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THE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MODEL AND WATER SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE ELUNDINI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN MOUNT FLETCHER

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ABSTRACT

The District Development Model is one of the strategies implemented to overcome service delivery challenges in municipalities and assist the government spheres in working in units with one plan, budget, and goal. Mount Fletcher is one of the smallest towns in the Eastern Cape and faces water service delivery challenges, scarcity, and unavailability. This study investigated the role of the DDM in water service delivery in the local municipality of Elundini. The primary goal of this study was to examine strategies for planning and monitoring the DDM's activities of DDMs in the provision of water services. Data for this study were gathered through semi-structured interviews and observations using a qualitative research methodology. The key findings of this study show that the DDM still needs to assist the municipality in providing adequate water to Mount Fletcher communities since its implementation. Moreover, the communities of Mount Fletcher continue to experience inequality in water service delivery as the municipality claims to face budget challenges. As the municipality plans to use the IDP to track the progress of the DDM's initiatives, it is also essential to monitor ward-based developments that directly impact the community. These communities struggle with water service delivery, access to roads, healthcare, and failing businesses. Additionally, given the municipality's recognition that the Moroka community faces the most significant impact in terms of water service delivery, it is imperative to regularly repair and inspect boreholes to prevent further harm and distress for residents. The active involvement of the community in the DDM plans would prove advantageous, ensuring a clear understanding of the developments within their communities.

Keywords: Water service delivery, District Development Model, Community participation, Local government

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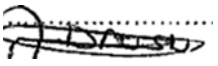
DECLARATION

I, Yonela Dlaza declares that the contents of this dissertation represent my unaided work and that it has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. It represents my opinion, not those of the University of Fort Hare. The work has been appropriately cited where the researcher used and quoted the work of other people.

Signature: 

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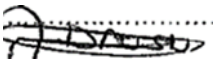
Signature: 

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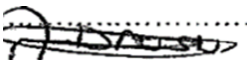
Signature: 

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
ASSAF	Academy of Science of South Africa
DDM	District Development Model
DSI	Department of Science & Innovation
DWS	Department of Water Service
EC	Eastern Cape
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IGR	Intergovernmental Regions
IUDF	Integrated Urban Development Framework
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
LM	Limpopo
NDP	National Development Plan
NW	North West
NWA	National Water Act
NWR	National Water Resource Strategy
ODT	Organisational Development Theory
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDF	Spatial Development Framework
RSA	Republic of South Africa
UN	United Nations
WSDP	Water Services Development Plan
WBG	World Bank Group
WSA	Water Services Act

CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The South African government has long sought to establish itself as capable, progressive, and ethical. To accomplish this, a District Development Model (DDM) was created as a comprehensive district-centred strategy designed to enhance service delivery and development results. According to the District Development Model (2024), the DDM is an initiative by the South African government to improve service delivery and socioeconomic development through a more integrated, cooperative approach at the district level. The DDM aims to deliver excellent services, such as ensuring water access for all South Africans, creating community-based budgets and programs, and promoting local economic development, youth empowerment, and sustainable development (Slater, 2021).

Additionally, in 2019, President Cyril Ramaphosa alluded to the government's desire to create a seamless, adaptable, and responsive system for delivering public services focused on citizens' needs (Writer, 2021). The rural version of the District Development Model (DDM) was strategically implemented in the OR Tambo District municipality in the Eastern Cape, with the specific aim of enhancing service delivery in rural areas (Slater, 2021). This approach underscores the commitment to ensure that even the most remote communities benefit from improved services, address long-standing disparities, and promote equitable development. The goals of the DDM are to create one district, one plan, and one budget to maximise the impact and align strategy and resources (Department of Cooperative Governance, 2023).

According to Assam (2021), the DDM and one plan were conceived in response to experiences and challenges related to institutional capacity, such as creating strategies that cater to urban areas while neglecting rural ones and lacking coherence in planning at the district and local levels. One plan of the DDM is to shift from delivering uniform services to all communities, recognizing that each community has unique needs (Department of Cooperative Governance, 2023). It aims to implement

budgets and programs tailored to each municipality and community, thereby accelerating sustainable development at a local level.

This necessitated an urgent move towards a collaborative planning approach supported by Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) mechanisms and a transparent performance management framework (District Development Model, 2024). In this context, intergovernmental relations involve national, provincial, and local spheres that are distinct, interdependent, and interconnected (Kenny, et al., 2020). These government spheres are independent entities operating within unified South Africa. Intergovernmental management emphasises the importance of partnerships, shared responsibilities, and joint problem-solving to address complex issues that span multiple jurisdictions (Askim & Johnsen, 2023). These entities must collaborate in decision-making, coordinating budgets, policies, and activities, especially for services that extend across these spheres, such as water service delivery (Department of Cooperative Governance, 2023).

In summary, while the principles of intergovernmental management are laudable, their practical implementation can be challenging. Addressing these challenges may require robust frameworks for coordination, clear lines of accountability, and ongoing efforts to build trust and capacity across all levels of the government.

According to Khambule (2021), The South African government has consistently aimed to become proficient, ethical, and progressive to achieve the country's development objectives. These goals include delivering services to everyone, enhancing infrastructure, empowering youth, creating jobs and procurement opportunities, supporting local businesses, and fostering local economic growth, as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP). Moreover, (Khambule, 2021) highlights that the District Development Model (DDM) can play a crucial role in establishing a local developmental state to support the country's goals. This can be achieved through a well-defined intergovernmental framework that enhances the institutional capacity of district municipal authorities.

In 2019, three District Development Model (DDM) pilot versions were launched across different regions to obtain varied outcomes. The rural iteration of the DDM was implemented in the OR Tambo District Municipality in the Eastern Cape, concentrating on the performance of district municipalities. The district municipality is a Type C municipality that executes the functions of the local municipality. The South African Constitution mandates municipalities to provide uninterrupted essential services such as water, electricity, roads, schools, and clinics to all communities (Emily & Muyengwa, 2021).

Local municipalities are responsible for providing essential services to the public (Morita et al., 2020). Maramura (2022) recognizes that local governments must provide high-quality services to their constituencies, particularly those in remote areas. While municipalities in South Africa vary in their specific contexts and challenges, they all share common goals: providing water services, enhancing infrastructure, creating employment opportunities, supporting small businesses, and empowering youth (Magagula et al., 2022). The District Development Model (DDM) tailors its approach to meet the distinct needs of rural and urban areas, ensuring that both types of communities are served effectively. Moreover, DDM aims to meet the specific needs of each community by tailoring strategies for rural and urban areas. This approach promotes equitable and inclusive development across South Africa (Sausi & Davids, 2022).

Despite various approaches, the primary aim is to enhance the quality of life of all citizens, regardless of their location. In this context, nations' developmental goals outline the overarching goals and strategies for a country's growth and development, addressing key areas such as infrastructure, health, education, and basic services (National Development Plan 2030, 2012). These plans were set as the vision and targets for long-term development, emphasizing inclusive growth and sustainable development. Moreover, the DDM is a localized approach that aligns with national development plans. It aims to coordinate and integrate efforts across different spheres of government, ensuring that national development goals are translated into actionable plans at the district level (District Development Model, 2020).

The DDM focuses on a collaborative and holistic approach to development, emphasizing local needs and priorities. Additionally, the capacity of district municipalities to provide essential services such as water is crucial for realising both national development plans and DDM objectives (Magagula et al., 2022). District municipalities are responsible for delivering the basic services to their communities. In essence, the national development plans provide the strategic framework and goals, the DDM operationalises these plans at the district level, and the capacity of district municipalities to provide water and other basic services is a critical factor in achieving the desired outcomes of both the national and district-level plans. This study examines the District Development Model (DDM) plans regarding water service delivery to provide outstanding services.

According to Amoah (2021), South Africa is an emerging nation facing significant challenges regarding water accessibility, high poverty rates, substantial unemployment, and steep increases in food and fuel costs. Stats (2024) shows that the unemployment rate in South Africa has reached a staggering 42.4 per cent in the year, exacerbating the economic challenges its citizens face. Additionally, the country has experienced a 6.6 per cent increase in food prices and rising fuel expenses, further straining household budgets and worsening living conditions (Stats SA, 2024).

However, the Department of Water and Sanitation (2021) reported that South Africa has improved adequate water and sanitation by 82.1 per cent between 2019 and 2021. Although the provision of water may have increased, the figure indicates that nearly 18 per cent of the population still lacks adequate water and sanitation, highlighting a significant gap in water service delivery. This gap is particularly concerning, given the essential nature of these services for public health and quality of life. Moreover, rural areas, which often face more severe infrastructure challenges, might not have experienced the same level of progress as urban centres. Amoah further stated that the Eastern Cape Province is one of the nation's sections that has seen significant changes in weather patterns. For example, the Eastern Cape Province has water shortages; as a result, it was declared a drought disaster region in 2019 both in rural and urban areas (Mahlalela et al., 2020) Due to this, most homes and families,

especially those in rural areas, are at risk of extreme poverty, a lack of water, and food insecurity (Amoah, 2021).

The Eastern Cape faces severe challenges in water service delivery, especially in rural areas. Many residents still fetch water from rivers and share these sources with domestic animals. According to Stats (2016), 48.8 per cent of the rural communities in the province lack access to clean water. Water service delivery is a critical component of economic and social development in rural communities because people have small businesses that use water (Kumasi et al., 2022). Access to water enhances living standards, improves health and educational outcomes, increases convenience and promotes gender equality.

Providing access to sustainable management of water and sanitation is one of the global sustainable development goals, particularly goal 6, which seeks to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation (United Nations, 2015). When the African National Congress (ANC) government acquired power in 1994, it promised to improve and prioritise water service delivery in rural areas (Reddy, 2016). Additionally, they pledged to improve citizens' living standards by effectively and efficiently delivering services in South African rural communities (Maramura, 2022). As a result, rural development is a key objective of the government. Thus, the local government's mandate is to deliver quality services to citizens, particularly water services in rural areas. Chapters 3 and 7 of the Constitution are on local government, and the cooperative government is based on Sections 154 (1) and 41(h) (I-vi) of the 1996 Constitution. Cooperative government refers to a system in which different levels of government (national, provincial, and local) collaborate (Shopola & Munzhedzi, 2024).

This approach ensures coordinated policymaking, budgeting, and service delivery to address the entire population's needs effectively. On the other hand, the Water Services Act 108 of 1997 (WSA) establishes the legal framework for putting the right to access enough water into practice by controlling the organisations in charge of delivering and facilitating access to water services, such as district municipalities. Weaver et al. (2017) stated that the fundamental principles of managing and delivering proactive water services are equity, sustainability, and efficiency. Determining a

municipality's readiness when implementing a new strategy to improve water service delivery is crucial.

The Elundini local municipality is a category B municipality consisting of three towns: Maclear, Ugie, and Mount Fletcher, in the rural northeastern region of the Eastern Cape. The Integrated Development Plan (2022) of Elundini local municipality (ELM) in the Joe Gqabi district revealed that only 34 per cent of people have access to piped water on community stands (taps) in the ELM, and about 18.07 per cent of people still receive water from rivers or streams, while another 6.49 per cent use dams as their source of water (Integrated Development Plan, 2022). The fact that over 40 per cent of the people in the Elundini local municipality still lack access to water is deeply troubling, particularly after 23 years of democracy. While municipalities may strive to provide clean water, many residents without access to water underscore significant shortcomings in service delivery and infrastructure development.

Many residents still lack access to piped water, making ensuring clean water provision difficult. Consequently, a significant number of people in the Elundini Local Municipality rely on flowing rivers for their water supplies (Kernick, 2014; Integrated Development Plan,2021).

1.2 Problem Statement

Stats (2016) showed that over five million South African rural communities still need clean and safe water. Ningi et al. (2021) noted that lack of water at the household level in rural areas poses serious risks to human well-being and to crucial sectors, such as food security and farming. This lack of water undermines rural communities' ability to thrive and sustain themselves, highlighting the urgent need for improved water infrastructure and management. To tackle the challenges of inequality, insufficient infrastructure development, and inadequate service delivery to provide clean water to certain communities in Mount Fletcher, the government established the District Development Model (DDM) in 2019. This initiative aims to create a more coordinated and effective approach to address these critical issues and improve residents' overall QoL (Musinguzi et al., 2023).

The aim of the DDM is to assist district and local governments in overcoming obstacles related to water service delivery and unequal distribution of water resources (Writer, 2021). These include inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, and logistical challenges in reaching remote areas. By addressing these barriers, the DDM seeks to ensure equitable access to clean water for all communities, fostering improved public health and quality of life. In the District Development Model, the 'One Plan' acts as a comprehensive strategic framework that unifies various initiatives aimed at achieving coordinated planning and implementation of key interventions (District Development Model, 2024). The One Plan strategic blueprint is tailored to the unique needs of each district, considered as 'impact zones, for public and societal investments. It embodies the concept of one plan and one budget, promoting cooperation between various government spheres (Department of Cooperative Governance, 2023).

However, communities are diverse, and their needs vary, even in rural areas. For instance, a unified plan aims to provide essential services such as water, health, and education, but each requires a distinct budget. A one-size-fits-all approach may fail to address each community's unique challenges and specific requirements, potentially leading to inefficiencies and gaps in service deliveries. Therefore, while a single plan can promote cohesion, it must be sufficiently flexible to allocate resources appropriately based on the varied needs of different communities. In addition, some communities still need access to piped water and those with piped water experience water shortages (Integrated Development Plan, 2021).

Even though the government is improving efforts to deliver water and sanitation services, Onyenankeya et al. (2018) observed that communities still need urgent assistance, particularly in Limpopo, the Northwest, the Eastern Cape, and Mpumalanga. This indicates that water demand has increased, and municipalities within these provinces still need to catch up with water service delivery. Water service delivery is still a significant challenge that negatively impacts communities within Elundini Municipality in the Eastern Cape.

The Elundini municipality is located in the rural northeastern region of the Eastern Cape, comprising the towns of Maclear, Ugie, and Mt. Fletcher. People in Tsekong, Katlehong, and Moroka on Mount Fletcher use the river and fountain for their water needs, and access to clean drinking water is still a dream. The Integrated Development Plan (2022) of the Elundini Local Municipality revealed that 46.09 per cent of households could not access piped water. 18.07 per cent, or 7071 homes, obtain water from rivers or streams, and another 6.49 per cent of households use open and unprotected dams as the primary water source (Integrated Development Plan, 2022). Consequently, there are water shortages in places where people have access to water, posing a challenge for water service delivery. Therefore, this study aims to assess the role of DDM in water service delivery in Elundini Municipality, particularly in Mount Fletcher, as water service delivery is still a challenge (IDP, 2021).

1.3 Research Objectives

Main research objective

To understand the perceptions of the municipality and the community and the methods used to plan and monitor the operations of DDM in water service delivery in Elundini's local municipality in Joe Gqabi District.

2. To assess the role of the DDM in providing water services in Mount Fletcher communities .

3. To explore the methods that Elundini local municipalities use to achieve the goals of DDM for the community.

1.4 Research Questions

Main research question

What processes are used to monitor plans and the operations of the DDM in water service delivery in the Elundini local municipality in Joe Gqabi District?

1. How does the ELM and community perceive the DDM’s role in ensuring the provision of water?
1. What strategies do Elundini local municipalities use to achieve the goals of the DDM for the community?

1.5 Significance of the study

Current literature on DDM and water service delivery is limited. Therefore, this study is among the new ones that tackle the operations of DDM and water service delivery in the Elundini Local Municipality. Khambule (2021) suggested that the DDM may help build a capable local developmental state and decentralise healthcare. Furthermore, it asserted that decentralisation could improve the institutional capacities of municipalities. Similarly, the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), 2022) states that when determining how to use the DDM as a platform for innovation, it is crucial to take the one government approach into account to ensure coordination. The DSI worked with various parties to ensure coordination, ensure that science and innovation significantly impacted service delivery, address this country's issues, and promote inclusivity.

These two leading researchers highlight the importance of the DDM in coordinating different spheres. Consequently, DSI and ASSAf (2022) noted that the DDM is best understood through ongoing engagement with the communities directly affected by the performance of the local government. At the same time, Khambule (2021) acknowledged that deconcentrating capacities could improve the government's performance toward service delivery. This study focused on a specific direction of water service delivery and how the DDM has impacted the communities' water service challenges. These studies emphasised healthcare and innovation services rather than water service delivery. In this regard, water service delivery is the main focus of this study, as there is limited literature on DDM and water service delivery, particularly on Mount Fletcher.

This research was influential in South Africa because DDM is a new model implemented to encourage unity among Metro, District, and local governments in providing quality service delivery to the citizens of South Africa. To maintain sustainability and people's rights in rural or urban areas, all spheres of government need to cooperate to achieve the DDM's desired objectives (Sausi & Yul Derek, 2022). This study can assist policymakers in implementing new policies on DDM and service delivery in rural areas. These stakeholders form a crucial part of the development of

communities, and the challenges that the stakeholders face are similar; this study then explores what the DDM can achieve.

1.6 Delimitations

This study is limited to Tsekong, Katlehong, and Moroka; these three locations in Tlokoeng are the focus of this study. This is because the water service delivery within these communities is different, and Mount Fletcher has many local communities; therefore, the researcher focused on these three. The current study focuses on DDM and water service delivery in Elundini municipality. This study focused on Infrastructure Planning and Development (IP&D) and community service departments, which provided a better understanding of the DDM, water service delivery phenomenon, and general workers within departments. Counsellors and traditional leaders of the community where water challenges are experienced and public community members, as well as those with small businesses in the community.

1.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter One provides a comprehensive foundation for exploring the District Development Model (DDM) and its impact on water service delivery. This study is underlined by addressing critical challenges within the realm of water service delivery, particularly within the context of the DDM framework. This chapter articulates the specific gaps and issues that this study aims to address while exploring the continuing inequalities in water access within the Elundini Local Municipality despite the implementation of the DDM. It identifies the objectives, focusing on the methods and mechanisms used to plan, monitor, and achieve the DDM's goals of DDM in water service delivery. This chapter emphasises the importance of this study by providing valuable insights that could inform policy adjustments and strategic planning to enhance water service delivery and equitable development across South Africa.

1.8 Chapter Outline

Chapter One

This chapter comprehensively overviews this study and covers several key areas. It outlines the background of the study, detailing the inception and objectives of the District Development Model (DDM). It also clearly states the research problem, focusing on water service delivery challenges in the Elundini Local Municipality. This chapter sets forth the research aims and objectives, including exploring the methods

and mechanisms used in the DDM framework and assessing community and municipal perceptions. Additionally, the chapter emphasized the significance of the current study, highlighting its potential to address critical gaps in service delivery and contribute to more effective and equitable development strategies in South Africa.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two provided a detailed review of the literature on the District Development Model (DDM) and water service delivery in the rural communities of Elundini Municipality. This chapter explored the conceptualization of the study, linking the DDM with local municipality functions and service delivery challenges. It examined various perspectives on the effectiveness and implementation of DDM, highlighting the model's potential to address infrastructure and service differences. By contextualising the study within the framework of local governance and the specific needs of rural areas, the chapter underscored the importance of tailored approaches to improve water access and overall community well-being.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three of the study outlines the research methodology, focusing on the design, data collection, and analysis processes. The chapter discusses the chosen research design, including qualitative methods like interviews. It explains how these methods are suitable for exploring perceptions and experiences related to the District Development Model (DDM) and water service delivery in Elundini Municipality. Detailed descriptions were provided for the interview guides to gather primary data from key stakeholders, including community members, local officials, and DDM implementers. Chapter Three is crucial because it provides a clear study framework. This chapter ensures transparency and rigour in the research process by detailing the research methodology, including interview guides and data collection methods.

Chapter Four

This chapter details the study's outcomes, presenting the data collected from interviews conducted with community members, local officials, and DDM implementers. The analysis of the interview responses highlights critical insights and patterns regarding the effectiveness of the District Development Model (DDM) in improving water service delivery in Elundini Municipality. Chapter Four is crucial, as it translates the raw data gathered during the research into meaningful findings. This

chapter presents empirical evidence and interprets it to provide a clear understanding of the DDM's performance in Elundini Municipality. This chapter highlights the key findings and lays the groundwork for subsequent discussions and conclusions, offering valuable insights that inform policy recommendations and future research directions.

Chapter Five

Chapter Five is essential, as it brings the study to a close by synthesising the research findings and offering actionable recommendations. The conclusions provide a clear summary of the study's contributions to the field, while the interpretation of the literature review helps situate the findings within broader academic and practical contexts. This chapter not only underscores the significance of the research, but also guides future initiatives and studies aimed at enhancing water service delivery through the DDM.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter comprehensively reviews the literature on DDM and water service delivery, particularly in rural areas. The concepts used in the study are local municipalities, service delivery, District Development Model (DDM), and water service delivery. Finally, a theoretical framework was established, drawing on organisational development and human rights theories.

The theoretical framework provides a structured foundation that guides the entire research process and helps to identify and clarify key variables and their relationships, making it easier to understand what is being studied and why. Finally, the theoretical framework is critical for providing research structure, direction, and legitimacy, ensuring the study is rigorous, coherent, and meaningful. Organisational development theory provides strategies to improve organisational efficiency and adaptability, whereas human rights theory emphasises the critical need to guarantee fair access to basic services such as water, recognising them as fundamental human rights (Wu & Chu, 2015).

Organisational development theory is crucial for enhancing an organisation's performance and ability to respond to environmental changes. Human rights theory is essential for advocating and ensuring that every individual has access to fundamental services, which is vital for promoting equality and justice in society. A literature review plays a critical role in examining existing literature, establishing a robust knowledge base on the subject, and assisting researchers in comprehending what has been previously studied and the conclusions reached (Lim et al., 2022). According to Deering and William (2020), literature reviews contextualise the current research within the framework of existing knowledge, demonstrating how it integrates into wider academic discourse. Therefore, in this study, the literature review assisted the

researcher in identifying gaps in current research on DDM and pinpointing areas that remain unexplored or require further investigation.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1. Local municipality

According to Monkam (2014), the lowest local government level in South Africa is known as the Category B local municipality. The primary responsibility of a local municipality is to coordinate and supervise the administrative, financial, and planning processes to prioritise the basic needs of the community, promote its social and economic progress, and actively engage in national and local development activities (Mubangizi, 2019).

In South Africa, municipalities act as a bridge between the state and citizens, offering services and promoting social cohesion. Smit and Govender (2015) concur that the local government is vital for fulfilling local needs, acting practically and responsively, and improving the quality of life of its residents. According to Koprić et al. (2018), local municipalities are vital players in the supply of public services; therefore, they are strongly motivated to improve local service delivery. Local municipalities in South Africa prioritise providing crucial services to communities, fostering social and economic advancement, and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for their residents (Mabizela & Matsiliza, 2020). Furthermore, Steiner et al. (2018) stated that the ability of local municipalities to provide services depends on their superior understanding of local conditions and preferences.

For the District Development Model (DDM) strategy to be effective, it is crucial to explore the involvement of local municipalities, which are closer to communities, as they are directly responsible for addressing people's challenges. South Africa's constitution, established in 1996, divided the country into three levels of government: national, provincial, and local spheres to provide services to local communities. The South African government system is divided, generating direct ties and responsibilities between the national government and the provinces and local governments (Monkam, 2014; Thapa, 2020). The Constitution of South Africa describes these government

spheres as "distinctive, interdependent, and interrelated" (section 40(1), Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Act No. 108 of 1996).

Following the establishment of the 1996 Constitution and the 1998 Local Government Municipal Structures Act, South Africa's local government system was reorganised into three distinct tiers or categories. Category A includes metropolitan municipalities set to govern major urban areas. Category B includes local municipalities appointed to manage smaller- and medium-sized jurisdictions primarily located in urban areas.

Finally, category C includes district municipalities that were also set to govern multiple local municipalities within a specific geographic area (Republic of South Africa, 1998). As stated in Section 153 of the Constitution, municipalities have an obligation to organise and oversee their administrative, budgetary, and planning procedures in a manner that prioritises the fundamental requirements of the community. Additionally, they are expected to foster the social and economic advancement of the community and actively participate in development programs at the national and provincial levels (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Act No. 108 of 1996) (Bahl & Smoke, 2003).

In this context, local municipalities prioritise a community's fundamental needs while fostering sustainable growth. Therefore, providing essential services, such as water, in rural areas is no exception. The DDM is an addition to many strategies that were implemented before it was believed would help the local municipalities to offer basic needs to communities effectively and sustainably, as they have the mandate to prioritise the basic requirements for the communities and ensure that service delivery is at its best (Asha & Makalela, 2020).

Local municipalities must finance and fulfil specific duties and responsibilities. Consequently, Mubangizi (2019) stated that local municipalities must seek assistance from the national government to manage and allocate the necessary funds for infrastructure and services. This reliance underscores the critical need for effective

collaboration and support between local and national governments to ensure that essential infrastructure and services are provided adequately to meet community needs. The duties of local municipalities vary, depending on the demands of their communities. Many local municipalities, such as Elundini Local Municipality, are located in small towns with large surrounding areas of small villages.

2.2.2. Water Service Delivery

The South African Constitution claims that the local government has a primary obligation to provide water services, regardless of whether it assumes the role of a water service authority or supplier (Act No. 108 of 1997). Ensuring sustainable, economical, and efficient water services for everyone has been a key focus of the South African government over the past few decades(Republic of South Africa, 1998).

Moreover, Perveen and Amar-Ul-Haque (2023) stated that high water quality improves living standards, enhances health, and offers greater convenience to citizens; thus, a sufficient, safe, and accessible water supply must be provided to all. As a result, the water service infrastructure is considered the core improvement element critical to achieving economic and social development (World Bank Group, 2017). Menard et al. (2020) contended that providing people with access to water services is a significant investment in the reform of water policies, and supportive institutions in both developed and developing nations are required.

Despite the mandate and expectations of providing public services to communities, many local municipalities, including Elundini, continue to face significant barriers in delivering excellent public services to their residents. From a socially oriented perspective, public services aim to ensure that essential services are accessible to the general population without imposing a significant financial burden (Thusi & Selepe, 2023). This includes services, such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and social welfare, which are essential for the well-being and development of individuals and communities.

The aim is to promote equity and social cohesion by ensuring that everyone, regardless of their financial means, has access to fundamental services that contribute

to their quality of life and societal advancement. However, many local municipalities face tremendous challenges, such as poor systems, poor performance, poor long-term planning, huge service delivery backlogs, unfunded mandates, and government debt (Steiner et al., 2018). Steiner et al. (2018) added that local municipalities need finances, trained workers, systems, and equipment to deliver on their mandates. Many studies have shown that municipalities face several challenges that inhibit water service delivery (Kalonda & Govender, 2021; Masiya et al., 2019; Patrick, 2021). Kalonda and Govender (2021) suggest that inadequate governance and corruption hinder municipalities from delivering sufficient services.

Mubangizi (2019) agreed that local municipalities have influences that prevent them from self-sufficiency and deliver proficient services to communities. The study by Masiya et al. (2019) demonstrates that citizens' satisfaction with municipality service delivery is inadequate, primarily because of the insufficient quality and quantity of services stemming from inadequate public involvement. Water, power, healthcare services, and the broad protection of lives and property are vital for the existence of the general population (Shittu, 2020).

The Elundini local municipality is one of the smaller municipalities in Joe Gqabi District Municipality. The ELM is the smallest among the three municipalities in the district; it comprises three small towns: Ugie, Nqanqarhu, and Mount Fletcher(Integrated Development Plan, 2021). Mount Fletcher has more than 20 rural areas that are dependent on the town for services, with less infrastructure to serve them, fewer employees to provide services, fewer qualified workers, and more significant backlogs in service delivery (Integrated Development Plan, 2021). Owing to these obstacles, ELM has struggled to deliver adequate water services to its communities. Access to water is recognised as a fundamental right that every rural community should enjoy. This study employs this principle to examine the strategies implemented by the municipality to accomplish the objectives of the DDM and to explore community perspectives on the impact of water service delivery on Mount Fletcher.

South Africa, being a developing country, has established institutions such as the Department of Water Services (DWS) and enacted strategies such as the National Water Act (NWA) and Water Services Act (WSA) to enhance water service delivery. The Water Services Development Plan (WSDP) details the responsibilities and tasks necessary for delivering water services, including water service infrastructure, water resource assessments, and demand management (Masia, 2022). For instance, the Department of Water Services is responsible for developing policies, putting them into practice, enforcing them, and managing the administration of water services (Enqvist & Ziervogel, 2019). In contrast, the NWA and WSA were established to provide citizens with quality water and sanitation (Department of Water and Sanitation, 2021). Pengelly et al. (2017) noted that these laws specify how a particular water source may be accessed and used, what water-related services must be offered to the inhabitants, and by whom.

The institutions and methods developed constitute a process for providing South African citizens with sustainable water service delivery. Ensuring sufficient access to water for the population of South Africa is of utmost importance in pursuing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 6. Goal 6 can be summarised as "Water and sanitation for all," encompassing six key targets: safe access to drinking water (6.1), access to sanitation facilities (6.2), water quality (6.3), water-use efficiency and scarcity (6.4), water resources management (6.5), and preservation of water-related ecosystems (6.6). Additionally, the means of implementation targets included official development assistance (6. a), and active involvement of local communities in water management (6. b). This goal focuses on underserved communities, particularly those in peri-urban and rural areas, which are crucial for equitable development (Nahar & Moran, 2020).

Despite ongoing efforts, numerous rural communities in South Africa still face considerable obstacles, particularly concerning water service delivery. According to Thusi and Selepe (2023), rural communities are the hardest hit by inadequate service delivery, affecting small businesses and healthcare, sometimes leading to strikes that can damage infrastructure. The research of (McGinnis et al., 2017; Monney & Antwi-

Agyei, 2018; Ohwo, 2019) indicated that ensuring water access in rural communities faces challenges, such as rapid population growth, insufficient capital investment, and a lack of focus on non-capital expenses within systems. Addressing these challenges is imperative to ensure that all citizens have access to essential services, which in turn promotes health, improves living standards, and fosters overall social and economic development. Ignoring these issues perpetuates inequality and hampers the progress of the nation. Therefore, it is essential to prioritise the improvement of water services in rural areas to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable future for all South Africans.

Strategies designed to address the challenges of municipal service delivery are essential for improving efficiency and effectiveness. Problems such as corruption, a lack of skills, insufficient water resources, inadequate water management systems, and poor administration have necessitated the introduction of these strategies (Katusiime & Schütt, 2020). Corruption in South Africa has been reported as a regular occurrence in all three spheres of government and as an inhibitor of excellent service delivery in government institutions (Shittu, 2020).

However, these issues persist despite their implementation, indicating that current strategies must be revised. The NWA has established principles and procedures to ensure the sustainable use of resources by stakeholders at the regional, national, and global levels (Pollard & Du Toit, 2019). These approaches are significant because they acknowledge the essential roles of the local actors. This strategy builds an ethical and developmental state by prioritising water infrastructure and service delivery within its strategic goals.

Although infrastructure services are vital for economic and social development, the effectiveness of these water service strategies is compromised if the water infrastructure is not updated to ensure equitable access for all communities (Nkwonta, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to modernise water infrastructure to ensure that all communities have equal access to water and that no one is left behind, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of water service strategies and supporting overall economic and social development.

2.2.3. Municipality perceptions on water service delivery

The South African government has institutionalized inclusive water service provision as a strategic priority, in direct alignment with SDG 6's mandate to ensure sustainable water management and universal access. Many countries, including South Africa, regard access to clean water as a fundamental human right, declaring it in policy and actively managing water resources within their borders (Mirumachi et al., 2021). On the other hand, (Muthwa & Matsiliza, 2024)reveal how apartheid era governance architectures systematically disadvantage historically marginalized townships and rural communities on the water supply. Their study reveals that Black South Africans, informal settlement dwellers, and peri-urban communities face unreliable water access due to systemic inequalities, while wealthier (mostly white) areas retain steady supply because of historical infrastructure advantages. The statement by (Nel & Rogerson, 2016) concur that spatial imbalance in water infrastructure development makes rural communities especially vulnerable to supply disruptions, reflecting long-standing urban-rural service inequities in post-apartheid service delivery.

Post-apartheid, the South African government implemented strategies to try and address unequal service delivery, despite these efforts to rectify historical injustices, rural communities continue to experience uneven access to essential services like water and sanitation. This persistent inequality highlighted the need for more effective policies and infrastructure investments to ensure equitable development. As a result, the government enacted legislation stating that municipal governments have statutory responsibility for water service delivery, as mandated by Section 84 of the Municipal Systems Act (No. 117 of 1998), which explicitly assigns this obligation to both district and metropolitan municipalities.

According to (Ngumbela, 2021) the idea of developmental local government in South Africa was intended to serve as the main conduit for public interaction with state institutions and as the cornerstone of the country's reconstruction and social change. Efficient and equitable water service delivery is not only required, but also a top priority since local municipality is the closest and most approachable level of government and has the knowledge and ability to effectively address community concerns. Since local municipalities are the closest to the people, they are mandated to set up a functional

system to provide public resources, including utilities and services, to residents (Hanyane & Naidoo, 2015).

2.2.4. Perceptions of community on water service delivery

Access to safe and sustainable water is both a basic human necessity and a fundamental human right, as recognised by international frameworks such as the United Nations Resolution on the Human Right to Water and Sanitation (2010). However, many rural villages continue to receive inadequate water services. Community attitudes in rural areas play a major role in determining whether water services meet human rights criteria (Yadav et al., 2024). Factors such as distance to water sources, seasonal shortages and water quality concerns all influence residents' perceptions of service delivery. When these needs are not fulfilled, perceptions of neglect and unfairness emerge, reducing faith in authority and perpetuating cycles of poverty and poor health.

To overcome the unfairness of water service delivery, communities have taken on more substantial duties because of the decentralisation of water service delivery, including managing water supply infrastructure, overseeing daily water delivery, and maintaining infrastructure (Shagama, 2021). This empowers rural communities to actively participate in the very systems designed to serve them, ensuring their voices shape solutions that meet their needs. However, communities have expressed a strong desire for dealing with such water delivery concerns with as little engagement as possible with central government administration and coordination (Shagama, 2021).

When communities fail to engage in water service delivery processes, their needs and expectations remain unaddressed. This undermines the core objective of the District Development Model (DDM), which seeks to foster collaborative governance across all government spheres and community stakeholders to achieve equitable and sustainable rural water service provision.

2.2.5. District Development Model

The DDM is a new integrated district-based strategy for improving, aligning, and strengthening municipal service delivery under a single development plan. The DDM is based on the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, which aims to ensure that the "local government is equipped and transformed to fulfil a developmental role." The DDM's foundation in the 1998 White Paper on Local Government is a critical step toward enhancing the capacity and transforming the role of local government. The primary goal of the DDM is to coordinate a government's response to the issues of poverty, unemployment, and inequality in citizen communities of citizens (Department of Cooperative Governance, 2023).

It aims to ensure inclusivity through budgeting, which addresses the needs and aspirations of people and communities at the local level. The government noted a lack of coherence between different spheres in the planning and implementing strategies to assist local municipalities. This lack of coherence also complicates the monitoring of government programmes. Without a unified and coordinated framework, efforts to address local issues such as infrastructure, service delivery, and community development are likely fragmented and less effective. A more integrated approach is essential for enhancing the alignment and synchronisation of governmental actions, ensuring that support reaches local municipalities more effectively and that program outcomes can be properly assessed and improved. This will lead to a more efficient use of resources, better service delivery, and improved governance.

Slater (2021) concurs that DDM is a valuable framework for improving cooperative governance to establish an ethical and competent developmental state. This is an example of a strategy that enables the three levels of government and state institutions to work together in a way that is focused on making an impact, with increased performance and accountability for reliable service delivery and development results (Slater, 2021).

The introduction of the DDM should not be viewed as a replacement for earlier strategies designed to address service delivery issues in municipalities. Instead, it serves as a complementary approach to enhance and build upon the existing frameworks. (DPME, 2019). Previous strategies have laid the groundwork for addressing these challenges, but persistent issues and evolving needs necessitate additional methods. DDM brings a new perspective and an integrated approach to improve coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness in service delivery. The DDM aims to create a more robust and adaptable system capable of meeting the complex demands of municipalities, ensuring that all communities receive the essential services they need for sustainable development and improved quality of life (District Development Model, 2020).

The South African government's stance that the DDM aims to reinforce rather than replace existing policies underscores the importance of building established frameworks (District Development Model, 2024). By enhancing coordination, planning, and execution, DDM seeks to address the gaps and inefficiencies of the current system. This integrated approach ensures that policies and programs are more effectively aligned and executed, leading to improved service delivery and better community outcomes. Strengthening these connections fosters a cohesive and responsive governance structure, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and inclusive development across the nation.

Sausi and Yul Derek (2022) agree that incorporating stakeholders at the national, provincial, and local levels, including business, labour, and community leaders, the DDM seeks to streamline, coordinate, and integrate service delivery. The effectiveness of the One Plans as a prioritisation instrument hinges on the thorough consultation and robust capacity-building efforts involved in their development. By ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are consulted and equipped, the One Plans can accurately reflect the needs and priorities of each district.

This collaborative approach enhances the alignment of programs, capacity, and budgets across all levels of government, ensuring that resources are directed to where they are most needed. Furthermore, according to Assam (2021), the DDM is described as an initiative to tackle local issues, which includes enhancing living standards, fostering economic development and employment opportunities, combating criminal activities and corruption, and enhancing educational achievements. Zerihun and Mashingo (2022) stated that the two significant actors in service provision are the state and society. To overcome the challenge of service delivery, the government established policies to assist municipalities in carrying out their mandate of providing efficient and sustainable service delivery. These policies included the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), National Development Plan (NDP), Intergovernmental Relations (IGR), and water boards, which were established in terms of the Water Services Act (Act 108 of 1997.

The South African government acknowledges that clean water is a fundamental human right. Consequently, the government has made water legislation available, which serves as a guide for using and managing water and the environment (Jordaan et al., 2021; Njoko & Mudhara, 2017). The National Water Act of 1998 was promulgated 25 years ago amidst a time of immense optimism and potential for democratic South Africa (Water Legislation, 2023). During this time, rapid changes occurred, and the challenges were significant. The 1997 Water Services Act and the National Water Act of 1998 were among the first sector-specific laws that embodied the principles of the new Constitution, aimed at addressing the profound inequalities created by over three centuries of colonisation and apartheid.

Despite progressive policies and a constitutional right to water, South Africa grapples with significant water delivery issues (Hofstetter et al., 2020). South Africa remains burdened by substantial challenges in water delivery despite the existence of forward-thinking policies and a constitutional mandate to ensure the right to water. This contradiction highlights the gap between legislative intention and practical implementation. While policies provide a framework for equitable water access,

systemic issues hinder their effectiveness, such as infrastructure deficiencies, governance inefficiencies, and financial constraints.

As a result, Steyn (2021) states that South Africa is still recognised as a water-scarce country, which places high pressure on limited water resources. This, in turn, affects the local government in ensuring that communities are provided with water services that foster a safe and healthy environment (Zwane & Matsiliza, 2022). Marumahoko (2020) concurs that, after using the new stream of strategies and policies, the local government was expected to improve water service delivery, and several years later, this has yet to occur. Nevertheless, with these policies, water service delivery challenges in many rural communities still need to be addressed.

Regardless, the government did not give up trying to improve the lives of rural people and decided to implement a new model (DDM) that was expected to assist existing strategies to provide water service delivery in rural areas. Therefore, this study has yet to establish the role of DDM in improving water service delivery, as no studies have explored this phenomenon.

The adoption and implementation of the District Development Model (DDM) are essential steps in addressing critical issues identified in numerous reports and studies concerning governance in South Africa, especially service delivery(Sausi & Davids, 2022). DDM aims to enhance coordination and coherence across various levels of government, ensuring that services are delivered more effectively and efficiently to the public. This model seeks to bridge the gaps between policy and implementation, addressing the fragmented approach, which has often hindered progress. By fostering greater collaboration and alignment between national, provincial, and local governments, the DDM strives to create a more integrated and responsive governance framework.

Moreover, the emphasis on the DDM underscores the recognition that improving service delivery is not just a technical challenge but also a fundamental aspect of

achieving social justice and equity in South Africa. Effective service delivery is crucial for improving the quality of life of all citizens, particularly those living in rural communities. Many strategies with similar goals have been implemented; however, the desired results remain elusive. Despite the best intentions and concerted efforts, much more work still needs to be accomplished.

2.4. The theoretical framework of the study

This study used Organisational development theory (ODT) and the Human Rights approach. These theories assisted the researcher in understanding and evaluating the DDM's assistance in the water service delivery challenges faced by Elundini Local Municipality. OD theory was the primary guiding framework for this study. This study aims to determine the role of DDM in easing water service delivery challenges in Mount Fletcher. organisational development theory deals with an institution's or organisation’s internal dynamics.

1.4.1. Organisational development theory

Given the evidence that system failures can contribute to quality issues, there is an increasing emphasis on organisational requirements for improving service quality (Rhydderch, 2004). Human relations experts realised in the 1930s that organizational architecture and procedures affected employee motivation and behaviour. This theory was acknowledged by Kurt Lewin, who worked in various areas, including group dynamics, organisational psychology, and transformation (Burnes, 2004).

Organisational development practitioners engage in management style improvement, strategy creation, cultural change, technology integration, and employee development (Bazigos & Burke, 1997). organisational development theory applies behavioural sciences to improve organisational effectiveness (Wu & Chu, 2015). The objectives of OD theory identify how an institution's internal dynamics arise when working together. Additionally, it includes thoroughly planned actions derived from problem assessment to strategise implementation and, finally, ends with an evaluation of effectiveness (Levin et al., 2013).

The OD theory objectives include enhancing organisational effectiveness, including a company's capacity to work effectively, and modifying cultural norms, practices, and procedures (Schneider et al., 2013). This theory has three concepts: organisational climate, culture, and capacity. Organisational climate may be considered a shared perception of the policies, procedures, and practices that workers experience. However, an unmet organizational climate leads to inconsistent policies and methods (Schneider et al., 2013; Glanz et al., 2008). In this case, the Joe Gqabi district municipality sets policies and procedures that local municipalities, such as Elundini, need to align with to accomplish their goals.

One of the DDMs focuses on infrastructure engineering, which outlines the availability of bulk service infrastructure, including water, sanitation, electricity, and roads (Sausi & Davids, 2022). OD theory looks at the coherence of parts of the organisation; however, in the case of this study, government spheres work together to provide efficient and sustainable water service delivery to rural inhabitants of Elundini Local Municipality (Srinivas, 2020). The application of OD theory is a change in participative management. Therefore, everyone in the planning and implementation stages of the DDM must participate in this model to yield results. The OD theory assisted this research in achieving the objectives of this study, objective two, which wished to explore the methods used to plan and monitor the operations of DDM. Simultaneously, objective three assesses the mechanisms used by the Elundini Local Municipality to achieve the intended goals of the DDM for the community.

1.4.2. Human Rights Approach

Human rights are positioned at the centre of human development under the human rights approach (Xiang & Maïnkade, 2023). Until the late 1980s, development and human rights were perceived as separate domains with distinct strategies and objectives, as noted by (Feiring & König-Reis, 2020). The United Nations (UN) officially acknowledged this in 1986. The UN confirmed the merging of development and human rights discourse at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna (Marx et al., 2015). According to Sekalala et al. (2021), the human rights approach forces states to take responsibility for their actions and to reframe commitments as rights and obligations.

Nyamu-Musembi and Cornwall (2004) identify that the human rights approach is a catalyst that can transform development practices to meet people's needs. First, these endeavours are promoted by collaborating with both governmental and non-governmental entities to enhance their capability to address and assume responsibility for safeguarding, honouring, and fulfilling human rights. Second, they empower citizens by creating avenues for individuals to assert their rights and enhance their capacities (Medina Poblete, 2023). Participation, accountability, non-discrimination, equality empowerment, and legality are fundamental tenets of putting a human rights-based strategy into action (Broberg & Sano, 2018).

This demonstrates that the unity of all public institutions is necessary for their performance, to show support, and to provide empowerment opportunities to the communities they work for. This theory helped the researcher understand the municipality's readiness to ensure that the model achieves its desired goals, and how this model can help the municipality improve water service delivery to the communities of Mount Fletcher. At the same time, the researcher was able to check the level of accountability that the Elundini Local Municipality was taking to provide efficient and sustainable development. Many forms, such as economic, environmental, and cultural growth, characterize the development effect. Mahajan et al. (2022) stated that solid governance can provide public water services with policymakers' commitment and support. This may be economically sound, environmentally sustainable, and socially equitable. Thus, this study focuses on water service delivery in the communities of Tlokoeng in Elundini's local municipality. Water challenges continue to rise, and this study seeks to understand how the DDM differs from other strategies implemented before, and how this model helped these communities.

1.5. Legal, Policy and Institutional Framework for DDM

The District Development Model (DDM) is in harmony with previously established policies to enhance government delivery of high-quality public services. These policies encompass the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Integrated Urban Development

Framework (IUDF), Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs), and National Development Plan (NDP). The alignment of the DDM with prior policies, such as the IDP, IUDF, SDFs, and the National Development Plan is crucial for several reasons. First, it ensures consistency and coherence in the government's approach to public service delivery, facilitates integrated planning and resource allocation, and promotes sustainability and long-term planning (District Development Model, 2020).

An Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is a comprehensive blueprint for the municipality that serves as a holistic framework for development. Its primary objective is to coordinate the endeavours of local and other levels of government, aiming to establish a cohesive strategy that enhances the overall quality of life for all residents (Integrated Development Plan, 2022). The plan should consider current conditions, challenges, and resources available for development.

According to the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), all municipalities are required to engage in an IDP process to create Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). As per legislative mandate, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) holds legal authority and takes precedence over all other plans that govern development at the local government level. The IDP is formulated through a comprehensive process, wherein municipalities devise a strategic development plan spanning a period of five years.

The Spatial Development Framework (SDF) is a strategic spatial plan designed with a long-term perspective extending to 2050, mandated by the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act of 2013 (SPLUMA), and must align with the 2030 National Development Plan (NDP) (National Spatial Development Framework, 2018). This long-term perspective allows for comprehensive planning that can adapt to future challenges and opportunities, ensuring that development is both forward-looking and resilient.

Moreover, aligning the NSDF with the 2030 National Development Plan (NDP) is crucial for coherence in national policy. The NDP sets broad developmental goals and objectives for the country, and ensuring that the NSDF is in harmony with these goals guarantees that spatial planning effectively contributes to the national vision. This

alignment ensures that all spatial development initiatives are geared towards achieving the same overarching objectives and enhancing the effectiveness and impact of development policies.

The Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) is a national urban policy that presents a fresh approach for South African cities and towns. Its goal is to steer urban expansion towards a sustainable model that features compact, connected, and coordinated urban areas (Integrated Urban Development Framework, 2020). The IUDF outlines a plan to realise the National Development Plan's (NDP) vision of spatial transformation by developing liveable, inclusive, and resilient towns and cities while addressing the spatial disparities left by apartheid (Integrated Urban Development Framework, 2020). The IUDF's alignment with the National Development Plan (NDP) vision for spatial transformation is vital for achieving broader national goals. The NDP sets out a vision for creating liveable, inclusive, and resilient towns and cities, and the IUDF provides a detailed roadmap for realising this vision.

The complementary nature of IUDF and DDM is vital for comprehensive and effective regional development (District Development Model, 2020). The IUDF's focus on cities and towns allows for targeted interventions that address unique challenges and opportunities within urban areas. This granularity ensures that urban development initiatives are tailored to the specific needs of these areas, leading to more effective outcomes. On the other hand, the DDM's district-wide approach provides a broader regional perspective that is essential for coordinating development efforts across different municipalities. This regional posture ensures that development strategies are harmonised, preventing fragmented and disjointed efforts. The DDM enhances overall district cohesion and integration by addressing regional disparities and promoting a balanced development.

1.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of existing literature on the DDM and its significance in local municipality, particularly in relation to water service delivery.

The discussion encompassed key theoretical and conceptual frameworks, offering a structured lens through which the study is analyzed. By exploring previous research, policy documents, and case studies, the chapter established a strong foundation for understanding the effectiveness and challenges of the DDM in addressing water service delivery issues.

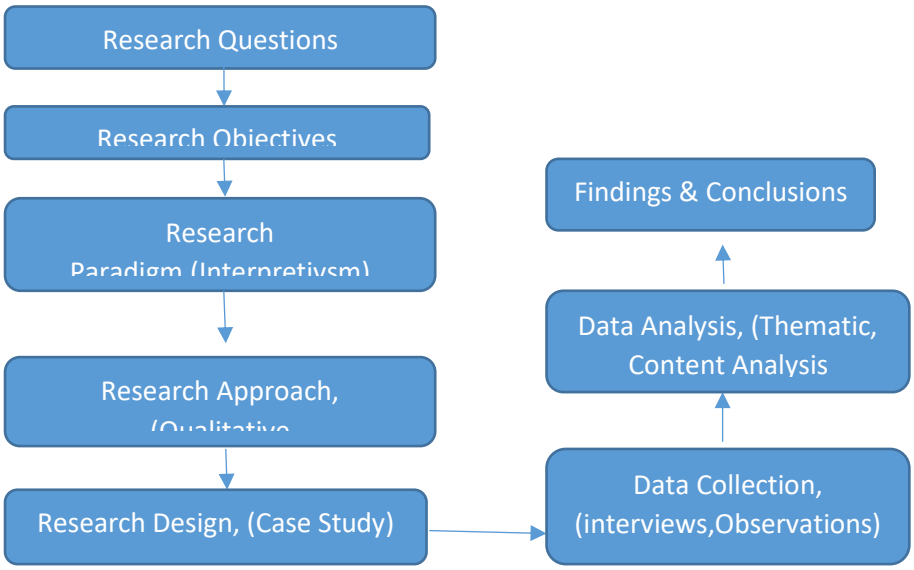
Despite the extensive review, a noticeable gap in the literature remains. While many studies highlight the potential benefits of the DDM in streamlining governance and improving service provision, there is limited empirical evidence on its actual impact, particularly at the ward level where community-based developments take place. Existing research often focuses on policy intentions rather than practical outcomes, leaving a gap in understanding how effectively the model translates into tangible improvements in water service delivery. The next chapter will present the research methodology, outlining the approach used to investigate the identified gaps. It will detail the research design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques employed to assess the DDM's role in local municipality and water service delivery. This methodological framework will ensure a rigorous and systematic examination of the study's objectives.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a concise overview of the execution of the research study, highlighting the approach and methodology employed. It also outlines the research paradigm, approach, sampling size and methods, data gathering procedures, and the qualitative techniques employed for data analysis. The primary objective of this chapter is to present the research methodology and data analysis utilised in the study, including the methods used for data collection and analysis. The diagrammatic representation below illustrates the interconnected progression from the research questions and objectives to the theoretical paradigm, methodological approach, research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. Each component informs and logically follows from the preceding one, establishing a rigorous and methodologically sound framework.



3.2. Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach. The proposed research approach assisted the researcher in determining whether the local government was working toward achieving DDM goals. A qualitative research strategy is appropriate when the researcher explores complicated issues in a new field of study, formulating new ideas, and contextualising data (Noyes et al., 2015). Turner et al. (2021) state that because societies are becoming more dynamic, well-managed qualitative research and data collection methods are critical for eliciting reliable data from respondents and analysing and interpreting data that provide meaningful explanations for events of the DDM and water service delivery in Tlokoeng (Mount Fletcher).

Qualitative research seeks to explain and interpret respondents' experiences and learn new data about DDM and water service delivery without making initial assumptions. It is essential to highlight that qualitative research is characterised by subjectivity, rooted in intuitive knowledge, and seeks to understand the topic under investigation comprehensively (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023).

Therefore, the researcher wished to understand DDM and water service delivery mechanisms in Tlokoeng's small town better. This helped the researcher determine whether the model's aims had been carried out. According to the primary purpose of the DDM, government agencies should work together to deliver high-quality services to communities. Additionally, it aims to find connections between various participants' answers in the complex layers of various research questions. The current study aimed to explore the methods and plans used to monitor the operations of the ELM model in the Joe Gqabi District Municipality. The qualitative approach assisted the researcher with a reasoning strategy that allowed the researcher to investigate meanings and insights in a given context (Levitt et al., 2017). The qualitative research approach portrayed the socially determined realities of water service delivery and the DDM.

The chosen research methodology possesses qualities that are advantageous for this study. Qualitative research has various advantages, including the ability to grasp the

meaning that individuals construct, generate an in-depth understanding of educational phenomena, study individual situations, consider the changing character of environments, and contribute to the development of new theories (Mulisa, 2022). Despite this, Mulisa (2022) highlighted the limitations of the qualitative technique, including its inability to generalize the findings, test theories and hypotheses, the time-consuming nature of the research, and researchers' biases.

In addition to the aforementioned limitations, this approach provides an opportunity to obtain views and experiences regarding the municipality's DDM and water service delivery. The data were collected in Elundini's local municipality, and a qualitative approach was used with in-depth interviews to explore the readiness of the municipality to facilitate the DDM goals and objectives. This approach was beneficial for this research to gather in-depth knowledge on DDM.

3.3. Research Paradigm

This study used the interpretivism research paradigm to help the researcher identify context, value-free information, and truth about the newly implemented model. It also helped the researcher to understand the individuals' interpretations of the DDM. Instead of focusing on the observer's perspective, every attempt was made to understand the viewpoint of the observed topic. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) argue that the interpretive approach seeks to comprehend social events from the perspective of the participants, rather than from the researcher's viewpoint.

Additionally, interpretivism assumes that reality is subjective and can vary when considering various individuals, because it emphasizes personal meanings and contributions (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

According to Pulla and Carter (2018), the interpretive perspective allows researchers to examine the meaning behind comprehension of human interactions, behaviours, and society. It also incorporated the researcher's attempt to create a thorough subjective understanding of people's lives. As a result, this paradigm aided the researcher in understanding the interpretations of the Elundini Local Municipality regarding water service delivery and the stated DDM assumptions with the actual practice objectives of this model. The positivist paradigm is one of the paradigms mainly used in research. The positivist research paradigm maintains that the world is

a cohesive entity that can be explored using scientific techniques. Experiments and other scientific approaches produce conclusive results that cannot be subjected to numerous interpretations (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021).

According to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), the rules in the positivist paradigm need to theorize the study of social science. In this case, critics of the interpretivist paradigm have been criticized for several years. Interpretivism has been criticized for being unable to make a significant contribution to social analysis because it can view the world from various perspectives. Because its standards call for viewing these perspectives equally, interpretivism inevitably questions all epistemologies (Junjie & Yingxin, 2022).

According to Pham (2018), interpretivism takes a relativist approach to ontology, recognizing that a single occurrence might have various interpretations rather than a definite fact that can be proven using measurement methods. Lewis (2015) asserts that, rather than generalizing findings to the entire population, researchers employing an interpretivist approach typically aim to comprehend the intricacies of an event within its specific context and understand its complexities. Therefore, the researcher used an interpretive paradigm to understand the interpretations of the municipality and communities regarding the DDM in the Elundini local municipality Tlokoeng (Mount Fletcher). A research paradigm is a plan for researchers who wish to conduct research and determine the direction of the topic. Finally, it guides the interpretation of the data. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), this paradigm plays a critical role in research because it influences what should be explored, how it should be investigated, and how the study's findings should be understood. Kekeya (2019) stated that a research paradigm is a theoretical framework within which a study is directed or carried out. It involves a combination of theoretical foundations and methodological approaches, including data-collection procedures, techniques, and tools for data analysis.

3.4 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive design and a case study design. Research design is a researcher's framework or strategy for conducting an investigation. "research design" describes a researcher's overall approach or method for examining a specific

research issue or hypothesis. It describes the precise actions and processes used to gather, evaluate, and interpret data to accomplish study objectives (Hassan & Wan Khairuldin, 2020). The research design can be divided into three groups: causal, descriptive, and exploratory analysis (Hassan & Wan Khairuldin, 2020). Because DDM is a new model, more information about how water services are delivered must be provided.

The researcher chose a descriptive research design to investigate the role of DDM and readiness conditions in Elundini Local Municipality, Mount Fletcher. This study aims to gain a deeper understanding and explore alternative perspectives on the DDM. A descriptive approach has been proposed to describe experiences and perceptions in areas where small amounts of information are available (Doyle et al., 2020). Wittmeier et al. (2022) state that the descriptive research design is particularly well suited for studies that aim to understand or describe a process or event where time or resources are constrained or for small, specialized studies conducted in the phenomenon's natural environment. A more qualitative approach often underpins this inquiry by focusing on obtaining new insights into current situations and issues (Rahi, 2017). Sahin and Mete (2021) stated that descriptive research can often integrate parts of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches into a single study, defying simple classification as either qualitative or quantitative.

This research design had its own characteristics. Pandey and Pandey (2015) stipulated that the descriptive study design is distinguished by uncontrolled variables, which means that none of the variables are changed in any way. This research was conducted using observational approaches. As a result, the researcher has no control over the nature or conduct of the variables. The second characteristic is that descriptive research typically involves a cross-sectional study in which several subgroups within the same population are examined.

Finally, it ultimately provides the framework for further analysis. Doyle et al. (2020) reveal the various criticisms of the descriptive research design, which analyses and summarises data rather than seeks to demonstrate cause-and-effect links, lacks

generalisation, and cannot control variables. The researcher used this research design to answer the research questions and gather, evaluate, and interpret the data. Moreover, the research design enabled the researcher to obtain new data on the DDM to help municipalities deliver quality services to communities.

3.4.1. Case study design

A case study research design involves a detailed examination of a specific subject within its real-life context (Oranga & Matere, 2023). It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding by analysing data, identifying patterns, and drawing conclusions based on empirical evidence (Priya, 2021). During data collection, the researcher utilized observation to gather insights, highlighting the advantages of employing a case study design for this research. The case study approach is particularly beneficial in studying the District Development Model (DDM) as it allows for an in-depth exploration of its implementation, challenges, and impact in a real-world context. By employing a case study design, this research ensures a thorough and contextually relevant analysis of the DDM, providing meaningful insights into its effectiveness and areas for improvement.

3.5 Target Population

The target population in research refers to a particular group or population that the researcher aims to investigate or extrapolate from (Rahman et al., 2022). Researchers are most interested in people with particular traits or features. In the current study, the targeted population included workers in municipality departments focused on service delivery to the local communities of Elundini, a local municipality in Mount Fletcher, and community members of Mount Fletcher, where water challenges are being experienced. Focusing on Infrastructure Planning and Development (IP&D), the community service office in the water and sanitation department assisted the researcher in assessing the role of DDM in water service delivery and the municipality's readiness and preparedness for DDM.

The study objectives and research questions were investigated to determine the target population. Casteel and Bridier (2021) declared that the target population is a specific, conceptually defined group of possible participants to whom the researcher may have

access and who embody the characteristics of the individuals of interest. The DDM was implemented in 2021 in the district (Joe Gqabi) and local-level municipalities; there has been limited literature about the model's assistance in municipalities and communities since its implementation. Municipality workers who have worked closely with the model since its implementation stages have provided the researcher with accurate advances that the municipality has taken to achieve the goals of this model. The communities affected by the service delivery in this aspect of water services also provided information on how water service delivery has been since this model was implemented.

3.6 Sampling Technique

The sampling approach is used when a population subset is selected as a representative sample. Additionally, a sampling technique refers to the method employed to determine observations from people included in the sample (Rai & Thapa, 2015). The sampling method determines the size of the selection to ensure the confidence level needed for the findings and generalizability. It also helps the researcher choose a representative sample (Berndt, 2020). The researcher used nonprobability sampling and a purposive sampling technique. Non-probability sampling is also known by names such as purposeful, purposive, and judgmental. Non-probability sampling methods adopt a strategy in which the sample is chosen based on the researcher's subjective view instead of random selection (Elfil & Negida, 2017).

Purposeful sampling is a commonly employed technique in qualitative research aimed at identifying and selecting cases that provide the most informative data, thus optimising the utilisation of resources (Etikan, 2016). This involves actively seeking and selecting individuals or groups with significant knowledge and expertise regarding the phenomenon under investigation. In the current study, the researcher employed purposive sampling to select the employees of the local municipality in Elundini as a group of people with the information and experience necessary to respond to questions concerning DDM and Water service delivery in Mount Fletcher villages. Additionally, the researcher purposely chose the Katlehong, Tsekong, and Hlankomo communities as part of the population, as each has unique water service provision methods.

Purposive sampling is sometimes known as judgment, selective, or subjective sampling, which reflects the researcher's decision but has both advantages and disadvantages. Sharma (2017) explains the advantages of purposeful sampling, highlighting that it allows researchers to justify making generalisations from the sample being studied, whether these generalisations are theoretical, analytical, or logical. The second benefit Sharma (2017) mentioned is that purposive sampling helps conduct qualitative research in stages, with each stage building on the previous stage.

On the other hand, Thomas (2022) highlights the drawbacks of purposive sampling because it depends on researchers' discretion when choosing participants, which can create researcher bias. For example, in this study, the researcher purposefully chose municipal officials working in the IP&D, Community Service, and Water & Sanitation Office, which better understood the DDM and water service delivery. The study required deep understanding and knowledge of the DDM, and there was bias in the researcher because of the prior information that was needed for this study. Purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on specified criteria, can provide homogeneous samples, lacks unpredictability, and is challenging to define. This study required a researcher to obtain particular answers from the participants.

3.7 Sample Size

This study's sample size included Infrastructure Planning and Development (IP&D) and community service workers in water and sanitation departments. Sample consisted of two managers who oversaw the new development strategies working in the IP & D office and two supervisors working in the community service department. These departments provided the researcher with data about the DDM and water service delivery, as they had better knowledge about the model and its operations. Then, ten employees within these departments executed the services on the ground level. Moreover, one counsellor and one traditional local leader in Mount Fletcher, who dealt with community complaints and challenges, were included in the sample of the study.

The researcher interviewed 15 community members for their perspectives on water service delivery. The community members were selected based on the fact that they stayed in communities with no piped water. The sample included five small business owners who were purposefully selected to obtain a holistic view of the DDM and water service delivery. The overall sample size of this study was 35 participants.

Category	**Number of participants**
Managers	2
Community members	16
Councilor	1
Traditional Leader	1
Municipality Workers	8
Business owners	7
Total	**35**

Table 1: Breakdown of the research sample size.

The primary goal of sample size justification for the study was to demonstrate how the obtained data likely yielded valuable information given the researcher's inferential intentions (Lakens, 2022).As a result, the sample size chosen for this study, which focuses on municipal employees and community members, is likely to produce the intended results and assist the researcher in learning enough about this model. On the other hand, qualitative research typically uses a smaller sample size to facilitate the in-depth case-oriented analysis central to this type of investigation. Additionally, qualitative samples were purposefully chosen for their ability to offer detailed insights pertinent to the topic under study (Vasileiou et al., 2018). The researcher aimed to determine the role of DDM in easing water service delivery challenges and the communities affected by water challenges.

3.8 Methods of data collection

The purpose of data collection is to gather relevant and accurate information that can be used to answer research questions, make informed decisions, analyse trends, and gain insights into a particular subject or problem. The collected data can be quantitative (numeric) or qualitative (descriptive or categorical), depending on the nature of the research or inquiry. To understand this study's objectives, primary data

on the DDM were collected from the representatives of the Elundini Local Municipality using semi-structured interviews. The interview guide comprised open-ended questions that the researcher asked department workers. At the same time, interview discussions with the managers sought the participants' details on how the municipality has ensured its readiness for the newly implemented model.

Questions on water access and their challenges as a community formed part of the interview guide. Government statistics, NGO reports, newspaper or website articles, research studies, evaluations carried out by other agencies, and community records are some examples of secondary data used by researchers. Secondary data are valuable sources of information that can support different data collection methods.

3.8.1 Semi-Structured interviews

For this study, the researcher used direct observation and semi-structured interviews to gather data on workers in the IP&D department, counsellors, traditional leaders, and community members. The researcher observed the participants directly during the interviews. Semi-structured interviews are a popular, versatile and adaptable (Kallio et al., 2016). Jamshed (2014) stated that individuals or groups frequently conduct semi-structured interviews. According to McGrath et al. (2019), semi-structured interviews are the preferred method of data collection when the researcher's goal is to gain a detailed understanding of each participant's viewpoint rather than to seek generalised knowledge of a phenomenon. The goal of this instrument is to compile information from significant individuals with relevant personal experiences, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Semi-structured interviews have several advantages. They balance structure and flexibility, allowing researchers to gather rich, detailed data while maintaining comparability across interviews. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) note that the main advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they allow for discussions to be directed while enabling the researcher to explore any relevant thoughts that may arise during the interview. According to Kakilla (2021), one benefit of semi-structured interviews is that they are interactive, allowing the interviewees the freedom to express

themselves and increasing the possibility that new ideas were generated and implemented.

Some of the disadvantages of semi-structured interviews, according to Kakilla (2021), include the inflexibility of the conversation if there is a limited understanding of the topic, limited responses when the participants are not comfortable answering the questions, and sometimes being lost in translation if there is a language barrier between the interviewer and interviewee. Furthermore, conducting interviews allowed the researcher to observe the participants directly while performing the interviews. Observation, as a data collection approach, is a means of gathering systematic information about various situations and groups. It is collected through practical assessment and can provide insight into how people communicate meaning to a research phenomenon (Fry et al., 2017).

Observation is an excellent tool for capturing precise context-rich information that is difficult to determine using other methods. It is an effective formative research technique both early in the study and throughout. According to Weston et al. (2022), observational data can be used throughout a study to describe processes, experiences, and areas for intervention, improve practice, further organisational goals, and develop context-specific interventions. They further asserted that using observation to inform interview guides and surveys enables researchers to ask more specific and context-relevant questions. The researcher used participant observation to participate actively in the setting or group being studied. The advantages of observational research involve first and real-time data, allowing the researcher to capture natural behaviours and contexts.

3.8.2 Data Analysis

This study employed thematic and content analysis. This data collection method assisted the researcher in obtaining relevant results to understand the District Development Model and its working progress. A thematic analysis (TA) research technique was used to find, analyse, classify, and report themes found within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) claimed that a theme systematically captures a significant component of the data, regardless of whether it depicts the

majority experience of the data. As a result, the TA evaluated whether the study data meaningfully answered the research question.

The thematic analysis identifies the data analysis approach, which mainly focuses on themes in the data collected. The study mainly explored the methods used by the Elundini local municipality to plan and monitor the operations of the DDM. The researcher believes that thematic analysis could be best used in this study. Moreover, the current study aimed to determine the first-hand experiences of the community and that of the ELM in terms of water service delivery. According to Braun and Clarke (2023), one of the most critical steps in understanding theme analysis practice is appreciating its diversity and determining what form of thematic analysis the researcher is conducting. It can be used with several epistemologies and research objectives (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis seeks to identify meaning patterns in the data derived from lived experiences. This analysis begins with textual data and attempts to structure definitions discovered in the data into designs and themes (Sundler et al., 2019). The six processes of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis were familiarization with the data, creating coding categories, developing themes, reviewing themes, naming and defining themes, and identifying exemplars. Consequently, following these procedures, conducting a qualitative TA is essential for obtaining high-quality data.

Additionally, thematic analysis assisted the researcher in identifying pertinent or fascinating patterns in the data, which can subsequently be used to address the topic or make a point about a problem. The conceptualization of themes and whether themes are seen as summaries of topics or categories or as capturing a fundamental idea or meaning and presenting an interpretive story about it are central concerns of thematic analysis methodologies by Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis methodologies (2023).

Content analysis is a research method used to systematically analyse and interpret the content of various forms of communication, such as written text, government statistics, NGO reports, newspaper or website articles, research studies, and

evaluations conducted by other agencies. This involves systematically examining the content to identify patterns, themes, and relationships within the data. Content analysis is one of the many qualitative techniques currently available for analysing data and interpreting their significance (Roller, 2019). Khirfan et al. (2020) described content analysis as an objective, rule-guided technique for making reproducible and reliable judgments by assessing the properties of visual, vocal, and written documents. A quantitative or qualitative approach can be applied inductively or deductively depending on the research question and strategy. Content analysis aims to gain valuable insights and develop conclusions about the content's qualities, meanings, and implications.

According to Mayring (2019), researchers commonly use content analysis to investigate various issues, including media portrayals, public opinion, social trends, propaganda, political discourse, advertising, and qualitative data analyses. In this study, content analysis was used to obtain insights into the DDM of government officials from the community's perspective. Since the local communities and municipalities experience the implemented strategies differently, the researcher saw it fit that the content analysis should be utilised in the study to gain insights into both the municipality and the community. Overall, content analysis is a valuable research method that allows researchers to gain insights into the content of various forms of communication and understand the social, cultural, and psychological aspects of water service delivery and DDM.

3.8.3 Trustworthiness and Data Quality

In this study, qualitative data analysis employs strategies to ensure the realities of the communities regarding the DDM and water service delivery, and the credibility of the findings should be interpreted. These strategies encompass credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability and authenticity. The trustworthiness of a study refers to its level of confidence in the data, interpretation, and methodologies employed to ensure the quality of the research (Connelly, 2016). To obtain rich data, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with participants to gain insight into the DDM and water service delivery in Mount Fletcher.

The study's credibility and confidence in the truth of the research indicate that the findings are the most crucial criteria (Polit & Beck, 2014). A prolonged observation period was used during data collection, and this technique was used in this study. Thorough notes were taken during data collection to help the researcher during data analysis. The researcher had a diary for writing important points that were deemed important during the data-collection period. Dependability is confirmed by ensuring that the research process is traceable, logical, and documented (Nowell et al., 2017). In this case, the researcher sought consent from the municipality and community members to conduct the interviews to ensure dependability; the information gathered was diligently recorded on the diary and notepad the researcher used, and direct quotes were transmitted. The information collected from the documents used in this study was referenced.

Cope (2014) defined confirmability as the researcher's capacity to demonstrate that the data accurately represent the participants' responses and are not influenced by the researcher's biases or perspectives. Thorough notes were taken during the data collection process to facilitate data collection and analysis. Additionally, direct quotes were utilized during the data analysis stage. Transferability is the ability of research and conclusions to be applied to various contexts or groups (Adler, 2022). The researcher wrote the interpretations and findings of this study based on the collected data and did not add their perspectives.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to the procedures set forth by the University's Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which mandates a review of all research projects. The UREC oversees compliance with ethical principles, values, and research practices. Before data collection, the researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate through the Inter-Faculty Research Ethics Committee (IFREC). This study followed the following ethical considerations throughout the research: consent was given voluntarily and with knowledge. Participants must understand what is being asked of them, permission must be freely given (voluntary), and all parties involved must be able to provide consent (Arifin, 2017). In this study, a consent letter was written and given to participants to sign to ensure that they understood that they could voluntarily participate or not participate in this study.

Anonymity and confidentiality safeguard participants' identities by withholding their names and identifying information throughout the data collection, analysis, and reporting of study results (Kalu, 2017). The researcher did not reveal the participants' names or identities during data collection. Pseudo data were used when analysing and writing a report of the study stage.

In compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), the personal information collected was treated as confidential. Protecting the publication of participants' personal information ensures that their rights and integrity are respected (Fotrousi et al., 2017). The researcher created a password-protected folder to store personal data. The researcher shared the data with the units associated with this study, which included supervisors. The study results were shared with the public, policymakers and academics upon completion. As the study comprised primary data, anonymity and confidentiality were considered.

3.10 Limitations

Due to the limited time available, this study encountered limitations and problems because the researcher had to travel long distances between communities to collect data. In this study, the researcher concentrated on what the participants felt comfortable and could respond to.

3.11. Delimitations

The delimitations of this study define its scope and focus, ensuring a manageable and relevant investigation of the DDM. Geographically, the study is limited to Mount Fletcher in the ELM municipality, excluding a broader local and district analysis. The sample consists of municipal managers, community members, a councillor, a traditional leader, municipal workers, and business owners, while other stakeholders, such as provincial or national government officials, are not included. Methodologically, the study adopts a case study approach, relying on qualitative data through observations, rather than large-scale surveys or statistical analyses. Additionally, the research focuses on the recent implementation of the DDM within the ELM, without conducting a long-term or historical evaluation. The study specifically examines the effectiveness, challenges, and impact of the DDM on the municipality’s water service

delivery without engaging in broader national policy discussions. These delimitations ensure a focused and in-depth analysis within a practical research framework.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a thorough analysis and description of the research methodology used in this study. It identifies the tools and instruments used for data collection and outlines the different methods used to gather data. Additionally, this chapter explains the sampling techniques used in the study. This chapter is crucial, as it establishes the foundation for the study's validity and reliability. Detailing the research methodology ensures transparency and allows for the replication of the study. The chapter's examination of the data collection instruments and sampling methods helps ensure that the data are accurately gathered and representative, which is essential for drawing meaningful and credible conclusions from the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter presents the research findings and discussion explored during the data collection. The data were collected in the ELM, Tsekong, Katlehong, and Moroka communities of Mount Fletcher.

4.2. Responses

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The researcher was able to interview the IDP manager and the Community Service Director in the management positions of the ELM, who are also the champions of the DDM in the ELM region. The researcher interviewed eight municipal workers to gain insights into municipal operations and service delivery. Additionally, the researcher engaged with the Mount Fletcher region's councillor and a traditional healer to understand the in-depth challenges faced by their communities. To further explore the perspectives of those directly affected by water service delivery, the researcher interviewed 16 community workers who actively experience these local issues. The study also included 10 business owners to understand the community's economic landscape and water challenges. In total, 35 participants contributed to this research, offering diverse and valuable insights into the key issues under investigation.

4.2.1. To understand the perceptions of the municipality and the community and the methods used to plan and monitor the operations of DDM in water service delivery in Elundini's local municipality in Joe Gqabi District.

Municipal officials were interviewed about the methods used in the ELM to monitor the plans and operations of the DDM in the municipality.

1) **Role of the IDP in monitoring DDM operations**

   Municipal officials emphasized that the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) serves as the primary strategic planning tool for overseeing the District Development Model (DDM) in ELM. The IDP manager stated that all planning, development, and decision-making within the municipality must align with the IDP to ensure

consistency and effectiveness (Integrated Development Plan, 2022). This was supported by the Community Service Director, who reiterated that the IDP guides the municipality in tracking the progress and implementation of the DDM, preventing any deviations from its intended objectives. To further explore the plans of the model in the municipality, officials were asked to clarify the intended objectives or plans of the DDM in the municipality and within the Mount Fletcher communities.

2) Key Objectives and Action Plans of the DDM in ELM

Municipal officials outlined the primary goals of the DDM in ELM, which include: Job creation for youth, Infrastructure development, including road repairs, Enhancement of healthcare systems, Improvement of water services and quality, Local economic growth and improved living standards.

These objectives align with the municipality's responsibility to prioritize community needs, promote socio-economic progress, and actively engage in national and local development activities (Mubangizi,2019). .

3) Intergovernmental Collaboration for Budget Planning

The IDP manager highlighted the collaborative approach between different spheres of government to ensure that budget planning and funding acquisition are well-coordinated. A municipal official stated, "*The municipality is not working alone. We are trying to work based on the aims of the DDM to ensure that the strategy meets its goals and that the municipality also achieves its objectives*." This demonstrates an effort to integrate the DDM framework within the existing municipal governance structure.

Even though the action plans may coordinate with the DDM, some services or projects still need to be accomplished in the IDP. For example, water challenges have been ongoing in the rural areas of Mount Fletcher. The above statements by government officials show that Mount Fletchers still has the same plans and needs to improve the goals and objectives of the IDP. In contrast to Senqu Local Municipality (18.9%) and Walter Sisulu Local Municipality (3.8%), which have smaller percentages of the population without access to piped water, ELM has a larger population

(46.7%), according to the Joe Gqabibi district's IDP (2022). ELM is the municipality with the most negligible development in providing pipe water to villages.

The evidence from this research shows that the perceptions of OD theory still need to be fully met in the municipality. According to Wu and Chu (2015), organisational development theory applies behavioural sciences to improve organisational effectiveness. The objectives of OD theory identify how an institution's internal dynamics arise when working together. The figure below shows some of the ways communities need to consider to consider clean water.

FIGURE 4.1: WATER STORAGE TANKS

The research findings indicate a discrepancy between planned development goals and actual service delivery in ELM. While the DDM and IDP frameworks provide structured methods for planning and monitoring, persistent water service challenges highlight implementation gaps. The high percentage of residents without access to piped water, compared to other municipalities in the district, raises concerns about ELM's developmental progress. Furthermore, while communities have devised their own

temporary water solutions, these do not replace the need for effective municipal intervention.

To bridge this gap, stronger coordination, enhanced accountability, and increased efficiency in project execution are necessary to ensure that DDM objectives translate into tangible improvements in service delivery.

4.2.2. To assess the role of the DDM in providing water services in Mount Fletcher communities

This section examines the perspectives of municipal officials, service providers, community members, and traditional leaders regarding water service delivery in Elundini Local Municipality (ELM) under the District Development Model (DDM). The findings reveal ongoing challenges in water accessibility, infrastructure development, and the implementation of DDM strategies, particularly in rural areas like Moroka, Tsekong, and Katlehong.

1) Perceptions and practices: struggles to overcome water challenges

Local governments are primarily obligated to provide water services, regardless of whether they assume the role of a water service authority or supplier (Act No. 108 of 1997). The participants in this study stated the challenges the municipality has faced for many years, including inadequate water services and road access, among many others. The Community Service director expressed her feelings about the water service delivery they had struggled to overcome for many years in ELM.

The Community Service director said: , "As the municipality, we face many challenges, including *creating job opportunities, standard roads, healthcare, housing and water access for all.* She continued, *“We have had water challenges for a long time in the rural areas. Even though we have tried to mitigate this in some areas, in deep rural areas, we are still struggling to overcome the challenges of water access, quality, and availability. People still use natural springs, rivers or dams to get water, which is not always ideal for consumption*.

The employees of the service providers shared their thoughts and knowledge on water service delivery and access, which included areas such as Tsekong and Katlehong. "*There are taps in Tsekong and Katlehong communities. Sometimes, we close the water to clean the dam, change and renew materials that we use, and allow the water to rise to a certain point before we open for the communities so that the water may be enough*". The above statement shows that some areas do have water; however, water availability in the taps depends on the satisfactory quantity in the reserve dam, the availability of materials, and whether the water is sufficient for every community. Moreover, some communities, such as Moroka, rely on natural springs and dams to obtain water. According to Kumasi et al. (2022), water quality enhances living standards, improves health, and provides greater convenience for citizens. However, the people of the Moroka community do not have the experience of quality of water as they struggle to obtain clean and adequate water.

Despite the government's responsibility to provide water services, many rural communities within ELM still lack adequate water access. The Community Service Director acknowledged that while efforts have been made to improve roads, healthcare, housing, and water infrastructure, deep rural areas remain underserved. The Moroka community, in particular, faces severe water shortages, relying on natural springs, rivers, and dams—sources that are often contaminated and shared with animals, leading to health and sanitation concerns.

The accounts from municipal employees and service providers confirm that some communities, such as Tsekong and Katlehong, have taps installed. However, the water supply remains inconsistent, as the municipality often shuts down water access to clean dams or replace materials. The lack of a stable water supply reflects structural inefficiencies in water service management and maintenance.

To obtain more views and opinions on water service delivery in Mount Fletcher, the researcher interviewed the town's traditional leader and counsellor to hear their points of view and gather more information. They added that ELM has a large backlog regarding service delivery, so many communities suffer the consequences. The council members continued, stating a general delay in providing services within the municipality. However, the situation is worsened by the need for appropriate materials

required by the municipality to ensure uninterrupted water access for neighbourhoods, regardless of the season (winter or summer. Conversely, the traditional leaders of these three communities suggested that *“while Tsekong and Katlehong have experienced relatively reasonable access to water services, the Moroka community has encountered difficulties due to a water shortage. They rely on natural springs unsuitable for consumption, often sharing these sources with animals, resulting in undignified conditions*.

2) Infrastructure Limitations and Incomplete Water Projects

In South Africa, strategies and institutions have been implemented to enhance the delivery of water services. For instance, the Department of Water Services is responsible for developing policies, putting them into practice, enforcing them, and managing the administration of water services (Enqvist & Ziervogel, 2019). At the same time, other institutions, such as the NWA and WSA, were implemented to provide citizens with quality water and sanitation.

However, these mandates and responsibilities do not operate in the rural areas of Mount Fletcher, as some places still need help to obtain water as a basic need. Moreover, ensuring adequate water access for the South African population is crucial for advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a particular focus on goal 6. This goal, encapsulated as "Water and sanitation for all," comprises six key targets: ensuring safe access to drinking water (6.1), providing access to sanitation facilities (6.2), maintaining water quality (6.3), addressing water use efficiency and scarcity (6.4), managing water resources (6.5), and preserving water-related ecosystems (6.6).

Additionally, the means of implementation targets involved official development assistance (6. a), and active engagement of local communities in water management (6. b). Mount Fletcher must fulfil all specified Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets. Communities in this area face various challenges regarding service delivery and access to water and sanitation.

The diagram below depicts the hardships faced by the residents of Moroka in Mount Fletcher when accessing water, as they rely on unprotected and contaminated dams for their daily needs.

Figure 0-24.2: Water Dam used in Moroka

Concerning the DDM's role in aiding the municipality in delivering quality water services to the communities, the director of community services mentioned, "*We haven't seen the DDM directly impacting water service delivery. However, ongoing projects could enhance water provision for all the communities under the ELM."* She went on to explain that two of the projects being carried out under the ELM are the bulk water system in Mount Fletcher Villages, which is Phase 2, and the bulk sanitation infrastructure improvement for Maclear, which is under Phases 2 through 5 of the Elundini Rural Sanitation VIP Program.

The Director of Community Services stated that these projects are being carried out under the will to improve and help many communities living in distress because of water scarcity and poor service delivery. According to the World Bank Group (2017), the water service infrastructure is the core element of improvement, which is critical to achieving economic and social development. According to the government officials' statements above, the DDM is yet to have a noticeable effect on the delivery of water

services in the ELM. However, projects that have begun since the implementation of the model in the municipality suggest that this model may help the municipality overcome its water service challenges.

3) Difficulties due to water shortages

Community members were interviewed to obtain more observations on water services in Mount Fletcher. Most participants in Tsekong and Katlehong alluded that water is available on taps, especially now that it is summer; otherwise, there are seasons where they go for two months without water, and there is also rainfall during summer, which assists in water tanks. Noqede expressed that the "*ELM's sole responsibility should be to inform the residents about water cutoffs. Otherwise, there is sometimes a lack of water for up to two months without prior notice to the community, and some individuals don't even have water tanks".*

4) Business Sufferings

These insights highlight the inconsistent nature of water service delivery in Mount Fletcher, with seasonal variations and lack of communication from the municipality exacerbating community frustrations. While some residents benefit from improved access during summer months, the prolonged and unannounced water outages emphasize the urgent need for more reliable infrastructure and transparent communication from ELM to ensure equitable and dignified access to this essential resource.

Nzipho, a businesswoman in Mount Fletcher town, said, "*My business is suffering because I just opened a laundry shop, but my suffering is not the unavailability of water, but the electricity; our electricity was cut off in this area*." However, the Moroka community alluded that they had never seen any water service because there were no water supplies other than rivers, dams, and natural springs. Batlokoa said,' *We have never seen any water service delivery in this community because two boreholes were made. They promised that we would have water, but it only worked for one month, and after that, we were told it was broken. Since then, we have used rivers, dams and water fountains to get water for our household's needs.*

These accounts reveal the deep-rooted service delivery challenges faced by both urban and rural communities in Mount Fletcher. While businesses in town struggle

with electricity outages that threaten livelihoods, rural areas like Moroka face a more fundamental crisis a complete lack of access to safe and consistent water supply. The unfulfilled promises of infrastructure development, such as the failed boreholes, further erode community trust and highlight the urgent need for sustainable, accountable, and inclusive service delivery interventions.

5) Reliance on natural springs

Kali said, "*We only have two boreholes that were supposed to supply water to the entire community, but they haven't been operating for more than three years, so we don't have any water services in our community*". The illustration below shows how community members of Moroka have managed to protect and use a natural spring to obtain water for their daily needs.

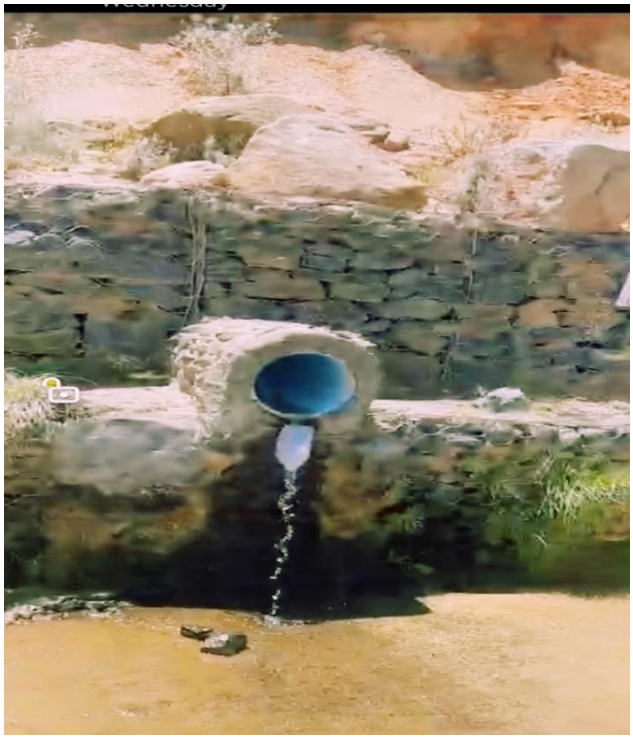

Figure 4.3: Protected small water well where communities fetch water

Most residents of the Moroka community emphasise that they lack access to clean and high-quality water for everyone. This rural community consistently encountered the challenge of denying its fundamental rights daily. Cole et al. (2018) stated that

water access is a basic human right and a key enabler of sustainable development, economic growth, food security, and health; reaching SDG 6 is crucial for South Africa as a developing nation. However, this statement by Cole et al. does not resonate with the people of Moroka, who still need to get basic water after many strategies are implemented by the ELM and government, including the DDM, to mitigate the challenges of water services faced by many rural communities.

Moreover, the situation that the Moroka community faces every day needs to align with the perspectives of the Human Rights approach, which advocates the transformation of people and practices by the government to meet the needs of the people. According to Sekalala et al. (2021), the human rights approach forces states to take responsibility for their actions and to reframe commitments as rights and obligations.

Government officials claimed that the District Development Model (DDM) has not significantly influenced overall service delivery, including job creation and improved access to roads and water services. This is mainly because many DDM plans must be completed. The IDP manager explained that most strategies to address water challenges in ELM are yet to be fully executed. Many are still in the planning stage, and funding is being sought because the municipality needs more financial resources to undertake these plans and responsibilities.

4.2.3. To explore the methods used by ELM to achieve the goals of the DDM for the community

For the District Development Model (DDM) strategy to be effective, it is crucial to explore the involvement of local municipalities, which are closer to communities, as they are directly responsible for addressing people's challenges. The South African government system is divided, generating direct ties and responsibilities between the national government and the provinces, as well as among local governments (Monkam, 2014; Thapa, 2020).

1) **Strategic use of IDP & Ward-based planning**

Government officials have concluded that the DDM has mechanisms that the model uses to achieve its goals of the DDM. The IDP manager said, "*The mechanisms that the municipality has implemented to optimise the benefits of the DDM is to use the IDP, prioritise the ward base plans and the needs of the communities*".

The Community Service director said, "*We will ensure that during this time, the development of the ELM communities is prioritised, improving the Local Economic Development, improving the living standards of the communities, and providing our communities with adequate water*".

The South African government has consistently employed various approaches to fulfil the objectives of each plan or strategy, aiming to meet the needs of the public and provide appropriate services. Despite utilising methods to ensure that the District Development Model (DDM) accomplishes its goals within the municipality, communities still need water assistance. According to Koprić et al. (2018), local municipalities are essential players in the supply of public services; therefore, they are strongly motivated to improve local service delivery.

According to Mount Fletcher's council member*, "It is never easy to put plans into action as the municipality faces general budgetary limits; Mount Fletcher as a whole is always in phase three of any developments that take place, making it extremely difficult for our people to perceive the development's progress and for us to serve as their leaders.*

2) **Water-based plans and community prioritisation**

Moreover, the traditional leader concurred with the council member's comment and added, "*Since the municipality's services appear to be taking longer, as the traditional leader, I have initiated several partnerships to enhance the quality of life for the populace. These cooperatives are now sponsored and centred on agriculture, which gives us optimism that our community is genuinely benefiting from something*". To gain additional understanding and observation of the services offered in ELM, the

researcher asked community members to share what they saw as positively impacting them and improving their communities.

Debbie stated that having access to water was essential for her as a restaurant businesswoman. Although there are occasions when this is not the case, she does not struggle too much because her restaurant is near municipal offices, where water is always available even when it is not in other places.

A member of the agricultural cooperative named Thando stated, *"I was struggling for years and couldn't get a job." Still, since I took advantage of the opportunity to join the cooperative, my family's situation has improved.*

Palesa talked about how receiving funding for her sewing business helped her develop personally and as a businesswoman. She added, "*I now have the right tools to take my company to new heights." She remarked that although the lack of water services in this tiny community is disheartening, there is hope that we will eventually have what we need, "she said"*. According to the participant responses above, the ELM has proven adept at concentrating on ward-based developments while focusing on other initiatives that help people's lives.

The municipality's development and areas depend on everyone having access to water. However, it is also critical to use and analyse the existing processes to determine how they contributed to the DDM's success of the DDM. Furthermore, when delivering services, local municipalities must ensure that their policies and solutions align with specific local challenges, such as water scarcity, varying access to water services among communities, high levels of youth unemployment, and community engagement in education. Furthermore, Steiner et al. (2018) stated that the ability of local municipalities to provide services depends on their superior understanding of local conditions and preference.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the strategies adopted by the Elundini Local Municipality (ELM) in implementing the District Development Model (DDM), with specific attention to water

service delivery in Mount Fletcher. The analysis revealed that the municipality strongly emphasises using Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), ward-based planning, and prioritising community-identified needs as central mechanisms to guide local development. Interviews with municipal officials and community members further revealed that collaboration across different spheres of government is instrumental in operationalising the DDM. However, the implementation of these strategies remains challenged by recurring water-related issues. Participants noted the practice of closing water taps to clean dams and frequent, unannounced interruptions in water supply, which often lasted up to two months. These delays have fostered a perception of neglect and a growing sense of indignity among affected residents.

Moreover, many rural communities, such as Moroka, continue to rely on rivers, dams, and natural springs due to the failure of municipal water infrastructure. This reliance has significant health and social implications. The water crisis also extends to local businesses, with entrepreneurs reporting significant disruptions to operations, especially in water-intensive sectors such as laundry and hospitality. While the chapter recognises the structural intentions of the DDM and the role of IDPs in addressing local development, the lived experiences of residents reflect a gap between planning and delivery. The findings suggest that without reliable water provision and responsive governance, the potential impact of the DDM remains constrained. Strengthening communication, service reliability, and equitable access to basic resources is therefore essential to restoring community trust and dignity.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This research explored perceptions of the ELM, methods for planning and monitoring the DDM in water service provision within the Joe Gqabi District Municipality, specifically in the Elundini Local Municipality. The preceding chapter presented the data analysis, providing the empirical foundation for interpreting and discussing the study's findings. Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and observations. This chapter provides an overview of this study. It begins by outlining the contents of the study and then examining the research objectives. Subsequently, it summarises the suggestions and discusses the limitations of the study. Finally, future research directions, concluding remarks, and recommendations are discussed.

5.2. Research Objectives

The results of this study are presented based on the research objectives introduced in Chapter One.

- To understand the perceptions of the municipality and the community and the methods used to plan and monitor the operations of DDM in water service delivery in Elundini's local municipality in Joe Gqabi District. .

- To assess the role of the DDM in providing water services in Mount Fletcher communities .
- To explore the methods that Elundini local municipalities use to achieve the goals of DDM for the community.

5.3. Synopsis

Chapter One provided the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, and significance of the study. Chapter two provides an in-depth literature review of the DDM and water services. The challenges of service delivery in local municipalities were addressed in the literature review. Lastly, the strategies the government implemented to overcome the difficulties of water service delivery in local communities were discussed. The theoretical framework of this study

is also discussed. Chapter Three provides the research methodology used in the study, including semi-structured interviews as a data collection method. thematic analysis addressed the main themes of the study by exploring the participants' views, which were further summarised into subthemes used to comprehend and discuss findings. Chapter Four revealed the study results and key findings obtained from the responses of the semi-structured interviews. Chapter five highlights the recommendations and conclusions of the study. It also discusses and interprets some essential points of the literature review.

5.4. Limitations of the study

Regarding the current study, more time was available as the researcher conducted interviews in different locations and encountered financial difficulties with travelling. During fieldwork, the researcher discovered that the community participants did not want to be recorded. Therefore, there were no recordings, and the researcher had to take notes from each interview.

5.5. Conclusions

The primary aim of this study was to explore the methods used for planning and monitoring the activities of the DDM in providing water services in the Elundini Local Municipality within Joe Gqabi District. This research is centred on Mount Fletcher within Elundini Local Municipality and examines three distinct areas where water service delivery varies. In 2021, the DDM was adopted in the Joe Gqabi District Municipality and its three local municipalities, including ELM. It was designed to facilitate coordination among government spheres by establishing a unified plan, and researchers examined the methods employed to plan and monitor the operations of this model. The Eastern Cape faces difficulties in water service delivery, which is marked by issues of scarcity and availability. In response, the South African government implemented various strategies and policies to address these issues. Consequently, the DDM was introduced to foster unity in the plans and priorities among the government spheres responsible for community services.

The study participants, who were government officials, indicated that the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the local municipality was utilised to plan and monitor the operations of the DDM. This is because each local municipality has its plans and

priorities, and the IDP is the guiding document for these. They emphasised that the DDM is central to coordinating the development efforts of the (ELM) and other local municipalities in the Joe Gqabi district. However, they also acknowledged that the specific plans and goals of DDM for ELM have not yet been concluded; they are still being developed from phase to phase. ELM has identified its priorities in the IDP, focusing on areas such as water service delivery and sanitation to address backlogs and align with national targets. Thus, while progress is being made, the success of these initiatives depends on the effective implementation of these plans. Furthermore, the IDP highlights the importance of governance, aiming to improve government performance, especially in promoting economic development and enhancing service delivery in areas such as water and sanitation, health, and education (IDP, 2021).

The officials notified the researcher that the action plans of the DDM were to improve the living standards of the ELM, provide jobs, fix roads, provide clean water, and strive for communities to have easy access to health services. These actions were coordinated with plans for the municipal IDP. Local municipalities play a significant role in guaranteeing efficient service delivery and providing essential infrastructure. Asha and Makalela (2020) emphasised that implementing effective strategy tools and adequate institutional capacity is essential for local governments to meet their developmental mandates. Therefore, the success of local government initiatives depends on having solid strategic approaches and sufficient resources to achieve their goals.

The study's second goal was toassess the role of the DDM in providing water services in Mount Fletcher communities . The findings indicate that ELM requires assistance with water service delivery in Mount Fletcher, with specific communities needing access to piped water while others enjoy this privilege. The residents of Katlehong and Tsekong experienced shortages despite access to piped water. In contrast, the Moroka community relies on natural springs and dams to fulfil their water requirements, as they need access to piped water.

The government official claimed that the municipality has faced challenges in providing water services to communities for an extended period, resulting in inequalities in Mount Fletcher communities. The traditional leader and counsellor of Mount Fletcher asserted that there is a backlog in water service delivery within ELM, leading to unbalanced outcomes in efforts to improve conditions for the communities. Menard et al. (2020) claimed that ensuring access to water services for people necessitates substantial investments in reforming water policies and establishing supportive institutions, a need observed in developed and developing nations. For South Africa, a developing nation, investing in water reform is crucial to aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets. The leaders of Mount Fletcher communities further highlighted that financial constraints hinder the continuation of community development projects and the challenges of delivering water to communities. For example, the ongoing project of installing water pipes in Mount Fletcher has been stopped because there is no budget to continue with the project and the municipality needs to source funding.

To gather more information, the researcher sought to understand the perspectives of water service delivery in Mount Fletcher from the Tsekong, Katlehong, and Moroka community members. The evidence of this research shows that residents in Katlehong and Tsekong do not experience water service delivery challenges like the people of Moroka do. The Tsekong and Katlehong communities have access to piped and clean water, although they sometimes experience water shortages. Participants said that small businesses suffered from water shortages. As a result, you need to have a water tank to ensure that your business can continue when there are water shortages.

However, in Moroka, the community needs taps to access clean water; the communities only have access to natural springs, dams, and boreholes that have not been in operation for a long time. These communities are in the same municipality but experience different service deliveries from the municipality. This research shows inequality in the service delivery of ELM as there are communities with access to water and those with a bare minimum. Government officials concurred that many rural areas

in Mount Fletcher needed access to water. Unfortunately, these communities need to make their means to obtain clean water for consumption, which protects their natural supplies of water because, as the municipality, they do not have the financial capacity to cover every rural area. Government officials stated that the role of the DDM in providing adequate service delivery for communities, including water service delivery, has been insignificant in ELM as many of their goals are still being planned. Furthermore, budget challenges still require that they ask for money from the national government. Even though there are projects underway that will form part of the plans and goals of the DDM in ELM, it is, therefore, unknown if the DDM will positively impact water service delivery in this small town.

The third objective of this study was to explore the mechanisms that Elundini local municipalities can use to achieve the intended goals of the DDM for the community. Government officials have notified that the tools that the municipality will implement or have implemented to optimise the benefits of the DDM are using the IDP to prioritise the ward base plans and the needs of the communities. The evidence of this research shows that the ELM will prioritise the IDP to achieve the goals of the DDM, and they will prioritise the ward-based developments that focus on the community's development. They stated that neighbourhood-based developments mainly focus on the development of people, including their businesses. The evidence of this objective shows that ward-based developments can improve the living standards of the people, improve their interactions, and assist the DDM's goals in opening job opportunities for the communities.

5.6. Recommendations and Future Research

This study explored the DDM and water service delivery in the Elundini Local Municipality in Mount Fletcher. The evidence of this study showed that the DDM did not impact water service delivery in Mount Fletcher. Many of the goals that are part of the DDM are still in the planning stage. This study makes some recommendations to examine further the role of DDM on service delivery as a whole. As this study focused on the role of DDM in water service delivery in ELM, it would be of great value if subsequent research could assess the role of DDM in unifying the government spheres.

The evidence of the main objective of this research is that the ELM plans to use IDP to monitor the operations of the model. However, ELM has not developed the goals it wishes to achieve with the DDM. Therefore, it would be of great value if future research could investigate whether local municipalities develop their goals first-hand when new strategies are being implemented.

The DDM was implemented to provide excellent service delivery and to unify government spheres with one plan and goal. Therefore, knowing if they are headed toward unity would benefit the government, policymakers, and government spheres. The researcher further recommends that subsequent research examine the plans of the local municipalities to see if they have achieved one plan and one goal of the model. Elundini Local Municipality has challenges in providing water equally to its resident communities; therefore, subsequent research is recommended to investigate whether the municipality plans to provide services equally to its communities. Since communities receive water services that differ from one another, it would be beneficial if subsequent research could look at the causes of inequality in water services in rural communities, as providing equality forms part of the objectives of the DDM. Even though some communities have piped water, they also experience many challenges due to water shortages. Therefore, the researcher would recommend that subsequent research examine the causes of water shortages in areas with access to piped water.

Since the sample of this study consisted of ELM and its three communities, the study focusing on Joe Gqabi District municipality and its three local municipalities to investigate their IDP plans and that of the DDM since its implementation would be interesting to see if the municipalities have plans aligned to that of the DDM. Furthermore, when delivering services, local municipalities must ensure that their policies and solutions align with specific local challenges, such as water scarcity, varying access to water services among communities, high levels of youth unemployment, and community engagement in education. Furthermore, policy implementers for rural communities must consider the challenges of a new model before analysing whether the system works. The ELM plans to use IDP and ward-

based developments to ensure that the goals of the DDM are met. The researcher recommends that Future research investigate how ward-based development improves service delivery. Moreover, as communities face different challenges, looking at ward-based development would benefit the local municipalities and policymakers by implementing strategies that would benefit the real challenges of the community. The researcher would recommend that subsequent research examine how the involvement of communities in strategy implementation could benefit both local municipalities and rural communities.

5.7.Chapter Summary

Chapter Five offered a reflective synthesis of the research findings, closely aligned with the objectives set out in Chapter One. By engaging deeply with the data, the chapter explored how the District Development Model (DDM) is monitored and implemented at the local level, particularly in relation to water service delivery. The analysis illuminated both the strengths and limitations of current municipal approaches, drawing attention to the practical realities faced by communities and the gaps between planning and delivery. This chapter not only addressed the research objectives but also contributed meaningful reflections on how policy can be more effectively translated into practice. It concluded by offering recommendations aimed at improving DDM implementation and highlighted areas for further exploration to enhance service delivery outcomes.

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Interview Guide for Community Members

I will start by asking you questions about your demographics:

1. How long have you lived in this community? (One year/ one to two years/ more than five years)
2. What can you tell me about water availability in your area?
3. How long have you had water in your taps/tanks?
4. Where do you usually fetch water?
5. How many times do you need to fetch water to have enough in your household?
6. What do you use water for mainly?
7. What can you tell about the water service delivery of Elundini local municipality?
8. What challenges does the community face concerning water service?
9. What do you think the municipality needs to do to combat these challenges?

Interview guide for Municipal Managers/ workers

I will start by start by asking you questions about your demographics.

1. What is your current position in the department?
2. Have you been managing the department for how long? (Less than a year/ two to five years/ five to ten years)
3. How long has the District Development Model (DDM) been implemented in the municipality?
4. What are the action plans considered by the DDM in Elundini local municipality?
5. What plans will be used to monitor the operations of the DDM in water service delivery in Elundini municipality?
6. What can you tell about the challenges the municipality is likely to face with water service delivery?
7. How has the DDM helped to ease the challenges of water service delivery in Elundini local municipality?
8. What are the intended benefits of the DDM for communities in Elundini local municipality?
9. What mechanisms can be put in place by Elundini Local Municipality to optimise the intended benefits of the DDM to the communities?

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICS CLEARANCE
REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Project Number: CHI031SDLA01

Project title: **The district development model and water service delivery in the Elundini Local Municipality in Mount Fletcher.**

Qualification: Master of Commerce: Development Studies

Student name: Yonela Dlaza

Registration number 202119862

Supervisor: Dr S Chivanga

Department: Development Studies

Co-supervisor: Prof P Monyai

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby grant ethics approval for CHI031SDLA01. This approval is valid for 12 months from the date of approval. Renewal of approval must be applied for BEFORE termination of this approval period. Renewal is subject to receipt of a satisfactory progress report. The approval covers the undertakings contained in the abovementioned project and research instrument(s). The research may commence as from the 10/08/23, using the reference number indicated above.

Note that should any other instruments be required or amendments become necessary, these require separate authorisation. Please note that UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material changes in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document;
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research.

The student must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this approval if ○ Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected; ○ Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented; ○ Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require; ○ The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to.

- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.

Your compliance with Department of Health 2015 guidelines and any other applicable regulatory instruments and with UREC ethics requirements as contained in UREC policies and standard operating procedures, is implied.

UREC wishes you well in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr A Nyika
Chairperson: Inter-Faculty Research Ethics Committee
11 August 2023