues by saying that adult education and training are building a fair society and a thriving nation and are central to sustaining economic success and building healthy communities. As such, adult education as an approach to enhance RM skills could prepare all stakeholders to participate in research and succeed in a changing world, as in South Africa, municipalities face the challenge of reskilling opportunities for employees.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes that Ubuntu is an appropriate frame that can be used to build an integrated team to enhance risk management skills of municipality officials, as it promotes interdependence and collaboration towards other people in learning activities. As indicated by literature and other lessons from this chapter, it is evident that adult education approach is an effective approach to boost confidence and self-esteem for better performance at a municipality.

CHAPTER 3 :

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The study aims to formulate a framework to enhance municipal officials' RM skills using an adult education approach. In achieving the study aims, I selected PAR as a methodology. Data were gathered from the sample drawn from Xhariep District Municipality and discussion meetings, workshops and observations. A democratic approach to conducting research informed the processes. Investigation reveals the co-researchers' feelings, views and patterns free from control or manipulation from the researcher. This chapter presents the PAR methodology because PAR involves researchers and co-researchers working together to understand a problematic situation and change it for the better.

The critical question that this work seeks to answer is: How can the RM skills of officials at a municipality be enhanced using the adult education approach? The objectives of the study are:

- to determine the need and the challenges to effective teaching strategies for RM skills for municipal officials;
- to identify components of the strategy that respond to the challenges to effectively teaching RM skills;
- to explore conditions conducive to the successful implementation of the strategy;
- to explore threats in the designing and implementation of the strategy; and
- to understand the indicators of success of the implementation of the strategy for effectively teaching practical RM skills.

Lastly, the chapter presents the method for data analysis and a conclusion on the chapter.

3.2 THE APPROPRIATENESS OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AS A METHODOLOGY FOR THE FORMULATION OF A FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVELY TEACHING RISK MANAGEMENT SKILLS

I have chosen PAR and find it appropriate for this study because PAR is an approach that works closely with the disadvantaged community and involves other stakeholders in a research project (see Jacobs, 2016:48). In this context, all stakeholders become active participants in enhancing RM skills using the adult education approach at Xhariep District Municipality. This project utilises PAR to reject traditional positivist research paradigms, which believe that the researcher achieves reliable knowledge (Majeed, 2019:122). It challenges the conventional hierarchies between the researcher and those researched (Jacobs, 2016:48). MacDonald (2003) concurs by stating that the hierarchy present within a traditional research approach holds the researcher to be the sole producer of knowledge, operating in an autocratic relationship. Contrary to this, PAR presents multiple realities in the data collection due to the collaborative and social aspect of knowledge creation.

In this study, part of the problem that leads to the ineffectiveness of RM skills is the teaching method used, which tends to be teacher-centred. This method is a traditional approach to teaching based on top-down dissemination of knowledge and does not encourage collaborative learning. It discourages learners from contributing and participating in all aspects of education and learning activities. This study advocates that it is crucial to use the learner-centred method to accommodate the diversity in employee training at Xhariep District Municipality. In this context, all stakeholders become active participants in the development of RM skills. PAR is what currently is lacking when the officials at Xhariep District Municipality are trained in RM skills. Consequently, it is clear that the training process of this city administration board is not in line with what the White Paper calls for. White Paper 6 (RSA DoE, 2001b) declares that inclusive education must meet all learners' needs through changes in curricula, attitudes, behaviours and environments and maximise learner participation in the curriculum. Many scholars support this. For instance, Tomlinson (2000) notes that the learner-centred method is adaptable to meet individual learners' diverse needs and differences. Similarly, McDonald (2013:358) asserts that the inability to promote

collaborative problem-solving skills affects the effectiveness of risk assessment processes.

Naiker (2006) points out that there is inadequate RM training for inclusive adult education in South Africa. In this context, the lack of proper training methods of RM puts the municipal skills development programme of Xhariep District Municipality in a precarious situation. Given the history of training activity at the municipality, the question is how PAR can be used as part of inclusive education solely to address the ineffective teaching RM methods as a challenge that deters the municipality from achieving its objectives. Moreover, how can municipality employees and other stakeholders be included as part of the approach to share experience and prepare them to fully meet their needs and the challenges that the municipality faces when it comes to skills development?

Following PAR as an inquiry approach, municipal officials would be able to participate, lead the skills development programme and acquire crucial new knowledge and civic competencies while providing services to distressed local communities. This approach will comply with the focus of the 2017/18 Integrated Development Plan, which calls for building a more inclusive developmental local government that would translate the vision of the municipality into action (Xhariep District Municipality, 2017). This emerging research paradigm seeks to enhance the problem-solving capacities of employees by actively involving university professionals, Xhariep community members, municipal officials and politically elected officials in every phase of the research and development. Although local authorities have a growing interest in developing their staff, they have not always been inclusive and shared this enthusiasm. Previous research projects that the municipality undertook relied more on the mainstream positivist research methodologies characterised by an expert researcher-driven research process (see Otukile-Mongwaketse *et al.*, 2016:11).

As observed by Otukile-Mongwaketse *et al.* (2016:11), this teacher-centred approach has not involved the staff in planning the skills development process. Such a professional research model restricts employees' input. There is also a political driven angle to participation in this form of research because it did not "affirm ... [worker's] right and ability to have a say in decisions which affect them and which claim to generate knowledge about them" (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:9). This teaching model

still dominates, and it has created a situation perceived as evidence of an unequal partnership. When research into the cause of a lack of effective service delivery is undertaken in this district and other related problems towards assessing risks, the municipality does not involve its employees to develop the potential solution. Therefore, this study proposes the adoption of PAR as an inclusive research approach that shares a vision of a society free of domination (see Maguire 1987:26). In the context of Xhariep District Municipality, PAR will allow the municipality to conduct research relevant to its employees' needs while delivering in-service learning opportunities.

MacDonald (2012:37) notes that PAR is a tool that could foster capacity, community development, empowerment and social justice. PAR is, therefore, an approach from the social sciences, which is becoming a paradigm shift from traditional, positivist science to work towards recognising and addressing complex human and social issues (Eruera, 2010:1). Also, PAR validates data because it approaches research from understanding social practice and continues to create awareness of historical political, and cultural conditions (Baum, 2016:405; McTaggart, 1998:212-213). Thus, PAR facilitates "mindful learning" or a mindful approach to acquiring knowledge in teaching and learning because it challenges co-researchers and researchers to be active rather than passive actors in pursuing their experience (Otukile-Mongwaketse *et al.*, 2016:20).

Furthermore, I have chosen PAR as a research approach and design because it moves people and their life experience to the core (see Hall 1992:15-16). As a research approach, it even acknowledges the power relations between the researcher and co-researchers, in contrast to traditional adult education research. In this respect, it is committed to equity and social change. This in contrast to conventional research methodologies, by which power is vested in the research academic. In PAR, power is vested in the co-researchers affected daily by the unsatisfactory situation that oppresses them (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2010:75; Netshandama & Mahlomaholo, 2010:110; Sanginga, Kamugisha & Martin, 2010:696). Besides, people themselves research practices that affect their own lives (McTaggart, 1997:26). Thus, professional researchers occupy the same status as other participants except for setting their expertise alongside the lay knowledge, skills and experiences of those

people who constitute the object of their investigations (Sanginga *et al.*, 2010:697; Ebersson *et al.*, 2007:126; Jordan *et al.*, 2003:190). In this way, PAR shifts the responsibility for the research process to the individuals and groups directly affected by inequalities (Jordan *et al.*, 2003:190).

Furthermore, the success of PAR relies on collective participation, indigenous knowledge, education and collective action. The researcher and the participants assume positions of being co-inquirers collectively engaged by and transforming the inquiry process (Dentith, Measor & O' Malley, 2012; Eruera, 2010:5; Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2010:75; Sanginga *et al.*, 2010:697). The usually unheard but essential voice of the marginalised is an ingredient of the collective in PAR. I, therefore, find PAR to be distinguishing itself from other approaches based on its objectives. People or co-researchers themselves conduct substantive research based on the practices that affect their own lives. According to Eruera (2010:2), Netshandama and Mahlomaholo (2010:111), Sanginga *et al.* (2010:697), Ebersson, Eloff and Ferriera (2007:126), and Strydom (2002:431-432), PAR has the advantage of engaging with the community in a collaborative relationship from the start on issues to which the community is committed to resolving. In this regard, I further view PAR as an effective methodology. Moreover, according to Eruera (2010:1) and Kemmis (2006:466-467), PAR enables individuals to take responsibility for their growth and history.

As Maguire (1987:30) indicates, the process of PAR helps rebuild individuals' capacity "to be creative actors in the world" while being active participants in meaningful decision making. This guaranteed me that information from the co-researchers would address the aim of this study. In other words, PAR would enable the voices of all the co-researchers to be recognised and listened to. Because inequalities affect individuals and groups, they strengthened the appropriateness of PAR for the profoundly unequal society in which this study would be conducted (see Jordan *et al.*, 2003:190). Consequently, I emphasise the power relationship between the researcher and co-researchers. In this study, the voices of municipal officials and other stakeholders are recognised. McTaggart (1998:216) also puts emphasis on the role of experience in interpreting research findings. Stake (1978:6) agrees by claiming that knowledge is a natural generalisation developed within a person as a product of experiences. This confirms that the research question of the study will be addressed

using PAR as an approach (see Netshandama & Mahlomaholo, 2010:111; Kemmis, 2006:473; McTaggart, 1998:217). In this regard, the participatory nature and goal of PAR are central to this study because of its new ways of conceptualising and democratising the relationship between researcher and co-researcher.

3.3 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This section conceptualises the study and discusses the establishment of the coordinated team and the participants' roles and responsibilities to implement the study plan.

3.3.1 Conceptualisation of the study: Step 1

The first step for designing a framework is planning and diagnosing a problem. In this study, it was done through a permission letter to conduct research at Xhariep District Municipality. All stakeholders involved in formulating a coordinated research team were identified, involving researcher and co-researchers, aiming to make informed decisions, validate data and impart social change throughout all aspects of the research process. As a team, we identified the issues that bothered the local municipality by identifying and assessing the risks at Xhariep District Municipality to work on solutions or strategies. The major challenge identified was the ineffective teaching of RM skills. We, as a team, considered existing resources available for an implementation strategy. The group discussed the co-researchers' roles and responsibilities and the sharing of power between the co-researchers and me. As a team, we also took into consideration ethical approval (see MacDonald, 2012:44).

3.3.2 Conceptualisation of the study: Step 2

In this step, the team is about to implement the plan as diagnosed in Step 1 (Section 3.3.1) focusing more on the implementation process of the programme developed in the diagnosis step. The aim is to address the agreed common goal because PAR involves participation and action. Thus, in this research at Xhariep District Municipality, as affected by skills development issues with regard to RM skills, the team decided to get together to work out a plan of action on how to address the challenges facing the municipality and discuss the solutions. Scholars of PAR argue that people should be engaged as active co-researchers in the research process to achieve an effective plan

(Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007:334). The then developed plan is put into action. All of the co-researchers' voices are listened to and the developmental goals are collectively agreed on (MacDonald 2012:45). Thus, the interventions of the team are executed according to the research plan (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005:23). In fact, at this stage, the actual praxis as planned by the co-researchers proceed even though there could be threats towards this phase (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2014:105). For instance, some co-researchers who engage in PAR are accustomed to traditional research hierarchies and, as such, may resist the sharing of power and resources. As such, they could develop a particular kind of negative attitude, as referred to by Kidd and Kral (2005:189). At this stage, the creation of consciousness and social transformation with oppressed communities is affected by inequalities (Kelly 2005:70). During this stage, both researchers and co-researchers collaboratively assess the implementation process and the outcome of the project. The latter involves the sharing of data with the co-researchers (MacDonald 2012:45). However, Kemmis *et al.* (2014:105) advise that the researcher should consider monitoring and recording the events, as putting the plan of action forward, it should have a solid base for reflection and a re-planning cycle.

Usually, the first step in designing a framework is planning, which involves diagnosing a problem. In this case, the problem involved challenges facing effectively teaching RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality. Diagnosing the problem involved a community assessment, finding a community partner and considering existing resources available for an implementation strategy. In addition, the participants' roles and sharing of power regarding responsibility for the research process are considered at this stage. It also takes into consideration ethical approval (MacDonald, 2012:44). The primary goal of this step is to form a research team, involving researcher and co-researchers. As a team, we then identified the issues that bothered the municipality. For PAR, these problems that require solutions should arise from the community of interest (Walter, 1993: Online). The process includes co-researchers critically reflecting on themselves to participate in the research process that solves the problem. In this study, the issue identified was ineffective methods of teaching RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality. In this respect, as a researcher, I approached the Xhariep District Municipality first to gain access to the municipality. The approach and plan of the study were set out in a permission letter to conduct research. The coordinated

team consisted of co-researchers and me, aiming to make informed decisions throughout all aspects of the research process. The aim was to validate data and impart social change or a specific action at the municipality.

3.4 THE HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

This section continues to motivate the choice of PAR for the study. As a research methodology, PAR originated in the late 1960s to address issues with regard to disadvantaged members of society (Jacobs, 2016:48). However, using PAR within education began in the 1940s and 1950s (Jacobs, 2016:51). PAR also draw on Lewin's work in the 1940s, which applied it to organisational change (Baum, 2016:405). However, the late 1950s and 1960s observed a decline in action research as legitimate research (Pine in Jacobs, 2016:51). Since the 1970s, PAR as a research approach increased in use and legitimacy.

Paulo Freire was one of the leaders of the resurgence of PAR within education in that period (Jacobs, 2016:51). Freire developed PAR in adult education to support participatory adult learning (Baum, 2016:405). Freire also developed the idea of praxis, that is, "reflection and action on the world to transform it" (Freire, 1970:36). His work was aimed at a radical change in societal power structures to empower people. Thus, many of the principles of PAR resemble Freire's thoughts on equality, partnerships, control and co-researcher and researcher both acting as researchers in educational learning environments (Jacobs, 2016:51). As Freire (2005:109) states, education is carried out by one *with* another. Similarly, in PAR, research is not research conducted *on* another, but *with* another. This type of collaboration in research allows all stakeholders to reflect upon one another's thinking and become jointly educated. In other words, the roots of PAR can be traced to Freire, who believed that critical reflection was crucial for personal and social change (MacDonald, 2012:37). PAR as developed by Freire aimed to empower the poor and marginalised members of society (MacDonald, 2012:39).

Furthermore, "PAR was developed as a means for improving and informing social, economic and cultural practice" (McTaggart, 1991:169), which, in principle, is a group of activities whereby individuals with differing power, status and influence collaborate on a concern. Likewise, Whyte (1991:20) maintains that co-researchers and the

researcher participate collaboratively in the research process in PAR. Furthermore, Maguire (1987:29) emphasises that the action activity of PAR paves the way for researchers and oppressed people to foster solidarity and take collective action, in both the short and the long term, for radical social change. In this respect, PAR involves three types of change: the development of critical consciousness of the researcher and the participants; improvement in the lives of those participating in the research process; and transformation of societal structures and relationships (Maguire, 1987:29). Moreover, PAR has evolved through bottom-up approaches and has strong ties with local communities and issues involving wealth and power (Glassman & Erdem, 2014:209).

3.4.1 Objectives of participatory action research

Although PAR has several objectives, in this study, I focus on only those relevant to designing a framework for effective RM teaching. As Ger (1997:116) observes, “solutions lie in the local”. Feldman (2007) has found that central to the objectives of PAR, is an awareness of resources and abilities to increase self-confidence and problem-solving skills. Thus, the ultimate goal of PAR in this study was to provide workable solutions in addressing the concerns of municipal officials to acquire confidence in their profession and develop collaborative problem-solving skills (see Morales, 2016:162).

On the other hand, in this study, PAR was used as “an active approach to improving social practice through change” (McTaggart, 1989). PAR influences emancipation by encouraging collaboration and involvement of those affected by a research process (Morales, 2016:159). As co-researchers become aware of sharing resources and cooperating or interacting with others (Glassmen & Erdem, 2014:214), as an approach to research, the Xhariep municipal officials actively reflected on their weaknesses and became more sensitive to the mode of teaching and learning for risk assessment. Consequently, the co-researchers became aware of equity and social justice and changed their attitude towards learning and developing strategies for mitigating risks at the municipality.

As defined by Tetui *et al.* (2017:104), PAR is a study design that treats the communities of inquiry as part of the generators of knowledge. In other words, by its

collaborative and participatory nature, PAR challenges the idea of the outside expert or researcher examining, theorising and proposing solutions for community issues. As an approach, it instead intends to have some real-world effect, increase popularity in research and allow research topics or questions to emerge from the community of interest (Walter, 1993: Online).

Furthermore, PAR aims to produce knowledge and action that are directly useful to a group of people. I have found the adult education approach to be an appropriate method of acquiring RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality. Walter (1993: Online) confirms that it is an approach aiming to empower people through constructing and using their knowledge as a resource. At its heart, PAR is a collective, self-reflective inquiry that a researcher and co-researchers undertake to understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves (Gillis & Jackson, 2002:264). For this reason, the reflective process is directly linked to action, influenced by an understanding of the history, culture and local context embedded in social relationships. Baum, MacDougall and Smith (2006:854) agree that the PAR process should be empowering and lead to people having increased control over their lives. Thus, in this study, power relations needed to be redistributed by working as a team in the research process. The relationship involved discussing the challenges to an effective teaching strategy for RM skills at the municipality and identifying the strengths, opportunities and threats they experience, the resources needed, the implementation of solutions, activities they should engage in and the time spent on these (see Tetui *et al.*, 2017:104). This indicates the researcher and co-researchers collaboratively taking a central role in decision making because PAR takes into cognisance local actions to resolve social injustices.

In this sense, Tetui *et al.* (2017:104) concur by stating that the participants in PAR seek to collaboratively identify social problems, adopt potential solutions and devise strategies to overcome challenges. Therefore, designing a useful framework for teaching RM at Xhariep District Municipality required a teaching and learning environment that was highly respectful to collectively generate lasting solutions to problems (see Tetui *et al.*, 2017:104). Thus, as a theoretical framework, the principles of Ubuntu, such as respect, humanity and solidarity, were considered. Therefore, I

argue that knowledge in PAR is co-produced by the researcher and co-researchers or people with lived experience of the issues under investigation.

3.4.2 Components of participatory action research

There are essential elements to the PAR process. Some scholars identify these elements as follows: Firstly, PAR is critical in its stance; it addresses real problems as determined by the community. Secondly, PAR improves the lives of the individuals involved in the research process by promoting active participation. Thus, the inclusion of community members with prior experience improves rich information regarding the situation in the organisation or community and the way forward to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and address the challenges experienced. Thirdly, PAR empowers and creates awareness towards self-reliant development (MacDonald, 2012:39). As the research process facilitates a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality, PAR allows the researcher to be a more committed participant, facilitator and even a learner in the research process (MacDonald, 2012:39). In this respect, I have found PAR suitable and appropriate for this study because it also collaborates with Ubuntu as a framework for the study. The Ubuntu approach offers resources for social cohesion and people-centred transformation and development (Nkondo, 2007:48).

3.4.3 Formats of participatory action research

This section discusses the formats of PAR, which are community-based participatory research, feminist participatory research, youth participatory research and mutual inquiry.

3.4.3.1 *Community-based participatory research*

Community-based participatory research is one of the formats of PAR and emphasises a collaborative process that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognises the unique strengths that each brings (Minkler, Garcia, Rubin & Wallerstein, 2012:8). Accordingly, community-based participatory research is essential and relevant to this study. Therefore, in contrast to the positivistic assumptions, community-based participatory research acknowledges that knowledge is constructed socially. Research approaches allow for social, group or collective

analysis of life experiences of power and knowledge (Leung, Yen & Minkler, 2004:502). As such, PAR and community-based participatory research focus on breaking the monopoly on knowledge production and emphasising the different sets of interests and power relations (Leung *et al.*, 2004:501).

According to Leung *et al.* (2004:501), community-based participatory research is characterised by participatory, cooperative and engaging community members and researchers in a collaborative process in which each contributes equally to a co-learning process, involving systems development and local capacity building. It is an empowering approach through which the participants can increase control over their lives and a balance between research and action is achieved (Leung *et al.*, 2004:501). In line with the objectives of community-based participatory research, Tshelane (2013:414) argues that the core value in PAR refers to research done with mutual respect for individual needs and differences and with the recognition of one another as equal members.

3.4.3.2 *Feminist participatory action research*

Feminist participatory action research is perceived as another format of PAR. According to MacDonald (2012:37), who draws on Maguire's (1987) work, PAR can be viewed from a feminist perspective as a research approach that promotes collaboration between the researcher and the participants. Jacobs (2016:50) agree, stating that a PAR project with feminist principles is truly a collaborative enterprise. This confirms the purpose of PAR, which is to empower the participants "through the construction of their own knowledge" (Pine, 2009:73). Freire (2005:109) refers to this as the "banking" concept of education and advocates for a more participatory learning environment. As such, a feminist approach to PAR is necessary as it allows researchers to attend intentionally to the perspectives and diversity of voices within the research process (Jacobs, 2016:50). Furthermore, Glassman and Erdem (2014:216) contend that feminism offers a critical aspect for expanding PAR in the conceptualisation and interpretation of power relationships. Thus, from a feminist viewpoint, PAR is used as a fundamental emancipatory approach to research that seeks to empower the subjugated and marginalised.

Feminist perspectives could stretch the praxis of PAR across multiple community levels. One example of a feminist PAR project comes from Williams and Lykes's (2003) photovoice study. In this project, researchers gave cameras to women of oppressed or endangered communities and asked them to document their everyday lives. In other words, the action of photography forced the women to step outside of their given roles and reflect on their conditions (Glassman & Erdem, 2014:216). In that research process, the participants realised that conscientisation was not an act of awareness but a long-term negotiation tied to gender definitions. This indicates how the feminist perspective can assist in considering power relationships in PAR.

From a feminist perspective, PAR aims to change systems and structures towards improving the lives of marginalised women, where the process emphasises local knowledge and understanding of the context (Smales, 2018:4). Thus, PAR can also be an educational process for the participants and researchers who are engaged in an analysis of the structural causes of acknowledged social problems through collective discussions and interactions (Mahlomaholo, 2009:224).

MacDonald (2012:38) further explains that the action activity of PAR is geared towards creating ways for researchers and subjugated people to join forces and, in solidarity, take collective action, in both the short and the long term, in pursuit of radical social change. In this way, from a feminist perspective, PAR involves three types of growth, namely the development of critical awareness in both the researcher and the participants, the advancement of the lives of those participating in the research process and the transformation of societal structures and relationships (Van Dijk, 2008:86). Hence, feminist PAR paves the way for understanding and communicating the experiences of the community and building the capacity of the community to organise, speak, identify their needs and determine what development frameworks will benefit or work for them and their situation. For this reason, PAR as a research process strengthens the solidarity and the understanding of the community towards sustainable development (Smales, 2018:4). Accordingly, I have found feminist PAR to be geared towards providing help to understand that facilitating a collaborative, equitable research process involves an empowering and power-sharing process that attends to social inequalities.

3.4.3.3 Participatory action research and youth education

Because PAR is tied to power relationships, Downes and Groundwater-Smith (in Jacobs, 2016:51) state that the absence of young people in research initiatives is similar to the lack of women in traditional patriarchal research, when they were silenced and patronised. I concur with Jacobs (2016:51) that this might be another reason why feminism has been so influential to PAR. Freire (2005:109) discusses this when he reveals that the oppressor wishes to silence the oppressed to control them. This has been one of the criticisms of traditional positivist research – that it owns and silences those interested or affected by the study (Jacobs, 2016:51).

Also, Glassman and Erden (2014:217) point out that youth PAR also offers opportunities in integrating communities into successful education through participatory approaches. The approach may even become more critical as the youth begin to appropriate new technologies into their learning processes. Glassman and Erden (2014:217) argue that youth are often treated separately from the methods of change and improvement of social injustice. Education with specific reference to adult education should be contiguous with adult activities and expectations and a shared community project.

Fine (2009), who draws from the work of Glassman and Erden (2014:217), suggests that it would be beneficial for the community as a whole to create settings for the youth where they can share *vivencia* (participation) with the adults in the process of reflection and change. Hall (1981:22) suggests that “giving voice and the right to speak” is central to the participatory research framework that supports this. Within this perspective, Glassman and Erden (2014:217) further suggest that PAR could help alleviate some of the alienation youth feel in society and enable them to become part of social policy and change to resolve the local and global issues they face. Hence, Glassman and Erden (2014) believe that integrating the PAR framework in research will provide abundant opportunities for change in the lives of the youth.

3.4.3.4 Mutual inquiry

As PAR is designed to promote active involvement in every stage of the research process, it replaces the traditional hierarchical approach to research with a commitment to mutual inquiry and local ownership (Chataway, 1997:747). That is, the

PAR principles of mutuality are of importance. Besides, Chataway (1997:747) believes that the validity of research findings is almost certainly enhanced by a combination of insider and outsider knowledge. As one native man explained to the Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, “we have been researched to death, it’s time that we started researching ourselves back to life” (Hawkes & Castellano, 1993:5).

Indeed, collaborative methods of research perpetuate the link between knowledge and power. Chataway (1997:750) confirms that PAR intends to share power and break down the usual hierarchical relationship between researcher and co-researchers. Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991:13) state that through PAR, “people who are currently poor and oppressed will progressively transform their environment by their praxis”. “In this process, others may play a catalytic and supportive role but will not dominate” (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991:13). Thus, PAR is designed to promote active involvement in research, and through this power-sharing approach, there is hope for correcting oppressive societal relations.

In this regard, Chataway (1997:750) acknowledges the goals of PAR, as identified by Reason (1993), Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991), and Whyte (1991), as:

- to break down the asymmetrical relationship between researcher and researched into mutual inquiry and problem solving;
- for traditionally subordinated groups to experience control and ownership of intellectual property concerning them by asking questions they think are essential, speaking in their terms and deciding for themselves how to use the results;
- for people who are embedded in a problem to develop the understanding and motivation needed to change their situation; and
- to develop a group of self-sufficient local action researchers.

3.5 STEPS AND STAGES IN PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

At its heart, PAR involves “the investigation of actual practices and not abstract practices” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:564). In other words, the participatory nature of PAR embodies a democratic approach to research in which the participants work collaboratively in the co-generation of new knowledge to address a specific issue or problem (Jacobs, 2016:48). In this respect, PAR marks progress in the research

process. For this reason, its sequential steps describe the research design process in PAR. The PAR approach involves a spiral of self-reflective cycles (Tetui *et al.*, 2017:128; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:276).

PAR breaks the hierarchical structure that appears within the traditional positivist research approach holding the researcher as the sole producer of knowledge and operating in an autocratic relationship (MacDonald, 2012:23). For this reason, PAR involves research closely with subordinate or oppressed groups to better their circumstances within society (Jordan *et al.* 2003:186). Thus, a research design approach utilising PAR produces an interactional experience that contributes directly to people's lives (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:276). In this respect, the goal of PAR, which is empowerment, is in light of learning from one's direct experience (Tetui *et al.*, 2017:105). Denzin (1989:102) supports this by saying, "No experience has the same meaning for two individuals. This is so because meaning is emotional and biographical." Therefore, I contend that PAR enables the opportunity of multiple perspectives rather than producing evidence from a single viewpoint or source (see Wimpenny & Savin-Baden, 2012:692).

The spiral self-reflection in PAR ensures the collaborative implementation of an effective teaching strategy for RM. Thus, the PAR methodology emphasises collaboration in research in contrast to the solitary process of systematic self-reflection (Tetui *et al.*, 2017:105; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:276). Central to the challenge of the traditional positivist research methodology, the fact is that a PAR project holds that research is conducted *with* the participants instead of *on* the participants (Jacobs 2016:49).

In PAR, the researcher and co-researchers follow the steps in a neat spiral that involves planning, action, observation and reflection. This process is more fluid, open and responsive on how to address the problem and come up with solutions to it (Kidd & Kral, 2005:187). This research design involves lived experiences implementing a useful teaching strategy for RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality. On the other hand, Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2007:331) indicate that the measure of success within PAR is not about the participants having to follow prescribed steps but whether they have a sense of how their practice understandings of their training (consciousness-raising) have developed. As such, the PAR process is not only about

problem-solving issues but also about considering the continuing well-being of the community involved. The latter emphasises PAR in the sense that knowledge can be developed in collaboration with local expert knowledge and the “knowers” (Kidd & Kral, 2005:333).

3.5.1 Beginning stage with planning and problem diagnosis

Usually, the first step in designing a framework is planning, which involves diagnosing a problem. In this study, the problem diagnosed was the challenges facing effectively teaching RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality. Diagnosing the problem involved a community assessment, finding a community partner and considering existing resources available for an implementation strategy. The participants’ roles and sharing of power in terms of responsibility for the research process were established at this stage. The primary goal of this step was to form a research team, involving co-researchers and me as the researcher. As a team, we then identified the issues that bothered the municipality in order to work on solutions to these. In PAR, these problems that require solutions should arise from the community of interest (Walter 1993: Online). This process includes critically reflecting on themselves to fully take part in the research process that seeks to solve the problem.

In this phase, ethical approval was also taken into consideration (see MacDonald, 2012:44). In this respect, as a researcher, I approached the Xhariep District Municipality to gain access to the municipality. The plan of the study was explained in a permission letter to conduct research. The coordinated team consisted of researchers and co-researchers in this phase, aiming to make informed decisions throughout all aspects of the research process. The team also aimed to validate data and impart social change or a specific action at a municipality.

As indicated in community-based participatory research, a collaborative process equitably involves all team members in the research process, and the community members become a means of producing solutions for organisational problems (Minkler *et al.*, 2012:8). As Kemmis and McTaggart (2007:287) observe, the ultimate goal of this stage is to develop a plan of action to solve the problem by the creation of priorities or strategies. Contrary to other research approaches, such as the quantitative method solving problems based on statistical evidence, PAR does not follow a standard linear

model of research. It involves a cyclic process in research that works its way through various processes of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:27). Concerning positivism, scholars argue that the quantitative research methodology used in teaching RM skills relies on hypothetic-deductive reasoning, “since it is theory-led and tends to be confirmatory” (Ngulube, 2015:27). This warning is highlighted by Donmoyer (2008:713), who explains that in a quantitative study, the researchers extract or collect data, analyse the data and present the results in numerical form rather than narratively. In this respect, in contrast to qualitative research, quantitative research is also viewed as an antithesis, as it relies on establishing statistical correlations between variables (Donmoyer, 2008:713).

In view of the above-mentioned explanation, this study adopted PAR as an appropriate approach to enhance municipal officials’ RM skills by using the adult education approach. Hence, in the initial stage of diagnosing the problem, I introduced ineffective strategies to teach RM skills at a municipality, as indicated by the literature. The introduction to ineffective teaching strategies was done through brainstorming. These ineffective strategies included a lack of promotion of collaborative problem-solving skills, the inability to tap adult learners’ prior experiential knowledge, which serves as a critical component in their foundation of their self-identity, and not perceiving adult learners as self-directing in the teaching and learning of RM. This diagnosis was made for better understanding and developing a plan (see Coghlan & Brannick, 2005:22), which supported the commitment of PAR to democratic values, such as transparency, openness, communication ethos and social justice. For this reason, this step opened a platform that was an equitable and conducive learning environment for the research team. Taking this step would enable the group to collectively identify and analyse challenges facing the teaching of RM skills at the municipality.

Lastly, this step was coined by developing an intervention plan for a commonly identified problem or problem. The literature puts forward that planning action is drawn from framing the issue diagnosed and an analysis of the context and the understanding of the project (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005:23). This context analysis leads to developing a plan that includes the formulation of the strategy components to respond to the challenges collectively diagnosed. In this study, the project elements included the development of the strategy to respond to the challenges facing the

teaching and learning of RM using adult education at the municipality. Informed by the community-based PAR adopted for this study, the context analysis included, among other things, a critical understanding of conditions for the successful implementation of the strategy to respond to the challenges facing the teaching of RM skills, including the indicators of successful performance of the plan.

3.5.2 Action stage

In PAR, this step to be undertaken when implementing this approach focuses on the implementation process of the plan developed in the diagnosis step. The aim is to address the agreed-upon common goal because PAR involves participation and action. Thus, municipal officials of Xhariep District Municipality, as affected by some problem or issue, decided to get together to work out a plan of action on how to take on the challenges facing the municipality and discuss solutions to these. Scholars of PAR argue that people should be engaged as active participants in the research process (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007:334). The then developed plan is put into action.

All the participants' voices are listened to and they collectively agree on the developmental goals (MacDonald 2012:45). Hence, the interventions of the team are executed according to the research plan (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005:23). In fact, in this stage, the actual praxis as planned by the co-researchers proceeds even though there could be threats towards this phase (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2014:105). For instance, some co-researchers who engage in PAR are accustomed to traditional research hierarchies and, as such, may resist the sharing of power that is offered in PAR. As a result, they could develop a particular kind of (negative) attitude (Kidd & Kral, 2005:189). In this stage, the creation of consciousness and social transformation with oppressed communities is affected by inequalities (Kelly, 2005:70). During this stage, both researchers and co-searchers collaboratively assess the implementation process and the outcome of the project, which involves the sharing of data with the participants (MacDonald, 2012:45). However, Kemmis *et al.* (2014:105) suggest that the researcher should consider monitoring and recording the events in the plan of action to have a solid base for reflection and a re-planning cycle.

The underpinning of Ubuntu for adopting PAR and as a theoretical framework of this study embraces collaborative learning as a good strategy for adult teaching and learning. This includes showing respect, genuineness and openness to the experience, listening to and responding to ideas of other participants, negotiating points of difference and commonality and having a framework for action that can bring change to those who have historically felt powerless (in this case the people of Xhariep) (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007:334). As such, the co-researchers' subjective interpretation of the situation is important as they practically implement planned and re-planned actions, depending on what has transpired on the ground. The research team, guided by this theoretical framework, collaboratively considered contextual factors and conditions that could militate against implementing the planned action and develop strategies to mitigate adverse conditions towards enacting the plan.

3.5.3 Observation, measurement and evaluation stage

The observation, measurement and evaluation stage is the final one, which assesses the action-planning cycle (see Sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3). PAR is a self-evaluative process in this stage, involving a constant evaluation process and modifications to adjust the methods of teaching RM skills (Walter 1993: Online). Therefore, the team members held review meetings. The discussions in these meetings aimed to encourage positive performance and teamwork towards solving the problems experienced in the organisation (see Tetui *et al.*, 2017:106).

3.5.4 Reflection stage

In the reflection stage, PAR team members engage in structured and critical reflection to evaluate what has happened in the previous phases. The process enables the co-researchers and researcher to develop explicit, alternative explanations for events and experiences (Gillis & Jackson in MacDonald, 2012:45). Even though PAR necessitates a group of participants, self-reflection is still central to the research process because it fosters shared meaning making and understanding between and among group members (Ferrell, 2015:7). Building a safe community within a PAR group is essential for promoting this reflection (Koch, Mann, Kralik & Van Loon, 2005). The reflection stage in PAR is central and critical, as it informs the research team that promoting a

collective response is a gradual process, for which there are no short-cut solutions. In this regard, acknowledging the views of local experts and empowering such experts to change their local communities positively are central.

3.6 AXIOLOGY, ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL STANCE OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

3.6.1 Axiological stance

Axiology relates to ethics and value systems; that is, what do we believe is right? Because reality is mind-constructed and mind-dependent. This is knowledge subjective, social inquiry which is driven by value-bound and value-laden (Kawulich, 2012:1). In PAR as a research methodology, Kawulich asserts that researchers are inevitably influenced by their values, which inform the paradigm they choose for inquiry, the choice of topic of their study, the methods they choose to collect and analyse data, how they interpret their findings and the way they report the findings. As such, this study is value-laden in nature, and values and biases related to the topic under study may interfere with neutrality.

In PAR, as a research design and methodology, I view the process as a moral and political activity that requires the choice of and commitment to a value position. In this regard, I should achieve objectivity by reflecting on and examining values to ensure that they were appropriate for carrying out the research study. Unlike in the interpretative paradigm, where every viewpoint is correct, some views will be wrong, while others will be right (Kawulich, 2012:12-13). The ultimate goal of PAR is the radical transformation of social reality and improvement in the lives of the individuals involved; in other words, community members are the primary beneficiaries of the investigation. Therefore, the study adopted PAR to empower municipal officials to act to transform society.

3.6.2 Ontological stance

Kawulich (2012:1), who draws on Patton's (2002) work, remarks that ontology relates to whether one believes there is one verifiable reality or multiple, socially constructed realities. Hence, the truth is mind-dependent and a personal or social construct. In this sense, the fact is limited to context, space, time and the individuals or group in a given

situation, and cannot be generalised into one shared reality. In this study, conceptions of realities legitimised from all cultures, and the emphasis is that there are individual realities and group-shared realities (see Kawulich, 2012:10). Hence, Freire's ontological argument is that posited praxis is a central defining feature of human life and a necessary condition of freedom. Freire contends that human nature is expressed through intentional, reflective, meaningful activity situated within dynamic historical and cultural contexts that shape and set limits on that activity. In other words, Freire argues that the struggle to be free, to be human and to make history and culture from the given situation is an inherent possibility in the human condition (Glass, 2001:15). Furthermore, Kawulich (2012:10) indicates that social reality is continuously changing and this involves multiple layers, such as the surface reality and deep structures. Therefore, according to Kawulich (2012:10), theories and a historical orientation help one to unmask buried structures.

The PAR methodology originated to address issues within disadvantaged members of society, and it was used in various fields and disciplines (Jacobs 2016:48). Although Kurt Lewin emphasised the importance of collaboration in some research processes in the 1940s (Jacobs 2016:48), it is clear that one of the central tenets of PAR is its participatory nature to include all stakeholders in all aspects of the research process. Jacobs (2016:48) indicates that the participatory nature of PAR embodies a democratic approach to research in which the participants work collaboratively in the co-generation of new knowledge to address a specific issue or problem. According to Jacobs (2016:48), "a research project which utilises a PAR methodology rejects traditional positivist research paradigms and challenges traditional hierarchies between the researcher and those being researched". In this regard, PAR allows the researcher to be a committed participant, facilitator and learner in the research process, which fosters militancy rather than detachment (MacDonald, 2012:39).

3.6.3 Epistemological stance

PAR refers to a study process that develops practical knowledge while pursuing worthwhile human purposes (Jacobs, 2016:49). The epistemology of PAR believes that background is rooted in individuals' experiences and lives and that knowledge is created through collaboration between the researcher and co-researchers. Furthermore, the constructivist nature of PAR knowledge and understanding is based

on learning and knowing as communal acts and how humans are social animals. Within the learning environment, accordingly, the co-researcher has more to learn than to dominate learning processes. Facilitating this process is a collaborative, democratising learning environment, which would benefit both researchers and co-researchers (Jacobs, 2016:49). However, PAR postulates that the researcher or observer not only has an impact on the phenomenon being researched (as they bring their values to the research process), but also that there are multiple realities present in the data due to the collaborative and social aspect of knowledge creation associated with PAR (Jacobs, 2016:48).

Kawulich (2012:12) argues that knowledge is real, only if it can be turned into practice that empowers and transforms people's lives. Thus, PAR is enabling, as it promotes capacity development and capacity building in all who participate in research processes (McTaggart, 1991). PAR encompasses a range of vulnerable groups of individuals: the exploited, the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised. As a research methodology, PAR promotes the ability of people to be aware of their experiences as rich resources and mobilise them for self-reliant development (MacDonald, 2012:39). Thus, accurate knowledge in this context is a collective, which can inform individual and group action that can change the living conditions of people; that is, the construction of knowledge from the participants' frame of reference. The relationship between the researcher and the co-researcher is not one of hierarchical power in the interpretative paradigm. Still, it involves a transformation and emancipation of both participant and researcher (Kawulich, 2012:12).

According to Stringer (1996), PAR is democratic and equitable in the sense that it enables the participation of all people and acknowledges equity. As an approach, it further liberate participants and provides freedom from the oppressive to enhance lives, and enables the expression of people's full human potential. Therefore, for this study, knowledge is considered to be subjective because it is socially constructed and liberate the minds of individuals. Meaning, the truth lies within the human experience (Kawulich, 2012:10). In this context, the stories, belief systems and claims of spiritual and earthly connections of the community find space as legitimate knowledge (Kawulich, 2012:10). As a collective, self-reflective inquiry for improving a situation in a community or a marginalised group of individuals, PAR offers a radical alternative to

knowledge development (MacDonald, 2012:46). Accordingly, as a research method, PAR moves social inquiry from a linear cause-and-effect perspective to a participatory framework that considers the contexts of people's lives (MacDonald, 2012:36). Moreover, it involves a cyclic process of research, reflection and action (Langlois, Goudreau & Lalonde, 2014:226) that "offers a critique of, and challenge to, dominant positivist social science research as the only legitimate and valid source of knowledge" (Maguire, 1987:10).

Principles of PAR contribute to local capacity building towards a collective social change. In addition, in its pluralistic structure it allows multiple views and options in dealing with social problems. In other words, these various views should be arranged in such a way that allow informed decision making (Tetui *et al.*, 2017:105).

3.7 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER IN PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

In PAR, the researcher helps to facilitate development by dispersing power and responsibility among team members. MacDonald (2012:43) concurs that PAR is a transformative, empowering process whereby researchers and co-researchers co-create new knowledge. Thus, PAR liberates research and decentralises traditional research. For successful implementation and maintenance of the strategy, the researcher also provides structure in the organisation of the team and in the members and processes in the research project. However, it is done without controlling or dominating the teaching and learning process for risk assessment (MacDonald, 2012:34). I further encouraged accountability and managed confusion by defining rules, such as respect, unity and sharing and the allocation of tasks among team members. In other words, researchers encourage the team to examine and resolve their organisational problems and employ solutions without imposing decisions. For this reason, the power relations between researcher and co-researchers are emphasised with inclusion of the communities to work towards action for change (Baum *et al.*, 2006:854).

Moreover, a researcher, because of his or her research expertise, contributes knowledge to address identified problems and develop an action. Goto (2010:3) argues that this step is an essential component in PAR while doing research. The

argument is that the involvement of this study could help the municipality and community discover its assets or strengthen its capacity. In other words, PAR is an approach that emphasises collaboration in research, that is, among co-researchers and researchers. That is why McTaggart (1991:169) sees it as a tool for empowerment because it promotes capacity development and capacity building. Consequently, for this study, PAR offered an adult educational process and served as an approach to social investigation and as a useful tool to address problems and issues facing the communities (see Tetui *et al.*, 2017:104). After all, PAR increased responsibility for learning and was used as a goal in collaborative learning. As such, collaborative research is the main component of PAR and a powerful tool that can allow researchers to tap into new ideas and information.

The researcher in PAR engages in the conceptualisation of the study by participating in preparatory discussions and giving guidance or facilitating the co-researchers to take responsibility for their thinking, attitude and actions (Wood *et al.*, 2007:78). This is done because shifts on a cognitive, affective and behavioural level are more likely to be sustained as they become part of the personal and professional identity of the participant (Batagiannis in Wood & Govender, 2013:178). Accordingly, PAR seeks the “enhancement of human flourishing, emancipation, democracy and the empowerment of those involved through critical reflection” (Wittmayer & Schöpke, 2014:476). The researcher’s engagement is to work with communities to co-create research and findings to unsettle the power relationships that traditionally structured research (Raynor, 2019:130).

3.8 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCHER AND CO-RESEARCHERS

In PAR, the researcher engages in collaboration to decide on the topic of discussion. Even though the subject of a debate is for the co-researchers, the facilitator is responsible for providing some structure (Gillis & Jackson, 2002:235). Because PAR permits sharing information between the researcher and co-researchers, they both view themselves with other individuals in their social contexts. Thus, co-researchers and researchers can reshape their knowledge of how the challenges of risk assessment affect daily life in the community (MacDonald, 2012:36). Therefore, PAR can move social inquiry into a participatory framework that considers the contexts of people’s lives. For this reason, PAR involves a cyclic process of research, reflection

and action that “offers a critique of, and challenge to, dominant positivist social science research as the only legitimate and valid source of knowledge” (Maguire, 1987:10). Therefore, participatory action research involving the marginalised can achieve meaningful change at both individual and social levels (Littlechild *et al.*, 2015:18).

With regard to PAR, McDonald (2012:45) warns that the participants and researcher collaborate to assess the research process and the outcomes thereof. PAR, as a research methodology, encourages collaboration in research among the participants and researchers. Thus, PAR is empowering, as it promotes capacity development and capacity building in all who participate (McTaggart, 1991:169). As such, co-researchers are transformed through collaborative learning and an increase in self-confidence and self-awareness, improvement in problem-solving ability and the development of a desire and capacity for lifelong learning. For this study, PAR offered a radical alternative to knowledge development as a collective, self-reflective inquiry for improving the situation of a community or a marginalised group of individuals. Freire (2005:109) makes it clear that PAR “is not research conducted on another, but with another”. This type of collaboration in research allows all stakeholders to reflect upon one another’s thinking and become “jointly educated” (Freire, 2005:109).

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

PAR reflects ethical values that promote direct participation by affected communities, a commitment to transformative actions and a belief in situated moral judgment (Saija, 2014:189). Therefore, as a researcher involving human participants in the research process, I promoted ethical values as a foundation and guidance towards the co-researchers’ attitude and spirit throughout the research process (see Raynor, 2019:130). For this reason, since the study involved a great deal of cooperation and coordination among diverse stakeholders, ethical standards promoted the values that were essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness (see Kabir, 2016:206).

3.10 RHETORIC IN PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

The goal of rhetorical education in PAR for this study was to develop the co-researchers’ power of expression, ability to take part equally in public spaces and ability to compose their individualities in tune with the reformulation of community

values inseparable from personal happiness (see Crick in De Andrade & Da Cunha, 2018:263). As such, it allowed the individuals to elaborate on their own experiences, meaningfully and consciously.

3.11 APPROPRIATENESS OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH IN THE RESEARCH DESIGN

I have found the PAR method an appropriate research design to generate data because it is a research approach that works closely with the community, especially subordinate or oppressed groups, to improve their circumstances (see Jordan *et al.*, 2003:186). It is a dynamic educative process, a social investigation approach and an approach to address socio-political issues (MacDonald, 2012:36). In other words, PAR seeks full collaboration in research with the participants and is committed to the local context. Moreover, PAR aims to shift the responsibility for the research process to individual members and groups directly affected by inequalities (Jordan *et al.*, 2003:190). In this respect, PAR was used as a methodology that empowered the marginalised and promoted the poor (see Jordan *et al.*, 2003:186). The team members were involved in conducting substantive research that was based on the practices that affected their own lives (see McTaggart, 1997:26). Therefore, in this study, PAR was committed to the politics of equity and social transformation (see Jordan *et al.*, 2003:190). Concerning the core principles and values of PAR, it is appropriate in a situation where people need to make changes thoughtfully after critical reflection (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000:28). Thus, PAR blurs the hierarchical lines between the researcher and the co-researchers (Hagey, 1997:199).

PAR can also be seen as a research approach that capitalises on people's resources to understand better and enhance their professional practices. Accordingly, PAR can consolidate knowledge on workplace learning in continuing interprofessional education (Langlois *et al.*, 2014:226).

3.12 SUCCESSES OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

PAR is an approach that recognises and values that people are social beings. In this respect, the participants are regarded as co-researchers and active contributors to the study because they are involved in all phases of the research process (MacDonald, 2012:39). As such, the PAR process assists in rebuilding individual capacity so that

people can be creative and critical while being active participants in meaningful decision making (Maguire, 1987:30). That is why the ultimate goal of PAR is to empower the marginalised to collaborate in social transformation (Jordan *et al.*, 2003:190), which encourages collaboration in terms of diverse knowledge, skills and expertise that foster sharing the power of knowledge development (MacDonald, 2012:40). In this study, PAR strengthened abilities and resources, as well as the results of skills. In this process, people were empowered, liberated and aware of the positive consequences of learning.

3.13 CHALLENGES OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Goto (2010:3) warns that empirical examination of the actions resulting from researchers' participation is rare, despite the emphasis of the research-action cycle of PAR. Goto (2010:3) further argues that there is little empirical evidence of how academic research, especially using more conventional methods such as interviews and surveys, can contribute to effective project outcomes. The other shortfall is that though PAR research identifies issues needed for action due to diverse interests in some matters from stakeholders, action may not occur (MacDonald, 2012:40; Goto, 2010:3). MacDonald (2012:40) also cautions that members of the research team members may struggle to maintain their commitment to the research project over time, resulting in members withdrawing from the research during the cyclical processes. Another challenge may be participants' misunderstanding of the social issue (MacDonald, 2012:40).

It is advocated by Freire (1973) that critical thinking is a process in PAR, with specific reference to adult teaching and learning. Moreover, it has been hypothesised that critical thinking is part of the educational process of the participatory approach towards empowerment and action (Wallerstein, 2013:220). However, Cahill (2007:28) argues that participatory research may become "just some set-aside space for developing critical thinking and consciousness" without subsequent social change action. Thus, the goal of PAR is not always discussed and negotiated among researchers, participants and other stakeholders.

Furthermore, Cleaver (2001:31) argues that despite more than two (now four) decades of implementing participatory approaches, there is a lack of evidence of the effects of

the participation of local people. This indicates a poor understanding of the process itself, including the roles of the participants in each stage of participatory research (Goto, 2010:4).

3.14 RESEARCH DESIGN AND ASSEMBLING THE COORDINATED TEAM

This section explains the research design as informed by the principles of PAR. The intention is to describe methods of collecting data and data analysis in pursuit of the study objectives.

3.14.1 Assembling the coordinated team

Co-researchers were invited through a formal invitation letter sent to the municipal manager at Xhariep District Municipality. The invitation letter reflected the title of the research project: *Enhancing RM skills at a municipality using the adult education approach*. The aim was to attract the most suitable co-researchers to enhance the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks through collaborative learning. After the municipality had granted permission to conduct research at Xhariep District Municipality, co-researchers were invited, and the coordinated team was established through informal and unstructured meetings and discussions. The principles of Ubuntu as the theoretical framework for the study and the objectives of PAR were adopted to create a respectful, unified and most sensitive and caring team (see MacDonald, 2012:34; Nkondo, 2007:49).

During our discussions, consent forms were distributed to the co-researchers and signed by those who were willing to participate in the project. The aim of signing consent forms was to ensure that ethical considerations were adhered to, such as confidentiality, anonymity and freedom of withdrawal from the study at any stage. A team comprising eight municipal officials, one youth community member, one member from the political office, one post-graduate from SuRLEc and I (the researcher) participated in the study.

During our first meeting, we agreed to form a team to enhance RM skills at a municipality. The team also formulated a schedule for the meetings and discussions, according to which we agreed to meet at least once a week for six months. As the researcher, I adhered to ethical principles as guidelines to ensure that all of the

participants were consulted and accepted the commencement of the research process. Thereby, I encouraged and promoted a conducive environment for the effective teaching and learning of RM skills.

3.14.2 Roles of the members of the research team

This section discusses the roles of the co-researchers as coordinated team members in this study. The representation is a full group of people affected by the identified need. For this report, only the coordinated team is discussed in the section below: municipal officials, youth community members, a member from political office, a post-graduate from SuRLEc and the researcher.

3.14.2.1 *The study coordinator*

My role as the coordinator and the researcher has been explained earlier (see Section 3.5). Besides providing the structure of the study according to my role as researcher, I acted as the team leader and coordinated the team of co-researchers. The principles of Ubuntu also guided my part as a theoretical framework governing the research and relating the role of PAR. Ubuntu further encouraged teamwork and mobilised the participants around a common goal (see Bekker, 2007:1). After receiving ethical clearance, as the researcher and team leader, I convened the first preparatory meeting with prospective co-researchers who had been invited to participate in the study. I organised workshops, conducted research with the research team, coordinated the activities of the research team, participated in collaborative planning meetings and recorded the data generated during joint planning sessions and lesson observations. I analysed and interpreted the generated data with the help of the research team. In addition, I ensured that the ethical clearance processes were adhered to.

3.14.2.2 *Municipal officials*

Municipal officials were invited to participate in the study to be actively engaged to pursue the aim and objectives of the study, namely enhancing their RM skills using adult education. They actively participated in the process of finding solutions to their problems and being co-constructors of knowledge. They were emancipated and developed a consciousness of how they had been identifying and assessing risks at the municipality. One official, Brains, was in a senior management position, and four

others (referred to as Atlanta, Ruth, Mpendulo, Ralph) were from non-senior managerial positions. These names are pseudonyms that were used to conceal their identities. They worked in different sections at the municipality.

3.14.2.3 *One member from political office*

The participation of a member from the political office (Sophia) assisted the coordinated team in coherently understanding the identified needs to enhance RM at Xhariep District Municipality. This was done by bringing together political history and prior experiential knowledge as a resource for successfully identifying and mitigating risks.

3.14.2.4 *Post-graduate from SuRLEc*

A post-graduate student (Peter) helped coordinate team members with research experience and the construction of knowledge as a resource. The member also assisted with his expertise in arranging meetings with the coordinated team to discuss the progress of the municipality and the possibility of intervening.

3.14.2.5 *Community youth member*

Only one youth member (referred to as Vista) from the Xhariep community participated in the study. He had more experience in the identified needs and ideas on integrating communities into successful education through participatory approaches. Vista even became more critical as he began to appropriate the experience of new technologies into learning processes for RM skills.

3.15 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SITE

The research conducted at Xhariep District Municipality, which is in the southern part of the Free State Province of South Africa. The invitation to conduct research at this municipality was because the literature indicated that there were challenges that were critical to effective teaching strategies for RM at the municipality (Zou & Mickleborough, 2015:49; Ajewole, 2014:114-115; Meyer, 2014:166). Some of these challenges resulted from a lack of awareness of the different learning styles of adult learners and failure to promote collaborative problem-solving skills for the identification and assessment of risks in the organisation.

3.16 DATA COLLECTION

Data were generated through meetings and discussions by means of taking notes and recording the proceedings using recording machines with consent from the co-researchers. This was done to ensure the reliability and validity of the research (see Caldwell & Atwal, 2005:42). Furthermore, for gathering and measuring information in the group meeting discussions, open-ended guides were used (see Tetui *et al.*, 2017:107; Kabir, 2016:203). The aim was to promote reliability and the creation of a supportive environment that would encourage discussion and different viewpoints (see MacDonald, 2012:41; Caldwell & Atwal, 2005:42).

The coordinated team used a voice-recording machine because it appears to be useful for generating data as it records voices thoroughly, accurately and systematically. Field notes also seemed to help strengthen validity. Furthermore, for data collection, the ethical principles of research were constantly adhered to throughout the research. The participants renamed themselves by using pseudonyms for the sake of confidentiality.

3.17 COMMON VISION AND MISSION

Practical, effective teaching and learning for RM are a goal-directed strategy that fosters the sharing of an organisational common purpose among team members. In addition, future organisational risks are avoided hereby. The task entails the core purpose; hence, the vision deals with the desired stage within the organisation. Valid values delineate the guiding principles on how an organisation intends its staff members to behave and interact (Lake & Wendland, 2018:11). In this regard, the participants and the coordinated team work towards a vision to unify effort in the attainment of clarity on the nature of a problem and its complexity. According to Mosia (2016:71), a vision and mission guide the daily activities of a team or an organisation and foster a shared purpose among the group members. Therefore, a shared vision creates an orientation and meaning for the team members and acts as a strong driving force for continuous and systematic development (Martin, McCormack, Fitzsimons & Spirig, 2014:1).

3.18 SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis is a strategic evaluation tool that a coordinated team uses to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in pursuit of responding to a challenge (Ayub, Razzaq, Aslam & Iftkhar, 2013:93). Therefore, this study adopted a SWOT analysis to respond to and determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the challenges that were critical to an effective teaching strategy for RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality. In addition, the SWOT analysis was used as a technique to gather information concerning the competencies of the team. Furthermore, using SWOT analysis could help identify threats that might hinder the successful implementation of the adult education approach and find sustainable solutions to these. Thus, both internal and external factors of effective RM teaching strategies were considered.

3.19 PRIORITISATION

Prioritisation involves action with a set of activities within an organisational context, from assessing the actual problem to prioritising work. In this context, there are two essential elements of decision-making. The first element is accumulated stock of experience to be utilised for efficient and effective enhancement of the strategic dialogue for the identification of desired inputs and outcomes (Curran, Kerr, Peacock & Wallis, 2004:1-42). The second element is being ready for a change that could pose a threat to the implementation of the strategy (Miller, Wilson & Hickson, 2004:1). Thus, experience and readiness contribute significantly to the achievement of stated objectives (see Chapter 2).

Consequently, in this study, the participants must have discussions and negotiations to agree on which issue to begin with within the strategic plan. In this regard, co-researchers and researchers agree on establishing a coordinated team that would lead in tasks being allocated to specific priorities. Shipley (2000:225) concurs that prioritisation requires the participants to agree on criteria and motivations based on which number can be given for a particular preference.

3.20 STRATEGIC PLANNING

The strategic plan provided actions to be taken for an effective teaching strategy for RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality. It involves the responsibilities to be taken by each participant, time, the duration for activities, resources allocated and performance indicators (Tsoetsi, 2013:156). Furthermore, strategic planning involves a cyclical process that comprises the following phases: environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and evaluation (Maleka, 2014:16). The plan of action formulated during our planning meetings and discussion is presented below as Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Plan of action

Activity	Responsibility	Monitoring	Evaluation	Time
Preliminary Phase Initial planning meetings	Research coordinator	Research coordinator	Co-participants' attendance, collectively brainstorming about various strategic actions addressing the issue or problem and development of team norms and an action plan	One-hour meeting
Phase 1 Collaborative problem solving and SDL workshop and collaborative lessons	Researcher, co-researchers and research coordinators	Facilitation of the workshop, challenging topics presented by co-researchers; schedule for the development of new lesson planning; two to three co-researchers meet, discuss and plan together, depending on the organisational context	Discussion of successes and challenges critical to an effective teaching strategy for risk assessment at the municipality; discussion and sharing of approaches to address these challenges – development of detailed lesson plan	2 hours
Phase 2 The lesson of workplace observation	Coordinators with available co-researchers	Research coordinator and available co-researchers	Discussion of components of teaching RM skills such as SDL, collaborative learning, misconceptions, capabilities and improvement on identified gaps	Duration?

3.21 DATA ANALYSIS

3.21.1 Critical discourse analysis as analytical approach

For data analysis and the interpretation of the results, this study adopted CDA as an analytical approach. This technique can reveal the unspoken and unacknowledged aspects of human behaviour. It also focuses on social problems and political issues and challenges power and dominance (Van Dijk, 1993:249-283). Thus, CDA constitutes the social identities of the relationship between people and groups of people (Weiss & Wodak, 2003:13). This study further employed text, discursive practices and social structure (see Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2002:69-85). Importantly, discursive practices include creating and disseminating documents. I found CDA to be a relevant analytical tool for analysing the co-researchers' written and spoken words. In essence, CDA captured and interpreted the sociocultural practices within a framework of formulation on the strategy to enhance RM skills at the municipality.

Moreover, the appropriateness of CDA for this study is evident as it focuses on relations between talking and ways of thinking in written text and spoken words (see Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010:56). On the other hand, I argue that CDA constitutes a similar objective as PAR because it seeks to formulate solidarity with those involved in CDA (see Van Dijk, 1995:18). Other scholars, such as Nnamdi-Eruchalu (2015:112), state that CDA considers multiple aspects that comprise text analysis and talk in all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. Accordingly, Fairclough (1992:232-234) argues that CDA is an interdisciplinary framework for exploring the social production of organisational and inter-organisational phenomena. Similarly, designing adult education as a strategy to improve RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality depends on the discursive construction of complex sets of concepts and the municipal officials applying these concepts to make sense of their experience.

3.21.2 Theoretical origin of critical discourse analysis

CDA originated from the influence of the Frankfurt School and Jürgen Habermas (Wodak, 2007:1). It was a reaction against the dominant formal (often "asocial" or "uncritical") paradigms of the 1960s and 1970s (Van Dijk, 2015:466). As a discourse, it has stressed its interdisciplinary approach in research since its beginning (Wodak, 2007:1). Wodak (2007:1) further explains that CDA has its roots in the critical-

dialectical and the phenomenological-hermeneutic; thus, like CDA, it is essential to understand one's own conscious life and one's own cultural products from within. However, there is a clear distinction between objectivism versus subjectivism (Wodak, 2007:1). The determination of CDA is not uniform; typical theory formation is determined by multiple approaches (Wodak, 2007:1). In other words, CDA brings various perspectives into the dialogue, and so there is no single guiding theoretical viewpoint in CDA (Wodak, 2001:18; Wodak & Ludwig, 1999:11). In this study, CDA uses multiple approaches in research processes.

For the analysis of data, the presentation of findings and the interpretation of results, Sheyholislami (2001:1) recommends the main approaches in CDA, which involve Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model, Wodak's discourse sociolinguistics and Fairclough's framework for analysing a communicative event.

3.21.2.1 *Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model*

Social cognition refers to "the system of mental representations and processes of group members" (Van Dijk, 1995:18). For Van Dijk (1995:2), "models control how people act, speak or write, or how they understand the social practices of others". According to Van Dijk (1995:22), mental representations "are often articulated along with us versus them dimensions, in which speakers of one group will generally tend to present themselves or their group in positive terms, and other groups in negative terms". Thus, as observed, ideologies such as knowledge, attitudes, and values are social representations shared by group members (Van Dijk, 1998:78). Van Dijk (1998:61-63) also believes that a transparent way of analysing discourse is by examining the historical, political or social background of a conflict and the main participants therein.

3.21.2.2 *Wodak's discourse sociolinguistics*

The discourse sociolinguistics model is based on the ideas of the Frankfurt School, especially those of Habermas (Wodak, 1995:209). Sociolinguistics is dedicated to the study of the text in context and accords both factors equal importance. This means that sociolinguistics is an approach capable of identifying and describing the underlying mechanisms that contribute to those disorders in the discourse embedded in a particular context (Wodak, 1996:3). Wodak termed the development of this

approach the “historical discourse method”. According to Wodak (1995:209), “historical” denotes the systematic integration of all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many written or spoken text layers. In other words, in the historical method approach, there is a belief that language “manifests social processes and interaction” and “constitutes” social processes and interaction (Wodak & Ludwig, 1999:12). In this regard, people’s background knowledge, information, and position may influence different interpretations of the same communicative event (Wodak & Ludwig, 1999:13). Therefore, Wodak and Ludwig (1999:13) assert that “THE RIGHT interpretation does not exist”, but a hermeneutic approach is necessary. That is, “[i]nterpretations can be more or less plausible or adequate, but they cannot be true” (Wodak & Ludwig, 1999:13).

3.21.2.3 *Fairclough’s framework for analysis*

Fairclough’s framework for CDA focuses on text and language. He describes the objective of this approach as “a contribution to the general raising of consciousness of exploitative social relations, through focusing upon language” (Fairclough, 1989:4). Through this approach, the text is viewed from a multifunctional perspective (Fairclough, 1995:57). For Fairclough (1995:60), “discourse practice straddles the division between society and culture on the one hand, and discourse, language, and text on the other”. According to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999:6), CDA as an analytical tool “brings social science and linguistics together within a single theoretical and analytical framework, setting up a dialogue between them”.

3.21.2.4 *Textual analysis*

The analysis of a text, according to Fairclough (1995:57), involves linguistic analysis in terms of vocabulary, grammar and so forth; hence, from a multifunctional perspective. According to Fairclough (in Sheyholislami, 2001:7), any sentence in a text is analysed in terms of presentations, relations and identities, in other words, particular representations and the contextualisation of social practice (Fairclough, 1995:58). According to Fairclough (1995:58), linguistic analysis is concerned with presences as well as absences in texts that could include “representations, categories of the participant, and constructions of participant identity or participant relations”. Hence, textual analysis is one lens through which data are considered (Janks, 1997:331).

3.21.2.5 *Text and discursive practice analysis*

In CDA, the analyst is enabled to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic selections, juxtapositioning, sequencing and layout. For CDA, texts are instantiations of socially regulated discourses in that the processes of production and reception are socially constrained (Janks, 1997:329). Consequently, Fairclough's approach to CDA is useful for the study because it provides multiple analytic entry points and the various kinds of analysis appear to be mutually explanatory.

3.21.2.6 *Social analysis*

In CDA, language is used as a form of social practice because as a research tool, it stems from a critical theory of communication (Janks, 1997:329). Within social context, for CDA, social practices are connected to historical background of the people – how existing social relations are reproduced or contested and different interests are served. In other words, it is the question about benefits that relates discourse to relations of power (Janks, 1997:329). Hence, CDA seeks to understand the relationships of power in research.

3.22 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed PAR as an appropriate methodology for designing the structure of the study and collecting and analysing data for the study. The chapter further highlighted CDA as a proper method to interpret the results and present findings to formulate a strategy to enhance RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality. In addition, the chapter indicated the relationship between CDA and PAR. The participants were described, and the intervention of the strategy was reported as well. The next chapter focuses on analysing the data and discussing the findings on implementing the plan.

CHAPTER 4 :

ANALYSIS OF DATA, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to formulate a framework for the effective teaching of RM skills at a municipality through the adult education approach. In pursuing the aim of the study, this chapter analyses data, presents findings and interprets results towards formulating a strategy to enhance RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality using the adult education approach.

The empirical data are analysed based on the five objectives of the study (see Chapter 2). The first is to justify the need to develop a strategy to enhance RM skills using adult education. To make sense of the generated data, I identify relevant constructs that are aspects of the respective objectives derived from the literature in Chapter 2 in order to make appropriate subheadings. These subheadings unpack each of the five objectives respectively. Firstly, the challenges to effective teaching strategies for RM are unpacked. Secondly, the components of the strategy constitute the focus of the analysis. Thirdly, the analysis shifts to the conditions for the successful implementation of the strategy. Fourthly, threats that may hinder the implementation of the strategy are anticipated. Lastly, evidence confirming the effectiveness of the adult education approach in the teaching of RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality is discussed.

The choice and formulation of the subheadings described above lead to an opening paragraph per objective discussing the literature based on three aspects, namely theories, policies and previous research. This aims to set out good practices in the formulation of the strategy to enhance RM skills. Furthermore, relevant extracts from the data are cited as evidence. This integrates ideas from the opening statement with empirical data to show their relationships. This integrated data-literature mixture is further analysed and interpreted using the Ubuntu theory as the framework of the study (see Chapter 2) in order to unearth a deeper meaning and better understanding of the above-mentioned data and literature. Lastly, the deeper meaning of the text is analysed using three levels of CDA, namely text, discursive practice and social structure.

The interpretation of the results towards formulating a strategy to enhance RM skills will be utilised through the lens of Ubuntu in order to understand the co-researchers from the viewpoint that human beings create relationships with other persons that reveal true identity through interaction in the community. This process will reflect repeatedly in all five objectives of the study using PAR.

4.2 THE NEED TO FORMULATE COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGY TO ENHANCE RISK MANAGEMENT SKILLS USING ADULT EDUCATION

This section explores data related to key components that constitute the need to formulate a framework to enhance RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality. First, the group of eight members met and established a coordinated team to identify problems experienced in teaching and learning in terms of the identification and assessment of risks in order to propose solutions thereto. In the meeting, team members identified components of the strategy for teaching RM, namely collaborative problem-solving skills, prior experiential knowledge, SDL and the learner-centred approach.

During the discussions and identification of components, the following challenges emerged non-existence of a coordinated team to enhance RM skills at the municipality; no recognition of prior experiential knowledge when teaching RM; no involvement of SDL when teaching; and non-implementation of a learner-centred approach when teaching RM. These challenges were discussed by the team to develop a deeper understanding and meaning of adult teaching and learning for RM at Xhariep District Municipality.

4.2.1 Non-existence of a coordinated, collaborative problem-solving team to enhance risk management skills

Theories of collaborative learning assert that, in its essence, a joint team promotes the sharing of resources to solve problems with regard to risk assessment (Zou & Mickleborough, 2015:148). It means by using the suitable method of teaching and learning for RM skills, municipal officials could work in teams to share experience and support one another (Quan-Baffour, 2014:240). Also, Adolphus *et al.* (2013:95) argue that co-teaching and learning for RM could offer an opportunity for cooperatively sharing identified problems in the organisation. On the other hand, Oliveri, Lawless and Molloy (2017:7) confirm that team cohesion and team empowerment inspire

mutual respect in achieving common goals, meaning that cooperation, unity, respect, care and love play a significant role in the culture of collaboration through mutual dialogues (see Chapter 2). Moreover, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA, 2012:9) and the Integrated Development Plan of Mhokare Local Municipality (2019/2020:8) attest that adequate training programmes in areas of skills development and financial management provide municipal officials with the ability to identify, assess and mitigate risks. Wicks and Reason (in Qhosola, 2016:137) observe that a team creates an environment (positive climate) of active, involved, exploratory learning through increased involvement in the community.

Contrary to good practice, the empirical data show the non-existence of teamwork at Xhariep District Municipality before the intervention of this study. This became evident during our first discussion meeting when we created a coordinated team. One of our team members, Brains, made it clear in his statement when demonstrated by a verbal expression that there was an absence of a coordinated team that could work together to achieve the common goals of the municipality. Brains said:

“Before I attended this group discussion, I did not know that sharing my experience on mitigating factors towards risks with my colleagues is a rich resource”.

The above extract “before I attended this group discussion” implies that before the coordinated team was formed, Brains felt isolated and denied the opportunity to share his experience with his co-workers. The phrase “I did know that sharing is a rich resource” shows that the existing structures and those holding political power excluded the contribution of municipal officials to the mitigation of risks at the municipality. The implication is that Brains has been waiting for this kind of opportunity to share and find solutions for problems that are facing the assessment of risks at Xhariep District Municipality. Furthermore, Brains’ feeling of isolation and being denied the opportunity of sharing his ideas with his co-workers indicate ignorance and inability to promote Ubuntu principles towards sharing in improving RM skills and the importance of working together and strengthening caring for others in the working environment (see Le Roux, 2000:43).

The absence of a coordinated team is also evident from the marking of attendance registers during our discussion meetings and workshop sessions.

Table 4.1: Attendance register: discussion meetings

Team members	15 June 2018	22 June 2018	29 June 2018	3 August 2018
Brains	✓	✓	x	✓
Atlanta	✓	x	✓	x
Ruth	✓	✓	x	x
Zara	✓	x	x	x
Mpendulo	✓	✓	✓	x
Ralph	✓	x	x	
Shembe	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sophia	✓	✓	x	✓
Siyamthanda	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vista	x	✓	✓	x

Explanation of keys:

✓ = Present and X = Absent

Table 4.1 provides a summary of attendance that was recorded from workshop discussions and during the observation of risk assessment learning activities. The table reflects workshop meetings while marking the presence of the co-researchers, showing the lack of support of the team. The table illustrates that before the intervention of the study, there was no support structure to encourage teamwork that could offer the co-researchers an opportunity to work as a collective and solve challenges facing the organisation. Besides that, people were not aware of the collaborative learning approach towards the assessment of risks at the municipality. However, a coordinated team creates a positive climate in a working environment and increases community involvement (Qhosola, 2016:137).

The non-existence of a coordinated team became more evident when I posed the following question to the group members:

“Do you have sufficient resources like teamwork for the effective implementation of risk management skills at your municipality?”

Furthermore, during observation at the research site, Ruth demonstrated the non-availability of teamwork by her verbal expression:

“We are experiencing these group sessions for the first time at our municipality where we are working as a group and shar[ing] ideas towards mitigation of risks”.

From the above extracts, the phrase “the first time” clearly shows that the collaborative learning approach was a new thing to the municipality employees. It means that people did not have opportunities to share their experience and expertise in RM training programmes before the intervention of this study. Therefore, it is clear that there is a need for adult education as a useful tool to teach RM at Xhariep District Municipality (Mohokare Local Municipality, 2019/2020:8). Furthermore, the municipal officials by demonstrating through their verbal expression showed interest in working as a team, as is clear from the word “We”. In their view, working as a team would contribute to individual skills development and delivering services to the community. Also, words such as “We” appear more than once, which shows the connection between the co-researchers and me, the researcher. This is consistent with Ubuntu objectives that emphasise humanity in all aspects of teaching and learning processes, including elements such as connectedness and the integration of knowledge acquisition.

The phrase “share ideas” means that the employees wanted to share expertise and increase hope for the Xhariep community.

Due to the lack of a coordinated team that prevailed at the research site, the municipal officials could not find an opportunity to reflect and learn from other team members. The co-researchers Brains and Vista confessed so in the same workshop when expressing excitement about this study. I observed their interest through their expression when they said:

“This is a new approach to us, and we believe this study is going to help us” (Brains).

“[The] municipality should be advised on [acting] hand in glove with the communities”
(Vista).

The phrase “we believe this study will help us” indicates that before the start of the study, there were limited structures that could offer assistance to the co-researchers to improve their lives and achieve the objectives of the organisation. The coordinated team, therefore, gave them a platform to share their experience with community members and me.

The participants Brains and Vista indicated the deprivation of being empowered as individuals, and this perpetuated their economic situation, which contributed to

poverty, deprivation and inequalities in the communities at Xhariep. The results show that people living in communities embrace Ubuntu principles by committing to treating others with a sense of humanity, justice and fairness (Letseka, 2012:48; 2000:180). In the same discussion and observation meeting, Ruth demonstrated the absence of a coordinated team by expressing her view:

“I used to attend a workshop offered by COGTA, and the timeframe for training looks enough to deliberate on issues of municipalities, but this approach of learning together is new to us”.

Here, the phrase “I used to attend workshops” implies individual versus group RM teaching and learning programmes before the study was conducted. It means unequal opportunities and limited efforts to unify employees as one community in programmes that train RM skills.

The use of “I” and “We” or “Us” in this observation in the workshop discussions allows me the opportunity to acknowledge that there are discursive practices that affect effective teaching for risk assessment at Xhariep District Municipality. These findings raise social ills influenced by power relations in social structure, such as local municipalities. Therefore, the inability to work as a team when solving issues at the local level is seen and seeks to be addressed if one believes in the emancipation agenda using PAR.

4.2.2 No recognition of prior experiential knowledge when teaching risk management

In good practice, theories of adult learning state that social interactions and experience influence the construction of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978:7). Despite adult education improving knowledge and skills, Knowles (1990:63) states that a learning environment allows a unique background of expertise. In other words, prior knowledge and experience are critical in teaching and learning the identification and assessment of risks (Ajewole, 2014:114-115). McGowan (2017:24) confirms this by saying that prior knowledge is a multidimensional and hierarchical resource that involves different types of knowledge and skills in teaching processes. In South Africa, for instance, the South African education framework encourages recognition of prior learning in teaching and learning (RSA DBE, 2016:18). The Skills Development Levies Act Number 9 (RSA,

1999) supports this by recognising prior knowledge in creating a framework for skills development. In addition, the National Qualifications Framework advocates that previous experience facilitate the cultivation of problem-solving skills (SAQA, 2012:7). Therefore, in teaching and learning processes for RM skills, it is essential to pay attention to adult learners' prior experiential knowledge as a resource for the successful acquisition of the skills required for the identification and mitigation of risks (Ajewole, 2014:114-115).

In contrast with best practice as presented by scholars and policies, during the observations and workshop meetings at the research site, the empirical data generated show the opposite to acceptable practices. The participants demonstrated this by showing little interest in the community youth member's contribution to risk assessment. It became evident when I mentioned to the coordinated team that a member of the community was needed as part of the team:

"We need a community member or members who can volunteer to be part of our research team. It can be a pastor, labour union person, youth, etc".

Ruth responded:

"Why do we need community members, because I can recruit a pastor?"

Her response was supported by Atlanta, who mentioned:

"It is sporadic [sic] to invite the community in our training of assessment of risks because is a challenging topic".

In contrast, Brains suggested:

"Youth members could contribute to challenges facing our municipality".

Mpendulo intervened and declared:

"[The] researcher and our employees are enough".

The above are conflicting responses from the co-researchers provided in the discussions and dialogues captured in workshop meetings. My observation shows unawareness of the background experience and involvement of different stakeholders, such as the community, as a rich resource when teaching RM. Such reflections would

account for the discursive practices that influence the attitude of employees towards learning in a workplace such as a municipality. This means that there are misconceptions of lived experience perpetuated by injustices, inequality and a lack of sharing power, especially during training in RM at a municipality.

There is a belief that other stakeholders, such as unschooled community members, do not know anything about assessing risks. I have found this attitude actively interfering with the ability of municipal officials to learn new information. As observed, those with less knowledge in RM showed a lack of self-esteem in-group discussions and contributed less. This was evident from the co-researchers themselves when they did not see the need to involve the community in our learning discussions. Both Atlanta and Mpendulo, when challenging the inclusion of community members in the research process, showed signs of knowing and the awareness of the conscious rising of the employees at Xhariep District Municipality regarding adult learning and teaching. However, one of the co-researchers, Brains, could see the importance of prior knowledge, especially from youth community members, as an effective method for teaching RM.

With support from Brains, I emphasised the need to involve the community in addressing issues at the municipality, irrespective of whether they had been schooled. However, it was evident in the group discussion that some of the co-researchers did not know the relevance and appropriateness of prior knowledge in constructing new learning. This conversation was continued by Ruth, Brains and me. It was confirmed that the municipality needed awareness about “the need to know” or the failure to inform adult learners about the negative consequences of not learning (Knowles, 1990:63).

During the workshops presented and my observations, the demonstration practices were opposite from the good practices espoused by theories, scholars and policy mandates. I have found the demonstrations showing an inability to promote humanity in all aspects of teaching and learning processes, which would lead to connectedness or integration of knowledge acquisition. According to the empirical data generated at the research site, it became more evident from the expression of different learning games by Ruth and Brains.

Concerning the recognition of prior experience when teaching RM, Brains expressed his response critically by saying:

“In utilising the support staff, the district should use them in pronouncing their role in supporting its local municipalities, but this does not happen because of the political dynamics in the municipality caused by provincial interests”.

Ruth responded to Brains by saying:

“COGTA assists us in the development of IDP [Integrated Development Plan] and Service Delivery Budget and Implementation Plan (SDBIP)”.

From the above extracts, it is evident that before the study, the municipality employees worked in silos. For instance, the phrases “role in supporting its local municipality does not happen” and “COGTA assists us” suggest that there is no coordinated team and collective understanding of the common good of society and humanness as an essential tool for human growth and caring towards others (see Nkondo, 2007:49) at Xhariep District Municipality. These are the best abilities to facilitate the integration of new knowledge. I find that acknowledging correct and structured prior experience can positively influence new ideas and the understanding of the mitigation of risks at a municipality. I find that there is a need for the municipal officials to expose themselves to others, to encounter the difference of their humanness and to inform and enrich our own.

4.2.3 Inability to involve self-directed learning when teaching risk management skills

Theories of adult education observe that independent learning promotes the acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing a new action plan towards the improvement of risk assessment (Gitterman, 2004:106). In teaching and learning environments for RM skills, Knowles (1980:43) advises that SDL should be considered because it is an approach that is more independent and self-directing. On the same note, Cazan and Stan (2015:10) state that SDL contributes to the development of adult learners and allows engagement in lifelong learning. In South Africa, for instance, Adult Basic Education and Training (National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996) advocates SDL as a framework for the enhancement of RM skills. Similarly, the

Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 and the Public Sector Risk Management Framework of 2010 contend that more attention should be given to SDL, which could contribute to and empower teaching RM as part of operational activities. In essence, SDL empowers individual learners to increase their responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating the strategy for teaching RM skills.

In contrast with best practices, our workshop observations and discussions at the meetings at the research site revealed that the municipal officials did not use an SDL approach in their training. It transpired during the workshop that there was an inability to monitor and evaluate risks at the municipality, as recommended by Cazan and Stan (2015:10). As a researcher and facilitator, I intervened and inquired about this lack of monitoring projects and their finances towards sustainability. Brains responded as follows:

“The district cannot do its functions set out in Section 84 of the MSA. There are 22 functions to be addressed, and it only manages five functions (non-compliant municipality): bulk water, electricity, regulates businesses, and they do not have the department. Even the five functions – the municipality is struggling to provide them fruitfully to its community”.

The phrase “The district cannot do its functions” affirms the importance of an SDL approach in recognising sharing and interconnectedness in the achievement of common goals and addressing municipal officials’ learning needs. I find that some kind of humanism could still have a place in ethics as it seeks to integrate members who have been dissipated by history.

Vista demonstrated this further by saying:

“There is a lack of skills development and political interference at our municipality”.

The above phrase reflects the need of adult learning programmes to meet municipality learning needs. The findings of this study show that the municipality does not know autonomous learning. Opportunities for sharing ideas about the assessment of risks were limited in the previous training for RM, which I find contributed to inequalities and the domination of power in learning activities. It may be argued that there is a deep meaning of insufficient learning and embodiment of Ubuntu values that would promote the common good of the municipality for the essential element of human growth,

interdependence and caring towards others. These would instil lost hope in the people at Xhariep and liberate them from their prejudice of seeing themselves as beings who are not capable of learning.

4.2.4 Non-implementation of a learner-centred approach when teaching risk management

A learner-centred theory asserts that good learning empowers and promote capacity building and development towards self-awareness and self-actualisation to transform learner' unacceptable conditions into better ones (Ayoub Mahmoudi, Khoshnood & Babaei, 2014:86). The implementation of a learner-centred approach when teaching learners embraces and promotes a good teacher-learner relationship in the learning environment (Freire, 1970:79-80). In good practice, learning is useful when learners and the teacher share learning experience to discover generated solutions towards a problem (Neilson, 2013:23). The advantage of a learner-centred approach, according to Nelson (2013:23), is that it stays more focused on the needs of a group. During teaching, the group members listen to one another, share their learning experience and follow their learning progress (Nelson, 2013:23). Moreover, SAQA (2012:9) also recognises the teacher-centred approach as transformational in teaching and learning because it supports collaboration and coordination in aspects such as education, training, development and work that supports staff development. Therefore, there is a need for more attention to analyses and the synthesis of social relations and power conditions as integral to RM learning processes (Boström *et al.*, 2018:13).

In terms of the data generated at Xhariep District Municipality, the empirical data show the opposite of good practices, which became evident during the discussion meetings. I observed that the dominance of a teacher-centred approach was prevalent in contrast to a learner-centred andragogy, as advocated by acceptable practices in terms of research, learning theories and policy frameworks. Brains' presentation on the mitigation of risks was predominately reflecting teacher-centred approach elements; other group members were passive instead of being active in the discussion meeting process of teaching RM. It was demonstrated when Brains posed the question:

“What can be the mitigating factors towards the risk (internal or external mitigation)?”

I observed that the group members gave no response to Brains' question and expected him to continue expressing his views on how risks could be mitigated at the municipality. I found the team members not being active and one member dominating the process of discussion. They were less engaged in dialogue with their fellow adult learners regarding the solution towards the mitigation of risks.

One of the co-researchers by the name of Zara demonstrated unawareness of the learner-centred approach by saying:

“Is this adult training approach going to assist us with our challenges at the municipality?”

The phrase “Is this training going to assist us” gives a reflection of adhering to a formal kind of education. It creates less interest in informal education such as adult education. This shows the continuous domination of the teacher or trainer in training sessions for RM when adult learners are not encouraged to control their learning activities. This confirms Freire's viewpoint that the learner-centred theory asserts that good learning empowers and makes learners capable of achieving self-awareness and self-actualisation to transform their unacceptable conditions into better ones (Ayoub Mahmoudi *et al.*, 2014:86).

4.3 ANALYSIS OF COMPONENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF RISK MANAGEMENT SKILLS

This section considers components of the framework to facilitate and enhance teaching and learning processes geared to address the challenges outlined in Section 4.2. These components that may respond to identified challenges are as follows: the establishment of a coordinated team; the recognition of prior knowledge and experience; SDL as a strategy; and the implementation of a learner-centred approach set by the team in response to the challenges identified in Section 4.2.

4.3.1 The establishment of a coordinated team

The establishment of a team provides workable solutions in addressing a group's concerns and provides a platform to share their expertise and experience to achieve a common goal (Mosia, 2016:139). The social constructivism theory argues that knowledge is empowering and emancipatory (Liasidou, 2008:486-487). It also leads

to solving people's real-life problems through inclusive, collaborative, participatory, democratic processes (Rocha-Schmid, 2010:344-345). A team is a critical component that develops an argument and integrates the initial ideas to generate a final solution (Zou & Mickleborough, 2015:148). Furthermore, a team contributes towards creating a sustainable learning environment, knowledge and skills cannot be monopolised but are shared, solving complex real-life problems facing the team members daily (Mahlomaholo, 2013:4692). A team also creates a platform for effective planning and implementation, enhancing reflection after the presentation of a lesson (Mosia, 2016:140). Hence, a coordinated squad promotes social interaction among its members to pursue the creation of knowledge to teach RM skills.

Furthermore, each team member has an opportunity to share his or her unique worldviews concerning RM teaching strategies using the adult education approach. In other words, a team creates a conducive learning environment where different perspectives based on realities are represented (Schreiber & Valle, 2013:396). The coordinated team in this study consisted of municipal officials, a political officer, a post-graduate student, a youth member and me (Section 3.2.14).

The aim was to work closely with the community and draw experience from different stakeholders affected by identified challenges. The team took responsibility for enhancing the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks through collaborative learning. The coordinated team also contributed to the empowerment of the municipal officials and the transformation of their lives. The establishment of the coordinated team was welcomed by the participants. This was evidenced by a demonstration of expression by the co-researcher Sophia during the first discussion workshop to establish a coordinated team:

"I think, finally, we are happy that we got help, as [the] municipality and us as individuals [are] working as a team to find solutions to our problems. We have been looking for this kind of intervention with no idea how. We are so excited and wish to work with you, Ma'am, even in the future".

The phrase "we are happy" used by Sophia shows the importance and strength of a team spirit in finding solutions to the challenges affecting the assessment of risks at Xhariep District Municipality. According to Sophia, the study intervention adopting a

collaborative approach in the teaching and learning of RM would promote an excellent common understanding of the challenges facing the municipality.

The youth member Vista also expressed his view and said:

“Community member like farmers must be included in the group discussion in resolving crime against farmers”.

Vista’s statement that in future, other community members, such as farmers, should be part of group discussions shows enthusiasm and an appreciation of teamwork and the sharing of experience to address issues facing the municipality. In this regard, Vista’s claim suggests that cooperation in planning contributes to positive, sustainable solutions. Thus, learning together changed our practice of thinking. Encouraging a collaborative learning approach at a workplace such as the municipality could bring about sustainable solutions, even to crime against farmers. The team members’ appreciation of the Ubuntu principles that guided the team reflects what Letseka (2013:337) calls knowledge from within historical and cultural opportunities and constraints in the social context of the individual’s life and work. Consequently, justice, equality and fairness could prevail in adopting Ubuntu principles in the workplace; that is, doing what is right and moral in indigenous African society.

Both Vista and Brains demonstrated their excitement and experience of teamwork as provided by the coordinated team. On the other hand, Ruth saw collaborative learning as an opportunity to pursue her studies.

“Relationship management with various stakeholders is an effective tool towards sustainable development”. (Ruth)

The above extract “an effective tool” that emerged from Ruth reflects an urgent need and the importance of adult education as an approach that would address challenges towards the identification and assessment of risks at Xhariep District Municipality.

4.3.2 The recognition of prior knowledge and experience

Prior learning experience is a useful tool as it influences the achievement of a common goal in group learning processes. It can also help address people’s needs and develop their information literacy skills (Ajewole, 2014:114-115). The utilisation of learners’ own

experiences is a fundamental and valuable resource (RSA DBE, 2016:18) in guiding facilitators in the planning and presentation of their lessons. The mandate of the above policy is supported by Mickleborough (2013:148), who indicates that diverse backgrounds are essential for adult teaching and learning because differing backgrounds create the ability to identify and resolve problems by sharing understanding in a team. In addition, prior knowledge positively influences the acquisition of knowledge and the capacity to apply higher-order cognitive problem-solving skills (Meyer, 2014:166). Including the backgrounds and experience of the affected persons in learning activities goes hand in hand with Ubuntu as a living theory that improves practice and generates knowledge in social communication (Whitehead, 2008:104). Moreover, the Ubuntu philosophy emphasises the importance of individual creativity in improving and learning from within historical and cultural opportunities and constraints in the social context of an individual's life and work (Letseka, 2013:337).

In our lesson observations as a coordinated team, I engaged the municipal officials to utilise their prior knowledge and experience to identify and assess risks. In contrast, Brains, one of the senior municipal officials, posed questions that showed failure to address and reduce risks affecting the municipality. Brains asked:

"If this risk happens, what can be the consequence?"

"What can be the mitigating factors towards the risk?"

From the above extract, it is evident that the group of learners were not sure about the adult education approach as a strategy that could solve risk assessment problems. Thus, mutual dialogue is a strategy that could gear learning activities towards one's life experiences (Merriam *et al.*, 2007:325).

The co-researcher Brains, with support from Vista, persisted in requesting the group members to discuss solutions towards the identified challenges. They engaged the group members, who gave the following responses:

"Do we agree that the District cannot do its functions set out in Section 84 of the MSA [Section 84 Municipal Structural Act]?" (Ruth)

"There is too much political interference and [this] affects the municipality's smooth running". (Shembe)

"[A] lack of skills is a severe challenge facing our district". (Sophia)

"Skills development programmes like adult education and training could improve not only reducing risks but also delivering service to the Xhariep community". (Ruth)

"Hmmhmm, I concur; capacity training in collaboration with various stakeholders is the best solution". (Zara)

"Municipalities need to ensure that they capacitate their employees or staff so as to achieve the best results of service delivery". (Brains)

Evidently, in the above workshop and observation, the co-researchers reflected on prior knowledge and experience and influenced the ability to identify and resolve problems by sharing understanding in a team; that is, they engaged other team members to achieve the common goal of enhancing RM skills at Xhariep District Municipality. The co-researchers were not aware of adult teaching and learning, but they became confident to present multiple perspectives from the same group. Moreover, Vista and Brains pursued the thinking of the other members when they posed a question. They did not impress their own thinking but included the group members' thinking in the discussion.

4.3.3 Self-directed learning as an aspect of the strategy

Constructivist theories hold that learners' ability to become self-directed contributes to monitoring their strategies (Jang & Pak, 2017:63). The recommendation is that learners should take the initiative in their learning activities (Knowles, 1975:18). SDL is a learning strategy that enables learners to be actively involved in their learning (RSA DHET, 2015; South African Council for Educators, 2013; National Qualifications Framework Act 67/2008). To improve skills in assessing risks, Sahoo and Mishra (2017:166) argue that SDL contributes to learners' success in their future careers and enables them to engage in lifelong learning. Moreover, SDL ensures that learners keep themselves up to date and apply their skills in practice.

The coordinated team analysed the strategy critically and Vista made the following remark:

"I find autonomous learning fascinating in the sense that we are now able to identify risks".

In the context of this study, the above extract is understood to mean that even though there were challenges facing the assessment of risks at the municipality, the team was starting to appreciate the strategy that could lead to the mitigation of risks.

4.3.4 Learner-centred teaching as an aspect of the strategy

Learning theories consider the fact that knowledge might not manifest itself in observable behaviour until sometime after the educational programme (Burns, 2002:1). The basic premise of this theory is that learning will happen by the teacher acting as a facilitator; that is, by establishing an atmosphere in which learners feel comfortable to consider new ideas and are not threatened by external factors (Laird in Burns, 2002:1). In the learning environment, learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning by providing much of the input for the acquisition of knowledge that occurs through their insights and experiences. In addition, learners are encouraged to regard self-evaluation as the most practical evaluation. Education needs to focus on factors that contribute to solving significant problems and achieving substantial results (Burns, 2002:1).

Concerning the discussion above, the team found it necessary to have a learner-centred approach for the group to identify and assess risks at the municipality with an agreement of working together. During the meeting to form a team, one of the team members, Mpedulo, proposed:

“If we agree, we should leave here knowing precisely what we want to achieve in the long term as a team”.

The phrase “if we agree” entails that the team members consider others’ perspectives and expressions to achieve common and sustainable goals. This expression was intensified by the phrase “knowing exactly”, which describes that the team members should know what they want to achieve as a team at a particular description level.

4.4 CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

This section focuses on the conditions conducive to the implementation of the adult education approach as the strategy. The team discussed these conditions because they pursued the objectives of the study beyond the duration of the study. These

factors include the integrated team as a conducive condition, experience as a resource for learning, individuals' developmental changes and autonomous learning.

4.4.1 Factors supporting the integrated team

The integrated team reflects when there is dialogue towards a common goal. According to Vella (1995:13) and Zohar (1997:136), a discussion is a conducive and useful tool for meaningful training. It means that performance cannot be fixed by means of one person only. In this regard, teamwork, in which people can share information and constructs as common ground in correlation with problem solving, creates a sense of belonging to an organisation (Zou & Mickleborough, 2015:157; Armitage *et al.*, 2013:5). Also, this encourages employees to look forward to collaborative team engagement. Lisa (2018: Online) supports this view by saying that teamwork involves various skills, such as time management, resource allocation, effective communication and collective effort, to be valuable for the municipality.

Teamwork empowers teaching of RM skills, which forces one to take into account multiple perspectives and background experience that enhances the assessment of risks. These approaches uplifted the self-esteem and competence of the group members. The members in the group set a common goal with a correlation of collaborative problem-solving skills by enhancing the municipal officials' RM skills, increasing their self-confidence and self-awareness and improving their problem-solving ability.

4.5 THREATS TOWARDS THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADULT EDUCATION APPROACH THROUGH AN INTEGRATED TEAM

Adults' experience is one of the threats to utilising adult education to teach RM (Cranton, 1996:57; Brookfield, 1988:98). The literature also identifies other risks, such as environmental conditions, negative attitudes towards learning, clinging to old ways of doing things, and developing mental habits, biases and presuppositions that hinder people to accept new ideas and alternative forms of thinking (Green, 2002:16). Further threats involve the inability to develop application strategies that could solve typical problems outside the learning situation and the failure to empower learners to become knowledgeable (Green, 2002:16; Knowles, 1980:58). In addition, Brookfield (1988:98) outlines that learners can withdraw from a learning process if they feel that the activity

or activities do not meet their needs, which can be a barrier to implementing the adult education strategy.

4.6 INDICATORS OF SUCCESS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADULT EDUCATION APPROACH

In previous sections (Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5), the processes of formulating a useful framework to enhance the RM skills of municipal officials at Xhariep District Municipality using an adult education approach were discussed. This section reports on indicators of success in implementing adult education as an effective strategy for teaching RM. In the success indicators in this study, a unique reference is made to good practice, as discussed in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.

4.6.1 Successful knowledge and skills to solve problems collaboratively

Besides solving the challenges of the municipality individually, the municipal officials became aware of collaborative learning and sharing ideas towards a common goal. By improving their self-esteem and confidence in understanding and assessing risks as a team, they generated the solutions and demonstrated the effectiveness of adult teaching and learning in the workplace.

Furthermore, the municipal officials' performance improved as they acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to solve problems collaboratively, generate solutions and demonstrated the effectiveness of the proposed solutions. As Cranton (1989:28) and Merriam and Caffarella (1991:255) put it, successful implementation of the adult education approach is evidenced by a desire for job satisfaction, self-esteem, confidence and improved quality of life.

The study helped shy employees to express themselves and gain confidence. The figure below reflects building trust and employees achieving a common goal. It illustrates the adult education approach as the best adult learning strategy with active involvement and different project perspectives.



Figure 4.1: Adult education approach (illustrated)

It appears that lesson planning encouraged the team members to build new knowledge from various backgrounds and experiences, putting their hands together as adult learners, showing and appreciating different opinions in reconstructing unique expertise for mitigating risks in the organisation.

4.7 ANDRAGOGY AS A USEFUL TOOL IN RESEARCH

This research organised coordinated teams, and Figure 4.2 below reflects andragogy as a useful tool in research to enhance RM skills (see section 2.4).

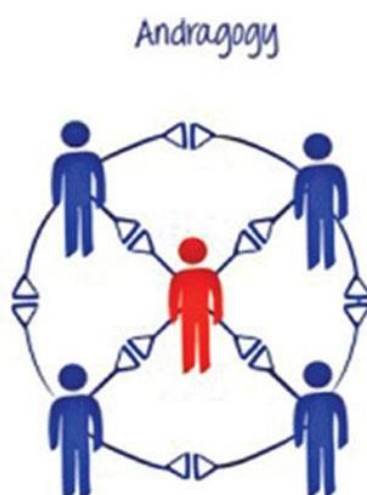


Figure 4.2: Andragogy as a useful research tool

The arrows of the circle and the arrows towards the person at the centre represent the coordinated team, indicating that the researcher and co-researchers share power in research and prior experience contributes to an effective teaching strategy for RM through coordinated teamwork. As municipal officials, they are empowered and emancipated in terms of collaborative problem solving as a strategy.

4.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the full implementation of the study, as previously stated overlaps beyond the duration of the study.

CHAPTER 5 :

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to formulate a framework to enhance municipal officials' RM skills using an adult education approach. This chapter starts with the background of the study, which encapsulates the problem statement and the objectives of the study to remind the reader what the study intended to investigate. After that, the chapter presents the findings of the study as organised by the goals of the study. Subsequently, the chapter presents different stages of a tested and implemented strategy to provide recommendations for all the challenges in the investigation process.

5.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Some challenges are critical to effective teaching strategies for RM. Zou and Mickleborough (2015:49) and McDonald (2013:358) assert that an inability to promote collaborative problem-solving skills affects the effectiveness of risk assessment processes. Ajewole (2014:114-115), Meyer (2014:166), Storbjörk (2007:463), and Gitterman (2004:106-107), point out that some challenges are caused by an ignorance of adult learner experience, failure to note the learners' "self-concepts" and using a teacher-centred approach in the learning processes. There is also a lack of recognition of adult learners' prior experiential knowledge as a resource for the successful acquisition of skills in the identification and mitigation of risks (Ajewole, 2014:114-115). Sometimes there are negative attitudes towards a lack of awareness about "the need to know" or failure to inform adult learners about the negative consequences of not learning (Knowles, 1990:63). According to Gitterman (2004:106), adult learners "have the potential to be self-directed, particularly when their life and practice experience are utilised as vital resources". Hence, the above-noted challenges result in a lack of awareness of adult learners' different learning styles and failure to promote collaborative problem-solving skills.

5.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The literature indicates that there are ineffective strategies to teach RM skills (Goddu, 2012:170; Gitterman, 2004:96). The ineffectiveness of such methods involves a lack of awareness of adult learners' different learning styles and promoting collaborative problem-solving skills (Zou & Mickleborough, 2015:148; Kenner & Weinerman, 2011:90). The inability to tap adult learners' prior experiential knowledge is another challenge that serves as a critical component of their self-identity (Cooper, 2011:41). Not perceiving adult learners as self-directing is yet another challenge (Olaye & Onajite, 2015:39; Meyer, 2014:163; Olufunke & Adeyemo, 2013:23; Managa, 2012:13; Knowles, 1984:10).

5.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

5.4.1 Research question

The research question to be answered was: How can the RM skills of officials at a municipality be enhanced using the adult education approach?

5.4.2 Research aim

The study aimed to formulate a framework that would enhance municipal officials' RM skills through an adult education approach.

5.4.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

- to determine the need and the challenges to effective teaching strategies for RM skills for municipal officials;
- to identify components of the strategy that respond to the challenges to effectively teaching RM skills;
- to explore conditions conducive to the successful implementation of the strategy;
- to explore threats in the designing and implementation of the strategy; and
- to understand the indicators of success of the implementation of the strategy for effectively teaching practical RM skills.

5.5 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the report presents a summary of the findings and the recommendations of the study.

5.5.1 The lack of a coordinated team to enhance effective teaching strategies for risk management skills at Xhariep District Municipality

The study found that at Xhariep District Municipality, there was no independent and collaborative problem-solving team for the assessment of risks, from which adult learners were inadequately trained and skilled to play a role in collaborative learning in identifying risks. The RM training did not encourage sharing and the Ubuntu principle of solidarity in achieving sustainable collaborative teaching and learning for the mitigation of risk factors at the municipality. In this regard, the non-existence of a coordinated team at the municipality contributed to the ineffective teaching methods for RM skills. As the study established initial meetings, it showed the need for a joint team to mitigate risks at the municipality. As a result of these challenges, the study makes the following recommendation.

5.5.1.1 Recommendation of strategies for the establishment of a coordinated team towards the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks

After our discussion meetings, workshops and observations with various stakeholders interested in enhancing the RM skills of municipal officials, the recommendation is that there is a need for a coordinated team using an adult education approach to teach RM at a municipality. The responsibility of the team should involve planning and monitoring municipality projects and their finances towards sustainability. The team should recognise community members' background experience for planning projects and making a contribution to knowledge building and practical strategies to assess risks.

A collaborative problem-solving team is recommended as an empowering, critical and reflexive tool for teaching RM skills and thinking about the diversity of experiences of the identification and assessment of risks at a municipality. Placing the team front and centre in the adult teaching and learning environment will help the municipality and its officials to mitigate risk factors.

5.5.2 No recognition of prior experiential knowledge when teaching risk management

During the investigation at the research site, the study found that there was no recognition of prior experience as a resource for the successful acquisition of skills in the identification and mitigation of risks at the workplace. There were no essential teaching and learning activities to develop an integrated knowledge framework to enhance RM skills. In other words, when teaching RM skills, there was a lack of promoting or motivating collaborative learning in the assessment of risks at Xhariep District Municipality. This affected effective teaching, and a negative attitude towards adult education as a tool to improve the RM skills of municipal officials was developed. These resulted from an inability to see prior knowledge and skills as a contributor and a useful approach to design learning activities to empower municipal officials.

5.5.2.1 Recommendation of strategies for the recognition of prior experiential knowledge when teaching risk management

In a judgement of the above-mentioned challenges, the coordinated team recommends the reconsideration of involved stakeholders' experience in teaching and learning risk assessment activities. The team should support making use of prior experiential knowledge in improving RM skills at a municipality, meaning the historical background of the co-researchers should form part of human resource development when teaching RM.

5.5.3 Failure to note self-directed learning as an approach in adult learning

I noticed a negative attitude towards learning and unawareness of one directing one's own learning based on the needs of the organisation. A lack of sharing ideas showed that some of the municipal officials did not perceive adult learning as a self-directing teaching method, especially in RM processes. They are used to a teacher-centred approach rather than a learner-centred approach, which influences team learning in RM training.

5.5.3.1 Recommendation of strategies for self-directed learning in teaching risk management

After the workshops, the team recommended SDL to specify the role of teamwork in skills development with specific reference to RM skills at a municipality. Team members should see SDL processes as the sharing of power between the researcher and the co-researchers, meaning the potential abuse of power in research processes and relations of power as an effective approach for municipality officials to be more productive and goal-orientated in the organisation.

5.5.4 Failure to promote transformative learning when teaching risk management skills

The study found that another factor contributing to the complexity of RM knowledge with specific reference for assessing risks was the inability to promote transformative learning when teaching RM. There was a breakdown in community-wide dialogue regarding the invitation to community members to participate in learning processes for RM. It means the involvement of the community in municipality projects was limited and sometimes ignored.

5.5.4.1 Recommendation of strategies for transformative learning when teaching risk management skills

The coordinated team should not dominate the training for RM project but allow background and experiences that establish a teacher-learner relationship in RM training at a municipality. Thus, the researcher should work on an equal basis with the participants in the research processes that enhance RM. In other words, during RM training or workshops, the co-researchers should be seen as humans who are autonomous in learning and have the potential for development and growth. The co-researchers who involve positively in the RM training that is more in tune with local concerns and traditions outside research power domination.

5.5.4.2 Recommended conditions conducive to transformative learning when teaching risk management skills

The implicit goal of transformative learning is to advance the emancipatory function of knowledge; hence, the study recommends that group learning should involve team members working together to design a solution to a common goal for a selected problem. Two team members, Brains and Vista, demonstrated their interest in the study by expressing their views as follows:

“If we could continue working and learning risk assessment together in our municipality, as a team, we could achieve the objectives of the organisation”. (Brains)

The viewpoint of these municipal officials emphasises the need to enhance RM skills through an adult education approach at Xhariep District Municipality. The study, therefore, recommends training in RM teaching and learning that facilitates the cultivation of collaborative problem-solving skills.

5.5.4.3 Threats and risks to transformative learning when teaching risk management skills

The study found that the importance of experience in teaching RM skills was not recognised concerning transformative learning; in other words, there was no sharing of ideas, raising one’s consciousness and facilitating an emancipatory transformation in RM learning and teaching processes. It seemed as if most of the municipal officials were not aware of adult education as an approach to facilitating the assessment of risks and acquiring knowledge to mitigate these risks.

5.5.5 Non-implementation of a learner-centred approach when teaching risk management skills

The findings of the study reflect the non-implementation of a learner-centred system at Xhariep District Municipality when training RM. The pre-training sessions for assessing risk were more focused on a teacher working on an unequal basis with the learners in the teaching process. The study showed teachers dominating the learning process and a lack of opportunities to pose questions concerning RM. In that way, those involved in the training were supposed to accept the teacher’s information.

5.5.5.1 Recommendations for the encouragement of a learner-teacher approach when teaching risk management skills

I recommend implementing a learner-centred approach as an effective strategy towards training and assessing risks at a municipality. An adult education approach needs to be seen as a useful tool to improve knowledge of RM. This has been reflected by senior municipal official Brains, when he said:

“We, as the municipality, need to establish a good relationship with the university with regards to teaching risk management using this approach”.

In this regard, from the above extract, I find that little was done at Xhariep District Municipality to recommend and encourage adult learning in a team as a useful tool in mitigating risks. I also find that the power relations between the researcher and the co-researchers in previous RM training involved domination by one over the other. In this study, the team members challenged individual teaching and learning for RM by working as a team to achieve a common goal of the municipality.

5.5.5.2 Recommended conditions to support learner-centred teaching as an approach to teach risk management

For the conducive situation to implementing adult education as an effective strategy to mitigate risk at a municipality, I find a need to acknowledge the experience for the development of individual municipal officials in the RM learning process. A municipality has to adopt collaborative skills as an abundant resource in sharing information and ideas for solving problems facing the municipality.

5.5.5.3 Factors that could threaten the implementation of a learner-centred adult learning approach

The study finds that there could be threats to the implementation of adult education. The dangers involve, among other things, the withdrawal of some adult learners in the RM learning process, the reason being that some learning activities do not meet their individual needs.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Risk management training that incorporates, involve and acknowledge prior experience in research processes enable municipality officials to achieve the goals of the organisation. Working as an integrate team and sharing ideas, respecting one another in teaching and learning activities improves identification and assessment of risks within the municipality. The ability to empower one another in a team work towards successful implementation of effective strategies that could mitigate risks at the organisation. Coordinated team led by the spirit and values of Ubuntu also enhances confidence and job satisfaction that could contribute positively towards better service delivery and improvement of municipality employees and people's lives.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



Faculty of Education

12-Dec-2017

Dear **Mrs Mamokhosi Choane**

Ethics Clearance: Enhancing Risk Management Skills at a Municipality: An adult education approach

Principal Investigator: **Mrs Mamokhosi Choane**

Department: **School of Education Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)**

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2017/0567**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

Prof. MM Mokhele
Chairperson: Ethics Committee

Education Ethics Committee
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APPENDIX B: LETTER TO KHARIEP DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Sir/Madam
The Municipality Manager
Xhariep District Municipality

I am Mamokhosi Choane, a registered PhD student at the University of the Free State under faculty of education, department of education. As part of my degree, I need permission to conduct a research project at your municipality in Education Studies.

Date: April 2018

Title of research project: Enhancing risk management skills at a municipality: Through adult education approach.

Principal investigator: Ms Mamokhosi Choane

Faculty and Department: faculty of education, department of education

Study leaders: Sechaba Mahlomaholo at mmahlomaholo@wsu.ac.za and co-supervisor Dr M Qhosola at QhosolaMR@ufs.ac.za.

The aim of the study: The study aims at formulating a framework to enhance the risk management skills of municipality officials through an adult education approach. The idea is to enhance identification, assessment and mitigation of risks through collaborative learning.

The researcher: Mamokhosi Choane currently working for the University of the Free State as a lecturer in the department of Political Science.

Ethical Approval: ethical clearance for the study is approved. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Why your organisation invited to take part in this research project? There are challenges that are critical to effective teaching strategies for risk management skills at municipalities. These challenges result in a lack of awareness of the different learning styles of adult learners and failure to promote collaborative problem solving skills.

The nature of participation in this study: Data collection will be in the form of focus group which will include discussions and meetings with community members, municipality officials. Based on the problem statement of the study: "there are ineffective strategies to teach risk management skills at a municipality", the focus group will meet and develop a strategy

informed by the objectives of the study. The exercise will be structured around municipality officials and community schedules so that they are not inconvenienced in their duties and responsibilities. The study will use focus group as a research instrument which will take approximately 1 hour 30 minutes every two weeks to discuss implementation of the strategy.

The potential benefits of taking part in this study? The researcher will ensure that your privacy is protected in any information we discuss in the focus group session and encourage all participants to do so. I will also encourage participants to respect one another to effective outcomes in our session. Furthermore, the participation in the study is on voluntary basis and participants can stop being in the study at any time without getting in trouble.

Confidentiality of the information: The researcher will make efforts to ensure that the information shared during the focus group is treated confidentially.

How will the information be stored? The information provided during focus group sessions will be stored safe in a locked cup-board?

Any payment or incentives for participants in this study?

There will be no costs incurred by the participant and no payment or reward will be offered during the session or discussion throughout the study.

How will the organisation be informed of the findings of the study?

Furthermore, the final findings and recommendations from the study would be made available to the Municipality through email: choanemp@ufs.ac.za.

Yours Sincerely



Mamokhosi Choane

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION FROM XHARIEP DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



An area of unfeared diversity

Xhariep

District Municipality

Private Bag X 136, TROMPSBURG, 9913, Tel: (051) 713 9300, Fax: (051) 713 0461
Email: info@xhariep.gov.za Website: www.xhariep.gov.za

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER

23 May 2018

To: Ms. Mamokhosi Choane


PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Madam

Xhariep District Municipality hereby welcomes your request, and is granting you an authorization to conduct the research on: Enhancing Risk Management Skills, through adult education approach.

Looking forward to a good working relationship with yourself and wishing all of the best.

Yours faithfully


LY Moletsane (Me)
Municipal Manager

APPENDIX D: LETTER FROM LANGAUGE EDITOR

CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

Dr. L. Hoffman, APed (SATI), APRed (SAVI)

Kroonstad

BA, BA(Hons), MA, DLitt et Phil, Certificate (English Grammar for Editors)

Accredited Professional Text Editor – English and Afrikaans (South African Translators' Institute)

Member of South African Translators' Institute – No. 1003545

Cell no: 079 193 5256

Email: larzahoffman@gmail.com

DECLARATION

To whom it may concern

I hereby confirm that I have proofread and edited the following thesis, including the bibliography.

Title of thesis

ENHANCING RISK MANAGEMENT SKILLS AT A MUNICIPALITY
USING AN ADULT EDUCATION APPROACH

Student

MAMOKHOSI PAULINAH CHOANE



Lariza Hoffman

Kroonstad

2 March 2021

